

The Almanac

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

NOVEMBER 28, 2012 | VOL. 48 NO. 13

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**Why Portola Valley
and Woodside
are still wrestling with...**



**THE
PERSISTANCE OF
LOW-FLYING
AIRCRAFT**

Page 5

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Kathy McKeithen leaves council seat fighting

■ Atherton councilwoman is unhappy with the city manager's confidentiality policy.

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

She came in fighting, and she's going out fighting. Kathy McKeithen, whose three-term tenure as an Atherton City Council member ends next month, is challenging the new town manager's decision to put a "confidential" stamp on a weekly report to the council that he has initiated since arriving in Town Hall in October.

Ms. McKeithen and City Manager George Rodericks exchanged a series of emails earlier this month about the nature of the weekly report, which the councilwoman had requested be sent to her automatically after her term ends. In response to her request, Mr. Rodericks said that the document, which he calls a "status report," is not a public record.

"Its content is intended to contribute to the reaching of an administrative or executive determination as part of the deliberative process and it is 'pre-decisional' in nature," Mr. Rodericks wrote. "... The report is a mechanism to allow the city manager to converse with individual members of the council to explore alternatives and provide tentative suggestions for action without fear of reproach upon subsequent disclosure of a thought process."

When Ms. McKeithen argued that the reports issued thus far have had "few, if any parts I would view as deliberative or pre-decisional," the town manager noted that as he gets "up to speed" on issues, the reports are likely to contain discussion of personnel matters, which are illegal to disclose, and other sensitive matters.

Dissatisfied with Mr. Rod-

erick's arguments, Ms. McKeithen's asked, "Why are you already creating impediments to the public's knowledge concerning what is going on in the town when we hired you to do just the opposite?"

Ms. Keithen, whose platform during her first run for council included reforming town management and creating greater government transparency, told the Almanac that during her 12 years on the council, city managers' weekly reports have never been considered confidential. The city manager's confidentiality policy regarding the report,



'Why are you already creating impediments to the public's knowledge ... when we hired you to do just the opposite?'

COUNCILWOMAN KATHY MCKEITHEN IN EMAIL TO CITY MANAGER

she added, "does not bode well" for transparency in government.

But part of the conflict appears to stem from the nature of the report Mr. Rodericks is restricting: Rather than the type of report past city managers issued and made public via an email list and other strategies, the "status report" is a new form of communication with the council, Mr. Rodericks said.

The report will take the place of one-on-one conversations with council members that "I guarantee you took place" with former city managers in Atherton and virtually all other cities — discussions that don't violate the law as long as strict rules are followed.

Those rules, as outlined in the state's open meeting law, known as the Brown Act, prohibit discussions between individual council members, or a council member and the city manager, for the purpose of determining the council member's position on

an issue and then trying to form a consensus by relaying that position to other council members.

That is not what Mr. Rodericks intends to do, he stated firmly, adding that he is a strong proponent of the Brown Act and has no intention of undermining it. His status report is a way to communicate important information to council members on an ongoing basis, including pending employee disciplinary actions that must legally be kept confidential, he said. "Some information is important to the council, and the minute I know about it, they're going to know about it."

"You can't keep things like (key personnel matters) from your governing body. ... And my rule is if I tell one council member, I tell all five," he said, adding that he won't favor certain members or "play politics."

The report also can be thought of as "a conversation I'm hav-

ing with myself," but allowing council members to be aware of his thinking — a strategy that could lead to feedback when

he's on the wrong track.

Mr. Rodericks said that eventually he'll issue weekly city manager reports like the documents that had been written in the past for public consumption, posting them on the town's website.

Council members McKeithen and Jim Dobbie said one danger of the city manager's confidential report is that it could lead to Brown Act violations by allowing council members to communicate positions back and forth in response to the emailed report. "It's almost like working behind the scenes to get a consensus, pushing at the seams of the Brown Act," Ms. McKeithen said.

But Mr. Rodericks said he is clear in his emailed reports that they should be considered one-way communications, and responses, if any, should be directed to him alone.

Mr. Dobbie said he doesn't

See MCKEITHEN, page 6



November 26
WEEKLY REAL ESTATE REPORT



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Dec. 2012

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Sunnyvale City Senior Center
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Presented by Yichieh Shiuuey, M.D.
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Join us for this educational presentation where you'll learn what a cataract is, what are the new advancements in cataract surgery and what is the outcome for vision after surgery.

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**TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY
NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON
PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO
PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) X7D-137
AND LOT LINE ADJUSTMENT X6D-214
BLUE OAKS SUBDIVISION
LOTS 23 THOURGH 26,
3 AND 5 BUCK MEADOW DRIVE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley will conduct a public hearing at 7:30 p.m. on December 12, 2012 on the November 7, 2012 Planning Commission actions amending the Blue Oaks PUD and approving the associated Lot Line Adjustment (LLA) to implement the proposed PUD amendments. The Planning Commission approvals would remove references to below market rate housing, reduce the number of parcels in the residential area owned by the town, i.e., 3 and 5 Buck Meadow Drive (APNs: 080-240-230, -240, -250, and -260), from four (4) to two (2) and make other changes to accommodate market rate housing on one or both of the adjusted parcels.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to provisions of the zoning ordinance, on November 14, 2012 the Town Council reviewed the November 7, 2012 Planning Commission actions as presented with the November 14, 2012 report from the Town Planner and determined that before the actions become effective, it was appropriate to conduct a Town Council public hearing on them as provided for under Section 18.78.120 of the zoning ordinance and set forth in this notice.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that at the conclusion of the December 12, 2012 public hearing the Town Council will determine whether or not to uphold the approvals of the Planning Commission or take other actions consistent with findings from review of the Planning Commission record and the public hearing. All reports, plans and documents associated with the project and November 7, 2012 Planning Commission approvals are available for review in the Portola Valley Planning Department at 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California.

All interested persons are invited to appear before the Town Council at the time above-mentioned. The public hearing will be conducted in the Historic School House meeting room at the town center, 765 Portola Road. If someone challenges an action on the public hearing matters in court, he or she may be limited to raising only those issues raised at the public meetings conducted on the proposal or in written correspondence delivered to the town at or prior to the public meetings.

Dated: November 15, 2012
Signed: Sharon Hanlon, Town Clerk

Low-flying aircraft still trouble local towns

By Dave Boyce

Almanac staff writer

For years, at Peninsula community roundtable discussions with noise-abatement officials, representatives from Portola Valley and Woodside have complained about arriving commercial aircraft flying too low, and too noisily, as they pass over a navigation beacon in the Woodside hills.

Despite these efforts and those of Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, on behalf of her constituents, the cause of the noise — low-flying aircraft — appears likely to continue.

Ms. Eshoo extracted an agreement in 2001 with the Federal Aviation Administration that arriving aircraft will stay at least 8,000 feet above sea level when passing over the beacon. Ms. Eshoo reminded the FAA with another letter in 2005. And yet incoming planes continue to violate that minimum altitude.

In recent presentations to the Portola Valley Town Council, Vic Schachter of Portola Valley, in partnership with Jim Lyons of Woodside, claimed that 23,000 arriving flights now cross the beacon annually. Between May 2005 and February 2010, their average altitude dropped to 6,600 feet from 7,500 feet, while

the number of flights rose by 70 percent. Between January 2009 and May 2012, more than 88 percent crossed at altitudes below 8,000 feet, with about 28 percent lower than 6,000 feet, Mr. Lyons told the Almanac.

Pilots speak

The Almanac sat down with Mr. Lyons and two retired commercial pilots, Chris Zwingle of Hillsborough and Bud Eisberg of Portola Valley. Asked about roundtable complaints from the vantage point of the cockpit, Macbeth's ghost could have been whispering into Mr. Zwingle's ear: tales told by the hopeful, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

"Nothing of what (the roundtable) works on is communicated to the pilots who operate the aircraft. Nothing," Mr. Zwingle said. "Pilots have and always have had complaints about noise-abatement-driven procedures. ... Not only is it not going to happen, it's never going to happen."

The Almanac contacted noise-abatement and air traffic representatives from Northern California, all of whom deferred to FAA spokesman Ian Gregor, who replied via email. "Pilots follow (air traffic) controllers' instructions, and controllers do not communicate with indi-



'While we keep almost all SFO arrivals at 8,000 feet at night, it is not possible to keep (them) at that altitude during the day because that would create conflicts with other aircraft using that busy airspace.'

IAN GREGOR OF THE FAA

vidual pilots about the terms of any local noise abatement agreements," Mr. Gregor wrote. "There is no need to explain the reason for an instruction, and indeed we need to keep controller-pilot communications as simple, direct and concise as possible to limit the chances of a miscommunication."

Mr. Zwingle, when informed

about Ms. Eshoo's letters to the FAA, replied: "I sincerely doubt that there's a formal letter of agreement." When Mr. Lyons produced a copy of Ms. Eshoo's letter, Mr. Zwingle said that the identifying number assigned to the letter indicated a policy. "There may be a policy, but there is no rule," he said. "Anna Eshoo can sign letters of agree-

ment or whatever until she's blue in the face."

A spokesman for Ms. Eshoo, asked to comment on Mr. Zwingle's remark, replied via email that Ms. Eshoo "continues to work on the issue of airplane noise abatement for the Portola Valley and Woodside areas

See **NOISE**, page 8

Portola Valley flooded with volunteers

By Dave Boyce

Almanac staff writer

The cup runneth over for the town of Portola Valley. Seventeen residents, including six incumbents, have applied for seven open seats on the town's two volunteer panels with the most consequential decision-making powers: the Planning Commission and the Architectural & Site Control Commission (ASCC). Openings on these commissions often draw just two or three applicants.

In response to the volume of candidates, the Town Council will begin its Wednesday, Nov. 28, meeting at the Historic Schoolhouse at 6:30 p.m., an hour earlier than usual. Follow-

ing candidate interviews, the council will make appointments by paper ballots, according to a staff report.

Commissioners are appointed for four-year terms. Candidates who get three or more votes from the five-member council will be appointed. Each commission has five members. Terms are staggered, with three seats open and then two seats two years later.

The Planning Commission addresses policies on land use and development, including applications for variances and the hearing of appeals by property owners over decisions made by Town Hall staff in administering zoning and subdivision ordinances.

**Seventeen
vie for seats
on town
commissions.**

See **PORTOLA VALLEY**, page 8

New look at grade separations

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

They aren't sure what they plan to do with the money, if anything, but the Menlo Park City Council decided to ask for county funding to study and possibly build grade separations at train crossings.

Public Works Director Chip Taylor explained during the Nov. 13 council meeting that the issue was last studied in depth about eight years ago. Some of the assumptions underlying that study no longer hold; for example, it assumed that crossings in Palo Alto and Atherton would all be at ground level and high-speed rail would be built on four tracks.

"At the time there was a need to do further analysis," Mr. Taylor said, particularly

■ MENLO PARK

in evaluating impacts, alternative designs and costs.

The county is only asking for letters of interest at this point, not actual project proposals.

Menlo Park seeks funds to study design alternatives and impacts.

It has \$225 million available — an amount that Mr. Taylor said will pay for three to five grade separations out of the 40 crossings in the county.

"If we even got funding for one we would probably be considered lucky," Mayor Kirsten Keith noted during the meeting.

The letter of interest needed to indicate a prioritized list of rail crossings, a proposed timeframe for completion, safety and congestion issues near the crossings, any potential economic and transit development benefits, and whether other funding sources were available to chip in.

The four Caltrain crossings in Menlo Park were prioritized based on traffic counts conducted in 2012, with Ravenswood Avenue leading the pack with an average 24,100 vehicle crossings a day, followed by Oak Grove Avenue, Glenwood Avenue and Encinal Avenue, according to the staff report.

The three Dumbarton Rail crossings within city limits were not considered a priority given the current lack of pas-

See **GRADE SEPARATIONS**, page 8

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Sides

Traditional Stuffing
Mushrooms, onion, celery, water chestnuts, & sage **\$11qt./\$5.75 pt**
Cornbread Stuffing
Dried cranberries, apricots, and green onion **\$11qt./\$5.75 pt.**
Mashed Potatoes
Fresh potatoes whipped with cream and butter **\$11qt./\$5.75 pt.**
Porcini Mushroom Gravy
Rich and creamy made with turkey drippings **\$13qt./\$6.75 pt.**
Onion Sage Gravy
With red wine, caramelized onion and sage **\$13qt./\$6.75pt.**
Beef Au Jus
Made with pan juices, red wine, and beef stock **\$13 qt/\$7 pt**

Potato Au Gratin
Baked with cheese, garlic, cream (serves 12-14) **\$30 per tray**
Green Bean Almandine
Sautéed shallots, butter and almonds **\$12qt./\$6.25pt.**
Fresh Cranberry Sauce
Whole cranberries slow cooked with a hint of orange **\$9qt./\$4.75pt**
Dessert
8" Good Earth Bakery Pumpkin Pie (serves 8) **\$12.99 ea.**
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Menlo Park man shot

A 49-year-old Menlo Park man was shot multiple times while sitting in a parked vehicle in East Palo Alto on Sunday night, Nov. 25, police report. Officers were called around 8:15 p.m. after the city's ShotSpotter gunshot detection system alerted them to shots fired in the

2200 block of Addison Avenue. The man was taken to a hospital. Police ask anyone with information to call the police at (650) 21-1112 or leave a voice mail or text on the anonymous tip line, (650) 409-6792, or via email at epa@tipnow.org.
— Bay City News Service

MCKEITHEN

continued from page 3

support an emailed confidential report, noting that if information is confidential, it should be discussed in closed session. Mr. Rodericks noted, however, that some topics wouldn't qualify for closed-session discussion by the full council under the Brown Act. But if they are discussed with individual council members or in a report that clearly states it's not intended to be retained on file, no Brown Act violation occurs, he said.

Members of the public, including Ms. McKeithen after she leaves the council, can obtain a redacted copy of the status report by requesting it from the city clerk, Mr. Rodericks said.

That process doesn't satisfy Ms. McKeithen, who fought several

battles during her council tenure to make documents deemed "confidential" to be made public. The need to file a public records request for the report is "not very transparent or community friendly," she wrote in her final email to Mr. Rodericks.

Mayor Bill Widmer said he spoke with Mr. Rodericks last week about the confidentiality of the report after learning of the disagreement, and suggested that a two-part report might be the solution. If the city manager wants to include confidential material, the supplemental part would be for council eyes only, he said.

Councilman Jerry Carlson said he was unaware of the disagreement over the reports, and Councilwoman Elizabeth Lewis couldn't be reached for comment.

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Protests target Arrillaga project in Menlo Park

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

A small group of residents has a large mission: Save Menlo Park. Their target? The eight-acre, mixed-use complex developer John Arrillaga wants to build on property owned by Stanford University along El Camino Real.

Their options? Few. The project proposes replacing car lots between Cambridge and Middle avenues with 96,000 square feet of medical offices, 133,350 square feet of regular office space, 10,000 square feet of retail and 120 rental apartments.

Since the project meets the new El Camino Real/downtown specific plan baseline requirements, the city gets no say in whether to approve it. Only the Planning Commission has some input, and that only regarding architectural details. The city also does not get to negotiate for any public benefits.

Save Menlo pins its hopes on the university's desire to maintain a good relationship with the city, given its use of Menlo Park's infrastructure and the number of Stanford employees, alumni and donors living there.

"So we think we have some political leverage," said Perla Ni, spokeswoman for SaveMenlo.org, in an email.

The offices will add traffic to an already-jammed El Camino

Real, without generating sales tax revenue for the city, making the project the target of ire from the group as well as city officials. However, according to the city's finance director, Carol Augustine, the university does pay property taxes on the lots, which would increase after development.

Council members and planning commissioners have noted that the project differs from what the university led Menlo Park to expect during specific plan negotiations. Save Menlo

Residents organizing against eight-acre complex.

would like to see Stanford live up to its assurances by building the senior housing the university reportedly indicated it wanted to build during those discussions — a much less traffic intensive development that would also expand the city's housing capacity.

"Instead, now they have reneged on their commitment, and exploited the good faith that Menlo Park placed in them," Ms. Ni said.

She told the Almanac that Save Menlo stands at 173 members and counting. The group has been putting notices in neighborhood mailboxes, handing out fliers and organizing meetings. There's one coming up on Monday, Dec. 3, at 8:15 a.m. Location? The Peet's Coffee next to the Safeway at 525 El Camino Real — a spot with an excellent view of the car lots Mr. Arrillaga intends to build on. ■

Shots fired where man was killed

About 12 gunshots were fired Saturday morning, Nov. 24, at a house in the 300 block of Ivy Drive in Menlo Park, police said. The gunfire was in the same block of Ivy Drive where a 42-year-old Newark man was shot and killed Nov. 17.

Also, on Nov. 2, four people were injured in a drive-by shooting near Ivy Drive and Windermere Avenue. In June a shooting on nearby Madera Avenue left 19-year-old Jesus Molina dead.

Police said they did not know yet if the shootings are connected.

In the Nov. 24 shooting, the house was occupied but no one was injured, police said. Witnesses told police that at about 8 a.m., a light-colored American-made car pulled up in front of the house and two men armed with handguns got out of the car and fired at the

house. The men, described as black and in their early 20s, got back in the car and fled eastbound on Almanor Avenue.

Police ask anyone with information about the shooting to call Menlo Park police at (650) 330-6300 or an anonymous tip line at (650) 330-6395.

Correction

An article in the Nov. 21 issue of the Almanac misstated the Menlo Park City School District's enrollment projection, in 2009, for the 2014-15 school year. The projection was actually 2,847 students, according to Ahmad Sheikholeslami of the school district. Current enrollment is 2,791 students.

Marvin Selcer Siegel

April 10, 1936-November 18, 2012

Marvin died suddenly on November 18th after nearly a decade of living to his full capacity with Parkinson's disease. He is survived by his beloved wife, Bonnie Siegel, his devoted children, son Dan Siegel (Lisa Langer), daughter Larissa "Lara" Siegel, and his adoring grandsons, Jacob and Ben Siegel, his step-daughters Anne Scholes, Sara Myers (Thane) and their children, Jake and Tess Restaino, Tegan and Cole Myers, his sister Rhoda Samuels (Peter), sister-in-law Eleanor Coffman and his niece, Rachel Goldberg (Jason) and nephews David Coffman (Heather) and Rabbi Joshua Samuels (Nicole). Marvin was predeceased by his first wife Jerrell Siegel.

Marvin was born in Fargo, North Dakota, and graduated from University of Michigan as a proud ZBT. He was introduced to California by his cousins Bernard and Charlotte Siegel. Once he came to attend Stanford Law School he moved to Menlo Park/Palo Alto permanently.

Marvin established a well-respected law practice, Jorgenson, Siegel, McClure and Flegel. He was a past president of the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County and served on the boards of Congregation Beth Am, JFCS and Sinai Memorial Chapel.

He took up bike riding midlife and biked until the week before he passed away. He was an avid sports fan, in particular the SF Giants and Michigan Wolverines. He and Bonnie loved to travel together. Due to his enjoyment of gadgets and photography, he owned several cameras with which he took thousands of pictures although few were ever seen by his family. He was an avid bridge player and enjoyed spending time in Palm Springs with his family from Minneapolis.

He was an honest, ethical, smart, decisive and trusted advisor, loving, goofy, gadget loving, family man. His twinkle and special presence will be deeply missed by all those who knew him. Like his father, he was a giant of a man committed to his community and family always thinking of future generations.

The family prefers contributions to: Congregation Beth Am Fund for the Future, JFCS Jerrell Siegel Home Health Care Fund or the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County.

Services were held on November 20 at Congregation Beth Am, Los Altos Hills, CA with interment at Hills of Eternity Memorial Park, Colma, CA.

Services under the direction of Sinai Memorial Chapel, Redwood City.



PAID OBITUARY

Thora Ann Richardson

Dearest Thora passed away on Monday, November 5, 2012 from a stroke. She died peacefully at UCSF Medical Center with a talented and caring medical team doing all they could to save her life. Her family was constantly at her bedside in the last two weeks of her life hoping and praying for a recovery.

Thora leaves behind a family united in their concern to live life better because of her wonderful witness to each of us—her husband John, her five children David (Kacy), Eric (Pearl), Karen (Jon Rubinstein), Kristen (Karl Mills) and Tom (Paula). She also leaves 10 grandchildren for whom she continually gave herself.

Thora was predeceased by her parents, Ingolfur and Kristiana Bergsteinsson and her sister Linda. She is survived by her brothers Paul and Bryan Bergsteinsson and their wives, Joan and Barbara.

Thora was born on Jan. 6, 1937 and enjoyed a remarkable life with amazing gifts of intelligence, grace, loving care for others and talent in many areas. She is known in her extended family as especially prudent. She entered Stanford University with Honors at Entrance at the age of 16. In less than four years she graduated with a B.S. in Mathematics and promptly took a position with Stanford Research Institute as a mathematician. She and John married on June 20, 1957. Her family began to arrive, and as John

was completing his graduate studies, they moved to Orange County, CA. There they became active in Trinity United Presbyterian Church, Santa Ana, with close and lasting friendships.

Thora and the family moved from Southern California to Michigan to Vancouver, B.C. and then to Menlo Park, where she had lived for the last 27 years. While here, she made major commitments for 26 years to the Palo Alto Auxiliary (President, Treasurer, Allied Arts Guild Server and then Co-Hostess for over 20 years) and for a similar period to her PEO Chapter DC (President, etc.) always contributing wherever her talents were needed, also doing whatever tasks needed her support. Recently she became part of the Hospitality Team at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church and was the Holiday Co-Hostess for her Stanford Hills neighborhood.

A Memorial Service and Celebration of her life will be held at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, 950 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park, on Tuesday, December 4, 2012 at 2 pm. A reception will follow.

The family requests that memorial donations be made in Thora's name to Lucile Packard Children's Hospital. Checks may be made payable to Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health and sent to the foundation at 400 Hamilton Avenue, Suite 340, Palo Alto, CA 94301.



PAID OBITUARY

NOISE

continued from page 5

with all parties involved. She has brought together impacted residents, FAA and SFO officials, and the airlines, who all continue to show good faith in reaching an agreeable end."

"There is no firm requirement that airplanes fly at 8,000 feet over the Woodside (beacon)," Mr. Gregor of the FAA said. "Northern California controllers have noise abatement Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and use them when traffic volume permits. Often, however, traffic volume prevents us from using them. ... While we keep almost all SFO arrivals at 8,000 feet at night, it is not possible to keep all SFO arrivals at that altitude during the day because that would create conflicts with other aircraft using that busy airspace."

A quieter future?

Mr. Zwingle unfolded a navigation chart depicting the airspace above the Bay Area. The route over the Woodside beacon showed two numbers: 4 and 10. Those numbers, Mr. Zwingle said, establish a minimum altitude of 4,000 feet and a maximum of 10,000 feet. "If traffic controllers agreed to do this, then they should be doing it,"

he said. "When traffic gets congested, the whole area is used."

Presentations by officials that project a quieter future, including the Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen), may "look glowing. They may or may not be accurate. They may or may not be true," Mr. Zwingle added. "You can go to all the meetings you want. I've never seen anything operational come out of any of it. Never."

Asked to comment, Mr. Gregor said that the FAA "can't speculate about the impacts from Bay Area NextGen procedures that are still in development. We will do a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for those procedures and until we complete the Draft EA, we won't know what the possible impacts of the new procedures will be."

One aspect of NextGen is ocean-tailored arrival, in which aircraft are assigned a 200-mile-long glide path to the runway, "like sliding down a bannister rather than walking down steps," Mr. Gregor said. Aircraft using this method "burn less fuel, emit fewer pollutants and make less noise because they are using minimal power." But NextGen requires that aircraft be outfitted with GPS devices, which they don't yet have, Mr. Eisberg noted.

In a traditional approach, pilots

reduce air speed using wing flaps and the engines, both of which create noise. "NextGen will not change that," Mr. Zwingle said. Gliding in at a fixed low speed is "a concept," he said. "It's debatable." An air traffic controller may order a pilot to slow to 200 mph from 250, a maneuver that may require traditional, and noisy, techniques, Mr. Eisberg added.

Air traffic control is a delicate business. "I've been scared in that control room, knowing what could happen," Mr. Eis-

berg said. A supervisor constantly paces the room, peering at radar screens over the shoulders of controllers. Any hint of a problem and "he'll yell out 'Spin 'em,' to put the planes in a holding pattern," Mr. Eisberg said.

A complicating factor is the required gap between arriving planes; it must be large enough to avoid the effects on the air of wake turbulence and wake vortices, the pilots said. Then there is the fact that the San Francisco International Airport is not

suitable to handle the volume it receives. "The complexity of it is huge," Mr. Zwingle said. "A Cessna has as much right to the airspace as anyone else."

Mr. Zwingle did offer one bit of solace. The Woodside navigation beacon is no longer vital to arriving aircraft staying on course, he said. Authorities could "move the fix," he said, meaning that flights could be redirected to cross the Santa Cruz Mountains farther south, away from populated communities. ■

PORTOLA VALLEY

continued from page 5

The commission has four open seats, including the one held by Denise Gilbert, first appointed in 2008. The term for Ms. Gilbert's seat expired in January 2012, but the churn of business at Town Hall at the time led to her reappointment becoming an unattended-to loose end, the report said. The council intends to align her seat with that held by Commissioner Arthur "Chip" MacIntosh, whose term expires in 2016.

The candidates

Ms. Gilbert, a former biotech executive, has applied for reappointment, as have Nate McKitterick, an attorney with a focus on

commercial liability and insurance issues, first appointed in 2005; and Alexandra Von Feldt, director of land stewardship for a Silicon Valley environmental nonprofit and appointed in 2009. Longtime Commissioner Leah Zaffaroni is retiring.

The other applicants for the Planning Commission are, in alphabetical order: Tom Kelley, founder of a high-tech-oriented executive recruiting firm; Terry Lee, an executive with a private high school; Andrew Pierce, an attorney whose focus includes land use; Darci Reimund, who runs a home-design firm; and Nicholas Targ, an attorney with a focus on environmental and land-use law.

The ASCC advises the Planning Commission and the Town Council and reviews significant remodeling and building projects in town, with a focus that includes preserving the visual character of the town by preventing "unsightly or obnoxious" structures.

On the ASCC, incumbents applying for reappointment are landscape designer Danna Breen, first appointed in 2003; architect Craig Hughes, appointed in 2009; and architect Carter Warr, first appointed in 1991.

New applicants are Tim Dyson, chief executive of a marketing communications group; Terry Lee, an executive with a private high school; Elin R. Pedersen, a research scientist focusing

on human and social-centered technology; Marianne Plunder, a longtime, active and multifaceted community volunteer; Dave Ross, a consultant on construction management and related dispute-resolution issues; and Jane Wilson, a longtime and active community volunteer with a background in architecture and estate management.

■ Go to tinyurl.com/PV-applicants and turn to Pages 4 and 28, respectively, for further information on the process and the candidates' letters of application.

■ Go to tinyurl.com/PV-incumbents and turn to Page 123 for statistical information on the incumbents.

Clarification

In a Nov. 14 story on Portola Valley's plans to purchase 900 Portola Road for small homes affordable to people of moderate incomes, the Almanac reported that a group of neighbors opposed the plan because of concerns about lower property values. While the group has acknowledged that possibility, it also regularly states that it is not opposed to affordable housing per se. The group claims the town's process has not been "democratic and open" and that the obligation to provide such housing could be met with a "creative approach that emphasizes second units." ■

GRADE SEPARATIONS

continued from page 5

senger trains on the line.

Although council members Kelly Fergusson and Rich Cline suggested "having a priority of one," i.e., focusing on the Ravenswood crossing, Mr. Taylor pointed out that building a grade separation at one crossing may create a need to make changes to the others, so in the end the council agreed to indicate it wanted to study grade separations at all four crossings.

"I don't disapprove the idea of a study," Mr. Cline said, acknowledging that the previous reports were outdated. "I

want to make sure that when we do that we're articulating very clearly what we want and don't want" just in case high-speed rail heads in a different design direction than expected.

He expressed concern that a lack of clarity in the letter would suggest to the California High-Speed Rail Authority that Menlo Park had come onboard with the four-track design. "No, we have not."

Mr. Taylor agreed that the letter could reiterate Menlo Park's support for a two-track design with no elevated segments.

The council voted 4-0, with Councilman Andy Cohen absent, to submit the letter, which was due Nov. 21. ■

Friends of the Menlo Park Library Book Sale

Sunday, December 2
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Menlo Park Library

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All proceeds benefit the Menlo Park Library & Belle Haven Library.

Compensation cuts for some Atherton staff?

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

The mayor calls it a wrap-up. The police union is calling it revenge. As the Atherton City Council meets on Nov. 28 for the last time before Councilwoman Kathy McKeithen steps down, it will vote on a resolution that would require the handful of the town's non-represented employees to pay more for their benefits, and take a one-week unpaid furlough between Christmas and New Year's Day.

The resolution will affect fewer than 10 employees, including the police chief and lieutenant, the city manager and city clerk, and the finance director, according to Mayor Bill Widmer.

The resolution also would cap vacation and sick-leave accrual, cap the town's contribution for health plans, eliminate health benefits for retirees hired after the effective date, and create a two-tier retirement system for employees hired after the effective date — a move reflecting a statewide trend for public employees.

Although most police department employees won't be affected by the resolution, the Atherton Police Officers' Association (APOA) posted a missive on its website last week titled "Atherton's lame duck council takes revenge," blasting the current council for "the vengeful nature of this last minute resolution."

"Widmer, Dobbie, and McKeithen will use their last majority vote to exact revenge for their political loss upon Atherton's residents and its employees,"

the posted statement said — the "political loss" a reference to the perceived shift of political leanings on the council resulting from the Nov. 6 ballot victory of Councilwoman Elizabeth Lewis and newcomer Cary Wiest, both of whom were endorsed by the APOA.

"That this council would rush to implement a furlough that shuts down government for a week certainly appears to be a punishment for the voters not

Council will vote on proposal to reduce employee costs, close Town Hall during Christmas week.

approving a library and their preferred candidate(s)," the statement said.

The APOA said the results of the resolution would include "significant disruption to town services," and would cause employees to look elsewhere for jobs, driving up employee replacement costs and offsetting any savings.

The statement concluded that any such changes to employee compensation should be decided by the council after Mr. Wiest takes Councilwoman Kathy McKeithen's seat next month.

Mayor Widmer disputed the APOA assertions, saying that the current council has been discussing the changes the council will vote on this week since last April. "This needs to be resolved by the people most knowledgeable about it," he

said. "This is not vengeance."

Noting that the police department would not be affected by the proposed furlough, Mayor Widmer said records indicate that other departments in town have "little to no activity" during the week in question.

The town expects to save \$14,213 in salaries over the four furlough days, according to a report from City Manager George Rodericks.

Other expected cost savings resulting from the proposed

employee-cost changes include \$92,413 over three years from shifting more of employees' retirement fund contributions to the employees; and \$24,960 next year from capping the town's employee benefit contributions, shifting more of the burden onto the employees.

Mayor Widmer said the changes are needed to solidify the town's financial position. "We took some steps last year (through outsourcing services and reducing the workforce),

but those steps by themselves aren't going to secure long-term financial stability for the town, which had been losing money since 2008."

Also at the Nov. 28 meeting, Reserve Officer Bruce Potts will make his annual presentation of awards to children participating in the anti-drug D.A.R.E./Red Ribbon program, and the council will be asked to approve up to \$6,000 in costs for a town volunteer and employee reception.

The meeting begins at 7 p.m. in the Holbrook-Palmer Park Pavilion at 150 Watkins Road. ■

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Thora Ann Richardson, volunteer

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 4 at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church in Menlo Park for Thora Ann Richardson, who died Nov. 5. She was 75.

Ms. Richardson was a graduate of Stanford University, which she entered at the age of 16. After earning a degree in mathematics, she worked as a mathematician for Stanford Research Institute.

In 1957 she married John Richardson. After living in several areas, the couple moved to Menlo Park 27 years ago. Ms. Richardson was active in the Palo Alto Auxiliary to Lucile Packard Children's Hospital and served as the organization's president and treasurer. She also served in the auxiliary's restaurant at Allied Arts Guild

OBITUARY

in Menlo Park. She was a past president of her PEO chapter and served on the hospitality team at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church.

She is survived by her husband, John; children David, Eric, Karen, Kristen and Tom; brothers Paul and Bryan Bergsteinsson; and 10 grandchildren.

Memorials may be made in Ms. Richardson's name to the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health, 400 Hamilton Ave., Suite 340, Palo Alto, CA 94301.



Thora Ann Richardson



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JobTrain graduates in the class of 2012.

JobTrain: From at-risk to at work

By *Kail Lubarsky, director of marketing and public relations for JobTrain.*

Board member Tamar Pichette describes JobTrain as: “An organization that consistently helps those who are most in need in the community. From offering them clothing, training and job placement, the staff and faculty are among the most dedicated and selfless people in the country. They quietly, efficiently and successfully accomplish the incomparable mission of giving people the dignity of a job, and have managed to do so on a lean budget. The impact of this nonprofit cannot be overstated. The country needs a JobTrain in every neighborhood.”

During these uncertain economic times, access to no-cost education for employment or career advancement is more important than ever. JobTrain proves that the best social service program in the world is a job.

Kamal worked as a certified pharmacy technician until he was stopped short with a diagnosis of multiple myeloma. Cancer ravaged his body, requiring a bone marrow transplant, chemotherapy and years of painful



Gifts to the Almanac's Holiday Fund help JobTrain and nine other community organizations.

recovery. When the cancer went into remission, Kamal needed to return to work to take care of his family of six.

That's when he found out that the industry standard had changed, and the pharm tech position he had held now required a high school diploma or GED, something Kamal did not have. Kamal was relieved to learn that JobTrain offered free GED classes. He worked closely with his JobTrain instructor and completed the program in just seven weeks.

Kamal is now reinstating his license with the California Board of Pharmacy. “JobTrain is a community servant and JobTrain sponsors are true community heroes for sharing their resources to advance the lives of others,” he says. “Thank you,

JobTrain, and thank you, JobTrain supporters, for helping us realize our dreams.”

Whether teaching leading-edge vocational skills to people seeking a career change or helping people reclaim their lives from welfare, addiction, incarceration and unemployment, JobTrain is here to help individuals discover their potential. JobTrain provides practical vocational and life-skills training, and access to quality careers.

Since 1965, approximately 160,000 people have come through JobTrain's doors and emerged with the tools to become self-sufficient members of our community.

Please create hope and opportunity for people who are willing to work hard to change their lives. Your tax-deductible contribution will put unemployed people into productive careers.

JobTrain is located at 1200 O'Brien Drive in Menlo Park, bordering East Palo Alto. Please visit our training facility for a tour and experience the positive energy of lives in transition.

Visit jobtrainworks.org or call (650) 330-6521 or (650) 330-6569 if you have questions and to schedule a tour. ■

City of Menlo Park Community Services Presents **BREAKFAST WITH SANTA**

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7:30am - 11:30am
Arrillaga Family Recreation Center
700 Alma Street



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Holiday fairs in Portola Valley

Saturday, Dec. 1, will be a busy day in Portola Valley with both the Cultural Arts Committee's fair and the Ladera Country Shopper merchants' fair scheduled for that day.

At 765 Portola Road, the Old Schoolhouse will be filled inside and out with merchandise from local artisans and craftspeople. Fine art, bronze sculptures, jewelry, woodcrafts, handbags, holiday ornaments, children's

clothing and much more will be for sale from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. A resident will be selling honey from local bees.

Fifth-grade Junior Girl Scouts and Corte Madera students will provide refreshments. There is a rumor that Santa will visit after his stint at the Ladera Holiday Fair.

The merchants at the Ladera Country Shopper will continue their 23-year tradition with a

holiday fair from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 1.

Santa will pose for photos at Kondetorei. Ladera Garden and Gifts will host a bulb planting. Bianchini's will serve its “famous” eggnog and have food tastings. The Lobster Shack features the Windy Hill Bluegrass Band and Pasquale's Pizza will present Madrigal Singers. Other merchants will also provide treats and entertainment.

The shopping center is at 3130 Alpine Road in Ladera.

Project Read helps people gain literacy, a new life

By Roberta Roth, literacy outreach specialist.

You who are reading this article are presumably not finding it to be a challenge. Unfortunately, this is not true for 15 percent of the adults in San Mateo County. That is why Project Read-Menlo Park exists, to increase literacy in adults to enable them to improve their lives and those of their families, and to actively contribute to their community.

Indeed, in these times it has never been more important to reach out to those in our community who struggle with basic literacy. Reading and

in an academic environment. Before I joined Project Read I was at a fifth-grade level and my spelling was even worse. I still don't feel I am at a college level, but I feel like I am definitely getting there."

Project Read, which has been providing free adult literacy instruction for 27 years, currently has more than 100 adult students in our one-to-one tutoring program and English as a Second Language classes at the Belle Haven Community School. These adults not only increase their own literacy, but also apply their knowledge and confidence at home, impacting a new generation of readers and strengthening families.

Individuals and groups can help Project Read in a variety of ways:

- Become a one-to-one tutor. We have students on our waiting list.

- Volunteer to help adults learn new computer skills.

- Contact us or check out our listings on VolunteerMatch: volunteermatch.org.

- Present our program to your HR Department /organization/ club.

- Become a board member of Project Read-Menlo Park Literacy Partners.

Project Read-Menlo Park relies on support from individuals, local businesses, foundations, the Friends of the Menlo Park Library and government. In 2010, a nonprofit arm, Project Read-Menlo Park Literacy Partners, was established to increase our funding base and ensure sustainable funding for the future.

Visit projectreadmenlopark.org, the Menlo Park Library (800 Alma St.), or call (650) 330-2525 for more information. ■



writing are fundamental skills for building better lives. Those who are able to read and complete job applications, obtain a GED certificate, attend college and otherwise comprehend the information associated with securing work will be employable.

Isis, an adult student with Project Read, is an example of the transformation literacy has on a person's life: "Thanks to Project Read I was encouraged to pursue my goal to go to college and follow my dream to become a fashion designer. Because of my tutor and Project Read I feel more comfortable

Sunday: Holiday train stop in Menlo

The Caltrain holiday train will stop at 7:45 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2, at the Menlo Park train station. Glittering with more than 60,000 lights and holiday decorations, the train will be collecting toys for children in need.

During the 20-minute stop, Santa, Ms. Claus, Frosty and the whole gang will get off the train to greet children and pose for pictures. The Salvation Army band will provide holiday music for carolers. Members of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves and representatives from the Salvation Army will collect donations of new, unwrapped toys.

Library book sale

Friends of the Menlo Park Library will hold a mini-sale from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 2, in the basement meeting room of the library at 800 Alma St. in Menlo Park.

Holiday and children's books will be sought-after items. Other popular categories include art, history, literature, mystery, religion, fiction and biography.

Funds raised by the sale will be used to enhance the library's collection and children's and adult reading programs.

Give to The Almanac Holiday Fund

Your gift helps children and people in need



Contributions to the Holiday Fund go directly to programs that benefit Peninsula residents. Last year, Almanac readers and foundations contributed \$167,000 for the 10 agencies that feed the hungry, house the homeless and provide numerous other services to those in need.

Contributions to the Holiday Fund will be matched, to the extent possible, by generous community corporations, foundations and

individuals, including the Rotary Club of Menlo Park, the David and Lucille Packard Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. No administration costs will be deducted from the gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law.

All donations to the Holiday Fund will be shared equally among the 10 recipient agencies listed below.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula

Provides after-school and academic support and activities for 3,200 young people, 6 to 18, at clubhouses in Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood, East Palo Alto, and Redwood City, and offers programs at Flood and Belle Haven schools in Menlo Park, Hoover Community School in Redwood City, and McNair School in East Palo Alto

Ecumenical Hunger Program

Provides emergency food, clothing, household essentials, and sometimes financial assistance to families in need, regardless of religious preference, including Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for more than 2,000 households.

Project Read

Provides free literacy services to adults in the Menlo Park area. Trained volunteers work one-on-one or in small groups to help adults improve their basic reading, writing and English language skills so they can achieve their goals and function more effectively at home, at work and in the community. In 2007-08, a total of 120 tutors assisted more than 300 students.

St. Francis Center

Provides services for families in need with the goal of helping them to live in dignity and become self-supporting community members. The center assists 2,400 people each month with such services as low-income housing, food and clothing, shower and laundry, counseling, community garden, and education.

Ravenswood Family Health Center

Provides primary medical and preventive health care for all ages at its clinics in Belle Haven and East Palo Alto. It also operates a mobile clinic at school sites. Of the 16,500 registered patients, most are low-income and uninsured and live in the ethnically diverse East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, and North Fair Oaks areas.

St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room

Serves hundreds of hot meals six days a week to people in need who walk through the doors. Funded entirely by voluntary contributions, St. Anthony's is the largest dining room for the needy between San Francisco and San Jose. It also offers emergency food and clothing assistance.

Second Harvest Food Bank

The largest collector and distributor of food on the Peninsula, Second Harvest Food Bank distributed 30 million pounds of food last year. It gathers donations from individuals and businesses and distributes food to some 162,000 people each month through more than 700 agencies and distribution sites in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

InnVision Shelter Network

Provides shelter/housing and supportive services across 18 sites in Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Peninsula. Serves thousands of homeless families and individuals annually on their path back to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

JobTrain

Provides training and job placement for people with the biggest problems, including returning parolees, long-term unemployed, homeless, welfare clients, marginalized youth, and those recovering from drug and alcohol abuse.

StarVista (formerly Youth and Family Enrichment Services)

Provides 22 programs to help people who struggle with substance abuse, domestic violence, mental health, and relationship and communications issues. Helps strengthen youth, families, and individuals to overcome challenges through counseling, education, and residential services.

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The Almanac Holiday Fund is a donor advised fund of Silicon Valley Community Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. A contribution to this fund allows your donation to be tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

All donors and gifts amounts will be published in The Almanac unless the boxes below are checked.

I wish to contribute anonymously. Please withhold the amount of my contribution.

The organizations below provide major matching grants to the Holiday Fund.



The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The David and Lucille Packard Foundation



The Almanac will make every effort to publish donor names for donations received before Dec. 31, 2012, unless the donor checks the anonymous box. All donations will be acknowledged by mail.



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Kindergarten signup, tours at Las Lomas

Kindergarten registration for the 2013-14 school year for children in the Las Lomas School District begins in January, and the district is beginning its tours for prospective parents next month.

Parents must reserve space on the tours, which are set for Dec. 6, 13, and 19; Jan. 18 and 24; Feb. 8 and 25; and March 7 and 20. All tours, which are for adults only, will be from 9:45 to 11 a.m. To reserve space, call 854-5900.

Registration packets for kindergartners who will begin classes at Las Lomas School in Atherton will be available at the school office beginning Monday, Jan. 7. The completed forms will be accepted beginning Jan. 28 at 8 a.m., according to the district.

Children who will turn 5 on or before Oct. 1, 2013, are eligible.

There are two kindergarten sessions: 9 a.m. to 12:20 p.m., and 10:35 a.m. to 2:05 p.m. To synchronize with the bus schedule, children living in the Ladera area are placed in the first session, and children from the Woodside area attend the second session.

All other registration and session request forms will be date- and time-stamped for placement, according to the district.

Parents registering a child for kindergarten should bring the child's original birth certificate or passport, immunization records to date, and proof of residence in the form of two original utility bills, such as power and water, or one original utility bill and lease agreement or mortgage paperwork.

A tour for parents of children enrolling in first through third grades is set for 9:40 to 10:35 a.m. on March 21. The tour is for parents of students new to the school.

Parents of returning first- and second-graders who wish to request a change of session may email requests to ssartor@llesd.org beginning Jan. 1.

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■ POLICE CALLS

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

MENLO PARK

Residential burglary report: Losses estimated at \$2,872 in break-in through rear window screen and theft of two laptop computers and pair of earrings, Euclid Ave., Nov. 23.

Auto burglary reports:

■ Losses estimated at \$4,000 in break-in by smashing rear side window and theft of laptop computer and briefcase, 2800 block of Sand Hill Road, Nov. 15.

■ Losses estimated at \$1,640 in break-in by smashing window and theft of backpack, purse, wallet and necklace, 2800 block of Sand Hill Road, Nov. 16.

Theft reports:

■ Losses estimated at \$1,150 in cutting of metal bike lock in front yard with latched gate and theft of two bikes, Roble Ave., Nov. 17.

■ Loss estimated at \$800 in theft of unlocked bike from private patio, Roble Ave., Nov. 14.

■ Losses estimated at \$770 in theft from shopping cart of bag of groceries valued at \$70 and \$200 purse containing \$500 in cash, Draeger's Supermarket at 1010 University Drive, Nov. 15.

■ Loss estimated at \$500 in theft of unlocked bicycle, Ravenswood Ave., Nov. 14.

■ Loss estimated at \$500 in cutting of cable lock and theft of bike from carport, Willow Road, Nov. 11.

■ Loss estimated at \$500 in the theft of unlocked bike and bike trailer from area near back fence at apartment complex, Buckthorn Way, Nov. 20.

■ Loss estimated at \$400 in theft of locked bike from fenced in patio, Sha-

ron Park Drive, Nov. 19.

■ Loss estimated at \$399 in theft of tablet computer from lobby of business, Adams Drive, Nov. 20.

■ Loss estimated at \$200 in theft of bike from front sidewalk, Nov. 10.

■ Loss estimated at \$80 in theft of car cover from driveway, Laurel Ave., Nov. 20.

■ Loss estimated at \$8 in theft of pumpkin from front porch, Gilbert Ave., Nov. 11.

■ No loss after woman yelled at two male youths on bicycles attempting to steal unattended purse on sidewalk next to vehicle, Santa Cruz Ave., Nov. 19.

Stolen vehicle reports:

■ Blue 2001 Pontiac TransAm, Durham St. and Arnold Way, Nov. 9.

■ White 2001 Toyota Tundra, O'Keefe Ave., Nov. 13.

■ Black 2000 Harley Davidson Super Glide motorcycle, Menlo Ave., Nov. 22.

WOODSIDE

Accident report: Bicyclist taken to hospital with "major injuries" after being struck on back by vehicle's passenger side mirror as vehicle swerved to avoid second bicyclist, Highway 84, Nov. 18.

Theft reports:

■ Unknown losses in arrest of house cleaner Marina Ramirez of Redwood City by Palo Alto police on burglary charges in case involving theft of jewelry, Hobart Heights Road, Nov. 18.

■ Loss estimated at \$60 in theft of cash, passport, ID card, health cards and bank cards, Canada College at 4200 Farm Hill Blvd., Nov. 19.

WEST MENLO PARK

Fraud report: Losses estimated at \$24,600 in cashing of bad checks to victim's checking account, Barney Ave., Nov. 16.

■ CALENDAR

Visit AlmanacNews.com/calendar to see more calendar listings

Special Events

Breakfast with Santa Menlo Park's Community Services Department presents "Breakfast with Santa." Activities include pancake breakfast, letter writing to Santa, holiday crafts, visiting and picture taking with Santa. Dec. 1, 7:30-11:30 a.m. \$5-7. Arrillaga Family Recreation Center, 700 Alma St., Menlo Park. Call 650-330-2200.

Christmas Wreaths A class that teaches students to make a permanent Christmas wreath. \$20 materials fee due to the instructor. Dec. 1, 1:30-3:30 p.m. \$30/\$39. Arrillaga Family Rec. Center, 700 Alma St., Menlo Park. menlopark.org/registration

Community Events

Nativity School Christmas Tree Lot Christmas wreaths and garland also available. All volunteer-run fundraiser for Nativity School. Through Dec. 15. Nativity School, 210 Oak Grove Ave., Menlo Park. www.nativitytrees.com

Norcal Crew erg-a-thon is recruitment and fundraising event. Entire Norcal team taking turns on rowing machines. The goal: pull at least 1 million meters and raise \$45,000. Dec. 2, Fremont Park, Santa Cruz Avenue & University Avenue, Menlo Park. Call 650-327-8275. www.piggybackr.com/norcal/erg-a-thon

Penninsula School Craft Fair Dec. 2 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. More than 40 vendors; handcrafted items include jewelry, clothing and toys. Homemade soups and baked goods. Fun zone for kids. Dec. 2, Peninsula School, 920 Peninsula, Menlo Park. Call 650-743-9360.

The Gift of Music Menlo Park Chorus performs sampler of songs from upcoming winter concert. Dec. 7 at Trinity Episcopal Church. 11-11:30 a.m. Menlo Park City Council Chambers, 701 Laurel St., Menlo Park. Call 650-330-2512.

Concerts

Kitka performs Wintersongs, seasonal harmonies from Eastern Europe. Wintersongs features music from pre-Christian celebrations of the solstice to Slavic folk carols, humorous Yiddish Chanukah songs, and meditative Eastern Orthodox incantations. Dec. 2, 4-6 p.m. Advance tickets: \$27/\$25/\$15; at the door: \$32/\$30/\$15/\$5. Arts at St. Bede's, 2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park. kitka.org

Missa, a celebration of Choral Music will be performed by Schola Seraphica. Composer range from Palistrina to Williams. Dec. 2, 2:30-4 p.m. \$20 general, \$15 for seniors/students. St. Patrick's Seminary, 320 Middlefield

'A Gift of Music'

Members of the Menlo Park Chorus rehearse for the annual holiday concert, "A Gift of Music," to be held at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 7, at Trinity Episcopal Church, 330 Ravenswood Ave. in Menlo Park. The program will range from seasonal pops to traditional carols. The city-sponsored chorus performs under the direction of April McNeely with piano accompaniment by John Iosefa. Tickets at the door are \$15 for general admission, \$12 for seniors and students, and free for children under 12.



Road, Menlo Park. Call 650-323-7914.

Peninsula Women's Chorus: 'Star of Wonder' Concert 3 features music from around the world, from Penderecki to the French Baroque to the U.S. premiere of "Star-Crossed" by Filipino composer Saundra Choi. Dec. 16, 4 p.m. \$30 general/\$35 premium/\$10 18 and under. St. Patrick's Seminary, 320 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park. www.pwchorus.org

Sacred Music for the Holidays Vallombrosa Center presents Christmas concert with Irish singer and songwriter Mary McLaughlin, her Cor Aingil Singers, and women's vocal ensemble Zambra. Dec. 2, 4-6 p.m. \$25.00/Adult, \$20.00/Youth (under 16). Vallombrosa Center, 250 Oak Grove Ave., Menlo Park. Call 650-325-5614. www.vallombrosa.org

Exhibits

Open Studio Five artists will be show their work with Jan Schachter at her studio: Lois Anderson, Margaret Wherry, Margaret Realica, Peggy Forman and Judith Content. Dec. 1-2, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Jan Schachter's studio, 190 Golden Hills Drive, Portola Valley. Call 650 851-3754. www.janschachter.com

Kids & Families

Atherton Dames Children's Holiday Tea Children and parents can join the Holbrook-Palmer Park Foundation Atherton Dames for their annual Children's Holiday Tea on Dec. 2. Visit with Santa, puppet show, craft activity. Sandwiches and treats available, too. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. \$55 for first two seats, all additional seats \$25 each. Jennings Pavilion, 150 Watkins Ave., Atherton. www.athertondames.org

Holiday party at Allied Arts Guild in Menlo Park benefits the Packard Children's Hospital. Two children's authors read from their stories and sell their books. A puppet show from Magical Moonshine Theater, Heather's Magic Show, a visit from Santa and juice and cookies. Dec. 2, 12:30-3 p.m. \$25 per person attending. Allied Arts Guild, 75 Arbor at Cambridge, Menlo Park. Call 650-854-4171. alliedartsguild.org

Talks/Authors

Author talk: 'Midnight Daydreams: Poetry of Heart Tales and Mindscapes' Local poets, co-authors, and mother and son, Dominique Renda and Blake Horsley, present a fresh collection of poetry. Nov. 29, 7:30 p.m. Kepler's, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Call 650-324-4321.

Author talk: 'Will Puberty Last My Whole Life? Real Answers to Real Questions' Julie Metzger, R.N., and Robert Lehman, M.D. discuss the book and answer questions from preteens about body changes, sex, and other growing-up stuff." Dec. 4, 7:30 p.m. Free. Kepler's, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Call 650-324-4321.

The New Industrial Revolution: How Will the Future be Made?

Attendees join Chris Anderson, editor-in-chief of Wired, and Carl Bass, CEO of Autodesk, for a discussion about the 3D printer revolution. Dec. 4, 6-9 p.m. Churchill Club member, \$54; others, \$79. SRI International, 333 Ravenswood Ave., Menlo Park. Call 408-265-0130.

Company gives to cancer research

The founder of glassybaby, a company that makes hand-blown glass votives and donates a portion of its profits to helping cancer patients, will be making a stop in Woodside on Thursday, Dec. 6.

Lee Rhodes will be selling her colorful candleholders from 4 to 8 p.m. at Emily Joubert Home & Garden, 3036 Woodside Road. Ten percent of the proceeds will go toward the Canary Foundation, a local nonprofit focused on cancer early-detection research.

Ms. Rhodes remembers the healing power she felt after lighting the glass votive her then husband made for her when she was stricken with lung cancer. She went on to start glassybaby in Seattle.

Close to a decade later there are now stores in Seattle and

New York, and the company claims to have donated a million dollars to various cancer charities.

— Kate Daly

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



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

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CALL the Viewpoint desk at 223-6507.

Viewpoint

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

Enrollment crunch at local schools

The two school districts serving most of Menlo Park and Atherton are bursting at the seams, which is causing a ripple effect as the enrollment bubble works its way through the schools.

And nowhere is that trend more pronounced than in the Menlo Park City district, which includes Hillview Middle School and the Oak Knoll, Encinal and Laurel elementary schools. The Menlo Park City district enrollment of 2,791 students significantly exceeds projections used a number of years ago when the district planned its facilities into the future.

The situation is dire enough to generate a notice from school officials to the German American International School, which leases the district's former O'Connor School site off Willow Road, warning that the district may have to take back the property before the lease expires. The notice was described as a "preliminary step" by school officials. The lease is set to expire in 2016, but can be broken if the district determines it needs the space.

And the Las Lomitas Elementary School District, which leases out campuses in Ladera (Woodland School) and Menlo Park (Phillips Brooks), has sent out a notice to the community asking for help to draft a new facilities master plan in the face of ever-growing enrollment that has seen more students materialize than planned for in recent years. Total enrollment for K-3 Las Lomitas and 4-8 La Entrada schools is expected to peak at just under 1,400 in 2016, but already some students are housed in portable classrooms.

The situation is likely more of a shock in the Menlo Park City district, which is just winding up a massive \$91

million rebuilding and remodeling project on all of its campuses. With the possibility that O'Connor might be in play, the district may have to adjust attendance boundaries. There are only 10 classrooms at O'Connor, but the campus could be enlarged by bringing in more portables.

Right now the district lacks the flexibility to move its middle (4-8) school students away from Hillview School in central Menlo Park. And although Encinal is a K-5 campus in Atherton, all students from the district's eastern edge must cross El Camino Real to attend Hillview for grades 6-8. With O'Connor, the district could take some pressure off Laurel and Encinal but eventually, it may run out of space at Hillview, which has just over 800 students now but a capacity of up to 1,000.

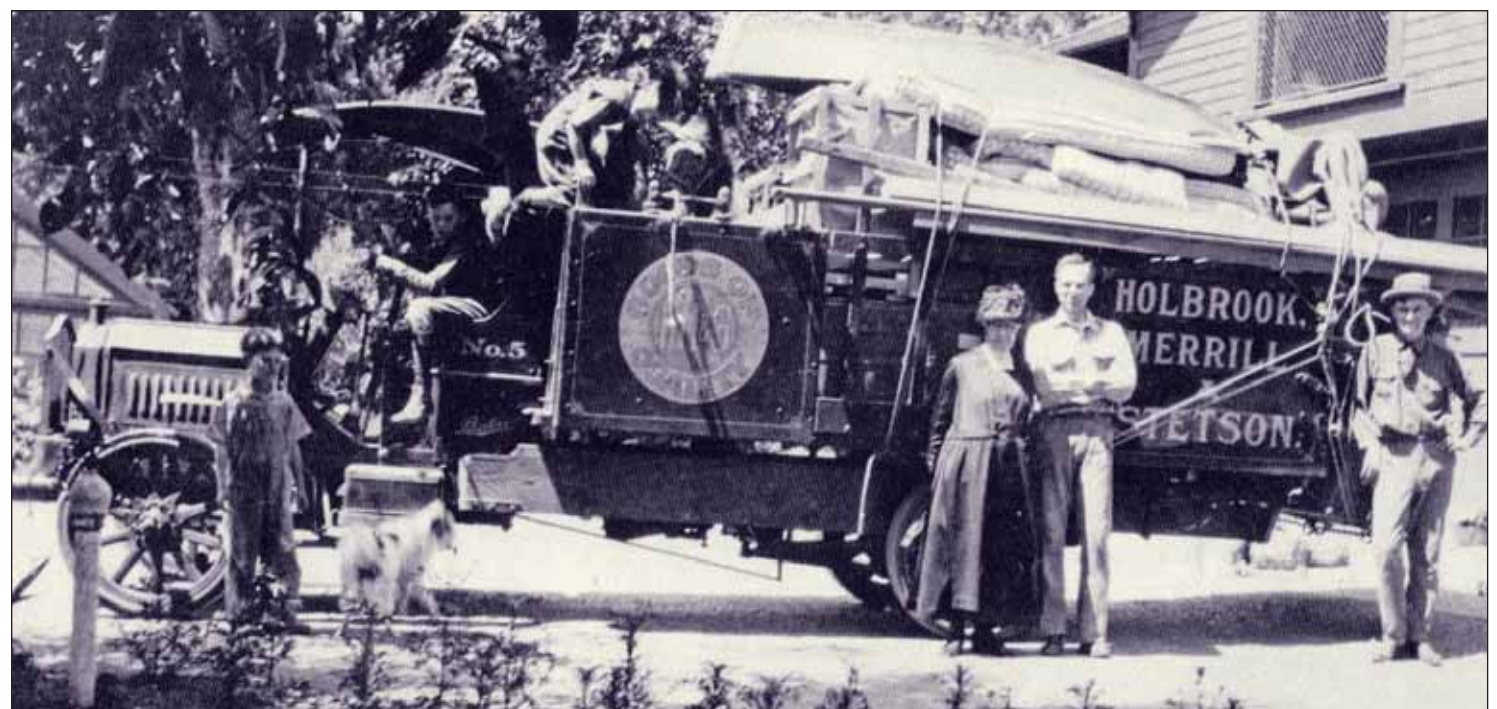
For Las Lomitas, which earlier this year signed a new lease for the Woodland School campus in Ladera, the unexpected enrollment bulge could mean that the district would have to take back what is now the Phillips Brooks campus, which is conveniently located adjacent to La Entrada.

But any plans to take back leased-out campuses will be studied very carefully by both districts, as the loss of rental revenue could severely impact their bottom line.

With both districts rated among the best in the state, the schools are a magnet for the Valley's high-tech parents, who want their children to attend top schools and are willing to pay the price to live in Menlo Park and Atherton to make sure they get it. But now the very popularity of Menlo Park's two prestigious districts could cause overcrowding and create the need for even more expansion at their campuses.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac



Atherton Heritage Association

Our Regional Heritage

The Merrill family of Atherton prepares for a trip in 1923 with their belongings piled high on a truck owned by the Holbrook, Merrill and Stetson company of San Francisco. Charles Merrill Sr. began his career with the company after the 1906 earthquake, and became president in 1926.

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10:00 am: Welcome Reception

10:30 am: Ceremony

11:00 am – 12:00 noon: Tours of Hoover Pavilion

The event is open to the public and will be held outside of the Hoover Pavilion at 211 Quarry Road in Palo Alto.

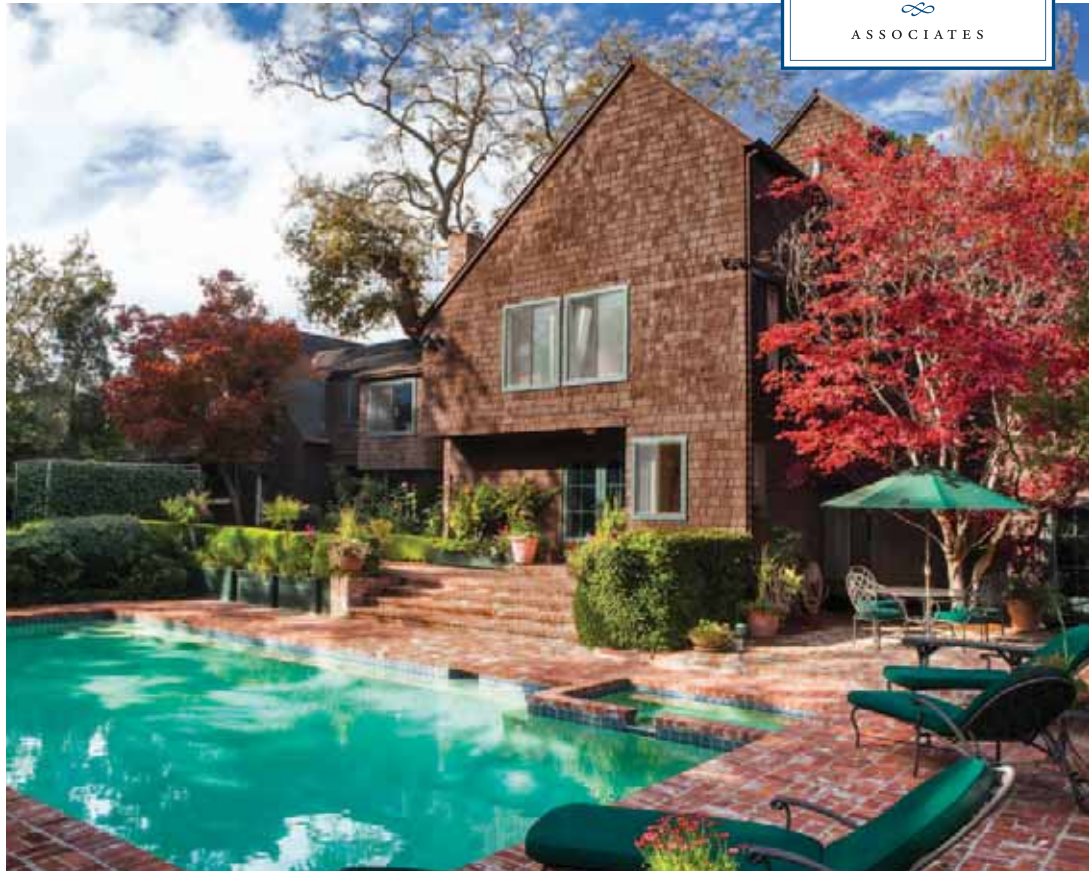
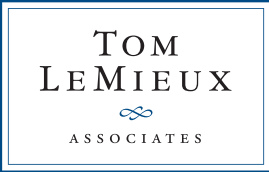
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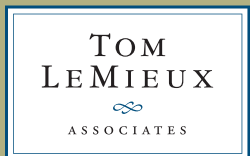
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