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Menlo Summerfest event guide

The name on the door

Atherton’s Bonnie Uytengsu gives $10 million for new children’s hospital surgery center

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THE ADDRESS IS THE PENINSULA
THE EXPERIENCE IS ALAIN PINEL

ATHERTON $26,800,000
5 Betty Lane | 7bd/9.5ba
Ali Faghiri | 650.346.4727
BY APPOINTMENT

WOODSIDE $12,395,000
835 La Honda Road | 4bd/3.5ba
Judy Citron | 650.543.1206
BY APPOINTMENT

ATHERTON $10,800,000
65 Selby Lane | 7bd/8 & 3.5ba
Mary & Brent Gullixson | 650.888.0860
BY APPOINTMENT

MENLO PARK $6,995,000
53 Politzer Drive | 6bd/5 & 2 ½ba
Judy Citron | 650.543.1206
BY APPOINTMENT

MENLO PARK $3,150,000
321 Camino Al Lago | 4bd/4ba
Keri Nicholas | 650.304.3100
BY APPOINTMENT

MENLO PARK $1,698,000
1315 Hoover Street | 2bd/3ba
Zach Trailer | 650.304.3100
BY APPOINTMENT

PALO ALTO $2,500,000
2319 Sierra Court | 4bd/4ba
Katy Thielke Straser | 650.888.2389
BY APPOINTMENT

MENLO PARK $2,495,000
354 Encinal Avenue | 4bd/3ba
Maggie Heilman | 650.888.9315
BY APPOINTMENT

MENLO PARK $1,395,000
802 Fremont Street | 2bd/3ba
Keri Nicholas | 650.304.3100
BY APPOINTMENT

MENLO PARK $1,680,000
907 Peggy Lane | 3bd/2ba
C. Carnevale/N. Aron | 650.465.5958
BY APPOINTMENT

MENLO PARK $1,395,000
802 Fremont Street | 2bd/3ba
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Fire district plans to spend $54 million

By Barbara Wood
Almanac Staff Writer

A budget showing $50.6 million in revenues and $54.6 million in spending for the fiscal year that started July 1 was approved by the board of the Menlo Park Fire Protection District on June 20. While the budget shows spending exceeding revenues, it also shows the district ending the 2017-18 fiscal year on June 30, 2018, with close to $65 million in reserves.

The general fund budget for the district, which provides fire and emergency medical services (not including ambulance transportation) in Menlo Park, Atherton, East Palo Alto and some adjoining unincorporated neighborhoods, is similar in size to that of the city of Menlo Park.

The city provides police, planning and building, road maintenance, water, library, parks and recreation, and other services to its residents. Menlo Park projects $56.87 million in general fund revenues in its fiscal year 2017-18 budget, compared with the fire district’s $50 million in anticipated general fund revenues.

Most of the fire district’s revenues are from property taxes, which are projected to be $44.3 million (compared with Menlo Park’s projected $19.7 million in property tax revenues) for the fiscal year. However, in the fire district, property tax revenues account for 88 percent of general fund revenues, while in Menlo Park property tax revenues are less than 35 percent of general fund revenues.

Policy to underestimate

The fire district will almost certainly receive more than the amount of property tax revenues it has estimated, however. For years its governing board has voted to cap the budget estimate of year-to-year growth in property tax revenues at 4 percent, despite the actual growth in assessed values.

Most local government agencies currently consider a 6 percent growth rate to be a “conservative” projection, and San Mateo County recently reported that the county’s assessed valuations grew by 7.9 percent in the just-ended fiscal year.

The fire district’s budget shows assessed valuations in the district have grown by far more than 4 percent for each of the past five years, including a 10.03 percent increase in fiscal year 2016-17. The budget shows the district underestimated its property tax revenues by $3.8 million for that fiscal year.

Fire board President Peter Carpenter said the district chooses to underestimate its property tax revenues because “we believe it to be irresponsible to spend money that we do not already have in hand and even more irresponsible to plan to spend everything we might hope to get on current expenses and then be forced to cry poverty and demand either a parcel tax or a tax-supported construction bond.”

Other revenue

In addition to property tax revenue, the fire district expects to receive $685,000 from two contracts it has with the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory and Facebook. While SLAC is not within the district’s service area, Facebook is inside the district.

The district projects income of $408,000 from the SLAC contract and $275,000 from the Facebook contract in the fiscal year that started July 1. The budget says the Facebook contract is to pay the full cost of a fire safety inspector and half the cost of a plan checker “for an initial term of two years.”

Fire board and Finance Committee member Chuck Bernstein said the district “agreed not to oppose Facebook’s development plans if the extra costs to us were reimbursed.” Facebook also allows the district to use some of its space as a warehouse for emergency supplies as part of the deal, he said.

The district also has a “Development Contributions” fund with money from charges assessed to “new development projects within the District’s jurisdiction.” The fund is projected to have $886,000 by the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2018, with the money to go to new public facilities or equipment “that will directly address the increased demand created by the new development.”

Wages and benefits

The fire district spends 72.1 percent of its budget on wages and benefits. Earlier Almanac reporting showed the district has since 2009 been among the top 10 state or local agencies in California for the average wages paid to its employees, according to the state controller’s office.

This budget shows the fire district expects its expenses for wages and benefits in fiscal year 2017-18 to be $36.1 million, an increase of 24.2 percent from the previous year’s spending, even though it plans to add only the equivalent of four full-time employees.

Much of the proposed increase in compensation, however, is for retirement costs, which, unlike property tax revenues, the board overestimates. The difference between what is budgeted and what is spent is put into a PERS Rate Stabilization Fund and used to pay down the district’s long-term pension liabilities.

The budget shows projected spending of $8.4 million on Wages and benefits in the 2017-18 fiscal year.

See FIRE DISTRICT, page 6

Portola Valley Town Center needs attention, budget shows

By Dave Boyce
Almanac Staff Writer

The Portola Valley Town Center is nearly 10 years old and its age is showing, according to the official budget for the coming 12 months.

The conditioning and heating systems in the buildings need mechanical repairs, and what were state-of-the-art systems in 2008 now need support and possibly replacement, Town Manager Jeremy Dennis said in his recent budget message to the Town Council.

With town staff foregoing the use of herbicides on trails, the mowing of grass and weeds will be more common. The budget reflects that change with a double-digit increase to pay for the greater intensity of labor involved. The budget even sets aside money for a push mower.

The council on June 28, with Mayor Craig Hughes and Councilman John Richards absent, unanimously approved a budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1. Revenues for the general fund are estimated at $5.3 million, a 3 percent increase over the previous year.

That forecast includes a 4 percent increase in property tax revenues and a 5 percent increase in sales tax revenues. The general fund reserve on June 30, 2018, is expected to be $2.1 million, slightly lower than was anticipated in the previous year’s budget.

Expenses of $4.9 million include a 15 percent increase in administration and operations costs, a 16 percent increase in public works spending and a 17 percent rise in spending for Town Center maintenance.

Driving the administration increases are the hiring of a new staff member to keep the public informed on events, meetings, activities and other important matters, and the reclassification of two existing staff members.

Sustainability & Special Projects Manager Brandi de Garneaux is now the assistant to the town manager, and Administration Services Manager Susan Cope is the town’s finance director.

A 16 percent increase in public works spending reflects, in addition to the expenses of herbicide-free trails and public rights of way, money for a new solar energy kit for the radar-enabled roadside vehicle speed monitor along with additional tools.

New electric vehicle recharging stations ($10,000) helped boost the forecast of Town Center spending by 17 percent. Also included in this category are $8,000 for Acela — software intended to make it easier for local government to communicate with the public, and $20,000 for cloud-based budget software.
Study: Displaced locals face many other obstacles

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

Low-income renters who are displaced from where they live tend to experience many adverse impacts in other areas of their lives, a recent study that focused on San Mateo County residents shows.

Such displaced renters are left with fewer job options and health services, longer commutes and greater environmental and safety concerns, according to a study by researchers Justine Marcus and Mirian Zuk with U.C. Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies.

The data is based on in-depth surveys of 100 renters from San Mateo County who received assistance from Community Legal Services, an East Palo Alto nonprofit that helps low-income people.

Of the 100 renters, 58 had been displaced in the last two years. Respondents had a median household income of $25,480.

The study, published in May, also reported that respondents said they’d experienced landlord practices that could be considered harassment or discriminatory. In other instances, market forces created pressure on landlords to evict their current tenants because of plans to sell, renovate, or move into the property.

Between 2012 and 2015, the study reports, there was a 59 percent increase in the number of evictions for people who couldn’t pay rent on time and a 300 percent in no-cause evictions in the county.

One survey respondent reported that after she complained about cockroaches in her Menlo Park apartment, the landlord told her to move out. Another person reported being evicted from a Menlo Park property because the landlord received an unsolicited offer on the property for more money than he felt he could refuse.

In other instances, people had difficulty finding housing because landlords required credit checks or proof of income of triple the rent.

People who opted to move into cramped living quarters rather than be homeless said the quality of their housing and their relationships with the friends or family they were living with.

In communities where people relocated — mainly in eastern parts of the East Bay or the Central Valley, the study says — there are fewer healthcare facilities, and air quality is often worse. About two-thirds of kids in displaced families have dropped out of school.

The brief concluded, “Homeless and marginal housing, often considered fringe experiences, were startlingly common among displaced households.”

Go to gd/housing402 to read the research brief.

Man pleads no contest to commercial burglary

A 26-year-old man from San Jose pleaded no contest to a felony commercial burglary in Menlo Park on June 23, and was sentenced to 90 days in the county jail. The crime could be reduced to a misdemeanor after a three-year probation period, according to the San Mateo County District Attorney’s Office.

Filimon Acosta Paredes was one of three men who was found by police at the Menlo Gateway development site at about 1 a.m. on Dec. 7 last year. Police found a hole in the security fence and power tools gathered together in a pile.

According to prosecutors, Mr. Paredes was a worker at the site and had been left at Thanksgiving. Prosecutors say he believed he had been unjustly laid off and was retaliating.

Mr. Paredes will be required to abstain from alcohol and drugs, and will be subject to chemical and genetic marker testing, and search and seizure. He cannot possess dangerous weapons or ammunition, and will have to pay $400 in fines and $100 per month for probation fees.

The case was continued to Aug. 17 for a restitution report. He is out of custody on a $25,000 bail bond.

— By Kate Bradshaw

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$23.5 million for compensation (wages, stipends and benefits — excluding overtime and retirement) and more than $4 million for overtime, a 15.2 percent increase over the previous year.

Some of that overtime pay comes back to the district when it deploys its staff to state or federal disaster assignments.

But a large chunk of the overtime is budgeted into at least 27 district programs that have no staff, but have overtime budgets ranging from $3,000 for the hose program to $108,160 for the “unnanned aerial systems” (drone) budget, for a total of close to $700,000 in budgeted overtime for programs with no staff.

The district said off-duty district employees sometimes participate in the programs, accounting for the overtime charges.

In 2016 many district employees made more than $50,000 in overtime pay, with two employees making more than $150,000 in overtime, more than doubling their total compensation.

Other spending

The district spends close to $1 million a year in debt service for two certificates of participation (COPs), a method of public financing that does not require a public vote of approval. The district has one $3.3 million COP and one $8.9 million COP, which were used to finance property purchases and improvements.

The smaller bond has a 12-year term (through 2022) and interest rates of between 2 and 5 percent. The larger bond has a 30-year term (through 2039) and interest rates of 7.1 to 7.28 percent. Part of that interest is rebated by the federal government.

The district plans to spend $74.4 million on capital improvements in 2017-18, with $7.2 million going to the construction of its new downtown Menlo Park station and museum. The district also plans to spend $35,000 for “constructing a ramp at its Chilco Street station in Menlo Park plus $35,000 for alterations.

The district says it will end the 2017-18 fiscal year with $26.3 million in its capital improvements reserve fund: $9.1 million for rebuilding its Middlefield Road fire station in Menlo Park, $12.7 million for its Alameda de las Pulgas station in unincorporated Menlo Park, and $2.8 million for the Chilco Street station. The fund for the downtown station will be $1 million in the hole by the end of the fiscal year, the budget shows.

The process

The district’s budget was approved unanimously, with no discussion, at the June 20 meeting. No one appeared to speak at the public hearing on the budget.

The board also considered the budget at its May 16 meeting, spending about 10 minutes in discussion. The budget was also discussed by two board members, Peter Carpenter and Chuck Bernstein, at Finance Committee meetings.
Rich Gordon, a former member of the state Assembly and the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, has dropped plans to run for another elective office, a seat on a state tax board. Mr. Gordon said he has accepted an offer to be president and chief executive of the California Forestry Association, a post he will take on July 17.

As the forestry association’s chief executive, Mr. Gordon will work four days a week in Sacramento and telecommute on the fifth. He will retain his home in Menlo Oaks, he said. In the Assembly, Mr. Gordon was a reliable voice in defense of the environment. He did not seek out the trade group for a job, he said. They found him. “It was like a call out of the blue,” he said. After some “very candid and frank conversations, I came to the conclusion that this would be a very interesting assignment, and they came to the conclusion that they wanted me to take that assignment,” he said.

The profit-driven approach of the forestry industry, which includes forest owners and harvesters, sawmills and makers of forest-based products, has been at odds with the environmental community, Mr. Gordon said. It’s a puzzle. Healthy forests are “really critical to the sustainability of the planet,” he said. “How do you juggle these things to make sure we have sustainability? ... I feel very strongly that we human beings are the stewards of this planet. Forest stewardship is a very critical function.”

His first six months will be spent meeting with association members and key people in the environmental community, he said. “In this job, clearly I represent the interests of the members and the industry,” he said. “I think the challenge will be trying to work with the industry and the members to highlight what they do that benefits the environment, and to work with the environmental community to figure out how to do all of that better.”

Why he’s not running

It’s been a restless six months for Mr. Gordon. Not long after he was termed out of the Assembly in December 2016, and after he joined Caminar, he made known his plans to run in 2018 for a seat on the state Board of Equalization. The board’s responsibilities have executive, quasi-legislative and quasi-judicial components, according to the Legislative Analyst’s Office. Board members are individually elected and oversee the property tax assessment practices of all 58 counties and the collection of over $60 billion in tax revenues — about 30 percent of the state’s income.

The board also hears appeals from taxpayers objecting to board decisions on property, business and income tax assessments.

After researching the job, Mr. Gordon decided he no longer wants it. It’s too easy, he said, for a board member to sidestep a rule to not participate in decisions affecting individuals or corporations who donate more than $250 to that member’s election campaign fund. And board members can talk in private with appellants about matters before the board without having to disclose to whom they talked or what they talked about, he said. Administrative law judges should be hearing these appeals, Mr. Gordon said. “This does not fit my ethics,” he told the Almanac. “How do you run for something that you don’t think should be an elected office in the first place?”

Reform ahead

Others are also looking askance. The state Legislature’s Legislative Analyst’s Office, in a June 7 report, said it considers the board’s situation to be “extremely difficult — if not impossible — for a single entity to perform all of these functions effectively.”

The five-member board, commissioned in 1879, has been an issue for the Analyst’s Office since at least 1949. A budget analysis from that year refers to the board’s efficiency as “below maximum” due in part to board members’ feelings of personal responsibility for administering tax matters in their districts, and a resulting lack of uniformity among districts in policy, organization, staffing and facilities.

The Sacramento Bee used the term “unseemly hijinks” to refer to the board’s “mysterious” staff salary increases, a lavish office redecoration and the firing and immediate rehiring (to a board member’s staff) of the board’s executive director.

A recent Department of Finance analysis notes that some board members as well as state legislators have “expressed concerns” about aspects of the board’s use of resources for outreach and communications, vacancies, executive pay, furniture and office space.

The Legislature has acted. AB 102, the Taxpayer Transparen- cency and Fairness Act of 2017, is headed to the governor’s office, approved largely along party lines in the Assembly and state Senate. The bill would have the board “stripped of power except for three or four constitutional powers,” Mr. Gordon said. Ninety percent of the staff would be moved out from under the board, and tax appeals would be heard by administrative law judges, he said. “Many of the things that I thought were wrong, this corrects,” Mr. Gordon said.

Trade group

At the forestry association, Mr. Gordon will have a “bunch of very good lobbyists” to the state Legislature and two people following rule-making at the state and federal levels.

Mr. Gordon said he will be
**Counties OKs $1 million for airport noise solutions**

By Barbara Wood
Almanac Staff Writer

More than $1 million in spending over three years has been approved by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors as part of a multi-pronged plan crafted in response to a wave of complaints about noisy aircraft at the San Carlos Airport since Surf Air began using the airport in 2013.

“We’re trying to fix a severe problem caused by Surf Air operations,” Supervisor Dave Pine said. Before Surf Air began using the airport for regularly scheduled flights, the airport was considered a “good neighbor” by the community, he said.

A ‘considerable issue’

Supervisor Don Horsley said county officials have met with thousands of people affected by the noise from Surf Air’s turbo-prop PC-12 planes over the four years since Surf Air began using the airport. “We’re not talking about a handful of people,” he said. “This is a considerable issue.”

The Board of Supervisors on June 27 unanimously approved funding for: an airport communications specialist to work with the public and pilots; hiring a contractor to investigate new air routes that avoid residences; and putting in place an automated flight tracking system tied to the noise complaint system. All are funded for three years, with a total cost, including authorizations to adjust the contracts, of $1.03 million.

County Public Works Director Jim Porter said that while he hasn’t added up how much money the county has spent responding to Surf Air-related problems at the airport, it is “several hundred thousand dollars.”

No curfew

Mr. Porter outlined a proposed noise-management program for the airport. Conceivably absent from the plan is a curfew earlier proposed by the county, which would have limited flights at night and early mornings. Many residents and the Atherton City Council had supported the curfew. Mr. Porter said the county believes will send the automated emails by June 27.

The San Carlos Airport holds community events such as its annual Airport Day, shown here in 2016. This year’s free event will be held Sept. 30 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**The San Carlos Airport**

**Photo courtesy Experimental Aircraft Association, Chapter 20**

**Surf Air actions**

In the meantime, Surf Air spokeswoman Angela Vargo says the airline is making a number of changes to reduce noise from its planes, including flying over the Bay whenever possible to avoid homes on the Midpeninsula.

The company is also seeking permission to increase the flying altitude over neighborhoods such as Sunnyvale and Cupertino, which planes pass over when using the Bay route. Surf Air has asked to increase the altitude up to 6,000 feet, from the current 2,000 feet, when conditions allow.

Surf Air pilots have also been told to use minimum engine power as they arrive at the San Carlos Airport, she said.

**Fake news?**

There appears to have been a political campaign against a flight operations proposal for a curfew wasn’t on the supervisors’ agenda. A group called “Keep San Mateo Flying” recently bought Facebook ads urging people to go to a website that sends automated emails to the supervisors.

“A recent county ordinance is singling out one locally owned business,” the ad says. Clicking on the link took readers to a page asking them to oppose the “county proposal that would shut down air service at San Carlos Airport.” The message said that the “San Mateo Board of Supervisors is considering restricting Surf Air’s aircraft operations at the San Carlos Airport,” although nothing on the supervisors’ agenda would have had that effect.

The website appeared to have no requirement that actual names, addresses, phone numbers or email addresses be used in order to send the automated message.

**‘We’re trying to fix a severe problem caused by Surf Air operations.’**

**SUPERVISOR DAVE PINE**

Within six months, the county also wants to develop new procedures that could minimize noisy arrivals and departures; expand voluntary noise procedures for helicopters (which residents have also been complaining about); hire the communications specialist and put the tracking system into place; and come up with incentives for pilots who comply with a voluntary curfew.

It could take more than a year, however, to get FAA approval of new flight paths, Mr. Porter said.

**Sunnyvale’s complaints**

One issue the consultants examining new routes for the airport will have to consider is the complaints that have been made about Surf Air from residents of Sunnyvale and Cupertino.

When Surf Air uses an alternative route that takes it over the Bay, avoiding most Midpeninsula homes, flights go over parts of Sunnyvale and Cupertino. The flights are at between 3,500 and 4,000 feet in altitude when they pass over those communities, while they are about 1,200 feet when they pass over Menlo Park, Deputy Director of Airports Rochelle Kiner said.

The new flight tracking system should help the airport quickly know exactly which flights and operators are responsible for noise complaints.

**How many flights?**

Ms. Kiner said Surf Air has 19 round trips on weekdays, but Surf Air spokeswoman Angela Vargo said in a press release on June 27 that the airline has 22 round trips on weekdays. On June 29, however, Ms. Vargo provided July flight numbers for the San Carlos Airport. She said Surf Air will have 20 round trips each weekday, five on Saturday and nine on Sunday, for a total of 114 round trips (or 228 flights) each week.

Ms. Vargo said additional flights will be added “based on demand.”

She said the earliest scheduled departure from San Carlos is at 6 a.m. and the latest arrival is at 10 p.m.

**GORDON continued from page 8**

Talking with legislators, but not until the year-long lobbying prohibition for former legislators expires. Whether he registers as a lobbyist will depend on how much time he spends talking with legislators, he said. “It may well be that I won’t qualify,” he said.

Asked about his salary, he replied that it will be published, given the non-profit status of the association. “I will be well compensated,” he said. His husband is excited about his new job, he said. “He’s retired, so I’m not sure he wanted me at home all the time,” he added.
Kepler’s Literary Foundation is launched

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

In the age of e-books and Amazon, how can a community bookstore thrive? The community of Menlo Park saw off this question in 2005, when it rallied to save Kepler’s Books by forming a board of investors or “patron circle;” and again in 2012, when owner Clark Forstner called his retirement and a team of dedicated locals rallied to develop a plan for a sustainable bookstore business model. Now, after years of effort, Kepler’s Books announced it has taken the final steps of that plan and launched the Kepler’s Literary Foundation, a tax-exempt nonprofit connected in vision with, though separate in purpose from, the brick-and-mortar bookseller located at 1010 El Camino Real in Menlo Park.

The foundation has been incubated as a project of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation and is expected to attain independent nonprofit status by the end of the year, according to Praveen Madan, Kepler’s community engagement officer and board member.

Jean Forstner, who previously ran programming and operations at Kepler’s events, will be executive director. She graduated from Stanford and worked as California state director for U.S. Senator Alan Cranston before working for Kepler’s. Chairing the bookstore’s nonprofit will be Patrick Cormar, a marketing and communications consultant. Also on the board will be Vice Chair Dan Gilbert, a technology entrepreneur and investor; Secretary and Treasurer Beth Morgan, entrepreneur and chief operating officer of Twine; Mr. Madan; and Anne Dimock, a creative writer and nonprofit executive.

The nonprofit will have an annual budget of about $500,000 and a staff of about five people, according to Ms. Forstner. About 20 percent of the budget comes from ticket revenues to premier events: discussions featuring intellectual and literary headliners such as Bill Nye, Roxane Gay and Khaled Hosseini, to name several from recent months. The rest of the revenue comes from tax-exempt individual and community donations and some small grants, she said.

The organization sees itself as the “premier producer of literary and cultural programs in Silicon Valley,” according to a press statement. The nonprofit hosts a quarterly literary seminar series with Kimberly Ford, a former adjunct professor at U.C. Berkeley; a number of reading and discussion groups that are free and open to the public; the weekly recording of radio show “In Deep” with Angie Coiro; and an event series called “Story is the Thing” for up-and-coming local writers to talk about writing and storytelling.

School programs

The foundation also runs a program started two years ago to bring children’s book authors to meet with and do readings for students in the Ravenswood City School District, where many lower-income families reside. So far, 6,500 students have participated in the program and 1,300 books have been donated to the district, the foundation says.

Both benefit

According to Ms. Forstner, having a separate organization focused on event programs means that employees aren’t being pressured to sell books and plan events at the same time. It also lets us involve the community, she said. “The program at the Ravenswood City School District is one clear example, she noted. “We can seek grant funding and do programs of benefit to the entire community—things that would be difficult to do as a for-profit.”

The shift has also helped the bookstore, Mr. Madan said. Though the bookstore, founded in 1979, maintains a social purpose, splitting the responsibilities has helped bookstore staff focus on improving the store’s inventory. Between a quarter and a third of the bookstore’s staff have master’s degrees, many in literature, he said, which allows for excellent customer service.

The bookstore now has a starting salary of $15 per hour for its employees, and is, to Mr. Madan’s knowledge, the first bookstore in the U.S. to develop a plan to raise staff compensation and achieve such results. Since 2012, he said, the bookstore has raised its starting wage from $9 an hour to $15 per hour, plus about $1.44 an hour from a profit-sharing program, an 82 percent increase over five years.

The foundation is having success in drawing big literary names to town and curating highattendance events. “There’s no way a bookstore could run as high-caliber a program as we have,” Mr. Madan said.

“Silicon Valley is a really important market for anyone who’s writing something or saying something important,” Ms. Forstner said.

Mr. Madan added that Kepler’s events can attract a broad audience, from all across the Bay Area and beyond, and inclusive of business and tech folks who are interested in literature. Increased outreach and marketing efforts help fill seats too, noted Ms. Forstner.

“We can bring in a Nobel physicist and pack the room,” Mr. Madan said. “Not everywhere can do that. We’ve really learned what our community wants.”

People in this area are busy and are more likely to attend events when they know they won’t be able to get the experience anywhere else, Ms. Forstner said. “We want to be producing events that people think are worth their time,” she added.

Because of that, Mr. Madan said, the event team has pivoted from a more traditional literary event format — the author reading a few passages and answering questions — to hosting conversations with authors. Some authors say that during their book tours, they get the best audience questions at Kepler’s, he said.

The fastest-growing part of Kepler’s business, Mr. Madan said, is its online GiftLit program. The website, bequeathed to the bookstore, rounds out the reconstructed business model by offering books online via a subscription service, in which people can order a curated set of books to be delivered monthly in three-, six- or 12-month packages.

Go to keplers.com for more information about the bookstore, keplers.org for more about the literary foundation and giftlit.com for the GiftLit program.
Farmers’ Market celebrates 25th anniversary

By Kate Bradshaw

In recognition of the 25th anniversary of the Menlo Park Farmers’ Market, the Menlo Park Lions Club will host a celebration at 9 a.m. Sunday, July 9, at the weekly market in downtown Menlo Park.

Remarks will be given and coffee and cake provided to vendors, according to Jim Bigelow, chapter secretary of the Menlo Park Live Oak Lions Club, which has sponsored the market since its start in 1992.

The market idea came from a group of women looking for something to enliven downtown Menlo Park on Sundays, Mr. Bigelow said. At the time, there were few farmers’ markets in the area.

The women, several of whom are still involved, asked the City Council to start a market in Menlo Park. The council asked them to get a nonprofit sponsor, and the women joined forces with the local Lions Club chapter.

Nineteen of the current 26 vendors have been coming to the market since its start, according to market spokesman Jitze Couperus. In some cases, the vendors who used to tag along with their parents to the market have taken over their parents’ spots selling products of the family’s farm or business, Mr. Couperus said.

The Lions Club collects leftover produce and distributes it to local food service agencies for low-income people. Revenue from booth fees goes to the club’s charity efforts.

According to Mr. Bigelow, since its start, the farmers’ market has donated more than 875,000 pounds of produce to local nonprofits such as St. Anthony’s Padua Dining Room, Coastside Hope and Little House. About $810,000 has been donated to Lions Club philanthropy, including efforts to provide sight and hearing assistance to low-income people of all ages.

The market is held each Sunday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the downtown parking area bounded by Santa Cruz Avenue, Chestnut Street, Menlo Avenue and Crane Street.

Celebration of life of Daniel Norman Chappelear

A celebration of life of Daniel Norman Chappelear, a naval architect and marine engineer who lived for 40 years in Emerald Hills, is planned for this summer. He died May 4 at age 82.

Born in Dayton, Ohio, he grew up in West Hartford, Connecticut, where he graduated from Loomis School in 1952.

He attended the Colorado School of Mining where he studied metallurgy before transferring to the University of Michigan. There, he earned a bachelor’s degree in naval architecture and marine engineering.

He met Katherine in San Francisco and the couple married in Palo Alto. They were married for 40 years.

Mr. Chappelear worked at Humble Oil, Miami Shipbuilding, Sparkman & Stephens, Boeing Company and Rosenblatt & Son before joining Lockheed Missiles & Space Company.

Memorial donations may be sent to: Michigan Engineering Fund, Scholarships, Office of University Development, University of Michigan, Dept. CH 10189, Palatine, IL; or a charity of the donor’s choice.

Menlo loses city clerk to Redwood City

By Kate Bradshaw

For the better part of the past decade, Pam Aguilar has been the behind-the-scenes workhorse keeping Menlo Park’s city hall running smoothly.

As deputy city clerk and then city clerk, she’s organized agenda packets, overseen elections, reviewed commission reports, responded to public records requests and — perhaps most importantly — managed to stay awake, friendly and helpful after Menlo Park City Council deliberations conclude, often well past midnight.

On June 12, Ms. Aguilar was appointed to the same job in Redwood City by its council. She left the Menlo Park post on June 22 and plans to start in Redwood City on July 5.

Redwood City Mayor John Seybert cited her “extensive regional experience, commitment to public service, strong customer service orientation and collaborative approach.”

She has worked for the city of Menlo Park for eight years, four as deputy city clerk and four as city clerk. Previously, she was a deputy city clerk in Belmont for two and a half years, she said.

“She has a quiet yet strong influence on the team,” City Manager Alex McIntyre said of Ms. Aguilar. “She will be hard to replace.”

Ms. Aguilar said in an interview that she loves the concept of the city clerk role. She sees her mission as being a “facilitator of the legislative process,” helping people to understand and participate in local government.

As someone who’s been told she’s “too nice” to be in politics, she said she likes that she is required to stay neutral as a city clerk, even while being privy to the political dynamics that swirl around the local law-making process.

The highlight of her work in Menlo Park, she said, has been the last nine or 10 months, during which the City Council has made some big decisions including updating the city’s general plan, approving the Facebook expansion project, and discussing housing affordability and how to protect the city’s immigrant community.

“It’s been grueling but interesting to be part of the process and to see the community come out for what’s important to them,” she said. “It shows hope that the whole process works.”

She said the switch will be a “bittersweet move,” noting that she’s enjoyed working with Menlo Park staff, council members and commissioners.

Redwood City, she said, has diversity, a lot going on and a reputation for being innovative and collaborative. “It was a hard opportunity to pass up,” she said.

She and City Manager McIntyre are working on a transition plan but have no details to announce yet, she said.

A Fremont resident who’s seen her daily commute time balloon from its original 20 minutes eight years ago, she added, “I will not be sorry to leave that Willow Road traffic at all.”

Members of the Menlo Park Live Oak Lions Club, including some who volunteer regularly at the Menlo Park Farmers’ Market, received a proclamation from the Menlo Park City Council on June 20. From left, they are Tina Morris, Jim Bigelow, Nancy Couperus, Bobbie McDonald and John Hickson.

Members of the Menlo Park Live Oak Lions Club, including some who volunteer regularly at the Menlo Park Farmers’ Market, received a proclamation from the Menlo Park City Council on June 20. From left, they are Tina Morris, Jim Bigelow, Nancy Couperus, Bobbie McDonald and John Hickson.

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“Lasting Memories”

An online directory of obituaries and remembrances.

Go to: AlmanacNews.com/obituaries

The Women, several of whom are still involved, asked the City Council to start a market in Menlo Park. The council asked them to get a nonprofit sponsor, and the women joined forces with the local Lions Club chapter.

Nineteen of the current 26 vendors have been coming to the market since its start, according to market spokesman Jitze Couperus. In some cases, the vendors who used to tag along with their parents to the market have taken over their parents’ spots selling products of the family’s farm or business, Mr. Couperus said.

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Problem solvers: Woodland School places third in state

Woodland School’s Future Problem Solvers team of fifth- and sixth-graders — made up of Ella Aspinall, Zachary Sayyah, Ryan Su and Nikhil Chand — placed third in the state in a recent global issues problem-solving competition.

The event was held at Nueva School in Hillsborough and organized by Future Problem Solving Program International. The private Woodland School is based in Ladera. Woodland’s was among 19 teams in the junior division given two hours to complete an evaluation and propose an action plan based on the theme of identity theft.

The Woodland team’s action plan focused on a multi-level security device called the Quadruple Mummy Scanner (QMS), which would scan a person’s fingerprint, iris, voice and DNA. They proposed the government-sponsored program would first be implemented in cities with the most fraud and be rolled out across the United States over a five-year period.

Woodland seventh-grader Emily Harris was on a team made up of students from around the state that also took third place.

Nikhil Chand, a student who participated in the international competition in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in June, competed with a team of three other students from three other states. The team won third place in the scenario writing junior competition.

Town steps up capital improvement spending

Woodside’s five-year capital improvement program, begun in 2016, reaches its height in the next 12 months, with spending of $2.7 million, around half of which will come from the town’s own coffers and the rest from federal and state grants and the county’s transportation tax, Measure A.

The town’s budget earmarks about $385,000 for the four principle bridges in town, including $85,000 for engineering and design plans to replace two bridges: on Old La Honda Road over Dennis Martin Creek and on Portola Road over Alambique Creek.

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By Barbara Wood
Almanac Staff Writer

Bonnie Brooks Uytengsu says she should have become a doctor. But during the 1950s, when she might have been enrolled in pre-med classes, studying anatomy and chemistry, she did what many young women of her era did — she got married, at the age of 21.

“I’ve always been very fascinated by medicine,” the long-time Atherton resident says. “If I was (part of) this generation, I’d try to get into med school.” Instead, Ms. Uytengsu found another way to help advance medical knowledge. For decades, she has donated generously to causes that support medical research, including annual donations to the Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford.

When Ms. Uytengsu heard the children’s hospital needed even more help — for an ambitious project to double the size of the hospital — she was on board, giving $10 million to help pay for a new high-tech surgery center. In December, when the new facility opens, the doors leading to the new surgery suites will say “Bonnie Uytengsu and Family” as part of their name.

The hospital’s planners hope the new technology will mean young patients will need fewer operations and spend less time under anesthesia.

The name on the door

But who is Bonnie Uytengsu? Bonnie Brooks spent her childhood in Washington, D.C. Her father, worked for the State Department during the administrations of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman. She remembers growing up in Washington, D.C., during the 1930s and 1940s as idyllic, with field trips to the Smithsonian and the White House. She went to Union Station with her mother and grandmother to see President Truman off at the

The name on the door — Atherton’s Bonnie Uytengsu gives $10 million for new children’s hospital surgery center

The name on the door

Michael Lane shows Bonnie Uytengsu what the new annex to the Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford will look like when it’s completed late this year. Dr. Dennis Lund is at left.

The latest technology

The facility will add six surgical suites, bringing the hospital’s total to 13, more than any other children’s hospital in Northern California. The state-of-the-art center will include an operating suite known as a "neuro hybrid-OR," which includes, in addition to the operating room, equipment for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and angiography (blood flow) imaging, allowing for less invasive surgery.

Surgeons will be able to look at updated images during surgery, allowing them to make sure, for example, that they have removed all of a tumor.

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end of his term, and no one in her neighborhood locked their doors.

Before she had graduated from her Catholic high school, Bonnie was recruited by a government agency (the name of which she says she still can’t reveal). After graduating, she was trained for an assignment abroad, and sent, with her widowed mother as a chaperone, to the American embassy in Manila, the capital of the Philippines.

At an embassy party, she met Wilfred Uytengsu, a young Filipino engineer and a Stanford University engineering graduate who was opening a flour mill in the Philippines.

After just a few dates — all of them including her mother — Mr. Uytengsu proposed, after first seeking her mother’s permission. “He didn’t want people to get the wrong impression,” she says of the chaperoned dates. Mr. Uytengsu, who died about seven years ago, founded several successful businesses, including the Alaska Milk Corporation and General Milling Corporation.

“His one of the few geniuses I think I’ve ever met,” Ms. Uytengsu says. The couple had three children and lived in the Philippines, in Cebu City and Manila, but spent summers in a home they owned in Menlo Park’s Sharon Heights neighborhood. “I felt at home in both places,” she says, adding that “the friends you make when you are living out of the country are lasting friends.”

In the 1980s, however, when the uprisings that led to the ouster of Ferdinand Marcos began, Bonnie Uytengsu moved to Atherton with the couple’s three children while Wilfred Uytengsu continued working in the Philippines.

Wilfred Jr., Candice and Michael attended Sacred Heart and Menlo schools and all are successful business people. Wilfred Jr. oversees the family interests in the Philippines, while Michael and Candice are involved in investments in the U.S. and the family’s foundation.

The family owned the Sunshine Biscuit Company, maker of Cheez-Its, Hydrox cookies and Krispy Crackers saltines, until it was sold to the Keebler Company in 1996.

Ms. Uytengsu says much of her giving was inspired by her husband. “He was a great one for wanting to give things back,” she says. He gave substantial gifts to most of the schools he attended, in the Philippines and the U.S., where he graduated from Indiana Tech as well as Stanford.

“I just want to continue on in his pattern of helping people,” she says. “He could never say no.”

In addition to donating to the children’s hospital, Ms. Uytengsu has endowed a program, led by Dr. Maria Grazia Roncarlo, to study finding cures for genetic immune diseases that strike children. Ms. Uytengsu says she was inspired after hearing Dr. Roncarlo speak.

“I listened to her speech and I said, that woman is going to make a difference in the world.” She’s going to change something,” Ms. Uytengsu says. “So, I donated her laboratory.”

She also donated money to create a bioengineering and chemical engineering center at Stanford, named after her husband.

Her children have also been generous in supporting many causes, including the Uytengsu Aquatics Center at the University of Southern California, which was renovated with the support of Wilfred Jr., and an endowed scholarship at the USC Marshall School of Business that came from Michael.

Something else that Bonnie Uytengsu supports? “I’m a 49er Faithful and I love the Warriors,” she says. “That’s my one vice — to yell at ball games!”

Fiona interrogates police chief

Steven McCulley, Atherton’s new police chief, answers Fiona’s questions.

Q. What has it been like to move from Washington state to California?

A. Well, the last six months in Seattle, it has been literally raining and cold every day. So since I’ve been here, I feel like I’m on vacation. I’m really excited to be here competing with the best and moving to move down in a few months and she’s really excited to come down, too.

Q. Do you think you will become a San Francisco Giants fan and/or a Forty Niners fan?

A. I think I’m going to have to be! I’m really not a Mariners fan -- they don’t do much. But the Seahawks are a pretty good team.

Q. Did you always want to be a police officer even when you were a kid?

A. That’s a good question because I did. In high school I wanted to be a Washington State Patrol trooper. When I was a senior, the Kiwanis, which is a service club, sent me to a law enforcement camp, the Washington State Patrol Academy, and I spent a week there. Then I really knew I wanted to be a police officer.

Then in college, I worked summers and put myself through school. I was a pizza driver to earn money, which was a good place to work because I got free pizza. I went to Washington State University and got a degree in criminal justice and sociology.

Q. What do you think is the best thing about the Atherton Police Department?

A. Lots of things. The people that work here, which is why I wanted to come here, are very professional, very friendly. I think they understand that the people that live here really like their police, which I think is great. So I’m happy to come here and provide them leadership, give them some experience and put our team together. It’s kind of like I’m the coach and they are the players but we are working all together.

Photo by Michelle Le /The Almanac

Bonnie Uytengsu signs her name to the last beam placed atop the new annex at the Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford at a January “topping off” ceremony.

Photo by Stephanie Lempres

Among questions Fiona Lempres asked Steven McCulley, Atherton’s new police chief, was: “Did you always want to be a police officer even when you were a kid?” His answer: “I did.”

Eventually, I’m going to come around to all the schools and meet all of your principals. I had a program back where I lived, “Lunch with the Police Chief,” and I went around to all the grade schools (but first I looked at the hot lunch menu) and I would go around and have lunch with kids.

Q. Did you go to your girls’ schools?

A. Yes, my favorite part was going to the school when my girls were there and coming in uniform and embarrassing them and having lunch with them.

Q. What does “No call too small” mean?

A. Where I came from we coined that phrase because regardless of what people called for, we would go. Whatever the call is, it gives a chance to talk with people and see what’s really going on. I’ll give you an example. In my last community, one of my sergeants said he was going down to help a lady start her lawnmower — he said every spring she needs help starting her lawn mower so she called the police and we would go down there and start the lawnmower. Really small, but she appreciated it. It is important for us to make contacts with all the people that live here.

Q. What’s your favorite book?

A. Well, I really enjoy reading mysteries, but right now I am reading the history book about Atherton, it is really interesting.

Q. Thank you for your time, Chief McCulley.

Fiona lives in Atherton and is a second-grade student at Sacred Heart. Her dad, Mike Lempres, is the mayor of Atherton.
Anne Flegel, former teacher, community volunteer, dies at 74

Anne Hartwig Flegel, a former first-grade teacher at St. Joseph’s School in Atherton, an active member of Peninsula Volunteers, and a longtime Atherton resident, died June 26 at age 74.

Ms. Flegel suffered from dementia since 2011, and spent several years at the Sequoias Memory Center in Portola Valley, said her husband, Mark Flegel, owner of Flegel’s Home Furnishings and Interior Design in downtown Menlo Park.

A native of Peekskill, New York, Ms. Flegel earned a bachelor’s degree in government from Smith College. She migrated west to San Francisco in 1964, immediately falling in love with that city, Mr. Flegel said. She earned her teaching credential from California State University, San Francisco.

Ms. Flegel “loved teaching first grade,” her husband said. She taught first in San Jose, and then San Carlos before arriving at St. Joseph’s. “Her warm heart was full of compassion and understanding for her students, and she loved learning of their successes in life,” Mr. Flegel wrote in a statement about his wife’s passing.

It was 1981 when Anne and Mark married, merging their families: Anne’s sons from a previous marriage, Ian and Eric; and Mark’s children, Christina and Brian. Mr. Flegel said he and his wife “spent many happy years” raising their children and traveling throughout Europe and in the United States.

As a Peninsula Volunteers member, Anne Flegel served on the board of the organization’s Rosener House, an adult day care facility in Menlo Park. An avid reader, she co-chaired the Peninsula Volunteers Authors’ Salon, relishing the chance to meet the guest writers, Mr. Flegel said.

In addition to her husband, Mark, Ms. Flegel is survived by four children, Ian, Eric, Christina and Brian; six grandchildren; and her sister, Jane Mandel.

A memorial service is scheduled for 2 p.m. on Aug. 4 at Menlo Church. The family prefers that memorial donations be made to the Menlo Park-based Peninsula Volunteers or the Music@Menlo music festival based in Atherton.

Goodbye, Plantation Deli Cafe

Plantation Deli Cafe, a West Menlo Park deli and cafe, has closed, according to a note displayed on the inside of the restaurant.

The note said: “It is with heavy heart to inform you after almost 18 years in business, Plantation will be closing its doors on June 8th, 2017. We would like to thank all of our customers, especially those whom have been with us since our beginning. We’ll continue to serve your favorites until our last day. Thank you again for years of wonderful memory.”

“Have a favorite memory from the cafe? Send an email to kbradshaw@almanacnews.com.

Astronomy talk for kids on total eclipse of sun

Andrew Fraknoi, chair of the Foothill College astronomy department and co-author of a kids’ book about eclipses called “When the Sun Goes Dark,” will give a free talk at the main Menlo Park library (800 Alma St.) on Thursday, July 13, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

A total solar eclipse will be visible at various points across the United States on Monday, Aug. 21.

Mr. Fraknoi will talk about how eclipses work, when and where the eclipse will be visible, and how to view the eclipse and sun safely.

Copies of the book will be available for purchase, via Kepler’s Books, and a book signing will be held after the event.

Coffee with mayor, assemblyman

The public is invited to bring questions and concerns and have coffee and a chat with Portola Valley Mayor Craig Hughes and Assemblyman Marc Berman on Friday morning, July 14, at Roberts Market in Portola Valley.

The coffee will be free at the 90-minute event, starting at 8 a.m. The market is at 4420 Alpine Road, at the intersection with Portola Road.

Mr. Berman plans a number of similar events in the future, including in Menlo Park.

Kids & firefighters

A fire crew with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District will make an appearance outside Menlo Park’s main library on Thursday, July 6, from 10:30 to 11:15 a.m., giving children the chance to meet firefighters, explore a fire vehicle and take pictures.

The event is free. The library is at 800 Alma St. in the Menlo Park Civic Center.

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Perfectly unpretentious

Michelin-starred Madera offers top-notch cuisine in relaxed surroundings

By Dale F. Bentson

“Sometimes you forget just how good food can taste,” said my dining companion, who was halfway through her appetizer of kampachi yelowtail, kamquat, cherry bomb radish, yuzu, avocado and butttermilk ($21).

The presentation offered by the kitchen at Madera, the Rosewood Sand Hill Hotel’s restaurant, was a work of art, like an ancient Roman grass crown, but edible, more colorful and with a blissful combination of ingredients. My companion stared at the dish for a long moment, then sighed before digging in.

“It was so beautiful, I almost didn’t want to eat it,” she said, but I’m so glad I did.”

I started with the foie gras terrine ($23) with rhubarb, strawberry and a walnut-and-espresso financier. It wasn’t exactly a terrine, rather a deconstructed extract of what it would have been in the terrine. It looked more like dessert than I had expected.

Where was the duck liver?

The chunks of rhubarb held a nice balance of bitter and sweet.

One dessert was crazy good. The Schmitz Ranch lamb loin ($41) featured several generous pieces of rare lamb with tiny braised artichoke hearts, eggplant, morels and sea beans, seasoned with Lebanese seven spice.

In the terrine. It looked more

The only other ingredient on the plate looked like dollops of whipped cream. That was the foie gras, cleverly whipped into the cream. The flavors were more subdued than if the liver had been seared — subtle, but not lost. Definitely rich, definitely foie gras, definitely delicious.

Madera, which occupies one wing of the Rosewood Sand Hill hotel in Menlo Park, is bouncing back after losing its Michelin star in 2015. It regained the coveted star last year. Earning a Michelin star is very subjective — especially in the United States — but suffice to say, it is a mark of distinction but not a guarantee.

Madera is a large airy space with an open kitchen on the left, just beyond hotel reception. The kitchen was strategically placed so the dining room and terrace could maximize sweeping views of the foothills as well as the open sky above. That evening, at dusk, the expansive sky was the color of an iridescent, purplish-pink Easter egg. Breathtaking.

Besides the open kitchen and terrace, Madera boasts a glowing fireplace, well-spaced tables, a vaulted ceiling, upholstered banquettes with comfortable pillows and an ever-buzzing waitstaff. The Rosewood bar is located elsewhere on the property.

I would define the restaurant as elegant-casual. Elegant in its ambiance and fare, casual in the range of attire of the guests. Male dress ranged from sports coats to shabby blue jeans with untucked shirts. Women, by and large, were in dresses and business attire.

In the kitchen is California native and California Culinary Academy graduate Raylon Agus- tin, whose career has taken him to Michelin-starred restaurants in London working under Gordon Ramsay and in the Bay Area, working under renowned chef and restaurateur Traci Des Jardins. He was appointed Madera’s executive chef earlier this year.

Our waiter greeted us by name. He was knowledgeable, friendly and professional, paced the meal perfectly and attended to all the amenities that define a Michelin-starred restaurant.

Soon after we ordered, an amuse-bouche of chilled vichyssoise with drops of mustard oil arrived. It was a nice touch while the sommelier uncorked the wine.

The wine list contains 99 pages of the greatest labels on the planet. Paul Mekis, who made his mark at Plumed Horse in Saratoga, has assembled one of the best wine lists on the Peninsula. Awarded Wine Spectator’s Best of Excellence 2016, it’s an oenophile’s dream.

The prices, though, caused heart palpitations. Many of the reds ran into the hundreds, sometimes thousands of dollars per bottle. Fear not; a sommelier does more than build a wine cellar. He or she is expert in finding the perfect pairing that will please both the palate and the pocketbook.

For entrees, the Yukon gold potato gnocchi ($30) was served with green garlic, Sicilian pistachios, black truffle and Parmesan — and other ingredients, as no plate was as simple as the menu indicated. There was chard and hedgehog mushroom rooms, yellow edible flowers and chives. The gnocchi had been sauteed, which turned the Yukon golds more golden and gave the pasta a welcome firmness and texture to match the woodsy shaved truffles.

The presentation was beautiful in a black earthenware bowl. Surprisingly, flavors didn’t leap from the bowl. Despite the Perigord truffles, the dish was mellow and refined, but each ingredient was evident, central to creating a harmonious whole.

The Schmitz Ranch lamb loin ($41) featured several generous pieces of rare lamb with tiny braised artichoke hearts, eggplant, morels and sea beans, seasoned with Lebanese seven spice. The seared meat was firm but tender, savory but not gamey, and spiced just enough to add a dimension of flavor.

One dessert was crazy good. The kung fu tea chocolate ($12) was served inside a glass filled with soft chocolate ganache, tea

British Bankers Club has visual appeal but food is astray

By Dale F. Bentson

Dining at the new British Bankers Club in Menlo Park was like finally getting a date with the prom queen. You looked forward to it and when you drove up, she looked enchanting, but within a few minutes you realized she had nothing interesting to offer. She was a superficial beauty, all glam and no depth.

Rob Fischer, who owns Peninsula Creamery, Reposado and Gravity Wine Bar in Palo Alto and Scratch in Mountain View, put loads of money and nearly three years into refurbishing the British Bankers Club. The result is visually inviting.

The handsome brick building, constructed in 1925, has housed a bank, the Menlo Park City Hall, the police department and jail, with the public library upstairs. Most recently, it was a busy bar and restaurant of the same name that closed several years ago after two employees were arrested for sexually assaulting two women in an upstairs room and its liquor license was suspended.

The presentation was beautiful.
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GREAT EVENT FOR KIDS AND FAMILIES
Menlo Park
BREAD MAKER
RISING

By Andrea Gemmet

Tian Mayimin's days revolve around bread. During the workday, she bakes naturally leavened bread in her kitchen in Menlo Park's Willows neighborhood. In the evening, she drives around Menlo Park and Palo Alto delivering freshly baked loaves and rolls ordered through her Little Sky Bakery website.

While she uses a starter that has reportedly been nurtured by monks for more than a hundred years, she’s relatively new to baking.

She started her career as a criminal defense attorney in Washington, D.C., then moved to Shanghai and became an entrepreneur, spending five years introducing cold-pressed juice to the Chinese market, she said. Her bakery business evolved after she and her new husband, an entrepreneur, decided to move to California a year and a half ago. "I couldn’t have imagined it even a few months ago," she said.

To stay in the food business, she began exploring concepts. She had experience baking with her grandmother, who hailed from the wheat-loving northern China city of Xi’an, but wasn’t very familiar with naturally leavened breads. Baking every day for houseguests led her to realize that she loved making bread and wanted to turn it into a business.

"Baked goods are fascinating as a product. A lot of them look good, but don’t taste good," she said.

She saw an opening in the local market for high-quality, naturally leavened bread, and decided to fill it. She fine-tuned her recipes, got certified by San Mateo County’s health department and opened Little Sky Bakery.

Only a few months old, the bakery has grown by word-of-mouth and in response to the 800 postcards she distributed around town. She offers free delivery in time for dinner, and in May, she started selling her bread at Palo Alto's seasonal downtown farmers market.

"Showing up on a person’s doorstep and handing them a loaf is one of my favorite parts of the job," she said.

Little Sky’s offerings range from a brioche-like challah made with olive oil and fresh-squeezed orange juice to a decadent chocolate-cherry-pecan loaf and to a country bread with a slight tang and satisfyingly chewy crust. The country bread and her raisin-walnut loaves are the most popular, she said. The black sesame bread is the loaf she wishes more people would try.

Mayimin continues to experiment with new recipes that aren’t yet on the menu, such as saffron bread, avocado bread and a spicy bread using Chinese lao pao peppers.

She said her recipes are the result of "micro-innovation," experimenting and improving on what already works, and incorporating new ingredients.

"I think there's a surprising amount of this that can still be done in the bread area, even though bread has been around for thousands of years," she said. "I find myself thinking a lot about new flavors, and then it's really fun to try them out and see what works." (The chocolate-cherry-pecan bread, for example, went through several iterations, to the delight of her husband.)

She credits her rapid entry into artisan bread-making to a combination of factors — the expert advice and detailed born of centuries of experience that’s readily available in cookbooks, and modern technology like thermometers that make it easy to be precise.

"I could not have accomplished this in several months if I had not been standing on the shoulders of giants," she said.

Go to littleskybakery.com for more information.

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MADERA
continued from page 15

Moore Banker's Club

open to the public at 4 p.m. and is also available for private parties. If that isn't enough, there is patio dining in the plaza shared with Cafe Borrone and Kepler's Books.

The menu had salivating: 10 starters, a half-dozen soups and salads, 10 entrees, a half-dozen tempting desserts, and a solid list of libations from beer and wine to tequilas and single malt scotches.

All of the elements were there. Alas, the food was not.

Cornmeal fried oysters ($16) was a concoction of deviled egg gibriche sauce (made of capers, egg, Dijon, olive oil and vinegar), pancetta jerky and frisee salad. Why the pancetta was made into a jerky is a mystery, because it was unchewable. The vinaigrette over the frisee was too salty.

The asparagus fries ($15), breaded with parmesan and parsley, were a worthwhile appetizer. The fries were fat and crisp, neither over-breaded nor overcooked. The accompanying lemon mascarpone and Aleppo pepper dipping sauce was spicy, cool and creamy.

House-made ricotta gnocchi ($16) swam in a cacio e pepe broth (black pepper and salty pecorino cheese) with charred onion and a pesto sauce that made the dish excessively salty. Glubs of salty pesto were dotted over the delicate gnocchi and broth. If that wasn’t enough, more cheese had been grated over the top, adding still another layer of saltines. It was difficult to know if the gnocchi were good. All I can report is that they were pillowy, not rubbery, and I drank a lot of water.

The slow-cooked Corvina sea bass ($29) came with zucchini noodles, white truffle oil and roasted tomato-lessepi agnolotti. The ragout was the only item on the plate with flavor. The presentation was appealing, the portion generous, but the fish was overcooked, bone-dry, flavorless and not worth eating. The zucchini noodles were loads of fun, though.

Not every selection was off-target. The mushroom and foie gras agnolotti ($25) was a hit. Agnolotti are small, stuffed pasta squares, like ravioli. At the British Bankers Club, they came as oversized rectangles filled with creamy mushrooms. The slice of foie gras was perfectly cooked and the truffle in the truffle-parmesan cream didn’t stifle the other ingredients. It was a well-executed dish.

For dessert, the roasted pear gingerbread cake ($8) was luscious, with a cap of cinnamon cream anglaise and whipped cream frappe. The apple streusel buttermilk cake ($8) was a lovely dish of frangipane, cream anglaise, kumquats and whipped cream.

The chai panna cotta ($8) was served with baklava rolups and honey yogurt, drizzled with spiced vincotto (grapes slow-simmered until syrupy). The flavors were good but the panna cotta was more like thick yogurt than the light, silky custard it should have been. Service was attentive if impersonal, though at lunch one day, I wasn’t three bites into my appetizer when the entree arrived. The waiter tried to slide it on the table despite seeing I was still eating the first course. I sent it back. There was no excuse, since there were but a half-dozen diners in the restaurant.

British Bankers Club has all the elements of a great restaurant, but the back of the house is a problem. It seems as if the kitchen is following recipes without any idea how the finished products should taste. It was food by rote rather than with emotion. Dinner for two, one glass of wine each, with tip, averaged $175.

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Portola Valley Soccer Club wins over-45 championship

For the second consecutive year, the Portola Valley Soccer Club has won the California International Soccer League championship in the over-45 age group.

The club clinched the title with a 6-0 victory over Britannia Arms at Rosotti’s soccer field in Portola Valley.

“It was a great accomplishment, considering the team had started the campaign with a couple of tough losses, having sat in last place,” said Bobby Lane of Atherton, one of the club’s two goalkeepers.

The team, made up of men ranging in age from 45 to 57, most of whom are residents of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley, and Woodside, finished the season with 15 wins, two losses, and one draw.

In the photo are club members (not including referees dressed in green): front row, from left, Richard Mainz, Freddy Froano, Tony Vertongen, Charlie Wilson, Chris Conroy, Gerard Mitchell and Dan Barber; back row, from left, Mark Gardner, David Tuck, Darko Dekovic, Chris Hens, Bobby Lane, Tim McAdams, Michael banks and Andres Clauere.

Go to cisl.teamsnapsites.com/standings for league standings.

— Christian Wagner

Portola Valley Soccer Club wins over-45 championship

Garden effort awarded at Selby Lane School

By Kate Daly

Woodside-Atherton Garden Club members Sherry Perkins, left, and Sara Jorgensen present a national award to Cesar Zuniga for his dedication to Selby Lane Elementary School’s garden and community.

W oodside-Atherton Garden Club members volunteer every week to cultivate local school gardens and were so impressed with one employee at Selby Lane Elementary School in Atherton, they surprised him with special recognition: a national award and a check for $1,000.

Dozens of club members gathered in the school garden on June 13 as Sherry Perkins and Sara Jorgensen of Woodside presented Cesar Zuniga with the Garden Club of America’s Elizabeth Abernathy Hull Award to honor his inspirational work with the schools children, parents, teachers and staff.

As school coordinator for Redwood City’s department of parks, recreation and community services, Mr. Zuniga has many responsibilities including running an after-school program where he uses the fruit, vegetable and flower garden as a teaching tool.

Garden club members, who have been volunteering in the schools garden since 2015, have recently added John Gill Elementary School in Redwood City to their project list, and plan to help out at Roosevelt Elementary soon.
Submit items for the Calendar
Go to AlmanacNews.com and see the Community Calendar module at the top right side of the page. Click on “Add your event.” If the event is of interest to a large number of people, also e-mail a press release to Editor@AlmanacNews.com.

July 5, 2017 | AlmanacNews.com | The Almanac | 19

M-A alumni perform on bluegrass show
By Christian Wagner
Special to the Almanac

T he "Menlo-Atherton Bears Alumni Bluegrass Band" — made up of banjoist Ryan Breen, guitarist Henry Warde, double bassist Kyle McCabe and mandolinist Andy O'Brien — will perform during the 31st Annual Summer Jazz Concert Series, 1 Club Fox in Redwood City.

Doors open at 8 p.m. with a 9 p.m. showtime. Tickets can be purchased online for $10 in advance or $15 for the door, with a 5 percent discount for M-A alumni. A lineup of musical guests, exclusively M-A alumni, will accompany the band.

Maurice Ghyse, who is just ending his tenure as superintendent of the Menlo Park City School District, performed live music with musicians LesBloch and Greg Kennedy at Cafe Zoe in Menlo Park on Saturday, July 15.

Mr. Ghyse will soon become chief innovation officer in the Ravenswood City School District, was the band’s lead vocalist, in addition to playing acoustic guitar.

Mr. Kennedy played the acoustic guitar and sang backup vocals, and Mr. Bloch switched between playing electric guitar and holding down the beat on the Cajon (a Peruvian percussion instrument), singing backup vocals as well.

In addition to playing rock-and-roll classics and a few pop tunes, the band showcased two original songs, “Blue Pill” and “What You Wanted,” that will appear on Mr. Bloch and Mr. Kennedy’s new album later this year.

Mr. Bloch and Mr. Kennedy, both residents of Danville, California, recently finished a studio recording session with their band, Kasy Baby, unaffiliated with Mr. Ghyse. Although the two have played together for more than 20 years, appearing on numerous professional recordings, this will be the first time they have written and recorded their own music.

Mr. Bloch and Mr. Kennedy are longtime friends with Mr. Ghyse, even performing music at Ghyse’s wedding. The three have played as a band for about a year, Cafe Zoe serving as one of their main venues.

During a short intermission, Kathleen Daly, the owner of Cafe Zoe, thanked Mr. Ghyse for all of his work in the community and with local schools. Mr. Ghyse thanked the people at Cafe Zoe for all of their support.

“It’s really been a great ride and I did not expect this at all,” Mr. Ghyse said. □
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995 Fictitious Name Statement


This business is conducted by: An Individual.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 5-22-17.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on May 31, 2017.

(ALK June 21, 26, July 5, 2017)

997 Other Legal Ads

8-PAGE LEGAL{

FILED: June 22, 2017.

This business is conducted by: A General Partnership.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 6-22-17.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on June 22, 2017.

(ALK June 21, 26, July 5, 2017)

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All City Filters, located at 301 Alta Mesa Dr., Menlo Park, CA 94025.

This business is conducted by: An Individual.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 6-24-2009.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on June 21, 2017.

(ALK June 21, 26, July 5, 2017)

All City Filters, located at 301 Alta Mesa Dr., Menlo Park, CA 94025.

This business is conducted by: An Individual.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 6-24-2009.

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