

NO. 1 vs. NO. 2

Kunkel's goal carries top-ranked Serra to win over No. 2 St. Francis in boys soccer rivalry game

Eastside wins showdown

No. 3 Castilleja blows 9-point lead against top-ranked team / SPORTS

Check out The Daily News' How-To consumer guide / B4-B7



THUNDERSTORMS
High: 50 Low: 40
Full weather report, B16

THE Daily News

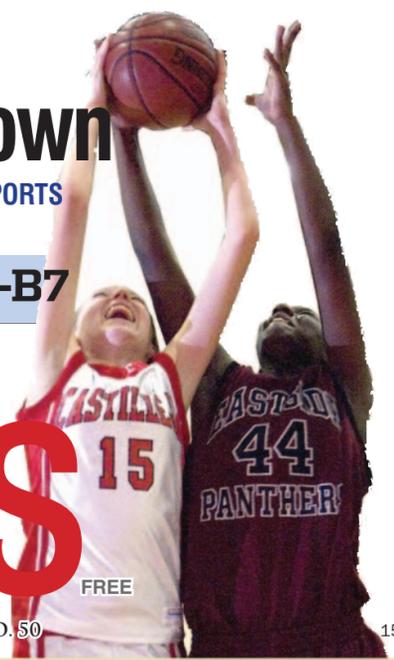
baydailynews.com

JANUARY 21, 2010 ◀ THURSDAY ▶ VOL. 15 NO. 50

FREE

150

ATHERTON EAST PALO ALTO LOS ALTOS LOS ALTOS HILLS MENLO PARK MOUNTAIN VIEW PALO ALTO PORTOLA VALLEY REDWOOD CITY SAN CARLOS STANFORD WOODSIDE



INSIDE TODAY

Union protests on eve of decision

San Mateo County Superior Court workers says closures have hurt crime victims / LOCAL, A3



LOCAL

School cuts: Mountain View school district to reduce hours for special education aides / PAGE A2

BUSINESS

Hopeful news: Wells Fargo looks sunnier in loan division of banking / PAGE, A7

STATE



Conservative leanings?: Should Sen. Brown's win in Mass. worry Barbara Boxer? Calif. GOP thinks so PAGE A5

Contact Us

Newsroom: 650-391-1000
Fax: 650-391-1346
Or e-mail us at editor@dailynewsgrp.com

Index

- AbbyB11
- BusinessA7
- ComicsB10
- HealthB13
- LettersA9
- LotteryA2

RAIN PROBLEMS MOSTLY MINOR BUT WIDESPREAD

El Niño storm peaks



Kat Wade / Daily News

Elizabeth Lee, who moved into a house across the street from San Francisquito Creek in April 2009, adds sandbags to her property that was severely flooded in 1998, near the Pope/Chaucer Street Bridge in Palo Alto. The Bay Area was hit with a fourth — and most serious — storm on Wednesday.

Power outage affected 1,000 in Palo Alto; weather service issues tornado warning in Santa Clara County

BY WILL OREMUS AND DIANA SAMUELS
Daily News Staff Writers

Lightning flashed, creeks rose, roads flooded and tree branches fell as a gusty winter storm doused the Peninsula on Wednesday with more than an inch of rain.

The storm was predicted to be the most powerful in a series that began Monday and is expected to continue through week's end.

The conveyor belt of storms are part of El Niño, a phenomenon caused by the warming of waters near the equator that can lead to wet winters for California.

"People were talking about the no-show El Niño," said Mike

Dettinger, a research hydrologist with U.S. Geological Survey in Southern California. "But when you look back (at the last strong El Niño) it was right around this time of year that it finally kind of broke loose."

The effects on the Peninsula were mostly minor, but widespread.

In Belmont, a car was seen submerged up to its windows at about 9:45 a.m. as Harbor Boulevard flooded, and a car repair business evacuated its building as 3 inches of water covered the floor. A power outage that affected some 1,000 customers in Palo Alto knocked out a traffic light at Embarcadero Road

and St. Francis Drive until about noon. And in San Carlos, mud slid into the backyard of a home on Drake Court.

By 11 a.m., the sun peeked through storm clouds in some spots and the heaviest torrents of rain appeared to have passed, though scattered thundershowers returned in the afternoon. The National Weather Service issued a high wind warning for the area through noon, followed by a tornado warning in Santa Clara County that expired at 2:30 p.m.

Waters rose ominously on San Francisquito Creek at the border of Palo Alto and Menlo Park until about 12:30 p.m., then subsided

BIG STORM, page A4

SAN FRANCISQUITO CREEK

Creek rises, as do flood concerns

BY WILL OREMUS
Daily News Staff Writer

As the rain beat down Wednesday morning, authorities in Palo Alto, Menlo Park and East Palo Alto anxiously watched the banks of San Francisquito Creek.

In 1998, an El Niño-spawned storm caused the creek to flood, forcing the evacuation of more than 1,000 homes and wrecking an estimated \$28 million in damage.

On Wednesday, the creek again rose quickly. With the tide coming in at about noon, it neared 15 feet at the Pope/Chaucer Street Bridge, leaving only a foot of clearance in the 16-foot-tall channel. Farther downstream at East Bayshore Road, the creek rose within about six inches of the top of the 11-foot-6-inch channel.

Glenn Roberts, director of Palo Alto's public works department, wasn't worried.

"We've been tracking it last night and this morning pretty closely," he said at about 12:30 p.m. Wednesday. "It's risen and it's gotten up there, but it's not going to be a problem in our opinion, because (the flow upstream) has

CREEK, page A4

The San Francisquito Creek flowed swiftly beneath the Pope/Chaucer Street Bridge in Palo Alto on Wednesday. Earlier in the day the rainwater in the creek rose to 15 feet.
Kat Wade / Daily News



Menlo-Atherton closer to getting stadium lights

Sequoia school board approves funding environmental study

BY JESSICA BERNSTEIN-WAX
Daily News Staff Writer

Menlo-Atherton High School is one step closer to having Friday night football games after the Sequoia Union High School District board on Wednesday unanimously approved funding an envi-

ronmental study on the effects of installing lights on its athletic field.

After about 14 neighbors, football players and parents spoke both in favor and against the installation of permanent lights at Coach Parks Field, the board decided to move forward with the \$31,000 study and to look into security concerns related to night games. Menlo Park-based TRA Environmental Sciences will complete the study, which will include meetings with neighbors, school officials and others, by end of March.

"Because we don't have lights we have to play our games before dark, and

I'm forced to miss some of my fifth, sixth and seventh period classes," 17-year-old junior and Bears linebacker Dan Mohr said. "I've had to miss a lot of valuable class time."

Mohr added that referees sometimes called games early because it was dark. Other players said they were heartened when many more fans than usual showed up for an Oct. 30 game against Sacred Heart Preparatory after the school installed temporary lights as an experiment that evening.

"As a member of the team, I can tell you the excitement at the school,

the school was buzzing about the night game," said 16-year-old sophomore and kicker Sam Falkenhagen. "Night games are a great way to develop memories. ... It gives the school life."

Ravenswood City School District Board Member Larry Moody, whose son Cameron plays on the team, said night games would help forge stronger bonds as well as attract athletes to the school.

"Football has always been a proud gathering place for the Belle Haven, East Palo Alto and Menlo-Atherton communities," Moody said.

LIGHTS, page A4