



**Suicide or murder? Attorneys
duel in closing arguments** | Page 8

The Almanac

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

MAY 22, 2013 | VOL. 48 NO. 38

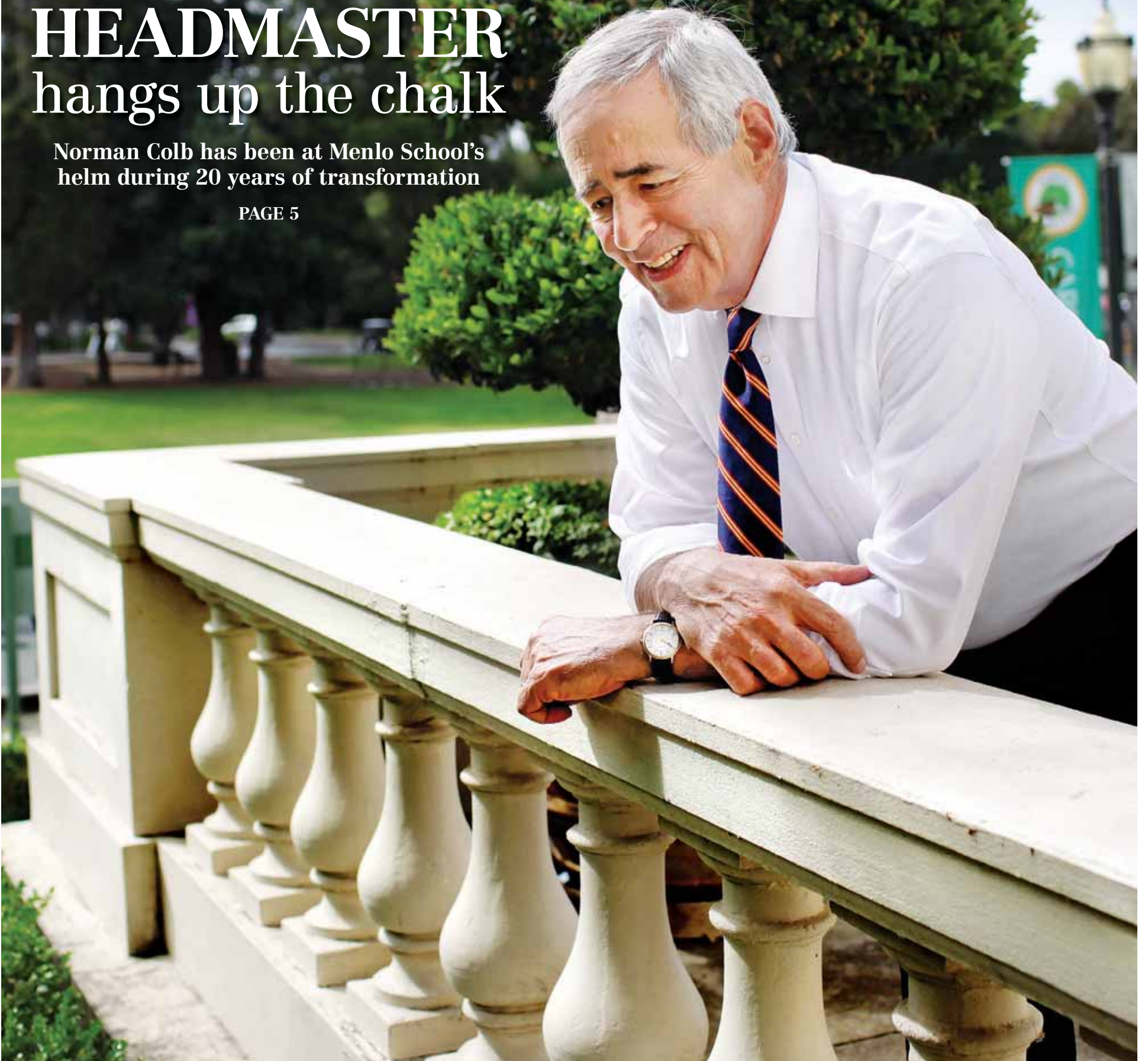


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HEADMASTER hangs up the chalk

Norman Colb has been at Menlo School's
helm during 20 years of transformation

PAGE 5





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Fire chief recovering from fall

■ Menlo Park fire district appoints interim chief.

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

After tumbling off a ladder at his San Jose home last week, Menlo Park Fire Protection District Chief Harold Schapelhouman is on the mend.

He was trimming foliage when he fell, but whether the ladder failed or he slipped remains unclear. The chief underwent an 11-hour long operation on May 13, said fire district board president Steve Nachtsheim, who described the surgeon as “extremely pleased” with how it went.

The chief’s love of conversation didn’t miss a beat. Even being on a respirator after the surgery “didn’t stop Harold from communicating,” Mr. Nachtsheim said.

No one knows yet how long the chief will need to recuperate. The fire board met May 16 to select an interim chief, and named former chief Douglas



The fire district’s board hopes **Chief Harold Schapelhouman** is back on the job by June.

Sporleder to the position.

Mr. Sporleder, the district’s fire chief in 2005 and 2006, returned to that position on May 20. He has also served as chief of the Santa Clara County Fire Department and fire marshal from 1982 to 2001.

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District encompasses Menlo Park, Atherton, East Palo Alto and nearby unincor-

porated areas.

While there’s no anticipated time of return for Chief Schapelhouman, Mr. Nachtsheim said the board will meet again in June to re-evaluate the situation. “We’re hoping he’s back by then.”

The need to find a temporary leader arises at a delicate time for the district, which recently began mediation sessions for the first time in several years with the firefighters’ union to sort out a long-standing impasse over labor issues.

Mr. Nachtsheim said that an attorney involved in the sessions attended the board meeting, and that other members of the district have also been participating in the mediation. “We’re going to do our best to make the place run the way it’s supposed to.”

Family, friends and neighbors continue to visit Chief Schapelhouman in the hospital. “There’s a massive outpouring of support,” Mr. Nachtsheim said. “He’s a very well-liked guy.”

Bay City News Service contributed to this story.

Menlo Park fire marshal leaving district

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Geoff Aus, longtime Menlo Park Fire Protection District fire marshal, is changing employers, but not job titles. He has accepted a position as fire marshal for the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

May 23 will be his last day with the district, which serves Menlo Park, Atherton, East Palo Alto and nearby unincorporated areas.

He has been with the district for 13 years, first as fire marshal, then continuing in that capacity as he became division chief of fire protection and later, of operations.

Geoff Aus accepts post as fire marshal for the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.



His responsibilities included inspecting schools for compliance with the fire code, a task that held per-

sonal significance for Mr. Aus, who saw his own high school burn as a student. He told the Almanac that the loss of records wreaked havoc on students applying to college.

Last week saw more than one change for the fire district, as Chief Harold Schapelhouman remains off duty as he recuperates from falling off a ladder at his home. The fire district directors met on May 16 to select an interim chief. ■

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

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Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Doug Peck Photography

Norman Colb speaks at the May 5 event honoring his leadership at Menlo School. In the background is a portrait made up of 2,000 photos of him with students.

HEADMASTER hangs up the chalk

Norman Colb has
been at Menlo
School's helm
during 20 years
of transformation

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

It was mid-afternoon on a glorious day — sunny, mild, the air fragrant with spring. But on the Menlo School campus, Norman Colb wasn't out smelling the roses. Instead, he said from his long-familiar office, "I'm inhaling every memory I possibly can."

With his 20-year history at the Atherton private school, on a campus that he's had a significant role in shaping and expanding, the stroll down memory lane no doubt would be a heady experience.

Mr. Colb, hired as head of school by Menlo in summer 1993, will "hang up the chalk" there in mid-June. The school has seen a major transformation during his tenure, beginning with the bolstering of its high school enrollment and the addition of a sixth grade to its middle school program soon after he arrived.

Also, in 1994, Menlo School and the adjacent Menlo College, which existed as a single entity for decades, separated, and one of Mr. Colb's duties was to develop the infrastructure the sixth- through 12th-grade

school would need to stand on its own, according to the school.

Over the last 20 years, Mr. Colb has overseen construction of new middle school buildings; the renovation and expansion of the historic Douglass Hall, former home of inventor Leon Douglass, whose family donated the expanse of property to the school for its campus; construction of new high school classrooms and a lecture/concert hall; and the construction of an Athletic Center and Creative

See **HEADMASTER**, page 8

COVER PHOTO: Headmaster Norman Colb enjoys a break outside his office in Stent Family Hall, formerly Douglass Hall, on the Menlo School campus. *Almanac photo by Michelle Le.*

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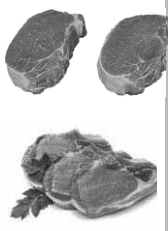
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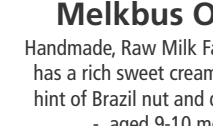
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Kevin Keegan named Ormondale principal

Kevin Keegan, an elementary school principal in the Santa Clara Unified School District, has been appointed the new principal of Ormondale School in Portola Valley.

The Portola Valley School District board on May 15 unanimously approved Mr. Keegan's appointment to head the K-3 school. He has held the top post at Kathryn Hughes Elementary School in Santa Clara since 2008.

He will replace Jennifer Warren, who resigned, effective next month, to become head of the lower school at San Francisco's Town School for Boys.

Kathryn Hughes is a preschool through fifth-grade school. Among Mr. Keegan's achievements at the school is "his collaboration with staff, community, the Silicon Valley Education Foundation and the Altera

Foundation to design a Technology Professional Development School that will serve as a model for 21st century learning and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education," Superintendent Carol Piraino said in a written announcement.

Mr. Keegan is married and has three young children, Ms. Piraino said. "Kevin's family accompanied him on a visit to Portola Valley last weekend, and his children were excited about the deer they saw out of the car window," she said. "Kevin is happy to be coming to Portola Valley and commented ... about how much Portola Valley reminds him of his home in Montana."



Kevin Keegan

City clerk leaving Menlo Park

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park needs to break out the recruitment ads once again. City Clerk Margaret Roberts gave two weeks' notice that her last day will be May 24.

Ms. Roberts told the Almanac she is going to the city of Hercules to serve as director of administrative services. The position comes with expanded responsibilities, she said, as she will be a member of the executive team, unlike in Menlo Park, and she's looking forward to being able to partner with the executive staff.

Rumor has it that meetings in Hercules end much earlier, so one can hazard a guess that Ms. Roberts won't miss the many post-midnight discussions she's attended over nearly five years in Menlo Park. But she is leaving some valued people behind. "I will miss the friendships I have made in Menlo Park," she said. "The council has been supportive and I will miss them more than words can express."

The feeling is mutual. Veteran council member Rich Cline commented that being city clerk is much harder than it looks. "Margaret has gracefully acted as the public interface for the city and has spent many long nights at the center of the storm administrating meetings and juggling the community needs for information and access," he said.

Margaret Roberts takes job with city of Hercules.

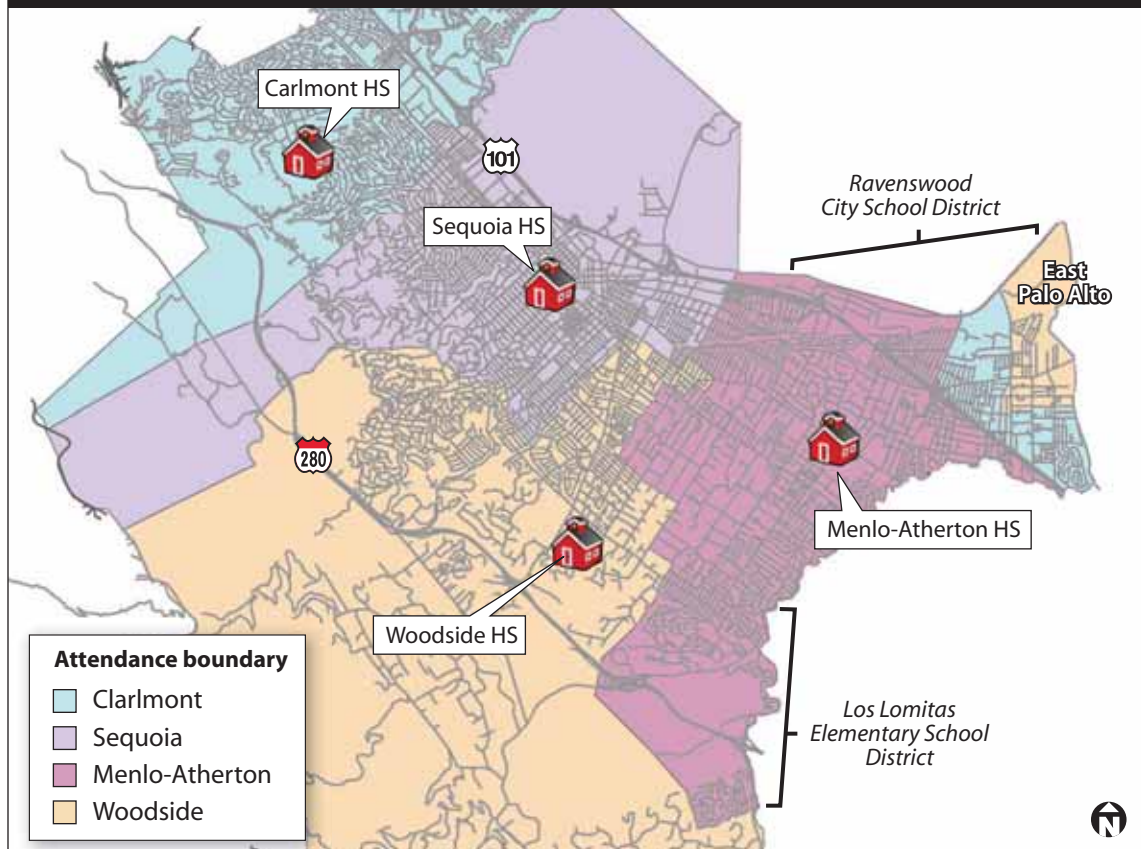


"When you consider some of the critical issues facing this city during her tenure, including one of the deepest economic slumps in city history, internal investigations and disclosure debates, along with the shifting landscape across our great city, I am grateful that it was Margaret in that city clerk seat. We will miss her."

First-term council member Ray Mueller said he was happy for her, but sad for the city. "There is irony in the fact that she is moving to a place called Hercules, as she has been doing the day-to-day heavy lifting for city councils for years. Her kindness and professionalism will be missed."

Other notable departures: Earlier this year, Finance Director Carol Augustine and Cmdr. Lacey Burt, who retired; Chief of Police Bryan Roberts and Engineering Services Manager Matt Ocamou in 2012; Public Works Director Kent Steffens in 2011 and Business Development Manager Dave Johnson, City Manager Glen Rojas and Personnel Director Glen Kramer, who all retired between 2011 and 2010. ■

Sequoia Union High School District attendance boundaries



Sequoia Union High School District

This 30-year old map is generating controversy over how it may be redrawn and which neighborhoods will be assigned to which high schools as district officials wrestle with a projected enrollment surge.

Too many students, too few seats

■ High school district considers enrollment growth and changing neighborhood-school boundaries.

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

In the Sequoia Union High School District, the status quo could be in for some rough going as an enrollment growth of kindergarten-through-fourth-graders, particularly in Menlo Park, makes its way toward and through ninth grade. District officials have begun a conversation on possible effects on facility use, school choice and neighborhood-school boundaries — a matter of great concern to parents in the Las Lomitas and Ravenswood school districts.

Projections by a consulting demographer — considered highly reliable — show 10,000 students in Sequoia district public high schools by the 2020-21 school year.

At the moment, enrollment is about 8,300, with room for more, Superintendent James Lianides said in a recent letter to parents. Woodside High is about 500 students shy of its 2,200-student capacity and Menlo-Atherton High, with the same capacity, has room for about 200 more. Because district officials are considering equalizing enrollment at about 2,400 students at each comprehensive high school, both Woodside and M-A might have to fit in 200 students beyond their current

capacities.

These projections assume full enrollment at the district's four charter high schools. A new comprehensive high school is not in the cards: the Sequoia district's capital budget sits at about \$9 million, not even close to the necessary \$200 million to build a new campus, and the district is all but built out, Mr. Lianides said. Adding second stories to existing buildings is not an efficient use of funds and efficiency is likely to be an important focus, he added in an interview.

Equal distribution of students and facilities is one of four proposed "tenets" that Mr. Lianides and the district board rolled out for community reaction last week. The other three: maintaining some student choice in picking a school, maintaining socio-economic diversity at Carlmont High in Belmont, and maintaining intact middle-school communities where possible, given a possible redrawing of the map that connects neigh-

borhoods to schools.

Much of the Las Lomitas Elementary School District is assigned to M-A, which means that the district's eighth-graders have automatic enrollment at M-A. Meanwhile, the Ravenswood City School District has its eighth-graders assigned to three schools: M-A, Woodside and Carlmont, despite being geographically closer to M-A than part of the Las Lomitas district. This arrangement came with a 1983 court-ordered consent decree when Ravenswood High School was closed. The consent decree expired after six years, Mr. Lianides said.

M-A is an appealing school academically. For the 2011-12 school year, its state-determined academic performance index is 820 on a scale of 1,000, and white students have a collective score of 952. Both numbers are highly meaningful to real estate agents and homeowners concerned about property values, and to parents with high ambitions for their children. At Woodside, the numbers are 744 and 852, respectively.

M-A is also appealing geographically for Ravenswood students, many of whom now have to catch an early-morning bus to Carlmont High in Belmont.

About 700 Sequoia district students annually apply for a school other than that to which

INFORMATION

Another community forum on high school enrollment growth and its effects will be held at 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 29, in the Performing Arts Center at Woodside High School, 199 Churchill Ave.

See **MANY STUDENTS**, page 17

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



The State of the Market

Dear Monica: Now that summer is almost here, is the real estate market slowing down at all? Eric D.

Dear Eric: 2013 has been an interesting year in the Peninsula real estate market. After a very vigorous first quarter, April and May have been more balanced. There is more inventory and although multiple offers are still happening, there are signs that the market is slowing a bit. In the lower price ranges it is still very strong with most properties selling within a short time, unless they are priced too high or not in a prime location. In the \$2-\$3 million range, properties are selling but there is more negotiating happening than

earlier this year. Sellers who are expecting multiple offers above their asking price are finding that they have to lower these expectations somewhat to sell their property. Properties in the higher price ranges are taking longer to sell than in the first quarter.

The spring market happened earlier this year. In other years March, April and May have been the peak spring real estate months. This year January, February and March were the most active months. The school year will be ending soon and people will be going on vacation. Then pace will slow down until September when sales buyers are back from vacation and ready to focus on real estate again.

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

DON'T LET A MOMENT SLIP

If you're an active person, you want eyeglasses that can keep up with your energetic lifestyle. Mothers chasing toddlers around playgrounds need glasses that will not slip whether they are riding on a swing, going down a slide, or making their way around the jungle gym. The same might be said of fishing enthusiasts, horseback riders, tennis players, hikers, or anyone else accustomed to focusing all of his or her attention on the task at hand. Few things are more annoying than (sun)glasses that must be

constantly adjusted as they slip down perspiring faces. Fortunately, there is a foolproof way to deal with this problem. Glasses with "cable" temples curve in a semi-circle to hug the ear.

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P.S. One of the most important aspects of a proper eyeglass fitting is selecting a temple (the long portion that supports the frame on the ears, otherwise known as the "earpiece") of the correct overall size.

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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Suicide or murder? Attorneys duel in closing arguments

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Did Parima Parineh commit suicide in the bedroom of her Woodside home on April 13, 2010, or was she shot and killed by her husband, Pooroushasb "Peter" Parineh, who is charged with premeditated murder for financial gain?

That was the key point of contention Friday in San Mateo County Superior Court in Redwood City as a prosecutor and a defense attorney gave their closing arguments to the jury.

Could Ms. Parineh, 56, have killed herself while lying in her bed by shooting herself in the head with a 0.38-caliber handgun and then, failing to die, take two more shots — one that missed and one that may have delivered a grazing wound to her head — and then take a fourth shot that ended her life?

"Just pull yourself back to common sense and look at the totality of the evidence," Deputy District Attorney Jeff Finigan told the jury. "Is this the most extreme, superhuman suicide ever? No. This is murder plain and simple."

"It was a suicide gone horribly wrong by a woman not familiar with the gun," defense attorney Dek Ketchum said in his summation. "She shot herself, she struggled, she missed and then she killed herself."

Mr. Parineh, a 67-year-old commercial real estate investor, had seen his net worth melt away after the 2007 collapse of the real estate bubble. He was arrested in June 2010 and has

been in county jail ever since on a no-bail status.

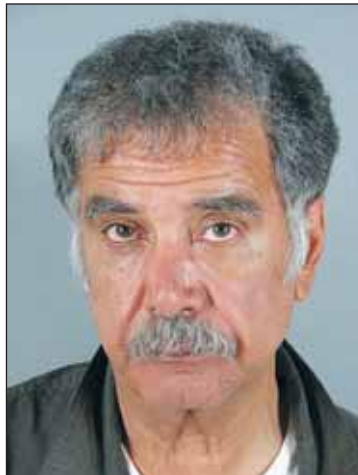
The 15 members of the jury panel — 12 jurors and three alternates, all of mixed age, race and gender — sat in Courtroom 2C for 15 days of testimony that included a recording of an anguished 911 call, a video taken at a firing range showing the handgun's recoil, a bed and mattress brought in to reconstruct the scene of Ms. Parineh's death, and many photos, some grisly and revisited more than once. Members of the Parineh family in the front row of audience seats would look away when the photos were shown.

Superior Court Judge Lisa A. Novak said she will give the jury its deliberation instructions on Monday (May 20). If the jury reaches a unanimous guilty verdict, Mr. Parineh faces life in prison or the death penalty.

Insurance worries

The couple and one or two of their three adult children had been living in a mansion on Fox Hill Drive in unincorporated Woodside, where Ms. Parineh had been a homemaker and painter. In March 2007, Mr. Parineh's holdings had been valued at \$152 million, Mr. Finigan said. By August 2009, he had been reduced to borrowing \$655,000; two months later he had stopped paying two mortgages. In January 2010, Mr. Parineh lost his Los Altos office building and all his income and had applied for government assistance, Mr. Finigan said. The family was contemplating life in an apartment.

Using Mr. Parineh's email



Pooroushasb "Peter" Parineh of Woodside is charged with premeditated murder of his wife for financial gain.

correspondence with his insurance contacts, Mr. Finigan portrayed him as desperately trying to avoid the cancellation of his wife's policy. Mr. Finigan noted several times how Mr. Parineh's promises to bring his payments up to date lined up closely with two significant incidents: when his wife overdosed in an attempted suicide on March 16, 2010, and when she died, on April 13, 2010.

Both sides agreed that on the day after his wife's death, Mr. Parineh did talk with his life insurance agent. But to what end?

"It's not unreasonable to ask what you're going to get," Mr. Ketchum said. "They clearly had a relationship. He's calling because they had business, they were friends." There is reasonable doubt as to what his motives were, Mr. Ketchum told the jury.

"What this case is about is greed, plain and simple. It's greed," Mr. Finigan said. With his wife's life insured for \$26.5 million, Mr. Parineh saw that policy "as the only way to save his lifestyle."

Referring to sometimes harsh email messages from Mr. Parineh to his children, Mr. Finigan pointed to incriminating passages. "I am in more s--- than I can handle," Mr. Parineh says in one, adding that their mother's insurance "can save us" and "save the financial empire that I have built." Mr. Finigan added: "The way he's talking about that insurance, he views it as an asset."

Of the \$655,000 Mr. Parineh borrowed, Mr. Finigan noted, \$300,000 of it went to maintain collateral on the insurance policy, money he could have used on mortgage payments. "That makes no sense unless you think that money may be coming to you in the future," Mr. Finigan said.

The policy had been placed in a trust managed by the couple's three adult children, with whom Mr. Parineh did not get along. (In April 2012, his two sons, Austiag Hormoz Parineh and Khashayar Parineh, and his daughter, Austiaj Parineh, filed a wrongful death lawsuit against their father.)

"He may not be father of the year," Mr. Ketchum said, "but when it comes to business, he can figure things out." It's absurd, he said, to think that, given the children's control of the trust, that Mr. Parineh would anticipate rapid payouts that typically take weeks or months.

ONLINE UPDATE

Check AlmanacNews.com for news updates.

Wife depressed

Ms. Parineh was being treated for depression, and according to Mr. Ketchum, was shouldering many of the day-to-day tasks: opening mail and taking phone calls from creditors, sometimes at 6 a.m.

Suicide had come up. Mr. Parineh had investigated whether the insurance policies covered it, and the couple had a suicide pact between them, Mr. Finigan said.

When Ms. Parineh overdosed at home in March 2010, Mr. Parineh mentioned the pact to his daughter, Mr. Finigan said. As emergency workers tried to resuscitate her, her husband reportedly showed no emotion. When she regained consciousness in the hospital, one of her first questions was the status of her husband, Mr. Finigan said. After that she was upbeat, not suicidal, he said.

Returning to his theme of reasonable doubt, Mr. Ketchum asserted that the children's testimony lacked credibility as to their assessment of their mother's mental health. Likewise regarding their suspicions of their father and their recollections of conversations with him, Mr. Ketchum said.

On the morning of her last day, Ms. Parineh admonished her children to dress nicely, telling her son to always make

See **SUICIDE OR MURDER**, page 16

HEADMASTER

continued from page 5

Arts and Design Center.

But as he wraps up his two decades at Menlo, it's not the buildings Mr. Colb points to as his greatest accomplishments. "If I have any legacy at all here ... it's in creating an attractive environment for serious educators," he said in an interview with the Almanac. "My primary goal has been to help build a school that is exceptionally attractive to the very best teachers. ... My theory has been: If you can attract and retain superb teachers, great teachers, everything would flow from that."

Eastward bound

Mr. Colb announced his retirement, effective this June, in December 2011, and at the time, intended that move to mean the end of his work life,

he said. He would be 70, he would have ended his career at "a school I truly cherish," and that would be that.

Then reality set in. After devoting nearly 50 years to the cause of education, Mr. Colb began having second thoughts as his retirement approached, he said, and when an opportunity opened to become headmaster at the Sage Ridge School, a 15-year-old independent school in Reno, he grabbed it. So rather than heading into the sunset, Mr. Colb and his wife, Susan, have sold their Menlo Park home and are preparing to head east.

His job at Sage Ridge will involve increasing enrollment and financial strength, he said. But he'll be on familiar ground in several aspects: "The school has an excellent faculty, and a strong mission," he said. "The core of that school is very strong."

Future of education

In a talk Mr. Colb gave in February at a gathering of Menlo School parents and alumni, he spoke of his views about the education world, including his beliefs that teachers are undervalued and grades overemphasized. The latter, he said, is counterproductive, encouraging behavior and strategies that may lead to better grades, but don't promote genuine learning. It also creates unhealthy stress for kids.

Mr. Colb elaborated on that theme earlier this month, stressing that putting too much emphasis on a child's grades can extinguish his or her engagement with the life of the mind. "Enjoying the use of one's mind and learning is what should be emphasized," he said.

One of his missions as head of school was to identify skills and experiences that would prepare students to lead productive lives

in the 21st century, he said. To meet that assignment involves teaching kids to work effectively with others, to learn to speak and write effectively, and to "understand one's relationship with the wider world and one's obligation to the wider world," he said.

Another aspect of the task is to help kids become problem-solvers. "I don't mean (solving) easily grasped problems," he said. "I mean problems that take extensive thought" and require drawing from a range of resources to solve.

Also, the future leaders and problem-solvers of the world must develop "habits of initiative," he said. "The problems we are facing as a society require that the kids act on their own initiative, not follow orders. We take great pride in handing out diplomas to kids who have shown they can do that."

A tribute

On May 5, Menlo School students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and trustees packed the school's Athletic Center for a tribute to Mr. Colb and his leadership, which "has helped Menlo become one of the premier independent schools in the country," according to organizers.

The event included a video tribute, a "flash mob" and chorus/dance productions by students. Attendees wore paper eyeglasses with angled eyebrows — a form of friendly mimicry of the distinguished-looking headmaster.

A highlight of the tribute was the unveiling of a collage of Mr. Colb, made up of 2,000 photos of him with students from the past 20 years. The artwork will be placed in the "Norm Colb Corner" of the school library, along with a bench and bookcase in his honor, according to the school. ■

New school campus: Bond measure on ballot as early as November

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

Although no formal action was taken, Menlo Park City School District board members agreed on two key issues they discussed on May 13: The district must ask voters to pass a bond measure to build new facilities on its O'Connor campus, and the private school that now occupies that campus should be allowed to remain almost a year longer than its contract allows while the district plans the new campus.

The board decided earlier this year that it must take back the campus at 275 Elliot Drive in Menlo Park, the former site of the district's O'Connor School, to address rapidly increasing enrollment in its three elementary schools. In October, the district notified the German-American International School (GAIS), which has leased the campus since 1991, that it might have to terminate the lease before June 2016, when it was set to expire.

The district did just that in April, using the termination clause in the contract to end the agreement, effective June 2014. But faced with the prospect of having to close the school down because of the short time-frame in which it would have to find and open a new campus, the private school lobbied the district to allow it to stay at least until June 2015.

At the May 13 meeting, board members indicated that, because of the construction schedule all of them agreed would be best — a three-year period that would prepare the campus to open for the 2016-17 school year — GAIS might be able to stay put until spring 2015, when construction on

new facilities would begin.

The board directed Superintendent Maurice Ghysels to meet with GAIS officials to discuss a lease extension. With construction projected to begin in May 2015, the district is likely to extend the lease only until April or May of that year if an agreement can be worked out.

Although board members agreed that the new school should have facilities comparable to those of the district's other four schools, eliminating options for minor renovation of the existing, 10-classroom building and the use of portable classrooms, tough decisions are yet to be made. That includes what class levels will be taught there — K-5 or 3-5, for example.

The private German-American school might be able to stay on the campus until spring 2015.

There appeared to be consensus that the campus should house a neighborhood school, with "choice" programs included. The option of making the campus a school of choice — such as for language immersion or science and technology programs exclusively — appears to be off the table.

They also reached consensus that the options to house only K-1 grade levels were not acceptable, leaving open the options for a K-5 or 3-5 campus that would enroll about 360 students.

But perhaps the toughest decisions will involve the scale of the building project, and by

extension, the size of the bond measure the district will ask voters to approve, probably in November of this year. Ahmad Sheikholeslami, the district's facilities director, presented a list of options, along with costs, estimating the price tag of a K-5 or 3-5 campus with only permanent facilities ranging from \$13 million to \$21.75 million. Those figures are in today's dollars, Mr. Sheikholeslami emphasized.

Several district parents who spoke at the meeting not only supported a bond measure to pay for modern facilities comparable to those on other district campuses, they said they were at the ready to lead the community campaign to convince voters to approve the measure.

Board members agreed that flexibility should be a key factor in designing the new school, giving the district breathing space to address future needs, and that the facilities should be comparable to those on the district's other campuses. But how much will that cost?

When the figure of \$30 million was mentioned as a possible bond measure — an amount likely to cover the most extensive option in 2016 dollars — at least one board member balked. "I believe we should do new facilities, and take the short-term pain," trustee Jeff Child said. But he said he was struggling with the idea of spending \$30 million on a school for an estimated 360 students, and urged the staff to "sharpen the pencil" in planning the school.

The district will hold a special community meeting at Hillview Middle School to continue discussions on the new school on May 29. ■

Hayward Design Center opens in downtown Menlo Park

The Hayward Corporation, a longtime supplier of products and services to the construction market, is opening a Hayward Design Center in Menlo Park.

A grand opening event is set for Thursday, May 30, from 4 to 7 p.m. at 1158-A Chestnut St. in Menlo Park. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served and the public is invited.

In a press release, the company says it's opening the center to capitalize on the "current acceleration of housing starts and the housing recovery."

The center will complement the Monterey-based company's recent acquisition of T&H Building Supply in Redwood City, said CEO William E. Hayward. The center will offer doors and windows from such manufacturers as Kolbe, Marvin, Unilux and Lemieux, the company says.

Hayward Corporation has six lumberyards in

■ BUSINESS

Monterey, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties, as well as six Hayward Design Centers.

Re/Max agents awarded for sales

Three agents with Re/Max Distinctive Properties in Menlo Park received outstanding production awards at the 40th annual Re/Max convention, held recently in Las Vegas. They were Penelope Huang (broker-owner), Omar Kinaan and Joe Carcione III.

Mr. Kinaan was recognized also for ranking 57th out of approximately 60,000 Re/Max associates nationally for sales in 2012. The Re/Max offices are at 648 Santa Cruz Ave. in downtown Menlo Park.

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Lawsuit filed over car collision with horses on I-280

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

A lawsuit has been filed by Menlo Park physician Dr. Jean W. Gillon over an incident in the early morning darkness of Dec. 29, 2012, when a Mercedes Benz she was driving collided with at least one of four Webb Ranch horses that had gotten loose and wandered on to the northbound lane of Interstate 280 just north of Alpine Road.

A civil complaint filed in Superior Court on behalf of Dr. Gillon accuses Webb Ranch of negligence and complains of “serious” personal injury as well as property damages, hospital and medical expenses, and the loss of income and earning capacity. Dr. Gillon, 61 at the time of the accident, is seeking damages in excess of \$25,000, according to the May 10 complaint. Her attorney is Anthony L. Label of San Francisco.

Tom Hubbard, Webb Ranch’s corporate president, was not available for comment on the lawsuit.

Webb Ranch “owed duties to

care to ensure that horses do not escape and create a danger to plaintiff and the public,” the complaint says. Webb Ranch “breached their duties by, among other things, allowing their horses to escape from the property and run loose on a major freeway, creating a serious hazard.”

In the accident, according to reports at the time from the California Highway Patrol and Mr. Hubbard, three of the horses were struck and killed shortly before 5 a.m. by a 2006 Toyota Prius driven by Richard Stein, 65, of Sacramento. Dr. Gillon came along after that collision and ran into one of the downed horses lying in the slow lane. A fourth horse was found uninjured in the grass on the side of the road.

Both Mr. Stein and Dr. Gillon were taken to Stanford Hospital, according to the CHP report. The scene of the accident was about 520 feet north of the Alpine Road interchange, the CHP said.

About Dr. Gillon

Dr. Gillon is a general and vascular surgeon in private

practice and at Sequoia Hospital, according to an online bio at her website. The home page includes a banner saying that she is currently recovering from her injuries and that her office will be closed until further notice.

In the accident, three of the horses were struck and killed on the freeway.

Dr. Gillon grew up in Palo Alto, attended Castilleja School in Palo Alto, and received a bachelor’s degree from UC Berkeley in 1972, the bio says. With a medical degree from Brown University, she was a surgical resident at Brown and Stanford universities, and for seven years worked in the trauma service at San Francisco General Hospital, where she became an associate professor, the bio says.

About the horses

Of the horses that died, two were thoroughbreds and the

third was a quarter horse, all geldings, Mr. Hubbard said. The uninjured horse was a wild mustang repatriated from open range land.

The paddock at Webb Ranch for these four horses has two gates, one of which was found with an unfastened spring-clip on the chain that locks the gate, Mr. Hubbard said at the time. The chain may have been left unsecured by someone tending the horses, he said, but an open gate would not commonly result in the horses wandering out to the freeway. Most escaped horses are found where there’s fresh grass, he said. “When they get out in the night, they go to the closest spot that they can eat grass,” Mr. Hubbard said.

Horses in a group can develop a herd mentality, he noted. These horses had been at the ranch for at least a year and possibly as long as five years, Mr. Hubbard said. This is the first such accident since the ranch opened in 1922, he said.

It’s not unheard of for a horse to open a secured paddock, Mr. Hubbard added. “Over time,

they’re just standing there (watching) and they can figure out how to unlock a gate.”

Horses sleep at night but don’t sleep the whole night through, Mr. Hubbard said.

As to the route they took to get from the paddock to the northbound lane, that is unclear and, with no tracks to go by, will probably remain so, Mr. Hubbard said. Alpine Road is the obvious route, particularly with the automatic gate not functioning at the time.

But the ranch also has a private road that runs alongside San Francisquito Creek and under I-280. If the horses took that route, they would have come out near the fruit stand on the east side of the freeway and could have easily found the on-ramp to the northbound lane. ■

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Police contract issues open to public scrutiny

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

Should the town of Atherton consider outsourcing its police department? If not, how much should the town be willing to pay to keep residents safe, properties secure, and police officers feeling fairly compensated?

Those were questions a handful of residents addressed when the City Council met on May 15 and asked the public to comment on what they think should be considered as contract talks with the police union get under way this month.

The contract talks promise to be contentious, with the police union, the Atherton Police Officers' Association (APOA), opening the public debate with

■ ATHERTON

mailers sent to residents during election season last year and in early spring. The mailers warned residents of a potential exodus of officers if the town demands compensation cuts similar to those recently imposed on non-represented employees, including the police chief and city manager.

Those cuts included caps on health and dental plans, caps on vacation and sick-leave accrual, and a new requirement that employees pay their own contributions to the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). (The town will continue paying the employer costs CalPERS charges all public agencies.)

The mailers also referred to potential moves by the council to outsource police services — an action current council members have said they have no interest in taking.

Only six residents commented during the May 15 session: Three stood in firm support of maintaining a local police force, with competitive salaries that will prevent officers from jumping ship and finding better-paying jobs. Among the three were former councilman Malcolm Dudley and Joe Lewis, Mayor Elizabeth Lewis' husband.

Resident Steven Goldby told the council that the police department is one of the reasons "this community's property values are so high and ... why we feel the security we do."

Residents Jim Massey and Sandy Crittenden urged the council to investigate what other agencies, such as the county Sheriff's Office or the Menlo Park police department, would charge to provide police services to Atherton. Police compensation is "the largest single item in the budget," Mr. Massey said, adding that he believed the command structure in the department is top-heavy.

Resident John Ruggeiro, who retired from the San Francisco police department after many years in command positions, voiced concern over escalating costs related to retirement and other benefits. He said that police officers in San Francisco, where his son now works, pay

10.5 percent of their salaries into their retirement funds.

"I'm not interested in outsourcing (police services)," he said. "I'm interested that they pay their share" of retirement costs.

Atherton has been one of the few jurisdictions in recent years to pay the entire employees' portion of retirement costs in addition to the costs billed to the town. Under a resolution passed by the council in January, unrepresented employees will begin paying their own portion in July.

Resident Peter Carpenter, who had encouraged the town to hold the hearing, modeled on the recent hearing before the Menlo Park City Council, was out of town that night, but sent the council an email stating that the town "is already paying far more per capita for police services than Woodside, Portola Valley, Palo Alto or Menlo Park."

Outsourcing, pensions and benefits are examined.

He noted that the town's CalPERS obligations "will rise significantly in the next five years, and that will be exacerbated by any

increases in the base salary levels." If the APOA is unwilling to make "significant concessions," he said, the town should begin talks with another police agency regarding contracting out all or most of Atherton's police services.

No one from the police union spoke at the meeting. The police contract expires Sept. 30, and talks began this month to set guidelines for negotiations, City Manager George Rodericks said.

Mr. Rodericks and staff prepared an eight-page report detailing current compensation and staffing levels of the police department, as well as of non-emergency employees. The report shows that 87.5 percent of the town's personnel costs go toward police department compensation. The high figure is accounted for, in part, by the fact that the police department has 25 employees; there are only nine non-emergency employees.

With the town's CalPERS payments dropping because of the recent decision to shift unrepresented employees' share of costs to the employees, the town is still facing escalating costs, according to the report. "CalPERS has advised that beginning in 2015, they will begin phasing in a five-year increase to employer rates in order to address the funding gaps within plans," the report says. ■

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Benjamin Davis Swan

September 15, 1931 – May 10, 2013

Benjamin Davis Swan passed away peacefully at home on May 10, 2013 with his loving wife at his side. Born on September 15, 1931 in Oradell, New Jersey to Nellie and Guy Swan, he was the youngest of 4 boys. Ben's father, Guy (Stanford Class of 1906), retired to California with their family in 1947 before Ben's junior year and he enrolled at Sequoia High School. Ben earned the Eagle Scout rank and graduated from Sequoia High School in 1949, matriculating to Stanford University that fall. He graduated from Stanford in 1953 with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Following graduation, he immediately entered Naval Officer Candidate School in Newport R.I. and was soon commissioned an Ensign. He was sent to a destroyer in the Pacific Fleet accompanied by many Stanford classmates also serving in the Navy. He volunteered for hazardous duty and was sent to Coronado, CA to undergo Underwater Demolition Training. He then joined UDT 11 – again, serving with other members of the “Stanford family” who were also “frogmen”. During his final year of active duty, he had the good fortune of meeting a first year Coronado elementary school teacher—Katsy Downing—and their relationship flourished in the sun, sand, and sea.



Ben left active duty in September 1957 and entered the Wharton School, where he received his M.B.A. in 1959. He and Katsy married in August 1958 at her home in Lexington, Kentucky between his years at Penn. They lived in Swarthmore for his second year where Katsy again taught in the elementary school.

After receiving his degree, Ben joined the management program of a New York insurance company and was assigned to their San Francisco regional office. He and Katsy lived in the City until the birth of their first child, Kathy, at Stanford Hospital. They moved to Los Altos and shortly thereafter, Ben joined a small asset management firm and remained there for seven years. Ben then started his own company specializing in real estate securities but transitioned into industrial property development and management for the next twenty five years. Throughout most of his business career, Ben was active in the Naval Reserve serving in various

positions, including several at the Naval War College. During this time, the Naval Special Warfare unit evolved into today's SEAL teams. After 26 fascinating years, he retired as a Captain.

Katsy and Ben moved to Palo Alto in 1965 with their daughter and newborn son, Benjamin Jr. Soon thereafter their second son, Sam, was born. They have lived in their home for 48 years and raised their family in the shadow of Hoover Tower with all of their children graduating from Palo Alto High School. Kathy graduated from Scripps while Ben Jr. and Sam graduated from the University of California at Berkeley.

While their children were in school, Katsy pursued their mutual passion for flowers and gardens becoming quite active locally in flower arranging and design directing among other projects, the renovation and restoration of the Hoover House gardens. Once all of their children had finished college, Katsy returned to Cal to study landscape architecture. Presently, she has an active design practice which Ben has supported over the past 25 years during the design and oversight of the Stanford University Medical Center gardens and a multitude of private residence projects. Ben and Katsy have led numerous tours to gardens of England, Scotland, France and Italy over the years—endeavors they always shared and enjoyed together.

Ben was preceded in death by his parents, Nellie and Guy, and his brothers George and Guy Jr. He is survived by his wife, three children, daughter-in-law Jennifer Shea Swan and seven grandchildren—Mollie, Peter, Patrick, Claire, Kate, Elizabeth, and Benjamin—to whom he is lovingly known as Granddaddy. Ben is also survived by his older brother, Calvin, and eleven nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at the Stanford Memorial Chapel at 4PM on Thursday May 23, 2013, immediately followed by a reception at Bing Concert Hall. Reserved parking will be available in the lot at the corner of Campus Drive and Galvez Street. Charitable donations may be made in memory of Ben Swan to Stanford University Development/Bladder Cancer Research, PO Box 20466, Stanford, CA 94305-0466 or Gamble Garden Center in Palo Alto.

PAID OBITUARY

Atherton city manager gets pay boost — sort of

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

With one council member calling the change “outrageous,” the Atherton City Council on May 15 approved a compensation increase, that by some calculations is a decrease, for City Manager George Rodericks.

The council voted 3-1, with Bill Widmer opposed and Jim Dobbie absent, to raise Mr. Rodericks' base pay \$30,000 a year — from \$160,000 annually to \$190,000. But the new contract also takes away a monthly travel and housing allowance of \$2,500, and a phone allowance of \$100 per month, which means a cut of \$31,200 annually.

The adjustment followed the city manager's contractually man-

dated six-month performance review, which Mayor Elizabeth Lewis said produced marks from satisfactory to “excellent and above average.” Council members and management staff participated in the evaluation, she said.

Complicating the compensation question is housing: When Mr. Rodericks was hired last October, he and the council agreed that he would move to the town-owned house in Holbrook-Palmer Park. The \$2,500 monthly travel and housing allowance was to expire in June, when Mr. Rodericks was due to move from his Marin County home and occupy the house in the park.

But several months after he began the job, Mr. Rodericks informed the council that “personal challenges” had developed that precluded his move to the house, and that he would continue living in Marin County. Noting that the

house has traditionally been factored into a city manager's salary, he asked for a salary increase to adjust for the fact that he wouldn't have the housing benefit.

Because the house is valued at \$5,000 a month — or \$60,000 annually — Mr. Rodericks said he was willing to “split the difference,” requesting a \$30,000 increase.

Further complicating the issue is that Mr. Rodericks was among the unrepresented employees whose compensation packages will be cut beginning in July. Retirement contributions now paid for by the town will be made by

employees — which in Mr. Rodericks' case means a hit of about \$13,765 — and caps on health and dental care

will be put in place. At the same time, the cuts will be offset in part by a 3.5 percent increase in base pay.

With all those elements factored in, Mr. Rodericks' total compensation — salary and benefits — will be about \$191,900. His current total compensation is about \$202,400, he said.

In opposing the contract adjustment, Councilman Widmer said that “giving someone a \$30,000 raise six months into the job is ... outrageous.” Mayor Lewis countered that the adjustments constituted a pay cut when all aspects were factored in.

The morning after the council action, Mr. Rodericks said: “Overall, it's a pay cut. But I love my job. ... And I enjoy working in the town of Atherton.” He added that he believes “it's the obligation of employees to pay their share” of retirement and other benefit costs. ■

‘Overall, it's a pay cut. But I love my job.’

GEORGE RODERICKS



Menlo traffic stop turns into drug bust

Running a stop sign can get you a ticket for at least \$214, but as two men discovered on May 14, it can also rack up some jail time.

Menlo Park resident Terry Malone Jr., 49, and Derrick Walls, 43, of San Francisco, were pulled over by police for allegedly failing to yield at a stop sign at the intersection of Newbridge and

Chilco streets around 12:30 a.m. A search turned up 772 Ecstasy pills, worth an estimated \$15,000, along with marijuana, heroin and a large amount of cash, according to the police report.

Both suspects were taken to San Mateo County jail and booked on numerous narcotics violations, police said.

— Sandy Brundage

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Menlo may restore library hours, add red-light camera

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

How do you spend \$75.5 million in one fiscal year? Menlo Park plans to answer that question as the city's 2013-2014 budget season kicks off, starting with the city manager's presentation of his proposed budget on May 21.

"It is, primarily, a 'status quo' budget that, while proposing a few modest investments, basically maintains services and costs at current levels until we can be more confident that the economic upturn seemingly underway, particularly in the Bay Area and Silicon Valley, has staying power," City Manager Alex McIntyre wrote in his report.

To that end, the budget for next fiscal year proposes some basic service restorations, including reopening the public library on holiday weekends.

The report also asks the council to consider adding a fifth Redflex red-light camera, to be installed at the intersection of Bayfront Expressway and Chilco Street. The city's other cameras are at the intersections of El Camino Real with Glenwood Avenue and Ravenswood Avenue, and Bayfront Expressway at Willow Road. But while Menlo Park may expand its red-light camera arsenal, other local cities are canceling their programs. Redwood City, Hayward and San Carlos have stopped using the cameras.

The report states that for the first four months of 2013, Menlo Park has received an average of 12 new development applications each month, "the highest level of activity seen in several decades." In addition to other projects, such as Facebook's Constitution Drive campus starting construction, and related tasks such as inspection fees, all that planning and public works activity is driving an additional \$905,000 into the city's coffers, compared to last year.

The city plans to use two to three contract employees to accommodate the increased demand on the planning depart-

ONLINE UPDATES

Go to AlmanacNews.com for updates. This paper went to press prior to the council meeting.

ment, at an estimated cost of \$300,000, as well as contractors in public works for \$108,000 — a solution described as "imperfect" by Mr. McIntyre, who had urged the council earlier this year to hire staff instead. The report states that he may ask the council to reconsider should the contractors' work fall short or activity levels stay high.

Menlo Park will look at outsourcing disaster preparedness to the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, and sharing services with Redwood City and East Palo Alto, according to the report.

While the economy appears to be improving, the city manager's analysis also notes some dark clouds on the horizon, in particular, the expected significant increase in employee retirement costs. CalPERS, the state's retirement system, has warned participating jurisdictions of upcoming changes; the city's budget report suggests that the city start saving now for increases that could be as much as double that projected over seven years. Mr. McIntyre recommended reserving the city's anticipated \$202,508 general fund surplus to help cover those costs.

Still, Mr. McIntyre would like to see city employees get raises, since they haven't seen a cost-of-living increase in five years.

"There is evidence of several high-profile departures recently from our City for positions with other agencies at higher rates of compensation and it is proving more difficult to recruit quality talent to Menlo Park in our current compensation program," Mr. McIntyre wrote.

The high-profile departures have included the city clerk and the finance director in the past three months.

Go to tinyurl.com/mekpo7g to review the report. The council will hold a public hearing on the proposed budget on June 4. ■

The city this year has received an average of 12 new development applications a month, 'the highest level of activity seen in several decades.'

Ruben P. Mallari, MD

Ruben P. Mallari, MD passed away peacefully on May 8, 2013, with Zeni, his wife of 45+ years at his side, in Atherton, CA. He will be remembered for his intellect, integrity, wit, wisdom, foresight, charm, sense of humor and unwavering devotion to his family and close friends.

Dr. Mallari was born on June 20, 1936 in the Philippines during World War II. As a child he excelled as a student and entered college at the age of 13. He graduated from the University of the Philippines Medical School in 1958, and completed his post-graduate work and fellowship in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1963, he returned to Manila for two years to teach medicine at his alma mater before moving to New York City where he lived in a small flat in Queens while working in multiple hospitals in Manhattan sending most paychecks to his family in the Philippines.

Along the way, he met Zeni Rodriguez. In 1967, they moved to and married in Honolulu, HI. He started a successful medical practice, had 3 children, became involved with the local chapter of the Rotary Club (eventually becoming Chairman) and got involved in local politics. In 1981, he served as the Chairman of Hawaii's Reapportionment Committee, which re-drew the voting districts in the State of Hawaii following the 1980 census.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Dr. Mallari was also involved in international politics. Ben's inherent sense of fairness and staunch and uncompromising belief in the protection of human rights drove him to take leadership roles in the movement to remove martial law from the Philippines often at significant personal risk to himself and his family.

Dr. Mallari was honored with a commemorative

plaque in the Philippines acknowledging his vision and his role within the People Power Revolution in 1986.

In 1982, recognizing the opportunities available in the developing Silicon Valley, Ben and Zeni moved to Atherton, CA, where they could raise their family in such an enriching and dynamic environment. Ben took great pleasure in serving this community not just as a Physician, but by getting involved in local charitable organizations like the Sequoia Hospital Foundation. As the children grew up and out of the house, Ben developed and explored his life-long interest in music, history, politics, sports, fine dining, wine & spirits and golf.

After his retirement from medical practice in 2004, he enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren, travelling the world with Zeni in between regular visits to his beloved Hawaii, as well as overseeing numerous remodeling projects at the home he loved.

Ben is survived by his wife, Zeni; three children: Alisa Mallari Tu (David Tu), Ana Rowena McCullough (Michael McCullough) and R. Peter "Chip" Mallari (Angie Byrd); four grandchildren: Alia Mulan Tu (11), Kawika Ruben Tu (9), Maia Indigo Tu (7), Leia Luna Tu (4), and Lisana Kai Mallari (a few days old); one sister, Erlinda Viray (Homer Viray); and many other cherished extended family members.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests a charitable donation to the Global Leadership Incubator at 2505 Alpine Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025 or the Peninsula Volunteers, 800 Middle Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025.



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May 20

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Suicide or murder? Attorneys duel

continued from page 8

telling her son to always make his bed, then showing him how. "Why that morning?" Mr. Ketchum asked. "Why 'Always make your bed?'"

If Mr. Parineh loved his wife, Mr. Finigan asked, and if she had talked of killing herself to help the family out of its financial difficulties, why didn't he cancel the policies after her suicide attempt "instead of hanging on to them like a dog with a bone?" Why did he give her a gun?

Mr. Parineh did not attend his wife's memorial service, Mr. Finigan added.

His absence "isn't about disrespecting his wife," Mr. Ketchum countered in his summation. "This is about being in a hostile environment where you're grieving." The deputies at the scene of her death described his

grieving as genuine, he said.

Mr. Finigan, in examining Mr. Parineh's phone records, noted frequent conversations with an ex-mistress from the 1990s, and that he was staying in a motel with this woman, at her expense, in the days after Ms. Parineh's death.

Mr. Ketchum had an explanation. Mr. Parineh's life was "falling apart" and he was estranged from his children. "He doesn't have any friends," he said. "If you assume that people need to talk sometimes, she serves that purpose."

Staging a suicide?

Mr. Parineh was at home on the day of his wife's death until 12:27 p.m., Mr. Finigan told jurors. Reviewing the defendant's typically voluminous daily phone record, Mr. Finigan observed that in a departure from routine, a series of calls went to voicemail between 10:38 and 11:27 a.m. "This is a guy who's tethered to his phone," Mr. Finigan said, "but not on this day. What was he doing during that time? He was murdering his wife and cleaning up."

When authorities responded to Mr. Parineh's anguished late-afternoon 911 call upon his discovery of the bloody scene in the couple's bedroom, they took close-up photographs of his (Parineh's) hands, photos that Mr. Finigan displayed for the jury. "These are not the hands of someone who has just come home, and (who) loved his wife. They're immaculate," Mr. Finigan said. "There was blood all over Ms. Parineh." The condition of his hands is "entirely inconsistent" with the intensity of his 911 call, Mr. Finigan added.

Mr. Parineh's hands were "beautifully manicured," Mr. Ketchum said in a rejoinder to the prosecution's photos. "He's not the kind of guy who likes to get his hands dirty."

Gunshot residue (GSR), the cloud of microscopic particles a gun ejects when being fired, was found on Mr. Parineh's left hand, shirt, vest, T-shirt and trousers. How did it get there? The prosecution claimed that it happened when Mr. Parineh shot his wife. The defense said it was acquired by storing the clothes in a bag that had carried a gun to a firing range. Mr. Finigan rejected that claim, based on videos that included shots of Mr. Parineh carrying a particular

bag to the gym.

"There is something important about GSR and it's where it's not," Mr. Ketchum said. "It's not in his car (as it) should be if he had GSR on him when he left the house" if he had just fired a gun.

Physics on trial

No one can explain the two missed shots, Mr. Finigan said. And the shots that did enter Ms. Parineh entered through her cheek and her upper lip, atypical for a suicide, he said.

The scene in the bedroom lacks a shadow without spattered blood — a void that would have been created if another person were there pulling the trigger, Mr. Ketchum said. "I think the physical evidence in this case has helped us unravel what happened," he said. "A painstaking analysis can't establish that (Mr. Parineh) was in the room."

There were strong indications that her body had been moved and the bedding rearranged after she died, Mr. Finigan said. She appears to have been face up when bleeding and on her side when found. It's natural for a body to be face up after a suicide, he said.

The bloodstains on the gun were smeared and consistent with having been transferred from another surface rather than naturally acquired after the shot, Mr. Finigan said.

Her hand was covered in blood, but photos show her fingertips were unstained. "She could have dropped that weapon, groped for it and pulled it back," rubbing her fingertips clean of blood in the process, Mr. Ketchum said. "If she's capable of voluntary movement (after the first shot), this is a reasonable interpretation. ... If you've shot yourself in the cheek and you're suffering, you may very well use two hands (to hold the gun)."

If a body's been moved, an absence of blood on fingertips is unreliable, Mr. Finigan said.

All four shots leave a similar trajectory of shell casings and bullet paths. If Ms. Parineh was on her side when she shot herself, Mr. Finigan asked, how would the trajectory of that final shot have differed? "This idea that somebody can shoot themselves in the head," he told the jury, "and somehow have the wherewithal to find the gun and try a different (two-handed) way to shoot it ... that's unreasonable. That's something you must reject." ■

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MANY STUDENTS

continued from page 7

they are assigned. Because there tend to be more applications than seats available, the district holds a lottery and about 500 students are transferred, Mr. Lianides said. In the Ravenswood district, about two-thirds of students assigned to Woodside and Carlmont apply, usually to M-A or a local charter school, Mr. Lianides said.

The Ravenswood district is not alone in being split. Part of North Fair Oaks divides itself among three schools, and there are households in the Las Lomitas district assigned to Woodside High. But Las Lomitas households are handled differently. In a November 2011 letter to parents, former Las Lomitas superintendent Eric Hartwig explained:

"For the past several decades, La Entrada students who reside in Atherton or Woodside have Woodside High School as their assigned school, but there has been a policy of allowing them to 'transfer' to Menlo-Atherton High

School," Mr. Hartwig said. "If this option is important to you, please be diligent in complying with the Sequoia District's procedures; if you don't follow them I won't be able to intervene."

The letter includes a link to an open enrollment form and adds: "It's as simple as that. No lottery, no mystery. Even if M-A is declared 'full' at a future date, (La Entrada) students who have followed this process will be admitted to Menlo-Atherton High school for 2012-13 under existing SUHSD Board Policies."

Go to tinyurl.com/LL-link123 to read Mr. Hartwig's letter.

At a May 15 meeting in a multipurpose room in East Palo Alto, a group of about 30 Ravenswood parents, teachers and staff met with Mr. Lianides and board members Olivia Martinez and Allan Weiner. "Many of the people are interested to hear specifically about the Las Lomitas district," said one parent after having the lottery explained. Mr. Lianides replied: "They have to submit the application, but they come off the top."

"It's hard to look at that map and think it's not awkward," said one parent. "It's a head scratcher. ... Does this make sense if we're building communities and community schools? I'm sorry, but I can't help thinking of a gerrymandered district when I look at this map."

Two days earlier, Mr. Lianides, Ms. Martinez and Mr. Weiner met with about 100 parents in M-A's Performing Arts Center. A show of hands indicated that about three-quarters were from the Las Lomitas community.

Las Lomitas and its relationship to M-A is "an organically derived fragile ecosystem," said one parent who said she was speaking for her husband. "It's grown organically into an amazing system that works. It works because we're all together. I anticipate that Woodside (High) will grow into something like that. ... If you remove a small part (of this ecosystem), it has the potential to collapse the whole thing."

Mr. Lianides comes to Woodside High at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 29. ■

Menlo Park to conduct department review

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Now that a \$25,000 review of the police department's internal operations is done, Menlo Park City Manager Alex McIntyre has hired a consultant to take a look at the city's administrative services department.

The \$40,000 study, conducted by Management Partners, based in San Jose, will encompass the human resources, finance, information technology, city manager, city clerk and economic development functions of the city. Mr. McIntyre said he expects it to be finished by the end of summer.

"My intentions all along since joining the City is to do a comprehensive review of each City Department," Mr. McIntyre said

in an email. The studies will be carried sequentially and the costs depend on the scope, he explained.

"For example, the Council has expressed an interest in exploring opportunities to streamline permitting. Given the complexity of doing so, the budget for that effort might be greater than the budget to study another department. We will likely initiate that study sometime later this year," Mr. McIntyre said.

Funding for the review comes out of the department's budget, according to the city manager. Individual contracts worth up to \$50,000 don't require the city council's approval.

The results of the police department study, conducted by Belcher, Ehle, Medina & Associates, were presented to the council during its April 29 meeting. ■

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Published every Wednesday at

**3525 Alameda De Las Pulgas,
Menlo Park, CA 94025**

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The Almanac, established in October 1965, is delivered each week to residents of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside and adjacent unincorporated areas of southern San Mateo County. The Almanac is qualified by decree of the Superior Court of San Mateo County to publish public notices of a governmental and legal nature, as stated in Decree No. 147530, issued December 21, 1969. ©2013 by Embarcadero Media Company. All rights reserved.

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Viewpoint

IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS

ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES FROM PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY. EDITED BY TOM GIBBONEY

Atherton faces big decision on police costs

Although expectations were high, not much was said at last week's only opportunity for public comment prior to the start of what promises to be a series of tough labor talks between Atherton and its police union. The largely calm discussion did not include remarks by anyone from the police union, which has sent mailers to residents warning that the town could lose officers if it demands compensation cuts similar to those recently imposed on non-represented employees, including the police chief and city manager.

Under the current contract, a typical rank-and-file sworn Atherton police officer receives some \$125,000 a year in salary and benefits, meaning that even a small percentage increase can amount to serious money.

And records show that Atherton spends more than half its total annual budget paying for police services, with officers who often perform mundane tasks like checking on residents' homes while they are on vacation or stopping suspicious people who might venture into the town.

And even if the council follows its recent action of making significant compensation cuts for employees not represented by the Atherton Police Officers Association (APOA), a parcel tax that helps fund the police department — 60 percent of its revenue goes directly to police services — is up for renewal next year. Without it, the town would face a budget crunch even if police officers don't receive a compensation increase.

There are factors complicating the council's negotiations. For example, the APOA's recent letter to all residents was similar in tone to mailers sent during the council campaign last year. At that time, the APOA played an active role in support of incumbent Elizabeth Lewis and candidate Cary Weist. Both candidates won convincing victories in a race that was complicated by a vote on whether to build a new library in Holbrook-Palmer Park. The

police union also got public support last week when now-Mayor Lewis' husband, Joe Lewis, spoke in favor of maintaining a local, well-funded police force.

Others who testified urged the council to seek out comparable costs if the county Sheriff's Office or Menlo Park were to provide police protection in Atherton. And Peter Carpenter, a longtime advocate of seriously considering outsourcing, said by email that Atherton's cost per capita for police services is far higher than in Woodside, Portola Valley, Palo Alto and Menlo Park.

With an unfunded liability for police pensions and the prospect that CalPERS, the state retirement agency, plans to raise its rates "significantly" in the next five years, any increase in salary levels will be difficult to fund.

But Atherton, like many other Peninsula communities, is faced with pressure to equal, match or exceed what other jurisdictions are paying police officers. It is a process that has driven up police costs to levels that far exceed annual compensation of \$100,000 a year, and with the present retirement package — "3 at 50," meaning that officers can retire at 90 percent of their highest pay after 30 years of service — there are plenty of reasons to put the brakes on adding costs for police services now.

We hope that Mayor Lewis and her colleagues have the courage to approve a package for the APOA that is similar to the reductions imposed on non-represented employees. We doubt if doing so would cause a mass exodus from the department, where officers enjoy relatively easy duty for pay that is, by terms of their contract, at the 70th percentile of many Bay Area police forces, including much busier departments nearby. We also hope that the APOA's involvement in the election does not influence the outcome of negotiations, which would send the wrong message to Atherton residents that police unions can buy influence with campaign support.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

Contradictory decision on turf field

Editor:

In its recent 3-to-2 vote, the Portola Valley Town Council overturned the Planning Commission's decision that would allow Woodside Priory School to install artificial turf when it renovates its playing field this summer. The Priory was denied the artificial turf and now must put in irrigated grass.

Surprisingly the issue that seemed to sway the three council members was not about open space, scenic corridor, rural or water conservation. Instead it was about the fact that artificial turf was not a living organism. The three council members who voted to reject the Planning Commission's decision said they had "gut instincts" against the artificial turf and that they "read into the General Plan" a value that would not allow something inorganic to replace



Woodside History Committee

Our Regional Heritage

Dr. Robert Tripp owned the Woodside store that still exists today on the corner of Tripp and Kings Mountain roads. He was elected to the first San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1850, before San Mateo County was established. He rode his horse to the meetings in San Francisco every Monday and returned the next day, about 70 miles round-trip.

an existing organic material.

I have a deep respect for all our volunteers in this town, especially our council members who put in so much time

and effort. However, I respectfully question this decision. How can a town that upholds a water-conservation code that regulates new construction to

a limit of 1,000 square feet of irrigated grass now turn around and insist that the Priory put in

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

two acres of it? How can a town that put in a mile of asphalt (inorganic material) on one of its town trails to make it a year-round recreational facility now turn around and deny the Priory a recreational facility the children can use year-round? The decision seems very contradictory.

What is done is done. Now the Priory will have to figure out how to make lemonade out of lemons.

If this upsets you, as it does me, there is something you can do. As citizens who have the right to vote, I urge you to pay attention to the Town Council election this upcoming fall.

Two of the three Town Council members who voted to reject the Planning Commission's decision and have denied the Priory a facility that would be "on-par" with every high school in its league, are up for re-election.

*SallyAnn Reiss
Golden Oak Drive, Portola Valley*

Most scientists agree about climate change

Editor:

A review of 12,000 papers on climate change, in the May 15 issue of the "Environmental

Research Letters," found that 97 percent of scientists attribute climate change to human activities. Although we're unlikely to reverse climate change, we can mitigate its effects by reducing our driving, energy use, and meat consumption.

Yes, meat consumption. A 2006 U.N. report estimated that meat consumption accounts for 18 percent of man-made greenhouse gases. A 2009 article in the respected World Watch magazine suggested that it may be closer to 50 percent.

Carbon dioxide, the principal greenhouse gas, is generated by burning forests to create animal pastures and by combustion of fossil fuels to confine, feed, transport, and slaughter animals. The much more damaging methane and nitrous oxide are discharged from digestive tracts of cattle and from animal waste cesspools, respectively.

Each of us has the power to reduce the devastating effects of climate change every time we eat. Our local supermarket offers a rich variety of soy-based lunch meats, hotdogs, veggie burgers and soy and nut-based dairy products, as well as an ample selection of vegetables, fruits, grains, and nuts.

*Miles Barney
Sharon Park Drive, Menlo Park*

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Mountain View

Western Ballet

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

Mountain View

Athletics

Alan Margot's Tennis Camps

Alan Margot's Tennis Camps provide an enjoyable way for your child to begin learning the game of tennis or to continue developing existing skills. Our approach is to create lots of fun with positive feedback and reinforcement in a nurturing tennis environment. Building self-esteem and confidence through enjoyment on the tennis court is a wonderful gift a child can keep forever! Super Juniors Camps, ages 3-6; Juniors Camps, ages 6-14.
www.alanmargot-tennis.net

Atherton

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The Menlo Park Tradition Continues! June 7, 8, 9

Nativity's 33rd Annual Spring Carnival



Fun for the whole family.....

FREE ADMISSION

Nativity School Grounds
at 1250 Laurel St.

Corner of Oak Grove & Laurel, Menlo Park

Raffle Grand Prize:
\$15,000



Musical Entertainment

Friday 6:00 to 10:00 — D. B. Walker

Saturday 12:00 to 1:30 — Joe Samuels Jazz Band

3:00 to 5:00 — Mark Bettencourt & the Aftermath

6:00 to 10:00 — Party Bomb

Sunday 2:00 to 6:00 — The Real Story TRS

Bar with 5 beers

on tap
and Margaritas
Great selection of food

Silent Auction

In the New Gym — Friday 5-11pm

Saturday, Noon-8pm

Sunday Noon-5pm (Pick-up day only)

Carnival Hours

Friday, 5 – 11pm

Saturday, Noon – 11pm

Sunday, Noon – 6pm

Security on-site

Look for us on  : Nativity Carnival Menlo Park • www.nativityschool.com/carnival



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