

# The Almanac

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

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# At what cost

Two school boards trusted Tim Hanretty  
to manage costly projects with little oversight.  
Their trust cost the schools money  
— and much more.

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Photo by Steve Rasmussen

Maddie Rostami, an M-A junior, rehearses as Ariel in "The Tempest," with other cast members looking on.

## M-A brings Shakespeare alive with 'The Tempest'

Performances Thursday and Saturday at Performing Arts Center

By Cherie Campbell

Shakespeare's "The Tempest" is the latest production to be performed by the talented young actors and actresses of Menlo-Atherton High School.

"It's been four years since a play by Shakespeare was performed here, and that was staged in a classroom in classic black box theater style," said Debra Zwicker-Sobrepna, M-A drama teacher and director.

"This will be a fully staged production. It's a chance to see how exciting Shakespeare can be — live, on stage as Shakespeare intended it to be seen."

Ms. Zwicker-Sobrepna noted that the players find it exciting as well. Hannah Berggren, a senior who has had many leading roles at M-A, finds it "a challenge. It's hard playing Miranda. She's so ignorant of the outside world, and looks like a ditz if you aren't careful."

Finding Shakespeare with plenty of female roles was the challenge for Ms. Z, as the cast calls their teacher. While males playing female roles was the norm in Shakespeare's time, Ms. Z cast female Janet Pale, a senior, as Prospero.

"I'm constantly having to think about dropping my voice

to sound like the calculating wizard Prospero," Janet said.

Strong characters are something she's experienced before, this being her third production at M-A. But her past roles were distinctly female, such as Mrs. Bennett in "Pride and Prejudice."

**'This will be a fully staged production. It's a chance to see how exciting Shakespeare can be — live, on stage as Shakespeare intended it to be seen.'**

DIRECTOR DEBRA  
ZWICKER-SOBREPENA

Some M-A freshmen are making their debut in "The Tempest." Ariel Sullivan, who plays Caliban, said, "I was terrified at first, but the juniors and seniors are great."

Charlie Campbell said, "Anytime you get to wear a sword, it's a good time." And there are plenty of swords, magic, comedy and drama in "The Tempest."

"The Tempest" opened last

week, and remaining performances are set for Thursday, Nov. 1, and Saturday, Nov. 3, at 7:30 p.m. And on Nov. 1, there is a special 3:30 p.m. after-school matinee, making "The Tempest" easy to attend for students at M-A and surrounding schools.

While the public is welcome at this performance as well, Ms. Z, also an English teacher, hopes to make the Bard even more accessible to kids. "We hope that students will come out to support their friends and leave with a new appreciation for the material."

Or at least an appreciation of the theater experience. The concessions stand will be selling gourmet prepared tiramisu, a donation from Trellis restaurant in Menlo Park and The Milk Pail in Mountain View.

"Only the best will do for our Performing Arts Center!" laughed Steve Rasmussen, owner of the Milk Pail. "Come for the show, stay for the dessert."

*Cherie Campbell is the assistant chair of the M-A Drama Boosters, the parent volunteer organization that supports after-school theater at M-A. Lyn Napel, the Boosters' chair, contributed to the story and submitted it to the Almanac.*

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The world's largest pesticide companies - including **Monsanto**, who produced *Agent Orange* and *DDT*, are spending over **One Million Dollars a Day** to confuse California voters about **Proposition 37** - a simple label that will give us the right to know whether or not the food we buy contains genetically engineered ingredients.

### READ THE FACTS ABOUT PROP 37:

**Prop 37 was written to encompass the foods that people eat most frequently** - processed packaged foods on supermarket shelves. Pet food containing GE crops such as corn or soy would have to be labeled under Prop 37.

**61 other countries currently have labeling laws for genetically engineered (GE) foods which include exemptions.** Prop 37 exempts products with no ingredient labels, such as **restaurant food** and **alcohol**. By California law, a ballot initiative cannot cover more than one subject: Prop 37 would label meat, dairy, and eggs from animals that **have been genetically engineered (GE) themselves**. But, because livestock fed GE grain are not themselves genetically engineered, the meat, dairy, and eggs coming from them will not be covered - as per this CA law. There are no genetically engineered animals on the market today, but the first one - a GE salmon, is on its way. It contains a growth hormone gene from a Chinook Salmon and a genetic "on switch"

from an eel-like fish known as the Ocean Pout. Without Prop 37, it will be unlabeled. (For more info: [carighttoknow.org/exemptions](http://carighttoknow.org/exemptions)).

**Costs:** Labeling didn't raise costs in other countries when they started labeling their GE foods. **Don't listen to fear tactics by profiteers.**

**There are no incentives for lawsuits:** Lawyers can't make big money from Prop 37, so claims about "shakedown lawsuits" make no sense whatsoever. And there will be no need for lawsuits. Companies will label for genetic engineering just like they label for calories and fat. **Don't believe the lies.**

**California Farmers are FOR Prop 37:** Thousands of California Farmers, all the leading businesses in the natural and sustainable food sector, and all the leading labor groups - United Farm Workers, United Food and Commercial Workers, and the California Labor Federation - are saying **YES ON 37**

### WHAT IS A GMO?

A genetically engineered food is a **plant or animal which has had its DNA artificially altered in a laboratory by genes from other plants, animals, viruses, or bacteria** (also referred to as GMO or Genetically Modified Organism). This type of genetic alteration is not found in nature and is experimental.

### GMO LABELS = CHOICE

**Thousands of U.S. physicians instruct their patients to avoid genetically engineered foods, due to the health impacts. And Russia just banned GE corn due to a recent study showing cancer and premature death. Don't you want these foods labeled so you can make your own decisions?**

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## The human factor

Excerpts from Hanretty probation report, letters, statements

### From the probation interview:

"During the probation interview, the defendant was candid about his life. He described a stable faith based childhood with supportive parents. When discussing the present offenses, he was emotional and expressed remorse and regret for his actions. He took full responsibility and accountability and reiterated several times 'I did what I did and what I did was wrong.'"

Noting that Mr. Hanretty has been attending weekly therapy sessions, the report continues: "He stated that he is determined to resolve why he betrayed the community for which he worked." He has started a home repair business and "he stated that he is allocating all of his wages toward victim restitution."

### From the evaluation:

Mr. Hanretty has been in a registered domestic partnership with Joel Morris since 2003 and has no children. He gets a monthly pension of \$3,856. "He reported that the market value of his house is \$542,000. He indicated that he is presently in the process of filing Chapter 7 bankruptcy through which all his debt will be eliminated." (Deputy District Attorney Kimberly Perrotti said that restitution claims are not forgiven in a bankruptcy.)

### From Mr. Hanretty's statement:

Though sorry for what he did in Woodside, he is "profoundly more remorseful" for criminal activity in Portola Valley. "Though others may disagree, in Woodside the funds ... were used for the benefit of the school district and resulted in a school campus and community sports fields that are treasured."

### From letter written by former Portola Valley district Spanish teacher Maryann Henn:

"On a personal level, the repercussions (of Mr. Hanretty's crimes) last a lifetime." Two days before he resigned, she met with him and he said her position was being cut to

See **HUMAN FACTOR**, page 8

# At what cost?

Two school boards trusted Tim Hanretty to manage costly projects with little oversight. Their trust cost the schools money — and much more

By Barbara Wood

Special to the Almanac

**W**hy would a man who is trusted, admired and looked up to by his community betray them?

That question is now being asked by many in that community — apparently, even by the parents of Tim Hanretty, 55, the former Portola Valley School District superintendent and former Woodside Elementary School chief business official who was sentenced to two years in prison on Oct. 22 after pleading no contest to six felony charges of embezzlement and misappropriating public funds in both school districts.



Tim Hanretty

"It is a complete mystery to me that Tim did what he did. It is so completely unlike him," wrote his father, James Hanretty, who also said that "Tim was a near-perfect son growing up."

James Hanretty's letter is part of a half-inch-thick stack of documents given to Judge Mark Forcum to help him pass judgment in the case. The documents don't answer the "why" question — but they do provide some clues to the answer.

In addition to details from the Dis-

## School districts take steps to prevent future misdeeds

By Barbara Wood

Special to the Almanac

**W**hile both the Woodside and Portola Valley school districts have put measures in place to try to make it more difficult for their funds to be misused in the future, officials emphasize that the crimes Mr. Hanretty has confessed to were sophisticated.

Mr. Hanretty "was able to snow two distinguished districts," said Scott Parker, head of the Portola Valley district's board. "These are really sophisticated boards full of people who have been serving for a number of years."

If the Woodside district had not discovered the loan improprieties, "I don't know whether (the Portola Valley embezzlement) would have been found. He was very, very good at hiding things," Mr. Parker said.



Michelle Le

Tim Hanretty's Woodside home, which was recently renovated using nearly \$101,000 of public funds.

trict Attorney's Office investigation and probation interviews, the "Probation Officers Report and Recommendations" contains an eight-page statement by Mr. Hanretty, letters from those affected by the crimes and from Mr. Hanretty's supporters, and a detailed list of the money each district wants as restitution.

The school districts' losses, however, go far beyond the monetary.

"This was a completely serious thing," says Scott Parker, president of the Por-

tolta Valley School District's governing board. "It almost tore this community apart in numerous ways."

After the Portola Valley district asked for and accepted Mr. Hanretty's resignation, but before the embezzlement was uncovered, many in the community questioned the decision. "People were concerned, they were worried, they were confused," Mr. Parker says.

"I don't think that was inappropriate,"

See **COST**, page 8

ber Bettina Pike.

Both districts say they have completely revamped the way they keep track of money.

"We really have changed our entire accounting structure," Mr. Parker said. "What we've added is additional ways for the board to have clearer eyes on our actual financial picture, rather than an interpretation of it."

"I think we're just starting with a clean slate," said Ms. Pike, who is the board member who first asked the questions about the district's debt service that led to discovery of the unauthorized \$2 million loan. Woodside plans, for example, to use an outside project manager for any future bond projects, she said.

Woodside district superintendent Beth Polito said the district is "making sure an independent financial audit is completed in a timely manner and that it is reported to the board in an open session every year."

"We thought we were being quite efficient," said Woodside board mem-

See **CHANGES**, page 8

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**Round two of city-Facebook negotiations begins this week**

■ Council to start work on development agreement for Gehry campus.

By **Sandy Brundage**  
Almanac Staff Writer

Negotiations with Facebook over its west campus development are imminent, but first Menlo Park has to decide what to ask for. The City Council takes up that question during its Oct. 30 meeting.

Facebook proposes building a sprawling office in a forest envisioned by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Frank Gehry on its 22-acre Constitution Drive Campus.

The 433,555-square-foot building would perch on top of approximately 1,540 parking spaces, and blend into the landscape by incorporating ground-level gardens that wind their way up to a rooftop terrace, creating a forest visible from the Bayfront Expressway. About 2,800 employees, mainly engineers, would go to work there.

In September the Planning Commission noted at least two areas for negotiation: Direct revenue, and ways to ease the burden on community services such as schools and transit in anticipation of population growth as Facebook employees move to the area and have kids.

The staff report for Tuesday's council meeting describes two ways to get that direct revenue: "The revenue could be in the form of an in lieu of sales tax comparable to the annual payment associated with the East Campus Development Agreement or some other mechanism such as the provision of monies to support police services in the Belle Haven neighborhood. An example of how the latter mechanism might be realized would be a requirement for the applicant to annually provide monies to fund two existing full time police officers."

The notion of payments to make up for a lack of sales tax revenue arises at an interesting time. The social networking giant launched "Facebook Gifts," a service allowing users to give each other real goodies such as chocolate or stuffed ani-

mals, in September. That could add sales tax revenue, depending on where the gift ships from, according to a Facebook representative. In some cases the tax will be factored into the price, a practice seen elsewhere online — Amazon began collecting sales taxes of 7.25 to 9.25 percent from California residents on Sept. 15.

The staff report also proposes possible one-time benefits, including sewer system upgrades, improvements to the citywide transportation network and updated emergency operations plans. In addition, Facebook is offering to pay \$4.58 million instead of building below-market-rate housing elsewhere in the city.

The development agreement for the east campus — at 1 Hacker Way off Willow Road — included a one-time payment of \$1.1 million as well as incrementally increased payments over 10 years starting at \$800,000 annually, local bike trail improvements and other benefits. The recently launched local community foundation, with a \$500,000 seed fund, represents Facebook's fulfillment of an agreement to fund local programs.

The city is eager to make sure that, should Facebook leave its east campus, the negotiated benefits don't all disappear. The west campus development agreement could contain clauses requiring the company to maintain its summer internships, the annual local community organization fair, and the Facebooks incentives program to support local businesses, according to the staff report.

The third main area of focus is imposing penalties for violating any caps on vehicle traffic the city and Facebook agree to implement. The east campus agreement carries stiff daily penalties of \$500 to \$100,000, depending on the number of violations.

On Menlo Park's negotiating team, in addition to City Attorney Bill McClure, are Public Works Director Chip Taylor, Development Services Manager Justin Murphy, and City Manager Alex McIntyre. Council members Kirsten Keith and Rich Cline serve as liaisons between the team and council.

The city expects to hold public hearings on the west campus development agreement in February and March of next year.

The Oct. 30 meeting starts at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center at 701 Laurel St. ■

Support Local Business



# A ray of hope in effort to recover Lehman Brothers losses in county

Local schools stand to benefit if county's lawsuit is successful.

By Dave Boyce

Almanac staff writer

In an encouraging development for local school districts hopeful of recouping heavy losses to their investments in the 2008 collapse of Lehman Brothers investment bank, a federal judge in New York has ruled that there are partial grounds to proceed with a lawsuit in which San Mateo County is a plaintiff.

In a 66-page decision dated Oct. 15, Judge Lewis A. Kaplan of the U.S. District Court Southern District of New York dismissed some claims, but proceeded with allegations of misconduct against Lehman's London-based accounting firm Ernst & Young and against Lehman executives, including the chairman and chief executive officer, the chief financial officer, the president and chief operating officer, and five former directors.

Among the agencies who shared in the loss of \$155 million from the San Mateo County investment pool are the Sequoia Union High School District, which lost about \$6.5 million, and four local K-8 school districts: the Menlo Park City district, which lost nearly \$4 million; the Las Lomas district, almost \$400,000; the Portola Valley district, nearly \$150,000; and the Woodside district, nearly \$100,000.

Some funds have already been paid back. With Lehman now liquidated, the county has recovered \$15.2 million — about 10 percent of the losses — from asset distribution payments in April and October 2012, County

Counsel John Beiers told the Almanac. The county expects to recover at least 22 percent in coming years, and "we're still hopeful it'll be somewhere between 25 percent and 30 percent of the total loss," Mr. Beiers said.

Recovered funds are apportioned according to the size of an agency's investment in 2008, he said.

Attorneys from both sides applauded Judge Kaplan's decision.

"This is a tremendous victory. Our public entity clients are extremely pleased with the results," said plaintiffs' attorney Mark C. Molumphy of the Burlingame law firm Cotchett Pitre & McCarthy in a statement.

"We are pleased that [the] court has concurred in our analysis in largely dismissing the claims against our clients," said defense attorney Adam J. Wasserman of the international law firm Dechert LLP. "We look forward to obtaining dismissal of the remaining claims."

## A unique case

In the lawsuit now unfolding in federal court, San Mateo County is one of eight plaintiffs seeking an award of damages. The county is seeking the full amount of loss: \$155 million. "That's what we're asking for. That's the extent of our damages," Mr. Beiers said. Also plaintiffs: the cities of Auburn, Burbank and San Buenaventura; Monterey County; two special districts; and an insurance company.

Lehman's financial statements and offering documents, the plaintiffs allege, materially understated the company's net leverage, overstated the value of its real estate assets, failed to

adequately disclose its liquidity, were misleading about its risk management practices, failed to properly disclose its concentrations of risk, and misrepresented conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

The lawsuit is unique, Mr. Beier said. "I'm not aware of many other lawsuits that are naming as defendants the officers and directors of a Wall Street company." But isn't one advantage of incorporating to protect individuals in the corporation from liability? "Individuals can still be liable if there's evidence of fraud, for example, which is what we're seeking here," Mr. Beiers said.

In the ruling, Judge Kaplan considers the arguments in which the individual executives assert that they are not liable for actions of employees under their supervision. Calling it a "peculiar contention," the judge adds that "the kindest thing to be said about this argument is that it is entirely unsupported by the language of the statute or any persuasive authority. Equally unfounded is their contention that only (supervisors) who have signed a relevant Registration Statement may be held liable."

As for Ernst & Young, the judge asserted that the firm issued "false and misleading" audit reports on Lehman's financial health. "The auditor certified that Lehman's financial reporting was in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, even though (the auditor) was or should have been aware that this was not true, because it in turn was aware of various accounting devices and financial mechanisms that Lehman was using to portray its condition as better than it actually was." ■

## Lost and found dogs confound Menlo Park neighborhood

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Here's one for the Sherlock Holmes case file: In Menlo Park, two dogs vanish from a locked house. They're found, two days later, in the bedroom of a vacationing neighbor's locked home.

A neighbor alerted the Almanac to the strange tale. A couple returned to a disturbingly empty house on Oct. 5 — their two Shih Tzus were nowhere

to be found. All gates were locked, the home was secure. They concluded the dogs had not gone on the lam unaided.

After days of searching, the distraught owners got a call on Oct. 7 from a stranger reporting that, after being gone for a week, the stranger's family had come home to a disturbingly occupied house — the dogs were locked inside, trapped in a bedroom.

Linfield Oaks residents wondered what this meant. Did

a thief break into the dogs' home and then use the other location to temporarily stash the Shih Tzus? Construction work going on at the home where the dogs were found may have provided access to the bedroom, but no suspects have been identified.

Police investigating the canine caper confirmed ownership of the mysteriously transported dogs, according to spokesperson Nicole Acker, but it remains unknown how they became dislocated in the first place.

"Still very odd, yet the dogs are back so we are all happy," the dogs' owner said. ■

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Gloria Darke



### Buyer Worries about Hidden Defects "Waiting to Happen"!

Q: How can I be reasonably certain that the home I'm buying doesn't have hidden defects that could be waiting to happen? — S. W.

A: Ethically and legally, real estate sellers are required to disclose known defects. But they might not know about something or they might not consider it a problem.

"Hidden defects" can mean (1) current mechanical or structural problems such as an inadequate electrical supply, leaks in roof or plumbing, cracks in the foundation, or (2) problems, as you suggested, that are "waiting to happen". These could include everything from an aging furnace that might quit on a cold winter's night or a roof ready to let the heavens soak the carpet during the next rainstorm.

Your best assurance is to have a professional inspection done before you buy. The inspector's written report will give you a detailed description of the property's physi-

cal components and assessments of their condition. If repairs or replacements seem necessary either now or soon, they'll be identified for you.

In your written offer to buy a property, you should include a "contingency clause" allowing you to hire a professional inspector and, at your option, to make the results a factor in deciding to complete the purchase, cancel it, or re-negotiate the terms to account for resolving the problems. The common practice in our local area is for the seller to have these inspections done, including pest control (termite) prior to putting the property on the market. Some buyers feel that the inspector was doing the report for the seller and might therefore, be biased. That is not the case with the good inspectors who typically do most of the inspections. If there are issues not disclosed and not found in the inspection, the inspector can be liable.

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



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**HUMAN FACTOR**

*continued from page 5*

save money. “Indeed, the school district carried out this plan when the budget problems became insurmountable in the wake of Tim Hanretty’s fraud.” His actions “forced me into early retirement. I am 58 years old and had planned to work seven more years. ... There is no putting back on track for my career. My economic status is forever lowered. My health insurance will never be what it was. ... What restitution would his probation provide to me? There are dozens of stories like mine.”

**From letter written by John Davenport, president of the teachers’ union:**

The teachers’ union “trusted Mr. Hanretty’s integrity and honesty, and in that spirit, the teachers made concessions impacting directly on their compensation and health benefits. ... That is why for two years all of the teachers have taken no raises. ... We thought we were sacrificing our own needs for those of the children and the parents we serve. It was a swindle, pure and simple, that not only hurt the students but also took money straight from the teachers and their families and lowered, sometimes considerably, their living standards.”

**From letter written by Mr. Hanretty’s mother, Mary Ann Hanretty:**

Tim “has always been a source of joy and pride to our family.” Always ready to help and lend a hand, he has “been a hard worker since his early teens. ... Our family is all behind him and hope and pray that the judgment will be one that is fair, merciful, and will give him a chance to make restitution.”

**Letter written by Joel Morris, Mr. Hanretty’s partner:**

“Tim is one of the gentlest, kindest, caring and giving people that I have ever known. ... I was shocked” when he learned what Tim had done. “The public humiliation and embarrassment that he has brought to my family, our community, and me is immense, as is the imminent financial ruin caused by the forced bankruptcy and foreclosure. ... It would have been easy to abandon Tim. I did not abandon him. ... I believe that he is a very good person who made a stupid, tragic mistake.”

**From letter written by Jeffrey Mead, Portola Valley district teacher:**

“Mr. Hanretty treated me with extraordinary dignity, sympathy, and respect at a time when none of my other colleagues did.”

**AT WHAT COST**

*continued from page 5*

he says of the reaction. “This was a painful experience.”

What happened in this case is easier to know than why it happened, at least as far as the actions Mr. Hanretty has admitted to.

**Altered document**

In 2007, Mr. Hanretty, managing a \$12 million project to update the facilities at Woodside Elementary School, was authorized to borrow an additional \$632,000 to renovate two athletic fields at the school.

“The resolution that the board approved for a \$600,000 loan was altered to reflect a \$2.6 million loan,” he said in his statement. “I take full responsibility for altering these documents.”

Later, he said, “I also presented financial reports about the construction project that did not reflect the cost overruns or the acquisition of the additional \$2 million in funding.”

When the project was completed, on time and, apparently, on budget, he was given a \$5,000 bonus — a bonus district officials say he did not know he might receive.

The investigation found no evidence that Mr. Hanretty spent any of the \$2 million on himself. “A forensic audit was conducted and the report revealed that all the money was spent on the schools,” the probation report states.

The district figures the unapproved loan cost, however, including accountant and legal fees spent uncovering it, is more than \$3.6 million. Taxpayers will be repaying the loan, which was supposed to have a 10-year term, for 21 years. Exactly how much Mr. Hanretty will be directed to repay the district will be determined by the judge in a conference on Nov. 15.

The district is also trying to cut its losses by negotiating new terms for the loan and seeking a payment from its insurance company, according to Superintendent Beth Polito.

**Stolen funds**

In Portola Valley, a few years after the Woodside project was completed, Mr. Hanretty was promoted in 2010 from assistant superintendent to superintendent of the school district, while continuing as its chief business officer.

Overseeing a project to install solar panels at the school with the help of a \$1.5 million federal grant, Mr. Hanretty submitted invoices that were actually for work done on his home in the Skylonda neighborhood of unincorporated Woodside, and paid for out of solar project funds.

“It was my intention to repay (the misappropriated \$100,926) to the school district by the end of my three-year con-

**CHANGES**

*continued from page 5*

In Portola Valley, Superintendent Carol Piraino said the district has formed an advisory committee made up of parents, representatives of the Portola Valley Schools Foundation and teachers; established an audit committee, which also has representatives of these groups; and begun



Michelle Le

**Solar panels** cover the rooftops at Corte Madera School — part of a multi-million-dollar project whose fund Tim Hanretty tapped into to pay for improvements to his home.

tract,” Mr. Hanretty wrote.

He did not, and now Mr. Hanretty has been ordered by Judge Forcum to pay the district \$181,750 in restitution. The amount includes not only the money spent on Mr. Hanretty’s home, but the district’s costs for the investigation.

**Conflicting stories**

Why did Mr. Hanretty commit the crimes he has admitted to? His statement says that as the Woodside School renovation project was under way, costs escalated, as did demands to complete the renovations quickly.

“I was under immense pressure from all involved to not only complete the project before school opened, but to cover additional expenses that were not anticipated,” he wrote

“I became nervous that there would not be enough money to complete the project. I projected that an additional \$2 million would be needed.”

His statement claims that money committed to the project by the Woodside School Foundation then fell through. “It also became clear as the project was under way, that the Foundation would not be able to meet its \$1.2 million funding commitment,” he wrote.

However, people who worked on the renovation with Mr. Hanretty deny that. Stephanie Ashworth, at the time a foundation board member serving as assistant treasurer, says the foundation had early on pledged up to \$1.2 million as a contingency fund should costs of the project go beyond the \$12 million bond amount.

“There was never a conversation that said we were no longer willing to do this,” she said. The money was in the foundation’s endowment fund, she said — available if it had been requested.

Instead, the board and others involved in overseeing the project were consistently told by Mr. Hanretty there were no schedule or money problems, Ms. Ashworth said.

Bettina Pike, who was president of the Woodside board at the time and is still a board member, agreed. “We were being presented with the perfect scenario of on time, on budget,” she said.

Since funds weren’t needed for the bond project, the foundation agreed to pay to renovate two school fields, Ms. Ashworth said. And when Mr. Hanretty pointed out that the district could borrow the money for the fields at a lower interest rate than the foundation was getting on its investments, the foundation agreed to instead repay the loan over its 10-year life to save money.

**‘Frustrated and angry’**

In Portola Valley, Mr. Hanretty’s motivations appear much different.

Mr. Hanretty said in his statement that when he was promoted to superintendent from assistant superintendent in 2010, he did not ask for “the usual \$15,000 to \$25,000 compensation increase that would accompany this type of promotion.” Instead, he said, he asked for a \$100,000 “housing assistance” loan — to be repaid over three years, with interest.

“The \$100,000 was needed to complete a significant home renovation project at my home,” he wrote. However, the loan was not approved as part of his contract.

“Frustrated and angry that I did not receive the \$100,000 loan, yet desperate for the money to complete my home renovation project, I charged down the path of true criminal activity,” Mr. Hanretty wrote.

Portola Valley board president Scott Parker said that while he can’t discuss what happened in closed session around Mr. Hanretty’s contract,” he “was shocked to hear” that Mr. Hanretty was unhappy about not getting the loan. “That wasn’t ever clear to us, that he was upset about that,” he said.

*Continued on next page*

using the San Mateo County financial systems for purchase orders, position control, and payroll to prevent the district from spending money it does not have.

In addition, Ms. Piraino said, all purchase orders over \$15,000 must now be approved by the school board.

“All of these practices have put checks and balances in place to ensure that we, as a district, live within our means,” she said.

Stephanie Ashworth, the former Woodside School Foundation board member who worked with Mr. Hanretty, said she has learned something from the experience that both districts might heed.

“I think for me the lesson learned (is) you never give one human being too much power in an organization when finances are involved,” Ms. Ashworth says. ■

# Menlo Park council drops Rural Lane site, but proposes higher densities elsewhere

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Squeaky wheels get the grease, so the saying goes, and the Menlo Park City Council listened. Protest by hundreds of people over allowing housing on Rural Lane led to the council's decision to drop the site from consideration.

The preliminary draft of the housing plan update proposed rezoning the Rural Lane site to allow 24 units on two acres. Public speakers during the Oct. 23 council meeting voiced concerns about the potential burden on the Las Lomas School District, traffic hazards along Alpine Road, and the lack of any nearby public transportation.

The council cautioned that Stanford University has plans for Rural Lane. "Even if we drop it from the list, Stanford still has the right to build housing on its property," said Mayor Kirsten Keith. The university sent a letter to the city indicating it wants to put faculty housing there.

In the end the council decided 4-0 by acclamation to leave Rural Lane alone. Councilwoman Kelly Fergusson recused herself since her husband works for Stanford.

But as another old saying goes, your loss is someone else's gain. To make up for losing that site, the council decided 5-0 by acclamation to research increasing the density of the

former post office site at 3875 Bohannon Drive. The 1.89-acre property would be rezoned from 30 to 40 units per acre.

"I'm comfortable with the post office site going up to potentially 40 units per acre," said Vice Mayor Peter Ohtaki, but he was concerned about balance. "We didn't hear a whole lot of opposition from Belle Haven around these sites but if you push it, my guess is you'll get it."

The council also considered raising the density of sites on Hamilton and Haven avenues, with City Attorney Bill McClure warning that doing so without neighborhood outreach could cause "some concerns politically," at least on Hamilton Avenue.

Continuing to tweak the draft plan, the council asked staff to research dividing 60 housing units among three sites in the Linfield Oaks neighborhood, whose residents have also been vociferous in their opposition. Mr. McClure said the city could decide to remove entire sites or portions during the upcoming review process.

"We'll look at removing two, probably," said Mayor Keith.

Menlo Park must add enough high-density housing zones to accommodate space for 1,000 to 1,975 units as part of a lawsuit settlement over its non-compliance with the state housing law. The city is not required to actually build the units, but has to provide incentives for devel-

opers to do so, according to the settlement approved on May 22.

State law dictates that cities assess and plan to meet their fair share of regional housing needs, which includes affordable housing, every seven years. Menlo Park hasn't met the state requirements since 1992, but now has only until Oct. 31 to send a draft update to the state's Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

"We do not have control over our community," Councilman Rich Cline noted during an unusually long comment earlier in the evening that called the state's ability to impose housing requirements "dangerous" for the city.

He expressed disappointment that the mixed-use Arrillaga project proposed for Stanford's lots on El Camino Real contained mostly medical offices with only "a sliver of housing," contrary to what the city told the university it wanted during negotiations over the specific plan. The university's vision for the sites apparently changed once the specific plan passed, he said, leaving those El Camino lots to now play only a minor role in contributing to the city's housing capacity.

## Meeting schedule

The city still has months of work ahead before finalizing the draft plan. The update process will include an environmental assessment and fiscal impact analysis to evaluate how higher-density zoning could affect service and school districts should units be built, according to Development Ser-

vices Manager Justin Murphy. To allow for more information to be available for public review, staff has recommended postponing a series of community workshops from November to January.

Several commissions will review the draft update and general plan amendments in December:

■ Housing Commission: Wednesday, Dec. 5, at 5:30 p.m.

■ Environmental Quality Commission: Wednesday, Dec. 5, at 6:30 p.m. (to be heard later on the agenda to allow time for earlier Housing Commission meeting)

■ Bicycle Commission: Monday, Dec. 10, at 7 p.m.

■ Transportation Commission, Wednesday, Dec. 12, at 7 p.m.

■ Planning Commission: Monday, Dec. 17, at 7 p.m.

■ Parks & Recreation Commission: Wednesday, Dec. 19, at 6:30 p.m. ■

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### November 6, 2012

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- Promote economically and environmentally sustainable approaches to all city projects.
- Preserve Atherton's small-town sense of community while delivering state-of-the-art services.
- Support renewal of Atherton's Parcel Tax for police emergency response services, street repair and maintenance, drainage facility repair and maintenance, and capital improvements.

### Ensure Public Safety

- Provide Atherton law enforcement with the staffing and resources to deliver the services our community expects.
- Improve pedestrian and bike safety throughout Atherton by working with public safety, public works, the schools and newspapers, to make Atherton a bicycle-friendly community where bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists safely share our roadways.

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Rose Jacob-Gibson, San Mateo County Supervisor  
Atherton Police Officers' Association (APOA)  
Rich Gordon, CA State Assemblyman 21<sup>st</sup> District  
Jerry Hill, CA State Assemblyman 19<sup>th</sup> District  
Memo Morantes, Trustee San Mateo County Board of Education  
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Silicon Valley Association of Realtors (SILVAR)  
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Niar Thorpe  
Dick & Doris Axen  
Rick Priola

Continued from previous page

Mr. Parker said Mr. Hanretty left behind a financial mess for the district that extends far beyond the money embezzled for the home-remodeling project.

This spring, for example, the district discovered that an additional \$400,000 from the solar fund had been used to make purchases not allowed under the grant. The misappropriation meant that the entire \$1.5 million grant could have been subject to immediate repayment if the district had not at once found another way to cover the purchases.

Mr. Hanretty also misused a fund the district had set up, with seed money from Bill and Jean Lane, to help district employees pay housing expenses. He also vastly underestimated employee benefit costs in the budget.

Until the Woodside investigation prompted Mr. Hanretty's resignation and the Portola Valley district investigation, "we

actually didn't know we were in financial trouble," Mr. Parker said. "Basically he was cooking the books."

The district was in such bad financial shape that it was in danger of going into receivership and being taken over by the state, even before the \$101,000 loss was discovered.

Today, however, with support from the community and the Portola Valley Schools Foundation, the district is back on track, Mr. Parker said.

And how did Mr. Hanretty's home remodeling project turn out? Despite the fact that Mr. Hanretty said a total of \$225,000 was spent renovating his home, he also claimed at his sentencing: "The house I share with my partner is upside-down financially."

Although Mr. Hanretty was sentenced to two years in prison, Deputy District Attorney Kimberly Perrotti noted that he will almost certainly be out in only one year, as prisoners routinely get one day of "credit" for each day served. ■

# Greg CONLON

★ for Atherton Town Council ★



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## Menlo Park senior home may become extended-stay hotel

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Casa on the Peninsula, formerly known as Glenwood Inn, may be reborn under a third name — Marriott Residence Inn — if the applicant wins over the Menlo Park City Council on Tuesday (Oct. 30).

The property at 555 Glenwood Ave. currently provides 125 market-rate units for seniors. That address lies within a mixed-use/residential zone of the new downtown/El Camino Real specific plan. Sand Hill Property Company is asking the council to study the impact of converting the property to a 138-room hotel while retaining the three-story and one-story buildings already on the site.

The hotel would be a part of the Marriott Residence Inn chain and provide extended stay accommodations of a week or longer, the staff report said. But while hotels add to a city's revenue through the transient occupancy tax (TOT), the tax excludes accommodations intended for stays of longer than 30 days — and that might be the case here, according to the staff report: "Based on the applicant's experience operating a Marriott Residence Inn in Los Altos on El Camino Real, 23 percent of room revenue would be from guests staying 30 days or longer, and as such would not be subject to TOT. However, as proposed, there would not be any restriction that would prevent non-TOT revenue from being even higher."

The specific plan allows hotels in mixed use/residential zones. So the council needs to consider whether an extended-stay facility like a Marriott Inn meets the definition of "hotel" given the projected percentage of 30-day stays, and if so, should Menlo Park cap the number of extended stays allowed to minimize loss of tax revenue?

Sand Hill Property Company prepared an economic review that concluded a hotel conversion would increase annual revenues from the property by approximately \$660,000 at the current 10 percent tax, or by \$770,000 if voters approve a TOT increase to 12 percent in November. The revenue from longer-term stays would add \$163,000 to \$196,000 if not excluded from the tax.

Parking presents another item worth close examination. The specific plan requires 173 off-street parking spaces for a hotel of this size. However, the applicant proposes 117 spaces, with 39 on-street slots. The staff report outlines mechanisms such as a variance or sharing parking with another development to allow for fewer spaces at the Glenwood Avenue site.

Conversion of the senior facility to a hotel would trigger negotiations for public benefit, given the site's floor-area ratio, according to the staff report.

Go to [tinyurl.com/9ad498o](http://tinyurl.com/9ad498o) to review the agenda and associated reports. Tuesday's meeting starts at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center at 701 Laurel Street. ■

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# County's Measure B questions status quo, Gordon says

ELECTION 2012

By Dave Boyce

Almanac staff writer

For the past couple of decades in San Mateo County, according to former supervisor and current state Assemblyman Rich Gordon, most candidates elected as county supervisor have won the countywide vote and the vote in the supervisor district in which they lived.

The obvious question: If a candidate is likely to win his or her district, why oppose a ballot measure that would have candidates run only in the district, nullifying the expense and complications of a countywide campaign?

Measure B would switch from countywide elections to by-district elections. San Mateo County is alone among California's 58 counties in using at-large elections to elect supervisors.

Opponents of Measure B — among them, supervisors Carole Groom and Rose Jacobs Gibson and Sheriff Greg Munks — assert that supervisors elected at-large are accountable to all voters. "Your influence and ability to have your voice heard will be reduced if we turn to a system where elected representatives are only interested in their district," the ballot argument says. By-district elections, they add, would lead to influence by "special interests" and a shift toward parochial concerns by individual supervisors.

"I think that a large part of what this particular measure is about, it's a debate," Mr. Gordon told the Almanac. "It's a test between the status quo and those who want change. I think those who want change may not be fully organized as a group, but I think they represent folks in under-served communities. I think those are folks who are concerned about how expensive campaigning has become."

Among the backers at a "Yes on B" website: candidates for supervisor Shelly Masur and Warren Slocum, Supervisor Dave Pine, Portola Valley Mayor Maryann Moise Derwin, council members Peter Ohtaki of Menlo Park and Elizabeth Lewis of Atherton, and Virginia Chang Kiraly of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District board.

The San Francisco-based Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights sued the county in April 2011 on the substance of this measure, as they threatened to do in 2010. That was before the formation of a county Charter Review Committee, which recommended that the board approve a ballot measure to let the voters weigh

in. Mr. Gordon's was the lone supporting vote on the Board of Supervisors.

In interviews, candidates have said that reaching likely voters via direct mail takes about \$40,000, given the county's

**'If everybody is treated equally, where do you draw the line?'**

SHERIFF GREG MUNKS

340,000 registered voters. By-district elections would shrink that pool by an 80 percent. "I think you have to wonder, if the cost of running for office is reduced, does it make it easier for candidates?" Mr. Gordon asked. That answer would be

yes? "I don't think there's any other answer," he said. "(Activists) in under-served communities see an opportunity for greater diversity if there were district elections."

Are by-district elections a threat to incumbents? The Almanac asked Ms. Groom, Ms. Jacobs Gibson and Sheriff Munks for comments.

### Threat to incumbents?

Sheriff Munks emphasized the supervisors' need to focus on countywide issues such as the homeless and the jail, and the value of the winnowing function of fundraising. "There's got to be some sort of vetting process," he told the Almanac. "The way to do that is to go to the public and find people willing to support you."

And about the fact that Warren Slocum acquired family

loans of \$143,000? "Some people are in a position to loan themselves money and some people aren't," Mr. Munks said.

Speculating on public funding for elections, he imagined up to 200 people with "no credentials, no experience and no qualifications (saying) 'I want to run for office.'" If everybody is treated equally, where do you draw the line?" he asked. "Believe me, I'm not insensitive to the (idea) that it's more difficult to run countywide. I'm not suggesting that running by-district is not plausible. I see the other side and I see that (running at-large) is a hurdle and makes it tougher to run.

Measure B, Mr. Munks conceded, would lower the cost of campaigns and encourage a broader base of candidates. "I think these are positive outcomes. What is the clincher for

me, I think, is the breadth and depth of experience and qualifications of candidates would be less." And if voters want to try something different? "That's what democracy is all about. Good people will step forward and there will be more of them," Mr. Munks said.

In a voice mail, Ms. Groom replied to the question on the threat to incumbents by elaborating on the ballot argument against Measure B. The board deals with regional issues, and at-large candidates are "much more engaged" with those issues, she said. In unincorporated areas, where the board acts as city council, if Measure B passes, "they'll only have one representative instead of five and I think that's a lack of access to government."

See MEASURE B, page 14



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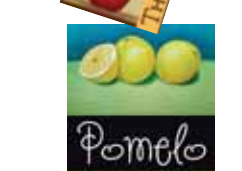


## WINE

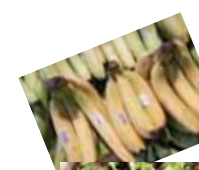
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Nov. 2012

## Understanding the 2013 Medicare Plans

Tuesday, Nov. 6, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.,  
and repeats on Thursday, Nov. 15,  
3 to 5 p.m.

**Palo Alto Center**  
795 El Camino Real, Palo Alto

**Presented by Don Rush**  
Volunteer Counselor & Community  
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Counseling & Advocacy Program  
**650-853-4873**



Changes to Medicare, especially the Medicare Advantage and Drug Plans, happen each year. We anticipate even more changes over the next few years. This presentation will provide information to help you evaluate your options and make informed choices about your Medicare coverage for 2013.

## Living Well with Pre-Diabetes

Tuesday, Nov. 13, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

**Palo Alto Center**  
795 El Camino Real, Palo Alto

**Presented by Jill Christensen, M.S.,  
R.D., CDE**  
PAMF Nutrition Services  
**650-853-4873**



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## Upcoming Lectures and Workshops

### December Mountain View

- Beauty Secrets of the Stars



## MEASURE B

continued from page 11

### Running at-large

Asked about the effect of running countywide, Mr. Gordon said it did lead to relationships with people outside District 3, which includes Portola Valley and Woodside. "I think it goes to the core argument of folks who support countywide elections," he said. "You're going to have to pay attention to issues outside your own district."

But such attention is a fact of life in governing bodies, he added. In the Assembly, he votes on timber resource issues in the northern end of the state and water resource issues at the southern end. "I get elected from a district, but I vote on issues that affect the entire state," he said. "I may not necessarily know people in those districts."

Would opponents of Measure B support statewide elections for state Assembly and Senate candidates? Citing the regional issues that supervisors deal with, Ms. Groom called the comparison "apples and oranges."

"I do believe that having countywide elections is beneficial to incumbents," Mr. Gordon

said. Countywide campaigns "are expensive, more money has to be raised, it's much harder to do a grass roots campaign, (and) consultants become an important factor," he said.

"The more expensive a race, the more personal wealth a candidate must have. That may be daunting to some folks who are interested in running for the Board of Supervisors."

San Mateo County limits donations to supervisorial candidates to \$1,000 per donor. Candidate Shelly Masur has raised about \$183,000, all in donations, campaign finance reports show. Warren Slocum raised \$224,000, including \$143,000 in family loans.

Finance reports show Mr. Slocum's expenses included \$15,000 on consultants and \$126,500 on campaign literature, including \$87,400 in the first 20 days of October. Among Ms. Masur's expenses: \$30,600 on consultants and \$18,700 on polling.

"Overall," Mr. Gordon said, "the more voters you have to reach, the more consultants will charge." He has used a consultant for every election he has run in except a school board election early in his career, he said. ▀

## No Golden Acorns this year

■ Menlo Park chamber skips annual awards banquet.

**By Sandy Brundage**  
*Almanac Staff Writer*

Fall will come and go this year without the 40th Annual Golden Acorn Awards banquet. The Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce decided to skip the community celebration in light of costs and participation levels.

"For the last few years the Golden Acorn banquet has been one of the events under review to determine if there is a more universal way to celebrate community contribution and leadership," Chamber CEO Fran Dehn wrote in an email to the Almanac.

"We have considered different approaches to recognition and venue choices to increase participation," she wrote. "Participation in all regards — nominations, selection, promotion (including media support) and patronage — needs to be increased."

The "Golden Acorn" title derives from the original Golden Acorn restaurant, a Menlo Park eatery opened in 1972 where the first chamber recognition dinners were held.

Last year the awards acknowledged community members for

business excellence, community service, nonprofit programs and public service.

Two years ago the chamber started co-hosting the mayor's annual state of the city speech along with the awards to see if that would increase participation. That worked, sort of, according to Ms. Dehn — "it did indeed draw additional attention and interest, but not necessarily in terms of banquet attendance/support."

Reservations for the 2011 awards cost \$100 apiece. "It was getting to the point where for a lot of people it would be cost-prohibitive," Ms. Dehn said, particularly for individuals buying tickets on their own rather than as part of an organization. "We want friends and families of the recipients to be able to attend."

She added that she missed holding the banquet this year, and hopes it returns. The chamber's board of directors will review the event again while planning for 2013.

Despite placing the Golden Acorn Awards on hiatus, the chamber continued efforts to honor community members this year. At its annual breakfast meeting in March, it surprised chocolatier Oscar Baile and Left Bank dining coordinator

# Odd twist in Sequoia Healthcare District race

■ Two incumbents seek re-election, while a third runs to shut the district down.

By **Sandy Brundage**  
Almanac Staff Writer

The Sequoia Healthcare District elections resemble a game of musical chairs this year. Director Jack Hickey, whose third term wouldn't expire until 2014, is still running for one of two open seats on the five-member board, challenging incumbents Kathleen Kane and Kim Griffin, whose terms really do expire this year.

"I deliberately forced this election by filing for this 4 year seat," Mr. Hickey announced on his website. Just as unusual is his longtime goal to dissolve the health-care district.

Established in 1946 to run a hospital, the district changed missions in 1996 after selling Sequoia Hospital. It still collects property taxes, but now uses the funds to support nonprofits — and that means the district has outlived its utility, according to Mr. Hickey.

With a \$13.8 million budget for 2012-13, the district spends \$10 million for community programs such as school health services, the county's North Fair Oaks Clinic and the San Francisco State University/Canada College nursing program, according to a report posted on the district's website.

With administrative costs at an estimated \$600,000, and \$160,000 paying for the November 2012 election, the district's expenses are expected to outpace its income by \$380,000.

Mr. Hickey has challenged the district's fiscal responsibility, while Ms. Kane and Ms. Griffin seem to think it's on the right track.

## Kim Griffin

Ms. Griffin is finishing out her first four-year term on the board. She parlayed an associate's degree in nursing from Lincoln Land Community College into work as a registered nurse. Specializing in oncology and cardiology, she worked at Stanford University Medical Center

for 15 years before moving on to Children's Cardiology of the Bay Area.

"I ran for the district board because my experience as a nurse taught me how important community health resources are and I believe it is important for direct caregivers to be involved in governance of those resources."

Why a second term? Ms. Griffin said she's enthusiastic about the district's programs.

"For example, as a cardiac nurse currently taking care of children and young adults with congenital heart disease you can imagine why I find the value in the district's

Heart Safe Program, which provides defibrillators and cardiac compression devices," she said. "This is the most up-to-date equipment that has already saved lives. Increasing the survival of cardiac arrest patients alone makes all the hard work on the board worth it."

An upcoming initiative coordinated with the Sequoia Hospital Foundation aims to develop a case management program designed to keep patients out of the hospital, she said.

So Ms. Griffin finds it rewarding to help deliver health services to her community, but why should voters give her a second term? "I have always had to live within a budget, my medical office is run on a tight budget, and I take my fiduciary responsibility on the board seriously," she answered. "But I think if I had to give just one reason to vote for me it would be because I am a patient advocate with a high standard of care. I know that offering anything less is unethical on my part as a health-care provider. It is my hope that district residents see the value in all the services we support since they benefit everyone."

## Jack Hickey

Mr. Hickey acquired instrumentation expertise while serving a four-year stint in the U.S. Navy. According to his bio-

graphy, he went on to register 28 patents as a researcher and electronics engineer.

Mr. Hickey said this election is not about "another term. It is a poll of voters. When I receive substantially more votes than either of the incumbents, it will be a clear mandate for dissolution. I will take that mandate to my board, hopefully with a large number of my constituents, and agencies which would benefit from dissolution, such as schools, fire districts, etc. in attendance, to persuade them to do the right thing. If that fails, I will seek one of those agencies to initiate the process of dissolution."

That's plan A and plan B. Plan C, what Mr. Hickey termed his "last resort," would be dissolving the district in the same way it was created — petitioning to get the issue on the ballot and in front of voters. "With a large plurality of the vote, gathering signatures for those petitions should not be a problem," he said.

## Kathleen Kane

Ms. Kane has served on the health-care district board for 20 years. Her educational background includes a bachelor's degree in organizational development from the University of San Francisco and certification as a surgical technician through the Stanford University Medical Center. She said she currently works as a human resources consultant, drawing upon more than 40 years of experience "in all facets

of health care, including vice president of human resources of a major San Francisco medical center.

"I am dedicated to improving the health of our community and fiscally responsible by guaranteeing all tax revenues are spent on health care and wellness services."

Ms. Kane appears to be seeking re-election to continue supporting the district's programs. "I believe the district meets many unmet health issues in

our community," she said, citing as examples as the Samaritan House free health clinic and the Children's Health Initiative that provides school nurses, counseling services and physical education programs for each school within the district. "None (of these programs) would be in existence without Sequoia Healthcare District. One hundred percent of the taxes we collect go back to health programs; none goes to operations." ■

**'I deliberately forced this election by filing for this 4 year seat.'**

JACK HICKEY

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## GOLDEN ACORNS

continued from page 14

Charles Chapman with awards. The chamber also co-hosted the state of the city gathering at Stanford Park Hotel on Oct. 16.

"Volunteers are the backbone of the community, whether in a

formal relationship such as city commissioners, or on an independent/individual basis," Ms. Dehn said. "We continue to embrace, encourage and recognize community leadership in all forms. Any suggestions on formal recognition are always welcome and appreciated!" ■

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Photo by Dave Boyce/The Almanac

**Tom Vlastic**, Portola Valley's town planner, explains to members of the Architectural & Site Control Commission and other residents the details of new lot lines proposed for a wooded property in Blue Oaks that the town owns. Funds from the sale of the property would go to purchase 900 Portola Road for some number of small homes for people of moderate incomes who either live or work in Portola Valley.

## Plans for affordable housing advance

■ Design panel passes ball to Planning Commission.

By **Dave Boyce**  
Almanac staff writer

A brisk wind drove autumn clouds across an unusually deep blue sky around 4 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 22, while below at the corner of Buck Meadow Drive and Redberry Ridge, a knot of Portola Valley residents, including members

of the Architectural & Site Control Commission (ASCC), gathered to consider the fate of an undeveloped 2.5-acre slope and its extensive grove of blue oak trees.

The ASCC had been asked to provide comments to the town's Planning Commission about a proposal by the property owner — the town of Portola Valley — to redraw lot lines for two potential homes, down from eight. When the ASCC reconvened later that evening in the Historic Schoolhouse, none of the five members objected to the redrawn lines. The Planning Commission is set to consider the town's proposal in November.

An out-of-town observer may consider this consensus unremarkable, but there is a back story.

The upscale Blue Oaks subdivision was planned in 1996. To meet a town ordinance requirement that subdivisions set aside 15 percent of lots for affordable housing, this particular property had been intended for eight below-market-rate (BMR) homes. The project languished as its sloping topography, among other factors, worked against a design that would turn a profit for the developer, town officials have said.

The matter is relevant now because the Town Council is trying to comply with a state mandate that requires cities and towns, including those with high property values, to accommodate residents of very low, low and moderate incomes.

In San Mateo County, according to the California Department

of Housing and Community Development, a moderate income is around \$86,500 for an individual and \$123,600 for a family of four.

Towns like Portola Valley have used second units (cottages) to meet the low and very-low income categories. Some towns have addressed moderate-income requirements with dense faculty housing on school campuses. But each town's requirement allotment for such housing rises on a seven-year interval, the next beginning in 2014, and the law requires zoning for "a variety of housing types, including multi-family," HCD spokesman Colin Parent told the Almanac.

With the Blue Oaks project long in limbo, the Town Council announced in August a purchase agreement that requires selling the Blue Oaks property for around \$3 million and using that money to buy 900 Portola Road, a flat 1.68-acre former nursery, for some number of small, lower-cost houses for people who either live or work in Portola Valley. A first step in this transaction: redrawn lot lines for two homes (instead of eight) to make the Blue Oaks property more salable.

Following the purchase of the nursery site, town officials have said they would engage a developer to come up with a plan. Exactly how many homes — eight, 10, 12, 14 — will be a topic for a "robust community process" to include discussions on the number of homes, the zoning and the design, officials

See HOUSING, page 19

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**Ryan Young** pressures the quarterback in the M-A Vikings Jr Pee Wee football game against Morgan Hill on Oct. 21.

Photo by Jeff Hardy

## M-A Vikings finish Pop Warner season, now enter playoffs

By **Bob Williams**

Finishing their first season in the strong Division 1 tier of the Peninsula Pop Warner Conference, the M-A Vikings prepare for the playoffs that begin this coming weekend at Menlo-Atherton High School, with games at 10 a.m., noon, and 2 p.m. Brackets will be announced via the web at [mapopwarner.com](http://mapopwarner.com)

The **Viking Junior Midgets**, coached by Steve Stenstrom, finished the season Sunday, Oct. 28, with a perfect 9-0 record, with a decisive victory over the third-ranked Almaden Mustangs, 38-16. The JM's (ages 11-13) earn a bye in the first round, with their second-round opponent to be determined during the noon game at M-A High this Saturday. Requiring two wins in the upcoming playoffs, the Vikings will attempt to claim the Pacific Northwest region crown and a return trip to the Pop Warner Super Bowl at ESPN Wide World of Sports in Orlando in December.

The **Vikings PeeWee team** concluded the regular season with a strong 20-7 victory over Almaden to improve its record to 6-3. The PW's (ages 10-12) begin their post-season Satur-

day with a game at 2 p.m. at M-A High. Coach Harold Atkins cites strong improvements by his first-year players, along with the solid play of his established veterans for his team's remarkable season.

The **Jr PeeWee's**, despite a strong finish winning two of their last three games, just missed the playoff cut. Coach Scott Sellers looks forward to the return of his team next season, along with welcoming new players to his team and all age levels for the Vikings (6 teams with players age 5 to 14 years).

Coach Rahsaan Dean's **Mitey Mites** finished their season with a stirring 24-0 shutout of the Bay Cities Bulldogs in the annual Mitey Mite Bowl. The Mitey Mites also play an exhibition at halftime of the Menlo-Atherton Bears game this Friday at M-A.

Last week, coach Dave Bragg's **Tiny Mites** finished their eight-game schedule at the non-score-keeping level (ages 5-7). Playing at an age group many consider to be the most fun to watch, many of the Tiny Mite Vikings graduate up a level to Mitey Mites for the 2013 season. **Bob Williams is president and co-founder, of Menlo Atherton Pop Warner.**

## Coat collection begins Nov. 5

Recology San Mateo County is launching its annual Coats for Kids program to collect new and slightly used coats for those in need.

From Monday, Nov. 5, through Friday, Nov. 9, drivers will collect coats curbside

on collection days in Atherton and Menlo Park.

Coats should be placed in a clear plastic bag marked "Coats for Kids," and placed on top of the blue recycle cart.

Additionally, the town of Atherton will place collection

containers, labeled "Coats for Kids," in the Town Hall lobby for residents to drop off coats.

Donated coats will be delivered to nonprofit agencies for distribution.

Last year, Recology collected 750 coats for families in need.

## Filoli gets ready for the holidays

It's not too early to make reservations for Filoli's annual "Holiday Traditions," which will be held Nov. 23 through Saturday, Dec. 1, at the historic Woodside mansion. This year's theme is "Discover the Magic."

Many of the events, such as the children's luncheon with Santa and Ms. Claus and the lunch buffets, are early sellouts.

The kickoff to the nine-day event is an evening of premier access shopping on Friday, Nov. 23. Guests are the first to see the decorations and shop in a relaxed atmosphere. The evening includes music, hors d'oeuvres and wine. The cost is \$75 for members and \$85 for non-members.

An evening of dinner and dancing is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 24, with dancing to a new orchestra, the Joe Sharino Band, in the ballroom. After two dinner buffet seatings, 6:30 and 8 p.m., guests return to the Main House for dessert and more time in the ballroom. Tickets are \$135 for members, \$150 for non-members.

During the balance of the week, visitors may shop in the Main House, enjoy the lunch buffets or visit Filoli's cafe for coffee, snacks, soups and sandwiches. There will be evening shopping Tuesday and Thursday, and the cafe will be open for light fare.

Holiday Traditions concludes

with the children's lunches on Saturday, Dec. 1, in the Visitor and Education Center.

Go to [filoli.org](http://filoli.org) for more information and to find what events are still available. Tickets are now on sale by calling 364-8300, ext. 508, Monday through Fridays 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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## Landscape painting workshop

Kristen Olson of the Portola Art Gallery will offer an impressionist landscape painting workshop from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 3, at Allied Arts Guild, 75 Arbor Road in Menlo Park. The one-day workshop includes lunch at the guild's Blue Garden Cafe. Cost is \$125. Ms. Olson teaches impressionist oil painting to beginning through advanced students. The workshop will concentrate on the basic principles of drawing, composition, value, color and edgework. Visit [www.kristenolson.net](http://www.kristenolson.net) for more information.



## Learn how to download media to your iPhone

"Books, Movies and Apps Galore: Downloading media to your iPad, iPhone, and iPod Touch" will be the topic of a presentation by Kim Marie Smith at 11 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 3, in the Menlo Park Council Chambers, 701 Laurel St., in Menlo Park. The talk, sponsored by the Menlo Park Library, is free and open to the public.

Ms. Smith will focus on how to find high-quality apps that are inexpensive or free, and how to build a library of digital and audio books. She will offer tips and tricks to get the most out of your device.

The presentation will include demonstrations, handouts, and a Q&A session.

Free wheelchair-accessible van service is available for Menlo Park seniors and people with disabilities. Call 330-2512 for van reservations.

### Baubles, Bangles and Bags' benefit

More than 150 new, vintage, designer and celebrity handbags will be featured at the Peninsula Volunteers' fundraiser, "Baubles, Bangles and Bags," to be held Monday, Nov. 12, at the Menlo Circus Club, 190 Park Lane in Atherton.

The PVs also promise an "array of interesting baubles and some intriguing mystery boxes."

Doors open at 10:30 a.m. for a champagne reception and silent auction. Luncheon follows at 12:30 p.m.

Suzie Woodward Morris, founder of Strategic Imaging, will present "Transformations" at 1:30 p.m. Ms. Morris will present her insights and innovations on image and "personal branding."

The benefit is expected to be a sellout, as it has been since

### AROUND TOWN

the first "Baubles, Bangles and Bags" was held in 2009.

Margo Rafaty and Margaret Day, both of Menlo Park, are co-chairs of the event. Kimber Sturm is the organization's president.

Ticket are \$125 general or \$200 premium. For more information or reservations, call 326-0665, ext. 238.

For 65 years, Peninsula Volunteers has been a pioneer in senior services on the Peninsula. Each year Peninsula Volunteers contributes more than \$5 million in services, including more than 130,000 hot meals through Meals on Wheels. The organization also operates Little House Activity Center, Rosener House Adult Day Services and Peninsula Volunteers Properties, Inc., which provides senior housing.

### DAR chapter celebrates 100 years

The El Palo chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) will celebrate the centennial of its founding on Sunday, Nov. 4, 11:30 a.m., at the Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club, 2900 Sand Hill Road in Menlo Park.

Barbara Matson Schwartz and Valerie Hamilton will give the history of a pageant on Gaspar de Portola first presented to the chapter in 1928. Marion Leib Adams, a Stanford historian, will speak about the early history of Stanford University.

El Palo chapter was founded by wives of Stanford professors. One of its early members was Mildred Hoover, wife of Stanford professor Theodore Jesse Hoover, and sister-in-law of President Herbert Hoover.

Daughters of the American Revolution was founded in 1890 as a non-political women's service organization. The El Palo Alto chapter works locally to support Palo Alto Veterans Affairs hospital patients. It sponsors historic essay contests for students, and presents yearly awards to deserving high school seniors and high school NJROTC cadets, as well as Stanford ROTC cadets.

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WEDDING

McKeithen-Jennings

Emma Maeve Danchuk McKeithen was married to Aric Lynn Jennings Sept. 8 at Beltane Ranch in Glen Ellen. Raleigh Sims, brother-in-law of the bridegroom, officiated.

The bride is the daughter of Kathleen McKeithen and R.L. Smith McKeithen of Atherton. Ms. McKeithen has twice been mayor of Atherton, where she continues to serve on the City Council. The bride is a graduate of Menlo-Atherton High School and received her bachelor's degree in public policy and English from Duke University. She has been employed by Google since 2005 and is currently an account executive, based in Boston.

The bridegroom is the son of Charlene Jennings and Lynn Jennings, both of Longwood,



Emma Maeve Danchuk McKeithen and Aric Lynn Jennings

Florida. He received his bachelor's degree in engineering from Tri-State University in Angola, Indiana, and his MBA from New York Institute of Technol-

ogy. He is director of Global Quality Engineering at Euro-Pro Operating LLC, a privately held appliance manufacturer in Newton, Massachusetts.

HOUSING

continued from page 16

have said.

Single-family homes are a Portola Valley tradition, the only exceptions being The Sequoias retirement community and the faculty housing at the Woodside Priory School, both of which predate the town. Right behind the old nursery sits Wyndham Drive, a circular road with a community of single-family homes, including about 21 households that have formed "Keep PV Rural" to fight the affordable housing project.

"An urban setting would be the result and property values could be affected," the group's website says of the project. In letters to the council and the town's online forum, the group says it is unopposed to affordable housing, but the process has not been "democratic and open" and the state obligation could be met with a "creative approach that emphasizes second units."

Purchase of the nursery site is contingent upon the sale of the Blue Oaks properties for close to \$3 million, roughly the asking price for the nursery site. Representatives of the Blue Oaks Homeowners' Association have expressed a preference for one lot that might preserve some or all of it as open space. The town is not opposed in concept to the one-lot idea, Town Manager Nick Pegueros said.

The concept of a \$3 million land swap is a problem for Keep PV Rural. "While we appreciate Blue Oaks' desire for more open space — it's a beautiful place up there — we oppose the process that this involves," group spokesman Bud Eisberg told the ASCC at its Oct. 22 evening meeting. ■



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## Mary Ann Drake

A retired bank officer, and long-time Atherton resident, Mary Ann Drake passed away unexpectedly in early October.

She began life as Mary Ann Knapp, in Antigo, Wisconsin, the daughter of Wilton and Mary Knapp. She studied nursing at Saint Mary's College in Wisconsin, and later joined the staff of Rotary International in Evanston, Illinois.

She and an Evanston roommate moved to San Francisco a few years later. They arranged to deliver an almost new Cadillac convertible to an auto dealership in San Leandro to minimize their travel expenses.

Mary Ann was soon hired by the Crocker Bank trust department and began her banking career there in 1961. She rose from her entry level position to retire as a vice president from Wells Fargo, following its merger with Crocker.

It was at Crocker that she met her future husband, Jim Drake, when he joined the bank in 1964. They were married in 1965 and celebrated their 47th anniversary on September 12 of this year.

Her fondness for the San Francisco Giants and the 49ers was exceeded only by her passion for the Green Bay Packers. When the Niners and the Packers played each other, she remained loyal to the team from her home state.

She and Jim enjoyed traveling the western states in their RV, particularly in Montana, Idaho and Oregon. Although Mary Ann did not embrace the fly fishing Jim enjoyed, she voluntarily enrolled in a fly tying class, when she retired, so she could assist him in keeping an adequate supply of bugs on hand.

Mary Ann discovered she was descended from a Mayflower passenger, after taking up the pursuit of genealogy in retirement, which qualified her for membership in the Mayflower Society. She was also a charter member of The Financial Planning Forum of Palo Alto.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by her sister, Carol Knapp Brandow, of Antigo, Wisconsin, her brother, Richard E. Knapp and his wife Jewel, of Eugene, Oregon, numerous nieces and nephews, and her husband's children by an earlier marriage, Catherine Drake Griffin, Stephen Drake, and Alison Drake Pack.

A private grave-side service was officiated by Frank VanderZwan of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church.

For those wishing to honor her, please consider donations, in Mary Ann's memory, to All Saints Catholic School, Inc., 419 Sixth Avenue; Antigo, WI 54409, or to The Henry's Fork Foundation, P.O. Box 550; Ashton, ID 83420.

PAID OBITUARY



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

## Enchanted forest in Woodside

Regal would not be too strong a word to describe this rider, Sue Anderson from Anderson Training Stable, on a roadside trail in Woodside on Saturday, Oct. 13, for the annual celebration of the Day of the Horse. Riders made real the Camelot theme, and the morning weather cooperated, providing a medieval mist to add a bit of magic to the affair.

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## Guy Ashley Lucian

Guy Ashley Lucian passed away suddenly of natural causes on October 8th, at his home in Portola Valley where he had lived with his family for over 25 years.

Guy was born in New Jersey on December 3, 1951, and spent most of his childhood on the east coast before moving to the Bay Area in 1980. He was the son of Guy Arthur Lucian and Jaqueline Woolley, and the brother of Sandra Lucian.

He graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1976 with a degree in Architectural Illustration, and worked as an illustrator for several years before starting his own graphics business with his wife, Karen, whom he married in 1985. Guy worked as a consultant for Oracle Corporation for many years, beginning when the company was located in a small office complex on Sand Hill Road in Menlo Park.

Guy's true passion was spending time with his 6 children as a volunteer, coaching each of their youth sports soccer, basketball, and baseball teams. Little league became a huge part of Guy's life. He was a "fixture" in the dugout as a coach, or at the left field foul pole as a spectator. Even before Guy's first son was old enough to play T-Ball, he would visit Ford Field in Portola Valley, talk at length about its history, watch baseball games, and plan how he would manage his first team... when that time came. In 1989 he volunteered to coach his first Alpine Little League team, and never looked back. Guy coached baseball every season, rain or shine from T-Ball, to Pitching Machine, to Majors, before heading to Palo Alto Babe Ruth as his sons grew older. He coached his last Alpine Little League game in June, 2010 as the Manager of Partners. With three sons, he often coached multiple teams, and gave each team, and every player his undivided and full attention. Ford Field was a second home for him, and the players, coaches, and families who played the games, brought the snacks, and supported his efforts were his extended family.

He is survived by his wife, Karen Hollingsworth Lucian, and three sons Guy Spencer (New York), John Travis (Indiana), and Jared, and three daughters Ashley, Lindsey, and Jennifer.

His inquisitive nature and sense of humor will be missed by all whose lives he touched.

The family requests that any memorial donations be made to the Ford Field Renovation Project in Guy Lucian's name, to support future generations of youth baseball players. Donations can be made online at <http://portolavalle.y.net/fordfield>, or checks can be mailed to Portola Valley Town Center, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028. Please write on the check Ford Field Renovation in Memory of Guy Lucian.

PAID OBITUARY

## Lynn Campbell Spielman

Lynn Campbell Spielman passed away peacefully with her family at her side October 20th 2012. Born December 12, 1934 at Mills Hospital in San Mateo, California, Lynn spent most of her life in and around San Francisco and the Bay Area. She was the daughter of Ronald and Lillis Campbell of Woodside. Lynn is survived by her husband Jeremy A. Spielman, her daughter Cailean S. Sherman, her son-in-law Robert Stanton Sherman III, and grandson Robert Campbell Sherman of Woodside. She was a fourth generation Californian with roots deep in the Sacramento Valley.

Lynn graduated from Castilleja High School in Palo Alto, and it was at Castilleja that she developed the lasting friendships which she maintained throughout her life. She attended and graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, majoring in Art History. During her senior year at Cal she met her future husband Jeremy Spielman of Los Altos, and they were married in 1956.

Lynn had a lifelong interest in clubs and social activities. She belonged to the Junior League of Palo Alto and the Peninsula Volunteers, where she served as Director of Little House - the nationally famous gerontological center. She also had a long and very active participation in the Woodside Garden Club

(perhaps her favorite membership), and was always happiest when working and spending time in her beautiful garden.

In addition, Lynn was an active golfer and belonged to and played at the Menlo Country Club and the San Francisco Golf Club. Bridge was a new interest and she played frequently at the Town and Country Club in San Francisco.

Lynn loved to travel. She worked with a Castilleja friend in the latter's travel agency and traveled the world extensively with her husband and other close friends. Many of these trips included golfing vacations to the East Coast, Europe, Asia, Mexico, Hawaii, and the Caribbean.

Lynn had a great love of life and was wonderfully kind and considerate with a quick humor. She had considerable interest in

and knowledge of fashion, and was widely considered one of the most stylish and elegant women on the Peninsula. Above all, she was a Lady.

We loved her greatly, and we will miss her more than we can say.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Lynn may be made to:

PAMF - Medical Oncology office of Philanthropy  
795 El Camino Real  
Palo Alto CA 94301



PAID OBITUARY

## Community college employees charged with embezzlement

A former community college director stepped off the plane after returning home from an Australian vacation, and stepped into custody, care of San Mateo County.

Bradley Witham, who led the information technology (IT) division of the San Mateo County Community College District until his resignation, was arrested Oct. 25 for allegedly embezzling more than \$350,000 from June 2006 through June 2012.

He and alleged co-conspirator Mark Anthony Bustos reportedly bought dozens of electronic items such as computers, hard drives and memory sticks online using the district's credit card, then sold the items via eBay and Craigslist, according to the District Attorney's Office. The pair allegedly also submitted fake reimbursement requests for iPhones and a bunk bed.

Mr. Witham pleaded not guilty in San Mateo County Superior Court on Oct. 26. Bail was set at \$1 million.

Mr. Bustos has also pleaded not guilty. According to District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe, the former IT technician allegedly hacked into the vice chancellor's email and alerted his vacationing partner in crime to the investigation. He remains out of custody on a \$250,000 bond.

### Saturday: Free document destruction

Want to declutter your Menlo Park property? Bring files to

### BRIEFS

shred and electronics to recycle to 333 Burgess Drive on Saturday, Nov. 3, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Documents are limited to three 10-by-2-by-15-inch boxes per vehicle. Confidential materials will be shredded on-site so residents can watch their documents being destroyed. Paper clips, staples and binder clips are acceptable.

Electronics accepted for recycling include televisions, monitors, computers, and cellphones. You can also bring up to five fluorescent tubes or bulbs.

Don't forget to bring proof of residency, such as a utility bill or driver's license with a Menlo Park address. Businesses need to show a city license or business card.

Call 330-6740 or email recycle@menlopark.org for more information.

### Styrofoam ban takes effect Nov 1

The new Menlo Park ordinance banning the use of polystyrene containers by food vendors takes effect Nov. 1.

The law doesn't ban polystyrene used for pre-packaged food or eggs, according to the city, or for non-food uses. It also doesn't include straws, lids or utensils.

Environmental Programs manager Rebecca Fotu said the ordinance helps Menlo Park meet a federal mandate

to reduce litter in storm drains and waterways by 40 percent by 2014.

### Domestic violence day of remembrance

"Over 6,000 San Mateo County children witnessed domestic violence in their home and over 300 adults were provided emergency shelter and transitional housing in 2011 alone," said Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson in a press release announcing a "Day of Remembrance" for domestic violence victims.

Co-hosted by the Domestic Violence Council, the event will take place on Tuesday, Oct. 30, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Board of Supervisors Chambers at 400 County Center in Redwood City. Community partners will offer resources to address domestic violence in the county and hold a ceremony honoring survivors and their advocates.



## TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

### NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a Public Hearing on a proposed Lot Line Adjustment X6D-213, Nebrig/Hall properties located at 20 & 30 Granada Court (respectively), APNs 079-092-320 & 079-092-310, on Wednesday, November 7, 2012 at 7:30 p.m.

Public Hearings provide the general public and interested parties an opportunity to provide testimony on these items. If you challenge a proposed action(s) in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at a Public Hearing(s) described above, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission at, or prior to, the Public Hearing(s).

You may view the Lot Line Adjustment documents at the Building and Planning Department, Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Planning Commission to be heard at the time and place mentioned above.

Dated: October 24, 2012  
Signed: Carol Borck, Planning Technician

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www.armadillowillys.com

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326-1446

541 Ramona Street, Palo Alto  
www.oldpropa.com

### STEAKHOUSE

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321-6798

1921 El Camino Real, Palo Alto  
www.sundancethesteakhouse.com

Read and post reviews,  
explore restaurant menus,  
get hours and directions  
and more at [ShopPaloAlto.com](http://ShopPaloAlto.com),  
[ShopMenloPark.com](http://ShopMenloPark.com) and  
[ShopMountainView.com](http://ShopMountainView.com)

### CHINESE

**Chef Chu's**  
948-2696

1067 N. San Antonio Road  
www.chefchu.com

**Ming's**  
856-7700

1700 Embarcadero East, Palo Alto  
www.mings.com

**New Tung Kee Noodle House**  
947-8888

520 Showers Drive, Mountain View  
www.shopmountainview.com/luunoodlemv

### INDIAN

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The Almanac, established in October 1065, 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](http://www.TheAlmanacOnline.com), and occasionally on the Town Square forum.

**TOWN SQUARE FORUM**

Post your views on the Town Square forum at [www.TheAlmanacOnline.com](http://www.TheAlmanacOnline.com)

**EMAIL** your views to:

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**MAIL** or deliver to:

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Menlo Park, CA 94025.

**CALL** the Viewpoint desk at 223-6507.

# Viewpoint

IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES FROM PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY. EDITED BY TOM GIBBONEY

## Almanac endorsements in local races

### Rogue board member roils health-care district

The Sequoia Healthcare District is under attack from one of its own board members, a Libertarian who says the taxes collected and allocated to nonprofits should be returned to the state and the district dissolved. Director Jack Hickey, whose board term won't expire for two more years, is running against incumbents Kim Griffin and Katie Kane. The top two vote-getters win on Nov. 6, and if one is Mr. Hickey, he says that will be a vote for dissolution. But in reality it would simply mean that board members likely would appoint the losing candidate to fill his current board seat.

The Sequoia district, like many others in the state, was chartered to establish a hospital and given a 1 percent share of the district's residential property taxes. In 1996 the board decided to sell the hospital to Catholic Health-care West. The sale did not do away with the district or its tax revenue, which currently generates more than \$10 million a year that gets distributed by the board to nonprofit agencies within the district. The board's donations are legal under state provisions that allow health-care districts to focus on outpatient services, but are not up to Mr. Hickey's standards.

During his 10 years on the board, Mr. Hickey has steadfastly opposed the practice of contributing to nonprofits, saying the private sector should take over this support and the tax revenue diverted to other uses.

Ms. Griffin and the other three board members disagree, showing no inclination to change their current strategy of supporting nonprofits with sizable annual grants, including \$2.9 million for the Healthy Schools Initiative and \$2 million for the North Fair Oaks Clinic.

Mr. Hickey's crusade to push other board members and the public his way has found little support. His effort in the previous election to take over the board with a slate of Libertarian-leaning candidates was a failure, leaving his dissolution strategy in tatters. Despite the aggressive attacks on the board and its actions, there

is little likelihood that he will succeed.

In our view, if the board does change course in the future, it should either decide by vote of the directors or by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAF-Co), which oversees special districts in the county, to turn down the tax money. Neither body is likely to change current policy, so the single-minded effort by Mr. Hickey in this election is virtually certain to fall short.

We do suggest the board majority pay more attention to stewardship of the public's money. Every effort should be made to ensure grants are spent as intended, and even audited if possible. At the same time, the board should reconsider if the district needs a \$150,000-plus a year CEO and five employees. We agree with Mr. Hickey that the CEO's compensation is far beyond necessary to attract a good administrator who could oversee such a small staff.

In the race for two seats on the Sequoia Healthcare District board, we urge voters to support incumbents Kim Griffin and Katie Kane, and to NOT cast a vote for Jack Hickey, who is already a board member and has two years remaining in his term.

### The Almanac also recommends:

**Menlo Park City Council**

Ray Mueller and  
Carolyn Clarke

**Assembly District 24**

Vote for Rich Gordon

**Senate District 13**

Vote for Jerry Hill

**County Supervisor,  
4th District**

Vote for Warren Slocum

**County Ballot Measures**

Vote No on Measure A; vote  
Yes on Measure B

**Atherton City Council**

Denise Kupperman and  
Elizabeth Lewis

**Atherton Ballot Measures**

Vote Yes on Measures F, M  
and L

**18th Congressional District**

Vote for Anna G. Eshoo

**EDITORIAL**

The opinion of The Almanac

**LETTERS**

Our readers write

**Support Measure B**

Editor:

San Mateo County, with a population of over 700,000, is currently the only county in California that elects supervisors county-wide. This means a candidate must appeal to all residents instead of the roughly 140,000 who live in a particular district.

Currently, it costs about \$400,000 to successfully run for a seat county-wide versus about roughly \$80,000 to run in a district. So only candidates who are already wealthy, or powerful, or well-known have a chance of winning.

This is why there has not been an incumbent unseated on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors in more than 30 years. It is also why there

have been very few traditional minorities elected. San Mateo County is currently being sued to stop its at-large elections and the county is spending tax dollars to preserve the status quo.

Let's bring San Mateo County into the 21st century and in line with all other 57 counties in the state. A "yes" vote on Measure B is not only the right thing to do, but it will also stop the county from spending money it does not have to defend an antiquated system in court — a fight that will likely be unsuccessful and definitely expensive.

*Kaia Eakin  
Redwood City*

**Confessions  
of a library hugger**

Editor:

My secret is out. I have always had a passion for libraries — I loved them as a child, a student, a graduate researcher, a Menlo School teacher, and now (the

best yet!) a grandmother.

I value libraries as the hallowed places of our culture, our democracy, places where we can find and compare books with disparate points of view and evaluate their arguments in ways beyond Amazon's "look inside" feature. The Romans built public libraries throughout the empire to preserve and sponsor learning, and as public libraries developed over centuries, they have met ever more sophisticated community needs for research, instruction, appreciation of the arts, and debate.

Now what better place for our community library than our beloved park? Centrally located, safe, beautiful — our community emblem — a place where parents can drop older kids off in the library and if they wish take younger ones to the swings. (My earliest memory of delicious freedom was being dropped at the library to wander the stacks while my mother went

to survey the blander tastes of supermarket.)

Libraries need to grow and change to meet the needs of communities. Our present library facility is too outdated to do that. Our new one can become a magnet for guest speakers, community meetings, exhibits for art and history and science, forums for debate and instruction, as well as an access point for the newest information technology — and we already have the money collected to build it.

The facts in favor of Measure F speak so eloquently: The funds already collected can build a beautiful state-of-the-art library and they can **only** be spent on the library. We have a gorgeous location in the park, the centerpiece of our town. Given its size and location, the existing library can never become what a new library would be.

Continued on next page

## LETTERS

Our readers write

Continued from previous page

There are those who wish to “save” the park by opposing the library and keeping the park the same. I too wish to save the park, but I welcome change. The park is not an antique. Let’s save the park for future generations by truly enhancing the park, building our community’s library there to meet the evolving needs of our changing community.

*Lenore Horowitz  
Atherton*

### Increasingly biased agenda on Athertonians blog

Editor:

With less than two weeks before the close of our election season voters in our community are being inundated with campaign materials in the form of fliers, ads, mailers and email communications. It is the latter that causes me some measure of concern, and the “Athertonians” Yahoo e-mail group in particular.

Many people in our town signed onto this group with the understanding that it was an open forum to keep people informed on town events and issues, and that it was a town-sponsored site. It is not a town-sponsored site. The site operated as a relatively open forum until about a year ago. The biased tone and agenda-driven communication seems to coincide with the Atherton Library’s

## Director defends role of health care district

By Kim Griffin

This is to respond to a letter published last week advocating dissolution of the Sequoia Healthcare District, which funds a number of community health-care related programs and grants that directly benefit district residents. In the current fiscal year the district will provide \$10.6 million in community health services.

The district’s Heart Safe program has provided life-saving defibrillators and cardiac compression devices to schools, public areas and first-responders. During the economic downturn we provided funding to food banks and “soup lines” when private funding could not make up for the increasing gaps. We also fund Meals on Wheels, which provides meals to the elderly or disabled who are unable to prepare a warm, nutritious meal or obtain food on their own. This service currently provides meals to the poorest to some of the wealthiest district residents.

Our chronic disease management program provides education and training for a number of illnesses, keeping residents healthier and sparing health-care dollars by preventing complications of illnesses. The district’s Healthy Schools Program has provided more school nurses, health

education, counseling and physical education to all school districts within the health-care district. Providing this service to our children is another cost-saving preventative program.

The district also works in conjunction with Sequoia Hospital and Sequoia Hospital Foundation to monitor the needs of district residents with a considerable stake in the new Breast Health Center and plans to implement a case management program designed to keep district residents out of the hospital. The district continues to fund the county clinic as well as surrounding community clinics that serve district residents. This provides access to care and prevents costly use of local emergency rooms that would otherwise be used as a substitute for primary care.

About 51 percent of county revenue goes to jails and courts. There is no guarantee where the current tax dollars collected for the health-care district would go if the district is dissolved. The only thing certain is that money will continue to be collected.

As a registered nurse, I do not view health care, nutrition, or lifesaving medical equipment as “charitable programs.” The services are necessary, cost-effective, and generally expected to be available

when ultimately all of us require them. Voters now have more control over utilization of tax dollars that go directly to health-care programs within their own district. The board and directors, with the exception of Jack Hickey, constantly assess and evaluate our programs, making necessary changes according to community needs and the many changes taking place in health care. The district once owned the hospital, continues to support it and provides services that every one of us will eventually need.

It saddens me that anyone likely to require health services would so quickly deny those now receiving them. Mr. Hickey is running for an additional seat on the board despite the fact that his current position does not term until 2014, forcing the district to spend \$160,000 on what otherwise would have been an uncontested election, only to further his dogmatic and extreme ideology to not pay taxes at all. This is a tragedy when one considers district programs that would have greatly benefitted by what I consider a lot of money. No board member should have the right to force taxpayers to foot the bill for an election just to advance his own political agenda.

*Kim Griffin is a registered nurse and president of the Sequoia Healthcare District board of directors.*



GUEST  
OPINION

becoming a controversial issue.

Today, this forum is increasingly used to communicate a biased political agenda by: the so called “moderators” who choose to remain anonymous, select City Council members, the Teamsters’ Union and those

allowed by the “moderators.” Dissenting views are not posted and some members of our community have simply been denied access.

Certainly the “moderators” are entitled to their First Amendment rights, but I am curious as

to why they don’t think it appropriate to extend those rights to all. Equally disturbing is the moderators’ complete disregard for verifiable facts.

Regardless of how you decide to vote, I encourage voters to dismiss anonymous, mean-spirited misstatements and focus on verifiable facts.

*Suzanne Legallet  
Selby Lane, Atherton*

### Clarke has qualifications for Menlo council

Editor:

The Menlo Park City Council could use someone with experience on a city board or commission, experience with the give-and-take of working with staff and citizens. East Menlo Park/Belle Haven has never been represented on the council, other than a Raychem employee many years ago.

Fortunately, there is a candidate who has all of these qualifications. Please join me in supporting Carolyn Clarke for Menlo Park City Council.

*Margaret Fruth  
Peggy Lane, Menlo Park*

### Recalling Sen. McGovern’s work on hunger

Editor:

Recently, we lost former U.S. Sen. George McGovern. Although many will recall his disastrous 1972 loss to Rich-

ard Nixon and his subsequent leadership in getting us out of Vietnam, his truly lasting legacy will be his war on hunger and malnutrition.

In 1977, following extensive public hearings, McGovern’s Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs published Dietary Goals for the United States, a precursor to today’s Dietary Guidelines. It marked the first time that a U.S. government document recommended reduced meat consumption.

The meat industry forced the committee to destroy all copies of the report and to remove the offending recommendation from a new edition. It then abolished the committee, voted McGovern out of office, and warned government bureaucrats never to challenge meat consumption again.

Yet after 35 years of studies linking meat consumption with elevated risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, and other killer diseases, the MyPlate icon, representing USDA’s current Dietary Guidelines for Americans, recommends vegetables, fruits, and grains, but never mentions meat, and shunts dairy off to one side.

And it all started with one brave senator from South Dakota.

*Malcolm Davidson  
Encinal Avenue, Menlo Park*

## Open letter to Portola Valley

By Leslie Lambert

You probably didn’t know that during my time working in the Building and Planning Department in Los Altos Hills many years ago, the entire staff would come and have lunch at Rossotti’s on a Friday afternoon.

On the way there along Arastradero Road I would always look over at one particular building and I thought perhaps someday I would work there. I had no idea what they did there, but it looked like a comforting place to be. Some 10 years later I did go to work there at S.P. McClenahan, and luckily for me I met my husband Terry, who has worked there for more than 30 years. With even more luck, one day I opened the Almanac and saw a job opening for the position of deputy town clerk

in the Building and Planning Department in Portola Valley. Ever since, Portola Valley has become a meaningful part of my life. Terry and I were married at Christ Church, we had our reception in the old multipurpose room at Town Center. Funny how things work out, isn’t it? Got to love it.

Over the past 20-plus years that I have worked for the town, the people and community have meant so very much to me. This really became an important part of my life. It has been wonderful to work in such a beautiful location and lovely area and have the opportunity to meet such appreciative people who have made this town so special. The volunteer spirit of the residents, the long-term consultants, the

local businesses, public safety, and a town staff committed to keeping Portola Valley as it is, is commendable.

After having the traumatic brain injury over one and a half years ago and being able to go back to work truly helped me to recover, knowing that I had so much support from everyone in the town. Because of a recent brain seizure, Terry and I decided that it was time for me to retire from my position with the town. I am grateful for my time in Portola Valley and I will so miss everyone I have met over the years. You have all meant so very, very much to me.

You have a lovely community and you should cherish it and keep it living as it is — there aren’t many places like this.

*Leslie Lambert is the former planning manager of Portola Valley.*



GUEST  
OPINION



OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY 1-4PM

COME  
EXPERIENCE  
THE GLORIOUS  
FALL COLORS  
OF THE  
SKYLINE  
CORRIDOR

# 16379 SKYLINE BOULEVARD WOODSIDE



**MAGNIFICENT PRIVATE COMPOUND** on almost 12 acres with exceptional views to the Bay. Approximately 10,000 square feet of sleek modern architecture, soaring ceilings and spectacular views blending in harmony with the natural setting. The main residence offers 5 bedrooms, 6 1/2 baths, oversized living, dining and family rooms; perfect for entertaining large groups, yet also comfortable for day-to-day living. The grounds are highlighted by a stunning resort-size infinity edge pool and entertainment complex, surrounded by a large dining terrace complete with outdoor kitchen. Additional features include a professional quality sound studio, 2 bedroom guest house, 6 car garage, plus separate 2 car and 3 car-carports. This magnificent property is the culmination of the current owners vision to create an extraordinary environment.

NEW PRICE \$5,700,000

[www.16379Skyline.com](http://www.16379Skyline.com)

*it's closer than you think*

it has a commute route that easily accesses two international airports, San Francisco and all of Silicon Valley

- From Skyline Blvd Hwy 35 0.5 mi (access road)
- From Alice's Restaurant 2.0 mi
- From intersection of Portola Road and 84 5.3mi
- From center of Woodside 8 miles  
(driving time 16 minutes at speed limit)

**SARAH RIVERS**

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