

## **For Immediate Release**

### Press Contacts:

Anne Banta  
Kepler's Chief Marketing Officer  
650-298-0058  
[anne@banta.org](mailto:anne@banta.org)

Susan Lider  
Slider & Associates  
650-321-2084  
[susan@sliderassociates.com](mailto:susan@sliderassociates.com)

## **Momentum builds for Kepler's renaissance with formation of Patron's Circle and Board of Directors and support from Menlo Park City Council**

*Public watches as Kepler's continues to work hard in negotiating a favorable lease arrangement*

**MENLO PARK, Calif., Sept. 19, 2005** – Kepler's today announced the formation of a Patron's Circle of 17 community-minded individuals who will provide the financial basis for the bookstore's renaissance and a Board of Directors that will add substantial financial and business expertise to Kepler's while keeping its heart and soul alive. Members of the City Council have pledged strong support for keeping Kepler's as the hub of downtown Menlo Park. However, the well-known and loved bookstore still faces hurdles in its ongoing negotiations with its landlord, the Tan Group of Palo Alto.

Members of the Board include Clark Kepler, President, CEO and Chairman of the Board; Daniel Méndez, a Menlo Park resident and co-founder and CTO of Visto Corporation, a wireless technology firm in Redwood City; Geoff Ralston, an Atherton resident and Chief Product Officer at Yahoo!; and Bruce Dunlevie, General Partner at Menlo Park-based Benchmark Capital and a seasoned veteran of venture capital with more than 15 years experience in high-tech investing. An additional board seat has been established to be filled with a Director who has experience in the book industry or publishing world.

"The Board appreciates the money pledged by these members of our community to ensure that Kepler's can get back on its feet as it becomes, with continued public support, a self-sufficient, ongoing, thriving cultural catalyst. We want Kepler's to be around, for the enjoyment of the community, not only for the next five years but for the next 50," said Méndez.

Kepler's was forced to shut its doors abruptly on August 31<sup>st</sup>, which resulted in shock, sadness, outrage and an spontaneous mobilization to save it. The importance of this historical bookstore to Menlo Park is demonstrated not only by the formation of the Patron's Circle and Board of Directors but also by the outpouring of support among the entire community including the City Council. "Kepler's is an essential part of Menlo Park's history and culture," said Mickie Winkler, Mayor of Menlo Park. "The 50-year-old bookstore forms a lively community gathering place that brings value and vitality to nearby businesses. Like so many residents in our community, I

am gratified to hear that negotiations between Clark Kepler and the Tan Group are ongoing, and am hopeful that the negotiations result in a mutually acceptable conclusion very soon.”

City Council Member Kelly Fergusson stated, “I’m proud to represent a community that takes care of its own legacy by stepping forward with funding, expertise, and heart. I join my fellow council members in a desire for the negotiations with the Tan Group to reach a fair conclusion, beneficial to all parties, this coming week. It is critical that Kepler’s re-open right away to get ready in time for the holiday season.”

The bookstore believes it must open its doors no later than October to secure the business, especially for the holidays, which is their ‘13 month’. Plus, Kepler’s phenomenal employees who know and love books need to be brought back, and the broader membership campaign and a series of benefits need to be initiated.

Members of the Patron’s Circle will form the core of Kepler’s new membership program, which will be extended to the community so that others who want to contribute time and money can do so. Public interest in supporting Kepler’s as demonstrated by more than 20,000 hits to the web site [www.Savekeplers.com](http://www.Savekeplers.com) and more than 300 emails sent from people who want to volunteer to help the bookstore. These volunteers, along with the Patron’s Circle, will serve as a catalyst to an entire multi-tiered membership program for others who want to support Kepler’s, pending Tan Group negotiations. Updates and more information on the membership program will be available soon at [www.Savekeplers.com](http://www.Savekeplers.com).

“It is incredible to me how many people have expressed that they want Kepler’s to re-open and continue on for decades to come for themselves, their children and their children’s children,” said Kepler. “For these people and for myself, I thank the Patron’s Circle, City Council and overall community support from the bottom of my heart.”

### **About Kepler’s Board of Directors**

Clark Kepler will continue to be responsible for Kepler’s bookstore and business operation, as President, CEO and Chairman, with the assistance and support of the other Board members. Clark grew up in and around Kepler’s Books in the ‘60s and ‘70s. He first joined the staff in 1979 starting off in the Receiving Department, and then was promoted to buyer in 1980. In 1983, he assumed full responsibility for bookstore management. Under his management, sales in the 1980s grew steadily. Clark served on the Northern California Independent Booksellers Association for eight years throughout the latter half of the decade and into the next, eventually serving as its vice president. In 1989, Clark saw the opportunity to move the bookstore to its present location in Menlo Center. Sales in the early 1990s tripled. The book trade publication *Publishers Weekly* named Clark *Bookseller of the Year* in 1994. In 2001, the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce awarded Kepler’s Books and Magazines the Golden Acorn award in recognition of community.

Having grown up in and around books all his life, Clark is an avid reader and is passionate in the belief that in a democracy, a free people must have access to alternative views when making choices. Kepler’s Books provides him a right livelihood to serve the community by making

available the full range of humankind's ideas. Clark is proud to carry on the bookstore in his family's tradition.

Daniel Méndez co-founded Visto in 1996 and has been instrumental in developing leading industry technologies. He is the principal inventor of multiple patents for technologies required to provide mobile users with access to email. Prior to Visto, Daniel was Vice President and Chief Technology Officer at American Management Systems (AMS). Before AMS, Daniel served in a variety of technical leadership and management roles at Cambridge Technology Partners. Daniel is a Director of a private, for-profit holding company which owns and successfully operates about a dozen high-end restaurants in Puerto Rico. He is also Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees at the Keys School in Palo Alto.

Daniel lives in Menlo Park, 5 minutes biking distance from Kepler's, with Vivian Leal, his wife, and daughters Adriana Sofia, 11, Elena Isabel, 9 and Anna Teresa, 3, all of whom look forward to volunteering at Kepler's, and to make available their extensive expertise in age-appropriate books. He is a book collector, and is particularly interested in the works of Gabriel García Marquez (his friends joke that he's got "seven *Hundred Years of Solitude*") and William Morris. To his great surprise, Daniel was born in Cuba, but he moved quickly to remedy the situation, and was gone by the time he was 6 years old (to paraphrase Asimov). Since, he has lived in Spain, Puerto Rico and in a number of cities in the U.S.A., including Boston, where he got his AB in Computer Science (with an emphasis in Cognitive Psychology) from Harvard University. He is now firmly in the grip of the Bay Area and the Hotel California: he can check out any time he wants, but he can never leave.

Geoff Ralston is Chief Product Officer at Yahoo!. He is responsible for driving Yahoo!'s global product vision, including the management of the development process, integration, and roadmap for all Yahoo! products and services. Geoff came to Yahoo! in October, 1997 with the acquisition by Yahoo! of Four11 Corp. Prior to joining Four11 as VP of Engineering at the end of 1995, Geoff was the creator of the popular LookUP! Internet white pages and do-it-yourself home page service. In the mid 1980's he was a key developer of Hewlett Packard's TCP/IP networking software for Unix based servers and workstations, and subsequently spent 5 years in France leading HP's ISDN technology development group. Geoff returned to United States to become a business development manager for HP, and in 1994 co-founded NetSMART, Inc., an Internet Presence Provider, which is where LookUP! was born along with a passion for creating truly create customer experiences.

Geoff lives in Atherton, a short walk from Kepler's with his wife Andrea and children Nicholas, 7, Michael, 6, and Caitlin, 2. They are all looking forward to many more Saturday trips to the bookstore where no one leaves empty handed, least of all Dad.

Bruce Dunlevie, General Partner, Benchmark Capital. Bruce has worked in the venture capital industry for more than 15 years and for the last 10 years with Menlo Park-based Benchmark. More importantly, he is a 23 year veteran of buying books at Kepler's, and is deeply committed to having the best bookstore on the peninsula continue to serve our local community.

Bruce is married and has 4 children.

### **About Kepler's Books**

Kepler's Books is a 50-year-old bookstore that is considered the heart and soul of Menlo Park and one of only a few remaining independent bookstores on the Peninsula. Kepler's is known for its broad book selection, phenomenal authors' events and distinguished employees who have extensive knowledge of the store's books and are clearly book lovers.

###