MEET THE SEVEN STATE SENATE CANDIDATES WHO WANT TO REPRESENT YOU IN SACRAMENTO

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FOR THE SENATE

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Going out of Business.
Everything Must Go!

With the owner of The Oriental Carpet preparing to retire next year, everything in stock at the downtown Menlo Park store is on sale – with the steep discounts ranging from 50% to 80% off.

Owner Bruce Good amassed an incredible collection of high-quality hand-knotted rugs in his nearly four decades in the business, and he has more than 2,500 pieces left to sell in his Santa Cruz Avenue store. The store's entire inventory is priced to sell.

“As I get closer to retirement, there will be more reductions – but less choice,” said Good. “The best pieces will go quickly.”

He’s seen some customers come in and buy a rug for every room in the house, he said.

All the rugs the store sells are hand-woven and knotted from traditional producers and cooperatives in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nepal. The store has pieces in every standard size and offers an array of designs including traditional, contemporary and “transitional” – rugs that can be formal or casual, depending on the furnishings they’re paired with. The store offers rugs made from wool, silk and viscose, a material that looks and feels like silk but is more affordable. Good says the majority of the rugs he sells are made of wool, which is the strongest and hardest material. Viscose offers the soft feeling of silk but is easier to clean.

“I personally really like it,” he said. “You can put it into a family room without worrying about it.”

The store's selection also includes a large number of antique rugs. Collectors appreciate how a rug's colors soften over the years, giving the piece a fine and distinctive patina.

The traditional handcrafted method makes the rugs both beautiful and durable, said Good.

The Oriental Carpet has been serving Peninsula residents for 46 years, helping homeowners and designers achieve the look and feel that a beautiful, high-quality carpet can bring to a room. Good said the handcrafted rugs last forever – but his sale won’t. If you’re looking for an attractive rug at an even more attractive price, now is the time to go shopping.

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Council fast-tracks Belle Haven center project by Facebook

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

To fast-track Facebook’s proposal to build a new community center and library in Belle Haven, the Menlo Park City Council voted 4-0 to take 10 steps to move the project forward over the coming months.

Vice Mayor Drew Combs was recused because he works for Facebook.

Among those steps were to designate the plan as a “priority project”; to work out a written agreement with Facebook ironing out design, construction, financing, operations and maintenance details for the new facility; to establish a process to name the new facility “while reflecting history”; and to identify specific environmental sustainability goals for the project, according to a staff report.

The council also committed to looking for funding for a new pool for the community center. A 2017 evaluation of the existing pool facilities found that they needed upgrades to comply with current health and safety codes, and that the city could either upgrade them to prolong their use for 10 to 15 years or rebuild them so they would last 25 to 30 years.

Facebook has committed to rebuilding the bulk of the facilities at the center but not the pool, though it has said it’s willing to work with the city to design around new pool facilities if the city can come up with the money for it.

Fergus O’Shea, Facebook’s director of campus development, talked about how the groundwork for this project — city studies informed by community outreach that evaluated how to accommodate the community’s library and community center needs — has been years in the works. He’s hoping to do six months of community engagement before drawing up and finalizing the plans, potentially starting construction early next year and completing the project within two and a half years.

The council also approved a $140,000 project to remove 21 eucalyptus trees on Blue Ridge Lane in order to make it easier to prevent the spread of a wildfire and to leave the neighborhood safer for many years to come, according to a staff report.

Eucalyptus are a non-native species and are exceptionally difficult to ignite, according to the staff report.

The trees are next to and over power lines running across Blue Ridge Lane.

The town received bids from four tree service companies and chose the lowest operative bid. The work is expected to begin in March and will take about three weeks to complete.

The council voted unanimously to go ahead with the project immediately by executing a budget amendment for the 2019-20 fiscal year to pay for it.

Woodside has also applied for $957,000 in federal funding for hazardous tree removal to prevent fires which, if approved, will require $312,000 in local matching funds, according to Public Works Director Sean Rose.

The federal money will not be available until the 2020-21 fiscal year that begins July 1, according to the staff report.

The project is one of several tree trimming and brush clearing projects that have been undertaken in Woodside. The town has removed about 160 hazardous trees so far on eight different streets, Rose said.

Photos by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

See BELLE HAVEN CENTER, page 7

Woodside council OKs public money for equestrian bridge

By Rick Radin
Almanac Staff Writer

A proposal to replace an equestrian bridge on the Center Trail, the main horse trail through Woodside, was unanimously approved for funding by the Town Council on Jan. 28, over earlier opposition from some residents who argued that the trail benefited only the horseback riding community.

Town Manager Kevin Bryant told the council that the town’s responsibility to maintain the horse trails is part of its general plan, which identifies Woodside as an equestrian-oriented community.

The council approved a conditional use permit for the bridge in October. That was after the Planning Commission passed it along to the council without a recommendation; some commissioners had expressed concerns about whether a publicly funded portion of the cost was appropriate.

Although the gates to the trail are unlocked, it is for equestrian use only, thus hiking and biking are prohibited.

The $200,000 cost of the new bridge, which will run over Bear Gulch Creek south of 3411 Woodside Road, will be paid for with a $115,000 donation from horse-oriented organizations, $50,000 from a fiduciary fund made up of contributions from the equestrian community, and $35,000 in public funds from a town trail maintenance fee, along with property and sales taxes.

The Mount Patrol Foundation, the Woodside Community Foundation, the Woodside Horse Owners Association, the Woodside Trails Club and the Community Horse Advocacy Program for San Mateo County contributed to the private funding.

“We need to make a statement that we are in support of our equestrian heritage.”

WOODSIDE TOWN COUNCILMAN CHRIS SHAW

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See EQUESTRIAN BRIDGE, page 7

Channeling their inner Pollock

It was a colorful salute to abstract expressionist Jackson Pollock on his birthday, Jan. 28, when participants in a Menlo Park Library art class gathered to drip, smear, and move paint freely over their canvases. Above, Elizabeth Kayser models her work on an image called up on her phone; at left, art teacher Christie Inocencio demonstrates to Kezya Materon Arum how to drip paint onto a canvas.
We’re Hiring
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The Almanac, an award-winning community newspaper and online news source that covers the towns of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside, is looking for an enterprising full-time news reporter with a passion for local journalism.

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 Council greenlights new three-story building for Santa Cruz Avenue

By Tyler Callister Special to The Almanac

As part of the city’s efforts to revive the downtown area, the Menlo Park City Council unanimously approved a three-story building project on Santa Cruz Avenue at its Jan. 29 meeting.

The 49,908-square-foot structure will be a mixed-use building split into retail space, nonmedical office space and residential space. Project architect Bob Giannini of Form 4 Architecture, who spoke at the council meeting, explained that the building design is intended to complement the city’s goal of revitalizing Santa Cruz Avenue, the downtown’s main street.

“It brings a lot of people downtown,” he said. “Which is bad, perhaps, for traffic, but good for the vitality of the street. Right now there are vacant storefronts on Santa Cruz. The goal would be to get more people downtown, and increase the liveliness downtown.”

The building owner, Vasile Oros, plans to tear down the current structure, which houses the restaurant Jaban Yankiniku House and the computer repair store TechLoos. The building is flanked by Menlo Park Hardware, also owned by Oros.

The next stage for the new project is the building permit process, after which the owner may begin construction. There is currently no set start date.

According to the city staff report, the building proposal is in keeping with Menlo Park’s 2012 El Camino and Downtown Specific Plan. “The proposal would meet the Specific Plan’s Base level standards, which were established to achieve inherent public benefits, such as the redevelopment of underutilized properties, the creation of more vitality and activity, and the promotion of healthy living and sustainability.”

On the Santa Cruz Avenue side, design renderings suggest the potential for increased foot traffic in the area. The renderings show large windows in the bottom-floor retail spaces, which Giannini said may house restaurants. The second floor will contain offices and the top level will have four three-bedroom condominium units.

The total residential space is planned at 11,405 square feet. Retail space will total 12,049 square feet, and office space will total 23,284 square feet.

The new building will include a parking garage off Chestnut Lane with 69 parking spaces, replacing the 18 spaces on the current site. Meanwhile, Senior Planner Kaitie Meador, technical components of the project application include an architectural control permit for the building design, a subdivision to demarcate the for-sale residential units on the top floor, a variance that allows for skylights above one of the office spaces, and removal of a single parking space on Chestnut Lane to allow for fire access.

Oros originally brought the building proposal to the Planning Commission in December 2017. The commission’s review yielded questions about how to address safety concerns on Chestnut Lane, and suggestions to improve the proposed building’s appearance.

Following the initial review, Oros hired a new architect, Form 4 Architecture, and after lengthy revisions brought the proposal again to the commission, which held a study session in September 2018. Finally on Dec. 9 of last year, the commission voted to recommend approval of the building.

During the discussion at the Jan. 29 council meeting, Councilwoman Betsy Nash expressed some regret that the building would include only a small amount of new housing. “I’m very happy to see a project coming in downtown. I wish there was more housing and less office, but I understand that is how this one’s working,” she said.

Meanwhile, Vice Mayor Drew Combs lamented the fact that the three-story building is the only new development being proposed for Santa Cruz Avenue.

“As a part of the [El Camino and Downtown Specific Plan] we changed the zoning toward parcels on El Camino and on Santa Cruz as a way to incentivize development,” he said. “And so far very few property owners on Santa Cruz have taken us up on that offer of greater ability to exploit their property. So I do think it’s worth noting … that this is … the only project on Santa Cruz, and it doesn’t look like there is another one in the immediate future.”

N E W S
of the key ways the community complex could be improved, based on input collected at a community meeting held in Belle Haven on Jan. 11.

The council also agreed to keep working with the architectural consultant firm Noll & Tam based on the firm’s expertise in designing library facilities.

One key improvement would be to expand the center’s most-used fitness room. Ashley talked about how splitting the ground floor of the facility into two areas with a breezeway in the middle might enable different hours of operation on each side, and offer operational efficiencies. For instance, one side might offer pool access, a locker room and a fitness area, and might be open for longer hours than the other side, which might house the senior center and classroom spaces.

The library might be placed on the quieter third floor of the facility, he added. In keeping with the city’s new laws requiring many new buildings to be all-electric, the facility would be designed to be all-electric and comply with other rigorous green building standards, according to the plan.

As in previous meetings, a number of Belle Haven residents expressed continued opposition to renaming the complex, insisting that the city retain the name Onetta Harris Community Center. The center was renamed in honor of Belle Haven resident Onetta Harris in 1983. Gail Wilkerson, related by marriage to the Harris family, said she grew up in Belle Haven and wants to see Harris’ legacy preserved, perhaps with a statue of her at the new facility.

“I can remember when she got the swimming pool over here. We had to trek over here to Burgess Park, and a lot of times, we got turned away. … She fought and got that center for us. So give her a statue. Don’t take her name away,” she said.

The next community meeting to get feedback on the project is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 9, from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Menlo Park Senior Center at 110 Terminal Ave.

The City Council’s next discussion of the project is scheduled for Tuesday, Feb. 11. Go to the project page on the city’s website at menlopark.org/bellehaven for more information.

EQUESTRIAN BRIDGE continued from page 5

The next planned project will involve brush clearing and tree removal in the 6.8-acre Joan Olsen Preserve in the Glens neighborhood.

Glens rules get final approval
The council also voted unanimously to give final approval to changes to zoning and development rules in the Glens, completing a process that has taken more than two years.

The Woodside Planning Department will be doing similar studies and considering similar changes to the rules in other neighborhoods, Bryant said.

Bryant added that zoning and development rules in the Old La Honda Road neighborhood in the Western Hills will be next up for consideration.

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REAL ESTATE Q&A
by Monica Corman

Contingent Offers

Dear Monica: We need to sell our house before buying another property. What is the best way to make our offer attractive to a seller? Liz G.

Dear Liz: For a seller to be persuaded to accept your offer contingent on the sale of your present home, you should already have your home on the market or be close to doing so. Your property should be appealing and well-priced, and be in an active market area. If a seller accepts your offer, they will continue to try and get other offers, and if they accept another offer they will give you a few days to remove your contingency or they will cancel your contract. The market is softer now than it was in 2018 and some sellers are more likely to accept an offer contingent on the sale of another home.

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.
The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors on Jan. 28 took under advisement a plan for budget cuts, income enhancements and reserve spending to close a $57 million gap in the budget of San Mateo County Health, the county’s health department, according to county Chief Information Officer Michelle Durand.

The board went on to form an ad hoc committee composed of supervisors Don Horsley and Carole Groom to evaluate the plan that was formulated by health department staff.

A public hearing about the proposed budget cuts will be held on March 10, Durand said. Supervisors will make a final decision about the cuts in June and adopt a final budget in September.

The plan calls for $33 million in revenue increases, $16 million in cost reductions and the use of $8 million in San Mateo Medical Center reserves, according to a staff report.

More than $48 million of the shortfall comes from San Mateo Medical Center, about $5 million from Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, and another $5 million in administration, Environmental Health, Correctional Health, Aging and Adult Services and Emergency Medical Services, according to the staff report.

San Mateo County Health proposes to eliminate 130 positions, 80 of which are currently filled. The plan calls for about 56 of those employees to be laid off rather than moved to other positions, county health chief Louise Rogers told supervisors.

Twenty-seven speakers at the Jan. 28 study session protested proposed cuts to areas including outpatient pharmacy, ophthalmology and mental health services.
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State Senate candidates to square off on Feb. 5

Seven candidates for California Senate District 13 will go head-to-head in a debate on Wednesday, Feb. 5, at the Palo Alto Art Center Auditorium, from 7:30 to 9 p.m.

Five Democrats, one Republican and one Libertarian are vying for the seat currently held by Sen. Jerry Hill (D-San Mateo), who is being term-limited out of the seat at the end of the year. Senate District 13 stretches from South San Francisco to Sunnyvale and is home to about a half million voters, 49% of whom are registered Democratic, 16% of whom are Republicans, and 31% of whom have claimed no party affiliation.

The field includes Democrat Josh Becker, Democrat Michael Brownrigg, Republican Alex Glew, Democrat Sally Lieber, Democrat Shelly Masur, Democrat Annie Oliva and Libertarian John Webster.

At the debate, voters will be able to hear the candidates’ stances on issues ranging from housing and homelessness to education, climate change and local versus state control.

The California open primary election is earlier this year — on Tuesday, March 3 — and voters will start receiving their ballots by mail in early February. Voters can cast a ballot for any candidate regardless of party affiliation. The top two in the primary will face off in November unless one candidate receives more than 50% of the vote in March.

Becker of Menlo Park is a philanthropist, former venture capitalist and CEO. Brownrigg is a former Burlingame city councilman, diplomat and venture capitalist. Glew is an engineer and Los Altos Design Review commissioner. Lieber is a former state assemblywoman and Mountain View city councilwoman. Masur is the Redwood City vice mayor, a nonprofit executive and a former school board member. Oliva is a Millbrae city councilwoman and real estate agent.

And Webster of Mountain View is a software engineer. The debate will be moderated by Palo Alto Weekly Editor Jocelyn Dong, Embarcadero Media/Almanac Reporter Kate Bradshaw, and CalMatters Political Reporter Ben Christopher.

Questions from the audience will be taken at the debate. Ahead of the event, members of the public can suggest questions to the moderators by emailing editor@paweekly.com or contacting them via Twitter and Facebook.

The event is sponsored by The Almanac, the Palo Alto Weekly, Palo Alto Online, the Mountain View Voice, and CalMatters — a nonprofit, nonpartisan newsroom committed to explaining California policy and politics.

The Palo Alto Art Center Auditorium is located at 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto.

The debate will not be livestreamed but will be video-recorded. The video will be posted to Palo Alto Online’s YouTube channel.

Cal Water completes water tank installation in Woodside

California Water Service (Cal Water) has completed construction of two 64,000-gallon water storage tanks and the installation of two 40-horsepower booster pumps in the Old La Honda Road neighborhood in Woodside, according to a Cal Water news release.

The new storage tanks replaced two old 20,000-gallon tanks at the site of 503 Old La Honda Road near Orchard Hill Road.

The added water storage capacity will provide firefighters and other first responders with more water in case of an emergency and the booster pumps will provide more pressure to the system to overcome the steep elevation changes in the neighborhood, according to the release.

Cal Water will demolish the old storage tanks in the spring, weather permitting, it said.

Cal Water serves about 60,900 people through 18,900 service connections in Portola Valley, Woodside, Atherton, and portions of Menlo Park, Redwood City, and San Mateo County, and has provided water service in the area since 1936.

The agency is in the permitting stage of another water storage project in the Skywood Acres neighborhood of Woodside that was approved by the Town Council in March, according to Town Manager Kevin Bryant.
Located in a premier central Portola Valley area on a non-through street, this desirable home boasts sweeping views, including iconic Windy Hill. Preceded by a vast open meadow and elevated on the one-acre lot to take full advantage of the views, the Mediterranean-style home enjoys the tranquil setting for which Portola Valley is renowned along with breathtaking vistas and level outdoor spaces for entertaining and play.

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OPEN HOUSE
Saturday 1:30 - 4:30 pm

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

*Search Criteria as compiled by BrokerMetrics® using MLS Data January 1, 2019 - December 31, 2019, Menlo Park, All Residential Properties.

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

*As ranked by REAL Trends 2019 Team Volume Inc. Published in the Wall Street Journal in June 2019.

For more information, video tour & more photos, please visit: www.1400HollyAve.com

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Striving for the Senate

MEET THE SEVEN STATE SENATE CANDIDATES
WHO WANT TO REPRESENT YOU IN SACRAMENTO

By Kate Bradshaw
Photos by Magali Gauthier

On March 3, and in the weeks leading up to it, the voters of California’s 13th Senate district will have a tough task. With seven candidates vying to become the district’s next Senate lawmaker, voters will decide which two will move on to the November general election ballot.

And that election will determine who will represent an area that has a vibrant population of nearly 1 million and is home to many of Silicon Valley’s largest companies. The Senate seat is now held by former San Mateo County Supervisor Jerry Hill, who is being term-limited off office.

The candidate pool offers voters five Democrats, a Republican and a Libertarian, though their perspectives, when it comes to how they would tackle the issues facing the region, are more nuanced than party lines might suggest.

They have unique areas of expertise and policy goals that they aim to take with them to Sacramento, based on past career, civic, nonprofit or philanthropic efforts.

These are among the top priorities of each candidate:

Josh Becker, a Democrat from Menlo Park, wants to help California become a national and international leader in environmental innovation.

Michael Brownrigg, a Democrat from Burlingame, wants to take up the fight for an inclusive brand of local control that permits community growth.

Alex Glew, a Republican from Los Altos, wants to push the government to invest in infrastructure and get back to the basics of doing things people can’t do for themselves.

Sally Lieber, a Democrat from Mountain View, wants to dig into anti-poverty policymaking in support of society’s underdogs.

Shelly Masur, a Democrat from Redwood City, wants to tackle school funding problems and expand affordable health care access.

Annie Oliva, a Democrat from Millbrae, spurred by a family member’s experiences on the streets, wants to end homelessness in California.

And John Webster, a Libertarian from Mountain View, wants the government to get out of the way and let the free market dictate community outcomes.

Under California’s “top-two” primary system, the two candidates with the most votes, regardless of party, will advance to the general election on Nov. 3.

The voter registration deadline for the primary election is Feb. 18. Register to vote at registertovote.ca.gov.

There are 40 state Senate districts, and District 13 is particularly diverse and multifaceted. It covers 23 cities and 13 unincorporated areas from South San Francisco to Sunnyvale and along the coast between north of Pacifica and Año Nuevo State Park. It’s home to some of the world’s largest tech companies, venture capital firms and billionaires but also to coastline farmers and a growing number of residents struggling to make ends meet.

Politically, it’s a Democratic stronghold. As of last October, 50.48% of the district’s voters were registered Democrats, 15.05% were registered Republicans, and 30.44% declared “No party preference,” according to the California Secretary of State Office.

About 82% of the district’s residents live in San Mateo County, though the district’s most populated city — Sunnyvale, with about 153,000 residents — is in Santa Clara County.

One of the most significant tensions between Peninsula communities and their elected representatives in Sacramento has been over Senate Bill 50, a proposed law that would have required cities to have relaxed zoning standards for housing development near transit and in jobs-rich areas. Although the bill died on the Senate floor last week, it raised deep questions about governance and what should be done to fix the problems that have come with the explosive job growth and stunted housing production on the Peninsula.

Should the state intervene in local communities’ governance to ensure housing growth? To tackle homelessness? To reduce greenhouse gas emissions? If so, how, and how forcefully?

Those questions aren’t going anywhere. They remain at the heart of the District 13 race this year and ripple across the unique and varied priorities and policymaking goals each candidate hopes to take to Sacramento.

JOSH BECKER

Josh Becker, a venture capitalist for green businesses, a former CEO of the legal analytics firm Lex Machina and a philanthropist, has had a varied career path. He said it’s that very path he’s covered, one that marries experiences in the nonprofit, for-profit and government sectors, that’s led him to run for office.

After college, he went into consulting before he left to work on the ground in war-torn Guatemala and El Salvador. There, he helped rebuild homes, open a market and build a school.

“That experience, for me, made me want to make my life about service,” he said.

He later returned to the U.S., where he worked in the Washington, D.C., political world as a press secretary before heading to Stanford, where he completed a joint law and business schools program. While there, he helped create the “Board of Fellows” program, which trains MBA students to serve on nonprofit boards.

In 2000, he created the Full Circle Fund. The fund focuses on making grants to innovative nonprofits throughout the Bay Area working on housing affordability, economic opportunity, education and technology and which now also supports health and the environmental programs.

“I’m running to be not just a good vote on climate change, but to be the environmental climate leader in the state Senate.”

Becker’s not new to local politics. He ran unsuccessfully for the state Assembly in 2010, then started campaigning again in 2016 for the District 24 Assembly seat. He dropped out of the race after his father fell ill. His father later died of brain cancer, and afterward, Becker helped to start a biotech company to research cancer cures.

He said he’s a collaborator and an innovator who, over the years, has taken on a number of varied challenges facing the state. He is a founding trustee at the University of California at Merced, serves on the San Mateo County County Child Care Partnership Council, is an appointee to the California State Workforce Development Board, and is a board member of the local environmental nonprofit Menlo Spark.

Becker said he wants to be the environmental leader in the Senate, in a state he thinks should be a leader not only in the nation but the world.

“I think what we do here has an impact well beyond our borders, if we get people like me up there who have been part of innovative technologies and innovative policy in this area,” he said.

He’s crafted a detailed environmental policy plan, saying he would push to make state agencies carbon neutral by 2030; propose incentives for people to buy the cleanest electric vehicles and disincentives to discourage people’s purchase of the worst polluting vehicles; support more bike lanes; protect “community choice” energy programs; support annual reporting of greenhouse gas emissions by 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.

He said he favors prizes and incentive programs to spur innovation.

His first policymaking priority as a senator would be to create incentives for the development of new technology to remove carbon from the atmosphere, such as awarding contracts to innovative businesses, he said. One idea: Cement production generates about 7% of the world’s carbon emissions. The
Michael Brownrigg

Mike Brownrigg is a former diplomat and venture capitalist who now works in social impact investing and sits on the Burlingame City Council.

He's running, he said, because as a 30-year resident of the district, "I love this place, and I don't think we're on a good trajectory."

Brownrigg grew up in Los Altos Hills before attending Williams College and later entering the foreign service. After working as a diplomat in Syria and Hong Kong, he returned to the Bay Area with wife Marty, a pediatrician, and they've raised their four children in Burlingame. He worked in finance and investment, most recently at Total Impact Advising, which he's taken a leave of absence from.

Over the past 18 years, he's become more involved in local politics, first serving eight years on the Burlingame Planning Commission before beating incumbents to gain a City Council seat. He's now in his 10th year on the council. His campaign strategy has involved meeting constituents at nearly 100 house parties across the district, in line with his campaign hashtag on Twitter, #NeighborhoodStateSenator.

On the City Council, he's seen the city through times thick and thin: He talks about how, early in his tenure, during the recession, he negotiated with labor through times thick and thin: He talks about how, early in his tenure, during the recession, he negotiated with labor groups to defer raises to bridge the economic downturn and got the community to step up philanthropic contributions to support the library.

"I'm a Peninsula kid, born and raised. I've seen the changes and I think I know what makes this place special, and I think that gives me an advantage as we start to think about how to grow in a way that protects what's special, and yet makes room for people, which is the most important thing."

More recently, he said, he and his council colleagues worked to implement new zoning for a new neighborhood and supported an affordable housing development in the heart of downtown Burlingame. The city is now on target to expand its housing stock by 20% over the next decade, he said, adding, "That's a profound accomplishment for any city."

Seeing Burlingame through tough times gives him an edge over competitors who have led only in times of growth, he asserted. "We're in the 10th year of the largest bull market ever, and I think there are a certain number of legislators who have never seen hard times, and I think hard times will come," he said.

Based on the success of his efforts to add new housing in Burlingame, he's a vocal proponent of local control and opposed SB 50.

"Nobody will push harder for responsible local control than I will because I have 10 years of pushing back against bad ideas from Sacramento," he said.

He said he emphasizes the word "responsible" because all stakeholders need to step up to address the housing crisis, and Sacramento needs to help.

"I think local officials are not unfairly demonized, but we are made to be the only scapegoat of the housing crisis, and that's not right."

"If we don't get more help to invest in quality-of-life investments, like transit, like housing, like child care, then I worry that the Peninsula that I grew up on, that's been this home of innovation and productivity, will erode," he said. "And we need more help from Sacramento, not less."

For example, he said, the state could offer jurisdictions low- or no-cost infrastructure loans.

"It's pretty tough politically to go to your residents, none of whom say, 'I want more big buildings and traffic; sign me up for that!' ... But you can get people to the point where they realize we have to do this because we need a place for our teachers and our young people and our nurses and our working families."

Yet it's even tougher to follow up after residents have allowed new density by asking them for another parcel tax to support, for instance, the resulting over-loaded schools or other infrastructure, he added.

The state could also help with investing in transportation connectivity, he said, such as Caltrain's business plan, getting BART around the Bay, getting another trans-bay rail line, supporting express lanes with rapid-transit buses, and developing better first- and last-mile transportation options. ("Because, newsflash, 65-year-olds are not going to get on Lime..."

See MICHAEL BROWNRIGG, page 18

Alexander Glew

The sole Republican candidate in a predominantly Democratic district, Alex Glew is an engineering consultant who sits on the Los Altos Design Review Commission and is part of the South Peninsula Area Republican Coalition.

He's also not a newcomer to local politics: In 2018, he ran for the District 24 state Assembly seat and lost to Marc Berman, with Berman earning about 76.6% of the votes.

Glew said his guiding principles are his values of freedom, liberty and choice and that he believes problems should "be first addressed by the people closest to the problem."

A big part of choice, he said, is getting to choose one's neighborhood.

"People buy into a neighborhood and raise their kids there or retire there based on choices, but these choices are being removed for them," he said. He said that cities should be able to control their own densities — voicing opposition to the premise of the controversial housing bill SB 50.

The state should be investing in big infrastructure projects, like dams, trains and highways, he said.

Talking about the high-speed rail project, he said: "That a government the size of California ... can't figure out how to plan for a train speaks to the inability of the government to think in a long-term and disciplined manner. ... It would be laughable if it weren't our state and our people and our problems and so much money. It's just sort of sad."

Sacramento, he asserted, is out of touch with what people like — cars, single family homes and lower taxes —, and it spends too much time on "minuscule things that sort of pander to popular culture" rather than "the basics" of investing in transportation and water systems.

"People like cars; politicians say cars are bad. People like single-family homes; politicians say single-family homes are bad. People want lower taxes; the politicians really don't listen," he said.

The lack of investment in infrastructure, even while cities have continued to grow, he said, has worsened the quality of life and made the average commute in the Bay Area more than an hour each way.

"No, as all of this degrades the quality of life for the people, it affects the industry and it affects the economy," he said. "People eventually get tired of commuting two hours a day and move to Texas or another state."

"California has a net outflow of people who were born and raised here," Glew said. "They just get fed up with the low quality of life. It attracts people who are used to a much lower quality of life, you know — we have a vast number of immigrants coming here. For them, this is perhaps heaven. But for the people who are here, it's not."

Regarding private sector growth, he said that the state and counties need to have clearer plans for infrastructure investment. Cities continue to attract more jobs without creating that infrastructure, he noted.

"The big companies are smarter than the local municipalities; they seem to always come out ahead on the deals," he said. "I'm a Republican. I run a business. I'm very pro-business. But I don't believe that there is an unbridled right to increase population just to feed workers to these entities."

If a county doesn't have an infrastructure plan to accommodate job growth, then another county should be eligible for that growth, he said.

He favors the state staying out of health care, preferring a marketplace approach. "I'm The Care that Works," a book by economics professor Sean Flynn, he supports widespread health savings accounts and more competition to give people choices about where to seek medical services. Those services should have clear price tags to help people make decisions about how and whether to save costs in seeking health services, he added.

Some of his other policy goals include changing the state pension system to a defined contribution program that functions more like a 401(k) system and to allow PG&E to face more competition.
SALLY LIEBER

Sally Lieber, former Mountain View City Council member and state assemblywoman, stands out among the candidates as the only candidate with experience as an elected official in the state Legislature. She served in the Assembly from 2002 to 2008.

Her path there was a nontraditional one: She worked as a wallpaper hanger in Michigan and San Francisco for 10 years, earned a GED and attended community college at San Francisco City College and Foothill Community College before attending Stanford. She won a seat on the Mountain View City Council in 1998.

During this period, she said, the state experienced major budget shortfalls and, since funding was so lean, the Assembly was “a slaughterhouse for good bills.”

Serving in the Assembly during that time taught her that a crisis can strike and throw off one’s legislative goals. “You can have the best-laid plans and an earthquake could happen during your term of office. Experience counts for a lot.”

Still, she said, she became known as a collaborator with other Assembly members and learned from more senior policymakers such as Jackie Speier, now a member of Congress.

“They’re not naive. They didn’t come here to Washington and think that being there for six years was an education,” she said. “It taught me a lot about government, and we have to invest in our democracy, and we have to invest in the foundation for our economy and make space for everybody — that’s a challenge, but it’s something that I’m committed to, that I have worked on my whole life.”

“I’m to a point in my political service that political footnote is not what I want to do anymore. I’m not angling for higher office. My interest is in policy and trying to make the machine of government operate better.”

Key issue: Tackling poverty
Age: 58
City: Mountain View
Education: Attended City College San Francisco and Foothill College, Stanford B.A.
Occupation: Volunteer and consultant with community organizations
Years in district: 26
Family: husband, dog
Key endorsements: National Nurses United - California Nurses Association, SEIU California, Sierra Club California
Campaign funds raised: $2,052,085
Independent spending: None

“I really believe that our schools are the economic engine of California, and in essence, that’s really the economic engine of this country. We’re also a district of vast disparity. We have some of the wealthiest people in the world, and we have some very, very poor families. And how we continue to build communities that value everybody and make space for everybody — that’s a challenge, but it’s something that I’m committed to, that I have worked on my whole life.”

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Shelly Masur brings to the candidate pool unique credentials as an education expert with a background in public health. She holds a master’s degree in public health and worked early in her career to support women’s reproductive rights.

As founding CEO of the Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation, which she led for five years before leaving earlier this year to run for office full time, Masur said she’s built relationships in Sacramento and regionally in the education sector.

Before that, she spent 10 years on the school board of the Redwood City School District. If elected, she said, she hopes to work on the Senate’s education committee.

Education represents about half the state’s budget, she noted, adding that in the Legislature, “I think it’s important to have people who understand education policy, and are able to invest and work in it.”

“I really believe that our schools are the foundation for our economy and our democracy, and we have to invest in them,” she asserted. “In the last eight years, we’ve changed almost everything in education in the last eight years. We’ve changed how we fund our schools, how we assess students, how we look at how schools are doing.”

Yet California continues to chronically underfund its schools, she said. “We’ve got to continually work toward moving from the bottom 10 to the top 10 in public education,” she emphasized.

But at the same time, rather than work on creating new education programs right now, she said, the state should continue to pay down pension liabilities for teachers and other government employees. When the state shifted pension costs to cities, school districts and employees, it created “havoc for all of us in local government,” she said. “It’s the responsibility of the state to come back and fund what it took away.”

As a council member in Redwood City, a community that has become a Peninsula leader in housing production, Masur said that another key priority for her is getting affordable housing built to address the region’s housing crisis.

The intersection of housing and education strikes home for Masur: Her daughter, a first-year teacher, is currently living at home because she can’t afford the cost of local housing.

Masur stood apart from the other candidates as the sole supporter of the removed version of SB 50. She said that the bill’s author, Sen. Scott Wiener, who has endorsed her, was responsive to her input and that of other leaders in Peninsula cities when he made a revision to allow cities to develop within two years their own zoning plans to allow increased housing, as well as to not exempt the less populous counties.

Another way the state could help communities to build more housing is to offer affordable housing tax credits and increased support for construction of middle-income housing, which is generally difficult to finance, she said.

To tackle homelessness, Masur said, she favors a “housing first” approach, which provides permanent housing without requiring that they adhere to regulations such as being clean, sober or employed.

“If you don’t have a home, how are you going to go to a regular appointment with a therapist? How are you going to make sure you take your meds every day? How are you going to make sure you have regular food? ... The list is endless because you have to spend all your energy to think about where you’re going to be.”

Masur, who has served as Redwood City’s representative on Caltrain’s Local Policy Maker Group, said that one of her priorities is to fund grade separations, for traffic and safety reasons.

“It’s a critical piece of the puzzle in terms of getting people around and not just people who live directly on the Caltrain line,” she said.

Masur said she also wants to declare a climate crisis and move up the state’s goal to reach zero carbon emissions by 2030. She also wants to make health care more affordable and accessible.

“California is the fifth largest economy in the world. We should be able to move forward in ensuring that everyone has access to health care in some way,” she said. “We all benefit when everyone has access to health care and when we don’t defer health needs. ... It’s just cheaper.”

KEY ISSUES

Support SB 50 because there wasn’t enough affordable housing tied to it. But she wants to focus on other policies that don’t “suck all the air out of the room.”

The service workers who are now commuting in from the Central Valley and south Santa Clara County won’t always be so willing to endure the schlep, she asserted.

“At some point, Stockton, Fresno and Merced are going to become more attractive for the support workers of our society to go ahead and work there, and we’re going to be in real trouble trying to recruit health care and home care workers,” she said. “We can’t solve all our housing needs by having spillover into agricultural areas of the Central Valley.”

A good start would be to invest in rail infrastructure so it takes less than two hours to commute by BART to the Peninsula from the East Bay, she said. That includes a better connection to Caltrain in the South Bay to better serve affordable housing growth in communities like Gilroy and Morgan Hill.

Tech companies should permit more people to work remotely, she said, and there should be a clearer pathway established for how they can be involved in helping solve the problems to which they contribute. “It shouldn’t be considered an act of philanthropy but rather a reliable source of funding, she said. And, just as
Annie Oliva

Annie Oliva’s drive to run for office, she said, is inspired in part by her family’s experience with homelessness. Her son has been homeless and struggled with mental health and addiction problems.

“When those bring you down, they bring you all the way down,” she said. After her son got on board with her run for office, Oliva proposed a seven-step approach for tackling homelessness in California.

Key among these policy proposals are to expand PG&E’s program, through which people in some situations would be required to use shelter or undergo treatment, and to promote transitional jail-diversion programs that give low-level offenders who are mentally ill or struggle with substance abuse the option to receive treatment instead of being incarcerated.

Homeless people in California are unsheltered at nearly twice the rate of the rest of the country, and the numbers of people experiencing homelessness are up in San Mateo County by 21% and in Santa Clara County by 31% since 2015, Oliva said.

“A number of proposed laws, like SB 50, which people in some situations would be required to use shelter or undergo treatment, and to promote transitional jail-diversion programs that give low-level offenders who are mentally ill or struggle with substance abuse the option to receive treatment instead of being incarcerated. People should play out. His positions include: People should pressure the free market dictate outcomes for the rest of the country, and the numbers of people experiencing homelessness are up in San Mateo County by 21% and in Santa Clara County by 31% since 2015, Oliva said.

Another component of tackling homelessness is decreasing the cost of building housing, she said. She favors streamlining permitting and project review processes at the city level to expedite development and reforming the California Environmental Quality Act to limit when people can file lawsuits over development proposals as part of the environmental review process.

“It’s pretty incredible to think that it takes an IPO to put a down payment on a home today.”

Marshall Realty, in 2012. During a 2016 audit, an investigator told her that the business was not registered under her real estate broker’s license, which she later remedied. She was also held to account for authorizing four bank transactions that year, over the phone, that the California Bureau of Real Estate characterized as careless. Her real estate broker’s license was revoked, but she has a restricted real estate salesperson license under which she continues to work.

Oliva said these incidents happened while she was visiting her son, who was receiving treatment, and the bureau reported that she took a number of steps to ensure that it wouldn’t happen again: changing business practices; taking courses in trust fund handling, ethics, risk management and office management and supervision; and getting assistance from industry professionals.

“I took this very, very seriously, and I did everything that they told me to do,” she said. “Yeah, I made a mistake, and nobody was hurt, thankfully, and we fixed it ... It was a painful time. I didn’t take it lightly. I still don’t take it lightly.”

While she’s made a name for herself supporting first-time homeowners, when it comes to mandates from Sacramento regarding the area’s housing problems — whether it’s the specter of SB 50 or renter protection provisions such as rent control and just-cause eviction requirements that passed last year — she’s not a believer.

Among the Democratic candidates, Oliva has spoken most strongly in support of protecting property rights. She opposed SB 50 and favors leaving zoning decisions up to local jurisdictions.

For example, she said, Millbrae’s height limits are, in part, tied to the city’s proximity to the San Francisco International Airport, so a “one-size-fits-all” approach to zoning doesn’t work.

She opposes the state’s new laws that set restrictions on rent increases and said the reason there are so few rental opportunities on the market is because landlords are hesitant with the new laws.

She favors investing in transportation instead — and suggested a train line recommended to her by a local business owner, to run between San Bruno and “Tracy. That would allow more workers to be able to get to Peninsula jobs from the East Bay and beyond.”

“If we can accomplish better public transportation for people that need to come into the district, and they can use that other than a car, I think that would be great for the environment as well,” she said.

For Oliva in particular, the call to return PG&E carries personal resonance. In the 2010 San Bruno pipeline explosion that gutted a neighborhood and killed eight people, several of her childhood schoolmates died and three of the agents in her San Bruno real estate office were displaced, she said.

“My mom (lives) about a half-mile away from the explosion,” she added. “It was horrific. It was scary as all heck. So you can only imagine from the experience we had how PG&E. ... I can’t forgive PG&E for what happened. People that died in that explosion I went to grade school with. They need to be watched.”

When a step should be done to reform the utility, she said, “I don’t want to comment on what I think the solution is. I think right now there’s revisions and that’s definitely moving in the right direction.”

If she were elected, the average resident in the district would be unlikely to see many changes except, perhaps, an accretion of positive aspects of Peninsula life, she said. She identifies her politics as “very moderate.”

“Common sense, I guess, would be the biggest change,” she said. “There’s just so many laws that come into effect that don’t make sense, and I’d like to be the one that listens to everybody.”

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John Webster

Libertarian John Webster is running because he wants to dramatically change the way the state government is run. His belief, he said, is that “it’s just as evil for the government to steal money from the rich and successful to sprinkle free benefits on everybody else as it is for me to steal money.”

He didn’t have concrete responses to a number of proposed laws, like SB 50, because, as he put it, “Since I’m not actually in the Legislature now, I don’t get the wording of intended laws.”

At nearly every level, he favors letting the free market dictate outcomes for people’s lives. Webster said he doesn’t think homeowners should pressure the government to restrict the housing supply to elevate costs so that they benefit.

Instead, he favors making zoning easy to change and letting supply and demand play out.

His positions include: People should have the right to build backyard granny flats and rent them out. People should be allowed to build cheaper housing or mini-houses. Taxation should be based on people’s uses of government services.

“I”m just as evil for the government to steal money from the rich and successful to sprinkle free benefits on everybody else, as it is for me to steal money.”

Families should pay tuition for their children’s schooling. Parents should be the ones to decide at what age vaping is appropriate for their children.

And the environment? He’s concerned about trash in the ocean, but “as far as the human-caused impact of carbon dioxide, I think that’s being totally overblown,” he said.

Things he opposes include rent control, health care for all, taxes and “too much democracy.”

According to his website, he also appears to oppose enforcement of child pornography laws.

He writes: “The original justification for punishing a person who purchased (or possessed) kiddie porn was that he was supporting an industry that abused children to produce the pictures. Once those laws were in place, they were used to severely punish people that took or enjoyed pictures of teenagers in sexy poses, etc. In other words, those laws were used to enforce our culture’s standard of what is an appropriate depiction of children, even where there was no real ‘Child Abuse’ involved.”

“The Law Enforcement agencies should be going after the people that committed the original abuse, if indeed there was actual abuse, and not wasting time and taxpayer’s money on enforcing what amounts to ‘thought’ crimes.”

In addition to his overall anti-government stance, he appears to have some personal grievances with law enforcement. He was arrested in 1990 in a sting operation for what he calls “talk-thought crimes.” In a series of tape-recorded conversations with a female undercover police officer, he discussed running away with her, raising children and “arranging pleasant sexual experiences” for them within the family, he said.

“I have a 15% chance of actually suing the government for millions,” he said. “If I did that, then maybe I could encourage a young lady to run off with me and start a family again.”

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scooters to get to BART," he noted.)

Along with investments in transit to curb car emissions, he said, he’s on a mission to make the power grid greener with more power storage to make a switch to all-electric power more viable. He’s pushing an ambitious goal: for the state to go carbon-free by 2030. That would require creating carbon-free energy and reducing demand for fossil fuels while taking aggressive steps to sequester carbon in the atmosphere, he said. To start, he wants to put together an 18-month blue ribbon task force to figure out how to create or store 10 gigawatts of energy in seven years.

“If the richest, greenest government in the world can’t get to zero carbon energy until 2045, then the rest of the country doesn’t get there until 2075, and the developing world, where most of these emissions will come from, won’t get there until 2100. And that’s game over for our kids and my grandkids,” he said.

He also wants to require the meetings of public agencies that spend more than $50 million to $100 million to be televised, with recordings that are searchable; create a permanent funding stream for early childhood education and early child care; and add a four-year degree program to a community college in District 13.

It’s often “a bridge too far, no pun intended,” for local working kids going to community college who then want a four-year degree to have to commute to San Jose, Oakland or San Francisco, he said.

The state’s challenges are complicated and numerous, but he believes he has the experience and track record to serve the district well, he said. He said he’s guided in his decision-making by asking himself questions such as “What is true north? What are we trying to accomplish?” and “What’s best for the kids?” — giving extra weight to the last of those questions. “That helps you make decisions. You’re not trying to solve for multiple variables,” he said.

SALLY LIEBER
continued from page 16

Cities today have to prove that there will be enough water available to support new growth, they should also be required to demonstrate that there is housing available before they permit new job centers to be built, she said. She wants the state’s surplus properties, particularly the surface parking lots of public agencies, studied and considered for affordable housing development.

One place she’s wary of developing, though, is on areas that have historically been part of the Bay or will be part of it in the future.

“Compact development around Caltrain is the answer,” she said. “We have to have the Bay on our side.”

JOSH BECKER
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Becker says public officials have a responsibility to be efficient and not interfere with the private sector to create affordable housing, as they have in the past.

One place he says they have failed is in the debate about Caltrain crossings.

“The state could offer a contract to the first company to produce ‘carbon-negative’ cement, or cement made using carbon dioxide, he said.

On the topic of housing policy, he did not support the revised Senate Bill 50 and noted that it would likely have been litigated and, as a consequence, wouldn’t have taken effect for three or four years.

Becker says that he would fight for the region to secure state funding for Caltrain grade separations — projects to separate the rail line from the more than 40 Peninsula roads that cross it.

Becker cites Santa Clara County finance documents in stating that only 6% of locally generated tax revenue comes back to the 14 cities of Santa Clara County.

“We need that money back for Caltrain grade separations,” he said.

If elected, he said, he’s committed to carrying on Sen. Jerry Hill’s work to hold PG&E accountable and to being accessible as Hill has been.

PG&E, he said, is disproving the concept of “too big to fail.”

“They’re too big and they’re failing,” he said.

He said he’s interested in exploring a co-op model for the utility, with PG&E potentially becoming a poles-and-wires company.

“I think the investor-owned utility model is broken,” he said. “They’ve lost the trust of the public, and we have to find a new model.”

He said he’s considering hosting regular “Java with Josh” events — modeled on Hill’s “Java with Jerry” sessions — in different cities. He’s also considering creating a district-wide book club to explore the history and problems facing the district — with books such as Richard Rothstein’s “The Color of Law,” Jessica Trownstein’s “Segregation by Design,” or Randy Shaw’s “Generation Priced Out,” he said.

“It would be an incredible district to represent,” he added.

Micheal Brownrigg
continued from page 15

COVER STORY

PAID OBITUARY

PAID OBITUARY

Donald Alexander Lucas

May 24, 1962 – January 28, 2020

Donald Alexander Lucas was born May 24, 1962, in Stanford, California to Lygia and Donald Leo Lucas. He grew up with his sisters Nancy and Allie in Atherton, and would later raise his family there with his wife Sarah. He attended St. Joseph’s School, Charles Armstrong and Bellarmine. He received his B.A. from Santa Clara in 1984 and embarked on his 30-year career in venture capital.

Don met the love of his life, Sarah, over spring break at the Vintage Club in Indian Wells. They married in 1988 and began building their family. They named their first daughter Mary after Don’s grandmother Mary “Gogo” Lucas, the most pivotal person in his young life. His grandmother instilled in him a love of God, gardening, good spirits, and family. Jack soon joined his sister, followed by Kate and finally Henry. Don loved his children fiercely and was so proud to raise them as members of the community he always knew could be anything. He and his family attended the Menlo Circus Club and was the “mayor of Draeger’s,” always greeting the team by name. He often could be found hiking the Dish, lunching in the booth at Evia, or hopping into the Palantir buildings to grab an update and a new company t-shirt. His favorite nights were those spent with family and friends, though he rarely made it past 9pm.

Don was a proud second-generation venture capitalist, initially joining his father on Sand Hill Road. He then founded RWI Group in 1993 and Lucas Venture Group in 2007. He believed in the power of venture capital to make the world a better place. He invested in companies such as Oracle, Cadence, Palantir, Aving, MightyNetworks, Berkeley Lights, Bossa Nova Robotics, Katerra, Pallet Shelter, and Finicast. He believed in supporting his entrepreneurs with any resources needed and loved representing his companies by sporting their logo wear. Pleased by his daughter Mary’s diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes, Don was most proud of his role as a founding investor in Dexcom, the continuous glucose monitor that helps millions today. The Lucas Family hosted “Spring Fling” in Half Moon Bay for 12 years, an annual two-day event that raised money for diabetes research. He then welcomed into his office Beyond Type 1, which his wife co-founded in 2014.

Don adored his community at church and looked forward to each Sunday. He and his family attended Nativity, St. Denis, and Our Lady of the Wayside. He dedicated the gardens at St. Denis to his grandmother Gogo, and most recently enhanced the grounds at Our Lady of the Wayside.

There was a memorial mass at Sacred Heart School in Atherton on 11am February 8, 2020, with a reception to follow. Donations can be made to the Donald A. Lucas garden fund at our Lady of the Wayside Church in Portola Valley or by Beyond Type 1 in San Carlos.

James Madden

April 7, 1947 – December 1, 2019

We are sad to announce the passing of James Madden. His love, laughter, and generosity will be dearly missed. Please join us in celebrating his life on Sunday, February 9, 2020 1-4 pm at Redwood City Elks Lodge, 938 Wilmington Way, Redwood City, CA. Afterward, we will be meeting at one of Jim’s favorite haunts to congregate and see friends, the Dutch Goose. Join us there to relax and have a burger and a beer. The back room of the Dutch Goose is reserved from 4 PM to 6 PM. RSVP for either or both gatherings: erikmadden@gmail.com risekrag@gmail.com
TIDE Academy honors students in first awards ceremony

New high school aims to help students in underrepresented groups pursue tech careers

By Angela Swartz

TIDE is beginning with a freshman class of 106, chosen by lottery, according to district spokesperson Ana Maria Pulido. It will eventually grow to 400 students once grades nine through 12 are in place.

Parents and students gathered in the “High TIDE” room at TIDE Academy, a new high school in Menlo Park, on Jan. 16 to recognize students’ academic and athletic achievements and other accomplishments to mark the end of the school’s first semester.

Students received awards for their participation in athletic activities, along with departmental honors and awards for exemplifying values such as respect.

“Today we make history here at TIDE” with the first awards ceremony, said Principal Allison Silvestri at the beginning of the event. “We make history every day here because we’re the founding class and faculty.”

San Mateo County Supervisor David Canepa and Menlo Park Mayor Cecilia Taylor also spoke and handed out awards.

The name of the Sequoia Union High School District school, which opened in August, is an acronym for technology, innovation, design and engineering — a nod to its mission of preparing students for STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) careers.

TIDE is beginning with a freshman class of 106, chosen by lottery, according to district spokesperson Ana Maria Pulido. It will eventually grow to 400 students once grades nine through 12 are in place.

During the event, officials also introduced Tina Smith as the school’s new vice principal. Smith started at TIDE in December, according to her LinkedIn profile. She taught science at Carlmont High School in Belmont for 18 years before joining the San Mateo County Office of Education as a career and technical education coordinator.

“TIDE’s curriculum includes classes in engineering, computer science, and design, with a focus on project-based learning, according to the school’s website. “In the case of TIDE Academy, the goal is to create an environment that replicates some of the largest tech companies in the world in order to make the Silicon Valley experience normal and in reach for TIDE students,” according to the district press release.

“Because of this, underrepresented groups will have the ability to pursue careers in the tech space, and in the process, help with its diversification.”

TIDE’s student council also announced the school’s mascot, along with a logo designed by students. Award winners include:

- Art department award: Denzel Marquez Orozco
- English department award: Leon Chow
- Math department award: Isaac Martinez
- Physical education department award: Annika Bai
- Science department award: Cambria Jones
- Social studies department award: Joaquin Tuason Cruz
- Service awards: Lucy Rutherford and Annika Bai
- Sports and Annika Bai
- Basketball: Michael Girma
- Sports, cross-country: Solomon Cornell
- Sports, soccer: Zoe Maheras
- Value award for growth mindset: Kiara Velador
- Value award for community: Annika Bai
- Value award for respect: Paul Salceda
- Value award for responsibility: Micah Robinson
- Value award for solutionary: Solomon Cornell

Enrollment for ninth graders for the 2020-21 school year is open now until Feb. 1 at 4 p.m., according to the school’s website. For more information, go to tideacademy.org/Enrollment/index.html or contact the Student Services Department at (650) 369-1411 ext. 22111.

Woodside First Friday program explores CuriOdyssey

Rachel Meyer, executive director of CuriOdyssey, a “science playground and zoo” in San Mateo, will be the guest for Woodside’s First Friday event on Feb. 7.

Meyer will talk about CuriOdyssey’s history as an innovator in early science learning, and how inquiry and play are key to how the science museum carries out its philosophy through an interactive learning environment.

The talk begins at 7 p.m. in Woodside Town Hall at 2955 Woodside Road.

—By Rick Radin
The year is 2025 (gosh, that’s soon!) and apparently environmental conditions on Earth are rapidly deteriorating. Trees have mostly vanished and other plants don’t seem to be doing too well either, with cotton clothing and wine “made from grapes” accessible only to the rich. Meanwhile, advances in “The Nether,” as the internet has become known, have developed rapidly as well, with simulated worlds growing ever more realistic and people able to “cross over” into living online full time, their physical bodies merely “shades” on life support. And in one virtual enclave, known as “the Hideaway,” visitors are guaranteed the privacy and freedom to act out some very dark impulses indeed. This is the disturbing world of Jennifer Haley’s “The Nether,” the latest brainy drama from Dragon Productions Theatre Company.

Director Jenny Hollingworth leads a capable cast through this very entertaining sci-fi/crime procedural/ethics puzzle of a play, which could easily translate to an episode of television’s “Black Mirror.”

Maria Marquis, whose performances always simmer with sharp intelligence, plays Morris, a detective engaged in a sting operation of sorts against Simms (Paul Stout), the architect and CEO of the Hideaway and a major player there. He’s designed the Hideaway to resemble a Victorian-era land of innocence, complete with tranquil gardens, a lovely house and a coterie of adorable children, including winsome 9-year-old Iris (Ellie Schwartz). Rounding out the cast are Drew Jones and Kevin Copps, whose roles audiences discover gradually and about whom I’ll refrain from saying much (it is a detective story, after all!).

In the Hideaway, old-fashioned gentility and manners are the rule, harkening back to pleasures no longer available in the “real world.” It’s also a place where pedophilia is tolerated — nay, encouraged — as is child abuse and even murder. Simms, or “Papa,” as his Hideaway alter-ego is known, built this online lair to be free of moral consequence, where people can be their “real” selves without facing judgement in the outer world. The Victorian era is a perfect setting, offering, as it does, echoes of Lewis Carroll’s (as far we know, innocent) infatuation with children and a touch of Wonderland madness. So skilful is Simms at coding and other tech operations that the Hideaway offers remarkably lifelike sensations as well as

See THE NETHER, page 21

State Senate Candidates Debate

Wednesday, February 5
7:30 – 9 p.m. at Palo Alto Art Center Auditorium
1313 Newell Rd., Palo Alto

Featuring

Josh Becker (D)  Michael Brownrigg (D)  Alex Glew (R)  Sally Lieber (D)  Shelly Masur (D)  Annie Oliva (D)  John Webster (L)

PANEL: Jocelyn Dong, Editor, Palo Alto Weekly
Kate Bradshaw, Reporter, Embarcadero Media
Ben Christopher, Political Reporter, CalMatters

Who will fill the 13th District State Senate seat when Sen. Jerry Hill is termed out this year?

California’s open primary election is Tuesday, March 3. Voters can vote for any candidate regardless of party affiliation. The top two in the primary will face off in November unless one candidate receives more than 50%.

The 13th District runs from South San Francisco to Sunnyvale.

Sponsored by Palo Alto Weekly, Palo Alto Online, Mountain View Voice, The Almanac and CalMatters
M-A hosts screening of Tulsa race riot documentary this week

By Angela Swartz

A film screening at Menlo-Atherton High School on Thursday, Feb. 6, offers the opportunity to learn about a little-known chapter of U.S. history.

Reggie Turner, an M-A and Stanford University graduate, will speak about his 2008 film, “Before They Die!” — about the 1921 Tulsa race riot, according to an Eventbrite invitation for the event.

During the riot, white residents attacked black residents and businesses in the predominantly black Greenwood neighborhood of Tulsa, Oklahoma, leaving hundreds dead and thousands homeless, according to a History.com article.

The film chronicles the stories of the riot survivors and their quest for justice.

Turner contacted M-A English teacher Sherida Bryant about coming “home to M-A” to screen the film and talk about his experiences at M-A as a teen, Bryant said.

The former student made the film after meeting survivors of the riot — who lobbied for the incident to be part of the historical record — during a 2003 trip to Tulsa, according to an article in TulsaPeople Magazine.

The riot remains one of the “worst incidents of racial violence in U.S. history” and is one of the least known, since news reports were quashed, the History.com article states.

Turner will also discuss growing up in East Palo Alto during the 1950s and 1960s, which he found to be similar to the Greenwood neighborhood — both were all-black communities because of segregation, according to TulsaPeople.

Turner found that he and the Tulsa survivors also experienced “extreme cases of racism,” the TulsaPeople article states. During Turner’s time at M-A, there were race riots and bomb threats, and black students were frustrated that no bus would take them to school, Turner told TulsaPeople.

There will be a “meet and greet” with Turner at 6 p.m. in the school’s performing arts center, followed by a screening of the 92-minute film at 7 p.m.

Turner will also meet with students that day during the school’s flex time and lunch breaks in the M-A library.

The M-A Black Student Union and Turner are hosting the event.

Tickets are free for students, $10 for general admission, and $20 for a ticket that includes admission and a DVD of the film. Proceeds from the event will benefit the families of Tulsa race riot survivors.

For tickets, go to bit.ly/tulsatalkm-a.

For more on the film, go to beforetheydie.org.

THE NETHER

continued from page 20

guaranteed anonymity.

Morris is disgusted by these virulent goings on and aiming to shut the Hideaway down. Simms argues that such pros-

ecution is on par with Orwellian thought police, that all must be free to use their imaginations as they wish, and that by allowing pedophilic and violent tenden-
cies to play out in the Nether, the physical world is actually made safer, by giving would-be deviants, himself included, an outlet. Of course, the reality is much less simple, as actions taken online turn out to have consequences beyond the Hide-
away, sometimes in surprising ways.

Hollingworth and crew cleverly divide, decorate and light the stage so that it’s easy to distinguish which scenes are taking place in the Hideaway (all aglow in soft lighting, pastoral sound effects, lovely, colorful costumes and “Waltz of the Fairies” phonograph records) and which take place in the harsh, drab, dark and dirty real world.

Populr trees much admired in the Nether turn into sinister, glowing columns of tech effectively, thanks to Nathaniel Card’s scenic design. One slight misstep is the large screen used during Morris’ interrogations, which seems to exist only to display floating text, screen-saver style, from time to time. It’s distracting and the show could easily do without — or more with — the device.

Though Haley’s work is fiction and takes place slightly in the future, the issues contemplated are very real, and very compelling despite (or perhaps because of) its ick factor. In “The Nether,” the avatars portraying Iris and the other children are played by actors dressed by real-life adults, but I wonder if the ethics would be different, and in what ways, if they were completely AI.

At the heart of it, “The Nether” is less about shocking compulsions than about the desperate need humans have for making connections, as well as the struggle to understand and reckon with what makes a “real” self. And it can be considered as much a critique of capitalism (it’s all business, Simms argues) as of its other, more taboo themes.

The short-but-powerful show raises more uncomfortable questions as it answers and will likely keep audiences thinking well after the curtain call.

Thinking, and hoping that the world of “The Nether” does not come to pass. As a tense and creepy bit of drama, and very compelling, the production is a memorable trip to the dark side of the web.

Karla Kane is the arts and entertainment editor of the Palo Alto Weekly, The Almanac’s sister publication.

IF YOU GO

What: “The Nether”

Where: Dragon Theatre, 2120 Broadway St., Redwood City.

When: Through Feb. 9

Time: Performances Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m.

Cost: $59.

Info: dragonproductions.net

STATEMENT OF ABDICATION OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME

FILED IN SAN MATEO COUNTY ON: Sep. 17, 2019.

THIS BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED BY: Individual.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk Recorder of San Mateo County on January 27, 2020.

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME

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Visit AlmanacNews.com/calendar to see more calendar listings.

Theater
A visit with Harriet Tubman Playwright and actress Betty Jo Lee captures the story of Harriet Tubman, Feb. 8, 7:30 p.m. Free, City Council Chambers, 701 Laurel St., Menlo Park. menlopark.org

Music@Menlo presents the annual Chamber Music Institute Benefit concert and reception. Featuring the upcoming Music@Menlo festival theme, "Music for a Better World," the concert will follow a dessert-and-wine reception. Feb. 8, 7:30 p.m. Free, Menlo Park Library, 800 Alma St., Menlo Park, menlopark.org

Volunteers for Adventure Members of the Rotary Club host a party and showcase how they work to improve their communities around the world. Feb. 8, 6-8:30 p.m. Free, Home of RoseAnn Randotano, 518 Agate Ave., Woodside. sanca.org

Author Events
Adalyn Grace Adalyn Grace joins author Tomi Adeyemi to talk about her new fantasy novel, "A Spark Like Stars and Teeth." Feb. 5, 7 p.m. $5-$23, Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park, keplers.org


Diane Ravitch Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education and author of "Standing Goliath," Diane Ravitch talks about the shortcomings of privatized and public schools as well as Common Core. Feb. 6, 7:30-8:30 p.m. $10-$40; discount for students. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park, keplers.org

Outdoor Recreation
Lessons & Classes
Changing Our World with Public Posters Interdisciplinary artist Lena Wolff leads a hands-on workshop where participants can generate ideas for public posters and think about how to turn political or social frustration into positive and effective action that fosters change. Feb. 9, 2-4 p.m. Free, Belle Haven Branch Library, 413 Ivy Drive, Menlo Park. menlopark.org

Lessons & Classes
Starting Your Garden Learn how to sow seeds now for spring planting and which plants are easiest to germinate. Free seeds are also provided. Feb. 5, 7-8:30 p.m. Free, Menlo Park Library, 800 Alma St., Menlo Park. menlopark.org

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Concerts
2020 Benefit Concert and Reception Musicians from the annual Chamber Music Institute Benefit concert and reception. The evening also features the announcement of the upcoming Music@Menlo festival theme, followed by a dinner and wine reception with the artists. Feb. 8, 7 p.m. $90-$100. Stant Family Hall, Menlo School, 50 Valparaiso Ave., Atherton. musicatmenlo.org

Songs of Resilience Award-winning activist and talk show host Julianne Johnson, pictured here in her studio last year, will be showing paintings of San Francisco, New York, New England and Europe — both representational and abstract — in a "pop up" exhibit from Feb. 7 through 24 at 883-1 Santa Cruz Avenue. The show is titled “Color: Pattern and Scale.” In addition to maintaining a rigorous painting schedule, Johnson, a longtime Menlo Park resident, has resumed teaching after more than 25 years at the Pacific Art League in Palo Alto. For more information about the show, go to mitchelljohnson.com.
City is ‘No. 1’ — but that’s not a good thing

By Mickie Winkler

Menlo Park has staffing problems, as demonstrated at the City Council meeting on Jan. 14. But neither city management nor council members are addressing them.

Here are some facts from the meetings and from the staff reports themselves.

Numbers: Menlo park has more staff, higher total wages (including pensions and benefits), more staff per resident, at a higher cost per resident, than any other city our size in the nine Bay Area counties. We are No. 1 in all categories.

Engaged staff: A 2017 city survey revealed that only 29 percent of the survey respondents were “fully engaged,” a full 15 percentage points below the local government benchmark supplied by the Institute for Public Sector Employee Engagement (the Institute).

Also, in that survey, 49 percent of the respondents were categorized as somewhat engaged, significantly higher than the local government benchmark. No one can be happy about this.

Retention: Last year, 21 regular employees left their employment with the city. Approximately 50 percent, 11, left Menlo Park to take a job with another public agency; and 33 percent, seven, retired.

The balance of departures, according to the survey, assumed roles in the private sector or resigned for personal reasons. “The most common reasons cited in exit interviews were shorter commutes and professional development opportunities (promotion or career path available in the new organization).” In fact, most employees leave for better opportunities in larger cities. Menlo Park has always been a for-profit organization with a high turnover rate.

Training time: As staffing explained at the Jan. 14 council meeting, it takes months to make a new employee productive — and presumably constrains other staff who must help the new employee. Staff endeavors to hire retired employees who don’t require training and are no longer pensionable. That is good.

Pensions: Pension costs are on course to double by 2024 because CalPERS is changing its earning assumptions. Some of the increase is borne by employees themselves. But here’s the kicker: When an employee leaves Menlo Park for another CalPERS city, he takes the pension with him. If that employee earns more at his new job, Menlo Park’s pension obligation for that employee goes up, even though the employee no longer works in Menlo Park. This is a reciprocal arrangement — but Menlo Park, a small city, is a net exporter of employees and is penalized by this rule.

Some staff and council members claim that Menlo Park offers more and better resident services, which is why its costs are so high. I encourage these members to actually study other cities. They suggest that some costs are covered by grants. And they suggest that many of its costs are recoverable by fees. But even if these statements are uniquely true, the grants and fees will disappear when a downturn occurs, but the number of staff will remain.

The only way to reduce staff size is to wait for an employee to voluntarily retire — as our city manager said. We know that it is impossible to fire a staff member for almost any reason.

Clearly, Menlo Park is not organized to benefit its residents. I believe that it could outsource the child care facilities, sell the water department, join the county in managing and overseeing rents. (In the past, our staff costs in housing were higher than the benefits accrued to recipients.)

In any case, I believe that the City Council should hire a good consultant. The consultant should be answerable to the council, not staff. And the consultant should be charged with proposing two differing organizational plans for staffing Menlo Park.

There are currently the equivalent of 28.5 full-time vacancies in the city. The opportunity to reduce city staff size is now.

City is ‘No. 1’ — but that’s not a good thing

LEHUA GREENMAN

“What hurts you today makes you stronger tomorrow.”

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What’s on your mind?

From City Hall politics and the schools to transportation and other pressing issues, the Almanac aims to keep readers informed about their community. But we also want to hear from you.

Tell us what’s on your mind by sending your letters to letters@AlmanacNews.com. Or snail-mail them to: The Almanac, 450 Cambridge Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306.

Letters should be no longer than 300 words.

You can also submit a longer piece of 450 to 600 words for consideration to publish as a guest opinion column.

Questions? Email Renee Batti at rbatti@AlmanacNews.com, or call 650-223-6528.

The Almanac

NOTICE INVITING BIDS

TOWN OF ATHERTON, CA

The Town of Atherton will accept bids for construction of the following public work:

2020 SPRING PATCHING PROJECT

Grind and replace approximately 25,000 square feet of asphalt to a 6-inch depth of pavement failures and placement of thermoplastic/paint striping. Some work will involve utility access hole covers.

Plans & Specifications may be obtained at http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/bids.aspx at no cost. The Contractor shall be responsible for any addenda which may be posted on the Town’s website.

SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 150 Watkins Avenue, Atherton, California 94027, until 2:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on Tuesday, February 25, 2020, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Bids must be for the entire work, and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked “Bid of (Contractor) for 2020 SPRING PATCHING PROJECT,” along with date and time of bid opening.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

BEFORE THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT

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 (30) Charges by Type of Connection – Accessory Dwelling Unit.

WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT

By: I/S Phil Scott

Phil Scott
District Manager

February 5, 2020 ■ AlmanacNews.com ■ The Almanac ■ 23
Los Altos | $2,980,000
Luxury chic and enchanting 3 bedroom, 2.5 bath remolded home, top Los Altos Schools, must see! This is an ideal place to call home in Silicon Valley.

Anni Chu
650.424.8188
joyannpeace@gmail.com
CaliRE #01189653

Palo Alto | $1,550,000
Contemporary townhouse, with high ceilings, cook’s kitchen, hardwood floors, 2 en-suites, 2-car attached garage.

Patrice McNulty
650.917.8262
pat.mcnulty@cbnorcal.com
CaliRE #01714085

Mountain View | $1,188,000
Outstanding value and location! No expense was spared in making this home desirable and inviting. A must see!

Alice Chakhmazova
650.917.4284
alice@alicemyagent.com
CaliRE #01419568

YOUR HOME CAN BE A SUPERSTAR!

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Check it out on Sundays at 4 pm on ABC7.

Find out how to shine a spotlight on your home. Contact your local Coldwell Banker office today for details.

ColdwellBankerHomes.com