



Celebrate the Fourth  
with parades, festivals | Page 8

# The Almanac

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

JULY 2, 2014 | VOL. 49 NO. 43



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Section 2



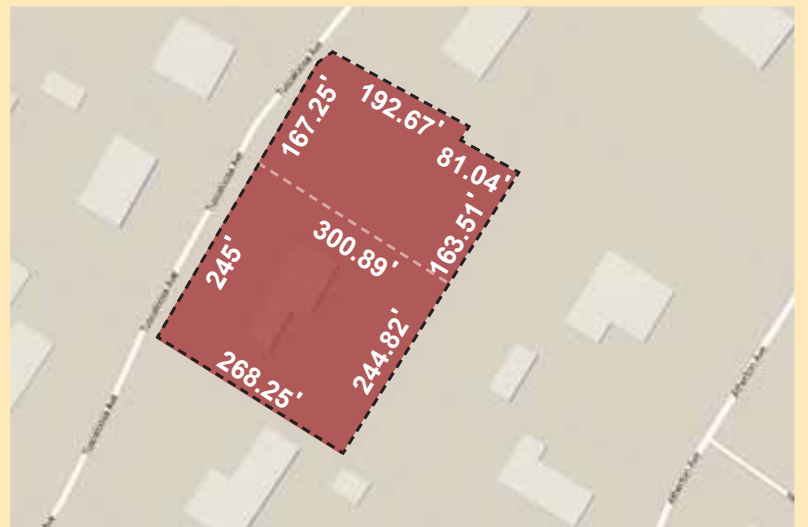
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Natalia Nazarova/Special to the Almanac

## Facebook pride

James Brechney, center, chalks a rainbow with interns and employees at Facebook's headquarters to celebrate Gay Pride Day on June 27. A barbecue salesman from Australia, Mr. Brechney drew rainbows in his house in Australia last year after government workers erased one sketched on the street. After a photo of his redecorated house went viral on Facebook, people worldwide started chalking rainbows. "To chalk around my house was sort of a joke. And a year later to be here at Facebook headquarters is a dream," he said. "This campaign is a conversation starter. It's so innocent and beautiful. It creates amazing awareness. We get a lot of emails and letters from kids at school, who get bullied. They just love seeing all the photos coming in from all over the world."

# Assessed values rise steadily

By Barbara Wood  
Almanac Staff Writer

The assessed value of property in the county increased by \$8.75 billion from Jan. 1, 2013, to Jan. 1, 2014, the San Mateo County Assessor's Office announced Friday.

Some property owners got some good news in the report: Because inflation, as measured by the California Consumer Price Index, was only 0.45 percent, assessments on properties that didn't sell or undergo new construction will only rise that much.

The assessed valuations of county property, the amounts on which property taxes are based, increased to nearly \$165 billion, or 5.6 percent above last year, and the highest valuation ever.

Town	Assessed value (2014)	Increase (\$) from 2013	Increase (%) from 2013
Atherton	\$8.06 billion	\$493 million	6.52%
Menlo Park	\$12.02 billion	\$704 million	6.22%
Portola Valley	\$2.80 billion	\$147 million	5.54%
Woodside	\$4.98 billion	\$211 million	4.43%

Source: San Mateo County assessor. The amounts shown are the assessed value of all properties as of Jan. 1, 2014, and changes in ownership, new construction, and changes in value from Jan. 1, 2013.)

Mark Church, the San Mateo County assessor, released figures that show total assessed value in Menlo Park is more than \$12 billion (6.2 percent more than 2013); in Atherton, \$8 billion (6.5 percent higher); in Woodside, nearly \$5 billion (4.4 percent higher); and in Portola Valley, \$2.8 billion (5.5 percent higher).

Menlo Park's valuation is based on 11,043 parcels and accounts (which are non-secured property such as airplanes, boats and business equipment). In Atherton there are 2,655 parcels and accounts; in Woodside, 2,494; and in Portola Valley, 1,823.

"The roll value continues to

See **ASSESSED VALUES**, page 14

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## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



### Market Value vs. Appraised Value

**Dear Monica:** After making several offers on various houses, we finally were the winning bid on a great house. We were ecstatic until the appraisal came in much lower than the selling price. Does this mean that we significantly overpaid for the property? If we had offered the appraised value as our bid, we would not have gotten the house. Is the appraiser right about the value or are we? Ruth M.

**Dear Ruth:** Your experience highlights an important aspect of the multiple offer market that we are currently experiencing; i.e., should the appraised value be the same as the market value. Usually the answer is yes because appraisers very familiar with what is happening in the market can find support for the selling price. But sometimes the appraisal is off the mark because the appraiser used the wrong comparables or was too conservative in the analysis. Once

the appraisal is finished, it is very difficult to change it although there are procedures available to do this. But there are risks too because a new appraisal is costly and may be the same or worse than the original one.

Market value, i.e. what a willing buyer will pay a willing seller, is different than appraised value, which only looks at closed sales of comparable properties. Appraised value doesn't take into account that there were several willing buyers competing for the property you are buying and that in order to win the bid you had to be better than the rest of the bidders. Market value is the price you had to pay to get the property and will be used as a data point in future appraisals but that doesn't help you now. If you plan to live in the property for five to seven years you shouldn't worry about this. Unless the market recedes, your home should hold its value during the time you own it.

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

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**NOTICE OF GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION TO BE CONSOLIDATED WITH THE STATEWIDE GENERAL ELECTION**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a General Municipal Election will be held in the Town of Atherton, County of San Mateo, California, on Tuesday, November 4, 2014 between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. for the election of the following officers:

Three (3) Council members for a term of four years.

The filing period for nomination papers, candidate statements and related documents will be available in the Office of the City Clerk, 91 Ashfield Road, Atherton, CA, on Monday, July 7, 2014 at 8:00 a.m. The last date and time for the submission of nomination papers for the aforementioned offices is Friday, August 8, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. except that in the event an incumbent for any such office does not file nomination papers by that date and time, the period is extended for five days to Wednesday, August 13, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. for said office.

The last day to register to vote in the election to be held November 4, 2014, is October 20, 2014 and is open to all UNITED STATES CITIZENS who will be at least eighteen (18) years of age at the time of the next election.

DATED: June 30, 2014

THERESA N DELLASANTA,  
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# Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

## Town cuts fine for trees felled without permit

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

It has become a familiar pattern. A Woodside resident comes to the Town Council to appeal a five-figure fine for having felled mature trees without first obtaining a permit. The council deliberates over the unforgiving character of the fines in the eight-year-old ordinance and whether it should be revisited. And after more discussion, usually on by how much to reduce the fine, a majority on the council votes to reduce it.

It's happened four times since 2009 and it happened again June 24. Residents Michael Dorsey and Susan Ford Dorsey were fined \$11,250 for the felling of three mature bay laurel trees, exactly half of the \$22,500 the municipal code calls for. The council voted 6-1, with Councilman Ron Romines dissenting.

The penalties are set at \$5,000 for the first tree, \$7,500 for the second and \$10,000 for each subsequent tree. A tree-cutting permit from Town Hall is \$50, but actually getting a permit requires consultation and agreement from a professional arborist.

Town staff learned of the downed trees in March and issued a code violation notice. Mr. Dorsey appealed the fine. "... We were told by many people that Bay trees are bad for Oak trees," he explained in his appeal. "We have more than 100 Oak trees that we are passionate about protecting. So, I wasn't as

vigilant as I should have been in protecting the Bay trees."

Appearing before the council, Mr. Dorsey spoke briefly — to apologize for not knowing the regulations, and to thank the members for their voluntary public service. Mr. Dorsey is a venture capitalist and has been a Woodside resident for 12 years, he said. The couple have about 7.7 acres on Family Farm Road.

Ms. Ford Dorsey, who was also present at the meeting, is the widow of Tom Ford, who was a resident of Portola Valley, a philanthropist and the moving force behind the development of Sand Hill Road into a center of gravity for venture capitalism.

A philanthropist herself, Ms. Ford Dorsey has given \$7.5 million to an international studies program at Stanford University and recently offered as much as \$100,000 in matching funds for the renovation of Ford (baseball) Field in Portola Valley. She co-founded the after-school academic program Center for a New Generation and has held many nonprofit leadership positions.

### About bay laurels

Bay laurels are native to California and are strong suspects in cases of sudden oak death. When bay trees are felled without a permit, Woodside property owners who appeal their fines often speak of concern for



Photo courtesy of town of Woodside

**This mature** bay laurel tree is one of three felled without a permit on the property of Woodside residents Michael Dorsey and Susan Ford Dorsey. The Town Council deliberated and cut in half the statutory fine of \$22,500 for the three trees.

oak trees as justification.

The Forest Pathology and Mycology Laboratory at the University of California at Berkeley states that bay laurel leaves are a principal carrier of the disease, for which there is no cure. Management options, including spraying, injections, and removing bays, are effective only if done before the oaks are infected, according to the lab website. But determining whether a tree is infected is tricky. Symptoms can be misleading and validation requires lab analysis.

Scientists from the Berkeley lab visit Woodside and Portola Valley annually for SOD workshops. Residents gather samples of potentially diseased

material, turn them in and wait, generally several weeks, for test results.

The Dorseys' oaks had been sprayed to try to get ahead of SOD, Mr. Dorsey said in response to a question from Councilman Romines. Mr. Dorsey said that he was unaware that bay laurels were protected by town laws.

To cut the bays, they hired a man recommended by their gardener, Mr. Dorsey said. "I guess they're licensed, but it's not one of the names that we would recognize," he said.

Well-informed laborers are important. Cutting an infected tree leaves SOD microbes on tools, shoes and tires, all of which should be decontami-

nated, according to the California Oak Mortality Task Force. Pets can transfer the disease. Infected wood is not supposed to leave the property.

### How big a fine?

During the discussion before they voted on a fine, council members tipped their hands a bit.

"Well, here we go again. Unlicensed people, unprofessional people taking down these trees again," said Councilman Dave Tanner. "We have a rule. We set the rules up in place to protect our trees. We do it with the fines."

See **TREES**, page 6

## Woodside adds funds for rehabilitation of bridges

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Along-term bridge rehabilitation program and the occasional presence at the planning desk in Woodside Town Hall of an in-house architectural consultant are among the late-approved allocations from the town's budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year.

For the bridge program, the Town Council, at its June 24 meeting, authorized the seeding of a capital reserve fund with \$750,000 from the general fund. The reserve fund is slated to grow by \$250,000 annually until the 2018-19 fiscal year.

The town had the wherewithal

to create this fund, in part, due to a 2013 one-time back payment of just over \$1 million in property tax revenues from San Mateo County.

As with plans to sequester \$100,000 annually over five years to rehabilitate the town's storm-drain system, allocations to the bridge program will be placeholders, Town Manager Kevin Bryant said. Costs could exceed what town finances could bear, in which case the council may turn to traditional ways of capital project fundraising: bond measures, low-interest loans and grants.

### Bridge fund

Three century-old bridges —

on Kings Mountain Road, Portola Road and Mountain Home Road — are not equipped for modern two-way traffic, with its heavier, larger and more powerful vehicles. The state designated all three bridges "functionally obsolete" and the council is facing choices that could involve millions of dollars and potentially affect Woodside's rural character.

Federal funds are available for 90 percent of the costs, but such funds bring with them federal safety standards, including 40-foot-wide roadways — a more modern appearance than is typical or desired in Woodside.

A \$159,000 forensic analysis of the three bridges is underway to determine whether they're safe and can be maintained to state standards without the need for federal funds.

### Architect in Town Hall

Members of the Planning Department staff at Town Hall have been working long hours as the economy improves and home construction and remodeling surge. The burden is also heavy on the town's Architectural and Site Review Board, particularly for projects that reflect insufficient attention to residential design guidelines.

Planning Director Jackie

Young, during an earlier budget discussion, noted that the city of Mountain View has an in-house architect to help applicants with designs early in the process.

"Maybe that's the right addition, an architectural consultant," Town Manager Kevin Bryant said at the time.

"The town staff and the town would benefit enormously," Councilwoman Anne Kasten said. "As the projects get more complex, we need to get more precise."

Councilman Peter Mason, an architect himself, noted the value an architect can bring by simplifying a project.

The budget includes \$50,000 for architectural consulting, with a focus on complex projects. ■

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## GreenWaste says it needs higher rates because people are producing less garbage

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

### ■ PORTOLA VALLEY

The Portola Valley Town Council approved a 5.58 percent rate increase for recycled materials and garbage collection in Portola Valley starting July 1. The increase is identical to that approved earlier in June by the Woodside council.

GreenWaste Recovery Inc. out of San Jose serves both communities with weekly collection of garbage, recyclable materials and compostable materials. In presentations to the councils, company officials noted that customers are producing less garbage — the key to the current rate structure. In both cases, GreenWaste asked for 8.58 percent increase and was refused.

The rate structure is old, said Emily Hanson, GreenWaste's director of business development and communications. It's a vestige of the days when people needed incentives to recycle, and collection companies responded by making recycling and yard waste collection free. "As the industry has evolved, we still have a cost based on garbage volume," she told the Portola Valley council. "We're trying to catch-up the rate model to match the processing system."

Because rates are based on the garbage component, customers can put out any number of carts of recyclable and compostable materials and it does not affect the fee, Ms. Hanson said. Frequent shoppers at Amazon.com, a generator of packaging waste, are being subsidized, Mayor Ann Wengert noted.

GreenWaste's expenses have also risen faster than the consumer price index. According to statistics provided by the company, health insurance premiums have gone up 39 percent and diesel fuel

up 54 percent over the last five years. (The U.S. Energy Information Administration shows California diesel fuel prices rising 48.5 percent since 2009.)

Costs for transporting compostable materials are up 14 percent, and while composting effectively recycles materials that would otherwise rot in landfills, the company is lucky if it can give it away, Ms. Hanson said.

Meanwhile, revenues from selling recyclables, a volatile market that depends on the state of the Chinese economy, dropped 13.5 percent between 2011 and 2013, she said.

#### What's next

One goal for the new rate structure, Ms. Hanson said, is an innovative, sustainable volume-based fee, or "Pay as you throw." Another is using the methane from the composting process to fuel the trucks — when the current fleet is replaced and if trucks of the right size are equipped with natural-gas engines, said Frank Weigel, the chief operating officer.

When might a new rate structure be ready, Mayor Ann Wengert wanted to know. Perhaps three months, Ms. Hanson said. Worst case would be January 2015, she added. Collecting waste material is "an incredibly complex business," she said at one point.

Councilwoman Maryann Moise Derwin wondered why the town held back on the other 3 percent. To give GreenWaste an incentive to figure out a better rate structure, Town Manager Nick Pegueros said.

"We certainly don't, from our perspective, want to be seeing you losing money," Ms. Wengert said. ■

### TREES

continued from page 5

In earlier cases, Councilman Romines said, the council has reduced the fines. "I think we need to do our job and abide by the ordinance," he said, adding that a study session might be in order.

Consistency with past practices is important, said council members Deborah Gordon and Tom Shanahan. "Most people in town understand that you shouldn't cut trees without a permit," Mr. Shanahan said. "I find a lot of mitigation here. I don't see a massive crime here. I see that

mistakes were made." He called for a fine of \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Councilman Peter Mason agreed on reducing the fine, adding that the high fines are meant to prevent egregious behavior, such as clear cutting. They should remain high and the council's job should be to consider the nuances of an incident in settling on a fine, he said.

Mayor Dave Burow said he agreed on keeping high fines, but that they might differ based on whether a permit would likely have been given. There would be no debate in egregious cases, he added. ■

# Demolition work has town reviewing mansion's remodel

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

Plans approved in mid-2013 for a significant remodel of a 7,750-square-foot mansion at 360 Mountain Home Road in Woodside are coming back to the town's Planning Commission for further examination and deliberation on Wednesday, July 2.

A visit in May to the property by town staff revealed that, contrary to the approved plans, the entire first floor of the main residence had been demolished, and that plans for the second floor and the basement had been reconfigured, according to a staff report.

The mansion made news in November 2012 when it was sold for \$117.5 million, a new U.S. record for a single-family home, according to news reports at the time. Staff reports list the property owner as SV Projects LLC.

While work at the site is being allowed to continue, staff is recommending to the Planning Commission that the applicant be required to submit amended plans consistent with current

## WOODSIDE

conditions, including a floor plan, and obtain new building permits.

The July 2 Planning Commission meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. in Independence Hall at 2955 Woodside Road.

Staff recommendations also include a deposit of \$33,150 to pay for an inspector who will be on the site three afternoons a week, at a charge of \$106 per hour, "to ensure construction is in compliance with the approved building permit." The deposit has been made, according to a copy of a receipt included with the Planning Commission agenda.

This inspector will not be there to expedite further changes to the plans, Planning Director Jackie Young says in a letter to the applicant. Such changes must follow the regular process for review and approval. Any construction not in accord with the approved plans will result in a stop-work order, Ms. Young said.

## Stone siding

The original plans include

expanding the main house to 8,000 square feet from the current 7,750, and matching some 35-foot-high elements by raising the heights of other parts of the house. The existing house, completed in 2007, was granted exceptions to the 6,000-square-foot and 30-foot maximums for floor area and height. The remodel required additional exceptions.

Among the original changes: replacing the white wood siding with beige stone siding, installing matching roofs of gray slate, and adding oval windows in various locations. On the main house, which sits near the center of the property, the remodel would enclose an upper-floor balcony under a slate dome that includes dormers. At the entrances to the accessory structures, the remodel would add formal elements such as columns at the entries.

Since the stone siding is adding to the mass of the residence, the mansion will need a new foundation and stronger framing, according to a June 8 letter from the project's engineering firm. ■



Photo by Natalia Nazarova/The Almanac

## Going green

A crew from the city of Menlo Park installed new green bike lanes on Willow Road between Middlefield Road and U.S. 101 on June 26. The eye-catching lanes, like those recently added along Alpine Road as it passes under Interstate 280, are designed to heighten awareness of cyclists along busy streets. The city also plans to paint green lanes along Haven Avenue and other selected sites.

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Photo by Mark Klack

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# Celebrate the Fourth with parades, festivals, rodeo

By Tiffany Lam  
Special to the Almanac

## ■ JULY FOURTH

Those looking for a way to celebrate Independence Day need look no further than local communities, where lots of activities, including parades, festivals, fireworks, and even a rodeo, will be held.

### Menlo Park

Locals are invited to decorate bikes, wagons, golf carts and floats and parade down Santa Cruz Avenue to Burgess Park on July Fourth. The parade begins at 11:45 a.m. at the parking lot behind Wells Fargo bank on Chestnut Street at Santa Cruz Avenue.

At the park, there will be music, food, games, jump houses, crafts, face painting, rock walls, laser tag, and more until 2:30 p.m. Musical group Mustache Harbor will perform.

The event is free. For some activities, a \$7 wristband is required, and can be purchased in advance at the Arrillaga Family Gymnasium from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

For more information, call the Community Services Department at 330-2220.

### Woodside

More than 100 young people from around California will test their skills July Fourth at the Junior Rodeo on the Mounted Patrol Grounds at 521 Kings Mountain Road in Woodside.

Events will include roping, women's barrel racing and bull riding. For the family, there are pony rides, a pig scramble and a petting zoo. Food and beverages will be sold.

Gates open at 8 a.m. and the main event begins at noon. Ticket prices are \$15 for adults, \$10 for children, and free for kids 6 and under.

A pre-rodeo dinner and dance will be held at the Mounted Patrol Grounds at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, July 3.

Go to [mpsmc.org/rodeo](http://mpsmc.org/rodeo) or call 851-8300 for more information.

Canada College in Woodside is opening its parking lots for the public to view fireworks displays on the Peninsula. The free viewing begins at 6:30 p.m. in the upper parking lots on the campus at 4200 Farm Hill Blvd.

The main entrances on Farm Hill Boulevard and Canada Road will allow cars, bicycles, and pedestrians. Barbecuing, cooking, alcohol and fireworks are not allowed.

### Redwood City

"Through the Eyes of a Child" is the theme of the 76th annual Independence Day Parade in downtown Redwood City.

The parade begins at 10 a.m. at the corner of Winslow and Marshall streets in downtown Redwood City.

After the parade, there is the 28th annual Independence Day Festival with booths located throughout the downtown area. The event takes place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The festival has arts and crafts booths, food and beverages, and other entertainment.

Go to [parade.org](http://parade.org) for more information.

The San Mateo County His-



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Wyatt Redamonti placed first in the senior boys bull-riding contest at the 2013 Woodside Junior Rodeo.

tory Museum at 2200 Broadway in Redwood City is hosting an old-fashioned Fourth of July event, where children can hand-crank homemade vanilla ice cream and make traditional Independence Day crafts.

The event takes place July Fourth from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is an admission fee of \$2.50 for adults and \$1.50 for students and seniors. For more information, call 299-0104.

### Palo Alto

The city of Palo Alto will hold its 33rd annual Summer Festival and Chili Cook-off to celebrate Independence Day.

Chefs will make a variety of chili dishes for the competition from noon to 5 p.m.

There will be music, more food and kids activities. The event is free and takes place at Mitchell Park on 600 E. Meadow Drive in Palo Alto.

Go to [tinyurl.com/Chili-704](http://tinyurl.com/Chili-704) or call Ali Williams at 648-3829 for more information.

### Mountain View

The San Francisco Symphony will give its annual concert at Shoreline Amphitheatre in Mountain View at 8 p.m. on July Fourth. There will be music from the movies and

American symphonic favorites leading up to a fireworks show.

Limited areas of the golf course and driving range will be open for the public to view the fireworks.

Shoreline has limited parking space that fills early in the day. One access point will be available from Garcia Avenue, where city staff and volunteers will guide the public to safe viewing locations. Both the Stevens Creek Trail and Permanente Creek Trail hours will be extended on July Fourth.

Go to [tinyurl.com/Shore-704](http://tinyurl.com/Shore-704) or call 967-4040 for more information and tickets. ■

## Budget shows surplus, healthy reserves

By Renee Batti  
Almanac News Editor

### ■ ATHERTON

Atherton residents are certain to be happy that their City Council was able to sign off on a new budget for fiscal year 2014-15 that showed revenues surpassing spending and healthy reserves. But they may also be appreciative of the planned upgrades for the public meeting hall used for council meetings — including plans to fix the holes in the restroom walls and replace the hall's tired carpet.

The council unanimously passed the balanced operating budget at its June 18

meeting, praising the finance director and the city manager for crafting, in the words of the longest-serving council members, the best and most readable document ever presented during their tenure on the council.

With \$11.6 million in projected revenue and some \$11.46 million in spending, there is a single-year operational budget surplus of \$155,850. That doesn't include the \$1.86 million in parcel tax revenue or money that will almost certainly

be paid to the town from a special state fund late in the fiscal year. That revenue, from the state fund known as ERAF, is conservatively estimated at \$700,000.

City Manager George Rodricks said in his report to the council that ERAF funds for the 2013-14 fiscal year, which ended June 30, have come in at just over \$1 million, and at the July council meeting he will recommend that the money be spent to pay down the town's unfunded Other Post-Employment Benefit (OPEB) liabilities.

In addition to new spending on long-deferred restroom

renovations and cosmetic improvements to the City Council Chambers, the new budget includes funds for technology improvements in the hall. The projects amount to a \$29,700 spending increase in the budget's "City Council" column.

The largest spending increase (\$351,200) is in the police department, and reflects the addition of two police officers. At the same time, less money is budgeted for such things as overtime costs, temporary help, vehicle maintenance and recruitment costs.

The budget for public works reflects a \$123,600 increase "and is largely due to the continuation of approved

### The largest spending increase reflects the addition of two police officers.

enhanced services for a full year, inclusion of contract park event services for a full year, and increases in professional engineering services in anticipation of increased capital project needs," according to the staff report.

The budget also includes an emergency reserve of about \$1.7 million, an operating reserve of about \$2.3 million, and a building reserve of about \$465,300. ■

# Menlo Park losing a top sales tax producer

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

In the wake of a merger, one of Menlo Park's top sales tax producers is decamping for Fremont this fall, according to the city.

Office Depot Max will shut down its local distribution facility in mid to late November, company spokesperson Karen Denning said. Operations will be consolidated with a larger facility in Fremont; most of the approximately 130 employees at the Menlo Park warehouse will be offered a chance to transfer.

Ms. Denning said the company intends to sell its 11.2-acre Menlo Park property once vacated.

According to Jim Cogan, the city's economic development manager, the property, located off O'Brien Drive in the M2 industrial district, could be worth \$25 million to \$30 million.

"From Menlo Park's standpoint, the (distribution facility) was great, because it had a really low traffic impact, but high revenue generation," he said.

Mr. Cogan explained that confidentiality agreements prevent disclosing how much tax revenue a given business generates. The loss of Office Depot Max

won't hurt Menlo Park during the 2014-15 fiscal year, which starts July 1, but will impact the city's revenue in subsequent years.

He said the question is how to mitigate the large loss of sales tax revenue in the mid-term. "We're really hoping downtown development can help bridge that gap. The (downtown/El Camino Real) specific plan is really a big part of our approach to that, by diversifying our tax base so we're not relying so heavily on one source."

Mr. Cogan said that with the proposed initiative to change the specific plan looking like it will be on the November election ballot, the outcome of the vote could reduce the potential investment in downtown.

"It is something we're concerned about," he said.

If the initiative, put forward by grassroots coalition Save Menlo, wins a majority of the vote, the city would have to look for other ways to diversify its tax base.

"Off the top of my head, our (1 percent) users utility tax is incredibly low. An increase of 1 percent equals (another) \$1.13 million a year to the city, which would help offset the loss of sales tax," Mr. Cogan said.

He noted that there are other strategies to explore — includ-

ing updating the zoning code for the M2 district, which is currently underway. The changes would ideally encourage companies to stick around.

"Menlo Park often has these amazing companies start here, grow to a certain size, and then

## Office Depot Max warehouse distribution facility is leaving for Fremont.

move, like Cisco," Mr. Cogan commented. "We're excited about the opportunity to work with property owners to create a space where our next generation of revenue generators — biotech companies (for example) — have the interest and means to stay in Menlo Park to grow. It's

a far stronger, more consistent sales tax generator group."

Mayor Ray Mueller, who focused on the future of the M2 district while running for council, agreed that the city's revised land-use policy needs to stimulate diversification "so that no one sector's downturn will cripple the city's revenue projections."

He said he'd like the city to make it easier for biotech and healthcare manufacturers to relocate to the M2, "as both of these sectors are highly regulated and are less likely to move offshore" and they collaborate with the city's information technology and software sector.

The M2 district already has one type of diversification in progress, albeit slowly: Menlo Gateway, an office-hotel complex on 16 acres along Independence and Constitution drives.

The project, approved in 2010, would provide an estimated \$1.4 million in annual hotel revenue. But until recently, investors weren't interested in building hotels, according to project developer David Bohannon. Now that's changing.

"We are in conversations with several potential operators for the Menlo Gateway Hotel. The market is encouraging," Mr. Bohannon told the Almanac. The Gateway hotel, he said, needs to be full service as compared to the boutique hotels being considered for downtown Menlo Park. He said he hopes to announce an agreement "in the not too distant future."

The city would love for that to pan out: "We're definitely going to be more interested in seeing that project move forward in light of the loss of sales tax, and definitely if the initiative passes, because we're going to need some investment," Mr. Cogan said. ■

## Program features music of Old West and beyond

The Prairie Rose Band brings "music of the Old West and of the West that never was" to Menlo Park with a free program on Saturday, July 12.

The performance will begin at 11 a.m. in the Menlo Park City Council Chambers at 701 Laurel St. in the Civic Center.

Sponsored by the Friends of the Menlo Park Library, the event spotlights the cowboy-outfit-wearing band whose wide-ranging repertoire includes songs popular during the Civil War, 1930s and 40s western swing, country hits, a bit of Stephen Foster and Cole Porter, and audience requests.

The band, which travels throughout the greater Bay Area, is made up of four musicians: George Martin on banjo and vocals, Paula Scholten on guitar and vocals, Gene Tortora on eight-string dobro and vocals, and Mark Hedin on bass.

Free wheelchair-accessible van service is available for Menlo Park area seniors and people with disabilities. Call 330-2512 for van reservations.

For event details, visit [menlopark.org/library](http://menlopark.org/library), or email John Weaver, Menlo Park Library outreach coordinator, at [weaver@plsinfo.org](mailto:weaver@plsinfo.org).

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# Menlo Park looks at changing pesticide policy

■ Menlo Park to test non-synthetic herbicide.

By **Sandy Brundage**  
Almanac Staff Writer

In the wake of residents' concerns about Menlo Park's spraying of a synthetic herbicide called "Roundup," the city is working on updating its pesticide use policy, which was first developed 16 years ago.

While the city doesn't rely only on herbicides and pesti-

cides for pest management — goats grazing at Sharon Hills Park are a familiar sight — the chemicals are part of Menlo Park's approach. According to Interim Public Works Director Jesse Quirion, the chemicals are chosen from the two categories classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as the least toxic — Category 3 (slightly toxic) and Category 4 (least toxic).

Roundup, which contains gly-

phosate, is classified as Category 3, based on the EPA's database.

During a presentation to the Environmental Quality Commission on June 25, the city staff said it's now taking a closer look at how the chemicals are used and how the public is notified about spraying.

Proposed changes to be tested over the next six months include posting signs 24 hours before and after spraying; using colored markers to delineate

sprayed areas; discontinuing use of spray trucks in parks; and spraying only during non-peak-use hours.

As for Roundup, it will be replaced on a trial basis by non-synthetic alternatives within 100 feet of schools, playgrounds and dog parks.

Mr. Quirion said the non-synthetic pesticide costs about \$7 more per bottle than Roundup, but it will need to be applied up to three times as often and in

higher concentrations, driving the cost up.

Menlo Park resident Elizabeth Houck said the changes aren't enough. "Ban (Roundup) city-wide, residential (uses) too." She suggested that the other ingredients used in the herbicide in addition to glyphosate make it dangerous.

The city will also continue to evaluate ways to reduce pesticide use and expand alternative weed-control methods currently in use, such as mowing and weeding.

Not all trials pan out: A year-long test run of using wood mulch chips instead of herbicides along a strip of Chilco Street in 2011 ended up requiring six times as long — to mow and then spread the chips — as spraying the area would've taken, according to the staff.

The experiment was meant to see whether Menlo Park should skip the chemicals in favor of alternate, non-toxic maintenance as Portola Valley and Woodside do along roadside shoulders.

But in general, based on the staff's data, Menlo Park has reduced its herbicide use more than 27 percent over the past two decades, even as the city has added 37 acres of land to its maintenance roster. ■



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## Two named to motorcycle unit

Menlo Park police officers Roy Lacy and Felicia Byars have been appointed to new positions with the recently reinstated motorcycle traffic unit, the city announced June 27.

The unit was reestablished in January to focus on improving traffic enforcement near schools and other areas of concern identified by residents, business owners and the police chief's citizens advisory group.

The city provided statistics that show the overall collision rate has dropped 20 percent and injury-related collisions by 29 percent since the start of the year.

If you experience a medical emergency, dial 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.



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# Initiative could affect fire-station remodel

■ Menlo Park denies fire district's request to expedite remodeling plan.

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

The redevelopment of Fire Station 6 on two lots at Oak Grove Avenue and Hoover Street seems an unlikely ground zero for Menlo Park's pitched battle over its new downtown/El Camino Real specific plan, but at least one fire district director sees it that way.

The parcels slated for the new station straddle the boundary of the specific plan, with 700 Oak Grove on the inside and 1231 Hoover St. outside. Menlo Park Fire Protection District board member Peter Carpenter, speaking as an individual and not on behalf of the board, said that creates issues that could kill the renovation should a proposed initiative to alter the specific plan's regulations get approved by voters in November.

Mr. Carpenter is a staunch and highly vocal opponent of the initiative.

The initiative, put forth by a grassroots coalition known as Save Menlo, includes clauses that would, within the specific plan's boundaries, restrict office space for individual projects to 100,000 square feet; limit total new office space to

240,820 square feet; and cap overall new, non-residential development to 474,000 square feet.

In addition, voter approval would be required to revise the ordinance, including its definitions, or to allow projects that would exceed the non-residential development limits.

That voter approval clause, as far as Station 6 is concerned, has drawn Mr. Carpenter's ire. He said that merging the Oak Grove and Hoover Street parcels could require redefining the specific plan's boundaries to encompass the entire combined lot. Under the initiative's terms, that means a city-wide vote would be required to allow it, he said.

The district started planning for a replacement station in 2007. When the fire district asked Menlo Park this May to expedite the station's remodel so that project approvals would become effective this year — before the initiative's regulations would take effect — Mr. Carpenter said the answer was no.

The city staff's response, according to a report by fire district staff for the June 30 fire board meeting, was that since

the process could not be expedited, the city would have to determine whether the project is subject to the new regulations, if the initiative passes.

"In the event that the City makes the determination that the Initiative applies to the Station 6 Project, the District would either have to contest that determination in court or

**Peter Carpenter is a staunch and highly vocal opponent of the initiative.**

obtain voter approval for the Station 6 Project. This would delay the Project by at least six months to a year and cost the District approximately \$95,000 in election costs," the fire district report states.

From Mr. Carpenter's perspective, this is an example of city staff allowing the initiative to impact current projects. Asked whether development staff shortages and heavy workloads could be responsible for the city's inability to accommodate the district's request, he replied in an email: "Not

in my opinion. The Fire Board passed two resolutions on this matter and the staff refuses to even refer those resolutions to the Council."

Calling it shameful that something as important as upgrading a fire station has become politicized, co-sponsor Patti Fry said the reasons for the protracted approval process have nothing to do with the proposed ballot measure.

The problems are between the city and the fire district, according to Ms. Fry. She said that for unknown reasons, the City Council, which includes former fire board director Peter Ohtaki, hasn't resolved the issues even during last year's specific plan review.

"Now the initiative is being blamed," Ms. Fry said. "We want Menlo Park residents and businesses to know that these issues have nothing to do with the specific plan initiative. We believe in public safety and support the district's pursuit of a viable plan for the downtown station's upgrade."

The fire board was scheduled to discuss its options regarding Station 6 during a meeting on June 30, after the Almanac's deadline. Three choices were

outlined: Proceed as planned despite the potential complications; eliminate the lot merger and process the project as two developments on two lots; and find a new replacement site entirely outside the specific plan's boundaries.

Fire Chief Harold Schapelhouman said he was asked on June 27 why his staff hadn't recommended one option over the other. "I had to say, after many hours of research and debate with staff and legal counsel, I don't like any of them! They all present a potential risk or additional cost to the district and its taxpayers. They could also draw us into the political fray, which I would prefer to avoid."

The chief noted that it shouldn't be this difficult to replace a worn-out station.

"Can I say it again, I just want to be able to expeditiously rebuild the fire station!" Chief Schapelhouman said. "We have the funds to accomplish this important task, we are not asking the taxpayers for a bond, additional tax or a penny more to do this. Delays, uncertainty and complexity have all led to the additional time and expense necessary to research and navigate this project and have created barriers to what should be, at this point, a straightforward task." ■

## ■ POLICE CALLS

*This information is from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. Under the law, people charged with offenses are considered innocent unless convicted. Police received the reports on the dates shown.*

### WOODSIDE

**Residential burglary report:** A garage door on Tripp Court was inoperative and would not close for about an hour which, the resident said, led to his bicycles being stolen. Estimated loss: \$11,000. June 11.

### Theft reports:

■ A leaf blower and 5-gallon gas can were stolen from an unlocked horse stall used to store gardening equipment at Folger Stable at 4040 Woodside Road. Estimated loss: \$475. May 31.

■ A purse containing a California driver's license, U.S. passport, vehicle keys, makeup, paperwork and credit cards was stolen from an unlocked vehicle parked in the 3000 block of Woodside Road. The credit cards were later used at Emerald City Liquors & Premium Wines in Redwood City and Target in Daly City. Estimated loss: \$100. June 5.

**Annoying a minor report:** A man in a silver pickup truck exchanged greetings with a student from Woodside High School as she was walking along Hull Avenue in Redwood City. As she continued walking, the man came by in his truck and asked if she needed a ride home. She declined, and the man asked for her phone number, which she declined to give. He gave her his number and offered to "hang out" with her. Deputies contacted the suspect, who denied the behavior alleged. June 4.

**Traffic accident report:** A vehicle stopped at the stop sign on Mountain Home Road at Portola Road drove forward as a vehicle westbound on Portola Road was passing by and broadsided the westbound vehicle. Both vehicles

were damaged, with major damage to the passing vehicle. The driver of the passing vehicle denied medical attention, but medics took the other driver to the hospital with an arm injury. June 12.

**Dumping of waste report:** A surveillance camera showed video of a man in a truck entering the parking lot of Roberts Market at the corner of Woodside and Mountain Home roads, taking garbage from the truck and placing it next to Roberts' trash compactor. The camera footage did not include a license plate and was too far away to get a clear image of the driver. June 13.

### PORTOLA VALLEY

**Traffic accident report:** A man on a bicycle exiting from a driveway to head north on Arastradero Road ran broadside into a southbound vehicle whose driver "was unable to take action to avoid a collision." Medics took the cyclist to the hospital for his injuries. June 17.

**Fraud report:** Someone filed false tax returns in the name of a Hillbrook Drive resident, who was advised to contact the state tax board and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. June 9.

### WEST MENLO PARK

**Residential burglary report:** Someone

kicked in the front door to a residence in the 2000 block of Santa Cruz Avenue, ransacked the interior and left with jewelry and an Apple iPad. Estimated loss: \$2,400. June 15.

**Theft report:** A resident of Liberty Park Avenue who had left his bike unlocked in front of his house came out of his garage to see a stranger riding down his driveway on the resident's bike. The resident yelled "Stop," but to no avail as the rider turned left toward Cloud Avenue. The serial number will be entered in the statewide database. Estimated loss: \$1,000. June 20.

**Fraud report:** Someone stole identity information from a resident of Hillside Avenue and used it to create an account that was then charged with online purchases. No losses. June 18.

### LADERA

**Vandalism report:** A man in a black BMW drove away from the Shell gas station at 201 La Cuesta Drive with a gas nozzle still inserted in his vehicle's gas tank, which caused the hose to separate from its connection. Estimated loss: \$200. June 22.

## ASSESSED VALUES

*continued from page 3*

grow due to one of the strongest real estate markets in the state," Mr. Church said. "The number of sales remains high and new construction has more than doubled from two years ago, restoring most of the value to the roll that was lost during the Great Recession."

The California Association of Realtors reports that the median home price in San Mateo County, the price at which half the sales are above and half are below, is now \$1.13 million, 18.9 percent higher than a year ago.

The increased property tax revenue in each community will not directly correlate to the increase in valuation because each government body gets a share of the overall county revenue based on its previous year's valuations, according to Terry Flinn, a special assistant to the assessor.

Since Proposition 13 was passed in 1978, the assessed value of property can go up no more than the rate of inflation as measured by the California Consumer Price Index, or

CCPI, to a maximum of 2 percent a year, except for sales and new construction. This year, Mr. Church said, the CCPI increased only 0.45 percent.

This was the lowest CCPI increase in 38 years, he said, and only the seventh time since 1978 that assessments rose less than the maximum 2 percent. However, Mr. Flinn said, this was the third time in the past five years that inflation has been low enough that property valuations were increased by less than the maximum 2 percent.

The county has been able to recoup much of the assessed value of properties that in earlier years had seen reductions in their assessment after showing they were worth less than the value given them by the county, either because the owner over-paid for the property or because real estate values dropped.

Mr. Flinn said that with the calendar year on which the valuations are based half over, next year should also see a jump in assessed valuations in the county. "Things seem to continue to be improving in the economy," he said. ■

## Menlo library drops hold fees

The Menlo Park Library will no longer charge patrons for placing holds on items, as part of a move by the San Mateo County Peninsula Library System to improve customer service and circulation of library materials.

The 75-cent fee delivered an estimated \$16,000 in annual revenue to the Menlo Park Library, but the decrease has been incorporated into the budget for the 2014-15 fiscal year, according to the city.

## Boundary map affirms intact school communities

By Dave Boyce  
Almanac Staff Writer

By a 4-0 vote on June 25, the governing board of the Sequoia Union High School District made significant changes to the high school boundary maps, changes that will affect the lives of thousands of high school students in the years ahead.

The new map, which goes into effect at the start of the 2015-16 school year, makes good on promises to the community of the Las Lomas and Ravenswood City elementary school districts.

For Las Lomas families, all households are now assigned to Menlo-Atherton High School, including those in Atherton and Woodside currently assigned to Woodside High. These families have had a right of first refusal to attend M-A; the new map makes exercising that privilege unnecessary with the start of the 2015-16 school year.

The situation is similar for Ravenswood families. The map assigns every household in East Palo Alto to M-A, where they can join their classmates from the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park. The board is also allowing East Palo Alto students exclusive transfer privileges to M-A for the coming school year, if there is room. Families must apply for the transfer.

The map denies some residents north of 8th Avenue in North Fair Oaks who wanted continued assignment to M-A, but it eases the change. Households being reassigned will have 15 years of privileges to attend the former school.

Go to [tinyurl.com/SEQ-222](http://tinyurl.com/SEQ-222) and turn to Pages 12 and 13 for details on the board's actions.

### East Palo Alto

M-A has always been accessible to East Palo Alto students through the Sequoia district's open enrollment policy. But the number of transfer requests often exceeded available space, resulting in a lottery. They can now skip the lottery.

For 30 years, East Palo Alto students have been bused to Woodside High or Carlmont High, a program that began in the 1980s with a court order to the Sequoia district to align the ethnic demography of each school with the demography of the district.

The board's action in October 2013 came amid deliberations on what to do about projections of an enrollment surge over the next seven years, much of it coming from the Menlo Park and Las Lomas elementary districts.

At Sequoia district community meetings in 2013 to discuss the surge, built-out campuses and possible revisions to the map in response to the surge, parents were unequivocal to officials about the importance of keeping middle-school communities intact.

That message hit home and became an abiding priority among Sequoia district officials in revising the map.

The addition of Ravenswood students to M-A is expected to be a wash in terms of its effect on enrollment, given the reassignment of North Fair Oaks households north of 8th Avenue to Sequoia High. ■



July 2014

## Community Health Education Programs

For a complete list of classes and class fees, lectures and health education resources, visit [pamf.org/education](http://pamf.org/education).

### Mountain View Center

701 E. El Camino Real  
Mountain View  
(650) 937-7380



### Birds and the Bees: Talking to Children About Sex

2014 Dr. Marvin Small Memorial Parent Workshop Series

July 8, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Torrey Mandell Freeman, M.S.  
Certified Parenting Educator

This workshop discusses effective ways to provide your kids with age-appropriate answers to those uncomfortable questions about our bodies and sex. We will cover when to have the talk, how to prepare for it, and why this kind of open communication is beneficial.

Aug., Sept., and Oct.

## Upcoming Lectures and Events

### Mountain View Center

### The Aging Eye

Aug. 12, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Yichieh Shiuey, M.D., PAMF Ophthalmology

### Palo Alto Center

### Don't Turn Green, Live Green!

Aug. 12, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Barbara Erny, M.D., PAMF Health Education

### Palo Alto Center

### Medicare Updates and Changes

Aug. 27, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP) community educator

### Mountain View Center

### Sleep and Your Child

Sept. 9, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

Nancy Zises (Barnett), M.D., PAMF Pediatrics

### San Carlos Library

### Don't Turn Green, Live Green!

Sept. 22, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Barbara Erny, M.D., PAMF Health Education

### Sunnyvale Public Library

### Supplements, Vitamins and More

Sept. 23, 7 – 8:30 p.m.

Ravin Agah, M.D., PAMF Internal Medicine

## Woodside sets kickoff meeting for 'Day of Horse' fair, ride

WHOA! — the Woodside-area Horse Owners Association — is hosting the 10th annual Woodside Day of the Horse kickoff meeting on July 9 from 6 to 7 p.m. for area residents and equestrians.

Meeting doors will open at 5:30 p.m. at Folger Stable's Carriage Room Museum in Wunderlich Park, 4040 Woodside Road.

Artwork, commissioned from longtime event artist Nancy Cawdrey, will be unveiled at the meeting. The watercolor is titled "Woodside Day of the Horse."

The actual 10th Annual Woodside Day of the Horse will

be held Oct. 11.

The July 9 meeting will also cover the 2014 event theme, "Chinese Year of the Horse," tips for safely sharing local trails, and discussion of this year's new events.

Tickets for the Woodside Day of the Horse raffle will be available at the meeting.

Each year, nearly 2,000 people attend the Woodside Day of the Horse events, including a horse fair and trail ride. The fair has activities for children and adults and more than 20 booths, including one for the Woodside Library.

Go to [whoa94026.org](http://whoa94026.org) for more information.

 Palo Alto Medical Foundation  
**Sutter Health**  
We Plus You

[pamf.org/education](http://pamf.org/education)

## Richard Warrington Dorst

October 25, 1925 - June 10, 2014

Richard "Dick" Dorst passed away peacefully after a brief illness. He was a fourth-generation Californian born in San Francisco in 1925 to Catherine Woolsey and James Dorst.



Dick graduated from UC Berkeley and Harvard Business School, serving in WWII in between. During his lifetime he was co-founder of the Dorsett Boat Company, trustee of the Sequoia Union High School District, church elder and bible study teacher, tennis player on the senior circuit, avid fly fisherman, and President of Aquaculture Corporation.

He was a member of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church, the Menlo Circus Club, YPO, and E Clampus Vitus.

Dick is survived by his wife of 62 years, Ann, his sons Jim (Amy) and Chris (Marybeth), daughter, Jane (Peter Clark), his daughter-in-law Suzanne Montgomery and was "Popeye" to 11 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

For a more complete obituary, please visit <http://spanglermortuary.com/obituaries.htm>

PAID OBITUARY

## Ann Dean Skidmore

April 25, 1950 — June 18, 2014

Ann Dean Skidmore passed away on June 18, 2014 at her home in Menlo Park with her loving husband and two children sitting at her side. For the last several months she had been surrounded by her sisters, close friends, and much love from her community. She had just celebrated her 42nd wedding anniversary.



Ann was born Ann Dean on April 25, 1950 in Salt Lake City, Utah. At the age of six, she moved to Denver, Colorado with her family. She graduated from Cherry Creek High School and the University of Utah as a Delta Gamma. There she studied fashion merchandising and met the love of her life, Earl Skidmore. Following her graduation they were married, moved to Palo Alto, and she was hired by Macy's as an assistant clothing buyer. In 1974 Ann changed her career direction and went to work running the orthopedic nursing department of Kaiser Hospital in Redwood City. In 1998, after years of being a wonderful mother with many volunteer jobs, she began her own company designing handmade Italian home products. This company, Arte Italica, began in her garage and is now a name respected across the industry. Ann curated beauty with Arte Italica in the same way she found beauty all around her in everyday life, in her presence beauty flourished.

She is survived by her husband, Earl, daughter Jennifer Neeley, son Clark, son-in-law Zach Neeley, and beloved granddaughters, Lola and Amelie Neeley. Ann is also survived by her parents Val and Helen Dean and her siblings Val, Kristin, and Patricia Dean. A natural at connecting to everyone who came into her life, Ann is leaving behind scores of people who adore her. She will be missed every day by her adoring family but her absence will be particularly felt at any party or holiday where Ann infused the room with grace, beauty, and her infectious joy of life.

A Memorial Mass was held on June 26, 2014 at St. Raymond Church in Menlo Park. If desired, donations can be made to the Lung Cancer Alliance, [www.lungcanceralliance.org](http://www.lungcanceralliance.org).

PAID OBITUARY



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

**ParkGate Home's**  
Laura Pohlen  
and Cathy Ettel  
show off their  
outdoor  
collection.

## ParkGate showcases vibrant lifestyle

By Jane Knoerle

Almanac Lifestyles Editor

### ■ IN BUSINESS

With its fresh approach to home decor, ParkGate Home is a lively addition to downtown Menlo Park's home furnishings scene.

Opened last fall next to Kepler's and Borrone's, ParkGate showcases the talents of its co-owners, Cathy Ettel and Laura Pohlen. Both are pros.

Ms. Ettel worked at Traditions on Santa Cruz Avenue for 18 years. Ms. Pohlen has had an interior design business at her home in Atherton. Longtime friends, both have degrees in business and interior design.

Instead of a staid cluster of sofas, chairs and tables sometimes found in furniture stores,

ParkGate displays its wares in inviting showrooms that change often. "We just did three rooms this morning," says Ms. Ettel. Recently, the front room featured white upholstered outdoor furniture accented with cobalt blue, yellow and coral accessories.

Vignettes in the 4,500-square-foot store might include real-looking hydrangeas and roses in a glass vase atop coffee-table books, or an accent table ready to hold summer drinks.

ParkGate's customers come from all over the Bay Area and range from young marrieds to down-sizing seniors. The store's owners are professionals who can completely furnish an Atherton mansion or are willing to offer savvy advice for a few accessories to brighten up your home.

Accessories — throw pillows, lamps, flowers, books — are important at Park Gate, says Ms. Ettel. "We travel a great deal and find individual items you will never see in other stores," she says.

Need help? Not sure what you want or need in furnishings? ParkGate will do a home visit at \$165 an hour. After seeing a room, it's much easier to find the right pieces, says Ms. Pohlen.

Since opening last October, ParkGate has attracted many visitors wandering over after lunch at Borrone's or book-browsing at Kepler's. They love the store's fresh approach to home furnishings and artistic use of color.

Located at 1010 El Camino Real, ParkGate is adding to Menlo Park's reputation as an important destination for home decor. It is open Monday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and closed Sunday.

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

*This is one of a series of stories about new home decorating businesses in downtown Menlo Park.*

## Richard E. Nippes

August 28, 1922-May 5, 2014

Richard E. (Dick) Nippes, 91, passed away on May 5, 2014, from congestive heart failure.

Dick was born in Ridgway, PA, on August 28, 1922. He graduated from Ridgway High School in 1940. Then started college at Pennsylvania State University in 1940 where he majored in Chemistry and was a member of NROTC.

In 1943, Dick was drafted into the Navy with one semester left to get his degree. He was sent to Northwestern University for midshipmen's school. Commissioned as an ensign in the USNR, Dick was sent to Boston, MA, where he commanded minesweepers patrolling Boston Harbor and the Atlantic Ocean. In 1945, he was ordered to China, but the war was over by the time he got there. In China, Dick served as mess and supply officer on the USS Obstructor, a minesweeper supply ship that patrolled the Yangtze River. Later, he became the ship's captain.

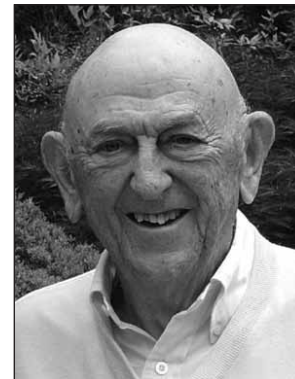
In 1946, he received orders to return to the U.S. and was honorably discharged as a lieutenant (jg). Dick returned to Penn State and finished his degree in 1946.

After graduation, Dick began work as a chemical salesman for PPG Industries in Akron, OH. A succession of promotions within the chemical sales division required moves to Boston, MA; New York City; Pittsburgh, PA; before moving to the Bay Area to become Regional Sales Manager in 1971. Dick worked for PPG for 37 years before retiring in 1983. Dick married the love of his life, Frances Ruth Corby, on April 21, 1947. They were married for 63 years before Fran passed away on February 21, 2011.

Dick enjoyed golf and gardening. He was actively involved in Holbrook-Palmer Park Foundation.

Dick is survived by his children: Richard, James, Louise, and William; grandchildren: Nicole, Matthew, Andrew, Kristen, James, and Mark; and his brother Paul.

In memory donations may be made to Dick's favorite charities: Holbrook-Palmer Park Foundation and The Salvation Army.



PAID OBITUARY

## Woodside woman writes romantic suspense novel

By Barbara Wood

Special to the Almanac

Lisa Frieden, a Woodside resident with a background in science but a Ph.D. in English, was working on her autobiography, telling the story of her successful fight against kidney disease in her 30s, when she abruptly set out on a completely different course.

"I decided I wanted to do something fun," says Ms. Frieden, who is now the mother of a 9-year-old daughter and lives in the Woodside Glens neighborhood with her husband Kurt.

The result of that about-face was a novel, "The Offering," about a tough, smart female CIA agent who ends up battling occult forces with the help of her group of close female friends, and a man she's not sure she can trust.

"I like romantic suspense, but I am always frustrated that it doesn't do what I want it to do," says Ms. Frieden. So she wrote the book she'd like to read.

The about-face was nothing unusual for Ms. Frieden, who grew up as the daughter of two college science professors and was headed for a career as a doctor when she decided to study English instead.

Ms. Frieden finished the novel while she was pregnant with her daughter, but couldn't find a publisher.

"It just sat on my hard drive," says Ms. Frieden, while other things assumed major importance in her life.

But talking with friends and members of a writing group who longed to some day write a novel inspired Ms. Frieden to take another look at the one she'd already written.

"The whole ending of the book needed to be totally tossed out and redone," she said.

In addition, the way books are published had changed a lot since her original attempt to market the book, and Ms. Frieden decided to publish the novel herself. She found an artist online who made a cover for the book and it is now available at Amazon, Kepler's and other online booksellers.

The book has received positive reviews, including an Amazon reviewer who said it is "a fulfilling mix of adventure, thriller, occult, romance, action and humor — all tied together with a strong theme of the power of sisterhood and female friendships."

With one book under her belt, Ms. Frieden is hard at work on

the next. She hopes to have her memoir completed by June and has another novel she began in 2007, a thriller set in Humboldt County called "Finding Clarity" that she wants to return to.

After that, she says, she has a series in mind, a story about each of the characters in the Cota Club, which played a big part in "The Offering."

"The Offering" can be found at [www.lisafrieden.com](http://www.lisafrieden.com). Ms. Frieden has a Facebook page at: [facebook.com/lisafriedenauthor](https://www.facebook.com/lisafriedenauthor)



Lisa Frieden

## Dr. Jones, Woodside dentist, dies at 85

Dr. Robert Bruce Jones, known as Bruce, a dentist in Woodside for more than 40 years, died at home in El Dorado Hills, California, on June 23. He was 85.

A native of Rigby, Idaho, he was a veteran of the Korean War, a 1960 graduate of the University of Southern California School of Dentistry, and a lay minister for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

"He literally sacrificed — though he would not call it such — thousands of hours working with those in spiritual, personal and financial need," family members said.

Dr. Jones' Woodside dentist office was just a few doors down from "The Pub." His patients, family members said, spanned from newly arrived,

impoverished immigrants from Tonga and Samoa to the rich and famous.

He is survived by Carol, his wife of 64 years; his children: Michael B. Jones of San Jose, Shauna Badger of Provo, Utah, Les-



Dr. Robert Bruce Jones

lie Jones of Placerville, Larry Jones of Peachtree, Georgia, Jeffrey Jones of Redwood City, Bradley Jones of Napa, and Russell Jones of Placerville; 30 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

His profession was adopted by several family members. Jeffrey, Bradley and Russell are all dentists, and Leslie is a dental hygienist.

Services will be a private.

## Donald Joseph Ragno

March 14, 1922 – June 22, 2014

Donald Joseph Ragno passed away peacefully on the morning of June 22 after a brief illness. He was 92. Beloved by family and friends, Don will be deeply missed.



Born in Bingham Canyon, Utah, to Gugliemina Robbiano and Giovanni (John) Ragno of Silvano d'Orba, Italy, Don was the youngest of three children. He moved to Oakland with his family at age one, and later to Palo Alto, graduating from Palo Alto High School in 1940, where he played varsity basketball. He continued to play basketball as a student at UCLA. Don enlisted in the Navy in 1943, serving until 1946 as a lieutenant, and eventually, a commanding officer, aboard three USS LCIs in the Asiatic-Pacific, the Philippines, and Europe. Returning to UCLA on the GI bill, Don graduated in 1946, majoring in economics. Through the years, Don often spoke of how much he enjoyed Southern California's beaches during college. While at UCLA, he met Frances Halstenrud. They were married in 1947, and moved to Palo Alto.

With his brother, Larry, Don was the owner of John's, a popular East Palo Alto liquor and wine business started by their father, John Ragno, with a restaurant and bar next door. The business grew quickly and they opened a second store in Ladera Shopping Center in Portola Valley in 1957. Throughout his life, Don enjoyed travel. He and Fran made many wonderful trips around the globe, also returning on a regular basis to visit family in Italy, where he loved having opportunities to converse in his local dialect. Don was an inveterate student of languages, and studied Spanish and French to add to his ability to communicate easily when traveling. Two of Don's passions were golf and basketball. He was a Stanford Golf Course member for many years, playing twice weekly in retirement until very recently. He was a loyal fan of the Stanford basketball team. Above all, Don valued friends and family. He had the ability to connect in a personal way with everyone he met, and was often described as a true gentleman. He and Fran entertained generously over many years, and his warmth toward people he knew was unforgettable.

Don is survived by Frances Ragno, his wife of 66 years, his five sons, Brock, Matthew, John, Martin and Donald, seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by a sister, Lillian, and a brother, Lawrence.

A memorial service and reception was held June 28 in the University Room at The Vi, 620 Sand Hill Rd., Palo Alto, 94304.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made toward the restoration of LCI (L) 713 c/o Amphibious Forces Memorial Museum, PO Box 17220, Portland, OR 97217.

## Ulele C. Hamway

At 95, our beautiful and loving mother, Ulele C. Hamway, died peacefully at The Sequoias Portola Valley on June 15. She was born on May 29, 1919 in British New Guinea to parents who were Methodist missionaries. Her name, Ulele, means "rainbow" in one of the two native dialects spoken by her father. As much as she disliked her name for its difficulty, she tolerated it because "rainbow" in the other dialect her father spoke was "Lubakaidorga."

Ulele attended Auckland University College and Teachers Training College. On graduating in 1940, the British Empire was at war. Wanting a change from her life in New Zealand, she answered an ad for teachers in Suva, Fiji Islands, a garrison station for the New Zealand forces. There she met her future husband, Sam, a U.S. Navy Lieutenant who was assigned to Suva as a liaison officer to New Zealand military headquarters. Ulele and Sam were married in San Francisco after the war and eventually settled in Atherton. A long, happy marriage and five children followed.

Ulele was an inquisitive thinker, passionate reader, warm and gracious conversationalist, witty writer of verse she called "doggerel," and loyal, loving mother and friend. Her love of community and organizational talents led to her key positions over many years in the Woodside Atherton Auxiliary, Committee for Art at Stanford, Holy Trinity Episcopal Church and a succession of P.T.A.s.

Following Sam's death, Ulele moved to The Sequoias Portola Valley in 2001 where she found a new community of lifelong friends and new outlets for her administrative, organizational and poetic talents. There, she continued her journey to expand her knowledge and understanding beyond the confines of her restricted life as the daughter of missionaries. Journey complete, Mom, and job well done.

Ulele leaves her beloved children Geoff, Pamela, Alison, Gregory and Melinda, their spouses Mary, David, and Preston and three cherished grandchildren, Sophie, Max and Stephen.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Holy Trinity Church, 330 Ravenswood Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025 or the Tomorrow Fund at The Sequoias Portola Valley, 501 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028. Funeral services will be privately held.

PAID OBITUARY

PAID OBITUARY

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WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

All views must include a home address and contact phone number. Published letters will also appear on the web site, www.TheAlmanacOnline.com, and occasionally on the Town Square forum.

Town Square forum

Post your views on the Town Square forum at www.TheAlmanacOnline.com

**Email** your views to: letters@almanacnews.com and note this it is a letter to the editor in the subject line.

**Mail** or deliver to: Editor at the Almanac, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

**Call** the Viewpoint desk at 223-6507.

# Viewpoint

IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES

## Guiding the Almanac: a rewarding adventure

As I retire from the Almanac after more than 20 years as publisher, it is rewarding to look back at what a fascinating job it has been and how warmly I was received by the staff and the communities we serve.

When I arrived in September 1993, the Almanac was running smoothly on the course set by publishers Mort and Elaine Levine and editor Richard Hine. The paper deftly covered Atherton, Menlo Park, Portola Valley and Woodside, and in large part managed to connect in a personal way with each community. With Richard at the helm of the newsroom I was left to write editorials and balance the sometimes conflicting needs of the editorial, production and advertising departments. All of this was done in a tiny office on Oak Grove Avenue in Menlo Park, where on occasion nearly 30 staff members managed to squeeze into less than 2,000 square feet. It was a miracle that no one was trampled on production days.

As a relatively new homeowner in Menlo Park and editor of the Palo Alto Weekly for more than a year, I was no stranger to the forces that moved Midpeninsula residents. In what we call Almanac country, there was no mistaking the difference between what was important in Atherton vs. Menlo Park, and the same went for Portola Valley, which treasured open space, and Woodside, where open space was a given so the horses had a place to roam. Luckily we had reporters who not only knew their way around — most lived in one of “our” communities, and were eager to share their knowledge with me if I needed an angle for an editorial. I could also rely on Bill Johnson, CEO of our company, who grew up in Portola Valley and attended Woodside High School. His insights into the flow of life in the communities that we covered was invaluable and continues today.

No recollection of the mid-90s at the Almanac is complete without mentioning a host of reporters who knew the 1965 founders — Hedy Boissevain, Jean Heflin and Betty Fry — and had stayed on to carry the torch with the Levines. Staff writers Marion Softky, Marjorie Mader, and Jane Knoerle, who remains on a reduced schedule, became fixtures in the community through their insightful and consistent reporting. Editor and reporter Renee Deal (now Renee Batti) is another key writer who has always given the Almanac an edge in arts reporting and predates me at the Almanac. She will inherit the job of writing editorials for the Almanac. And Woodside resident

Barbara Wood was well on her way to becoming the go-to reporter in her community when I arrived and later began a long stint as a columnist. Now she has come full circle and will return to the Almanac as a staff writer this week. No look back would be complete without recognizing the fine work of photographer Carol Ivie, who was a presence at all the significant occasions covered by the Almanac.

For me, the 20-plus years flew by, as have the issues that sometimes roiled local residents over the years. In Menlo Park there was a longstanding difference of opinion between “residentialists” or environmentalists, and residents who were more inclined to give developers the edge. These forces remain in play today as debate continues on the initiative to revise the downtown specific plan.

The future of Douglass Hall on the Menlo School campus was among the stories covered in the Sept. 8, 1993, Almanac. The school wanted to knock down the historic 52-room mansion, but an Atherton Planning Commission vote to deny a demolition permit was overruled by the City Council. Sometime later the building

Continued on next page

FAREWELL  
By Tom Gibboney



Photo by Michelle Le/  
The Almanac  
**Tom Gibboney** has been editor and publisher of the Almanac since 1993.

LETTERS

Our readers write

Specific plan initiative is a poison pill

Editor:

The proponents of the ill-conceived Lanza/Fry initiative claim that only “modest changes” are being proposed to Menlo Park’s downtown specific plan. That is patently false.

Aside from turning the specific plan on its head, the Lanza/Fry initiative states that without a (costly) citywide vote of Menlo Park residents, the City Council cannot make changes, no matter how small, in the definitions and development standards contained in the initiative. It further states that no new “inconsistent” zoning can be introduced or passed and prescribes exactly how voter approval for change can occur ... for 30 years.

The requirement calling for a citywide election is the initiative’s ultimate poison pill and it

is not insignificant or modest.

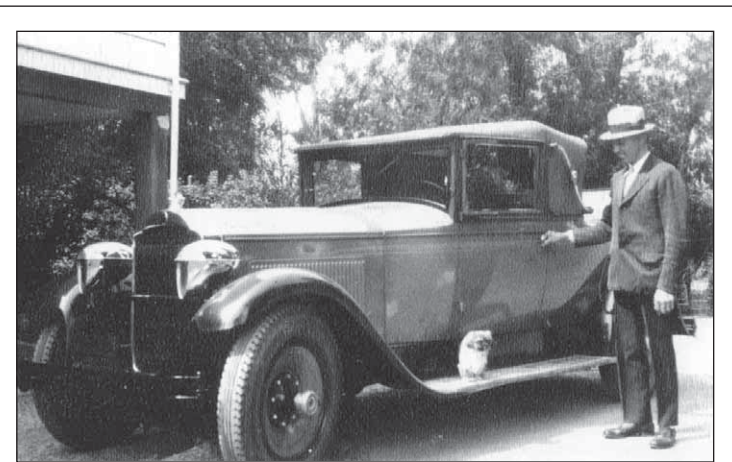
No matter what you think of the downtown specific plan, it allows for citizen input and revision by the City Council, and requires review on a timely basis, adjusting to Menlo Park’s needs.

The initiative’s voter requirement emasculates the Planning Commission and the City Council, freezes unintended consequences, some of which have been reported, and freezes the definitions of banking and office and medical in a rapidly changing world.

Finally, this initiative freezes unvetted zoning rules, which most assuredly contain mistakes. Imagine the time, the money and the energy required to overturn those high barriers to change.

We hope that our city’s leaders will denounce the initiative and warn their constituents not to swallow this poison pill.

John A. O’Malley,  
former Menlo Park  
planning commissioner  
Katherine A. Strehl,  
current Menlo Park  
planning commissioner



Courtesy Menlo Park Historical Association

Our Regional Heritage

In 1931 a chauffeur enjoys a moment with a small dog, seen on the running board of this elegant coupe.

Initiative would kill ‘winning agreement’

Editor:

Heyward Robinson did not understand the potential housing impact of the Fry/Lanza initiative (letter June 25) on Menlo Park. Many don’t. The question is not whether housing is allowed in the specific plan —

that doesn’t change — but what kind of housing might be built.

Zoning is partly about restrictions on, and partly economic encouragement to, development. The specific plan went through many iterations to balance likely uses of private lands up and down El Camino Real, and a bal-

Continued on next page

**FAREWELL**

*continued from previous page*

won a reprieve and ultimately was restored by the school and remains a centerpiece of the campus today. In Woodside, a hot 1993 issue was the formation of a parking district. An Almanac traffic survey that received more than 900 responses also made headlines.

Over 20 years there have been hundreds, if not thousands of issues debated by residents who felt passionately about their point of view. Many of these topics became editorials in the Almanac, offering the newspaper's position for everyone to see.

At this time it is appropriate to mention the free rein I

was given by what is now the Embarcadero Media Company to write about the news as I and the staff saw fit. Perhaps the most memorable difference of opinion was when the Almanac and sister paper Palo Alto Weekly took different positions on the Stanford housing development along Sand Hill Road near the Stanford Shopping Center. The Almanac, reflecting the views of residents who lived along nearby San Francisco Creek and did not want the property developed, editorialized against the project, while the Weekly supported it. Both papers were simply reflecting the views of their readers and that was that.

As I leave, it is comforting

to know that the Almanac survived the Great Recession and is good financial health. Finally, I want to thank all the friends and acquaintances I have made during my tenure here, many while Kathe and I brought up Jeff and Kyla in the Las Lomitas School District before they attended Menlo-Atherton High School. Jeff, a mechanical engineer, was recently married and Kyla just graduated from Hastings Law School. We plan to live in the community and I hope to stay active by volunteering or consulting for organizations whose missions I support.

Richard Hine has been promoted to editor of the Almanac and is the person to contact

if you have a question. Renee Batti is now associate editor and will edit the Viewpoint pages and write the editorial. I say with certainty that all our readers are in good hands

with Richard and Renee, whom you should contact if you need assistance. So long.

*Tom Gibboney stepped down as editor and publisher of the Almanac on June 27*

**LETTERS**

*continued from previous page*

ance was found between office, retail and housing. Of course, the landowner has to evaluate what to build, justifying to partners, investors, or trustees.

Last fall, Stanford agreed to forgo medical offices and to build mostly small units. But

that winning agreement via the City Council disappears if the initiative is enacted.

So what will Stanford build on its portion if this unfortunate initiative becomes law? Three "by-right" choices are likely:

(1) Emphasize medical offices, since the advantage of building regular offices is removed by the 100,000 square foot restriction, which could bring day-traffic.


(2) Build family housing,

since this brings in more rent than grad student and empty-nester units. This will surely bring families for our schools.

(3) Stanford could leave the land vacant until emotions settle, as they did for a decade for Sand Hill Road projects.


I don't like any of those choices. Clearly Menlo Park deserves better.

*Henry Riggs  
Callie Lane, Menlo Park*




## Buying or Selling...

**“I couldn't have been happier with my choice to use Steve in selling my Atherton home. I also used him as my buyer's agent for my new home. During both processes I appreciated his competency, communication skills and high level of professionalism. I highly recommend Steve to anyone looking to sell or buy.”**



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and information, please visit:

[www.99StonegateRd.com](http://www.99StonegateRd.com)



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