

ALAMEDA Accent

A FREE WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE Alameda Times-Star

Volume 2, No. 23

June 16-22, 1999

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LocalAccent

Father's Day June 20

Relay for Life fund-raiser catapults in with \$79,000

NANCY WONDER and her sister Susan Bunker are going to be a tough act to follow when a new committee and co-chairs take over Alameda Relay for Life next year.

That was evident during this year's event when it became apparent that something special was happening at the two-day American Cancer Society event at the Encinal High School track and

football field. For the second year in a row, the fund-raiser and cancer awareness event leapfrogged well beyond all goals and expectations.

More campers, more sponsors, more walkers and more volunteers raised more money than a year ago, when the sisters exceeded all expectations by raising \$42,000 to combat cancer. Before they agreed to chair the 24-hour fund-and-awareness-raising event, the first



Tom TUTTLE

Alameda event in 1997 had garnered \$9,000. So last year's \$30,000 goal was a lofty target. The same was true this year,

when 1998's success encouraged ACS to set Alameda's goal at \$55,000.

Wonder, a three-year cancer survivor, said when the \$55,000 target was set that she would "feel good" if they achieved it. As the event began June 5, she altered her position only slightly, saying, "My sense is we are going to be very close if we don't make it."

Debra Papp, the ACS event manager, "thought we would go

over the \$55,000, but didn't know how much."

Meanwhile, Bunker had jotted \$72,000 down on a piece of paper and put it away. It turns out Susan was closest, but that even her "optimistic" expectation was too conservative.

By 5:30 p.m. June 5, the brother team of Troy and Michael Williams, who spent most of the two days tallying contributions, had \$60,000 in hand without

counting income from the popular lunary ceremony that night. Add in the \$6,181 that just under 700 luminaries — candles in bags placed around the rim of the track to honor cancer survivors and commemorate those who lost battles with the disease — earned, and the total was up to \$69,000 by bedtime.

By 6:30 a.m. Sunday, 48

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Harbor Bay nets top spot

By Leslie Fulbright
STAFF WRITER

ALAMEDA — Forget Maui. Don't even think about Palm Beach.

The nation's premier golf and tennis club is in Alameda.

It's the Harbor Bay Club and it has been granted the most prestigious award in the world of golf and tennis — the 1999 National Organization of the Year Award. Out of more than 6,000 facilities, the U.S. Tennis Association chose the Bay Farm Island club for the distinction on the basis of its service to the community, customer service, programming for its members and support to the tennis community.

The Harbor Bay Club lies on 10 acres of the Bay shoreline at the center of the 1,000-acre Harbor Bay



Tennis director Rosie Bareis gives a lesson at the award-winning Harbor Bay Club on Bay Farm Island in Alameda.

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Tenant group battles owner

By Leslie Fulbright
STAFF WRITER

ALAMEDA — An Alameda landlord has pleaded not guilty to 45 criminal charges of substandard housing filed against him by city prosecutors who say his Santa Clara Avenue rental property has numerous code violations.

Arthur Aswad, who owns the building and several others in Alameda, claims he is no longer responsible for the repairs because he has hired a property management company to take over the units for the next 20 years.

Meanwhile, city officials say, the garage is seeping raw sewage, leaks are getting worse, hot water is sporadic, there is a lack of heating and smoke detectors are missing or inoperable.

Tenants say the building is virtually uninhabitable.

"I am scared to take a shower for fear the ceiling will cave in," said 5-year resident Sandra Cotton. "And the hot wires behind my refrigerator are also a constant worry. I would really just like to be able to go on with my life in decent surroundings."

The residents formed a tenants union last July and hired a lawyer to help them fight for their right to live under suitable conditions. That case is separate from the city's criminal case against the landlord.

"Things have not changed at all since we hired a lawyer," said Cotton, the tenants' union president. "And now, with these new people supposedly handling it, who

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A walk in the park



Anita Suderman and 'Katy,' a Welsh corgie, take advantage of the spring weather during a walk in Alameda Park.

Developer eyes Belt Line property

By Leslie Fulbright
STAFF WRITER

ALAMEDA — Plans for the old Alameda Belt Line property remain in limbo while local developer Mike Valley decides whether to proceed with purchasing the site.

The traffic, soil, engineering and basic land planning studies are still in progress, but Valley expects he will make a decision on the \$14.5 million acquisition sometime this coming week. He currently has the property under option — meaning he is making payments to the seller to tie up the land until he makes up his mind.

An active developer in the early 1990s, Valley plans to get back into the development business, primarily in Alameda and the East Bay, said Amber Colon, a spokeswoman with his company. He comes from a family of developers and has done several projects near Great America in Santa Clara, she said. He now

works with Sun Country Partners in Pleasanton.

The tract — 22 acres of railroad property fringed by Constitution Way, Sherman Street and Eagle and Atlantic avenues — was previously home to a railroad track used by trains serving companies on the waterfront.

"We now have a very short period of time to make up our mind," Valley said. "If we decide to make the purchase, we will make an announcement stating what our plans include," such as the number of units and amount of open space.

At a neighborhood block party last month, Valley made a presentation to residents outlining what he had in mind. Plans included construction of 150 to 200 homes. He promised to keep the community involved in every step of the process.

"But we still don't trust any

developer," said resident and party organizer Debra Arbuclle. "We really need to know something and at this rate, 'open space' is gaining in popularity."

What Arbuclle speaks of is fellow West End resident Jean Sweeney's plan to halt development in her neighborhood. She is circulating petitions for a ballot initiative demanding that the 22 acres be left as open space.

The initiative states that more buildings or roads coming through the neighborhood would be destructive to the residential character. It requests that the quiet nature of the area be preserved.

"What I am planning to do is have the property zoned as open space, you know, go before the voters," Sweeney said. "While one development after another

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Relay: Success bodes well for summer events

Continued from page 1

alkers were back on the track representing the 45 teams participating in the relay. A flood of overnight envelopes also had arrived, nudging the total past \$77,000 by 9:12 a.m.

When the closing ceremony began at 10:30 a.m., the figure was \$79,000 and climbing. As heques left on kitchen tables and at offices trickle in over the next few days and weeks, Bunker expects the total to inch "over \$80,000, way over \$80,000."

"I'm smiling, even though I feel sun- and wind-burned," she said afterward. "My heart is melting, my whole being is melting."

Since the Alameda Relay is the first of 30 the ACS will hold in the Bay Area this summer, its success would seem to bode well or those that follow.

An estimated 132,510 Californians and 5,560 Alameda County residents are expected to contract cancer this year. Of those, 54,354 residents of the state and 2,360 Alameda County citizens will die of the disease this year, according to the California Cancer Registry of the state Health Department.

Co-chairs Wonder and Bunker have overcome some formidable personal barriers and losses to

lead the successful relay during the past two years.

Ten days before the 1998 relay, the stepfather of Susan's husband, Jim Bunker, a cancer survivor, died. This year, exactly 10 days before the relay, Jean Jacobs, the mother of four members of the 16-person leadership committee, also passed away. Her daughters, Susan, Nancy, and Mary Tuttle; son John Jacobs, and son-in-law Rob Wonder were almost one-third of the committee.

While Pappé declared the Jacobs clan "a relay for life family" at the end of the two-day event, Mayor Ralph Appuzzo asked the more than 500 participants at Saturday's opening ceremony "to walk one lap for Jean Jacobs."

The luminary ceremony, at which the names of local cancer victims living and deceased were read, was highlighted by survivors taking a lap around the track lined with 652 bags containing lit candles. Brown bags carried the names of 383 people who lost the fight, while 269 white sacks honored survivors.

The list reads like a local who's who. It included 17 bags for the Bartalini and Buhnerkempe families. City Manager Jim Flint and his wife, Karen; teacher, journalist and cancer advocate Kay Hickox; Lynn Ash-

craft; Bureau of Electricity official Juelle-Ann Boyer; David Peterson; Meals on Wheels executive director Rosemary Reilly; Joan Fairfield; Brian Warne; former community development director Dona Hoard; former school board member Rich Thomas; former Times-Star society editor Barbara Stevenson; realtor Ian Weber; historian and former Citizen of the Year Andy Pagano; scout leader and former Man of the Year Dick Anderson; George Nakamura; Salvador Pucci; Claudia Rivard; Grant Robinson; Ruth Spangler; Don Orchard; Ron Arnerich; Bob Kemp; Frank LaPorte; Diane Lichtenstein; Linda Ratto; Millie Green; Walt Jacobs and Ann Russum, to name a few.

Immanuel Lutheran Church fielded four teams appropriately named The Four Seasons. They won both the decoration and team spirit contests. Kathy McNeil said they selected the name before they had enough teams to justify the "Four Seasons" tag. Members of its relay wore ribbons around their necks bearing the names of 500-or-so cancer victims they walked to honor.

The Jacobs Family team, Syn-ergy 1, was the top fund-raising team with \$3,295, led by Mary Tuttle's \$1,095. Tim McKeon

raised the most money, \$2,380.

One of the most unique teams was "Elena's Bachelorette Party," consisting of the friends and family of Elene Tzovaras, who is to wed Russell Dunn next Saturday. Elene, who was one of the top fund-raisers with \$1,155 and whose team finished third in decorations, said, "I lost my dad to cancer last year, which is why we decided to form a team."

The crowd of 350 people serenaded her with "Here Comes the Bride" when she picked up her first award at the closing ceremony, but topped it with a rousing rendition of "Chapel of Love" as she accepted a second.

"Life's a Beach, Catch the Wave and Wipe Out Cancer," headed by Joan Wright Albertini and her brother, Bill Wright, who lost both parents to cancer, finished second in the decoration contest. The Donor Party, formed to honor member Jill Velasco, who donated a kidney to her brother, was third in fund-raising behind the Elephant/Rudolf Tennis Group, which got \$2,982 in contributions.

Tom Tuttle's column appears in the Alameda Times-Star. He can be reached by fax or phone at 523-5458 or by e-mail at oldkingtut@aol.com

Belt: City will have plan

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pops up, our neighborhood children are playing in the cul de sacs."

Sweeney will need to collect 38,000 signatures before the end of the year to get the open space initiative on next year's ballot.

"In my eyes, it is okay to develop the property if it is done well," Arbuckle said. "But if we don't hear from Valley again soon, we will race to get the open space signatures."

Meanwhile, city officials will be creating a plan of their own.

A General Plan provision required an analysis of whether the extension of Clement Avenue or another road would be necessary when the Beltline Railway property went up for sale. A preliminary study showed that with anticipated development, an additional facility would be needed, said Public Works Director Matt Naderio.

The aim of extending the northside street would be to improve waterfront access, relocate the truck route from Buena Vista Avenue, and accommodate traffic resulting from the Northern Waterfront Redevelopment area.

The city has initiated an area-wide analysis, which will evaluate impacts on drainage, schools and cultural resources. Several city

departments will do their own analyses before Public Works reviews them and sends them to the planning department for final approval. The planning department will tell the developer the details of the city's analysis.

"The city has to look at the area for necessary improvements as well as all of the different land use alternatives — mixed offices, all residential or industrial," Naderio said. "The idea of the specific plan is to be inclusive and have consensus from all interested parties: the developer, the residents and the city."

The plan should be complete in about a year.

Residents collected signatures last summer demanding to be involved in the process. Developers realize they have to get input early in the process because neighbors can slow down their projects, Naderio said. "And if they sue, it prolongs the project even more, as well as making it tremendously expensive."

"This end of town never gets fair treatment," Arbuckle said. "It is not known as the good end of town. The developers and city make promises and then go back. There is a lot of resentment."

"We don't want them to take a relatively quiet area and pave it until there is nothing left."

