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Listed by Michael Repka of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in Menlo Park.*

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Kicking off the Lunar New Year

In anticipation of the upcoming Lunar New Year 2020, the Year of the Rat, which begins Jan. 25, Leung’s White Crane Dragon and Lion Dance Association performers danced and entertained families in Holbrook-Palmer Park’s Carriage House in Atherton on Jan. 17. The San Mateo County library system hosted the event.

Menlo Park school board considers parcel tax measure in November

Timing might not be right, with Proposition 13 amendment sharing the ballot, superintendent warns

By Angela Swartz
Almanac Staff Writer

With fewer than 11 months to go before the November general election, Menlo Park City School District officials are undecided on whether they’ll place a ballot measure to renew or replace a parcel tax that district staff says is only a “temporary solution” to the district’s financial woes.

There are several factors that make this particular election a challenging one for passing a ballot measure. Superintendent Erik Burmeister said during a Jan. 9 school board meeting at which staff and board members discussed the future of the existing tax, which expires in 2024.

Burmeister warned board members that the Nov. 3 ballot will be crowded with tax-related propositions, and it would be a “completely different election” than any the district has faced before. He and board members are unsure how a measure on the November ballot to amend Proposition 13, which governs property taxes in California, could affect the district’s funding, making it difficult to accurately assess the need for a parcel tax.

The “split-roll” initiative would amend Proposition 13 to increase taxes on commercial and business properties, but not on homeowners. About 40% of the $12 billion it would generate would go to public schools, according to EdSource.org.

“We will have more insight into student enrollment (at a future date) and getting a little bit more of that information would allow us to make better decisions, which is in the community’s best interest anyway,” said Trustee Scott Saywell. “I’d rather do it right.”

The parcel tax in question, Measure X, which passed in 2017 with an initial rate of $360 per parcel, will expire in 2024.

The deadline to have ballot measures placed on the November ballot is Aug. 7, Jim Irizarry, San Mateo County's assistant chief elections officer and assessor-county clerk recorder, said in an email.

Burmeister noted that November 2022 is probably the latest the district would be able to put a parcel tax measure on the ballot without some “significant budget cuts.”

The board last year had preliminary discussions about putting a measure before voters to renew or replace Measure X at a higher taxation rate to help address deficit spending that could be a result of last year’s teacher salary hike.

According to a staff presentation prepared for an October meeting, with implementation of a 5% raise for district teachers during the 2019-20 school year, the district’s required reserve funds will drop below the minimum amount stated in board policy — at least 15% of total annual spending — within two years unless voters approve a parcel tax to replace Measure X — one that would generate higher level of revenue.

We need to have a more permanent solution than Measure X, so we have to do it right,” Burmeister said. “A lot of schools are...
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held before the Board of Directors of the West Bay Sanitary District at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 12, 2020, at the District Offices, located at 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, California to consider the adoption of an ordinance to consider a General Regulation amending the Code of General Regulations for Section 406 Backflow Prevention Devices and Section 901 Sewer Connection Charges (03) Charges by Type of Connection – Accessory Dwelling Unit.

WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT

By: [Signature of District Manager]

Phil Scott
District Manager

Town of Woodside
Invites Applications for Committees

Arts and Culture Committee - Meets monthly on the 2nd Thursday at 5:30 p.m.; 2-year term; strengthens community involvement by initiating, sponsoring, and celebrating local art and cultural activities, including, art, photography, design, music, horticulture, culinary arts, literature, drama, and dance; organizes and supervises events showcasing local creative talent.

Circulation Committee – Meets monthly on the 4th Thursday at 7:30 p.m.; 2-year term; supports the General Plan goal to foster a community of all users of the public roadway system; works with the Town Engineer, Sheriff’s Department, and local and regional organizations to encourage “share the road” programs; develops educational programs on traffic safety, promotes safe, convenient access to schools, businesses, public and private institutions, and neighborhoods.

Emergency Preparedness Committee – Meets monthly on the 2nd Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.; 2-year term; supports the General Plan Policies related to education on natural hazards and emergency preparedness; develops and maintains appropriate plans and procedures with staff to respond to disasters and emergencies; supports the Citizens’ Emergency Response and Preparedness Program.

Environment: Open Space, Conservation & Sustainability Committee - Meets monthly on the 4th Thursday at 5:30 p.m.; 2-year term; reviews applications for professional stable permits and forwards recommendations to the Planning Commission; processes applications for exceptions to the private stable regulations, forwards recommendations to the Planning Director, and conducts stable inspections in accordance with the Municipal Code; develops and supports education and information programs which aid the community in sustaining, protecting, enhancing, and enjoying equestrian activities and facilities.

Recreation Committee - Meets monthly on the 1st Thursday at 6:00 p.m.; 3-year term; guides the activities of the community recreation program. The Committee provides organized and supervised community recreation services in all areas of the Town and makes recreation budget recommendations to the Council.

Trails Committee - Meets monthly on the 2nd Thursday at 3:00 p.m.; 2-year term; reviews land divisions, subdivisions and conditional use permits for locations for equestrian, pedestrian and bicycle trails and makes recommendations to the staff and to the Planning Commission; advises on trail maintenance projects and on rules, regulations and ordinances pertaining to the trails.

Woodside History Committee - Meets monthly on the 2nd Thursday at 10:30 a.m.; 2-year term; advises the Town Council and staff regarding actions, policies and plans relating to historic preservation; plans and recommends means for ensuring the security and public accessibility of the Town’s historic archives; gathers and catalogues historic material.

These are volunteer positions and serve in an advisory capacity to the Town Council. Interested residents may request information and applications from the Town Clerk’s Office at Town Hall, 3055 Woodside Road, or telephone (650) 851-6790, or through the Town web site at www.woodsidetown.org.

The deadline for applications is Friday, January 31, 2020, by 5 p.m.


Local notice is hereby given inviting members of the public to attend a public hearing to be held before the Board of Directors of the West Bay Sanitary District, to be held at the District Offices, located at 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, California on Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of considering a General Regulation amending the Code of General Regulations for Section 406 Backflow Prevention Devices and Section 901 Sewer Connection Charges (03) Charges by Type of Connection – Accessory Dwelling Unit.

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El Camino narrows to one lane beginning this week

Locals, brace for traffic. Due to construction work at the Guild Theatre site, where the old movie theater is being rebuilt into a nonprofit live music venue, sections of El Camino Real and Ravenswood Avenue are going to be narrowed to one lane on weekdays for two weeks, beginning this week.

There will be two lane closures: southbound El Camino Real between Santa Cruz and Live Oak avenues and westbound Ravenswood Avenue between Laurel and Merrill streets. The closures will be in effect between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. from Monday to Friday the weeks of Jan. 20 to 24 and Jan. 27 to 31.

These closures are expected to cause delays, so the city of Menlo Park recommends that motorists drive safely and allow extra time during these construction closures. “The city’s police and transportation division staff will monitor conditions and work to minimize impacts where possible,” an alert from the city stated.

Intermittent closures due to construction are expected over the next 18 months. Closure dates are expected to be posted on signs along El Camino Real.

For more information people can subscribe to the city’s weekly construction impact alerts at menlopark.org/constructionnews.

BRIEFS

State Senate candidate forum in La Honda

A candidate forum to hear from state Senate candidates running to represent California’s 13th District is scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 22, from 7 to 9 p.m. at 120 Scenic Drive in La Honda at the Cuesta La Honda Clubhouse.

Seven candidates are in the running for the seat now occupied by Jerry Hill, who’s being term-limited at the end of the year. The event is sponsored by La Honda Indivisible and the League of Women Voters. Parking is located near the playground at the intersection of Scenic Drive and Escondido Drive.

Contact Lynnette Vega for additional information at lanhondynnette@earthlink.net.

— By Kate Bradshaw
Feldman’s Books not eligible for historic protections

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

The Menlo Park building that houses Feldman’s Books — and was formerly home to Martin J. McCarthy Groceries and East-West Books over the structure’s more than centurylong existence — is now one step closer to demolition.

In a 4-3 vote on Jan. 13, the city’s Planning Commission deemed the Feldman’s building at 1170 El Camino Real and a neighboring structure at 1162 El Camino Real, where youth mental health services are offered, not historically significant, and therefore not eligible for protection.

The development firm Prince Street Partners, led by Chase Rapp and Brady Fuerst, has proposed to replace those structures with a prefabricated, three-story building that has nine apartments, three of which would be designated for below-market-rate rent.

The four commissioners who voted that the buildings are not historically significant — Andrew Barnes, Henry Riggs, Larry Kahle and Michael Doran — all said that it was a difficult decision because of the cultural value of the used bookstore, but that ultimately, the buildings do not meet the criteria for a historic resource.

Historic resources can be categorized at the national, state and local level. However, Menlo Park does not have a system or registry for tracking historic resources, or policies for how such resources should be protected.

The buildings were determined to be ineligible for national or state historic protection based on two evaluations — one that the developer submitted by the firm Evans and De Shazo, and the other by Interactive Resources, Inc., a third-party evaluator contracted by the city to peer-review the first analysis. However, the Planning Commission could have found it eligible for local protection, in which case the developer would have been required to complete an environmental impact report on how to potentially mitigate the impacts the project might have on that particular historic resource.

Since Menlo Park does not have a separate local registry, however, staff members suggested that the Planning Commission review the standard criteria used broadly in other communities to determine local historic resources.

These criteria are: Is it associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the “broad patterns” of the city’s historical and cultural heritage? Is it associated with the lives of people who are important to the city’s past? Does it embody locally distinctive characteristics of a type, period, method or construction; an important local creative individual; or high artistic value to community residents? And has it yielded, or is it likely to yield, information about the prehistory or history of the community?

Barnes said that, considering the criteria, he was “unable to find overriding considerations … to make it historical from that standpoint,” but noted he wants further discussion about whether the city should adopt a local registry with additional criteria.

The decision may be appealed, he added.

Several commissioners pointed out that it’s not necessarily the building that makes Feldman’s so unique, but rather the spirit of its interior.

“Largely, Feldman’s is attractive because it’s been well-furnished,” Riggs said, arguing that while the business should be protected, the structure has little architectural significance. He added that he is interested in finding a new location for the bookstore and offered to help.

Additionally, saving the building from demolition won’t necessarily protect the bookstore, Doran pointed out. The bookstore is on a month-to-month lease and there’s nothing preventing the landlords from raising rent and pricing the business out.

Commissioners Camille Kennedy, Chris DeCardy and Michele Tate opposed the finding that the buildings are not historic. Kennedy talked about how the bookstore is a destination within and outside of the community. “For many people it appears to be a north star. You can find yourself again when you walk in there,” she said.

DeCardy said he’d like to see more context and information, but added, “There is no way I would vote to say this doesn’t have historical significance, right now.”

There was no shortage of love expressed for the city’s last remaining used bookstore by people of all ages in public comments and in emails sent to the commission before the meeting.

One mother, Suzan Szollar, shared via email her 9-year-old daughter Paloma’s petition to save Feldman’s Books. The Laurel School fourth grader, on lined notebook paper, wrote: “If you like Feldman’s, sign this petition to save it.” Her petition bore 23 penciled-in signatures from other students.

At the meeting, Blake Conway talked about the significance of Feldman’s during his childhood in Menlo Park. The building, in its previous iteration as East-West Books, had ties to the Whole Earth Catalog, a countercultural magazine focused on ecology and holism that was published starting in 1968, he said.

“I think a used bookstore is, by definition, historic in the way it comes across its books, and what you find there is an amalgamation of the interests and the belongings and the curiosities of the people of a place, and Feldman’s does represent that,” he added.

Fuerst said he and co-developer Rapp have been working with Jack Feldman to find a new location for the bookstore. “We are in full-on support of finding Feldman’s a new home,” he said.

REAL ESTATE Q&A by Monica Cormar

The Gap Between Buyers and Sellers

Dear Monica: My house is on the market and has had a very good response but so far no one has made an offer. It is priced within a popular range but no one has acted on it. What are you seeing so far this year? Chris B.

Dear Chris: We are only a few weeks into January and so far buyers have shown little urgency to make offers, even if they like a particular property. They don’t feel pressured by the thought of rising prices, and in fact do not think prices will go up any time soon. Sellers who have priced their properties too high, even modestly high, have not had offers yet. And there have been several price reductions in the past few weeks. These price reductions are resulting in sales.

There is a gap between sellers, who think that prices are higher than they are, and buyers who would rather wait than pay too high a price. If you sense your property is priced too high, you should adjust the price if you want to sell it.

Contact me at monica@monicacorman.com; Office: 650-465-5971, COMPASS. Ranked in the Wall St Journal’s 2016, 2017, and 2018 Nationwide list of top 250 Realtors.
Five of the seven candidates running for state Senate in District 13 vied to win over Peninsula voters by showing their passion and knowledge on a range of environmental topics at a panel held on Jan. 15 at Menlo-Atherton High School.

Before a crowd of an estimated 500 people, candidates answered a series of questions posed by the moderator, San Mateo County Supervisor Dave Pine. They touched on the overall climate crisis, as well as energy conservation, water quality and availability, waste management, and PG&E’s future for providing energy in the state.

The candidates are competing for the District 13 state Senate seat, now occupied by Jerry Hill, who will be term-limited this year. The district runs from South San Francisco to Sunnyvale and on the Coastside from Pacifica to the Ano Nuevo State Reserve. About 82% of its residents are Asian American and Pacific Islander, according to the 2020 Census, and the most-cited reason for moving to the area was the quality of life.

Participating candidates were Democrat Sally Lieber, a former Mountain View councilwoman and state Assembly member; Democrat Shelly Masur, a Redwood City vice mayor, nonprofit executive and former school board member; Republican Alexander Glew, an engineer and Los Altos District 10 city council member; Democrat Josh Becker of Menlo Park, a philanthropist and former state Assembly member; and Democrat Michael Brownrigg, a Burlingame City Council member and former diplomat.

Absent from the forum were Democrat Annie Oliva, who sent a message saying she could not be there due to a friend’s death, and Libertarian John Webster.

Candidates were asked to give an opening statement about their position on environmental concerns, and then answered questions that came from some of the environmental nonprofits that organized the event — such as Citizens Climate Lobby, Acterra, Sustainable San Mateo County and 350 Silicon Valley — before providing closing statements. More than 20 additional environmental organizations supported the event.

“There’s no more important issue than facing the climate challenge, and sadly, we’ve put so much carbon into the atmosphere,” Pike said. “We’re seeing the effects of that every day around the world, and the future could be much worse, depending on the types of policies we implement here in the state and around the world.”

Lieber, who served in the Assembly from 2002 to 2008 and ran against Hill in 2012, said she wants the region to be a model one for energy efficiency and natural resources conservation in the state.

Masur talked about being raised in Alaska with young parents, and how she learned from her grandparents, who grew up during the Depression, which helped her develop a conservation mindset.

“It was about doing the things we could do individually to make a difference,” she said, adding that she thinks systemic change is also needed. When she was a school board member, she supported the installation of solar panels at the school district she helped oversee, she said.

Becker noted that he started as a school board member, she supported the installation of solar panels at the school district she helped oversee, she said.

Becker quoted a Native American proverb: “We don’t inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.”

“Let’s be honest, we’re not being very good stewards right now,” he added.

Becker said that he started a clean energy investment fund and ran for state Senate in 2010 as a green energy entrepreneur. In addition, he announced an environmental policy platform for his campaign, saying he would push to make state agencies carbon neutral by 2030; propose incentives to buy the cleanest electric vehicles and disincentives to buy the worst polluting vehicles; support bike lanes; protect community choice energy programs; support annual reporting of greenhouse gas emissions among cities of more than 75,000 people, and promote cleaner alternatives to freight transportation, which he said is the single largest contributor to diesel particulate matter and nitrogen oxide emissions in California.

“California is the fifth-largest economy in the world, so what we do matters here and also beyond our borders,” he said.

Brownrigg said his environmental priorities would be to attain zero carbon energy, eliminate plastic going to landfill, provide 100% clean drinking water for everyone in California, invest $100 billion in Bay Area transit, and restore 50 billion gallons of water to aquifers by 2030, at the latest.

“Those aren’t easy targets, but they are realistic with courage and conviction,” Brownrigg said. He added that he’s worked with the South Bay Waste Management Association, and based on the environmental priorities he’s helped set there, “we could be one of the first net-zero-carbon garbage facilities in the state.”

He talked about the work he’s done on the Burlingame City Council to help a city that hadn’t built new housing in decades develop plans to build a new neighborhood.

Becker said that local community choice nonprofits, like Peninsula Clean Energy or Silicon Valley Clean Energy, for instance, have served as examples of transparent and community-serving players in the utility field. He added that he supports microgrids and the state effort to analyze the details of the power shutoffs in 2019 and how the territory of future shutoffs might be narrowed.

On the topic of water and its preservation and safety, Lieber said she favors more water recycling and restricting intensive uses of water.

Becker said his priorities are to reduce lead levels in water where children are exposed, require water metering across the state and figure out how to reduce water use in the agricultural sector.

Brownrigg talked about recycling water systems, which have been developed in Redwood City, and said she supports infrastructure and technology to use more recycled water.

The candidates also tackled questions about how to make environmental protection and energy conservation efforts more tenable for lower-income residents, as well as how to better include people of color in discussions about the climate.

Glew asserted that only 29% of U.S. residents think the threat of climate change is a problem, so engaging in public outreach to make that number larger is a priority. One cost-effective way to be more energy efficient and use less heat is to install triple-paned windows, he added.

Becker talked about his past efforts in workforce development to promote green jobs.

Masur discussed how racism has in some ways kept people out of the environmental movement, and spoke of the importance of promoting leaders of color and her plans to hire a diverse staff if elected.

Brownrigg talked about the yellow-jacket movement in France, a grassroots pushback to gas taxes, and the importance of understanding the needs of middle- and low-income earners.

Candidates also responded to several quick-round, yes-no questions. Should the high-speed rail project move forward? That got a

State Senate candidates weigh in on ideas to tackle climate crisis

By Kate Bradshaw

Almanac Staff Writer

Moderator Dave Pine, a San Mateo County supervisor, introduces state Senate candidates to the audience during a forum held on Jan. 15 at the Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center. They are, from left: Sally Lieber, Shelly Masur, Alex Glew, Josh Becker and Michael Brownrigg.
Woodside council rejects solar project at Town Hall

By Rick Radin
Almanac Staff Writer

The Woodside Town Council backed away from a project that would have used solar panels to supply Town Hall and the historic Independence Hall meeting venue with electricity.

The project won a 3-2 council majority at a meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 14, with council members Daniel Yost, Chris Shaw and Ned Fluet voting yes and Katisha Kahl and Tom Livermore voting no.

The proposal included $1.8 million in energy projects, Shaw said.

“Something we need to do when the budget is flush,” he said. “(This project) is supportive of independent green energy projects, Yost said.

Kahl objected because of a shortage of parking at that location.

“The cost of this redundant power system is more expensive than power from Peninsula Clean Energy, San Mateo County’s clean-energy consolidator,” she said.

“Rooftop solar is the highest priced way to go,” said project opponent Ed Kahl. “The price of solar systems and solar power keep going down, so there’s no advantage to spending the money now.”

The proposal also included a provision for electric vehicle charging stations to be installed in the parking lot at the town library, but some residents objected because of a shortage of parking at that location.

“The cost of this redundant system will be closer to $500,000 than $300,000 after adding in the cost of a needed roof replacement, charging stations, consultants’ fees and staff time,” Kahl said.

Shaw emphasized the safety issue, saying that the town needs an independent source of power separate from the PG&E grid.

“When you eliminate generating electricity locally, you are putting the community at risk,” Shaw said. “We’ve been talking about this for a long time, and we keep kicking the can down the road.”

Peninsula Clean Energy is also supportive of independent green energy projects, Yost said.

“Power shutoffs aren’t going away,” he said. “(This project) is something we need to do when the budget is flush.”

Bridge repair approved

The council also approved a maximum of $950,000 for a repair to a 106-year-old bridge on Old La Honda Road about a mile west of Portola Road and authorized putting the project out for bid.

The bridge is a reinforced concrete box girder bridge built in 1914, according to the staff report on the project.

A recent Caltrans study reported that the bridge is “structurally deficient” and experiencing advanced deterioration of its exterior girders and abutment walls.

The study gave the bridge a 36.8 rating for “sufficiency,” with 100 being the highest score possible, according to Woodside Planning Director Jackie Young.

Although repair or replacement of any bridge with less than a 50 rating is eligible for federal funding which could be used to cover 89% of the cost, the federal Highway Trust Fund is currently tapped out and new funding won’t be available until 2023, said Woodside Public Works Director Sean Rose.

Despite that situation, the council voted to go ahead immediately using town funds, since there are three other bridges that also need repairs, and wait to secure federal reimbursement later.

Rose recommended the repair plan that calls for placing a culvert 84 inches in diameter, along with cement, under the bridge to create a channel instead of replacing the entire structure.

“Right now there’s a rectangular concrete opening,” he said. “We’re going to put a pipe inside the opening and build concrete walls and encase the culvert in concrete.”

The council also authorized Town Manager Kevin Bryant to execute an amendment to the contract for $57,770 in environmental consulting services for the project to meet certain requirements for the state Regional Water Quality Control Board, according to the staff report.

The control board requires that Woodside restore about 1,000 square feet of riparian stream area as mitigation for the bridge construction, according to the staff report.

Town staff has identified a site downstream from the project on Dennis Martin Creek at Portola Road where the mitigation would take place. The work will include removing invasive plants, installing native plants and monitoring of the work for up to five years, the report says.

New traffic rules

Because of recent blockages of Old La Honda Road caused by accidents involving oversized vehicles, the council moved to change the size limits for trucks using the road from a maximum of 3 tons, which is about the size of a pickup truck, to a limit of 35 feet in length and 13 feet in height, and to end an exception for routine deliveries to Old La Honda Road residents.

The council also voted to make the restrictions enforceable rather than merely advisory, per a recommendation from the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office, which will be in charge of enforcing the ban.

Old La Honda Road is a narrow, winding route that connects Portola Road and Skyline Boulevard south of La Honda Road.

The 3-ton weight restriction did not address the problem of very large vehicles not being able to navigate the road’s sharp turns, according to a staff report.

In the most recent incident, in September, a 75-foot-long truck/trailer got stuck and needed to be towed out, causing the road to be closed to through traffic for several hours and resulting in damage to the road, according to the staff report.

Exceptions for public utility, town, and emergency vehicles will remain in place, along with a new exception for any vehicle that has obtained a transportation permit from the town.

Both the Old La Honda Road bridge project and the vehicle size restrictions passed unanimously.

Want to get news briefs emailed to you every weekday? Sign up for Express, our daily e-edition. Go to AlmanacNews.com to sign up.
going out for parcel taxes, we are not going to be alone in school districts trying to get people’s attention.”

The school board is also in the process of hiring a political consultant to advise the district on a possible Measure X replacement. Board members noted that their decision on whether to put a measure on the November ballot could be influenced by what the consultant recommends.

Burmeister said that the cost of an election other than a November general election would be more expensive, since the cost of holding an election would be spread across fewer parties. Additionally, the cost of educating voters in preparation for a ballot measure during a “really noisy campaign” would be much higher, he said.

But board member Mark Box said that if the school board feels ready to go out for a November ballot measure, it should, but not before having many conversations with the community about the need for the tax.

Although the meeting agenda included discussion of a possible district bond measure, there was no such discussion.

Compensation
At the same meeting, the board unanimously approved a new contract for Burmeister, which includes a 5% raise during the 2019-20 school year, retroactive to July 1, bringing his salary up to $258,151.

It also voted to extend his contract by three years to June 30, 2023, with an automatic 2% pay hike and a “retention bonus” at the end of each of the three years. The bonuses would be 5% of his annual salary at the end of the 2020-21 school year; 7.5% at the end of the 2021-22 school year; and 10% at the end of the 2022-23 school year, according to the staff report.

The board also began to discuss establishing principles of compensation to help attract and retain district employees other than teachers and some other certificated staff. Burmeister noted that a draft document of the principles is similar to the “teacher compensation philosophy,” which was established in 2019 and emphasizes giving teachers pay increases that are higher than what neighboring districts offer.

Saywell said that he’d like the non-teacher compensation principles to reflect that these district employees hold as much value as teachers and aren’t simply present to support teachers. He wants the principles to acknowledge that “there are a lot of different employees who make a really big impact on the culture and environment” of district schools.

In November 2018, Jarrod Combes, president of the district’s chapter of the California School Employees Association, told the board that support staff felt like an afterthought since the new policy includes only teachers.

The groups that will be affected in a non-teacher compensation policy include: classified employees represented by CSEA; unrepresented certificated employees, including psychologists, counselors, occupational therapists, and site and district administration; Early Learning Center teachers; and assistant teachers.

In the fall, the district’s teachers represented by the Menlo Park Education Association received a 5% raise after the school board approved the teacher compensation principles. The raise is higher than they had been given in recent years. The board last approved raises for all district employees in June 2017, when it authorized a 2% pay hike for the 2017-18 school year and a 3% increase for 2018-19, according to the district website.

Enrollment
The board unanimously approved a contract, not to exceed $31,800, with San Mateo-based Enrollment Projection Consultants to study district enrollment projections. Of that amount, $11,800 will be for completion of a basic enrollment forecast update and optional study additions for the contract, effective Jan. 10 to June 30.

Although enrollment in the district has slowed in recent years, it may grow in the next two to three years with new housing projects along El Camino Real opening, according to the district website and district officials. This could impact capacity at Hillview Middle School, a former district administrator told The Almanac in the fall.

Video of the meeting can be viewed at vimeo.com/384003331.

Given that the council had held an hours-long discussion about limited staff resources earlier in the evening, she added, she would rather see transportation staff resources focused on immediately addressing dangerous intersections for pedestrians or moving the Middle Avenue bike and pedestrian underpass forward faster. And while much of the work would be done by AECOM, the consultant firm the city’s working with on the project, it will still require staff work, City Manager Starla Jerome-Robinson said.

Mueller said he suspected that the viability of the project will likely “come down to what the design looks like.”

“The longer I’m on (the council), the more I think: If you do something beautiful, anything’s possible, if you do it bad, it’s not,” he said.
Atherton signs off on Caltrain proposal to permanently close its train station

By Angela Swartz
Almanac Staff Writer

After more than a dozen public comments, the Atherton City Council decided on Jan. 15, to accept a proposal from Caltrain to permanently close the town’s train station.

The town will now work with the rail service agency to create a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with specifics for closing the station in the next few months. Caltrain spurred this process last week, when it sent a letter to the town — which had most recently indicated it wants to expand service to weekdays — asking it to provide official support for the proposal before closing the station, which currently operates only on weekends.

At a Jan. 15 City Council meeting, Mayor Rick DeGolia expressed sadness that a historic station, which currently operates the train service from San Francisco to San Jose, according to DeGolia. Several speakers at the meeting noted that they would gladly travel to the nearby Menlo Park or Redwood City stations to take the train.

They also advocated for some sort of path extending south of Watkins Avenue that would safely connect Atherton to the Menlo Park station. With such a path, which Caltrain mentions in its letter, people would not have to walk along busy El Camino Real to go from Atherton to Menlo Park.

Caltrain also mentions that the town may expand its quiet zone as a result of the station closure and safety improvements at Watkins Avenue. DeGolia noted that there is more of a balance of Atherton residents on each side of the issue.

Malcolm Dudley, former Atherton mayor and town Rail Committee member, spoke in support of closing the station in the next few months. Dudley said that as Caltrain service expanded, it would be better for the environment and for ridership to funnel riders to nearby stations. The station, which is more than 100 years old, is a designated "hold out station" because it has separated the tracks.

"I think this is the beginning of a negotiation with them," she said. "I think this is the beginning of a negotiation with them," she said. "We need to make sure it's clearly spelled out. The letter doesn't promise us a whole lot."
Contributions to the Holiday Fund go directly to programs that benefit Peninsula residents. Last year, Almanac readers and foundations contributed $150,000 from more than 150 donors for the 10 agencies that feed the hungry, house the homeless and provide numerous other services to those in need.

Contributions to the Holiday Fund will be matched, to the extent possible, by generous community organizations, foundations and individuals, including the Rotary Club of Menlo Park Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. No administrative costs will be deducted from the gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law.

All donations to the Holiday Fund will be shared equally among the 10 recipient agencies listed on this page.

The organizations below provide major matching grants to the Holiday Fund.

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Boys & Girls Clubs
Provides after-school academic support, enrichment, and mentoring for 1,800 low-income K-12 youth at nine locations across Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, and the North Fair Oaks neighborhood of Redwood City.

Ecumenical Hunger Program
Provides emergency food, clothing, household essentials, and sometimes financial assistance to families in need, regardless of religious preference, including Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for more than 2,000 households.

Fair Oaks Community Center
This multi-service facility, serving the broader Redwood City community, provides assistance with child care, senior programs, citizenship and immigration, housing and employment, and crisis intervention. Programs are available in Spanish and English.

LifeMoves
Provides shelter/housing and supportive services across 18 sites in Silicon Valley and the Peninsula. Serves thousands of homeless families and individuals annually on their path back to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

Project Read
Provides free literacy services to adults in the Menlo Park area. Trained volunteers work one-on-one to help adults improve reading, writing and English language skills so they can function more effectively at home, at work and in the community. Basic English classes, weekly conversation clubs and volunteer-led computer enrichment are also offered.

Ravenswood Family Health Center
Provides primary medical and preventive health care for all ages at its clinic in East Palo Alto. Of the more than 17,000 registered patients, most are low-income and uninsured and live in the ethnically diverse East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, and North Fair Oaks areas.

St. Anthony’s Padua Dining Room
Serves hundreds of hot meals six days a week to people in need who walk through the doors. Funded by voluntary contributions and community grants, St. Anthony’s is the largest dining room for the needy between San Francisco and San Jose. It also offers take-home bags of food, as well as emergency food and clothing assistance.

Second Harvest Food Bank
The largest collector and distributor of food on the Peninsula, Second Harvest Food Bank distributed 52 million pounds of food last year. It gathers donations from individuals and businesses and distributes food to more than 250,000 people each month through more than 770 agencies and distribution sites in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

StarVista
Serves more than 32,000 people throughout San Mateo County, including children, young people and families, with counseling, prevention, early intervention, education, and residential programs. StarVista also provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services including a 24-hour suicide crisis hotline, an alcohol and drug helpline, and a parent support hotline.

Upward Scholars
Upward Scholars empowers low-income adults by providing them with financial support, tutoring, and other assistance so they can continue their education, get higher-paying jobs, and serve as role models and advocates for their children.
Thank you for donating to the Holiday Fund

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As of January 14, 167 donors have contributed $145,962 to the Almanac Holiday Fund.

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* Donor did not want to publish the amount of their gift.

As of January 14, 167 donors have contributed $145,962 to the Almanac Holiday Fund.

Thank you for donating to the Holiday Fund.

RoseAnn Sayler, founder of the Menlo Park Academy of Dance, died on Jan. 5 at age 96. She had a rich career as a dancer.

RoseAnn Sayler, beloved teacher, Menlo Park dance academy founder, dies

By Kate Bradshaw

RoseAnn Sayler, a longtime Menlo Park resident who founded the Menlo Park Academy of Dance and participated in the city’s civic life for many years, died Jan. 5 at age 96. She was born June 19, 1923, in Muskogee, Oklahoma, the fifth of seven children born to Al and Rose Smith.

She began dancing as a child when she caught a lucky break. Her sister would often help walk one of her friends across town to attend dancing lessons, but one day, her sister couldn’t go because she didn’t finish her chores, so she went instead.

Sayler initially merely watched her friend during the city’s lesson, held in the home of a woman named Miss Bonnie, Sayler wrote in an autobiographical piece published in The Almanac in 1998. When the lesson switched to tumbling on a mat, though, her eagerness to participate became evident and Miss Bonnie asked if she’d like to try it.

“So I did,” Sayler wrote. She finished high school in two years, and while there she also picked up baton twirling and joined the orchestra.

At 16, she auditioned and was accepted to tour with a professional company in Oklahoma City; she traveled with a troupe across the U.S. performing with a ventriloquist, a singer and other. She continued to perform throughout college at Oklahoma State, where she once presented 27 dances in one day.

After graduating, she danced in San Francisco. Later, she studied by day at the San Francisco Ballet school and at night danced in Mountain View at a night club called the Bon Ton. It was there she met the son of the club’s owner, Lewis Sayler, whom she would later marry.

She continued studying, earning certification for secondary education, working as a member of Dance Masters of America, and

Photo courtesy of her family.

January 22, 2020 • AlmanacNews.com • The Almanac • 13
A heightened awareness about school security, an increase in vandalism and theft, and a violent crime on a Peninsula campus are leading local school district officials to join other school administrators in a recent nationwide trend: installing surveillance cameras on their campuses.

Such cameras had hefty price tags in the past — reaching hundreds of thousands of dollars. Now, they are more affordable, enabling cost-conscious districts to install them on their campuses.

Last November, the Woodside Elementary School District board approved placing about eight cameras on the district’s only campus, Woodside Elementary, according to district Superintendent Steve Frank. The cameras, which will cost a total of around $28,500, will be installed this month, he said.

“When we did the last bond (measure in 2014), we took a long look at what it would cost to implement cameras or (motion detector) sensors, but based on surveys and the culture of the community, we didn’t want to create a closed-off fortress of a school,” Frank said.

A recent trend of break-ins on Woodside campus and across San Mateo County prompted officials to reconsider cameras, he said.

In June, the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office arrested a man for attempting to steal iPads and computers from the school after he tripped an alarm. But it’s not this single incident that spurred the district to consider cameras, Frank noted. Recently, there have been four smash-and-grabs to steal items from cars parked on campus, including one in broad daylight during a back-to-school night, he said.

“There’s been a heightened awareness with an uptick of property damage,” he said. “We really do need to protect student safety and cameras are not anything other than a deterrent.”

Violence on some school campuses has also been a concern for administrators, and the hope is that cameras can deter or solve such incidents.

Last year, someone shot and killed a Carlmont High School student on the Central Elementary School campus in Belmont, according to media reports. In October, the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District board voted to install exterior-facing security cameras at its seven campuses and district office following the incident.

A national trend

Peninsula school districts are joining the roughly 81% of K-12 public schools in the U.S. that use security cameras on their campuses. That figure is from a 2015-16 school year study released in 2018 by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Nationally, there has been a considerable amount of conversation about security cameras on school campuses in light of, most recently, the mass shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, in 2018, said Molly Henricks, school safety and risk prevention coordinator for the San Mateo County Office of Education.

During an active shooter situation, schools can potentially allow police officers to view live feeds from cameras on campus, Henricks said, adding that real-time feeds can help police act quickly during an emergency. During the Parkland shooting, police efforts to apprehend the shooter were hampered because officers thought they were watching the suspect live on school cameras, but they were actually seeing 20-minute tape-delayed feeds.
Peninsula school districts are joining the roughly 81% of K-12 public schools in the U.S. that use security cameras to monitor their campuses, according to a 2015-16 school year study released in 2018 by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Henricks said that some schools are also installing security cameras to investigate reported incidents, such as fights or bullying.

Office of Education staff members do not keep a running count of county school districts that have installed security cameras, but they have noticed an increase in camera installations, Henricks said.

Privacy concerns

Some school neighbors are concerned about the need for safety measures to ensure people's privacy as they go about their days on and around the nearby campuses, Henricks said. Frank said the cameras at Woodside will not face inward toward the campus; instead they will monitor the school's parking lot to see who is coming and going.

"We think relative privacy does not extend toward being in an automobile coming toward our campus," he said. The cameras will not be monitored in real time, and there will be signs posted on campus alerting people to them, he said.

The Las Lomitas Elementary School District added security cameras to "key locations" at La Entrada Middle School in Menlo Park after two break-ins on campus last summer, said Superintendent Beth Polito, who added that the perpetrators did not take anything.

In an email to staff and parents, Polito noted that signs will be posted in the vicinity of all cameras, and their use will "hopefully be primarily preventative."

"In the event of another break-in, camera feed will be reviewed to provide law enforcement assistance in apprehending the culprit," she wrote. "While the primary purpose of the surveillance system will be to protect District facilities from break-ins, recordings may be used in disciplinary proceedings and any matters captured by cameras may be referred to local law enforcement, as appropriate."

This school year, Portola Valley School District officials installed additional security cameras and upgraded older ones on both school campuses to protect property and improve security, at a cost of $43,758 for camera hardware, mounting accessories and five years of licenses and support, said Superintendent Roberta Zarea.

The district first installed cameras on its campuses in 2013 in response to several incidents of after-hours vandalism and theft, she said.

Recently, there has been concern that valuable construction materials from Corte Madera and Ormondale school construction sites could be stolen, said Adam Lint, the district's director of bond projects. The district is especially vulnerable to theft because its campuses are tucked away in the isolated hills west of Interstate 280, Zarea said.

The district's policy states that "cameras shall not be placed in areas where students, staff, or community members have a reasonable expectation of privacy." Although the video recordings, which capture images and sound, are not monitored actively, they may be used in disciplinary proceedings and can be passed on to local law enforcement, according to the policy.

Zarea noted that there has been an increase in vandalism and theft in the area in general over the years.

Bicycle thefts at local school campuses appear frequently in police logs, but there have also been more substantial incidents. For example, in December 2018, police arrested a man for stealing about $14,000 worth of iPads and MacBooks from Encinal School in Atherton.

A Nov. 14 Menlo Park City School District staff report on possibly renewing the Measure X parcel tax that will expire in 2024, notes that new funds could go toward, in part, implementing "best-in-class" security plans and infrastructure on all campuses. This could include strategic fencing around schools and "state-of-the-art" video systems to ensure safety, according to the report.

The district "has strategically placed cameras in certain campuses over a period of the last few years based on need," said Superintendent Erik Burmeister in an email. "Cameras currently serve the purpose of campus security related to vandalism and loitering. The Board has begun the conversation of expanded video surveillance for increased security needs."

Shortfalls of camera technology

Many of the measures that would help schools improve security are "less flashy and fad-driven, and sometimes more discreet or even invisible," said Kenneth Trump, a school safety expert and president of the National School Safety and Security Services, a Cleveland-based national consulting firm

See SECURITY CAMERAS, page 16

Above: A security camera on the side of a building at La Entrada School. At left: Students walk past a security camera at Corte Madera School in Portola Valley on a recent day.

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SECURITY CAMERAS

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specializing in school security and emergency preparedness training.

For example, school officials can reconfigure a campus’ main entrances to funnel visitors into the school’s office, preventing people from walking into classrooms and spaces where students congregate, he said.

Schools can also enhance hallway supervision and reduce bullying by positioning restroom sinks in common areas so adults can better supervise kids washing their hands after using the bathroom, he said.

Trump acknowledged that there is always a push to do something “new” in order to respond to the heightened fears of parents, educators and the broader society after a high-profile shootings such as the Parkland incident.

“They (school officials) are looking at physical, tangible security hardware and products that meet the emotional security needs, but could create a false sense of unrealistic security due to the overreliance upon quick-fixes versus time and people investments,” he said in an email.

“It’s easy to point to more cameras or additional police at a school (neither of which on their own are bad things), but it’s harder to point to adults building relationships with kids, improved counseling and mental health support, regular planning and cross training with first responders, and diversified lock-down, evacuation, fire and other drills, (and) proactive communications strategy with parents and the community — all of which truly make schools safer,” he said.

The Atherton Police Department employs a school resource officer who visits Atherton schools not only to keep the campuses safer but also to mentor students and break down barriers between students and police.

School resource officer KC MacDonald spends his weekwork handling everything from mental health crises to fights between students. The majority of his work time — two days per week — is spent at Menlo-Atherton High School, but he drops by eight school campuses in all.

Since 2006 there have been security cameras on Menlo-Atherton and Woodside high school campuses, according to The Almanac’s archives. M-A has 65 cameras, said Principal Simone Rick-Kennel.

MacDonald said Atherton police can request access to a school’s cameras if there is an incident on the campus, but the police don’t have access to a live feed. Police recently used footage from a camera installed at M-A to identify a student who vandalized a police car parked on campus, he said.

“We could do our jobs without the cameras, but it (camera technology) helps mitigate a lot of issues,” MacDonald said. Police can use camera footage to see if a suspect is a person they are already familiar with or send the image to other law enforcement agencies to help identify the culprit, he noted.

The Menlo Park Police Department hasn’t reviewed footage of incidents at schools, said police spokesperson Nicole Acker. It did provide officials at TIDE Academy, a high school that opened this school year in Menlo Park, with recommendations on cameras, she added. TIDE has 20 security cameras on its campus, said Sequoia Union High School District spokesperson Ana Maria Pulido.

Trump hopes that school officials know how to use camera technology if they choose to install it.

He has completed a number of security assessments at schools across the country in recent years, where school officials have installed new technology, such as cameras and new telephone systems, and the school staff has not been trained on how to use them or on the equipment’s capabilities. He’s seen schools in which principals have no remote access to their school’s cameras, yet the function exists.

“We were in one high school where we interviewed the safety team and only one person knew that an all-call announcement could be made over the new telephone system put in classrooms the year before, yet nobody told the principal, her assistants, or the school’s crisis team,” he said.

He’s also seen schools install camera systems through grants or one-time funding, but not maintain them since they don’t have the budgets to fund them in the long term. This results in cameras that are not functioning, not being repaired and presenting a false sense of security, he said.

###

**TOWN OF WOODSIDE**
**2955 WOODSIDE ROAD**
**WOODSIDE, CA 94062**

**INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING COMMISSION**

Districts 1, 5, and 7

Terms from February 2020 to February 2024

The Planning Commission participates in the administration of the planning laws and policies of the Town. It is responsible for recommending to the Town Council ordinances and resolutions necessary to implement the General Plan and adopted development policy. The Commission also conducts necessary public hearings to administer the planning laws and policies of the Town and acts upon applications for zoning amendments, conditional use permits, variances, subdivisions, and other related functions as may be assigned by the Council.

The Planning Commission meets on the first and third Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m.

To obtain information on residency or addresses of residential properties located in Districts 1, 5, or 7, please check the Town website at www.woodsidetown.org, under “What’s New,” and “Town Council and Planning Commission Districts and Map.”

Interested residents may check residency requirements, request information, and submit applications Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00-5:00 p.m. at the Town Clerk’s Office, Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, Woodside, CA 94062. The Town Clerk may be reached by calling (650) 851-6790, or e-mailing ill@woodsidetown.org.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:** Friday, January 31, 2020, by 5 p.m.

**INTERVIEW AND APPOINTMENT BY TOWN COUNCIL:**

Tuesday, February 11, 2020, 7:00 p.m.

Published: The Almanac on January 15, 2020, and January 22, 2020

Posted: January 8 - 31, 2020
County health department developing plan to stanch red ink

By Rick Radin
Almanac Staff Writer

Discussions about Medicare For All and the Affordable Care Act in the presidential debates are highlighting the affordability crisis in health care nationwide.

And while some are advocating that the federal government play a larger role in paying for health coverage, what’s happening to San Mateo County Health, the county’s health department, is the exact opposite, according to county health department chief Louise Rogers.

The department is projecting a $57 million deficit in 2020-21, with $48 million of the gap at the main hospital, San Mateo Medical Center, alone, largely due to reductions in funding for Medicaid and other federal programs.

Federal support for Medi-Cal, the state of California’s Medicaid program serving low-income residents, at San Mateo Medical Center is projected to decline to $307 million in 2020-21 compared with a projected increase in costs to $356 million, according to San Mateo County Health.

The health department has an annual budget of $838 million, of which $177 million comes from federal and state sources, Rogers said.

Until fiscal year 2016-17, Medicaid support for the hospital consistently exceeded its cost of operation, according to the department’s statistics.

At the other end, the department is getting squeezed by higher labor costs, amounting to a $14 million increase in salaries and benefits in 2020-21, that are occurring because it needs to compensate health-care workers for the high cost of living in the Bay Area and especially on the Peninsula, Rogers said in a phone interview.

Without the increases, the county would find it increasingly difficult to fill critical positions, she said.

“We’ve been working on the structural deficit challenge for several years now,” Rogers said. “The core issue is the labor costs that are going up at a higher rate than the revenues we’re receiving from state and federal government.”

The department has a plan to raise revenues, spend down reserves and cut costs that it will introduce at a study session with the Board of Supervisors on Jan. 28 to move toward balancing its 2020-21 budget, Rogers said.

The plan calls for increasing revenue by $30 million, cutting programs by $16 million and using about $8 million from the department’s reserves to close the rest of the deficit, she said.

The revenue increases will come from “providing more services and redesigning services without increasing costs,” which could include transferring more services to nonprofits, Rogers said.

“We are seeing a decline in incarcerated youth and subsequently have redirected services to greater areas of need,” Rogers said in a department release. “We have identified services for reduction where patients or clients could still obtain services within the community, just not from us.”

The $16 million in cuts will largely come from eliminating about 100 unfilled positions and laying off about 80 current employees, Rogers said.

“Unfortunately, the recommendations necessary to address a $57 million gap necessitate eliminating positions in the San Mateo County Health workforce, as well as eliminating or reducing other federal programs,” Rogers said.

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Finding the freedom to live and die well

By Mary Matthiesen

When people learn that I work with a hospice agency, many think I spend every day focused on death. In fact, we spend much more time focusing on quality of life and supporting what matters most to those we serve. This is one of the many lessons I learned from my mother as she was dying 15 years ago — a lesson that continues to inspire my life and my work.

My mother accepted her death with grace, and told those she loved that she loved them. She lived her final days at home, aligned with what mattered most to her.

Like my mother, most Americans expect their families to carry out their wishes for end-of-life care. However, 75% admit that they have never clearly articulated those wishes, and their children are often afraid to ask. As a result, while 80% of people say they would like to spend their final days at home with support, in reality, the vast majority die in institutions.

As hard as my mother’s death was for me as her daughter, I take great solace that we were empowered to support her wishes because she took charge of her own health care decisions.

Her actions also inspired me to consider and share what really matters to me for the end of my life — and all the days between now and an unknown time. Doing so made me feel lifted, lighter, and full of new energy for life. That experience in turn motivated me to help others make the most of their lives, and to prepare for their own future care.

In 2016, I joined Mission Hospice, with the goal of raising awareness of end-of-life issues within the areas of San Mateo and Santa counties. Mission Hospice was founded in 1979 by a group of nurses, neighbors, and friends who were dedicated to improving end-of-life care for their community — helping patients live their final months to the fullest by providing compassionate support to them and their families.

I believe deeply in the kind of care we can offer as a nonprofit hospice — which has become the rarity rather than the norm, both in California and nationally. Our commitment to patients over profit means we can offer alternative and complementary therapies that ease pain and increase quality of life. We can offer grief support for those in our community who need it. And, although hospice is a Medicare-covered benefit, we can serve patients regardless of their insurance or ability to pay. All of this thanks to the support of our incredible community of donors.

As a nonprofit, we also offer community education — opportunities to learn and talk about something we will all face. Every week, Mission Hospice hosts workshops, grief support groups, author readings, movies, and other opportunities to discuss life and death.

Together with local senior and health care nonprofits right here in Menlo Park, Mission Hospice led a coalition dedicated to creating a more compassionate community for people facing serious illness, death, and bereavement. Over the last few years, this group has offered dozens of free “Take Charge” advance care planning workshops throughout the Peninsula, helping people consider and express what’s most important to them, and then doing all that’s possible to ensure that loved ones and medical professionals can support their wishes.

In teaching others that we can each have the power and courage to choose the kind of care we hope for, I am following the lead of my mother who was quite frankly the last person I expected to learn this from. Facing the reality of our mortality isn’t easy stuff, and it’s much bigger than a form or a single conversation. Yet it can give both the living — and the dying — great freedom in the end.

We’re all in this life and death thing together. By talking about what we want, learning the facts, and supporting each other along the way, we can truly be part of a community that cares — about living and about dying well. In the end, what matters more than that?

Mission Hospice hosts free Take Charge workshops regularly, including one in Palo Alto on Jan. 31 and Feb. 7. Go to missionhospice.org for more information.

ROSEANN SAYLER
continued from page 13

attending National Dance conventions and workshops.

In 1947, she founded RoseAnn Dance Studio, first located at 1259 El Camino Real before it moved to 1163 El Camino Real in 1949, with a short stint in a four-car garage in between, according to the Menlo Park Historical Association. The studio was renamed the Menlo Park Academy of Dance in 1969 and is now the official school for Menlowe Ballet, Menlo Park’s professional ballet company.

Over the years, Sayler wrote, many of her students have become dance teachers, won scholarships through pageants, gone on to dance on Broadway, and danced with the San Francisco Ballet and various dance companies around the U.S. and Europe.

Sayler was also active in Menlo Park’s civic community. She served for 15 years on the city’s recreation board and five years on the arts commission.

She is preceded in death by her husband Lewis and her six siblings. She was known for her infectious smile and strong determination as well as her love of children, according to her niece, Sheri House.

A memorial service will be held at Menlo Church at 950 Santa Cruz Ave. at 2 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 31.

The family prefers that memorial donations be made to the Menlo Park Academy of Dance Scholarship fund.

Information provided by her family and previous writing.
Childhood education focus of film screening in Menlo Park

Watch ‘No Small Matter’ documentary at Hillview Middle School on Jan. 22

By Angela Swartz
Almanac Staff Writer

San Mateo County officials will meet for a film screening and discussion about a program plugging local families— a shortfall of early childhood education options—on Jan. 22 at Hillview Middle School in Menlo Park.

The Menlo Park City School District, Community Equity Collaborative, All Five, the Primary School, and Good2Know Network are partnering to host a screening of “No Small Matter,” a documentary about the impact of early childhood experiences, according to a school district press release.

The film also highlights how millions of American children are not getting the care they need to succeed and examines “the complicated science, history and sociology that has brought the early care and education system to where it is today,” according to a school district press release.

“While it’s the poorest children who are most vulnerable, middle class families are increasingly feeling the squeeze, as the cost of quality child care soars,” according to the film’s website.

“There is a projected shortage of about 14,000 slots for children in early education classrooms by 2025, according to the assessment. The panel discussion will include San Mateo County Supervisor Dave Pine, Menlo Park City School District Superintendent Nancy Magee in a prepared statement. Magee will moderate the event’s panel discussion.

San Mateo County families are facing a shortage of child care services. The county will need to fill about 2,500 teaching spots by 2025 to keep pace with the growing need for early childhood education programs, according to a 2016 early learning facilities needs assessment for the county. There is a shortage of about 40,000 slots for children in early education classrooms by 2025, according to the assessment.

San Mateo County Office of Education Superintendent Nancy Magee in a prepared statement. Magee will moderate the event’s panel discussion. The panel discussion will include San Mateo County Supervisor Dave Pine, Menlo Park City School District Superintendent Erik Burmeister, Menlo Park Mayor Cecilia Taylor and early learning educators. The panelists will focus on how the local community can become educated about the challenges and opportunities for high-quality early learning options and how people can help improve the early learning landscape, according to the press release.

“Quality child care and preschool are pivotal to the development of our kids, yet are woefully underfunded,” said Pine, who co-chairs the Childcare Partnership Council, a county group that identifies local priorities for child care and early learning services, in a prepared statement. “I encourage all community members to attend this film screening and panel discussion to better understand the lifelong benefits of quality early learning programs and the urgent need to make sure that such programs are available to all children regardless of family income.”

The event takes place from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Hillview Middle School, 1100 Elder Ave. in Menlo Park. For more information and free tickets, go to bit.ly/NoSmallMatterMPCSD.

For more details about the film, go to nosmallmatter.com.

Panels will moderate the event to better understand the lifelong benefits of quality early learning programs and the urgent need to make sure that such programs are available to all children regardless of family income.
The final line of Henrik Ibsen’s “A Doll’s House” is a stage direction: “The sound of a door shutting is heard from below.”

That informs Torvald Helmer that his wife Nora — his “little skylark, his doll” — has left him, and their three children. The character is shocked, audiences at its premiere were shocked, and at least one prominent actress refused to perform in the play when it got to Germany because, she said, she would never leave her own children.

But performances sold out in 1879 Copenhagen for what was an “awesome feminist moment,” as actress Gabriella Grier put it, in a recent phone interview.

“It was banned in Europe sometimes. That a woman would leave her family was too crazy and provocative at the time,” she said.

Grier is playing Nora in “A Doll’s House, Part 2,” by Lucas Hnath, which begins with Nora coming back through that slammed door, many years later. Michael Champlin plays her estranged spouse. “The good news is you don’t have to have any familiarity with Part 1,” said Jeffrey Lo, who is directing ‘Part 2’ for the Palo Alto Players, opening Jan. 18 at the Lucie Stern Theatre. “What little you need to know is at the beginning of Part 2. ‘Part 1’ is essentially about a well-to-do woman, a mother, a wife, who is unhappy in her marriage, and leaves at the end of the play. Back then, that left everyone up in arms that a woman would leave her husband and children just because she was unhappy,” he said. “Our play is set 15 years after ‘Part 1’ and has Nora coming back through the door she slammed. ... What she needs, I don’t want to share.”

Lo loves to let his audience enjoy a play’s “reveals” — those “Aha!” moments. So, we expect something good from this play as well. In his day job, Lo is casting director at Theatre-Works Silicon Valley. “I really wanted to work on this play,” said Grier, who grew up in Palo Alto before going to Barnard College and the Juilliard School, then returned to the Peninsula, where her day job is in the advancement office at Crystal Springs Uplands School in Hillsborough. “It’s just a fascinating exploration of reality and the fantasies about how we wish our lives could go ... we want Nora to find her own voice. Really, her family doesn’t see her as a real person. But, what is the cost? She left her children, she left her husband... “What’s interesting is you get to see Herr Torvald’s perspective. ... In his world, he was doing all the right things. For her to just leave, you see how devastating that was to him,” Lo is well pleased with Grier’s work as Nora. “She’s just a real strong, classically trained actor,” Lo said. “She auditioned with me, and was very amazing. In rehearsal, we found her mind and mine work the same. We are kindred spirits, finding big meanings in small words.”

John Orr is a freelance writer. The Portola Art Gallery presents ‘The Square Show’

Artist reception this Saturday

The award-winning artists of the Portola Art Gallery in Menlo Park are showcasing original works of art that are smaller in size but large on value and creativity.

The art show runs through February at the gallery, located in the historic Allied Arts Guild complex at 75 Arbor Road.

The diminutive original paintings and fine art photographs make owning an original piece of art easier for the first-time buyer, notes a gallery volunteer.

An artist reception is scheduled for this Saturday, Jan. 25, from 1 to 4 p.m. The Portola Art Gallery exhibits representational art by 17 Bay Area artists, who work in media including painting, pastel, ceramics and photography.

Gallery hours are 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday.
Go to portolaartgallery.com or call 650-321-0220 for more information.

“The Square Show” features 6x6” works by the award-winning artists of the Portola Art Gallery, including this acrylic work by Jerry Peters, a retired battalion chief with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District.
BY ELENA KADVANY

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.

Sign up for food reporting you won’t find anywhere else at almanacnews.com/express
Talks & Lectures
Rhonda Magee Rhonda Magee, professor at University of San Francisco, discusses ways to confront discrimination and cultural biases using storytelling and practical exercises. Jan. 27, 7:30-8:30 p.m., $35. Keplers Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Redwood City. keplersbooks.com
Changing the Game Coach John O’Neill talks about how youth are engaged with the game and how coaches can ensure that all sports are inclusive. He will discuss the worst reasons and his “7 C’s of a High Performance Organization” that help ensure that athletics is a positive and rewarding experience for children. Jan. 26, 7-8:30 p.m.; $10; free for members. Piedmont United, 800 Broderick St., San Francisco. puateachers.org

Musicals & Exhibits
Alexander Nemover on Pollock and Davis Miller, the significance of their works. Jan. 23, 6-8 p.m. Free. Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Society. stanfordopportunity.org
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
The registrant commenced to transact business as: CLERK-RECORDER OF SAN MATEO COUNTY The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: America Services Provider, located at 121 Daphne Way, East Palo Alto, CA 94303, San Mateo County. Registration(s) filed: SANETA UHLANKELANGI File No.: 283613 File No.: 283633 The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: D robes and 最高の品質のものを提供する。
I've learned:
I've bought an electric bike 18 months ago because the commute from the bay side of town to the Oak Knoll side of town where I teach was taking so much time from my life and making me more irritated when I got wherever it was I was trying to go. I would like to share 10 things I've got wherever it was I was trying to make me more irritated when I spent much time from my life and the town where I teach was taking town to the Oak Knoll side of the road than drivers may realize.

1. Many people commute by bike until I became one of them. I have nearly 3,000 miles on my bike, almost exclusively in Menlo Park. That’s 3,000 miles my car wasn’t adding to traffic.

2. There are a lot more bikes on the road than drivers may realize. I certainly didn’t realize that so many people commuted by bike until I became one of them. I have nearly 3,000 miles on my bike, almost exclusively in Menlo Park. That’s 3,000 miles my car wasn’t adding to traffic.

3. Stop signs are for everyone to stop at — bikes included. I may not be perfect at it, but I’m trying. I’ve noticed that cars often won’t take their turn at a four-way stop if they see a bike coming because they don’t know if the bike will stop, and most people aren’t willing to hit someone just to prove they have the right-of-way. If you ride a bike, you should follow the rules of the road just as you expect cars to do. Also, it’s good role modeling for the next biking generation to see. Special shout-out to the parents I see showing their kids to stop at stop signs and walk bikes in crosswalks. I do see kids who follow all the rules, and I know where they learned it.

4. Those green lanes on the edge of the driving lane are actually not just an overflow lane for cars. I see cars dip into this lane whether there are bikes there or not. And despite my neon jacket, many cars seem not to look before trying to share my green lane. Thank you to those who do.

5. Cars turning right are easily the biggest hazard I face on my ride. Drivers making right turns, please look for cyclists (and increasingly, scooterists as well). Right turns on Alma are a particular trouble spot. Watch for bikes! All the time. All across town. We’ve had 16 bike/ped accidents involving a car just since September.

6. Slow down! The death rate more than doubles for pedestrians hit by cars when the speed goes from 25 to 35 mph. Way too many cars are exceeding 30 mph on clearly posted and used school safety routes. Ringwood, Middle, and Santa Cruz avenues commonly have traffic exceeding 30 mph and heavy bike traffic. Maybe a citywide 25 mph limit would make our roads safer for all users.

7. In our small community, high school kids ride the wrong way on the sidewalk because the roads don’t feel safe. High school kids. What if we all drove like we lived in a small community where even middle school and elementary kids could feel safe sharing the roads?

8. Parents: Talk to your bike riders about why the helmet hanging from the handlebars of their bike isn’t doing them any good. Having nearly lost a relative to a head injury from a bike fall, I can attest to the lifesaving qualities of those plastic shells. No one plans to fall off their bike — there won’t be time to put the helmet on then. My relative had a full recovery.

9. Drivers: Many of you are still on your phones when you’re driving through town. It won’t be worth the damage that inattention might cause some day.

10. The traffic issues aren’t going away any time soon. However, if we choose policies that make our community more walkable and bikeable, then more of us will get the ease of access and increased quality of life that I’ve been enjoying since I started riding more and my commute went from being the most stressful part of my day, to the least.

Thank you for reading this. Hopefully we can all help make the roads a little safer for everyone.

Honoring a man who knew: We can do better

Editor:
This month, the beginning of 2020, is the anniversary of the birth of The Honorable Elijah Eugene Cummings, who was chairman of the House of Representative’s Oversight Committee at the time of his death on Oct. 17, 2019.

This letter is written in tribute to him, and the forceful exhortation he made to committee witnesses and political adversaries during impeachment investigations of the Trump Administration. The exhortation was: “We are better than this!”

This exhortation could be applied to a litany of issues that have plagued the nation since its birth. A partial list of these issues is worthy of review as a new year is inaugurated:

- Racial gerrymandering in voter districting: “We can do better than this!”
- Voter suppression: “We can do better than this!”
- Census-tampering: “We can do better than this!”
- Racism throughout the spectrum of the criminal justice system: “We can do better than this!”
- Immigration policies and practices lacking in compassion: “We can do better than this!”
- Racism in health research and delivery: “We can do better than this!”
- Environmental injustice: “We can do better than this!”
- Economic inequality: “We can do better than this!”
- Abandonment of public schools, and de facto segregation: “We can do better than this!”
- This nation has never been great on these issues, in spite of bragadocio to the contrary. It must become better than this, as it has been admonished by Cummings. May he rest in peace. May the nation seek peace by being better, beginning in this decade.

Henry Organ
Euclid Avenue, Menlo Park
Soquel | $295,000

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