

# The Almanac

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

MARCH 26, 2014 | VOL. 49 NO. 29



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Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

A variety of stray and abandoned dogs have a temporary home at the Peninsula Humane Society's holding facility in San Mateo.

## New holding facility for animals?

By Dave Boyce  
Almanac Staff Writer

Representatives from the San Mateo County Environmental Health Department have been making the rounds of city and town council meetings, letting council members know of plans to tear down the 60-year-old animal-holding facility on Airport Boulevard in San Mateo and build a new one.

The representatives' message: Annual expenses for animal control services will go up as cities and towns share lease payments for a new, smaller and updated holding facility at an estimated cost of between \$15 million and \$20 million.

The county has not yet determined a funding source for the construction, health department spokeswoman Robyn Thaw said. The Board of Supervisors will address that issue once the councils have signed on to the memo of agreement — as Woodside, Portola Valley and Atherton have done.

The county owns the land, which it leases for \$1 a year to the Peninsula Humane Society/SPCA, which owns the cur-

rent facility. The facility "has no monetary value," Ms. Thaw said; the county will own the new building. Groundbreaking is planned for July. Construction would take between 12 and 18 months, according to staff reports.

Councils have little room to maneuver in terms of costs. The Humane Society is the only ani-

**With 45,000 animal visits per year, the existing facility gets much wear and tear.**

mal-control services provider in the county.

The new facility is not meant for animals eligible for adoption. They are located two miles away at 1450 Rollins Road in Burlingame. The animals in the San Mateo shelter often look less than happy in photos. Asked to comment, Humane Society spokesman Scott Delucchi replied: "You see dogs in a park with green all around them, they're going to look better than

in a cage."

The intake and holding facility is the place to turn to when looking for a lost pet or surrendering an animal that can no longer be cared for. There are cages, a spay-neuter-vaccination clinic, and a squad room for animal control officers, Mr. Delucchi said. Medical facilities are also available, but mainly to care for animals injured by vehicles. Euthanasia procedures also take place there. It is not a hospital.

With 45,000 animal visits per year, the facility gets more wear and tear than an ordinary building, Mr. Delucchi said. Dogs have been chewing what's chewable for decades. Proper maintenance and repairs would run \$50,000 a year, according to staff reports. It's noisy in the way a jail is noisy, and not well ventilated.

"Animals that are stressed are more likely to get sick," Mr. Delucchi said. The improvements will include surfaces more comfortable for animals, improved heating and air conditioning, and better noise insulation, he said.

See **ANIMAL SHELTER**, page 6

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# Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



HMC Architects

The master plan calls for a two-story administration building, which will include the police station, a newly constructed library, and a town green between the two structures.

## Plans rev up for new \$32 million Town Center

By Renee Batti  
Almanac News Editor

Will Atherton residents be willing to contribute nearly \$20 million toward a new Town Center to replace the decrepit buildings that now house town services, the police department and the library? Community leaders

helping to plan the center — which is projected to cost close to \$32 million — intend to find out as the plan moves into its design phase.

The City Council on March 19 endorsed the project's master plan, crafted over several years of advisory committee meetings and a series of neighborhood meetings.

### ■ AHERTON

The plan calls for a complete redesign of the existing Town Center area bounded by Fair Oaks Lane, Ashfield Road, Maple Street and the train tracks. It includes a 25,500-square-foot, two-story administration building, more than half of which will

house the police department; a 9,000-square-foot library; 37,000 square feet of parking areas; and a large open-space "town green" between the administration building and the library.

The estimated project cost is nearly \$31.8 million: about \$21.9 million for the administration building and about \$9.8 million for the library. Those

figures include costs that cover associated elements such as required environmental studies, infrastructure, and common space throughout the center.

Special funds will be tapped to pay for \$12 million of those costs: \$9.8 million in the library fund, which is expected to have

See TOWN CENTER, page 8

## Windmill School signs contract to buy former nursery site

By Dave Boyce  
Almanac Staff Writer

A preschool appears to once again be in the future of the 1.68 acres at 900 Portola Road. The Windmill School, a private nonprofit preschool with a 50-year presence in rented locations in Portola Valley, announced on March 20 that it is a party to a contract to buy the former plant nursery.

"After more than a decade of efforts across numerous alumni and volunteers, I am delighted to announce that Windmill is under contract to secure a long-term home for this vital community asset," Windmill board President Liz Poggi said in a statement. "... Windmill is one of the community's oldest institutions and has played a key role in building the strong foundations, friendships and

spirit of volunteerism that (have) made Portola Valley and its surrounding community such a wonderful place to raise a family."

Plans include enrichment courses for children in preschool and elementary school in the arts, language, reading and science, as well as a barn with live animals and a wooded amphitheater, the statement says.

The site, located between Our Lady of the Wayside Church and the Village Square shopping center, was at the center of a controversy in 2012 when the Town Council was in a contract and came close to buying it as a potential location for small

See WINDMILL SCHOOL, page 8

## Golf club well proposal resurfaces on March 26 commission agenda

By Sandy Brundage  
Almanac Staff Writer

Two years after the idea first came before Menlo Park's environmental quality commissioners, the panel will review a proposal to allow a private club to drill an irrigation well in a city park on Wednesday, March 26.

The Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club wants to build the well to draw from a public aquifer to water its golf course. The club now uses more than 60 million gallons of potable water per year, purchased from the Menlo Park Municipal Water District. The district in turn pulls all of its supply from the Hetch Hetchy reservoir.

Menlo Park may find the idea appealing because, according

### ■ MENLO PARK

Environmental Quality Commission takes another look at Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club request to dig irrigation well in city park

to city staff, the well could also irrigate Nealon, Jack Lyle, and Sharon parks, along with La Entrada School, thereby reducing the city's demand for Hetch Hetchy water by 13 million gallons a year and saving approximately \$68,000 a year. In addition, the club has offered to pay for construction

of the well, with an estimated price of \$4 million, as well as for ongoing operations and maintenance costs.

"As the state continues to experience growth, more pressure may be placed on the Hetch Hetchy water system, and by using a diverse portfolio of water sources, the city can alleviate regional pressure while still securing adequate water supplies for residents and businesses," staff wrote in its report to the commission.

But residents belonging to a group called "Nealon Neighbors" don't see any appeal at all. In a letter sent last fall, the group asked the city to "shut down this project once and for all." While the well clearly

See GOLF CLUB WELL, page 8

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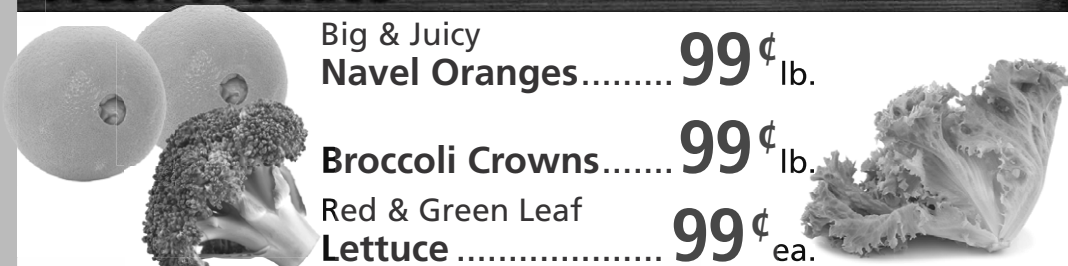
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## Atherton voters to choose next council member

By Renee Batti

Almanac News Editor

Atherton City Council members will divvy up the duties of their former colleague Jim Dobbie until December rather than appoint a new member to serve out Mr. Dobbie's term, they decided on March 19.

Mr. Dobbie, whose term was to end in December, resigned from the council earlier this month due to poor health.

Council members considered alternatives that included appointing a new member that night, opening an application period for residents interested in serving on the council through November, or leaving the post vacant until a successful candidate for the seat in the Nov. 3 election joins the council in early December.

After Mr. Dobbie resigned on March 4, town staff contacted residents who applied for a vacancy last year resulting from Jerry Carlson's resignation. Seven candidates were considered for appointment to that seat, but the council was unable to choose.

City Manager George Rodericks said five of the applicants indicated they were still interested: Diane Beymer-Sandhu, Greg Conlon, Michael Lempres, John Ruggeiro, and Jo-Ann Sokolov.

Rick DeGolia, another applicant for Mr. Carlson's seat, ran successfully for the post in November. A seventh candidate, Michael Stogner, is now a permanent resident of San Carlos.

When the agenda item came up last week, Mr. Ruggeiro was the first to address the council, saying he really was no longer interested in the position, and

that council members should consider not appointing anyone to avoid giving that person "a leg up" as an incumbent in the November election.

But, he suggested, if council members were really determined to appoint someone, they should appoint Mr. Conlon, who ran for a council seat twice.

Alternatively, he said, they could appoint him, and he would promise not to run for the seat in November.

Council members agreed that appointing a new member would give that person an advantage at the ballot box, which they were reluctant to do. They also agreed that, even if they wanted to fill the seat before the election, it would be a bad idea to choose that night from among the applicants for Mr. Carlson's seat without opening the application process for people who might now be interested in an appointment. "It would be unfair to do that," Councilman Bill Widmer said.

Councilwoman Elizabeth Lewis said she was inclined to leave the seat vacant and, on hindsight, was "glad we didn't appoint (anyone) last year" to fill Mr. Carlson's seat. That decision led to an election in November with three candidates, and "it got people involved," she said. An election promotes involvement by "people who really do want to serve and not just get an easy appointment," she said.

Mr. Dobbie, 83, served on the council for about six years before resigning. His wife, Pat, told the Almanac that her husband has for the last few months battled a strange respiratory condition, and despite undergoing numerous tests by "outstanding" doctors, the cause remains a mystery. ■

## ANIMAL SHELTER

continued from page 3

### Costs to towns

The average annual leasing cost for each city or town will be prorated according to the demand for animal control services, as is done to determine the overall annual fee for each city or town. The prorated figures below are estimates based on three-year averages and city/town populations.

Here are the local allocations:

■ Portola Valley allocated \$28,712 for animal control services in 2013-14 and will add between \$3,000 and \$4,000 more in lease payments.

■ Atherton allocated \$52,180 for control services and will add between \$4,300 and \$5,750.

■ Menlo Park allocated \$255,550 for services and would add between \$23,750 and \$31,770. The City Council is expected to vote on this matter soon.

■ Woodside allocated \$64,000 and will add between \$9,800 and \$13,100.

Shelter services take up about 70 percent of the Peninsula Humane Society's operating budget, and about 27 percent go toward services in the field, including breaking up animal fights, dealing with biting animals and capturing animals at large, Mr. Delucchi said. ■

# DA indicts 16 alleged gang members

■ Arrests include murder, attempted murder suspects.

by Sue Dremann

Palo Alto Weekly

Sixteen alleged members of three East Palo Alto gangs have been arrested for staging a murderous war that resulted in multiple killings, attempted murders, witness dissuasion, drugs, guns and attempted robbery, San Mateo County District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe announced on March 24.

The alleged gang members are being blamed for a string of violent crimes that stretched from East Palo Alto to San Francisco from September 2012 through December 2013. East Palo Alto's Sac Street and DaVill street gangs allegedly unified against the Taliban, a Menlo Park and East Palo Alto gang, Mr. Wagstaffe said.

The 16 people arrested include one Menlo Park resident, a Palo Alto woman, 11 East Palo Alto residents, two Hayward residents and one from Newark.

The investigation stemmed primarily from five murders and attempted murders, including the Sept. 30, 2012, midday attempted murder of Chris Baker on U.S. 101 in Belmont; the 2012 killing of Stoney Gibson in San Francisco; the 2013 killings of Jonathan Alcazar and Lamont Coleman in East Palo Alto; and the 2013 attempted robbery at Plaza Jewelers in Redwood City.

"The city of East Palo Alto for 20 years has had a serious vio-

lence problem," Mr. Wagstaffe said. Although crime has been significantly reduced, residents still live with gang violence and drug trafficking, he said.

Dubbed Operation Sunny Day after the code the persons arrested allegedly used to signify when a murder was successful, the 18-month-long investigation is the most massive case prosecuted by the DA's office in its history, Mr. Wagstaffe said. Investigators served 80 search warrants, used GPS, social media, tapped phones and cell phones, and did "good, old-fashioned hard work and legwork," he said.

The grand jury investigation began in early January and took two months. It is the county's longest, he added. Its members handed down three indictments, including for four separate murders, two attempted murders and "countless other crimes," he said.

All 16 people are in custody, 11 in San Mateo County jail and five others in other jurisdictions. Nine are charged with capital murder with special circumstances: East Palo Alto residents Raymond Bradford, 28 (two counts); Roberto Bustos-Montes, 24 (two counts); Emmanuel Hyland, 25 (three counts); Tyrone Love-Lopez, 21 (two counts); Eric Valencia Vargas, 20 (one count); Marvin Jake Ware, 26 (one count); Miguel Angel Rivera Jr., 23 (one count); Palo Alto resident Nina

Mehrnoosh Cragg, 23 (one count); and Menlo Park resident Jerry Coneal III, 19 (one count).

Assistant District Attorney Karen Guidotti, who spearheaded the investigation, said the warfare was about control among the gangs. "It's a question of control, power and respect. One gang member slights another by offending someone, and it becomes a cycle of retaliation," she said.

Deputy district attorneys Jamie Draper and Jordan Boyd were singled out for their work as lead investigators. East Palo Alto Criminal Investigator Sgt. Jeff Liu was also credited with major contributions by that city's interim police Chief Lee Violet.

In 2013, East Palo Alto had eight homicides, Chief Violet said. "Too many young men have died violently, causing loved ones to grieve. ... Our work will not be done until there are zero homicides and our community is safe again," he said.

Several state, local, county and federal law-enforcement agencies worked with the DA's Bureau of Investigations, including Mountain View, Belmont, East Palo Alto and Milpitas police, the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office, the federal Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Marshals Office and the U.S. Department of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. ■

## Man robbed for change in Menlo Park

A man walking from the Safeway on El Camino Real during the pre-dawn hours of March 18 reported that he'd been hit and robbed. The suspect asked for change, then struck the 59-year-old victim in the head.

When the victim fell down, the suspect rifled through his pockets and then fled with his wallet, the victim told Menlo Park police. He was treated at Stanford Hospital for non-life-threatening injuries. The only item of value lost was the wallet itself, estimated to be worth \$25.

### ■ MENLO BRIEFS

He described the assailant as a Somali or Ethiopian man wearing a black hoodie, approximately 5 feet 6 inches tall and 125 pounds.

### Autism center gala raises more than \$50,000

The seventh annual Starry Starry Night gala staged by the Morgan Autism Center surpassed its goal to raise \$50,000 and nearly doubled the amount raised last year, according to a

press release.

The event, held on March 1 at the Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club in Menlo Park, welcomed about 320 guests who bid on artwork and other items during a silent auction to raise funds to support the center's programs.

During the gala, Ride a Wave founders Danny and Heather Cortazzo were honored with an award for outstanding leadership for their nonprofit's service in providing tandem surfing, kayaking and boogie-boarding activities to people with disabilities since 1998.

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



### Second Home Market

**Dear Monica: I am thinking of buying a second home in order for my family to enjoy a place for rest and recreation, away from our main residence. What is the second home market like and is this a good time to buy? Tim D.**

Dear Tim: The second home market is rebounding well after a significant downturn in 2008-2011. Bay Area residents wanting a vacation home have excellent choices all within a reasonable distance. One can look to the coast, the wine country, and the Sierra, for the vacation home that suits one's style. There is also Hawaii, Mexico and other more distant destinations that attract some buyers. A vacation home is a great place to spend recreational time with

family and friends, away from one's everyday pattern of work and school. It can also be a place where couples move when they retire and it's easy to make the transition if they have already spent vacations there.

The second home market is more vulnerable to downturns in the economy and you should be aware of this before you buy. If the economy is in recession, a second home becomes a luxury that some cannot afford and it is not easy to sell during these times. You should spend time in a few of the best destinations and decide which affords the setting and activities you like most. There are good properties available now and interest rates are still excellent. It is a good time to buy.

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## GOLF CLUB WELL

continued from page 5

benefits the country club, they said, how does it help the public?

The group fears the depletion of a natural resource, and opposes the potential construction of a well in Nealon Park, which does not allow private uses without conditional permits. Members also question whether the plan really reduces water use in the first place, or merely transfers the source.

“Not one drop of water is saved,” said Nealon Neighbors organizer Elizabeth Houck.

Both the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Environmental Quality Commission have expressed reservations in the past about the potential public-private partnership.

In 2012, environmental quality commissioners unanimously recommended not going for-

ward with any specific proposals regarding ground water use, including cost, siting, and other considerations, until developing a plan for using the city's graywater, and clarifying long-term groundwater rights with the county.

As of now, the graywater plan and water rights issues remain unresolved. San Mateo County issues permits to drill wells, but maintains no oversight of regional groundwater management beyond that.

Ultimately the decision lies in the hands of the City Council, which will make the final call on whether to pursue the golf club partnership.

The Environmental Quality Commission meeting on March 26 starts at 6:30 p.m. in the council conference room, located in the Civic Center at 701 Laurel St.

Go to [tinyurl.com/lemguj2](http://tinyurl.com/lemguj2) to review the agenda and associated staff reports. ■

## TOWN CENTER

continued from page 5

accumulated that amount by the time construction is in progress; and \$2.2 million in building department reserves. Money in those funds must be spent on projects related to those services.

The town will seek private contributions for the remaining funds.

Members of a resident advisory committee appointed by the City Council last year, the Civic Center Advisory Committee (CCAC), are “comfortable with a fundraising range of \$20 (million) to \$25 million,” according to a report from City Manager George Rodericks. “This amount is comparable to similar, privately funded civic projects in the area,” he wrote.

One such project was successfully completed in 2008 in Portola Valley. Some \$17 million in private funds were raised for the \$20 million Town Center project.

Atherton appointed a small citizens' task force several years ago to begin looking into a

Town Center renovation plan. Councilwoman Elizabeth Lewis, who led the task force, said in 2010 that members believed residents would be willing to open their wallets to cover most of the costs. “I think if Portola Valley can do it, so can Atherton,” she said.

Town and library services are now delivered out of cramped quarters that, in some cases, don't meet seismic standards and need major upgrades to meet code standards. The planning and building divisions have operated since the 1990s out of “temporary” quarters — portable buildings near the administration building and police station.

Voters in 2012 approved Measure L, which endorsed the building of a new Town Center, now being referred to as a civic center, using primarily private funds.

In addition to approving the civic center master plan and cost estimates, the council also authorized the city manager to initiate an environmental review process, and begin preparations for the project's design phase. ■



Photo by Ashley Pogue

Valley Presbyterian Church members filled boxes with food, and displayed them in the church sanctuary before they were distributed to undernourished people.

## Volunteer, and put aside stress

By Kelly Brieger of Menlo Park, member, Valley Presbyterian Church

Valley Presbyterian Church, the cool “wedding church” nestled in the redwoods in Portola Valley, is a community of question-askers and good people who find large and small ways to do pretty amazing things.

My kids, now teenagers, were both baptized at VPC; our family joined the church in 1997 and it feels like home. The church holds a special place in my heart, not only because of its beautiful surroundings, but because of its community.

The staff — dedicated people who always have their arms open — and the loving community (the folks who show up to worship and for events and giving opportunities) is what makes up a church.

From March 30 through April 6, VPC will hold its annual Service Week, offering many opportunities to serve local communities, including with Habitat for Humanity

### ■ MY TAKE

and Stop Hunger Now.

Come help package meals, box groceries, plant vegetable gardens, give blood, donate household items, and much more, all while connecting with old friends and meeting new ones who share a desire to help others. The church website has a list of the dozens of opportunities to choose from.

When I show up to lend a hand, I experience something new. Of course, helping others is important. But here's what happens, at least for me: I have fun. I meet new people. I laugh a lot.

But the coolest thing that happens is that I feel as if the clock ceases to exist for a moment, and I leave this stressful world for a little while, getting off the grid and experiencing something new.

Last year, I participated in Stop Hunger Now — measur-

ing, weighing, and bagging rice. Not only was it helpful, but it was fun. All of us laughed as we raced to fill as many bags as we could in a few hours.

Before committing to help at a Habitat for Humanity build (I am not handy), I thought, there is no way I can add much value. Actually, just showing up made it possible for me to be helpful, learn something new, enjoy the sunshine, meet new people, hang with old friends, and see, firsthand, what it really means to build a home for a family in need.

I encourage you to sign up for just one thing, anything, during VPC's annual Service Week. I guarantee you will become a very important member of a team, but you will also learn, laugh and love.

Check it out on [valleypreschurch.org](http://valleypreschurch.org) or call Mary Jo Alderson at 851-9661, or send an email to [maryjo.alderson@valleypreschurch.com](mailto:maryjo.alderson@valleypreschurch.com).

## WINDMILL SCHOOL

continued from page 5

homes affordable to people of moderate incomes.

### On again, off again

This is the third bite at this apple for Windmill. According to accounts by the property's owners, the school was days away from a purchase in March 2011 when it learned of the need for a zoning change, an unwelcome surprise to school officials and donors. The school asked

for and got a six-month extension, but in September 2011 came news of soil contamination, and the deal fell apart.

The town has twice made bid: a verbal offer in 2009 that was rejected by owners John and Karin Wu; and an offer in 2012 to the new owners, Geoff and Colleen Tate, well after Windmill's deal fell through.

Town officials have said — and the Tates have confirmed — that the town did not actively pursue a contract until Windmill had taken itself out

of the running.

The town's contract stipulated that San Mateo County environmental authorities must attest to the proper clean-up of the site's pesticide residues. The council allowed the contract to expire after county officials declared the clean-up inadequate and gave indications that a clean-up would likely be several months away.

Windmill did not respond to questions about the current state of soil contamination in time to meet the Almanac's publication deadline. ■

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Photo courtesy of Facebook

## New face of Facebook

Facebook released a fresh look at the “office in a forest” the social media company is building on Constitution Drive, within walking distance of its headquarters. Designed by world-renowned architect Frank Gehry, the new campus consists of one large, 433,555-square-foot room sandwiched between a rooftop garden and bottom-floor parking garage. The model shows the view that motorists will see as they pass the campus while driving along the Bayfront Expressway. Construction of the “west campus,” which will serve as a satellite office in Menlo Park, started in September and is expected to finish in spring 2015.

## City to hire consultant to analyze initiative

By Sandy Brundage  
Almanac Staff Writer

**I**want it to be unmerciful. I want the comparison to be unmerciful to the (specific) plan. And I want the comparison to be unmerciful to the initiative,” Menlo Park Mayor Ray Mueller said while voicing his support on March 18 for hiring an independent consultant to evaluate a proposed ballot measure that would change the city’s downtown/El Camino Real specific plan.

The council voted 5-0 to spend up to \$150,000 to hire the consultant. City Manager Alex McIntyre said to avoid perceptions of bias, staff will find someone who hasn’t worked with the city, local developers such as Stanford University and Greenheart, or other parties with a stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

“We’re going to go far afield to find people who are credentialed, qualified, who have done this kind of work but haven’t done it here,” Mr. McIntyre said.

Menlo Park’s \$1.7 million downtown/El Camino Real specific plan was approved in 2012 after five years of study and community engagement.

But after Stanford University proposed building a mixed-use complex on eight acres of empty car lots along 300 to 500

El Camino Real, community opposition arose in the form of Save Menlo, which has now notified the city of its intent to put a set of proposed changes to the specific plan before voters.

The grassroots coalition is currently trying to collect the 1,780 signatures needed by mid-July to qualify its initiative for the fall election ballot.

Save Menlo’s initiative would cap office space in any individual development at 100,000 square feet; limit total new office space in the specific plan area to 240,820 square feet; and restrict overall new, nonresidential development to 474,000 square feet within the plan’s boundaries.

The initiative would also redefine open space to mean only areas no higher than 4 feet tall. Save Menlo has stated that one of its goals is to prevent balconies from counting as open space.

In addition, voter approval would be needed to revise the ordinance or to exceed the square footage limits for office and nonresidential development.

Save Menlo member George Fisher urged the council during Tuesday night’s meeting to put the \$150,000 to better use.

“I have good news. You don’t

See **CONSULTANT**, page 17

## To sign or not to sign, that is the question

By Sandy Brundage  
Almanac Staff Writer

**A**s Menlo Park waits for a consultant to analyze an initiative to downsize the city’s downtown/El Camino Real specific plan, the group backing the measure is busy collecting the signatures needed to get it on the November ballot. The timing leaves residents facing a quandary: Should they sign now? Never? Wait and see?

Save Menlo’s initiative limits office space for any project within the specific plan boundaries to 100,000 square feet — about half of what developers like Stanford University have proposed building along El Camino Real. Total new office space would be capped at 240,820 square feet, and new nonresidential development at 474,000 square feet, among other changes. It would also require voter approval to exceed those caps.

The group needs 1,780 registered voters to sign its petition by mid-July to qualify the initiative for the ballot. Former planning commissioner Patti Fry, who co-sponsored the proposal, said the signature drive is going well, and that the group has decided not to provide a tally of its progress.

The Almanac asked several community members and officials to weigh in on signing the petition.

Some were measured in their responses.

“The initiative discussion is already helping the city to focus on large projects, their costs and benefits. Some feel the specific plan gives too much away without commensurate benefits, and that the city is losing out. The initiative is one response to that weakness, maybe not the best, but a response nonetheless,” said Planning Commission Chair John Kadwany.

Fellow commissioner Katie Ferrick said that while she

Camino, he said.

He noted that the Planning Commission and City Council already use “architectural review powers to push back on bad designs and guide developers towards good outcomes for the city.”

Likewise, Vice Mayor Catherine Carlton said she supports the specific plan process — the kind of public process the initiative bypasses — and thinks the city already has ways to make changes as needed.

“I absolutely support everyone’s right to have an initiative,” she said, pointing out ballot measures she signed on to in the past. “But this one I’m wary of. I hope everybody’s honest and provides accurate information and doesn’t twist the facts.”

Councilwoman Kirsten Keith simply thanked “the hundreds of Menlo Park residents who participated in a thorough, transparent, public, open, deliberate process for over five years to arrive at the specific plan.” Their time and energy help the city grow in a “positive, planned, thoughtful direction.”

Others were not so measured with their comments.

“Well, no,” said Planning Commissioner Henry Riggs when asked whether people should sign Save Menlo’s petition.

“If it gets the signatures, it will end up on the ballot. There will

### Menlo Park leaders share thoughts on whether residents should sign petition to get specific plan initiative on the ballot

wouldn’t sign the petition, given the great deal of thought that went into devising the specific plan, she won’t comment on what anyone else should do.

Colleague Ben Eiref recommended that “residents think hard about the roughly seven years of work and input we all as a community put into the specific plan, the dozens of outreach events, the hundreds of hours of deliberation.” Consider the full context of the plan, and the community’s broad desire to revitalize the downtown and eliminate blight along El

See **SIGN**, page 17

## M-A Robotics team finishes first at meet

Menlo-Atherton High School took home the hardware, literally, with a first-place alliance finish at the FIRST Robotics Sacramento Regional Competition held March 13-15 at UC Davis.

As part of the winning alliance, led by Spartan Robotics Team 971 of Mountain View High School and including Citrus Circuits Team 1678 of Davis, California, Menlo-Atherton's Team 766 earned a spot at the national competition to be held April 23-26 in St. Louis.

Fifty-four teams competed at the Sacramento Regional Event. This year's game, Aerial Assist, required teams to pass an inflatable exercise ball between robots and then shoot the ball into various goals and over a center truss spanning the playing field.

People can see M-A's bot in action April 3-5 at the Silicon Valley Regional competition at the Event Center at San Jose State University. Admission is free.

Go to [team766.com](http://team766.com) for more information on M-A Robotics.



**Team members**, from left, are Oliver Conn, Nico Andrighetto, Peyton Warford, Tyler Evars, Ryan Anderson, Ryan Carney, Jack Herrell, Kevin Carney, Jameson OíToole and Emmer Nichols. Coaches are Terry Warford, left, and Scott Evars.

## Junior basketball: Local team takes title

With a 42-40 victory over Los Gatos, the Redwood Chapter of the National Junior Basketball League's third- and fourth-grade boys division took the Silicon Valley All-Star Championship on March 16.

The 9- and 10-year-old members of the All-Star team reside in Woodside, Portola Valley, Atherton and Menlo Park. They beat out Palo Alto and West San Jose on March 15 to play Los Gatos in the final championship game.

Next up, the team will compete in the NJB National Championship Tournament in Anaheim March 28-30.

National Junior Basketball is a national youth league with 25,000 participants in 6 states.

## Summer hours for farmers' markets

Summer hours are on again for the weekly farmers' market in Portola Valley, and the two farmers' markets in Woodside will reopen in April.

The Portola Valley market now runs from 3 to 7 p.m. on Thursdays in the parking lot in front of the Historic Schoolhouse at 765 Portola Road.

The Wednesday market in Woodside opens April 2 and runs from 3 to 7 p.m. in the

parking lot of the Skywood Trading Post at 17285 Skyline Blvd. (just north of the intersection of Old La Honda Road and Skyline Boulevard).

Woodside's Sunday market opens April 6 and runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot of the Woodside Elementary School at 3195 Woodside Road.

Go to [tinyurl.com/mark909](http://tinyurl.com/mark909) for more information.



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# Gymnastics: Menlo Park boys compete in NorCals

By Pearce Wagner, developmental gymnastics program coordinator.

The Level 4 & 5 Menlo Park Boys Gymnastics Team competed at the Northern California State Championships in San Luis Obispo on March 8 and 9.

Representing Menlo Park Gymnastics at the competition was Noah Kim, Rowan Irvine, Ezekiel Eason and Jaden Phillips.

In the Level 5 competition, Eason took first place all around. Kim came in 11th place all around in his age group.

In the Level 4 competition,

Phillips captured fourth place all around and first place on high bar and rings. Irvine took 14th place all around in his division.

At Level 5, Kim and Eason qualified for the regional championships in Phoenix, Arizona. Eason also qualified to be on the Northern California State All Stars Team. This is the first time the Menlo Park Boys Team has qualified for the regionals.

The boys' team trains at the Arrillaga Family Gymnastics Center in Menlo Park and is coached by Cameron Matzke, Nicole Hyde and Pearce Wagner.



Ezekiel Eason on the high bars.

## ■ POLICE CALLS

This information is from the Menlo Park Police Department and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. Under the law, people charged with offenses are considered innocent unless convicted. The dates police received the report are shown.

### MENLO PARK

**Commercial burglary report:** Someone entered the office of St. Raymond Catholic Church at 1100 Santa Cruz Ave. and stole a box containing about \$2 in cash. March 17.

**Auto burglary report:** A vehicle parked on Alma Street was found with a passenger side window smashed and \$2,445 in missing possessions, including two Apple iPads, two tennis rackets, a watch, sunglasses, CDs and a gym bag containing shoes and clothing. March 20.

**Fraud report:** Someone made fake checks linked to the bank account of a Chestnut Street address and used them to withdraw about \$7,000 from the account. March 18.

#### Theft reports:

■ An unlocked vehicle parked on Partridge Avenue was robbed of a tablet computer, a baseball glove, a camera and a briefcase that contained a checkbook, for total loss of about \$1,125. March 20.

■ A man walked into the A & S Union 76 gas station at 710 Willow Road and stole 50 cigarette lighters, a total loss of \$87.50. March 18.

■ A box of collectible Crayola crayons, a \$32 value, was stolen from the front porch of a home on Oakland Avenue. March 18.

**Stolen vehicle report:** Someone stole a light blue 1991 Honda Accord from the 1000 block of Alma Avenue. March 19.

### PORTOLA VALLEY

**Residential burglary report:** No property appears to have been taken, but a residence on Sausal Drive was found with two large windows smashed and the home's interior in disorder, with drawers open and possessions strewn about. March 13.

### WOODSIDE

**Fishing without a license:** A deputy discovered a man fishing in Bear Gulch Creek. He did not have a fishing license and the creek is closed to fishing. Later, the deputy detected marijuana odors coming from inside the fisherman's vehicle. The man had a medical marijuana card, but not one issued by the state Department of Public Health. Inside the vehicle, the deputy found four "vials" of marijuana, four burned marijuana cigarettes and marijuana debris on the carpet. The deputy cited the fisherman for not carrying a fishing license and having marijuana in the vehicle. March 14.

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WITH ART; OPENING  
RECEPTION MARCH 26

## EXHIBIT OPENS *doorway to decades past*

BY RENEE BATTI *Almanac News Editor*

Ninety-five artists are represented in “85 Years, 85 Artists,” a vibrant new exhibit at Menlo College. The show is a celebration of the 85th anniversary of the college’s founding. The college, however, is 87 years old.

Contradictions? Call it artistic license. The discrepancies are easily explainable, and the 10 extra artists only add to the richness of an exhibit that takes viewers on a compelling journey through most of the 20th century — with its genocide and war, its sometimes explosive scientific advances, its moments of cultural change and political upheaval — into the present.

The college is hosting a reception to officially open the exhibit on Wednesday, March 26, from 5 to 7 p.m. in the school’s administration building.

The idea for the unusual show was hatched by the college’s Art Committee, which put out the call for artists interested in representing one year, randomly assigned, between 1927 — the year the college opened — and 2012.

Planning for the exhibit began in 2012, and the response by artists throughout the country and abroad was so great that the

committee decided to add 10 additional artists, each assigned to represent an entire decade from 1920 to 2020, according to Yasmin Lambie-Simpson, the college’s director of student affairs. Ms. Lambie-Simpson co-chairs the Art Committee with Linda Smith, associate dean of library services.

The artists are from 23 U.S. states, England, Italy, and

---

**The art ‘really talks  
about time — they’re  
not just pretty pictures.’**

YASMIN LAMBIE-SIMPSON  
ART COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR

the Netherlands. They were instructed to work in a 20-by-20-inch format, and frame their piece. Have we mentioned artistic license? The works, in fact, range in size, and in some three-dimensional cases, must be displayed on a table top.

The participants were also directed to “make a work (representing) something going on in that year — it could be a personal or a world view,” Mr. Lambie-Simpson explained. All the works are accompanied by text.

Russell Cook of Ranger, Georgia, takes a world view in his powerful, fantastical work. “Song of the South II” uses oil, wax, Chinese watercolor, walnut stain, and grass paper on a panel to depict an otherworldly red, waxen rabbit near a red chair.

Mr. Cook represents 1963, which he describes in his written statement as “turbulent and violent, a molten crucible of ideals that would cool to form our society today.” He cites the death of four black children in a Birmingham, Alabama, African-American church, and the assassination of President John Kennedy, in addition to the cultural ferment arising from the publication of Betty Friedan’s “The Feminine Mystique” and Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech.

In his statement, Mr. Cook links his artwork’s rabbit with the Uncle Remus character in the series of African-American folktales published in the 1880s, an era whose “tensions and violence manifested in private spaces as families and workplaces change” were echoed in 1963. “The character of Uncle Remus’s ... rabbit is at the end of an era, filled with beauty and violence and uncertainty,” he writes.

---

**Russell Cook** of Ranger, Georgia, uses oil, wax, Chinese watercolor, walnut stain, and grass paper on panel for his “Song of the South II.”

**'That Our Flag Was Still There,'** a mosaic by Dora Aldworth Grinnell of San Jose, represents notable events of the bicentennial year, 1976, including the first commercial Concorde flight, Jimmy Carter's defeat of incumbent Gerald Ford to become president, the Viking 1 landing on Mars, the founding of the Apple Computer company, and Hank Aaron's 755th and final home run in Milwaukee.



A more personal view of a year, 1956, is taken by Salma Arastu of Berkeley. "Sitting with Ama in the Courtyard," an acrylic, pen and ink work, recalls her childhood in India, where she and her nine siblings slept in a courtyard listening to stories. The graceful work depicts her mother "reading mythological stories" to her in the courtyard.

Mara Zoltners of Utica, New York, uses a thermal print on aluminum to produce the haunting "View From Morning Train" to represent the turbulence of 1938, when Hitler seized control of the German army, and more than 90 Jews were murdered in Germany and Austria in the Kristallnacht rampage. It was also the year Orson Welles terrified American listeners with his "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast.

Ms. Zoltners writes that her work — which suggests move-

ment through a stark yet beautiful landscape, with ghost-like trees seemingly enshrouded by gauze — "attempts to capture this atmosphere of change by presenting an image that might be seen as both strangely familiar and unfamiliar all at the same time."

"It is an image where movement within stillness attempts to speak about the uncertainty of changes yet to come."

Ms. Lambie-Simpson said there's "an element of history, an element of teaching" in the work on display. The art "really talks about time — they're not just pretty pictures."

An artist herself, Ms. Lambie-Simpson was assigned 1974 as her focus. Her work includes an image of a former Menlo College student: Patty Hearst, who was kidnapped in 1974 by a domestic terrorist group known as the Symbionese Liberation Army.

In a press release Art Committee co-chair Linda Smith said, "The artists have embraced the challenge of researching their years in both social and personal terms, and the results are wonderful and intriguing." The work is executed in an array of media, including painting, collage, book art, letterpress relief, photography, fiber art, and mosaic.

The exhibit, which lines the administration building hallway, will be up through July 11.

### Reception

A reception officially opening "85 Years, 85 Artists" is set for Wednesday, March 26, from 5 to 7 p.m. in the administration building at Menlo College, 1000 El Camino Real in Atherton. The Art Committee, which is hosting the event, requests RSVPs at: [artcommittee@menlo.edu](mailto:artcommittee@menlo.edu) ■



**'Sitting with Ama in the Courtyard,'** an acrylic, pen and ink work by Salma Arastu of Berkeley, delivers a personal statement about 1956 for the artist.

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**SIGN**

*continued from page 9*

be misleading but false information, like we saw distributed last year (during the review) but more so," he said.

Then, according to Mr. Riggs, the initiative will be voted on by a few people "who care a lot, and may or may not understand it as well as they think, and many people who don't much know or care. What a dumb way to write law governing our town for 30 years."

He emphasized that the city already intends to address concerns related to large projects proposed under the specific plan regulations, and has the means to do so.

Fellow commissioner Katherine Strehl is disappointed that Save Menlo moved forward with the initiative. She doesn't encourage voters to sign.

"In general, I don't support ballot initiatives dealing with complicated planning issues," she said; like others, she emphasized that the specific plan resulted from community consensus.

Downtown property owner Nancy Couperus, on the other hand, encouraged people to sign on.

"The Save Menlo initiative is pretty modest in what it intends to achieve. Hopefully residents will embrace it to bring some sanity to all of the

new development that is going to occur," she said.

Office space adds little value to the community while creating parking and traffic issues, according to Ms. Couperus, while retail at least provides services and sales taxes, and more higher-density housing along El Camino Real would fulfill a need.

And still others thought it too soon to comment on whether anyone should sign Save Menlo's petition.

Mayor Ray Mueller, appointed along with Councilman

Rich Cline to a subcommittee that will determine the initiative consultant's scope of work, said "it's inappropriate to comment" before getting the independent analysis.

The city has just started looking for a consultant, who must be someone with experience, but who has never worked with either Menlo Park or any of the parties with a stake in the outcome, such as Stanford University. The mayor said hopefully the analysis will be finished before the initiative is certified for the ballot. ■

**David Barclay Kirby**

*June 15, 1924 – March 15, 2014*

*48-Year Resident of Palo Alto*

David Kirby, a Bay Area public relations executive who started and managed Hewlett-Packard's corporate PR department for 27 years, has died at age 89. He died on March 15 at the Sequoias in Portola Valley surrounded by family and friends.

Dave was born in San Francisco in 1924. He grew up in Ross in Marin County and attended Tamalpais High School in Mill Valley. During World War II he served in France and Germany as a staff sergeant in the 89th Infantry Division, a unit of General Patton's Third Army. After VE Day he served six months as an Army administrator in Paris.

Following the war, Dave attended the University of California at Berkeley, graduating in 1949 with honors in journalism. During his senior year he was sports editor of the Daily Californian and president of Sigma Nu fraternity. He also was a member of several campus societies, including Golden Bear, Skull and Keys, Beta Beta, and the Fraternity Scholastic Honor Society.

Following graduation, Dave worked as a copy editor on the San Francisco News, at that time one of four daily papers in the city. He later gravitated to public relations, serving first on the PR staff of Bechtel Corporation, then the Wine Institute, Kaiser Aluminum, and the L. C. Cole Co., an advertising/public relations agency in San Francisco.

In 1962 he was asked by David Packard, co-founder, chairman and CEO of Hewlett-Packard, to start a public relations department for the company. Over the years the department grew steadily under Dave's direction, and when he retired in 1989, it had offices and staff in all major countries throughout the world.

Following his retirement, Dave provided writing and editing assistance to David Packard for Packard's book, *The HP Way*. Published in 1995, the book describes the origins of the Hewlett-Packard Company, the management philosophies and policies guiding its growth and success.

Over the years Dave was active in a number of civic and community organizations, including the Palo Alto YMCA and Avenidas, the Palo Alto senior center.

In 1960 Dave married Anne Nicolas, who had moved from her native Minneapolis to San Francisco a few years earlier. They married shortly after Anne had served on the public relations staff of the 1960 Olympic Winter Games in Squaw Valley, CA. When Dave went to work for Hewlett-Packard, they moved to Palo Alto and lived there for more than 48 years. When Anne predeceased him in 2010, Dave moved to the Sequoias retirement community in Portola Valley, where he lived until his death.

Dave is survived by his three children; sons Daniel (Sheree) of San Jose and John of Portland, OR, and daughter Rachel Fitzgibbon (Robert) of Essex, MA. Also surviving are five granddaughters and a step grandson.

Dave was an eighth generation American. In 1635 his English ancestor, Joseph Kirby, left Rowington, a small village near Warwick and immigrated to America, settling in Hartford, CT.

A private memorial celebration of Dave's life will be held the afternoon of Tuesday, April 22. Those wishing to attend please contact Rachel Fitzgibbon by April 8th at [davekirbymemorial@gmail.com](mailto:davekirbymemorial@gmail.com). Memorial gifts to Pathways Hospice Foundation, Sunnyvale will be appreciated.



PAID OBITUARY

**Ronald Wilson**

*November 1930 – November 2013*

Longtime resident of Portola Valley Ranch, passed away November 17, 2013.

Born in Texas, the only son of Cecil and Rowena Wilson, Ron graduated from Corpus Christi High School and Stanford University where he met his wife, Susan.

Ron served in the U.S. Army as helicopter pilot and 1st Lieutenant as a General's aid during the Korean War.

Ron was the General manager of Town & Country Village shopping center in Palo Alto until he retired in 2005.

Ron is survived by his loving wife, Susan. They had been married for 59 years. Also surviving Ron are his sons Broderick (Rick), Wayne and Bruce and his daughter Julie. Ron has one sibling, June Baldwin of Southern California. He is also survived by five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

A burial at sea will be held at a date yet to be determined.

In lieu of flowers the family requests that donations be made in Ron's name to ASPCA at [www.aspc.org](http://www.aspc.org)

PAID OBITUARY

**Angelos Dellaporta**

*February 8, 1917 – March 6, 2014*

Dr. Angelos Dellaporta passed away peacefully at home on March 6, 2014 at the age of 97. He was born February 8, 1917 on the Greek island of Kefalonia.

He attended medical school in Freiburg, Germany; served as a medical intern at the Charite Hospital in Berlin during WWII; and as a resident at the University of Vienna in Austria. He achieved the highest medical degree available in Europe, that of Doctor Medizine Habilis. After the war he was invited to continue his medical practice and research in the United States.

He married Penelope Metaxas in June of 1954 and together they lived in Buffalo, New York; Vienna, Austria; and San Francisco. When the new Stanford Hospital was built in 1959, they moved down the peninsula and settled in Atherton, where they brought up their 4 children.

Dr. Dellaporta became known in the medical community for his groundbreaking work in treating glaucoma, retinopathy and macular degeneration. He found great satisfaction in developing simple, yet bold solutions to difficult medical problems. From 1967 -1972, he served as Head of the Division of Ophthalmology at Stanford Hospital. He was a member of the Stanford clinical faculty and consultant to the Palo Alto Veterans Hospital, teaching residents and helping grateful patients for many years. He also published numerous articles on his medical research and the history of ophthalmology over the course of his long career. He enjoyed sharing medical knowledge with colleagues around the globe, while learning more about the culture, art and history of other lands. Dr. Dellaporta continued seeing patients in private practice into his eighties, until his own failing eyesight made it difficult, and he was proud to be instrumental in founding the Byers Eye Institute at Stanford. He continued learning and teaching through his final days.

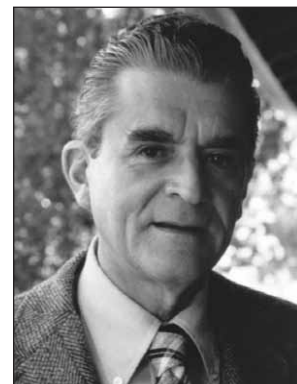
He is survived by his devoted wife, Penelope; his four children, Angela Dellaporta, Marina Marguet, Elizabeth Daschbach and Nicolas Dellaporta, and their spouses, John Richards, Mark Daschbach, and Lynn Dellaporta; by his beloved grandchildren, Alexandra Codina, Sarah and Andrew Daschbach, Michael and Jessica Marguet, and Matthew Dellaporta; by his sisters, Kalerga, of Athens, Greece, and Sophia, of Houston, Texas, and many other loved family members.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to his caregivers, Margaret, Luisa and Prad, who gave him wonderful, loving care and companionship for many years; and also to the Pathways Hospice team, who were so knowledgeable, kind and compassionate.

We are grateful for all that our father gave in his life: for his contributions to the medical community; for inspiring in us a love of our Greek heritage; and for his unwavering devotion to his family, whom he supported and advised with great integrity. He was a man of honor and generosity.

A private memorial is planned. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to The Byers Eye Institute at Stanford ([stanfordhospital.org/eyeinstitute](http://stanfordhospital.org/eyeinstitute)) or to Pathways Hospice.

PAID OBITUARY



**CONSULTANT**

*continued from page 9*

have to do this. You're too late. You refused to do this earlier," Mr. Fisher said, referring to the coalition's demands that the city both review and revise the specific plan last year.

However, the consensus of the council was that, given the importance of the specific plan as the city's blueprint for development for the next several decades, money spent on an independent review of the initiative would be well spent.

"The devil's always in the details," Councilwoman Kirsten Keith said, adding that since the community spent five years going over details of the specific plan — a "very comprehensive document" — it's equally important to understand the details of any proposed changes.

The council also voted to form a subcommittee — composed of Mr. Mueller and Councilman Rich Cline — to collaborate with staff to determine the consultant's scope of work. ■



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# Viewpoint

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

## Menlo Park on the right track with housing

After a whirlwind effort over the last two years the city of Menlo Park brought its housing element up to date, providing state-mandated zoning for 900 units and ensuring that enough space is left to build 655 more, including units accounted for in the downtown/El Camino Real specific plan and the more than 500 housing units planned near the Facebook campus, located off the Bayshore Expressway. These units are more than enough for the city to comply with state's allocation of housing for 2015 through 2023.

As part of the latest update, the Planning Commission focused on where to allow construction of a 16-bed homeless shelter, and how to encourage residents to build secondary units, otherwise known as "granny" units.

The commission recommended zoning an area at the Veterans Affairs campus on Willow Road for a shelter, but also included a sliver of land in the neighborhood, which the city hopes will help the site pass muster with state regulators. Neighbors were not satisfied, saying they feared the possibility of having a shelter so near three schools and a park, but the commissioners said they had no intention of locating a shelter anywhere other than the VA site. City staff will study the issue to determine if the state will permit the city to zone land it does not own for a shelter.

More important, in our opinion, was the commission's effort to ease restrictions on building affordable housing in the city, where low-income tenants often have a hard time finding low-priced rentals. Granny units, which could help meet the needs of low-income residents, have been in short supply due to numerous restrictions passed when the city really had no interest in providing such housing. But now, with rents skyrocketing and housing prices moving upward every month, it is time for the city to make it easier to build a granny unit.

At earlier meetings, the commission had decided to reduce the minimum residential lot size required for a secondary unit to 5,750

square feet, and allowing granny units of up to 700 square feet to help improve access for disabled tenants. Then at its March 10 meeting, commissioners unanimously agreed to drop the minimum lot size even more, to 5,000 square feet, which will open the possibility of more properties in the city being able to build a legal granny unit in their backyard.

One issue that could impact whether property owners will be building granny units is whether they would be required to live on the lot. The concern is that landlords who are not present might not take care of deteriorating properties.

A sensible compromise was struck that would add three changes to the ordinance:

- As long as both units are not occupied, the owner would not have to live on the property;
- A registration process would also be established to allow both units to be rented out temporarily for up to four years;
- If owners want to keep renting out both a main house and granny unit for more than four years, the commission suggested that they then be required to apply for a use permit, which would cost about \$4,000.

The City Council will have the final say on the much-needed changes to the granny unit ordinance when it considers the housing element update at its April 1 meeting. These are long-overdue changes that will not have huge impacts on neighborhoods, but will give homeowners a way to share their property with students or those who need temporary housing or cannot afford other options.

Another factor that would encourage the construction of granny units would be lowering permit fees, which right now are estimated at around \$20,000. In the spring, as part of its annual review of service fees, the City Council is set to look at ways to reduce or subsidize those fees.

**EDITORIAL**

The opinion of The Almanac

**LETTERS**

Our readers write

**Resident input on Atherton bleachers thwarted**

*Editor:*

Resident input on the concrete bleachers in Holbrook-Palmer Park was on the March 19 Atherton City Council agenda, but Mayor Cary Wiest thwarted any meaningful action.

After an offer by two residents to be a part of an ad hoc subcommittee, Mayor Wiest announced that he and former Mayor Elizabeth Lewis would be the subcommittee and work with the staff to insure that the project was consistent with the "historic character" of Holbrook-Palmer Park. The agenda called for the city to set up an ad hoc subcommittee to insure that the design of the project had such consistency.

This requirement of consistency with the "historic character" had been prudently inserted in the original approval at the specific request of Councilman Rick Degolia. If having this new permanent structure in the park is not what you think is in the community's long-term interest, you as a resident need to speak out very strongly; we are



Woodside History Committee

**Our Regional Heritage**

Crew members stand outside Woodside's first fire station in 1915. The building later housed a dry cleaner, bakery, ice cream parlor and, in recent years, several restaurants. The crew members in the photo are from left, Vern Kelly, Chief John Volpiano, Poots O'Neill, and Bob Nehmens, whose son Bill also became a fireman.

well along the path to having this drastic change in the town's beautiful park forced on us.

It is ironic that those two council members, Mr. Wiest and Ms. Lewis, who have seemed to uni-

formly take the Little League's position on all matters so far, were the individuals Mayor Wiest delegated to determine the issue of "historic character."

Thus, if solely in Mr. Wiest's

and Ms. Lewis' opinion, the drawings and design appear consistent with the park's "historic character," the town will

*Continued on next page*

# Initiative supporter explains why she supports a vote

By Patti Fry

**P**redictability about development in Menlo Park is important. Developers want as much certainty as possible about what they can build, and residents want predictability about their quality of life.

The El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan was sold as a guide for the city's growth over the next several decades, balancing new community-serving retail, restaurants, housing, offices. But now, less than 18 months into the Plan, two major projects propose to build at least 50 percent more new office space than residents were led to expect for the 30-year life of the Plan — in the entire 130-acre Plan area.

This additional office space brings not only more commuter traffic than anticipated, it also means that actual development may never attain the expected retail/restaurants, small-scale offices, hotel, and transit-oriented housing. The Plan has a maximum buildout of 680 housing units that our crowded schools already would struggle to accommodate; this much additional office space puts significant pressures on Menlo Park to plan for even more housing.

The Plan's rules aren't working properly to support the Plan's vision. These first two El Camino Real development

proposals caused the local Sierra Club to write to the City Council last November, which said: "...[a] closer examination of the Plan has exposed a misalignment between its goals and the development standards formulae." Specifically pointed out was that the Plan's "limit" of 50 percent office should actually be 20 percent office to align development with the Plan's environmental impact report and its expected office/housing balance. The letter concluded, "the city cannot have it both ways — a job-housing balance as articulated and supported by the public process and also 50 percent FAR (floor area ratio) for office. It has to decide which direction it wants change to happen in the downtown and El Camino area."

The Sierra Club gets it right. The Plan's rules are not resulting in the "most reasonably foreseeable" scenario of balanced growth and revitalization for the next 30 years, as defined and analyzed by the city's teams of expensive consultants. Rather than an "invalidation of the Plan," SaveMenlo's initiative honors the Plan by adopting as firm limits the **same** amount of new office space (240,820 square feet) and total non-residential space (474,000 square

feet) as in the consultants' scenario, so residents can be more confident in the experts' predictions of both the environmental and financial impacts of the Plan, positive and negative.

The initiative's new limit of 100,000 square feet of office space in any single development is believed to affect only three sites: Stanford's, Greenheart's and the Cortana (Big 5 shopping center) sites, each about 6 acres or larger, and each well-suited for multi-unit housing to address Menlo Park's job/housing imbalance, not worsen it. This provision should provide more certainty to property owners of smaller sites that they could include some office space without triggering costly environmental reviews the Plan was supposed to help them avoid.

The initiative also removes balconies and upper level decks from counting as project open space, providing more ground level open space for livable, walkable new development consistent with our town's desired character. Participants in the Plan visioning process were clear that they did not want the urbanized character of "stack and pack" development of other peninsula cities.

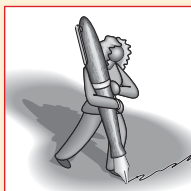
Contrary to some assertions, the ini-

tiative does not shrink or alter the total development any particular project can build under the Plan. It does not change the allowable height. It does not change the amount of retail, restaurants or other non-office uses that would make up the rest of the Plan's maximum build-out of non-residential development. It does not change the Plan's maximum build-out of housing units. It adopts Plan definitions to make it clear how office and open space would be counted after the initiative is adopted.

Voter approval is not required for individual projects. However, rather than returning to the old ad hoc project-by-project negotiations when a proposed project would exceed the initiative's or Plan's limits, the initiative requires a vote of residents (not a Council majority) to decide when it's appropriate to modify the initiative's limits, whether that's sooner or later than the Plan's 30-year life.

Initiative supporters are gathering signatures to give Menlo Park residents the opportunity to vote for or against a few new controls so future development might conform more closely to what residents were told to expect. After all, once huge buildings are constructed, they will affect for generations the walkability, livability, and character of our town.

*Patti Fry, former Menlo Park planning commissioner*



GUEST OPINION

## LETTERS

Our readers write

*Continued from previous page*

adhere to the earlier 3-2 approval of building the largest Little League stadium in our geographic area. This will attract

most of the major and playoff games to Holbrook-Palmer Park with all the attendant parking and traffic issues.

Do we really need to be the next victim to the Little League's grand plans after Menlo Park and Portola Valley?

It is ironic that the council inordinately praised itself for all the

outreach it had done with its Civic Center Advisory Committee in a later agenda item, but has done so little outreach with the residents on this large bleachers/stadium, which will drastically change the aspect of the open field in the town's only large natural park.

*Walter Sleeth,  
Catalpa Drive, Atherton*



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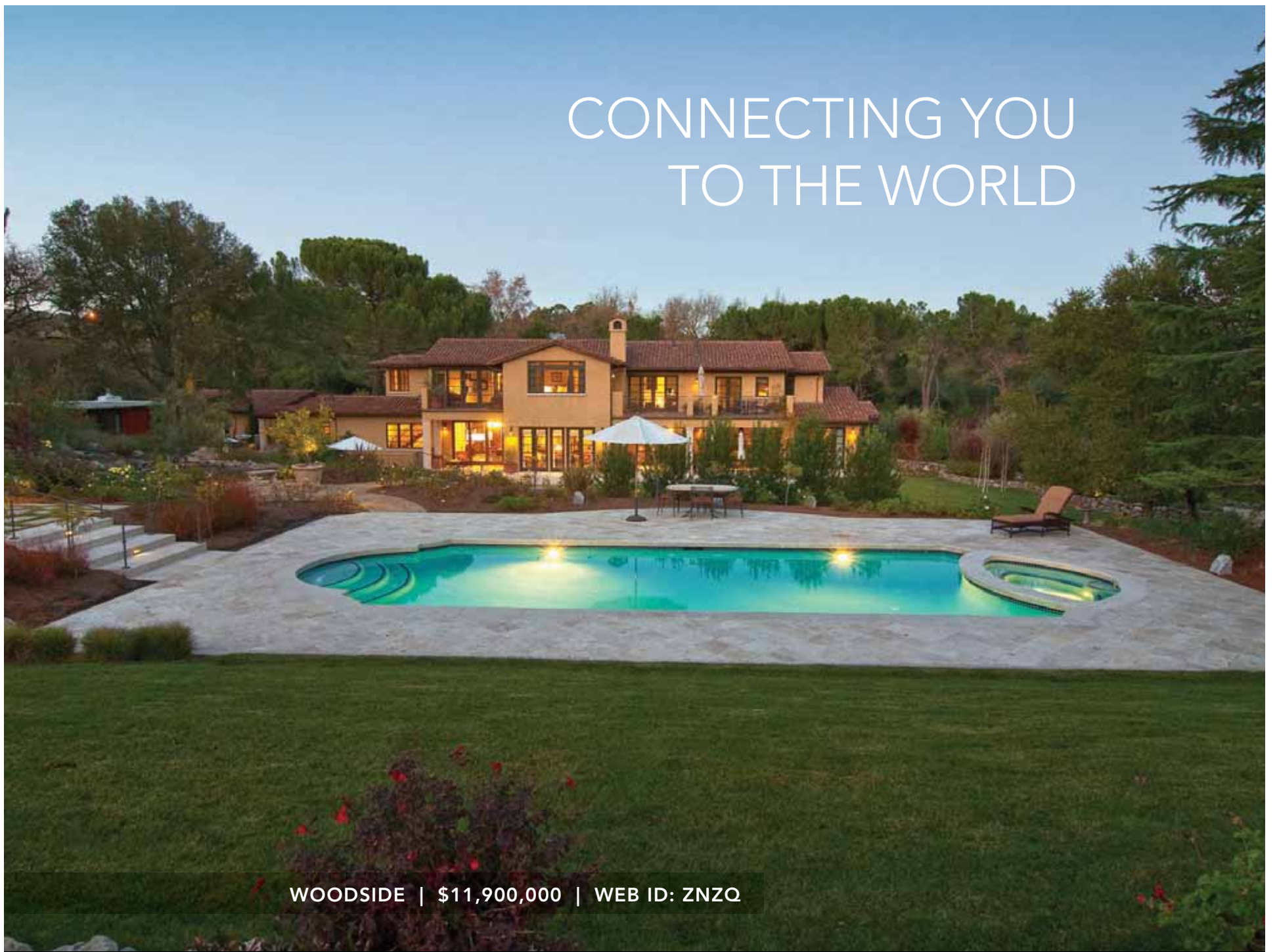
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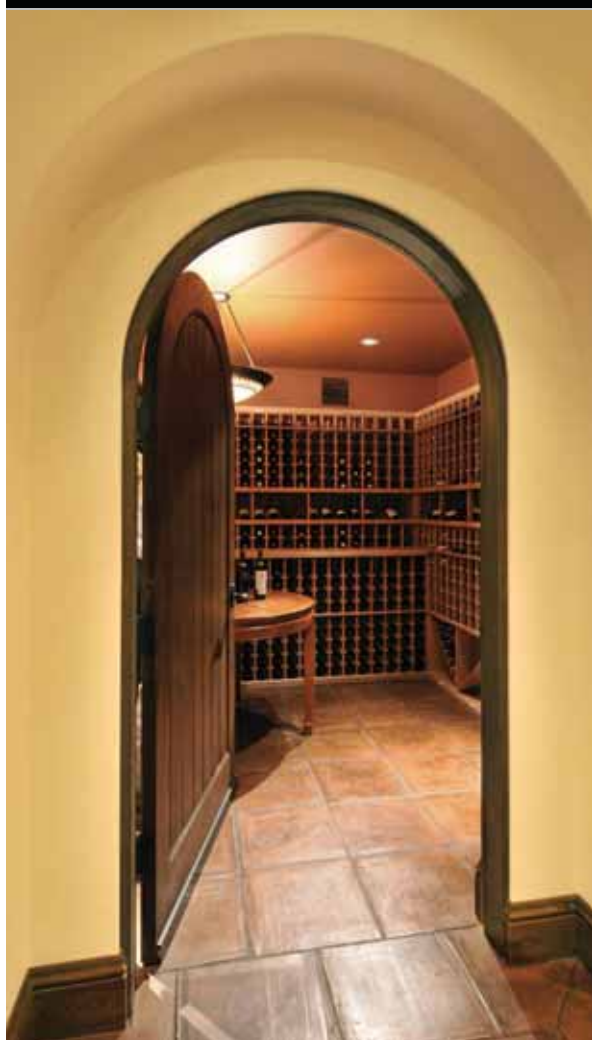
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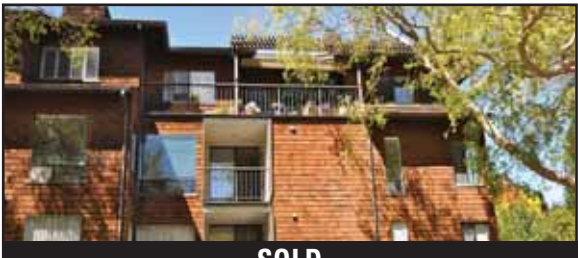
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