

The Almanac

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

MARCH 27, 2013 | VOL. 48 NO. 30



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Photo courtesy of Flea Street Cafe (www.cooleatz.com)

Jesse Cool (center) with Sheryl Sandberg and Oprah Winfrey at Flea Street Cafe in Menlo Park.

Oprah, Sandberg visit Flea Street

Jesse Cool, longtime owner of Flea Street Cafe in Menlo Park, sent out an email March 22 about a recent visit to her restaurant of Oprah Winfrey and Sheryl Sandberg, chief operating officer at Facebook and author of the new book, "Lean In."

Here is what Ms. Cool had to say (she refers to the organic buttermilk biscuits served at the restaurant):

"As some of you know, Oprah visited Flea Street to film an interview with our dear friend Sheryl Sandberg. The interview was about Sheryl's new book Lean In (Knopf Publishing 2013). It was such a privilege to be there, set the table and make it comfortable for Oprah and Sheryl's in depth conversation.

"Of course we think those biscuits just might have set the scene for the amazing interview. To say we were honored to have these two remarkable women at Flea Street would be an understatement.

"Listening to Sheryl and



Photo courtesy Jesse Cool (www.cooleatz.com)

The organic buttermilk biscuits served at Flea Street Cafe.

'It was such a privilege to be there, set the table and make it comfortable for Oprah and Sheryl's in depth conversation.'

JESSE COOL

Oprah talk about women and their role in management helped me reflect on both the difficulties I have faced in a male dominated profession, as well as the remarkable change we are seeing as more and more young women take the helm in modern kitchens.

"Women's place in the culinary world used to be confined to home cooking or comfort food. Entry into fine cuisine was often met with a very stern man in a toque who ignored women cooks. It was intimidating at times.

"The interview (and the biscuits!) are featured in the just-released April issue of O Magazine. (The interview was shown March 24 on Oprah's OWN cable TV channel.)

"A big thanks to Sheryl for thinking of us as one of her favorite local restaurants. And thanks to all of you, after so many years, for allowing us to set a special table for you. See you soon over a basket of biscuits and more." ■

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IL TROVATORE

BY GIUSEPPE VERDI



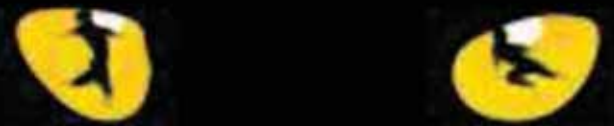
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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Town seeks public comments on affordable housing

Affordable housing in Portola Valley — why it's important and how it should be planned for — is the topic for a community meeting at Corte Madera Middle School on Thursday evening, March 28.

By state law, Portola Valley, along with every town in California, must plan for socio-economic diversity among its residents. Town officials, through a group of volunteers on an ad hoc committee, are seeking feedback from the public on town values and aspirations related to affordable housing. The meeting is set for 7:30 p.m. in the school's Annex Building at 4575 Alpine Road.

More meetings are scheduled

for the weeks ahead: on Wednesday morning, April 3, in the Valley Presbyterian Church, and on Monday evening, April 8, at the Alpine Hills Swim & Tennis Club. Less formal meetings in the homes of ad hoc committee members are planned. Refer to the town's website and PV Forum for schedules and locations.

Why is this important? Officials from the California Department of Housing and Community Development assert that the state has a housing crisis in that too many people are not able to live near their workplaces. Local government land-use regulations are

See **PUBLIC COMMENT**, page 8

Volunteers chafe over limits on their affordable housing role

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

The topic of state-mandated plans for affordable housing in Portola Valley is not a pathless landscape. Many avenues of inquiry offer themselves: Why is the state inserting itself into local affairs? Is socio-economic diversity important in a community of very high value homes? What does it cost to build such housing in such a town, and do the economics even work? Where exactly should such housing go?

It's complicated and controversial, but for the nine volun-

■ PORTOLA VALLEY

teer members of the Ad Hoc Affordable Housing Committee, these topics are unavailable. The mission, as defined by the Town Council, which has wrestled with the issue and has been scorned by affordable housing critics for its efforts: find out what the community thinks about having such housing in its midst. The committee is organizing at least three community forums, with possibly several more meetings in members' houses.

The committee itself has assembled twice for two hours each

time to discuss tactics, and there are three more such meetings scheduled. In May, their job concludes with delivery of a written report to the council. Because the committee is subject to the state's open-meeting laws, group conversations among members — most of whom are new to this restriction — must take place during these five tactical sessions.

In the two meetings thus far, complaining has been a not insignificant feature — about being rushed, about having to solicit community views without a better understanding of the

See **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**, page 8

Private school pleads for more time at O'Connor site

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

More than 600 supporters of a private school that may be booted from its longtime home two years before its lease is set to expire signed a petition that was delivered to the Menlo Park City School District board on March 20, appealing to the board to delay the eviction for one year.

German-American International School officials presented the petition, with 635 signatures gathered in just four days, at an afternoon study session held to further review the board's option

Menlo Park district may open a new school at the site.

of opening a new district school at the former O'Connor School site to deal with the district's burgeoning enrollment.

The private bilingual school took over the O'Connor site at 275 Elliot Drive in Menlo Park in 1991, and has a lease agreement with the district that expires June 2016.

Last October, the district notified GAIS that it might exercise the option included in the agreement to terminate the lease two years early, in June 2014, and has publicly stated it might open a fifth campus there for the 2014-15 school year. If the board decides to evict the private school that summer, it must notify GAIS by April 10.

The decision is set for the

April 9 school board meeting, but on March 22, the board met in closed session; the agenda for that meeting, posted March 21, after the study session, said the board would discuss a "lease modification" pertaining to the O'Connor site.

Board president Terry Thygesen said no action was taken at the closed meeting. The discussion, she said, pertained to the terms of the current GAIS lease, and was therefore within the legal bounds of what can be discussed in closed session. The board didn't discuss whether to allow GAIS to stay

at the O'Connor site, she said.

At the March 20 meeting, the board reviewed a report on the possibility of placing a bond measure on the ballot to pay for an overhaul of the O'Connor site, which now has a single, district-owned building and several portable buildings owned by GAIS.

The board also heard from 13 speakers, who urged board members to allow the private school to remain on the campus one more year. Many argued that if the board decides next month to evict GAIS in 2014, the school will have only 15 months to find a new home — not enough time, they said, to find a suitable property in the highly

See **PRIVATE SCHOOL**, page 8



Michelle Le/The Almanac

Menlowe Ballet dancers Vincent Chavez and Coreen Danaher rehearse "Sweet Sadness," which is being given its world premiere next month.

New home, new show for Menlowe Ballet

April performances include a world premiere, encores of popular works

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

Just in time for spring, the local dance troupe Menlowe Ballet is experiencing a sort of renewal as it stages its mid-April performances: It will be the company's first production performed in a space it can call "home," the Menlo-Atherton High School Performing Arts Center. "I'm so jazzed about getting

into this center — it's our new home theater," says Lisa Shiveley of Atherton, the company's executive director.

The company of 15 dancers will perform "Reverie" on Friday through Sunday, April 19-21, showcasing the world premiere of guest choreographer Viktor Kabaniaev's "Sweet Sadness," and reprising Artistic Director Michael Lowe's "Chuntian" and "Surfside."

The two-year-old Menlo Park-based company had staged earlier productions at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts and the Bayside Performing Arts Center in San Mateo, but Ms. Shiveley worked with Menlo Park city staff to finally firm up stage time in town. The city's contribution to the building of the M-A center

See **NEW HOME**, page 8

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Wine and Spirits

Spring Whites

Spring has sprung. It's time to consider moving away from the heavier winter wines, to lighter, warm weather whites. Here are few sale items to kick off the season.

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{ www.robertsmarket.com }

Residents likely to be polled on parcel tax renewal

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

ATHERTON

With some council members pushing for studying other ways of raising revenue, the Atherton City Council has directed staff to look into hiring a pollster to measure support for renewing the town's parcel tax.

No vote was taken at the March 20 meeting, but the council made it clear that it would be premature to hire a consultant to manage a parcel tax renewal effort before residents were polled.

City Manager George Rodericks had asked the council to consider bringing in a professional group to manage a poll, then analyze results "for feasibility and provide the town with a strategic memorandum that discusses the vitality, risks, opportunities, effective message, and recommendations" on how to proceed with a ballot measure.

Mayor Elizabeth Lewis said she believes the town should "poll residents, but we don't need a consultant at this time."

Mr. Rodericks estimated the cost of conducting a poll of residents at \$15,000 to \$20,000.

The parcel tax will expire in June 2014, and the town is considering a renewal measure for the November 2013 ballot. With one exception, Atherton residents have in the past supported the tax, which must receive a two-thirds vote to pass.

Because the town collects almost no sales tax, it has relied on its annual tax of \$750 on most parcels to supplement property tax revenue — by far

the town's largest source of revenue — and other smaller revenue sources.

Parcel tax revenue goes to police services (60 percent) and capital projects (40 percent). Tax revenue for this fiscal year is expected to come in at about \$1.86 million, providing about \$1.1 million to the police department and about \$744,000 to public works projects, according to the staff report.

With a budget of nearly \$5.5 million this fiscal year, the police department accounts for just over half of the town's \$10.9 million budget.

Atherton's parcel tax will expire in June 2014.

The council has talked about finding other revenue sources, and Mr. Rodericks suggested that council members evaluate

additional means of raising funds as it proceeds with a parcel tax renewal effort. Council members Jim Dobbie and Bill Widmer pushed for exploring those options sooner rather than later.

"Do we need a parcel tax continuance?" Mr. Widmer asked. "I'm not prepared to say we need to continue it or not, but we need to discuss it and have facts."

Mr. Dobbie urged fellow council members to focus on other possible revenue sources such as a road impact fee and a real estate transfer tax. But in the end, the council agreed that studying other options would take time, and that in order to keep open the option of renewing the parcel tax, the town had to move ahead with the process and review other revenue sources later. ■

Easter egg hunt is on in Holbrook-Palmer Park

It's a safe bet that no one will miss a human-size Easter Bunny when it arrives in Holbrook-Palmer Park on Saturday, March 30, but the eggs? You'll have to find them yourselves.

The Atherton Dames invites all eager egg-hunters to the park for the group's annual event from 9:30 to noon.

The egg hunt is open to kids 10 and under, but other family members and attendees can

avail themselves of breakfast foods and specialty coffees. There will also be a magic show and photos with the Easter Bunny. A face painter will be on hand to turn young faces into works of art.

For the egg hunt, a golden egg will be hidden for each age-group category, according to organizers.

Holbrook Palmer Park is at 150 Watkins Ave. in Atherton.



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Imagination is essential when Woodside Priory School students such as Will Latta, left, and Andy John Isokpehi practice running. They're preparing for a race on a standard 400-meter oval track, but the Priory has only a 350-meter rectangle with rounded corners. The new track will be a standard oval, but with an artificial grass all-weather infield.

Priory 'grass' infield gets green light

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

They were eloquent in their opposition to artificial grass. Defenders of a natural grass infield for the new oval running track being proposed for Woodside Priory School in Portola Valley spoke of precedents being set if the fake stuff were allowed, of birds flying on because worms will not be below to distract them, of betrayal of a founding principle in the town: respect for the land.

But after 10 months and 13 meetings, the Portola Valley Planning Commission voted 3-2 on March 20 to allow the Priory — a private Catholic middle and high school — to proceed with a proposal to enlarge its running track to regulation size and replace the 2.5-acre grass infield with a product called FieldTurf Revolution. This green playing surface is already in use at Woodside Elementary School and Menlo School.

The dramatic conclusion included a delayed tie-breaking vote. On March 6, the commission had voted 2-2 on allowing artificial grass, with Chair Alexandra Von Feldt and Commissioner Denise Gilbert voting against and commissioners Arthur "Chip" McIntosh and Nate McKitterick voting in favor. Commissioner Nicholas Targ delayed voting until the commission visited some FieldTurf-equipped fields.

In his comments before voting on March 20, Mr. Targ sounded a sour note in describing the

football field with painted yard lines at Burlingame High School as "tarted up." (No painting is planned for the Priory field.) But, Mr. Targ said, while Portola Valley does place high value on naturally green spaces, this is Silicon Valley, where science and technology should be valued.

This green playing surface is already in use at Woodside Elementary School and Menlo School.

"I might also say that we've poked at this project pretty hard," he added. Both he and Mr. McKitterick cited private property rights in their reasoning to allow the Priory to go ahead. Ms. Von Feldt noted that the town's general plan does not distinguish between public and private, a point reinforced by Leigh Prince, an assistant town attorney.

The school agreed to a one-time payment of up to \$5,000 for a "carbon offset:" the cost of adding to the atmosphere greenhouse gases that a grass field would otherwise absorb.

Principled opposition

On her visit to FieldTurf fields in Cupertino, Ms. Gilbert said the fields looked urban whereas Portola Valley's vision of itself stresses rural character.

"The last thing I want," Ms. Von Feldt said, "is to see this in my town."

Resident Virginia Bacon

offered the commissioners a tray of sod. "It's nice, soft, fresh, green grass, fresh from my yard," she said. "It's just gorgeous. It's beautiful. It's magic. Look at the color. Smell it. Touch it. Put your fingers in the soil. ... I don't see any worms but who knows?"

"You can't read the general plan and not understand that it's all about rural, natural, etc.," said resident Tom Kelley. "I can't even imagine the words 'artificial grass' or 'plastic grass' in that plan."

"Our society is haunted by the surprises of new technology and chemistry," said former planning commissioner Linda Elkind. "Be the stewards of the complex ecology of grass turf."

Fake but safe

Artificial grass is flat and not subject to digging by burrowing animals such as gophers, thereby reducing knee injuries, said Dr. Sally Harris, a resident and sports medicine and pediatrics physician. Injuries are 50 percent lower on artificial grass fields, she said, adding that claims of infections acquired from the surface are anecdotal and no longer relevant.

"We should all be riding around on a horse and take away all technology," said a Priory parent referring to Ms. Bacon's paean to natural grass. "Technological advances are good in moderation."

"There have to be adjustments as society and as technology evolves. We can't all still have adobe homes," said another parent. ■

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Disclose, Disclose

Dear Monica: I am selling my home and want to know what the rules and guidelines for completing the disclosures are. What information must be disclosed? How detailed do I need to be?

Helen M.

Dear Helen: The best advice for sellers is to disclose all material facts and circumstances that relate to your property. The disclosure forms include comprehensive questions designed to capture most of the important items that should be disclosed to prospective buyers. If there are important facts that are not covered by the disclosure form, an addendum should be added describing this information. Sellers should not hesitate to include detailed information about anything

they feel is important about their property. This includes information about the neighborhood and neighbors, if noteworthy. Buyers appreciate this and feel reassured that the seller is not hiding anything.

When a buyer moves into a home he or she soon learns first-hand a great deal about the property and if the seller didn't disclose a material fact, there could be legal consequences. It is so much better for everyone to inform the buyer of any negative facts before the house is sold when the sale can still be canceled, than have the buyer upset after the sale when it's too late to back out. A good rule is that if a fact is important to you, it will most likely be important to your buyer. Disclose it.

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



EYE CARE NEWS



Presented by
Mark Schmidt
Licensed Optician



SUNBURN OF THE EYE

Most people are well acquainted with the fact that excessive exposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays leads to skin damage and the possibility of developing skin cancer, and wear sunscreen accordingly. However, many have not made the leap in thinking to realize that the same harmful UV rays can also burn the surface of the eyes unless they wear protective sunglasses. Even people who are exposed to bright sunlight for even short periods can develop "sunburn of the eye"

(medically known as photokeratitis or photoconjunctivitis). Even worse, similar to the skin, the eyes can develop cancer as a result of UV exposure. The eye tends to develop melanoma while the eyelids usually are afflicted with basal cell carcinoma.

With warmer weather around the corner, more people will be spending time outdoors. Protect your eyes just as you would your skin. Visit MENLO OPTICAL at 1166 University Drive, on the corner of Oak Grove Avenue and University Drive, to browse through our selection of sunglasses with 100% UV-ray protection. We carry a range of sunwear, from high-end styles to everyday styles. Please call 322-3900.

P.S. Even bright light reflected off sidewalks, buildings, water, etc. poses a danger to eyes in both summer and winter.

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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Volunteers chafe over limits on affordable housing role

continued from page 5

topics, about not having answers to basic questions. Among those questions: Where should the housing go? What about its economics? What controls do local governments have? What happens if Portola Valley does not comply with the mandates? Are the regionally derived quotas realistic? What will it cost the town for a property manager if the housing is built?

Former mayor and non-voting chair Steve Toben acknowledged the tight spot in which some members see themselves, but reiterated the mission: discover the community's values and goals, its "broad aspirations" around affordable housing.

"I think we all came together to do a very, very good job," member Carter Warr said. "The Town Council has possibly tasked us with too much to do in too short a time."

The committee may be fielding questions it won't be able to answer, member Bud Eisberg said, and Mr. Warr added: "We start looking like dummies or (like we're) evading the answers."

The community forums, said member Susan Dworak, should open with a 20-minute presentation but, she asked, how can that be prepared if the committee doesn't have answers to its basic questions? The committee, she added, should be exempt from open-meeting restrictions to allow for more conversation, and should have a budget for legal counsel. (The council allotted the committee \$5,000, most of which is to be spent on a planning consultant familiar

with the regulations.)

Other members pushed back against the complaining.

"It's always important to be looking at values early and have a benchmark," Judith Murphy said. "It keeps it from being sort of a dog fight. ... It's not about solutions. It's about gathering information." The committee, she said, should be accumulating information on what the community wants, what it doesn't want and what it fears.

"What we're doing here is getting the people talking," said Onnolee Trapp. "We're beginning a conversation."

"I do think we can learn by doing," said Andrew Pierce.

"There's never enough time, never," added member Wanda Ginner.

Who is pushing this?

Two questions have come up repeatedly in community forums: Where is the pressure coming from to act on affordable housing, and can't the town buy its way out of this?

The pressure starts with the state Department of Housing and Community Development, said Karen Kristiansson, a consultant advising this committee on planning regulations.

In each town's general plan is a chapter on housing, which is the state's way in. The housing "element" is the only chapter subject to state review and certification, thereby delegating authority to the state, Ms. Kristiansson said. "There is a housing crisis in the state," she added. "Not enough housing is being created. The state believes that one reason is

district board. Noting that the school has "ramped up our efforts tremendously" to find a new site, such an effort takes time, he said. Without the extra year, he said, the school would be in jeopardy of having to shut its doors.

Speaker Elizabeth Sanborn, a real estate agent who said she has scouted out roughly 25 sites for private schools in the last six years, supported the

four income categories, including very low to moderate incomes.

Residents can submit comments at Town Hall on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 to 5 p.m. To download a blank comment form, go to tinyurl.com/PV-afford.

For more information, contact Interim Planning Department Manager Steve Padovan at 851-1700, ext. 212, or spadovan@portolavalley.net. ■

New home, new show for Menlowe Ballet

continued from page 5

opened the door for non-high school performances, in the interests of community performing arts, but it took the city some time to work out booking logistics — hence the delay for Menlowe Ballet.

As a warm-up for the spring dance concert, Menlowe Ballet will give a free performance to M-A students on April 19, Ms. Shiveley says, adding that, with the free concert, the company hopes to show its appreciation for all the community support it has received.

Music and memory

Mr. Kabaniaev set "Sweet Sadness" to Sibelius' Violin Concerto in D minor, music he'd been listening to around the time Mr. Lowe, the artistic director, asked him to create a work for the local company. The concerto, he says, evoked days and experiences gone by, creating in his mind "pictures of the past."

The Russian native says he creates abstract ballet, and wants the audience to interpret the work for them-

that local government land-use regulations limit the supply."

With a state-certified housing element, Ms. Kristiansson said in an email, a town acquires five ways to reject an affordable housing project: 1) the town has already met its obligations; 2) the project would irreconcilably harm health and safety; 3) the project would conflict with existing state or federal law; 4) the site

speakers' assertion.

"Sites are not easy to find, but they're there," she said. "I firmly believe that (GAIS) can find a site (and open a school), but ... it can't do it in 15 months."

Enrollment pressure

The board must wrestle with the reality of student enrollment that is growing at an unexpected rate. Several earlier demograph-

Jennifer Ratay to head Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund

Jennifer Ratay will join the Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund (SV2) as executive director in March. Ms. Ratay has served as program officer in the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation's Effective Philanthropy Group since 2007.

At the foundation she directed its multi-million dollar organi-



Michelle Le/The Almanac

Choreographer Viktor Kabaniaev, whose work is being premiered.

selves. "I don't want to chew for the audience," he says. But he offers a personal view of his latest work, which he developed as he worked with Menlowe Ballet dancers Vincent Chavez and Coreen Danaher.

"For me, it's an individual looking back, and remembering things with sadness," Mr. Kabaniaev says. He experiences that sweet sadness himself,

he says, when remembering his early life in Russia, also in Germany. "I left my heart there. ... I'm affected by pictures of the past."

Mr. Kabaniaev trained at the prestigious Vaganova School in St. Petersburg, Russia. As a dancer, he has performed throughout the world, including France, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Poland, Iraq, Japan and Singapore. He has created more than 40 works for companies including the Cincinnati Ballet, Ballet Austin, Smuin Ballet, and Moving Arts Dance, and his works have been presented worldwide, according to his biography.

He now lives in the Bay Area. ■

Performance

"Reverie" will be staged at 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday, April 19 and 20; and at 2 p.m. Sunday, April 21. Tickets ranging from \$28 to \$45 may be purchased at menloweballet.org or by calling 800-595-4849. The Menlo-Atherton High School Performing Arts Center is at 555 Middlefield Road in Atherton.

ment gives the town more control over where and how affordable housing is provided."

As to whether the town can pay for affordable homes in another town? No, said Duane Bay, who heads the Department of Housing and Community Development in San Mateo County. "It's a very popular notion," he said, "but there really hasn't been a way invented yet to do that." ■

rent enrollment is 2,791, having increased by about 40 percent since 2000, according to Superintendent Maurice Ghysels.

If the district doesn't take over the O'Connor campus in the 2014-15 school year, measures to accommodate student growth on existing campuses might include larger class sizes and portable classrooms, Mr. Sheikholeslami said in his report. ■

PRIVATE SCHOOL

continued from page 5

competitive Peninsula real estate market, jump through all the permitting hoops, and prepare the site to house a student body of more than 300.

"I am formally asking you to postpone termination of the lease by one year," GAIS board president Thomas Siegel told the

PUBLIC COMMENT

continued from page 5

seen as a principal source of the problem, a member of the Portola Valley planning staff has said.

HCD and regional agencies have been addressing the issue with planning quotas for each community that are updated periodically. Towns have an obligation to show how they would accommodate specific numbers of dwellings in

ic studies predicted a slower, less dramatic increase in students, and a leveling off by the middle of this decade.

The latest study, however, predicts enrollment growth over the next 10 years, with projected enrollment in 2022 ranging from 3,000 to 3,500, according to Ahmad Sheikholeslami, the district's director of facility planning and construction. Cur-

zational effectiveness grants program.

"Jennifer's exceptional experience in philanthropy, coupled with her vibrant enthusiasm



Jennifer Ratay

and deep passion for creating social impact, perfectly qualify her to take the helm of SV2," said Laura Arrillaga-Andreesen, founder of SV2 in 1998.

Ms. Ratay holds a master's degree in public affairs from Princeton University and a bachelor's degree in government from Dartmouth College.

Caltrans previews Willow Road-U.S. 101 redesign

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Caltrans, in partnership with San Mateo County, East Palo Alto and Menlo Park, plans to reconstruct the current full cloverleaf interchange of U.S. 101 and Willow Road to “address deficiencies impacting motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians by eliminating traffic weaves and providing adequate space for vehicles to stack on freeway off-ramps,” according to the agency.

In March the Menlo Park Transportation Commission got a preview of how the agency might accomplish those goals. The six designs under consideration — four using variations of a partial cloverleaf, and two using a diamond configuration — range in cost from \$38.2 million to \$54.9 million for construction costs and right-of-way acquisitions.

A half cloverleaf design, labeled “1B” in the staff report with an estimated price tag of \$42.5 million, appears to be the leading contender after consultants reviewed the designs. The city of East Palo Alto has also expressed its support for that configuration.

One key request from Menlo Park is to evaluate the feasibility of adding a median bike lane along Willow Road, through the interchange. The staff report states that a median lane presents some safety issues, as drivers aren’t used to it and it exposes bicyclists to traffic on both sides at intersections.

The design team concluded that the option wasn’t viable. “It works when you have a full cloverleaf because as you go through the entire overcrossing you have no intersections. But when you have intersections there, the whole thing starts to break down,” said Public Works

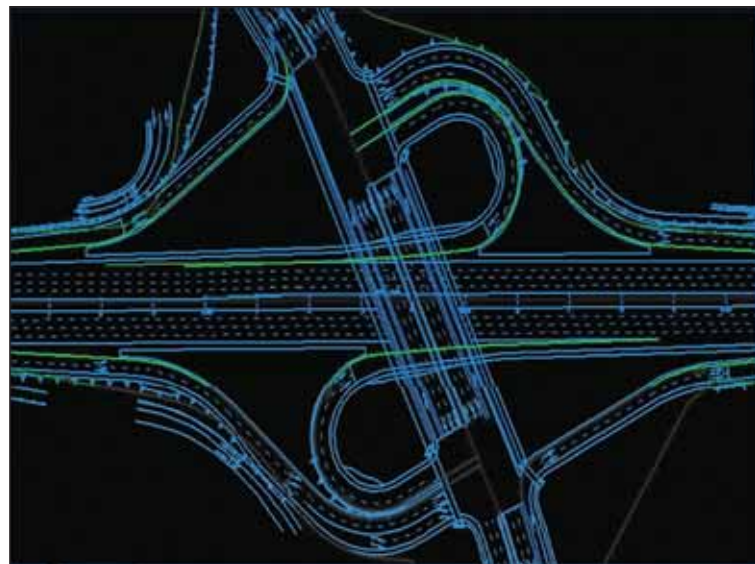
Director Chip Taylor.

Mr. Taylor said that design 1B, in addition to minimizing the right-of-way impact on property owners near the interchange, also incorporates signalized on-ramps and “squared off intersections” so that drivers must slow down and make a right turn to enter the freeway, creating a “better experience for bicyclists” traveling alongside other vehicles.

The draft environmental analysis for the project should come before the City Council and public starting in April, with the final report expected to be done sometime this fall.

Caltrans plans construction to start in 2016 and finish within two years. The project first needs to secure full funding, however, before proceeding.

Mr. Taylor said the agency hopes to leave as much of the current infrastructure intact throughout construction to minimize traffic impacts, but



Courtesy City of Menlo Park

A depiction of the favored (partial cloverleaf) design for the Caltrans reconstruction of the U.S. 101-Willow Road interchange.

it’s too early to outline how exactly that will occur. “They still have to select the alternative and work through the environmental process first before get-

ting to those details.”

Go to tinyurl.com/bz6bofz to review the staff report and proposed interchange configurations. ■

Fortified traffic patrol nets at least 200 drivers

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Even with police informing the public that they would step up traffic patrols on March 20, at least 200 drivers got tickets in Menlo Park and Redwood City on that day.

“Our overall objective is to increase awareness, and part of that is publicizing (the patrols),” said Sgt. Jay Kiely of the Burl-

Most citations are for failing to yield to pedestrians and distracted driving.

ingame Police Department, which participated in the multi-agency effort. “We don’t want it to come as a shock. Educating is one of the

main ways to minimize collisions. For some, their education comes in the form of a ticket.”

Seventy-one citations were handed out for failing to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks. Sixty went to distracted drivers, such as those talking on cellphones while driving, and the remainder were given for running stop signs, not wearing seat belts, and other violations, according to Sgt. Kiely.

Based on collision statistics and other data such as the amount of pedestrian traffic or unregulated intersections, the officers selected downtown Menlo Park, the El Camino Real corridor and Woodside Road in Redwood City for increased patrol on Wednesday.

San Mateo County law

enforcement agencies donated officers to conduct monthly traffic saturation deployments through August. The next effort will be held in April in Daly City and Millbrae. Sgt. Kiely said agencies are hoping to win a grant from the state Office of Traffic Safety to fund the program in the future. ■



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Portola Valley man pleads no contest to porn charges

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Portola Valley resident Stephen Wolf, 65, pleaded no contest on March 19 to charges of possession of child pornography, according to the San Mateo County District’s Attorney’s Office.

At a hearing set for May 30, he could be sentenced to as much as one year in jail, prosecutors said. The no-contest plea included a condition that he not be sent to prison. Prosecutors had been seeking a sentencing option of up to 16 months in state prison, but the judge rejected it, District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said.

It’s standard practice for San Mateo County prosecutors to ask for a prison option for “people who are fascinated by child pornography,” and common practice for judges to reject that option when the defendant has no history of actual sex offenses, as was the case this time, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

Nevertheless, Mr. Wolf will have to register as a sex offender, Mr. Wagstaffe said. And the Department of Justice may add his name to a list associated with Megan’s Law, which makes public “certain information on the whereabouts of sex offenders so that members of our local communities may protect themselves and their children,” according to a summary of the law by the California Department of Justice.

“The law is not intended to punish the registrant and specifically prohibits using the information to harass or commit any crime against a registrant,” the summary says.

Mr. Wolf is out of custody on \$10,000 bail.

Mr. Wolf and Menlo Park resident Charles Vela Reyes Jr. were two of nine men arrested on March 22, 2012, during a county-wide sweep of 11 homes by detectives from a regional Internet-crimes task force. Both men had pleaded not guilty. Mr. Reyes’ trial

is set to begin on May 6.

In the arrests, detectives seized computers containing pornographic images and other evidence linking the men to the distribution and/or possession of child pornography, the Sheriff’s Office said. Mr. Wolf’s computer contained images of nude girls ages 6 through 12 who were “engaged in sexual activity,” prosecutors said.

More than 100 investigators from more than 20 law enforcement agencies participated in the sweep, including the Sheriff’s Office, the Menlo Park Police Department, the FBI, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and a “homeland security” investigative arm of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Mr. Wolf entered his no-contest plea in a pre-trial conference with Superior Court Criminal Presiding Judge Jonathan Karesh.

Mr. Wolf’s attorney, Jonathan D. McDougall, did not respond to an interview request. ■

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Gymnastics probe findings won't be made public

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

The investigation into allegations of a hostile workplace within Menlo Park's gymnastics program will likely take at least one month, but however long it takes, the public will remain in the dark as to the findings.

"I am advised that it will likely be at least one month before the investigation is completed given the number of witnesses to be interviewed," City Attorney Bill McClure said. "The investigative findings are not subject to public disclosure because the investigation relates to confidential personnel matters and is also an attorney-client privileged investigation."

Nikki Hall, the San Francisco-based attorney hired by Menlo Park to conduct the review, has extensive experience representing public sector employers and investigating workplace misconduct, according to her biography. She directed the Almanac's questions to the city attorney.

Menlo Park hired her weeks after a popular gymnastics

instructor, Michelle Sutton, was fired and allegations of a toxic workplace environment within the program arose.

City Manager Alex McIntyre had initially said that he had reviewed the circumstances of the firing to his satisfaction. However, his review didn't encompass talking to instructors who said that a gymnastics program supervisor allegedly bullied and harassed staff, including Ms. Sutton.

Ms. Sutton had asked the city's human resources department and union representatives about filing a harassment complaint against supervisor Karen Mihalek the week before she was fired. However, the instructor said she was told that a parent's complaint led to her termination on Feb. 12. The complaint, sent to program management and to the City Council's public email log on Jan. 30, described the instructor as unprofessional in how she had asked the parent to step away during a child-only class.

The Almanac reviewed Ms. Sutton's personnel file at the city and found no documentation of any reprimands or other perfor-

mance issues. However, Menlo Park isn't legally required to document disciplinary actions for at-will employees such as Ms. Sutton, although many employers do as a safeguard.

Another instructor, Chris Ortez, quit in protest over the firing and later told the city manager and the council that Ms. Mihalek held "none-too-discreet contempt" for Ms. Sutton and reportedly had a history of complaints filed by at least two female staff members "who have been harassed, intimidated, and/or otherwise bullied by her."

Asked why the city hired an independent investigator, Mr. McClure said that information presented to the council by the former instructors triggered the decision, and that that was the first time the city had been made aware of the specific allegations.

Ms. Sutton told the Almanac that the day she was fired, she got a letter from the city's human resources director that acknowledged the city was aware that she had wanted to file a harassment complaint and asked her to call to discuss it.

"Because of my status as an at-will employee, I did not respond to her request. I chose to speak to an attorney first," Ms. Sutton said. ■

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High rents drive demand for home-sharing program

By Barbara Wood
Special to the Almanac

Anyone who has tried to find a rental on the Midpeninsula recently knows that rents seem higher than ever locally — a fact confirmed by a recent study that found San Mateo County to be the third-most-expensive rental market in the country.

The study by the National Low Income Housing Coalition found that only Nantucket County in Massachusetts and Honolulu County in Hawaii have more expensive rents, based on the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development's annual study of fair market rate rents.

The Low Income Housing Coalition study found that a yearly income of \$72,000 is necessary to afford the \$1,795 rent for a typical two-bedroom apartment in the county without spending more than 30 percent of income on rent.

Other studies show rents in the county

are even higher, according to Kate Comfort Harr, executive director of the nonprofit Human Investment Project (HIP) Housing, which works on providing affordable housing options. "Data recently released by the County of San Mateo cites the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in San Mateo County as \$1,925 a month, putting it out of reach for most teachers, home health aides, bank tellers and so many others," said Ms. Harr.

It would take, she said, 173 hours a week of minimum wage work to afford this rent. "There literally are not enough hours in the week," she said.

Ms. Harr said the situation has been made worse by the extremely low number of affordable housing units and the loss of redevelopment agencies, which had been one of the main sources of funds for affordable housing construction in the county.

HIP Housing, which receives funding from local city and town governments, runs a Home Sharing program that matches those who have space in their homes with those who need an affordable place to live.

Joe Karnicky, a 69-year-old retired engineer who has owned a home in North Fair Oaks since 1978, is currently using HIP Housing to help him find a roommate for the fourth time.

Mr. Karnicky, who has a progressive form of multiple sclerosis and uses a wheelchair, said he likes having someone else living in his home in case he needs an extra hand. He also has an attendant who comes in twice a day to help him in and out of bed.

"It allows me to keep on living here," he said.

His current roommate, who has lived with Mr. Karnicky for seven years, has been able to save enough in rent money during that time to now buy a home in Santa Clarita with his son.

"I'm going to take my time finding a replacement," Mr. Karnicky said.

Mr. Karnicky said he is pleased with the HIP Housing process, which requires both the person seeking a renter and those who want to rent to

fill out extensive forms used to match up roommates. "It actually has worked out really well for me," Mr. Karnicky said.

HIP Housing Development Director Clarice Veloso said that rents in the home-sharing program average around \$700, creating "a win-win for both home providers and home seekers."

"In the last 6 months, we have seen an 11 percent increase in calls from those in need of an affordable place to live and a 30 percent increase from those at risk of homelessness," said Ms. Comfort Harr.

She said that for every person seeking a renter, there are six people in search of a place to rent, "one of the highest ratios we've ever seen in our program." The program has been in place for 40 years.

According to Ms. Veloso, in the 2012-13 fiscal year, HIP Housing received a total of \$25,775 in grant funds from Woodside, Portola Valley, Atherton and Menlo Park. The city of Menlo Park also helped finance an affordable housing project with HIP at 1157-1161 Willow Road.

Visit HIPHousing.org for more information. ■

It takes 173 hours a week of minimum wage work to afford the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment, says HIP Housing's official.



Songs for scholarships

Noted folk singer Joan Baez (center), who recently gave a concert benefiting the Peninsula College Fund, is shown with six students who have been or will be helped by the scholarship fund. They are, from left, Laura Tovar, Lisette Valadez, Manny Castro, Tania Garcia, Melissa Sandoval, and Jessica Esquivel. More than 530 guests attended the March 2 concert at Sacred Heart Preparatory in Atherton.

Former college student pleads no contest to theft

A former Menlo College student arrested for stealing backpacks at a neighboring school pleaded no contest to misdemeanor petty theft in San Mateo County Superior Court on Wednesday, March 20.

Raphael Daniel Bettan, 19, and another student were accused of taking computers and backpacks at Menlo School in November 2011. A judge sentenced him to one day in county jail with three years of probation, and ordered him to pay

\$706 for fines and restitution.

The other student, 20-year-old Ryan Alexander Goodman, pleaded guilty to grand theft in January 2012 and was sentenced to one day in county jail and two years of probation conditioned on completion of a substance abuse treatment program, according to the county district attorney's office.

Police said they found in the college students' dormitory two iPads and other electronic items believed to have been stolen.

Ironically, a former Menlo School assistant baseball coach who spotted the pair grabbing the backpacks was himself later charged with stealing iPads from the campus. Michael Taylor voluntarily confessed to the Atherton Police Department and pleaded no contest to misdemeanor petty theft. Mr. Taylor was sentenced to three days in county jail and 18 months of probation, and also ordered to pay \$212 in restitution and court fees.

— Sandy Brundage

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■ POLICE CALLS

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

WOODSIDE

Residential burglary reports:

■ Julio Cesar Jimenez-Hernandez of San Francisco was arrested on burglary charges in connection with a series of missing items valued at \$15,000 from a Churchill Avenue home, including a gold Rolex watch, a 1984 silver U.S. Olympic commemorative coin, and keys to a vehicle, March 15.

■ Someone kicked open the front door of a house on Stockbridge Avenue and got away with electronic equipment, jewelry and cash with an estimated value of \$4,400, March 5.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Residential burglary report:

A Tommy Hilfiger purse containing gift cards and a credit card, with an estimated total loss of \$2,650, is missing from an unlocked vehicle parked in an unlocked garage on Shawnee Pass, March 5.

LADERA

Suspicious circumstances report: A man returned home to find an unfamiliar key jammed and stuck in the keyhole of his front door. Upon returning to the door a few minutes later with pliers, he found the key gone. There were no suspicious vehicles nor any other indications that anyone had been inside the home, March 4.

MENLO PARK

Commercial burglary reports:

■ Someone broke into Del Rio Stone, a custom stonework company on Constitution Drive, and stole a computer and a white GMC pickup truck for a total loss estimated at \$13,100, March 15.

■ Someone stole fence stakes with a value of \$1,500 from the bed of a pickup truck at Alternative HVAC Solutions on Constitution Drive, March 15.

■ The losses are not yet known after burglaries at three businesses on Haven Avenue, all located in one commercial building. The entry was through a heating and air conditioning vent on the roof, March 11.

Residential burglary reports:

■ Thieves got away with jewelry valued at \$2,900 after entering a Berkeley Avenue house through a rear door without leaving signs of breaking and entering, March 17.

■ Someone stole a video game console, a watch, a necklace, headphones and a .38-caliber pistol, with a total value of \$1,950, from a home, but did not leave signs of breaking and entering, March 14.

■ Losses are estimated at around \$1,700 in the theft of a motion-sensor light, a component from a leaf blower, and miscellaneous electrical items from a home under construction on Santa Cruz Avenue, March 11.

Auto burglary reports:

■ Losses were set at \$4,330 after someone smashed a front passenger side window of a truck on O'Brien Drive and stole golf clubs, an Apple iPod, tools and snowboarding gear, March 21.

■ Someone stole a set of golf clubs valued at \$2,000 from the trunk of a locked vehicle in the 2800 block of Sand Hill Road but left no indications as to how the trunk was opened, March 14.

■ A camera and accessories valued at \$1,220 are missing from a vehicle parked on University Drive, March 21.

■ After smashing the passenger side windows of a vehicle on Sharon Park Drive, someone stole a leather jacket and other items for a total estimated loss to the victim of \$480, March 14.

Theft reports:

■ A blue silk rug with an estimated value of \$2,800 was taken from the American Cancer Society Thrift Shop on Santa Cruz Avenue, March 11.

■ Someone stole a laptop computer valued at \$2,000 from a work station at Facebook Corp. on Hacker Way, March 15.

■ An unattended laptop computer valued at \$1,500 was stolen from inside the McDonald's restaurant at 1100 El Camino Real, March 2.

■ Someone lost a cell phone with an estimated value of \$650 while riding her bike on Santa Cruz Avenue, March 11.

■ Two bikes valued at about \$500 each were taken from apartment garage areas in the 1600 block of El Camino Real, March 7 and 8.

■ Someone stole a car cover valued at \$400 from a vehicle on Woodland Avenue, March 10.

■ A car-organizer bag, a center-console phone receiver, and \$22 in cash were reported missing from an unlocked

vehicle on Buckthorn Way for a total estimated loss of \$237, March 7.

■ Two minors got away with a 12-pack of beer valued at \$10.95 from the Safeway Supermarket on Sharon Park Drive, March 10.

■ Juvenile admitted to stealing about \$3 from the employee tip jar at the Subway sandwich shop on Santa Cruz Avenue, March 18.

Stolen vehicle reports:

■ A 1990 Toyota Camry from a parking lot in the 800 block of El Camino Real, March 7.

■ A black 2001 motor scooter from the side yard of a residence on Alice Lane, March 8.

Possession of burglary tools report:


Two Redwood City women arrested, cited and released when found in possession of a bolt cutter, screwdrivers, pliers, a chisel and a lock pick, March 12.

Accident reports:

■ Pedestrian suffered non-life-threatening injuries and taken to a hospital after stepping into a bike lane without looking and colliding with a bicyclist on Alma Street near Burgess Drive, March 12.

■ One driver was taken to the hospital with a non-life-threatening injury and complaints of pain after a two-vehicle accident near Willow Road and O'Keefe Street, March 5.

■ One driver taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injury and complaints of pain after one vehicle rear-ended another at Sand Hill Road and Santa Cruz Avenue, March 6.



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John Woodell countersued in cellphone/sign caper

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Well, now the shoe's on the other foot: First John Woodell sued two people for defamation. Now one, Chuck Bernstein, has countersued Mr. Woodell — for defamation.

Mr. Woodell, husband of Menlo Park Councilwoman Kirsten Keith, sued fire board director Virginia Chang Kiraly and Mr. Bernstein in October, alleging that the pair told the media, police and others that he'd stolen campaign signs during the 2011 fire board election. Both defendants denied doing so.

"I had hoped that the matter would be resolved without the necessity of a trial and I worked toward that end," Mr. Bernstein told the Almanac. "However, it appears that there will not be a settlement and so I had to proceed."

He said he considered the lawsuits an enormous waste of time, money, and energy.

"I never accused John Woodell of doing anything illegal, immoral, or unethical. I like John and I am sorry if anything I may have said was misinterpreted to suggest I was accusing him," Mr. Bernstein said. "I did not choose to engage in this legal action and I would never have initiated a legal action. However, I must defend myself

against this unwarranted lawsuit and, insofar as it appears that John has accused me of wrongdoing, I want to defend vigorously my reputation and integrity."

All parties agree that someone uprooted Ms. Chang Kiraly's campaign sign from Mr. Bernstein's yard. He later found the sign tossed into the bushes, lying near Mr. Woodell's cellphone, which was turned in to police.

Mr. Woodell denied vandalizing the sign. A court filing states that the plaintiff may have dropped his phone while walking the dog in the neighborhood where both the Woodells and Bernsteins live.

Now Mr. Bernstein's suit accuses Mr. Woodell of knowingly making false statements to the district attorney, among others, that Mr. Bernstein had stolen the phone, that were then published in news reports about the case.

The filing of the countersuit delayed a case management conference, originally scheduled for March 21, to May 2 to give Seth Rosenberg, Mr. Woodell's attorney, time to review the action. He was not immediately available for comment.

A judge recently denied a request by the other defendant, Ms. Chang Kiraly, to dismiss the case. ■

Defendant in lawsuit alleges defamation.



Fifth Grade Allnet team

The Redwood Fifth Grade Allnet team won the National Junior Basketball Silicon Valley Section championship March 10, defeating the Palo Alto Allnet team, 36-31. The boys played in the national tournament in Orange County March 22-24. The Redwood team includes: front row, from left, James Pleasants, Joe Posthauer, team manager John Diepenbrock, Nick Tripaldi, Andrew Elhini and Trevor Wargo; second row, Michael Matsuno, Walt Smithers, Justin Sellers, Justin Waddell and Sam Weseloh; third row, assistant coach Jeff Tripaldo and head coach Peter Diepenbrock.

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Getting self-published book printed ... in 10 minutes

By Kate Daly

Special to the Almanac

It's getting easier for writers to get published now that there are so many self-publishing options. Vanity press has largely become an online business, but I found one outlet here in the Bay Area that is providing quick turnaround service with a human touch. The Espresso Book Machine can print out a paperback in 10 minutes, enabling authors to self-publish a book in about two weeks from start to finish.

There are 81 EBMs spread out in bookstores, libraries and universities around the world. Fifty of the machines are located in the U.S., four are in California. I recently used the closest one at Bookshop Santa Cruz to complete my own publishing project, "The Empty Nesters' Cookbook: Cooking for 2 to 20."

Four years in the making, the cookbook is a compilation of more than 170 recipes that I started developing when my kids headed off to college. I found the cooking part both challenging and creative, but the publishing part, not so much.

Procrastination got in the way, too, but after doing a lot of research and flirting with going with my former publisher of "The Soccer Moms' Cookbook," I turned to EBM. I explored using Lulu, Blurb, Xlibris and iUniverse, but chose EBM because it's the most user-friendly way to go. You end up dealing with a person in person, and not having to do everything online.

In my case, I wanted to print

out a run of paperbacks containing only recipes, some commentary, and no illustrations. That means I could use Word software for the content, and then use Word and a digital photo for the cover. I was fine with the fact that only black and white is available for the books' pages, and color is reserved for the cover. I also knew I would need a little technological help, and received it.

I had read an article about EBMs and the company that owns them. That led me to On Demand Books' website where I skipped over details such as the company started in New York City in 2006, and went straight to the do-it-yourself submission specifications.

(Visit bookshopsantacruz.com/espresso to see specifications.)

As for pricing details, I called the print consultant in Santa Cruz, Sylvie-Marie Drescher, and found her very helpful. She explained that the range for the initial setup production fee runs anywhere from \$15 to \$249, depending on the need. The more help needed, the higher the cost.

I went with the \$99 basic Paperback Writer package, but for another \$125 I could have purchased an ISBN number (the bar code used to track retail books). I also could have bought into a marketing plan to make the book available in the store on consignment, but instead opted to have the title added to the company's online database.

Each book printed out on EBM would cost an additional \$6.50 to \$30, depending on the length. The general rule is \$5 per book and



Photo by Julia Daly

Cookbook author Kate Daly of Woodside describes how easy it is to self-publish on the Espresso Book Machine.

4.5¢ per page, but there are bulk discounts. As for format, books must be between 40 and 800 pages long, and measure between 4.5 x 5 and 8.25 x 10.5 inches in size.

I went for the 6 x 9 inch size on cream paper (as opposed to white paper). I carefully formatted my Word file to conform to that size, adjusting the margins and page breaks. The next step was to convert my file into a PDF, a Portable Document Format, to email to Ms. Drescher, or hand in on a thumb drive or CD. I found the conversion rearranged the spacing, so ended up emailing my Word file to her to create a PDF. We still ran into

spacing problems, and had to reduce the font size.

I also emailed her a PDF of the proposed cover. She realigned it a bit and emailed it back to me for approval. Within minutes, Ms. Drescher printed out a proof copy of my book on the oversized copier machine sitting right next to her. We are literally talking hot off the press.

I drove down so we could sit at her desk and go over the spacing issues. I marked up the proof copy, and we continued consulting over email. She emailed me back another PDF to approve, and then ran my order for 50 copies. That took a few extra days because I picked one of the busiest times of year and had to wait in line.

The end result is a professional looking book that is 126 pages long and cost me less than \$500 to make. My book is now being electronically stored should I decide to order more copies or succeed in selling it on EspressoNet, the company's online database.

The company offers access to more than eight million paperback titles with the selling point that they can be printed out on-demand in minutes on an EBM, rather than take up space in stores and warehouses, waiting to be sold. In addition to new self-published works from around the world, customers may purchase books that are in the public domain, which Ms. Drescher describes as titles from 1923 or earlier that are out of print or out of copyright.

Bookshop Santa Cruz has had its EBM since July, and since then, Ms. Drescher says, she has published more than a half million pages, or about 2,500 books. She estimates up to three-quarters of the orders are from

self-publishers creating books for private events and/or resale. She believes what distinguishes her product is "no one else has a local person to help," and points out that competitors such as AuthorHouse, FastPencil and CreateSpace are all online and can be more expensive.

Self-publishing is one of the fastest growing segments in the industry she says. One source, Bowker Books in Print, claims print accounts for 63 percent of the self-publishing business, and that there was an increase of 33 percent in that category from 2010 to 2011. During that same period the report shows 129 percent growth in the number of self-published electronic titles.

That trend towards electronic titles might be perceived as a red flag for some publishing houses, but vice president of sales for On Demand Books Jason Beatty says: "We embrace e-books because they lead to our technology, to print only when you need it. We feel the physical book will always be around."

He says the price of the Espresso Book Machine has dropped to around \$100,000 each. The company is partnered with Xerox to do the selling and servicing. There was a lease option, but that is currently on hold and under review. The Santa Cruz installation operates as a concession, renting space from the bookshop, but that arrangement is no longer being offered. Praveen Madan, the owner of Kepler's Books in Menlo Park, says, "We are looking into the EBM but haven't decided yet."

Kate Daly, a resident of Woodside, is a frequent contributor to the Almanac.

Nea Zanita Sneckner

January 21, 1916 - August 11, 2012



Our Mother and family matriarch, passed on August 11, at 12:14 PM. She is sorely missed!

Nea married George J. Sneckner October 4th 1935. Their life was full of travel and wonderment. They raised 6 children, and were always there for us.

They went through the end of the Great Depression, creating businesses SEM Products,

The TAPEX Company and Export Import Co., they developed properties, and thrived.

During and after World War II, George was in-charge of 3 displaced persons camps through United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, "UNRRA". They participated in the sponsorship of several displaced persons from different countries and welcomed them in our home while teaching us about people and cultures!

Mother's favorite hobby's were travel and her bon-sai's which took her to related countries. She grew things from the smallest cuttings making tiny trees

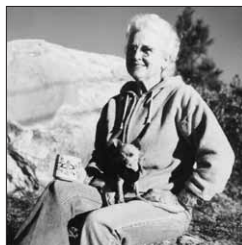
and forests. Her love of plant life did not stop there!

She was diversely creative and had an eye for all things aesthetic. She made most of our clothes, school banners, graduation and prom dresses to wedding gowns. She co-built, landscaped and decorated homes including ours on Sneckner Court, the dance hall of formerly Stanford Weekend Acres. She painted, drew, made stained glass and still had time to spare for Family and Friends. We feel very fortunate to have inherited some of her creativity as well hope to have her resourcefulness, generosity and zest for life!

Survived by 5 of her 6 children, Nea, Jerral, Leith, Eddi and Georgi. Preceded in death by youngest daughter Sherri, several grandchildren, 3 preceding her in death also, great grandchildren, great, great grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

If you wish, please donate to Hospice or charity of choice.

No host celebration of life at the Fish Market Palo Alto May 11th at 2:00pm RSVP to Georgi at roughweek@comcast.net.



PAID OBITUARY

Portola Valley may hold garden-sharing event

With the growing season just ahead, a proposal before the Portola Valley Town Council on Wednesday, March 27, would establish a gathering place on the fourth Saturday of every month for residents to exchange the fruits, both literal and metaphorical, of the labors in the garden. The council meets at 7:30 p.m. in the Historic Schoolhouse.

The "garden share" would take place at 10 a.m. in the redwood grove near the schoolhouse. Besides tips and conversation, goods exchanged could include fruits and vegetables, herbs and seeds, pickles and jam, chicken manure and earthworms, according to a report by Brandi de Garmeaux, the town's coordinator of initiatives on sustainable living.

Such events cultivate community, share best practices, encourage appreciation of homegrown food, reduce waste and lower food-gathering carbon footprints, Ms. de Garmeaux says.

The redwood grove "provides a lovely space for the event and eliminates the need for setting out tables, as there are three existing picnic tables in the Grove," the report says, adding that the event is "not intended to be a primary food source."

Go to tinyurl.com/PV-share and turn to Page 34 for more information.

Menlo Park molestation case ends in mistrial

The 12-day trial of a Menlo Park man charged with five counts of child molestation ended without resolution after the jury deadlocked. Eight jurors voted guilty, two not guilty and two were undecided about the charges against Horacio Carlos Teran.

Mr. Teran, 49, was arrested in 2010 after a 10-year-old neighbor alleged that the man had fondled him during games of tag in the defendant's backyard, according to the district attorney's office.

Michael Armstrong, the defendant's attorney, has told

the media that while his client did play tag, no lewd touching occurred.

The case returns to court on April 12 for the prosecution's decision on whether to pursue a retrial. Mr. Teran remains out of custody on \$50,000 bail.

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March 25

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sgray@cbnocal.com

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www.fprespa.org

Holy Week & Easter
at
St. Bede's
Episcopal Church
2650 Sand Hill Rd, Menlo Park
www.stbedesmenlopark.org

March 28 ♦ MAUNDY THURSDAY

12 noon Foot Washing & Holy Eucharist

6:30pm Agape meal & Holy Eucharist

8:00pm-midnight
Vigil in the church

March 29 ♦ GOOD FRIDAY

12 noon Communion from reserved sacrament & music *approx. 1 hr*

7:30pm Tenebrae *approx. 1 1/4 hr*

March 30 ♦ HOLY SATURDAY

7:30pm Great Vigil of Easter *approx. 1 1/4 hr*

March 31 ♦ EASTER SUNDAY

8:00am Eucharist with Hymns

10:15am Sung Eucharist w/choir

11:30am Easter Egg Hunt

Nursery available 10-11:30am

Alleluia!

Holy Week Services

March 28 6:00 pm Seder Dinner

March 29 Noon & 7:00 pm Good Friday Services

March 31 9:30 am Easter Festival Service
Children's Easter Egg Hunt
after the service!



Bethany Lutheran Church
1095 Cloud Avenue, Menlo Park
Bethany 650.854.5897 www.bethany-mp.org



Woodside Village Church

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

March 24 Palm Sunday Worship - 9:30 a.m.

March 28 Maundy Thursday, Last Supper re-enactment - 7:30 p.m.

March 29 Good Friday - 7:30 p.m.

March 31 - Easter Worship Service - 9:30 a.m.

Easter Egg Hunt and Celebration Reception immediately following service

Reverend Michael E. Harvey, Pastor
Reverend Dorothy Straks, Minister of Music

Woodside Village Church
3154 Woodside Road, Woodside 650.851.1587 www.wvchurch.org



Photo by Pete Zivkov

Menlo International Fair

Menlo School students, from left, Julia Dressel, Max Parker, and Helena Abbott, take part in a Bollywood dance organized by senior Puji Anur as part of the school's recent International Fair. In the first year of the school's Global Programs & Studies program, the fair highlighted Menlo School opportunities for global student experiences. The afternoon included crafts and games and an international cafe, where Menlo School families shared recipes from around the world.

Woodside sewer rates may rise 100 percent

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

In January 2011, the Woodside Town Council passed an ordinance to more closely align service fees, charged to property owners, to the costs for those services. These services included building permits, plan checks, and site analysis.

Now the focus is sewer rates, most of which have not been looked at in 18 years, a staff report says.

A proposal before the council on Tuesday, March 26, would increase sewer rates by about 100 percent for all residences with sewer service — 157 residences and 24 non-residential properties — starting in the 2013-14 fiscal year. The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. in Independence Hall at 2955 Woodside Road.

The vast majority of Woodside's 2,200 residences use septic tanks. The Town Center Sewer Assessment District runs along the downtown area of Woodside Road and includes Martin, Audiffred and Cedar lanes, Prospect Avenue and Canada Road north to Bardet Road.

After this initial jump, residential rates would continue rising over the next three years, but at much smaller increments — at 8 percent, 16 percent and 7 percent. Non-residential rates, while calculated differently, would track residential rates, Deputy Town Manager Paul Nagengast said in an email.

The current annual rate of \$359 for a Canada Road household within the sewer district would rise to \$747; for all other affected households, the current rate of \$426 would rise to \$830. By 2017-18, these rates would be \$1,353 and \$1,450, respectively.

For many households, the current annual rate of \$426 would rise to \$830.

The current rates, according to the report, “do not pay for the existing cost of service to maintain the existing sewer system and for the conveyance costs” to transport and treat the sewage. Nor are rates at a level sufficient for a proposed upgrade to the 30-year-old treatment plant in Redwood City, the report says. The town's sewer district needs about \$650,000 in capital improvements, according to an engineering study. ▣



CHRIST CHURCH

The Episcopal Parish of Portola Valley & Woodside

Saturday March 30: Children's Eucharist @ 4 p.m.

Sunday March 31: Sung Eucharist @ 8 a.m. & 10 a.m.

815 Portola Road, Portola Valley; tel. (650) 851-0224

www.ccpvw.org www.facebook.com/ccpvw



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Celebrate the Resurrection

Sunday March 31

9:15 am Light Brunch and Egg Hunt

10:00 am Family Worship

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Reverend Matthew Weber, Assistant

March 31 Easter Sunday 11am Choral Eucharist & Sermon
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Maundy Thursday— March 28

❖ 6:15pm *Monastic Supper & Liturgy of the Word followed by Holy Eucharist & Stripping of the Altar*

Good Friday — March 29

❖ Noon to 2:00pm *Stations of the Cross with Reflections*

❖ 2:00 to 3:00pm *Labyrinth Stations: A Walking Meditation*

❖ 7:30 to 8:30pm *Tenebrae: The Office of Shadows*

Easter — March 31

❖ 5:30am *Easter Vigil, Eucharist & Baptism*

❖ 8:00 to 9:30am *Festive Breakfast & Family Easter Activities*

❖ 10:00am *Festive Holy Eucharist*

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11:00a.m. Sunday, March 31st Easter Service



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Rev. Jerry Fox



Grace Lutheran Church ELCA

Celebrate Easter

Holy Week

Maundy Thursday
3/28 | 7:30 pm

Good Friday
3/29 | 12 pm & 7:30 pm

Saturday
Easter Vigil
3/30 | 7:30 pm

Easter Sunday

March 31 | 8:30 am and 10:45 am
Easter Breakfast: 9:00 - 10:30 am

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Join Us For Holy Week & Easter

The great question of Easter is about us: where are the tombs in our life that God is inviting us to leave and where is new life rising in us? Join us at Trinity as we celebrate the promise and possibility of new life.

Palm Sunday, March 24: 10:00 am*

Maundy Thursday (The Last Supper)
March 28, 6:00 pm* (with simple meal)

Good Friday, March 29
7:00 am, Noon, 7:00 pm

The Great Vigil of Easter
Baptisms & First Easter Communion
Saturday, March 30, 7:00 pm*

Easter Sunday, March 31
6:30 am in the Memorial Garden
8:30 am* & 10:30 am* in Church with Festival Choir

*Indicates child care available.

330 Ravenswood Ave., Menlo Park (650) 326-2083
www.trinitymenlopark.org



Peninsula
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Services

EASTER

The reason to hope

Menlo Park Presbyterian Church
950 Santa Cruz Avenue, Menlo Park

Easter Service, March 30, 5pm
Easter Sunday, March 31, 8am, 9:30am, 11am
mppc.org



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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.

More housing for Menlo Park

Just over 10 months ago, the city of Menlo Park agreed to find sites to zone for approximately 900 new housing units to comply with state housing quotas as part of a lawsuit settlement.

There were some bumps along the way, and some say not enough effort went into spreading the five selected sites equitably around the city, but regardless, the city has taken steps to fulfill the terms of the settlement.

At the outset, City Manager Alex McIntyre admitted Menlo Park was 10 years behind in updating its housing element. During an intensive process, the city held hearings to review numerous sites. In some cases, neighbors convinced city officials to remove potential sites, in Sharon Heights and Linfield Oaks, for example, from the list.

The City Council and Planning Commission are moving toward adopting the updated housing plan in early summer, which will likely rezone five sites for development as housing. Among the site finalists is one on Haven Avenue northwest of Marsh Road, with proposed zoning to allow up to 540 housing units. Another, on Hamilton Avenue off Willow Road, had previously been identified for affordable housing and could accommodate 216 units. Two of the remaining sites are on Willow Road between Bayfront Expressway and U.S. 101, and the fifth is on Willow off the freeway.

When the process began, the city was under orders to find 1,975 units, but after deducting new housing built after 1998, brought the total down to approximately 900 units. The new zones must include a mix of market-rate and moderate-, low- and very-low income units, with affordable housing on sites zoned for at least 30 units per acre.

It's easy to understand why a city like Menlo Park, which is close to being totally built-out, has a hard time finding locations for dense housing in neighborhoods where many homes are valued at more than \$1 million. But the city does have pockets of apartment buildings in numerous locations that could support infill development, including downtown south of Menlo Avenue, Linfield Oaks and Sharon Heights.

So despite what first appeared to be an impossible mountain to climb in a short amount of time, Menlo Park has managed to identify sites for new housing — but the process is not over. After the conclusion of this update, the city will immediately need to start planning how to meet the next quota assigned by the state.

Studies have shown that 17,000 workers commute into the city every day. Whether a developer will step forward to actually build homes on sites newly rezoned by the council is anybody's guess, but given the number of potential buyers or renters who want to live here, it just might happen.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

Fee for paper bags is outrageous

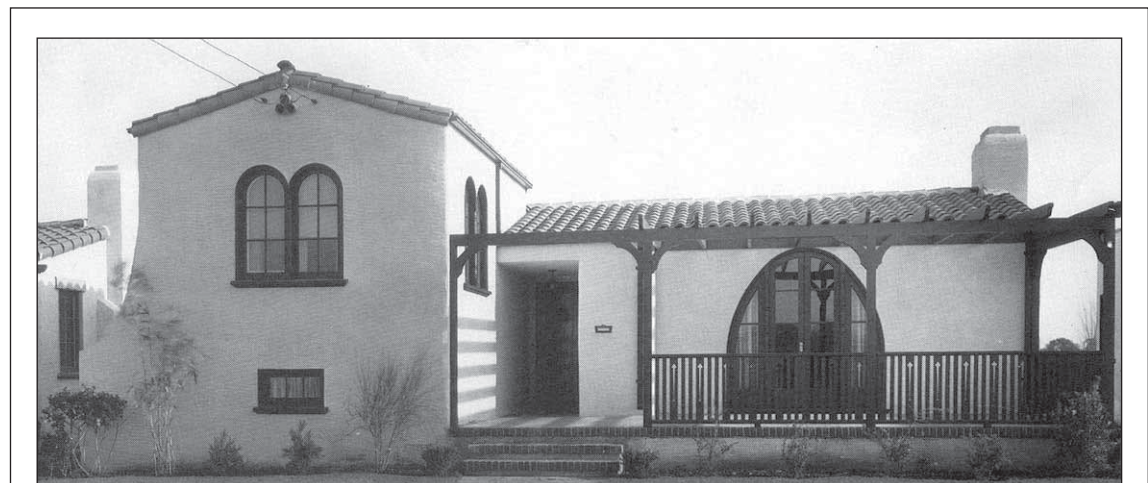
Editor:

Some too narrowly focused and overenthusiastic "protectors of the environment" have convinced many Peninsula city councils to enact an ordinance regarding the use of plastic bags by our businesses.

While the intent to reduce plastic bag polluting is admirable, the sample ordinance that many local governments have promoted is overreaching, has provisions that are probably illegal, and certainly creates unnecessary difficulties for our struggling small businesses as well as their customers.

The ordinance not only prohibits plastic bags, but mandates that businesses charge their customers a minimum specified amount for a paper bag. Initially the minimum amount is 10 cents and it later rises to 25 cents.

Since when does any government in the United States have the authority to tell people they may not give something away but have to charge for it? The city councils could just as easily pass an ordinance stating that



Menlo Park Historical Association

Our Regional Heritage

Contractor David D. Bohannon, who over a 50-year period built more than 40,000 homes in the Bay Area, offered homes like this three-bedroom model called "Casa del Flores" in Menlo Park's Belle Haven subdivision in 1933, during the Great Depression. Priced for people of low and moderate income, the homes sold for \$5,950 and included a 50 x 100-foot lot, an electric dishwasher and a detached two-car garage.

you may not give a piece of candy to a child, but that the child must pay for it. (After all, candy is not very good for the child — shouldn't the city council take action to stop it?)

This is complete absurdity. Note that this is not a "tax." The money does not go to the city but is retained by the merchant. (As a tax, it would have been illegal without a vote). How can anyone believe that payment requirement to be a legal

mandate? Mayor Bloomberg revisited?

The ordinance goes on to attempt to define what makes a non-conforming bag acceptable (part of the definition being that it does not have handles), and defines the proper construction of paper bags.

The basic intent to remove polluting plastic bags is admirable, but the method is illegal, and ill-advised. I sincerely hope that merchants in the city will

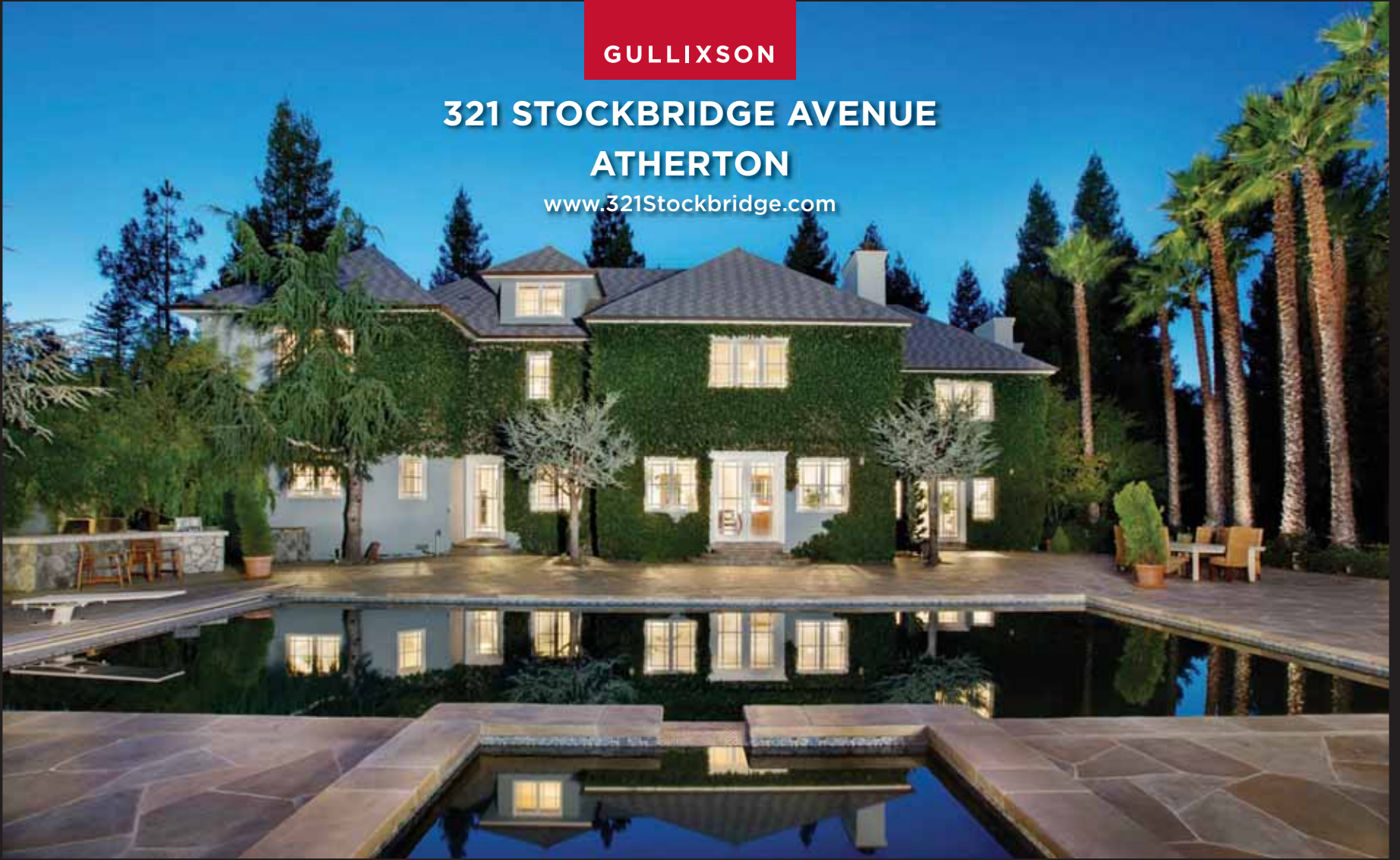
have the courage to refuse to collect the mandated fees, and that the city councils involved will undo, or at the very least intelligently revise, these poorly thought-out regulations. Can anyone suggest how to package a new unwrinkled prom dress in a paper bag made of re-used material? Stupidity in government needs to be resisted.

Alan Lambert
La Honda Road,
San Mateo County

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