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The Almanac

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

OCTOBER 15, 2014 | VOL. 50 NO. 6



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Measure M

What it is, what it does, and what we don't know

SECTION 2



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Photo by Natalia Nazarova/The Almanac

Eighth-graders at La Entrada School in Menlo Park celebrate the school's being named a National Blue Ribbon School, the only school in San Mateo County to receive the honor this year.

La Entrada named Blue Ribbon School

By Barbara Wood
Almanac Staff Writer

La Entrada School, the Las Lomitas Elementary School District's grade 4-8 school, has for the second time in six years been named a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education, the only San Mateo County school to receive the designation this year.

"Teachers, staff, parents and students are rightfully excited about this," said Lisa Cesario, district superintendent.

La Entrada, located at 2200 Sharon Road in Menlo Park, was also named a California Distinguished School in 2011. Schools are eligible to get the Blue Ribbon award once every six years.

This year, only 337 schools in 47 states, including 50 private schools, were given the Blue Ribbon designation. Blue Ribbon schools must either be among

the highest achieving in their state or have made significant academic improvement.

La Entrada's application for the award said the school's 750 students "benefit from a community that remains constant with consistent rules, familiar

The school continuously ranks at the top of local Bay Area schools and in the top 100 schools in California.

teachers, supportive adults, and a close community of families."

The school's shared vision is for "rigorous academic programs and positive social and emotional growth without sacrificing art, music and physical education," the application said.

While La Entrada is in Menlo Park, the school also includes students from Atherton, Portola Valley, Woodside, and East Palo Alto.

Academically, the school "continuously rank(s) at the top of local Bay Area schools ... and in the top 100 schools in California. Our Academic Performance Index (API) from 1999-2000 to 2010-2011 has grown from 913 points to 964 points," the application says.

Other attributes of the school noted in the application: Every student has an iPad to use; 85 percent of parents participate in the school's PTA or education foundation; and foreign language choices include Spanish, French, Latin and Mandarin.

Principal Shannon Potts noted another reason for La Entrada's success. "We are so gratified to be able to attract amazing, innovative teachers at La Entrada," she said. "That's what keeps our schools on the vanguard and helps us to foster excellence."

Principal Potts and one other staff representative will travel to Washington, D.C., to receive the award in November. ▣

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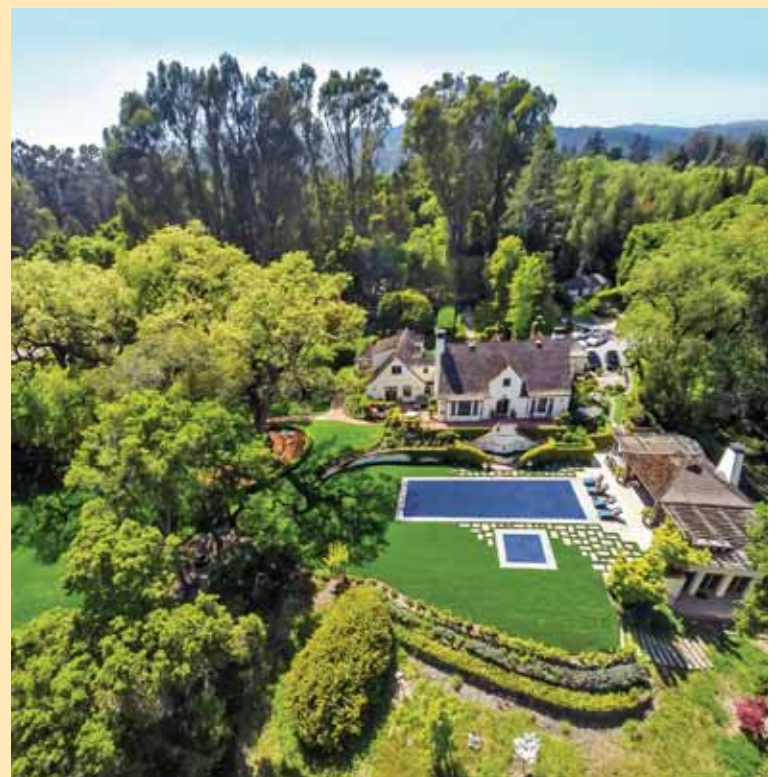
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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Council backs removal of hazardous trees

Old eucalyptus trees are seen as a fire hazard, particularly in the drought.

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

■ PORTOLA VALLEY

Roadside stands of eucalyptus trees, with their tendency to drop limbs and sometimes fall over, can be a very significant danger when power lines are present, fire-fighting authorities say. Even if the power line is across the road, as is the case in at least three locations in Portola Valley, the trees are so tall that the power line is still vulnerable.

Complicate matters by adding a severe drought; eucalyptuses at the end of their lifespans; the oiliness of eucalyptus wood, bark and leaves — firefighters call them “gasoline trees” — the fact that electrical fires are dangerous to firefighters until power is shut down; and that the governor has temporarily grounded firefighting aircraft following a recent crash ... and you have a situation.

The Portola Valley Town Council on Oct. 8 gave the green light to Town Manager Nick Pegueros to finalize a policy proposal for the Oct. 22 council meeting that would give staff the discretion to quickly remove a hazardous tree. A short list of specific trees marked for destruction will be included.

The discussion on Oct. 8 included passionate defenses of eucalyptus trees from Trails and Paths Committee members who asked the council to include the community in non-urgent tree removal decisions.

For a cold view of the situation, the council turned to Fire Marshal Denise Enea of the Woodside Fire Protection District. “My job

is worst-case scenarios and fire prevention,” Ms. Enea said. While she rarely orders trees to be felled, experts are consistent in their analysis of eucalyptus and their prominent role in fires, she said.

Eucalyptus have a lifespan, Ms. Enea said. While she deferred to arborists for professional opinions, she said that two of three major stands in Portola Valley are at or near the end of their lives — in front of the Spring Down Equestrian Center on Portola Road and in front of the Alpine Hills Tennis and Swimming Club on Alpine Road.

A stand on Grove Drive is younger but just as tall, and has upper branches that appear to be second growth and thus structurally weak, Ms. Enea told the Almanac.

A eucalyptus fell on July 24 on Canada Road near Godetia Drive in Woodside, bringing down a 60,000-volt power line as it fell, which immediately started several fires. The incident enshrouded Interstate 280 in smoke and disabled many area traffic signals.

Helicopter water drops were crucial that day, Ms. Enea said, because firefighters had to wait 45 minutes for Pacific Gas & Electric Corp. crews to shut down power to the downed wires. Had they attempted fighting the fire from the ground, firefighters would have faced the unacceptable risk of shock from electricity following the stream of water back to the hose, Ms. Enea said in an interview.

“We have to assume that trees



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Eucalyptus trees, like these four in the public right-of-way in front of the Alpine Hills Tennis & Swimming Club, present a fire hazard in that they are prone to falling and tall enough to bring down the power lines across the road. The Town Council agreed in principle to an expedited procedure to remove trees that present an imminent danger.

towering over the power lines — that goes for ANY tree over the power lines — has the potential to fall and start a fire,” she said. “In the fire service, the mantra is: If it is predictable, it is preventable!”

Two trees per year

It’s not yet known exactly how many eucalyptuses present a hazard on public land in Portola Valley, but it may well be more than 10, Mr. Pegueros told the Almanac. Given a cost of between \$2,000 and \$8,000 per tree, depending on size, staff plan to take down a few per year.

At the meeting, residents Phil Reilly and Susan Gold of the Trails and Paths Committee advocated for consensus-driven

decisions on removing trees not considered an immediate danger.

Mr. Reilly took issue with characterizing all eucalyptus as dangerous. Other Bay Area communities manage them rather than remove them, he said. Town staff should seek “multiple inputs, not just the fire marshal,” he added. If consensus is elusive, a council member should decide.

The right approach to tree removal is caution and deliberation and consideration of the town’s goals, Ms. Gold said.

But a question lingered: When is the danger not immediate if a tree is old, tall, heavy, flammable, prone to falling and located within striking distance

of a power line?

Recalling the consensus-seeking that animated the four-year extension of life given in 2008 to a faltering old oak over a Little League dugout at Ford Field, Mayor Ann Wengert wondered about the utility of consensus this time around. “What I’m most concerned about is hindering (staff’s) ability to do their work,” she said. “I feel very strongly that safety has to trump all in these situations.”

“It is unacceptable for a tree to fall and take down a power line and start a fire,” Councilwoman Maryann Derwin said. “This isn’t about the romance of saving trees. This is about preserving safety in this town.” ■

Menlo Park Planning Commission: ‘We are changing the specific plan’

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park planning commissioners say they hope to send a positive message with their unanimous action on Monday, Oct. 6, to support three changes to the downtown/El Camino Real specific plan, most significantly a cap on medical office space.

“We are changing (the specific plan),” said Chair Ben Eiref. The cap would limit medi-

cal office space per project within the specific plan area to 33,333 square feet for projects of 100,000 square feet or more; smaller developments may included up to one-third of their total size as medical office.

There was initially some bemusement as to where “33,333” came from — the council had made the suggestion in the fall of 2013, after the commission had completed its specific plan review. Changes to the specific plan require a review for any

unexamined impacts, according to state law, so the recommended changes are just now returning for final approval.

Commissioner John Kadwany wondered whether it was “a randomly chosen value ... basically, it’s unstudied.”

Discussion turned toward a letter sent on Oct. 6 from the city’s contracted attorney on specific plan issues that said if Measure M passes before the cap is adopted by the council, the change would have to go up for a

city-wide vote instead.

Attorney Greg Stepanicich said that Measure M wouldn’t require voter approval for all changes to the specific plan, but it would in this case since the measure doesn’t distinguish between different types of office space. Section 3.3.5 of the initiative sets the maximum amount of office space of any individual project at 100,000 square feet, he said, and Section 4.1 states that any amendments to development standards and definitions

require voter approval — even ones that would impose stricter standards.

Measure M supporters have challenged that interpretation of the initiative’s language. The full text of Measure M is available on the city’s election website.

Commissioner Katie Ferrick concluded during the Oct. 6 meeting that the attorney’s opinion implied that a project could consist of 100,000 square

See **MP PLAN**, page 6

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Police ask dry cleaner clients to review credit charges

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park police are asking customers who used Menalto Cleaners to review credit card statements and receipts for the past three years.

A press release issued on Oct. 7 said the police are investigating allegations of credit card fraud that may be connected with Menalto Cleaners, located at 1921 Menalto Ave. in Menlo Park.

Business owner E. Gary Smith

declined to comment on the case.

Police said the investigation has found at least seven alleged victims with a combined loss of more than \$200,000.

Cmdr. Dave Bertini said that since the investigation is ongoing, and no arrests have been made, the department is not naming suspects.

Anyone with concerns that they may have been a victim of fraud may contact Detective Steve Knopp at 330-6364 or swknopp@menlopark.org. ■

MP PLAN

continued from page 5

feet of medical office space if M passes, since the types of use aren't distinguished.

Commissioner Drew Combs, who holds a Harvard law degree, and is currently running for election to the council, pointed out that the attorney's opinion did not cite any legal precedent such as case law or prior rulings.

Senior Planner Thomas Rogers agreed, but said it was possible there were no directly analogous cases to cite.

Mr. Combs also emphasized that he thinks Measure M would not make changing the specific plan impossible. "Certainly the process of amending the plan and it being organic is something we all value, but it's not clear that if M passes, (the specific plan) is set in stone."

While other commissioners highlighted that the city currently has the power to make amendments, such as the cap under discussion, and saw that as proof the specific plan works, Mr. Combs had a different take.

"Changing it, by default, is a statement that (the specific plan) is not working right," he said.

The discussion then turned toward how large a project should be before the developer

is required to negotiate public benefits. Several commissioners, including Vince Bressler, Katie Ferrick and John Kadvanly, thought the topic was worth returning to after the council failed to recommend any changes last fall to that aspect of the specific plan.

Mr. Kadvanly pointed out that Stanford University is voluntarily involved in ongoing negotiations with the city over its proposed mixed-use complex that would not have triggered required public benefit negotiations. So there is this negotiation outside of any process of the specific plan, which is supposed to control the process, he said. "Go figure!"

The commissioner said he thought that not lowering the trigger threshold was "the biggest mistake the council has made in the last couple years," and contributed to unnecessary "sturm und drang" over the specific plan.

Staff said that while that was not the focus of the Oct. 6 meeting, the commissioners were free to express their opinions about the public benefit thresholds to the council as individuals.

The Planning Commission supported the recommended amendments 7-0. The council is expected to take a final vote on the medical office cap and the other changes on Oct. 28. ■

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Construction firms heavy donors to bond measure for community colleges

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

It's a season of giving for construction interests from around the Bay Area.

Contributions from architectural firms, builders and organized labor made up much of the \$167,600 total to a campaign committee backing Measure H. The \$388 million bond measure on the Nov. 4 ballot would fund capital improvements at three campuses in the San Mateo County Community College District.

Three years ago, the district proposed a \$564 million bond measure but it failed, missing the necessary 55 voter approval by 1.9 percentage points. The pace of giving is up this time. Finance reports showed \$117,500 in contributions at this point in the 2011 campaign, about 30 percent lower than this year's donations.

Measure H also needs approval by 55 percent of the voters to pass. The measure would increase annual property taxes by \$8.22 per \$100,000 of a property's assessed value.

The college district includes Canada College in Woodside, the College of San Mateo in San Mateo, and Skyline College in San Bruno. Plans for the \$388 million include eight new and nine remodeled buildings, with the remodeling to include seismic retrofits, energy efficiency



and access for the disabled.

The campaign contributions, most from Bay Area firms, are listed in a report from the county Elections Office that covers the three months ending Sept. 30. The report lists 33 commercial or institutional contributors, with 19 giving \$5,000 or more.

In the five-figure category of contributors are Swinerton Management & Consulting in San Francisco (\$25,000), BCA Architects of San Jose (\$20,000), Blach Construction in Santa Clara (\$10,000), and MediFit Community Services in New Jersey (\$10,000), the only out-of-state contribution.

MediFit Community Services is a fitness-center design and management firm, according to its website. Plans for Measure H include an expansion of a health-and-wellness center and a new kinesiology-and-wellness building at the College of San Mateo.

The contributions include \$14,800 from organized labor and \$50,000 from architectural firms.

Go to tinyurl.com/college114 to see the campaign finance report (California form 460). We were unable to rotate the image, so you may need to print it out to view it. There are a total of 20 pages. ■

The measure would authorize \$388 million in bond borrowing for the community college district.

Woodside School seeks bond oversight committee members

Woodside Elementary School is seeking members for an independent citizens' oversight committee that will keep an eye on the use of the \$13.5 million in bond money that voters approved in June.

The committee is seeking members who fit in one of the following categories: active in a business organization representing local business; active in a senior citizens organization; active in a taxpayers association; parent or guardian of a district student; parent or guardian of a district student and active in a parent-teacher organiza-

tion; and an at-large community member who lives in the school district.

The committee will be responsible for reviewing and keeping the public informed of bond spending and for submitting an annual report on the bond spending to the school board.

Committee members will serve one- or two-year terms and can be reappointed for two additional two-year terms.

Applications are at tinyurl.com/WESapply1 or in the school district offices at 3195 Woodside Road, and are due by Oct. 31.

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VOTE ROSE

ATHERTON COUNCIL

Measure M equals big spending in election

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Three committees have organized to either champion or defeat Measure M, the specific plan initiative on the Nov. 4 election ballot.

Measure M aims to amend the Menlo Park El Camino Real/downtown specific plan to set a cap on allowable office construction in the area. The provisions in the measure could be changed only by a city-wide vote.

Greenheart

Greenheart Land Co., which is proposing to build a 420,000-square-foot, mixed-use development on El Camino Real at Oak Grove Avenue in Menlo Park, has contributed \$200,000 to a political committee it organized

to defeat Measure M, according to its campaign finance filing.

If passed, Measure M would reduce the allowable office space at the Greenheart site from the proposed 210,000 square feet to 100,000 square feet. Greenheart executives have said that if Measure M passes, they would have to go back to the drawing board on their proposal.

Greenheart's political organization, named the "Committee for a Vibrant Downtown: No on Measure M," reported spending \$82,860 during the reporting period, from Jan. 1 through Sept. 30.

The money was spent to produce and distribute campaign materials not only against Measure M but also for Menlo Park City Council incumbents Rich Cline, Kirsten Keith and

Peter Ohtaki, who are seeking re-election and are opposed to Measure M.

Money was also spent on newspaper ads and tech services.

The "nonmonetary" spending for the candidates was to help defray the costs of "slate cards" — mailers sent by larger organizations such as political parties — and delivering campaign literature door to door. The Greenheart committee calculates the value of the contributions at \$992 for Mr. Cline, \$867 for Ms. Keith, and \$992 for Mr. Ohtaki, according to the filing, which was received by the Menlo Park city clerk on Tuesday, Oct. 7, a day after the deadline.

Save Menlo

Save Menlo, the Yes on M

contingent, raised \$17,305 from July 1 through Sept. 30. It also listed \$213 in nonmonetary contributions, described as food and supplies for its campaign kick-off event.

Major donors include downtown property owner Nancy Couperus (\$1,000); Save Menlo co-founders Mike Lanza and Perla Ni (\$2,500); Stanford University student Camille Townsend (\$1,000); and registered nurse Catherine Wilson (\$2,000).

All but one donor listed on the report listed a Menlo Park address, marking a change from fundraising during the first six months of the year, when Atherton resident and venture capitalist Gary Lauder donated \$20,000 — 65 percent of Save Menlo's funding as of June.

Another 'No' committee

"Menlo Park Deserves Better," the other No on M committee, reported \$5,705 in monetary donations and \$1,845 in nonmonetary contributions, listed as beverages, event supplies, printing, website and logo design services.

Major donors include several real estate agents, with Kimberly LeMieux giving \$250; Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers venture capitalist Ted Schlein giving \$1,000; and August Capital COO Jeffrey Bloom chipping in \$250.

Menlo Park Deserves Better has its own Atherton representative: Peter Carpenter, a Menlo Park Fire Protection District board member, gave two donations in the form of nonmonetary website services that totaled \$799 and also a \$1,000 cash contribution. ■

Keith leads Menlo Park council race fundraising

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

Incumbent Kirsten Keith raised \$13,943 according to the campaign finance report that covers the period from July 1 through Sept. 30, outpacing the other five candidates running for three open seats on the Menlo Park City Council. The reports were filed by Monday, Oct. 6, with the city clerk's office.

Ms. Keith also reported receiving \$2,303 in nonmonetary contributions, most of which went toward a fundraiser held at the Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club organized by developer David Bohannon. Tickets went for \$100 to \$1,000 each. She

also received \$867 in campaign literature distribution and mailings from developer Greenheart's "Committee for a Vibrant Downtown — No on (Measure) M."

Noteworthy money donors include John Tarlton, CEO of Tarlton Properties, and Atherton resident and Menlo Park Fire Protection District board member Peter Carpenter (\$900 each); Mr. Bohannon and Tod Spieker of Spieker Companies (\$1,000 each); "marketing ninja" Deborah Conrad of Cowboy Ventures (\$2,019); the California Apartment Association PAC (\$500); Pacific Gas and Electric (\$250); and a slew of current and past city commissioners, former council members and other officials.

Ms. Keith spent \$3,335 on lawn signs, voter data and campaign literature.

Fellow incumbent Peter Ohta-

ki reported \$8,635 in monetary contributions and \$983 in non-monetary donations, which included Greenheart's slate mailings and campaign literature distribution.

Appearing on his list of donors are SLAC physicist Charles Munger Jr. (\$995); Lincoln Club of Northern California PAC (\$900); and Peter Carpenter and Tod Spieker (\$900 each).

Giving \$500 each were Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers venture capitalist Ted Schlein, the Republican Leadership Council, developer Matt Matteson, homemaker Deborah Clemetson, and investor Bob Lane. Pacific Gas and Electric contributed \$250.

Mr. Ohtaki's expenditures — \$3,364 — mostly went toward campaign literature, food for a kick-off event and a \$500 donation to the Coro Fellows program run by a nonprofit public affairs organization.

Former council member Kelly Fergusson, who lost a bid for re-election in 2012 but resurfaced for this year's campaign with the support of the Save Menlo "Yes on M" faction, came in third, with \$8,472 in monetary donations and no non-monetary contributions. That includes \$619 donated by herself; \$1,000 from Save Menlo co-founder Mike Lanza; and \$500 each from "Yes on M" supporters Morris Brown and Elizabeth Houck. There were a sprinkling of out-of-town donors.

Ms. Fergusson's filing reports the occupation and employer of many donors with the word "requested" — rather than identifying their responses.



'Plein Air Escapes'

This painting, titled "Pescadero Village," is part of the "Plein Air Escapes" exhibit of new works by Menlo Park artist Diana Jaye at the Viewpoints Gallery in Los Altos through Nov. 1. "Meet the Artist" days are Oct. 25 and 27 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the gallery, located at 315 State St. Ms. Jaye's oil landscapes are from San Francisco, Sonoma, Pescadero, Princeton, Poplar Beach, Colfax and Grass Valley. Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday.

Her \$4,034 in expenses included \$27 for nametag badges for "Yes on M," and campaign materials.

In fourth place, newcomer and Planning Commissioner Drew Combs raised \$7,650 in monetary donations, including \$325 donated by himself. He reported \$217 in nonmonetary donations, consisting of \$157 in event food from wife Alexa.

Donors of interest included "Yes on M" supporters Mike Lanza, Elizabeth Houck and Morris Brown (\$500 each); account manager William Hyland of Mission Viejo (\$400); former councilman Heyward Robinson, George Fisher and registered nurse Catherine

Wilson (\$250); and Atherton attorney Chip Lutton (\$200).

Environmental Quality Commissioner Kristin Duriseti reported raising \$4,918 in monetary donations and gave her campaign a \$4,000 loan. She had a single nonmonetary donation of photos by Irene Searles Photography.

Donors included Camille Townsend, a teaching assistant at Stanford, who gave \$500, contributed the same amount to Ms. Fergusson and gave \$1,000 to the "Yes on M" committee.

Giving \$250 to Ms. Duriseti were Clean Coalition attorney Craig Lewis, former councilman Heyward Robinson, attorney George Fisher, and registered

nurse Catherine Wilson.

As he predicted, incumbent Rich Cline raised the least amount of money as he continued his tradition of low-budget campaigning. His \$3,500 in monetary donations includes a \$1,000 loan from himself. He reported \$992 in nonmonetary contributions from Greenheart's committee for mailings and campaign literature distribution.

Peter Carpenter gave \$900, and Ted Schlein, Matt Matteson, Tod Spieker and the California Apartment Association PAC chipped in \$500 each.

Mr. Cline's expenses — \$2,883 — were dedicated to campaign paraphernalia and literature. ■

Ratings firms give community college district top marks

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

The San Mateo County Community College District has received top marks from two rating services: Standard & Poor's gave the district an AAA rating, and Moody's assigned it Aaa.

The college district said it is the only public higher-education institution in California with this rating.

At its website, Moody's Invest-

or Services explained its rationale, citing the district's healthy reserves, high socio-economic indicators, a large tax base, and a funding formula that insulates the district from uncertainties in state finances.

Standard & Poor's, which upgraded the district's rating from AA, noted that its general fund balances and reserve policy are "very strong," said district spokesperson Barbara Christensen. Both agencies assigned

the district a "stable outlook," she added.

Top ratings make it easier to refinance bonds at favorable interest rates, and the district will be refinancing about \$120 million in general obligation bonds over the next several weeks, Ms. Christensen said. If interest rates don't change, the refinancing will reduce taxpayers' obligations by about \$17.4 million, she said.

The district also has a \$388

million bond measure on the Nov. 4 ballot. A recent survey, commissioned by the district, showed that 75 percent of potential voters, when informed of the goals of the proposal, would support the measure.

Three years ago, the district proposed a \$564 million bond measure, which received the approval of 53.1 percent of the voters, shy of the 55 percent required for passage. The new measure also requires 55 per-

cent voter approval.

This is the fourth bond measure proposed by the district since 2001. All but the 2011 measure passed. The previous measures raised \$675 million, but all three campuses — Canada College in Woodside, Skyline College in San Bruno, and the College of San Mateo in San Mateo — still have classroom buildings that are 40 to 50 years old, officials have said. ■

Measure M is a Mistake

Measure M Is Opposed By The Entire Menlo Park City Council



"Our families deserve to enjoy an El Camino Real corridor that is free of vacant lots, free of blight and is not crumbling in decay. Measure M will delay those improvements for years. It's time to move forward. Please vote no on Measure M."

Ray Mueller
Mayor, Menlo Park



"Measure M doesn't limit the size of any project, it just limits the office space and allows that to be replaced by more retail, bigger residential units or medical offices. So the net result is higher traffic and bigger burden on our schools."

Catherine Carlton
Vice Mayor, Menlo Park



"Currently, the city has the ability to change zoning for downtown at any time, but this initiative takes away that ability and locks us in. Measure M puts us at a real disadvantage relative to our neighboring cities."

Rich Cline
Former Mayor



"The current plan has been thoroughly vetted. I have concerns that if M passes, it could lead to high traffic medical offices replacing the current proposals, which have no medical, leading to much more traffic."

Kirsten Keith
Former Mayor



"We have the opportunity to create a tech village near Caltrain that would bring vibrancy and new customers to our downtown. Measure M's limit on office space will squash that opportunity."

Peter Ohtaki
Former Mayor



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Rose Hau leads Atherton candidates in fundraising

By Barbara Wood
Almanac Staff Writer

Atherton council candidate Rose Hau has raised the most money of the four candidates running for three council seats in Atherton, according to campaign finance statements for the period July 1 through Sept. 30.

She reported \$15,340 in contributions during the period, more than twice that raised by the next-highest fundraiser, Mike Lempres, who reported \$7,098 in contributions.

The campaign finance reports were filed by Oct. 6.

The other candidates in the race are two incumbents: Rick DeGolia and Bill Widmer. Mr. DeGolia was elected in a special election in 2013 to serve out the remaining year in Jerry Carlson's term after his resignation. Mr. Widmer was first elected in 2000.

Mr. DeGolia reported raising \$5,376 during the filing period. However, he began the campaign with \$13,475 in his coffers, left over from last November's election. Mr. Widmer reported raising \$5,072.

Mr. Lempres reported spending \$12,594 during the period, the most of the four candidates. Ms. Hau reported spending \$6,837; Mr. DeGolia, \$5,890;

and Mr. Widmer, \$4,309.

Listed below are names, city of residence or business, and occupations of donors of \$200 or more.

Mike Lempres

■ \$1,000: Lincoln Club of Northern California, Sacramento; William Draper, Atherton, Draper International Venture Capital; and Charles Munger Jr., Palo Alto, a physicist.

■ \$500: Curtis Tingley, San Jose, attorney; Paul Centenari, Severn, Maryland, CEO, Atlas Container Co.; and Bob Hellman, Atherton, CEO, American Infrastructure MLP Funds.

■ \$400: Joe Lewis, Atherton, commercial real estate executive, Orchard Commercial Real Estate.

■ \$250: Carl Guardino, Monte Sereno, CEO, Silicon Valley Leadership Group; John Thibault, Atherton, retired; Cynthia Marty, Menlo Park, no occupation listed; Martin Lempres, Wellesley, Mass., biomedical services, American Red Cross; and Stacey Rubin, SF, Managing Director, The Emerson Collective.

The candidate lent his campaign \$5,100.

Bill Widmer

■ \$500: Joan and Mo Sanders, Atherton, retired; and the Lincoln Club of Northern California, Sacramento.

■ \$400: Bill Zappettini, Atherton, retired.

■ \$300: Don Arata, San Carlos, President, Arata Equipment.

■ \$250: Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Elsbree, Atherton, retired; Elsa Arata, retired.

■ \$200: Denise Kupperman and Roger Schwab, landscape architect and executive, Herrick Co.; Marion Oster, Atherton, retired; Marie Zahn, Atherton, retired; Daryl and John Lillie, retired; Paul Jones, retired; and David and Elyse Barca, real estate broker, Pacific Union Real Estate.

The candidate lent his campaign \$990.

Rose Hau

■ \$2,000: Rose Hau, Atherton, candidate.

■ \$1,000: MM Ackley, Atherton, homemaker; DL Denniston, Atherton, homemaker; JM Lu, Sunnyvale, part owner, Hunan Home Restaurant; Susan Chan, Fremont, homemaker; Michelle Hu, Atherton, investment adviser, First Allied Securities; Joyce Hsu, Atherton, retired; and Jack Wu, Half Moon Bay, grower, Half Moon Bay Farm.

■ \$990: Paul Hau, Atherton, retired.

■ \$750: Jane Hall, Atherton, homemaker.

■ \$500: R. Hellman, Atherton, retired; K. Wiggans, Atherton, homemaker; J. Dinapoli, Los Gatos, attorney, DiNapoli and Sibley.

■ \$400: J Lewis, Atherton, retired.

■ \$250: SR Hall III, Atherton, retired; Dr. F St. Goar, Atherton, M.D., Advanced Cardio; Maria Chiossi, Atherton, homemaker; Gloria Tam, Atherton, self-employed consultant; Grace Yang, Atherton, homemaker; and P Rydberg, Atherton, retired.

■ \$200: ME Oster, Atherton, homemaker; M Rosati, Atherton, Attorney, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati; FOB Colwell, Los Altos Hills, retired.

The candidate loaned her campaign \$3,266;

Rick DeGolia

■ \$3,001: Steve Westley, Atherton, venture capital.

■ \$1,000: John Worthing, Atherton, retired.

■ \$500: Kay Clarke, Atherton, homemaker.

■ \$300: Anthony Meier, Atherton, retired.

■ \$200: Marion Oster, Atherton, homemaker; and Robert Roeser, Atherton, retired; Joan and Mo Sanders, Atherton, retired; and the Lincoln Club of Northern California, Sacramento. ■

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Mandarin charter school plan scrutinized by district

By Barbara Wood
Almanac Staff Writer

Community members who want to know how a proposed Mandarin immersion charter school could affect the Menlo Park City School District asked lots of questions but learned there are still a lot of unknowns involved in the answers at a meeting Oct. 9 at Oak Knoll School in Menlo Park.

A group of about 50 people met to hear district Superintendent Maurice Ghysels, district board President Joan Lambert, and board member Maria Hilton talk about what they know, and don't know, about the proposal.

A public hearing on the proposal will be held at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 14, at Encinal Elementary School's Multi-Use Room, 195 Encinal Ave. in Atherton, after the Almanac goes to press. Visit AlmanacNews.com for updates.

The board also plans a study session on the charter school at 6 p.m. Monday, Oct. 27, at the district office's TERC Building, 181 Encinal Ave. in Atherton, before it votes on the proposal at a meeting at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 12, also in the district office's TERC building.

Exactly how the charter school would affect the district's

finances is one question the district officials said they just can't answer yet.

"No one really knows right now," said Ms. Lambert.

What they do know is that the district now spends an average of about \$11,000 per district student each year out of its general fund budget, Superintendent Ghysels said. The district would be responsible for directly paying much less for each charter school student, he said, an amount they estimate at between \$6,500 and \$7,000 per student.

However, he said, the district could end up paying for students who come from other districts. That's because the charter school law says that charter students can come from anywhere in the state if all slots aren't taken by in-district students.

Then it gets more complicated. If the students' home districts use the same funding model as Menlo Park's, known as "basic aid" or community funding, the home district is not required to repay the Menlo Park district for the cost of educating their students. Nearby basic aid districts, which get the majority of their funds from local property taxes, include the Las Lomas, Palo Alto, Woodside and Portola Valley school districts.

The Menlo Park district would be repaid 70 percent of the costs of students from less affluent districts that use the "revenue limit" funding model and get most of their funding from the state.

In addition, the district may have to provide facilities for the school if it has 80 or more students who reside in the district, as well as pay other overhead and administrative costs. The

Exactly how the charter school would affect the district's finances is one question the district officials said they can't answer yet.

charter petition says that in the first year there will be a total of 100 students in two kindergarten and two first-grade classes.

Because the number of students from outside the district who would go to the charter school is at this point unknown, no one knows the final cost to the district.

Board President Lambert said "what I have been told by experts" is that "districts generally do not come out ahead,"

when they fund a charter school.

The question of providing facilities for the school also has many unknowns, district officials said. While those petitioning for the charter have said they plan to have a least 80 district residents the first year, meeting the threshold for requiring the district to provide classroom and other facilities, it is not clear if that many students would actually show up for classes if the charter is approved.

To help clarify that decision, the district is contacting everyone who signed the petition and making sure they are "meaningfully interested" in enrolling a kindergarten or first-grade student in the charter school next fall if it is approved, Ms. Lambert said.

"What they're asking for is to start with 100 kids," Ms. Lambert said, in four classrooms, increasing by two classrooms every year, and ultimately using 18 classrooms for 450 students in a kindergarten to eighth-grade school, she said.

Superintendent Ghysels said the district does not have a particular site in mind for the school. "All the campuses are up for the (possibility) of putting facilities on," he said. "It's not just classrooms. It's also access to comparable facilities," such as libraries or play areas, he said.

To further complicate things, while questions of finance and facilities may be foremost in the minds of many district residents, the board is not supposed to consider them when making its decision.

"We are not allowed to consider the financial impact or the facilities impact," Ms. Lambert said.

What the board is allowed to do, according to district officials and the state's education code, is make sure the charter proposal has addressed 16 areas that charter law requires. The areas range from making sure the proposal has a plan for the education program and measuring student outcomes to how it will "achieve racial and ethnic balance among its pupils, reflective of the general population residing in the district."

In addition, the education code says, the board may deny the charter for four other reasons, the most significant of which is finding that "the petitioners are demonstrably unlikely to successfully implement the program set forth in the petition."

The district's website, mpecd.org, has a copy of the entire petition, including signatures and links to the sections of the state education code that govern charter schools. ■

Does Menlo Park fire district need drones? Fire chief seeks comments

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Do firefighters need aerial drones to help them do their jobs? When fighting a fire, for example, or rescuing someone from the cold waters of San Francisco Bay, a bird's eye view could provide situational awareness and help in making decisions, firefighting officials say.

The board of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District Fire has discussed acquiring a drone and is in favor of it, according to Fire Chief Harold Schapelhouman. The chief is asking the public for its views — write to harolds@menlofire.org — ahead of a discussion with the board on Tuesday, Oct. 21. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. at Fire Station 1, 300 Middlefield Road in Menlo Park.

At the scene of a fire or other emergency, the drone's camera would send a video stream to the smart phones and tablet computers of firefighting management, the chief said. A drone's view could supplant firefighters' need to examine a site using a web-mapping tool with dated

photographs. Firefighters could see actual hose placements and locations of flames. "This is real time," the chief said, "like the coach's box (seat) in a football stadium."

Most of the videos would be available to the public after the fire via YouTube, in the way photos of fires are available on the fire district's website, Chief Schapelhouman said. Posting videos would be in the interest of transparency on how the drone is being used, he said.

No spying

The fire district is not unfamiliar with drones. They've been used during a recent Atherton fire, and again to observe construction of a fire station in East Palo Alto, the chief said. The drones were borrowed from a contractor and from "a stringer photographer who works with the news media."

Drones can be a highly sensitive issue for the public, a point that Chief Schapelhouman says is not lost on him. "I've witnessed the very concept of using this technology become an issue in other communities,"



Photo courtesy of DJI Innovations

A drone like this one, the DJI Phantom 2 Vision+ Quad-Copter, is under consideration as an aerial assistant for firefighters of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District when fighting a significant fire or conducting a difficult rescue. The drone's arms are about 4 inches long.

he said. "We wanted to get out in front of this technology with our Fire Board and residents by asking them what they were thinking about so we can address those issues in policy and/or practice."

A model for its use might be

found in the way the district uses its air-boat — a flat-bottomed vessel used to make rescues on mud. It's used as necessary, and only by trained personnel.

A drone would be used for significant fires only and not at

night, he said. The camera lens would be whatever comes with the camera, he said, not ruling out an infrared lens. While there are firefighting drones out there that can run for hours, the one under consideration would have battery power for 20 to 25 minutes per flight.

Public agencies borrow equipment from each other. If the fire district buys a drone, would the district make it available to other agencies? "I don't think we would," the chief told the Almanac. Maybe if it were another firefighting agency, he added, but only in the possession of a district firefighter trained to operate it.

"The biggest issue seems to surround law enforcement using (the drone) for surveillance," the chief said. "We're just not going to (let it be used for) that except under extreme circumstances. ... People don't want people spying on them and that's not what we do."

Before operating a drone, the fire district would need a certificate of authorization from the Federal Aviation Administration. ■

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A day to learn about water conservation

Living in a time of water scarcity will be the theme of Drought Action Day, a free event open to the public on Saturday, Oct. 18, at the Town Center in Portola Valley. The emphasis will be on water conservation, including ways to gather rainwater, garden with minimal water, and reuse household water, also known as gray water.

The day's events run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 765 Portola Road. There will be speakers, demonstrations, workshops, contests, a raffle and children's activities.

Using gray water and gathering rainwater will be the topics at 11 a.m. The scheduled speakers are Tom Bressen, owner of the San Francisco-based Urban Farmer Store, and Jesse Froehlich, owner of BlueBarrel

Rainwater Catchment Systems in Santa Rosa.

At noon, the topics are drought-tolerant native plants and smart irrigation, with Peggi Duvall of Indig Design in Woodside and Carmel, and Frank Niccoli of the Village Gardener in San Carlos. Visitors interested in understanding their outdoor water use should bring a water bill.

And at 1 p.m., the topics are sustainable landscaping and the importance of healthy soil, with Sherry Osaka of Sustainable Landscape Designs in San Jose, and Terry Lyngso of Lyngso Materials in Redwood City.

Workshops at 10:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. will teach participants how to garden in containers. Participants must bring their own containers, and registra-

tion is required. Go to plant-a-pot.eventbrite.com.

With the afternoon will come the names of the winners of two contests — on household water conservation and on outdoor water conservation — and a raffle with the winner receiving a 60-gallon rainwater collection barrel.

Children's activities include an interactive model of a watershed, microscopic pond life, an insect hunt, sun prints and leaf rubbings.

Go to tinyurl.com/pv2146 for a complete schedule and list of commercial and organizational participants.

Drought Action Day sponsors are the town's Nature & Science Committee, the town's Water Conservation Task Force, the town of Woodside, and Acterra.

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Incumbent faces challenger for open space district seat

By Barbara Wood
Almanac Staff Writer

After narrowly approving a \$300 million bond measure for the Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space district in June, local voters now must decide who will represent them in spending that money over the next four years.

Incumbent Larry Hassett, 65, who has served on the board for 14 years, is running against newcomer Brandon Lewke, 29, who said this is his first run for office. They are competing to represent Ward 6, which includes Atherton, Menlo Park, Portola Valley and Woodside as well as Redwood City, San Gregorio, La Honda, Loma Mar and Pescadero.

Mr. Hassett, a resident of the South Skyline area of unincorporated San Mateo County, is the retired owner of Hassett Hardware, a family-owned chain of hardware stores he has turned over to his sons. Mr. Lewke, a resident of Redwood City, is a project analyst and accounts receivable manager for the Tech Museum in San Jose.



Brandon Lewke

Age: 29

Education: Valparaiso University, Indiana, BA communications and geography

Occupation: Tech Museum, project analyst and accounts receivable manager.

Public Service: Blood donor, Stanford Blood Center; volunteer, Stop Hunger Now and Ecumenical Hunger Program.

Website: democracy.com/votelewke



Larry Hassett

Age: 65

Education: San Jose State University, BA Environmental Studies, College of San Mateo AA

Occupation: Retired in 2012 as owner/operator of four neighborhood hardware stores with more than 120 employees

Public Service: 14 years board member and past board president of the MidPeninsula Regional Open Space District; president, Peninsula Executive Association; founding board member, Skyline Historical Association; member of Kiwanis, Palo Alto; board member and past president, South Skyline Association; national chairperson, Ace Hardware Environmental Programs; member and past president, Palo Alto Bayshore Rotary; member, South Skyline Volunteer Fire Department.

Website: LarryHassett.com



boundaries. "I think I've helped allay the fears of some of the mountain residents," he said. "The benefits of the district being up there are immense."

Mr. Hassett, who said he is the only board member who lives next to one of the district's open space preserves, said he has a unique insight into what the district needs to do to be a good neighbor.

Mr. Lewke said he'd like to see the district increase the minimum percentage of trails opened to bikes from the current

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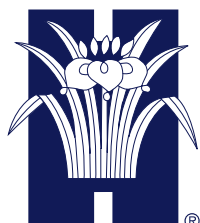
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60 percent. In addition, he said he'd like to see some trails allow bikes only, including paved trails for road bikes, and to see leashed dogs allowed on all district trails.

Mr. Hassett said he favors the approach the district has been using to decide which trails should be open to which user groups. "I think a balanced approach to different user groups and really figuring out what's appropriate to certain areas and what's not appropriate is the right approach," he said.

Certain sensitive areas with endangered species, or close to streams the district has promised to protect, are not appropriate for all uses, he said. "We have to be prudent in how we open trails up," he said. "There are places where mountain bikes are certainly appropriate, but there are other places where I'd be concerned."

Mr. Lewke said he would also like to see the district use its own money to preserve the old Mt. Umunhum radar tower that is currently deteriorating on district property in San Jose. In 2012 district directors voted to give the public five years to privately raise the \$1.2 million needed to make the relic safe.

Mr. Lewke said he favors the district spending even more to completely renovate the building to create a tourist attraction he compared to Alcatraz, which is part of a national park.

"I think (restoring) it would make it a natural destination for the South Bay," said Mr. Lewke. "Think what it would be, if you had the Alcatraz of the South Bay," as part of a district preserve, he said.

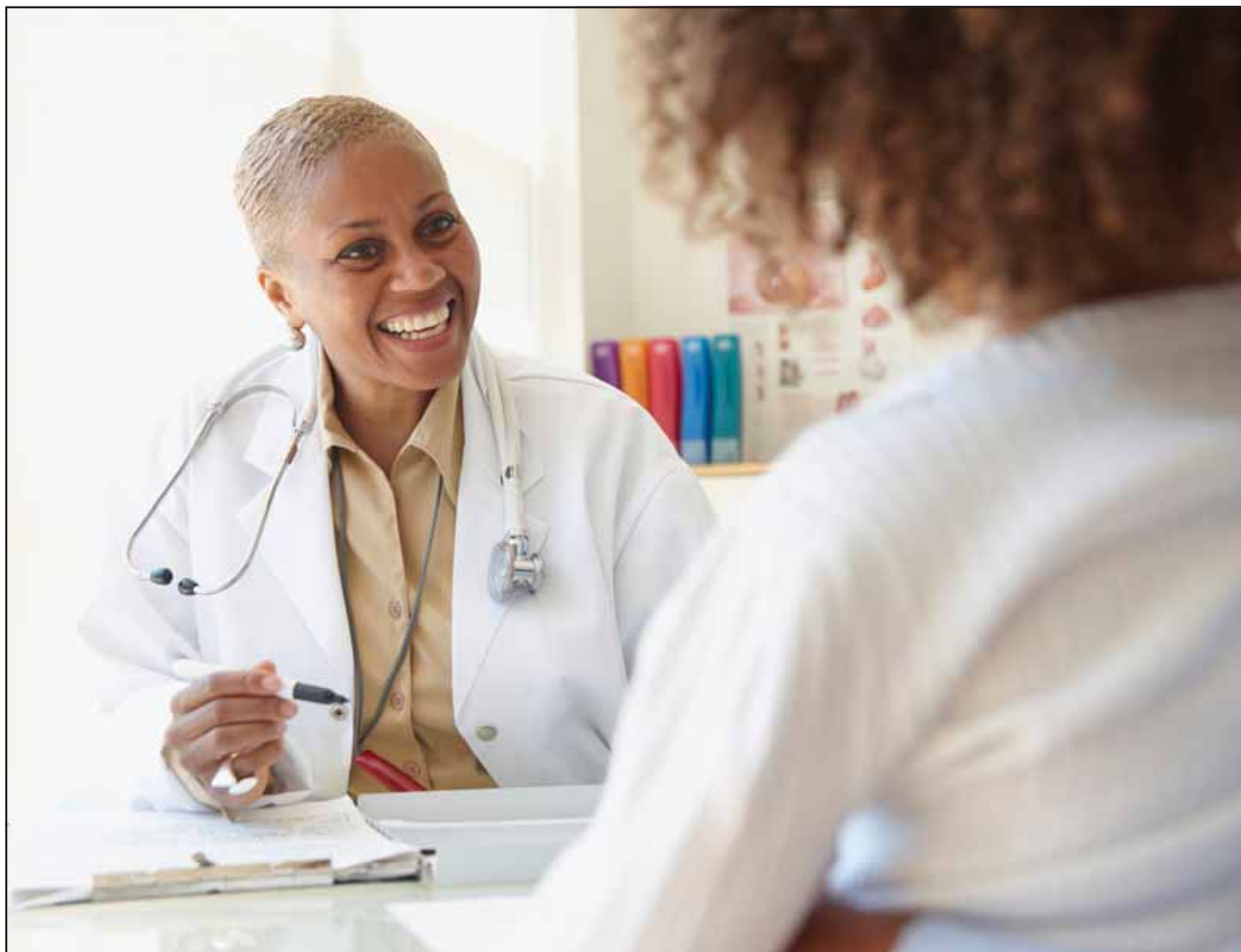
Mr. Hassett said he voted in 2012 to allow the building to stay long enough to give those interested in preserving it time to raise the money to do it. He said the district offered the property to the Santa Clara County as a park, but that they did not want it.

"The dilemma was how much does an open space district spend of the public's money to restore and rehab a structure like this," he said. "The board decided this really was not our function as an open space district."

Endorsements

Mr. Hassett is endorsed by the Sierra Club, Democratic Party, Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, State Assemblyman Rich Gordon, San Mateo County Supervisor Don Horsely, all current Midpeninsula Regional Open Space directors, and former Midpeninsula Regional Open Space Director Ken Nitz.

Mr. Lewke is endorsed by the MidPeninsula Regional Open Space District Field Employees Association, and USAF 682nd Radar Squadron Veterans group. ■



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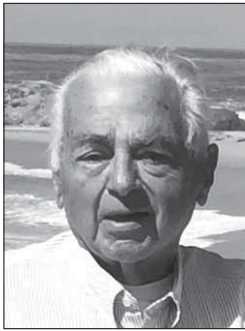
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Maurice Julius Galvez

Born to Elisa Rivera and Mauricio Julio Galvez, in El Salvador on December 22, 1932, Maurice Julius Galvez died September 27, 2014. His life was devoted to his family. He leaves his loving wife of 58 years, Christine Herborn Galvez; his 8 children: Mauri (Sue); Tony (Kim); Becky; Suzie (Kirk Bennett); Terry; Ricky (Donna); Michelle (David Agee); & Heidi. 17 grandchildren: Jessika (Daton Gomes), Lindsay; Carey, Tonya (JP Foster), Elissa, Danielle, Ezra, Tanner; Tara; Tenaya, Talon; Matt Day, Josh (Rillie); Cassandra, Richard, Glenn; & Trenton. 2 great-grandsons: Kainoa and Nainoa; a sister, Miriam Lewellen; plus numerous nieces and nephews.



Services have been held at St. Raymond Church in Menlo Park. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to The St. Raymond Homeless Family Fund or The St. Francis Center on Buckingham Way, Redwood City, or to a charity of your choice.

PAID OBITUARY

Wiley Thomas Birkhofer

July 7, 1987 – September 30, 2014

Resident of Brooklyn, NY

Wiley Thomas Birkhofer passed away on September 30, 2014. Wiley was born in California on July 7, 1987 at Stanford Hospital, the first child of Wendell Wiley Birkhofer and Celeste Phaneuf Birkhofer. He grew up in Menlo Park, CA, where he attended Oak Knoll and Menlo Schools. Wiley flourished in academics and sports, especially basketball, soccer and lacrosse. He also became an avid skier, surfer and seeker of adventure. After graduating from Stanford University with his Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 2009, Wiley continued to pursue his love of writing. He completed his Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing - Poetry at New York University in 2014.



Wiley recently achieved his goal of becoming an English professor, and was teaching at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. He was planning to teach creative arts to underserved kids through Community-Word Project in the NYC School System. His work career also included teaching at Sacred Hearts School on Maui, Boys and Girls Club, and undergrad writing and poetry courses at NYU during his Master's program. He also had a stint at local tech start-up Thuuz.

While living in New York, his passion for creating art and music grew exponentially. Wiley made a lasting impression on many people. He deeply loved his family and countless friends. They will forever remember his uninhibited spirit, creativity, intellectual curiosity, sense of humor, sensitivity and compassion for others. Wiley is survived by his parents, sister Elise Marie Birkhofer, grandfather G. Wendell Birkhofer and ten aunts and uncles.

A memorial service will be held at Stanford Memorial Church on Tuesday, October 21 at 2:30 p.m. Parking and shuttles will be available at Galvez Lot, at the corner of Campus Drive East and Galvez St. The reception to follow will be a private gathering. The family suggests that donations can be made in Wiley's memory to the National Alliance on Mental Health (namicalifornia.org) or Community-Word Project (communitywordproject.org) in New York.

PAID OBITUARY

Second units key to 'affordable housing'

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Portola Valley Town Council members had a lively and generally upbeat discussion recently on what is usually a difficult and controversial topic in this town — affordable housing.

Before them was a draft of an update to the housing chapter in the town's general plan. Staff members were seeking direction for themselves and the Planning

Commission on the council's priorities and steps needed to create more affordable housing.

Towns have options, including below-market-rate homes within new subdivisions, small homes on institutional properties such as the Woodside Priory School, second (granny) units, and shared housing. During the discussion on Sept. 24, the council returned often to the idea of second units, particularly those inside the home rather than the typical

detached structure.

For now, town regulations limit interior second units to homes on 3.5 acres or more. Mayor Ann Wengert suggested an expedited look into lowering that limit to one-acre properties. "We have many more homes that fall into that category," she said. "It gives people what I think is needed flexibility that allows them to manage their lives."

It increases housing stock without adding structures or changing the visual impact of Portola Valley, and can be implemented quickly, she said. It does increase population, she noted.

Councilman Craig Hughes suggested a deliberate path that includes staff and/or the Architectural and Site Control Commission, particularly with respect to potential impacts of additional parking and vehicle traffic.

In that same vein, Town Attorney Leigh Prince suggested that entire one-acre neighborhoods perhaps should not be given a green light to build interior second units, but that "overlay zoning" might be applied so as to protect areas where such developments could be disruptive.

Councilwoman Maryann Moise Derwin quoted a story in the New York Times describing a future California in which the middle class is gone and the entire state echoes the demographics of a big city — the wealthy and the poor. "I think we really have to think completely differently about housing to get at the problem," she said. "It's going to take a very different mindset."

There was no comment from the public.

In an interview, Ms. Wengert agreed that California's middle class are in trouble, and "fast disappearing" in Silicon Valley.

The council was energized on this topic, she said, because efforts over the past 18 months by the Planning Commission and the Ad Hoc Affordable Housing Committee have been rigorous, encompassing and public. "It takes a while for people to really assimilate and accept (affordable housing)," she said. "The community now understands what we are doing and what we will do."

The idea of interior second units has much to do with aging homeowners as well as adult children who can't afford places of their own, she said. "These ideas are not that radical," she said, though she did admit to being outspoken on the issue for the first time. ■

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LET'S BE HONEST ABOUT Measure M

Proponents of Measure M want us to believe our city will look like this.



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6-story office buildings, like the one pictured above, have never been considered for Menlo Park. The two largest developments in the planning stages are NOT mega office complexes. They are NOT about to be approved and they are NOT 8 football fields of offices in the heart of downtown.

Both developments still require complete environmental impact studies and the City Council is continuing negotiations with the developers to make needed architectural and other changes necessary to mitigate traffic impacts – as required by the Downtown Specific Plan.

Measure M does nothing to change the size of allowable development; it only limits office space, which will be replaced with potentially more intense traffic generators like retail or medical offices.



Here's what Menlo Park could look like



Designed in the Spanish Eclectic style, reminiscent of Allied Arts, this proposed project fronting El Camino, Oak Grove, and Garwood, is located 350 feet from the Caltrain station. It includes about 200 transit-oriented apartments in 4-story buildings similar in height to the existing Menlo Square Condominiums on Oak Grove. Office space is proposed in two buildings, each 2-3 stories tall, and parking will be predominantly underground. Retail at ground level is proposed as a "Market Hall" offering specialty food, a stylish new restaurant, casual dining, and other pedestrian-orientated retail shops. If you like the feel of the Cafe Borrone plaza, you'll really like this!

The proposal also includes a new street to relieve El Camino Real traffic and an abundance of open space – a large courtyard between the office buildings with seating areas, water features, and lush landscaping, a public park, a large plaza and cafe on the corner of Garwood and Oak Grove, a courtyard and pool for the residents, as well as private decks/balconies.

Traffic is a concern of every citizen in Menlo Park, including our elected council members, each of whom is working diligently to mitigate traffic in our city. Join them in voting NO on Measure M. **Let's keep Menlo Park moving forward!**

Learn more by visiting the web sites shown below.

Look Who's Endorsing NO on M:

- The entire current City Council
- The current Mayor and Vice Mayor
- 8 former Mayors and Vice Mayors
- The entire Menlo Park City School Board
- 3 County Supervisors
- California State Assemblyman, Rich Gordon

- Majority of Menlo Park Planning Commissioners
- Most Menlo Park Transportation Commissioners
- Majority of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District
- Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce
- Silicon Valley Association of Realtors
- San Mateo County Central Labor Council
- and many more...

NO on Measure M

menloparkdeservesbetter.org

mpcdforum.com

menlopark.org/782/ballot-measure-m

This ad paid for by individual residents who want to see a more vibrant Menlo Park. Kim and Tom LeMieux, Mary and Mark Gilles, Lynn and Bruce Felt, Mari and Aron Chazen, Sue and Craig Olson, and Sara and Josh Leslie

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Delucchi Market opens at Marsh Manor center

It's been a busy fall for the Delucchi family. Patriarch Richard Delucchi of Woodside celebrated his 105th birthday Sept. 14 and Delucchi's Market, named for him, opened Oct. 3, in the Marsh Manor shopping center, located on Marsh Road at Florence St. in Redwood City.

Marsh Manor is a local enterprise, developed 50 years ago by Mr. Delucchi. He built many homes in Friendly Acres, north of Florence Street, just across from the present shopping center.

The center was remodeled four years ago with Dorine Secrest, Mr. Delucchi's daughter, "leading the way," says her husband Jerry Secrest.

At that time, the Almanac noted in October 2010: "Marsh Manor's new look includes a

trellis-covered walkway between stores and a patio area for relaxed gathering and outdoor dining."

Mr. Secrest and his wife are part owners of the market along with Enrique Sanchez and the Marsh Manor Shopping Center. The market was purchased from the Dehoff family, who owned and operated Key market at that location for 20 years.

The market will be undergoing changes over the coming months, with new stock added, such as more organic produce. A meat department will be added in a couple of months, and a full service deli next year, says Mr. Secrest.

An entry feature and fruit stand on the Florence Street side of the building and additional parking are planned.

Cecile Pichel, 89, marriage and family counselor

Cecile (Cece) Pichel, an Atherton resident for 50 years, died Oct. 1 at Vi of Palo Alto. She was 89.

Ms. Pichel was a marriage and family counselor, practicing in Menlo Park for more than 40 years.

Born in Brooklyn and raised in New York City, she met her future husband, Julian Pichel, at Penn State. They were married in 1945 and both attended Yale University after their marriage. They then moved to California, where Dr. Pichel started his practice at Palo Alto Medical Clinic.

The Pichels loved traveling, dancing and socializing, say family members. Ms. Pichel wrote plays, stories, and country and western songs; loved bridge; played piano; and rode her

OBITUARY

daughter's horses. She walked from her house in Atherton to her Menlo Park office almost every day for decades.

She was deemed a miracle patient at Santa Clara Medical Center, where she was in the burn unit for three months after a house fire in 2004 that took her husband's life. She was able to resume her previous life as though nothing had changed, say family members.

She is survived by her children, Linda Arata of Woodside, Cathy Cook of Honolulu, and Steve Pichel of Petaluma; five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. The family will hold a private memorial service.

Open space district candidates raising little or no money

Incumbent Larry Hassett has not yet raised any money in his attempt to return for a fourth term on the board of the MidPeninsula Regional Open Space District, while his opponent, Brandon Lewke, has raised only \$300, with \$200 of that his own money.

According to the campaign finance filings covering July 1 through Sept. 30 and filed on Oct. 6, Mr. Hassett lent his campaign

\$4,700, spending most of the money on campaign mailings and putting information in the county voter information guide.

Mr. Lewke's filing shows he has received one \$100 donation from Jim Sullivan of Pacifica, who lists his occupation as "gadfly." Mr. Lewke also donated \$200 to his own campaign and has spent money on business cards, his filing fee and Facebook ads.

The Roundtable at Stanford University

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9:30 a.m. President's Welcome / 10 a.m. Roundtable
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KQED, media partner roundtable.stanford.edu

Atherton may pursue study of El Camino lane reduction

By Barbara Wood
Almanac Staff Writer

Even before a pedestrian was killed crossing El Camino Real in Atherton in July, the town had been working on ways to make the busy state highway that bisects the town safer, especially for pedestrians and bicycles.

On Wednesday, Oct. 15, the City Council is scheduled to take the first step toward possibly changing Atherton's 1.6-mile segment of El Camino Real from six to four lanes. The council will vote on authorizing a study of the lane reduction.

The study would look at how traffic delays and safety would be affected with fewer traffic lanes. The area studied will stretch from Oak Grove Avenue in Menlo Park to Redwood Avenue in Redwood City.

In a report on the proposed study, Community Services Director Michael Kashiwagi said 31,000 vehicles pass through Atherton on El Camino Real each day, but the town has only one traffic signal. Pedestrians

and bicyclists who wish to cross from one side of town to the other must use Atherton Avenue, where the traffic signal is, or one of five other marked crosswalks.

The town wants to make other improvements on El Camino Real, Mr. Kashiwagi reported. They include:

- Widening the existing center median at intersections with marked crosswalks, but no signals, giving pedestrians "a safe refuge" midway across the highway.

- Restricting left turns at some intersections.

- Adding signals at some intersections; either "hybrid pedestrian beacons" controlled by pedestrians or traditional traffic signals.

- Removing vegetation and trees in the medians to improve visibility.

- Adding bike paths if lanes are reduced.

The council will also hold public hearings on:

- Atherton's housing element, a state-mandated plan for providing housing to people of all income levels.

- Making changes to the town's regulations for accessory buildings and structures to allow some structures to be closer together than is now allowed.

- An appeal by the owners of property at 81 Atherton Ave. who ask the council to overturn a ruling by the town planner on how the wall height of a flat-roofed building is measured. ■

Drives help schools in West Africa

McKenna Brown, 14, an eighth-grader at Woodland School in Ladera, recently organized two drives to collect classroom materials for schools in Equatorial Guinea in West Africa.

More than 100 Woodland students donated or helped pack donations from the school community.

McKenna then took her project a step further and asked her aunt, Margaret Watson, a third-grade teacher at Sandpiper School in Redwood Shores, for more help. A total of 225 pounds of school supplies, such as notebooks, rulers and pens, were shipped.

Fifty pounds of school supplies that could not be sent into Equatorial Guinea were donated to Selby Lane School in the Redwood City School District.

The drives were part of McKenna's eighth-grade Capstone Project, where students research a topic of local and global significance and present their findings to the school community.

As part of her year-long project, McKenna decided to help Equatorial Guinea, where about 50 percent of primary school-age children do not attend school, partially because they can't afford school supplies.



Ruby Mason, joined in 2012

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■ POLICE CALLS

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

PORTOLA VALLEY

Residential burglary: A resident of Golden Oak Drive ran some errands, but left home with a sliding door unlocked and returned to find that computers, Apple iPads and jewelry had been stolen. No estimate on losses. Sept. 29.

WOODSIDE

Thefts:

■ A relative of an elderly resident of Tum Suden Way claims that someone opened fraudulent credit card accounts using the resident's personal information, then used the cards to make purchases. Estimated loss: \$10,000. Sept. 25.

■ Someone entered an unlocked vehicle parked at the Horse Park at 3674 Sand Hill Road and stole credit cards and a driver's license. No estimate on losses. Oct. 3.

MENLO PARK

Commercial burglary: Two women were seen leaving the Safeway supermarket on Sharon Park Drive with five canisters of baby formula they had not paid for, then fled in a gray Audi. Estimated loss: \$140. Oct. 3.

Thefts:

■ Someone forced open storage containers in the 3600 block of Haven Avenue and stole a nail gun, a carpenter's level and 25 Vendsign candy machines. Estimated loss: \$11,250. Oct. 11.

■ The headquarters of Ayasdi Company on Bohannon Drive were unlocked when someone entered and stole a laptop computer from a desk. Estimated loss: \$1,200. Oct. 6.

■ A man left a bag unattended in the seating area outside the Bagel Street Cafe on Santa Cruz Avenue. Someone stole the bag and inside were a wallet, keys and other personal items. Estimated loss: \$350. Oct. 3.

■ A man left his cellphone in a public bathroom on Middlefield Road and returned a few minutes later to find that the phone was no longer there. Estimated loss: \$80. Oct. 5.

■ Someone stole political campaign signs from the front yard of a residence in the 100 block of University Drive. No estimate on losses. Oct. 7.

■ A resident of Woodland Drive told police that someone had stolen newspapers from his driveway. Estimated loss: \$4. Oct. 8.

Fraud:

■ A woman living on Hamilton Avenue told police that someone had created a satellite TV service account in her name. Oct. 3.

■ A resident of Valparaiso Avenue had her name and Social Security number appropriated in filing a false tax return for 2013. Oct. 8.

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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Associate Editor
Renee Batti (223-6528)

Lifestyles Editor Jane Knoerle

Staff Writers
Dave Boyce (223-6527),
Sandy Brundage (223-6529),
Barbara Wood (223-6533)

Contributors Marjorie Mader, Kate Daly

Special Sections Editor
Carol Blitzer (223-6511)

Photographer Michelle Le (223-6530)

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Marketing and Creative Director
Shannon Corey (223-6560)

Design and Production Manager
Lili Cao (223-6562)

Designers Linda Atilano, Colleen Hench,
Rosanna Leung, Paul Llewellyn

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3525 Alameda De Las Pulgas,
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Newsroom: (650) 223-6525
Newsroom Fax: (650) 223-7525

Advertising: (650) 854-2626
Advertising Fax: (650) 223-7570

Email news and photos with captions to:
Editor@AlmanacNews.com

Email letters to:
letters@AlmanacNews.com

The Almanac, established in October 1965, is delivered each week to residents of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside and adjacent unincorporated areas of southern San Mateo County. The Almanac is qualified by decree of the Superior Court of San Mateo County to publish public notices of a governmental and legal nature, as stated in Decree No. 147530, issued December 21, 1969. ©2014 by Embarcadero Media. All rights reserved.

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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.

Town Square forum

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Call the Viewpoint desk at
223-6528.

Almanac endorsements

No on Measure M

When they vote on Measure M this fall, Menlo Park residents will be participating in what may be the most consequential ballot-box decision ever made regarding the future character of their community. One of the most complicated as well.

The ballot measure sprouted from the frustration of some residents — many of whom have been active in city governance and community service for years — over the City Council's decision last year not to adjust several provisions of the new downtown specific plan. The residents say those provisions have created loopholes for developers, allowing them to build projects that don't live up to the community's vision for the downtown — a vision that was forged during years of public meetings and workshops.

Of primary concern to those residents was a provision that set the project-size threshold for triggering public benefit requirements far higher than it had been before the new specific plan was approved the previous year. The unhappy residents pushed hard to change that rule, calling it a give-away to developers planning projects along El Camino Real. Although the council made a few changes to the plan, including reducing the amount of allowable medical office space, it didn't budge on the public-benefit trigger and other provisions of concern.

Citing new proposals that many residents believe have too much office space — one by Stanford for its 8-acre property on the southern end of El Camino and another by Greenheart for a 7-acre project near the northern end — the dissatisfied residents launched a successful signature-gathering campaign to put a measure on the ballot. The measure, among other things, sets a conservative cap on office space in the specific plan area — a move they say is needed to stem peak-hour traffic gridlock and ensure balanced development along the El Camino.

Voters who generally favor the Stanford and Greenheart proposals, which are works in progress as the plans go through the normal approval process

and the city negotiates for non-mandatory public benefits, have a clear choice on Measure M. They will vote no.

But the key question for residents opposed to the developments as proposed is this: Will Measure M address your concerns over increased traffic and building mass along the El Camino corridor? The answer, in our opinion, is no. Measure M's provisions fall short of achieving the intended goals — goals that we and many other of the measure's opponents are sympathetic to. A curious omission in the measure pertains to the up-zoning in the specific plan that raised the public-benefit threshold. Measure M doesn't address that at all, even though that issue, and the council's unwillingness to deal with it, provided much fuel for the citizen action that led to the ballot measure.

The measure requires a vote of the people to change any of its provisions, which include key definitions and the problematically worded ban on the adoption by the city of "any new provisions or amendments to the Policy Planning Documents that would be inconsistent with or frustrate the implementation" of the measure's rules. Such ambiguous language is a recipe for litigation. It also could discourage other developers of potentially desirable projects from even trying to navigate the process of getting a plan approved in Menlo Park.

Opponents call Measure M "ballot-box zoning," but that's a reach. If most residents agree that office space shouldn't squeeze out other uses on El Camino Real but believe the council is going to thwart that vision by approving massive office projects under consideration, a ballot measure can be a reasonable, democratic strategy. But Measure M is flawed, and is not the right tool to fix what proponents want fixed.

If the measure fails at the bal-

City Council choices

The Menlo Park City Council race this year is seen by many as an extension of the vote on Measure M. With three seats open, the candidates are the three incumbents and a trio of challengers.

Challenger Kelly Fergusson, a former council member who lost her bid for re-election in 2012, is a strong Measure M supporter, and says she entered the race because of her opposition to certain provisions in the specific plan. And challengers Drew Combs and Kristin Duriseti are supported by Measure M proponents who believe the newcomers would work toward changing objectionable provisions in the plan. The incumbents — Rich Cline, Kirsten Keith and Peter Ohtaki — staunchly oppose Measure M.

In endorsing the incumbents in their bid for another term, we are in no way linking those choices to Measure M. In fact, we find ourselves in an awkward position: We believe that the council fell down on the job last year when it rejected a reasonable plea by residents to fix a key problem with the new downtown specific plan — a lack of action that some argue was a major impetus leading to Measure M.

The residents, who included a number of people long active in civic affairs, wanted the council to lower the level, tied to a project's size, at which a public-benefit requirement would be triggered. That threshold had been raised significantly in the specific plan approved in 2012 after a long process that had played out primarily during bad economic times. Although the council reviewed the plan last year, it didn't touch the public-benefit trigger — a big mistake in our view.

Despite that criticism, we believe that the incumbents have many strengths, and can point to a number of achievements during their tenure so far that justify returning them to office for another four years. Among the council's accom-

plishments over the last two years are Belle Haven neighborhood projects, including the opening of a police substation and the launch of a visioning project that engaged a significant number of residents; beginning the process to change the binding arbitration procedure after examples surfaced that police officers' job protection might trump the public's interest when binding arbitration is called upon; and paying down the city's pension obligation. And Ms. Keith, along with current Vice Mayor Cat Carlton, successfully negotiated with Stanford to remove medical office space from its proposed development on El Camino Real and pay for a substantial portion of the cost for a bicycle pedestrian tunnel; she continues to work with Stanford to improve the project.

In passing over the challengers, we couldn't get past the fact that two of them — Ms. Duriseti and Ms. Fergusson — would have to disqualify themselves from discussing and voting on projects coming before the council from Stanford. At a time when Stanford is pursuing its plans for a massive development on its 8-acre property at 500 El Camino Real, having a council member, or two, who couldn't participate in the council's review and decision-making for the project hardly seems wise.

We're also troubled by Ms. Fergusson's insistence that her Brown Act violation when she was on the council didn't constitute wrongdoing. She had conducted what the act calls serial meetings with at least two council colleagues to lobby their support in her bid to be mayor in 2010. When the city attorney declared her actions a violation of the open-meeting act, which all council members are required to review and respect, she resigned as mayor. But she told the Almanac last month that her First Amendment right to advocate for herself trumps the Brown Act, a statement that raises concerns.

Mr. Combs is a man of intelligence and fresh perspectives, but he has lived in Menlo Park for only two years, and his



LETTERS

Our readers write

Developer spending big to influence election

Editor:

The stakes in Menlo Park are getting higher. The risks are getting greater. Developers with deep pockets have never been shy when bringing out an arsenal of big money to get their way. This time, mysterious Greenheart Land Co. (as phony a name as could be found) has followed this tradition by dumping \$200,000 into a political action committee against the community's initiative Measure M.

To scare voters, Greenheart has spent over \$82,000 on slick mailers and full page newspaper ads that are filled with misinformation and frightening photos of a Walmart store. Part of this money was also spent on the re-election campaigns of incumbents Keith, Cline and Ohtaki. Greenheart needs these three to get re-elected and Measure M to fail in order to protect its proposed 210,000-square-foot office development on El Camino Real.

There is nothing new in Greenheart's attempt to buy a city council. What's different now is this is the first time in the history of Menlo Park that all five of our city council members have joined a developer allowing the use of their mug shots and quotes in material that is false.

Let's talk about Walmart. Only the council has the power to approve big box retail in Menlo Park. If our five council members are using the image of Walmart in our town as a scare tactic, is it possible that they have negotiated with this big box retailer for such a plan?

Measure M has no provision that allows a Walmart in town. Its very goal is to protect the small-town character of Menlo Park. Council candidates Drew Combs, Kris Duriseti and Kelly Fergusson are challenging the incumbents and are firmly against this absurd threat.

Big developer money can make local political campaigns ugly when using threats, exaggerations and downright lies. Menlo Park voters have seen through this kind of deceit before and I hope their eyesight is 20-20 on election day.

Yes on Measure M and yes for three new council members should be the residents' clear answer to Greenheart's efforts to buy this election.

*Steve Schmidt
Central Avenue, Menlo Park*

'Monkey wrench' tactics?

Editor:

The creators of Measure M have adopted a tactic of the Tea Party movement. The established government process isn't producing the results they want so they throw a Monkey Wrench in the works to break it. M is for Monkey Wrench.

*Eric Doyle
Laurel Avenue, Menlo Park*

Election-year 'outrage'

Editor:

"I'm shocked, shocked to hear there's a traffic problem here in Menlo Park!" Mayor Ray Muller reminded me of Claude Rains' famous line in "Casablanca" when he led the City Council in their "outrage" over the latest traffic study that was released last week. The study indicates that Stanford's proposed project at 500 El Camino Real would overload Allied Arts streets with traffic.

I wonder if the upcoming City Council elections on Nov. 4 have anything to do with this outrage. I also wonder if they will still be outraged on Nov. 5.

I doubt it. Friends of mine and I have been trying to get our city government to pay attention to our traffic problems, and take action to correct them, for years.

The city's recently approved 30-year plan to allow developers to build much larger buildings on El Camino is proof that they haven't listened to us at all. In approving that plan, the City Council totally ignored another traffic study that said 15 intersections, including four on Willow Road, where I live, would be badly impacted by development allowed in the plan.

Now, two developers, Stanford and Greenheart, are proposing to build huge complexes on El Camino that would have 60 percent more office space than the 30-year plan said was the maximum, and the City Council is supporting them.

I don't trust the City Council to protect us from traffic. That's why I encourage everyone to vote yes on Measure M on Nov. 4.

*Mark McBirney
Willow Road, Menlo Park*

Incumbents have lost the public's trust

Editor:

Financial disclosures (last week revealed that Greenheart Land Company, the developer behind the proposed massive office complex at 1300 El Camino Real, has created a PAC with a \$200,000 war chest to

oppose Measure M. Voters have already started receiving their slick mailers full of misleading "facts" and propaganda.

The disclosures also reveal that City Council incumbent candidates Kirsten Keith, Rich Cline, and Peter Ohtaki accepted gifts from Greenheart's political action committee. These donations, among other things, are paying to put Keith, Cline, and Ohtaki's picture on a series of paid fake slate mailers that will be cluttering voters mailboxes in the coming weeks.

Developers like Greenheart received a huge windfall when the council more than doubled their allowed height and density for building. By accepting Greenheart's donations, no matter how large or small, the incumbent council candidates have lost the public's trust that they can and will fairly evaluate Greenheart's development proposal.

Greenheart's money can buy a lot of misinformation and maybe some council votes, but we know that they won't fool the people of Menlo Park who love our community and want to protect it. That's why I'm voting yes on M and for council candidates Kelly Fergusson, Kristin Duriseti, and Drew Combs.

*Lynore Banchoff
Morey Drive, Menlo Park*

Mandarin school a drain on district's resources

Editor:

I strongly oppose the opening of a Mandarin Immersion Charter School in Menlo Park. I urge all community members to attend the school board meeting on Oct. 14 at 6 p.m. and write to members of the school board to express your opinions.

My objections are based on three basic premises:

■ Since the Menlo Park City School District is a high-performing district doing a fantastic job in closing the achievement gap between high- and low-performing students, there is no need for any charter schools.

■ The board of education previously rejected the formation of a Mandarin immersion program, as it would be a drain on resources perceived to be needed elsewhere in the district at this time; a charter school is clearly more resource-intensive than a program.

■ Charter schools are entitled to a pro rata share of district revenue based on their student enrollment, but generally do

The fiction and fact of ballot Measure M

By Dan Dippery

By this time you're already swamped with handouts, mailers, doorknob hangers, yard signs and newspaper ads, all telling you how to vote on Measure M. And unless you're firmly decided, with all that information comes equal parts confusion. So what follows is clarification: simply telling the truth and telling the truth simply.

First off, Measure M is about letting voters choose what kind of Menlo Park they want in the future: 1) the small, village character that brought us all here in the first place, or 2) a mega-storied office park, with the mega-traffic daily gridlock. That's the simple truth. Now the Fiction and Fact:

FICTION: "Measure M was drafted in private by a small group of individuals who want to bypass the six years of hard work by city planners, paid planning professionals, the City Council and volunteers."

FACT: Measure M started with a group of families called SaveMenlo, distressed about the increased traffic — through their neighborhoods — that will come from massive office buildings proposed for the Stanford property on El Camino. But it took nearly 3,000 Menlo Park signatures to turn their efforts into a ballot issue. And the team who developed the initiative includes attorneys, former city planning commissioners, mayors and a growing army of volunteers — many of whom helped develop the original specific plan vision.

FICTION: "Measure M violates the specific plan and would stifle development in Menlo Park."

FACT: Measure M simply asks that all development meet the original vision of the specific plan — created as a 30-year development guide. Because within months of the plan's certification, the City Council welcomed proposals for 400,000-plus square feet of offices, rather than the balanced mix of retail, housing and office agreed upon in

the specific plan. And these came from just two developers — Stanford/Arrillaga and Greenheart — in just two years, and all on El Camino Real.

Worse yet, a gaping loophole in the plan lets developers count private balconies and rooftops as open space against their requirement to provide publicly accessible open space; in the Stanford project that adds up to 22,000 square feet — enough to be a park or plaza. Measure M requires that "Open Space" be truly open to the public — all of the public.

FICTION: "Measure M locks the city into 30 years of zoning rules that can only be changed at the ballot box."

FACT: Measure M simply reduces office development to 100,000 square feet — per development — in the plan area. That and closing the open space loophole are the only changes M makes to the current specific plan.

FICTION: "Measure M will increase traffic in Menlo Park."

FACT: It's amazing the NO folks even mention the traffic issue. Particularly since a recent traffic analysis — by Stanford (tinyurl.com/MP500ECR) — shows that just with its project alone, neighborhood streets, Middle Avenue, Cambridge, University and Yale, would all be "clogged with traffic." That's because roughly 92 percent of our traffic comes from out of town. So more offices will just bring more out-of-town traffic and gridlock.

BOTTOM LINE: The issue is simply: What do you want Menlo Park to be and look like in years to come? Will it retain its small-town character — as in the specific plan's original vision — with a balanced growth of offices, shops, housing, offices and services? Or will it become a massive office park, dark at night, but filling our streets with gridlock by day

The choice is yours. But I hope you vote yes on M — for all of us.

Dan Dippery is a longtime Menlo Park resident.



Woodside's water-shortage approach short on action

By Kevin Greenwood

Culminating six months of fact gathering, attending seminars, and collaborating with a variety of public agencies and boards, Woodside resident Debbie Mendelson (Woodside Sustainability & Conservation Committee and Portola Valley Ad Hoc Water Committee) made a presentation to the Woodside Town Council on July 8, talking about the drought, what nearby communities were doing to conserve water, and noting Woodside had never formulated or implemented any water conservation plan or ordinances as stipulated in the Woodside Town General Plan (adopted by the Town Council in 2012).

The most stunning part of the presentation was when Ms. Mendelson revealed Woodside's usage of water — 421 gallons per person/per day (per Cal Water Service statistics) vs. Portola Valley, 305; Los Altos Hills, 268; Hillsborough, 256, etc. She provided facts and figures on usage provided by Cal Water Service, BAWSCA, and the state of California; conservation programs in nearby communities; and a variety of reports, articles and website links for the council to review. Her request

was simple enough: the Town Council needs to adopt a Water Conservation Plan (WCP).

Councilman Romines was the first (and only) council member to acknowledge that it was important to take up the task, and to thank Ms. Mendelson for her work. From there it went quickly downhill, as the council egos went into their typical defensive, do-nothing postures. Councilman Tanner said he had seen brown spots (on lawns) and "... know people are already conserving." Councilwoman Gordon said that she needed to get "real numbers," blustering about attending monthly BAWSCA meetings (though unable to correctly identify what the acronym stood for), assuring the crowd that BAWSCA is "working hard."

Councilman Mason dismissed Ms. Mendelson's work and request for a WCP, saying the town just needed "lots of study sessions." One council representative suggested deferring any tasks

to the "town staff," to which another immediately replied, "but, their plates are too full already." Mayor Burow made vague reference to people being entitled to what they had worked for, noting people might object to having anything imposed on them. Ultimately the do-nothing Woodside Town Council, by its inaction, chose to not move forward with a WCP.

Most recently (Sept. 9) the council moved to alter reality and rewrite history by approving "minutes" of the July 8 meeting which stated: "... the request should be referred to staff on a priority basis to develop a water conservation plan ... a good goal is to create awareness through incentives and education ... Mr Bryant (town manager) clarified that the Council had indicated its interest in pursuing a water conservation program ..."

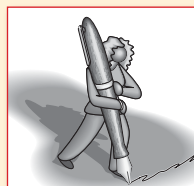
These fabricated statements may be current thought, but are not "minutes" or even a factual representation of what took place at the July 8 meeting. The only correction to these "minutes" prior to approval was brought by Mayor Burow, who wanted the statement removed that the Woodside council members said that Woodside residents

should be ashamed of their water use (only Mr. Romines had said that).

While Woodside recently agreed to donate some money to Portola Valley's upcoming "Drought Day" program (Oct. 18 in Portola Valley), it is now three months since Ms. Mendelson's presentation, and Woodside is no closer to creating or enacting a water conservation plan than it was on July 8. It's unfortunate when Town Council members ignore or disregard the efforts and knowledge of citizens and town committees, think their inactions avoid actionable consequences, focus on formulating replies rather than listening to constituents, and don't allow public comment following the pontificating of council members.

If anyone wonders why the public doesn't think that politicians listen or represent them, stop in at a Town Council meeting in a town that uses 421 gallons of water per person/per day during one of the worst droughts in California's history.

Kevin Greenwood is an educator, writer, and retired business executive living in Woodside.



GUEST
OPINION

MEASURE M

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lot box, however, city officials would be wrong to interpret its defeat as an endorsement of the more than 800,000 square feet of development that has been proposed. Even Measure M opponents have publicly criticized aspects of the specific plan that don't give the city the muscle it needs to effectively negotiate public benefits when major projects are proposed. These include Planning Commission chair Ben Eiref, who in a guest opinion in last week's Almanac noted that a lower public-benefit trigger in the specific plan would be "the ultimate source of control" over large projects.

Planning Commissioner John

Kadvany, who says he is critical of Measure M but hasn't publicly taken a position on it, said at last week's commission meeting that the decision not to lower the trigger threshold was "the biggest mistake the council has made in the last couple of years."

We agree with those comments, and hope that, should Measure M fail, proponents — and those who opposed it because they believe it's the wrong tool to address legitimate concerns — will turn their energy toward pushing the council to do the right thing. The council needs to lower the public-benefit threshold on projects, and soon, while there's still time for such a change to affect what gets built in the Stanford and Greenheart projects.

and an indication of their support for the specific plan. Therefore, he said, he wouldn't advocate changing the plan to meet Measure M objectives if the measure were defeated.

As we endorse the incumbents, we also urge them to open up a new review of the specific plan's public-benefit trigger, and take action to adjust it before it's too late to have an impact on the Stanford project.

LETTERS

Our readers write

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not take children in need of extra services, resulting in charter schools consuming disproportionate resources relative to schools that accommodate children with greater needs.

It is well documented that charter schools provide no or limited resources for children with special needs. Therefore, children with the greatest needs remain in other district schools, costing those schools more money per pupil. In the Mandarin Immersion Charter School budget there are no budget items related to special education teachers, school psychologists, reading specialists, specialist aides or English language specialists for ESL learners.

Since this school, based on its own budget, appears to be cherry-picking students, creating a quasi-private school using public money, it will consume a disproportionate amount of

resources per pupil based on its students' needs. The result will be less money available for other students, with the greatest impact likely falling, unfortunately and typically, on those with the greatest needs.

*Andrew Becker
Yale Road, Menlo Park*

Don't split vote in health care district race

Editor:

I hope by now enough voters are aware of how our taxes continue to go to what is renamed a health care district — renamed because the hospital district for which the taxes were granted was sold.

A grand jury's recommendation over 10 years ago was that voters should approve any new purpose of a hospital district. This has yet to happen. The directors of that district would rather use the taxes as they see fit, and decide with only one dissenting vote to their four to whom they bestow the grants.

The dissenting director, Jack Hickey, has been elected to three

four-year terms by voters who continue to question the validity of this health care district and are unhappy he has never changed anything. But he is only one vote of disapproval and cannot even get a motion seconded.

This election must get Jack the support of two other candidates whose purpose would also be to bring this decision to the voters. If your vote for Jack Hickey also includes a for for DePaula and McDowell, together they plan to do that. If you split your vote with another candidate, we will have lost the opportunity again to have voters make the decision for our health care district's tax collection.

All the time voters have been denied this decision there have been a great many beneficiaries of this board's generosity of our taxes. They certainly want to keep those donations coming. Is it too late already to stop this controversial tax collection because so many votes will come from those benefiting from a tax distribution which so many of us question?

*Betty Seckler
Oakley Avenue, Menlo Park*

COUNCIL CHOICES

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public service here consists of a few months on the Planning Commission and the Bicycle Commission. Although Measure M supporters say he could be relied on to work toward changes to the specific plan, he told the Almanac that if Measure M fails, he would regard that as the will of the people

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