

Local

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JOAN ARAGONE
Time of Your Life

A difficult but necessary talk

BETSY CARPENTER, a volunteer counselor for end-of-life issues and advance care at El Camino Hospital in Mountain View, calls it "the conversation." It's important, it can be terrifying and it looms in the lives of all of us.

It's the discussion between elderly patients and adult children about a patient's wishes as the end of life approaches. What efforts should be made to extend life? What are the patient's personal values?

Completing this discussion is a challenge. Different generations have different views, said Dwight Wilson, chief executive of Mission Hospice in San Mateo. Adult children, who may be in denial that their parent can die, may refuse to consider the issues.

"Don't be morbid," they tell the parent. Or, less frequently, elder parents, uneasy about approaching death, may react in anger to an adult child's inquiry about end-of-life care. Communication is the key.

"The conversation is a gift to the family," Carpenter

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Redwood City ordered to pay legal fees in suit

■ Judge calls for \$260,000 payment to attorney who contested downtown plan

By Shaun Bishop
MEDIANEWS STAFF

Redwood City's decision to legally defend its flawed downtown development plan likely will cost more than \$600,000, after a judge or-

dered it to pay attorney fees to the man who challenged the document.

On May 28, San Mateo County Superior Court Judge Marie Weiner ordered the city to pay about \$260,000 to Joe Carcione, a local attorney who sued it for approving the Downtown Precise Plan. Weiner had ruled in April that the city did not adequately study the environmental impacts of the downtown plan,

which lays out zoning, building standards and a vision for as many as 2,500 new high-rise housing units in a pedestrian-friendly shopping district.

Carcione and his wife, Roberta, argued that the city erred by not examining whether allowing buildings up to 12 stories high could cause shadowing on shorter downtown buildings — including Carcione's law offices

at 601 Brewster Ave. Weiner agreed, ruling that the City Council should not have approved the plan in 2007 without a shadow study.

The judge also ruled that the city inadequately studied how historic downtown buildings might be impacted by a development boom.

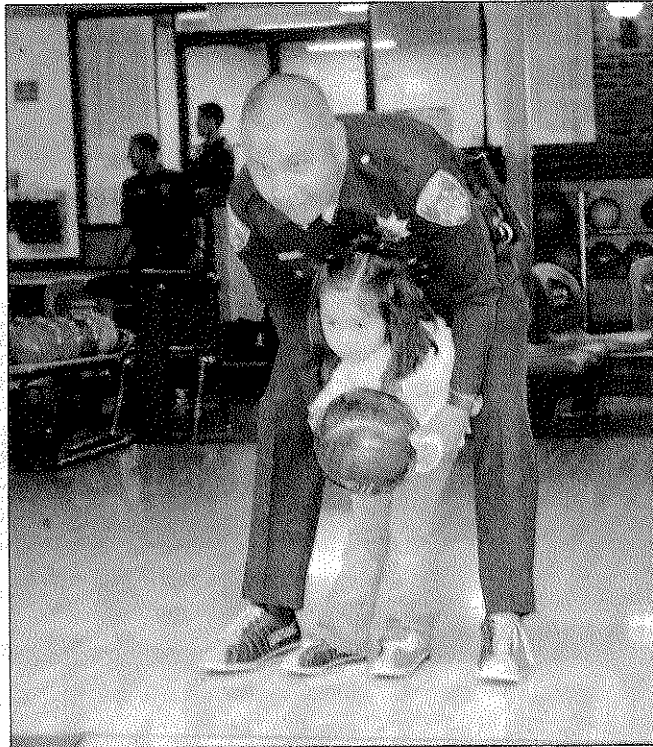
Weiner didn't give the Carciones the full \$350,000 in legal fees they asked for, in part because the law gives judges

discretion to award fees if the legal action benefits "the general public or a large class of persons."

She said Carcione had personal interest in the shadowing issue, because his law offices could be affected, and deducted the time his attorneys spent arguing that issue. He had no personal stake in defending historic resources.

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HAVING A BALL



DEAN COPPOLA/STAFF

BROADMOOR POLICE OFFICER Carlo Calacal helps Janelle Olimpiada, 4, line up a shot during the 18th annual Kops and Kids Family Day event at Serra Bowl in Daly City on Saturday. The event included bowling, prizes, games, fire department and law enforcement booths,

Common sense will help make summer safe

WE ALL KNOW the obvious summer-safety tips: Limit exposure to heat and sun, drink plenty of water and apply lots of high-SPF sunscreen.

Fences and supervision are required for pool safety, and helmets need to be worn when riding bikes, scooters, in-line skates and even Heelys (shoes with wheels).

There are some precautions, however, that may not be on your radar, but with a little safety awareness any



MARGARET LAVIN
Elementary, My Dears

unforeseen accident can be prevented.

When frolicking in the park, never allow children to attach ropes, jump ropes, or

leashes to playground equipment, and make sure metal slides are cool to prevent youngsters' legs from getting burned.

Children are great garden helpers, perfect for planting, watering and weeding. Those younger than 12, however, should not be allowed to operate or sit on ride-on lawn mowers. They should not use walk-behind mowers unless supervised and should always wear

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Aragone

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said.

A counselor for almost 20 years, she will give a talk on "End-of-Life Issues: An Inter-Generational Discussion," from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday at Hendrickson Auditorium, Mills Health Center, 100 S. San Mateo Drive, San Mateo. The cost of the event, presented by Mission Hospice, is \$20, including dinner.

The most familiar story of what can happen when family views differ is that of Terri Schiavo, the woman who lay in a vegetative state in a Florida hospital for years while her spouse and parents battled over her fate. Her husband wanted the feeding tube removed. Her parents wanted to continue life support. The courts ultimately ruled in favor of Schiavo's husband.

"We never would have heard Terri Schiavo's name if she had had a simple advance directive," Carpenter said at the time the case was in the news.

She referred to the document that allows adults to name an agent to make decisions for them when they cannot speak for themselves and provide instructions about wishes about health care.

But before documents are considered, family members need to understand each other.

"The key is respect for each person's wishes," Carpenter said recently.

"Choosing an agent is the single-most important decision concerning advance-care directives," she said. "It's important that the agent has integrity and is strong. The agent has the power to fire the doctor."

Her talk will focus on the intergenerational aspects of family communication, community resources and current law. It also will include detailed information on advance directives, which are available free of charge from hospitals, senior centers and online. (Google "California advance care directive" for more information.) A question-and-answer session will follow.

Carpenter provides free, one-hour counseling appointments for anyone 18 and older at El Camino

Hospital. Call 650-940-7210.

To register for Thursday's event or for information, call 650-554-1000 or e-mail ikanturek@missionhospice.org.

PROTECT CAREGIVERS AND ELDERLY FROM BUDGET CUTS

Late last week, state legislators were holding hearings on slated budget cuts that would greatly reduce or eliminate support for family caregivers. The following is a portion of a statement by Family Caregiver Alliance, a network of organizations that provides support to caregivers:

"Gov. (Arnold) Schwarzenegger's proposed revisions to the California state budget will dramatically affect family caregivers. Families rely on critical support services to help keep loved ones with debilitating health conditions at home, out of expensive nursing homes. Those services will be eliminated.

"Particularly devastated will be families dealing with brain-damaging disorders such as Alzheimer's disease, traumatic brain injury, stroke, and other disabling conditions requiring long-term care not covered by Medicare or private health insurance."

Besides eliminating sources of emotional support and respite for the millions of unpaid family in-home care providers, the cuts would result in a predicted rise of nearly 500,000 frail elderly residents now cared for at home who would need to enter nursing homes at a greatly increased cost to Medi-Cal.

The cuts are deep and serious. Decisions are still being made. Call, e-mail or fax the governor and your representative in Sacramento. For information, go to www.caregiver.org or call 800-445-8106.

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO FARMERS MARKET RETURNS

Want some fresh, nutritious food? The South San Francisco farmers market operates from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays through Oct. 31 at the Plaza, South San Francisco BART station, El Camino Real.

For comments or story ideas, reach Joan Aragone at 650-348-4332 or fog-belt2@aol.com.