

The Almanac

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

MARCH 11, 2015 | VOL. 50 NO. 27



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Gateway hotel unveiled

David Bohannon discloses
details for hotel that will
permit Menlo Gateway
development to move forward

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Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

West Bay Cleaners owner Eric Ybarra, front, and manager David Lopez, back, work in the dry cleaning store on Menalto Avenue in Menlo Park.

New owner asks for clean slate

West Bay Cleaners owner says he's not associated with former tenant

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

Guilt by association is a pernicious thing, as the new tenant of Menalto Corners in Menlo Park is discovering.

Eric Ybarra opened West Bay Cleaners at 1921 Menalto Ave. in January, after the popular owner of a dry cleaning business in that same space was arrested for multiple counts of alleged credit card fraud.

"A lot of people in the neighborhood are having a hard time distinguishing between me being the new owner and Gary (Smith)," said Eric Ybarra, the proprietor of West Bay Cleaners. "People thought we were connected, that I'd taken it over for him, that we were related — you name it, they thought it. We're still facing it to this day," he said. "We are not connected to him."

This is Mr. Ybarra's first foray into dry cleaning. After Mr. Smith was evicted the day before his arrest, the cleaning equip-

ment remained behind, as did longtime manager David Lopez, and the new business owner thought he recognized a great opportunity.

"The key is to hire the right people," Mr. Ybarra said, which is why he hired Mr. Lopez. "He's my only employee right now and he's a godsend. He's an amazing guy, and he's done an amazing job. He has 20 years of experience cleaning — 15 years of that here with Gary."

The fallout from Mr. Smith's arrest included difficulty getting a credit card processing machine for West Bay Cleaners simply because the address had been blacklisted, according to Mr. Ybarra. Finally, after getting letters from the landlord and from the bank, he got approved.

"It was ugly," Mr. Ybarra said. "It took a month and a half for them to say OK, we'll take a chance on you. I said, 'Wait, take a chance on me? I'm not the previous guy.'"

When the former tenant showed up post-arrest to col-

lect and return some items of clothing to customers, it further stirred suspicions of ties between the old and new dry cleaner, according to Mr. Ybarra.

Other businesses in the same small shopping center — particularly those relying on walk-in business, including Cafe Zoe, saw customers dwindle, sources told the Almanac. Slowly some are returning.

Nona Ybarra runs a dance studio next door to her husband's West Bay Cleaners. Mr. Ybarra said the whole family, along with fellow tenants and the landlord, are pulling together.

"My wife rallied behind me. My children are being as patient as they can be with us both owning businesses. It's starting to pay off. It's awesome. I wouldn't trade it for the world, being right next door to my wife."

Mr. Smith was arrested on Jan. 14. He has pleaded not guilty to 40 counts of alleged credit card fraud, and is currently out of custody, awaiting the preliminary hearing. ■

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THE ALMANAC (ISSN 1097-3095 and USPS 459370) is published every Wednesday by Embarcadero Media, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025-6558. Periodicals Postage Paid at Menlo Park, CA and at additional mailing offices. Adjudicated a newspaper of general circulation for San Mateo County, The Almanac is delivered free to homes in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside. Subscriptions for \$60 per year or \$100 per 2 years are welcome. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Almanac, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025-6558. Copyright ©2014 by Embarcadero Media, All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.

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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Bohannon unveils Menlo Gateway hotel

By Sandy Brundage

Almanac Staff Writer

The view from the Bayshore Freeway in Menlo Park may be about to change. Developer David Bohannon, hotel partner in hand at long last, plans to see Menlo Gateway up and running by 2018.

The plan is to build three office buildings — still totaling 694,000 square feet — three parking garages and one hotel on the 16 acres along Independence and Constitution drives.

But the project that will be presented to the City Council on March 10 has changed in some particulars from the version voters approved in 2010.

Mr. Bohannon's agreement with the city requires that construction of the hotel begin before he can build the office space. The current design concept shows a hotel of glass and light folded into sharp angles. With 250 rooms in an 11-story tower, this iteration has 20 more rooms than the original version, spread across 193,000 square feet.

Amenities include a restaurant, an outdoor pool with lounge, and a 40,000-square-foot fitness club that will be managed independently of the hotel. Meeting spaces — 20,000 square feet created both indoors and outdoors — round out the planned project.

Construction will attain, at a minimum, LEED Gold standards of "green" design, according to the developer.

Ensemble Hotel Partners, based in Long Beach, will manage the hotel, which will launch as part of Marriott's new "Autograph Collection" series of properties.

"All the hotels under the Autograph Collection are a brand of one," said Brian Ehrlich, chief investment officer for Ensemble.

■ INFORMATION

Online: Check AlmanacNews.com for updates on the City Council's comments regarding the hotel at a March 10 council study session.

The Menlo Gateway site will be customized through an independent branding exercise "to help to create a personality, a style, a design that celebrates Menlo Park," he said.

He estimated the hotel's construction cost as in the ballpark of \$100 million, plus or minus 10 percent. Building would start the first quarter of 2016, with the hotel opening by early 2018.

Room rates will be in the range of \$400 — "we hope to tag along with the Four Seasons, and probably drift and drag behind them by \$20 to \$30. The one big hole in the market in our perspective is outdoor function and meeting space, for corporate as well as social events. There really isn't a great place for that both indoors and especially outdoors," Mr. Ehrlich said.

The redesigned hotel is projected to deliver to the city about \$3.1 million annually in transient occupancy tax revenue. That's about \$1.2 million more than the version presented in 2010, according to Mr. Bohannon.

Bigger hotel but potentially less traffic than was earlier projected? Yes, thanks in part to a smaller fitness center. The developer's consultants estimated 10,777 new daily trips with the revised project; the original version was expected to generate 11,113. The environmental impact report done for the 2010 version should suffice for the updated plans, he said.

Mr. Bohannon hopes to achieve an urban, mixed-use village kind of feel, he said. "I want people to feel this is a very nice place to be, very inviting, frankly, for people who don't want to stay in the hotel, to come in for a meal."

His vision extends beyond the boundaries of the Menlo Gateway site. He hopes to establish standards, such as 12- to 16-foot-wide sidewalks that Menlo Park will incorporate into the new zoning regulations the city is currently working on for the M2 district.

Bookended by Facebook



Cunningham Group Architecture

A rendering of the front view of the 250-room Menlo Gateway hotel to be built on Independence Drive. **On the cover:** Rear view of the hotel. (Rendering by Cunningham Group Architecture.)



Heller Manus Architects

A rendering of the Menlo Gateway plan, as viewed from Bayshore Freeway. The hotel is on the right front. The plan encompasses three office buildings (totaling 694,000 square feet), three parking garages and the hotel on 16 acres along Independence and Constitution drives.

■ AT A GLANCE

- 193,000-square-foot hotel with 250 rooms in an 11-story tower.
- 694,000 square feet of office space, with two buildings on Constitution Drive and one on Independence Drive.
- Both the hotel and office buildings will be under 140 feet high.
- 40,000-square-foot fitness center.
- 2,689 parking spaces in three parking garages.

and Menlo Gateway, the M2 industrial zone is undergoing a renaissance, with new apartment complexes, Facebook's ever-expanding number of campuses, and the opening of new incubator companies. The changes will impact the surrounding Belle Haven neighborhood — something developers are taking into consideration.

"We're partnering with Facebook right now to improve Chilco Street. ... we agreed to design it and provide the design to the

city," Mr. Bohannon said. They are still hashing out exactly what those improvements will look like.

Not a bubble

The news of the hotel may surprise some in Menlo Park who were starting to wonder whether Menlo Gateway would ever break ground.

"I started the project in 2004, with a smaller, different type of hotel," Mr. Bohannon said. But that was before the reces-

sion killed investors' enthusiasm for new developments. That enthusiasm continued to lag, at least as far as luxury hotels were concerned, once the economy started to bounce back.

"There are very few four-star, full-service hotels being developed in this country," he said. "Asia is doing a lot."

The current superheated real estate climate, however, seems to be something different from a bubble, Mr. Bohannon said.

See **BOHANNON**, page 6

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The complex would be built along Independence and Constitution drives between the Bayshore Freeway and Bayfront Expressway.

Bohannon unveils Menlo Gateway hotel

continued from page 5

He thinks there will be another cycle of ups and downs, but “we have institutional memory now.” Banks as a result of being burned badly by the previous downturn are “very disciplined” when it comes to investing.

Even with the economic recovery that started about three to four years ago, Mr. Bohannon said, the upswing is still spreading across the United States. Investors first snapped up “broken assets,” such as hotels that

were financially underwater, before looking to build new projects, making something like Menlo Gateway a low priority.

“If you’re someone like us, sitting on (a proposal) for a full-service hotel, it wasn’t happening,” Mr. Bohannon said. He could have gone smaller; people were calling to ask about doing a limited hotel, he said. But, he added: “While the city wanted this type of hotel, we also wanted it. I have been patient, waiting to bring forward the right type of hotel.” ■

Rudolph ‘Rudy’ Wegman, 88, Wegman’s Nursery founder

Rudolph Henry “Rudy” Wegman, who, with his wife, Marlis, founded Wegman’s Nursery in Redwood City, died Feb. 17. He was 88.

Mr. Wegman was born in Uster, Switzerland, in 1926 and was raised on a dairy farm with his three siblings. He learned the nursery trade as a young man.



**Rudolph
Wegman**

In 1950, he left Switzerland for the United States. In 1956 he married Marlis Perino, also from Switzer-

land. Together they founded Wegman’s Nursery in 1960 and worked hard to achieve the American Dream, say family members. “Rudy loved being in the nursery,” they say.

Mr. Wegman played bocce ball every Saturday with friends for more than 20 years. He also enjoyed fishing.

He is survived by his children, Erhard Wegman, Mark Wegman, and Heidi Wegman-Pellarin; sister Elsi Denzler-Wegmann and brother William Wegmann of Switzerland; and six grandchildren. His wife, Marlis, preceded him in death.

City weighs sidewalks on Santa Cruz Avenue

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

Eight years ago, the City Council chose to make installing sidewalks along Santa Cruz Avenue, between Olive and Johnson streets, a priority, or as much of a priority as the vagaries of funding allow. On Tuesday, March 10, the current council was scheduled to decide, finally, what design option to study further.

Santa Cruz Avenue handles about 15,300 vehicle trips on a weekday, with many people using it to travel to and from Hillview Middle School, according to the city's transportation staff.

A slew of recent emails to the city indicated that residents consider the sidewalks a sorely

INFORMATION

Check AlmanacNews.com for updates. The March 10 council meeting was held after our print deadline.

needed safety feature. Some have had close calls with cars pulling out of driveways, or while walking along the roadway's shoulder to reach a crosswalk.

But the improvement plan comes with a catch: Homeowners along Santa Cruz Avenue have extended landscaping and fencing into the city's right-of-way. Menlo Park would have to reclaim at least part of its property to create the sidewalks.

The transportation and bicy-

cle commissions in February and March unanimously recommended the installation of 6- to 8-foot-wide sidewalks, maintaining bike lanes and preserving heritage trees where feasible. Some on-street parking may be sacrificed in exchange.

The city's preferred choice tweaks that option a bit; the staff recommends a 5-foot-wide sidewalk, and making the existing bike lanes wider by 2 feet (to a total of 7 feet where possible). Street parking would be eliminated to help mitigate the impact on property owners and maximize preservation of heritage trees, according to the staff report.

Completing the design of the chosen option, expected to take up to 12 months, and starting construction would use the remaining \$600,000 in the project's budget. Staff would then ask the council for more funding during the 2015-16 budget approval process. ■

BBC construction gets underway

Construction of a three-floor restaurant with rooftop dining at 1090 El Camino Real, site of the British Bankers Club, has kicked off, according to the city of Menlo Park.

Rob Fischer, who owns the Palo Alto Creamery along with Reposado and, in Mountain View, Gravity and Scratch, added the BBC to his roster in July 2013.

He received permits at the end of February to start the interior and exterior modifications to

MENLO BRIEFS

Menlo Park's historic landmark. The new restaurant should be finished by December 2015, the city said.

Construction starts at St. Anton complex

Developer St. Anton Partners is ready to start building its 394-unit apartment complex at 3639 Haven Ave. in Menlo

Park. The city issued permits on March 2 for two of the three planned buildings.

Planned in partnership with Facebook, Anton Menlo is the largest apartment project undertaken in the city in more than 20 years.

Situated on 10 acres of land off Marsh Road, the \$120 million complex will include amenities such as a convenience store, pub, bike repair shop

See **MENLO BRIEFS**, page 14

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Buying a Tenant-Occupied Property

Dear Monica: I am going to make an offer on a property that I will want to live in but that currently has a tenant. I want to move in as soon as the lease is terminated. What do I need to do to protect myself from adverse issues regarding this? Jane B.

Dear Jane: First, you should get a copy of the lease that is in effect for the property and review its terms. Confirm that the purchase contract for the property includes language about assignment of leases. At the close of escrow the lease will be turned over to you including any depos-

its. You will be the substituted landlord. You won't be able to take possession of the property until the lease has terminated.

When it is thirty to sixty days before the lease expires, make sure the tenant knows in writing that you will not be extending it and that he or she will be expected to relinquish possession on the termination date. You may need to issue a notice to vacate. It is good you are confirming the facts now before you are in contract to buy this property. Consult an attorney if needed to understand and protect your rights.

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

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Atherton police write 87 citations in one day

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Police issued 87 traffic-related citations in Atherton on March 4 during a day of extra patrols intended to focus on pedestrian hazards.

Forty-eight of the citations were for speeding and 35 for drivers not yielding to pedestrians in a crosswalk, Cpl. Brett Murphy of the Burlingame Police Department said.

The patrols are part of a county enforcement program that receives funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration through a grant to the California Office of Traffic Safety.

Six officers in Atherton conducted “saturation enforcement” in places where collisions between vehicles and pedestrians have occurred.

Along with the speeding and failure-to-yield citations, one driver was ticketed for a cellphone violation, another for texting and a third for driving without a driver’s license. Police made one arrest — for evading police, Cpl. Murphy said.

The crosswalk enforcement

was conducted at the intersection of El Camino Real and Almedral Avenue, a spot picked by Atherton police, Cpl. Murphy said. Atherton resident Shahriar Rahimzadeh, 32, died at this intersection in July 2014 after being struck by a vehicle while crossing El Camino.

In this enforcement effort, police did not wait for pedestrians to come along. A sergeant in plain clothes and wearing a highly visible vest walked out into the crosswalk as traffic approached. Drivers who did not yield were cited.

The driver cited for a cellphone violation was holding a cellphone while using its speaker function. Had the phone been on the seat rather than in the driver’s hand, there would not have been a problem, Cpl. Murphy said.

In making the one arrest, an officer on foot had signaled the driver of a pickup truck to pull over. The driver, upon learning that the officer was going to issue a speeding citation, said, in effect, “No, you’re not,” and drove off, Cpl. Murphy said. The officer got on his motorcycle, caught the truck and made the arrest. ■

‘Affordable housing crisis’ on county supes agenda

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

In the realm of problems without ready answers, it’s hard to top the scarcity of housing on the Peninsula that is reasonably affordable to households with less than six-figure annual incomes.

The standard of affordability is defined as monthly rent or mortgage payments of no more than 30 percent of the household’s income, according to a white paper published in January by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors.

With the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment on the Peninsula now at \$2,648 a month, a household needs an annual income of \$106,000 to meet that 30 percent standard, the white paper says. In 2013 in San Mateo County, according to the U.S. Census, more than 35,000 renting families were paying more than 30 percent.

“San Mateo County is experiencing an affordable housing crisis,” the supervisors say in the white paper. “The demand for

housing affordable to all but the wealthiest residents far exceeds the available supply.”

The board is holding an afternoon study session Tuesday, March 17, to examine how to keep current occupants in their homes and add to the available stock of affordable housing. The session will run from 1:30 to 5 p.m. in the board chambers at 400 County Center in Redwood City.

HIP Housing, the go-to agency in the county for finding shared-living situations, has 10 applicants for every offer of housing, the county says in an email update on the study session.

In unincorporated communities, the county has “contributed to the development of 1,554 affordable housing units,” the update says. The county’s Affordable Housing Fund, created in 2013, has awarded \$18 million to date.

Go to tinyurl.com/ssrv234 to read the white paper. Supervisor Don Horsley recommends the white paper to anyone wanting to participate in the study session. ■



Photo courtesy of Michelle Tsui

Residents and volunteers worked to complete phase I of the Belle Haven community garden in November. The project is now ready to expand.

Community garden grows bigger

By Sandy Brundage
Almanac Staff Writer

Twelve fruit trees and 10 additional garden beds are on the way to the Belle Haven community garden, thanks to an \$8,000 donation from Facebook.

A 25-bed garden opened on Nov. 22 on city-owned property at Ivy Drive and

Hill Avenue. One Belle Haven family is assigned to each 4-foot-by-8-foot raised bed, which are free to use on a one-year agreement. The Rotary Club is also sponsoring gardening classes four times a year at the site.

“Over the past two years, the Rotary Club of Menlo Park has made connecting to the community one of the

top priorities for service,” said Glen Rojas, former club president.

In addition to the Rotary Club and main sponsor Greenheart Land Development, other contributors include Bavarian Nordic, Farmscapes, the city of Menlo Park, Recology, CalWater, Mission Engineers, Lynsco, and now Facebook. ■

Facebook funds high-tech cameras for firefighters

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District has used money from Facebook to order high-tech cameras used for finding people trapped inside burning buildings, fire officials said.

According to Fire Chief Harold Schapelhouman, the new cameras will replace existing equipment that’s six to eight years old.

The district plans to deploy 11 new Bullard Eclipse LDX model thermal imaging cameras at a cost of \$90,000. The funding for the new cameras came from the development impact agreement for Facebook’s new West Campus in Menlo Park.

“It’s almost like a police radar gun,” Chief Schapelhouman said. “You point it and you look

through the screen, and that allows you to see the heat signatures through the smoke.”

The LDX model uses new technology to increase brightness and improve contrast, which makes it possible to locate fire victims in the kind of smoke-filled, zero-visibility conditions found inside burning buildings.

“This is so much different from what we experienced 10 years ago,” he said. “I used to crawl through buildings and close my eyes and focus on other senses, because vision wasn’t a good one. You try and listen, hear the sounds of a burning building and listen for people crying out.”

The LDX model also features “thermal throttle,” which allows

firefighters to pinpoint hot spots in walls or ceilings, and a digital video recorder known as the “scene catcher.” Firefighters plan to record exactly when and where they locate victims inside of burning buildings and use that footage for post-incident analysis.

They also hope to show the public what firefighters experience under dangerous and difficult job conditions and what goes into rescuing fire victims.

“We’re just happy to have this kind of technology,” Chief Schapelhouman said. “Had we not had a donation like that I’m not sure we would’ve bought the most advanced equipment because we always have to balance performance and cost.”

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District serves Atherton, Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and some unincorporated areas of San Mateo County.

— Bay City News Service

Filoli hires firm to help handle volunteer exodus

By **Barbara Wood**
Almanac Staff Writer

Filoli, the historic estate in Woodside, has hired an Oakland-based crisis communications management company, Kamer Consulting Group, after hundreds of volunteers gave up their volunteer jobs rather than sign a mandatory new volunteer agreement.

On Monday, March 2, Larry Kamer of the crisis management company released a statement from Filoli's executive director, Cynthia D'Agosta saying that "over 1,000 volunteers have decided to sign the new volunteer agreement."

Mr. Kamer and Ms. D'Agosta did not respond to multiple requests to answer questions about the statement, but in an earlier interview, Friends of Filoli president Heidi Brown said Filoli had asked about 1,500 volunteers to sign the agreement — 1,300 "active" volunteers and 200 others with emeritus status or temporarily on leave. That means, if Ms. D'Agosta's statement is correct, as many as 500 volunteers may have left Filoli.

According to Ms. D'Agosta's statement, "Filoli has experienced no significant loss of volunteers or volunteer hours, nor do we expect to."

See tinyurl.com/filoli302 on the Almanac website for the full statement.

In mid-February a number of Filoli volunteers contacted the Almanac to express their distress over the volunteer agreement

they had been told they had to sign by March 1 to keep their volunteer jobs. At that point, according to an email from Filoli management, only 600 volunteers had signed the agreement.

After the Almanac posted a story about the controversy, Filoli's board met and told volunteers they could cross out the most objectionable clause, which states that the volunteer will not make "a claim of any negligence, personal injury, wrongful death or property damage against Filoli" in connection with the volunteer's work at Filoli.

The statement issued by the crisis management company says: "Filoli volunteers, members and visitors are all covered by a policy that has been in place for many years." Volunteers have asked that a statement regarding liability and secondary medical insurance coverage be included as part of the volunteer agreement to ensure the insurance remains in place.

Many volunteers said they still could not sign the agreement even with the changes because of remaining clauses, including those that say they will be "responsible for medical costs incurred by accident, illness or injury associated with my services to Filoli"; a clause that says the document is signed "without any duress or undue influence"; and a clause that says Filoli can "publish any photos" in which they appear. Volunteers said they also were unhappy with Filoli's failure to add requested clauses protecting volunteers. ■

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Spring registration is now open and most classes begin the week of March 30.

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Police Department names employees of year

Code enforcement officer Eleonor Hilario has been tapped as the Menlo Park Police Department's 2014 employee of the year, while Officer Brent Hughes has been selected as the officer of the year, the city announced.

During her two years in code enforcement, Officer Hilario is "credited with making a tremendous impact in the community by addressing health and safety hazards, enforcement of City codes/regulations, blight prevention, and quality of life issues," according to the city's announcement.

Officer Hughes, who has been with the department for almost five years and serves on the SWAT unit, earned recognition for his enthusiasm and professionalism, the city said.

■ BRIEFS

Kathy Krize

Kathy Krize of Keller Williams Realty in Menlo Park has received certification as an international property specialist by the National Association of Realtors. The designation is awarded for completing coursework on international real estate practices and demonstrating proficiency in international business.

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For video tour & more photos, please visit:
www.20Ohlone.com



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Camp Connection

For more information about these camps, see our online directory of camps at www.paloaltoonline.com/biz/summercamps/
To advertise in this weekly directory, call: 650-326-8210

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www.arts4all.org

Mountain View

650.917.6800 ext.0

Environmental Volunteers Summer Camp

Explore nature this summer from your own backyard. Environmental Volunteer summer camps return with a new series of programs. Hands-on activities, field trips and creative fun make science accessible to kids ages 6-11.

www.Evols.com/Explore

650.493.8000

Foothills Summer Camps

In this historic, popular, traditional day camp your child will play on miles of trails, woodlands, fields, streams, Boronda Lake, and enjoy spectacular views of the bay area. Transportation to and from Foothills Park is provided each day.

www.cityofpaloalto.org/foothillscamps

Palo Alto

J-Camp Oshman Family JCC

Exciting activities for kindergarteners through teens include swimming, field trips, sports and more. Enroll your child in traditional or special focus camps like Studio TV Production, Jr. Masterchef, Elsa and Anna's Dance Camp, Beach Bonanza and many others!

www.paloaltojcc.org/summercamp

Palo Alto

650.223.8622

Palo Alto Community Child Care (PACCC)

PACCC summer camps offer campers, grades 1st to 6th, a wide variety of fun opportunities! Neighborhood Adventure Fun and Junior Varsity Sports Adventure Camp are for the more active and on-the-go campers! New this year: E.P.I.C. Camp – Energetic, Peers, Independence & Community for the older kids! Returning are FAME - Fine arts, Music and Entertainment and Operation Chef for out of this world cooking fun! Swimming twice per week, periodic field trips, special visitors and many engaging camp activities, songs and skits round out the fun offerings of PACCC Summer Camps! Open to campers from all communities! Come join the fun in Palo Alto! Register online.

www.paccc.org

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explore.stanford.edu

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Stanford

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stanfordjazz.org

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www.techknowhowkids.com

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Palo Alto

TheatreWorks Summer Camps

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www.theatreworks.org/learn/youth/summercamps

Palo Alto

YMCA Summer Camps

At the Y, youth of all ages make new friends, build character and learn new skills. With hundreds of unique camps and 30+ convenient locations, you'll find a camp that's right for your family. Financial assistance is available.

www.ymcasv.org/summer

408.351.6473

Throughout Silicon Valley

Athletics

Camp Campbell

For close to 80 years, Bay Area youth have forged life-long friendships and benefited from character-defining experiences at Camp Campbell through nature hikes, campfires, archery and many other fun outdoor activities. Financial assistance is available.

<http://www.ymcacampcampbell.org/>

831.338.2128

Santa Cruz Mountains

Hi Five Sport

Hi Five Sports is thrilled to present our fourth multi-sport competitive summer camp to the San Francisco Bay Area! Through experienced, passionate and patient coaching, we believe the timeless lessons that only sports can teach will stay with the kids for the rest of their lives.

www.hifivesportsclub.com

650.362.4975

Atherton

Menlo School Sports Camps

Menlo camps are designed for boys and girls grades 4-12 to learn from Knights coaches and staff -whether it's preparation for an upcoming season or simply for fun and to stay in shape in a high energy, positive setting. Join us this summer to develop skills, foster athleticism and promote sportsmanship in camps covering a range of sports - baseball, basketball, football (skills, lineman, and safe tackling camps) lacrosse, soccer, tennis, track & field, volleyball, water polo.

www.menloschool.org

650.330.2001 ext. 2758

Atherton

Nike Tennis Camps

Junior Overnight and Day Camps for boys & girls, ages 9-18 offered throughout June, July and August. Adult Weekend Clinics (June & Aug). Camps directed by Head Men's Coach, Paul Goldstein, Head Women's Coach, Lele Forood, and Associate Men's and Women's Coaches, Brandon Coupe and Frankie Brennan. Come join the fun and get better this summer!

www.USSportsCamps.com

1.800.NIKE.CAMP (645.3226)

Stanford University

Stanford Baseball Camps

Stanford Baseball Camps have gained national recognition as the some of the finest in the country. These camps are designed to be valuable and beneficial for a wide range of age groups and skill sets. From the novice 7 year-old, to the Division 1, professionally skilled high school player, you will find a camp that fulfills your needs.

www.Stanfordbaseballcamp.com

650.723.4528

Stanford Campus

Stanford Water Polo

Ages 7 and up. New to sport or have experience, we have a camp for you. Half day or fully day option for boys and girls. All the camps offer fundamental skill work, scrimmages and games.

www.stanfordwaterpolocamps.com

650.725.9016

Stanford

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www.sfhs.com/summer

650.968.1213 x650

Mountain View

Summer Camp@SportsHouse (Powered by Skyhawks)

June 15-August 14. Weekly indoor sports day camp for kids 6-13 years old. Fun filled sports and games directed by Skyhawks. Full day 9am-4pm camp includes lunch and optional after camp care.

www.sportshouseonline.com

650.362.4100

Redwood City

Academics

Alexa Café

At Alexa Café, girls ages 10-15 collaborate around café tables and learn to code apps, produce films, design websites, develop wearable electronics, and more. Discover a passion for technology in this unique environment that emphasizes leadership, philanthropy, and more.

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Palo Alto High School

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www.castilleja.org/summercamp

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Academics

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www.summer.harker.org

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San Jose

iD Game Design and Development Academy

Get immersed in game design at this 2-week, pre-college summer academy! Teens ages 13-18 design video games, develop apps, model 3D characters, mod with Minecraft, and more. Tour a development studio and create a portfolio.

www.iDTech.com

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iD Programming Academy

Get immersed in technology at this 2-week, pre-college summer academy. Teens ages 13-18 code apps, program with C++ and Java, mod with Minecraft, engineer robots, and program websites. Tour a development studio and create a portfolio.

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iD Tech Mini

Kids ages 6-9 will have a blast at iD Tech Mini, where half day options let aspiring innovators discover a love for tech. Campers make new friends and learn hands-on STEM skills in a kid-friendly environment.

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Palo Alto High School

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www.mid-pen.com

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Menlo Park

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www.oneyou.education

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Palo Alto

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www.oneyou.education

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Palo Alto

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Summer at Saint Francis

Summer at Saint Francis provides a broad range of academic and athletic programs for elementary through high school students. It is the goal of every program to make summer vacation enriching and enjoyable!

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www.headsup.org

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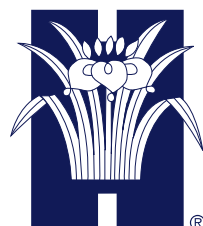
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Woodside, developer find compromises on mansion

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

The remodeling of the 7,423-square-foot main house and accessory structures at 360 Mountain Home Road in Woodside is evolving, though with fewer surprises than was the case 10 months ago.

Planning Director Jackie Young and the Architectural and Site Review Board agreed

to a set of revisions to site plans on March 2, Ms. Young said. The town's conversation with the applicant, SV Projects LLC, has been going on since December.

The result is a modified version of what had been "much more formal and intense" proposals that were "inconsistent with several aspects of the Residential Design Guidelines," Ms. Young said. "We found acceptable compromises."

Among the compromises: front gates will have a more rural style, three sets of stairs will be less formal, exterior lighting will be set to a minimum, and a pool patio structure and a garden structure will have bronze siding and roofs, Ms. Young said.

The applicant had proposed using the same stone siding and slate roofs planned for the main house. But that would have complicated an observer's ability to distinguish the main house and accessory structures, creating a perception of a more massive complex, staff said.

All existing upward-pointing exterior lights must go, and lighting in the basement lightwell and garden structure must be kept to a minimum, per the

town's codes, Ms. Young said. The pylons at the entrance gates originally had metal caps, but those, too, must go.

The applicant agreed to these changes, but is planning to ask the Planning Commission for "a height exception" to overturn the ASRB's recommendation against a proposal for two more dormers on the roof of the main house, Ms. Young said.

The process is orderly, unlike in May 2014. Town staff visited the site and were surprised to find the top two floors of the main house elevated on steel beams above an empty space where the first floor and basement had been.

Permission had been given to elevate the house, but for the purpose of removing the

basement only, not the first floor or its framing. Ms. Young issued a stop-work order on July 3.

After much discussion, the Planning Commission split on the matter on July 31, leaving it unresolved. The applicant appealed to the Town Council, which unanimously granted the appeal Sept. 9. Work resumed.


The mansion was completed in 2009 and ownership changed in 2012. The new owner's plans included replacing wooden siding with stone, expanding the basement and roofs of gray slate.

While the 2009 home was considered "inconsistent" with the town's design criteria, the limited scope of the changes led the town to permit raising some areas of the roof and adding 400 square feet of floor space. ■



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MENLO BRIEFS

continued from page 7

and dog daycare.

Facebook will subsidize 15 of the 37 affordable housing units. Construction is expected finish in mid-2016, according to the city.

Meeting on reducing traffic congestion

Atherton, Menlo Park and Redwood City officials will join county representatives and Jeff Tumlin of Nelson Nygaard Associates on Monday, March 16, for a regional

discussion about reducing traffic congestion.

The meeting starts at 6 p.m. and will be held at the Jennings Pavilion in Holbrook-Palmer Park at 150 Watkins Ave. in Atherton.



Join Us to Celebrate the Opening of Our Model Suites at Kensington Place

on Saturday, March 21 from 2pm-4pm

at AutoVino, 205 Constitution Drive, Menlo Park, CA

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We are excited to announce the opening of our furnished model suites at Kensington Place, a new memory care community currently under development in Redwood City. It will be a residence featuring two neighborhoods beautifully designed, appointed and staffed to assist seniors and families who are facing the challenges of Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia. *Connections* is for residents in the early to middle stages of memory loss. *Haven* is for residents in the middle to late stages.

We are getting closer to bringing our memory care expertise and a full spectrum of clinical support to seniors you love—in surroundings customized for their comfort and safety. We are grateful for the chance to care for your family and to be part of your community. Let us thank you by inviting you to join us as we celebrate reaching our latest milestone. **Stop by, enjoy refreshments and take a guided tour of the model suites we can't wait to share. Please RSVP.**



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Sports

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650-854-6699 | www.jgswimschool.com
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Menlo Park Tennis

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www.webbranchinc.com/riding.htm
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650-450-3209
Maryanne Fernandez-Richardson,
jmfdance57@aol.com
www.danceexpressions5678.com
Dance instruction for children and teens of various skill levels, focusing on jazz technique.

Draeger's Cooking School

1010 University Drive, Menlo Park
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www.draegerscookingsschool.com
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Old World Designs

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www.oldworlddesigns.com
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School Days

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275 Elliott Drive, Menlo Park
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Ladera Community Church Preschool

3300 Alpine Road, Portola Valley
650-854-0295 | director@laderapreschool.org
www.laderapreschool.org
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Sand Hill School

650 Clark Way, Palo Alto
650-688-3605 | info@sandhillschool.org
www.sandhillschool.org
Located at the Children's Health Council, Sand Hill School works with children from K through 6th grade (expanding to 8) with language-based learning and attention difficulties.

Adult Education

3247 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park
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650-326-0665 | www.penvol.org/littlehouse
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Community Services

701 Laurel St., Menlo Park
www.menloPark.org/212/Community-Services
650-330-2200
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The Class Guide is published quarterly in the Almanac, Palo Alto Weekly and Mountain View Voice. Listings are free and subject to editing. To inquire about submitting a listing for the next Class Guide, email Editorial Assistant Sam Sciolla at ssciolla@paweeekly.com or call (650) 223-6515. To place a paid advertisement in the Class Guide, call the display advertising department at (650) 326-8210.



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www.sandhillschool.org

Children's Health Council www.chconline.org



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Nancy Glass, active volunteer

A memorial service was held March 5 for Nancy Elizabeth Glass of La Honda, who died Feb. 24. She was 87. Interment followed at Alta Mesa Memorial Park in Palo Alto.

Ms. Glass was an active volunteer in La Honda, supporting junior rodeos, the fire brigade and the 4-H



Nancy Glass

OBITUARY

Obituaries are based on information provided by the family.

Club, according to her family.

Nancy Alford grew up in San Gregorio and attended high school and college on the Peninsula.

She married childhood neighbor Bill Glass and the couple moved to La Honda. She was "an amazing cook," her family said, and loved get-togethers. Ms. Glass was

a key participant in the annual crab cioppino fundraiser for the La Honda Fire Brigade.

Her survivors include her son, Michael Glass, daughter Sharon Dooley and three grandchildren.

The family asks that donations be made to the La Honda Fire Brigade, P.O. Box 97, La Honda, CA 94020; or to the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital.

Go to tinyurl.com/rte334 to leave remembrances on the Almanac's Lasting Memories page.

Ted Viray named postmaster for Menlo, Atherton, PV

Ted Viray, who took over Feb. 27 as postmaster for Menlo Park, Atherton and Portola Valley, said he is looking at hiring more carrier assistants for Amazon package delivery on Sundays.

Mr. Viray, 49, has been with the Postal Service for 24 years, 19 of those in management. He was postmaster in Pacifica in 2013 and officer-in-charge at the Menlo Park branch for eight months before his promotion.

His predecessor in Menlo Park, Jeff Gaskill, is now a labor relations specialist in the San Francisco district of the Postal Service.



Ted Viray

Mr. Viray, a resident of San Jose, works out the main Menlo Park post office at 3875 Bohannon Drive. The Menlo Park branch includes the post offices at 655 Oak Grove Ave. in downtown Menlo Park and at 2120 Avy Ave. in West Menlo Park. Portola Valley and Atherton do not have post offices within their boundaries, though Atherton has a "postal unit" inside City Hall. The district includes 23,322 addresses served by 87 letter carriers who work 41 routes in Menlo Park and eight routes each in Atherton and Portola Valley, Mr. Viray said.

Mr. Viray is married and the father of three children. He studied zoology as an undergraduate at Far Eastern University in Manila (in the Philippines).

Edwin Adams Wells

August 15, 1923 – February 7, 2015

Edwin A. Wells, Jr. — municipal finance consultant, civil engineer, Stanford graduate, WWII Army veteran, civic volunteer — died peacefully on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015 after a brief illness, surrounded by family at his home of more than 50 years in Portola Valley, California. He was 91.

Ed was born in Palo Alto, California to the late Edwin A. Wells, Sr. and Mildred Thompson Wells. He was also pre-deceased by his younger brother, Donn Jordan Wells. Ed graduated from San Rafael High School. In 1942-43 he worked in Alaska and the Yukon Territory as a survey crewman on the Alaska-Canadian Highway.

In WWII Ed served as a Technical Sergeant in the Army 776th Field Artillery Battalion in Europe in 1944-45, and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge, participated in the German surrender and remained in France for a year after the war ended, assisting with reconstruction efforts.

On his return he entered Stanford University, where he was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity, and he met his future wife Alison Dice. They were married in 1949. Ed earned a BS in 1949 in Civil Engineering and an MS in 1950 in Hydraulics. He transferred to UC Berkeley and earned a Degree of Civil Engineer in sanitary engineering in 1952. He worked for Clyde Kennedy Engineers (1952-55) and Stone & Youngberg (1955-64).

In 1964, Ed co-founded Bartle Wells Associates, the first independent municipal financing consulting firm on the West Coast. The firm specialized in financing planning for major regional water and sewer programs. In 1971 he was a principal author of the State Revenue Program Guidelines for federal and state pollution control grants. He was instrumental in the creation of the National Association of Independent Public Finance Advisors. He retired in 1994.

Ed was instrumental in incorporating the town of Portola Valley, in 1964. He served as Town Treasurer for the town's first 13 years, and remained active in civic and Stanford Alumni affairs throughout his life.

Bringing his love of wine back from France, Ed planted one of Portola Valley's first vineyards, and with his family hosted an annual grape stomp to produce Le Pont du Diable Cellier Wells wine. The vineyard still produces Cabernet and Chardonnay grapes, and the motto remains: "There is no bad wine."

Ed loved his family and led them on numerous adventures, including camping and backpacking trips through the Sierra Nevada Mountains, a road and canoe trip to Alaska to retrace his surveying journey of 25 years prior, and extensive travel abroad.

With a deep affinity for being useful, Ed found creative ways to help many people improve their educations, homes and careers. His generosity, impeccable timing telling a story, and ability to engineer a solution to almost any problem will be greatly missed by his family, friends and colleagues.

Ed is survived by his wife of 65 years, Alison Dice Wells; children Ed (Martha), University Park, MD; Donn (Janette), Portland, OR; David (Stephanie), Wilbur, WA; Carolyn, Diamond Springs, CA; Richard, Sonoma, CA; Janet, Berkeley, CA; grandchildren Kelly (Christoph Dankert), El Paso, TX; Jason (Angela), Fremont, CA; Colin Portland, OR; great-grandchildren Mitchell, Charlotte, Jameson, Fremont, CA.

At Mr. Wells' request, there will be no services. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to: Guide Dogs for the Blind (www.guidedogs.com); Peninsula Open Space Trust (www.openspacetrust.org); or the charity of your choice.



The **Almanac**
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LET'S DISCUSS:
Read the latest local news headlines and talk about the issues on Town Square at AlmanacNews.com

Tatum Nicole Jackson

July 11, 2007 – February 26, 2015

Tatum was born seven years ago in Kennewick, WA to her devoted and loving parents, Annette Bonino and Darren Stewart Jackson. She was their miracle baby after many years of wanting to have a child. Being an only child, she was her parents' whole world. Seven happy years were spent watching her grow into a star student, a budding artist, a caring and kind friend, and seeing her dance her way through her tragically short life.

Tatum was a second grader and loved her school, teachers and friends. Tatum enjoyed many activities, including piano and swimming lessons, summer time acting, dancing and art classes, and had an avid love for reading. It is impossible to capture the essence of this bright, shining, little girl in words. She was a gift to all who knew her.

Tatum is survived by her loving parents, Annette and Darren of Kennewick, WA, her grandparents, Pamela and Richard Bonino of Menlo Park, CA and Dorothy Jackson of Fresno, CA, her Aunt Lisa, Uncle Mark and her cousins/brothers Cason and Riggins Mitchell, her Uncle Barry and Aunt Jennifer Jackson, her great grandmothers, Mary Nelson and Doris Bonino and her two cats Nola and BK, who have looked for her every day since she left us.

Rest in peace, our beautiful angel. The love we have for you transcends your passing — you will live forever in our hearts and memories.

Tatum was laid to rest Saturday, March 7th at The Church of the Nativity in Menlo Park, California. There will be a Celebration of Her Life at the Parish of the Holy Spirit in Kennewick, WA on Friday, March 20th at 1:00 p.m.



POLICE CALLS

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

WOODSIDE

Drunken driving and injury to children:

A woman with three grandchildren in her vehicle was driving on Portola Road near Family Farm Road when she left the road, driving onto the shoulder and striking two street signs and some shrubberies. She returned the vehicle to the road, but left it again, this time striking shrubbery and trees and putting the vehicle into a roll. The vehicle came to rest on its wheels on the road shoulder. Deputies determined that the collision was the result of driving under the influence of alcohol. Medics took all four occupants to Stanford Hospital with injuries. Feb. 28.

Thefts:

■ A small wooden jewelry box was stolen from a residence on Stadler Drive while the resident was in the process of moving. Estimated loss: \$2,600. Feb. 26.

■ The owner of a vehicle parked on Farm Road discovered a woman in the act of stealing things from the vehicle. When confronted by the owner, the woman dropped the items and fled in a vehicle driven by an accomplice. March 1.

LADERA

Residential burglary: A burglar entered a home on La Mesa Drive through an unlocked rear bedroom window, ransacked the house and stole watches, bracelets, camera equipment, personal items and a small safe. Estimated loss: \$20,000. Feb. 23.

NORTH FAIR OAKS

Discharging firearm from vehicle: The occupants of a green Dodge or Chrysler minivan fired eight shots into the air as they passed the 800 block of Warrington Avenue. Deputies located eight .45 caliber shell casings. There were no injuries. Feb. 25.

Commercial burglary: Someone pried open the front door of Christina's Deli and Market at 2701 El Camino Real, but took nothing. No estimate on losses. Feb. 23.

Auto burglary: A vehicle parked on MacArthur Avenue was found damaged and with items stolen from inside. Estimated loss: \$2,030. Feb. 27.

WEST MENLO PARK

Residential burglary: A resident of Orange Avenue noticed a broken window in a door into his garage, then saw further indications that someone had tried to break in through the laundry room. The resident inspected the property with deputies and noticed that a bike had been stolen. Estimated loss: \$750. Feb. 24.

MENLO PARK

Residential burglary: In an incident in the 100 block of Alma Street, someone opened an unlocked vehicle in a parking garage but took nothing, went upstairs to an unlocked third-floor laundry room and stole two jackets and a box of sewing items, then left those items on other floors of the building. They were recovered. March 4.

Commercial burglaries:

■ A man entered Draeger's Supermarket on University Drive with an empty wine box on the lower shelf of his shopping cart. He loaded the box with 12 bottles of wine, paid for several other inexpensive items, and left with the wine but without having paid for it. Estimated loss: \$1,400. March 3.

■ Employees at Safeway supermarket at 525 El Camino Real saw a man they recognized from a previous attempt at theft putting items into a backpack that was sitting in a shopping cart. They contacted police. Meanwhile, the man noticed he was being followed, unloaded the backpack into the cart, and left with the empty backpack. No losses. March 2.

Thefts:

■ Someone stole an unlocked bicycle from the public library on Alma Street. Estimated loss: \$250. March 4.

■ A locked bicycle was stolen from an exterior stairwell of an apartment building on Mills Street. Estimated loss: \$250. Feb. 28.

■ A resident of Crane Street who had had her purse stolen told police that a man called her saying that he had her purse and wanted to return it. She did not meet with the man and let the police handle it. Estimated loss: \$125. March 2.

Vandalism: Someone drove "recklessly" on the lawn at Nealon Park and damaged it. March 2.

Six candidates for high school board

Six people have applied for an interim position on the board of the Sequoia Union High School District, according to district Superintendent Jim Lianides.

Candidate interviews will be done in open session before the public at a special board meeting at 5:30

p.m. Wednesday, March 11.

The five-member board has had a vacancy since longtime member Olivia Martinez retired earlier this month. Her term expires in December 2015.

With six candidates to be interviewed on one night, followed by a board discussion and as many votes as

are needed to choose a new member, the board agreed to limit the interviews to 30 minutes each.

The board meets at the district office at 480 James Ave. in Redwood City.

Go to tinyurl.com/seq310 (Almanac website) for more information on the candidates.

Robert E. Somers

July 9, 1916 – February 24, 2015

Robert (Bob) Somers died peacefully at home, surrounded by his loved ones. He was 98. His gentleness and wisdom will be deeply missed by everyone. His family is forever grateful for the way he blazed such a fine trail for all of us to follow. Bob was born in Kansas on the farm his grandfather homesteaded. He was the second of seven children to Charles and Anna Somers, who were wheat farmers. Bob attended Cowley College in Arkansas City, Kansas, then, literally, took to the air. As a young man, he discovered aviation and went on to train pilots and fly clipper ships. Bob was also a glider pilot and taught glider flying during WWII. In 1943, he was hired by Pan American World Airways, his life-long career.



Bob married the love of his life, Jean Templeton, in Palo Alto, and they had four children he was proud of. Before reaching the mandatory retirement age of 60, Bob picked the longest trip Pan Am had to offer: "Flight One: Around the World," which he flew as captain of the Boeing 747. Jean went, too.

The couple was among the first to move to Ladera, a community behind Stanford University. Here, they raised their four children. He was a co-founder of Ladera Oaks Swim and Tennis Club, where he spent many days between flying. Bob was full of stories, from his boyhood adventures on the Kansas farm to journeys in remote corners of the globe.

A year after his retirement from Pan Am, Bob went to work for the Aviation Safety Reporting System (ASRS), a NASA program, and joined General Doolittle's Quiet Birdmen. He and Jean moved in 1981 to Aptos, California, in a house their son-in-law built, and where they have lived ever since. He retired to play golf and enjoy his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and the kids next door, Nima and Nava and their mother Azi. One of the highlights of his life was introducing his grandchildren and great grandchildren to his Pinecrest summer cabin.

Bob is survived by his wife of 68 years, Jean Templeton Somers, his daughter Robin Somers (Schirmer), his son Michael Somers, his daughter Marti Somers Kulikov and his son Richard Somers; his grandchildren Jennifer Templeton Dunn and Joe Schirmer, his step-granddaughter Olivia Erwin; his sisters Mary Hohenberger and Eleanor Ciskowski both of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and his brother Chuck Somers of San Diego. And his five great-grandchildren, Alex, Colin, Charlie, Calvin "Chaco," and Pearl.

Bob said everyone has to take that final journey into the west. His was a very good last flight. A memorial service was held in the chapel at the Resurrection Catholic Community Church in Aptos on Friday, March 6 at 10 a.m.

PAID OBITUARY

Thomas D. Sege

May 17, 1926 - March 3, 2015

Thomas ("Tom") D. Sege passed away peacefully at his home in Woodside, California, surrounded by his loving family and caretaker on March 3, 2015, at the age of 88, due to complications from Alzheimer's.

Born on May 17, 1926, in Novi Sad, former Yugoslavia (now Serbia), he lived the majority of his life in Los Altos Hills and Woodside, CA.

Tom, his parents Aladar and Shari and brother George fled Yugoslavia via Cuba to the U.S. during the Second World War when he was 12 years old, and he spent the remainder of his youth in New York City.

He graduated from Columbia University with a bachelor's and a master's degree in engineering, married Alice Sege and started work at Sperry Gyroscope on Long Island.

In 1963, Tom and Alice moved to Los Altos Hills, where Tom became general manager of Eitel-McCollough, or EIMAC, a pioneer in vacuum tube manufacture in Silicon Valley.

EIMAC later merged with Varian Associates, where Tom rose through the ranks to become CEO between 1981 and 1990. Under Tom's leadership, Varian grew to more than \$1B in revenues per year.

During his career, Tom pioneered in many areas of radio transmitting tube technology, including the high-powered klystron tube used in radar and television and radio transmission.

Tom and Alice divorced in 1976 after a long marriage. They raised two children, Kathleen and Ronald. Tom married Dorothea in 1982 and eventually moved to Woodside, where he lived for more than 25 years.

Tom was kind, loving, generous and devoted to family and friends. He was a father figure to many in his life.

He was an avid reader of fiction and nonfiction, a passionate gardener, a lover of travel and an experience-seeker. He was a punster, a poet, a jokester and a philosopher.

He loved to play chess, bridge and Scrabble. Tom spoke multiple languages including Hungarian, German, French and English.

He was devoted to his children and his grandchildren and is survived by daughter Kathleen McNamara and son Ronald Sege, daughter-in-law Gina Sege, grandchildren Scott McNamara and Christopher, Jonathan, Georgia and Alex Sege.

Tom battled advancing Alzheimer's for the last 12+ years of his life, but never lost his indomitable spirit and good humor. He received meticulous and loving care for those 12 years from his long-time live-in caretaker Margaret ("Kalo") Naufahu and her family throughout this difficult period.

Tom will be dearly missed by all. Donations may be made in Tom's name to the Alzheimer's Association. http://www.alz.org/join_the_cause_donate.asp

A tribute to the life of Thomas D. Sege will be offered Sunday, March 8, 2015, from noon to 1:30 pm at Crippen & Flynn Woodside Chapel in Redwood City, with private interment to follow.

Donations may be made in Tom's name to the Alzheimer's Association. http://www.alz.org/join_the_cause_donate.asp

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Published every Wednesday at
**3525 Alameda De Las Pulgas,
Menlo Park, CA 94025**

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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?

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223-6528.

Residents rightfully miffed over roadside spraying

To spray or not to spray? That is a question — but certainly not the only one — residents of unincorporated San Mateo County have been doggedly asking Caltrans, which has decided to spray herbicides along 12-plus miles of Highway 84 west of Skyline Boulevard this month. Another equally important question is: Are Caltrans decision-makers showing respect for and good faith toward residents who oppose chemical weed-control and were assured by the agency that they would be given advance notice of future spraying?

In spite of the promise to notify, it appears that Caltrans has sprayed the area at least twice — two months ago and in January 2014 — without alerting residents, and many residents are justifiably upset. Some of them have been fighting the practice since at least 2006, including Patty Mayall, who lives near La Honda and was a key advocate of the ban on roadside herbicide spraying passed by the Board of Supervisors in 2012. “They’re not giving anybody any choice of their public exposure to a toxic chemical,” Ms. Mayall told the Almanac last month.

The county ban applies to its own public works department, not to Caltrans, and the state agency warned residents after the supervisors’ action three years ago that it would continue the practice under certain circumstances, including in matters of roadway

safety and potential fire danger. Why Caltrans is not following through on its commitment to let residents know beforehand is baffling, and unacceptable. Advance notice allows residents to post “No spray” signs on their own property, to keep their pets indoors, and to avoid walking or bicycling along a roadway where toxic fumes may be lingering. As Ms. Mayall said last year after finding out about the unnoticed spraying, “... how can people opt out from having their property sprayed when they don’t know the spraying is taking place?”

The question of whether spraying herbicide, rather than mowing, is the only effective method of controlling weeds along rural roadsides is an important one that should be pursued, but meanwhile, Caltrans should be clear about why it continues the practice in this county when it finds alternative strategies in other counties that have banned spraying.

When they passed the spraying ban in 2012, the supervisors agreed with residents pushing for it that the chemicals put people, wildlife and the watershed at risk. In addition to living up to its commitment to notify residents if it continues to spray, Caltrans should also explain why the perceived need to use toxic chemicals in the public space should outweigh public health concerns. ■

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

LETTERS

Our readers write

Oversight needed for stadium construction

Editor:

The silent majority in the town of Atherton is aghast at how our natural park environment in Holbrook-Palmer Park is being destroyed with the completion of the Menlo-Atherton Little League stadium. The controversy over the council’s 3-2 approval two years ago to accept the MALL plans and construction of the “bleachers/stadium” in Holbrook-Palmer Park continues. At that time there were three council members who ignored the Planning Commission, without sharing in public what contravening evidence they relied on; their action continues to be inconsistent with the pride they regularly express in the outreach being taken on other matters.

However, continuing to “cry over spilled milk” won’t rectify this; the stadium drastically impacts the historical natural setting of the park that a large majority of our residents love and take pride in. Now is the time for either the council’s personal oversight or a delegation of the Parks and Recreation Committee to oversee/direct the

A response to the turmoil at Filoli

By Rod Boucher

In response to the turmoil over the recent rollout of Filoli’s new volunteer agreement, Heidi Brown, president of the Friends of Filoli, has stated in an Almanac article: “We figure that at least a hundred pair of eyes have seen this document.”

There may have been a hundred pair of eyes that have seen the document, but clearly not one pair of those eyes has “seen” the problems with the document. On the other hand, some 800 volunteers, well over half of the volunteer workforce, did “see” and immediately made their concerns known. They asked questions; wanted clarification; offered suggestions. Would this not alone have been enough to alert all those hundred pair of eyes that there were issues with what was written?

According to Heidi Brown, there were too many questions to answer: Ms. Brown said she and Executive Director Cynthia D’Agosta tried to answer volunteers’ questions, but there were too many of them. “We’d have to have a staff working to answer every single question,” she said.

Is not a free work force of 1,300 people worth the effort? How is a comment like that supposed to make the volunteers feel?

Those who refused to sign the volunteer agreement saw two major problems with the agreement. One was with the content, the other was with the tone.

The content puts all the risk and liability on the shoulders of the volunteer while Filoli, by omitting in the agreement a written declaration of how it will protect the volunteer, bears none.

One of the most egregious items, the Release and Indemnification clause, has been temporarily removed as the volunteers have, for the moment, been given the opportunity to cross it out; but other issues remain.

Answers to the remaining concerns are still not forthcoming: not by the executive director, the governing board, or the Friends of Filoli. Due diligence on the issue has not been provided by any of the above nor by the National Trust for that matter. Are lack of transparency, refusal to dialogue, and inability to be accountable the going trends of the 21st century?

Not only can they not “see,” neither can they “hear.” The second problem has had to do with the tone of the volunteer agreement. There is nothing in the document itself nor in the way it has been presented that speaks to any respect, regard, or appreciation held for the phenomenal workforce Filoli has in its corps of volunteers. It was cold, harsh, and without grace.

The fact that the administration refuses to give complete and thoughtful answers to the concerns expressed, the fact that they care so little for the volunteers that they are incapable of offering a sincere apology for what has transpired, only confirms that the volunteers are not worth their time.

Bringing Filoli into the 21st century has resulted in leaving her soul in the past.

Rod Boucher has been a volunteer docent at Filoli for three years and has been a mentor in the nature education training class for the past two years.



Continued on next page

Finally a new El Camino hotel —but there's a catch

By Stu Soffer

Pollock Financial proposes building a boutique hotel on a now vacant lot on El Camino. Pollock Financial has a strong history in Menlo Park of providing good projects, and I consider Jeff Pollock an approachable, good guy. This is a welcome project not only for how this fits into the vision for the downtown specific plan (DSP) at long last, but also since hotels passively generate city revenue in the form of a transient occupancy tax, or TOT.

The applicant asks the City Council to consider rebating a portion of the TOT to project investors. (See menlopark.org/DocumentCenter/View/6550.)

Unfortunately, the applicant muddies the waters on a gullible staff and council to subsidize investors by returning (dare I say an above-the-table kick) a percentage of the TOT for a period of time.

This request gives new meaning to the phrase "public benefit." Usually it's defined as a benefit that is dedicated to the public — not from the public to the investors. (I'll note that this lot was not vacant or economically fallow while the downtown plan was discussed and approved, so arguments that this project removes blight won't work.)

There are several problems with this idea, including:



GUEST OPINION

Menlo Park resident **Stu Soffer** is an Almanac blogger. You can read more of his commentary by going to AlmanacNews.com and clicking on "Blogs" in the menu bar.

■ **Existing incentives:** There is already plenty of incentive provided by the DSP, including a density bonus, which provide additional hotels rooms for lease, and a reduction in the parking requirement.

■ **Precedent:** Once you start rebating taxes, every (similar) project will want the same. Stanford Park Hotel didn't need it; the Rosewood didn't need it; the Marriott Residence Inn didn't need it.

Another developer mentioned to me that he was planning another boutique hotel a couple of blocks from this site. If staff knows about this possibility and hasn't informed the council, you have a problem.

By what established criteria will the requests for tax rebates can be judged? The council will be hard-pressed to come up with a reason why another hotel project would not be entitled to the same pass-back, setting us up for future a legal challenge.

To be fair, the Four Seasons Hotel in East Palo Alto asked for and received a

10-year rebate of that city's TOT to the developers. That was at a different time, when Whisky Gulch was rife with various issues. I suspect that in retrospect East Palo Alto regrets having made the hotel deal that way.

■ **Law:** The TOT is statutory. There is no requirement, and none anticipated when it was enacted, to siphon off the tax. If we do, perhaps we could rebate the utility user's tax to residents at the same time.

■ **Fiscal responsibility — We are not the Bank of Menlo Park:** The project proposal says: "... in order to raise the capital investment necessary to purchase the site we need to ensure a level of profitability for our primary institutional investor. The sellers of the site have given us until March 18, 2015, to provide non-refundable payment. In order to do that we are requesting feedback from the City Council regarding their openness to sharing TOT revenue for a limited period in order to ensure the necessary return to our primary institutional investor."

The deadline response placed the city in a difficult position of providing a guarantee without vetting any business plan.

Also: "... Our high profile institutional investors will not invest in the project unless the hotel can achieve enough

Net Operating Income (NOI) to meet their return parameters, and without their financing we will have to let the property go."

The city should not be in the business of guaranteeing investors' return in private projects. The names of the investors should be made public for transparency of any conflicts. The contractual rate of return to the investors should be made public.

Two years ago, Menlo Park voters passed Measure K, which increased the hotel TOT from 10 percent to 12 percent. If the city had felt that it was flush, it shouldn't have gone to the voters.

And we know from past experience that just because the city feels flush today, it doesn't mean that it will be next year, or in two years, or later. The city would be obligated to pay regardless of the city's budgetary needs.

The staff and council should be wise to the ways of the world. I don't buy the suggestion that the project won't be built without the city's subsidizing private investors' return. Come on. It would never have come this far without assumptions that the project penciled out otherwise — that some people telegraphed their predisposition before it came before the public.

In this and other decisions, the council should be able to say "no" when "no" needs to be said.

LETTERS

Our readers write

Continued from previous page

finishing touches.

Great care should now be taken with regard to the paint and varnish used to finish the project. The roofing materials and color of the roof should also be carefully chosen. This should not be left to the Little League's discretion; they out of pride in having gotten what they want might finish the project in a commercial and flashy fashion. The goal the council should have is to camouflage to the extent possible the structure so that it blends in to the natural environment of Holbrook-Palmer Park. (Shades of green come to mind.)

Now is the time to lessen the possibility that, when the project is completed, residents will conclude that the three council members erred drastically when they pushed the project ahead. They can now help to make the stadium less obtrusive, and that should be done. Residents who continue to believe the park was never meant to be the center of young boys' baseball in southern San Mateo County should let our council members know how they feel.

Walter Sleeth
Lindenwood Area, Atherton



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**TOWN OF WOODSIDE
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WOODSIDE, CA 94062**

**PLANNING COMMISSION
March 18, 2015
6:00 PM**

PUBLIC HEARING

2. Kalaf Properties, Inc. ASRB2014-0080
17287 Skyline Boulevard Planner: Sage Schaan, Senior Planner

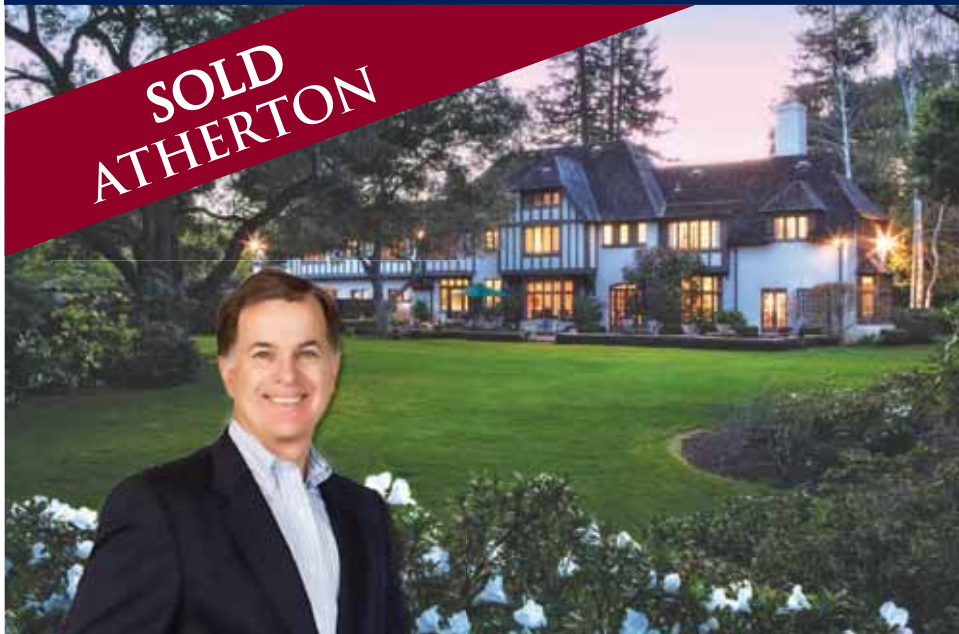
Presentation and consideration of a proposal to demolish an existing service station/garage; construct a new service station building in a similar location; and install a hydrogen fueling dispenser, a fenced yard with the hydrogen supply, and storage and compression equipment that is required to support dispenser operation. The project would utilize the existing septic system that serves the property, which is located on the adjacent parcel to the west (APN 075-103-050). The ASRB will provide a Conceptual Design Review of the project on March 16, 2015. The Planning Commission shall make a Use Determination to decide if the proposed Hydrogen Fueling station use is substantially consistent with the Town's definition of "Service Station."

3. Menlo Country Club CUSE2014-0058
2300 Woodside Road Jackie Young, AICP, Planning Director

Review and approval, conditional approval, or denial of the proposed formal recognition of the Nursery and Maintenance Area adjacent to the Golf Course, and a 6 foot wood and wire fencing and landscaping to screen the maintenance yard.

All application materials are available for public review at the Woodside Planning and Building Counter, Woodside Town Hall, weekdays from 8:00 – 10:00 AM and 1:00 – 3:00 PM, or by appointment. For more information, contact the Woodside Planning and Building Department at (650) 851-6790.

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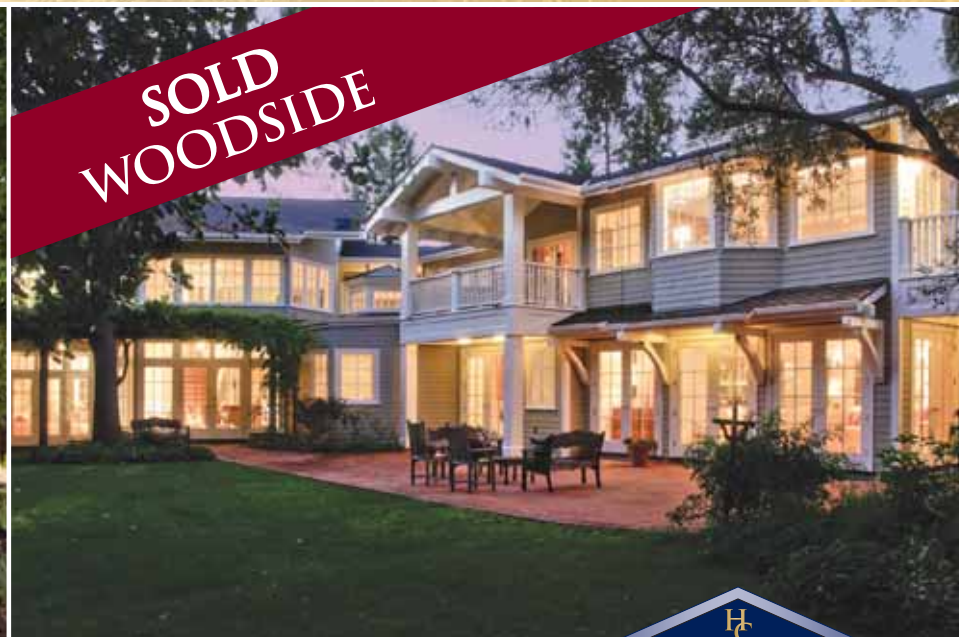


My 2014 Real Estate Review, summarizing the sales statistics for Atherton, Menlo Park, Portola Valley, and Woodside, is now available. This comprehensive report is an invaluable tool if you are considering buying or selling your home. Please contact me to receive a copy or to discuss any real estate questions you may have.

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