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**Spring Home + Garden Design**

# The Almanac

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

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## facebook moves in

The Gehry campus changes  
more than its name

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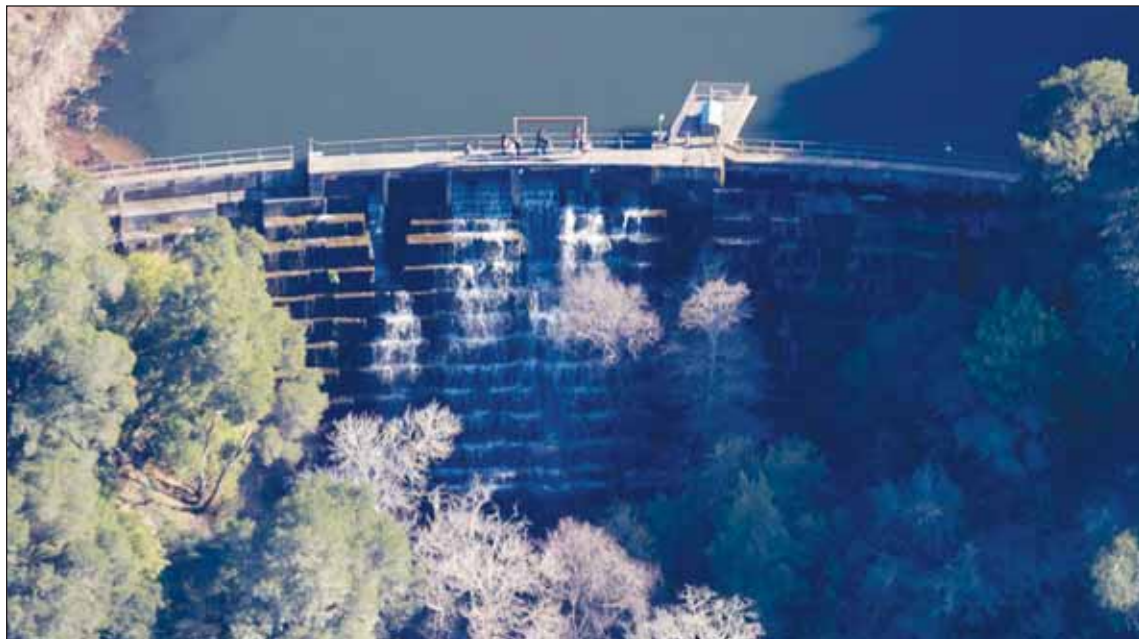


Photo by Matt Stoecker, Beyond Searsville Dam

**Aerial view** of Searsville Dam in the Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve on Stanford land.

## Water board supports dam removal

By **Barbara Wood**  
Almanac Staff Writer

The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board has sent Stanford University a letter saying the agency supports “alternatives that focus on dam removal” as the university moves toward a decision on what to do with Searsville Dam and its reservoir.

The dam is located off Sand Hill Road west of Interstate 280, in the Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve on Stanford land.

The letter, dated March 30, is signed by Bruce Wolfe, executive officer of the water board, which is a state agency.

“We have been, and continue to be, supportive of alternatives that focus on dam removal,” the letter says. The dam “remains a complete barrier to steelhead migration, greatly reducing the amount of habitat that is accessible, and placing this steelhead population at much greater risk of extinction,” it says.

The dam was built between 1888 and 1892 by the Spring Valley Water Company, and was meant to supply water to San Francisco, but accounts say the water was foul-tasting and was never used as drinking water.

Stanford acquired the dam and reservoir in 1919.

In 2013 Stanford announced it

**The dam ‘remains a complete barrier to steelhead migration.’**

SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD

was studying the fate of the dam because the reservoir is more than 90 percent filled with silt and could be completely dried up in another 20 years.

Among the options being studied are removing the dam, restoring the reservoir through dredging, allowing the reservoir to completely fill in, partially excavating the reservoir, or diverting water to another area such as Felt Lake.

Stanford now uses water diverted by the dam, when water is available, mostly for irrigation.

Stanford has not announced a decision on the fate of Searsville Dam, but said it would by the end of 2014.

In the meantime, environmental groups have sued the university, saying the dam and water diversions by Stanford are threatening endangered species, including steelhead trout and the red-legged frog.

Last year the American Rivers foundation named San Francisco Creek the fifth most endangered river in the county

because of Searsville Dam.

“Stanford University’s 65-foot Searsville Dam blocks threatened steelhead from reaching 20 miles of habitat upstream, impairs water quality, and poses flooding risks for local communities,” the organization said.

The organization, Beyond Searsville Dam, has been fighting for the dam’s removal for years. Matt Stoecker, director of the group, and one of the producers of the documentary “Damnation,” which is about dam removal, said the letter from the water board is “a powerful message supporting the removal of Searsville Dam, while also questioning the feasibility of other potential alternative futures for the dam.”

The letter also stresses, Mr. Stoecker said, “the importance of safely restoring the flow of beneficial sediment downstream for the health of San Francisco Creek and to improve the resiliency of listed wildlife, San Francisco Bay wetlands and coastal communities facing the adverse impacts of climate change and sea level rise.”

The letter was addressed to Jean McCown, director of community relations at Stanford and co-chair of the committee looking at alternatives for the dam. Ms. McCown did not respond to a request for comment on the letter. ■

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# Local News

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## Facebook's new Gehry campus changes more than its name

By Sandy Brundage  
Almanac Staff Writer

It's no longer "the Gehry building" — Facebook's newest Menlo Park office has been dubbed "MPK20" as employees start moving in this week. This is building number 20 in Menlo Park (MPK).

Designed by world-renowned architect Frank Gehry, the single-floor, one room 433,555-square-foot west campus building sits at 1 Facebook Way (formerly a portion of Constitution Drive), across the street from the main east campus.

A pedestrian-bike tunnel runs underneath the Bayfront Expressway to connect the two campuses, and is also now open for business, according to the social media company.

"Our goal was to create the perfect engineering space for our teams to work together," CEO Mark Zuckerberg posted on his Facebook page. "We wanted our space to create the same sense of community and connection among our teams that we try to enable with our services across the world"

To do this, he said, "we designed the largest open floor plan in the world — a single room that fits thousands of people. There are lots of small spaces where people can work together, and it's easy for people to move around and collaborate with anyone here."

Construction of the west campus started in September 2014 and was done to meet LEED Gold environmental standards, according to Facebook. Design features include an insulated roof to reduce heating and cooling costs, and etched windows to deter birds from crashing into the panes.

The building, which is on stilts with parking underneath, is expected to eventually hold 2,800 engineers, but they won't all arrive at once. "It will take us some time to grow into the space," Facebook sources said.

It's also not done: "The building itself is pretty simple and isn't fancy," Mr. Zuckerberg wrote. "That's on purpose. We want our space to feel like a work

### Social media company's expansion shapes future of Menlo Park's industrial district.

in progress. When you enter our buildings, we want you to feel how much left there is to be done in our mission to connect the world."

The outside looks fancier than the inside: The rooftop was turned into a 9-acre garden complete with a half-mile walking trail, outdoor work spaces and 400 trees, according to Facebook.

Right now, Cafe Full Circle is providing sustenance on the new campus. Eventually MPK20 will feature a St. Frank Coffee, an offshoot of the San Francisco-based company, on the roof, along with a juice bar, and a grilled cheese and potato bar. A Singaporean cafe with noodles and a chicken BBQ eatery will round out the offerings.†

Mr. Gehry described the building as a "remarkably human environment," and said he was very proud of how the collaborative project turned out. "It is not a grand design statement and it has a toughness and a rawness that reminds me of the work I was doing in the early part of my career," he said in a written statement.

### Real estate portfolio

The property for the west campus was far from Facebook's last acquisition in Menlo Park: The company bought a 59-acre property in 2014 from TE Connectivity on Constitution Drive near the corner of Chilco Street and the Bayfront Expressway, and then in February of this year, picked up the 56-acre Prologis site, located on Willow Road just south of the Bayshore Expressway.

Mr. Gehry is also designing the TE Connectivity site, although Facebook is starting small with that property — currently it's converting one of nine buildings on the site from a 185,000-square-foot warehouse to a general office building with



Matt Harnack/Facebook

An aerial view, shot from a drone, of Facebook's new west campus in Menlo Park.

amenities that may include a cafe and fitness center.

What will appear on the Prologis property remains to be seen, although Facebook representatives tried to make clear that the vision doesn't include 8-story buildings after Belle Haven residents expressed concern during the city's discussion of the zoning update underway for the M2 industrial district, which encompasses Facebook's Menlo Park campuses.

Representatives of PlaceWorks, the consultant facilitating the zoning changes, said that depictions of 8-story buildings in preliminary studies were meant only to illustrate what that height would look like.

Employee housing remains a key focus for Facebook. During an M2 study session on March 31, the consultant estimated that 4,500 units of new housing will be built within the district, with 1,500 units slated for employee and intern housing on Facebook's east campus, and 2,000 units on Willow Road and 1,000 along Jefferson Drive for the



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

A look at the exterior of the new Facebook building, known as MPK20 (since it's building number 20 in Menlo Park). Another view is on the cover, also photographed by Michelle Le.

broader population.

Then there's Anton Menlo, a joint endeavor between developer St. Anton Partners and Facebook to build a 394-unit apartment complex at 3639 Haven Ave. Situated on 10 acres off Marsh Road, plans for the \$120 million complex include a con-

venience store, pub, bike repair shop and dog daycare.

The complex includes 37 affordable housing units, 15 subsidized by Facebook. Construction permits were issued on March 2 and building should finish by mid-2016, according to the city. ■

# Facebook proposes to build two more office buildings

■ Company may build 200-room hotel on Chilco Street in Menlo Park.

By **Sandy Brundage**  
Almanac Staff Writer

Facebook's real estate dealings are a constant feature of news headlines of late. Fresh off the opening of the Gehry building in Menlo Park, also known as the "west campus" and "MPK20" and "that cool

building at 1 Facebook Way," the social media company has now submitted a proposal for the 59 acres it bought from TE Connectivity in 2014.

Located on Constitution Drive near the corner of Chilco Street and Bayfront Expressway, the redeveloped site would have

985,719 square feet of office space in two new buildings, for a net increase of 149,881 square feet; public open space; and a pedestrian-bike bridge over the Bayfront Expressway, under the current proposal.

Facebook is also considering construction of a 200-room, 120,000-square-foot hotel at the corner of Chilco Street and the Bayfront Expressway, according to the city on April 4.

Gehry Partners, the firm founded by world-famous architect Frank Gehry, is also designing this campus, which is expected to resemble MPK20 in look and feel.

Redevelopment of the TE site has already started. Facebook received a permit in December to convert a 185,000-square-foot warehouse and distribution building on the site to an office building with employee amenities

such as a cafe and fitness center. Construction would be done in phases. The next step in the process is an environmental impact review.

Menlo Park will also have some negotiating to do, as Facebook will need to provide affordable housing in exchange for development permits, whether by paying in-lieu fees, building units or some combination of the two. ■

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## Menlo Park extends M2 zoning timeline

By **Sandy Brundage**  
Almanac Staff Writer

After a lengthy discussion on March 31, the Menlo Park City Council opted to take a 60-day timeout before pressing forward with the next steps in the long process of updating the zoning rules for what can be built in the city's M2 industrial district. The council and the Planning Commission, which held a joint study session on the topic, want to use that time to talk further with community members about what's happening.

"This all happened so quickly here ... that I don't think people have had the time to digest it," said Councilman Ray Mueller, referring to new information that had arrived during the past month. Mayor Catherine Carlton agreed.

Some of that new information involved Facebook's expanding portfolio of real estate in the M2 district, the area roughly bordered by the San Francisco Bay, University Avenue, U.S. 101 and Marsh Road. The area has recently seen and will continue to see a development surge, thanks to Facebook as well as the upcoming construction of Menlo Gateway and various new housing complexes.

The zoning update is part of the city's revision to its general plan, the overall "constitution" for development within Menlo Park.

The usual questions are being asked: How high should the buildings go? What about traffic and school impacts associated with the expected 4,500 new housing units? Should necessities such as grocery stores count as public benefits?

Community reaction indicated that the answers require further discussion before the city starts planning the fiscal and environmental impact reports (EIR).

One source of consternation involved language, with council members and planning commissioners pointing out that while

"preferred land use alternative" may be a phrase commonly used in environmental studies, which analyze the maximum development allowed by proposed changes to zoning regulations, it falsely implies that maximum development is preferred.

"If people think that those maximums don't fit their community, how do you respond to why we're even considering those for this EIR?" asked Commissioner Drew Combs.

One maximum in particular — the exploration of eight-story buildings on Facebook's 56-acre Prologis property, located on Willow Road just south of the Bayshore Expressway — served as a lightning rod for residents of the nearby Belle Haven neighborhood, with some commenting before the study session that such heights would be inappropriate.

Representatives of PlaceWorks, the consultant overseeing the zoning change process, said that depictions of 8-story buildings were meant only to illustrate what that would look like.

Council members Ray Mueller and Peter Ohtaki, who are serving on the general plan advisory committee, wrote in an email to the city that a conversation with Facebook representatives on Wednesday, April 1, clarified that the social media company does not want to build 8-story buildings on the Prologis site.

Facebook, which bought the property in February, said it's in the early stages of figuring out what to do with the site. It doesn't expect to increase the office density, according to the council members.

"Lastly, Facebook stated their support for the recommendation to take more time for study, education and outreach in connection with the Connect Menlo process," the council members wrote.

Go to [tinyurl.com/n4cbj7u](http://tinyurl.com/n4cbj7u) to view the ConnectMenlo page on the city's website for updates. ■

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# Governor's water conservation orders could hit hard locally

By **Dave Boyce**  
Almanac Staff Writer

**G**ov. Jerry Brown's new order to reduce water consumption by 25 percent could have an unusually high impact on local households.

In his order, the governor told water regulating authorities that service areas with greater per capita use should "achieve proportionally greater reductions than those with low use."

In 2013, the Bay Area averaged 79 gallons of water per person per day, according to the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency. But Portola Valley's average in 2013 was 305 gallons per person per day and Woodside's was 421 gallons, according to data from the California Water Service Company.

Cal Water, a private company with headquarters in San Jose, supplies water to many cities and towns, including Portola Valley, Woodside, Atherton and parts of Menlo Park.

In Menlo Park, in neighborhoods served by the city's water agency, usage was 88.5 gallons per person per day for 2013, and usage dropped to 78 gallons per person for 2014, according to Pam Lowe, a civil engineer for the Menlo Park Municipal Water District.

The 2013 numbers for Woodside and Portola Valley are the latest available and no numbers are available for Atherton. Cal Water releases usage data only if a town official requests it, which officials in Woodside and Portola Valley did for 2013.

The Almanac obtained additional data on Woodside's Cal Water customers. Between 450 and 500 single-family households used more than 75,000 gallons of water per month from June to August of 2013. That number jumped to nearly 600 households in September and remained high until December.

The data showed 17 percent of Woodside households used more than 67,500 gallons per month in 2013.

## Getting specific

The governor's order requires golf courses, cemeteries and campuses to immediately reduce potable water use by 25 percent. The Department of Water Resources, acting with local agencies, must lead a statewide effort to replace 50 million square feet of lawn and ornamental landscaping with drought-tolerant alternatives.

But while the governor has set a state-wide use reduction

target, his order does not say how the reductions will be allocated by water suppliers, water districts, and users.

The implementation plan will come from the state's Water Resources Control Board, which regulates public water agencies, and the California Public Utilities Commission, which regulates private water companies. The governor directs the water board to act, but requests that the utilities commission follows suit.

"The million dollar question is what's going to happen as a result of the governor's proclamation," said Cal Water spokesperson Dawn Smithson, referring to the implementation specifics. "All your questions are pretty much my questions, too," she told the Almanac. Some water systems may have to cut back by more than 25 percent, she said.

## Woodside's per capita water use was more than five times the Bay Area average in 2013.

There is local attention being paid. The Portola Valley Town Council will discuss the governor's order at its April 8 meeting. In Menlo Park, the City Council is expected to talk about it in May, and the Woodside Town Council may also, Woodside Town Manager Kevin Bryant said.

Will Woodside be asking for 2014 usage data? Mr. Bryant said he didn't think so. "(The big users) know who they are. People are very protective of their privacy," he said. "At this point, I don't see that it's something that we need to do our job."

Heavy users represent the best potential for reduction, he said, adding that he is more interested in a cooperative effort with Cal Water. "They know their customers and what it would take for them to reduce."

Portola Valley's Water Conservation Committee met with Cal Water recently and is preparing requests for data, Town Manager Nick Pegueros said. He will be going over the list with Brandi de Garmeaux, the town's sustainability and special projects manager, before submitting it to Cal Water, he said.

Menlo Park's water district implemented several restrictions in 2014: Potable water cannot be used to wash down driveways or sidewalks absent a health or safety concern, nor can it be used for irrigation if it runs off onto

non-irrigated areas. Ornamental fountains must use re-circulated or recycled water. Hoses must have shut-off valves when washing vehicles. Restaurants and other food service operations can serve water to customers, but only upon request.

The Atherton City Council adopted a water-efficiency ordinance for new landscaping in 2010. The ordinance regulates plantings on steeper slopes, the use of mulch, smart irrigation systems, irrigation hours, fountain water, and the use of native or low- or no-water plants.

Holbrook-Palmer Park, the town's major public user of water, is irrigated with well water unsuitable for drinking, said Public Works Superintendent Steven Tyler. As for household reductions, Atherton will be taking its lead from Cal Water, City Manager George Rodericks said.

Towns don't control water use, but can impose regulations that have the effect of reducing water use, such as adding conditions to building permits and conditional use permits — water-efficient landscaping, for example.

The governor is requiring that new homes and buildings employ drip or micro-spray irrigation technology when using potable water. A related requirement prohibits irrigating "ornamental turf" on median strips on public streets with potable water. Plans for private lawns may come under local scrutiny.

The governor is ordering the 25 percent reductions based on 2013 usage. Conscientious residents have been conserving for years. Can they cut further? "This has always been a concern," Ms. Smithson of Cal Water said. It's not clear how finely tuned the rules will be. Cal Water's website will be a resource, she said. ■

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



### Buyer Fatigue?

**Dear Monica. My property is in a popular area and I thought I would get several offers for it last week. But I was surprised that I only got one offer, which was very good but nonetheless not the experience I expected. Is the market changing? James P.**

Dear James. No, the market isn't changing but it may be taking a short breather for a few reasons. First many schools are on vacation and families are away. Second, there are religious holidays happening this week which many people are taking

time to observe. It is also tax season and many are busy preparing returns and expecting to pay both property and income taxes.

And lastly, many buyers are hoping and expecting more inventory to come on the market, which usually happens in April. Sellers will have more competition but this will be good for buyers. With interest rates still low, buyers are not leaving the market, although some have been priced out of it. We should expect a good real estate season until summer at least.

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

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# Kepler's aims to start national conversation

■ Menlo Park bookstore will host a new live talk radio show.

By **Sandy Brundage**  
Almanac Staff Writer

Kepler's bookstore in Menlo Park is known throughout the Bay Area for provoking discussion on the issues and writers of the day, as it has ever since its inception just prior to the turbulent 1960s. Now the team wants to hold those discussions on a national level, and is looking to a new live talk radio show to get the message out.

Starting on Wednesday, April 8, well-known radio journalist Angie Coiro will host "In Deep," a two-hour talk show recorded live at Kepler's. The first hour will be dedicated to current

issues and the second spent on arts and culture.

"I think it'll be fabulous. There's just nothing like the live energy, the wildcard element of a whole bunch of brains sitting down with you," Ms. Coiro said.

In its live debut, the show will tackle the aftermath of the verdict in the Ellen Pao gender discrimination lawsuit.

"I was disappointed for her sake, and some of the comments ... people pulled out the slut card, which was so predictable and so sad," Ms. Coiro said. "But almost immediately you heard women chiming in that this was not a total loss."

The radio show will explore whether the trial can lead to change in the Silicon Valley culture, she said. Other upcoming topics include looking at environmental victories and how those came about, as well



Courtesy, Angie Coiro

**Veteran radio journalist**  
Angie Coiro will host "In Deep," a two-hour show recorded live at Kepler's bookstore in Menlo Park.

as social inequalities.

"It's going back to the roots of Kepler's," said CEO Praveen Madan. "We've got a lot of ideas, and one test is how does

this help us further our mission? It's really back to what Roy (Kepler's) mission was — deepening minds and broadening literacy."

Jean Forstner, Kepler's director of community relations, said the bookstore is the first in the country to do a weekly live broadcast. She described it as an evolution of the store's focus on building engagement by giving people a chance to interact with authors and other deep thinkers.

Kepler's and Ms. Coiro first connected through her award-winning author interviews, with some writers enjoying the experience so much they asked if they could take her along on tour, Mr. Madan said, laughing. She has since interviewed luminaries such as Gail Sheehy and Salman Rushdie.

She got started in radio while living in Hawaii during her 20s

"because there was no paying acting work in Hawaii. They made me a salesperson, which could've been a disaster, but I sold my own radio show to get on the air," Ms. Coiro said. She found that she loved the adrenaline, the people and especially the research required.

Her first Bay Area gig involved a 2 a.m. shift as a traffic reporter. She went on to become an anchor for KQED, and later, created an interview series for Mother Jones as well as one for the Tech Museum of Innovation in San Jose.

In Deep will kick off at 11 a.m. on Wednesdays at Kepler's, located at 1010 El Camino Real in Menlo Park. The first three shows will be free to attend; after that, audience tickets will cost \$10 per person and be sold both at the store and online.

Listen to the recorded shows at [InDeepRadio.com](http://InDeepRadio.com). ■

## Menlo Park officer honored for work with kids

By **Sandy Brundage**  
Almanac Staff Writer

Going to school pays off, both for the students and for the Menlo Park police officer whose mission it is to make sure the kids get to class. Officer Mary Ferguson received the Police Service Award from the Peninsula Council of Lions Clubs on March 20 for her work with the city's youth.

"Mary has been phenomenal in working with schools, students and families," Menlo Park Police Chief Bob Jonsen told the Almanac. "Her passion for the position is evident and Menlo Park benefits every day from the proactive interaction she has with at-risk youth."

Five years ago, Officer Ferguson created a truancy-abatement program. Now, she gets to focus

on kids full-time, particularly those attending Belle Haven Elementary School. Facebook agreed in 2014 to pay the city up to \$220,000 a year for at least three years to fund a community service officer position to reduce truancy and gang activity and create safety plans for local schools and businesses.

"Most kids — all they want to know is at the end of the day somebody cares about them," Officer Ferguson said. "A lot of these youth feel a disconnect with their community, school, family or friends. By going on campus a few times a week, I am able to check in and let them know that they matter. I am blessed to work with such an inspiring group of kids."

The elementary school doesn't have a large truancy problem, she said. It's more a matter of

Home visits and shooting hoops are all in a day's work.

the kids not getting to school on time for reasons that she works with the family to resolve.

"Often families are hesitant to invite me into their homes; however, with persistence, I am able to prove my true intentions of helping the family," she said. Likewise, at school, where students initially didn't want her around, she is now "greeted with smiles and hugs ... most of the time."

In addition to meeting with each class at Belle Haven Elementary, she teaches life skills for sixth- through eighth-graders with volunteers from the nonprofit Alive and Free, and anger management for minors



Courtesy, Menlo Park Police Department

**Officer Mary Ferguson** says that at Belle Haven Elementary School, she is now "greeted with smiles and hugs ... most of the time."

sent through the police department's diversion program.

Next year she plans a larger presence at Willow Oaks Elementary School, and meanwhile offers assistance to all Menlo

Park schools as needed.

Sometimes this means making visits to talk about what a police officer does. "(It's) a great opportunity to make these children's first encounter with law enforcement a positive one," she said. "In light of all the negative media, I do not want our youth to fear us; I want them to view us as their friends."

Sometimes it means stopping during a weekend tour of duty through Belle Haven to shoot hoops and pull weeds with the kids, like she did a couple weeks ago. "I don't recall ever having so much fun patrolling my beat as I did that Sunday," she said.

Officer Ferguson earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and sociology, and has also attended multiple training programs on juvenile diversion and truancy, according to the Menlo Park Police Department, which she joined about nine years ago. ■

## What will \$50K a month get you in Atherton?

Looking for a Midpeninsula rental? Well, according to the Zillow and Berkshire Hathaway websites, there's a nice one coming up in Atherton, if you can afford it.

The home has seven bedroom suites and a total of 10 bathrooms, a pool, guest house, cabana, movie theater, wine cellar, gym, six fire-

places, and is in the Menlo Park City School District.

All of this in a cozy 14,568 square feet on an acre lot. The rent? Only \$50,000 a month.

If you're longing to make this your home sweet home, you'll have to hold on just a bit. It's under construction and not expected to actually

be available until November. But they'll let you tour the construction site right now.

Local real estate agents say the demand for high-end rentals is greater than ever before, with homes in the \$25,000 to \$50,000 range not that uncommon. Brand new construction brings a premium.

The home is listed by Tim Kerns in the Menlo Park Coldwell Banker Santa Cruz Avenue office.

Visit [tinyurl.com/rental50k](http://tinyurl.com/rental50k) to see the listing on the Berkshire Hathaway website.

## Commission meets on rail crossing

Grade separation at the Ravenswood Avenue railroad crossing and a possible electric bike ordinance are on the agenda for the Wednesday, April 8, meeting of the Menlo Park Transportation Commission.

Go to [tinyurl.com/q8nqb97](http://tinyurl.com/q8nqb97) to review the agenda and associated staff reports. The meeting starts at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at the Civic Center at 701 Laurel St.

### At Kepler's

World War II continues to provide themes and stories for films and books.

### ■ BRIEFS

A new book by Bruce Henderson, a Menlo Park resident, a former journalist and the author or co-author of more than 20 nonfiction books, tells the story of a daring rescue of imprisoned American men, women and children at the Los Banos prison camp on the Philippines as World War II was drawing to a close.

Mr. Henderson will be at Kepler's Books at 1010 El Camino Real in Menlo Park at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 9.

## Chowchilla kidnapper found fit for parole

■ Three kidnappers were from families in Atherton and Portola Valley.

One of three men who kidnapped a busload of Chowchilla schoolchildren in 1976 was found fit for parole April 1 by a two-member panel of the state Board of Parole Hearings.

This was the 20th time the board considered releasing the man, James Schoenfeld, 63, who is imprisoned at the California Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo, the Fresno Bee said. The ruling will go through an internal review that could take up to four months before a recommended parole date is sent to Gov. Jerry Brown.

The three kidnappers were from families in Atherton and Portola Valley. James Schoenfeld and his younger brother, Richard Schoenfeld, were from Atherton, and Frederick Woods was from Portola Valley.

Richard Schoenfeld was paroled in 2012. Frederick Woods could have a parole hearing this fall.

The Schoenfeld brothers and

Mr. Woods were in their early to mid-20s when they ambushed a busload of schoolchildren on July 15, 1976, from Dairyland Union School in Chowchilla, a small farm community about 35 miles northwest of Fresno in Madera County.

The men left the bus camouflaged in a creek bed and drove the children and bus driver, Ed Ray, to the California Rock and Gravel Quarry in Livermore.

The kidnappers sealed their victims in a large van that had been buried in a cave at the quarry and fitted out to keep the children and driver hostage.

The kidnappers then demanded a \$5 million ransom for the return of the 26 children and the driver.

The hostages escaped from the buried van more than 24 hours after they were first kidnapped when Mr. Ray and the two oldest children piled mattresses to the top of the van and forced their way out.

The three men received life sentences after pleading guilty in Alameda County Superior Court in 1977 to 27 counts of kidnapping for ransom. ■

## Woman attacked, robbed while sitting in car

By Sandy Brundage  
Almanac Staff Writer

Two people attacked and robbed a woman sitting in her car on Market Place in Menlo Park during the early evening of Wednesday, April 1, according to police.

Around 6:45 p.m. the 39-year-old victim reported that she was parked in the 200 block of Market Place, reading a document while in the driver's seat, when the two suspects opened an unlocked door and punched her in the face.

She told investigators that one shouted, "We are going to get your purse. Let it go or we are

going to hurt you," police spokeswoman Nicole Acker said.

After taking the purse, the pair ran down Del Norte Avenue. Although the victim heard a vehicle speed away, she didn't see it, and could not describe the assailants beyond saying they were in their late teens or early 20s, and skinny, according to the report.

The woman drove herself to the hospital for treatment of bruising to her arm and face, police said.

Police estimated the value of the stolen property at \$14,952, which includes a wallet, identification, credit cards, checkbook, \$5,000 cash and an iPhone. ■

## Model ships gallery upgraded

A celebration marking completion of an upgrade of the Ships of the World gallery at the San Mateo County History Museum will be held Saturday, April 11.

The gallery's \$58,000 upgrade includes new interactive activities, video presentations, graphics and murals. A ribbon cutting ceremony will be held at 11 a.m. followed by children's crafts between 1 and 4 p.m.

The gallery features 24 model ships fashioned by the late Charles Parsons. The ships are a collection representing Mr. Parson's interest in maritime history, from a Greek warship of 500 BC to a World War II destroyer.

The museum is located at 2200 Broadway in the historic Old Courthouse in Redwood City.

Visit [historysmc.org](http://historysmc.org) for more information.



Redwood City Fire Department/Instagram

The home on Shearer Drive in Atherton was destroyed in the April 1 fire.

## Fire chief: No one died in house fire

By Dave Boyce  
Almanac Staff Writer

Investigators searching for possible victims in the abandoned single-story house at 29 Shearer Drive in Atherton that was destroyed in an April 1 fire found no human remains.

The 3,000-square-foot house had had its utilities shut off, raising questions about how the fire might have started. Because the house had a basement, firefighters considered the possibility that someone, perhaps a transient, had been camped in there, said Fire Chief Harold Schapelhouman of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District. The district employed a dog and handler trained in finding human remains — a duo that's part of the district's Urban Search and Rescue Team.

After the basement was pumped clear of the 4 to 5

feet of water that had collected there, the dog found no indications of a human victim, the chief said.

"Our official determination at this point is that we are calling this a 'suspicious' fire," the chief said. "We are familiar with this location. We've had a fire in this vacant home before. There is no power to this building and we will be working closely with the Atherton Police Department to investigate this incident. Vacant structures with no working utilities don't just catch themselves on fire."

Firefighters turned control of the site over to the Atherton Police Department. The town's Public Works Department fenced the site and had red-tagged it for demolition within 24 hours, the chief said.

### Basement a risk

Firefighters arrived at the

house shortly before 5 a.m. on April 1 and found it engulfed in flames, the chief said. With 16 firefighters from the Menlo Park district and the Redwood City Fire Department fighting the blaze, it was extinguished by around 9:45 a.m., the chief said.

On the scene were four fire engines and a ladder truck, along with the battalion commander's vehicle. One engine company stayed behind for the rest of the day to watch for re-ignition and to work with the fire investigator and Atherton police, the chief said.

Knowing about that basement and the potential for the first floor to collapse under the weight of a person led the battalion commander to the decision to fight the fire from outside the building, the chief said. ■

## Priory senior receives volunteer service award

Menlo Park resident James Phelps, a senior at Woodside Priory School in Portola Valley, has been awarded the President's Volunteer Service Award for his work as a volunteer with the International Institute of the Bay Area, a Redwood City nonprofit that works with immigrants and refugees, and where he teaches an adult citizenship class.

"I always have been a history geek," James says. "I love it that I can pass on what I know to people who can use it to help themselves."

His passion for volunteering was ignited during a 2011 service trip to Los Angeles organized by his church, Menlo Park Presbyterian, to cook and serve meals at food banks. James went on to help out at the Second Harvest Food Bank in San Carlos, and then, during spring break of 2013, attended a church service trip to Mexi-



James Phelps

cali, Mexico, to participate in a construction project at a church.

In 2013, James also volunteered for Rebuilding Together, which helps people who are struggling financially to refurbish their homes. And he took part in the junior retreat to the Tenderloin in San Francisco, where he worked with organizations such as Glide Memorial and Project Open Hand.

James, who will go to Redlands University in the fall, says the best way to get started in community service is to think about something you feel passionate about and volunteer for an organization that allows you to transfer your passions and skills into volunteer work. ■

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## Caltrain to move ballast rock by October

By Sandy Brundage  
Almanac Staff Writer

When public agencies embark upon projects, delays are — unfortunately — expected. Caltrain, however, has turned that expectation on its head by deciding that rather than needing two years to move piles of ballast rock off Chilco Street in Menlo Park, it can now accomplish that task within six months.

The rail agency said in an update emailed to the city on Friday, April 3, that it will be finished removing the rock by Oct. 1, but did not provide a cost estimate.

“While Caltrain is still working to develop funding solutions to cover these immediate expenses, we understand the community’s urgent desire to remove the material from the site and we want to assure you that we are fully com-

mitted to responding in the most expeditious way,” spokesman Seamus Murphy wrote.

The Almanac’s conjecture that the partnership between Facebook and Menlo Gateway developer David Bohannon to upgrade Chilco Street is responsible for cutting the ballast rock moving timeframe by 75 percent was substantiated by sources, but no one was ready to comment for attribution by the newspaper’s deadline.

The ballast rock, used to support railroad tracks, has been stored along Chilco Street since 2008. Caltrain held a meeting on March 23 with several dozen Belle Haven residents who live nearby and are worried about health hazards presented by the dust released into the air by the rock piles, and said it would provide possible solutions by April 3. ■

## Atherton not willing to give up library tax revenue without a fight

By Barbara Wood  
Almanac Staff Writer

Atherton’s City Council members made it clear at an April 1 study session that they have some major concerns about a county library system proposal that would end the practice of allowing all library tax revenue raised in a town or city to stay in that community.

While no vote was taken at the meeting, council members said they want to figure out how to keep as much of the town’s library tax money as possible, while leaving open the possibility that they would consider sharing funds they don’t need for expanded library services once their new library is completed.

Some of the audience members urged the council to withdraw from the county system and run its own library, however. Didi Fisher, a former Atherton council member and mayor, said she thinks the town should get out of the county system, even if it costs the town some tax dollars. The

changes proposed by the county library staff, she said, could make “your lives hell,” because they would leave the town uncertain about how much money it would have to operate its library.

Ms. Fisher said the town had considered leaving the county library system when she was on the council, in the 1990s, and had gone as far as getting bids from other libraries to run Atherton’s library. “I wish we had done it then,” she said.

Atherton is part of a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) that manages the county library system, along with Belmont, Brisbane, East Palo Alto, Foster City, Half Moon Bay, Millbrae, Pacifica, Portola Valley, San Carlos and Woodside as well as San Mateo County.

The current JPA agreement says that library property tax dollars (\$32 per \$100,000 in assessed value) beyond the amount needed to pay a town or city’s library operating costs, plus a share of county library administration and overhead costs, go to the towns or cities that generated them. By state

law the money can be used only for library-related expenses. Atherton is one of three so-called “donor cities” that generate excess funds; Woodside and Portola Valley are the other two.

Mayor Rick DeGolia, who serves on the JPA along with council member Elizabeth Lewis, and is also a member of a JPA subcommittee studying the donor city tax issue, says that Atherton now generates about \$1.3 million more each year in library tax than is spent on Atherton library costs. Woodside generates about \$450,000 a year and Portola Valley about \$100,000 a year in surplus taxes.

Portola Valley has a new library, built as part of a new town center that was completed in 2008, and Woodside is about to begin a remodel of its library, which will deplete its donor fund.

At the end of June 2014, Atherton had accumulated \$8.6 million in its fund, which will go to a new library. Once the library is built, however, even

See **LIBRARY**, page 18

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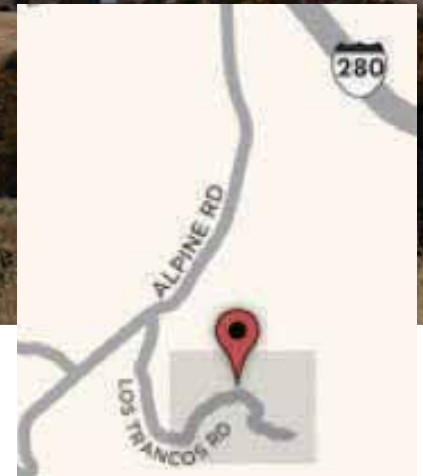
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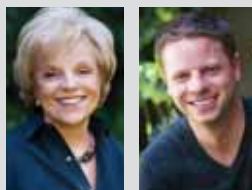
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# Should STEM and career tech be focus at new high school?

By Dave Boyce  
Almanac Staff Writer

Academic paths through high school typically lead students toward college, with career technical education as an option. What if the paths were mixed up a bit?

The governing board of the Sequoia Union High School District discussed curriculum ideas for a new high school in Menlo Park at its April 1 meeting. David Reilly, Woodside High's former principal and now a district assistant superintendent, proposed some guiding principles.

The board has committed to building two magnet schools for 300 to 400 students, one in San Carlos and one in Menlo Park's M2 industrial area. A surge of elementary and middle school students is working its

way toward the district's comprehensive high schools. Enrollment at Menlo-Atherton High is expected to grow by at least 25 percent by 2020-21, and the new school could relieve enrollment pressure at M-A.

At the new school, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) classes would be a preference, Mr. Reilly said, citing a recent survey of parents, staff and students. But the same survey showed strong interest in health science, medical technology, computer science and digital and media arts, he said.

Partnerships could be the answer, he said.

The school site is at 150 Jefferson Ave., a neighborhood of high-tech enterprises such as Facebook, Intuit and Oracle. The area represents one of "three rapidly growing high-tech sectors" in the industrial

district, the others being life sciences and medical devices, according to a recent report from the city of Menlo Park.

The companies present an opportunity for linked learning, Mr. Reilly said. Linked learning is a four-year program that blends academics with business in the form of internships, mentoring, workplace simulations and apprenticeships, according to a report from Stanford University's School of Education.

If linked learning represents an opportunity, not taking advantage of it would be like an island economy not tapping its fishing industry, Mr. Reilly said, adding that the area is "insanely rich."

Another partnership, with Canada College, could offer courses at the school in kinesiology, radiologic technology, nursing, engineering, and environmental technology, he said. ▣



Photo by Barbara Wood/The Almanac

It's enough to take your breath away. It's the time of year when climbing roses bloom by the hundreds in many of the trees lining Woodside's streets. The Gold of Ophir rose, which at one time was in so many trees on Albion Avenue that locals call it the Albion Rose, in this Albion Avenue garden is climbing onto the roof of the two-story home. Elsewhere there are yellow Lady Banks roses, and white Fortunianas, which the Sunset Garden book says are often passed off as white Lady Banks, but aren't really. Try Manuella Avenue for the most magnificent examples.

## Hearings held on school district transfer request

By Barbara Wood  
Almanac Staff Writer

Public hearings were held March 30 and April 6 on a request by residents of 31 homes on O'Connor Street in Menlo Park to transfer from the Ravenswood City School District to the Menlo Park City School District.

One hearing was held in the Menlo Park district and the second in the Ravenswood district.

The residents who want to transfer live between 235 and 295 O'Connor Street. The districts' boundaries runs down the middle of the street.

Ravenswood Superintendent Gloria Hernandez-Goff said the Ravenswood board members oppose the petition, but will formally vote April 23. The district staff will research the fiscal and enrollment impacts the transfer might cause.

Ahmad Sheikholeslami, the Menlo Park district's chief business and operations officer, said the Menlo Park board asked district staff to look at the "continued erosion of diversity and funding in the Ravenswood District." He said the Menlo Park district has "space and facility constraints and land use constraints," and is wary of creating precedents for future requests from other neighborhoods in Menlo Park or Atherton that are not in the Menlo Park school district.



Photo by Michelle Le/The Almanac

Residents of the north side of O'Connor Street (to the left) are in the Ravenswood City School District. Across the street, the residents are in the Menlo Park City School District.

The Menlo Park board is scheduled to vote April 14 on whether it supports the transfer.

The actual decision on the transfer request will be made by the County Committee on School District Organization. The committee's decision can be appealed to the state board of education.

An election will be required if either district opposes or remains neutral about the transfer, but it is approved by the county committee. The county committee would decide which voters participate in the election,

which could include only the homes affected, or residents of either or both affected districts.

The petitioners, led by Susan Stacy Keller, John Barksdale and Lansing Scriven, said the neighborhood now has only six school-age children, with several already in Menlo Park schools, either because the students have a parent who lives in the district, or the child is attending under the Tinsley program, which allows minority students to transfer from the Ravenswood district into other local school districts. ▣

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## POLICE CALLS

This information is based on reports from 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.

## MENLO PARK

**Residential burglary:** An initial examination showed nothing missing from a house on Felton Drive. A window was broken on a back

door. Someone apparently entered, went into several rooms and set off an alarm upon entering a bedroom closet. March 22.

**Commercial burglary:** A woman entered a store on Santa Cruz Avenue, unpacked a pair of skates, put the skates in a tote bag she was carrying, then left the store without paying for the skates. Estimated loss: \$61. March 31.

**Auto burglaries:**

■ Someone broke a side window on a vehicle parked in the 2800 block of Sand Hill Road and stole bartending equipment. Estimated loss: \$2,000. March 29.

■ A burglar broke into a vehicle parked in the 700 block of El Camino Real and stole a brown bag containing Bible-related books. Estimated loss: \$300. April 2.

**Thefts:**

■ A resident of the 1300 block of Willow Road sold a purse to someone in Glendale over the Internet, but the buyer claimed that the package received was empty. Estimated loss: \$3,999. April 2.

■ Someone stole a purse from the backseat of a unlocked vehicle parked on Marsh Road. Inside were a cellphone, \$140 in cash

and credit cards. Estimated loss: \$790. March 26.

■ Two bikes were stolen from a locked storage room at an apartment complex on Waverley Street. Estimated loss: \$778. March 27.

■ A man and a woman entered the Safeway supermarket on Sharon Park Drive and walked out with shopping cart containing 12 bottles of red wine that they did not pay for. They fled, but it's not known in which direction. Estimated loss: \$745. March 26.

■ A locked bicycle was stolen from a carport on Coleman Avenue. Estimated loss: \$500. March 28.

■ Someone stole a locked bicycle from in front of an apartment on Partridge Avenue. Estimated loss: \$270. March 26.

■ The Madera Avenue owner of a bicycle that had been stolen from his

front yard later located his bike, took it back and signed a citizens arrest warrant that led to the arrest of the alleged thief. No losses. March 31.

■ A "transient looking" man entered the Big 5 Sporting Goods store on El Camino Real wearing one pair of shoes and left wearing another pair but without having paid for them. The old shoes were found in the box from the new shoes. When confronted outside by the store manager, the man "fled on foot with the property." March 28.

**Falling tree branch:** A 40-foot branch of an oak tree fell on a Lexus SUV traveling east in the 1600 block of Valparaiso Avenue. The man and woman inside received scratches on their arms and legs from the broken glass, while the vehicle appeared to be a total loss. March 28.

## Henry Norbury Kuechler III

March 15, 1938 – March 25, 2015

Henry, known to his friends as "Hank," was born on March 15, 1938, in Stanford Hospital to Beth and Henry Kuechler (Mary Elizabeth Stewart & Henry Norbury Kuechler, Jr.) of Atherton, California.

His upbringing was greatly influenced and shaped by his beloved grandfather, A.O. Stewart.

Henry had three sisters, Sue (Mrs. James Harris, who preceded him in death), Sally (Mrs. Warren Debenham) and Nancy (Mrs. Lee Enright).

He attended the Thacher School in Ojai, CA, excelling in horsemanship and tennis. While attending the University of California, Berkeley, he played varsity tennis and was a member of Zeta Psi fraternity. After graduating with a B.S. in Business, he served in the United States Navy aboard the USS Merrick as Chief Engineer before entering the family business alongside his grandfather and father in 1962.

Henry was active in many facets of the agriculture community serving as President of the Board of Trustees for Reclamation District #2060, Chairman of the North Delta Water Agency Board of Directors, President of the Cow Palace, President of the Grand National Foundation, and a Director for the California Tomato Growers Association and the San Joaquin Hay Growers Association.

He also served as a Director for Federal Coca-Cola Bottling Company, Great River Oil & Gas Corporation, BRK Petroleum Corporation, Boo-Ker Oil & Gas Corporation, Cola Petroleum, Exchange Oil & Gas Company and Allied Properties.

Henry served multiple terms on the Hoover Institution Board of Overseers throughout the past three decades. He was active with the Booth-Bricker Foundation of New Orleans, and was a past chairman of the Atherton Planning Commission.

Hank's lifelong friends can be counted among the members of the Burlingame Country Club (where he served as President from 1995-1997), the Bohemian Club (Santa Barbara Camp), the Boston Club of New Orleans, Cypress Point Golf Club, the Frontier Boys, the Pacific Union Club, the Palo Alto Club, Rancheros Visitadores (Los Chingadores), the San Francisco Golf Club, the San Francisco Grid Club, and the Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews.

He is survived by Alice, his wife of 34 years, his children and their spouses, Henry "Jack" Kuechler IV (Kristi), Mary Kuechler (Paul Kick), Tom Dias (Nanci), Alair Dias, Greg Dias (Monique), and his four grandchildren, Katie Kuechler, Henry "Will" Kuechler V, Elisabeth Engelson and Natalie Dias.

The family wishes to thank Dr. Kathy Renschler and Dr. George Fisher for their incredible compassion, care and professional guidance during the past eight weeks.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Patrick Swayze Pancreas Research Fund or to the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network.



PAID OBITUARY

## Council to discuss license plate cameras

A busy night is ahead for the Portola Valley Town Council when it meets on Wednesday, April 8, at the Historic Schoolhouse at 765 Portola Road.

The agenda includes a discussion on whether the town should employ permanently mounted cameras to photograph the license plates of every vehicle that passes through town, around the clock.

The council arranged community forums in February and March to hear presentations and discuss the matter.

### PORTOLA VALLEY

The images would be stored in a database overseen by a regional agency in San Francisco that receives funds from the Department of Homeland Security.

The council will also discuss the local implications of Gov. Jerry Brown's executive order mandating a 25 percent cut in water use in urban areas. Water company records show Portola Valley residents as using significantly more water than Bay Area averages, which

may result in closer scrutiny by water regulating agencies.

In a staff report, Town Manager Nick Pegueros estimates that the town could reduce irrigation for Rossotti Field, Ford Field and the Town Center fields by 11 percent, 52 percent, and 12 percent, respectively.

Also on the agenda: a proposal to allow fundraising at the weekly farmers' market, a new contract for animal control services and a proposal to participate in an all-mailed-ballot election pilot program in the county.

## Peter Keck

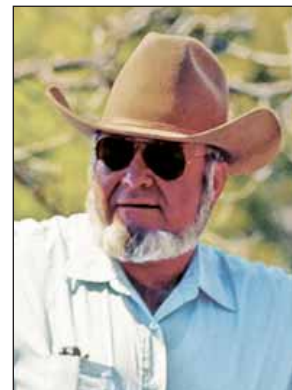
June 6, 1927 – March 16, 2015

A memorial service will be held Saturday, April 11 in Woodside for Peter Keck, former longtime resident of Woodside, who died March 16th in Everett Washington, he was 88.

The service celebrating his life will start at 1 p.m. at the Woodside Village Church, 3154 Woodside Road in Woodside.

Born June 6, 1927, Mr. Keck was quite a creative entrepreneur, and spent quite a few years building highways in Sydney Australia and Mexico City, however he lived in Woodside for over 35 years, enjoying his friends at the Village Pub and Woodside Vineyards. Peter was an active member of the Woodside Village Church and created the United Church of Christ insurance program which became a nationwide program. Peter was also active in the Woodside musical theater. For the last 15 years he has lived in Washington State near his son Kurt.

Peter is survived by his daughter Debbie McCormick of Redstone Colorado, son, Kurt Keck of Arlington WA and son, Chris Keck of Redwood City as well as 4 grandchildren, Brittney, Haley, Nathan, and Sarah.



PAID OBITUARY

## Students impersonate rock acts

The 14th annual production of Frederick's Follies, featuring Corte Madera students impersonating rock acts (the Bangles, Katie Perry, Queen and Pitch Perfect) will take place at 6:30 p.m. Friday, April 10, at Corte Madera School, 4575 Alpine Road in Portola Valley.

The fourth- to eighth-grade students in the production are part of a performing arts camp led by Corte Madera teacher William Frederick.

Tickets are \$10 for adults. \$5 for children 14 and under, and free for children 5 and under.

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## Woodside High declared safe after bomb scare

By **Dave Boyce**  
Almanac Staff Writer

Investigators and a bomb-sniffing dog from the San Mateo County bomb squad paid a visit to the campus of Woodside High School on the morning of Thursday, April 2, to search for a bomb. They did not find one.

Someone had phoned in a bomb threat from off-campus that morning, Principal Diane Burbank said in a phone call to the school community. Ms. Burbank ordered classrooms evacuated at about 9:30 a.m.

Given the length of time investigators would need to search the campus, Ms. Burbank said she canceled classes for the day.

Students without transportation home assembled on the football field to await parents or guardians to either pick them up or call in and authorize the school to let them go home on their own.

When exiting the classrooms, students were told to leave their backpacks and other personal items. Students who drove to school and had car keys with them when they evacuated were allowed to leave, but only after an authorizing phone call.

Authorities declared the campus safe at about 11:45 a.m., said Deputy Rebecca Rosenblatt of the county Sheriff's Office. No one was reported hurt.

When the evacuation began, Sheriff's Office deputies had



Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

**The Woodside High School** football field, where students had gathered after the evacuation, was empty by noon on the day of the bomb threat, although emergency aid kits could be seen.

been questioning four students about an incident unrelated to the bomb threat, Ms. Rosenblatt said. Deputies made two arrests, also unrelated to the bomb threat, she said.

A student who said he observed an interaction between deputies and students during the evacuation told the Almanac that deputies grabbed a student and "threw him to the ground."

Asked to comment, Ms. Rosenblatt said that the student on the ground was a 16-year-old who "became confrontational and attempted to flee from deputies and staff." ■

## Dentist's bike ride raises more than \$10,000

On his 16th charity bike ride, Menlo Park dentist, Dr. Jan Gabus recently raised \$10,815 for the Mid-Peninsula Dental Health Foundation.

Through their contributions,

associates and local residents helped him raise money on his "Miles for Smiles" five-day fall bike ride on the Cabot Trail at Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

Dr. Gabus began his charity

rides for the Menlo Park Kiwanis Foundation, which provides college scholarships for Menlo-Atherton High School graduates.

He raised more than \$100,000 for Kiwanis between 1999 and

2007. During the past seven years his bike rides have raised more than \$87,000 for the dental foundation, which provides dental care for the working poor.

"Last year the foundation helped hundreds of children and adults keep on smiling, providing more than \$25,000 worth

of care in our area," says Dr. Gabus. "I'm just one of several general dentists providing care, which brings a smile to my face, too."



Dr. Jan Gabus

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## TOWN OF WOODSIDE

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### INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE REVIEW BOARD

The Architectural and Site Review Board reviews and makes recommendations to the Planning Director regarding community character, site planning, building design and landscape elements on residential and commercial applications.

Meetings are held on the first and third Monday of each month, 4:30 p.m. Appointments are for a four-year term.

*Interested residents may request information and applications Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-12 noon and 1-5:00 p.m., from the Town Clerk's Office at Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, or telephone (650) 851-6790, or through the Town's web site at [www.woodsidetown.org](http://www.woodsidetown.org), Residents, Volunteer Opportunities. Applications will be accepted until appointment is filled.*

# Atherton not willing to give up library tax revenue without a fight

*continued from page 12*

with higher operating expenses, the town will still bring in about \$1 million a year in excess tax revenues, Mr. DeGolia said.

The tax rate could be lowered by the state Legislature, but that wouldn't really save Atherton taxpayers any money, council member Lewis said, because the taxes that don't go to the library would just be spread among other county entities. "Your taxes wouldn't go down, but the revenues to other agencies would go up," she said.

Leaving the JPA is also complicated by the fact that the current agreement says that any community that leaves would have to give up any funds it has accumulated. This basically means that Atherton could not leave until it had built its new library and spent its accumulated funds.

Since the agreement also calls for a year's notice to any town or city leaving the JPA it also means a year's funds would be forfeited, according to City Attorney William Connors.

The county library staff has proposed the JPA agreement be changed so that if cities and towns generate excess library tax, half that money will go into the county library system's general fund and half go to the city or town, Mr. DeGolia said.

In addition, Mr. DeGolia said,

the county staff has proposed that donor cities could accumulate no more than \$1 million of the excess funds; any additional money would go into the county system. At the rate Atherton has figured it would accumulate excess funds once the new library is built, it could reach this cap in a year.

Any changes in the JPA agreement need approval by two-thirds of members, which means, the council members were told, that the non-donor cities could pass new rules even if Atherton, Woodside and Portola Valley all oppose them.

Atherton, however, has some pull in the JPA because it already contributes more than its share of funds, Mr. DeGolia said. "This library JPA really wants us to stay in the JPA," he said. So he has countered with his own proposal.

To start with, Mr. DeGolia said, he has asked that any changes in the JPA agreement be put off until mid-2017; at that point the town should have figured out how much it will spend on its new library and what some of its ongoing expenses might be.

He has also asked that the county not expect any sharing of donor city's funds until each city has spent as much as it needs to on library-related costs. He'd like those costs to include having Atherton install

a high-speed fiber optic Internet system serving library users, "bringing the library into your living room," he said.

"Nobody challenges the concept of conveying information electronically is not library services," he said.

Other council members said Atherton should study how it could spend all of its tax money on expanded services for its own library.

Mr. DeGolia said he has proposed that the shared money would not go into the general fund, but instead into a pool that could be applied to "for special purposes" by staff or other libraries. He said that idea has been opposed by county library staff because it would not allow the money to be used for salaries.

Mr. DeGolia said the issue of whether there should be a cap on the donor cities' accumulated funds, and if so what the cap should be, is still open.

Anne-Marie Despain, the county library systems' director of library services, said that the JPA board, which is made up of representatives of each member community, began discussing the issue "based on the significant accumulation of library district revenue for the operation of three libraries and the limitations this presents for service improvements throughout the library system."

Ms. Despain said the subcommittee is still working on finding "a balance whereby member cities are not negatively impacted, yet the Library JPA is strengthened and able to move toward a solution that embraces the original intent and purpose of a County Free Public Library district."

Ms. Despain said no one from the county system attended the Atherton meeting.

Portola Valley council member Maryann Derwin, who is the chair of the donor funds subcommittee, said subcommittee members agreed at their last meeting that the three donor towns need to discuss the proposals for the unused funds and hear what their community members have to say.

Ms. Derwin said Portola Valley has not yet scheduled its discussion of the issue.

Woodside Town Manager Kevin Bryant said Woodside will discuss the matter as part of its budget deliberations, probably in April or May. ■

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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](http://www.TheAlmanacOnline.com), and occasionally on the Town Square forum.

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# Viewpoint

IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES

## Increase the pressure on water wasters

Many individual area residents and our local water agencies have made tremendous efforts to save water in the face of the drought that's parching the state. But more effort will be required as we enter our fourth year of dry weather with no relief in sight anytime soon.

Gov. Jerry Brown's strategy last year, when he declared that California was in a state of drought, was strangely mild considering the circumstances. But last week, pointing to the dismally low level of snowpack this season to underscore the crisis we face, the governor finally put mandatory 25 percent water reductions by California towns and cities into place through next February. His directive requires state agencies to create water-conservation strategies for local water agencies, such as the private company Cal Water and the public Menlo Park Municipal Water District, to implement.

These local agencies have already developed a number of strategies, such as public education and rebates for purchasing water-efficient appliances. In the case of the Menlo Park district, residents must adhere to a range of restrictions on the outdoor use of potable water.

The Bay Area in general has done a better job cutting back on

water usage than much of the state; according to the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency, the region's residents average 79 gallons of water per person per day. But a closer look at the statistics for individual towns is revealing. Although figures for per-capita water usage in all communities in the Almanac's coverage area are not yet available, the 2013 statistics for Portola Valley and Woodside put water consumption at 305 gallons and 421 gallons per person per day, respectively. Compare that with the numbers reported by towns such as Pacifica to the north, where usage is 37 gallons per person per day.

Cal Water, which provides water to Portola Valley, Woodside, Atherton and parts of Menlo Park, has been unwilling to provide 2014 water-consumption figures for its client towns unless the information is specifically requested by an individual town. The logic behind keeping that information from the public at large is murky at best. Water is a shared, vital resource, with all residents in the state affected by the behavior of those who won't do their part to conserve. The public has the right to demand water-usage data and hold public water agencies' as well as private water companies' feet to the fire to put in place serious penalties for irresponsible water wasters. ■

**EDITORIAL**

The opinion of The Almanac

**LETTERS**

Our readers write

### More housing? Try smaller families instead

*Editor:*

There definitely is a lack of affordable housing in San Mateo County, and I'm sure in most parts of the world. ("Affordable housing crisis' on county supes agenda," by Dave Boyce, 3/11/15).

Maybe a different approach needs to be taken. Instead of concentrating on providing more housing, why not concentrate on encouraging couples to produce *small* families? The over-production of consumers is destroying the health and well-being of our planet. Everyone is affected. Why not strive for a balanced population through education and tax incentives?

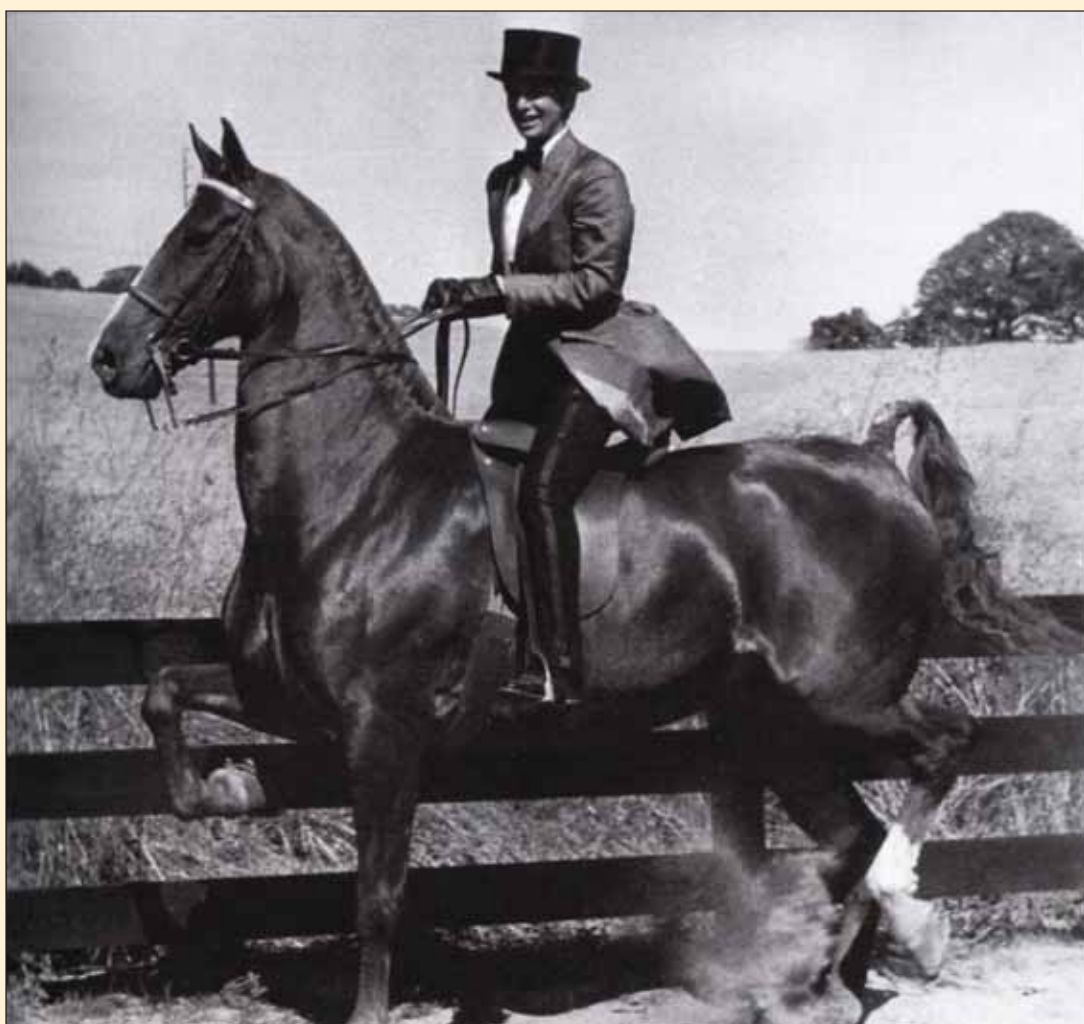
As population worldwide decreases, so will the attitude of "me first" and the feeling of fear. Harmony will be more noticeable in all of our lives.

*Jackie Leonard-Dimmick  
Walnut Avenue, Atherton*

### What's on your mind?

From City Hall politics and the schools to transportation and other pressing issues, the Almanac aims to keep readers informed about their community. But we also want to hear from you.

Tell us what's on your mind by sending your letters to [letters@AlmanacNews.com](mailto:letters@AlmanacNews.com). Or snail-mail them to: The Almanac, 450 Cambridge Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306.



Courtesy Delia Ehrlich and the Woodside History Committee

### Looking back

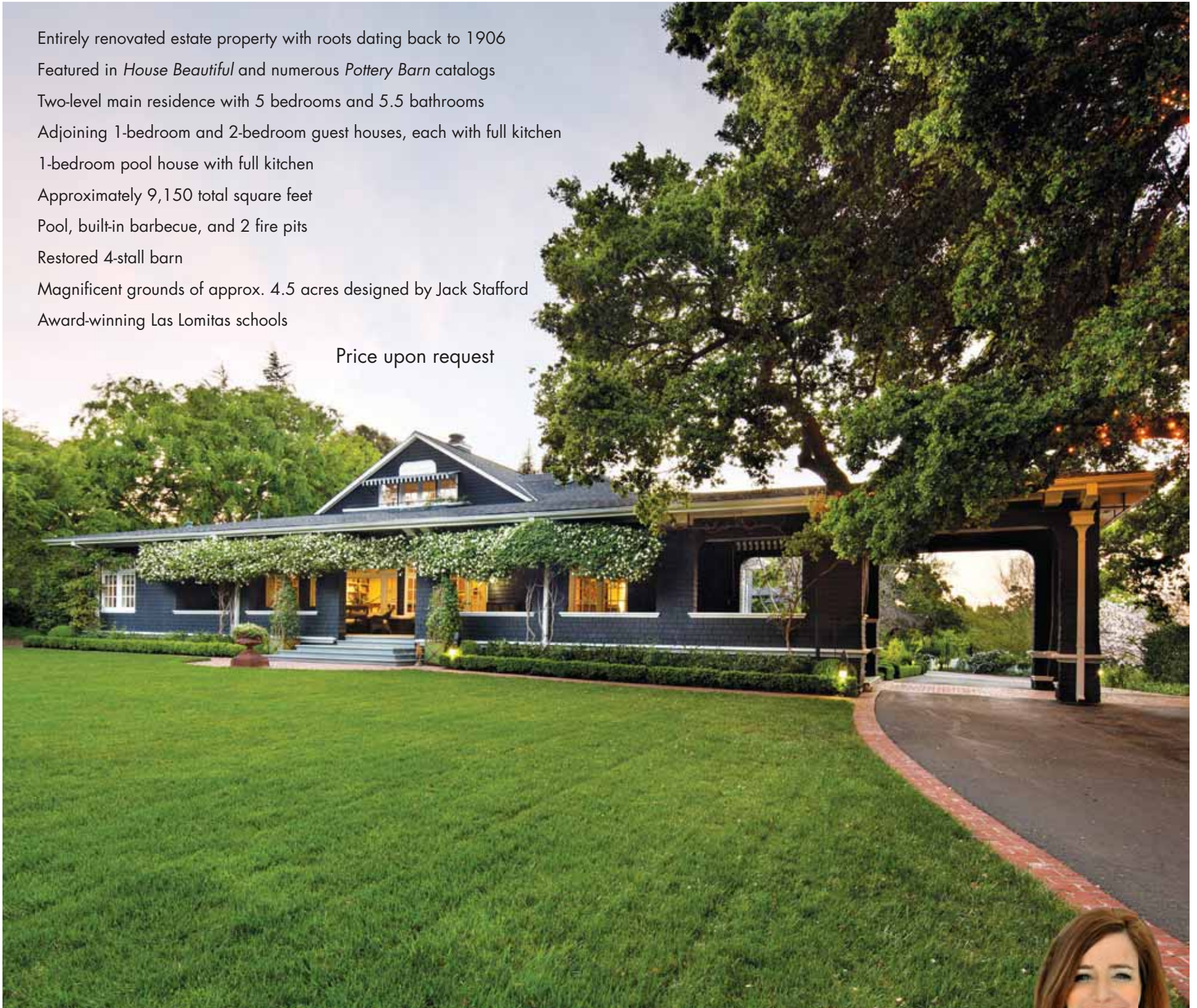
This circa-1965 photo shows Woodside resident Delia Fleishhacker Ehrlich riding English-style on Country Gal, a prizewinning American three-gaited saddle horse, according to a description in the Woodside history book by Thalia Lubin and Bob Dougherty. Ms. Ehrlich is a member of the Woodside History Committee, which published the history book, and spends her summers in a William Wurster-designed house at the Fleishhacker estate in Woodside, according to the book. And about that distinctive hat: Because Country Gal is a three-gaited horse, Ms. Ehrlich is wearing the traditional top hat rather than the bowler hat one would wear astride a five-gaited horse.

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