



**Seventh-grader making
a mark in music** | Section 2

The Almanac

THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER FOR MENLO PARK, PORTOLA VALLEY AND WOODSIDE

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It's a wrap for Rita Williams

Portola Valley
resident has been
a top reporter at
Channel 2 for years

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Kathryn Williams says her years teaching were the happiest of her life. "I always loved the little people."

Former local teacher turns 100

Kathryn Williams looks back over a well-lived life

By Jane Knoerle
Almanac Lifestyles Editor

Kathryn Williams of Menlo Park celebrated her 100th birthday Feb. 25.

The next day, Ms. Williams, a former elementary school teacher at Las Lomas School in Atherton, was to be feted by retired Las Lomas School District teachers, who meet every month for lunch. "It's very unusual to keep such lasting friendships," says Ms. Williams of the 15 to 20 teachers who have been getting together for years.

Ms. Williams started teaching in 1947 when her son was in first grade. She was one of the first to teach in split sessions, needed when the schools began to deal with the first of the Baby Boom. She taught in Redwood City and, for the last eight years of her teaching career, at Las Lomas School, retiring in 1971.

She says those years teaching first and then third grade were the "happiest years of my life. I always loved the little people."

Ms. Williams was born in Oak Knoll, Ohio, and moved west with her family to Walla Walla,

war years took them to Japan for two years and to London.

"I've made friends around the world," she says.

Ms. Williams was a minister's daughter and religion has been an important part of her life. She has been an active member of the Menlo Park Presbyterian Church since 1947. "My husband said I was always the first one to greet people at church and the last one to leave," she says with a laugh.

A resident of Menlo Park for 52 years, Ms. Williams lives with her daughter, Roberta Allee. Her son, J. Byron Williams, resides in Maryland. She has six grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

When asked the traditional question about the secret to her long life, Ms. Williams says: "I was taught to appreciate life. Every day is a brand new day for me." ■

'I was taught to appreciate life. Every day is a brand new day for me.'

KATHRYN WILLIAMS

Washington, when she was 3 years old.

"My parents always stressed education," says Ms. Williams, who graduated from UC Berkeley in 1934. The next year she married Ben Williams and they became parents of two children. Mr. Williams' government work in post-


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EYE CARE NEWS

Presented by
Mark Schmidt
Licensed Optician

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



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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Re-imagining the word 'rural' in Portola Valley

■ Portola Valley weighs whether to allow a vineyard in a meadow preserve.

By **Dave Boyce**
Almanac Staff Writer

In Portola Valley, home town to Silicon Valley entrepreneurs and endowed with open space and opportunities to own horses, goats and chickens (and roosters here and there), the words “rural character” and “sustainability,” meaning a preference for environmentally sensitive living, are considered vital to the town’s identity.

The word “rural” appears 40 times in Portola Valley’s general plan, including in a 10-point list defining rural quality. While officials in the past have sometimes put air quotes around this word, that seems unlikely now. The meaning of “rural” has become a matter of significance in an evolving community discussion over the fate of a 20-acre open field at 555 Portola Road.

The general plan describes the field as a “meadow preserve” within the town’s scenic corridor that “should be kept in a natural condition and the existing agricultural charac-

ter preserved.” Passersby and Westridge neighborhood residents can look across 100 yards of deep grass, often grazed by deer, and follow the earth tones up over ridges to the 1,900-foot peak of Windy Hill, an open space preserve.

This field also happens to be private, part of 229 acres owned by Dr. Kirk Neely and Holly Myers. The couple have been trying for about five years to get a permit to use seven acres at the least visible end of the field for a barn, some rows of vegetables, some fruit trees and a vineyard.

The Planning Commission approved most of the proposal in January 2012, but a 3-2 majority rejected the vineyard on the grounds that it conflicts with the “general purpose and intent” of the general plan, in the words of Commissioner Chair Alexandra Von Feldt.

Without the vineyard, Dr. Neely has said, the project is not economically viable. Since that decision, the couple have continued to press their case, and the Planning Commission has lost one member

Is small-scale agriculture consistent with scenic beauty?



Photo by Sheldon Breiner

This meadow, located in a privately held 229-acre parcel at the foot of Windy Hill in Portola Valley, is at the center of a dispute over the community’s vision of what is meant by rural character and whether a barn and some rows of crops, including a vineyard, are consistent with that vision.

of the majority that rejected the vineyard. In what may have been an inadvertent framing of the debate, the new commissioner, Nicholas Targ, recently described two kinds of rural: aesthetic and working/agricultural.

The council and the Planning Commission met on Feb. 13 for a 90-minute study session to consider options for the “meadow preserve,” including taking a closer look at the language in the general plan.

Comment on the meadow

“We need to acknowledge that Dr. Neely has been a really good steward of this piece of property,” Mayor John Richards said.

See **PORTOLA VALLEY**, page 14

Lawsuit over Atherton layoffs is dismissed

By **Renee Batti**
Almanac News Editor

At the request of the Teamsters union, the town of Atherton and the union have agreed to dismiss the lawsuit filed against the town in July 2011 over the layoffs of 11 employees in the building and public works departments.

In filing the lawsuit, the union had argued that because the town was going to outsource the work being performed by the permanent employees targeted for layoff, the action was illegal under California law. The town maintained that its actions were allowed under the employees’ contract.

A San Mateo County Superior Court judge in August 2011 denied the union’s request for an injunction halting the planned layoffs, and nearly all of the

town’s represented employees were then sent on their way with pink slips. But the union continued the legal battle against the town, citing provisions in Government Code 37103 and 53060.

Explaining the union’s decision to move for a dismissal, which the town had to agree to, Peter Finn of Teamsters Local 856 told the Almanac: “We stand by the merits of the suit, and would not hesitate to pursue similar legal action against another city that chose to outsource city services. When the judge failed to grant the injunction to stop the layoffs, the town employees subject to the layoffs moved on with their lives, making pursuing the case a moot point.”

Mr. Finn talked to the Alma-

See **ATHERTON LAYOFFS**, page 14

Hill pitches bill to ensure funding for electrification of Caltrain

By **Gennady Sheyner**
Palo Alto Weekly

As Caltrain prepares to embark on its long-stalled voyage toward electrification, state Sen. Jerry Hill, D-San Mateo, has unveiled a bill that would bring to the project the funding it needs while, at the same time, ease local anxieties about the controversial high-speed rail line.

Senate Bill 557, which Sen. Hill introduced at Palo Alto’s Caltrain station Friday morning, Feb. 22, seeks to ensure that the \$68 billion high-speed-rail project allocates funds for Caltrain’s electrification, a project that Caltrain has been coveting for more than a decade but

that has languished thus far because of non-existent funding. Officials have long maintained that electrification is necessary to modernize Caltrain, allowing the agency to run more trains and reach financial sustainability.

The high-speed rail project, which California voters approved in 2008 and which remains deeply controversial on the Peninsula, offers Caltrain its first real chance at electrification. Senate Bill 1029, which legislators approved by a single vote in the state Senate last



Jerry Hill

fall, allocates \$1.1 billion for train improvements on the Peninsula. Sen. Hill’s bill specifies that these funds include \$600 million for electrification and another \$105 million for advanced signal system.

The bill that passed last year also includes a loophole that would allow state officials to funnel money from the Peninsula project and allocate it to Central Valley, where the first segment of the rail system is set to be constructed. Sen. Hill’s bill would close that loophole by guaranteeing that the money rail officials promised to Caltrain would not be transferred to other segments.

See **HILL BILL**, page 14

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Bald eagle visits Menlo

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

A large bald eagle named Sequoia has been tree-sitting in unincorporated Menlo Park near the North Fair Oaks neighborhood since at least Saturday, Feb. 23.

The female eagle is tame and normally lives in the Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo, Menlo Park Police Department spokeswoman Nicole Acker told the Almanac.

Zoo staff are monitoring Sequoia's activity and waiting for her to get hungry enough to come to her handlers and get fed, Ms. Acker said, adding that the police department is not involved.

The handlers use whistles to convey instructions to the bird, photographer Jim Vanides said in an email. He had observed and photographed the bird on Sunday around 5 p.m.

Mr. Vanides, a Menlo Park resident, said he spotted the eagle in the pine trees along the Dumbarton railroad spur line near the Suburban Park area of Menlo Park.

North Fair Oaks resident Scott Peterson told the Almanac that



Menlo Park resident and photographer Jim Vanides spotted a bald eagle in the Suburban Park area of Menlo Park around 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 24, and sent us this photo.

he'd been out in his backyard on Saturday around 4 p.m. and had seen a large bird soaring a couple of hundred feet above some redwood trees. "I noticed it because it was so large," he said.

Mr. Peterson told this reporter that he'd been unaware that he might have been looking at an eagle. "That was a huge, huge bird," he said, "the biggest bird I've seen in 30 years of living here." ■

■ BRIEFS

Saturday: Menlo Park library e-reader event

The Menlo Park Library invites the public to learn how to download and read e-books and audio books from the library, and discover other sources for free e-books. The event runs from noon to 3 p.m. Saturday, March 2, at the main library at 800 Alma St. in the Civic Center.

Author Guy Kawasaki will speak from noon to 1 p.m. about his book, "APE: Author, Publisher, Entrepreneur," and share tips about how to publish an e-book. Two attendees will win Kindles donated by the Menlo Park Library Foundation.

Electrifying Caltrain

In preparation for conducting an environmental impact

review of Caltrain's proposed electrification project, Caltrain is holding two public scoping meetings this week: from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 27, in the second-floor auditorium at Caltrain's offices at 1250 San Carlos Ave. in San Carlos; and from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, at the city council chambers in Palo Alto at 250 Hamilton Ave.

The project would electrify the Peninsula corridor from San Francisco to San Jose, convert diesel-powered trains to run on electricity, and increase service by up to six trains in each direction during peak travel hours by 2019, Caltrain said.

Comments may be sent by email to electrification@caltrain.com, with the subject line "Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project."

Gun buyback collects 355 firearms

It took less than three hours Saturday, Feb. 23, to collect 355 firearms at a three-city gun buyback event in East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Palo Alto.

With a line of cars, driven by would-be gun sellers, snaking along University Avenue for hours, the buyback would have

collected even more if it hadn't run out of money. In total, gun owners brought 355 firearms to exchange for \$52,000 that had been privately raised by the Menlo Park-based non-profit Protect Our Children Bay Area.

Visit tinyurl.com/Guns-225 for more information.

Parents demand Menlo Park reinstate gymnastics teacher

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

City employees are often reminded that they work for the public — usually when the public wants the employee terminated. But in the case of a fired gymnastics teacher, the public wants her back at work.

Emails have flooded the Menlo Park City Council's inbox since parents learned that gymnastics teacher Michelle Sutton had been fired on Feb. 12. Menlo Park responded by deleting the emails, which are ordinarily archived as public records on the city's website, on grounds that they relate to a confidential personnel matter and could expose the city to a defamation lawsuit. The Almanac has maintained copies, however, including the original complaint that purportedly led to the termination.

Parent after parent wrote to say they would stay up past midnight to register their child online for Ms. Sutton's classes. They praised her rapport with kids and parents alike and described the firing as a "bait and switch" by the city, which didn't notify clients about the change in teachers or give the children a chance to say goodbye.

Lindsey Fisher's 3-year-old son has taken nine months of classes with the teacher. "Every day he wakes up and says, 'Is this my gymnastics day?'" she said.

The parents are mounting a campaign to get Ms. Sutton back. A Facebook group, "Bring Back Teacher Michelle," had 105 members within three days

of launching.

Ms. Sutton was fired after one mother took exception to being asked to follow a gym policy that requires parents to step away during child-only classes, which require parents to stay off the mats, preferably watching from a viewing area. The program also offers parent-child participation classes.

The mother, Erika Broda, referred to Ms. Sutton's approaching her while class was in session as unprofessional, and her husband, David Mai-



Michelle Sutton

The firing took place amidst conflict in the gymnastics program.

gret, emailed a complaint to the council on Jan. 30.

"It is really unfortunate what Michelle has done and she really owes my wife an apology and should be terminated — In my opinion. It is just a complete lack of judgement for a payed (sic) city employee," Mr. Maigret wrote.

The couple did not respond to the Almanac's multiple interview requests.

Ms. Sutton said the complaint did not accurately present her discussion with the mother, and in retrospect, would not change how she handled it.

While attempting to enforce the gym's policy she met "with strong resistance," Ms. Sut-

ton said. "I would not have approached the situation differently; our gym polices are designed for the safety of all students and their family members."

Supervisor Karen Mihalek reprimanded her the day after the encounter took place, she said. Twelve days later Ms. Sutton was fired "for reasons that remain unclear to me and to the many parents who support me. A copy of my employee file was mailed to me with no other papers than those submitted at the start of my employment, despite being told that this letter of complaint was my undoing."

The Almanac, with Ms. Sutton's permission, reviewed her personnel file at the city's human resources department on Feb. 25. It contained a note regarding a pay raise she received in 2009, and the paperwork employees file upon starting work with the city. The file held no documentation of reprimands or any other disciplinary actions.

However, the city doesn't need a reason to terminate at-will employees, and is not legally obligated to document disciplinary actions in their personnel files, although employers often do as a safeguard.

The termination took place against a backdrop of conflict within the gymnastics program. Ms. Sutton told the Almanac that six days prior to being fired, she asked the city's human resources department how to file a complaint of harassment against her supervisor. Staff told her to contact the union liaison

See GYMNASTICS, page 10

City deletes emails regarding teacher

The gymnastics uproar left parents questioning the legalities of the city erasing emails sent to the council, and what role the City Council played in Ms. Sutton's termination and the deletions.

Not much, as it turns out. "I have received a number of emails from residents in the past week, who seem to be under this misconception that I and my colleagues on council had something to do with Ms. Sutton's dismissal," Councilman Ray Mueller told the Almanac. "Frankly, the matter is a personnel matter that was handled by city management. While it is true I returned a phone call from a resident who called me wishing to register a complaint, beyond receiving

the complaint, I did not measure its merits, nor measure whether any disciplinary action was necessary."

As for the city's decision to delete the emails: Mr. Mueller asked that anyone concerned about any part of this issue write directly to his council account at rdmueller@menlopark.org.

"I will collect them all, I will not delete them, and I will give them to the city manager," Mr. Mueller said.

Whether the city even has legal standing to destroy the emails remains questionable.

"It's ludicrous," said Jim Ewert, legal counsel for the California Newspaper Publishers Association. "They've taken the phrase 'tortured logic' to a new level."

State law requires that records

be kept a minimum of two years. In addition, he said, "these are just comments; it's as if these individuals are petitioning the government to influence a decision."

In other words, it's just like what happens at every council meeting when a member of the public comments. The remarks are saved for posterity in the form of minutes and video recordings, which are archived on the city's website.

Even if the emails contained confidential personnel information — which Mr. Ewert disputes — "they're immune from (a defamation lawsuit) because these are privileged publications in the scope and course of a public hearing, if you will."

— Sandy Brundage

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Moving Can Be Daunting

Dear Monica: We are moving out of our home of sixty years to a smaller place in a senior complex. The move seems overwhelming to me and I don't know where to start. Do you have any suggestions of how to manage this huge task?

Betty G.

Dear Betty: I can imagine that you are overwhelmed by the thought of moving out of your long time home. I have had many clients in this same situation and can tell you the strategies that worked best.

The most important first step is to decide what you are taking to your new home. Since you are moving to a much smaller space you may not be able to take very many things and you may need to buy some new furniture scaled to fit the new space. Once you make this move you will be able to enjoy the new home and begin to get settled.

The next step is to organize the rest of

the project. You may have family members who can help you organize the move and there are professional organizers who offer a range of services to homeowners in your position. I think you should delegate as much of the task as you can to lessen the stress on you. You can divide the remaining items into groups such as, items for family members, items to donate or sell, items to discard, etc. If it is too hard to decide what you want to keep, you can rent a storage unit and have the items moved there so that you don't have to deal with them immediately. Since you will be selling your home it is important not to delay the process.

You should feel a great relief once you are in your new place. You will make new friends and you won't be burdened by the daily chores of shopping, cooking, cleaning, etc. These will be done for you and you can enjoy more relaxing activities. Best wishes for a wonderful transition to your new home.

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It's a wrap for Rita Williams

Portola Valley resident has been a top reporter at Channel 2 for over 30 years

By Kate Daly
Special to the Almanac

It's no coincidence that award-winning reporter Rita Williams of Portola Valley is retiring from Channel 2 (KTVU-TV) on Feb. 27. She told her boss months ago that she was planning to leave, and he picked that day because it's the last day of the ratings period.

Ms. Williams will be turning 66 the following week. "I'm probably the only female television reporter who's still on the street 41 years later," she says, pointing out that she never wanted to be an anchor and sit on the set.

"I've always wanted to be a writer, and a journalist," she explains, ever since she wrote for her middle school newspaper in Lubbock, Texas. But back then, she says, "I never aspired to be a TV reporter because it was all old, fat, white men."

Her trailblazing started early. She was the first in her family to go to college, attending Texas Tech University on a scholarship and majoring in journalism. After that she went on to become press secretary for Texas Congressman George Mahon for three years and learned "a lot about covering politics" between her job and taking night classes to earn a master's degree in political science and international affairs at George Washington University.

At age 25 she faced a fork in the road and chose to apply for a Westinghouse Broadcasting training program rather than accept a newspaper position back in Texas. That decision eventually led her to a TV reporting job in San Antonio, where she met Lindsay Bowen, a former Navy officer. After their wedding, they had another decision to make: Follow his work in computers to the Bay Area or go to Atlanta, where she had a job offer.

In 1978, they moved to California and she started freelancing at KQED and KTVU television stations. She was hired full time at the Oakland-based station in 1980.

Back then, in the broadcasting business, "a lot of women didn't get mar-



Rita Williams of Portola Valley is retiring from Channel 2 (KTVU-TV) on Feb. 27 after more than three decades with the station. (Cover photo also by Michelle Le.)

Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

ried, or got married and divorced," she observes. "I was the first on-air reporter to have a baby and be pregnant on the air."

She recalls working with longtime cameraman Bill Moore, Belva Davis' husband. He had orders not to show Ms. Williams' changing body, so he kept tightening up his focus, shooting closer and closer until he joked, "I'm just going to have to show your eyes."

She remembers getting 10 days of sick leave when she had her son. After experiencing some complications that delayed her return to work, she vowed to change things to ensure "other women who followed me wouldn't be treated like that."

She says she has always worked hard. "I've always felt I'm the eyes and ears of the public, I'm the watchdog. ... I competed with myself to do the best job ... every single day I gave them more than 110 percent."

'I always wanted to be writer, and a journalist. ... I'm probably the only female television reporter who's still on the street 41 years later.'

She considers herself tenacious, but also sees herself as bringing a woman's feeling and warmth to her reporting. She recalls a news conference she covered after a child

was murdered. "I remember waiting until all the guys finished yelling their questions, and I knew the police chief had kids, and asked, 'How did this case affect you?' He teared up and said, 'This is the hardest case in my 39 years; I have a kid the same age, and it hurts.'" That turned out to be the quote most of the newsmen used in their stories.

Another memorable story she tells is running onto the Bay Bridge minutes after the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989, wondering if she was putting her own life in danger, spending the night there, and then reporting on the situation from another live location well into the next day. She also witnessed



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Rita Williams works with video editor and longtime colleague Ron Acker at the KTVU station in Oakland.



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Rita Williams with KTVU sports reporter Mark Ibanez, who is going over his script before air time.

the last gas chamber execution at San Quentin in 1993.

She won a George Peabody award for her lead investigative reporting on the killing of passenger Oscar Grant by BART police officer Johannes Mehserle in 2009. She got an exclusive interview with Mr. Mehserle, done clandestinely in jail. Ms. Williams says: "I received lots of death threats after that. ... I didn't go out on the streets of Oakland for another couple of months."

For years she worked out of an office in the Hall of Justice in San Francisco. "I had so many sources in the Federal Building ... and did some really good reporting," she admits, which helped her be the first to break the story when Giants home-run hitter Barry Bonds was indicted on perjury and obstruction charges in 2007. She won an Emmy for that story and a second Emmy for a piece she did after two young Marines were killed in Iraq and their bodies were flown back to the East Bay.

Ms. Williams displays those three golden awards on the mantel in the living room of the home she's kept in Portola Valley since 1989. Her other awards hover around her desk alongside piles of papers. She has stored boxes of more papers in her

'I've always felt I'm the eyes and ears of the public, I'm the watchdog. ... I competed with myself to do the best job ... every single day I gave them more than 110 percent.'

backyard barn and envisions taming them into a memoir some day. She also sees herself writing mystery novels in the future.

For now she has few plans. She will speak at Writers' Week and Career Day at two local high schools and emcee a breakfast for Pathways Hospice. She's also planned her farewell party and has turned it into a fundraiser for Friends of Faith. Faith Fancher was a KTVU reporter who died of breast cancer.

Ms. Williams is looking forward to not having a schedule, coasting into summer, and perhaps traveling in the fall. She notes, "I've never been able to enjoy the spring, never had time to enjoy the beauty around here." And now she can. ■



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Rita Williams with then San Francisco mayor Dianne Feinstein in 1984. Ms. Williams and cameraman Bill Moore had this T-shirt made up as a prop when presidential candidate Walter Mondale interviewed Mayor Feinstein as a vice presidential candidate. The nod actually went to Geraldine Ferraro.



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Stephanie Lucianovic, *Suffering Succotash: A Picky Eater's Quest to Understand Why We Hate the Food We Hate* – March 13

Lisa Barnes, *The Petit Appetit Cookbook* – March 20

Donia Bijan, *Maman's Homesick Pie: A Persian Heart in an American Kitchen* – March 27

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EVENT

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How to Develop Mindful Eating Habits

Tuesday, Mar. 12, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Palo Alto Center

795 El Camino Real, Palo Alto

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PAMF Ear, Nose and Throat

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Please join us for a review of what obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is, how it is diagnosed, and why it is treated. Dr. Lee will also discuss nonsurgical and surgical treatments of OSA.

■ POLICE CALLS

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

MENLO PARK

Residential burglary reports:

■ Someone kicked in the side door of a residence on Blueridge Avenue in Sharon Heights and stole miscellaneous jewelry with an estimated value of \$6,500, Feb. 22.

■ Someone forced open a side door to a residential garage on Siskiyou Drive and stole miscellaneous jewelry with an estimated value of \$5,100, Feb. 15.

Auto burglary reports:

■ A locked vehicle on Marsh Road was broken into and someone stole a purse, Apple iPod, wallet, sunglasses, makeup and jacket for losses estimated at \$1,000, Feb. 20.

■ Items were "moved around" but there were no losses after someone entered a vehicle on Marmona Drive, Feb. 15.

Theft reports:

■ Someone stole three locked bicycles from a Coleman Avenue apartment patio for a total loss estimated at \$1,750, Feb. 19.

■ Five wheels with a total estimated value of \$1,000 are missing from the back of a pickup truck on Woodland Avenue, Feb. 15.

■ Someone stole a purse containing a cell phone and credit cards from the Rosewood Sand Hill hotel on Sand Hill Road for losses estimated at \$829, Feb. 21.

■ A bicycle and attached trailer secured with a cable lock and with an estimated value of \$529 are missing from a carport on Coleman Place, Feb. 15.

■ A woman reported that someone

stole her cell phone from a shopping cart while at Safeway supermarket at 525 El Camino Real for a loss estimated at \$500, Feb. 17.

■ Someone stole a bicycle locked to an apartment carport on Coleman Avenue for an estimated loss of \$500, Feb. 19.

■ An undisclosed amount of cash has gone missing from a locked cash box at the Mindfulness Center for Healing on University Drive, Feb. 20.

■ Someone stole a package containing prescription eyeglasses valued at \$140 and delivered to a door step on Peggy Lane, Feb. 20.

■ Someone stole hub caps valued at \$140 from a vehicle on Campbell Avenue, Feb. 21.

■ An employee of the Palo Alto Humane Society Art Gallery on Santa Cruz Avenue had her wallet stolen from her open handbag while at work for a loss estimated at \$77, Feb. 20.

Stolen vehicle reports:

■ Green 1999 Dodge Ram pickup from Pierce Road, Feb. 18.

■ Red Nissan Altima from Hamilton Court, Feb. 21.

■ Fraud report: Check bounced for goods valued at \$625 and purchased at Ela Lingerie at 1139 Chestnut St., Feb. 21.

WEST MENLO PARK

■ Residential burglary report: Resident of Leland Avenue discovered back door had been forced open but reported nothing missing from the house, Feb. 20.

ATHERTON

■ Theft report: A package delivered to the porch of a residence on Walnut Avenue is missing, Feb. 21.

GYMNASTICS

continued from page 7

at the city; he then directed her to the representative who handled at-will employees, who didn't return her phone calls, she said.

Gymnastics program management directed the Almanac's inquires to the city's human resources director, who was unable to comment on personnel matters.

The Almanac interviewed four current and former employees of the Menlo Park gymnastics program; they asked to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation. Each said that ongoing strife within the department contributed to the abrupt decision to fire Ms. Sutton, and that they were shocked to hear anyone claim she delivered poor customer service. One has quit in protest.

Ms. Sutton, on the other hand, wants to come back to the gym where she taught for five years — if the atmosphere improves. "I would love to return to the

gym, to my position as instructor. The current gym environment is not ideal as this time. My best possible outcome, as it stands now, would be a return to good standing with the city of Menlo Park."

The gymnastics center holds special significance for Ms. Sutton: Her daughter, 19-year-old Cate Fisher, also taught at the gym before she was shot and killed in 2011.

"Because Cate was a beloved teacher for almost three years, I wasn't sure if I could ever return to the gym," Ms. Sutton told the Almanac. "(With) the immeasurable support I received from co-workers, especially that of Pearce Wagner, and the Menlo Park community, I was able to regain the joy of teaching. In addition to the love and support of my own family, these families kept me moving forward, often with optimism and happiness. Despite lacking job security and better pay, I had 200 reasons to look forward to going to work each week." ■

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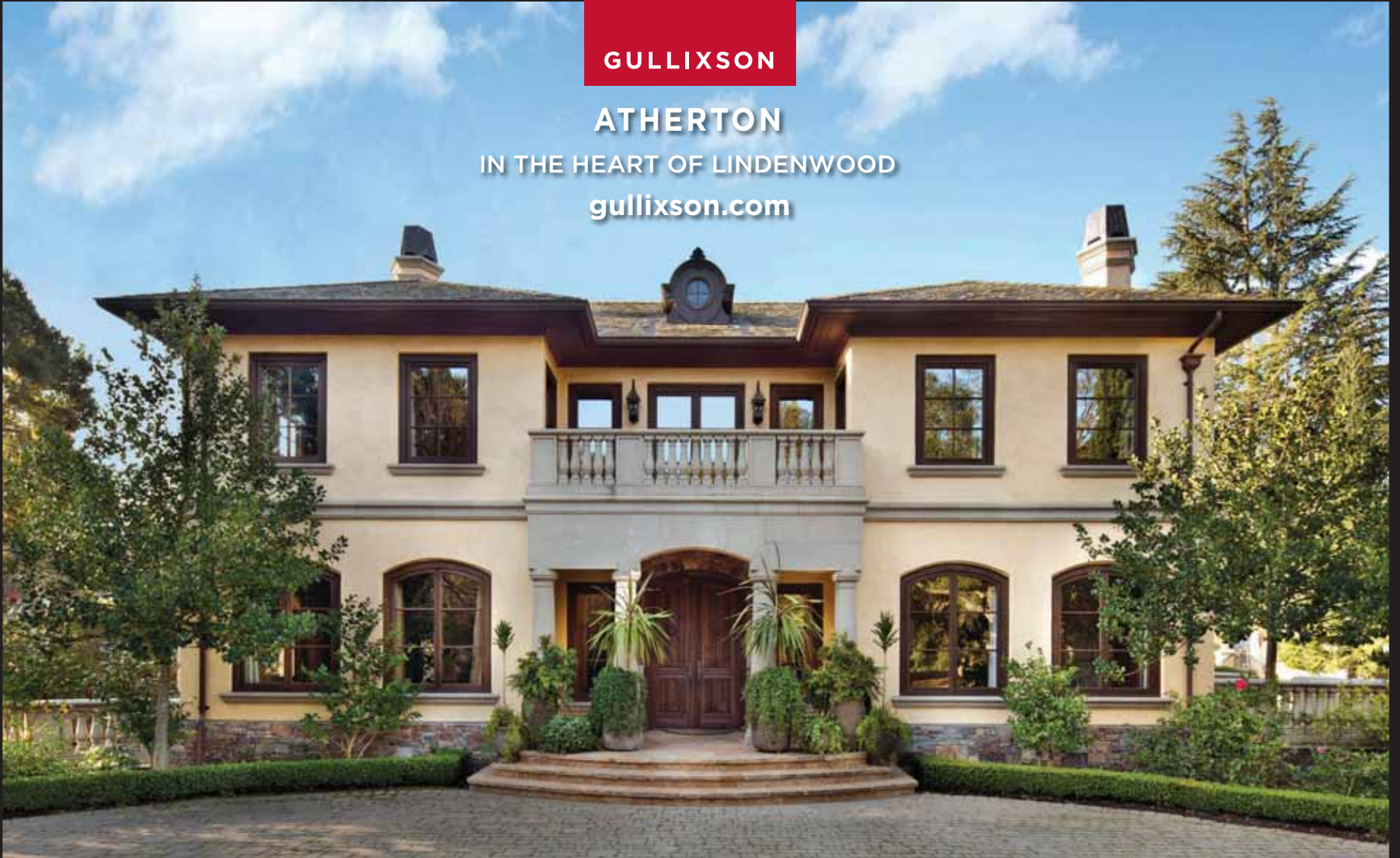
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El Camino traffic lights synchronized again

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Good news at last: The traffic lights along El Camino Real in Menlo Park are back in sync.

“The signals are almost completely back online for the adaptive system,” said Chip Taylor, the city’s public works director. “There are a few more items to work out, which should be corrected over the next few weeks. It is flowing much better.”

Caltrans confirmed the repairs are just about done. “The contractor should be finished connecting everything by next week if nothing prevents them from finishing,” said agency spokeswoman Gidget Navarro

on Friday, Feb. 22.

The traffic snarls began five months ago when a crew working repaving portions of El Camino Real near Santa Cruz Avenue accidentally cut the electrical lines powering the signal synchronization system in October.

Caltrans initially projected that the lights would be back to normal by mid-November. Freezing weather delayed the project’s completion, according to agency representatives.

After restriping the road, work crews had to reconnect the 16 traffic-sensing control loops on each side of El Camino Real to allow the system to start adapting signal timing to the amount of traffic flow again. ■

Facebook seeks land to build housing

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Like the city itself, Facebook’s hunting for spots to build homes in Menlo Park. The social media company either needs to create 15 homes, or pay \$4.5 million in in-lieu fees, according to the proposed below-market-rate housing agreement.

An attempt to buy lots the city owned at 777-821 Hamilton Avenue failed when Facebook was outbid, according to company representatives. Menlo Park sold the land for \$8 million in November to Greenheart Land Company, which plans to build housing on the 2.1 acres, and possibly expand the project to 7.1 acres if adjacent property owners agree to sell.

The agreement is tied to Facebook’s plans to build a sprawling “office in a forest” on 312 and 313 Constitution Drive, down the road from its main

campus. Designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Frank Gehry, the 433,555-square-foot building would perch on top of approximately 1,540 parking spaces, and blend into the landscape through ground-level gardens that wind their way up to a rooftop terrace, creating a forest visible from the Bayfront Expressway. An estimated 2,800 employees, mainly engineers, would work there.

In January the City Council unanimously approved a development agreement for the auxiliary campus that provides \$1.7 million distributed over 10 years, a vehicle-trip cap and possible tax revenue.

Housing commissioners unanimously recommended approval of the below-market-rate housing agreement on Feb. 20. The contract went to the Planning Commission on Feb. 25 and then to the City Council for a final review. ■

Hiker discovers human skeletal remains

A hiker found human skeletal remains at Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve in unincorporated San Mateo County on Feb. 18, according to the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office.

At about noon that day, deputies received a report that a hiker had come across the remains. Deputies arrived and the hiker guided them about

two miles west of Skyline Boulevard. The remains were found about 100 feet off the trail, deputies said.

While the remains have been identified as human, deputies have not identified the body. The San Mateo County coroner’s office and detectives are continuing to investigate the incident.

— Bay City News Service

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Bill to ensure funds for Caltrain electrification

HILL BILL

continued from page 5

"I'm making it clear that Caltrain will receive the full funding intended by the state," Sen. Hill said at the Friday press conference, where his announcement was intermittently interrupted by the sound of passing trains.

The bill also seeks to turn other promises from California High-Speed Rail Authority officials into enforceable laws

— namely, the assurance from rail authority officials that the rail system would be a "blended system" made up of two tracks shared by Caltrain and high-speed rail. The authority agreed in its most recent business plan to pursue such a system after a vehement outcry from Peninsula communities about the prior proposal, which called for a four-track system with Caltrain on the inside tracks and high-speed rail on the outside.

Sen. Hill's new bill would codify this promise in legislation. It would also give Peninsula communities some leverage over the project by giving Caltrain and eight Bay Area agencies a veto power over any future proposals to revisit the four-track alternative, which would increase the footprint of the controversial project and require more property seizures along the Caltrain corridor.

Under the proposed legislation, a decision to revisit the locally unpopular alternative would require approval from nine Bay Area agencies, including Caltrain, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority and the cities of San Francisco and San

Jose. Sen. Hill called this provision a "critical safeguard" for the Peninsula communities.

"I think it will provide certainty and a peace of mind as we move forward toward electrification and, ultimately, high-speed rail," he said.

The proposal is Sen. Hill's

Proposal would make it difficult for state to revisit 'four-track' option for high-speed rail.

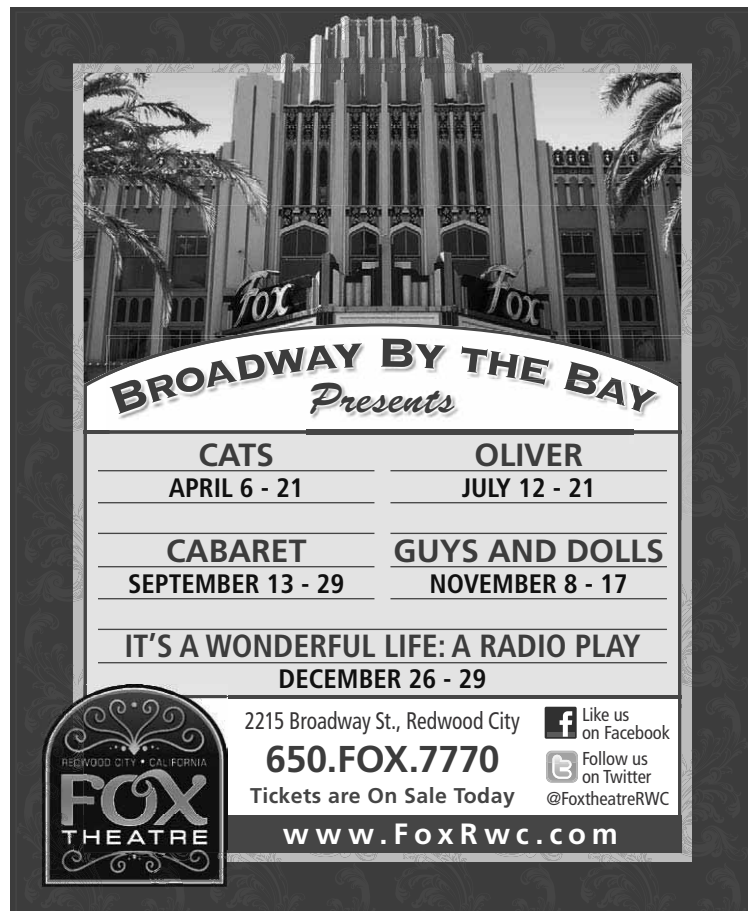
first high-speed rail bill since his election last November to the state Senate, where his district includes much of the territory formerly represented by Joe Simitian. A leading rail watchdog who termed out last

year and who now serves on the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, Mr. Simitian was one of the three architects — along with U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, and Assemblyman Rich Gordon, D-Menlo Park — of the "blended system" approach.

Santa Clara Supervisor Ken Yeager, who chairs Caltrain's board of directors and who joined Sen. Hill at the press conference, said the board is in "full support" of Sen. Hill's legislation. He noted that next year will mark the 150th anniversary of passenger rail service on the Peninsula.



"These early investment funds set us on a course to thrive over the next 150 years," Mr. Yeager said.

Under the current plan, Caltrain electrification is slated to be completed by 2019. ■



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PORTOLA VALLEY

continued from page 5

Maintaining the meadow does require economic activity, and "agriculture makes a lot of sense in a sustainable way," he added. "A vineyard might be acceptable in part of the area."

Councilwoman Ann Wengert agreed, as did Mr. Targ. "It

seems to me," he added, "that 'agricultural character' encompasses an abundance of agricultural opportunities." Modern farming, he said, is "highly sustainable" and could provide the town with a greater understanding of the value of agriculture.

Defenders of aesthetic rural resisted. "It is important to understand the traditions of this town and protect the largely open character of this meadow," former mayor Jon Silver said. "If we're going to change that, it requires the widest, broadest participation of the town."

"This isn't an agricultural community," resident Tom Kelley said. "This is a natural community. If you want to see an agricultural community, take (state Highway) 99 and go to Fresno. We're more horse people than we are agricultural people."

"I'm forever grateful for this view of open space," said resident Julia Shepardson. "I think that agriculture of any form is impactful. (The meadow) is the soul of Portola Valley. Barns, delivery trucks, agricultural plants ruin ecology. I really hope that we, as a community, can think of ourselves as trustees."

"When you buy a preserve,

you own a preserve. It's not a blank slate," Ms. Shepardson continued. "The town is allowing him to do more than have a meadow." The language in the general plan should "be as inflexible as possible," she said. "Historic preservation by its nature kind of holds things as they were."

"I find myself in the public spotlight. I don't really want it or like it," Dr. Neely said, adding that he prefers collaboration rather than antagonism and the "trench warfare" over what words mean. "A 20-acre parcel remains a museum of Portola Valley's past for the benefit of passersby," he said. "That really has to be weighed against fairness. ... We don't think it's a desecration to use the meadow for a limited amount of agriculture."

The Planning Commission's 2012 decision "was not a compromise but a gutting of the proposal," he said. "What we were left with was hobby agriculture."

The vineyard could go somewhere else, vineyards exist elsewhere on the property, and the issue needs a public hearing, Planning Commissioner Denise Gibson said, in an echo of former mayor Silver's comments. ■



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ATHERTON LAYOFFS

continued from page 5

nac during a quick break in a negotiation session, and had to rush off before he could explain why the union decided to drop the lawsuit at this time rather than earlier.

In a prepared statement, Atherton Mayor Elizabeth Lewis said: "The decision to lay off town employees was difficult, but one that was necessary to balance

the town's financial picture. We are grateful that the lawsuit is now concluded and that the town can focus on continuing to provide quality services to our residents in a cost-effective manner."

Town attorney Bill Conners and his assistant worked on the town's defense, and City Manager George Rodericks said the work was covered by Mr. Conners' retainer fee, so was done at no additional cost to the town. ■

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Atherton council OKs police records shredding

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

After hearing assurances from Atherton's town attorney that information in the police files slated for destruction was "trivial in every sense," a unanimous City Council on Feb. 20 authorized the shredding of 18 files on internal investigations and citizen complaints.

The files contain "nothing fresh or useable in any way" in terms of possible lawsuits or ongoing problems with individual police officers, attorney Bill Conners told the council.

All the files are at least five years old, and none has to do with issues of officer integrity or possible criminal behavior, said Police Chief Ed Flint, who brought the authorization request to the council.

Under state law, records of citizen complaints and internal investigations of police officers must be kept for at least five years, and their destruction after that period requires the written consent of the city attorney and city council authorization. Destruction of old files under a sound records retention policy is "standard operating procedure," Chief Flint said.

Before the vote, Councilman Bill Widmer noted that he had received email from residents

concerned about destroying records in a police department that has been marked in recent years by incidents drawing lawsuits and disciplinary action. Although he has confidence in the police chief's performance and judgment, there is a lingering concern on the part of some residents about possible police officer misconduct, Mr. Widmer said. "We need to err on the conservative side," he said.

Other council members noted,

however, that under Chief Flint's leadership, welcome changes have been made. The council should "support his judgment in changing the way we do things," said Councilman Cary Wiest, who also said he had heard from a number of residents concerned about the matter.

The town has been remiss in adhering to its record retention policy, and Chief Flint's effort to conform to it shouldn't be discouraged, Councilman

Jerry Carlson said. Mayor Elizabeth Lewis agreed, saying that every jurisdiction regularly purges its records in keeping with policy, and Atherton should do so as well.

In his report, Chief Flint stressed the importance of following a retention schedule, noting that "(i)n the event of litigation, courts accept a retention schedule as establishing an agency's 'normal course of doing business' and duty to retain records. Retention

of stale information in personnel and litigation matters can be detrimental to staff, the organization, and the town."

Offering strong support for the chief's request, Councilman Jim Dobbie wanted the police records shredding project to start a town trend. He urged town staff to start getting rid of the rat-gnawed clutter of records stored in the Carriage House in Holbrook-Palmer Park. "I'm all for cleaning house," he said. ▀



5th Anniversary
Dine Out for Packard

Thursday,
March 7



Atherton to plant 5 cedar trees

The Atherton Tree Committee will plant five deodora cedar trees at Holbrook-Palmer Park on Saturday, March 2, in recognition of Arbor Day, which is March 7.

"Volunteers, with or without shovels, are invited to join the planting, which will start at 9 a.m. beside the entrance road inside the park," Tree Committee member Ted Haynes said in a press release.

The trees — a fast-growing, long-lived and drought-tolerant species — will continue a row of mature cedars along the front of the park, Mr. Haynes said.

Deodora cedars were recommended by the Tree Committee and approved by the town's Parks and Recreation Commission, he said. ▀

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The Engineer's Estimate for the project is: \$365,000

Per Section 6.01 of the Town of Atherton's Standard Specifications, the General Contractor shall perform, with his own organization, work of a value amounting to not less than 50% of the total contract, excluding specialty items as indicated on the bid schedule.

Bids must be for the entire work, and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked: "Bid of (Contractor) for 2013 CAPE SEAL PROJECT, Project No. 56056", along with date and time of bid opening.

Plans and specifications may be obtained at the Town of Atherton's website at www.ci.atherton.ca.us under Bid Solicitation at no cost. Additional important information is contained in Town of Atherton Standard Specifications, which are available on line at www.ci.atherton.ca.us/publicworks.html. Contractor shall be responsible for any addendums that may be posted on the Town's website. **No Planholders list shall be available.**

Bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of cash, a cashier's or certified check or bid bond for not less than ten percent (10%) of the amount of the bid, as a guarantee that the bidder, if awarded the Contract, will fulfill the terms of the bid.

The Town of Atherton, The City, reserves the right to reject any or all bids; to make any awards or any rejections in what it alone considers to be in the best interest of the City, and waive any informalities or irregularities in the bids. The contract will be awarded, if at all, to the responsible bidder that submits the lowest responsive bid. **[NOTE: If there are alternates in the bid, the City will need to state how the low bid will be determined, as required by PCC 20103.8.]**

Bidders are hereby notified that, pursuant to California Civil Code Sections 3247 and 3248 and Standard Specifications Section 3.02, the successful bidder will be required to provide payment and performance bonds in the amounts of 100% of the contract price.

Bidders are hereby notified that provisions of California Labor Code regarding prevailing wages and apprentices are applicable to the work to be performed under this contract. Pursuant to Section 1773 et seq. the general prevailing wage rates have been determined by the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations and appear in the California Prevailing Wage Rates. Copies are on file at the office of the City Engineer and are available to interested parties upon request. The successful bidder shall post a copy of the wage rates at the job site.

The Contractor may elect to receive 100 percent of payments due under the contract, without retention of any portion of the payment by the Town of Atherton, by depositing securities of equivalent value to the retention amount in accordance with the provisions of Section 22300 of the California Public Contract Code.

All bidders shall be licensed under the provisions of the Business and Professions Code to do the type of work contemplated in the project. The City has determined that the Contractor shall possess a valid Class A license at the time the bid is submitted. Failure to possess the specified license shall render the bid non-responsive.

Each bidder shall submit with this bid a statement setting forth his/her/its experience and qualifications. The statement shall be made on the forms provided by the Town and must accompany each bid. The three lowest bidders will be required to submit subcontractor's experience and qualifications statements within 48 hours of the bid opening, on forms provided by the Town.

By submitting a bid in response to this advertisement for bids, the bidder shall be conclusively deemed to have read, understood and agreed with all of the information and materials contained in the bid documents, including but not limited to the construction contract, the standard specifications, the special provisions, the required nature and amount of insurance and the documentation evidencing said insurance.

Any questions regarding the project should be directed to David Huynh, Project Engineer, telephone: (650) 752-0555 or by written Requests for Information (RFI) to: Public Works Department, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton, CA 94027, no later than ten (10) business days before bid opening. RFIs may be emailed to dhuynh@ci.atherton.ca.us or faxed to (650) 688-6539. Responses shall be posted on the Town's website no later than five (5) days prior to bid opening.

By: _____
Gordon Siebert, P.E., City Engineer

Date: _____

Supes settle suit, may redraw district lines

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

San Mateo County voters last November brought an end to the practice of having candidates for county supervisor run county-wide instead of in their districts alone. Now, in settling a 2011 lawsuit brought by six people — three of Asian ethnicity and three of Latino — over complaints of racial discrimination in elections to the Board of Supervisors, the board has agreed to consider redrawing the five district boundaries.

"While the Board of Supervisors firmly believes that the existing system of elections was fair and protected the rights of all voters in the County, those voters expressed a clear preference for district elections through Measure B," county spokesman Marshall Wilson said in a Feb. 20 statement. "Given the change in the law, it no longer made sense to defend the prior system. Resolving the lawsuit thus allows the County to focus its efforts on developing the district-based system chosen by the voters in a sensible manner that protects the right of all citizens to vote."

A nine-member citizens committee, with members vetted by the League of Women Voters and approved by the board, will hold public meetings around the county in coming months to "receive community input as to where the boundaries of each district should be placed," Mr. Wilson said.

The committee, working with professionals familiar with redrawing district lines, will make recommendations to "ensure that the integrity of neighborhoods and communities of interests are protected," the statement said.

District boundaries were redrawn after the 2010 census. If they are to be redrawn again, the supervisors would decide that on Oct. 8, 2013, and the changes would be in place for the June 2014 elections.

The defendants — the five supervisors and Mark Church, the county's chief elections officer — agreed that the county would pay, in round figures, \$650,000 in plaintiffs' attorneys fees, along with \$400,000 to Kerr & Wagstaffe and \$100,000 to the county counsel's office for

legal services, Mr. Wilson said. The lawsuit, led in part by attorney Robert Rubin of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, alleged racially polarized voting that left the Asian and Latino communities "routinely ignored and marginalized by the majority."

People in those two communities make up about 50 percent of the county's population but since 1995, no Asians and just one Latino have served as supervisor, the complaint says.

The plaintiffs asked for an end to at-large (countywide) voting and a remedy to violations of state and federal voting rights laws. Voters' approval of Measure B took care of the first issue; a study of whether to redraw boundaries is intended to address the second.

The defense argued that at-large voting was justified under "home rule," a concept that allows a charter county — San Mateo County is one of 13 in the state — freedom to craft its own laws. "They argued that they could ignore state (and federal) law. We felt that an issue like discrimination against minority voters was a sufficiently compelling interest (to justify suing)," Mr. Rubin said. "A home-rule charter county doesn't trump state law."

Asked to comment, attorney Michael von Lowenfeldt, who helped defend the supervisors, said he remains unconvinced, adding that laws governing charter counties predate the California Voting Rights Act. This case, he said, was about at-large voting, not voter disempowerment, and had been rendered all but moot by Measure B. As for redrawn districts, "All we've agreed to is to analyze the issue," he said. "That may or may not affect where the lines would be. There will be more public comment this time around. More comment is usually better."

The board "did insist on retaining its power" to approve the ad hoc committee membership and new district boundaries, Mr. Rubin said, but added: "We're confident they will listen to the committee and our consultants and approve (new) lines. ... Section 2 of the California Voting Rights Act, we think, is a sufficient check on any shenanigans." ■



Nicholas Targ's credentials are a deep shade of green

Attorney is a new member of the Portola Valley Planning Commission

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Statistics on commuting by Portola Valley residents are showing changes that are heartening, says Nicholas Targ, a new member of the Planning Commission. In comparing census data from 2010 and 2006, Mr. Targ noted during a recent interview that commuting by bicycle is up. So is walking to work and working at home, while driving alone to work is down.

These numbers bode well for Portola Valley because they reinforce the tone of sustainable living embodied in the town's general plan, Mr. Targ said. A land-use attorney with deep experience in environmental law, Mr. Targ will be participating in decisions on development in town for the next four years.

The 2006 data at bayareacensus.ca.gov are taken from the American Community Survey, a project of the U.S. Census Bureau to periodically update numbers from the formal census taken every 10 years. The 2010 numbers show 11 Portola Valley residents commuting by bike versus none at all in 2006; 84 residents walking to work, up 22 percent; 229 working at



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Nicholas Targ was an attorney at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

home, up 4 percent; and 1,403 driving alone to and from work, down 17 percent from 2006.

Mr. Targ said he found the commuting numbers especially interesting. "I believe they have implications for the way in which the population uses the local natural and built environment," he said.

Sustainable land use

Environment and land use are among his priorities as a

PORTOLA VALLEY

partner in the international law firm of Holland & Knight in San Francisco. He is an adjunct professor in land-use law at Hastings College of Law in San Francisco. In addition, he is vice-chair of the American Bar Association's Committee on Environmental Justice, and he co-founded an environmental law and sustainability program at the historically black Howard University in Washington, D.C.

His career in Washington began in the Department of the Interior, where he helped establish an alternative dispute-resolution program and a department-wide office for dealing with hazardous material issues. At the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, he was counsel and associate director in the Office of Environmental Justice.

He has a law degree from Boston College and a bachelor's degree in economics, politics and legal studies from the University of California, Santa Cruz. During studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, his focus was "principle-

Commute data (2010, compared with 2006)

	Atherton	Menlo Park	Portola Valley	Woodside
Bike to work	No change (0)	+110% (1,182)	11, up from zero	20, up from zero
Walk to work	-29% (119)	+40% (472)	+22% (84)	-71% (34)
Work at home	-37% (242)	+15% (1,165)	+4% (229)	+33% (402)
Drive alone	-17% (1,930)	-11% (10,204)	-11% (1,403)	-17% (1,590)

Source: U.S. Census and American Community Survey, a U.S. Census periodic update

based negotiation in land use planning, sustainability and property rights."

Mr. Targ grew up in Palo Alto, but as a kid he roamed the hills of Portola Valley, he said. The open spaces set the town's character and are "an opportunity for the community to come together, to be out having an experience in nature that supports health and that's connected with the landscape that we have."

In his capacity as a planning commissioner, Mr. Targ said a search for common ground will be key. "It takes a lot of homework to understand the different interests that are significant to different stakeholders," he said. "Once you understand what their interests are, you can begin to satisfy them and work for mutual benefits

in a proper alignment."

Among such issues that Portola Valley government has been addressing lately is the possibility of a small vegetable farm and vineyard in part of a private field at 555 Portola Road, a space treasured by some residents for its scenic qualities.

In his interview with the Town Council, Mr. Targ distinguished between working rural and aesthetic rural, and hinted at the value of working rural. So is he a working-rural advocate? "That's definitely true," he told the Almanac, but his support depends on the project. "I'm an advocate of projects that fit in with the community (and) preserve the community's character and history," he said. "I like community-serving landscapes and I also like community-serving retail." ■

Painting valued at \$100,000 missing from home

A valuable painting by noted Filipino portraitist and landscape painter Fernando Amorsolo is missing from an Atherton home on Jennings Lane, Atherton police reported Feb. 18. The painting has a value of more than \$100,000 and was believed stolen sometime in May or June of 2012, police said.

Lt. Joe Wade said in an email that the painting depicts women planting while standing in a rice paddy, their reflections coming off the water, with a water buffalo and a farmhouse in the background. The painting's name, its date and whether it is an original are all still unknown, police said.

A web search turns up a 1949 oil-on-canvas called "Rice Planting" that includes women planting rice, reflections, a water buffalo, and a farmhouse. That painting appears to have gone up for auction at Christie's in Hong Kong in 2011.

A Wikipedia entry calls Mr. Amorsolo, who died in 1972, "one of the most important artists in the history of painting in the Philippines." He was particularly good at painting light, the entry says.

The police report is silent as to suspects, leads and how the painting might have been sto-

len. Police are waiting for more information from the victim, Lt. Joe Wade said.

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John Frenster

John Henry Frenster, M.D., longtime resident of Atherton, California, passed away peacefully on January 26, 2013. Born on October 14, 1928, in Chicago, Illinois, he was the only child of Henry and Pauline (nee Janssen) Frenster.

He received his BS (1950) and MD (1954) degrees from the University of Illinois. Later, he served in the U.S. Army Medical Corps at the Walter Reed Army Research Institute and then was Assistant Professor at the Rockefeller Institute in New York (1958-1965) doing biomedical research.

Dr. Frenster continued his medical and scientific career at Stanford University and Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, where he served as medical oncologist and researcher, especially in the area of Hodgkins' Lymphoma. Devoted to scientific inquiry in cancer research, cell biology and biophysics, he actively pursued his scientific investigations until his death.

Dr. Frenster married Dr. Jeannette Hovsepian on June 15, 1958. They celebrated their 50th anniversary in 2008 with a celebration of family and friends at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado

Springs, Colorado.

As a sports enthusiast, Dr. Frenster could often be found following the latest San Francisco Giants or 49ers game on the radio. He also enjoyed visiting museums of fine art. Listening to classical music and frequently attending live concerts were other passions of Dr. Frenster.

In addition, he was an avid reader of books and journals, and he immersed himself in many subjects such as history, poetry, culture, technology, and mathematics. Years ago he spent many hours with his family at Kepler's bookstore, at Stanford University sporting events, and on numerous road trips.

Dr. Frenster is survived by his wife of 54 years, Jeannette Hovsepian Frenster; three children, Jeffrey Frenster of San Jose, Diane Frenster (Thomas Moses) of Galesburg, IL, and Linda Jackson of Colorado Springs, CO; and four grandchildren, Mark Frenster and Rebecca, Jacob and Sabrina Jackson.

A private memorial service will be held in March.

Donations in his memory can be made to the charity of your choice.



PAID OBITUARY

We've Got Your Back

June 6, 1938 - January 28, 2013

Bill Thomas is a nomad who found reverence on the road. That is how he says he learns best – by seeking exotic landscapes and embracing the folks that live there ... all sizes and shapes, people with varied life-styles. He travels with an old brown backpack – sometimes on his Goldwing motorcycle or by train or plane (always economy). Sometimes his boat in Baja, The Grey Crepusclo, gets his favor, and they wander the Sea of Cortez.

He took his son to Cuba before it was in vogue and to Uganda to stare into the eyes of (fellow) gorillas. He and his daughter traveled Asia, exploring Burma and Thailand. They ventured to Alaska, Papua New Guinea and Irian Jaya where the mud people introduced a unique world. His grandson and daughter played in Vietnam after he and his traveling buddy motorcycled the mountains of the north. The wholesome parks of the US intrigue him, especially the southwest – where light delights the stodgiest of travelers and the red rocks cast a mystery.

He follows hot springs and finds the refreshing waters rejuvenating – their locations in strange and curious places. He traveled the Silk Road with his buddies – a historical road in Afghanistan. He watched polo matches there at the top of the mountain, enjoying the colorful enthusiasm of the locals.

Susan, his wife, follows the yellow line riding on the back of tomorrow – which is really their silver metal machine – they covet – cross the country with camera ever-ready, in mostly wonder and awe. Especially HWY 1 – the road to Big Sur – their “favorite” landscape

in their own back yard. The costal charm, the soft turns and the marvelous vistas!

In 1969 he stumbled onto Portola Valley and thought it is a lovely spot to bring his family – a spot for a unique nest.

He returns to his nest comfortable and familiar – the family – a place to tell stories as he shares the joy of the land.



We are their kids -
Jeff and Jenny

We are their mates -
Rachel and Rich

The best of the bunch -
The Grand Ones ... the future -
Wyatt, Joss, Mason and Blake

Susan and their canine Ms.
Bailey – a constant reminder
that unconditional love is exact-
ly that ... unconditional!

Wherever he travels, his fond-
ness for tequila and the music of the land – Ray
Charles and Willy Nelson – embrace his soul.

That's the way we roll!

Come Join the Thomas Family
for Bill's Celebration -
Thursday, February 28
Any time after 6:00 PM
Parkside Grille –
88 Portola Road, Portola Valley

Donations in Bill's Memory may be made
to the National Parks Conservation
Association – 777 6th Street NW, Suite 700,
Washington, DC. 20001-3723

PAID OBITUARY

Ex-chief probation officer pleads not guilty to charges

Former San Mateo County Chief Probation Officer Stuart Forrest pleaded not guilty Feb. 22 to two charges of possessing child pornography, according to state prosecutors.

Mr. Forrest was arraigned at San Mateo County Superior Court in Redwood City and was expected to be released on \$100,000 bail, according to Lynda Gledhill from the California attorney general's office.

A complaint filed by that office alleges Mr. Forrest possessed child porn on Dec. 20 and 21, 2012.

San Mateo County District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe, who said he has previously worked with Mr. Forrest in various professional capacities, turned the case over to Attorney General Kamala Harris.

At the arraignment, a judge outside of San Mateo County was brought in to further dismiss any concerns about the county's

previous working relationship with Mr. Forrest, Mr. Wagstaffe said. “We want the public to feel comfortable,” he said.

The complaint stems from a federal investigation by the U.S. Postal Inspector Service last December.

Mr. Forrest was placed on administrative leave on Dec. 21, 2012, after county officials announced the probation chief was under investigation. He announced his immediate retirement on Dec. 31.

Mr. Forrest had worked for the county's probation department since 1977 and was appointed chief in 2009. His salary in 2012 was \$140,004.

Calvin “Cal” Remington is now serving as interim probation chief.

Mr. Wagstaffe said the U.S. Attorney General's Office turned the case over to the county, which in turn passed it along to the state.



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Stephen E. Jones

Stephen E. Jones, devoted husband, father, brother, son and friend, age 54, passed away on Wednesday, February 20th, in Redwood City, California after a nearly two-year struggle with brain cancer. Steve was a committed father and husband who will forever be remembered for his good-natured, gentle soul and unwavering belief in the goodness of his fellow man. His family, friends and colleagues marveled at his



determination and optimistic spirit. Kathryn, his 11 year old adoring daughter, inherited his grace and describes her father as generous, thoughtful, and kind-hearted. Steve was born in Poughkeepsie, NY, moved to San Jose in 1968, and attended Leland High School and UC Berkeley, where he graduated with a degree in chemistry. He began a career in the electronics industry, and subsequently moved to Menlo Park, where he met his wife, Karyn. Steve later pursued his passion by starting his own construction company, SEJ Builders. As a contractor he built many beautiful homes along the Peninsula. Since his diagnosis of glioblastoma in the summer of 2011, Steve continued to live each day of his life to the fullest. Steve leaves his cherished wife, Karyn Haaland, and his adored children, Kathryn, Bradley, and Michael. He will be forever loved and missed by his devoted parents, Pat and Bob Jones, his beloved sister Lisa, and brother-in-law Rod. He will be missed by his extended family, the Leslie Clan of Menlo Park, his dear cousin Kim Poling, his aunt Elaine Andrews, and his uncle Buzz Hagen. Steve touched his friends and family with his warmth, humor and kindness. A memorial service will be held at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church on February 26th at 2 pm. In lieu of flowers the family requests donations to the Stephen E. Jones Memorial Fund at any Wells Fargo Bank, which has been set up for Kathryn Jones' college education.

PAID OBITUARY

Woodside council to discuss second farmers' market

The idea of a farmers' market in a downtown parking lot in Woodside on Saturday afternoons returns to the Town Council for its Tuesday, Feb. 26, meeting, which starts at 7:30 p.m. in Independence Hall. The council will be discussing issues such as zoning rules that prohibit open-air markets on public property, and the use of parking space for a market in a town chronically short of parking space.

Maggie Foard, who manages a Wednesday afternoon market on a private parking lot near the corner of Skyline Boulevard and Highway 84, asked the council on Jan. 22 to consider her Saturday market proposal.

The idea has support. Town

Hall received more than 50 email messages advocating for a second market, according to a staff report. The Wednesday afternoon market began in late September 2012, closed for the season in mid-December, and is set to reopen in April.

Also on the agenda: The council may take the second step in a two-step process to enact an ordinance banning distribution of single-use plastic bags at retail checkout counters. The council introduced the ordinance in January on a 4-2 vote, with Councilmen Tom Shanahan and Peter Mason dissenting. Mr. Mason said it imposes undue burdens, and Mr. Shanahan said he didn't want to be "issuing mandates and instructions" to his neighbors.

Police seek information about man arrested for alleged molestation

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Police are searching for anyone with more information about a taekwondo instructor at a Redwood City academy who was arrested on suspicion of child molestation late last year, Redwood City police said.

Ralph "Eugene" Todd, 31, of Menlo Park, was taken into custody Dec. 19, 2012, for allegedly fondling a 9-year-old student during a private lesson, police said. He had taught at the Kim's Tae Kwon Do Academy in Woodside Plaza for 12 years.

When police searched his home, they allegedly found child pornography on his computer, according to the San Mateo County district attorney's office, and arrested him again on Feb. 5

on a new charge.

Attorney Ryan McHugh, a former prosecutor representing the defendant, told the Almanac that neither he nor Mr. Todd had any comment at this time.

Police Lt. Sean Hart said on Feb. 20 that investigators have spoken with all of the current students at the academy, but are looking into whether past students may have been abused.

Mr. Todd left custody after posting \$100,000 bail. Preliminary hearings on both cases are scheduled for April 10.

Police ask that anyone with information regarding Mr. Todd call Detective Megan Boyajian at the Redwood City Police Department at 780-7138.

— Bay City News contributed to this story.

Jones again wins DealMakers award

Jennifer Jones & Partners of Woodside, a marketing communications firm for venture capital and private equity firms, was named as the



Jennifer Jones

best communications firm for the venture capital and private equity industries in North America by DealMakers Monthly, a magazine based in Great Britain. The award is based on a readership survey.

The magazine said Jennifer Jones & Partners and other awards recipients "have performed to exceptional levels during the most difficult period that the global economy has experienced for decades." The firm said that this is its fourth

■ IN BUSINESS

award in three years from DealMakers Monthly.

Rusty Bacon joins Morgan Stanley office

Rusty Bacon has joined Morgan Stanley's wealth management office as a vice president and financial adviser in the Whitfield Group in Menlo Park, the firm announced. Formerly with J.P. Morgan, Mr. Bacon is a native of San Mateo with a bachelor's degree from Vanderbilt University. He lives in San Mateo with his wife and two daughters.

Morgan Stanley's Menlo Park wealth management office is located at 2775 Sand Hill Road.

Charles Dickey "Dick" Randall

After almost 90 years of vibrant life, Dick passed away on February 10th surrounded by his family at Kaiser Hospital in Redwood City. Born in Highland Park, Illinois, February 25, 1923, he was the son of Elizabeth Lee and Irving Randall, Sr. who moved to Los Altos in 1929. His death was preceded by that of his two brothers, Irving and Lee.

Dick attended Los Alamos School, Choate Preparatory School and Yale University and served in the US Army in the South Pacific during WWII. He married Sally Ann Childs in Hood River, Oregon, in 1948 and they recently celebrated 64 years of marriage. During his life, he lived in Charlottesville, VA and Moorestown, NJ, designing large store interiors for Hussman Corporation. The Randalls have been residents of Atherton since 1964 and longtime Menlo Circus Club members.



Dick was a quiet gentleman who was a true and committed friend to all who knew him. His sense of humor and generous spirit were reflected in his volunteer work throughout San Mateo County with the Boys and Girls Club and his pet therapy work for over a decade with two of his much loved Wheaten Terriers.

He is survived by his wife Sally, his daughter Susan Lee Randall of Carmel, his son Peter Winston Randall and wife Patrice of Redwood City and their two sons Tyler Winston Randall and Gregory Lee Randall; also two nieces, Jane Randall Barry of Pebble Beach and Barbara Randall Preuss of Atherton.

A private celebration of his life will be held in early March. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Diabetes Association or the Alzheimer's Association.

PAID OBITUARY

Jean Bennett Seccombe

July 10, 1921 - February 3, 2013

Jean Bennett Seccombe, 91, died on February 3, 2013, in Redwood City. Cause of death was kidney failure due to natural causes.

Jean was born to Melville Cleave and Helen Munro Bennett on July 10, 1921, in New Haven, Connecticut, and grew up in Cheshire, Connecticut.

She met Roger Seccombe at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, and they were married in the campus chapel on May 30, 1942. Jean graduated with her bachelor's degree in child development in 1946.

The Seccombes' first child, Ann, was born in Connecticut while Roger was overseas serving in World War II. After the war, the family lived in Brooklyn while Roger attended Columbia University, followed by his first teaching job in Vermont, where their second child, Thomas, was born.

From there the Seccombes moved to Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where two more children, Alison and Matthew, arrived to complete the family. Jean believed in encouraging individuality in each of her children and might have later regretted her success.

In 1951 the family moved to Seattle and eventually to Astoria, Oregon, while Roger served in the Coast Guard during the Korean Conflict. They finally settled in the Bay Area in 1954.

In 1956 Jean returned to college, earning a teacher's certificate at San Jose State, and began a long career teaching preschool students with nurturing enthusiasm, as former students that she occasionally encountered while shopping at Trader Joe's would later attest. Jean retired from teaching in 1979.

Jean and Roger were charter members of their beloved congregation, St. Bede's Episcopal Church, and after retirement Jean devoted her life to community service through the church by delivering groceries to homebound people, teaching Sunday school, fostering ecumenical events, and hosting church guests.

Jean and Roger also shared a love of travel, taking many trips to Europe, the Caribbean, and

around the United States. One of their favorite trips was a cruise up the Norwegian coast on a ship that delivered the mail into one fjord port after another. Roger claimed they were frequently invited to eat at the captain's table because the captain was sweet on Jean. She always kept a trip journal that would read like a restaurant guide as she detailed every meal and her opinion of it.

Her Scottish heritage was a particular interest of Jean's and she was proud to be a "Munro," an ancient Highland clan. She possessed traits that people often associate with Highland stock: She was industrious, thrifty, stoic, had a dislike of pretense, and dogged determination or, some would say, stubbornness.

Besides her affection for Scotland, Jean had a liking for owls, cats, Gershwin music, ballet, the writings of Rachel Carson, reading to children, and burnt toast (or so she claimed).

Curious throughout her life, Jean pursued various interests such as tap dancing, studying Ohlone Indian culture, scrapbooking, and practicing yoga. She was also an avid reader.

Jean was preceded in death by her husband, Roger, in 2004. She is survived by her children, Ann Seccombe and husband, Roger Williams, of Redwood City; Tom Seccombe of San Jose; Alison Gilliland and husband, Kirby Gilliland, of Norman, Oklahoma; and Matt Seccombe of Somerville, Massachusetts; and by her grandchildren, Lacuna Williams Love and husband, Troy Love, of Denver; Lytton Gilliland and wife, Xandra Gilliland, of Seattle; and Ellen Gilliland of Blacksburg, Virginia. A brother, Alan Cleave Bennett and wife, Jean Butler Bennett, four nephews, one niece, and their spouses, all of Connecticut, also survive her, as well as numerous Munro cousins.

A Memorial Service will be held on March 9 at 2 p.m. at St. Bede's Episcopal Church, 2650 Sand Hill Road (at Monte Rosa Drive) in Menlo Park.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial gifts be made to the Seccombe Fund for Outreach at St. Bede's or the charity of your choice.

PAID OBITUARY

Cheryl Fackler Hug

March 29, 1962 – February 17, 2013

Cheryl Fackler Hug, 50, passed away unexpectedly Feb 17, 2013. She was born in Oakland, CA and grew up in Cleveland, OH. She graduated from Wittenberg University with a political science degree and received her law degree from the University of Michigan. She worked for Gibson, Dunn and Crutcher in Washington DC where she met and married her beloved husband of 21 years, William Fackler Hug. They began their overseas adventures in Belarus, where Cheryl assisted in the development of the Belarus constitution and helped establish a public law library. They then moved to Menlo Park where Cheryl began working with Sun Microsystems, both in California and Geneva, Switzerland, ultimately becoming Vice President, Deputy General Counsel, Chief Integrity and Compliance Officer. After Sun's acquisition by Oracle she moved to



Hewlett Packard where she was a Vice President and Associate General Counsel.

Cheryl raised two wonderful sons with Bill, volunteered at their schools, and was always there for family and friends. She was a fierce advocate for causes in which she believed. She was the family organizer, relied on for vacations and family reunions, and a skilled multitasker.

She is survived by Bill and her sons, Nicholas and Colin, by her parents John and Naomi (Steege) Fackler, her siblings Kathy (John) Chapman, Karla (David) Grafton, John (Lee) Fackler, Dori Fackler, and numerous nieces and nephews.

She will be greatly missed.

Family and friends were invited to a celebration of her life on Saturday, February 23, 2013 at 10:00am at Roller & Hapgood & Tinney Funeral Chapel at 980 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto.

PAID OBITUARY

A headmaster offers his parting lesson for parents

By Chris Kenrick

Palo Alto Weekly

EDUCATION

An overemphasis on college preparation is “extinguishing childhood” for too many of today’s kids, says Norm Colb, who is nearing completion of his second decade as head of Menlo School in Atherton.

Constant anxiety over grades and performance is a losing strategy for nurturing the self-confident, resilient, morally centered young adults who will succeed in the world, he believes.

More than anything, today’s teens need “less worry and more enjoyment” from their parents — and opportunities for autonomy, the avuncular headmaster told a major gathering of Menlo parents and alumni on Saturday, Feb. 9.

Mr. Colb — who leaves Menlo this summer after nearly 50 years in public and private education — gently but firmly implored parents to resist the impulse to micromanage their children’s lives.

Parental anxiety — which is contagious to kids — and “the pernicious quest for grades won’t lead us to where we want to go with our children,” he said.

He illustrated his hour-long talk with a series of New Yorker cartoons, including his favorite: a clearly distraught teenager sitting on her bed with her mother at the door saying, “Try and tell me what’s bothering you — and use your SAT words.”

He outlined four well-meaning parental behaviors that he warned have the perverse effect of undermining competence and self-confidence in teens: micro-

management of kids’ lives; overemphasis on grades and college admission; the “subcontracting of parenting” to others, including schools and the media; and worrying.

“When parents correct the grammar, the spelling, the punctuation, the paragraphs, the student never learns those things. They get better grades, but they don’t do the learning,” he said.

Cash incentives or other bribes for good grades as well as the



Norm Colb

increasing use of “study drugs” such as Adderall promote superficial, short-term learning and are “very worrisome,” he said. Grade obsession has led to a plethora of cheating

scandals at top schools such as the hypercompetitive Stuyvesant High School in New York City and Harvard University, he noted.

“When I say the pursuit of grades is a toxin, this is what I mean,” he said. “It extinguishes engagement, can promote a barter economy in the family and does not promote the genuine learning I think we all want for our kids.”

Pushing a child just enough so that she “gets into that next tier” of colleges also can backfire, he warned.

“So I’ve spent four years of high school pressing my kid to get higher and higher grades so

Continued on next page

Too much focus on college prep ‘extinguishes childhood,’ says head of Menlo School

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**TOWN OF WOODSIDE
2955 WOODSIDE ROAD
WOODSIDE, CA 94062**

**PLANNING COMMISSION
March 6, 2013
7:30 PM**

PUBLIC HEARINGS

9. Robert and Nancy Hollister NCOU2013-0001
245 Laning Drive Planner: Sage Schaan, Senior Planner

The Planning Commission will determine if the owner may convert an existing nonconforming structure from a garage to a storage building. The structure is nonconforming since it is partially located within the rear yard setbacks. No changes to the structure are proposed at this time. The property is located within a Suburban Residential (SR) Zoning District.

10. Laurene Jobs VARI2013-0001
460 Mountain Home Road Planner: Jackie Young, Planning Director

Review for approval/denial of a Variance to permit an addition to an existing historic water tower/accessory living quarters for a three story enclosed stairway that would have a building wall within 15.75 feet of a property line where a 50-foot setback is required, and to permit the roof eaves of the stairway within 13.75 feet of the property line where a 47-foot setback is required. The project also includes review for approval/denial of a Variance to permit the three story enclosed stairway 33 feet in height where 30-feet is the maximum height limit. The property is located within a Special Conservation Planning-5 Acre minimum (SCP-5) Zoning District.

All application materials are available for public review at the Woodside Planning and Building Counter, Woodside Town Hall, weekdays from 8:00 – 10:00 AM and 1:00 – 3:00 PM, or by appointment. For more information, contact the Woodside Planning and Building Department at (650) 851-6790.

Ronald R. Ferrando

Ronald Rio Ferrando, born May 30, 1953 to Ezzio and Rita Ferrando, passed away peacefully in Menlo Park on February 18, 2013. Ron grew up in Menlo Park and remained in the area. An avid drummer he spent much of his retirement perfecting his drumming skills. He had a passion for restoring muscle cars. He was a beloved school bus driver for Las Lomas School District for 30 years. Ron’s concern for their transportation needs and their general well being will be remembered by the many children and parents who knew him. A loving father, brother, uncle and friend he will be sorely missed. Ron is survived by his son Mark, brothers Bob (Grace) and Randy (Mary) uncle to Andrew, Mary, and Alex. Donations may be made in his name to the American Cancer Society. Private services will be held. Remembrances may be mailed to PO Box 831 Menlo Park, CA 94026

PAID OBITUARY

Hillview stages 'Honk' in its new theater

Hillview Middle School in Menlo Park will present "Honk" on Feb. 28, March 1 and March 2 in the school's new performing arts center.

The cast includes sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students directed by new drama instructor William Hairston. The school orchestra will also perform.

Major roles will be played by Kelley McCutcheon, Kate Mulhern, Izzy Nada and Teddy Pagee.

Based on Hans Christian Andersen's "The Ugly

Duckling," the musical tells the story of an odd-looking baby duck, Ugly, and its quest to find its mother.

Since 1993, the Stiles and Drewe musical has appeared in more than 8,000 productions and received the Olivier Award for Best Musical in 2000.

The first show will be held at 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, for Hillview students. Tickets are \$5. Other performances are 1 and 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday, March 1 and 2. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for children, and can be purchased at the door.

M-A National Merit finalists named

Out of 16,000 semifinalists, 12 members of the Menlo-Atherton High School class of 2013 have been named finalists in the National Merit Scholarship program, the school announced.

Those selected to continue in the competition for Merit

scholarships are: Stephen Chu, Amal Duriseti, Tyler Finn, Meredith Geaghan-Breiner, Casey Kiyohara, Nina Lozinski, Roger MacFarlane, Madeline Napel, Zoe Nuyens, Emilia Reed, Allison Silverman and Nicole Wong.

Continued from previous page

they can go to a university where they feel below average.

"I'd much prefer a slightly less competitive college where the student ends up feeling powerful. I think kids would be much better served thinking of themselves as powerful than as marginal."

Mr. Colb said the "subcontracting of parenting" to schools is an honor for the schools, but parenting really needs to happen at home. And substituting television and other media for in-person parental attention is especially dangerous, he said.

"Kids learn their values, their sense of self, at your breakfast table," he told parents.

He said his personal specialty as a parent — his kids are now adults — was worrying, "morning and night."

"The pressure is communicated very readily to kids," he said.

"These behaviors don't launch our kids into lives of great purpose. They just don't.

"If you worry about them incessantly, they'll worry about themselves. If you're calm and competent about them, you give them a gift that lasts a lifetime.

"What kids need from us is authentic, patient, loving, unloaded, unworried time."

Mr. Colb, who announced more than a year ago he would leave Menlo this summer, originally planned to retire but has changed plans. He will become

head of school at Sage Ridge School, a 15-year-old independent school in Reno, Nevada.

Before joining Menlo in 1993, he spent nearly 30 years in public education, first as an English teacher in Brookline, Massachusetts, and later as superintendent of schools in Mamaroneck, New York, where he dealt with seven separate employee unions.

He said he switched to private education "to get closer to kids."

The teaching profession doesn't have the status that it should, he believes.

"The way I read the news, it's progressively more debased, and I think that's a tragedy.

"Every profession has its marginal employees, but the press and political establishment seems to delight in focusing on (failed teachers) as opposed to the gifted teacher who works so hard day in and day out to raise up the next generation.

"It's really remarkable that the profession doesn't enjoy that status, and I think we will pay a price for that."

Teachers should be viewed as an asset, not as labor, and need certain conditions to thrive: to be respected; to be paid well enough to live in the local economy; to be involved in decision-making; to have a certain degree of job security and professional renewal.

"If you put these ingredients together, you could start to move the needle," he said. ■

Esther C. Judd

Esther Cameron Judd, a longtime resident of Menlo Park, CA passed away peacefully in her home with her family by her side on February 10, 2013 at the age of 83. Mrs. Judd worked as an elementary school teacher and always retained her youthful enthusiasm towards young people. Esther was an active tennis player, enjoyed sailing on San Francisco Bay and skiing in the Sierras. Esther was a true lady with a charming smile and an appreciation to detail. She always had a great love of music, she was a prior member of the ladies singing group Peninsula Clef Hangers, and a patron of the San Francisco Youth Orchestra. Traveling was another passion and she visited over 20 countries in Europe and Asia and never lost her curiosity of new places and new people.

Esther was born in Quasqueton, Iowa with her twin brother Bruce Cameron on November 9, 1929 to parents, Douglas Cameron and Avola Newberry. The family moved to Santa Rosa, CA where she spent her youth. She graduated from San Jose State University. It was there that she met Frederick Judd, and later they married in August 1951 and resided in Menlo Park, CA. They welcomed their son, Clay, in 1954. In addition to being a wonderful mother, she was an active member of local Episcopal churches. She was a longtime member of Junior League and

the SF Symphony Guild. In 1972, they moved to Sun Valley, Idaho. There she enjoyed horse-back riding, river floating, fishing and her continued passion for skiing and tennis. Esther returned to Menlo Park in 1982, and lived on the Sharon Heights golf course for the remainder of her life. She enjoyed the San Francisco Symphony and was a regular season ticket holder. She especially loved spending time with her family and her grandson, Ryan.



Esther or "Grandmere" will always be remembered for her lovely smile, her generosity, kindness, and gentle spirit. Esther is survived by her son, Clay Judd (Nita Judd), grandson Ryan Judd, brother's Bill Cameron, Bob James, and sister Dorothy Titus, and former husband Frederick Judd. Preceded in death were siblings Betty Ann Ellis, Betty Love Spini, Alfred James, David Cameron, John James and

twin brother Bruce Cameron.

A private memorial service was held Saturday, February 23, 2013 at Woodside Village Church Chapel in Woodside, CA. There will be an additional celebration of life service for family friends that will be announced at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to: San Francisco Symphony, memo; Youth Orchestra, Davies Symphony Hall, 201 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102

PAID OBITUARY

Robert (Bob) Franceschini Sr.

March 7, 1930 – February 12, 2013, Atherton California

Beloved father, Grandfather, Business and Community Leader.

Bob was most often characterized as generous and gregarious. His charm, welcoming nature, and smile were legendary. He had a keen sense of style and always "dressed to the nines." See's candy and fine wines were often in his hands when he made visits to friends and colleagues. Bob's family was his true passion and he treasured family dinners and vacations, especially those at Lake Tahoe, which was his favorite place to summer. Bob and his late wife, Nadine, derived much happiness from their active and dynamic social life. A few years ago they were honored as co-recipients of the Sons of Italy Western Foundation Humanitarian of the Year Award.

Born in Palo Alto, CA Bob graduated from St. Joseph's Elementary School, Belarmine College Preparatory, and Santa Clara University. He also attended the Stanford Graduate School of Business. Bob's past community involvements included the following: Board of Directors of Kainos Home and Training Center, President of the Sequoia Foundation, President Holbrook Palmer Park Foundation, President and Co Founder of the Sequoia Awards, President of the Atherton Civic Interest League, President St. Pius Men's Club, President of the YMCA of Redwood City, President of the Redwood City Chamber of Commerce, which awarded him their "Man of the Year" Award in 1974.

Bob was also a President of the California Beer Wholesaler's Assoc. He was a Bay Area beverage distributor and President of Coors West & Regal Beverages. Bob also

co-founded Evergreen Savings and Loan Association.

Through the years, Bob was an avid gardener, duck hunter, fisherman and golfer. Bob was a member of the Palo Alto Hills Golf and Country club for 36 years. He was a lifelong Stanford, San Francisco 49er and Giants fan. He truly enjoyed music especially the Big Bands and Jazz.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, Angelo and Margaret Fabbro Franceschini. His cherished wife, Nadine Paolino, passed away in 2008 after 52 years of marriage. He is survived by his children: Robyn (Dick) Budelli, Robert (Kathy) Franceschini Jr., Richard Franceschini, and grandchildren, Francesca (Brady) Budelli Harter, Adam Budelli, Robert III and Evan Franceschini. Bob is also survived by his sister, Mary Riviello, uncle, Frank Fabbro, and aunt, Sarah Balocco. We would like to thank Sylvia Nelson for bringing him happiness in his final years. Special thanks to Goodie VeraCruz, his dedicated caregiver.

A memorial Mass in celebration of his life will be held on Thursday, February 28 at 10:30am at St. Pius Church, 1100 Woodside Road, Redwood City. In lieu of flowers please honor his memory by sending donations to one of the following: Robert and Nadine Franceschini Endowment Scholarship Fund, St. Francis High School, 1885 Miramonte Ave, Mt. View, CA 94040 (www.sfhs.com) or Kainos Home and Training Center, 3631 Jefferson, Redwood City, CA 94062 (www.kainosusa.org).



PAID OBITUARY

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WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

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

Town Square forum

Post your views on the Town Square forum at www.TheAlmanacOnline.com

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

Mail or deliver to: Editor at the Almanac, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, 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

City overreacts in censoring emails

Menlo Park's decision to delete a flood of emails sent to the City Council in support of a fired gymnastics instructor raises serious questions about how far a city can go to ostensibly protect itself from a potential defamation lawsuit.

Apparently that is the rationale behind the wholesale elimination of a flood of emails sent to the city in support of Michelle Sutton, who was fired after a disagreement with a parent who created a disturbance in her class. The parents complained by email about the incident, which prompted a supervisor to reprimand Ms. Sutton the next day. She was fired 12 days later, despite an outpouring of support from her fellow workers and the parents of her students.

On Feb. 21, Assistant City Manager Starla Jerome-Robinson posted a message on the city's website saying that "because postings on the this site are public, to the extent postings relate to confidential personnel matters and/or might constitute potentially defamatory content for which the city could have liability if allowed to remain posted on the site, the city does and will continue to remove postings that relate to confidential personnel matters and/or that could expose the city to potential liability."

Regardless of Ms. Jerome-Robinson's admonition that postings about Ms. Sutton's case would be removed, the fired teacher's supporters continued to pack the city's website with supportive messages late in the day on Feb. 22. Parents said their children were asking for Ms. Sutton when they attended gymnastics classes, and others questioned the city's decision to fire her. By 5 p.m. Friday, after city offices had been closed all day, about a dozen messages in support of Ms. Sutton remained on the website.

Virtually all the messages extolled Ms. Sutton's character and skills as a gymnastics instructor and were not in any way defamatory toward the supervisor who fired her. Others were highly critical of the city for taking the action against someone they perceived to be a beloved gym instructor who had many close relationships with her students and their families.

Council member Ray Mueller also became involved, inviting anyone concerned that his or her email message about Ms. Sutton would disappear to write directly to his City Council account at rdmueller@menlopark.org. "I will collect them all, I will not delete them, and I

will give them to the city manager," Mr. Mueller told the Almanac.

The city is developing a pattern of locking up information that rightfully belongs to the public. In January, a request by the Almanac for non-confidential, public-record statistics regarding convictions or terminations of Menlo Park police officers, with no names or other identifying characteristics attached, was turned down. And earlier, a request to obtain police logs for a three-year period was at first denied, although finally released after a fight. One post by a resident in support of Michelle Sutton said "... email blogs allow citizens to feel as if they have a voice, but that feeling vanishes if the city behaves as if the emails have never been read and acts as if the message will never be received."

Jim Ewert, an expert in media law and a staff attorney for the California Newspaper Publishers Association, was aghast at the city's actions.

State law requires that records be kept a minimum of two years. In addition, he said, "these are just comments; it is as if these individuals are petitioning the government to influence a decision."

He likened the situation to what happens at a City Council meeting when a member of the public comments. The remarks are saved for posterity in the form of minutes and video recordings, which are archived on the city's website.

In our opinion, there is a distinction between letters emailed to the city's website that simply express surprise and shock about Ms. Sutton's dismissal and compliment her skills as a gymnastics instructor, and a message that attacks the character of the supervisor who fired her. Many websites, including the Almanac's, do not permit personal attacks on other posters.

But just because Ms. Sutton was fired is not, in our view, a good enough reason for the city to delete any message mentioning her name or the incident in question, which are hardly grounds for a defamation case.

Mr. Ewert put it this way: "They (the city) are immune (from a defamation lawsuit) because these are privileged publications in the scope and course of a public hearing, if you will."

He added: "It's ludicrous. They (the city of Menlo Park) have taken the phrase 'tortured logic' to a new level."

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

City would lose senior housing with demise of Glenwood Inn

Editor:

Something must be terribly wrong with Menlo Park's Downtown Specific Plan if it encourages a developer to destroy a perfectly fine senior housing complex that a number of elderly residents have called home for years. The plan is to turn it into an upscale "residential" Marriott hotel for well-to-do traveling businessmen.

Weren't we just told we needed "affordable" housing for

seniors near the downtown, close to transit and shops? Yet it seems that will be the first thing to go.

And where will these displaced seniors move to? Los Altos? And now the city, though parking is at a premium, proposes to give away public parking spaces to this new development.

Something is wrong with this picture. Why can't our city admit the downtown plan was a mistake, and put a freeze on it while they review it, taking public input seriously this time around. Neither the Glenwood Inn project nor the Stanford/Arrillaga project are good for the city. Let's retrench.

Cherie Zaslowsky
Menlo Park downtown



Menlo Park Historical Association

Our Regional Heritage

Michael Lynch, standing, as superintendent of Timothy Hopkins' Sherwood Hall in Menlo Park, planted the largest field violets in the U.S. Menlo Park adopted the purple flower as the town's official flower in the 20th century. Mr. Lynch opened his own nursery on Oak Grove Avenue in 1892 and helped install landscaping at Holy Cross Cemetery and St. Patrick's Seminary, and later assisted in landscaping the Stanford campus.



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Camp Connection

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

Academics

Early Learning Camp Connection listing Palo Alto

Write Now! Summer Writing Camps
Emerson School of Palo Alto and Hacienda School of Pleasanton open their doors and offer their innovative programs: Expository Writing, Creative Writing, Presentation Techniques, and (new!) Test-Taking Skills. Call or visit our website for details.

www.headsup.org Emerson (650) 424-1267
Hacienda (925) 485-5750

Foothill College Los Altos Hills

Two Six-Week Summer Sessions Beginning June 10. These sessions are perfect for university students returning from summer break who need to pick up a class; and high school juniors, seniors and recent graduates who want to get an early start. 12345 El Monte Rd.
650.949.7362 www.foothill.edu

Harker Summer Programs San Jose

K-12 offerings taught by exceptional, experienced faculty and staff. K-6 morning academics - focusing on math, language arts and science - and full spectrum of afternoon recreation. Grades 6-12 for-credit courses and non-credit enrichment opportunities. Sports programs also offered.

www.summer.harker.org 408-553-0537

iD Tech Camps - Summer Tech Fun Held at Stanford

Take interests further! Ages 7-17 create iPhone apps, video games, C++/Java programs, movies, and more at weeklong, day and overnight programs held at Stanford and 60+ universities in 26 states. Also 2-week, teen-only programs: iD Gaming Academy, iD Programming Academy, and iD Visual Arts Academy (filmmaking & photography).

www.internaldrive.com 1-888-709-TECH (8324)

iD Teen Academies

Gaming, Programming & Visual Arts Stanford

Gain a competitive edge! Learn different aspects of video game creation, app development, filmmaking, photography, and more. 2-week programs where ages 13-18 interact with industry professionals to gain competitive edge. iD Gaming Academy, iD Programming Academy, and iD Visual Arts Academy are held at Stanford, and other universities.

www.idteenacademies.com 1-888-709-TECH (8324)

Stratford School - Camp Socrates 17 Bay Area Campuses

Academic enrichment infused with traditional summer camp fun—that's what your child will experience at Camp Socrates. Sessions begin June 24 and end August 9, with the option for campers to attend all seven weeks, or the first four (June 24-July 19). Full or half-day morning or afternoon programs are available.

www.stratfordschools.com/Summer (650) 493-1151

Summer at Saint Francis Mountain View

Summer at Saint Francis provides a broad range of academic and athletic programs for elementary through high school students. It is the goal of every program to make summer vacation enriching and enjoyable!

www.sfhs.com/summer 650.968.1213 x446

TechKnowHow Computer & Lego Camps Palo Alto Menlo Park/Sunnyvale

Fun and enriching technology classes for students, ages 5-14. Courses include LEGO and K'NEX Projects with Motors, Electronics, NXT Robotics, 3D Modeling, and Game Design. Many locations, including Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Sunnyvale. Half and all day options. Early-bird and multi-session discounts available.

www.techknowhowkids.com 650-638-0500

YMCA of Silicon Valley Peninsula

What makes Y camps different? We believe every child deserves the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can achieve. Y campers experience the outdoors, make new friends and have healthy fun in a safe, nurturing environment. They become more confident and grow as individuals, and they learn value in helping others. We offer day, overnight, teen leadership and family camps. Financial assistance is available. Get your summer camp guide at ymcasv.org/summer. Youth camps (ages 5 - 17) run June 17 - Aug. 16. Half-day and full-day options. Fees vary. 1922 The Alameda 3rd Floor, San Jose

www.ymcasv.org (408) 351-6400

Arts, Culture, Other Camps

Busy Bees & Astro Kids Summer Mountain View Adventure Camps

Join us for these half-day camps designed for 3-8 year olds as we have fun, participate in games and crafts, and go on fun field trips! Mountain View Community Center, 201 S. Rengstorff Avenue

<http://mountainview.gov>

Community School of Music and Arts (CSMA) Mountain View

50+ creative camps for Gr. K-8! Drawing, Painting, Ceramics, Sculpture, Musical Theater, School of Rock, Digital Arts, more! One- and two-week sessions; full and half-day enrollment. Extended care available. Financial aid offered.

www.arts4all.org 650-917-6800 ext. 0

DHF Wilderness Camps Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve

Children ages 6-14 can meet the livestock, help with farm chores, explore a wilderness preserve and have fun with crafts, songs and games. Older campers conclude the week with a sleepover at the Farm. Near the intersection of Hwy 85 and Hwy 280

mountainview.gov

Palo Alto Community Child Care (PACCC) Palo Alto

PACCC summer camps offer campers, grades kindergarten to 6th, a wide variety of fun opportunities! K-1 Fun for the youngest campers, Neighborhood Adventure Fun and Ultimate Adventure Fun for the more active and on-the-go campers! New this year: Sports Adventure Camp for those young athletes and Operation Chef for out of this world cooking fun! Swimming twice per week, periodic field trips, special visitors and many engaging camp activities, songs and skits round out the fun offerings of PACCC Summer Camps! Registration is online. Open to campers from all communities! Come join the fun in Palo Alto!

www.paccc.org 650-493-2361

Theatreworks Summer Camps Palo Alto

In these skill-building workshops for grades K-5, students engage in language-based activities, movement, music, and improvisation theatre games. Students present their own original pieces at the end of each two-week camp.

www.theatreworks.org/educationcommunity 650-493-7146

Western Ballet Mountain View Children's Summer Camp

Students attend ballet class and rehearsal in preparation for the recital of either Peter Pan or The Little Mermaid at the end of the two week session. Separate Saturday classes are also offered. Ages 4-9. 914 N. Rengstorff Ave, Mountain View

<http://westernballet.org/documents/summerchildrens.html>

Western Ballet Mountain View Intermediate Summer Intensive

Students obtain high quality training in ballet, pointe, character, jazz, and modern dance, while learning choreography from the classical ballet Paquita. The students dance in featured roles in a final performance. Ages 9-12. Audition required 914 N. Rengstorff Ave, Mountain View

<http://westernballet.org/documents/summerpre-intermediate.html>

Western Ballet Mountain View Advanced Summer Intensive

Students obtain high quality training in ballet, pointe, character, jazz, and modern dance, while learning choreography from the classical ballet Paquita. The students dance in featured roles in a final performance. Ages 13-23. Audition required. 914 N. Rengstorff Ave, Mountain View

http://westernballet.org/documents/summer_int_adv.html

Athletics

City of Mountain View Mountain View Recreation Division

Discover fun with us this summer through the many programs available with the City of Mountain View Recreation Division. From sports to traditional day camps, to cooking camps, dance camps and art camps... we have it all! Mountain View Community Center, 201 S. Rengstorff Avenue

<http://mountainview.gov>

City of Mountain View Swim Lessons Mountain View Rengstorff and Eagle Parks

We offer swim lessons for ages 6 months to 14 years. Following the American Red Cross swim lesson program, students are divided into one of the 11 different levels taught by a certified instructor. Rengstorff Park Pool, 201 S Rengstorff Ave and Eagle Park Pool, 650 Franklin St.

<http://mountainview.gov/>

Club Rec Juniors & Seniors Mountain View

Club Rec Juniors and Seniors is open for youth 6-11 years old. These traditional day camps are filled with fun theme weeks, weekly trips, swimming, games, crafts and more! Monta Loma Elementary School, 490 Thompson Ave.

<http://mountainview.gov>

Foothills Day Camp Palo Alto

What will you discover? Foothills Day and Fun Camps, for youth ages 8-10 and 5-7 respectively, includes canoeing, hiking, animal identification games, crafts, and more- all for less than \$5 an hour. Registration begins February 15th for residents. (February 22nd for non-residents.) Hurry, spaces are limited!

cityofpaloalto.org/enjoy 650-463-4900.

J-Camp Palo Alto

Exciting programs for kindergartners through teens include swimming, field trips, sports and more. Enroll your child in traditional or special focus camps like Surfing, Archery, Animal Adventure, Circus Camp and over 50 others! Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way

www.paloaltojcc.org/jcamp (650) 223-8622

Kim Grant Tennis Academy Palo Alto & Summer Camps Menlo Park/Redwood City

Fun and Specialized junior camps for Mini (3-5), Beginner, In-termediate 1&2, Advanced and Elite Players. Weekly programs designed by Kim Grant to improve players technique, fitness, agility, mental toughness and all around tennis game. Camps in Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Redwood City. Come make new friends and have tons of FUN!!

www.kimgranttennis.com 650-752-8061

Nike Tennis Camps Stanford University

Dick Gould's 43rd Annual Stanford Tennis School offers day camps for both juniors & adults. Weekly junior overnight & extended day camps run by John Whitlinger & Lele Forood. Junior Day Camp run by Brandon Coupe & Frankie Brennan.

www.USSportsCamps.com/tennis 1-800-NIKE-CAMP (645-3226)

Spartans Sports Camp

Spartans Sports Camp offers multi-sport, week-long sessions for boys and girls in grades 3-6 as well as sport-specific sessions for grades 6-9. There are also strength and conditioning camps for grades 6-12. Camps begin June 10th and run weekly through August 2nd at Mountain View High School. The camp is run by MVHS coaches and student-athletes and all proceeds benefit the MVHS Athletic Department. Lunch and extended care are available for your convenience. Register today!

www.SpartansSportsCamp.com 650-479-5906

Spring Down Camp Equestrian Center Portola Valley

Spring Down Camp teaches basic to advanced horsemanship skills. Ages 6-99 welcome! Daily informative lecture, riding lesson, supervised hands-on ski-II practice, safety around horses, tacking/untacking of own camp horse, and arts/crafts.

www.springdown.com 650.851.1114

Stanford Water Polo Camps Stanford

Ages 7 and up. New to sport or have experience, we have a camp for you. Half day or Full day option for boys and girls. All the camps offer fundamental skill work, position work, scrimmages and games.

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