

The Almanac

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

MAY 14, 2014 | VOL. 49 NO. 36



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MEASURE



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SECTION 2

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Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Save Menlo's initiative proponent Patti Fry shows boxes full of petitions at a May 12 news conference at the Menlo Park City Hall. At right is Save Menlo organizer Mike Lanza.

Initiative signatures submitted

By **Sandy Brundage**
Almanac Staff Writer

About a dozen people gathered outside Menlo Park City Hall on May 12 to listen to Save Menlo representatives announce that they've collected a lot more than the 1,780 registered voter signatures needed to get their downtown/El Camino Real specific plan initiative on the November ballot.

The grassroots coalition organized to protest the specific plan once a large mixed-use development was proposed along El Camino Real. If a sufficient number of signatures are verified, the City Council may choose to implement the changes or put the issue before voters.

"We hope the council adopts it," said Patti Fry, a former planning commissioner who helped draft the initiative.

Those signing the petition go beyond "the usual suspects," according to Ms. Fry, who said many are new to Menlo Park and had to register to vote first.

She told the gathering that the initiative is a way to enforce the limits set by the specific plan.

"This is not 'no growth,'" Ms. Fry said. Rather than an urban downtown with high-rise office buildings, she said, the com-

Save Menlo's Patti Fry says she hopes the council adopts the changes before the election.

munity wants balanced development with retail, transit-oriented housing, a hotel, and maybe more senior housing. "But that's not what's coming forward."

According to the city's summary, the initiative restricts the amount of office space in any individual development to 100,000 square feet; limits total new office space to 240,820 square feet; and caps overall new, non-residential

development to 474,000 square feet within the specific plan's boundaries. The initiative would also redefine open space to mean only areas no higher than 4 feet off the ground, thereby preventing balconies from counting as open space.

Voter approval would be needed to revise the ordinance or to exceed the size limits for office and non-residential development. Other clauses appear intended to guarantee the longevity of the measure, with one stating that if any part of the measure is invalidated, the remaining provisions remain in effect, and another allowing the initiative to supersede all conflicting ordinances and policies, according to the city's analysis.

The initiative would impact two mixed-use development proposals already in the works by cutting the amount of office space allowed in each project by about 50 percent.

Stanford University and developer John Arrillaga want to

See **INITIATIVE**, page 6

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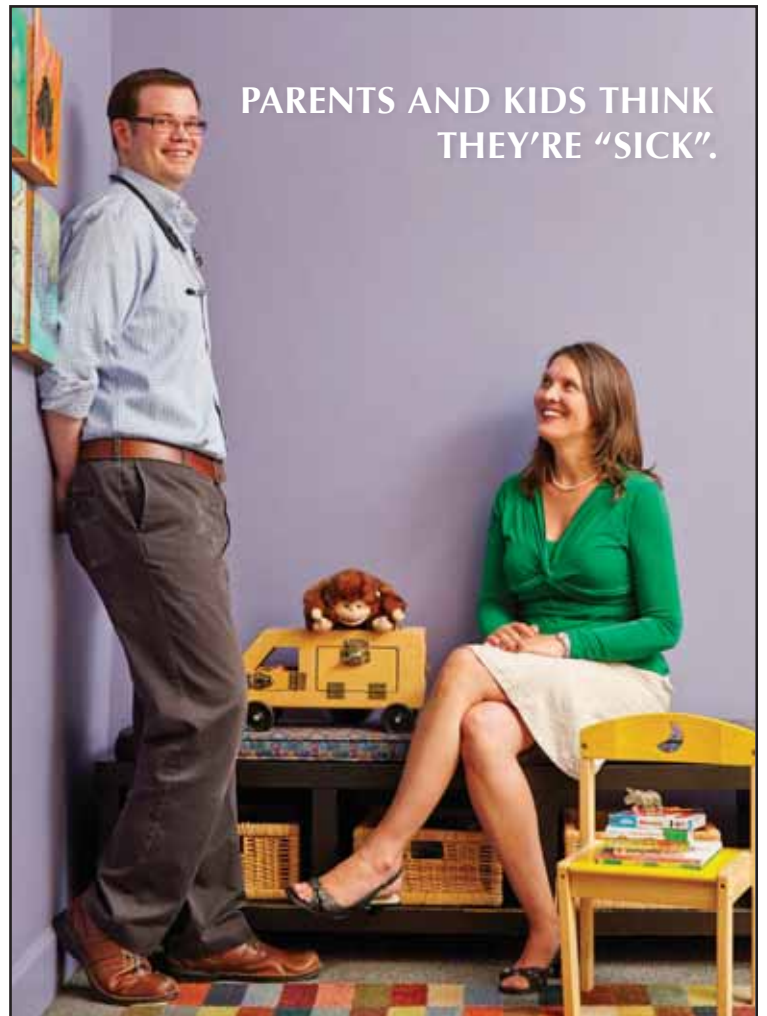
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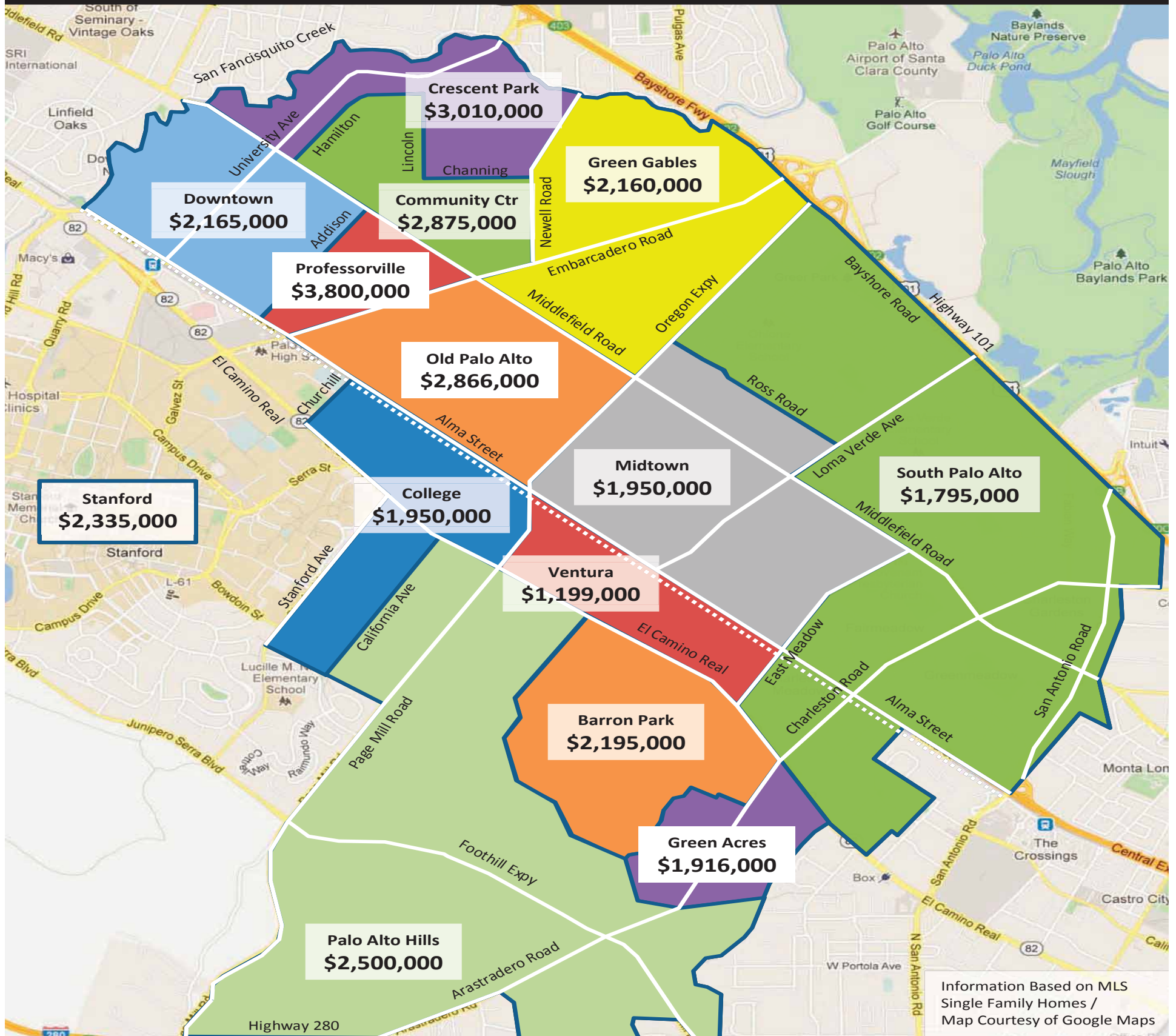
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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

\$13.5 million in bonds for Woodside School?

By Renee Batti
Almanac News Editor

When people pass by Woodside Elementary School, they see a well-manicured campus with attractive, recent-vintage buildings. They could be forgiven, then, if they wonder why the one-school district is asking voters to approve a \$13.5 million bond measure next month to fund campus modernization and repair projects, and the replacement of Sellman Auditorium.

"If you drive by the school, you think it looks so beautiful and modern," parent Heather McLeod Grant said, adding that the glancing impression could be deceptive.

What the casual passerby cannot see are the leaky roofs and other problems resulting from deferred maintenance; the lack of facilities for

students to eat lunch; classroom space that hampers the type of instruction schools are widely adopting to adapt to the changing world; and the deteriorating — and seismically unsound — condition of the auditorium.

Ms. McLeod Grant, who chairs the community-based Yes on Measure D committee, noted in an interview that if Measure D is approved, the bond revenue raised would fund "really bare-bones projects," and private donations are being raised to pay

for any "extras."

Measure D on the June 3 ballot would raise about \$13.5 million for the Woodside Elementary School District in Woodside. The nonprofit Woodside School Foundation has launched a capital campaign to raise another \$3.5 million for the campus modernization project, according to district Superintendent Beth Polito.

If passed, Measure D would tax district residents at a rate of \$24.05 per \$100,000 of their property's assessed value per year. This would be in addition to what property owners already pay annually for previously approved bonds: a total of \$34.50

per \$100,000 of assessed value for bonds passed in 1999 and 2005, according to Robin Wasco, the district's chief business official.

School board members Wendy Warren Roth and Rudy Driscoll, along with community members Frank York, Charline Quist Douthy and Erika M. Demma, signed the ballot argument in favor of the bond measure.

Mark Hinkle, president of the Silicon Valley Taxpayers Association, wrote the ballot argument against Measure D, challenging the use of bond revenue to pay for safety projects and technology rather than using "dollars already in schools' budgets."



Photo by Barbara Wood

Woodside Elementary students, from left, Xander, Shay, Bryn and Yvette, explore with parent Jeff Linnell the virtual universe they helped create for a Collaborative Design Thinking Project event held at the school on May 1.

The money would pay for repairs, upgrades and new classrooms.

Open space district seeks voter OK for \$300M bond measure

By Barbara Wood
Special to the Almanac

If two-thirds of voters approve Measure AA, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District will be able to issue up to \$300 million in bonds to finance improving, preserving and restoring its properties as well as purchasing land needed to connect trails and preserve plant and animal habitats.

According to the ballot measure language, bond proceeds will be used "to improve access to hiking and biking opportunities, protect and preserve redwood forests, natural open spaces, the scenic beauty of our region and coastline, critical wildlife habitat, and restore creeks to protect

water quality, and reduce forest fire risk."

To reduce the cost of the bonds, the district will issue them in several series and will not allow the annual tax rate on the bonds to exceed \$3.18 per \$100,000 of assessed property value, which is equivalent to \$31.80 a year for the owner of a property assessed at \$1 million.

The bonds have a maximum term of 40 years and the annual tax is predicted to range from \$1 per \$100,000 assessed value (or \$10 for a \$1 million home) in 2015-16 to \$2.90 per \$100,000 assessed value (or \$29 for a \$1 million property) in 2044-45.



This is the first bond measure the district has attempted to pass in its 41 years.

The highest rate of \$3.18 would be in 2034-35.

The bond measure also includes provisions for an oversight committee, made up of seven board-appointed district residents, to annually review how the bond money is spent and present its findings to the public.

Steve Abbors, general manager of the open space district, says the bond measure is the first the district has attempted

of state budget cuts that led to deferred maintenance. A school board "that has been really fiscally conservative" decided during those years to delay facilities maintenance projects so that classroom programs wouldn't suffer, she said.

What would it pay for?

If the measure passes, bond revenue would fund the repair of "critical school facilities, including sewer, lights and leaking roofs; upgrade classrooms

and other facilities to meet current health and safety codes, and replace two aging portable classrooms with permanent facilities; and replace older heating and electrical systems to save on utility bills," according to the ballot argument in favor of Measure D.

The bulk of the bond revenue would be spent on rebuilding Sellman Auditorium, built in 1940, according to Ms. Wasco.

See **WOODSIDE**, page 8

to pass in its 41 years. The district covers southern and central San Mateo County from the Bay to the ocean, and northern and western Santa Clara County, as well as a small area in Santa Cruz County.

Property owners in the district, except for those on the coast, currently pay \$17 per \$100,000 of assessed property value, or \$170 a year for a property valued at \$1 million. Property owners on the coast will help pay for the bonds if Measure AA passes.

Diane Talbert, a resident of Woodside and president of the Sempervirens Fund, is one of those who signed the ballot argument in favor of the bond measure. "Measure AA is essen-

tial to protecting the miles of treasured open space that make the Bay Area such a wonderful place to live and work," said Ms. Talbert. She said the measure will "protect and preserve the vital land around our water sources," as well as increase public access "so that more trails, waterways and redwood forests can be enjoyed by all members of our community."

Ms. Talbert said she believes "this is money well-spent and essential to preserving our precious natural resources and quality of life."

There appears to be no organized opposition to the bond measure, but local Libertar-

See **OPEN SPACE**, page 8

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(Woodside location only)



New driveway coming to Louise Street?

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

It turns out that life on Menlo Park's Louise Street as the residents know it may survive the addition of one more driveway after all.

Developer Sam Sinnott and resident Kiki Kapany issued a joint press release on Friday (May 9) announcing that the two parties had settled their differences over a tangle of greenery on the cul-de-sac in a conflict that started more than a year ago.

The settlement will let Mr. Sinnott construct a 16-foot-wide paved driveway at 1825 Santa Cruz Ave. that will exit on Louise Street, while preserving a portion of the 53-foot-by-60-foot patch of greenery as open space.

Mr. Sinnott and investment partner Mircea Voskerician bought the property two years ago for redevelopment, but then ran into trouble when Louise Street residents protested the pair's plans to build a driveway and then switch the home's address from Santa Cruz Avenue to Louise Street. The residents argued that paving even a part

of the green space would damage the character of their neighborhood.

Although city staff initially authorized the driveway, in August, the council voted to turn the green space over to the residents — a process known as abandonment. Mr. Sinnott then filed a lawsuit in San Mateo County Superior Court in November against several of the residents as well as city officials.

When asked what made a settlement possible now, Ms. Kapany responded by referring to the press release. "That's all we have to say. Thanks so much."

Bill Garrett, the attorney representing Mr. Sinnott, said, "Cooperation. Communication. Compromise." A framework for a settlement was reached back in February, he said, and the parties have since worked out the details.

The press release offered no other information about the terms of the settlement. The revised terms of abandonment were part of the City Council's consent calendar for May 13.

Check almanacnews.com for updates. ■

Developer and residents reach compromise.

INITIATIVE

continued from page 3

build a complex on the mostly vacant car lots along 300 to 500 El Camino Real. The 8.4-acre project would involve 199,500 square feet of office space, 10,000 square feet of retail, and up to 170 apartments.

The proposed mixed-use complex initially contained medical offices and fewer apartments, but Stanford revised the plan after a series of discussions with city officials and Save Menlo representatives.

A second project, designed by Greenheart LLC, would put 210,000 square feet of office space, 210,000 square feet of apartments, and 13,000 square feet of retail on the 7-acre site located at 1300 El Camino Real and Oak Grove Avenue.

Greenheart representatives have stated that the proposed modifications to the specific plan, and delays caused by waiting to see what happens with the initiative, would make their project financially unfeasible.

Meanwhile, the city has found a potential consultant to conduct an independent analysis of

both the initiative and the specific plan. The staff report for the May 13 meeting identifies the recommended contractor as Lisa Wise Consulting Inc., a company based in San Francisco that has not worked with the city of Menlo Park before.

The city proposes to spend \$126,886 on the review, with the option to increase that by \$3,408 to add a site analysis of what types of projects could be built under the initiative's proposed regulations.

"My first reaction was (that) we're in the wrong business," Mike Lanza quipped during the press conference when the cost of the analysis came up. An initiative leader, he said he hopes it leads to a regional "push back against pack and stack" development.

Mr. Lanza predicted that with three council seats open this fall, the issue could influence the election's outcome and encourage higher voter turnout than usual. Save Menlo did hire paid signature gatherers, but the number of signatures collected by volunteers was sufficient to get the initiative on the ballot, he said. ■

{ www.robertsmarket.com }



Town of Portola Valley

The red arrows point to the two ends of a gas line feeding a Portola Valley residence at 190 Cervantes Road. The line was accidentally severed on May 6 by the action of an asphalt-grinding machine as a crew prepared a section of the road for repaving. The line was 3 inches below the road surface and should have been much deeper.

Gas leak may be tied to settling of road

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

■ PORTOLA VALLEY

Repairs have been made to a residential gas line serving 190 Cervantes Road in Portola Valley. The line, which had been just 3 inches under the surface of the road and thus vulnerable to repaving processes, was severed on May 6, but is now repaired and at the proper depth of 18 inches, a Pacific Gas & Electric spokesman told the Almanac.

Town Manager Nick Pegueros told the Almanac that the town's conversations with PG&E will result in the line being buried to an updated standard of 30 inches below the surface.

The line may have been too close to the surface because road beds settle over time, and because repaving processes can slowly push a road below its original height, PG&E says.

There were indications that the

repaving had not been preceded by a phone call to 8-1-1 two days in advance of the intended work to alert PG&E, spokesman Jason King told the Almanac. Had that call been made, PG&E would have located the pipe and marked the area with flags and/or paint, he said.

The rupture occurred around 12:45 p.m. on May 6 when a repaving crew using an asphalt-grinding machine accidentally severed the three-quarter-inch line.

Firefighters were called and they secured the area and rerouted traffic. They were on the scene for about 90 minutes, said Battalion Chief Kevin Butler of the Woodside Fire Protection District. No one was injured and there was never a threat of injury, he added.

The odor of natural gas had been detectable, but wind dispersed it, he said.

A PG&E crew stopped the leak by 2:30 p.m. and repairs were complete by 5 p.m., Mr. King said.

At the scene, firefighters found themselves in a bind at first, Mr. Butler said. The asphalt-grinding machine was the size of a small car, it was turned off, and it was sitting directly above the leak. They could not risk a spark by restarting it, nor could they move it.

The PG&E crew solved the problem by excavating the areas on either side of the break. They found the line and crimped it on the supply side to shut off the flow of gas, Mr. Butler said. The line fed gas to one home.

Asked about a gas line being so close to the surface of the road, Mr. King said it is rare in his experience. He attributed it to natural sinking and settling of the road and decades of grinding and repaving. "We can't guarantee, over time, the depth of a line when the homeowner or contractor does a digging project," he said. ■

Sheriff adds assistant to management staff

Capt. Tom Gallagher of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office was promoted on May 6 to assistant sheriff.

Mr. Gallagher joins Assistant Sheriff Trisha Sanchez in reporting to Undersheriff Carlos Bolanos. Mr. Gallagher's responsibilities include the jails, jail planning services, court services and technology services, the Sheriff's Office announced.

Ms. Sanchez oversees the patrol bureaus and units engaged with emergency services, homeland security, and narcotics and

stolen-vehicle trafficking.

Mr. Gallagher grew up in San Mateo County and graduated with a bachelor's degree from the Union Institute & University in Cincinnati. He is a graduate of a Los Angeles Police Department leadership program and has been with the Sheriff's Office for 27 years.

The new position was cre-



Tom Gallagher

ated in part due to the Sheriff's Office's recent absorption of the San Carlos and Half Moon Bay police departments, and the new jail, the Sheriff's Office said in its announcement.

The Board of Supervisors recently allocated \$4.2 million to pay six months of salaries for 57 new jail staff. "In light of this outward expansion, Sheriff Greg Munks is looking to develop an organizational structure best equipped to support the recent growth within our Office," the announcement says.

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Open space district has \$300M bond measure on the June 3 ballot

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ian Jack Hickey, a resident of unincorporated Emerald Hills, argues that the district would be better off funding the projects it has proposed by opening some of its land to recreational uses, such as golf courses, that would earn income for the district.

“That is what I call stewardship of the land,” he said. “It would take less than 1 percent of their land to do this.”

Other uses could also produce revenue for the district, he said. “They could have a rifle range.”

As part of the proposed bond measure, the district has issued a list of 25 priority projects across the district, 10 of which are in or near the Almanac circulation area. They include:

- Re-open Alpine Road at Coal Creek for trail use.

- Help to complete gaps in the Bay Trail and build city-to-Bay trails. Support wetland restoration and science education exhibits.

- Develop new trails and improve existing trails at Windy Hill. Open Hawthorn historic area, connecting it to Palo Alto trails. Restore Los Trancos Creek.

- Open the Driscoll Ranch area at La Honda Creek to more public access. Restore La Honda Creek and remove fish barriers.

- Preserve Upper San Gregorio Creek Watershed and protect streams. Create new public use facilities and complete Ridge Trail gaps at La Honda Creek and Russian Ridge.

- Open new trails at Russian Ridge. Introduce grazing and enhance wildlife protection.

- Build walking, hiking and biking trails at El Corte de Madera Creek. Complete gaps in Ridge Trail. Improve water quality via land preservation

and restoration.

- Open upper La Honda Creek Preserve for public recreation. Restore habitat and reintroduce grazing.

- Open Miramontes Ridge to the public. Create new trails and neighborhood access points. Restore streams in Madonna Creek watershed upstream of Half Moon Bay and enhance local farms.

- Complete the Purisima-to-the-Sea Trail and connect Ridge Trail to Coastal Trail. Protect and restore the Lobitos Creek watershed.

Other projects on the list include protecting more redwood forests, conserving salmon fisheries, building a welcome center at Rancho San Antonio, opening new trails in the redwoods connecting large parks, adding campgrounds, connecting the Ridge Trail to the Bay Trail, protecting wildlife corridors, and opening more district lands to public access.

Mr. Abbors said the district came up with the bond measure after looking toward the future of the district.

“After 40 years ... we started looking at what are we going to do for the next 40 years,” he said. The district decided it needed to work on land already owned as well as acquiring new properties.

“It required a change in thinking and even in how we apply our budget,” he said. Only about half of the district land is now open to the public, Mr. Abbors said.

After looking at what might be needed in the district, a list of 57 possible projects was created and brought to the public for discussion. The district held a series of public meetings, created a community advisory committee, and used social media to come up with a list of the top 25 projects. ■

Residents win habitat awards

Residents who create wildlife corridors on their lands that allow and encourage the presence of native plants and wild animals will be honored by the town of Woodside on Saturday, May 17.

A total of 50 Woodside residential properties will be recognized with Backyard Habitat awards. The program will run from 3 to 5 p.m. on the patio of Town Hall.

The award includes a 3-foot-long, 4-inch-wide vertical plaque of rusty steel engraved with the program’s name and topped by a silhouette of a California Quail, also rusty.

Two guests are scheduled to speak and/or present: Philippe Cohen, the executive director of the Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, and Nicky Hughes of the Gold Rush Nursery in Soquel.



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

A large dump truck crashed into the vegetation west of Portola Valley’s Ford Field during a wildfire drill on May 7. A mechanical failure caused the truck to hurtle down steep Westridge Drive and across Alpine Road, at which point the driver veered right, into a wooden fence, to avoid firefighting equipment in the parking lot, firefighters said.

Fire drill interrupted by dump truck crash

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

A collection of firefighters, many with EMT skills, happened to be on the scene at a wildfire drill in Portola Valley around 9 a.m. on May 7 when a super-dump truck — the kind with an extra set of wheels slung up over the bed — came hurtling down Westridge Drive, careered across Alpine Road without hitting any cross traffic, crashed through a wooden fence and came to rest against some trees above the banks of Los Trancos Creek.

Fire-crew management on the scene assigned a couple of EMT/firefighter crews to check on the truck’s two occupants, who, it turned out, were not seriously injured, Battalion Chief Rob Lindner of

the Woodside Fire Protection District told the Almanac. The incident caused a “slight delay” in the day-long drill, he said.

About 75 gallons of diesel fuel spilled onto the ground from the truck’s ruptured fuel tank, but firefighters isolated the fuel so that it did not pollute the creek, Mr. Lindner said.

‘It wasn’t a part of our drill.’

BATTALION CHIEF ROB LINDNER

The spill did pollute the ground and the wood chips scattered there, however, and the Portola Valley Public Works Department is attending to that, Town Manager Nick Pegueros told the Almanac. The affected ground will be excavated and disposed of in coordination

with the San Mateo County Department of Environmental Health, he said.

Firefighters were using the parking lot at Ford Field as a staging area for the drill simulating an aggressive wildfire in communities along the border with Santa Clara County. The drill had just gotten going when the dump truck came through the intersection. “It wasn’t a part of our drill,” Mr. Lindner said.

The truck was loaded, perhaps with broken-up concrete, he said. Upon entering the intersection at Alpine Road, the driver veered right to avoid firefighting equipment in the parking lot, and the truck emerged from the accident with a cracked frame and significant front-end damage, he said.

Had cars or bikes been in the intersection, had the driver not steered away from the parked fire trucks, the accident could have been a catastrophe, Mr. Lindner noted. “A lot of us went up and thanked him,” he said. “It rattled some nerves.” ■

WOODSIDE

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Some improvements to the building were funded by previous bond measures, but they were “mostly superficial in nature,” Superintendent Polito said. And if the auditorium remains in use, it would need major retrofitting to meet seismic and other building code requirements.

The facilities plan outlines a project that would replace the auditorium with an 8,560-square-foot building that would include a permanent stage

and added storage. It would connect with the campus’ music room, a new food-service area, and restrooms. That project is estimated to cost \$7.67 million.

Bond revenue would also pay for construction of a 1,000-square-foot flexible classroom space to accommodate project-based learning and other teaching strategies that are becoming the norm for the modern classroom.

“Teaching is changing,” Ms. McLeod Grant said, and school facilities that accommodate those new practices are critical if Woodside Elementary hopes

to maintain its status as one of the highest-achievement schools in the state.

“As a community, I believe it is important to support our local award-winning public school,” she said in an email. “It benefits our children, provides assets for community use — such as our sports fields and auditorium — and helps boost our property values. I really hope local citizens ... will come out and pass Measure D in June. All the money will be locally controlled and used for basic infrastructure repairs and upgrades.” ■

Man sentenced for attack on Portola Valley boy

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

A 22-year-old Palo Alto man was sentenced to one year in San Mateo County jail on Friday, May 9, after having pleaded no contest to felony charges of auto burglary and assault of a 13-year-old Portola Valley boy with a baseball bat in April 2013.

Alexander Stefan Dombovic, who remains out of custody on \$50,000 bail, is to report to jail on June 21 to begin serving his sentence. He was also ordered to pay \$3,000 in restitution and serve three years of probation.

Mr. Dombovic agreed in December 2013 to a plea bargain in which he would serve a maximum of two years in state prison, prosecutors said.

The string of incidents that led to Mr. Dombovic's arrest began at around 10 p.m. on a Sunday night, April 21, 2013, according to accounts by prosecutors and Sheriff's Office deputies.

The Portola Valley boy had been reading in his bedroom when he heard a car come down the driveway of his home and park near his room. He went out to see what was going on and said he saw a man rummaging through his father's vehicle.

The boy asked the man what he was doing, and the man allegedly yelled at him and charged at him with an aluminum baseball bat, hitting him in the shoulder. The man then fled in a gold Toyota SUV.

Deputies were in the area to respond to a nearby car burglary and saw an SUV driving on the wrong side of the road with its lights off. The deputies swerved to avoid the vehicle and a chase ensued, with the pursued vehicle accelerating to 60 miles per hour.

Mr. Dombovic was arrested after he lost control of his vehicle in the 900 block of Westridge Drive and plunged down an embankment.

Mr. Dombovic, who is of Chechen ethnicity, was ordered out of his vehicle, whereupon he yelled to the deputies in a Russian accent, "This has nothing to do with Boston," prosecutors said. The Boston Marathon bombing had occurred six days earlier.

About 129 pieces of mail from 18 local addresses were found in the vehicle. Deputies reported that Mr. Dombovic used a baseball bat to "forcibly enter" three mailboxes on Alamos Lane and two on Westridge Drive. ▀

The arrested man told deputies: 'This has nothing to do with Boston.'



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Rec classes: nonresident surcharge debated

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Should nonresidents pay 35 percent more, and wait a week longer to register, for the city of Menlo Park's recreation classes? As a prelude to the Parks and Recreation Commission's consideration of the issue later this year, council members set aside some time on May 6 to provide their perspectives, as did several community members.

The 35 percent surcharge has been in place for about 10 years. Residents already pay \$14 per \$100,000 of assessed property value each year as part of Measure T, a bond measure passed to support Menlo Park's recreation programs and facilities, Community Services Director Cherise Brandell explained during the May 6 council meeting. How that stacks up against the nonresident surcharge will be researched before the commission meeting takes place this fall.

Six people, some of whom live within the 94025 Menlo Park zip code but outside city limits, told the council the

surcharge is an unfair expense for families, as is the one-week registration delay.

Dawn Irvine said her son competes on the gymnastics team for the city of Menlo Park, not the unincorporated county. Five out of the six team members live outside city limits. "I don't think the impact of fees on a team was considered," she said, adding that her family spent about \$3,200 just on gymnastics classes — which doesn't include private lessons or meet fees — and that was about \$730 more than a family living in Menlo Park.

"You've caused people to step away from the programs," Ms. Irvine said.

As for the registration delay, Ms. Irvine and other parents told the council that their children, who go to Menlo Park schools, would like to attend recreation classes with their friends from school, but often find popular programs like gymnastics full once their one-week waiting period expires.

Martial arts instructor Kristin Quintana of Kuk Sool Won talked about the impact the fees have on her business. With 93

students currently, her classes are at only 58 percent of capacity, she said. "I lost 45 students who said they didn't want to pay the nonresident rate." But after getting the city to agree to let her pay half the surcharge, effectively lowering it to 17 percent for her students, "in five weeks, I had four students decide to stay ... and five students returned to the program after several years away."

Exacerbating the problem, Ms. Quintana said, is that the surcharge doesn't apply to every program in the same way. Some instructors don't charge nonresidents more, and some charge less than 35 percent. "(That) asks my students to subsidize other programs."

Councilman Peter Ohtaki, who owns property in unincorporated Menlo Park, said he supports a higher fee for nonresidents to make up for the Measure T taxes residents are paying, but encouraged the city to see whether 35 percent is more than other cities charge. He also proposed looking at a "membership program" that would allow nonresidents paying an annual fee the same reg-

istration priority as residents.

Perhaps those living within unincorporated portions of Menlo Park should explore annexation to become part of the city, Councilwoman Kirsten Keith suggested. She noted that she would have a very difficult time telling a resident that he or she couldn't get into a class because of a nonresident.

Vice Mayor Catherine Carlton said her daughter spent months on the waiting list for gymnastics, so long that she'd nearly lost interest by the time an opening was available.

Councilman Rich Cline and Mayor Ray Mueller want data. Lots of data: which classes are full; what proportion of students come from unincorporated areas; which programs serve mainly the city and which, such as soccer leagues, are more regional; and so on.

The mayor said he was also very interested in exploring a membership program, along with sliding surcharges for classes that aren't full. It "makes no sense to me" to charge the full 35 percent for empty classes, Mr. Mueller said. ▀



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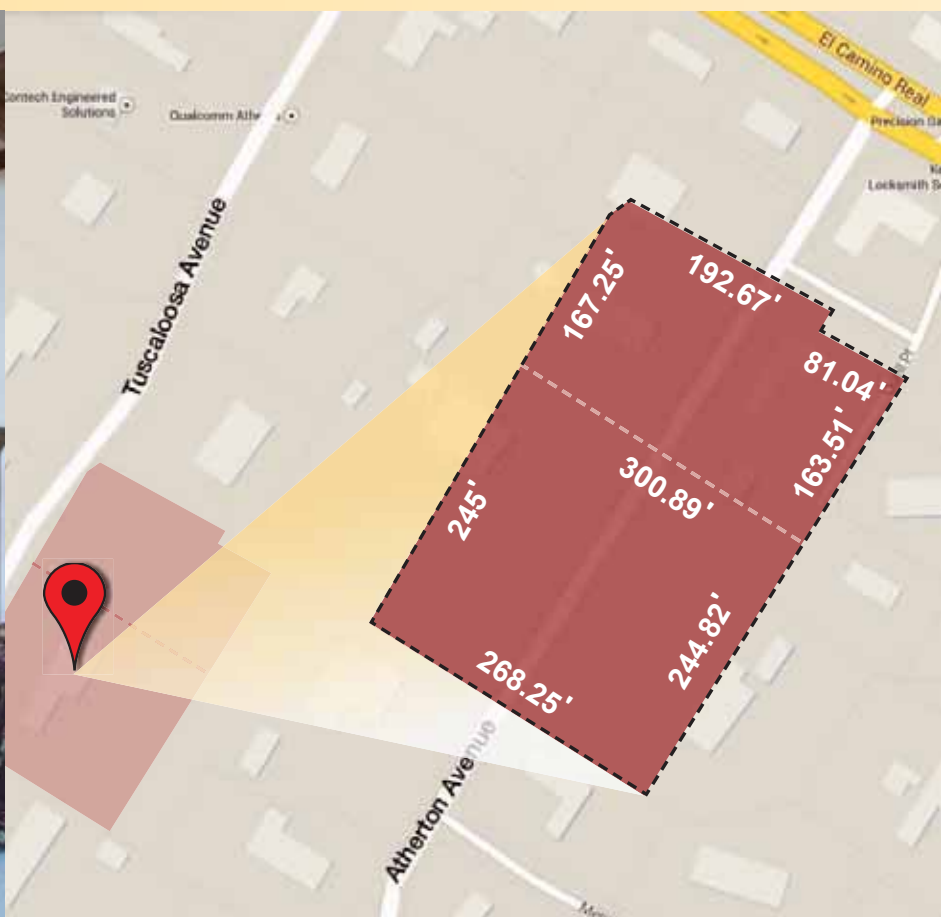
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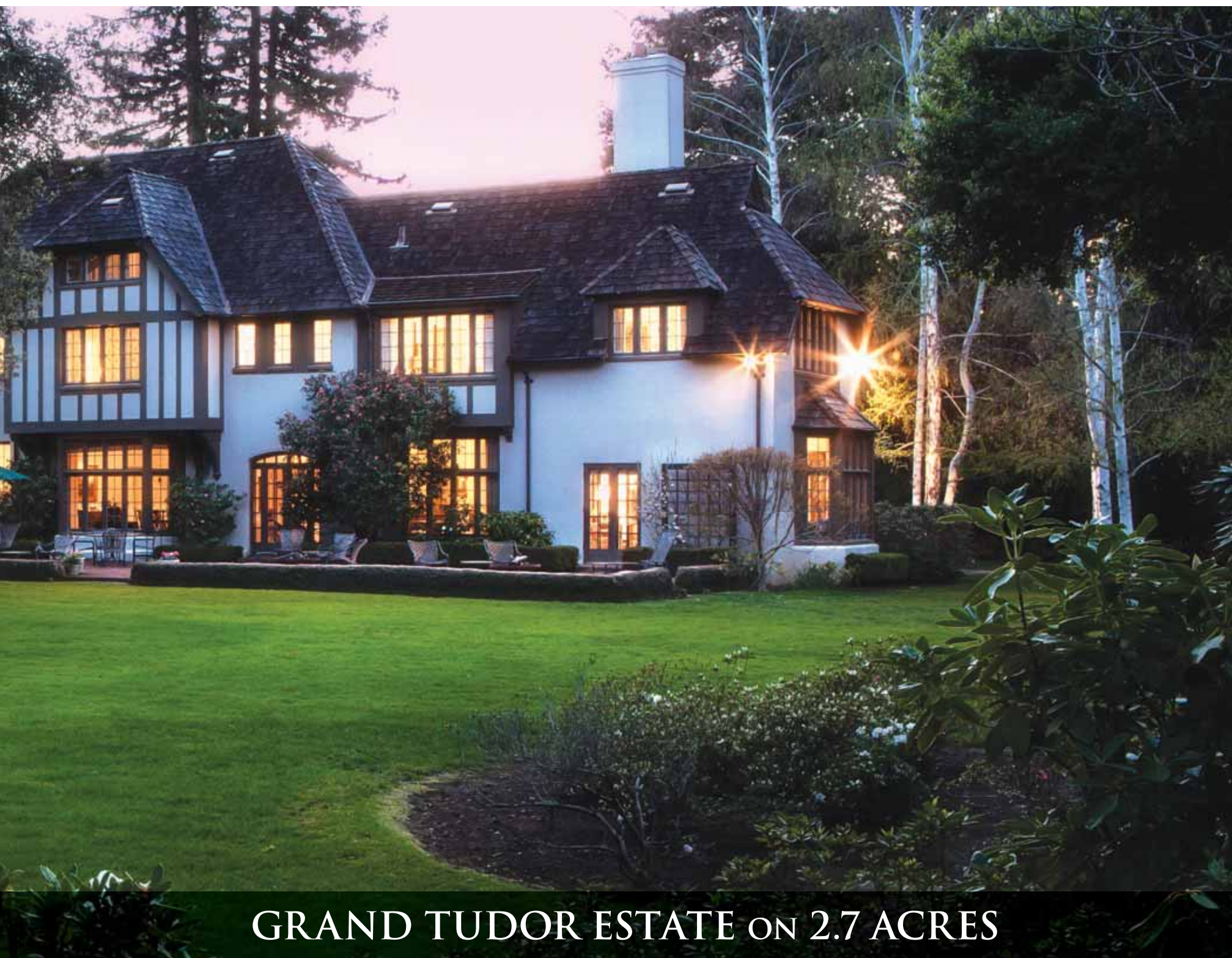


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Notice of Public Hearings

The Menlo Park City Elementary School District will hold two separate public hearings on the proposed Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and the proposed budget for fiscal year 2014-15 on Wednesday, May 28, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. at the Menlo Park City Elementary School District Office, located at 181 Encinal Avenue, Atherton, California. A copy of the LCAP and the proposed budget will be available for public examination at the above location from May 23, 2014 through May 28, 2014 between the hours of 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Any stakeholder affected by the LCAP or the Menlo Park City Elementary School District budget may appear before the Menlo Park City Elementary School District Board of Trustees and speak to the LCAP or the proposed budget or any item therein.

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Carol Ann Tinsley

July 31, 1937 – April 27, 2014

Carol Ann Tinsley of Menlo Park passed away unexpectedly on April 27, 2014. A long time resident of Menlo Park, she was born in Chicago, Illinois and raised in Los Altos and Atherton by her parents Margaret and Edwin Smith.



“CA”, as she was affectionately known to her family and close friends, attended Castilleja School in Palo Alto and The University of Arizona where she was a member of the Alpha Phi sorority. It was there she met Carlos “CO” and later married on April 8, 1958 in Palo Alto, California.

She will forever be remembered for her generous kind heart; her willingness to stop everything and lend an ear; her wonderful sense of humor; and genuine kindness and hospitality.

While raising four boys, Carol always showed her commitment to community. She was a member of The Peninsula Volunteers where she was president in 1971 and 1972. In 1982, she was awarded the Golden Acorn Award from the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce for distinguished community service.

Friends will recall that Carol’s home was always beautifully decorated. Her passion and eye for design led her to start her own interior design business, Peninsula Interiors. For over 30 years, Carol decorated beautiful homes and businesses in the Bay Area and beyond.

Carol’s priority was always her family and friends but also had a remarkable sense of civic duty and volunteerism. Carol served as President of the Sharon Heights Home Owner’s Association, a board member and chairperson of the house committee of the Menlo Circus Club from 2005-2010, and recently as a member of the San Mateo County Grand Jury.

Carol is survived by her husband of 56 years, Carlos O. Tinsley, her three sons, Randy (Libby) of Menlo Park, Ron (Julie) of Elk Grove, Ken (Suzi) of Menlo Park, her brothers, Richard and Donald Smith of San Diego and 15 grandchildren.

She will be missed by those who survived her, but solace is found in her reunion with her parents and her son David, who passed away in 2009.

Friends are invited to a celebration of Carol’s life which will be held at the Menlo Circus Club on Thursday, May 22, 2014 at 1:00 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made in Carol’s memory to the American Cancer Society.

PAID OBITUARY

Wildfire drill went well, officials say

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

About 30 residents in and around Los Trancos Woods evacuated in their cars to Portola Valley Town Center as part of a mock fire drill on Wednesday, May 7. The evacuation and the methods of notifying people were a key part of the Woodside Fire Protection District’s third annual wildfire drill.

The order to evacuate came to affected residents at about 10:20 a.m. via a “push” phone call from Town Hall, said Town Manager Nick Pegueros. About 20 minutes earlier, most town residents had been notified by phone of an “aggressive wildfire” approaching the areas of Portola Valley Ranch, Los Trancos Woods and Vista Verde.

In concert with the phone calls, the county Office of Emergency Services issued alerts and the town notified the PV-Forum online chat room and played recorded messages on the town’s new low-power AM radio transmitter. The radioed messages did not reach into parts of the hills, so evacuating residents did not pick up the signal until their vehicles came within range, Mr. Pegueros said.

The evacuating residents were “very excited” to be participating, Fire Marshal Denise Enea said. In fact, she said, the division of the Citizens Emergency Response Preparedness Program (CERPP) represented by Los Trancos Woods had asked to be chosen for the evacuation.

For the drill, senior staff at



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Captain Tom Cushieri, left, and Central County Fire Captain Chuck Goodwin take notes during a briefing as part of a May 7 wildfire drill.

Town Hall broke out the gear for the Emergency Operations Center, Mr. Pegueros said. The EOC element ended at about 12:30 p.m. after transmitting many communications for a “vast array” of scenarios, Ms. Enea said. “I think they enjoyed themselves,” she said of the staff. “They did a good job.”

Among the areas of focus for evacuees: food, toilets, buses and costs. “You start to expend money quickly,” Ms. Enea said. “You need to see who’s spending what.”

Residents had been preparing for weeks under the CERPP guidance, community leader Steve Friedman said in an email. The drill and evacuation were “a valuable learning experience,” he said. “This gave folks a chance to think about what you would do in the event of an evacuation and gave them a preparation checklist.”

“The drill went well from the fire district’s perspective,” said Battalion Chief Rob Lindner of the Woodside district. Aside from the runaway dump truck that hurtled down Westridge Drive, careered across Alpine Road, crashed through a fence, and came to rest above Los Trancos Creek after narrowly missing the assembled firefighters in the Ford Field parking lot, “everything went smoothly,” Mr. Lindner said.

Firefighters from around the county participated. There is talk of holding a drill in other areas of the county next year, he said.

“We try to train together even if it’s not an all-day drill,” Ms. Enea said. The mutual assistance pact among county firefighting agencies is very real. “Over the whole county, the alarm plan is a single moving living thing,” she said. “It’s good to work together and it’s an opportunity to learn.” ■

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Animal-control shelter: City agrees to pay, for now

By **Sandy Brundage**
Almanac Staff Writer

While the county's request that Menlo Park help pay for a new animal-control facility finally won City Council approval, that could be temporary.

The 5-0 vote on May 6 came with a caveat: The city intends to look around to see whether other contractors, such as the Palo Alto Humane Society, could provide the same services for less.

"It would've been better if you'd brought us into this process a lot earlier," Mayor Ray Mueller commented, addressing project representatives at the meeting. "You probably would've had an easier time with this council."

Mr. Mueller said an earlier request could have led the city to help find private donors, for example. During the meeting, project representatives said private funding wasn't explored given the lack of public relations appeal of a facility that will house dangerous and sick animals.

Vice Mayor Cat Carlton said she was aware of at least one

private organization that funds this type of project.

San Mateo County plans to replace a 60-year-old animal-holding facility on Airport Boulevard in San Mateo with a new, smaller one estimated to cost between \$15.1 million and \$20.2 million. The county contracts with the Peninsula Humane Society for facility operations, and in turn the 20 cities and towns contract for services.

The county asked the cities and towns that use the services to contribute toward the cost of the new facility.

Menlo Park was the last of 20 Peninsula jurisdictions to reach a decision; the others have approved the funding. Under the agreement, Menlo Park will pay \$23,728 to \$31,769 annually. Woodside, Portola Valley and Atherton will pay \$3,000 to \$13,111 annually.

Should Menlo Park abandon the contract, there is no financial penalty, but the city must give one year's notice, according to project representatives. Those cities remaining under contract would pick up the extra cost. ■

Police investigate Sand Hill hit-and-run

A dark blue 2002 GMC truck careened off several traffic signal poles and then ran into a tree in the area of Sand Hill Road and Branner Avenue on May 6, according to Menlo Park police.

Officers responding to a call that a traffic signal was down at Sand Hill Road's intersection with Branner Avenue around 9:24 p.m. found witnesses to the incident, but not

the driver.

Those who saw the collision described the driver as a white man in his mid 20s, about 5 feet 9 inches tall, and weighing 170 pounds. He wore a white T-shirt and jeans, they said. He reportedly stopped to gather a few items from the truck before walking away from the scene.

On Wednesday morning, May 7, police spokeswoman

Nicole Acker said, another call came in, this one at 5:45 a.m. from an injured man at the intersection of Sand Hill Road and Oak Avenue. He was taken to Stanford Hospital for treatment. But, she said, it's not clear yet whether he was involved in the Tuesday night collision.

Police ask anyone with information to call 330-6300.
— Sandy Brundage

William W "Bill" Eberwein

William W. "Bill" Eberwein (65) left this world to join his heavenly father on April 21, 2014 after a long and courageous battle with prostate cancer. Bill was a humble man of uncommon intellect and curiosity who taught, but never stopped learning and lived a full and rewarding life as a true renaissance man.

He is survived by his loving wife Kristin and sons Cole and Reid Eberwein of Menlo Park, CA; and was pre-deceased by his son Walker Eberwein. Other surviving family members include his mother, Thelma "Tommy" Eberwein of Portland, OR; brother, Bruce "Nip" Eberwein of Joppa, MD; brother, Bart Eberwein, of Portland, OR; brother, Robert "Bing" Eberwein of Allentown, PA; and sister Jesse Molina of Riverton, NJ.

Bill was born and raised in Baltimore, MD and studied education and psychology at Catonsville Community College and the University of Maryland. His varied and successful business career began in the insurance industry in Baltimore, but soon took him to Los Angeles, where he joined Tandem Com-

puters. Bill was an early and accomplished tech enthusiast who possessed the unique ability to translate the benefits of computers to lay and business audiences alike. As a result, his skills led him to

become a "trainer of trainers" for several computer companies, including Tandem, Oracle, Blue Pumpkin, and Juniper Networks. Bill's compassionate and reassuring manner made him an excellent teacher and motivator of people, including his adopted son Jason Levine, who Bill mentored while living in Los Angeles. Deeply spiritual, Bill's quest for enlightenment took him to Switzerland as a young man, where he studied transcendental meditation with the Maharishi institute. In time, his active study of all religions steered him back to Christianity, which he embraced enthusiastically and he and his family were devout members of the Menlo Presbyterian Church in Menlo Park.

A man of many talents, Bill was quintessentially well-rounded. His wit and storytelling ability left family and friends in stitches and impressed by the unexpected moral behind his words. An inveterate traveler, he made his way around the world, where he climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, explored Thailand, and lived for a short time on the Isle of Mallorca. A skilled gymnast and competitive diving champion

in high school, Bill also enjoyed performing magic tricks for friends and family and inventing games to play with his children and tireless family pet, "Boulder The Wonder Dog." To hone his renown public speaking ability, he experimented with stand-up comedy in L.A. clubs while living in Southern California and later performed in community theatre productions after moving to the Peninsula. Despite having the entertaining skills of a "headliner," Bill never called attention to himself, but always encouraged others. Music was another passion of Bill's, which led him to audition for and eventually serve as Chairman of the Bohemian Club Chorus, along with performing in dozens of Club shows over a span of 20 years. He was also an anchor of "The Tonics," a 4-man a cappella group that featured Bill as a baritone and soloist. His skill at finding an elusive harmony note left many a fellow singer in awe... Also a voracious reader, Bill loved mysteries, biographies, historical novels, political treatises, and of course, the Bible.

A strong family man, Bill was devoted to Kristin, the love of his life, and their 3 wonderful sons. Bill was blessed to have a large, diverse, and loyal group of friends and business colleagues and

was truly loved by all who knew him. He will be greatly missed, but long-remembered for his wit, intellect, humility, and love of his family and fellow man.

A service to celebrate Bill's full and well-lived life was held on Monday, April 28 at the Menlo Presbyterian Church in Menlo Park, CA. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that you consider a donation to either of the following organizations, each of which were important to Bill—the first, in light of the loss of their beloved Walker and the second, a worthy charity to which they devoted substantial time and energy. 1) Will to Live Foundation: a group dedicated to preventing teen suicide through education and counseling about mental health issues—<http://www.will-to-live.org/about-will-to-live-foundation/make-a-donation/>; or 2) City Impact Ministries: a Christian resource center that provides food, a K-8 school, a library, and drop-in medical services for San Francisco Tenderloin residents—<http://sfcityimpact.com/donate/>.

James Stanley Aufdemberge

March 1, 1953 to April 15, 2014

James Stanley Aufdemberge, age 61, of Kansas City, MO, moved on to his next adventure on April 15, 2014 after an extended illness. He lived life large and will always be remembered as an outgoing bon vivant and raconteur with a great sense of humor.

Formerly of Atherton, Mr. Aufdemberge is the father of Andrew James Aufdemberge and the former husband of Celia Aufdemberge, both of Menlo Park. He is also survived by 2 daughters, Beth Aufdemberge and Rachel Aufdemberge, a granddaughter Victoria, and siblings Jan Mulkey, David Aufdemberge, and Donna Miles.

Mr. Aufdemberge was a real estate entrepreneur in Kansas City in recent years. Previously, Mr. Aufdemberge had a 30 year career of senior management roles in sales, marketing and field operations at leading software companies including Agile Software Company; The Complex Sale; Information Management Associates; Dun & Bradstreet Software; and Management Science America. Mr. Aufdemberge was a mentor to several local Silicon Valley industry leaders who credit him for their career start.

Mr. Aufdemberge had a passion for global travel and theatre (especially Shakespeare), was an avid reader of anything history, and was known for possessing an extensive amount of trivia on most subjects. He was creative, loved to entertain and cook, and enjoyed his family and friends. He graduated with a B.A. in Fine Arts from Beloit College.

Mr. Aufdemberge grew up in Kansas City, MO; lived in NYC; London; Melbourne, Australia; Agoura Hills, CA; Fairfield, CT; and Atherton, CA during his life before returning to his hometown.

A memorial service was held in Kansas City for family and a visitation day will be held on May 18th from 3 to 5 p.m. at his family's home in Menlo Park for local friends and colleagues.

Contributions may be made in Mr. Aufdemberge's memory to The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, PO Box 460937, San Francisco, CA 94146-0937; www.sfshakes.org



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Hall of Fame baseball player Willie McCovey of Woodside answers questions from Woodside School students.

Willie McCovey helps rededicate ball field

By Barbara Wood
Special to the Almanac

WOODSIDE

Although he's been retired since decades before they were born, Willie McCovey made a new generation of fans last week when he visited Woodside Elementary School on Monday, May 5, to help rededicate the baseball field that is named in his honor.

The school's students, teachers, staff and some community members gathered on McCovey field at lunchtime, with lots of San Francisco Giants' orange and black in evidence.

"I'm very honored to have (the field) named after me," said Mr. McCovey. "This is one of the thrills of my life, being here with you guys. I mean it."

Mr. McCovey, who has lived in Woodside since 1977, which is the year the field was originally dedicated, answered questions from the students about his career. He spent 22 years as a Major League baseball player, all but four of them with the Giants. He was named to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1986.

"I was living out my dream," he told the students about his days as a Giant, playing on his dream team in San Francisco and with one of his dream teammates, Willie Mays, who he had idolized growing up.

Mr. McCovey's favorite moment in baseball? Hitting a home run in the second game

of the 1962 World Series on Friday, Oct. 5, at Candlestick Park.

Mr. McCovey told the students he played basketball, baseball and football growing up. But once Jackie Robinson became a Major League baseball player, when Mr. McCovey was 9 years old, he knew he could someday play there himself.

"When he broke the color barrier, I knew there was room for me to play Major League baseball," Mr. McCovey said. "I knew one day I would make it to the big leagues."

Although he is 76 and uses a wheelchair, Mr. McCovey apparently still retains a good grip, if the comment overheard from one of those lucky enough to shake his hand before the event is any indication. "He nearly broke my hand," the man joked.

An anonymous donation of \$310,150 by a school family allowed the baseball field to be redone over the winter holidays. Another \$15,000 was donated by the Alpine-West Menlo Little League.

Upgrading the field and making it accessible to all was part of the school's facilities master plan, says Superintendent Beth Polito. "We just streamlined it and did it quick because we wanted to be able to use it for this year's baseball season," she said. "It's beautiful; it looks great."

The total cost of the project was \$353,129, with the amount in excess of the donations paid by the school.

The baseball diamond and outfield were completely redone and bullpens added for pitcher warm-ups. Drainage and irrigation were also part of the project, according to school board member Rudy Driscoll. ■

Lyme Foundation raises \$500K

BRIEFS

The Bay Area Lyme Foundation raised nearly \$500,000 at its second annual LymeAid benefit concert on April 27 at a Portola Valley home, said foundation spokesperson Yvonne Wolters.

The money will go for research to find a reliable way to diagnose and cure Lyme disease, she said.

The first recipients of the foundation's \$100,000 research grants were announced. They are:

■ Lisa K. Blum, a postdoctoral fellow at the Stanford University School of Medicine whose work might explain why some people have short-term symptoms from a Lyme infection and others become chronically ill.

■ Jerome F.M. Bouquet, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of California, San

Francisco, who is working to identify "biomarkers" that will allow for the development of a host-based clinical diagnostic for both acute and post-treatment Lyme disease.

More than 300 people attended the event, where scientists from Harvard, Johns Hopkins and Stanford discussed Lyme disease research. The band The English Beat performed.

Go to BayAreaLyme.org for more information.

Flight night

Portola Valley will hold its fourth annual "Flight Night," with demonstrations and displays of radio-controlled model aircraft, at 6 p.m. Friday, May

16, at the Portola Valley Town Center, 765 Portola Road in Portola Valley.

The public is invited to this free event, where fixed-wing, helicopters and multi-copters will be demonstrated and displayed. Some aircraft will have lights for after-dark flying, according to a statement from the event's sponsor, the Portola Valley Nature & Science Committee.

Participants can get instruction and practice on computer flight simulators. Materials will be on hand to build gliders, and there will be in-flight videos and opportunities to talk with skilled pilots and learn about careers in science and technology.

Go to flightnightpv.org for more information.

■ POLICE CALLS

This information is from the Menlo Park Police Department. Under the law, people charged with offenses are considered innocent unless convicted. The dates police received the report are shown.

MENLO PARK

Forgery reports:

■ A woman from Berkeley Avenue and a man from Euclid Avenue told police that blank checks had been stolen from their mailboxes. The woman reported a check forged for \$20,000 and the man reported a \$19,000 forgery. May 6 and May 2.

■ In response to a phone call from someone claiming to be from the Miami Police Department, a man from Laurel Avenue wired \$2,000 to post bail for his granddaughter, allegedly in a Miami jail. May 2.

■ A resident of Madera Avenue told police that someone stole his credit card and bought an airline ticket for \$1,318. May 5.

Residential burglary report: Someone stole tools from two residences under construction. The estimated loss is \$2,645 from a Wood Lane home, and an unstated loss from a San Mateo Drive home. May 9.

Theft reports:

■ A woman living in the 1900 block of Santa Cruz Avenue told police that someone stole pieces of jewelry with a value of \$1,200. May 7.

■ A bag containing a laptop computer and a wallet, a total value of \$1,020, was stolen from a locker at Facebook at Hacker Way. May 7.

■ Someone stole a locked metal box from a home in the 1300 block of Willow Road. The contents included \$60 in cash, jewelry and prescription medication, a total loss of about \$141. May 4.

■ A man had his hair cut at Golden Shears barbershop on Santa Cruz Avenue and walked out of the barbershop without paying. May 2.

Menlo weighs policy on surveillance data

■ BRIEFS

The Menlo Park police may finally get to deploy their new automated license plate readers in the near future.

Deployment has been waiting for the council to implement a new privacy policy governing the use of data obtained through public surveillance.

The council was scheduled to review a proposed ordinance governing the use of the LPRs as well as the city's security cameras on May 13. If adopted, the new regulations would require the destruction of license plate data after six months unless it pertains to an active criminal investigation or court order. Camera recordings would be kept for 90 days.

The ordinance allows sharing data with other law enforcement agencies only with the permission of Menlo Park police

and only if those agencies have signed an agreement to abide by the regulations. Any city employee accessing the data without authorization would face potential termination, criminal prosecution and civil liability.

The Northern California Regional Intelligence Center, which will store Menlo Park's captured license plate data, will provide quarterly reports to the police department about how many plates were captured, how many were on an active "wanted" list, and who asked to review the data and why. The police will then provide a report to the council.

Go to tinyurl.com/l55zzt2 to review the ordinance.

Go to AlmanacNews.com for updates. The council meeting occurred after the Almanac's press deadline.

Benefit in memory of Amelie Le Moullac

A benefit will be held on Friday, May 16, in memory of Amelie Le Moullac, a 24-year-old Menlo School graduate who was killed while riding her bike to work in San Francisco last August.

Members of the Palo Alto Philharmonic and a choir of community singers will perform at the benefit, along with Ms. Le Moullac's mother, Jessie Jewitt.

The benefit will take place at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, located at 600 Colorado Ave. in Palo Alto. All proceeds will go to "Amelie's Angels," a fund created to help children in Haiti.

Voter info online

San Mateo County residents can peruse candidate statements, ballot arguments and videos of candidate forums online and on television.

Go to tinyurl.com/muleg9z or smartvoter.org for information on the June 3 election.



Our life here

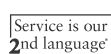
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Work begins on Skyline slope

Crews from the California Department of Transportation are working to repair a steep slope off the shoulder of Highway 35 (Skyline Boulevard) at mile post 13.1 near Skylonda at the intersection of Bear Gulch Road. Work hours will be from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The work, including building a pile wall and installing a metal guardrail, is expected to be completed in July, weather permitting, Caltrans said.

One-way traffic is set to begin on May 19 or 20 and will be in effect 24 hours a day. Digital message signs will be installed to help guide motorists.

Go to tinyurl.com/Sky212 for more information.



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Viewpoint

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

Voters face big bond issues; school bond in Woodside



There are two major bond issues on the June ballot with very different goals — one to build more classroom space at local high schools for an expected enrollment bulge that could add 22 percent more students over the next five years, and the other to make 62,000 acres of wilderness and trails more accessible for local

residents. In addition, the Woodside Elementary School District is seeking approval of a \$13.5 million bond measure to make improvements at its combined elementary/middle school on Woodside Road.

\$265 million will pay for space needed at Sequoia district high schools

We believe there is a compelling case to approve the Sequoia Union High School District's \$265 million bond issue. It would pay for two small high schools and additional classrooms at all four of the district's high schools — Menlo-Atherton, Woodside, Sequoia (Redwood City) and Carlmont (San Carlos/Belmont).

How else could the district accommodate the huge enrollment surge that is making its way through the district's feeder schools now? A major factor in this demographic shift is that many older residents are moving out and selling their homes to newly affluent young parents, drawn here by the tech boom and excellent schools.

New classrooms will cover much of the immediate demand for space, but when the two small magnet-type schools come on line it is hoped they will be popular and help alleviate pressure on the big schools. One new school would be built in the Menlo Park area and the other in the north part of the district. Each existing school will add classroom space for 300 to 400 additional students, although that number could increase. Menlo-Atherton's enrollment is expected to jump at least 25 percent by 2020-21, and a 19 percent jump is expected at Woodside High. Double-digit growth is also likely at Sequoia and Carlmont schools.

If history is any indicator, the odds are high — 82.4 percent according to state calculations — that the bond measure will be approved. A major factor favoring school bonds is that only 55 percent voter approval is needed, and historically, the Midpeninsula has been supportive of school bonds.

This bond measure comes at a relatively low price, costing property owners just \$16 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation. That means a home valued at \$1 million would add a tax of \$160 a year, hardly a burden for owners of today's high-valued homes.

We urge residents to vote yes on Measure A, the bond measure for the Sequoia Union High School District.

Open space bond will help upgrade huge Peninsula asset

More than 40 years ago, before voters approved setting aside land for the Midpeninsula Open Space District, there was no certainty that the lush meadows and forests of the scenic Coastal Range would be protected from development. Until voters approved an initiative in 1972 to create the district that now spans San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, developers could have built subdivisions and commercial projects all the way up the hill from San Francisco Bay to the coastside.

Measure AA on the June 3 ballot authorizes the sale of up to \$300 million in bonds to fund improvements to make sure the 62,000-acre preserve is maintained properly and made more accessible for the public to enjoy over the next 30 years. The cost to each taxpayer in this far-flung district will be minimal — \$3.18 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation, or just over \$30 a year for the owner of a home assessed at \$1 million. The district is primarily funded now by a property tax of \$17 per \$100,000 assessed valuation, which would not be affected by the bond issue vote.

The need for the bond measure was determined after a year and a half of public meetings to evaluate the district's priorities and

develop a vision and plan for the district's 26 preserves over the next 40 years. Among other things, the funds would be used to open more areas to public access, improve and construct more trails and facilities, restore creeks and streams, and acquire more land as it becomes available. This initiative is exactly what the district should be doing — working to add more opportunities for the thousands of hikers, bikers, horseback riders, campers and dog owners who visit the district 365 days a year.

It is the taxpayers of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley, Woodside, Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Mountain View, Redwood City, San Carlos, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Sunnyvale, Cupertino, Los Gatos, Saratoga, and Monte Sereno who have paid to keep this preserve intact over the years and will continue to do so if this bond measure is approved by two-thirds of the voters on June 3. This is a high bar. We urge residents

to vote yes on Measure AA, which will approve up to \$300 million in bonds to make much needed improvements in the open space district.

Woodside school bond measure will pay to build new auditorium, add classrooms

The small, 450-student elementary and middle school in Woodside looks spiffy from the outside, but some of its buildings are outdated and need replacing, including the 1940s-era Sellman Auditorium. This and other needed improvements will be made if voters in the Woodside Elementary School District approve a \$13.5 million bond measure on June 3.

Measure D would cost district residents \$24.05 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation, or \$240 for a home assessed at \$1 million. It would be added to the \$34 for bond issues approved in 1999 and 2005. The cost is apparently not a concern, as the bond measure faces no apparent organized opposition.

Along with replacing the auditorium, named after former longtime superintendent George Sellman, the planned projects include replacement of two aging portable classroom buildings, repairs to leaky roofs, and other maintenance and modernization projects.

We urge Woodside voters to approve Measure D, which will greatly improve and enhance Woodside Elementary School.



Menlo Park Historical Association

Our Regional Heritage

Menlo Park Mayor Charles Burgess receives his inoculation against polio during the 1950s. He served two terms as mayor and was first elected to the City Council in 1942, when the city's population was 3,000. He was a graduate of Stanford and also served as president of the League of California Cities.

Ex-council member rejects specific plan petition

By John Boyle

A group calling themselves “Save Menlo” is promoting a petition that would dramatically alter the recently re-approved El Camino Real/Downtown Specific Plan (DTSP). As a former City Council member, I have had a number of people ask me about this issue.

I strongly disagree with the petition for the following reasons:

■ Vacant lots on El Camino will remain vacant. The DTSP was designed to encourage vibrancy and balanced growth. Since its approval, two projects have already been proposed that would eliminate the blighted, former car dealership lots on El Camino. The petition, however, seeks to restrict the existing approved mix of allowed uses. If approved, the current proposals will have to be withdrawn. Replacement proposals aren’t guaranteed. If or when new projects are proposed, the changes may well be more negative than positive.

■ Loss of revenue to schools, fire district and the city. The petition will result in significant loss of near-term revenue for our schools, fire district and city. In addition to several millions of dollars in upfront development fees, the current proposals being attacked by this petition would annually generate \$3 million for our schools as well as \$900,000 each for our fire district and city to fund important community services. A similar petition back in 2006

stopped the Derry property project, which has sat vacant ever since. To date, this lost opportunity has cost our community well over \$10 million in development fees and lost annual, incremental property tax revenue.



■ School crowding and traffic. The petition could result in significantly more high-density housing being built on the two vacant El Camino lots, leading to more crowding in our over-burdened Menlo Park schools. Additionally, the petition could shift development toward more automobile-intensive retail and high-traffic medical offices. It does not ensure less traffic, and in fact, may result in more.

■ Lack of public process. The petition was crafted in secret with zero professional studies or public discussion being done. The DTSP went through six years of public input and independent, professional analysis. It is the result of extensive discussion, debate, and consensus creation. This privately defined petition flies in the face of our Menlo Park values that demand transparency and public participation in our land-use decision-making.

■ The petition rejects existing consensus. The petition’s changes to the DTSP were already rejected during the recent review and approval of the DTSP by the City Council and Planning Commission. One of the goals of the consensus-driven DTSP was to

help our city to avoid the uncertainty and politics that have historically characterized and stalled prior efforts to eliminate the blight on El Camino. Rather than accept the compromises already inherent in the DTSP, this petition returns us to the divisive, political battles of the past.

■ Costly litigation and taxpayer expense. The petition could cost the city millions of dollars in lawsuits and legal challenges, not to mention the future “ballot box zoning” elections mandated by the petition should certain untested limitations need to be adjusted. With this unvetted petition, there is no way to anticipate or understand all of the possible unintended consequences. Rather than allow our Planning Commission and City Council to do their jobs, this petition will require citywide public votes and expensive, divisive political campaigns for future adjustments.

The result will be political chaos, development gridlock, and probable lawsuits. Worse, the changes locked into law may well create more traffic, more school crowding, less downtown vibrancy, and reduced revenue sources for our schools, fire district, and city services.

I urge you to join me in rejecting this unvetted, flawed, and divisive petition.

John Boyle is a former Menlo Park City Council member (2006-2010).



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