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The Almanac

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

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The first issue of the Almanac (Sept. 8, 1965)

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The Almanac reaches
the 50-year mark | PAGE 5

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Bobcat visits Portola Valley home

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

It was about 5 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 23, when Ron Johnson of the Alpine Hills neighborhood, in his hand a single-lens reflex camera with zoom lens, caught an image of a bobcat alongside his house.

That it's a bobcat was a guess on Mr. Johnson's part, having looked up images on the web and seen the short tail. A search shows cats of many color combinations, but a short tail and a penetrating gaze are common.

Had he been standing next to it, the cat would have come up to his knee, Mr. Johnson said. As the time of the photo, the animal was about 15 feet away and casually departing the scene, he said.

This was not his first encounter with a bobcat. Mr. Johnson's home is not far from an open space area owned by Stanford University.

In an encounter from several years ago, he said, he saw a bobcat with a rabbit in its mouth. While he was watching it, Mr. Johnson said, the cat spied another rabbit, dropped the one it had and went after the second rabbit, caught it and came back to retrieve the first one.

"That was quite a sight," he said. ■



Photo by Ron Johnson

This bobcat was caught on camera on Aug. 23 alongside a Portola Valley home in the Alpine Hills neighborhood.

Sea level rise: A call for action

By Kate Bradshaw
Special to the Almanac

Picture this: the San Francisco International Airport is underwater. As many as 120,000 residents of San Mateo County have been displaced by flooding. Three-quarters of the Bay Area's wetlands have been rendered unviable. Roads, highways, and railroads are covered in water, which has been contaminated because wastewater treatment plants have been inundated and rendered obsolete.

If this sounds either too antediluvian or post-apocalyptic

to be a realistic scenario, think again. Such a future could very well occur within this century if coordinated action is not taken to address imminent sea level rise, according to a San Mateo County grand jury report released in June.

San Mateo County is considered at significant risk from sea-level rise. A water level rise of 55 inches could cause an estimated \$24 billion in damage to buildings and their contents, according to a study cited by the grand jury. Gradual sea level rise is expected to reach 65 inches by 2100, the report says.

The county and its cities should take coordinated action to address sea-level rise, the grand jury says. On Aug. 25, the Menlo Park City Council approved the city's response, which largely agreed with the grand jury findings.

While the city is working with the San Francisco Creek Joint Powers Authority to address flood risks, the city agreed that rising sea levels are a county-wide threat and that a county-wide organization should lead the effort to combat that threat.

See **SEA LEVEL**, page 6

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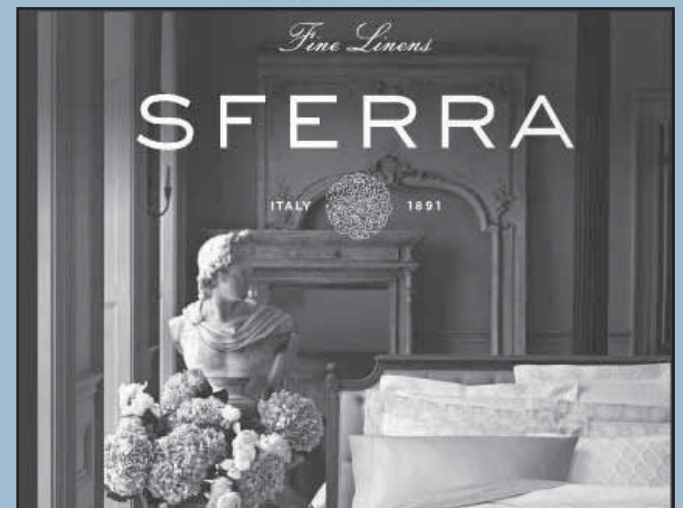
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Local News

MENLO PARK | AThERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Almanac: 50 years of covering community

This history of the Almanac is largely based on accounts by the late longtime staffer Marion Softky, who wrote thousands of articles for the Almanac over 40 years.

On Sept. 8, 1965, the first issue of the Country Almanac appeared in mailboxes all over Portola Valley and Woodside.

The paper was the creation of three Portola Valley women who thought local issues were not getting enough attention from the daily papers of that day, including the Palo Alto Times and the Redwood City Tribune.

A Portola Valley school bond measure had been defeated. Supporters blamed, in part, the lack of coverage in the dailies.

Three young mothers filled the void. Jean Heflin, a member of the Portola Valley Conservation Committee, introduced Betty Fry, who had business experience, to Hedy Boissevain, a former women's page editor for the Palo Alto Times.

After the trio gathered for an April lunch in a eucalyptus grove on the Stanford campus, their project for a community newspaper took off. The founders held more meetings, made plans, networked, and enlisted the support, including financial backing, of others in the community.

That four-page first issue featured a big picture of Susie Brown getting ready for her first day of kindergarten.

For the first months, the paper was put out on the founders' kitchen counters and dining room tables, spilling into garages. Their teenage kids enlisted their friends to help tie and address piles of papers. "It was fun," Ms. Fry recalled.

Jane Coladarci, who later became a mainstay of the Almanac's advertising department, recalls subscribing to the paper when it launched for \$2 a year.

By 1966, the paper had moved

■ ALMANAC AT 50

to an office under the Woodside post office. Later, it occupied the old Spanish-style telephone exchange building at the corner of Woodside and Canada roads in Woodside from 1974 until it moved to Menlo Park in 1985.

Those first four-page issues featured a major article, at least one big picture, school and church notes, a bulletin board, and a column by a local writer.

Advertising got a big boost in 1971 when Mardell Ward, former editor of the Menlo Park Recorder, took over advertising, a position she held for 18 years. Ms. Coladarci, who turned up on the doorstep one day in 1974, became the powerhouse of the advertising department until she retired in 2004.

"I loved it," said Ms. Coladarci, who started as a receptionist. "I answered the phone, took care of the mail and subscriptions, did the shopping, went to the bank, took dictation from Betty Fry and did accounts receivable."

She was good at it, but had other talents. Ms. Ward suggested she try out advertising.

"Well, they turned me loose with no instruction, no territory, but I was determined to make a go of it," she said. "I went after anything from Mountain View to Burlingame."

She met with success and was given a full-time sales job, which she held for 25 years.

"We started getting support," Ms. Fry said for a 2005 Almanac article. "We knew we'd arrived when we were made marshals of the Woodside May Day Parade."

Starting in 1969, the paper hired more local reporters, including Marion Softky, Marjorie Mader and Jane Knoerle.

Pam Jones, who came in 1975 as the first full-time employee in the news department, recalled: "I've had city officials tell me they had to read the Almanac to find out what went on at a meeting."

"The Hedy-Betty years were

See 50 YEARS, page 10



Photo by Veronica Weber

Saying goodbye to longtime staffer Jane Knoerle (center) former and current staffers, from left, Tom Gibboney, Renee Batti, Richard Hine, Linda Atilano, Michelle Le, Barbara Wood and Andrea Gemmet.

Recalling 40 years at the Almanac

After 53 years in Menlo Park and 40 years with the Almanac, longtime staff writer Jane Knoerle recently moved to San Diego County to be near her daughter. She plans to continue writing for the Almanac. Before she left, she penned this short memoir of her 40 years at the Almanac.

By Jane Knoerle

The Almanac was much different when I started working there as a part-timer in 1975. Founded in 1965 by Hedy Boissevain, Betty Fry and Jean Heflin, the Country Almanac was located in a little building at the corner of Woodside and Canada roads in Woodside. Cold in winter, hot in summer, it was furnished second-hand style with flush doors as our desks. The decor was funky; the atmosphere warm and cozy.

The front door was always open to visitors. Dr. Stan Goldman would drop by with some of his homemade pickles. Olive Mayer stopped in to see fellow environmentalist Marion

■ ALMANAC AT 50

Softky. A smiling Lehua Greenman dropped off real estate ads. Former Redwood City Tribune editor Ray Spangler brought in his column, "Under the Courthouse Dome."

The staff was mostly local women with families. Marion Softky and Marjorie Mader were already on board when I started. A few months later, Carol Ivie was hired as photographer and darkroom technician. My copy was read by Carol Blitzer, who earlier this year retired from the Palo Alto Weekly. When Carol stepped down at the Almanac, Pam Jones, a bright 22-year-old, took over.

We all became lasting friends.

Later the staff expanded. Two of the brightest young men hired were Sam Whiting, now a staff writer at the San Francisco Chronicle, and Tom Rosensteel, author and executive director of the American Press Institute.

My first assignment was covering the Las Lomas School

District. Later, work expanded into office rewrites, weddings, obituaries, charity events, features, and the Bell Savings calendar, where you had to list an event for each day of the month.

In 1980 veteran newspaperman Mort Levine and his wife, Elaine, acquired the Almanac and expanded the newspaper to cover Menlo Park as well as Portola Valley, Woodside, and Atherton. The paper's offices moved to downtown Menlo Park and the staff grew with Elaine as editor, Mort as publisher.

Being downtown was fun. Although a resident of Menlo Park for almost 20 years, as a reporter I learned a lot about the city and its workings. I also was lucky enough to be invited to many social events — Menlo School fashion shows, Tally Ho at the Circus Club, Peninsula Volunteers galas, Menlo Charity Horse Shows, Summer Symphony, and Christmas at Filoli.

In the 1980s, the publisher decreed that the paper's second

See 40 YEARS, page 10

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Corrections officer charged with selling drugs in jail

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

Jason Jurow, a corrections officer in the San Mateo County jail, faces a preliminary hearing in a Redwood City courtroom on Sept. 14 to answer to drug-related charges brought by county prosecutors.

Mr. Jurow, 32 and a jail employee for six years, gave himself up to authorities on Aug. 13 on suspicion of having committed six felonies: one count of bringing drugs into jail, three counts of selling drugs in jail, and two counts of possession of drugs for the purpose of selling them, District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said.

Mr. Jurow allegedly brought

into the jail the drug Xanax, used to treat anxiety and panic disorders, and he was in possession of thousands of pills of oxycodone and morphine, prosecutors said.

A San Mateo County physician prescribed the drugs for Mr. Jurow, Mr. Wagstaffe said. Prosecutors have referred the physician's name to the state medical board to determine whether there has been misconduct worthy of prosecution, he said.

Surrender options

In a similar case, Deputy Juan Lopez, a 27-year veteran of the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office whose duties included working in the county jail, was arrested at his Newark home in November 2014 on charges of having smuggled a cellphone into jail.

At the time of his arrest, officers from an Alameda County task force arrived with sirens wailing and lights flashing, his attorney David Washington said at the time. With guns drawn, the officers ordered Mr. Lopez, who was outside of his

home, to put his hands in the air and get down on his knees, and they handcuffed him, Mr. Washington said.

Asked to comment on the different handling of two arrests, both in connection with alleged smuggling by jail employees, Mr. Wagstaffe said he didn't know whether Mr. Lopez had been offered a chance to surrender, and that such offers are at the discretion of the prosecutor assigned to the case.

As for contacting that prosecutor to ask whether Mr. Lopez had been offered a chance to surrender, Mr. Wagstaffe said the prosecutor would very probably not answer that question. "They made a call on it," he said. "For whatever reason, they made a call on it."

In general, prosecutors make surrender offers through defense attorneys, but only if the suspect is not a flight risk, the charges don't involve an ongoing crime, and the charges are not related to a violent crime, Mr. Wagstaffe said. Neither Mr. Lopez nor his attorneys were available for comment on whether he was offered a chance to surrender. ■

Teen semifinalist in science fair

Cameron Jones, the 14-year-old Portola Valley science fair whiz who graduated from Corte Madera School last June, has done it again by being named a semifinalist in a national middle school science fair competition. He is one of 300 students in the country to do so.

In early September, Cam-

eron will find out if he has been named a finalist in the competition, named Broadcom Masters.

His project last year, which won a first place in the state science fair, involves infusing fine carbon powder into rubber bands so they can be used to measure biometrics (such as heartbeats or breathing).

Cameron will be going to Harker School in San Jose this fall, partially because, he says, the school supports its students in science fairs.



Cameron Jones

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SEA LEVEL

continued from page 3

That organization could be an expanded San Mateo County Flood Control District or a new joint powers authority, the city says. The City/County Association of Governments should also be considered. That organization, the city says, should assess all flooding risks, not just sea level rise.

Mitigation measures in

addition to building levees should be considered, the city's response says. Menlo Park, the city points out, is taking measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Also, in updating its general plan, the city is assessing the risks of sea level rise.

A primary concern, the city says, is the difficulty in coordinating plans across jurisdictions, which makes it hard to obtain state and federal funding for projects. ■

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

Displacement of residents among concerns with M-2 district revamp

By Renee Batti
Almanac Associate Editor

■ MENLO PARK

Draft revisions to rules and policies affecting the future of the eastern portion of Menlo Park will be reviewed by the Planning Commission later this month, but residents have one more chance before then to come together at a public meeting for an update on the project and to offer their views.

A community workshop is set for 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 9, at the Menlo Park Senior Center to review proposed changes to the general plan — considered the city's "constitution" governing development. The changes affect the city's M-2-zoned industrial area, roughly bordered by Marsh Road, U.S. 101, University Avenue and the bay — an area being transformed as Facebook acquires and develops more land and the Bohannon Development Company prepares to break ground on a major office and hotel project.

The general plan update project, dubbed ConnectMenlo, has involved a number of public meetings over the past year, and was the focus of the city's General Plan Advisory Group, which came up with recommendations for changes in the plan. In March, the City Council and the Planning Commission held a joint study session to review the recommendations, but the council wanted more time to gather additional information and clarification on development plans for the area already in the pipeline.

Among the advisory group's

recommendations were provisions to allow up to 2.5 million square feet of nonresidential buildings beyond what is now allowed in the general plan, about 4,500 new housing units, about 5,300 new jobs, and about 600 new hotel rooms.

An outdoor workshop on the grounds of the downtown "paseo" on Sept. 2 drew a small group of residents, and a couple of pooches, to view images of possible developments and

A resident said she was 'profoundly concerned' about displacement of residents because of skyrocketing housing costs.

roadway features envisioned for a revamped M-2 area. City staff members, consultants and two Facebook staff members answered questions, and later Charlie Knox of the consulting firm PlaceWorks spoke and took general questions from the public. The workshop's format will be repeated at the Sept. 9 event at the Senior Center.

A Belle Haven resident asked how the city would ensure that current area residents and businesses would benefit from the new developments planned for the M-2 district. She urged city leaders to strike deals with the developers that would give first preference for hiring and job training for local residents.

One resident of west Menlo Park said she was "profoundly concerned" about the displacement of residents across the city because of skyrocketing housing costs. She noted that the changes ahead in the east of town could put lower-income residents in that area at even greater risk, and made an impassioned plea for the city to consider enacting rent stabilization rules and mechanisms that would ban evictions without just cause — words that drew applause from others in attendance.

Mr. Knox said after the meeting that similar concern about the displacement of residents "has been expressed by many community members" during the ConnectMenlo events. Affordable housing advocates agreed at a May 28 Housing Commission meeting that reviewed the ConnectMenlo project "that rent stabilization and just cause of eviction are the two tools available to stem displacement," he said in an email to the Almanac.

Following the Sept. 9 workshop at the Senior Center, located at 110 Terminal Ave., the general plan update project will go before the Planning Commission for an environmental impact report (EIR) scoping session on Sept. 21, then back to the council on Sept. 29. The draft EIR is expected to be completed in February, and the final document should be ready by June. The estimated completion for the overall project is July, according to a timeline from the city.

Go to menlopark.org/connectmenlo for more information. ■

Project Read-MP celebrates 30 years

Friends and staff of Project Read-Menlo Park are throwing a party on Sept. 20 to mark the 30th birthday of the program, which offers free tutoring to adults needing to improve their English reading, writing and speaking skills.

The celebration, dubbed "Pearls of Wisdom," will be from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. It will include brunch provided by Cafe Zoe of Menlo Park and Project Read students, who will offer breads that reflect their cultures.

The party will be in the Arrilaga Family Recreation Center at 700 Alma St. in the Menlo Park Civic Center.

Alisa Clancy, program direc-

The program offers free tutoring to adults needing to improve their English skills.

tor of KCSM jazz radio station, will emcee the event, and former state senator Joe Simitian, a long-time Project Read supporter who is now a Santa Clara County supervisor, is expected to offer remarks.

The guest speaker will be Gerardo Pacheco Matus, a former ESL student who went on to earn a master of fine arts degree in creative writing and is now a poet and Project Read teacher.

Other highlights will be the unveiling of an anthology of life stories written by Project Read students, and presentation of the Lee Romashko Tutor Legacy Award to Menlo Park resident Paula Berka, a volunteer Project Read tutor since 1989.

There will also be live music provided by the Bennett Roth-Newell Trio.

The reservation deadline to attend is Sept. 14. To reserve a seat at the party, call 330-2525 or email projectread@menlopark.org.

Go to projectreadmenlopark.org to learn more about Project Read. You can also sign up there to volunteer to help at the Sept. 20 event or make a donation to support it.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Ready for Fall

Dear Monica: I am trying to buy a house but have been so discouraged that I stopped for a while but plan to start again. Do you see the market getting any better for buyers? Jaqueline E.

Dear Jaqueline: The fall season is just beginning and it is too soon to know how it will be. The volatility in the equity markets hasn't yet affected the real estate market but it may do so if it continues. On one hand real estate seems a more stable asset than equities and is attractive for that reason. On the other hand, buyers' stock portfolios have lost value and they are not able to spend as much as

they might have earlier this year. Barring any serious economic trends, buyers who need to find a house will continue to be in the market in the next months.

Many sellers are thinking that they need to sell now because they worry the market may be turning. My advice to you would be to be diligent and watch new listings carefully. You may find that there is a little more inventory and a little less competition. Keep at it and you will likely be successful before the end of the year.

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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Fully remodeled in 2010, this impressive 5 bedroom, 3.5 bathroom home of 3,930 sq. ft. (per plans) accompanies a detached garage with an additional half bath on a sprawling lot of 1.2 acres (per county). Automatic gates access the circular driveway, while the sensational interior provides a host of custom touches and a free-flowing floorplan with a living/dining ensemble, a dreamy chef's kitchen, a large breakfast area, and a family room with a fireplace. Two bedrooms, including the relaxing master suite, are downstairs, and a gracious staircase leads up to a spacious loft, a home office, and three more bedrooms. Outdoors, the converted garage enjoys a studio, and the fine grounds also include a paver terrace, a custom shed, and an immense backyard. A short stroll from Holbrook-Palmer Park, this home also features easy access to Caltrain and prestigious schools like Sacred Heart and Menlo School, plus other excellent schools like Encinal Elementary (API 930), Hillview Middle (API 950), and Menlo-Atherton High (buyer to verify eligibility).

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Almanac at 50

continued from page 5

very special,” Marion Softky wrote in a 2011 obituary on Betty Fry. “I could not imagine a better pair of bosses. Betty, in particular, ran a tight but pleasant ship. She was very sharp, very thorough and very efficient. I am immensely grateful to both of them for starting me on a career that has been of great personal satisfaction, and — I hope — public service.”

Ms. Softky died late that same year.

As the 1970s waned, so did the commitment of the editor, Ms. Boissevain, and the publisher, Ms. Fry. Ms. Boissevain's husband, Al, had retired and wanted to grow wine grapes in the Gold Country; Ms. Fry didn't want to run the paper alone.

Mort and Elaine Levine, who had built a chain of 16 local papers in Santa Clara County, proved ideal buyers. They had sold their chain, and then found they weren't ready to retire.

The Levines modernized and expanded the Country Almanac. By 1985, they bought the dying Menlo Park Recorder, expanded circulation to cover Menlo Park and Atherton, and moved offices from Woodside to downtown Menlo Park.

The Levines also modernized production. By the time the paper was sold again in 1993, reporters wrote on Mac computers, soon to be PCs.

As the 1990s surged in, the Levines got ready to retire again. This time they sold the paper to Embarcadero Publishing Company, which was founded in 1979 to publish the Palo Alto Weekly.

“The Almanac was a good comprehensive community paper that people valued,” Mr. Levine said. “It was a totally satisfying time in our lives.”

In a sense, the purchase of the Almanac by Embarcadero Publishing represented the closing of a circle.

Weekly publisher Bill Johnson grew up in the neighborhood of the Frys in Portola Valley. “To have the mother of a friend start a newspaper and have it succeed was one of my inspirations for a career in journalism,” he said.

The new management under Publisher Tom Gibboney brought in modern computer systems, coordinated advertising and productions systems, and put out new publications. And the paper dropped “Country” from its name.

Over the years, one of the best-known Almanac faces in the community was staff photog-

rapher Carol Ivie, who started taking pictures for the Almanac in 1976 and continued, literally, until the day she died on June 5, 2005. She often photographed the children of parents she had photographed when they were kids. She even got knocked over once taking pictures at a football game, and ended up in the emergency room.



Carol Ivie

In 1995, the Almanac moved from 855 Oak Grove Ave. in downtown Menlo Park to larger quarters in a new building at 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas in West Menlo Park., next to Luticken's deli.

In the last week of December 2010, the Almanac staff moved to the new Embarcadero Media building on Cambridge Avenue in Palo Alto, joining the staffs of sister papers the Palo Alto Weekly and the Mountain View Voice.

Since the first paper in 1965, the Almanac has published 2,600 issues. But today, the Almanac is so much more than a weekly paper. With its news staff headed by Editor Richard Hine and Associate Editor Renee Batti, Almanac reporters, including Dave Boyce and Barbara Wood, and staff photographer Michelle Le, spend at least as much time reporting for online, and the daily email Express, as they do for the weekly paper.

“In 1989, the Loma Prieta earthquake struck the day after we went to press,” Mr. Hine recalled. “We had a whole week to develop stories and take pictures. Today, we'd be updating stories and photos around the clock.”

Mr. Hine said he thanks all the people over the years who have helped to make the Almanac an important part of the community, including long-time staffer and graphic designer Linda Atilano, advertising sales representatives Neal Fine and Janice Hoogner, Woodside contributor Kate Daly, and the many former staff members, among them Adrienne Abbott, Thalia Battles, Joe Betar, Xavier Briand, Katie Cvitkovitch, Laura Don, Andrea Gemmet, Barbara Gramkin, M.J. Hayden, Jennifer Brown Hine, Sally Keep, Peter Munch, Bill Murray, Lisa Nelson, Ann Nielson, Mary Paniagua, Raul Perez, Bill Rayburn, Joan Sellman, Gay Skarpass, Emily Spoon, Gail Thoreson, Gary Vennarucci, Tony Visek and Rebecca Wallace. ■

Covering schools for four decades

■ ALMANAC AT 50

Marjorie Mader joined the Almanac reporter corps in 1970, five years after the paper was born. For the next 40 years, she focused primarily on school coverage, attending hundreds of board meetings and gaining a close and inside knowledge of school affairs.

She came to the Almanac as a professional journalist. A native of Wisconsin, she earned a journalism degree at Stanford. She spent a year as a Coro Foundation fellow, studying public affairs, and then worked as a reporter for the Independent Journal in Marin County.

During that time, she met George Mader, who would become Portola Valley's long-time and legendary town planner. They married and moved to the Menlo Park area in 1956, and then to their new Ladera home on Memorial Day of 1965.

It was a school issue that brought her back into journalism in 1970. After she worked

very hard on a curriculum problem in the Las Lomas district, the Almanac failed to cover a key meeting. She called the editor, Hedy Boissevain, and found that the paper didn't have enough reporters. “She called me back that afternoon and asked if I'd do Portola Valley,” recalled Ms. Mader, who still lives in Ladera and is an occasional contributor to the Almanac.

When Ms. Mader started with the Almanac, the Historic Schoolhouse at the Portola Valley Town Center was still a school. Today, the building is used for Town Council and other community meetings.

“It was a real community feeling,” Ms. Mader said of those early years.

Besides Portola Valley schools, she also covered other districts during her Almanac career, including the Menlo Park City School District and the Sequoia Union High School District, as well as community colleges and regional educational issues.

“I used to read the paper to see exactly what happened in my

board meetings,” said longtime Sequoia high school district trustee Sally Stewart of Portola Valley in the 2001 article about Ms. Mader. “Marjorie is always very thorough. She knows the background, and knows what is going on, and puts it in context.”

Ms. Mader was the major contributor to the Almanac's annual “Back to School” and graduation issues each year.

During her years at the Almanac, she has done community reporting and feature writing well beyond the education beat, including profiles of some of the impressive people who live in our communities.

Like many on the Almanac staff, she has been a photographer as well as a writer, “one of our best photographers on the staff,” said Editor Richard Hine. “Her profiles of children are classics.”

“I really enjoy taking photos of kids,” she said. ■

Much of this article is based on a 2001 Almanac story, written by Marion Softky, about Marjorie Mader being honored by the town of Portola Valley for community service.



Marjorie Mader

Recalling 40 years at the Almanac

continued from page 5

section should focus on a different interest each week. I ended up being assigned food and drink, fashion, home and, often, travel. Each week was a scramble. Somehow, we always came through.

My special interest was in food — a review of a new local restaurant, an interview with a great cook, a visit to an herb garden, a recounting of one of my trips with the Association of Food Journalists, were all favorites.

In 1995, the Almanac moved to the Alameda in West Menlo Park, which was great since it was close to my home. We did miss the downtown restaurants. Although we didn't have as many visitors on the Alameda, it was a friendly place. Thalia Battles brought in crockpots of delicious homemade soup. There was always food to scrounge in our new kitchen. Receptionist Jeanne Hueffed was hostess, arranging monthly birthday parties and celebration luncheons.

The Levines retired and the paper was sold to the Embarcadero Publishing Company in 1993. Tom Gibboney, who had edited a Pulitzer Prize-winning weekly in Alaska, became editor and publisher. Richard Hine continued as managing editor, handling sometimes temperamental reporters and the never-ending pressure of deadlines with finesse.

Newspapers always look for the local angle. The local angle here is Bill Johnson, who grew up in Portola Valley and is president and CEO of Embarcadero Media (the former Embarcadero Publishing Co.). His mother was a friend of Almanac founder Betty Fry.

I remember Bill sitting by Betty Fry's desk, absorbing some of her good advice when he was planning on starting the Palo Alto Weekly.

Today the Almanac offices are at Embarcadero Media's new building at 450 Cambridge Ave. in Palo Alto, sharing space with the Palo Alto Weekly and the Mountain View Voice. Reporters

are connected to their computers. No noisy typewriters. Few jangling telephones. The editorial department has its own third floor. Visitors rarely venture above the first floor.

Looking back over 40 years, so many memories, so many good stories, so many terrific people, some now gone.

Leaving the Almanac office and bidding farewell isn't easy. I'll miss my coworkers, all the interesting people I've met, and being part of a local newspaper. Hopefully, becoming a freelancer from my new home in Carlsbad, California, will keep me in touch with people I treasure and the paper I've been proud to represent.

During my time with the Almanac, I've interviewed Martha Stewart, had a drink with Shirley Temple, been quoted in the New York Times. I forged close friendships with Marjorie Mader, Marion Softky and Carol Ivie, to name a few. Friends told me, “You've got the best job in the world.” I agree. ■

Atherton must act to weather winter storms, report says

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

If the coming winter in the Bay Area is as rainy as long-range forecasts have been predicting, Atherton will have problems handling storm-water runoff as it makes its way to and out of the Atherton Channel.

The City Council met Sept. 2 to hear a report from San Jose engineering firm NV5 Inc. on an update to the town's 2014 drainage master plan — specifically, how to store storm-water runoff and prevent flooding in the channel.

Three issues topped the priority list:

■ A water flow bottleneck exists in the form of a culvert on Marsh Road east of the intersection with Middlefield Road. Is it feasible to temporarily detain storm water in upstream basins, perhaps at Holbrook-Palmer Park, or the private Menlo Circus Club, or Las

Lomitas Elementary School?

Of the three locations, the school is closest to the channel, engineers said. A basin at the Circus Club could hold 5.6 million gallons of water, while the park could hold 3.9 million gallons and the school 1.1 million gallons, according to the NV5 report. Two basins would be needed "to really address" the flood potential, City Manager George Rodericks told the Almanac.

■ The Las Lomitas Elementary School District is an independent agency. The town should keep track of district actions to address flooding at the school, including plans to divert water around the school and/or detain it.

■ Water from the Horse Park at Woodside passes through the Atherton Channel. The town should get a reading on the water quality, including bacterial content, of storm water

coming from the Horse Park.

Atherton's problem with runoff is complicated because of the multiple sources of the water. About half of it has sources west of town, with 36 percent coming from Menlo Park and unincorporated San Mateo County, and 19 percent from Woodside and Stanford University, according to NV5 engineers.

The Marsh Road bottleneck is a box-shaped culvert that can handle about 85 percent of what a 10-year storm would produce. Widening the culvert would be more problematic than building detention basins, Mr. Rodericks said, chiefly because the culvert is located in an area covered by multiple jurisdictions.

Complaints in town about flooding are markedly lower since the 2001 flooding analysis, with just 17 complaints in 2013 compared with 97 in 2001, the engineers said. The council's concern, for now, is a 10-year storm in that the Marsh Road culvert can handle flows for a seven-year storm only, engineers said.

Detention

Detention is key to reducing flow, and cooperation among the players is the best approach, said Nona Espinosa, a senior engineer at NV5.

Mr. Rodericks said the basins under discussion have two forms: a lawn over a concrete structure installed a few feet beneath the surface, making it all but invisible; or a field or lawn enclosed by berms, permeable and capable of holding maybe 4 feet of standing water. A key difference: an above-ground pond presents a drowning hazard and

would have to be fenced.

The city had 48 drainage-system improvement projects on the table in 2001 and finished 26 of them to date, including 10 swales and six storm drain systems, at a cost of about \$44 million, Councilwoman Elizabeth Lewis said.

It's not clear what future infrastructure investment costs would be, town officials said.

Comment

Councilman Bill Widmer said he would not be 100 percent behind an above-ground detention pool at Holbrook-Palmer Park. "This is a park," he said. "It's not a water reservoir."

Such a basin becomes a safety issue, added Mayor Rick DeGolia.

The town should be talking about storm water with San Mateo County regarding the situation at the box culvert, and with officials from the Las Lomitas district and the Horse Park, Mr. DeGolia said. ■

Aircraft noise: Atherton calls for county action

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

With noise overhead from Surf Air commuter planes landing at San Carlos Airport continuing to be an issue in Atherton, the mayor will be sending a letter with complaints and suggestions to a San Mateo County governmental association looking at airport-related issues.

The letter to the City/County Association of Governments will constitute the Atherton City Council's feedback and comment on the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan, a report meant to serve as "a framework for reviewing significant proposals for further airport development," according to City Manager George Rodericks.

The council met Sept. 2 to discuss its comments. Among the concerns: rebates for residents installing double-pane windows, a call for county Board of Supervisors to hold public meetings on airport impacts, and putting Atherton on record as disagreeing with noise measurement standards.

"It's such a problem that I cannot carry on a conversation in my house," resident Mary Wheeler said. "It's so bad it has a detrimental effect on our quality of life." ■



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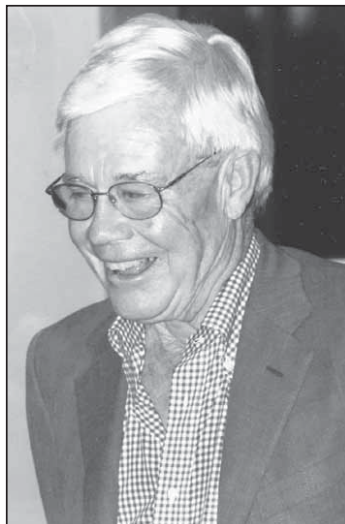
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Scott T. Carey Memorial Service

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PAID OBITUARY

■ 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.

PORTOLA VALLEY

Theft: Someone stole \$2,000 in cash and a credit card from an unlocked Ford pickup truck parked in the 4100 block of Alpine Road. The card was used to make two purchases in Santa Clara. Aug. 25.

WOODSIDE

Auto burglaries:

■ Someone smashed the rear window of a vehicle parked in the 3000 block of Woodside Road and stole a camera and a flask. Estimated loss: \$800. Aug. 30.

■ A vehicle parked in the 3000 block of Woodside Road was found with a window smashed and a backpack, headset and clothing stolen. Estimated loss: \$475. Aug. 28.

Traffic accident: A sheriff's deputy came to the scene of a reported bike accident at High and Woodside roads and found medics from the Woodside Fire Protection District treating a cyclist who had run over some kind of obstruction, maybe gravel. The cyclist lost control of his bike and fell off. Medics took him to Stanford Hospital for treatment. Aug. 23.

MENLO PARK

Residential burglaries:

■ Someone stole two rings from an apartment on Willow Road. There were no signs of forced entry. Estimated loss: \$900. Aug. 24.

■ A wallet was stolen from an apartment on Crane Street, also with no signs of forced entry. Estimated loss: \$450. Aug. 24.

■ A thief stole a bike from an enclosed garage. Estimated loss: \$450. Aug. 27.

■ A resident of Hamilton Avenue told police that she had seen someone peeking in her window at night, and that he fled before police arrived. Aug. 25.

■ A resident of Marcussen Drive found indications of someone trying to pry open the house's front door. Aug. 27.

Commercial burglary: Someone used a rock to smash glass doors at Aviso Corp. on Constitution Drive, then stole 10 Apple computer monitors, a large-screen TV and computer accessories. Estimated loss: \$2,100. Aug. 24.

Auto burglaries:

■ A camera and a gym bag containing shoes and a pair of jeans were stolen from an unlocked vehicle on

Live Oak Avenue. Estimated loss: \$3,200. Aug. 24.

■ Someone smashed a window and stole a laptop computer and \$200 in cash from a vehicle parked in the 2800 block of Sand Hill Road. Estimated loss: \$1,600. Aug. 24.

Thefts:

■ Someone stole a purse containing a wallet, earrings and other items from an unlocked vehicle parked on Royal Oak Court. Estimated loss: \$5,000. Aug. 22.

■ A purse stolen from unlocked vehicle parked on Oak Hollow Way contained \$55 in cash, prescription glasses, a checkbook, earrings and other items. Estimated loss: \$5,000. Aug. 22.

■ A resident of Madera Avenue reported seven checks signed and cashed by someone unauthorized to cash them. Estimated loss: \$2,234. Aug. 24.

■ A surveillance camera caught images of someone stealing a package containing tennis rackets and vitamins from the porch of a home on Cambridge Avenue. The video shows the suspect returning a box to the porch 10 minutes later. Estimated loss: \$608. Aug. 25.

■ Someone stole a locked bike from a bike rack in the 500 block of Alma Street. Estimated loss: \$400. Aug. 27.

■ A bike was stolen from a bike rack near the public library. Estimated loss: \$399. Aug. 27.

■ A resident of Terminal Avenue told police that someone stole two credit cards and \$480 in cash from his wallet, though he did not know how this happened or where. Aug. 25.

■ Someone stole a Kindle reader from an unlocked vehicle. Estimated loss: \$150. Aug. 27.

■ Two packages, containing a pair of shoes and press-on fake fingernails, were stolen from a porch on Yale Road. Estimated loss: \$80. Aug. 27.

■ A man was seen stealing a hair-and-beard trimmer from Walgreens on Santa Cruz Avenue. Estimated loss: \$47. Aug. 26.

Stolen vehicle: A 2013 silver Chevrolet Camaro from Ringwood Avenue at Bay Road. Aug. 24

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PLANNING COMMISSION September 16, 2015 6:00 PM

PUBLIC HEARING

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Maurice and Helen Werdegar 1028 Cañada Road | SDES2015-0003, CEQA2015-0002 Planner: Sean Mullin, Associate Planner |
|---|---|

Review and approval, conditional approval, or denial of a proposal to demolish two existing main residences and eight accessory structures including four barns, a loafing shed, a detached garage, an outhouse, and a well house; and construct a new two-story main residence with a partial basement, two detached accessory living quarters (guest house and pool lounge) and three accessory structures (office, fitness barn, and garage), a swimming pool, a new vehicular entry gate and wing walls, and other landscaping and site improvements. The current equestrian use of the property will not be maintained with the proposed project. The Planning Commission shall consider adoption of an associated Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act related to work proposed within a stream corridor.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2. 70 Valley Ranch LLC 70 Valley Court | SDES2015-0005, GRAD2015-0003 Planner: Sage Schaan, Principal Planner |
|---|---|

Review and approval, conditional approval, or denial, of a project requiring Formal Design Review, to demolish an existing single family residence; construct a single-family residence, guest house (without kitchen), and remodel an existing pool house into a pool house/Accessory Living Quarters. The proposal requires Planning Commission approval as the project is over 2,000 square feet and is located within the scenic corridor of Highway 280, and a Grading Exception is required for proposed grading of greater than 1,500 cubic yards.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 3. Caltrans Caltrans Right-of-Way near 5055 Farm Blvd | CUSE2013-0005 Planner: Sean Mullin, Associate Planner |
|--|--|

Review for approval, conditional approval, or denial of a Conditional Use Permit Amendment to CUSE2009-0002 to modify the ground-mounted equipment, remove the existing 12-foot pole and install a new 20-foot pole and new pole-mounted equipment at an existing wireless facility on property owned by Caltrans. Ground-mounted equipment would be installed within the confines of the existing utility pad. This project was continued from the June 4, 2014, meeting.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 4. WMC Chapter 151, Site Development, Including New Development Standards for Basements | ZOAM2015-0003 Planner: Jackie Young, Planning Director |
|--|---|

Review and recommend approval, conditional approval, or denial to the Town Council of an ordinance to amend and update Woodside Municipal Chapter 151 in its entirety, to address: development standards for basements; items included in grading calculations; the findings necessary for a Second Driveway Exception; spelling/sentence structure corrections; updates to referenced documents, State law, and responsible agencies; review of definitions for outdated, erroneous, or missing terms; obsolete practices; reorganization of the submittal material section to be more user-friendly; and cross checks for consistency with the current regulations of outside agencies, such as County Health and the Woodside Fire Protection District.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 5. WMC Section 153.220-153.231, Architectural and Site Review - Process Streamlining | ZOAM2015-0004 Planner: Jackie Young, Planning Director |
|---|---|

Review and recommended approval, conditional approval, or denial to the Town Council of an ordinance to amend Woodside Municipal Code (WMC) Section 153.220-153.231, Architectural and Site Review, and related WMC sections, to streamline the process and procedures for architectural and site review.

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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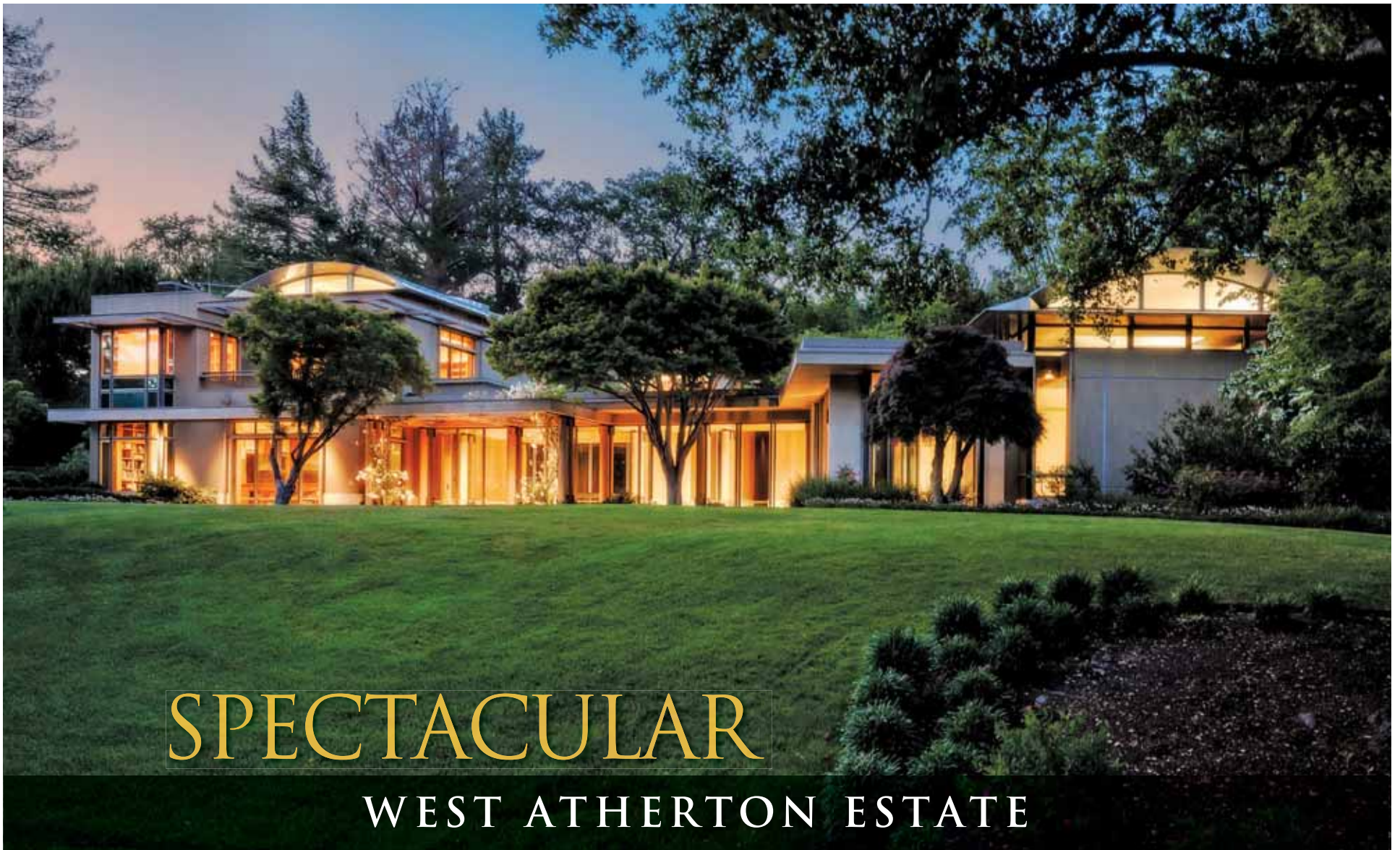
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Menlo Park, CA 94025

Call the Viewpoint desk at
223-6528.

Time to open discussion on leaf blowers

Attempts by cities to curtail or outright ban the use of leaf blowers over the years have often been defeated by professional lobbying efforts and fears by some residents and business owners that the cost of gardening services will rise. But arguments by the California Landscape Contractors Association and other industry groups decrying the financial hardship a ban would have on professional gardeners, and by homeowners unwilling to pay their gardeners an extra \$10 or \$15 for service, overlook another cost that must become part of the discussion: the cost of leaf blower use to human health.

Most people are all too familiar with the blasting, disruptive noise of leaf blowers, but many probably aren't aware of the serious health hazards of these machines—to gardeners and everyone else. According to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, leaf blowers whip up into the air particles including hydrocarbons from gasoline, animal droppings, spores, pesticides and herbicides, fertilizers, brake-lining dust and tire residue, and heavy metals. Some of these particles are easily absorbed by the lungs, and some can travel hundreds of miles and remain airborne for days or weeks, the air quality district report says.

Particulate matter, the air quality district asserts, is “the air pollutant that poses by far the greatest health risk to Bay Area residents.” And leaf blowers share the blame for that risk: Each leaf blower whisks up into the air about 5 pounds of particulate matter per hour, and those particles can take hours to settle, according to a 1999 Orange County grand jury report on leaf blower pollution.

Menlo Park banned gas-powered leaf blowers in April 1998, but the ordinance was opposed by industry lobbying groups and a vocal contingent of residents. It was overturned by referendum that same year.

But some California cities, including Berkeley, Santa Monica, Laguna Beach and Los Angeles, have successfully put bans or significant restrictions in place. In Southern California, cities trying to address health and quality-of-life issues resulting from leaf blower use are supported by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, which in 2006 established a leaf blower buy-back program for professional gardeners. The program is responsible for handing over some 12,000 cleaner and

less noisy machines to professional gardeners in exchange for the worst kinds of blowers.

The Bay Area air quality district has been working on reducing harmful particles swept into the air by leaf blowers, but the task is huge. A program it oversees funds the exchange of battery-powered, zero-emission lawn and garden equipment for gas-powered machines, but the program is restricted at this time to Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

Is it time to raise the issue in our local towns? Yes, given the high cost to human health posed by leaf blowers. There are many types of restrictions that can be considered. Some cities have focused on banning gas-powered machines but allowing electric blowers, reducing the noise level and emissions specific to gasoline. Others have banned all leaf blowers, regardless of what fuels them. Then there are cities that have restricted the hours of their use, and put a cap on the allowable decibel level of the noise they produce. Although Menlo Park adopted the last of these strategies after the ban was overturned, many residents believe more must be done.

Any move to restrict leaf blowers would come with a financial cost to a town—code enforcement isn't cheap. And there would of course be a financial hit to local professional gardeners as well. But our communities have an active force of environmental advocates, including on their city councils, and creative minds can forge a plan to make any new rules governing leaf blower use less painful to gardeners and less costly to the towns.

For one thing, town leaders might approach the Bay Area air quality district with a plan to partner with that agency in a buy-back program. If a town doesn't want to ban leaf blowers completely, the partnership program could fund training sessions on effective operation of the machines to minimize pollution and protect the soil that now so often is harmed by their reckless use.

There are a number of approaches Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside can take to address the leaf blower problem that affects our shared environment, but to not approach it at all would be to ignore an important health and safety issue. ▣

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

Looking back

It was a grand event that brought Miss San Francisco, Eleanor Twohig, to Menlo Park. That event was the 1927 opening of the brand new Dumbarton Bridge. Historians Michael Svanevik and Shirley Burgett write in their Menlo Park history book “Beyond the Gate” that the first automobile crossing of the San Francisco Bay via the bridge was on Jan. 15, 1927. The structure lasted until 1984, when it was destroyed by explosives to be replaced by a new bridge that year, according to the historians.



Menlo Park Historical Association



46 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton Offered at \$2,988,000

Gated Craftsman Home, Beautifully Restored

Flaunting period details, this 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom Craftsman-style home of 2,680 sq. ft. (per county) covers a lot of 0.62 acres (per county). Two gates open to a semi-circular driveway, leading to this home adorned with 10-foot coved ceilings, white oak floors, antique fixtures, and picture molding. Pocket doors open to a formal living room with a fireplace and a formal dining room with a bronze stove. The elegantly remodeled kitchen adjoins a butler's pantry, a walk-in pantry, and a light-filled breakfast room. Three beautiful bedrooms include the master suite, which features two closets, a sunroom, and a newly remodeled bathroom. These gorgeous grounds enjoy large outdoor entertainment areas, plus new landscaping, a fountain, rosebushes, vegetable planters, and a detached garage. Other highlights include an updated hall bathroom and a lower-level bonus room. Walking distance from Caltrain, the home is also steps from Holbrook-Palmer Park and the Atherton Library. Excellent nearby schools like Encinal Elementary (API 930), Hillview Middle (API 950), and Menlo-Atherton High (buyer to verify eligibility).

For video tour & more photos, please visit:
www.46FairOaks.com



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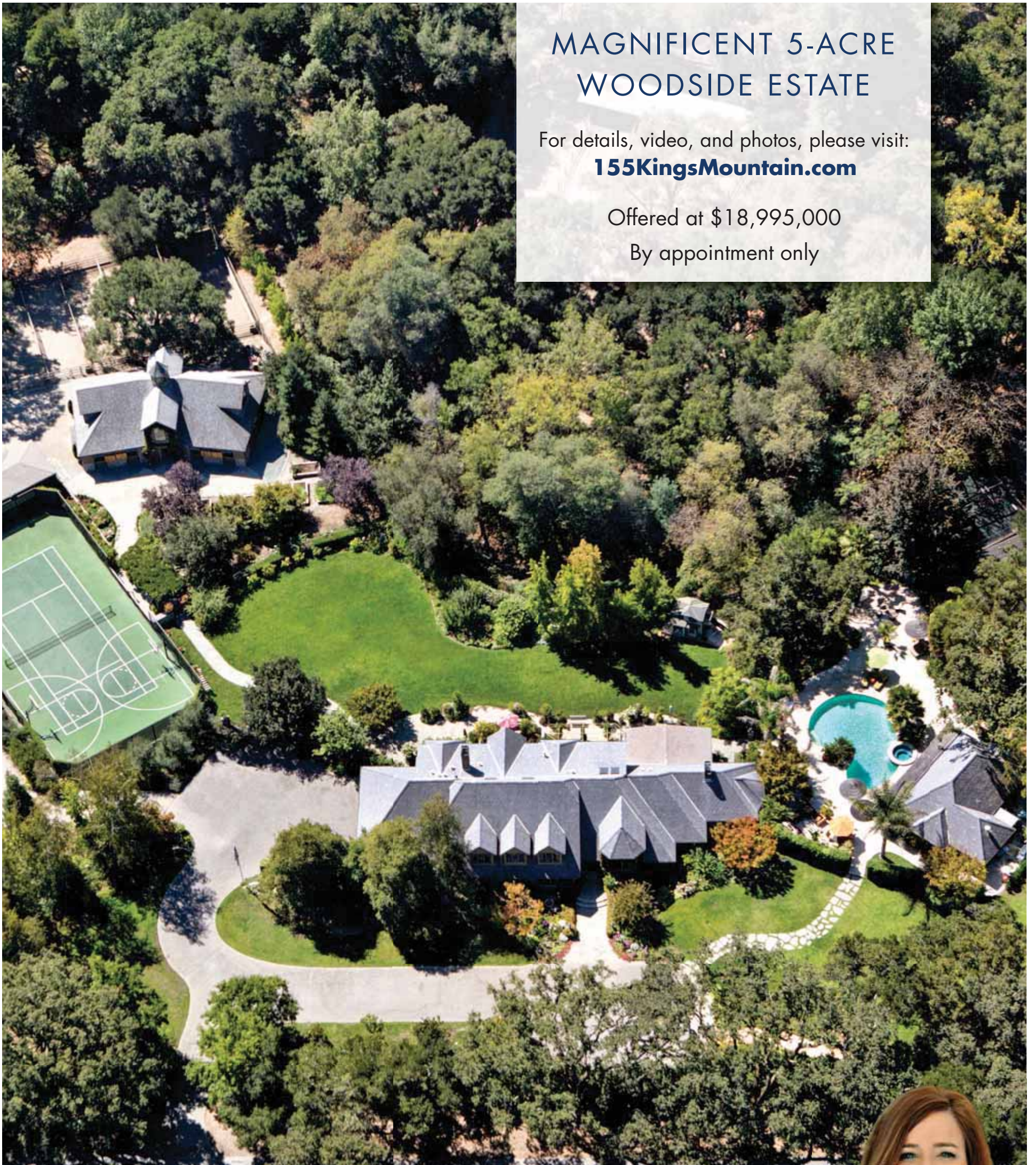
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