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The Almanac

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

JULY 9, 2014 | VOL. 49 NO. 44



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PRIVATE MORTGAGE ADVISORS

Woodside halts work at mansion

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

The top two floors of the three-story, 7,425-square-foot mansion at 360 Mountain Home Road in Woodside are reported to be resting on steel beams above a large empty space where the foundation, basement and first floor used to be. It's been an active construction site for months, but now its future, including the lowering of those upper floors onto new first-floor framing, is uncertain.

As of July 3, the site was posted with a stop-work notice from the town. The Planning Commission had approved the project in November 2013 as a remodel. But, alerted by staff about the missing floors, the commission met on July 2 to discuss whether actions at the site were consistent with what had been approved.

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 owner of the 8.74-acre property as SV Projects LLC.

After a lengthy public hearing that included testimony from construction managers, the commission voted 6-1 to continue the matter to a date uncertain and referred it to the planning director, who then issued the stop-work order. Commissioner Elizabeth Hobson dissented.

Included in the vote was a recommendation to send the project back to the Architectural and Site Review Board, essentially back to square one. The remodel, according to some commissioners, had evolved into a demolition.

Planning Director Jackie Young told the Almanac that the original resolution will be returning to the Planning Commission along with an "alternate resolution of denial" based on the July 2 discussion.

More massive

Original plans called for replacing the white wooden siding on the main house with



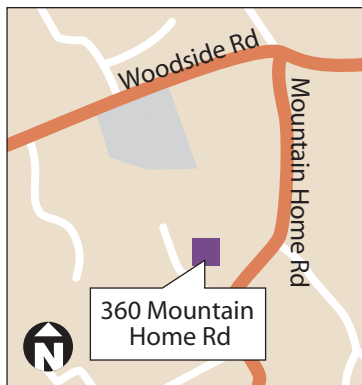
Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

The site was posted with a stop-work notice from the town.

beige stone siding, installing roofs of gray slate, and adding oval windows in various locations. An upper-floor balcony would be enclosed under a slate dome.

Those are the plans being implemented, Noel Manerud of the Mill Valley firm Van Acker Construction told the commission. The missing first floor reflects the need to strengthen the framing, as does the missing foundation, he said.

Such insights came through "discovery" as the project advanced, Mr. Manerud said. The commission caught the project at a "moment in time," he said. "We needed to temporarily remove that framing which was in place on the main level to ... restore it, augment it. ... We're effectively caught mid-stream between that temporary removal and installation of shoring (to support the stone walls)."



The property is located on Mountain Home Road in Woodside.

"How long was that moment that it took to decide to take out the first floor?" Commission Chair Marilyn Voelke asked. "Was it long enough to call staff? That seems an inadequate description to me."

"It's a period of certainly a good long week preparing and a good long week doing it," Mr. Manerud replied, adding that his team had been focused on the effort.

As for the foundation and basement, structural engineer David Kallmeyer, in a June 9 letter to the town, explained: The mansion acquired more mass from the new stone siding and a second story heated from a radiant-heat floor, which uses concrete as thermal mass. "The nature of the changes to the foundation system are significant enough that the project team deemed the most effective, safe, efficient and waterproof construction method for the project to be replacement of the foundation in lieu of localized augmentation (of the existing structure)," Mr. Kallmeyer wrote.

Van Acker should have expected such changes, Ms. Voelke said. "I don't think it's credible. I think it's incredible."

After learning that the structural engineer been brought in after the plans were approved, Ms. Voelke had a question: "What was it that was brought

See **MANSION**, page 7

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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Vintage fighting vehicles to be sold

■ Jacques Littlefield's collection goes on the auction block July 11 and July 12.

By Dave Boyce

Almanac Staff Writer

For those with deep pockets and a deep hunger to own an authentic military fighting vehicle from World War II or the Cold War, there will be rich pickings on Friday and Saturday, July 11 and 12, at 499 Old Spanish Trail at the far end of Los Trancos Road in unincorporated Los Trancos Woods.

In an auction that is closed to the public, 114 vehicles are going up for sale from the collection of the late Jacques Littlefield, who collected, restored and preserved armored vehicles and weapons. Among items on the auction block: a Soviet SCUD mobile missile launcher, with an estimated sale price of \$300,000 to \$350,000.

The public will get its chance to see the fighting vehicles after they have been loaded onto trucks (for transport to a staging area, likely in the East Bay). The trucks will use public roads and the cargoes will not be covered, said Bill Boller, president and chief executive of the Military Vehicle Technology Foundation.

The foundation's schedule anticipates an average of about six transports a day in "a continuous stream for six weeks," Mr. Boller said. The foundation has been in touch with local homeowners' associations, he said.

Mr. Littlefield, who died in 2009, was the founder of the nonprofit that is selling the fighting vehicles. The gates open at 9 a.m. and the auction begins at 11. Daylong previews are scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, July 9 and 10.

Weapons sale

The auctions are being run by Indiana-based vehicle auction specialists Auctions America. Two auctions are scheduled: of the vehicles on Friday and Saturday, and of spare parts on Friday only.

A 220-page, four-color catalog was produced for the auctions. Among the items (with estimated sales prices) for the main event are:

■ A U.S. M4A3E2 assault tank, also known as a Sherman "Jumbo" (\$1.4 million to \$1.6 million). One of seven or eight still in existence, this tank



Photo courtesy Auctions America

A Soviet SCUD mobile missile launcher, with an estimated price range of \$300,000 to \$350,000, is among 114 military vehicles up for auction from the Jacques Littlefield collection.

was intended for use after the 1944 invasion of Normandy. The tracks are rubber and the driving controls and hatches operate normally. The interior restoration is incomplete, but the needed parts come with the purchase.

■ A U.S. M37 105-millimeter howitzer (\$200,000 to \$250,000). Built in 1945 and completely restored, this mobile gun has rubber tracks, exterior lights, working hatches, working periscopes with "good glass," and a complete instrument

panel. It was last driven in January 2014.

■ A U.S. M16 anti-aircraft half-track (\$75,000 to \$100,000). Built in 1943 or 1944, the engine runs well and "responds nicely

See VINTAGE FIGHTING, page 10

Former assemblyman Ira Ruskin dies at 70

Services will be held Wednesday, July 9, for former state assemblyman Ira Ruskin, who represented the 21st Assembly District for six years. He died July 3 at the age of 70.

The services will start at 10 a.m. at Temple Beth Jacob, 1550 Alameda de las Pulgas in Redwood City. A graveside service will follow at Alta Mesa Cemetery, 695 Arastradero Road in Palo Alto.

Go to tinyurl.com/Ruskin714 for updates.

The Assembly district he represented stretched from the Almaden Valley in Santa Clara County to San Carlos in San Mateo County, and included Atherton, Menlo Park, Portola Valley and Woodside.

The Democrat from Redwood City told his supporters in a May 2011 email that he had undergone emergency surgery for a

malignant brain tumor earlier that month and that he was preparing to undergo "aggressive treatment," including radiation and chemotherapy.

He said at the time that his doctors told him the tumor, while not curable, was containable. The illness halted his bid for a state Senate seat.

Mr. Ruskin served nine years as a city councilman in Redwood City, starting in 1995, and was mayor from 1999 through 2001. He was elected to the state Assembly in 2004, when he defeated Republican Steve Poizner to succeed Joe Simitian.

He was re-elected twice to



Ira Ruskin

See RUSKIN, page 6

Fire board looks for new site for station

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Seven years in the planning, the redevelopment of Fire Station 6 on two lots at Oak Grove Avenue and Hoover Street in Menlo Park may now be abandoned by the Menlo Park Fire Protection District.

Citing a protracted planning process and the city's refusal to expedite the permits before a possible specific plan-altering ballot initiative could take effect, the fire board directors voted 3-0-1 on June 30 to look elsewhere for a site to construct a new fire station downtown. Board member Charles Bernstein was absent and Virginia Chang Kiraly abstained, saying she wanted the full board present to discuss alternatives.

"After 7 years of working to replace Station 6 we have gotten nowhere while in half that time we will have built a brand new and dramatically better station in East Palo Alto with

Directors opt not to pursue remodel of Station 6 in current location in downtown Menlo Park.

the full support and assistance of the City of East Palo Alto," director Peter Carpenter said in an email after the vote.

"After a full discussion the Fire Board voted ... to make no further expenditures for the replacement of Station 6 at the Oak Grove site and to consider alternative sites which will

allow us to fulfill our obligation to serve the downtown area," Mr. Carpenter said.

The parcels that were slated for a renovated station straddle the boundary of the specific plan, with 700 Oak Grove on the inside and 1231 Hoover St. outside. The fire board discussed three options: 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.

At issue is whether the initiative proposed by grassroots coalition Save Menlo would require a city-wide vote to change the boundaries of the specific plan to incorporate

See FIRE BOARD, page 10

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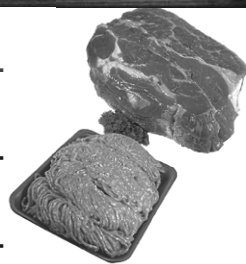
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City reaches agreement with employee union

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

■ MENLO PARK

Menlo Park has reached a tentative agreement with the Service Employees International Union, which represents about 134 city employees.

The one-year contract includes a 4.5 percent pay raise and four hours less paid time off, and maintains employee contributions toward retirement benefits at the levels set in 2011. The union's members last received raises in 2008, according to the city's staff report.

As it did during negotiations with the police sergeants union, the city decided to keep using binding arbitration for misconduct cases, but with a few tweaks. The union contracts bifurcate the appeals process, using one procedure for grievances, such as labor violations, and another for appealing discipline more severe than a letter of reprimand, such as suspension or termination.

The city and union would now be able to select an arbitrator from a pool of retired San Mateo County judges, according to the contract. But the arbitrator's decision would still be final.

Another change is the creation of a labor-management committee that will meet at least once per quarter to discuss retirement benefits and related potential future cost increases.

The staff report estimates the SEIU contract will cost the city an additional \$904,000 a year. The City Council is scheduled

to vote on the proposed SEIU contract on July 15.

Vasquez case

The Almanac broke the story last year about the arrest, firing and reinstatement of veteran Menlo Park police officer Jeffrey Vasquez, that shone a spotlight on the failures of the binding arbitration system.

The officer, fired after being caught naked with a prostitute in a motel room in Sunnyvale and reportedly admitting that it wasn't the first time he'd solicited a hooker for sex, was reinstated through binding arbitration and awarded \$188,000 in back pay. He remains employed by the city.

Were the Vasquez case to occur under the new arbitration process, it would end the same way should the arbitrator rule to revoke the officer's termination.

Binding arbitration decisions in police misconduct remain confidential unless both parties agree to release the information.

The Almanac obtained 17 redacted decisions from multiple California jurisdictions and found that in 10 of those cases, arbitrators reversed the discipline decision. Arbitrators reinstated the officers nine times, and shortened one suspension. They upheld terminations in the remaining seven cases.

Academic studies of similar binding arbitration cases in Chicago and Houston showed approximately the same reversal rate. ■

RUSKIN

continued from page 5

the state Assembly before being termed out in 2010. He was succeeded by fellow Democrat Rich Gordon.

Mr. Ruskin championed an environmental bill to safeguard the state through toxic-substances reporting. He introduced a bill that funded the successful Parolee Reentry Program in East Palo Alto, which helped more than 100 people change their lives and exit the revolving door of crime.

In 2009, he attempted to get a bill passed that would have given new authority to the California Coastal Commission to impose penalties for violations of the Coastal Act.

He served on several Assembly committees, including budget, business and professions, environmental safety and toxic materials, and higher education.

He had planned to run for Mr. Simitian's seat in the state

Senate in 2012.

"Given the treatment ahead, I am withdrawing from all political activity at this time in order to focus on my recovery and to be with my wife, Cheryl, friends, and family," he said in announcing his illness. "I will be looking inside myself to understand how I want to spend my time and how I otherwise want to contribute to the community."

Mr. Gordon has praised Mr. Ruskin's service in the Assembly. He said he was "impressed by the deep respect that so many in Sacramento have for Ira."

Mr. Ruskin received a bachelor's degree in history from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1968 and a master's degree in communications from Stanford University in 1983.

He is survived by his wife, Cheryl. The family prefers memorial donations to the Sem-pervirens Fund, 419 S. San Antonio Road, Suite 211, Los Altos, CA 94022. ■



Photo by Brandon Chew/The Almanac

Young roper

More than 100 young people competed at the Junior Rodeo, held July Fourth at the Mounted Patrol Grounds on Kings Mountain Road in Woodside.

Town to hear water-conservation ideas

Portola Valley may hold a community forum on water conservation. It's one of several ideas that a water-conservation task force will present to the Town Council at its meeting on Wednesday, June 9.

The task force has been at work since April on generating ideas to address the drought. Among them: recognizing residents who do a good job conserving water, adding a water-conservation section to the town's website, and arranging tours of gardens employing best water-conservation practices.

The council will consider a budget of \$3,400 and a work plan.

■ PORTOLA VALLEY

Go to tinyurl.com/Water241 and turn to Page 60 for the staff report and presentation. The council meets at 7:30 p.m. in the Historic Schoolhouse at 765 Portola Road.

Also on the agenda is the council's first annual discussion of acquiring real property "for a compelling public purpose, including, but not limited to, open space, public facilities and affordable housing."

The policy calls for the council to appoint two people to work

with the town attorney in identifying properties.

The focus on July 9 will be the acquisition of property as open space. By July 2015, the town will have more than \$4 million available for the purchase of open space.

Related issues include the coming end to the consulting contract for planning services and bringing the entire planning department into Town Hall. A minor remodel will likely satisfy planning department needs, but Town Hall expansion — and a capital campaign to pay for it — may be necessary.

MANSION

continued from page 3

to us to approve?" After a pause, she added: "Smoke and mirrors."

Commissioner Grant Huberty called it "bizarre" to be asked to retroactively approve what had already happened. "Why are we here if we're not going to be honored?" he added. "That's what really bothers me."

Commissioners Aydan Kutay and Adolph Rosekrans spoke of approving it and moving on, though they voted with the majority.

Commissioner Elizabeth Hobson, in dissent, called the project "a remodel, (though) it doesn't seem like one." She added: "It's going to come out like the picture. ... You have to kind of bemoan the process that got you here and get to the end."

Glen Sherman of Van Acker defended the team's actions, but

acknowledged that they had not informed the town. "Remodel or not, it's complicated," he said. "We have to take down 40 feet of framing to make the shoring work, (and) we didn't pick up the phone and call Town Hall. We didn't do it."

"We're moving fast. We have

A remodeling project evolved into a demolition, commissioners say.

expedited construction plans," he said. "We honored the process. We continue to honor the process. We made a mistake. ... It would have been foolish for us to come in here and do smoke and mirrors."

Van Acker did not have a crystal ball, he said, adding: "I really would appreciate not

speculating on our integrity and our truth."

Community comment

A few residents spoke up, most from the ASRB, and none in support of the applicant.

"Taken separately, these changes are incremental. In aggregate, these changes are flagrant and egregious" and their approval would set a "dangerous precedent," said ASRB member Maggie Mah.

These guys "are not rookies" in analyzing a building for what needs to be done, said ASRB member Rick Anderson. "They know what to expect. I know building plans (for this house) exist. They should not have been surprised."

Resident Sam Felix said he and many other Woodside homeowners have endured town regulations. "This is setting a bad precedent if you let this go," he said. ■

Catherine Rees Latimer

August 5, 1923 – June 25, 2014

Catherine Rees Latimer was born and raised in Seattle. She resided in California for the last 55 years. She passed in her sleep Wednesday, June 25th, 2014 at the age of 90. She is survived by her daughters Leanne Latimer Troy, Tara Latimer Brock and four grandchildren—Matthew, Malia, Cortney, & Chelsea.

Please sign Catherine's online guestbook at www.Legacy.com.



PAID OBITUARY

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Marty Holderness

July 29, 1941 – June 24, 2014

Menlo Park, California

Martha (Marty) Holderness, a long time resident of Menlo Park, passed away peacefully at her home on June 24, 2014, at the age of 72. The daughter of Welch and Marietta (Raggie) Jordan, she was born and raised in Greensboro, North Carolina. She was trained as a chemist with degrees from Hollins College and Emory University, and she enjoyed a 24-year career with the Scientific Instruments Division of Hewlett-Packard.

Possessed of a brilliant mind and a sharp wit, Marty was at heart a gardener. Her rose bushes and citrus trees flourished, but her ability to cultivate extended well beyond the quiet calm of her yard. With her husband of 36 years, Karl Kuhlmann, she nurtured four children and watched them grow. Over the past sixteen years, they saw their garden expand with the arrival of nine grandchildren: Jordan Payne, Cannon Haworth, Alexander Holderness, Savannah Payne, Cameron Payne, Benjamin Holderness, Taylor Haworth, Wilson Tryon, and August Tryon. Annual family trips, the virtual summer camp that her home became each year, and a grandmother's inclination to dote on all of her grandchildren bonded together siblings and cousins who lived all over the country. Nothing filled Marty with more pride or gave her more pleasure than being with her children and grandchildren. All know that Granny will be keeping a watchful and loving eye over them.

Outside of her family, Marty was a loyal friend and a consummate organizer. She was devoted to the Ladera Community Church, its congregation, and its youth programs. In her church, in her community, and within her family, Marty was a pragmatic optimist who never needed to take the lead but was often the driver behind progress. Her wit, her laugh, her energy, and her loyalty will be missed. She is survived by her husband, Karl; her daughter Elizabeth Kuhlmann and son-in-law Stuart Haworth of Tallahassee, Florida; her son Howard and daughter-in-law Jennifer Holderness of San Francisco; her daughter Kristina and son-in-law Steve Tryon of Tulsa, Oklahoma; her daughter Laura and son-in-law Clinton Payne of Coral Gables, Florida; her brother William and sister-in-law Olive Jordan of Greensboro, North Carolina; her half-sister Janet Alberty of Greensboro, North Carolina; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A celebration of Marty's life will be held on Saturday, July 12, 2014, at 2 pm at the Ladera Community Church, 3300 Alpine Road, Portola Valley, California. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to youth programs at the Ladera Community Church or to www.mynewredshoes.org, an organization providing new shoes to homeless children (please reference Ladera Community Church).

PAID OBITUARY



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Vintage fighting vehicles to be sold at auction

continued from page 5

to restart.” There are no front brakes and it cannot operate from its own fuel tanks, but is equipped with four replica 50-caliber machine guns.

■ A Soviet 8K11 SCUD A mobile missile launcher (\$300,000 to \$350,000). This surface-to-surface short-range ballistic missile launcher needs a good cleaning inside and some cosmetic touch-up outside. The wheels and tracks are serviceable and the engine operable, but the engine governor needs work.

■ A West German Leopard 1A1A4 main battle tank (\$400,000 to \$450,000). Built in 1969, this tank’s exterior is painted in NATO camouflage in excellent condition, as are its tracks and wheels. The interior “appears to be complete.” This tank comes with a spare engine.

Not all the vehicles listed include six-figure prices. For example:

■ A six-wheeled British Saracen Command Post Vehicle with original paint, very good tires and fuel system, functional brakes and “normally functioning” driving controls may be had for \$15,000 to \$25,000.

■ A FV701 Reconnaissance Scout Car, also British, is in similarly good condition with all lights and mirrors present. The asking price is \$25,000 to \$35,000. The Scout Car was originally outfitted with a machine gun.

The parts auction will include over 200 parts assemblies, including transmissions, wheels and many engines.

Some of the vehicles are considered destructive devices, the sale of which is overseen by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. ■



Photo courtesy Auctions America

A U.S. assault tank, also known as a Sherman “Jumbo” (\$1.4 million to \$1.6 million), is one seven or eight still in existence. It is part of the Jacques Littlefield collection up for auction.

Fire board looks for new site for station in downtown Menlo Park

continued from page 5

both parcels, so that a merged lot would be subject to only a single set of zoning regulations.

The initiative 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, nonresidential 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 nonresidential development limits.

Initiative co-sponsor Patti Fry and supporters Steve Schmidt and George Fisher spoke during the board meeting.

Saying that the initiative has nothing to do with the district’s issues with renovating the station, Ms. Fry commented: “We would encourage you to do what’s right. We want to support our fire station.”

Mr. Schmidt agreed. There is no reason the district couldn’t rebuild the way it wants should the initiative pass, he said, and to move the station elsewhere, partly out of spite, would deprive portions of Menlo Park from the protection offered by having the facility located centrally in downtown.

“It’s not in the interests of residents or fire district to be involved in a petty political

contest over talking points in November,” he commented.

They asked, why not go with the option that doesn’t involve merging the parcels? But the district representatives responded that that would lead to a sub-optimal station squeezed into a too-small lot.

Taking a different tack, Mr. Fisher stated that he thought Mr. Carpenter should be recused from the discussion on grounds that his anti-initiative stance created a conflict of interest.

District representatives replied that since the director has no financial interests related to Station 6, and that the board isn’t voting on the initiative anyway, recusal was unnecessary.

View from the city

According to the city’s staff, the district’s request in May to expedite the station’s remodel so that project approvals would become effective this year was impossible because of state law.

“Ultimately, the timeline on the Fire Station 6 process is primarily being dictated by the (California Environmental Quality Act) requirements,” said Senior Planner Thomas Rogers in an email to the Almanac. The specialized work needed, combined with staff shortages, led to the selection of a consultant — GHD — to do an \$84,220 CEQA analysis, which the council approved in May.

“The final actions on this project are projected for December,

and are driven by the preceding CEQA analysis requirements,” Mr. Rogers said, noting that public comment deadlines are not up to the city’s discretion.

He added that GHD’s schedule had the fire district’s approval before it went to the council. “In general, I believe the Planning Division has been responsive to the Fire District throughout this

overall process, and has moved things along as the District has addressed the City’s requirements.”

However, the initiative qualified for the November ballot after the consultant was hired. According to the fire district staff’s report for the June 30 board meeting, if the initiative passes and the city decides the

new regulations apply to the Station 6 remodel, the district would either have to fight that decision in court or hold a special election at an estimated cost of \$95,000 in related expenses.

With the decision to look for an alternate site, the board noted that it was essentially regarding the money spent by the district on the GHD contract as a sunk cost. ■



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Fire Station 6 is located at 700 Oak Grove Ave., about two blocks west of El Camino Real in Menlo Park.

Seth Weil competes in world rowing events

By **Tiffany Lam**
Special to the Almanac

Nothing can stop Seth Weil from rowing — not even the flu. Weil, who grew up in Menlo Park and graduated from Menlo-Atherton High School, has competed in two rowing competitions on recent consecutive weekends.

On the weekend of June 20, Weil, along with over 700 athletes from 46 countries, competed in the 2014 World Rowing Cup II at Lake Aiguebelle in France.

This was his second year competing at the event as part

of the U.S. men's four crew. The team won the bronze medal. Australia won silver, while Great Britain took home the gold.

The experience was stressful, yet rewarding, according to Weil. He came down with the flu just before racing. "Although you don't want something out of your control to dictate how you work, it was nice to train through it," he said.



Seth Weil

Copyright: www.row2k.com

Adding to the pressure, a member of the U.S. men's eight crew broke a rib, causing one of the four-crew members to row in both races.

"France was beautiful," Weil said. "I wouldn't have had the opportunity to see that part of the world without rowing."

Just a week later, Weil competed at the Holland Beker Regatta in Amsterdam as part of the U.S. men's eight crew, which took home the gold. The Holland Beker is Holland's most renowned international regatta, attracting 560 crews from 21 countries. The Chinese were right behind the U.S., while the Dutch took third.

The U.S. team is currently training for the world championships, to be held in Amsterdam in August. ■

Norcal Crew rowing team wins gold in national event

A Norcal Crew rowing team won the gold medal in the lightweight four with coxswain event on June 15 at the U.S. Rowing Youth National Championship at Lake Natoma, California.

The team led a field of 21 boats from across the U.S.

Members of the team are Misha Hindery, Marcelo Buxton and Chris Skokowski (all will be seniors this fall at Palo Alto High School); Will Carhart of Menlo Park, a graduate of Menlo-Atherton High School; and Miles Bowman, a graduate of Aragon High School in San Mateo.

In the 2,000-meter six-boat final, Norcal won by more than a boat-length and with a time of 7 minutes and 11.757

seconds. Los Gatos Rowing finished second and S.A.C./Capital, third.

This is Coach Nathan Walker's second Youth National Championship in two years. Last year he coached the Norcal lightweight girls to the lightweight double national championship.

Norcal Crew had two other boats compete at the championships. Katie Kelly, an M-A graduate, finished six out of 14 boats in the grand final of the women's youth single event. Alex Warner, a Paly graduate, and Janet Titzler, a Gunn graduate, finished ninth out of 21 boats in the women's youth lightweight double event.

Go to norcalcrew.org for more information.

Locals among top real estate sellers

Two Menlo Park agent teams and nine individuals were among the top 250 real estate salespeople in the country in 2013, based on rankings announced by Real Trends in Wall Street Journal ads on June 27.

- Top Menlo Park teams were:
- No. 6: Mary and Brent Gulixson, Alain Pinel Realtors, Menlo Park, \$324 million.
 - No. 158: Carol Carnevale and Nicole Aron, Alain Pinel Realtors, Menlo Park, \$95 million.
- Top individuals were:
- No. 33: Keri Nicholas, Cold-

well Banker Residential Brokerage/NRT, Menlo Park, \$154 million.

- No. 70: Hugh Cornish, Coldwell Banker, Menlo Park, \$108 million.
- No. 76: Judy Citron, Alain Pinel Realtors, Menlo Park, \$104 million.
- No. 80: Tom LeMieux, Pacific Union Real Estate, Menlo Park, \$101 million.
- No. 130: Terri Kerwin, Kerwin & Associates, Menlo Park, \$81 million.
- No. 136: Tim Kerns, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage/

NRT, Menlo Park, \$80 million.

- No. 167: Hanna Shacham, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage/NRT, Menlo Park, \$72 million.
 - No. 177: Billy McNair, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage/NRT, Menlo Park, \$69 million.
 - No. 193: Liz Daschbach, Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage/NRT, Menlo Park, \$66 million.
- Go to tinyurl.com/agents752 to the full rankings of the top-selling 250, and even up to 1000.
- Carol Blitzer

News of recent college graduates

- Lindsey Waters of Woodside graduated from the University of Vermont on May 18 with a bachelor's degree in English in the College of Arts and Sciences. In the fall of 2012, she was named to the dean's list.
- Giovanna Baffico of Menlo Park graduated May 23 from Marist College with a bachelor's degree in French.
- Matthew C. Susk of Woodside graduated with a degree in economics on May 18 from St. Lawrence University.
- Sophia Chrystel Cornew of Portola Valley graduated May 24 from Bowdoin College with a major in economics and a minor in biology.
- Ryan Quincy of Menlo Park graduated from Rice University on May 17 with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering.

- Stephen Leadendam of Menlo Park earned a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology.
- Michael Darrow, son of Sandra and Lewis Darrow of Menlo Park, graduated May 17 from Macalester College with a degree in physics.
- Benjamin Godfrey of Portola Valley graduated summa cum laude from the University of California, Davis, with a degree in physics. He will be entering the Ph.D. physics program in condensed matter at U.C. Davis this fall.
- These four Menlo Park residents graduated from Boston University: Adam C. Luce, doctor of medicine, cum laude; Zachary D. Clarence, bachelor of fine arts in acting; Claire H. Sutton, bachelor of science in film and television, magna cum laude; and Aliya A. Lakha, master's degree in medical science.

Regis Philbin to give talk at benefit

TV personality Regis Philbin is on tap to deliver the keynote address at the annual benefit breakfast for InnVision Shelter Network on Oct. 9 at the Regency Hotel in Burlingame.

The Menlo Park-based Shelter Network provides shelter and services to homeless people from San Jose to Daly City. Mr. Philbin supports organizations that help the homeless, Shelter Network said.

Sportscaster Ted Robinson will be master of ceremonies and Shelter Network CEO Karae Lisle and a Shelter Network client will give remarks at the breakfast.

Go to ivsn.org for more information.

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PRESENTED BY

Nancy Jewell Cross reported missing; then she is found

By Barbara Wood
Almanac Staff Writer

Nancy Jewell Cross was once well-known locally for arriving on her bicycle for a harangue public bodies on her favorite topics of public transportation, the environment and political malfeasance. Last week she was reported missing by the San Francisco Police Department.

Ms. Cross, 94, who police say is now homeless, was found later the same day in Berkeley, where police said she frequents the law library.

Albie Esparza, the SFPD public information officer, said Ms. Cross was reported missing on July 1 when workers at homeless shelters where she is a regular became worried after not seeing her for several days.

Menlo Park City Attorney Bill McClure said he remembers Ms. Cross frequently appearing at council meetings and suing the city multiple times. Ms. Cross eventually filed so many lawsuits that in 1992 she was declared a "vexatious litigant" and barred from filing any more suits.

She did so anyway, in 1993,

against Ted Lempert, saying he did not live in the area where he ran for a seat on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. She ended up in jail for several days, refusing to eat while jailed.

In 1996, Ms. Cross was found guilty of "judge-shopping," filing a lawsuit with more than one judge, while trying unsuccessfully to avoid eviction by her sisters from the family home in unincorporated Menlo Park.

In addition to filing lawsuits and lecturing public bodies, Ms. Cross frequently ran for public office, including for the state Senate, state attorney general, U.S. Senate, San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and the Redwood City council. In 1998 she finally won an election, to the board of AC Transit in her new home in the East Bay, defeating the incumbent.

She served one term, losing re-election in 2002. ■



Nancy Jewell Cross, from missing-persons flier.

Candidate filing period opens July 14

By Barbara Wood
Almanac Staff Writer

Yearning to get involved in local politics? The candidate filing period for the Nov. 4 election opens Monday, July 14. Seats on the Menlo Park and Atherton city councils as well as several school boards are up for election.

The filing period will run through Friday, Aug. 8, but will be extended through Wednesday, Aug. 13, in races where an incumbent candidate is eligible to run but does not file.

Up for election are school board seats in the Menlo Park City and Las Lomas elementary school districts, on the county Board of Education, and on the governing boards of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and the Sequoia Healthcare District.

In Menlo Park the terms of Rich Cline, Peter Ohtaki and Kirsten Keith are expiring. Mr. Ohtaki and Ms. Keith, both completing their first terms, have indicated they will run for re-election. Mr. Cline, who would be running for his third term, has said he is undecided.

An initiative measure spon-

sored by the grassroots coalition Save Menlo will also be on the November ballot if the Menlo Park City Council does not take action on July 15 to adopt the initiative as written. The initiative would modify the downtown/El Camino Real specific plan with restrictions on office space and a cap on new, nonresidential development, among other changes.

In Atherton the terms of Bill Widmer and Rick DeGolia are ending and the seat vacated by Jim Dobbie's resignation in March is also available. Mr. DeGolia, who was elected to fill out the term of Jerry Carlson in November 2013, and Mr. Widmer, who was first elected in 2010, have both said they will run for another term.

In the Menlo Park City School District, three seats are up for election. They are now held by board President Joan Lambert, who is finishing her first term; Terry Thygesen, who is ending her third term; and Scott Hinshaw, who was appointed by the board to fill Laura Rich's



unexpired term in March.

In the Las Lomas Elementary School District, three terms are expiring: those of board President Jay Siegel, who was appointed in 2009 and elected in 2010; Rich Ginn, who is finishing his first term; and Christie Heaton, who was appointed in 2013 to fill the unexpired term of Ann Jaquith.

Regionally, the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District has four of seven seats open, including Ward 6, the seat now held by Larry Hassett; Ward 6 includes most of Woodside, Menlo Park, Atherton and Portola Valley as well as La Honda, Loma Mar, Menlo Park, Pescadero, parts of Redwood City and San Gregorio. Mr. Hassett has been on the board since 2000.

The Sequoia Healthcare District's Board of Directors has three open seats, which any district resident 18 years or older is eligible to file for. Incumbents are Jerry Shefren, Arthur Faro and Jack Hickey.

The San Mateo County Board of Education has three seats open, but those seats do not represent local school districts. ■

SLAC reopened after fire

All facilities at SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory in Menlo Park were up and running again 48 hours after a fire broke out in the linear accelerator on June 25, according to communications

manager Andrew Gordon.

On that evening, smoke poured out from an apparent electrical fire within the housing for the two-mile-long linear accelerator at 2575 Sand Hill

BRIEFS

Road. The fire damaged supporting equipment, but not the accelerator itself, according to emergency personnel, and was quickly controlled.

Downtown fitness

Another event is joining Menlo Park's roster of downtown festivities: The city is partnering with SBM Fitness to showcase ways to have fun exercising. On Aug. 13, the sounds of Zumba dancers and runners panting, among others, will echo along Santa Cruz Avenue from 6 to 9 p.m. when Menlo Park hosts its first "family fitness extravaganza."

Kickstarter

Menlo Park photographer Mark Tuschman has launched a Kickstarter campaign to raise funds to publish "Faces of Courage: Intimate Portraits of Women on the Edge," a photo-essay collection documenting women's rights issues in developing countries.

Go to tinyurl.com/mb2rhu5 to learn more. Mr. Tuschman estimates he needs to raise at least \$50,000 to get the 350-page book into publication; if the effort is successful, copies of the book will be donated to

schools and libraries.

Caltrain fares

Caltrain fare increases will take effect during the next several months. The agency's board of directors approved the changes during its July meeting.

Day passes will cost 50 cents more, and paper one-way tickets 25 cents more, effective Oct. 5, a move the agency said is meant to encourage use of the reusable Clipper fare card. The cost of the "Go Pass," which employers may purchase for use by their employees, will rise \$15 to \$180 in 2015 and to \$190 the following year.

Those counting as "youth" will catch a break — the transit agency expanded the category of people qualifying for the 50 percent youth discount by one year to include those who are 18 years old.

Meals on wheels

The Meals on Wheels program is looking for volunteer drivers to make deliveries on Monday or Friday mornings, according to Peninsula Volunteers. The program takes more than 1,400 meals to house-bound adults in south San Mateo County each week.

Go to tinyurl.com/nudgvhg to learn more.

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■ POLICE CALLS

Police received the reports on the date shown.

WOODSIDE

Theft report: Someone in a white pickup truck used tools to remove and steal a license-plate-reading camera from the campus of Canada College at 4200 Farm Hill Blvd. June 23.

Residential burglary report: Someone broke into a residence on Still Creek Road and rummaged through dresser drawers in the master bedroom but took nothing. June 26.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Residential burglary reports:

■ Someone broke the glass of an exterior door to the master bedroom of a Golden Oak Drive home and stole a floor safe. Estimated loss: \$26,500. June 28.

■ A rear window into the master bedroom of a home on Escobar Road was found broken, with indicators that the bedroom had been rummaged through. It wasn't clear if anything was taken. June 24.

■ Someone entered a residence on Favonia Road via an unlocked door and rummaged through several rooms, taking three items. Investigators have a vehicle description and a partial license plate number. Estimated loss: \$620. June 24.

■ A house cleaner said bedrooms had been ransacked in a home on Oak Forest Court. The burglar entered by smashing a window in the door to the master bedroom. Deputies did not find fingerprints and the list of stolen property was not available. June 27.

Theft report: Someone stole power tools, an Apple iPad and a camera from an unlocked shed on a Ramosa Road property. Estimated loss: \$1,850. June 28.

LADERA

Forgery report: A resident of N. Castanya Way reported that someone stole checks from an unlocked vehicle

and cashed one in Yuba City, California. June 27.

MENLO PARK

Auto burglary reports:

■ Someone smashed a rear window of a vehicle parked on Sharon Park Drive and stole a bicycle from the back seat. Estimated loss: \$600. June 25.

■ A backpack was stolen after someone broke into a vehicle parked in the 1800 block of El Camino Real. Estimated loss: \$200. July 1.

■ Someone broke into a vehicle parked in the 1300 block of El Camino Real, but stole nothing. July 1.

Theft reports:

■ Exercise equipment was stolen from a parking lot at Sparta Performance Science at 165 Constitution Drive. Estimated loss: \$18,000. June 23.

■ Someone broke into a Santa Monica Avenue garage via a rear door, then entered the residence through an unlocked door and stole a saw for cutting tile and stone, a laser and other tools. Estimated loss: \$1,297. June 26.

■ A woman having dinner at Piccolo Ristorante Italiano at 651 Oak Grove Ave. had her wallet stolen from her table. June 25.

■ Police stopped an East Palo Alto man at Alma Street and Oak Grove Avenue for riding a bicycle at night without a headlight, then detained and booked

him into jail after verifying that the bicycle belonged to Google Corp. in Mountain View. June 27.

■ Someone stole a locked bike from the Caltrain station on Merrill Street. Estimated loss: \$300. July 1.

■ A bike locked to a bike rack at the Caltrain station on Merrill Street was stolen after the lock was cut. Estimated loss: \$150. June 25.

■ A customer at the Safeway supermarket at 525 El Camino Real put baby formula into a purse, left the store without having paid for the formula, and fled in a waiting vehicle. Estimated loss: \$53. June 23.

■ Two juveniles stole, then returned, two permanent markers from Menlo Park Hardware at 700 Santa Cruz Ave. They

were let go with a warning. June 24.

Fraud reports:

■ Management at the Red Cottage Inn at 1704 El Camino Real was informed by Expedia.com that a fraudulent credit card had been used to rent a room. The occupant left after saying that a friend had rented the room for him. June 30.

■ Pumps at the Chevron gas station at 1399 Willow Road had been tampered with and were pumping unaccounted amounts of free gasoline. June 23.

■ A resident of Partridge Avenue reported that someone filed 2013 income taxes using the resident's personal information.

Stolen vehicle report: Someone stole a silver 2014 Nissan Versa from a residence on Hermosa Way. July 3.



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Hiltgund Wickett, Atherton resident

Hiltgund Wickett died at her home in Atherton on June 4. She was 85.

Born in Vienna, Austria, in 1928, she immigrated to the U.S. in the early 1950s and attended U.C. Berkeley. Family members say she was "smitten with the Bay Area's climate and natural beauty after enduring the misery of WWII and the postwar years in Central Europe."

In 1955 she married Walton Wickett and they settled on the Peninsula. A lifelong and ardent devotee of classical music, she shared that passion with her only child, who became a professional musician.

"Her zest for life, charm, warmth and ebullient free spirit is much missed," her daughter said.

In midlife Ms. Wickett put secondary roots down in France, becoming a confirmed Francophile.

Twice widowed, she is survived by her daughter, Helene Wickett of San Mateo, and her brother, Horand Tekusch, and his family in Vienna, Austria. Services have been held.

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



Stanford Hospital & Clinics
MEDICINE

NEWSROOM

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WHAT'S YOUR VIEW?

All letters 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.

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Mail

or deliver to: Editor, The Almanac
3525 Alameda de las Pulgas
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Call

the Viewpoint desk at 223-6528.

Good move by town on building violations

Every so often city council members and planning commissioners are put in the uncomfortable position of trying to determine whether residents who have violated the terms of their building permits are being sincere when they say: “Oops. I made a mistake. I’m sorry — have mercy.” The Woodside Planning Commission was in just that situation last week when it reviewed a Mountain Home Road residential building project that went off the tracks and greatly exceeded the limits of what the town permitted.

The commission did the right thing in recommending that the project, which in November it had approved as a remodel, be sent back to the town’s Architectural and Site Review Board for review. With that action, the commission rejected the town staff’s recommendation to sign off on amendments to the previously approved plan for the mansion at 360 Mountain Home Road. By instead endorsing a strategy that forced the applicant to stop work on the project, resubmit plans and obtain new approvals, the commission gave a clear message: When the town stamps “Approved” on a property owner’s permits, there are consequences to overstepping the bounds of those permits.

(The Almanac learned at press time that the Planning Commission is expected to rehear the issue in late July; the ASRB is not expected to review it again.)

At issue is the property owner’s complete demolition of the mansion’s first floor and basement, despite the fact that the Planning Commission had authorized only a partial demolition of the basement to accommodate the approved basement expansion, according to a staff report. The approved plans, which had also been endorsed by the ASRB last year, included expanding the main house to 7,825 square feet from the current 7,425, and raising the heights of some portions of the house. The applicant is listed only as SV Projects LLC.

The applicant’s representatives have argued that during the construction process, building professionals determined that removing those floors would allow crews to shore up the structure to better support new stone siding. But the glaring question is: Why didn’t the applicant consult Town Hall before diving into work that clearly went beyond the scope of what was permitted by the town? Planning Commission Chair Marilyn Voelke, after hearing a representative of the applicant refer to the excessive work discovered by a town inspector as only a “moment in time” for the project, aptly asked: “How long was that moment that it took to decide to take out the first floor? Was it long enough to call staff?”

As ASRB member Rick Anderson put it, the project’s construction managers “are not rookies.” Not only should they have known what to expect in “remodeling” a structure that will include stone siding, they also should know that project changes that exceed the permitted scope must be approved, and the first step is to consult the town’s planning staff.

Countless residents making changes to their homes sometimes face what they might see as costly, time-consuming and frustrating hurdles in obtaining project permits. But the majority honor the process. The Planning Commission’s action discourages egregious violations of the rules generated by the idea that it’s better to ask for forgiveness than to ask for permission.

In a related matter, the town of Woodside would do well to adopt Portola Valley’s and other public agencies’ practice of organizing site visits by council and commission members as open meetings, giving the public and press access to what might be occasions for the public’s business to be discussed. In this case, commissioner’s were encouraged to visit the construction site individually, avoiding a quorum, and making the process less transparent. ■

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

Don’t blame SaveMenlo for fire station delay

Editor:

SaveMenlo, the group sponsoring the downtown specific plan initiative, has one overriding goal: to improve the quality of life for Menlo Park residents. We support the vision of a revitalized downtown and we fully support the Menlo Park Fire Protection District’s efforts to modernize its downtown fire station.

Opponents of the initiative (including a longtime fire board member who knows better) have suggested that the initiative is somehow responsible for delaying the fire station upgrade. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The fire district’s proposal to merge two parcels and rebuild the downtown fire station is

Continued on next page



Atherton Heritage Association

Looking back

The date of this photo and the purpose and location of the gathering are mysteries, but these finely hatted ladies on a lawn make for a striking image. Most are identified: Front row, from left, Mary Joselyn Avenali, Mary Eyre and Elia Howard Baldwin; middle row, Elena Macondray Eyre, unknown, Margaret Eyre Girvins and unknown; back row, Annie Selby, unknown, and Elena Atherton Macondray Selby.

LETTERS

Our readers write

Continued from previous page

not restricted by the initiative. The initiative does not prevent merging these parcels. Moreover, it does not stand in the way of the city changing its zoning rules as requested by the district for the project. The initiative does include a map of the specific plan area; this is relevant only for the purpose of showing where new square feet will be counted.

The fire district bought its expansion property more than six years ago, and raised numerous issues regarding the proposed downtown specific plan while it was being deliberated. The City Council, including a former fire board member, failed to address those issues prior to approving the specific plan in July 2012. They again failed to address them when they had another chance to do so during their November 2013 review of the specific plan.

The SaveMenlo Initiative, formally submitted in May 2014, has nothing to do with these failures of the City Council and the fire board.

I encourage all parties to work together to get this important new station approved and built as expeditiously as possible. If improvements to downtown fire safety are delayed further, it is only because that serves the interests of the initiative's opponents.

Patti Fry

Wallea Drive, Menlo Park

City's inaction on fire station plan a mystery

Editor:

The Menlo Park fire board resolution passed on (June 30) regarding Station 6 reads: "The Fire Board hereby determines that since the City of Menlo Park is unwilling to proceed expeditiously regarding Station 6 that no additional expenditures will be made to rebuild Station 6 at its current location and the District will consider alternative sites." This resolution correctly lays the blame for inaction squarely on the city of Menlo Park.

It is a mystery why the parcel purchased by the fire district in 2008 that was to enhance the rebuilding of the station was not included in the specific plan area. There are no less than 13 communications from the fire district via letters and appearances at Planning Commission or City Council meetings in an 18-month period that the fire district sought

assistance regarding the parcel it purchased and wanted to use for its building plans.

Most egregious, the day before the council approved the specific plan on June 5, 2012, Fire Chief Schapelhouman again wrote to then Mayor Kirsten Keith and Vice Mayor Peter Ohtaki repeating the fire district's plea to consider flexibility regarding the Station 6 redevelopment plans.

Some say that the specific plan took seven years to create and should be left as it is. I support the SaveMenlo initiative because there are unintended consequences of the specific plan that need to be addressed

Brielle Johnck

Central Avenue, Menlo Park

Mayor Mueller in China an 'able diplomat'

Editor:

I write in praise of Mayor Ray Mueller's contributions to the just-concluded Silicon Valley Mayors Delegation to China. As deputy head of delegation, Ray showed himself to be an able diplomat even while he was a vigorous proponent for Menlo Park, its businesses like Facebook and venture capital, and its attraction as a place for inbound investment.

Mayor Mueller also spoke for the region, most memorably when he advocated strongly for East Palo Alto in front of Shanghai financial managers representing billions of dollars in investment portfolios.

In all, there were 11 mayors and vice mayors on the trip, representing over 550,000 citizens and numerous powerful companies in our remarkable region. As such, our delegation received remarkable access and perspectives.

We were able to meet the deputy mayor of Shanghai (a city with 24 million people, more than half the population of California), the leadership of Hubei and Hebei Provinces (collectively home to 130 million people), and city and party leaders in Beijing, Wuhan, and Shenzhen. We shared perspectives on economic development, technology and the importance of open markets. We broke bread (or rice) and got to know each other.

We know there are skeptics about trips like this. But the fact is, in China, government works very closely with business and Chinese leadership has directed large Chinese firms to invest overseas. Chinese officials and corporate leaders are making decisions where to invest and they want to form trusted relationships with their opposites — mayors like us and our own corporate leaders.

This trip was a small but important step to introduce our 11 cities and to reinforce Silicon Valley as a place that welcomes foreign investment and innovation.

I am grateful to Mayor Mueller for taking time away from his family, work and city to join this first-ever delegation and to help make it the success that it was.

Michael Brownrigg

Mayor, City of Burlingame
Head of Silicon Valley Mayors Delegation


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