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Local leaders unite to fight development on Bay’s salt ponds

By Matthew Vollrath
Special to The Almanac

Local leaders unite to fight development on Bay’s salt ponds

We don’t build on the Bay. Bay Area environmental groups have long declared. Now, local leaders are once again sounding this call.

On Aug. 20, San Mateo County Supervisor Dave Pine joined advocates from Save the Bay, the Committee for Green Foothills, and other local advocacy organizations at Redwood Bayfront Park in Menlo Park. Their purpose, as Pine tweeted later that day, was to announce a broad coalition opposed to development on the Cargill Salt Ponds, where the developer is testing the waters for a potential housing project.

“We’re taking bold action to prepare our communities for the impacts of climate change, but building on these wetlands would be a giant step backward,” Pine said in a Save the Bay press release. “There is too much at stake — building here will put people at risk, destroy fish and wildlife habitat and make traffic congestion on the Peninsula even worse.”

“The salt ponds are particularly vulnerable to earthquakes, liquefaction hazards, and rising seas,” Dan Ponti, a representative of Redwood City Neighbors United, added at the press conference. “We therefore believe it’s just plain foolish to put residents and businesses on a restorable wetland that could otherwise provide unique benefits to the community.”

Cargill’s plans to develop the salt ponds were made public in 2009, when the company’s contractor, DMB Associates, proposed building 12,000 homes on the 1,400-acre property. In 2012, however, Cargill withdrew its bid after facing significant public opposition.

Then, in 2017, the Trump administration’s Environmental Protection Agency reversed a prior decision that protected the salt ponds under the Clean Water Act.

As The Almanac earlier reported, a survey was sent this June to certain Bay Area residents, asking whether they would “support or oppose a proposal for the salt ponds land” that would involve building on 20 percent of the property while preserving and restoring the other 80 percent.

In the survey, the plan was pitched as a way to create much-needed affordable housing. “Any project would dedicate at least 25 percent of the new housing units as affordable workforce housing for young families, workers who serve our community such as teachers and nurses, and seniors on fixed incomes,” one part of the survey reads.

However, says David Lewis, executive director of Save the Bay, affordable housing creation need not be in tension with environmental restoration. “Save the Bay agrees we need much more (low-income) housing here on the Peninsula,” Lewis said. But, he added, “Redwood City has shown the way by building housing downtown, (which) is near transit, and is not at risk from sea level rise and climate change.”

Megan Fluke, executive director of the Committee for Green Foothills, reinforced this last point. “It doesn’t make sense to put development in a place that’s going to flood,” she asserted. Protecting a development from flood risk would require 40-foot levies to be constructed, which Ponti says would be “really expensive, and not without residual risk.”

The Cargill property is one of the company’s last remaining sites in the Bay. In 2003, Cargill sold the vast majority of its salt lands to the state and federal governments, and restoration of some 15,000 acres is now underway, the Sierra Club reported in April.

Scientists warn, however, that tens of thousands more acres of wetlands will have to be restored to protect against impending sea level rise.
DA's Office reveals new details in Haldeman sexual assault case

By Rick Radin and Renee Batti

More information has been made public by the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office about the alleged sexual assaults of children by Randolph Haldeman, including that one of the incidents allegedly occurred in a bathroom at St. Denis Catholic Church in Menlo Park.

Haldeman, who was arrested last month on allegations of sexually assaulting boys and then released on bail hours later, was arrested again on Aug. 21 at his Menlo Park home on 20 sexual assault charges, according to the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. Bail was set at $5 million.

After the original arrest generated numerous Bay Area media reports, eight more individuals contacted authorities to report being sexually assaulted by Haldeman, according to District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe.

Several of the molestations occurred after the victims had consumed alcohol, and involved fondling while viewing pornography, Wagstaffe said.

The victims' ages at the time of the alleged assaults ranged from 4 to 16 years old, Wagstaffe said.

Haldeman had been arrested on July 25 on two counts of “lewd and lascivious acts” with boys ranging in age from 8 to 13 years; the alleged assaults took place at his Menlo Park home and at the Ladera Recreation Center.

Although the Sheriff’s Office said at the time of his arrest that Haldeman was a swim team photographer at the Ladera center, several people connected with the center have challenged that characterization, and Wagstaffe said on Aug. 26 confirmed that Haldeman was only a parent volunteer rather than an employee of the center.

An official at the Ladera Recreation Center declined to comment on Haldeman’s role at the center when contacted by The Almanac.

In addition to the information that one of the alleged assaults occurred at the church, Wagstaffe said on Aug. 23 that some of the children interviewed by investigators reported improper touching, while another case involved soliciting a sexual act with a minor with no actual contact, which is also a felony.

The soliciting charge involved a girl, and the others involved eight boys and one girl, Wagstaffe said.

One allegation has resulted in a charge against Haldeman of sodomy on a drunken 12-year-old boy, he said.

Many of the charges could result in a sentence of life in prison, Wagstaffe said.

Haldeman and his attorney, Chuck Smith, were due in court on Monday, Aug. 26, to enter a plea and seek a reduction in bail, according to Wagstaffe. The Almanac was unable to learn what occurred at the hearing before press time.

On his LinkedIn page, Haldeman describes himself as a “CEO, CMO, Innovator, Mentor.” He is chief executive officer and president of Code-N, a Menlo Park-based “next-generation cloud computing company,” according to the company’s website.

Wagstaffe’s investigators “believe there are potentially more victims out there and encourage anyone who had any contact, with the suspect, allowed him to be around their child/children, or believe anyone may have been victimized” to contact Detective Fava at 650-363-4192 or jfavah@smcgov.org; or Detective Derespini at 650-363-4055 or rderespini@smcgov.org, or the Sheriff’s Office press release states.
Street parking near new school cut to make room for bike lanes

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

In order to offer safer passage by bike to Menlo Park’s new high school, TIDE Academy, the Menlo Park City Council voted unanimously on Aug. 20 to remove 165 parking spaces on Jefferson Drive, between Chrysler and Constitution drives, and on Chrysler Drive between Constitution and Commonwealth drives.

In response to initial opposition to the plan from council members Cecilia Taylor and Drew Combs, the council agreed to permit roughly 15 to 20 parking spots on a segment of Commonwealth Drive and five to seven spots on Chrysler Drive, where parking had previously been disallowed.

TIDE Academy, located at 150 Jefferson Drive, opened on Aug. 14 and has capacity for 400 students and 35 faculty and staff members; it is expected to serve students from East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Redwood City, though it’s open to all students in the Sequoia Union High School District.

District Superintendent Mary Streshly told the council she supports the addition of bike lanes. “What we’re really hoping is that the links of the bike pathway happen as swiftly as possible because we want to encourage students.” She added that about 15% to 20% of students are already biking to school or expressing interest in biking.

The area doesn’t have the cleanest track record for vehicle safety: Between January 2016 and December 2018, there were 19 collisions reported on Chrysler Drive, six on Jefferson Drive and one at their intersection, according to a staff report. Having vehicles parked on both sides of the street may have contributed to a limited sight distance that could have contributed to the accidents, the staff report said.

Adding bike lanes and improving visibility for drivers by getting rid of the parked cars could actually improve safety for all road users, city staff argued.

And traffic conditions are likely to worsen: There are about six new developments and six proposed developments in the area near Jefferson and Chrysler drives, according to staff.

But council members also identified downsides to eliminating street parking. Combs argued that the broad parking ban would make it so that there’s no place for people who are lost to stop and consult a map, or for people to park and ride their bike to wherever they’re headed. It would leave only private parking as an option for an entire section of the city.

Taylor echoed these points and added that she was particularly concerned with pedestrian safety in the area. “It’s not just bikes that live in this world,” she said. “Pedestrians come first to me.”

Council members discussed the possibility of allowing parking to continue on one side of the street and installing a two-way bike lane on one side, but Assistant Public Works Director Nikki Nagaya said that, because of the number of driveways along the route, it could create new dangers — for example, if drivers don’t check both ways for cyclists before exiting the driveway.

To make it safer for students to bike to TIDE Academy in Menlo Park, the City Council voted to eliminate street parking and add bike lanes to this section of Jefferson Drive and a segment of Chrysler Drive.

City, community work to iron out minimum wage ordinance

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

A small gathering of people from the business, labor and public health communities met with city staff on Aug. 22 to talk through the logistics of how a minimum wage ordinance might work in Menlo Park.

As currently drafted, an ordinance, if passed by Oct. 10, could result in a citywide minimum wage of $15 an hour that would take effect by Jan. 1, 2020. It could also rise in accordance with the Consumer Price Index in the future.

It’s tentatively scheduled for possible adoption at the City Council’s Sept. 10 meeting.

A few questions came up.

What about tipped employees?

According to Menlo Park’s Assistant City Attorney Cara Silver, under state law, cities cannot regulate the tips employees receive. In other cities where minimum wage ordinances have passed, restaurants and other industries that rely on tips have added minimum wage surcharges instead.

What about independent contractors?

According to Nick Pegueros, assistant city manager, the ordinance would apply to wage earners paid by employers in Menlo Park — and specifically to incorporated Menlo Park. As a result, the regulation wouldn’t apply to unincorporated San Mateo County businesses such as those on Alameda de las Pulgas in West Menlo Park.

What about minors who work?

Dexter Chow, owner of Cheeky Monkey Toys, said that his business employs high school students, and if a minimum wage ordinance passes, the business could be required to jump from a minimum wage of $11 an hour to $15.

“It’s a big jump,” he said.

Wage pressure could also be combined with tariffs on toys from China come December.

Tariffs are anticipated to affect the “vast majority of products” at the store, and staying price-competitive with national and online retailers that don’t have minimum wage pressures could put the business at a disadvantage, he argued.

Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Fran Dehn said she’s spoken with local business owners who say they’d like to pay $15 an hour but can’t afford to do that, and say they may end up cutting back employee hours.

According to data from the San Mateo County Health System, while there are some minors in low-wage jobs, about 95% of low-wage workers in the county are in the middle years of their careers, between the ages of 18 and 64, and nearly 45% are raising children.

With a $15 minimum wage, or earnings of about $31,200 a year, it would take about 1.7 full incomes to pay for the average rent of $4,368 at a large apartment building in the city.

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Saint Frank Coffee and Schmidt family offices now open

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park is now officially home to the headquarters of the family foundation and office of former Google chairman Eric Schmidt and a new Peninsula outpost of coffee vendor Saint Frank Coffee.

Construction of the new office building at 1020 Alma St., across from the Menlo Park Caltrain station, was recently completed and the building is now occupied, according to Jeff Birdwell, president of the Northern California commercial division of Sares Regis Group, the firm that managed the development of the project.

New cafe

While the courtyard of the new building won’t have an old heritage tree, which toppled during excavation work at the site, it does now have an outdoor coffee kiosk occupied by high-end coffee vendor Saint Frank Coffee.

The business has another Menlo Park location at Facebook headquarters, but it is only accessible to Facebook employees. The new location is open to the public.

According to Saint Frank Coffee owner Kevin Bohlin, “We are thrilled to be serving our coffee on such a beautiful property. We originally began our business with an outdoor pop-up so this is a kind of returning to our roots in a more refined and mature approach fitting our journey as a company.”

He explained that the cafe will have a new menu with “relationally-sourced” filter coffee and espresso drinks, but with an expanded focus on colder drinks, with new offerings like “Kaffe Cola,” alongside existing menu items like cold coffees, a “Kaffe Tonic” and nitro coffees.

“Would it be incredible if we were able to work toward collaborating on projects in the future where coffee can be the agent of transformation in sustainability, not just the object of it,” he added.

New green office building

There are hopes that the renewed site will promote new activity in the area.

“This building replaced a number of obsolete buildings on sites adjacent to the Menlo Park Caltrain station, and we’re proud that we’ve been able to enliven the neighborhood with this project,” Birdwell said in a written statement.

“Eric and I are grateful to the city and residents of Menlo Park and are eager to see the active enjoyment of the cafe, bike racks, and EV charging at the Alma Station project,” said Wendy Schmidt, president of The Schmidt Family Foundation and co-founder of the Schmidt Ocean Institute.

The new office building will consolidate several branches of the family’s initiatives: the Schmidt Family Foundation, which was formerly in Palo Alto; the Schmidt Ocean Institute, which runs Falkor, a research vessel to promote ocean exploration; and Schmidt Futures, which funds science fellowships and promotes initiatives for science, technology, society and “shared prosperity,” according to a press statement. It will also house the Schmidt family’s investment management company, Hillspire LLC.

The building was designed by BAR Architects and has solar panels, a complex HVAC system, two EV charging stations, bike racks, and new streetscaping and landscaping out front. It also has two levels of underground parking.

The new building is expected to have 80 to 100 people working there, and they will be encouraged to keep energy use low. Birdwell said that the building isn’t “net zero energy” yet because staff still needs to move in and adapt to the space. In the building’s lobby, he said, there will be a dashboard that will encourage occupants to minimize their energy use by providing real-time feedback on the building’s consumption.

Schmidt added that she supports those aims: “Targeting near-zero energy and responsible water use were important goals for every member of our team. And the easy commuting location alongside Caltrain Alma Station is a great convenience for many who will work in the building,” she said in a written statement.

Environmental review starts for Facebook’s Willow Village plan

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

An estimated $1.8 million in staff and consultant work to evaluate the environmental impacts of Facebook’s proposed Willow Village can now begin, following the approval of a series of contracts by the Menlo Park City Council on Aug. 20.

Facebook will pay for this work as it pushes forward with its proposal to build millions of square feet of commercial and residential space in the Bayside area of the city, on a 59-acre property located on the south side of Willow Road about a quarter-mile west of Bayfront Expressway, bounded roughly by Mid Peninsula High School to the west, Willow Road to the north, the Dumbarton rail corridor to the east, and the UPS Center and Pacific Biosciences office (on O’Brien Drive and Adams Court) to the south.

Notably, the number of housing units up for consideration now is substantially greater than the original 1,500 units in the initial proposal.

While council members did vote in favor of the contract, several were quick to point out that the action is really an administrative step — they have to vote on it because of the amount of money involved, and would be liable to a lawsuit if they didn’t approve it — and noted that approving the contract is not an endorsement of the project.

“We owe the applicant a fair and balanced hearing on the project,” said Mayor Ray Mueller.

Councilwoman Betsy Nash and Vice Mayor Cecilia Taylor expressed concerns that the project would worsen the city’s jobs-housing balance by adding more employees than housing units.

“This is the biggest project in Menlo Park’s history,” said Taylor. “We need to be cautious.”

The council is also in the process of considering revisions to its ConnectMenlo plan. According to City Attorney Bill McClure, Facebook would have to comply with whatever the laws are when it seeks final approval for the project, not when it starts its proposal process. “This project has no vested rights,” he explained.

Within the next few weeks, the city plans to release a notice of preparation for the project’s environmental impact review, according to Principal Planner Kyle Perata. At that step in the process, there will be a window during which people will be encouraged to bring up topics that should be studied in the environmental analysis.

School board considers how to fill vacant seat

Menlo Park City School District school board members will discuss, and possibly vote on, how to fill outgoing board member Caroline Lucas’ seat at an Aug. 29 meeting.

The board can either call an election for the nearest established election date that’s more than 130 days away (April 2020) or appoint a member of the public to serve the remainder of Lucas’ term, which ends in November 2020, according to a district staff report. If the board doesn’t act, an election is automatically triggered after 60 days from Aug. 1, according to the district.

If the board were to call an election for April, whoever wins the seat would serve only seven months, until the November 2020 election, according to the staff report.

Lucas joined the board in 2016. She resigned from her post on Aug. 1 to take a part-time Spanish teaching position at Hillview Middle School, a school in the district she helped oversee. California law prohibits district employees from simultaneously serving on their district’s school board.

Before joining the district as a teacher, she most recently taught Spanish and English language development in the neighboring Los Lomitas Elementary School District for six years.

At the same meeting, the school board will recognize Lucas for her service as a board member.

The meeting takes place on Thursday, Aug. 29, at 5 p.m. in the TERC Building at 181 Encinal Ave. in Atherton.

— by Angela Swartz
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City Council extends cannabis ordinance by two years

By Matthew Vollrath
Special to The Almanac

The Menlo Park City Council voted on Aug. 20 for a two-year extension of the city’s current cannabis policy, which prohibits outdoor cultivation of marijuana and smoking it in public, while driving, or while within 1,000 feet of a child care facility.

It also “effectively prohibits state commercial cannabis licenses in the city,” John Passmann, a staff management analyst, explained at the meeting. In other words, it precludes retailers from setting up dispensaries, or otherwise selling cannabis products, in Menlo Park.

This policy is in keeping with that of many other cities in San Mateo County. With the passage of Proposition 64 in 2016, all California cities are required to allow cannabis use in homes and indoor cultivation of up to six plants. Most local municipalities, however, have chosen to regulate its sale and its use and growth outdoors because, in Passmann’s words, it can be “a bit of a public nuisance.”

The city adopted a temporary moratorium in 2016, and extended it for another two years in 2017. The original plan was to vote this month on whether to make the ordinance permanent. After a brief discussion, however, the council decided that additional public outreach is necessary before reaching a long-term decision.

Mayor Ray Mueller said the council had received several emails and phone calls weighing in on the policy, but “not the volume we usually get when there’s an uproar.”

Four of the five council members generally supported the current cannabis restrictions. As Mueller put it, “Our main concern is keeping it away from our kids.” Since children often play in each others’ backyards, he said, prohibiting outdoor cultivation would play an important role in this.

In other action

Staff also reported that the district received a high rating for its fire safety inspection program in a recent report from the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury.

In the report, the district was identified as one of six out of 10 San Mateo County fire districts that have written policies and procedures to carry out mandated annual inspections. Fire officials are required to inspect all public and private schools, hotels and motels, and apartments and condominiums, according to the report.

The grand jury also judged the district’s inspection policy as one of the two “most comprehensive” by defining the buildings to be inspected, procedures to be followed, and inspection fees.

It was also named as one of three districts that conducted inspections of more than 90% of buildings that it was required to inspect between 2015 and 2018.

Fire agency inspection programs are coming under intense scrutiny in the Bay Area since the Ghost Ship fire in Oakland in December 2016 that killed 36 people.

In that case, the Oakland Fire Department had no record of the Ghost Ship property and, as a result, the property was never formally inspected, according to the grand jury report.

In addition, city and county officials were aware of the warehouse and the fact that it was being used as a live/work space, but did not take action that could have prevented the disaster, although a variety of fire and building code violations existed in the warehouse, the report said.

FIRE BOARD
continued from page 5

to hire a search agency to find a deputy fire chief from outside the district before considering other strategies. Bernstein and Mclaughlin cast the dissenting votes.

Deputy Chief Don Long will be retiring on Sept. 1, and Division Chief Jim Stevens will be taking over his job while continuing in his current role until he also retires at the end of the year, Schapelhouman said. Long joined the district four years ago after transferring from a fire district in Merced, while Stevens has spent his entire career with the Menlo fire district starting in 1982.

Bernstein suggested that the board meet in closed session at a future date and go over the qualifications of current employees to find an internal candidate for deputy chief, who could also be groomed to take over for Schapelhouman when he eventually retires. Schapelhouman has two years left on his contract.

“I’m opposed to executive recruiters,” Bernstein said. “People who have worked for us are going to be frustrated if they don’t see a way to be promoted.”

The Menlo Park City Council extends cannabis ordinance by two years.

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James Trudell, a Stanford University chemist who spent 50 years working to make anesthetic drugs safer for patients, died July 29 of complications from acute myeloid leukemia at his Woodside home. He was 77.

Trudell, who co-authored more than 170 scientific papers, was a professor of anesthesiology, perioperative and pain medicine at Stanford’s School of Medicine. His research advanced the understanding of how anesthetics work to limit pain and contributed to making newer, better anesthetics with fewer side effects, according to a Stanford press release.

“For 50 years, Dr. Trudell’s innovative research played a major role in advancing the field of anesthetics and improving patient safety,” said Dr. Lloyd Minor, dean of the School of Medicine, in a prepared statement. “More than just an exceptional scientist, he also strengthened the Stanford Medicine community by serving as a caring mentor and thoughtful collaborator to so many.”

Born in Iron Mountain, Michigan, in 1941, Trudell’s passion for chemistry began at age 9 when his parents gave him a chemistry kit. He received a bachelor of science degree in chemistry from the University of Michigan.

Trudell served two years on the USS Randolph as a photo and electronics officer during the Vietnam War. He then graduated from Stanford with a doctorate in organic chemistry in 1969. As a student he studied under chemistry professor Carl Djerassi, who later helped create the birth control pill.

He joined Stanford’s anesthesiology department in 1969, initially studying how drugs metabolize within the human body. He discovered that anesthetics work through protein interactions rather than interactions with lipids, the fatty molecules in tissues. Trudell used molecular modeling to study receptor sites, the binding structures on the surface of cells involved in how drugs cause unconsciousness. He began working with Dr. Edward Bertacini, a professor of anesthesiology, perioperative and pain medicine, in the early 1990s. The two worked together to create anesthetics with fewer side effects.

“Our research, the molecular mechanism of how anesthesia works, is a small niche in the world, but he played a key role,” Bertacini said in a statement.

Trudell continued his work until his death, with a laptop and molecular modeling research papers still open on his desk when he died, his wife, Dr. WeiQi Lin, noted in the press release. (Bertacini added that Trudell worked from his laptop while at the hospital undergoing chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant.)

Chemistry was more than just a job to Trudell, said Lin, who first met him when she was a postdoctoral scholar in his lab.

“He was a true scientist at heart,” she said in a prepared statement.

The Menlo Park City School District will kick off its 2019-20 speaker series on Wednesday, Sept. 4, with Jo Boaler, a professor of mathematics education at Stanford University. The program is set for 6:30 p.m.

Boaler will share her research on how minds work and how we can learn anything new at any time, with the right mindset. A participant in the district’s speaker series last school year, Boaler will introduce her new book, “Limitless Mind: Learn, Lead, and Live Without Barriers,” which includes six keys to unlocking learning potential.

Later in the school year, guest speakers are scheduled to present programs including: “Parenting Landmines: Peer Pressure, Vaping, Concussions, Sleep, Stress, and More,” and “Are You Using Technology or is Technology Using You?”

The district’s annual speaker series includes talks by local authors, movie showings, and discussions with experts addressing parenting and education topics. All speaker series events are held at the Hillview Middle School PAC, 1100 Elder Ave. in Menlo Park. Events are free and open to the public, and include food and child care for potty-trained children through Steve & Kate’s Camp.

For more information, go to mpdpspeakerseries.com/events or contact Public Information Officer Parke Treadway at hello@mpcsd.org.

— By Angela Swartz
You're invited to the Palo Alto Black & White Ball on Friday, October 4th at the iconic Lucie Stern Community Center. Join us in celebrating the City of Palo Alto's 125th birthday and Palo Alto Weekly's 40th anniversary. Spend the evening mingling with friends & neighbors, dancing to live music, & enjoying food & drinks from your favorite local restaurants.

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here’s one word that keeps popping up next to the name of Ladera resident Lennie Roberts. In 2009, Cox Communications named her the Bay Area’s “Conservation Hero.” In 2016, she received the Environmental Hero Award from the Loma Prieta chapter of the Sierra Club. And earlier this year, she was dubbed a 2019 “Local Hero” by Bay Nature Magazine.

Next month, she’ll receive perhaps her most distinguished accolade yet. On Sept. 17, at a dinner of the San Mateo County Historical Association in Burlingame, Roberts will be named San Mateo County’s 2019 History Maker in honor of her decades-long career as “perhaps the most skilled defender of the natural environment on the San Francisco Peninsula.”

Roberts, ever modest, was concerned about attendance. “Are people really going to buy tables for an environmental advocate?” she wondered aloud during a recent interview with The Almanac.

Four hundred people are already signed up, Historical Association President Mitch Postel confirmed.

Indeed, Lennie Roberts is no ordinary environmental advocate. To borrow one of Roberts’ own phrases, her legacy is visible all around us, “not in what you see, but in what you don’t see.”

Picture the serene coastal waters along Highway 1 filled with offshore oil rigs and commercial fishing operations, McMansions lining the bluffs above. Imagine the many oases of open space in San Mateo County — Windy Hill, Thornewood, Teague Hill — replaced by the concrete jungle of office parks. Think of Devil’s Slide, a stretch of coastal cliffs south of Pacifica, circumscribed by a six-lane, seven-mile stretch of superhighway.

Without this one woman’s 50 years of work with the Palo Alto-based Committee for Green Foothills, it’s safe to say that the Bay Area would be a very different place.

FIGHTING FOR THE FOOTHILLS

When Roberts moved to Ladera in 1965, she was alarmed, as many were, by plans to fill and develop the shallow waters of the Bay. So in 1968, she joined the board of a local environmental advocacy group known as the Committee for Green Foothills.

The Committee had formed six years earlier, when a group of locals met in a living room in Palo Alto to oppose Stanford’s plans to put “factories in the foothills.” Their early efforts were less than successful, however. Stanford built an office park, which
By the early 1970s, Caltrans was ready to break ground. Roberts and two other local women, however, had no intention of letting them. They started by taking Caltrans to court. The National Environmental Policy Act, which had recently been passed by the Nixon Administration, required an environmental impact statement for new developments that used federal money. Since Caltrans had not drafted such an impact statement, the court ruled that it couldn’t proceed with construction.

But the agency soon returned with its impact statement in hand. So the advocates found other things to challenge. “We kept playing Whac-A-Mole with them,” Roberts said. The two sides went back forth for nearly 25 years, with Roberts and her lawyers leveraging every policy and regulation they could think of to keep the project in limbo. By 1996, things were looking grim for Roberts and her supporters. “We finally realized our legal options were about to run out,” she said. “They’d satisfied all the court’s orders to do various things.”

And so, in a move that was by now becoming her calling card, Roberts wrote up another ballot measure. The 1996 Measure T would require Caltrans to build a tunnel through the unstable portion of Devil’s Slide instead of the highway bypass it had planned. This was what a team of geologists and engineers had recently recommended, prompting an infamous response from Caltrans spokesperson Greg Bayol: “We’ll reevaluate (that report) and say a tunnel is too expensive.”

His agency wouldn’t have a choice, however. That year, Measure T passed by a landslide.

In 2013, the Tom Lantos Tunnel opened for use, named after the local congressman who supported the effort to build the tunnel but died in 2008 before seeing its completion. The tunnel is now home to Xerox, and began expansion west of Junipero Serra Boulevard, continuing through the 1960s.

By the time Roberts joined, Committee members knew they needed a stronger approach. To truly protect open space in the Bay, they couldn’t just oppose individual developments — they needed to fight for legislation that would preserve these areas forever.

As the Committee’s legislative advocate for San Mateo County, Roberts would quickly prove indispensable on this front. One of her first, and greatest, contributions was the creation of a public land trust in the county.

The idea, which Roberts says originated with former Palo Alto Weekly editor Jay Thorwaldson, was simple: “If you want to protect the hills, you should buy them.” So in 1972, Committee for Green Foothills sponsored Santa Clara County Measure R, or the “Room for Breathe Initiative,” which led to creation of the Midpeninsula Open Space District.

But while Santa Clara County was on board, San Mateo County, with its many acres of foothills and forests, was not. As the resident of San Mateo County, Roberts led the effort to change that.

The Board of Supervisors was less than receptive, however. “We had some significant opposition (from them),” Roberts recalled. So Roberts and her colleagues took the next step: They put it to the voters. At the ballot box, they found their support. In 1976, the county entered the Open Space District with the successful passage of San Mateo County Measure D.

The district has since bought and preserved over 63,000 acres of land, including Windy Hill in Portola Valley and Russian Ridge Preserve in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Because of her instrumental role in its formation, Roberts is often considered to be one of the Open Space District’s founders.

The battle still wasn’t over. Six years later, a Half Moon Bay developer tried to use the same process in reverse — it submitted Measure D, which would pave the way for a hotel, golf course, and condo development on land that was the coastal plan was protecting. The developer had a $600,000 budget for its campaign, Roberts said. She and her colleagues had $40,000. But their message to voters was the same as before, “(We told them,) ‘They’re trying to take away your voice,’” Roberts said. “You already voted to protect the coast, and now they’re trying to take this property away.”

Measure D failed with an 88% “no” vote. The county’s coastal plan is still in place today, and its impact, Roberts says, has been enormous. “It’s probably the most effective body of law anywhere in the world, as far as coastal protection goes,” she asserted.

The absence of numerous dams and seawalls along the coast — not to mention oil mining operations — is the direct result of the county’s strong and enduring coastal plan, she said.

THE DUEL FOR DEVIL’S SLIDE

Perhaps Roberts’ biggest claim to fame, however, is her 30-year fight to stop development around the cliffs of Devil’s Slide.

In the 1950s, Caltrans began drafting plans for what Roberts called “a devastating freeway” down the coast, from San Francisco to San Luis Obispo. Much of this devastation would be the result of the planned building of a seven-mile stretch of road that would bypass the portion of scenic Highway One known as Devil’s Slide, where landslides were already leading to frequent road closures.

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**Renovated Skylonda ‘wellness resort’ to reopen Nov. 1**

By Rick Radin

A 28-year-old hotel, resort and conference center in the forest along Skyline Boulevard is taking on yet another identity after being acquired by Canyon Ranch, a chain of “wellness resorts” that also owns properties in Massachusetts and Arizona.

The Canyon Ranch Wellness Retreat — Woodside, which will open Nov. 1 after a renovation of the property’s 38 rooms is complete, was previously known as the Skylonda Lodge, among other names.

Canyon Ranch, located at 16350 Skyline Boulevard, will offer a choice of three-day, four-day and weekend retreat packages, and will also host conferences, according to Hannah Rodbell, the company’s New York-based publicity agent.

Guests will be encouraged to take advantage of the property’s 16 acres of grounds and hiking trails, as well as a therapy pool and spa services, yoga, tai chi and fitness classes; meditation sessions; and a restaurant with communal tables.

The restaurant, called The Hearth, will be run by executive chef Isabelle Jackson Nunes. A sample menu indicates it will feature locally made products, including a chèvre and lavender tart made with Harley Farms cheese, Acme bread and a flatbread made with Markegard Ranch beef. There will also be a bar and lounge, called The Hideaway, and after services, including natural, biodynamic and organic wine, beer and ciders, according to the Canyon Ranch website.

You can sign up with a retreat with organized activities, and we will also be hosting corporate retreats where you can book out most of the property,” Rodbell said.

The Canyon Ranch website advertises the resort’s convenient access to Silicon Valley companies, including Facebook, Apple and Google, as well as to venture capital firms along to venture capital firms along

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**Barbara Holt Douglass**

January 10, 1926 – August 13, 2019

Barbara Douglass, a long-time resident of Atherton, passed away peacefully at the age of 93 at Stanford Hospital on Tuesday August 13th. Barbara was born in Flushing, New York to George and Lorraine Tonjes. She was preceded in death by three sisters and a brother. She graduated from Flushing High School in 1944 and attended classes at a business school before working at a local bank. She then took a position with CBS Radio in New York City as a secretary in the script-editing department.

She met her future husband of 72 years, Earl Douglass on St. Valentine’s Day, 1945 at the Stage Door Canteen in New York, where she was a volunteer hostess. Duke, as he is known to family and friends, was a Marine on shore leave at the time. They were married on June 30, 1947 in San Francisco. They later spent their honeymoon at the Highlands Inn in Carmel, moved to Menlo Park. While Duke was completing his studies at Stanford University, Barbara worked at the university in the scholarship and physics departments. In 1952 they moved to their current home in Atherton.

With her boundless energy, besides raising a family of 5 children, Barbara was very active in the community. She was a member of The Atherton Garden Guild for over 30 years, a docent at Filoli in Woodside for 9 years, a tennis player for many years, a member of the women’s auxiliary of The Society of California Pioneers and a lifetime member of the Menlo Park Historical Association.

Barbara is survived by her loving husband, Duke, five children (Christine, Scott, Stuart, Alan and Mark), twelve grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren.

There will be a memorial mass for Barbara at 11 A.M. on September 7th at the Church of the Nativity on Oak Grove Avenue in Menlo Park. In lieu of sending gifts, please make a donation to: Cancer Research Under the Direction of Dr. George Fisher, MD, Stanford Cancer Center, 875 Blake Wilbur Drive, Stanford, CA 94305 or to a charity of your choice.

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**Lennie’s Legacy**

What has made Lennie Roberts such a powerful voice for the voiceless— the trees, the birds, the hills and wetlands? The answer, her colleagues say, is a confluence of qualities.

One, says county Supervisor Dave Pine, is her remarkable ability to grasp and communicate a large body of environmental law, despite a lack of any formal legal training. “She knows the facts of the situation, and presents them in a straightforward and compelling way,” said Pine, who also served with Roberts on the Committee for Green Foothills website, keen-eyed passersby can spot ‘Peregrine Falcons, California golden poppies, (and) wild strawberry plants.’

**HERO**

continued from page 15

Lennie Roberts will be honored by the San Mateo County Historical Association as it “2019 History Maker” at a Sept. 27 dinner at the Burlingame Hyatt Regency Hotel. The evening will begin at 6 p.m. with a hosted cocktail reception, followed by dinner, a brief live auction, a special film created by the Historical Association as a salute to Roberts and then comments by the honoree. Reservations are required and can be made at historymac.org or by calling 650-299-0104.

On the cover: Lennie Roberts poses in her Ladera garden. Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac
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Portola Valley sculptor strives to imbue her work with ‘the expression of basic human emotions.’

By Apala G. Egan
Special to The Almanac

Exposure to places and things in childhood can leave a deep mark, and influence what you might pursue later in life. So it was with sculptor Danielle Fafchamps, a longtime resident of Portola Valley.

A native of Belgium whose body of work is in large measure reflective of a childhood spent close to nature and an early fascination with ancient peoples and their art, Fafchamps grew up in a small town outside Liege, which falls in the French-speaking region named Wallonia in the southern portion of the country. She, along with her brother and friends, routinely wandered in the thickly wooded grounds of the nearby Chateau de Fayenbois, in ruins at that time, exploring, climbing trees, playing by the pond and smelling wet earth, and touching the squishy mud and clay. Going on long nature hikes with her mother was an integral part of her childhood.

“I was so happy, and still am, to be in a forest,” she said. “We also grew our own fruits and vegetables. As a family we all worked in the garden and developed this deep connection to the earth. We were aware of where our food came from,” she said.

When she and her brother were young, her mother took them regularly to the international geography presentations sponsored by local universities and held at various locations in Liege. “You learned about the people and architecture. That gave me a sense of wonder and a desire to travel,” said Fafchamps.

She recalls that she was attracted to Asia and Africa because it was something different, and the art, including folk art and sculpture of those regions, made a deep impression on her.

Fafchamps studied psychology at the University of Liege and later worked in literacy development programs in small villages in countries in French-speaking Africa. Through her work she traveled extensively and visited the Ivory Coast, Rwanda and Burundi. She was moved by the kindness of the local people, their devotion to their ancestral traditions and the creation of unique pottery, she said.

Working in remote villages influenced her on many levels; she learned how crucial a holistic approach to culture is for successful program design and adoption.

Later, she earned a multi-disciplinary doctorate at Stanford University that encompassed the fields of education, anthropology and computers, and eventually settled in California.

Her inherent interest in art led her to take various workshops and classes at the Pacific Art League and the Palo Alto Art Center, as well as drawing lessons at Canada College. She has also taken workshops with a sculptor while visiting her mother in Belgium. She said that she likes to try different mediums, and that you need perseverance and resilience to find the medium that resonates with you.

The medium is the magic
One afternoon she visited a sculptor friend, an emigre from Russia, who put some soft clay in her hands. “It was moist, soft and magical. I experienced a deep concentration and felt a sense of absorption with this malleable medium,” she said. The mud that she had rolled on her palms during her childhood came back to her, now imbued with artistic potential.

“When you get a medium that’s right for you, you know it,” she said.

Fafchamps, who has been creating sculpture for almost 15 years, began with figures. “I like things that are more primal. I use natural pigments, items that are basic and tactile. Clay is coarse, it is not smooth, not perfect,” she explained. “An intimate part of humanity that is deep inside us all is expressed in my sculptures.”

Ancient peoples and their life and art have had a deep influence on her work. During a visit to Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, she saw ruins of the Pueblo people who had inhabited the land over a thousand years ago. Anthropomorphic rocks along the many trails seemed to stand as sentinels and inspired her first figure of a head. The rock formations of Mesa Verde in Colorado have influenced her sculpted heads as well.

On a visit to Musee du Quai Branly in Paris early on in her artistic career, she saw huge totems made of wood from Polynesia and tall African creations. Inspired, she returned to California and created a number of totem sculptures. Some of her sculpted heads, with meditative, half-closed eyes gazing towards eternity, have been influenced by Polynesian pieces, she said.

“In clay sculpture everything you do is with your hands. There are no synthetic colors or materials, only natural pigments and oxides,” she said. “My sculpture is not about fancy forms or display of exquisite techniques. Rather, it is about authenticity and the expression of basic human emotions. Art for me is a means to connect with others.”

STEM cell connection
In 2013 she appeared on the Discovery Science Channel in a program that combined science with visual metaphors. “Through the Wormhole” was a series hosted by Morgan Freeman, who invited Fafchamps to represent the visual and Professor Renee Reijo Pera, the scientific perspective for the episode: “Will Sex Become Extinct?” Pera’s professional interests lie in regenerative medicine and stem cell biology.

According to Pera, sculpting stem cells from other cells — such as skin cells — is a lot like a sculptor taking a small ball of clay and directing it to be the sculpture that he or she wants to create.

For the show, Fafchamps arrived with a large lump of clay.

See DANIELLE FAFCHAMPS, page 19
Golden Acorn Award winners announced

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

The winners of Menlo Park’s Golden Acorn Awards are a varied but accomplished group and include the people behind a community cafe, a cycling fundraiser, a free meal program, a program to cut fresh water use at a golf course, and nonprofit and for-profit developers.

The winners have been announced in advance of a ceremony next month to celebrate their achievements and contributions.

The Golden Acorn Awards are an annual tradition of the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce to recognize significant contributions to the community.

This year’s winners are:

- For Business Excellence, Cafe Zoe. The community-oriented Menalto Avenue cafe, run by mother-daughter duo Kathleen Daly and Zoe Sharkey, turned 10 last year.
- For Community Service, Tour de Menlo. Tour de Menlo is an annual fundraiser sponsored by the Rotary Club of Menlo Park Foundation and The Almanac. It raises funds for initiatives the Rotary Clubs supports and The Almanac’s Holiday Fund, which distributes funds to local community-serving nonprofits. The tour invites participants on several bike loops from Menlo-Atherton High School up to 100 kilometers.
- For Professional Leadership, MidPen Housing. MidPen Housing is a nonprofit housing developer that built Sequoia Belle Haven, a senior affordable housing development, in 2017, and is working on a project to redevelop old affordable housing on Willow Road into 140 new affordable housing units for families.
- For being an “Unsung Hero”, St. Anthony’s Padua Dining Room. The volunteer-run program, which has been operating since 1974, provides up to 500 people hot meals six times a week.
- For Environmental Stewardship, two winners were named: Tarlton Properties and the public-private partnership between the West Bay Sanitary District and the Sharon Heights Golf & Country Club to bring recycled water to the golf course.
- For being an “Unsung Hero”, Danielle Fafchamps is recognized.

Danielle Fafchamps

Throughout the filmed talk, while the scientist described how stem cells could be created, Fafchamps pulled out tiny bits of clay and created a sculpture of a seated woman. She fashioned the basic piece during the filmed presentation, finishing it later in her studio.

In a larger sense, just as human or animal forms are created out of cells or amoebas, a sculptor can create a human figure from a shapeless mass of clay. Likewise, stem cells can be created in the laboratory by biologists and scientists from other cells found in the human body.

Supporting other artists

Fafchamps is an active participant in, and supporter of, the local arts community. Recently, beneath the clear blue skies of a spring afternoon, the 2019 Silicon Valley Open Studios was in full swing at Fafchamps’s home. An abundance of artwork by 14 artists was on display, representing a wide variety of fields, including oil painting, pottery, jewelry and sculpture.

Each artist demonstrated his or her art at individual booths in the garden. Earrings made of silver and Venetian glass, ceramic vases and trays in muted hues, sculpted heads and intricately carved spheres made of clay glazed in the afternoon sunlight. A graphite artist described how she used only colored pencil to create vivid pictures of the Monarch butterfly, and flowers in a profusion of pinks and yellows.

“Danielle tries to support all artists. She has been very helpful,” ceramic artist Doris Fischer-Colbrie said.

According to photographer Arup Biswas, Fafchamps takes an active role in helping local artists in a variety of ways. For instance, over the years she has helped recruit artists for and publicize The Main Gallery, housed in a historic Victorian building in Redwood City.

Opening her home for the annual Silicon Valley Open Studios involves a great deal of organization, marketing and coordination, and can take months to prepare. “Danielle has been really kind in allowing us to display our work at her home,” said Biswas, whose art includes panoramic views of Yosemite as well as vistas of wildflower-strewn meadows.

Over the last 10 years, Fafchamps has won a number of awards, including numerous first-place prizes at a number of local and statewide shows. She routinely exhibits at area shows and has been invited to display her work at several juried events.

See more of her work at daniellefafchamps.com.

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The Golden Acorn Awards are an annual tradition of the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce to recognize significant contributions to the community.

This year’s winners are:

- For Business Excellence, Cafe Zoe. The community-oriented Menalto Avenue cafe, run by mother-daughter duo Kathleen Daly and Zoe Sharkey, turned 10 last year.
- For Community Service, Tour de Menlo. Tour de Menlo is an annual fundraiser sponsored by the Rotary Club of Menlo Park Foundation and The Almanac. It raises funds for initiatives the Rotary Clubs supports and The Almanac’s Holiday Fund, which distributes funds to local community-serving nonprofits. The tour invites participants on several bike loops from Menlo-Atherton High School up to 100 kilometers.
- For Professional Leadership, MidPen Housing. MidPen Housing is a nonprofit housing developer that built Sequoia Belle Haven, a senior affordable housing development, in 2017, and is working on a project to redevelop old affordable housing on Willow Road into 140 new affordable housing units for families.
- For being an “Unsung Hero”, St. Anthony’s Padua Dining Room. The volunteer-run program, which has been operating since 1974, provides up to 500 people hot meals six times a week.
- For Environmental Stewardship, two winners were named: Tarlton Properties and the public-private partnership between the West Bay Sanitary District and the Sharon Heights Golf & Country Club to bring recycled water to the golf course.
- For being an “Unsung Hero”, Danielle Fafchamps is recognized.

Danielle Fafchamps

Throughout the filmed talk, while the scientist described how stem cells could be created, Fafchamps pulled out tiny bits of clay and created a sculpture of a seated woman. She fashioned the basic piece during the filmed presentation, finishing it later in her studio.

In a larger sense, just as human or animal forms are created out of cells or amoebas, a sculptor can create a human figure from a shapeless mass of clay. Likewise, stem cells can be created in the laboratory by biologists and scientists from other cells found in the human body.

Supporting other artists

Fafchamps is an active participant in, and supporter of, the local arts community. Recently, beneath the clear blue skies of a spring afternoon, the 2019 Silicon Valley Open Studios was in full swing at Fafchamps’s home. An abundance of artwork by 14 artists was on display, representing a wide variety of fields, including oil painting, pottery, jewelry and sculpture.

Each artist demonstrated his or her art at individual booths in the garden. Earrings made of silver and Venetian glass, ceramic vases and trays in muted hues, sculpted heads and intricately carved spheres made of clay glazed in the afternoon sunlight. A graphite artist described how she used only colored pencil to create vivid pictures of the Monarch butterfly, and flowers in a profusion of pinks and yellows.

“Danielle tries to support all artists. She has been very helpful,” ceramic artist Doris Fischer-Colbrie said.

According to photographer Arup Biswas, Fafchamps takes an active role in helping local artists in a variety of ways. For instance, over the years she has helped recruit artists for and publicize The Main Gallery, housed in a historic Victorian building in Redwood City.

Opening her home for the annual Silicon Valley Open Studios involves a great deal of organization, marketing and coordination, and can take months to prepare. “Danielle has been really kind in allowing us to display our work at her home,” said Biswas, whose art includes panoramic views of Yosemite as well as vistas of wildflower-strewn meadows.

Over the last 10 years, Fafchamps has won a number of awards, including numerous first-place prizes at a number of local and statewide shows. She routinely exhibits at area shows and has been invited to display her work at several juried events.

See more of her work at daniellefafchamps.com.

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Vampire Salt, Brown Sugar Baby, Honey it’s BBQ, and You Jerk! are just some of the quirky names Duanli and Lisa Spencer and their son Myles plaster on little containers filled with their homemade spice blends.

For the past four years, the Spencers, of East Palo Alto, have been running Savor Seasoning Blends, which specializes in salts, rubs and other seasonings.

“All of our products have really ridiculous names but people love it,” Lisa Spencer said. “For instance, the garlic salt is called ‘vampire salt’ because vampires are known to be afraid of garlic. I call myself the chief creative officer. My son does a lot of the packaging and my husband does some of the making of blends.”

It all started with a book called “Food in Jars,” which Lisa gave to her husband as a Christmas present in 2014. Soon after, he made his own rosemary salt; tasting it inspired her to make her own garlic salt. She started to create more unique blends in her home kitchen, giving them away to friends and family.

“During that first month, that damn book turned our tiny kitchen into a crazy mess of salts, bowls and pans,” she said. “I had no recipe and I cannot follow recipes because I always end up putting too much or too little. Every once in a while, when we sold a jar, it was the most exciting thing. We probably sold four jars in 2015. The friends who we sold stuff to would come back for more, but nobody else really knew about it.”

That changed in December 2016, when she sold her blends at a craft festival at the Peninsula School in Menlo Park. So many people loved it, she said, that she came back the following year.

They now sell their creations online — there are 17 flavors, from rosemary salt to Jamaican jerk seasoning — and at The Market at Edgewood in Palo Alto and Delucchi’s Market in Redwood City.

For the past two years, Lisa has also been attending local pop-up shops. It was at one of these events at the Tulip Jones Women’s Center in East Palo Alto in February that she invented what she calls ‘vampire butter,’ which caused what might be called a “Savor Seasoning Blends Sensation.”

“I decided to take the vampire salt, stir it up with some butter and put it on sourdough bread,” she said. “One hundred people came through and asked where the butter was. I told them I sold the salt but I just mixed it with the butter to enhance the flavor. One of my friends yelled and said, ‘Just make the damn butter.’ People lost their mind; they kept talking about the vampire butter and posting it on Facebook.”

Afterward, Lisa said, people would knock on her door and ask for a container of vampire butter. By the end of February, she had sold 300 containers of the butter. She also adds garlic, sea salt, parsley and basil to the mix.

“She emphasized that she does not follow recipes, and instead relies on experimentation and intuition to ‘throw something together.’”

“My mom is from the South and most people who are from the South do not follow recipes well because we were never taught by recipe,” Lisa said. “My mom had a cookbook and every once in a while she looked at something that looked good but she never followed the recipe. We call it ‘just throwing something together.’ What I will write down is what I put in it.”

She has no aspirations for Savor Seasoning Blends to be sold in bigger grocery stores such as Whole Foods Market or Trader Joe’s; instead, she hopes to get the blends into smaller, boutique-style stores. Her goal is to perfect the recipes and sell them to a corporation in the future.

Her favorite part of the experience has been coming up with new blends with her family.

“My mom is from the South and most people who are from the South do not follow recipes well because we were never taught by recipe,” Lisa said. “Seeing what I am able to make from scratch is always really exciting.”

More information can be found online at savorblends.com.

Daniel Li writes for the Palo Alto Weekly, The Almanac’s sister paper.
Redwoods transformed into art you can sit on

The seven redwood trees that for years grew above a parking garage and were the focus of a public outcry earlier this year when the property owner applied to remove them have been felled, but ultimately given new life.

Some of the logs were delivered to a site near the Menlo Park Library in the Civic Center and transformed by chainsaw carver John Mahoney into two artistic benches. The benches feature carved owls and books. Mahoney, of Street Tree Revival, has done similar projects on the Laurel Street side of City Hall and at Fremont Park in downtown Menlo Park.

The benches outside the library will be used for kids’ storytime sessions. Other logs will be milled and used for affordable housing projects, according to the city of Menlo Park.

Funds for the project came from corporate to educational organizations and used for affordable housing projects, according to the city of Menlo Park.

“The rooms were kind of basic, but they’re being upgraded and renovated,” Rodbell said. “We’re not changing too much of the structure itself.”

The facility was also the subject of a controversy in 2014 after the operators at the time received approval from the San Mateo County Planning Commission to use the property as a drug rehabilitation center.

But, after complaints from neighbors “concerned that a former addict might, for example, drop a lit cigarette and start a forest fire,” the county Board of Supervisors reversed that decision, according to a 2017 Almanac story.

The operators sued in 2015 on the grounds that the supervisors’ action violated federal housing and disability laws that protected the rights of potential clients.

The county quickly settled the suit for a reported $350,000, but without admitting fault, liability or wrongdoing, according to the story.

“The county’s primary goal was to ensure that a more intensive use did not occur at the site, and the county achieved this goal through the settlement,” said the county’s attorney, John Beiers, at the time.

The county spent about $900,000 defending itself, Beiers said.

Continued from page 16

Tuolumne Film Festival at M-A

The 5th Annual Tuolumne Film Festival is scheduled to run at the Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center at Menlo-Atherton High School, 555 Middlefield Road in Atherton, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 7.

The event offers live music starting at 6:30 p.m., followed by the screening of a series of 10 short films starting at 7 p.m.

Purchase tickets online for $10 at is.gd/tuolumne, or at the door for $15.

Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

Audrey, 2, reads with her nanny, Maribel Cortes, on a newly carved bench after a storytime activity outside the Menlo Park Library.

Living Well

Living Well is a comprehensive source of local information with a directory of services offered by not-for-profit organizations and other agencies. Listings will cover subjects from nutrition counseling to financial planning, home care to hospice, recreational activities to computer training and more.

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PLANNING COMMISSION
September 04, 2019 6:00 PM

PUBLIC HEARING

3. 60 Why Worry Lane and 3411 Woodside Road (Center Trail Bridge)
CUSE2019-0003; CEQA2019-0004
Town of Woodside Planner: Jackie Young, Planning Director
Presentation and approval, conditional approval, or denial of a proposal to install an equestrian bridge across Bear Gulch Creek, a Town-Designated Stream Corridor. Prior to taking action on the project, the Planning Commission will consider adoption of an Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

4. 2300 Woodside Road
CUSE2019-0002; CEQA2019-0003
Menlo Country Club Planner: Sage Schaia, Principal Planner
Presentation and approval, conditional approval, or denial of a proposal to stabilize the banks of Redwood Creek within a Town-Designated Stream Corridor. Prior to taking action on the project, the Planning Commission will consider adoption of an Initial Study Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

5. 4214 Jefferson Avenue
ASRB2018-0036; VARI2018-0009; VARI2018-0010; X2DR2018-0002
Bradley Hofer and Christine Thibault Planner: Joseph Balabat, Assistant Planner
Presentation and consideration of a proposal, requiring Formal Design Review, to demolish an existing two-story main residence and a detached garage, and construct a new two-story main residence, a detached garage with an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) above it (connected to the main house via a lower level passageway), a reconfigured driveway, and other site improvements. Design Review; a Variance to Setbacks, a Variance for Encroachment into Slopes Exceeding 35%, and a Second Driveway Exception will be considered by the Planning Commission.

All application materials are available for public review at the Woodside Planning and Building Counter, Woodside Town Hall, weekdays from 8:00 – 10:00 AM and 1:00 – 3:00 PM, or by appointment. For more information, contact the Woodside Planning and Building Department at (650) 851-6790.

Marketplace

The Almanac offers advertising for Home Services, Business Services and Employment.

If you wish to learn more about these advertising options, please call 650.223.6582 or email digitalads@paweekly.com.

Community

continued from page 16

Sand Hill Road in Menlo Park. It invites potential guests to “come with intention or let us help you find your way to a full rebirth of mind, body, spirit and soul.”

A search of the site’s reservation system shows rooms with a single queen bed starting at $1,089 per night. A four-night, five-day retreat, which includes a room with two queen beds, is listed for $989 per night.

The facility has had a string of owners prior to its current incarnation, including the Stillheart Institute, operated by Joan Porter and her husband Bill, who was the founder of the online investment trading site E-Trade, according to founder of the online investment

John Mahoney into two artistic benches. The benches feature carved owls and books. Mahoney, of Street Tree Revival, has done similar projects on the Laurel Street side of City Hall and at Fremont Park in downtown Menlo Park.

The seven redwood trees that for years grew above a parking garage and were the focus of a public outcry earlier this year when the property owner applied to remove them have been felled, but ultimately given new life.

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The facility has had a string of owners prior to its current incarnation, including the Stillheart Institute, operated by Joan Porter and her husband Bill, who was the founder of the online investment trading site E-Trade, according to a flyer on the property by commercial real broker Gushman & Wakefield.

Stillheart’s mission was “to provide a world-class retreat and learning center for groups ranging from corporate to educational to spiritual,” according to the flyer. The Porters added 24 elevated “tree houses” to the original three-story, 14-room structure in 2009.

“The rooms were kind of basic, and they’re being upgraded and renovated,” Rodbell said. “We’re not changing too much of the structure itself.”

The facility was also the subject of a controversy in 2014 after the operators at the time received approval from the San Mateo County Planning Commission to use the property as a drug rehabilitation center.

But, after complaints from neighbors “concerned that a former addict might, for example, drop a lit cigarette and start a forest fire,” the county Board of Supervisors reversed that decision, according to a 2017 Almanac story.

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The county spent about $900,000 defending itself, Beiers said.
**Public Notices**

**995 Fictitious Name Statement**

**MPH DESIGN**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282108
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: MPH Design, located at 242 Donohoe Street, East Palo Alto, CA 94303, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s): SARAH CAPLAN
242 Donohoe Street
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk Recorder of San Mateo County on August 2, 2019.
(ALM Aug. 14, 21, 28, Sep. 4, 11, 2019)

**JESSICA R. CLARK, LMFT**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282110
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: Jessica R. Clark, LMFT, located at 655 Oak Grove Ave. #170, Menlo Park, CA 94026, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s): JESSICA R. CLARK
655 Oak Grove Ave. #170
Menlo Park, CA 94026
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk Recorder of San Mateo County on August 2, 2019.
(ALM Aug. 14, 21, 28, Sep. 4, 2019)

**MENDOZA TRUCKING**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282193
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: Mendoza Trucking, located at 200 Santa Inez Ave., San Bruno, CA 94066, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s): MARIA GUADALUPE DURAN SALDIVAR
200 Santa Inez Ave.
San Bruno, CA 94066
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk Recorder of San Mateo County on August 2, 2019.
(ALM Aug. 14, 21, 28, Sep. 4, 2019)

**LAW OFFICE OF KALED LEE**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282074
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: Law Office of Khloe Lee, located at 303 Grove Ave. #170, Menlo Park, CA 94026, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s): KIYOU NGHAMI LEE
138 Fleetwood Dr.
San Carlos, CA 94070
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk Recorder of San Mateo County on July 30, 2019.
(ALM Aug. 14, 21, 28, Sep. 4, 11, 18, 2019)

**SEAM Partners**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282199
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: SEAM Partners, located at 592 Sand Hill Circle, Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s): ED REVILL
592 Sand Hill Cir
Call Alicia Santillan at 650-223-6578 or email asantillan@paweekly.com for assistance with your legal advertising needs. The deadline is Thursday at 5pm.

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**King’s Mountain Art Fair this weekend**

**Art fairgoers enjoyed fine weather on King’s Mountain last year as they strolled and took in the sights among the redwoods.**

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**Nonprofit to plant trees at local high schools, community sites**

By Angela Swartz
Almanac Staff Writer

A local group is helping to plant 129 trees in high schools and in other community spaces through a $42,500 grant.

CityTrees, a Redwood City nonprofit, will plant 58 of those trees at six Sequoia Union High School District campuses, according to a July 21 press release from the group. The California Department of Food and Agriculture's Forest and Fire Protection (CalFire) Social Equity Grant Improvement Program is funding the project to help combat climate change by reducing greenhouse gases, according to press release.

“During their lives, these new trees will remove over 500 tons of greenhouse gases from the environment while transforming concrete landscapes and beautifying the city and surrounding communities,” said CityTrees board President Simms Duncan in a prepared statement. “We invite all community members to come out and join our work.”

CityTrees and the Redwood City public works department will plant 71 trees in Redwood City’s Stambaugh-Heller neighborhood, a designated “disadvantaged community area” — an official term for an area that suffers from a combination of economic, health and environmental burdens. The Stambaugh-Heller plantings will begin on Sept. 7, said David Grabel, CityTrees treasurer.

Organization leaders will meet with the six schools’ principals on Aug. 28 to finalize the number of trees and tree species at each campus, Grabel said. CityTrees will give the schools a month or two to settle into the new school year before planting the trees, he said.

The plan, the nonprofit said, is to plant 19 trees at Sequoia High, 15 at Woodside, 10 at Carlmont, six at Menlo-Atherton, four at Everest, and four at East Palo Alto Academy.

“The life of them estimated at 40 to 50 years, Grabel said. The group plans to plant live oaks, crepe myrtles, coast redwoods, gingkos and other species.

“Many people don’t realize there are generations of trees,” he said. “Many of the trees on these (school) campuses are mature and aging and go through a cycle of life; it’s one of the reasons why it’s so important to plant trees.”

CityTrees plans to provide seminars on tree care and maintenance, according to a press release, which added that students will benefit from an annual seminar and planting and pruning events.

In addition to reducing greenhouse gases, the press release says, the project is expected to decrease fossil-fuel-based energy use and restore wildlife habitat.

The mission of CityTrees, which was founded in 2000, is to improve the quality of life in the greater Redwood City area through a coordinated program of education, outreach and advocacy for tree planting, maintenance and support. The group has planted more than 3,200 trees and maintained 3,000 trees, leaders say.

To volunteer with CityTrees, go to www.citytrees.org/volunteer.
Every other week, top local food reporter Elena Kadvany provides insight into the latest openings and closings, what she's eating that she's excited about, interviews with chefs and the trends affecting local restaurants.

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