

The Almanac

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

SEPTEMBER 11, 2013 | VOL. 49 NO. 1

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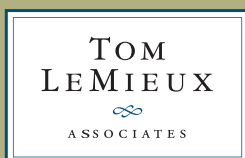
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Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Roger Reynolds Nursery & Carriage Stop closed on Sept. 3.

End of era: Landmark nursery Roger Reynolds closes doors

By Jane Knoerle
Almanac Lifestyles Editor

“Well that just ruined my morning.” “A very big loss to the community.” “I spent thousands of dollars over the last few years. I did my share!” “Always sad to see the mom and pops leave after so many years.”

These were some of the many comments posted on the Almanac’s Town Square online forum, lamenting the unexpected Sept. 3 closing of Roger Reynolds Nursery & Carriage Stop at 113 Encinal Ave. in Menlo Park.

Owner Sally Halstead, granddaughter of Roger Reynolds, who founded the nursery in 1919, put a message on the nursery’s website and a sign on the Carriage Stop’s door announcing the closure. “Since the severe economic downturn of 2008 our business has been unable to adequately recover,” she said in the announcement.

Attempts to reach Ms. Halstead for an interview were unsuccessful.

“What? No warning? What are they doing with all the inventory? I shopped here for 30 years — one of the last mom and pop places to disappear,” wrote a Lindenwood neighbor. Another wrote, “I’m sure the 140k stolen from RR hastened their closing.”

In 2010 Evette Christine Weiler, a bookkeeper for the nursery, pleaded no contest to charges of embezzling \$140,000 from the business. Auditors discovered “dozens of checks” written to an accounting business, When Every Penny Counts, which she had created, instead of paying the nursery’s health insurance and vendors’ bills. She was sentenced in 2011.

What’s next?

“What next?” asked a resident of nearby Felton Gables who posted on Town Square. “High density development, more offices, maybe some housing, increased backups at what is currently the least-gridlocked train crossing. Too bad for all of us in so many ways,”

According to the Menlo Park planning department, there are currently no plans or applications on file regarding the Roger Reynolds property.

With such family-owned businesses as Beltramo’s Wines & Spirits, Draeger’s Market, and Flegel’s Home Furnishings flourishing, Menlo Park still retains its vibrant small town feeling, however, many are mourning the loss of another community fixture.

History

According to the company history, Roger Reynolds opened a commercial printing shop in San Francisco at the turn of the last century, but developed an allergy to printing ink and sought a new line of work that would offer plenty of fresh air.

He acquired 18 acres of land between El Camino Real and the Southern Pacific railroad tracks in Menlo Park. At that time the nursery fronted El Camino Real.

See REYNOLDS, page 6

CALLING ON THE ALMANAC

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Do you have a dog that would make a good therapy dog? If you feel your dog can demonstrate how to follow basic obedience commands, has the desire and aptitude to be around strangers and other animals, is comfortable in new environments and would pass a veterinarian health

screening, then your dog may be the animal we’re looking for! You would also have to meet volunteer guidelines.

Stanford Hospital and Clinics, in conjunction with Pet Partners (formerly Delta Society), is holding a free orientation (about one hour) on Saturday, September 12, 2013 at 2 p.m. in Palo Alto. No pets please – humans only. For more information, please contact Lyn Belingheri at labsite@sbcglobal.net and see the Stanford PAWS website: <http://stanfordhospital.org/forPatients/patientServices/pawsGuestServices.html> RSVP required for the orientation

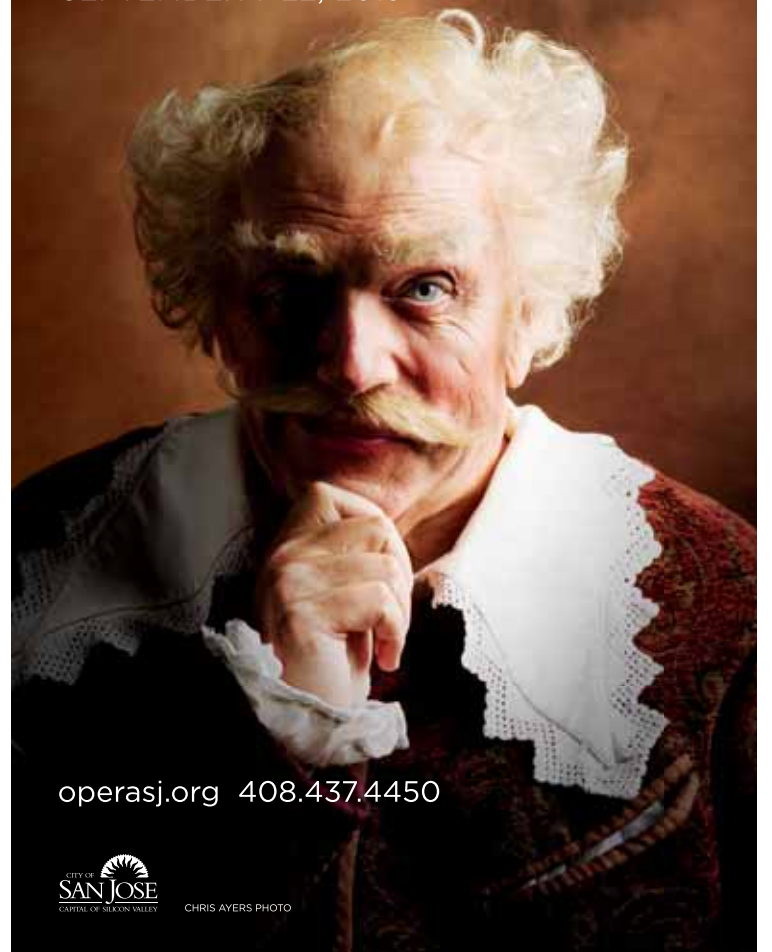


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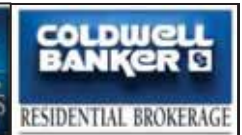


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Local News

MENLO PARK | AThERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Drawing by Square Three Design Studios/courtesy, town of Atherton

New facilities proposed by the Menlo-Atherton Little League for the ball field in Holbrook-Palmer Park include a covered grandstand.

Atherton Little League plans face opposition

■ Council seeks compromise on new ball field facilities in Holbrook-Palmer Park.

By **Barbara Wood**
Special to the Almanac

Last November, in an Atherton election that sharply divided the town, there was one measure on the ballot most voters agreed on: renovation of the Little League baseball facilities in Holbrook-Palmer Park, a measure approved by 75 percent of the voters.

Despite the election outcome, plans for the baseball field have bogged down, with the town's Planning Commission oppos-

ing many of the changes the Menlo-Atherton Little League has proposed.

The Little League, according to representative Mike Haven, is only asking to do what the voters approved. Its plan includes a new backstop, seating in a covered grandstand, covered dugouts, a fixed electronic scoreboard and foul poles, new permanent fencing, improvements to drainage and irrigation, and an overhaul of the playing area.

Atherton's Planning Commission thinks "the physical

improvements are too monumental, too large in scale and counter to maintaining the rustic nature of the park," commission chair Herman Christensen told the City Council on Sept. 4.

At that meeting, council members worked toward developing a compromise proposal for the Sept. 18 meeting, when the council is scheduled to vote on an agreement with the Little League.

Under the agreement, the Little League would pay for the ball field improvements and donate money for other town projects, including resurfacing of the park's tennis courts. The

Atherton's Planning Commission thinks 'the physical improvements are too monumental, too large in scale and counter to maintaining the rustic nature of the park.'

town also proposed that the Little League donate 5 percent of the final construction costs, up to \$50,000, for other park improvements.

Hours were spent at the Sept. 4 meeting discussing project details including: whether 2 feet of bench is enough room for the rump of the average local baseball fan (and their belongings) or if 3 feet is actually necessary; whether right field or left field would be the best place for a new scoreboard; and who should mow the field's grass during baseball season.

The proposed grandstand would have public bathrooms and storage in the rear of the structure.

In addition to down-sizing

See **LITTLE LEAGUE**, page 8

Police create database of private security cameras

By **Sandy Brundage**
Almanac Staff Writer

In an effort to help figure out where to install up to four surveillance cameras of its own, the Menlo Park Police Department is creating a database of locations that already have private cameras.

Police chief Robert Jonsen said three cameras will be placed somewhere along Willow Road in the Belle Haven neighborhood, but the exact locations remain to be determined.

"(The week before last) we had two shootings in the Belle Haven neighborhood, one of

which was on Willow Road, and the shootings in East Palo Alto have been continuing," Chief Jonsen said. "After every shooting, residents in the area ask about the cameras so I want to get a few up. However, the locations are not set in stone because if we determine there are a lot of independent cameras already in the area that we can enter into the (database), then we may place our cameras somewhere else."

He said the department will have a better idea of where to put its cameras in a couple

See **CAMERAS**, page 8

Police to post stolen-bike photos online

By **Dave Boyce**
Almanac Staff Writer

Mug shots of lost or stolen bicycles recovered by the Menlo Park Police Department will be online soon.

Menlo Park police have a room for the storage of recovered bikes and within a week or two, partial pictures of these bikes will be going up on the police department website using the photo-sharing application Instagram, police spokeswoman Nicole Acker said.

As is the case when retrieving lost items generally, the would-be owner will have to demonstrate detailed knowl-

edge of the bike's features to prove ownership, Ms. Acker said. The department has about 30 bikes currently.

Go to tinyurl.com/Bike402 to see a sample photo of a recovered bike. The sample shows only the handlebars.

The police department home page will include a link to Instagram, so a smartphone won't be necessary to view photos, Ms. Acker said.

Youths captured

Police announced the Instagram initiative in connection with the capture and detention of four youths seen entering an open garage on Hedge Road on Sept. 2 at around 6:15

p.m. and stealing a bike that they later discarded.

A witness said they were seen running through Flood Park. The youths "admitted to the crime and admitted to going to this area to steal bicycles," police said.

All four were booked into the Hillcrest juvenile detention center on suspicion of burglary, police said. Investigators are examining the possibility that the youths are connected to other bicycle thefts in the area.

Victims of bike theft can find out if their bikes have been found by calling the Property and Evidence Unit of the Menlo Park Police Department at 330-6334. ■



PORTOLA VALLEY

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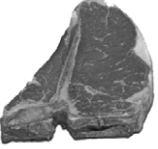
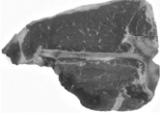
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Pinot Noir Tasting At Thomas Fogarty Winery Wednesday, September 18th, at 7:00pm

Please join me for a special event hosted at The Thomas Winery on Skyline Blvd. This will be a blind tasting incorporating Pinots from Burgundy, Oregon, California and the best examples from the Fogarty Winery. The cost is \$45 per person. Please call me, John Akeley, at 650-851-2640, or email at rmtk-john@robertsmarket.com to reserve a seat. Here are the wines we will be tasting:

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| 2011 Bergstorm, Bergstorm Vineyard,
Dundee Hills, OR \$79.99 | 2011 Thomas Fogarty, Rapley Trail Vineyard-Henry
Ayrton's Block Estate \$79.99 |

{ www.robertsmarket.com }

Code enforcement gets a boost in Atherton

By Barbara Wood
Special to the Almanac

Although Atherton will continue to cite violators of its city ordinances only when a complaint is received or a public official notices a violation, the town will soon increase the hours of its code-enforcement officer from 12 to 20 hours a week.

Councilman Jim Dobbie has also asked the police to take a more active role in reporting code violations they see during their daily rounds.

The City Council voted at its Sept. 4 meeting to add \$36,000 to the budget to pay for additional code enforcement. Council members Dobbie, Cary Wiest and Elizabeth Lewis voted for the increase; Councilman Bill Widmer had left the meeting early.

In a report to the council, Community Services Director Michael Kashiwagi said that the town has been getting more complaints about misdeeds from neighbors lately, including six complaints made via the town's new website in its first

30 days "on issues such as right-of-way use, trees, drainage, and construction."

Mr. Kashiwagi said the extra hours will help the town do a better job at enforcing the code relating to such things as debris clearance, visibility, and illegal construction; with issues related to construction, such as work hours, parking, and working without a permit; and in addressing illegal business activity in the community.

The town has been getting more complaints about misdeeds from neighbors lately.

Councilman Dobbie said he wants the Atherton police force to be more involved in the town's efforts to enforce its codes. "What I would like to do is make the police more aware that they are the eyes and ears, and not only catching criminals, but if they see things going on that are illegal or breaking our codes that they also help in reporting this so that we can get more information," he said.

"In general I think policemen think, 'my job is to catch criminals,' but in Atherton we have a different kind of police — we have community police," he said. ■

REYNOLDS

continued from page 3

In the early years, the nursery's redwood grove was turned into a park with barbecues, picnic tables, a dance floor and a jukebox. It was rented out on the weekends to San Francisco organizations wanting "a day in the country."

To make ends meet during the Depression, Mr. Reynolds leased out some of his property. The Franciscan Forge began its business as one of his tenants. A Victorian cottage on the property, used as a guest house for the family, later became Edy's Candy Store, complete with soda fountain. That became the Carriage Stop, which sold garden gift items and houseplants.

After Mr. Reynolds died in an automobile accident in 1932, the business was run by his wife. She sold some of the land and later, part of the remaining five-acre nursery was leased to Home Savings of America.

His step-granddaughter, Ms.

Halstead, has owned the business since 1978. She said she insisted on following her grandfather's legacy to provide high quality products and services at a fair value and "maintain a meandering garden of beauty that all can enjoy."

In announcing the closing Sept. 3, she said that after 97 years in the same location in Menlo Park, Roger Reynolds Nursery & Carriage Stop "has closed its doors for the last time."

She thanked generations of loyal customers who supported Roger Reynolds over the years. "On behalf of my family and staff, I thank each and every one of you for being with us," she said. "Your patronage and support has been most valued and appreciated."

Roger Reynolds was a nursery partner of the Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden and of Filoli, the historic country estate in Woodside, and frequently won the Almanac's Readers' Choice Award for best nursery. ■



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One developer's plans hit pause, but another slowly moves forward

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

The Greenheart Land Company said it waited for Menlo Park's new specific plan before moving forward with a project for 1300 El Camino Real, the site of a former Cadillac dealership and the former site of the Derry project, on about 3.5 acres between the Caltrain station and El Camino Real.

Then Menlo Park decided to make a comprehensive review of the specific plan, starting with a Planning Commission meeting on Sept. 9.

Now, according to Greenheart representative Bob Burke, plans are on hold until the company sees what happens with the review. The company is considering building a mix of ground-level retail, apartments and office space on the parcels.

"We were very close and ready to do the project, and now we have to see how that goes," he said. "No one knows how that's going to turn out."

Mr. Burke questioned the necessity of opening the specific plan to a complete overhaul after the city spent five years and held dozens of public meetings to create it.

"It's very sad. It's very, very disconcerting, in our opinion. (The specific plan) is one of the reasons we came here and decided to invest in this community,"

■ MENLO PARK

he said, since developers would know what the rules were and how to comply.

While a review is always a good idea, he said, because there are always minor tweaks to make when things happen that a city didn't anticipate, the potential for a major overhaul "makes you say, wait a minute, why would anybody want to propose (projects) now?"

Historical association has no objection to demolition of Park Theatre building.

A group of residents citing traffic and housing impacts has led the charge against the current specific plan after Stanford University and developer John Arrillaga proposed building an eight-acre mixed-use complex from 300 to 500 El Camino Real that met the plan's baseline criteria without triggering public benefit requirements.

Park Theatre

Another project that waited for passage of the specific plan is moving forward.

Howard Crittenden told the

Almanac in December that he planned to turn his Park Theatre property, located at 1275 El Camino Real, into office space and retail. With the specific plan in place, the remaining obstacle was the historic nature of the theater, he said.

According to the city, that obstacle has now been removed. Menlo Park asked VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting earlier this year to evaluate whether the theater, built during the 1940s, still qualified as a historic building, given the numerous changes made during past decades, including the removal of a sign, plaster finishes and ornamentation, as well as the remodeling of the concessions stand.

The consultant concluded that the building no longer counted as historic per national criteria, according to a letter from Arlinda Heineck, the city's community development director, to the local historical association. The association in turn said it did not have a problem with the demolition of the building.

What exactly will replace the theater remains to be seen. "No plans have been submitted for the Park Theater site. The demolition permit is still pending. We are waiting for a resubmittal by the applicant in response to plan check comments," Ms. Heineck said on Sept. 9. ■

City moves ahead with Cate Fisher memorial

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

Two years after she died, plans to formally remember Menlo Park gymnastics instructor Cate Fisher on the grounds of the center where she loved to teach are finally underway, according to city staff.

The 19-year-old woman taught for the city for nearly three years before she was shot and killed in July 2011. Although a tree was planted outside the gymnastics center and an insider area was set aside as "Cate's Corner," neither had any indication that they were in memory of the popular young

instructor, contrary to what residents, family members and some staff expected.

Staff emails obtained by the Almanac suggested that personnel conflicts between gymnastics supervisors and Michelle Sutton, Cate's mother, who had also taught for the city until abruptly being fired earlier this year, derailed plans for a memorial.

Now Community Services Director Cherise Brandell confirmed that a sign for "Cate's Corner" has been ordered, as well as a plaque for the crepe myrtle tree that was planted in the instructor's memory.

"We are hoping to have them in time for a dedication by the family scheduled for October 26," Ms. Brandell said in an email on Sept. 5.

Ms. Sutton said that within 24 hours of the Almanac's story about the delays in creating a memorial, she received an email from gymnastics manager Pearce Wagner saying he had been instructed to take charge of and expedite the project.

"Thank you, again, for honoring Cate's memory both inside and outside the gymnastics center. She would be, as we are, truly touched by this gesture," Ms. Sutton replied to his email.

She told the Almanac that she was both "thrilled and grateful" that the plans were finally underway, and that the family is willing to pay for associated expenses. ■

Councilman to hold office hours

Menlo Park Councilman Ray Mueller will hold "office hours" on Saturday, Sept. 14, on the patio at the Oasis, located at 241 El Camino Real.

He said he'll be available to discuss any topic, including the downtown/El Camino Real specific plan, with the exception of the Stanford-Arrillaga

project from which he's recused until February.

Office hours start at 1 p.m. on Saturday. Vice Mayor Mueller said he will hold additional hours in the near future.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

The Current State of the Rental Market



Dear Monica: I am just moving to the Bay Area to take a new job and I want to rent for at least a year before I will be ready to buy a home. I want to be sure the job works out and save more money for a down payment. It is a tight market and I am having trouble finding available rentals. Do you think I will find a decent property to rent at a price I can afford? Nigel R.

Dear Nigel: The rental market is indeed very tight and you need to be quick and flexible in order to find a good rental. You can find many listings on Craigslist and other sites, but there are some properties that never get to the open listing web-

sites. Agents often get information through their networks about available rentals, some of which are also posted on Craigslist. But many are not listed openly and these places are often rented within a day or two of being available.

You should consult with an agent who will have access to listings that you would never know about otherwise. Continue to actively look online as well and the combination of the agent's professional network and the public bulletin boards will give you the most comprehensive list of available properties. Within a short time you should be successful in finding a good rental, in spite of this very tight market. Best of luck with your search.

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

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Atherton adopts new fees for town services

■ Some fees will dramatically increase, others will go away or be reduced.

By Barbara Wood
Special to the Almanac

In November Atherton residents will see changes in the fees they pay the town for everything from a building permit to getting a copy of a police report. A new fee schedule was approved by the City Council at its Sept. 4 meeting.

The new fees are designed to assign all the costs of town services to those using the services and were developed by consultants Capital Accounting Partners.

Some fees will dramatically increase, others will go away or be reduced, and many will stay the same.

In the end, the town hopes the new fees will reduce the amount the consultants say taxpayers had been subsidizing those who use town services — more than \$83,000 for planning services, more than \$35,000 for engineering services, more than \$214,000 for building services, and nearly \$23,000 for park services.

“The consultant that was hired did a very thorough job,” said Mayor Elizabeth Lewis. “I note that many fees have gone down.”

Councilman Cary Wiest said the town’s goal “is to break even,” adding: “We’re trying to please as many people as possible.”

Examples of fees

The study compared fees with those of other Bay Area communities and found Atherton’s new fees will be lower than most, especially when compared with Woodside’s.

As an example, building fees,

which will be based on square footage and not the cost of construction, are estimated for an 8,000-square-foot house with a 4,000-square-foot basement to now be \$28,332 in Atherton, \$43,290 in Woodside, \$37,026 Belmont, and \$18,336 in Hillsborough.

The town plans to adjust the fees annually and will return the matter to the council next June, City Manager George Rodericks said.

Examples of some of the fees that have gone up are those for zoning ordinance and general plan amendment applications, which will double from \$2,500 to \$5,000 each. Solar panel permit fees will also double, from \$250 to \$500.

Driveway-inspection fees are going down, however, with the fee for a driveway with a culvert being reduced from \$864 to \$438.

Copies of police reports will also be less expensive. A copy without photos or audiotape will be only 25 cents, reduced from \$18. For copies with photos and audiotapes, the fee is now \$50 per hour, down from \$106 per hour.

Fees for renting out buildings in Holbrook-Palmer Park will range from \$400 for a half day of use of the Main House or Carriage House to \$2,500 for a full weekend day’s use of Jennings Pavilion. In addition, non-residents will be charged a 30 percent “administrative fee” when they rent park facilities, while residents are charged 15 percent.

Visit tinyurl.com/Fee-904 to see the fee schedule. ■

Goal is to assign all costs to those using services. Study finds the fees will be lower than most towns, especially Woodside.

LITTLE LEAGUE

continued from page 5

the bleachers, commissioners unanimously wanted the fences, scoreboard, and foul poles to be removable so they could be taken down after the February-through-June baseball season, Mr. Christensen said.

“By accepting our recommendations, the park can be saved along with getting an improved ball field,” he said.

One of the main points of contention is the amount of bleacher seating to be built. The Little League says its proposal

would comfortably seat 100 people with 36 inches per person allowed. But the California building code states that 18 inches is a seat size; under that definition, the Little League plan would allow bleachers of a capacity for 200 people.

Council members spoke in favor of down-sizing the seating, with several saying they think 24 inches for 60 to 100 spectators would provide plenty of room. But Councilman Cary Wiest said that as a big person who often brings kids and lots of gear along to a ball game, he’d like more room.



Almanac file photo by Michelle Le

In 2010, then-Police Chief Mike Guerra, right, and other Atherton police officers collaborated with U.S. Secret Service agents to secure the perimeter of Steve Westly’s home in Atherton during President Barack Obama’s fundraising visit for Kamala Harris, then San Francisco’s district attorney.

Presidential fundraisers: Town plans to charge hosts for costs

By Barbara Wood
Special to the Almanac

■ ATHERTON

Here’s a heads-up for Atherton residents: If you plan to host a fundraiser for Paul Ryan, Hillary Clinton or any other future presidential contender, the town plans to charge you if the town provides extra police protection, closes down streets, or otherwise spends public money in connection with your event.

At the Sept. 4 City Council meeting, City Manager George Rodericks admitted that town employees blew it in April by not warning the residents who hosted two fundraisers with President Barack Obama about special-event permit requirements and the need to repay the costs of any required town services.

“The town’s ordinances require that if you have a pri-

vate event on private property ... you are obligated to pay any extraordinary public safety police or public works costs that are associated with that event,” Mr. Rodericks said. “We should have engaged the residents at the very beginning (and) informed them.”

Mr. Rodericks said the town knew in advance from the Secret Service that President Obama would be in town. After the event, “we sent invoices to the White House, to the Secret Service, to the DNC (Democratic National Committee) and to the residents and didn’t receive any remuneration,” he said. The town’s costs totaled just over \$8,000, he said in a staff report.

However, because the town hadn’t warned the residents — Marcia and John Goldman,

and Liz Simons and Mark Heising — in advance, that debt is being written off, he said.

But it won’t happen again, Councilman Cary Wiest said. “We’re now taking the position of educating the people in town, saying that if you are going to throw an event you do have to pull a permit and do expect to pay a bill so the other taxpayers in town are not going to have to pay for enhanced services.”

The policy applies to all special events, from weddings to charity fundraisers, if the town has to provide anything beyond its usual services.

City Manager Rodericks promised in his staff report that the town “plans to step up the education” by rewriting the town’s laws and policies that govern special events and to educate residents through press releases and the town’s website. ■

Councilman Bill Widmer urged compromise. “I don’t think we need to make it larger than it needs to be,” he said. He asked the town to work with the Little League “to see if there’s any kind of compromise,” and asked for them “to work as a team to make this happen but to preserve the integrity of the park.”

Council members also appeared to favor compromises on other parts of the plan as well, such as making some of the fencing permanent and some removable. They asked for investigation into the practicality of removing the foul poles

and the scoreboard.

As to the question of who will mow the fields during the baseball season, City Manager George Rodericks said he will look at the agreement the Little League has with Burgess Park in Menlo Park for inspiration.

The matter is scheduled to return to the council at its Sept. 18 meeting, which starts at 7 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 91 Ashfield Road.

Visit tinyurl.com/LL-906 to download a PDF document with more information on the Little League proposal, including drawings. ■

CAMERAS

continued from page 5

weeks, as people continue to register their own cameras.

The database of private cameras will also help investigators determine who may have footage related to a crime, according to the police. To register, the department asks that you call 330-6300 or email policerecords@menlopark.org with your name, phone number, address where the cameras are located, email address and any additional information you want to provide. ■



Michelle Le/The Almanac

Facebook II

Facebook recently started construction work on its “west campus,” located on Constitution Drive down the road from its Menlo Park headquarters. The new campus, designed by world-renowned architect Frank Gehry to blend into the landscape, will cover about 10 acres and provide office space for up to 2,800 engineers as well as a rooftop garden, according to the social networking company.

Beechwood School breaks ground

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

The past 12 months have been a challenging time for Beechwood School, a private Belle Haven facility for grades K-8, as it overcame a fire that destroyed a third-grade classroom and the administrative offices last year.

But now, the school is preparing to grow. A groundbreaking ceremony on Sept. 5 marks the start of a \$12 million campus expansion.

“The time is right to take the next step in our mission to help students succeed in their personal and family lives and in their communities,” Development Director Melinda Christopherson said in an announce-

The \$12 million campus expansion includes nine new classrooms.

ment. “The ‘temporary’ campus has served us well for longer than we could have hoped. We are thrilled now with the opportunity to create a new physical environment for our school.”

In March, the school bought from Menlo Park for \$1.25 million the site it sits on at 50 Terminal Ave., as well as another 1.5 acres. Construction will take place in two phases, split between 2013 and 2014, and will add nine classrooms; a social center; spaces dedicated to science, art and music;

a library; garden; a track and field; and a new administration building, Principal Dave Laurance said.

The land purchase contract allows the city to buy back the land for the purchase price if the construction of the new campus isn’t substantially finished in five years, and also gives Menlo Park the right of first refusal should the school decide to sell the land for a non-educational use.

Habitat for Humanity had planned to build 22 affordable homes on the parcel, but pulled the plug on the development after facing 10 years of community opposition and financial difficulties. ■

Town weighs redwood-planting guidelines

Redwood trees are native to California, but not all of California. They don’t do well in dry upland areas, for example. And the Town Council in Portola Valley, a town with a plenty of dry upland, will be considering new guidelines for where and where not to plant redwoods at its Wednesday, Sept. 11, meeting.

The meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. outside under the redwoods in

■ PORTOLA VALLEY

the small grove just north of the Historic Schoolhouse at 765 Portola Road. (The council has one scheduled meeting in this grove per year.)

According to a staff report, redwoods should not be planted where they have to rely on irrigation or where they will even-

tually obstruct someone’s view. They should not be planted within 50 feet of a structure or septic system or leach field, and should not be planted as a hedge.

The guidelines were drawn up by the Conservation Committee and have been reviewed twice by both the Architectural and Site Control Commission and the Planning Commission.

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High-speed-rail 'two-track' bill is signed into law

By Gennady Sheyner
Palo Alto Weekly

Legislation that makes it next to impossible for the California High-Speed Rail Authority to build a four-track rail system on the Peninsula was signed into law Friday by Gov. Jerry Brown.

Senate Bill 557, spearheaded by Sen. Jerry Hill, D-San Mateo, and coauthored by Assemblymen Rich Gordon, D-Menlo Park, and Kevin Mullin, D-South San Francisco, seeks to address one of the region's primary concerns about the increasingly unpopular rail project — the prospect of a four-track rail system getting built along the Caltrain corridor.

The four-track alignment, in which Caltrain would occupy the outer tracks and high-speed rail the inner tracks, was initially proposed by the California High-Speed Rail Authority but later shelved in favor of a "blended system" in which both train services share two tracks on the Peninsula.

Sen. Hill's bill creates a steep hurdle for reversing this decision. Though it stops short of codifying the blended alignment into law, it gives nine Bay Area agencies veto power over revisiting the four-track approach. The agencies include the Caltrain board of directors, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

The blended system, which was first proposed by former

state Sen. Joe Simitian, Mr. Gordon and U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, would include as a major component the electrification of Caltrain, a project the commuter service has been planning for over a decade. Sen. Hill's bill makes Caltrain electrification more likely by including language that prohibits the transference of funds from the Peninsula segment of the high-speed-rail project to other regions of the state.

The bill clarifies that \$600 million in high-speed-rail funds will be used to electrify Caltrain by 2019, with local agencies providing the balance of the \$1.1 billion project.

The rail authority is now preparing to construct the first segment of the \$68 billion San

Francisco-to-Los Angeles rail system in the Central Valley. In a statement, Sen. Hill said the new law "provides statutory assurance that high-speed-rail funding will be used to advance the modernization of the Caltrain system and deliver cleaner, quieter, faster, more frequent rail service to Peninsula residents and business."

"By signing this bill, the Governor has made it clear that the State is in lock-step with local communities advocating that the high-speed-rail project should be phased to prioritize upgrades to our existing rail system and eventually accommodate high-speed rail service in a way that avoids impacts on local communities," Sen. Hill said. ■

The bill gives nine Bay Area agencies veto power over revisiting the four-track approach.

Menlo Park fire district names new interim chief

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

As Chief Harold Schapelhouman continues to recuperate, the Menlo Park Fire Protection District governing board has appointed Daniel Belville to serve as interim chief.

Mr. Belville previously served as chief in San Mateo and Foster City. His 36-year career also included a stint in San Carlos. He steps into the district's lead position after the first interim chief, retired firefighter Douglas Sporleder, finished serving on Aug. 30, according to the district.

The fire district board also

granted Chief Schapelhouman an unpaid leave of absence through Jan. 5, 2014. A fall at his San Jose home in May has left him partially paralyzed and in a wheelchair. The chief said he recently visited the fire district with an occupational therapist to start planning his eventual return to work.

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District serves Menlo Park, Atherton, East Palo Alto and portions of unincorporated San Mateo County. ■



Daniel Belville

Will bike-sharing work on Peninsula?

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Getting around on the crowded streets of downtown Redwood City could be easier and less stressful with the Aug. 29 launch of Bay Area Bike Share. The pilot program, set to run over the next year or two, will test the popularity and practicality of some 700 teal-blue rental bikes installed along the Peninsula, including in San Francisco, Palo Alto, Mountain View and San Jose.

With a credit card, Bike Share members in Redwood City with an errand to run, a job to get to, or a train to catch can unlock a low-slung, easy-handling, seven-speed bike from a docking station at one of five downtown locations and pedal off to another station, where they then re-lock the bike and go about their business. The stations are far enough away to save time, but close enough to each other and to centers of activity to be useful and to accomplish one-way trips in less than 30 minutes.

The ideal Peninsula community for a bike-share program appears to be a busy cityscape that straddles the transportation corridor of Caltrain and El Camino Real. Menlo Park could meet the criteria needed to join, if and when the pilot expands into a permanent program, said Tom Flannigan, a spokesperson for the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

Redwood City, the only community in San Mateo County to be participating, has five rental stations and 70 bikes initially (growing to 100 in the second phase). The five stations are concentrated downtown, where county and city public employees gather, and are easily within a 30 minute ride of each other, said Jessica Manzi, the city's transportation manager.

Palo Alto and Mountain



Image courtesy of bayareabikeshare.com

Some 700 teal-blue rental bikes are being installed along the Peninsula.

View have five Bike Share stations, and there are 14 in San Jose and 34 in San Francisco. The Bay Area program is the first to distribute bikes along an extended metropolitan corridor, according to the website of Bay Area Bike Share.

In coordination with the

Pilot program tests popularity of bike-sharing.

county, the San Mateo County Transit District and Caltrain, Redwood City had been working steadily on last-mile projects: getting public transportation commuters closer to the doors of their destinations. The city already offers the Zipcar car-sharing program and van pools for public employees, Ms. Manzi said. Bike-sharing was also on the table.

When the opportunity came along to join the Bike Share pilot, Redwood City was ready and applied for and received a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Ms. Manzi said. More bike lanes are coming to the city as streets are being resurfaced, she added.

The pilot, modeled on programs in major cities in the United States and Europe, aims to help Caltrain, BART

and ferry commuters get to and from inner-city workplaces, and to help anyone in the inner city run errands quickly and cleanly, in terms of environmental impact.

The bikes are regularly maintained, designed for safe and easy riding on flat terrain, and are equipped with lights, bells, fenders, chain guards and a small carrier mounted on the handlebars. They even have internal gears that can be shifted while sitting still.

The air-quality district is one of several Bay Area public agencies funding the pilot, according to the Bike Share website. Others include the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Caltrain, the San Mateo County Transportation Authority and San Mateo County.

As a member, you can take as many 30-minute trips as you like within the limits of your membership, whether for a day (\$9), three days (\$22) or a year (\$88). You'll be on the hook for another \$4 if you keep the bike for 60 minutes, and the cost jumps by \$7 for each 30-minute window after that.

"It's intended to be a very safe way to help provide additional mobility options," said Karen Schkolnick of the air-quality district.

Go to bayareabikeshare.com for more information. ■

Service for Mary Ruth Berrett

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 18, at Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, 950 Santa Cruz Ave. in Menlo Park, for Mary Ruth Berrett of Menlo Park, who died at home Aug. 29 after a battle against cancer. She was 87.

Ms. Berrett was born in Santa Cruz and graduated from the College of San Mateo. She met Stanford law student John Richard "Jack" Berrett while living in Palo Alto and they were married

in 1948. After living in Sacramento for a short time, they moved to Menlo Park.

For many years, Ms. Berrett volunteered at resale shops, including the Menerton Shop (where she was shop manager), Treasures, and the Bargain Box. She was a member of the Menertons and the Atherlons and cherished the many friends she met through these organizations, say family members. She enjoyed travel, reading,

music, and gardening, and took Jazzercise classes for more than 30 years.

She is survived by her children, Judith of Bellevue, Washington, and Richard of Menlo Park. Her husband, Jack, died in 2004.

Remembrances may be made to Pathways Hospice, 585 N. Mary Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94085.



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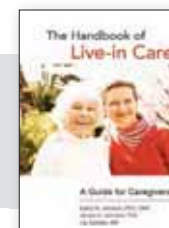
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Paul Scribner DeCarli

1930-August 4, 2013

Growing up on the DeCarli dairy farm in the delta near Stockton, Paul began his studies at Stanford in 1948. He served with the US Army from 1952 to 1954, returned to Stanford, and finished his B.Sc in Materials Science in 1956.

Paul worked on shock effects in materials at the Stanford Research Institute, now known as SRI International. He and his colleagues were the first to use shock to form amorphous quartz, and to synthesize diamond, maskelynite and stishovite; he and coauthors were the first to experimentally demonstrate the shock origin of melt veins in meteorites and the entrapment of noble gasses in shocked meteorites. When Paul retired, he turned his attention to meteoritics and planetary science.

Paul the bassoonist and his wife Anne the oboist played woodwind chamber music with friends in their home weekly for most of the 53 years of their marriage; in recent years Paul also played in the South Bay Community Orchestra.

Paul is survived by his wife Anne, son John and daughter-in-law Rhea, daughter Elizabeth and son-in-law Thomas Quirk; sisters Madeleine Murphy and Elisabeth Baker; brothers Peter and Ralph; and many dear cousins, nephews and nieces, and grandnephews and grandnieces.

PAID OBITUARY

Shirley Rosenberg

Sept. 8, 1933-Aug. 23, 2013

Shirley Rosenberg, beloved wife, mother, grandmother, sister and friend, passed away on August 23, 2013. Shirley was born in Whittier to Donald Strahl and Louise Hodgins Strahl on September 8, 1933, lived her early years in Santa Monica and Gilroy, and a resident for over 50 years of Ladera, Portola Valley. She graduated from San Jose State University in 1954, was a member of Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority, and the 1954 sweetheart of Sigma Chi. She was a social worker with the Red Cross, and met her future husband, Dr. Saul A Rosenberg, when both were stationed at the U.S. Naval Hospital, Corona, Ca. They married in San Francisco in 1956, and had two children, Anne and David.

Shirley truly devoted her life to her husband and children and passionately loved her three grandchildren, Zachary, Chloe and Sloan. She spent many happy days teaching Zachary how to fly fish at her beloved Lake Almanor and although she didn't have enough time with her twin grand daughters, she did show them how to make the perfect Thanksgiving stuffing, when they were just two years old.

Shirley was a beautiful, elegant, and gracious woman who had a gentle spirit and special creative talents that touched many. She was an exceptional cook and baker and ran a catering business out of her home for many years, turning out exquisite and delicious cakes, pies, tarts and cookies. Anyone who knew Shirley's baking will be forever spoiled as her treats rivaled and most often were better than even the finest bakeries. Her desserts were the highlight of many a wedding, engagement and birthday party, each one created with exceptional detail and love. She also loved to garden, golf, and fly fish and did so happily with her many dear "girl friends". As one of those friends said, "Shirley was definitely a woman among women, was loved and admired by all her knew her and will be dearly missed".

Shirley is survived by her loving husband, Saul, two children, Anne (Greg) and David (Kritina), three beautiful grand children, Zachary, Chloe and Sloan, and sisters, Ona Driscoll and Susan Filice. She is preceded in death by her parents, Donald and Louise Strahl, and sisters, Linda and Christine. A small, private celebration will be held at a future date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the charity of your choice or to the Henry's Fork Foundation in Ashton, Idaho.

PAID OBITUARY

New law protects mountain lions

Animal-control authorities now have a mandate to explore options other than lethal when dealing with mountain lions that visit residential areas but behave in non-threatening ways.

In signing a bill by state Senator Jerry Hill, D-San Mateo, Gov. Jerry Brown on Sept. 6 expanded the choices available to authorities from the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) and its partners, including the Peninsula Humane

Society, veterinarians, zoos, colleges, universities and nonprofit organizations with the expertise to assist with mountain lion incidents.

Authorities must use non-lethal procedures — including capture, pursuit, anesthetizing, marking, transporting, hazing, relocating, rehabilitating and/or providing veterinary care — in resolving situations in which lions are not behaving aggressively and are not presenting

an imminent threat to public health or safety, according to a statement from Sen. Hill's office.

Assemblymen Rich Gordon, D-Menlo Park, and Kevin Mullin, D-South San Francisco, co-authored the bill.

The Peninsula Humane Society rescued 1,450 wild animals in San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties over the previous 12 months, the statement says.

■ POLICE CALLS

PORTOLA VALLEY

Auto burglary report: Thieves using a pry bar broke windows, reached in, and stole items from inside three vehicles parked in the vicinity of the Alpine Inn at 3915 Alpine Road, Aug. 31.

ATHERTON

Theft report: While school was in session, someone stole a \$519 bronze Hardrock Sport bicycle that had been locked to a street sign on the shoulder of Oak Grove Avenue near the faculty entrance to Menlo-Atherton High School at 555 Middlefield Road, Sept. 4.

MENLO PARK

Residential burglary reports:

■ Police are looking for a clean-shaven white man between 30 and 40 years old in connection with the discovery outside an El Camino Real office building of several items that had been inside the building. Landscapers found the hidden items — ceramic tiles, a plaque, a framed photograph and an engraved metal bowl — and a surveillance camera showed someone matching the description above riding up to the building in the 1700 block of El Camino Real and entering through an open garage door. The suspect wore blue-gray shorts, beige boots or high-top sneakers,

a black T-shirt with Puma logos on the front and back, and a light-colored baseball cap with an unknown logo on it, Sept. 5.

■ A resident of Woodland Avenue came home to find that a side window to the house had been forced open and the interior of the house ransacked. No word yet on whether anything is missing, Sept. 4.

Auto burglary report: Burglars hit three vehicles parked on Stanford Avenue for losses estimated at \$1,245, including a GPS device, two pairs of sunglasses, sunglasses clips, a wallet and the faceplate of a car stereo. Fremont police had made an arrest and discovered pieces of property inside the suspect's vehicle that included at least one said to be missing from an unlocked vehicle on Stanford Avenue, which then led Menlo Park police to the other two incidents, Aug. 30.

Theft reports:

■ Two bikes left unlocked by an apartment stairway on San Antonio Street are missing for a total loss estimated at \$1,630, Sept. 4.

■ Someone stole a \$475 bicycle locked to a sign pole in the 600 block of Santa Cruz Avenue, Aug. 30.

■ The metal box used to collect entry fees from visitors to Flood (county) Park

on Bay Road is missing \$224, Aug. 31.

■ An employee of Cardiokinetics, Inc. on Hamilton Avenue reported the theft of her handbag from inside a drawer in her desk, Sept. 3.

■ A woman fled with a \$4.99 loaf of raisin bread from Safeway supermarket on Sharon Park Drive, Sept. 2.

■ The owner of a cell phone believed to have been stolen during a party on Carlton Avenue later tracked the phone to another location in Menlo Park, Sept. 4.

■ Someone stole a bag containing notary equipment from an unlocked vehicle parked in the 1800 block of El Camino Real, Sept. 4.

Tow request report: A black 2008 Dodge Charger was towed from Arnold Way, a residential area, after the car's alarm went off consistently and repeatedly for more than 20 minutes, Aug. 31.

Fraud report: Someone cashed a \$530 check stolen from the mailbox of a resident of Lorelei Lane, Sept. 2.

Trespassing report: A neighbor of Tarlton Properties on O'Brien Drive trimmed some bushes on the Tarlton property without authorization. After meeting with a police officer, both parties came to an understanding about the pruning of trees on each other's property without permission, Sept. 3.

Glenn E. Buzza

April 8, 1925 – August 27, 2013

Glenn, "Buzz," Buzza, 88, died on August 27, 2013, slipping into a "peaceful restful sleep." His final days were spent as his entire life, surrounded by those he loved.

Buzza was born in San Antonio, Texas, to A.W. and Lillian Buzza. The family grew to include an older sister, Elaine, deceased, and younger brother Russell. "Now you're railroad-ing!" Living out his youth in Los Angeles he established lifelong friendships and an impeccable work ethic.

In 1943 with "fire in the paint locker," he joined the Navy. "Not to worry," he did not go to war, instead he put on a baker's hat. War over, he ventured to Yosemite where he worked at the Ahwahnee Hotel and learned to ski at Badger Pass.

Moving on, he "got the show on the road" and enrolled in San Jose State College where he met Barbara Soldavini. After graduating,

with "all his ducks in a row," Buzz went to work for Varian Associates in Palo Alto for thirty-six years. "Hope to spit in your mess kit," Buzz and Barbara were married in 1954. This wannabe Italian and his "bride" raised their two children, John and Christi, in Ladera.

"Better than ever," he endeared himself with his expressions as he led a rich and varied life. His passions were skiing, fishing, scuba diving, biking and sailing. And of course, the Giants! "Hit the ball, Willy!"

Barbara, John and Christi with their families would like to invite family and friends to a Celebration of Life on Saturday, September 21, 2013 at Allied Arts Guild's "Sunset Room," in Menlo Park from 2-5 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests contributions in Buzz's memory be made to Allied Arts Guild or the charity of choice.



PAID OBITUARY

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EDITOR & PUBLISHER

Tom Gibboney (223-6507)

NEWSROOM

Managing Editor

Richard Hine (223-6525)

News Editor

Renee Batti (223-6582)

Lifestyles Editor

Jane Knoerle (223-6531)

Staff Writers

Dave Boyce (223-6527),
Sandy Brundage (223-6529)

Contributors

Marjorie Mader, Barbara Wood, Kate Daly

Special Sections Editor

Carol Blitzer

Photographer Michelle Le (223-6530)

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Design Director

Shannon Corey (223-6560)

Assistant Design Director Lili Cao

Designers Linda Atilano, Rosanna Leung,
Paul Llewellyn, Scott Peterson,
Kameron Sawyer

ADVERTISING

Vice President Sales and Marketing

Tom Zahralis (223-6570)

Display Advertising Sales

Wendy Suzuki (223-6569)

Real Estate Manager

Neal Fine (223-6583)

Real Estate & Advertising Coordinator

Diane Martin (223-6584)

Legal Advertising

Alicia Santillan (223-6578)

Published every Wednesday at

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

Newsroom: (650) 223-6525

Newsroom Fax: (650) 223-7525

Advertising: (650) 854-2626

Advertising Fax: (650) 223-7570

Email news and photos with captions to:

Editor@AlmanacNews.com

Email letters to:

letters@AlmanacNews.com

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Viewpoint

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

Menlo election districts deserve a look

Is the largely minority community of Belle Haven in eastern Menlo Park represented fairly by a city council that is elected at large and has not included a Belle Haven resident since Billy Ray White served and was mayor about 25 years ago?

Although a good case can be made that Belle Haven has hardly been shortchanged when it comes to city spending, the neighborhood has not had a locally elected council member to advocate on its behalf for many years.

Forming districts to elect Menlo Park City Council members could change that. The idea was kicked around for a few minutes last month while the council was discussing the results of the recently completed Belle Haven visioning process. Consultants reported that a survey of residents found that some community members want to have a Belle Haven seat on the council. During the November election Belle Haven resident Carolyn Clarke ran for a council seat, but she was solidly defeated by Sharon Heights resident Catherine Carlton and Ray Mueller, who lives on Santa Cruz Avenue.

The issue of minority representation was front and center in the November decision by San Mateo County voters; they approved Measure B, which finally throws out the at-large process that has been used for years to elect the five supervisors. Supervisors have always had to live in the district they represent, and now, with the new law, residents will be able to vote only for the supervisor running in their own district. It is a huge change but a major step toward giving voters an opportunity to elect the supervisor who will represent their own district. Now county voters will see more locally oriented campaigns, and candidates will find it less expensive and more convenient to campaign in a much smaller area.

The at-large elections for Menlo Park City Council could be

challenged for the same reason — that minority residents are unable to elect a candidate who could represent them on the council. Currently, all council members except Mayor Peter Ohtaki are white, and all five live west of Highway 101.

During the Belle Haven discussion, council member Mueller mused that one way to get the benefit of both at-large and geographical election districts would be to use a hybrid system, with three members elected by district and two at large.

“People would run based on the strength of their relationship with their neighbors and community. There would never be an area that would somehow be able to say, our voice isn’t included,” Mr. Mueller said.

It is not difficult to see how district elections would bring city government much closer to constituents, and not only in Belle Haven. The Willows, west Menlo Park and

Sharon Heights all have their issues and sometimes they can be overlooked by council members who are more focused on the big picture. And as Mr. Mueller said, “campaigning in a district rather than at-large “empowers people to run. That makes it attainable. It’s a lot less expensive,” he said.

This concept deserves more study. The council should appoint a subcommittee to take a serious look at the pros and cons of district council elections. City Attorney Bill McClure said a district election plan would have to be approved by voters.

In our view, district elections would sharpen interest in all neighborhoods about the direction of the city. More candidates would emerge who otherwise would not be electable in outlying districts. And if a Belle Haven district were created, it would almost guarantee that a person from that community would become a member of the council.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

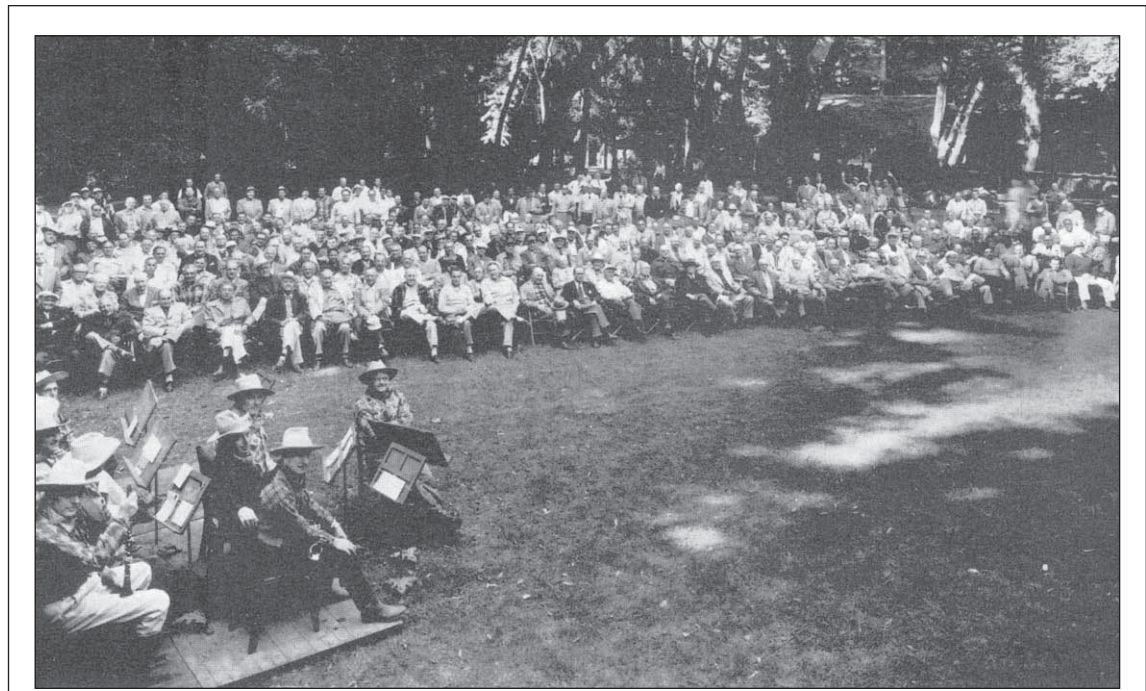
Council members, listen to your constituents

Editor:

So where are we now? Almost a year has passed since Stanford’s first proposal for the eight-plus-acre property at 500 El Camino Real and reality has set in along with suspicion and fear. Yes, there have been improvements made to Stanford’s plan with the elimination of medical offices but overall, the heavy lifting has been done by the residents, the very people who voted for our current council.

What could have been different? In January of this year when emotions were running high in the Allied Arts neighborhood, the council members who voted to approve the specific plan in June 2012 could have stepped forward and shown their humanity. Council members Peter Ohtaki, now mayor, Kirsten Keith and Rich Cline voted on June 5, 2012, to review the specific plan in one year.

Mr. Cline used his common sense and admitted right fast that Stanford’s proposal was not even close to his expectations



Woodside History Committee

Our Regional Heritage

Former members of San Francisco’s Bohemian Club and others formed a private male-only club called The Family. In 1909 the club established a rustic retreat with camp facilities near Searsville Lake in Woodside. This 1954 photo shows members and their families attending a play at the camp.

and he encouraged a review of the specific plan. Unfortunately, he did not get the enthusiastic support from his colleagues. Instead, the residents experienced a push-back that included delay, argument and obfusca-

tion. The subcommittee process turned out to be unilateral and top-down with residents being shut out of all conversations with Stanford. One can only wonder the number.

What is the damage? Today

the number of disappointed and angry residents has grown and the mistrust is deep. This could have been avoided and may now hamper the pending specific plan

Continued on next page

LETTERS

Our readers write

Continued from previous page

revision process at the Planning Commission and the council. What should have been promised in January and begun in June was a process that could have stressed fairness and mutual respect. I've lived here long enough to know that we now have an environment that can produce a political sea change. It's happened before and this issue is fraught with frustration.

What is the solution? The council needs to show grace and gratitude to the hundreds of residents who have spoken and written to them. These are their constituents, the people who voted them onto the seats they hold. Work with them, listen to their ideas and include them in decisions that will affect their lives.

*Brielle Johnck,
former Environmental
Commissioner
Central Avenue, Menlo Park*

Define objectives before deciding on Syrian attack

Editor:
On Syria, there are two facts.

1) It is a civil war, not unlike civil wars that occur from time to time across the world. 2) Chemical weapons are used in contravention of the Geneva Protocol. The same could be said about the Congo, where a simmering civil war has claimed more lives and, against multiple international treaties, child soldiers are deployed and women raped.

Intervention in Syria, but not the Congo, will be because of our national interest. Let's be honest and define what those interests are and what path to best achieve them. What are our objectives? An immediate cease-fire enforced from the air? Securing or neutralizing the stockpiles of chemical weapons? Ousting the Assads to exile in Switzerland or trials at The Hague? Supporting a representative government that recognizes Israel's right to exist and stay out of Lebanese politics? Sending a strong message to Iran?

We have options, none of them good, cheap, or risk-free. We should listen to the president as he makes his case and presents his plan. But if we are still not sure, if we are not united in our purpose, don't go.

*George Yang
Madera Avenue, Menlo Park*

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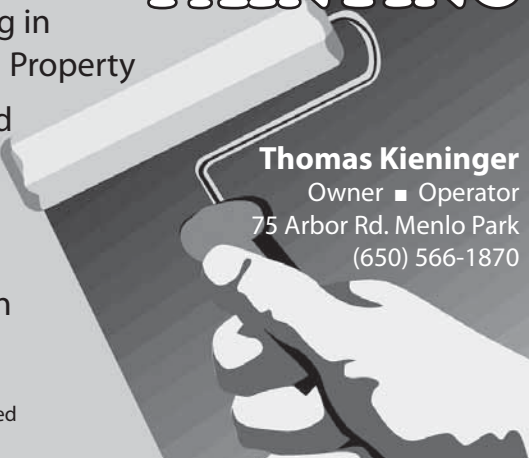
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