

Palo Alto

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Weekly

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INSIDE Bay Area Senior Games



STANDING TALL

Palo Alto's Tall Tree Award winners are honored for exceptional community service

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LECTURE SERIES

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20th Anniversary
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City manager seeks to change vague hiring policy

Current Palo Alto system has created unusual category of managers

by Gennady Sheyner

Ned Himmel, Rich Malonee and Rob Braulik have little in common when it comes to professional responsibilities, but one wouldn't know it from looking at their job titles.

Himmel took over as the city's

interim library director in October, replacing retired Director Diane Jennings. Malonee heads the city's Office of Emergency Services, while Braulik helps the City Council keep up with California's proposed high-speed rail project. But the three share

one characteristic; they are among the dozens of city employees whose official title is "management specialist" — a nebulous designation that has become increasingly common at City Hall over the past three years.

Records from the Administrative Services Department show that in 2010, 73 employees carried the "management specialist" designation — up from 45 in 2007. The list includes an attorney, a Fire Department deputy chief, planning consultants, traffic

engineers, police dispatchers and Palo Alto's interim city auditor. About the only thing that links these officials is their vague title.

Taken as a group, the management specialists earned more than \$3 million in 2010.

Not coincidentally, the number of management specialists at City Hall has been rising at the same time as Palo Alto's overall workforce has been on the decline. Dozens of workers have retired or have seen their

positions eliminated over the past two years. Palo Alto eliminated 60 positions that were supported by its General Fund over the past two fiscal years, and 46 other positions have been held vacant to save money.

The overall number of positions in the General Fund has dropped from 730 in 2003 to about 580 today, City Manager James Keene told the council during its annual retreat

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Veronica Weber

Bake sale aids Japanese disaster relief

Masako Yang, 6, and fellow classmates at Ohlone Elementary School sort through Japanese snacks and treats during a March 22 fundraiser for victims of Japan's earthquake and tsunami. The school sold baked goods, sushi, used books, origami and crafts, and donated the money raised to the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California.

COMMUNITY

Hate doing taxes? Not these guys

Tax-prep volunteers recoup big money for low-income clients and seniors

by Sue Dremann

For most people, doing taxes once each year is more than enough, but Sheldon Kay does as many as 20 returns for other people — for free.

Kay, a retired engineer who spent

most of his career working on the Hubble telescope, is one of a group of volunteers who fill out tax forms for low- and moderate-income people and seniors through the United Way of the Bay Area's EarnIt!KeepIt!SaveIt!

program.

The program has saved millions of dollars in taxes for Bay Area residents who earn less than \$49,000 per year, according to the organization.

Volunteers have also prevented thousands of people from predatory lending by some for-fee tax preparers, who offer enticing high-interest advances on refund checks.

With one month left in this year's tax season, the program has seen a 25 percent increase in demand over last year, in large part because many first-time clients had their incomes drop significantly due to job loss or cuts in hours, Kelly Batson, regional director, said.

Last year, 33 percent of program clients reported that they or someone

in their household had lost a job in the previous year, and 29 percent had a cut in hours or wages, she said.

"Even if you didn't qualify for free tax preparation in previous years, this year could be different, especially if you saw a reduction in your income. Not only will you get your taxes prepared for free, but you'll also receive expert guidance on how to account for unemployment benefits in your tax return and which tax breaks you are eligible for when your income is down," she said.

Those tax breaks can amount to a significant savings and even a refund in thousands of dollars, she said.

Last year, the program recouped \$57 million in tax refunds from

(continued on page 10)

NEIGHBORHOODS

Manager embezzles \$70K from neighborhood

Former Greenmeadow Community Association administrative manager apologizes for crime

by Gennady Sheyner and Sue Dremann

The former administrative manager of the Greenmeadow Community Association in south Palo Alto has admitted to embezzling as much as \$70,000 from the neighborhood association.

Kimball Allen, who was hired by the association in 2008, sent the association an apology letter through the Palo Alto police department on March 17 for the theft, which took place throughout 2010, according to association President Sean Giffen.

Details of Allen's expenditures on the association's credit card emerged at a March 22 community meeting regarding the theft. The charges included a \$5,000 air-conditioning system for a rental home he owns in Kansas City, Mo.; a hair-replacement surgery; membership to a high-end fitness club; trips; and paying off his credit cards, Giffen said Wednesday (March 23).

In his letter to the association, Allen acknowledged, "The crimes that I have committed are pathetic and hurtful" and asked members to keep an "open mind."

"I got caught up in a vicious cycle of greed, selfishness and deceit," Allen wrote in the letter, which was obtained by the Weekly. "My actions cannot be justified and the worst punishment is my own guilt."

Allen resigned his position on Dec. 30, 2010, to start a new gym, but he stayed on through January 2011 to train his replacement, Donna Rhoan.

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“If I had hair, my hair would be on fire.”
— Ken Dauber, Gunn High School parent, on the urgency of responding to a survey on student emotional health. See story on page 5.

Around Town

TAKING BACK THE 'PROCESS'
... The "Palo Alto Process" is a term laced with nasty bureaucratic baggage. Mayor **Sid Espinosa** summarized it succinctly at this week's City Council meeting: "For anyone who lived here for any length of time, it's synonymous with anything that's unclear and cumbersome with the process," particularly as it relates to building permits. The council is fighting the stigma in two ways. One is reforming and simplifying the city's permitting process — a process that City Manager **James Keene** kicked off last July. The second way is by focusing on the positive aspects of the city's famous thoroughness, as evidenced at Monday night's four-hour discussion of composting technologies. The council debated the preliminary results of a feasibility study for a proposed waste-to-energy plant, heard from dozens of residents and raised new issues for staff and consultants to explore. Though the city came no closer to making a decision on the project, Espinosa and his colleagues on the council hailed the discussion as an example of everything that's good about Palo Alto. "I think having the kind of engagement on a subject like this is exceptional, and I think it's a good part of the 'Palo Alto Process' and one we should embrace," Councilman **Pat Burt** said. "What a cool town this is," Keene added at the end of the public-comment period. "It's amazing to listen to this discussion." At least one member of the public agreed. "The 'Palo Alto Process' is pretty darn amazing," said **Annette Isaacson**, a Midtown resident who is supporting the new plant.

SPEAKING OF 'PROCESS' ... Palo Alto officials hear no shortage of complaints about the city's frustrating permitting process. **Jim McFall**, a local architect who is part of a citizens group advising the city with the reforms, illustrated the complexities at this week's City Council meeting when he unfurled two scrolls, each longer than 4 feet, and displayed them to the council and the public. One was a list of Palo Alto's application and permit types; the other was a list of city regulations. "As you can see, it's not often times a simple process," McFall said as the scrolls

dangled from his shoulder level to the floor.

SPEAKING OF COMPOST ... Palo Alto residents are invited to grab their shovels and buckets and come out to the city's soon-to-be-closed landfill for some free compost. The city will be holding "Compost Giveaway" days on March 26 and April 3, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Each visitor will be able to come away with up to 1 cubic yard of compost.

ON THE ROAD ... The Palo Alto Art Center will be shutting its doors April 4 for its long-awaited renovation and is not expected to reopen until summer of 2012. But art lovers needn't fear. According to Art Center Director **Karen Kienzle**, the center will be able to maintain its art classes and programs for kids and adults by holding them at other locations throughout the city, including at **Lucie Stern** and **Cubberley** community centers. The center's "art truck" will also hit the road, bringing art projects to events throughout the year. The city is soliciting input on potential names for the truck, which can be offered in a suggestion box in the lobby of city hall. Arts Producer **Rebecca Barbee** said the art center's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/paloaltoartcenter, is currently the best way to get updates and information on all the center's happenings.

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING? ... It's been a wet, gray week throughout the Bay Area and the weather prognosis for the week-end is no better. But Palo Altans have at least one reason not to feel too gloomy. Councilman **Larry Klein**, who sits on the board of directors at the **Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency**, told his colleagues that as of last week, the water supply at the Hetch Hetchy system (from where the city gets its water) was at 159 percent of the normal level. Even if the weather were to dry up for the rest of the fiscal year (which ends June 30), the water agency would end the year at 120 percent of the normal level. These numbers don't include the wet week that is just concluding and the rainy days ahead. As Klein put it, it's been "a great year for water." ■

After the disaster: Enoch Choi's Japan Blog

In new Palo Alto Online blog, local doctor relays efforts of medical team sent to Japan to aid earthquake victims

Enoch Choi, a partner at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation Urgent Care Center and a disaster-relief veteran, isn't in Japan yet. But he's at the heart of relief efforts by a medical team that arrived in the Sendai area of Japan this past week.

To inform Midpeninsula readers of the ongoing challenges facing the Japanese in the wake of the 9.0 earthquake and subsequent tsunami, Choi has launched a blog on PaloAltoOnline.com, Enoch Choi's Japan Blog.

Choi will provide updates about the medical-aid efforts, with links to videos and photos shot by the team.

"We've had a physician, nurse and team of support folks in the disaster area in the past week," Choi said. All are experienced in disaster relief, having aided in Haiti and after Hurricane Katrina.

As a first-world nation, Japan is

much like the Bay Area, and given the risk of the San Andreas fault, a local disaster could look similar to that in Japan, Choi said.

"We could be in these same conditions," he said.

Approximately a half-million Japanese took to shelters immediately after the initial quake. Some have returned to their homes; however, without resources, they are returning to shelters for food and water, Choi said.

There are those who lack prescription medications for chronic health



Enoch Choi

conditions. Others have colds, flu or were injured trying to recover property from their homes. Contaminated water has led to gastrointestinal disease as well.

Choi's medical team is composed of personnel from the nonprofit humanitarian organization Jordan International Aid, which is working with the National University of Singapore Entrepreneurship Centre and a multidisciplinary team of skilled social entrepreneurs, nutritionists, health professionals and disaster veterans.

The team brought its own food, supplies and shelter, Choi said.

Choi and a few other Palo Alto Medical Foundation doctors are ready to travel to Japan as well, once the risk of radiation lessens. ■

— Palo Alto Weekly staff

EDUCATION

Parents ask Palo Alto to be anti-stress role model

Exchange follows discussion of survey data from more than 4,000 students

by Chris Kenrick

Frustrated parents Tuesday challenged the Palo Alto Board of Education to make local schools "a role model nationally" in stress reduction.

Following a lengthy school board discussion of survey data that paints a mixed picture of student emotional health, a group of parents argued the schools are not doing enough to reduce academic stress.

One mother of three Palo Alto High School graduates, who criticized what she called "the marathon of achievement," said she was "speaking for what I believe is the silent majority of parents and students in Palo Alto."

"My daughter and her Paly friends routinely stayed up until the wee hours of the morning to finish their homework," Karen Kang said.

"It was physically impossible to complete their assignments in a normal day. Not wanting to appear like losers, they suffered in silence. For students taking AP classes, this is not unusual."

Kang said the daughter, now in her mid-20s, attributed the anorexia, anxiety and depression she experienced in high school largely to "being enrolled in the Palo Alto school system."

Citing a string of student suicides in 2009 and 2010, the parents said the district has failed to "propagate things that work" (to reduce stress) such as Paly's new bell schedule and reforming homework and testing policies.

School board members said while they agreed with the broad goals of the complaining parents, differences

exist on timing and tactics.

"I don't agree that nothing's been done and that we've sat back and allowed a crisis to occur and not responded," board member Barbara Klausner said.

"A lot of things have been done and they fit under (what you are asking for).

"I'd say we are doing some of these things (you ask for) but there are some key factors we haven't necessarily addressed."

Klausner and other board members asked administrators to consider whether the parents' concerns could be addressed through the district's priorities for next year.

In particular, the parents asked for immediate implementation of a policy to foster a "supportive school environment," which was among 22 recommendations in a report issued last summer by Project Safety Net. Formed in response to the suicides, Project Safety Net is a community-wide coalition to boost the social and emotional well-being of Palo Alto youth.

Among the 22 Project Safety Net recommendations, officials this year chose five to particularly focus on, and those did not include the "supportive school environment" item, known as P-8.

Superintendent Kevin Skelly said he would find a way to do so, but added that he rejects what he called a "dangerous" premise of the parents' request — "that there's a direct connection between the suicides and Gunn High School.

"I think that's a dangerous place

to go, and unfair to the school, the district, the students and faculty who have worked very hard to create an environment there," Skelly said.

"What we're looking for is an expanded definition of success within the schools and community that embodies an appreciation of the variety of aptitudes and avenues that define success.

"We have a particularly unique challenge around that, living in the community that we do. ...

"Changing the definition of success is going to take the entire community," he said.

"There's no reason we can't address this in powerful ways."

Kang urged the Board of Education to "be bold and grab this opportunity" to be a national role model in stress reduction.

"We have excellent local partners, a good plan and a highly visible school district. ...

"It's a win-win for the students, the community and the district," she said.

Kang's comments came shortly after the board discussed results of an emotional health survey taken by more than 4,000 Palo Alto students last October.

The survey, measuring the degree to which fifth graders, seventh graders and high school students possess 40 key "developmental assets" needed to thrive, offered a mixed picture.

In general, results showed that elementary students have more positive attitudes than older students and

(continued on page 6)



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Online This Week

These and other news stories were posted on Palo Alto Online throughout the week. For longer versions, go to www.PaloAltoOnline.com/news or click on "News" in the left, green column.

Superintendent urges denial of charter school bid

The superintendent of East Palo Alto's Ravenswood City School District has recommended denial of an application by a high-performing charter school operator to open a campus in East Palo Alto. (Posted March 24 at 9:51 a.m.)

Humanitarian Oneida 'Mother' Branch dies at 92

Oneida "Mother" Branch, 92, who for years collected and provided food and clothing for East Palo Alto's needy, died of natural causes Tuesday (March 22). (Posted March 24 at 9:32 a.m.)

Stanford students hold bake sale to help Japan

A bake sale benefiting victims of the recent earthquake and tsunami in Japan will be held by Stanford students Saturday (March 25) from noon to 3 p.m. at the Clark Center, outside NeXus Cafe, 318 Campus Drive, Stanford University. (Posted March 24 at 9:19 a.m.)

Menlo Park council looks at \$1.3M in budget cuts

The \$1.3 million in cuts proposed for Menlo Park's general fund will largely come from reducing personnel costs, according to a staff report, saving an estimated \$681,000. (Posted March 24 at 9:14 a.m.)

Menlo Park city manager announces retirement

Calling it a tough decision, Menlo Park City Manager Glen Rojas announced Tuesday morning (March 22) that he is retiring, effective July 15. Rojas said it was a tough decision that he had been considering for a while. (Posted March 23 at 9:23 a.m.)

East Palo Alto gets \$40K for Cooley Landing Park

East Palo Alto received a \$40,000 grant Saturday (March 19) to develop a public nature park that will increase the city's park space by more than 50 percent, local officials said. (Posted March 23 at 9:15 a.m.)

PiE raises \$3.4M for Palo Alto schools

Parent volunteers have raised a record-breaking \$3.4 million to donate to Palo Alto's 17 public school campuses, the foundation Partners in Education (PiE) announced Tuesday (March 22). (Posted March 23 at 12:45 a.m.)

Smuggler kidnaps woman from Mountain View

An illegal border crossing took a scary turn in Mountain View on Sunday (March 20) after the family of a woman was unable to pay the extra money demanded by an immigrant smuggler, a police spokeswoman said. (Posted March 22 at 12:04 p.m.)

New city attorney pledges 'transparency'

Palo Alto's new city attorney passed her first test Monday night (March 21) — she sat through a four-hour debate on composting technologies and emerged not just awake but downright impressed. (Posted March 22 at 11:36 a.m.)

Los Altos man dies after crash off 280

A Los Altos man died Sunday (March 20) after succumbing to injuries from a solo vehicle collision in unincorporated Santa Clara County on Saturday afternoon (March 19), a Redwood City California Highway Patrol officer said. (Posted March 22 at 9:12 a.m.)

Car slams into tree on Bryant Street in Palo Alto

The driver of a silver Mercedes sedan broke her nose Monday morning when her car slammed into a tree on Bryant Street in Palo Alto, police said. The single-vehicle crash occurred around 10:30 a.m. between Embarcadero Road and Kingsley Avenue. (Posted March 21 at 3:07 p.m.)

Mountain lion sighted in Woodside/Portola Valley

A mountain lion was seen in the vicinity of Farm Road and Woodview Lane in the Woodside/Portola Valley area at approximately 3:30 a.m. Monday morning (March 21), the San Mateo County Office of Emergency Services reported. (Posted March 21 at 3:07 p.m.)

Palo Alto choral group helping Japan through music

A local Japanese choral group that practices at Aldersgate United Methodist Church in Palo Alto has made a YouTube video to muster aid, raise awareness and bring comfort to the tragedy-stricken people of Japan. (Posted March 20 at 10:48 a.m.)

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LAND USE

South Palo Alto housing proposal dealt a blow

Planning commission rejects plan for 26 homes at site of Peninsula Day Care

by Gennady Sheyner

A proposal to build 26 homes on the site of a soon-to-be-closed day care center in south Palo Alto suffered a possibly fatal setback Wednesday night when the city's Planning and Transportation Commission voted it down.

The plan by SummerHill Homes called for the creation of a residential community at 525 San Antonio Road, the present site of Peninsula Day Care. The child care center, which stands adjacent to the Greendell neighborhood on the city's southern edge, is scheduled to close in two months after 37 years in operation.

SummerHill cited the area's proximity to the San Antonio Road Caltrain station and the nearby Charleston Shopping Center as good reasons for building homes at the 3-acre site. But after hearing from skeptical residents from the Greenmeadow and Greendell neighborhoods, the commission reached the opposite conclusion.

The commission voted 6-1, with Eduardo Martinez dissenting, to recommend that the City Council deny SummerHill's proposed zone change. Commissioners cited a variety of reasons, including the area's insufficient access to transportation, a shortage of services in the neighborhood and the recent influx of dense housing developments in south Palo Alto.

The SummerHill proposal isn't nearly as dense as other projects the city has approved in south Palo Alto over the past decade. Unlike recent developments such as Altaire, Echelon and Arbor Real (each of which has more than 70

units), the SummerHill plan called for a "low-density multiple-family residential" zone that would allow for 26 two-story homes.

After hearing community opposition, the developer agreed to reduce the number of houses to 23. Seven of these would be one-story homes that would serve as a buffer zone between the development's 16 two-story homes and Greendell's houses. The new plan was meant to address concerns about privacy from the Greendell and Greenmeadow neighborhoods, which largely are composed of one-story Eichler-style homes.

"It's quite a low-impact residential development," SummerHill Vice President Katia Kamangar told the commission. "We feel it is appropriate in the context of adjacencies, access to retail and access to transit."

But the revisions weren't enough to sway the neighborhood residents, about 40 of whom attended the Wednesday meeting. Lisa Steinback of the Greenmeadow Community Association said members of her group voted 60 to 3 to oppose the proposed zone change.

Recent housing projects and zone changes in south Palo Alto have "undermined the residents' trust in the city's commitment to the Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance," Steinback said.

"Approval of this project would exacerbate a critical problem of unplanned housing development that already is affecting south Palo Alto schools, playing fields, space availability and transportation systems," she told the commission.

The city's planning staff also recommended the commission reject SummerHill's proposal for a zone change. Planning Manager Amy French noted in her report the proposed development would include a "relatively significant population increase" and would be located more than half a mile from the Caltrain station. Based on these factors, she wrote, the proposed zone change is "inconsistent with the council direction to focus increased housing densities near transit."

Commissioner Arthur Keller, who made the motion to reject the project, agreed with most of the speakers and called the site of the development "not a good location for high-density housing." Keller disputed SummerHill's claims that the area around San Antonio Road is transit-friendly. He also argued the area doesn't have enough amenities to justify more development.

"We've put (housing) in East Meadow Circle, Bayshore and different places where there were no amenities and no services nearby," Keller said. "Here's another one adding to that mix."

SummerHill is not the only party interested in developing the San Antonio land. Last October, the Palo Alto Unified School District expressed interest in acquiring the property to meet the needs of the city's growing southern population. ■

Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner can be e-mailed at gsheyner@paweekly.com.

Parents

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that kids feel less supported and less hopeful as they move into their teen years.

Palo Alto's results are a few points above — but not significantly different from — results in other communities throughout the county and the nation, according to Anne Ehresman of the nonprofit Project Cornerstone, which helps schools in Santa Clara County interpret the survey data.

The Developmental Assets Survey, originally developed by the Minneapolis-based Search Institute, has been taken by more than one million students in hundreds of communities, including 50,000 Santa Clara County students last fall, Ehresman said.

Survey results can guide parents, schools and youth-serving organizations to change their behavior to become "asset builders," she said, citing efforts in Los Gatos that boosted students' "asset levels" be-

tween 2007 and 2010.

Decades of analysis have established that children who possess higher asset levels tend to thrive, while those with lower levels engage in more high-risk behavior, Ehresman said.

Groups in Palo Alto, including the City Council and the school district, adopted the Developmental Assets model last year in response to the suicides.

School board members and others focused on different points in the wealth of survey data presented Tuesday, which showed some students to be "thriving" while others "vulnerable or at risk."

Noting that 47 percent of high school students are "vulnerable or at risk" (defined as possessing 20 or fewer assets), Gunn parent Ken Dauber said, "That's a really high number."

"If I had hair, my hair would be on fire. This underlines the urgency we continue to have in this community."

School board president Melissa Baten Caswell offered a different perspective.

"You can look at this as, 'Oh my God, my hair's on fire, we've got a huge problem,' or you can look at this as an opportunity to do great things in this community," Caswell said.

"We've done (great things) before, and we can do it again."

Caswell challenged parents and others to volunteer in upcoming "community service days" — including Paly's March 31 Cesar Chavez Day — using it as an opportunity to bond with teens.

"We could take this to heart ourselves and ask, 'What are we doing personally on each of these assets?'"

"I don't want to be preachy, but I'm trying to live this model as well."

Amy Drolette, the school district's coordinator of student services, said the survey data will be studied by principals, PTA groups, Project Safety Net and others in the community and used to formulate action plans. ■

Staff Writer Chris Kenrick can be e-mailed at ckenrick@paweekly.com.

EDUCATION

Finding the positives in rejection

In rite of spring, Gunn, Paly students post college 'nos' for all to see

by Chris Kenrick

As college acceptances and rejections begin rolling in, some students at Gunn High School are sharing their rejections for all to see on a makeshift "Wall of Rejection."

By mid-week, the wall facing a well-trod Gunn hallway held a growing number of "no" letters from UCLA, Cal Poly and other institutions.

With high tension over college applications, the rejection wall has become a cathartic — though sometimes controversial — rite of spring on many high school campuses across the country.

Described as feeling like a consoling "group hug" by one recent Gunn graduate, the rejection wall was absent from its traditional quad-facing location at Palo Alto High School last year.

It will return this year, student leaders say, but in a more regulated format.

The term "rejection wall" had some "negative connotations that weren't really appropriate," Senior Class Vice-President John Brunett said.

"This year it's not called a 'rejection wall' but a 'colleges-missing-

out wall,'" Brunett said.

"We want to focus on the positive aspects — that people in a very stressful environment in a very stressful school can see that it's OK to fail and sort of take some pride in that, have a community-life feeling."

Rather than taping up their own rejections, as in the past, Paly students are asked to drop off their

rejections for colleges rejecting them is because they're not good enough, and that's not the case. It's because it didn't work out; they don't have room for that many qualified people.

"So I and the rest of (student government) and the administration wanted this phrasing because it's really supposed to be a positive experience, and we want kids realizing that rejection isn't the end of the world."

Brunett said he hoped students would begin submitting rejections by the end of this week, and that the wall would be launched next week, after fliers from the school's career fair are taken down.

"Outraged" by the mysterious absence of Paly's rejection wall last spring, editors of the student newspaper The Campanile mounted their own smaller version, taping rejections facing out on the windows of the journalism classroom, Brunett said.

"But the windows are tinted and Campanile was on the outskirts of the campus, so not a lot of people saw it and not a lot of letters were posted," he said.

In a Feb. 25 editorial, The Cam-

'We want kids realizing that rejection isn't the end of the world.'

—John Brunett, senior, Palo Alto High

rejections, with names blacked out, at the Student Activities Office, and others will handle the posting.

Brunett said the new plan — as well as the absence of a rejection wall last spring — represents a "group decision" on the part of student leaders and administrators.

"A common description by stu-

What's happening here

Where: 420 Cambridge Ave., Palo Alto

What: Construction of Cambridge Plaza — four 3-story, 1,500-square-foot condominiums (3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths); one 1,500-square-foot commercial condominium; and a covered parking garage. The retail space at ground level is expected to house personal services.

When: Through March 2012

Who: Clarum Homes, 599 College Ave., Palo Alto

Cost: \$1.81 million

Impact: Reduced parking on Cambridge adjacent to the construction site; intermittent deliveries of construction materials and equipment; some traffic slowdown and pedestrian sidewalk obstruction to accommodate heavy-equipment movement.

Revenue: Annual property and utility-user tax revenue for the City of Palo Alto is estimated at \$5,600, plus an estimated \$10,600 one-time documentary tax.

Of note: This is Palo Alto's first project in the Pedestrian Transit Oriented District zone and is intended to provide a walkable lifestyle with access to mass transit and groceries, restaurants and services. Also, the building, on a 6,000-square-foot lot, will apply for the environmental designation of U.S. Green Building Council-certified LEED Platinum. Each unit will have a solar electric system and solar hot-water-heating system and a car stacker in the garage, which will allow two cars to park in one space. ■



Sue Demann



Courtesy Clarum Homes

Construction workers, top, were undaunted in the rain in early March, as they readied the parcel for construction. Below, an artist's rendering of Cambridge Plaza shows what the three-story building will look like.

panile called for reinstatement of the traditional rejection wall.

"With all the stress and pressure to succeed embedded in life at Paly, the rejection wall is a simple yet effective way to show students that it is okay to fail," The Campanile said.

"It is easy to attend Paly and assume that every other student is going to an Ivy League school, but the rejection wall proves that this is not the case.

"Many seniors feel alienated and alone when rejected from their first-choice schools, but the presence of a rejection wall unifies the senior class and shows each student that they are not alone in their

frustration."

Since 1990, The Campanile has published a list of seniors and their college, or other, destinations in its final issue each June. It plans to continue this year.

Campanile advisor Esther Wojcicki said the information is not provided by the Paly administration but collected student by student.

"Sometimes social-studies teachers will let the kids fill out a form that we make up," Wojcicki said.

"Some kids don't want to participate, and we honor that." ■

Staff Writer Chris Kenrick can be e-mailed at ckenrick@paweekly.com.

CityView

A round-up of Palo Alto government action this week

Public Art Commission (March 18)

Palo Alto Art Center: The commission heard a presentation from Art Center Director Karen Kienzle. **Action:** None

Bliss sculpture: The commission voted to approve up to \$300 for the April 22 dedication of the "Bliss in the Moment" sculpture. **Yes:** Unanimous

Brochures: The commission voted to allocate up to \$1,500 for printing of its publicity brochure. **Yes:** Unanimous

Artist lectures: The commission voted to allocate up to \$1,500 for its annual artist speaker series. **Yes:** Unanimous

City Council (March 21)

Compost: The council discussed the preliminary results of a feasibility study for a proposed anaerobic-digestion facility at Byxbee Park. The council will continue the discussion on April 11. **Action:** None

Attorney: The council approved a contract with Molly Stump, Palo Alto's new city attorney. **Yes:** Unanimous

Board of Education (March 22)

Internet services: The board authorized school district staff to negotiate a five-year contract for a dark-fiber network at a cost not to exceed \$1,138,260. **Yes:** Unanimous

Student social-emotional health: The board discussed results of a "developmental assets" survey administered to more than 4,000 district students last October. It directed the superintendent to return with a plan to prioritize action regarding "supporting school climate" in 2011-12. **Action:** None

Parks and Recreation Commission (March 22)

Bicycle plan: The commission heard updates on the ongoing Palo Alto Bicycle Plan, the city's Infrastructure Blue Ribbon Commission, and the capital-improvement needs in the Community Services Department. **Action:** None

Planning and Transportation Commission (March 23)

525 San Antonio Road: The commission voted to recommend denial of a proposal by SummerHill Homes to rezone the site of Peninsula Day Care to "village residential" (RM-15) to enable construction of 23 homes adjacent to the Greendell neighborhood. **Yes:** Fineberg, Garber, Keller, Lippert, Tanaka, Tuma **No:** Martinez

Architectural Review Board (March 24)

Lucile Packard Children's Hospital: The board approved the proposed design for the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital with the condition that the applicant make adjustments to the signage. **Yes:** Lew, Malone Pritchard, Wasserman, Young **Abstained:** Lee

Stanford School of Medicine: The board approved the proposed renovations to a building at the Stanford School of Medicine. The project is part of Stanford University Medical Center's expansion project. **Yes:** Lew, Malone Pritchard, Wasserman, Young **Abstained:** Lee



LET'S DISCUSS: Read the latest local news headlines and talk about the issues at Town Square at PaloAltoOnline.com

Public Agenda

A preview of Palo Alto government meetings next week

CITY COUNCIL... The council has no meeting scheduled this week.

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION ... The commission plans to discuss the city's capital-improvement program for the fiscal years 2012-2016. The commission is also scheduled to discuss the proposed draft Housing Element goals, policies and programs. The meeting is scheduled for 4 p.m. on Wednesday, March 30, in the Council Chambers at City Hall (250 Hamilton Ave.).

News Digest

City takes steps to reform 'Palo Alto process'

Palo Alto officials plan to unveil new pilot projects at the Development Center next month as part of a broad effort to improve customer service and simplify the city's notoriously laborious development process.

The City Council discussed the ambitious effort, known as "Blueprint for a Development Center," at its meeting March 21. While the city plans to start adding personnel and making other permanent changes in July, Deputy City Manager Steve Emslie told the council that one new Development Center service will begin as soon as next month.

The pilot project would pair applicants with project managers who would shepherd the proposed building or renovation plan through the city's permitting process. Project-management services would give customers a central point of contact, Emslie said, avoiding the "runaround" — one of the Development Center's often-cited customer-service problems.

Project managers would address concerns from simple requests for a permit or information to more complex requests for approval of commercial and residential plans.

The city has already tried this approach with several major applicants, including a proposal to expand the Hewlett-Packard Co. headquarters, and received positive feedback.

"I've gone through the process before and after and having a project manager has streamlined the process," said Elinor Kumpf, the architect behind the HP project. "The permit process will run smoothly, and I hope all projects will get this kind of attention." ■

— Zohra Ashpari

Palo Alto's compost dilemma deepens

The future of Palo Alto's composting returned to the spotlight March 21 as more than 100 residents packed into City Hall to make their cases on whether the city should build a waste-to-energy plant in Byxbee Park.

The fierce debate, which has pitted some of the city's greenest residents against one another, centers on a 9-acre site that currently houses the city's landfill and that is slated to become parkland when the landfill closes next year. The landfill also includes the city's composting operation, which means the city would have to ship its compost elsewhere in about a year.

A coalition led by former Mayor Peter Dreke supports a new anaerobic digestion facility, which would convert yard trimmings, food scraps and sewage sludge into energy. A group that includes conservationists Emily Renzel, Tom Jordan and Enid Pearson, think the city should keep industrial facilities away from local parks.

Last week, Dreke's group submitted 6,000 signatures to the City Clerk's office to place the land-use issue on the November ballot. If voters support the measure, the parkland would become eligible for hosting a new anaerobic digestion facility.

After a discussion that lasted close to four hours, the council agreed to return to the subject next month and give staff further direction. Staff and Alternative Resources, Inc., plan to present a draft feasibility study in June and to release the final study in the fall. ■

— Gennady Sheyner

Parents, counselors discuss teen stress at forum

Many Palo Alto parents know that stress is part of their teens' lives, but spotting the difference between normal teen stress and potentially troubling behavior can be a challenge, according to parents who attended an intimate gathering with mental-health experts Tuesday night at Cubberley Community Center.

Sponsored by the nonprofit Adolescent Counseling Services, the event was part of a series of community forums aimed to educate parents and community members about how to better understand and care for teenagers. Two counselors from Adolescent Counseling Services and two from Community Health Awareness Council in Mountain View spoke.

The phrase "stressed-out" in Palo Alto is a taboo term, said Roni Gillenson, Adolescent Counseling Services on-campus counseling director. With the competition intense among peers, students may not even know they are anxious or may not wish to admit it since they feel the expectations of a high-performing culture, she said.

Gillenson advised parents with children who don't display signs of stress to not ask them directly of possible anxieties, which may lead to them becoming quiet, but to pose questions concerning their well-being, such as the amount of sleep they've been getting or how much time they've been spending with friends.

Although some teens may not show stress, there are some who do. Warning signs may include obsession, irritability, procrastination or lack of response, changes in eating habits, rebellious behavior and secretiveness.

Counselor Ursula Vogelsang of Community Health Awareness Council named secretiveness, what she defined as a complete loss of interaction between parent and teen, as the most dangerous.

Opening up and maintaining channels of communication with teens about their emotional lives is key in preventing a stress breakdown, the counselors said.

Editor's note: Two videos, including 15 minutes of uncut footage from the forum, can be seen at www.youtube.com. ■

— Zohra Ashpari

Labor

(continued from page 3)

in January.

The "management specialist" designation is Keene's tool to keep the city running despite the recent flux. Typically, the council approves all the staff positions in June, when it approves the annual budget. The budget document lists every General Fund position in each department. If the city manager wants to add a new position during the year, he has to bring it back to the City Council for approval — a process that can take weeks.

Or, he can hire someone on a temporary basis and designate that person a "management specialist."

In an interview this week, Keene told the Weekly that the current policy for hiring temporary managers causes problems in regards to both transparency and recruitment. One the one hand, citizens looking at the city's long list of management specialists typically have no way of knowing what exactly these people do. On the other hand, newly hired managers and professionals aren't always thrilled about carrying a relatively meaningless, catchall title.

"When you're trying to bring someone into the organization, you want them to have a title that reflects what they're doing," Keene told the Weekly.

Interim City Attorney Donald Larkin illustrated that point at a Dec. 14 meeting of the council's Policy & Services Committee. He told the committee that his office recently tried to hire an employee to fill a temporary vacancy after a deputy city attorney left. But because the office wasn't allowed to hire a new deputy city attorney, the city had to hire a "management specialist" to fill in for the deputy city attorney.

"I don't know any lawyers that want to put on their resumes 'management specialists,'" Larkin told the committee. "We're calling them deputy city attorneys."

"They're management specialists on paper, but no one is calling them management specialists."

To deal with the problem, Keene has proposed reforms to create more flexibility for hiring temporary employees without having to use the "management specialist" designation. Keene's proposed reforms, which have yet to be reviewed by the full council, would allow him to assign new managers and professionals other positions without explicit council approval, provided that he stays within the council-approved budget.

He told the committee in December that given the city's shrinking staff and sizeable turnover, "We need to have more flexibility than we have now."

Keene said the Human Resources Department is now putting together a specific recommendation, which he hopes to bring to the Policy and Services Committee in the next month or two. He said he hopes to bring the issue to the council and make the necessary changes before the next fiscal year begins on July 1. ■

Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner can be e-mailed at gsheyner@paweekly.com.



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It Happened in Palo Alto

William "Bill" Walsh was born in Los Angeles on November 30, 1931. His family moved often as his autoworker father sought work in the Depression. Bill played halfback as a senior at Hayward High School, and played football at San Mateo Community College and San Jose State. After marrying, getting a Master's in Physical Education, a teaching credential, and serving in the army, he was hired as head football coach at Washington High in Fremont. The team had lost 26 of its last 27 games, but Walsh, taking advantage of an increase in enrollment, devised a new offensive scheme, mixing plays and using innovative pass patterns. Two years later Walsh's team won the league championship, a pattern he would repeat through his career.

After being assistant coach at the University of California, Berkeley, Walsh was defensive backfield coach at Stanford, his first association with it. He coached at the professional football level with Oakland, Cincinnati, and San Diego until late 1976, when hired by Stanford as head coach. In 1977, Walsh coached Stanford to an eight-win three-loss season and beat Louisiana State in the Sun Bowl. In 1978, his team went 7-4 and beat Georgia in the Bluebonnet Bowl.

Walsh's greatest fame was as head coach of the San Francisco 49ers. After a 2-14 season in 1978 the 49ers scored 70 more points under Walsh in 1979 and ranked 6th in the National Football League in total offense. He led the 49ers to the 1982 Super Bowl, the first in the franchise's history, and won two more Super Bowls until he retired after the 1988 season. Unexpectedly, Walsh returned to Stanford as head coach in 1992, when he led Stanford to a 10-3 season and beat Penn State in the Blockbuster Bowl. His last two seasons being unsuccessful, he left coaching in 1994. After Walsh's death in 2007, a memorial service was held at Stanford's Memorial Chapel.



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NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING of the City of Palo Alto Historic Resources Board

Please be advised the Historic Resources Board shall conduct a meeting at 8:00 AM on Wednesday, April 6, 2011 in the Civic Center, Council Chambers, 1st Floor, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California. Any interested persons may appear and be heard on these items.

STUDY SESSION

285 Quarry Road Hoover Pavilion Renovations [10PLN-00398]: Request by Stanford Hospital and Clinics on behalf of The Board of Trustees for the Leland Stanford Junior University for Historic Resources Board review of exterior renovations to Hoover Pavilion, a component of the Stanford University Medical Center Facilities Renewal and Replacement Project. Existing Zone District: PF (Public Facilities).

Questions. If interested parties have any questions regarding the above applications, please contact the Planning Division at (650) 329-2441. The files relating to these items are available for inspection weekdays between the hours of 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM and staff reports will be available for inspection at 2:00 PM the Friday preceding the hearing.

The City of Palo Alto does not discriminate against individuals with disabilities. To request accommodations to access City facilities, services or programs, to participate at public meetings, or to learn more about the City's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), please contact the City's ADA Coordinator at 650.329.2550 (voice) or by e-mailing ada@cityofpaloalto.org.

Steven Turner, Advance Planning Manager

Greenmeadow

(continued from page 3)

It was she who quickly discovered that something was amiss.

Rhoan told the Weekly that Allen held on to his administrative access until Jan. 31, his final day at the association, and spent much of that day cleaning up the data on the association's computer.

She said Allen told her just before leaving that he had ordered checks and equipment. When the items didn't arrive, Rhoan said she e-mailed Allen on Feb. 3 to ask about them. He responded about a week later with a brief e-mail that she described as "snappy" and that didn't provide the information she was seeking.

In another case, Rhoan said she asked Allen about two payments that he signed off on to a new bank. Allen said he made an error.

Rhoan said she also noticed that many of his reported expenses were based on estimates rather than invoices. This included estimates for fitness equipment and for a sand-filtration system meant for a giant swimming pool.

Another red flag was raised when the association received a letter from a bank acknowledging the association's change of address for mailed statements. The fact that the association never requested an address change made her suspicious, Rhoan said.

Rhoan said she alerted the association's board of directors about the financial irregularities just after she noticed them. Association officials initially thought the damage was limited to \$5,000 or \$7,500, she said, but they soon found other examples of inaccurate accounting.

"Once we found one error, we began looking through everything," Rhoan said.

In 2009, the association's credit card spending totaled about \$20,000, but in 2010, that sum ballooned to \$90,000, Giffen said.

The discovery began with "a few items of a questionable nature," including a \$500 charge to Walgreens, he said.

"There were no records or details of the credit-card bills. Once we were able to get the credit-card statements, the majority of the expenditures were of a personal nature, and we contacted the police," he said.

Allen voluntarily came to the police department for questioning, but he was not arrested, Giffen said. The association provided police with "an enormous amount of detail" regarding the embezzlement, he said. No charges have yet been filed.

Residents expressed shock and disappointment regarding the theft, but most were supportive of the association's efforts, he said.

"We are all sad and disappointed about this turn of events, but Greenmeadow has always pulled together to solve problems. I have no doubt we'll get through this just fine," Penny Ellson said.

"There was a consensus that he is responsible and shouldn't walk away from this. We're looking at options to recoup the money. We hope to recover the loss. We'll see what the

District Attorney has to say about potential restitution," Giffen said. It is also possible that restitution could be made through the credit-card company, he said.

Giffen said he attempted to contact Allen a number of times and was never successful.

"His behavior after leaving Greenmeadow indicated that he had almost no concept that he had done anything wrong," he said.

Allen expressed remorse in his letter to the association and pledged to take "full responsibility."

"Words cannot express to you how remorseful I am," he wrote. "I plan on taking the appropriate legal and emotional steps in resolving the damage that I have done."

Meanwhile, the association's finance committee is looking at available technology to provide transparency in bookkeeping. Other members at Tuesday's meeting offered ideas on policy and practices that could help prevent future thefts, Giffen said.

"The community really came together. ... It's moments like this that

define a community. Does it tear you apart or bring you together?" Giffen said. ■

Staff Writers Gennady Sheyner and Sue Dremann can be e-mailed at gsheyner@paweekly.com and sdremann@paweekly.com.

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Taxes

(continued from page 3)

51,963 tax returns volunteers prepared, according to Rob Nerrie, site coordinator at JobTrain in Menlo Park, which is one of 211 Bay Area sites. The program started in Alameda County in 2003 with 14

locations, he said.

People often don't realize they can earn income credits and credits for being single-family heads of households with dependents, he said.

One such credit, the federal Earned Income Tax Credit, is the nation's largest benefits program for working families. It can boost the annual income of a low-wage

worker by 10 percent, according to the United Way.

The credit is often overlooked by commercial tax preparers, but EarnIt!KeepIt!SaveIt! volunteers are trained to identify eligible taxpayers, Nerrie said.

The savings can be significant, Batson said.

"A family of five making \$12,000 to \$25,000 can receive a \$5,600 refund. I saw a family with a \$20,000 income that got \$9,000 back last year," she said.

The program also keeps financially vulnerable clients in need of immediate cash out of the hands of predatory lenders, Nerrie said. Some commercial tax preparers try to sell refund-anticipation loans that advance cash before the tax refund comes in.

"The loans can carry up to 300 percent interest on your money," he said.

But EarnIt!KeepIt!SaveIt! volunteers help clients who have never had a bank account to set up direct-deposit accounts so that refunds quickly arrive. Someone filing their taxes online today would have their money by April 1, he said.

The program is approved and monitored by the Internal Revenue Service, Nerrie said. Volunteers receive about five days of training and have a thick instruction manual at the ready while preparing the tax returns one-on-one with the client.

For volunteers such as Kay, the work is immediately satisfying, he said.

"The last gal I helped here said, 'I need the money' and she got a nice refund. It makes me feel good that she walks away happy."

Kay said he did his own taxes years ago and began doing tax returns for friends who were afraid of numbers or who were not as computer savvy.

Some filings are simple; others take two hours.

The news isn't always good, however. Some people don't realize they'll owe on unemployment benefits; others whose homes were foreclosed on will have the sale sum count as income, and that can mean thousands of dollars in taxes that they don't have, he said.

Madhu Mehta, another retired engineer, volunteered at another fed-

eral tax-prep program in Houston, Texas, before coming to California. The area was exceedingly impoverished, filled with little shacks on stilts that were raised to avoid flooding, he said. But he could still give hope to people making only \$3,000 to \$4,000 a year by finding tax credits that could put money in their pockets, he said.

"It was a big awakening," he added.

One client this year sticks in his mind:

"She had a good job before at an airline and is out of work. She had an apartment and had to leave it and move in with friends. Now she is the head of her household.

"I told her that she had a significant amount of a refund. She was so shocked when she saw that number. She was thrilled," he said.

Eligible persons for the program can locate an EarnIt!KeepIt!SaveIt! site by calling 211 or 800-358-8832. ■

Staff Writer Sue Dremann can be e-mailed at sdremann@pawebly.com.




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CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW

CALL FOR ARTISTS
SUBMITTAL DEADLINE: APRIL 22, 2011, 5:00 P.M.
Submit To: callforartists@mountainview.gov

The City of Mountain View's Visual Arts Committee is seeking solo artists or artist collectives to exhibit public art in the lobby of the Center for the Performing Arts for the 2012-13 season.

The rotating exhibits are approximately nine weeks in length and are viewed by thousands of people visiting and attending shows at the Center for Performing Arts. The Committee particularly wants to encourage exhibits by professional artists or collectives and only media that can be hung on the exhibition walls will be accepted for this space. The City will provide insurance, installation and offer a small stipend to help defray transportation and/or shipping costs. Site visits to the Center for Performing Arts Lobby are encouraged in order for the artist(s) to get an idea of the exhibition space. The lobby is open on Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 12pm to 1pm and one hour prior to every public performance. All exhibited artwork will now be sold through the Center for Performing Arts Box Office for a 20 percent commission. In addition, credit card and debit card processing fees will be deducted from the sales price. Further, the City of Mountain View does not collect sales tax on the sale of merchandise and the artist is responsible for all taxes due on any sale of art by the City. All sale and delivery arrangements will be made by the Center for Performing Arts staff with buyers.

All submittals should include the following:

1. A one-page résumé in PDF format, titled Last name First name
2. 10 digital photos in JPEG format, numbered 1 through 10.
(72 dpi, 600 x 800 and no larger than 10 MB total for all images). A minimum of five (5) of the 10 digital photos must be of art that would be exhibited; the remaining 5 photos may be samples of other past works.
3. An inventory list in PDF format that provides the following information that correlates with each numbered photo:
 - Dimensions of all art pieces (to be exhibited & past works)
 - Media
 - Date of art piece
 - Title of art piece, if any

The Visual Arts Committee asks that all work considered for exhibition be appropriate for the space, both in size and subject matter. The Committee reserves the right to combine one or more artist's work into one exhibition if size of artwork is too small to fit the exhibition space on its own. The Committee also reserves the right to visit any chosen artist at their studio to review their work prior to exhibition. For dimensions of the exhibit space please refer to the schematic listed on our website under "Announcements" at www.mountainview.gov.

Do not send any materials not specifically requested as part of this application; e.g., drawings, videos, catalogs, binders, etc. They will not be considered as part of your application packet and will not be reviewed by the selection panel. The City of Mountain View is not responsible for loss or damage to material. Incomplete entries will not be reviewed.

ALL SUBMITTALS WILL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW AND WILL NOT BE RETURNED.

Learn the Guitar this Spring

Carol McComb's "Starting to Play" workshop includes the FREE use of a Loaner Guitar for the duration of the classes.* Regular cost is just \$160 for nine weeks of group lessons, and all music is included.

"Starting to Play" meets for one hour each Monday night for nine weeks beginning **March 28th. Students are encouraged to bring their own guitar, but both nylon-string and steel-string loaner guitars are available.

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DEBORAH'S PALM

Editorial

A growing school movement

Deep concerns over the emotional health of our kids demand stronger leadership from school officials

A sympathetic but defensive school board did little Tuesday night to reassure concerned parents that they shared their alarm about an academic and achievement culture in Palo Alto that is threatening the health of our teens.

Instead, the board and Superintendent Kevin Skelly focused on the good work that is already underway and the obstacles to responding any more quickly in the face of other district priorities.

It is inevitable that some parents, especially those whose lives have been directly impacted by the teen suicides of the last two years, will never be satisfied that the district is moving fast enough.

But what the school board and Skelly do not seem to acknowledge is that a large and growing number of parents, including those of academically high-achieving kids, are questioning the competitive and stressful culture we are all responsible for having created in our community.

Challenging this culture is very threatening to all those who embrace it and whose policies contribute to it. It leads to the uncomfortable posturing witnessed at Tuesday's meeting, where school board members and Skelly come across as unresponsive and bogged down in their bureaucratic policies, procedures and jargon.

We don't for a second believe that our school officials are as insensitive as they appear. They correctly point to a number of initiatives, including the just-completed student survey aimed at assessing how well fifth-graders, seventh-graders and high school students are doing by measuring their development of 40 "assets" that have been shown to foster emotional health.

They deserve credit for embracing the Project Safety Net program, which issued an outstanding report and recommendations last summer and is the focal point for community collaboration on addressing concerns over teen stress and health.

But the school board and Superintendent Skelly keep missing opportunities to demonstrate they aren't as tone-deaf as they appear, and to truly lead our community.

At both board and community meetings, they find themselves trying to convince concerned parents that much is being done rather than clearly articulate how we as a school community will discuss and reconcile the desire of some parents for the most rigorous and competitive academic environment possible and the belief of others that we need to redefine success and implement policies to impose limits on things like AP classes, homework and school projects.

In compelling remarks at Tuesday's meeting, former Paly parent Karen Kang called on district officials to make PAUSD a national model for reinventing the school culture in an achievement-oriented community.

She quoted her 24-year old daughter, who wrote "Getting A's, being in AP classes, doing extracurricular activities and attending a prestigious college was all part of the religion of achievement.

"The five years I spent under the spell of this religion of achievement were a complete waste — I spent my time working hard at what I didn't care about, got physical and mental problems, and was extremely miserable. I've had to put every ounce of my energy for the past few years unlearning those backward lessons I learned as a student in Palo Alto."

Such stories abound, and Palo Alto parents are bravely starting to share them, only to discover that many others have had similar experiences.

To be sure, the problem is much bigger than the school system and it's not fair to expect the school board or administration to unilaterally "fix" it. The entire community must take responsibility, including parents, students and teachers, as well as the college application imbroglio.

It will take bolder and more courageous leadership if we are to succeed in redefining our school culture.

But as one of the most respected school districts in the nation, we can have an enormous national impact if we really commit ourselves. It is especially important that admissions deans from elite colleges hear our voices and be engaged in seeking change.

Could there be a more perfect district — the one that educates the kids of Stanford faculty — to lead this movement?

Spectrum

Editorials, letters and opinions

Alma project

Editor,

There is no justification for Palo Alto to allow the five-story building proposed for 335-355 Alma St. At 64-feet tall plus 15 feet for utilities, the resulting 79-foot concrete edifice would loom over all surrounding buildings on its tiny little lot. Hundreds more cars will clog up the streets and neighborhood. We hardly need yet another cafe in the downtown area. And our local schools, fields and infrastructure are already overtaxed from the more than 3,800 housing units that have been built or approved in Palo Alto over the past decade, so we hardly need five more.

This building is designed to maximize developer profits and elicit support from special interests. They have added housing to appease those advocates, even throwing in one below-market-rate unit. They add retail to appease those who want tax revenue. And the starting size of this project is so huge that even if the developer cuts it in half, it will still be too big and they will still make huge profits.

Palo Alto talks about wanting to be a sustainable city and then proceeds to overtax its infrastructure and deplete natural resources with huge energy using and environmentally destructive developments that are turning the city into a cement and asphalt centered society. These huge urban developments are not what most residents in Palo Alto want. Any use for this site should be based on its previous use and size. In this case it should be a neighborhood oriented business of appropriate size and scope.

This proposed monstrosity is not wanted or needed.

Tina Peak
Palo Alto Avenue
Palo Alto

Enrollment issues

Editor,

Past issues of the Weekly noted PAUSD school enrollment is increasing by numbers that were not predicted by the usual and customary housing turnover and population data as previously projected.

An article on page 3 and the editorial in the March 11 Weekly indicated the district "must be prepared for as many as 568 new students in the next five years."

Camille Townsend asked, "Could it be as simple" as "seeing all the new houses, or seeing all the new developments by the JCC?"

Does Ms. Townsend really know how many school-age children live in the new JCC apartments? Could it be there are more senior citizens living in those apartments than school-age families? Has she done a survey of the JCC apartments?

Could it be, Ms. Townsend, the enrollment is increasing in south Palo Alto because students attend PAUSD schools that do not actually live in the city of Palo Alto? Address given may actually be business, for example, restaurants.

Despite the district's registration policy, I ask if the district knows how many students who attend Palo Alto schools (in the south part of town) actually live in Palo Alto? Does a teacher or counselor try to reach a parent by phone only to find the phone has been disconnected, is out of service and/or the parent is unknown by the person answering the phone? How many attendance officers actually go to addresses to confirm students live in the address that is indicated on the registration?

Joan Reid
Embarcadero Road
Palo Alto

Alhouse remembered

Editor,

While I didn't know Bill Alhouse well, I knew who he was. He was the man who helped create Palo Alto Little League when I was 11 years old. All these years later, I know he helped to make my life better.

In 1951 he joined Howard Bertelsen, Frank Pfyl and Ed and Bernie Hoffaker to create Palo Alto Little League. To do the homework, file the papers, create the concept, raise the money, build the new Little League park, and then coach the kids.

I played for Palo Alto Sport Shop. Bill Alhouse's team, sponsored by Floyd Lowe Realty, was the enemy. But

I always knew that he was our friend, too.

The first official season was played in 1951 at El Camino Park, just north of the Palo Alto train station, and across from the current Stanford Shopping Center. Our team, Palo Alto Sport Shop, won most of the time but he was respectful and he was fair.

Some of the best-known first-year players included 12-year-olds Noel Barnes and Dennis Brewick, both of whom later starred at the University of California; Bob Wendell, who captained Cal's national-championship basketball team; Frank Farmer, who played at Paly before signing a professional baseball contract; and 11-year-old Ted Tollner, who played football and baseball at Cal Poly and became a successful head football coach at USC and San Diego State, and professional coach with the Bills, Forty-Niners and Raiders.

The next year we played at the brand-new Little League park on Middlefield road that was patterned after Stanford's famed sunken diamond and is still used today, nearly 60 years later.

Thanks to Bill Alhouse, for his generous gift to so many people. Thanks for these memories.

Don McPhail
Hope Street
Mountain View

YOUR TURN

The Palo Alto Weekly encourages comments on our coverage or on issues of local interest.

What do you think? Are Palo Alto schools doing enough to deal with teen stress?

Submit letters to the editor of up to 250 words to letters@paweekly.com. Include your name, address and daytime phone number so we can reach you. We reserve the right to edit contributions for length, objectionable content, libel and factual errors known to us. Anonymous letters will generally not be accepted.

You can also participate in our popular interactive online forum, **Town Square**, at our community website at www.PaloAltoOnline.com. Read blogs, discuss issues, ask questions or express opinions with you neighbors any time, day or night.

Submitting a letter to the editor or guest opinion constitutes a granting of permission to the Palo Alto Weekly and Embarcadero Media to also publish it online, including in our online archives and as a post on Town Square.

For more information contact Editor Jocelyn Dong or Online Editor Tyler Hanley at editor@paweekly.com or 650-326-8210.



Check out Town Square!

Hundreds of local topics are being discussed by local residents on Town Square, a reader forum sponsored by the Weekly on our community website at www.PaloAltoOnline.com. Post your own comments, ask questions, read the Editor's blog or just stay up on what people are talking about around town!

Guest Opinion

How Caltrain's GO Pass program will help Stanford Hospital

by Yoriko Kishimoto

My bedtime reading recently included the environmental analysis for the Stanford Medical Center expansion project. This is an important project that almost everyone supports — but the biggest challenge has been how the expansion can take place without adding horrendous traffic to the region. Caltrain and its GO Pass Program hold, simply put, the key to this expansion.



The Caltrain GO Pass program is an employer-sponsored program that offers employees unlimited rides on Caltrain. Participating employers pay \$155 per eligible employee per year.

Stanford University (the university itself, not including Medical Center) employs 15,300 workers and purchases 10,100 GO Passes a year. The success of this has been amazing. It was first offered in 2002 to Stanford University employees when only 4 percent used Caltrain. This went up to 12 percent by 2004. In 2005, the Baby Bullet service began, which reduced travel time. By 2006, the percentage of university employees who used Caltrain rocketed to 16 percent, and by 2008 to 20 percent.

Stanford Medical Center currently has 10,000 employees and they have not offered GO Passes. In 2006, only 3.6 percent used Caltrain. Although the hospital is a 24-hour operation, 77 percent of day-shift employees arrive during morning commute hours and 65 percent of them live in cities serviced by Caltrain.

The GO Pass would cost the hospital \$2.25 million per year, which includes \$1.8 million for Caltrain plus \$450,000 for additional shuttle operations. There would be a \$2 million capital expenditure for the purchase of new shuttles as well.

Let's compare this to Google. According to the analysis, Google also has about 10,000 employees at its main campus. The company operates 50 buses, serving about 20 percent of their employees. Annual operating costs are estimated to be \$8.1 million per year. Plus, at \$500,000 per bus (non-hybrid), the amortized capital cost is estimated at \$2.6 million per year. Compared to the \$2.25 million for Caltrain plus Marguerite, the dedicated bus option is \$10.7 million per year, or four times more expensive.

Caltrain's time-efficient Baby Bullet service is also cost-efficient for large employers near Caltrain. Stanford originally justified its alternative transportation investments by comparing them to the costs of providing parking spaces on campus, let alone impact on the surrounding communities and street network. In this age of fiscal and global climate crises, we need more Caltrain service, not less.

Thanks to the outpouring of concern about potential drastic cutbacks to Caltrain, which is threatening to stop all service to Gilroy and half a dozen stations between San Francisco and San Jose and all mid-day and early-morning/late-evening service, our elected officials are working hard behind the scenes. The hope today is that by the next Caltrain board meeting April 7, the outlines of a two-year package will come together between the three county transit agencies and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the regional transportation authority. The package will call for

shared sacrifices from each agency and from Caltrain and its riders.

As Stanford's case study shows, Caltrain provides a cost-effective transportation solution that would cost many times more for any alternative solution, whether they are more buses or double-decker highways.

Although we are hopeful that a two-year rescue package might come together, the far more daunting challenge is to create momentum and develop a framework for a permanent funding source for Caltrain and also to work towards a more sustainable symbiosis with the communities and businesses it serves.

As the "orphan" transit agency that is top-performing in farebox recovery and rising ridership but with no dedicated funding, it has been the canary in the mine for the strains and crises facing all government agencies today: the twin fiscal and climate crises.

Here are a few forums to get that discussion going:

- There is a series of workshops coming up sponsored by MTC and the other regional agencies to get the public thinking about legacies, good and bad, that Bay Area leaders of the past have left us and our alternative futures. Go to OneBayArea.org to sign up: There is one at 5:30 p.m. at Microsoft in Mountain View.

- The Silicon Valley Leadership Group, with support from the Friends of Caltrain, will host a series of town hall meetings to get ideas for long-term solutions for Caltrain. The Mid-peninsula meeting will be held April 20 in Redwood City's City Hall at 6 p.m.

- The Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club is working with partners to put on a series of forums to invite community leaders to integrate economic, environmental and social factors towards an integrated Healthy Com-

munity vision.

There are also exciting initiatives taking place for wildlife corridors and watershed planning as well: the living "infrastructure" that supports our economies and makes it so attractive to live in the Bay Area.

Gary Snyder, our great California poet, wrote: What is "California?" It is, after all, a recent human intervention with many hasty straight-line boundaries that were drawn with a ruler on a map. ... A bioregional perspective gives us the imagination of a citizenship in something beyond politically designated space. It gives us the imagination of a citizenship in a place . . . which has valley oaks and migratory waterfowl as well as humans among its members. Watershed consciousness and bioregionalism are not just a form of environmentalism or just a political program, but a move toward resolving both nature and society with the practice of a profound citizenship in both worlds. If the ground can be our common ground, we can begin to talk to each other (human and nonhuman) again."

The crisis of Caltrain and the sum total of California's fiscal, environmental, and social challenges and opportunities forces us to literally step outside our boxes, re-find our footing as California and Bay Area citizens and fire up our imagination for alternative futures.

Let's check our preconceived prejudices and political boundaries at the door and learn from examples like Stanford's great experience with Caltrain in transforming its environmental footprint on an economically viable basis. ■

Yoriko Kishimoto is the former Mayor of Palo Alto and co-founder of the Friends of Caltrain (friendsofcaltrain.com). She is also a director of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

Streetwise

Why do you think Palo Alto teens are stressed?

Asked on S. California Avenue, Palo Alto. Interviews and photographs by Zohra Ashpari.



Andrew Pearl
No Occupation
Forest Avenue, Palo Alto

"Maybe teens try to grow up too fast — get a girlfriend, get a job, go to college. Parents, be loving to your kids."



Ladreka James
Homemaker and Cosmetologist
California Avenue, Palo Alto

"Probably pressure from schools, especially since Stanford University is right around the corner. Students feel they have to get in there. There are seminars in City Hall giving information on how to cope with stress."



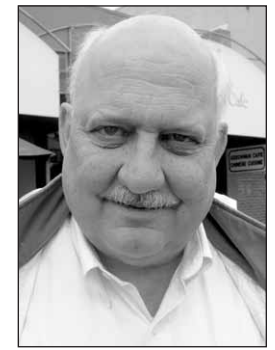
Margaret Vesey
Real Estate Broker (Retired)
Greer Road, Palo Alto

"The pressure to achieve is terrible especially in this area. Schools have cut out so many 'frill' courses like music, art, etc., which help with students' mental well-being. There is only testing and more testing, which is stressful. There isn't a joy to being a teen and going to school anymore."



Fumiko Yamaguchi
Homemaker, Former Physicist
Sheridan Avenue, Palo Alto

"There's so much academic expectation. Parents are taking even their 2-year-olds to ballet, math and various lessons. My 4-year-old speaks and reads Japanese and English, along with going to tennis and dance lessons. As a parent, I'm pressured too, feeling that I have to keep up."



Charles Guenzer
Attorney
Grove Avenue, Palo Alto

"I think teens are encouraged to be stressed by their peers. It's fashionable. Teens have much to live up to since their parents are extremely successful."



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Guest Opinion

Girl Scouts learn about the joy of giving at the VA Hospital

by **Carrie
Manley**

This past Saturday, in the cold rain and gusty wind, four girls from my daughter's Girl Scout Troop set up shop in front of Peet's Coffee at the Town & Country shopping center. Their shared one-hour mission: to sell Thin Mints, Trefoil Shortbreads and other brightly colored boxes of Girl Scout cookies to anyone willing to stop and hear their pitch in the blasting storm.

As the scouts arranged their display, I quickly advised them that along with the less-than-ideal weather conditions, they would likely face another challenge: buyer fatigue.

Anyone who has ventured from home in Palo Alto recently has no doubt been approached by an eager Girl Scout (or three eager Girl Scouts) selling cookies in front of various markets and stores. And even if you've stayed indoors, it's also likely that the unrelenting sound of your doorbell has signaled the arrival of yet another Girl Scout loaded with product and anticipation.

And sure enough, on Saturday, as folks hustled by in rain gear, with steaming coffees, some paused long



enough to say that they had already bought cookies, lots and lots of cookies.

That's when the girls quickly mentioned one other option: buying cookies as a donation, to give to the veterans at the Palo Alto Veterans Hospital. Back on Valentine's Day, our troop of fifth graders made their annual visit to the Spinal Cord Injury Unit at the Palo Alto VA Hospital. Since first grade, the girls have visited this unit, to share home-made cards and to sing and dance for the hospitalized vets. The first time they went, as Girl Scout Brownies, it turned out that Miss California was also visiting that day; at the time, I wondered if a group of 6- and 7-year-olds would really have much impact compared to a certified pageant winner.

I got my answer one year later, when the girls, now second graders, returned on Valentine's Day to sing the Beatle's classic "Love Me Do," and to dance to the rousing "Hairspray" song, "You Can't Stop the Beat." When we arrived for this second Valentine's visit, one veteran was by the front door in his wheelchair. "The happiest day I had here in the last year was the day the Brownies came," the veteran explained. "When I heard you were coming back, I decided to wait for you."

This year, on Valentine's Day, the girls — now in fifth grade — decided to take orders from the hospitalized vets. But instead of charging the veter-

ans for the cookies, they made plans to ask for donations.

As a result, in these past few weeks, rain or shine, our troop has directly experienced the incredible generosity of so many people throughout our city. The congregation at All Saints' Episcopal Church chipped in to buy more than 50 boxes for the hospitalized veterans. One nice woman, in front of Piazza's grocery store, took the time to listen to the girls, and then told them, "You are real leaders, you are our future, and I just really admire you for what you are doing."

But our most unexpected moment of warmth and love came Saturday, in the rain and cold. One young man stopped to listen, and as the girls described their plans to deliver cookies to hospitalized vets, his face quietly shifted with emotion.

"My father is at that hospital now, on the fourth floor. Could I buy some cookies for him?" He handed over a \$20 bill for five boxes of cookies. I asked what would be the best time for the girls to make the delivery, and if he knew how long his dad might be in the hospital.

"I think maybe a couple of weeks," he said quietly. "He has cancer."

"Is he in the hospice unit?" I asked. "Not yet."

Then, he shared his gratitude for the wonderful care that he said his father was receiving. As he said good-bye, the girls told him, "We are making you a Girl Scout promise, we will get these cookies to your dad."

Our booth sale ended at noon. One girl kindly stayed behind with another parent to close up. The three other girls decided that before going home, they had one important promise to keep. Once at the VA Hospital, they took the elevator to the fourth floor, and started asking nurses for the father. "Yes, his room is right there, he is with his family."

The girls walked in, carrying armfuls of donated cookies, and there was the son with his dad, along with several other family members. Upon seeing the girls, the son broke out in a huge smile, sweeter than any Thin Mint. The girls explained to the dad that his son had bought Girl Scout cookies for him, and that he could take whatever he wanted. Then, the girls gave a detailed description of each type of cookie to make sure he got his favorites.

The father seemed to get a big kick out of the surprise delivery, and was even willing to pose for pictures with the girls, his family and his cookies. The family thanked us, and we thanked them for the privilege of getting to be with them.

"You are thanking us for the cookies, but we really want to thank you, because today, we got to see how much a son loves his dad," I said.

Next year will mark the 100th anniversary of Girl Scouts. But our troop celebration is starting early, as we prepare to deliver more than 100 additional boxes to the Palo Alto VA Hospital. Thank you, Palo Alto, and most of all, thank you, veterans. ■

Carrie Manley volunteers for Junior Girl Scout Troop 60893. She lives in the Midtown neighborhood of Palo Alto with her family and can be reached at carrie_manley@yahoo.com.

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Standing out above the forest

by Carol Blitzer and Karla Kane

Palo Alto's Tall Tree Awards honor citizens, organizations for exceptional community service

The roots of Palo Alto's Tall Tree Awards go long and deep and have grown in 32 years to touch every aspect of the community.

Beginning with the idea that the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce needed to focus on more than local business, the award was inspired by neighboring Menlo Park's Golden Acorn program, which honored citizens and businesses for their devotion to their town, noted Andy Doty, who served on the chamber board at the time.

"We put together a small committee and proceeded to nominate members of the community, preferably people who were unsung," he recalled. The award was a way to bring attention to their hard work.

The idea undergirding the awards was that "a healthy residential community with great volunteers creates a vibrant business community," said Palo Alto Weekly Publisher Bill Johnson, who joined the chamber a year or so later, soon after founding the Weekly.

Back in 1980, it was unusual for a chamber to acknowledge community service, but the model soon spread widely, Johnson said.

At the beginning, the process for choosing Tall Tree winners was fairly simple: A few people sat around the chamber and tossed out ideas for candidates, Doty said.

Today there's a formal nomination process, and the committee holds multiple meetings to discuss potential recipients.

And it's a major event. The Tall Tree Awards dinner is the chamber's major fundraiser for the year; the event is co-sponsored by the Palo Alto Weekly.

Since 1980, Tall Trees have been conferred on individuals and businesses (or nonprofit organizations) that have demonstrated "exceptional civic contributions and service to the community." They were selected "based on their local impact, breadth of contribution, diversity of individuals impacted, timeliness and originality of contribution," according to the nomination form.

The first winners, in 1980, included Queene Amirian (Outstanding Citizen), who was instrumental in creating the Palo Alto Cultural Center (now Palo Alto Art Center) and senior center (now Avenidas); Syntex Corporation (Outstanding Organization), which offered space to nonprofits and opened its doors for public art exhibits; and Betty Wright (Outstanding Professional), a prime mover behind the swim program at the Community Association for Rehabilitation (CAR, now Abilities United) in Palo Alto.

Initially, the "Outstanding Organization" category covered both businesses and nonprofits.

Through the years, outstanding citizens and businesses were highlighted, including former councilmembers (Alan Henderson, 1982; Larry Klein, 1994; Jack Sutorius, 1995; Julie Jerome, 2004; Mike Cobb, 2005; and Gary Fazzino, 2007).

Outstanding organizations have ranged from Hewlett-Packard Co. to the Winter Lodge (The Trust for Community Skating).

While the list of organizations and companies honored reads like a who's who of local companies and nonprofits, there have been some unusual choices. In 1983, the Palo Alto Elementary School Closure Committee was chosen.

"It was a very difficult process; it was timely to acknowledge they'd done a tough job," Johnson said.

And then there was C.W. Roddy, who was given a special Community Leadership Award in 1990 for standing up to drug dealers in her East Palo Alto neighborhood.

Former Palo Alto High School Principal Sandra Pearson was named in 2004, after she came out of retirement to take charge of the school after a student's suicide.

In 2004, Outstanding Business was split off from the Outstanding Non-Profit Company or Organization as a fourth category on its own. That year the Garden Court Hotel was honored.

Unlike Avenidas' Lifetimes of Achievement awards, there is no minimum age requirement for winning a Tall Tree.

"For more than 30 years, the Tall Tree Awards process has allowed us to recognize and celebrate those people and organizations that hold our community together. It gives us the chance to pause from our busy lives and thank those who quietly make Palo Alto the strong community it is," said Paula Sandas, president and CEO of the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce.

This year's awards will be presented on Thursday, March 31, at the Crowne Plaza Cabana Hotel. Those to be honored include Outstanding Citizen: William Alhouse and Jane Gee; Outstanding Business: University Art; Outstanding Professional: Jim Baer; and Outstanding Non-Profit: Youth Community Service.

Associate Editor Carol Blitzer can be e-mailed at cblitzer@paweekly.com; Editorial Assistant Karla Kane can be e-mailed at kkane@paweekly.com.

(continued on next page)

OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL

Jim Baer

The consummate real-estate broker, Baer has pushed the zoning envelope while advancing city policy

by Carol Blitzer

If you want to get something done in this town, simply “call Jim Baer.”

That’s what former mayor Larry Klein wrote in his Tall Tree nominating letter, suggesting Baer as the Outstanding Professional Business Person “who, through extraordinary efforts in their chosen field, has contributed significantly to the Palo Alto community.”

Perhaps best known as the developer of 125 buildings in Palo Alto — about 40 of them downtown — Baer has been instrumental in moving projects through the Palo Alto process.

Baer credits Klein with helping him develop expertise in identifying projects that are both approvable and advance public policy.

After all, Baer’s first job fresh out of Stanford Law School was at Blase, Valentine & Klein.

What Baer learned over time — after starting his own law firm, then his own development company, Premier Properties — was that “land use and buildings are a physical, manifested extension of public policy.” And collaboration would prove to be key to furthering policy.

Baer also got an early start in community-based work, joining the board of the Palo Alto Housing Corporation at age 29. He served for 10 years.

At age 60, looking back at his career, Baer points to a couple of stand-out projects:

- 250 University Ave. (at the corner of University Avenue and Ramona Street) was the first Planned Community Zone development, where greater density was to be offset by public benefits. Here he created a Spanish-style building that fit with surrounding, older structures, connected by an alleyway system.

“It got a lot of scrutiny, a lot of conversation,” but it was approved unanimously, he said.

- IDEO’s headquarters at 100 Forest Ave., designed by Ken Hayes, which was built “for a specific avant-garde user.”

“Both are beautiful buildings with an impact on the community,” Baer said.

He also was the developer of the first LEED gold-certified commercial building in Palo Alto: Embarcadero Media’s headquarters at 450 Cambridge Ave. (the home of the Palo Alto Weekly).

Sometimes Baer pushed the envelope, looking at what he could do that may break some of Palo Alto’s rules but ultimately meet the city’s policy goals.

That inclination came in handy

“Outstanding Professional” Jim Baer counts the 250 University Ave. building and connecting alleyway among his most memorable Palo Alto projects.

when he helped further development of the Taube Koret Campus for Jewish Life in south Palo Alto.

In her nomination letter, Shelly Herbert, who served as executive director for development of the campus, wrote: “Jim was immediately responsive and generous with his time and expertise, which he graciously donated. He advised us about the city-approvals process, what issues would be important to the community, and many complex land-use matters that needed to be evaluated before making such a major investment. ...

“Jim’s depth of expertise and devotion to community life in Palo Alto is unmatched. ... He truly has a heart of gold.”

For his part, Baer acknowledges, “What we’re doing stretches some of the zoning requirements, but it enhances public policy. That’s what my career has been about.”

In 2008, Baer took his longstanding interest in environmental issues and founded Wave One, a nonprofit that assists small businesses reduce their energy use.

With close to 40 businesses signed on, Wave One is ready to go to the next step, he said, using the businesses’ combined power to conduct comprehensive inventories, recruit industry experts, figure out the best sources of funding, including tax credits or rebates, and more.

Baer has definitely put his money

(continued on page 20)



Veronica Weber

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Veronica Weber

“Outstanding Citizen” Jane Gee sits with a photo of her late father and Tall Tree co-honoree, William Alhouse, at the Palo Alto Little League field Alhouse helped create.



Veronica Weber

From left, University Art General Manager Todd Ayers, C.F.O. Cornelia Pendleton and Vice President Charlie Affrunti have worked together at the art-supply store, this year’s “Outstanding Business,” for decades.

OUTSTANDING CITIZENS

William Alhouse and Jane Gee

Father and daughter share a love of community involvement

by **Karla Kane**

It’s been a memorable few months for the Alhouse family.

In February Jane Gee and her father, William Alhouse, were named this year’s Tall Tree Award honorees in the outstanding-citizen category, the first time an award has been shared between a father and daughter. The month took a sad turn when, having suffered from Alzheimer’s disease for the past three years, Alhouse died Feb. 24. The following week, Gee helped present another Mothers Symposium, a community event she co-founded more than a decade ago.

Next Thursday, March 31, with her family around her, Gee will be honored at the Tall Tree Awards ceremony.

“It’s one of Palo Alto’s highest honors,” Gee said of the award. And sharing it with her beloved father, with whom she also shared a love of volunteerism and sports and a successful career in real estate, makes it all the more special, albeit bittersweet.

“I was so proud of my dad and vice versa. I’m glad he made it to the reception,” she said, referring to the Feb. 10 event. “He was so happy.”

Happiness, inspiration and a desire to help others are some of the words that come to mind when Gee remembers her father. “Baseball and business” are the others, she said, laughing.

A native of Brooklyn, William “Billy” Alhouse moved out west for college, got a master’s degree in education from Stanford and worked as an assistant baseball coach there for 17 years. He helped to create the Palo Alto Little League, for which he also coached, in 1951.

“My mother married him thinking she would be the wife of a baseball coach,” Gee said.

But when the sleepy town of Palo Alto started to grow in the 1950s, Alhouse opened a real-estate office

while continuing to coach and raise two daughters. He made his presence known in the Palo Alto business community for years as the head of Alhouse Realty, serving on the Palo Alto Board of Realtors and as its president in 1963.

He never left baseball far behind, taking his family to Amsterdam for a year to coach the national team there and later serving as a coach at Gunn High School and Menlo School.

“The contribution that Bill has made to young people in this area transcends sports. He has been a mentor and role model for integrity and fair dealing in business and in giving back to the community,” wrote award-nominator John King, who took over Alhouse Realty in 1985.

‘Jane continues her father’s legacy of a volunteer who jumps into many causes ... she is a ceaseless volunteer.’

—MEGAN SWEZEY FOGARTY, FORMER TALL TREE HONOREE

“He wanted to help people his whole life. I have done some things but not nearly as much as him,” Gee said.

Despite her modesty, co-honoree Gee has carved her own niche in Palo Alto, first by following in her father’s footsteps, then branching out.

“Jane continues her father’s legacy of a volunteer who jumps into many causes. Through PTA; neighborhood leadership; church mission trips to Mexico to build homes; wildlife protection and service to Preschool Family and Family Resources boards, she is a ceaseless

volunteer,” former Tall Tree honoree Megan Swezey Fogarty wrote in her nomination letter.

Gee grew up in Palo Alto, attended the University of the Pacific in Stockton, then, like her father, worked in the Stanford Athletics Department. After a year spent teaching in Marin County, Gee was ready to come home and make a career change.

“Dad said, ‘Get your real-estate license and come work for me,’” she said, so she did just that, working for Alhouse Realty for 12 years.

“It was so much fun to work with him. I never felt like I had to follow in his footsteps, but I loved that work,” she said. She served as president of the Palo Alto Board of Realtors in 1993, exactly 30 years after Alhouse did.

After meeting husband Bruce (whom she calls a perfect match, “made in heaven”) and having two kids, “It all changed. I had a hard time deciding whether or not to go back to work. I was really torn because I loved the business, but I certainly loved my kids more.”

Realizing such issues are common among modern mothers, Gee created a forum for women, a place of discussion and support. In 1997, the Mothers Symposium was born.

Every other year, several hundred women gather at Stanford to hear guest speakers, music and more.

“The camaraderie of women is very powerful and comforting. It tells women they’re not alone,” she said.

Though she keeps her real-estate license current, Gee said she’s busy with her volunteer work, raising her now-teenage kids and helping her elderly in-laws and mother, all of whom live locally.

The Alhouse family’s legacy of support for local sports lives on through her children and through the Palo Alto Little League organization, which continues going strong after 60 years.

“We still sponsor a team,” she said. “We always will.” ■

OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

University Art

Downtown shop has been supporting local art for decades

by **Karla Kane**

Since 1948, University Art, this year’s honoree in the outstanding-business category, has been a mainstay in the local business world. Providing all manner of art supplies and framing services to the area, it opened first in Palo Alto then expanded to locations in five other cities. But it’s more than just a place to pick up paintbrushes; the family-owned shop has also taken an active role in the Palo Alto art scene.

Cornelia Pendleton, University Art’s current CFO, has grown up with the business. Her mother, grandfather and aunt started University Art after World War II, deciding they wanted to run a store together.

“My grandfather enjoyed painting, and he wanted to do something with his daughters that he could participate in,” she said. “They didn’t know a lot about the business, but they learned by talking to people; they had a lot to learn about the art industry.”

The store was originally located on University Avenue, as the name implies, but moved to its present location on Hamilton Avenue in 1964.

“We all had to participate as kids, working in the warehouse, doing inventory, working the cash register,” Pendleton said of her siblings and cousins. She is now the only relative still actively working for the business (her mother and aunt, Laurie Cappiello and Ginny Biondi, are now retired). But her co-managers, Charlie Affrunti and Todd Ayers, have worked with her for decades and are now like family, she said, along with the rest of University Art’s close-knit staff.

“I started at age 16. I’ve done everything from delivery to management, and I’m still here,” said Affrunti, whose kids have also worked in the business. “It’s always enjoyable.”

University Art is beloved not only for its fine merchandise and customer service but for its support for local

arts.

“A comfortable space in the core downtown, it is well-known for its generosity and genuine interest in our entire community,” Tall Tree nominator Barbara Gross wrote of the retailer. University Art has donated prizes to local art contests, including the Weekly’s Photo Contest and shows at the Palo Alto Art League, and supplies for the art projects made in Downtown Palo Alto’s annual street festivals. University Art also holds its own children’s art contest and a juried competition for adults.

“We have a really good relationship with the art organizations in our area,” Pendleton said. Ayers served on the board of the Pacific Art League, while Pendleton served three terms on the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation Board. There she raised funds for the Art Center’s renovation, as well as supporting such Art Center programs as Project Look! and Cultural Kaleidoscope, both of which provide art education to children.

“We’ve always felt being a part of the community is important. We’ve been fortunate and we want to pass that on,” Affrunti said.

Though not immune to the recent economic downturn, University Art is hanging in there.

“It’s been a rough three years, but we’ve been through enough ups and downs to know what we need to do,” Pendleton said, adding that they cut back to around 65 employees from their prior 70 to 75.

“To be recognized for what we bring to the community is a terrific feeling. So many people have grown up with our store. They come in to visit, to get ideas. It’s more than a place to just pick up some supplies,” she said.

“It’s an honor to be recognized for the successes that we’ve had. We’re still in business because of the people we’ve met and the friends we’ve made along the way.” ■

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Jim Baer

(continued from page 16)

where his mouth is, personally contributing \$350,000.

Baer said he considers receiving the Tall Tree award a continuation of the blessings he's experienced working in Palo Alto all these years.

The timing is especially meaningful to him, given that nearly a year ago he had a near-fatal bike accident that has left him still recovering from a severe brain injury. He spent six weeks unconscious and about seven months in the hospital. He's still not totally back to the office — but he's working on seven Palo Alto projects right now.

He likes to joke that what he does for a living actually helped speed up his recovery.

"I've been hit on the head professionally a thousand times. What do I do for a living? Go negotiate with neighborhoods and city staff, council members and planning commissions.

"Thank you all for the little knocks on the head that contributed to my recovery."

While convalescing, Baer said he couldn't read much but found plenty of time to reflect on life. His conclusion:

"I really am in a business that does not create enemies. We are collaborative. It's like being on a small basketball team; we're doing it together. ...

"I'm blessed with having friends from my career. We really are friends in that shared work we do together." ■



Veronica Weber

Rosa Mendoza, second from right, talks with Gunn High School students Olivia Bonneville, left, and Fiona Finn, far right, while making fruit salad together at Lytton Gardens during a service day sponsored by "Outstanding Non-Profit" Youth Community Service.

OUTSTANDING NON-PROFIT OR ORGANIZATION

Youth Community Service

Inspiring young people to start giving back early

by Carol Blitzer

Sometimes numbers simply speak for themselves: Since 1990, Youth Community Service (YCS) has involved 17,000 students in local projects, providing 110,000 hours of service through more than 40 organizations.

This year alone, more than 1,000 students are participating.

For many, that original interest — whether through a middle- or high-school based service club, a leadership-training program, a life-skills class or a service day — has sparked a lifelong commitment to giving back to the community.

As Dan Dykwel wrote in his nominating letter for the Tall Tree Award for nonprofit organization: "YCS has provided opportunities for students whose hearts are full of grace to make meaningful contributions to their communities."

Leif Erickson, the nonprofit's executive director for the past seven years, sees a connection between youths' self-esteem and service to the community.

"There are many ways (for students) to be successful, not just making straight As. It could be music, sports, service.

"Most students feel there's just one definition, and they're struggling to fit it. Service is just one way kids can be successful," he said.

Starting with just one club on one campus 20 years ago, YCS has grown to multiple collaborations between Palo Alto and East Palo Alto students.

Today, YCS has active student clubs at all three Palo Alto middle schools and both high schools, as well as three East Palo Alto middle schools. This year the group is heavily involved with Project Safety Net, which is focused on increasing student well-being and mental health awareness.

At Gunn High School early this month, more than 300 students participated in the annual Gunn High School Service Day, volunteering in

nearly a dozen venues from working with seniors at Lytton Gardens Senior Center to planting acorns in the Stanford hills through the environmental group, Magic.

While the YCS staff lined up the sites, recruited chaperones and arranged for bus transportation, the YCS Interact Club played a leadership role and handled publicity in addition to volunteering, Erickson said. The youth also learned to partner with Key Club, Palo Alto University Rotary Club and others.

YCS is not solely about community service, however. At Menlo-Atherton High School, YCS facilitators run three life-skills electives, with students often referred by Miki Cristerna, the school's student-support coordinator. She identifies students with behavioral or attendance issues who could benefit from the 180 Degree program that develops self-awareness and self-confidence in ninth through 11th graders.

In just the third semester of the program, she's finding "huge differences (in the students, who are) recognizing that adults on campus are here to help them, aren't the bad guys."

Some students have moved into the Freshman Leadership Corps, the Boys & Girls Club or YCS school clubs, taking what they've learned to the next step, and often giving back through mentoring others.

Giving back can become second nature to participants in YCS programs.

Freshman Diqan Richard was surprised when he was recently honored by YCS.

"They gave me an award, but I was just helping," he said.

What has made YCS so successful over the years is its focus on collaboration and partnerships, group leaders say.

"We don't do anything on our own. Everything is with partners," Erickson said.

YCS has expanded to Redwood High School, a continuation school

in the Sequoia Union High School District, at the request of that principal.

Today, YCS offers life-skill classes through the school's environmental program, and to teen moms.

"It's a very adaptive curriculum," Erickson said.

While leadership and service clubs thrive in Palo Alto, "We haven't figured a way to bring life-skills program there yet. We're just starting to have conversations," Erickson added.

This summer, YCS is sponsoring a Summer of Service day camp at Ventura School in Palo Alto, where middle school students spend the first week immersed in projects in one of four areas of interest: environment; hunger and homelessness; seniors and health care; and child care and education. During the second week, they learned about another of the three areas.

"This is a process of discovery. ... Part of service learning is students being able to choose and not just doing what they're told," Erickson said.

Erickson not only wants to continue YCS collaborations but to increase their depth.

"(We're looking for) deeper partnerships with each school, each district, in ways that fit their priorities and culture. It just gets richer and richer as we build those relationships with the principals, counselors and teachers," Erickson said.

"We aren't the only solution, but we're in partnership with other organizations. The purpose of it all is to help kids discover what they love, what they're good at." ■

Editor's note: YCS is interested in contacting its alumni, both to stay connected and to find out whether (or how) they are still involved in community service. Alumni can search for "Youth Community Service alumni" on Facebook.com.

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A list of all the Tall Tree recipients since the awards' inception in 1980 is posted on Palo Alto Online.

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Arts & Entertainment

A weekly guide to music, theater, art, movies and more, edited by Rebecca Wallace



Photos by Veronica Weber

From top: PACO musicians rehearse for the March 27 concert; Sierra Leder, center, at rehearsal; violinist Joanna Chung; Ben Simon conducts the orchestra; Lauren D'Andrea at rehearsal.

Giving Bach to the community

Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra plans a benefit concert for music in Ravenswood schools

by Joann So

“

We're gonna dance for the last time!”

During rehearsal, Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra music director Ben Simon gives his students a suggestion to make their final rendition of a Bach piece more spirited. Students start to sway from left to right as they play their instruments. Bows graze across the strings in the vivacious Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G Major. All the musicians dance through Bach's work — even the seated cellists.

Many students are busily finishing the last bit of homework and preparing for the new week on a Sunday night. For those in the senior ensemble at PACO, though, this evening is reserved for weekly practice at Palo Alto's Cubberley Community Center.

“Music isn't for oneself completely, but the power of music is to share and play for others,” Simon says. For its 45th birthday, PACO is sharing by holding a benefit concert on March 27 at Costaño Elementary School in East Palo Alto. Proceeds will go to the Music in the Schools Foundation, a nonprofit that provides music education to the Ravenswood City School District.

The beneficiary will also be a part of the concert. Thirty student choral singers in the third through fifth grade from Green Oaks Academy in the Ravenswood district will be sharing the stage with senior members of PACO.

The concert also features a folkloric South American trio called Chaskinakuy, based in Northern California. The group plays Andean music with costumes and instruments made from a wide variety of materials. Among these is a violin formed out of an armadillo shell. Simon said he invited the trio to add variety to the concert program because of their easily accessible sound.

(continued on page 21)



**NOTICE OF A PUBLIC MEETING
of the City of Palo Alto
Architectural Review Board (ARB)**

8:30 A.M., Thursday, April 7, 2011 Palo Alto Council Chambers, 1st Floor, Civic Center, 250 Hamilton Avenue. Go to the Development Center at 285 Hamilton Avenue to review filed documents; contact Alicia Spotwood for information regarding business hours at 650-617-3168.

1095 Channing [10PLN-00337]: Request by NSA Wireless, on behalf of Roman Catholic Welfare Corp. of San Jose, for Architectural Review of a 50 foot tall tower to house a telecommunications facility (nine panel wireless antennas and associated equipment) on the St. Albert the Great Church property. A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow the building-mounted telecommunications facility was tentatively approved on March 25, 2011. Environmental Assessment: Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act per Section 15301.Zone District: R-1 (Single Family Residential).

559 Lytton Avenue [11PLN-00076]: Request by California Communities on behalf of Lytton Park, LP for Preliminary Architectural Review of a new development consisting of four attached townhomes. Zone - RM-30.

211 Quarry Road- Stanford University Medical Center Project, Hoover Projects [10PLN-00398]: Request by Stanford Hospital and Clinics on behalf of The Board of Trustees for the Leland Stanford Junior University for Architectural Review of exterior renovations to Hoover Pavilion and construction of a new 60,000 square foot medical office building and parking structure containing 1,088 parking spaces. These projects are components of the Stanford University Medical Center Facilities Renewal and Replacement Project. Existing Zone District: PF (Public Facilities).

**Amy French
Manager of Current Planning**

Arts & Entertainment

Benefit concert

(continued from page 21)

All five ensembles of PACO will perform short pieces. At the end of the concert, more than 150 current and past PACO members are scheduled to perform the Brandenburg Concerto No. 3 in G Major. To reconnect with alumni and celebrate the occasion, Simon invited several alumni and guests to play alongside current musicians.

The concert will be collaborative on other levels as well. The senior ensemble will provide background strings for the Chaskinakuy trio and for the students at Green Oaks, with both string arrangements by Simon.

"An intense musical soup" is one way Simon describes PACO. The orchestra is distinctly chamber-based. Simon is intent on keeping the orchestra small — there are about 20 to 25 students in each ensemble.

Despite PACO's size, its commitment to strong chamber music has allowed the orchestra to grow in the number of ensembles, scope of repertoire, touring and recording, Simon said. "But the heart of PACO remains the same," he added.

Camaraderie and concentration marked the mood at the rehearsal on a recent Sunday evening. Students seemed excited to catch up on each other's weekend during down time, but focus characterized the group when practice began.

Friends Isabella Costanza and Joanna Chang stood only a few music stands apart. Costanza has been playing the violin for eight years and Chang for 11 years. They also both play the piano.

"We don't judge each other — we support!" said Costanza, a freshman from Gunn. She said she doesn't mind practicing two to three hours of violin a day; she wants to pursue music professionally one day. Numerous hours of music have "become a part of us," she said.

The group of musicians, as Simon said, is connected by a musical and interpersonal bond. Everything in PACO is a shared experience, from weekly rehearsals to international tours.

As Costanza and Chang chimed in on each other's conversations as close friends, Chang fondly brought up an orchestra tour last summer.

"We went on tour to Turkey and had a lot of fun," she said, recalling that PACO played her favorite piece, "Las Cuatro Estaciones Porteñas," by Astor Piazzolla. Its structure is "kind of like Vivaldi's Four Seasons," she said.

PACO is divided into five orchestras, starting at Superstrings, with musicians then moving up to the Preparatory, Debut, Sinfonia and Senior levels. But for Chang and Costanza, both members of the senior ensemble, there is no disengagement with one another based on level or age.

"It feels like we're a family," Chang said.



The Chaskinakuy trio will perform Andean music at the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra concert on March 27.

Simon wants his students to perform not only as an orchestra but also as a community, connecting musically within the orchestra and working with other students and organizations.

Virginia Fruchterman, the chair of Music in the Schools, said in a phone interview that "people seem to notice that music is disappearing (in school)." She added, "Fundraising is a little difficult but it's a little up this year."

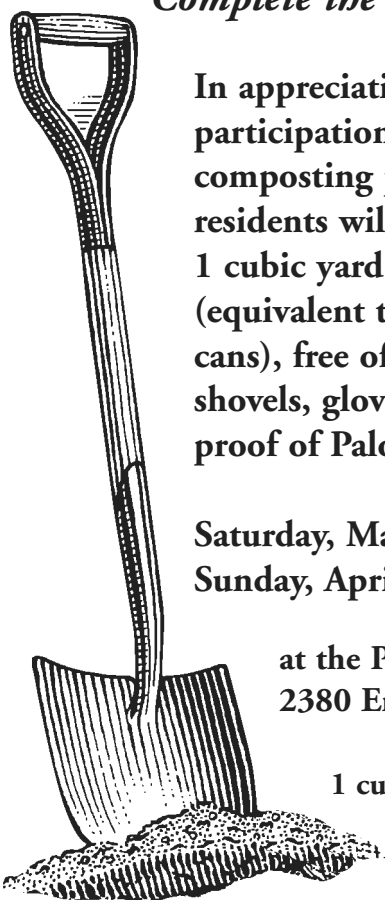
The program currently offers classes that teach the basics of music and rhythm through musical games, singing and dancing. Older students are learning to play the recorder. The district is not charged for the classes, according to Music in the Schools' website.

Fruchterman said she hopes to also start a strings program and add more after-school music programs. Music in the Schools currently reaches 1,000 students a week, but this is only a third of students in the Ravenswood district, she said.

"There are more who want music," Fruchterman said. ■

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Info: Go to pacomusic.org or call 650-856-3848.

VIEW MORE ONLINE
www.PaloAltoOnline.com

To watch video from the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra rehearsal, shot by Weekly photographer Veronica Weber, go to PaloAltoOnline.com.

Correction

In the March 18 article "For love of a garden," an incorrect event ticket price was listed for Gamble Garden and Palo Alto Art Center members. Admission for members to Elizabeth Murray's talk is \$35. To request a correction, contact Managing Editor Jocelyn Dong at 650-223-6514, jdong@paweekly.com or P.O. Box 1610, Palo Alto, CA 94302.

Chasing the perfect beat

Palo Alto teen packs 'drama' into his first hip-hop album

by Rebecca Wallace

Life as a teen seems to have an indelible soundtrack. There's something about being in high school that makes music more intense.

For Sean Lee, a 15-year-old Gunn High School student, the connection with notes and melodies runs especially deep.

When a friend drives up and screeches the car tires, Sean observes, "That's D-sharp." He's an experienced pianist who plays in the Gunn jazz band. And late last year, he released his first hip-hop album, "Drama Lives On." He wrote all the songs, and recorded the album at his home.

"I printed 100 copies and have sold 50 of them," Sean said with quiet pride during an interview at the Weekly earlier this month. He also tallied about 300 downloads of the album during the month of December, when it was released.

Music has always been huge for this hip-hop artist with perfect pitch. Sean started playing violin and piano at an early age. In junior high, he was writing lyrics and drawing musical inspiration from Kanye West and the Backstreet Boys. By early last year, he was determined to learn the technology he needed to make his own album.

"I had songs in my head. Then I did research on how to put drums, melodies into them on the computer," he said. He borrowed headsets and other equipment, learning the technology as he went.

"He's a perfectionist. He really wanted to make it so perfect," said Sean's mother, Wen Lee, who accompanied him to the Weekly.

"Drama Lives On" is an album that tells a lot of stories, Sean said, with many of the songs about relationships. The first few tracks are "party-club style," followed by songs with more of a rock and R&B feel, he said. Toward the end, the sound turns more melodic.

A few guest singers are featured, including Kelly Milliken, who sings on the last song of the album, "Last Time." The song combines a soft, minor-key sound with gentle beats, telling the story about the end of a relationship. Harder-edged tracks include "Go Get'em," which has a local shout-out: "I was raised in the city P.A. / and now I'm gonna bring the sound of the music into play."

Eric Leroy, a Palo Alto High School hip-hop musician who goes by L-Roy, praised his friend's album and "really good microphone quality."

"It's super-important to get the sound right. You could record a track that will be too loud or staticky, or too soft," he said. "Finding that balance: Sean has definitely achieved that in



Veronica Weber



Top: Sean Lee mixes a track on a sound mixer at the Media Center in Palo Alto, where he's on the Youth Advisory Council. Above: The cover of Sean's new album, "Drama Lives On."

the whole album."

Eric also applauded Sean's "original" lyrics. "They're more free verses, much like Jay-Z," he said.

Besides his music, Sean also works on video projects. In 2008, he started "The Sean Lee Show," a series up on YouTube that includes parodies, piano, travel and cooking features, and interviews.

Sean is continuing to learn about video and music technology at the Media Center in Palo Alto, where he serves on the Youth Advisory Council. He shot part of the video for "Understand," the first track on his album, at the Media Center, and en-

listed fellow council members Suzie Quackenbush and Nicholas Moss to act with him in the video.

Ultimately, Sean said, he'd like to major in film or video in college, and continue pursuing his music.

"I'm working on new melodies and compositions that I can most connect to," he said. And how does one get better at rapping? Sean shrugged and smiled. "Practice." ■

Info: To watch Sean's videos, go to www.youtube.com/TheSeanLeeShow. His album, "Drama Lives On," can be purchased through iTunes.

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OPENINGS

Jane Eyre ★★1/2

(Palo Alto Square) Just when you think the umpteenth adaptation of Charlotte Brontë's beloved 1847 novel couldn't possibly add anything new to the library of cinematic classics, director Cary Joji Fukunaga proves you wrong. Besides featuring rising stars Mia Wasikowska and Michael Fassbender, the handsome British production successfully explores the mindscape of the "small and plain" heroine.

Instead of telling the tale in chronological order, screenwriter Moira Buffini ("Tamara Drewe") begins with the adult Jane (Wasikowska) of "Alice in Wonderland" and "The Kids Are All Right"), diminutive in a long shot, at a crossroads on the mist-shrouded moors. Sobbing and "white as death," Jane unleashes her emotions in an opening both atmospheric and wordless — yet true to the spirit of Brontë's first-person narrative.

Only after being taken in by cleric St. John Rivers (Jamie Bell of "Billy Elliot") and his sisters (Holliday Grainger and Tamzin Merchant) does Jane recall her unhappy time as the orphaned ward of her aunt (Sally Hawkins of "Happy-Go-Lucky"). The flashback takes us to the novel's opening scene and establishes the admirable traits of the 10-year-old girl: independent, imbued with a sense of fairness and justice, and calm but with a burning passion beneath her drab exterior.

Buffeted about by fate and subject to the cruel inequities of class and gender, Jane eventually becomes the governess of Thornfield Hall and falls in love with the master of the manor house, Edward Rochester (Fassbender of "Hunger" and "Inglourious Basterds").

Wasikowska's understated performance engenders sympathy, particularly when Jane suffers through numerous false accusations, beatings and disappointments. She emanates a quiet strength and enduring spirit, making her few emotional outbursts even more dramatic. The young actor owns the movie. When Fassbender stumbles into the picture as the brooding Rochester, he sweeps the impressionable woman off her feet but doesn't steal the show. "You are my equal and my likeness," he says, as the love story takes flight.

Although straying far from the dangerous territory of the Central American immigrants and Mexican gang members of "Sin Nombre," Fukunaga and lenser Adriano Goldman bring visual and visceral punch to the Victorian era. The team created stark images of lonely vistas and boxed-in en-



Michael Fassbender and Mia Wasikowska in "Jane Eyre."

vironments that externalize Jane's inner feelings. A gothic eeriness hovers over the movie, sometimes making one question the sanity of the governess, and other times suggesting an invisible world of spirits.

Either way, the filmmakers pull us inside Jane's feverish imagination while hinting at the dark secrets behind Thornhill's closed doors. Judi Dench, who plays the caring housekeeper of the manor house, provides the few moments of levity in the film.

Reader, a new generation will most likely enjoy discovering this enduring classic on the big screen.

Rated PG-13 for some thematic elements including a nude image and brief violent content. 1 hour, 55 minutes.

— Susan Tavernetti

Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules ★★1/2

(Century 16, Century 20) "You are so dead." Words that will strike a chord with any middle-schooler who has run afoul of a bully or a big brother. A quickie sequel to a film released only last year, "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Rodrick Rules" surprisingly improves on its predecessor.

Based on Jeff Kinney's illustrated novel of the same name (but also incorporating elements from third novel "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Last Straw"), the new film benefits from a more thematically cohesive script and presumably also from the new director, David Bowers ("Flushed Away"). Bowers tips his hat to his animated roots in an opening that finds Kinney's penciled caricatures turning into the actors; otherwise, the style remains fairly consistent with the first film, and the script reasonably faithful to the book, so fans will stay happy.

Pint-sized diarist Greg Hefley (Zachary Gordon) returns

to Westmore Middle School as a proud seventh grader. Naturally, his pride doesn't last long, as the franchise runs on indignities (and the occasional gross-out).

Throwing Greg off balance is cute transfer student Holly Hills (Peyton List), who gives him a yet more compelling reason to try to be cool. As ever, Greg's guileless best friend, Rowley Jefferson (Robert Capron), remains clueless to coolness, but the larger threat comes from Greg's big brother, Rodrick (Devon Bostick of "Adoration"). As Greg puts it, "Rodrick is the king of laziness, except when it comes to torturing me."

Rodrick is something of an archetype of the foul teenager, cleaned up for the tween set. Dim-witted and mean, he lives only for his band, L'ded Dipper, donning eyeliner to rock out on the drums. Having pinned his dreams on Plainview's citywide talent competition, Rodrick can't be bothered to play nice with Greg. But their columnist mother (Rachael Harris) intently pushes them together, lamely bribing them with "Mom Bucks." At first, Rodrick won't let up. But before long, the brothers find themselves in a symbiotic tangle: After they're left alone for a weekend, they must work together to cover up the evidence of a "wild" party.

I say "wild" because "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" remains resolutely and a bit blandly innocent, with Plainview a kind of kiddie-cable-sitcom, time-warp fantasyland. Reality dictates that illicit teen parties involve more than chugging soda, and that junior-high kids wanting sneakily to watch a DVD probably aren't watching the equivalent of a 1970s Hammer horror film (though the latter allows for an amusing spoof). The boys' first stirrings of puberty haven't graduated to curiosity about sex, and Rodrick's idea of pranking strangers is to put fake vomit on their cars.

On the other hand, Rodrick's "rules" credibly include coaching Greg to cheat and lie ("Deny, deny, deny ..."), and some junior-high horrors never change: Greg faces the waking equivalent of the old "wearing just underwear in public" dream. Despite being affectionately mocked (by Harris and an especially funny Steve Zahn), parents will appreciate the relative virtue of Kinney's vision, which may help to hold the line of childhood innocence a bit longer. And the kids will plotz for the poop jokes.

Rated PG for some mild rude humor and mischief. One hour, 36 minutes.

— Peter Canavese

NOW PLAYING

The following is a sampling of movies recently reviewed in the Weekly:

Battle: Los Angeles ★1/2

(Century 16, Century 20) A meteor shower off the coast of Tokyo turns out to be the first salvo in an alien invasion. With San Francisco and San Diego conquered, Los Angeles is the last bastion of the West Coast. Only the U.S. Marine Corps can save us now! Aaron Eckhart plays Marine Staff Sergeant Michael Nantz, who just turned in his retirement papers. For good measure, Nantz carries survivor's guilt from recently losing his platoon overseas, including the brother of one of his newly assigned charges. The rest of Nantz's new unit is full of characters with Conspicuous Reasons They Can't Die, including unclaimed virginity and an imminent wedding. Rated PG-13 for sustained and intense sequences of war violence and destruction, and for language. One hour, 54 minutes. — T.H. (Reviewed March 11, 2011)

Certified Copy ★★★1/2

(Aquarius) "Certified Copy" takes place in Southern Tuscany, where a small assemblage awaits an absent lecturer. James Miller (William Shimell) arrives late to discuss his book, which has been awarded "best foreign essay of the year." Present at the Tuscany conference is a woman (Juliette Binoche) whose bothersome boy hastens her exit. The teen teases his mother that she likes the author; soon thereafter, she meets the man at her antiques gallery and initiates a flirtation. As the pair go through the age-old motions of coquetry, cues suggest they may have a shared past that they're playfully ignoring. Are these two kindling a relationship or rekindling one? Not rated. One hour, 46 minutes. — P.C. (Reviewed March 18, 2011)

The Music Never Stopped ★★1/2

(Aquarius) Gabriel Sawyer (Lou Taylor Pucci) came of age during the Summer of Love, after which he disappeared from his parents' lives. When he turns up again nearly 20 years later, he's a changed man. To blame is a brain tumor, which has left Gabe with limited memories and a demonstrable inability to form any new ones. Gabe's mother Helen (Cara Seymour) and father Henry (J.K. Simmons) enlist in

the Sisyphean task of getting through to their son. The considerable strain further disrupts the Sawyers' marriage, but a ray of hope emerges when Gabe responds to music. A former garage-band lead man, Gabe lights up when he hears music from his "Wonder Years": 1964-1970. The Beatles, The Stones, Dylan and especially The Dead have the magical power to bring back the Gabe his father remembers. Rated PG for thematic elements, some mild drug references, language and smoking. One hour, 45 minutes. — P.C. (Reviewed March 18, 2011)

Of Gods and Men ★★★1/2

(Guild) Based on a true incident in 1996 involving a clash between Algerian monks and Islamic fundamentalists, the film invites a consideration of the social roles of religion and how the unseen and unheard (namely God) provide unlikely justification for radically diverse social action. The encroachment of Islamic radicals on the peaceful countryside presses a thorny question to the monks: With direct conflict inevitable, should they stay true to their commitment to serve the local needy, or abandon the monastery and return to the safety of France? Rated PG-13 for a momentary scene of startling wartime violence, some disturbing images and brief language. Two hours, two minutes. — P.C. (Reviewed March 11, 2011)

Paul ★★★1/2

(Century 16, Century 20) Graeme Willy (Simon Pegg) and Clive Gollings (Nick Frost) are unadulterated fanboys from Britain visiting the U.S. and its array of UFO hotspots. The geeky pals get an otherworldly shock when a car crashes in front of them on a quiet desert highway. The boys quickly exit to help the driver, only to discover he is an alien named Paul (Seth Rogen). Paul convinces his bewildered new buds to help him return to his home planet. Along for the ride is Ruth Buggs (Kristen Wiig), the sheltered daughter of a shotgun-toting Christian fanatic. Meanwhile, Paul and the gang are feverishly pursued by a relentless government agent (Jason Bateman) and his two buffoonish henchmen (Bill Hader and Joe Lo Truglio). Rated R for language, including sexual references, and some drug use. 1 hour, 44 minutes. — T.H. (Reviewed March 18, 2011)

MOVIE TIMES

The Adjustment Bureau (PG-13) ★★1/2	Century 16: 11:35 a.m.; 2:20, 5, 7:55 & 10:30 p.m. Century 20: 11:45 a.m.; 2:15, 4:50, 7:25 & 10:05 p.m.
Battle: Los Angeles (PG-13) ★1/2	Century 16: 11:05 a.m.; 2, 4:50, 7:35 & 10:20 p.m. Century 20: 11:25 a.m.; 12:50, 2:10, 3:30, 5, 6:30, 7:45, 9:20 & 10:30 p.m.
Beastly (PG-13) (Not Reviewed)	Century 20: Fri. & Sun.-Thu. at 10:30 p.m.
Cedar Rapids (R) ★★★	Century 16: 11:50 a.m.; 2:30 & 9:40 p.m.; Fri.-Wed. also at 4:45 & 7:20 p.m.
Certified Copy (Not Rated) ★★★1/2	Aquarius Theatre: 2, 4:30, 7 & 9:30 p.m.
Diary of a Wimpy Kid 2: Rodrick Rules (PG) ★★1/2	Century 16: 11:40 a.m.; 12:40, 2:05, 3:20, 4:25, 6:10, 7:10, 8:45 & 9:45 p.m. Century 20: 11:30 a.m.; 12:40, 2, 3:10, 4:30, 5:40, 7, 8:10, 9:25 & 10:35 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. also at 10:15 a.m.
Gnomeo & Juliet (G) ★★★	Century 16: 11:15 a.m.; In 3D at 3:50 p.m. Century 20: 11:50 a.m.; 4:10 & 8:35 p.m.; In 3D at 1:55, 6:25 & 10:45 p.m.
The Golden Arrow (1936)	Stanford Theatre: Fri. at 6:10 & 8:55 p.m.
Jane Eyre (2011) (PG-13) ★★★1/2	Palo Alto Square: 1:30, 2:30, 4:25, 5:15, 7:15 & 8:15 p.m.; Fri. & Sat. also at 10:05 p.m.
Jezebel (1938)	Stanford Theatre: Sat.-Mon. at 7:30 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. also at 4 p.m.
Just Go With It (PG-13) ★1/2	Century 20: 11:35 a.m.; Fri.-Wed. also at 2:25, 5:05 & 7:50 p.m.
Justin Bieber: Never Say Never (G) (Not Reviewed)	Century 20: In 3D at 12:05 p.m.
The King's Speech (R) ★★★1/2	Century 16: 1, 4, 7 & 9:55 p.m. Century 20: 11:20 a.m.; 2:15, 4:55, 7:35 & 10:15 p.m.
Limitless (PG-13) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 11:20 a.m.; 12:20, 1:55, 2:55, 4:40, 5:40, 7:25, 8:30 & 10:10 p.m. Century 20: 11:15 a.m.; 12:15, 1:50, 2:50, 4:25, 5:25, 7:05, 8, 9:40 & 10:35 p.m.
The Lincoln Lawyer (R) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 11 a.m.; noon, 1:45, 2:45, 4:30, 5:30, 7:30, 8:40 & 10:15 p.m. Century 20: 11:25 a.m.; 12:25, 2:10, 3:20, 4:55, 6:10, 7:40, 9:10 & 10:25 p.m.
Mars Needs Moms (PG) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 1:30 & 8:20 p.m.; In 3D at 6:05 p.m. Century 20: 11:15 a.m.; 3:55 & 8:30 p.m.; In 3D at 1:35, 6:15 & 10:45 p.m.
The Music Never Stopped (PG) ★★1/2	Aquarius Theatre: 2:30, 5 & 9:55 p.m.; Fri.-Wed. also at 7:30 p.m.
My Run (PG-13) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: Thu. at 7 p.m. Century 20: Thu. at 7 p.m.
Of Gods and Men (PG-13) ★★★1/2	Guild Theatre: 2:45, 5:30 & 8:30 p.m.
Paul (R) ★★★1/2	Century 16: 11:30 a.m.; 12:30, 2:10, 3:10, 4:55, 5:50, 7:45, 8:55 & 10:25 p.m. Century 20: 11:30 a.m.; 12:35, 2, 3:05, 4:35, 5:35, 7:15, 8:10, 9:45 & 10:40 p.m.
The Petrified Forest (1936)	Stanford Theatre: Sat.-Mon. at 5:55 & 9:25 p.m.
Rango (PG) ★★★	Century 16: 11 a.m.; 1:40, 4:15, 6:50 & 9:30 p.m. Century 20: 11:10 a.m.; 1:45, 2:40, 4:20, 5:20, 6:55, 8:05, 9:30 & 10:40 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. also at 10:05 a.m.
Red Riding Hood (PG-13) ★1/2	Century 20: 12:30, 3, 5:30, 7:55 & 10:20 p.m.
Satan Met a Lady (1936)	Stanford Theatre: Fri. at 7:30 p.m.
Sucker Punch (PG-13) (Not Reviewed)	Century 16: 11:10 a.m.; 12:10, 1:50, 2:50, 4:35, 5:35, 7:40, 8:50 & 10:30 p.m. Century 20: 11:40 a.m.; 1, 2:20, 3:40, 5, 6:20, 7:40, 9 & 10:20 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. also at 10:20 a.m.
To Catch a Dollar (Not Rated) (Not Reviewed)	Aquarius Theatre: Thu. at 7:30 p.m.

★ Skip it ★★ Some redeeming qualities ★★★ A good bet ★★★★ Outstanding

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City Council is seeking applications for the Historic Resources Board from persons interested in serving in one of four, three year terms ending May 31, 2014.

Eligibility Requirements: The Historic Resources Board is composed of seven members appointed by the City Council and who serve without pay. Members shall have demonstrated interest in and knowledge of history, architecture or historic preservation. One member shall be an owner/occupant of a category one or two historic structure, or of a structure in an historic district; three members shall be architects, landscape architects, building designers or other design professionals and at least one member shall possess academic education or practical experience in history or a related field.

Duties: The primary duties of the Historic Resources Board include: a) Reviewing and making recommendations to the Architectural Review Board on proposed exterior changes of commercial and multiple-family buildings on the Historic Building Inventory; b) Reviewing and making recommendations on exterior changes of significant (Categories 1 and 2) single-family residences on the Historic Building Inventory; c) Researching and making recommendations to the City Council on proposed additions and on reclassifications of existing buildings on the Inventory; and d) Performing other functions as may be delegated from time to time to the Historic Resources Board by the City Council.

Application forms and appointment information are available in the City Clerk's Office, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto - (650) 329-2571 or may be obtained on the website at <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org>.

Deadline for receipt of applications in the City Clerk's Office is 5:30 p.m., April 14, 2011. If one of the incumbents does not re-apply, the final deadline for non-incumbents will be April 19, 2011 at 5:30 p.m.

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Eating Out

RESTAURANT REVIEW



Veronica Weber

Corned-beef hash with poached eggs in hollandaise sauce, served with a biscuit.

A truly hearty breakfast

Morning portions range between generous and gigantic at Country Gourmet

by Dale F. Bentson

On chilly and not so chilly mornings, I love waking to thoughts of a bounteous breakfast. My lifestyle doesn't allow for indulgence in a big breakfast very often, but when it does, it's a place like Country Gourmet in Mountain View that whets my appetite.

Country Gourmet has been a fixture on the southeast corner of El Camino Real and Rengstorff Avenue for decades. Architecturally, the restaurant resembles a small farm structure. Built in the late 1960s, the building originally housed a unit of the long-defunct Red Barn restaurant chain, according to owner Herman Shaw. "The property had been in the

family for many years. After Red Barn closed, the building sat empty for some time," Shaw said. In 1981, his son conceived the family-restaurant idea and the place has been a local favorite ever since.

Shaw is the only family member active in the restaurant but has other business interests that limit his on-site time. "We have a manager and most of the staff has been with us for 10 years," he said.

From my perspective, it seems to be a well-run operation.

While Country Gourmet is open six days a week for breakfast, lunch and dinner, I'm focusing on the early menu for this

breakfast review.

"Healthy Food and Lots of It" is the logo beneath the Country Gourmet sign that beckons along El Camino. It's one advertising line that few could dispute, at least the "lots of it" part. Portions range between generous and gigantic, frequently overflowing the large plates that the orders are served on.

Just inside the door, the "Place Order Here" sign was a little off-putting on my first visit, where the service was semi-self-serve. Orders were delivered to the table but there was no attendant table service. There was an area for water and soft drinks, while another section was designated as the serve-yourself coffee station. The behind-the-counter staff was friendly but I missed a perky waitress sashaying around the breakfast room, refilling coffee mugs willy-nilly and calling everyone "hon."

Printed menus were ready for diners at the door, listing the usual retinue of omelets, scrambles, Benedicts, quiches, pancakes and eggs any which way, with sides of fruit, biscuits, potatoes, meats, toast options, grilled polenta, guacamole and hollandaise sauce.

There was also a chalkboard behind the order/pay position that catalogued 17 additional breakfast specials. "Come earlier" was my lesson; several of the specials were already sold out.

According to Shaw, the most popular item is Belgian waffles (\$7.95). The waffles are topped with a thicket of blackberries and sliced strawberries, along with Chantilly cream and scoops of sweet butter, with syrup on the side. It's an artistic plate, worthy of a Dutch Master's signature, but this edible art would have pleased even Vermeer — had he loved waffles.

Pumpkin pancakes (\$7.95) were also topped with a bucketful of sweet butter, with cranberry and maple syrups on the side. There were no additional frills, and my initial reaction was that eight bucks was a lot for two pancakes. Still, it was plenty to eat: I could barely manage a salad for dinner that evening. The pancakes were dense and flavorful, fresh-tasting and slightly nutty. My only real complaint was that the cranberry syrup was teeth-chattering sweet.

The San Jose omelet (\$8.75),

served open-face, was layered with bacon, cheddar and jack cheeses, diced tomatoes, roasted tomatillo salsa, avocado and sour cream, and came with a choice of two sides. Although I couldn't finish it all, my mind still carries an image of that tempting omelet.

Corned beef hash (\$8.95) was a mini-mountain of grilled potatoes, house-made corned beef, bell peppers, tomato and onions, topped with two poached eggs under a blanket of hollandaise sauce.

The hash and eggs were delicious and the hollandaise well prepared. I didn't like them together, though. The lemony sauce seemed at odds with the other savory ingredients rather than complementing them. Next time, I'll ask them to hold the hollandaise and give the hash its just due: a liberal splash of Tabasco.

I cringed when I saw the size of the Italian sausage omelet (\$8.95). The eggs ballooned with spicy sausage, mushrooms, feta cheese, fresh arugula and sweet peppers. Unwisely, I chose potatoes as one of the sides. Not that they weren't delicious, but it was just too much when coupled with the huge biscuit that was more scone-like and bigger than any other flaky little breakfast biscuit in the neighborhood. I passed on dinner altogether that evening.

Country Gourmet has an excellent children's menu (\$5.25). Every order is served with a ramekin of fruit and choice of milk or juice and either pancakes, chocolate-chip pancake, cheese omelet or breakfast quesadilla (eggs, bacon and cheese) all designed specifically for children.

The interior of Country Gourmet is zigzagged off with wood planters filled with living plants, making the dining room more intimate than if it were one large open space. There is a small patio for use in warmer weather. Tables are tile-topped, chairs of sturdy wood.

Daylight floods the room even on inclement days thanks to high-up windows. Restrooms must be accessed from the parking lot, but are part of the building, a holdover from Red Barn days.

Next time you're hankering for an all-American, amped up, heavy-duty, super-delicious, home-styled, 100 percent authentic and "lots of it" breakfast, Country Gourmet is the place for you. Who knows? You might be hungry again in a day or two. ■

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Sports Shorts

CARDINAL CORNER . . . The Stanford women swam to a fourth-place finish at the NCAA Championships paced by freshman **Maya DiRado's** runnerup finish in the 200-yard individual medley and third-place showing in the 400 IM. At 1:54.66, DiRado trails only **Julia Smit** in Stanford history. DiRado's 4:01.20 time in the 400 IM bettered her No. 3 ranking. She was a four-time All-American overall. **Kate Dwelley** was a national runnerup in the 100 free on the final day, giving the senior seven top-16 finishes and 23 in her career. **Liz Smith** closed out her career as a four-time All-American in the 200 breast. Senior diver **Meg Hostage** earned All-American honors by finishing third in the one-meter and seventh in the platform . . . Stanford's wrestlers posted their best-ever showing at the NCAA Championships last weekend in Philadelphia, placing 11th. Junior **Nick Amuchastegui** (174 pounds) became just the second Cardinal wrestler to reach an NCAA final and earned his second career All-America honor with his second-place finish. Joining Amuchastegui as All-Americans were senior **Zack Giesen** (197 pounds) and sophomore **Ryan Mango** (125 pounds), each of whom placed sixth. It marks the first time in the 95-year history of wrestling at Stanford that the Cardinal has produced three All-Americans in the same season . . . The men's golf team is seeking its first tournament title this academic year and is expected to battle No. 3 Alabama this weekend at the Linger Longer Invitational in Eatonton, Ga. Stanford's **Andrew Yun**, at No. 5, is the highest-ranked golfer in the field . . . Stanford has retained the overall lead in the first winter Division I Learfield Sports Directors' Cup standings with 674 points.

ON THE AIR

Friday

College baseball: Long Beach St. at Stanford, 6 p.m., KZSU (90.1 FM)

Saturday

College baseball: Long Beach St. at Stanford, 1 p.m., KZSU (90.1 FM)

Women's basketball: NCAAs: Stanford vs. North Carolina, 8:30 p.m.; ESPN2; KZSU (90.1 FM)

Sunday

College baseball: Long Beach St. at Stanford, 1 p.m., KZSU (90.1 FM)

Monday

Women's basketball: Stanford-North Carolina winner vs. Gonzaga-Louisville winner, 6:00 p.m.; ESPN2

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Stanford's (L-R) Toni Kokenis, Lindy La Rocque, Neka Ogwumike, Jeanette Pohlen, Kayla Pedersen, Chiney Ogwumike and Mikaela Ruef all had a hand in a 75-49 victory over St. John's on Monday that earned the No. 1-seeded Cardinal a berth in Saturday's Sweet Sixteen matchup against North Carolina in Spokane.

WOMEN'S NCAA BASKETBALL

It's a real team effort all the way

Stanford players have formed a successful, championship bond heading into Sweet 16

by Rick Eyrer

They've already discussed attending each other's weddings and baby showers and they have yet to graduate from Stanford. The Cardinal women's basketball team formed such a strong bond that junior Nnemkadi Ogwumike said she already knows these are forever friends.

"They are fun to be around," Ogwumike said of her teammates. "It's not just basketball. We like hanging out together and talking about how we will be at each other's weddings. It's just a close relationship."

Ogwumike thinks that relationship will come in handy as top-seeded and second-ranked Stanford (31-2) prepares for its Sweet Sixteen

appearance against fifth-seeded and 14th-ranked North Carolina (27-8) in Spokane's Veterans Memorial Arena at 8:30 p.m. Saturday (ESPN2).

In a nod to ever increasing parity in women's basketball, the other regional semifinal features seventh-seeded Louisville (22-12) and 11th seeded Gonzaga (30-4) at 6 p.m.

The winners meet Monday to determine a berth in the Final Four.

The Cardinal beat St. John's, 75-49, this past Monday to reach the Sweet 16. Stanford, winner of 25 straight, outscored the Red Storm, 61-27, over the final 29:47.

Stanford's senior class won all 63 regular-season games played at Maples Pavilion, one of three teams in the country to have accomplished



Stanford seniors Kayla Pederson (left) and Jeanette Pohlen went 63-0 in home games during their four-year career.

that. Tennessee and Connecticut are the others.

"You want to play with them and for them," Ogwumike said of her teammates. "Our team captains do a great job of including everybody. We need that accountability."

The senior class actually did experience a loss at home: a 97-62 ex-

hibition defeat to USA Basketball in November of 2007. The regular-season streak started with a 96-61 win over USF and included an overtime victory against Tennessee, which eventually beat the Cardinal for the 2008 national crown.

(continued on next page)

Pinewood girls take a shot at history in state hoop finale

by Keith Peters

A little history can be made by the Pinewood girls' basketball team when it takes on St. Bernard of Playa del Rey for the CIF Division V State Championship at Power Balance Pavilion in Sacramento on Friday.

The Panthers, ranked No. 1 in the state in Division V, can break the all-time state record for most three-

pointers in a season. Pinewood needs only one trey to reach 339, which would eclipse the state mark of 338 set by the Panthers in 2003.

Pinewood (27-5) also can become the first Division V team in state history to win five state crowns with a victory over St. Bernard (24-10), which will be seeking its fourth state title — the first in Division V — when the teams tip off at 3:30

p.m. "I'd rather have one than the other," said Pinewood coach Doc Scheppeler, when asked which achievement he'd prize most.

A fifth state title, of course, is Pinewood's main goal. In order to accomplish that, the Panthers will have to break the three-point record. Pinewood tied its own mark with eight treys in a 41-36 victory over St.

Joseph-Notre Dame of Alameda last Saturday in the CIF NorCal finals at Folsom High.

Pinewood made only eight of 38 three-pointers last weekend and finished just 13 of 51 for the field. Yet, the Panthers still found a way to win. That will be the task on Friday once again against a St. Bernard

(continued on page 31)

Pitching efforts keep Menlo, Palo Alto on top

Despite a week of bad weather, Knights and Vikings manage to post victories and keep impressive baseball seasons on track

by Keith Peters

While the weather was the real winner this week, the Menlo School and Palo Alto baseball teams didn't let the elements overcome them. Instead, both squads took advantage of brief windows of clear skies and used some strong pitching to post impressive victories.

In a showdown between two defending section champions, Central Coast Section Division III champ Menlo handed North Coast Section Division V champ Redwood Christian a 7-0 non-league loss in Atherton. The Knights improved to 8-1 as starter Freddy Avis pitched five shutout innings, allowed only two hits while striking out six.

After playing an epic 13-inning game last year that featured current Stanford pitcher AJ Vanegas throwing seven shutout innings before Menlo's Dylan Mayer hit a walk off homer to win it, this one was over early as the Knights scored three in the first and then three more in the second and never looked back.

The Knights once again were led by senior Jake Bruml, who had two hits and two RBI, but the key hit was by senior shortstop Tim Benton, who knocked in the first two runs with a clutch two-out, two-strike hit in the first inning.

Palo Alto, meanwhile, moved its Wednesday game up a day and junior Ben Snieder came up with his best pitching performance of the season, issuing just one hit during an 8-0 complete-game baseball victory over visiting Homestead in SCVAL De Anza Division action on Tuesday.

The Vikings (5-0, 8-3) took over sole possession of first place by banging out 13 hits. Ozzie Braff, Cory Tenanes, Christoph Bono, Will Glazier and Drake Swezey all had a pair of hits while T.J. Braff drove in three runs.

Palo Alto holds a one-game lead over Wilcox, Los Altos and Homestead. All are 3-1 after being rained out last Friday.

In the SCVAL El Camino Division, Gunn suffered its first setback in division play in an 8-6 loss to host Santa Clara on Tuesday night at Washington Park. The Titans (2-1, 4-4-1) grabbed a 2-0 lead after two innings before the Bruins tied it in the third. Gunn went ahead 4-2 in the top of the fifth, but Santa Clara scored five times in the bottom of the inning for the eventual winning runs.

In the PAL Bay Division, Menlo-Atherton also moved up its opener but suffered a 4-3 loss to host Se-

quoia on Tuesday in 10 innings. The Bears (0-1, 5-3) out-hit the Cherokees, 13-7.

Boys' golf

Despite playing in soggy conditions, Sacred Heart Prep produced a 196-225 victory over host King's Academy in a West Bay Athletic League dual match on Wednesday at Sunnyvale Municipal. SHP junior Kevin Knox earned medalist honors with a 2-over-par 37 on a cool, breezy afternoon. Teammates Ricky Galliani and Taylor Oliver each shot 40 as the Gators improved to 4-1 in league (5-1 overall).

On Monday, Stanford-bound senior Patrick Grimes of Menlo School shot a 1-under-par 70 to earn medalist honors at the Marin Catholic Wildcat Invitational at the Meadow Club

in Fairfax. The finish by Grimes helped the Knights finish fourth in the team race with 393 strokes.

Menlo sophomore Andrew Buchanan finished third overall with a 1-over 72 as he carded five birdies, while senior Bobby Pender shot 81, junior Will Petit had an 83 and junior Jackson Dean carded an 86.

Also on Monday, Vincent Yang shot a 1-over-par 37 to pace Gunn to a 202-212 victory over Palo Alto in a SCVAL De Anza Division dual match at Palo Alto Municipal. Herbert Sadler-Wong added a 39 for the Titans (4-0-1), who handed the Vikings (4-1) their first loss of the season despite a 38 from Sam Niethammer and a 39 by Grant Raffel.

Boys' lacrosse

Palo Alto and Mountain View came into Wednesday night's league game on Paly's turf field with momentum and an eye on this year's SCVAL championship. The Vikings boasted a 4-0 record and last year's overtime victory against the Spartans in the title game. Mountain View was riding its own four-game winning streak.

After almost 48 minutes of tough, physical play with five lead changes and intermittent rain, the Spartans led 10-9 — but the Vikings had the ball and a timeout before the final 24 seconds. Coach Craig Conover's squad couldn't recreate the last-minute magic that characterized its title run last season, however, and the Spartans came away with the win and an impressive 4-0 record and early season league lead. Palo Alto falls to 2-1 in league (4-1 overall).

Paly was led by Kevin Proceviat, who had four goals and one assist, and Zach Spain, who tallied three goals and one assist. ■



Stanford head coach Tara VanDerveer congratulates Nnemkadi Ogwumike and the rest of her players before the Cardinal wrapped up a 75-49 victory over St. John's in a second round NCAA game on Monday.

NCAA basketball

(continued from previous page)

Ogwumike is one of the tri-captains with seniors Kayla Pedersen and Jeanette Pohlen. All three have played vital roles in developing team chemistry over the past few years.

"We've talked about this from day one how deep this team is and how each player has created a role for themselves on the court and with the team," Ogwumike said.

As Stanford plays deeper into the tournament, depth may serve as the X-factor. With everybody involved, it only makes sense for bench players to be accepted into the fold. Even senior Hannah Donaghe, out all year with a torn ACL, has her role: running the 3-point double high fives along the bench.

Sophomore Mikaela Ruef played 22 minutes against St. John's, showing off her 3-point shooting ability, her ability to finish strong and draw the foul, and her passing ability.

Freshman Toni Kokenis is one of the first players off the bench and Melanie Murphy, Sarah Boothe and Joslyn Tinkle are involved in the rotation.

Ogwumike, with fellow 6-foot-

ers Chiney Ogwumike, Pedersen and Pohlen, has a chance to work against other talented 6-footers like Ruef, Boothe, Tinkle and Ashley Cimino.

That will come in handy when Stanford meets the Tar Heels, who feature five players between 6-0 and 6-6.

"Those guys challenge us every day," Ogwumike said of Stanford's talented reserves, some of whom (like Ruef) were state players of the year or among the very best. "They're aggressive, they don't let us make our favorite moves and they are so good about preparing that they often know our opponents better than we do. We're confident any time one of them goes into the game. They are as good as we are."

North Carolina brings one of the better heart-warming stories to Spokane in the form of 6-foot-3 senior Jessica Breland. She missed last season while receiving treatment for Hodgkin's lymphoma. After being diagnosed in the spring of 2009, Breland spent six months undergoing chemotherapy at UNC Hospitals. She remains under close monitoring.

North Carolina, which won the national championship in 1994, and

is coached by veteran Sylvia Hatchell (859 wins, three-time national Coach of the Year), even has its own Nicole Powell, a 5-10 senior guard. The Tar Heels also feature 6-5 Chay Shegog, 6-6 Waltiea Rolle, 6-1 Laura Broomfield and 6-0 guard Krista Gross.

"Right now is the best time to be playing your best basketball," said Gross, who had 14 points and 10 rebounds in their 86-74 victory over Kentucky. We know what to expect now. All the anxiety and nerves are gone and now our focus turns back to just basketball."

North Carolina opened the season with 14 consecutive victories and finished the regular season with a four-game losing streak. The Tar Heels have won six of seven in the postseason.

Italee Lucas, a 5-8 senior guard who played at Centennial High in Las Vegas, leads the Tar Heels with a 16.7 scoring average. Stanford junior Lindy La Rocque played at Durango High, about 20 miles south of Centennial.

Stanford and North Carolina have met once before; in the NCAA Sweet 16 in 1995. The Cardinal ended the Tar Heels' season with an 81-71 victory in Los Angeles. Current assistant coach Kate Payne was then a senior guard for Stanford.

The Cardinal last played in Spokane when Pedersen and Pohlen were freshmen.

"My favorite memory from that trip was the Maryland game," Pedersen said. "How hyped we were for it, how Candice (Wiggins) led the way. Jeanette and I really wanted to go back. It's a special place for us."

Stanford beat Maryland, 98-89, to reach the Final Four. Wiggins scored 41 points, JJ Hones added 23 and Pedersen added 15. Pohlen played 10 minutes.

Pederson, Pohlen and Neka Ogwumike now lead the way with a strong cast that hopes to be starring at the Final Four in Indianapolis next weekend. For Stanford, it's all about team and teamwork — something at which the Cardinal excels. ■



Grace Mashore (L), Ashley Cimino, Lindy La Rocque, Melanie Murphy and Sara James (21) hope to keep celebrating this weekend.

Paul Sakuma/Associated Press



Paly's Ben Snieder

Keith Peters

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(continued on next page)

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ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



Kendall Cody

Sacred Heart Prep

The senior scored 16 goals and added five assists during a 3-1 week in lacrosse, including 13 goals in the victories, in addition to playing solid defense while helping limit the opposition to 7 1/2 goals per outing.



Justin Chan

Menlo School

The junior fashioned a team-best 7-1 record for singles and doubles in four matches as the Knights defeated three opponents, 8-0, before falling in the finals of the National All-American Invitational tennis tourney.

Honorable mention

Julia Ama

Gunn swimming

Charlotte Biffar

Palo Alto lacrosse

Caitlin Ciardella

Pinewood basketball

Caroline Cummings

Sacred Heart Prep lacrosse

Hailie Eackles*

Pinewood basketball

Julia Keller

Sacred Heart Prep lacrosse

Austin Braff

Palo Alto baseball

T.J. Braff

Palo Alto baseball

Graham Fisher

Gunn baseball

Patrick Grimes

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State basketball

(continued from page 28)

team with five players standing 6 feet or taller.

"They pose some problems," Scheppler said of the Vikings, who featured 6-foot-3 senior Kacy Swain, headed for UCLA, and 6-2 freshman Lajahna Drummer, who leads the team with averages of 17.3 points and 11.9 rebounds per game. Swain is second with 11.3 ppg and 10.3 rebounds. "They pound the offensive boards. I'm hoping we can minimize the damage inside."

Scheppler said his team hasn't faced this much height since the Nike Tournament of Champions in Arizona in December. Pinewood went 3-1 that weekend.

Along with St. Bernard's height and length, the Vikings play an extended zone, which will put a premium on Pinewood's three-point shooting if the Panthers are unable to penetrate.

"We definitely have to shoot better than the other day," Scheppler said of his team's 25 percent effort against St. Joseph. "We do not have to shoot the lights out, just shoot OK and hold down the fort. They are not a great-shooting team; we are."

Scheppler sees Friday's championship game as a matchup between his team's veteran experience and perimeter game against St. Bernard's youth and inside presence.

"They are freshman-laden and we are senior-laden," Scheppler said. "I'm hoping the two-year difference in age will make a difference."

Also in Pinewood's favor, perhaps, is the fact the Panthers are the defending Division V state champions while St. Bernard last won a Division IV state crown in 1998.



Pinewood senior Hailie Eackles is averaging 23.5 ppg.

Pinewood beat St. Anthony of Long Beach, 62-44, in last year's state final and Scheppler sees similarities between St. Anthony and St. Bernard.

"They're similar in size," Scheppler said. "We brought them out of their zone."

Pinewood, however, is without a key player from last season's team — Jenna McLoughlin, the team's tallest player at 5-10. She missed much of this season after undergoing a second ACL operation.

"Not having her in the line-up against this particular team makes a difference," Scheppler said. "If they (St. Bernard) start playing volleyball out there, we're in trouble."

Pinewood will have to pressure fullcourt, force turnovers, shoot well from the perimeter and be able to play its game — all the while trying to limit second and third shots by St. Bernard.

"We have to create some opportunities for ourselves," Scheppler said. "We'll definitely have to find a way to penetrate that zone."

Pinewood senior Hailie Eackles will need to be at her best on Friday. She scored 16 points and grabbed 18 rebounds in the NorCal final, but made only four of 22 shots from the field for 18 percent. She'll take a 23.5 scoring average and 2,089 career points into the state finale.

Eackles still came through in the clutch with three free throws in the final moments to hold off St. Joseph, which trailed by 34-32 before Kelsey Morehead hit a big three-pointer for a 37-32 lead.

Eackles made two free throws for a 39-32 lead with 47 seconds to play, made another and then Morehead sank the final free throw. Senior Caitlin Ciardella made two big treys in the second half and played well to keep the Panthers on top.

"Our shot selection wasn't very good and we turned it over too much against their zone," Scheppler said of the St. Joseph game. "It never was a smooth-flowing game, as far as offensive execution. But, we won."

The key to the game, Scheppler said, was Pinewood holding its own on the boards (both teams had 38 rebounds) and a solid defensive effort that held St. Joseph's 6-foot-4 Carmen Lockhart to 10 points and a trio of high-scoring guards to a combined 12 points.

"They (St. Joseph) did their damage on the offensive boards and put-backs," explained Scheppler. "I was really pleased with our defensive effort. We forced 19 turnovers, that was crucial."

"Now, we're looking to have a great game in the state finals. I know we're ready to play. They've worked hard all year for this. They know how to play in big games, and they can do great things in big games." ■

Pinewood senior Miranda Seto will wrap up standout career.

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