COVID-19 transformed the world of outdoor education

Here’s what local leaders say has changed

By Kate Bradshaw

A day at the Peninsula Forest and Beach School won’t involve computers, Zoom or Wi-Fi. Instead, a recent school day involved a group of young students wearing brightly colored masks at Twin Pines Park in Belmont, reading stories on a picnic blanket with their instructor, feeling tanbark with bare feet and going for a hike.

Perhaps that’s why, since the start of the pandemic, the school has seen a tenfold increase in enrollment, from 15 families to 150. The demand has come largely from the school’s expansion into providing customized learning programs for private family pods, according to Bonnie McKinney, owner and director of the Peninsula Forest and Beach School.

As data have increasingly found that COVID-19 spreads far less frequently outdoors than indoors — one study published in the Journal of Infectious Diseases found that it is nearly 19 times more likely to spread indoors than outdoors — the drive to find ways to educate children outdoors during the pandemic has led to new opportunities and obstacles for outdoor education providers.

And while adults throughout the Peninsula are getting vaccinated against COVID-19 in growing numbers, children under 16 are not yet eligible for any vaccine and remain vulnerable to developing complications from COVID-19 that, though rare, can be life-threatening.

While private outdoor education providers like the Peninsula Forest and Beach School have seen skyrocketing demand, other providers have seen significant disruptions and have had to adapt quickly to deliver their programs in new ways.

Meanwhile, educational leaders whose work previously focused on environmental literacy efforts became the new expert consultants, working with school districts to safely bring classes outdoors.

Many questions remain about the future of outdoor education as the prevalence of COVID-19 declines.

We asked local leaders throughout the outdoor education industry to identify trends they’ve seen and share their insights about where things are headed.

The growth of private learning pods

McKinney, whose outdoor school program has grown tenfold during the pandemic, said that a big part of the success is due to its flexibility in developing pod-based programs.

“That was the new innovation that ended up happening,” she said. “We have over 15 private cohorts that didn’t exist before.”

The school works mainly with children ages 3 to 10 and sees the most interest among 3- to 7-year-olds. Its traditional programs run through public parks in partnership with the cities of Belmont and Redwood City, as well as the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in Montara, to teach children outdoors.

Some families the school works with have been extremely cautious about COVID-19, only ordering groceries for delivery, rarely leaving the house and avoiding grandparents, McKinney said. Perhaps a mother is pregnant, or a family member has health conditions that demand extra caution. She said she carefully interviewed families of young children ages 3 to 10 who wanted to enroll.

Portola Valley School District parcel tax measure leading in early returns

By Angela Swartz

Measure S, a reduced parcel tax measure for the Portola Valley School District, is ahead in early results from Tuesday’s special election.

By the close of election night on May 4, 75.3% of votes counted were in favor of the measure, which requires a two-thirds majority to pass, county election officials reported. Measure S was the only item on San Mateo County’s all-mail ballot.

The district is asking for less money than the current parcel tax, which is set to expire: $471 per parcel annually versus the current rate of $581. It would raise $997,000 annually for the K-8 district. It has an eight-year term and would expire in 2029.

“Although we are happy to learn of the early result and the strong support from our community, it is important that the Elections Office takes the time to count every vote,” said Superintendent Roberta Zarea in a Wednesday email. “We are cautiously optimistic based on these initial results. A lot of work went into listening early on to our community so we could put a measure on the ballot that our community could get behind. Thank you to everyone who came out and supported our local PVSD schools and children.”

Semi-official election results at 8:10 p.m. on election night show Measure S with 1,743 votes in support and 573 no votes (24.7%). Just two of these votes were turned in at voter centers; the rest were mailed to the Elections Office.

District officials are asking taxpayers for less because the district has made $1.3 million in cuts over the last three years, said district Chief Business Officer Connie Ngo. The district saved money by eliminating an assistant principal position at Corte Madera School; eliminating a district office classified staff position; freezing the hiring of the director of learning and innovation; eliminating 30 telephone lines; and reducing its workforce by seven teachers and classified staff positions through attrition, Ngo said.

Voters in March 2020 failed to pass a $60 million bond measure to fund construction of a new K-8 school.

See PARCEL TAX, page 17
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In search of smoother ground
Open space district clears its trails of barriers in push to make parks ADA accessible

By Sue Dremann

When Santa Clara County resident Sean Simonson explores trails and open spaces in the Santa Cruz Mountains, he faces accessibility challenges that other bikers and hikers take for granted. Trail impediments might be easy to hop over or maneuver around, but not so on a recumbent tricycle or in a wheelchair, he said.

Simonson, 47, an athlete and newly retired emergency services manager, became quadriplegic from a mountain biking injury in 2006. The change in his mobility hasn’t gotten in the way of enjoying the outdoors, but access to open spaces — even getting through the entrance gate — has proven to be limiting. Most entrances, guarded by stiles or logs to keep vehicles out, aren’t wide enough for wheelchairs and other mobility-assisted devices. Trails and roads can be narrow or too steep, and surfaces can be slippery or snag a chair’s wheels.

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, which manages more than 65,000 acres in the greater Santa Cruz Mountains region, is working to change that. Over the past three years, district crews have been widening the stiles and gates at trailheads as part of their first steps in an ambitious 15-year plan to upgrade their trails and roads.

Atherton: More license plate readers OK’d, town to explore all-electric buildings

By Angela Swartz

Deeming the initial rollout of license plate readers in town a success, Atherton officials will purchase additional readers using $52,250 from an anonymous donor. The plan is to install some along busier intersections, including along El Camino Real.

With the City Council’s approval during its April 21 meeting to purchase an additional 10 cameras licensed by the manufacturer for two years of use, the town will soon have a total of 43 automated license plate readers installed.

Automated license plate readers (ALPRs) are mounted on police cars or on fixtures such as road signs and bridges. The town plans to put additional cameras at westbound Stockbridge Avenue at El Camino Real, westbound Almendral Avenue at El Camino Real, southbound Alameda de las Pulgas at Stockbridge Avenue and elsewhere. Some 22 of these 43 cameras are privately funded.

Police Chief Steve McCulley has spoken about how police have used the readers in town.

“The Flock ALPR cameras located throughout town have proven to be a very valuable investigative tool and a proactive crime detection tool,” according to a Feb. 17 report prepared by McCulley. “Within the first few weeks of operation a burglary suspect vehicle was identified and linked to a major in-town burglary. Several felony arrests have been made as the result of Flock license plate hits. The arrests include stolen cars and wanted, armed violent fugitives.”

Council member Rick DeGolia said he is grateful for the program and noted that Atherton might have the largest deployment of Flock cameras per capita.

The private funding of $52,250 will support the initial purchase and two years of annual costs, as well as the majority of the installation costs related to each camera, according to an April 21 staff report.

When the initial two-year agreements end for the privately funded cameras, the town can elect to remove them if private financial support is withdrawn. The annual cost to fund all 43 cameras would be $107,500, according to the April 21 report.

Police first proposed installing cameras in town in response to a rash of 20 residential burglaries over a four-month period between November 2018 and February 2019.

All-electric building codes

Council members opted, in a 4-1 vote, to take a $10,000 grant from Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE) to pay for staff and consultant time to explore so-called reach codes to require new buildings in Atherton to be all-electric. In addition to California-mandated building codes, cities and towns are encouraged by the state to pursue buildings that are all-electric.

In a blog post on April 20, Apple CEO Tim Cook said last year that 62% of Apple’s employees were “most productive” working remotely, which was an increase of 5% from the previous year. Apple CEO Tim Cook said last year that 62% of Apple’s employees were “most productive” working remotely, which was an increase of 5% from the previous year.

Local tech companies brace for gradual return to office

Google, SAP, Intuit look to adopt hybrid work models as they welcome back employees

By Lloyd Lee

With California set to end its color-tiered reopening system on June 15 as COVID-19 infections decrease and vaccination supplies increase, some of Silicon Valley’s largest tech companies are slowly reopening their campuses.

Google started welcoming back employees to some of its U.S. campuses on a voluntary basis in April, a company spokesperson wrote in an email, though a decision has not yet been made on the reopening time frame for its Bay Area offices. Facebook plans to reopen its Menlo Park headquarters at 10% capacity starting on Monday, May 10.

SAP, which has a Palo Alto location, opened its offices last month at less than 5% daily capacity for “employees who choose to return to the office for business critical needs,” a spokesperson said. Intuit also recently announced its plans to cautiously reopen.

“We intend to be deliberate and data-driven in our approach,” the Mountain View financial software company announced in a blog post on April 20. “Tech companies were among the first to ask employees to work from home during the COVID-19 outbreak, and now their reopening plans could provide a glimpse as to what office life might look like post-pandemic.

Most local tech companies that have announced reopening plans are welcoming employees back to the office on a voluntary basis for the remainder of 2021, and many indicated that they are looking to adopt a hybrid work model that will maintain some aspects of remote work indefinitely after the health crisis.

Google said its employees will not be required to return to the office until September, and when they do come back, the company will pilot a “flexible hybrid work week model,” which teams can work in the office some days and work from home on others, according to the spokesperson.

The week work entails at least three days in the office, according to a New York Times report that cited an email from Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google’s parent company, Alphabet, to staff. Capacity of Google offices will be dependent on various factors, including vaccine availability and lower COVID-19 cases, a spokesperson said.

Similarly, HP expects to implement a hybrid model, “where the role of the office evolves to focus more on collaboration,” a spokesperson wrote in an email.

Apple CEO Tim Cook said last September in an interview during The Atlantic Festival that there were “some things that actually work really well virtually” and the company would not “return
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CRIME BRIEF

Francis Wolke trial postponed

The trial of Francis Wolke, a 28-year-old from Cincinnati who faces murder charges in the 2018 death of Kathleen Anderson, a Menlo Park resident and longtime Atherton town arborist, has been postponed to Sept. 17 for a trial readiness conference and for the jury trial assignment, according to the San Mateo County District Attorney’s Office.

Wolke pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity on Nov. 9, and since then, two court-appointed doctors tasked with evaluating his sanity at the time of the murder returned with split conclusions, according to prosecutors. He remains in custody on $10 million bail.

—Kate Bradshaw

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Library celebrates Mental Health Awareness Month

The Menlo Park Library has planned a range of activities throughout May in recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, including:

- Monday, May 10, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., take a virtual tour of the Museum of Mental Health, the site of the 130-year-old hospital used to film “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest.” It is now dedicated to educating and helping people understand mental illness and removing stigma. Go to is.gd/poMjzs for more information.
- Friday, May 14, from 4 to 5 p.m., Bay Area singer and songwriter Kimberly Gold shares original and cover pop, rock, R&B and country songs. Go to is.gd/tU6eDB for more information.
- Friday, May 28, from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m., Frances Ancheta, a singer, songwriter and performer, performs a show sharing acoustic music and storytelling about her experiences with postpartum depression and surviving breast cancer. Go to is.gd/O90eE1 for more information.

Caltrain to improve safety at two Menlo Park rail crossings

Caltrain is set to begin a project to improve safety near two rail crossings in Menlo Park, at the Glenwood Avenue and Garwood Way intersection and the Oak Grove Avenue and Merrill Street intersection, according to a citywide announcement. To improve pedestrian safety, the project will add new paint striping and lettering and new pavement markers at the pedestrian crossings. To improve motorist safety and deter drivers from driving around the lowered crossing gates, the project will also install a fixed concrete median with flexible bollards at the intersections.

The project was set to start on May 6 and 7 at the Glenwood Avenue and Garwood Way intersection, after which work was expected to take up to three weeks between the hours of 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Mondays through Fridays, according to the city. People can contact Caltrain’s construction outreach line 650-508-7726 with any questions or concerns.

—Kate Bradshaw

Talk on Lyme disease

The town of Portola Valley Nature and Science Committee will host a one-hour talk about the rise of the proliferation of ticks and Lyme disease with Dan Salkeld, a research scientist at Colorado State University and scientific advisory board member for Bay Area Lyme Foundation, according to a town of Portola Valley newsletter. The talk starts at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, May 11. Access it at bit.ly/PVticktalk.

Safe Routes to School survey

Officials from the city of Menlo Park’s Safe Routes to School Program are collecting data on cycling and walking safety in public schools this spring. They’ve released a survey and plan to host community meetings in June before creating audits of walking routes to Menlo Park public schools, as proposed (but not yet funded) by the city’s transportation master plan. The survey is open through May 10 at tinyurl.com/mpsaferoutes.
Menlo Park district warns of strangers approaching students en route to school

By Angela Swartz

Over the last two months there have been “three separate and unrelated incidents” involving strangers “behaving suspiciously” toward students on their way to Menlo Park City School District (MPCSD) schools, according to the district.

One incident was reported on the afternoon of April 5 on the 200 block of Elliott Drive in Menlo Park (near Laurel School’s Upper Campus). A detective had a possible identification of the people who approached a child, “but this did not pan out,” said Menlo Park Police Department spokesperson Nicole Acker in an email. Police took a report of a “suspicious vehicle” in the area at that time, according to the police log.

“The students did the right thing in getting help from nearby adults, and reporting the incident once they reached the school office,” said Parkes Treadway, the district’s public information officer, in an email. “Menlo Park and Atherton police were notified, and our students were not physically injured.”

The Menlo Park Police Department published a blog post on April 16 noting that “as schools start to reopen, this is a good time to remind students to be aware of their surroundings and of people that ask them to do something that they sense is not right or makes them feel uncomfortable.”

All K-5 hybrid students are now attending classes in person five days a week, according to the district. The Atherton Police Department published a similar post on April 23.

An April 22 district newsletter noted that the district is “fortunate to live in a community of neighbors who are helpful and have our students’ safety and wellness at heart.”

The Menlo Park Police Department has developed new resources to help families and students have conversations about stranger awareness, and build confidence and safety skills in students, according to the newsletter.

“Dangerous and uncomfortable situations can be referred to instances where children are approached by a person and asked to disobey their parents or do something without permission, asked to keep a secret, or make them feel uneasy in any way,” the police department post states.

The first post talks about the difference between strangers who can help students — like neighbors, teachers, older children nearby, workers at a local business, or police officers — and potentially dangerous strangers. Suspicious situations can include asking a child to get in a car, keep a secret, help find a lost pet, or offering them candy, according to the post.

If approached by a stranger offering them something, a child should be taught to say “no,” run away, and find a safe adult to report the incident and call for help. The Menlo Park Police Department also encourages parents to remind their children to contact the police whenever they observe or are notified of something they believe to be out of the ordinary. Parents should notify the police as soon as possible.

School officials are using the nonprofit KidPower’s resources to educate students on stranger awareness and how to be safe when confronted with a suspicious situation.

Email Staff Writer Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com.

Student project highlights the plight of restaurant workers

By Angela Swartz

Armed with a curiosity about why restaurant workers receive low pay in the United States, Woodland School student Milo Barnes dedicated his yearlong capstone project to exploring this and figuring out how he could help.

Milo, 13, of Redwood City, said he had heard how people in the restaurant industry had to juggle several part-time jobs to make ends meet given the “lack of substantial increase in the minimum wage,” he wrote in his project summary.

The project is part of a program in which eighth graders at the Portola Valley school spend the school year researching a topic of local and global significance, and present their findings to the Woodland community.

Other topics covered by students this school year included animal poaching, gender equity in pay for female athletes and food insecurity, according to the school’s website.

Milo said one of the most startling things he uncovered during his research was the origins of tipping service workers. During the 1850s and 1860s, wealthy Americans “discovered the tradition (tipping), which originated in medieval times as a master-serf custom,” wishing to seem aristocratic, according to a 2019 Time Magazine article Milo cites.

Many traditionally low-wage industries took this opportunity to legally pay their workers less than a livable wage to increase the business owner’s profits, Milo wrote.

“This practice was even used as legalized racial oppression of the Reconstruction Period, as ‘many former slaves would only be able to work in low class jobs (often tipped) because of their lack of experience and education,’” he said. Freed slaves relied on tips in place of wages, which caused them to struggle to support themselves since people would tip them less because of prejudices, he wrote.

Milo found, via the nonprofit Economic Policy Institute, that if the minimum wage grew with productivity, it would have reached over $20 per hour in 2019. The federal tipped minimum wage was $2.13 per hour in 2019, according to the nonprofit. This amount is maintained because restaurants expect that the remainder of wages will be made up by tips, “which is oftentimes not true,” Milo wrote.

“As a result, this continually leads to worse conditions for restaurant workers, in particular those who live in more expensive areas such as the Bay Area,” he said. For example, the online RENTCafe rent affordability calculator tool shows that the average San Francisco restaurant worker needs to put 40% of their wages toward rent.

Pay alternatives

Milo explored ways for restaurant workers to make more livable wages.

One movement he highlighted is the cooperative business model.

Instead of the traditional business model in which profits go to an owner or investors, a cooperative is owned by its workers, and profits are distributed equally between them.

A Slice of New York in Sunnyvale, for example, has a board that’s elected annually by its members, has its own constitution (an operating agreement) and makes decisions on budget, governance and strategy.

“This is their profits,” co-owner Kirk Vartan told The Almanac’s sister publication, The Six Fifty. “This is where people

See RESTAURANTS, page 10
San Mateo County could move to yellow tier next week

By Astrid Casimire/Bay City News Service

Case rates of COVID-19 in San Mateo County are on the decline, testing rates are up and vaccines are available for anyone who lives or works in the county.

Officials on Tuesday said that the county could move into the least restrictive yellow tier of the state’s blueprint for a safer economy next week.

Chief of San Mateo County Health Louise Rogers said the case rate reported by the state for anyone who lives or works in San Mateo County is at 0.6% overall, and a positivity rate of 1.1% in its most vulnerable communities.

The county could move into the yellow tier next week.

“We will see if that progress continues, but it does look hopeful,” Rogers said.

Rogers shared some COVID-19 milestones the county has achieved, including the one-year anniversary of the Great Plates program, which has provided over 2 million free meals to older adults in the county through partnerships with local restaurants.

And with its increased vaccine supply, the county resumed mass vaccination sites last week.

“There should be no barrier to anyone who lives or works in San Mateo County receiving a vaccine,” Rogers said.

Dr. Anand Chabra, San Mateo County Health COVID-19 mass vaccination section chief, said that appointments will show up on MyTurn.ca.gov three to four days in advance and that work is being done to extend that timeline, add more evening hours and add appointments for weekends.

When the San Mateo County Fair comes to the Event Center the first weeks of June, Chabra said vaccinations would go to the long-term parking garage at San Francisco International Airport (SFO), which had been used as a mass vaccination site in the past.

As of Monday, 73% of San Mateo County residents had received at least the first dose of the vaccine, including over 90% of county residents who are 75 and older.

Chabra said that at least 62% of the county’s 2,196 homebound individuals had been vaccinated so far.

Vaccinations in San Mateo County will continue this week via local pharmacies, health care providers, vaccination clinics — in East Palo Alto, North Fair Oaks, Daly City, South San Francisco, San Mateo and Half Moon Bay — and at the county’s mass vaccination site at the Event Center.

More information on vaccinations in San Mateo County is online at smchealth.org.

Coronavirus central: Clinics boost vaccination rates

County extends North Fair Oaks vaccine clinic held on Sundays

By Embarcadero Media staff

San Mateo County as of Monday had 41,633 cumulative cases of COVID-19, with 567 deaths. There were 19 people hospitalized. Santa Clara County as of Tuesday had 118,541 cumulative COVID-19 cases and 2,070 deaths. There were 64 people hospitalized, 12 of whom were new.

Community clinics have helped boost COVID-19 vaccination rates in hard-hit San Mateo County neighborhoods, but there are still pockets of people the effort has not yet reached.

In the county’s most vulnerable communities, the vaccination rate was 59% as of April 29, while the countywide average is over 70%.

At the Ravenswood Family Health Network, vaccine clinics serve residents of East Palo Alto, where vaccination rates have been the lowest of all cities in San Mateo County. As of April 29, 46% of East Palo Alto residents had received the vaccine.

Ravenswood has administered over 15,000 vaccine doses so far, according to Chief Executive Officer Luisa Buada. There are clinics in East Palo Alto, Mountain View and Sunnyvale.

Buada said the clinics started off with a bang but demand has since dropped. A surge in demand expected after April 15, when the state opened vaccine eligibility to all Californians, did not happen.

“We know that there are a lot more events (and) a lot more vaccine available all throughout the two counties we work in: San Mateo and Santa Clara,” Buada said.

Some of the reduced demand could be due to the “chilling effect” of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine pause in April, she said. The Johnson & Johnson vaccine has since resumed, and Buada reminded people that “there was a chance of severe side effects from the vaccine is extremely low.”

Despite the drop in demand, Buada noted that the community clinics have helped increase vaccination rates in vulnerable and low-income communities.

“Things have come up tremendously because of these efforts of all of us but we definitely want to get to that sweet spot of at least 70% vaccinated in all the communities, so we’re trying to figure out how we can reach those pockets of people who haven’t come out,” Buada said.

Buada said Ravenswood has done barrier-free clinics by providing walk-up vaccinations, plus multilingual outreach and materials. They also moved clinics to later hours so that it’s easier for working people to access.

The next step will be providing mobile vaccination units that go to specific neighborhoods, much like an ice-cream truck.

Though vaccination rates in hard-hit communities have not yet caught up to the countywide average, officials say the gap has not changed that much as vaccinations progress.

Closing the gap has its challenges, according to Srira Srinivasan, deputy chief of San Mateo County Health.

“We do expect it to take longer to reach the same level of penetration in our lowest-resource communities,” Srinivasan said.

“Some of our residents have much less flexibility with work schedules, caregiving responsibilities (and) transportation barriers and we just know that we need to be able to provide more opportunities,” Srinivasan said.

The county’s increased vaccine supply will make it easier to host consistent vaccination sites.

Srinivasan said the county continues to invest in local, targeted approaches to vaccination. These investments involve working with community organizations and developing partnerships to operate clinics.

On April 30, the county announced a partnership with Dignity Health, Sequoia Healthcare District and the city of Redwood City to continue a weekly vaccination clinic in North Fair Oaks, one of the communities that has been hard hit by COVID-19.

And at the Ravenswood Family Health Network, Facebook grants have funded free transportation to and from vaccine clinics, and some groups have provided meals to clinic volunteers. The city of East Palo Alto and community organizations like Belle Haven Action and Nuestra Casa also contribute to vaccination efforts.
Embarcadero Media’s the *Peninsula Foodist* and Facebook have come together to celebrate our local restaurants and give back to the community. As a local business ourselves, we at Embarcadero Media understand the hardships restaurants have faced during the pandemic and we wanted to find a way to connect our communities with local restaurants who need our support.

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ATHERTON
continued from page 5

counties may also adopt more advanced, or enhanced, building codes, known as reach codes, according to PCE’s website. Towns across the Peninsula have adopted such codes, including Menlo Park and East Palo Alto. Woodside officials declined to consider them, according to a report from the clean energy agency.

Portola Valley is “very close” to moving forward with its codes, with a hearing coming soon, Rafael Reyes, the agency’s director of energy programs, said during the meeting.

Reyes discussed how electrically powered homes are safer and healthier, according to the presentation. Gas stoves increase children’s asthma risk by 42%, the report states. Total electric living eliminates the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, and induc- tion ranges automatically turn off when not in use, eliminating a leading cause of house fires, according to the report.

Council member Diana Hawkins-Manuelian said she supports pursuing a move to all-electric building.

“I like the idea of the new houses going in, or putting in hard-ware that’s going to be in place going into the future, it’s our duty to try to fix some of the problems we have (with gas power),” she said. “If I look at the community of Atherton, I think there’s only one thing that I think the ladies will have a hard time giving up the gas stoves for. And I’ve not been able to find any induction stoves that are being promoted very much in the U.S., so that’s something that’s going to be fixed. … I do think that our community would go with it; we have a high number of electric cars already so I’m in favor of this.”

Vice Mayor Mike Lempres was the only council member to vote against the code change, noting “it makes me uncomfortable for us to be mandating things for people to do.”

Peninsula Clean Energy’s consulting team will work with town staff to devise an approach that fits for Atherton, Reyes said. The agency can offer model reach codes to the developers who can offer guidance.

Menlo College to break ground on new dorm, host in-person graduation

Menlo College officials will break ground on a new 288-bed residence at the campus on May 13, Angela Schmiede, vice president for student success and chair of the pandemic planning team at Menlo College, told the council during the meeting. This will be the first time new housing is offered on campus in more than 30 years, she said.

Schmiede said the new three-story housing project will expand affordable housing for students and reduce traffic congestion to and from campus. Last summer the council gave the green light last to the project, which the school aims to complete by April 2022.

Menlo College, which is reopening for in-person classes in the fall, will host its 93rd commencement ceremony May 15 for the classes of 2020 and 2021, since last year’s graduates did not have a ceremony due to the pandemic.

Maya Soetoro-Ng, former President Barack Obama’s sister and co-founder of Ceeds of Peace, which creates peace-building action plan workshops for educators, families, and community leaders, will speak at the ceremony. Schmiede described Soetoro-Ng as a “really delightful person.”

Each graduate will be able to bring two guests, and families will sit in distanced pods on the quad. Schmiede said typical post-cere- mony gatherings have been can- celled. Graduates will be required to verify a negative COVID-19 test before the ceremony.

The school plans to enroll about 850 students this fall, said Presi- dent Steve Weiner.

With the increased vaccine supply received last week, San Mateo County also reopened its mass vaccination sites.

The county received over 24,000 doses last week, a wel- come change from previous weeks, when the county strug- gled with a low and unpredict- able vaccine supply.

As of Sunday, 73% of San Mateo County residents had received at least the first dose of the vaccine.

For San Mateo County vac- cination information, visit smhealth.org/covid-19-vaccina- tion-program-overview.

County extends North Fair Oaks vaccine clinic

A weekly COVID-19 vaccine clinic will continue running on Sundays in North Fair Oaks and offer more predictable hours, the county of San Mateo said in a statement.

The North Fair Oaks clinic is held on Sundays between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. at Fair Oaks Health Center, 2710 Middlefield Road, Redwood City.

The partnership brings vac- cine accessibility to one of the county’s hardest-hit neighbor- hoods. The vaccine site at Fair Oaks Health Center serves a community with significant rates of COVID-19 infections and deaths, and some of those hardest to reach or who have difficulty reaching mass vaccina- tion sites.

The North Fair Oaks clinic will now have a more pre- dictable schedule with drive- thru and walk-up registra- tion without an appointment, the county said in the statement. North Fair Oaks is an unincorporated neighborhood of approximately 15,000 resi- dents located between Red- wood City, Menlo Park and Atherton. The extended week- ly clinics are possible through a new partnership between the county of San Mateo, Dignity Health, Sequoia Healthcare District and the city of Red- wood City.

“From the beginning, we’ve said that our comeback depends on all of us, and that also means it depends on all of us working together to meet residents where they are,” said Dr. Annie gas- demic has highlighted that we are responsible not only for our own health but those around us, and our vaccination efforts are no different. Every shot in an arm is a success for our county,” county Supervisor Warren Slo- cum, whose district includes North Fair Oaks, said in the statement.

Dignity Health and the city of Redwood City will run the site and Sequoia Healthcare Dis- trict will provide funding. The county will continue helping with outreach in English and Spanish, including door-to-door canvassing.

“We’re thrilled to partner with Redwood City, San Mateo County and the Sequoia Healthcare District to help vaccinate some of our community’s most vulnerable residents — many of whom have difficulty accessing high-volume vaccination sites due to work hours and access to transportation, or they lack the technology to book appointments online. We believe these vaccine clinics will eliminate those barriers and allow us to protect the lives of many more of our neighbors,” Bill Graham, president of Digni- ty Health Sequoia Hospital, said in the statement.

The clinic doesn’t require prescheduled appointments, but the state of California’s MyTurn online scheduling sys- tem offers options for schedul- ing appointments for vaccine clinics throughout the county.

Comprehensive COVID-19 coverage


American Clean Energy and Community Service District project

The town’s long-awaited new Civic center project will break ground this fall, said in the statement. The town’s long-awaited new Civic center project will break ground this fall, said in the statement.

Go to studentpress.org/nspa/ convention were eligible to enter their work. The Almanac Press.org/nsipa/ spring-2021-best-of-show for the full list of winners.

—Angela Swartz

Menlo School newspaper takes home award

Menlo School’s student newspa- per won fourth place in the best paper category for a school of 1,500 students or fewer in the National Scholastic Press Asso- ciation’s Best of Show competi- tion, according to the organiza- tion’s website.

The association honored student journalists and their organizations during its Spring National High School Jour- nalism Convention, produced virtually March through May. Students registered for the

Civic center project

The town’s long-awaited new $31.6 million civic center, which includes police and administra- tion facilities, building and planning offices and a library, is on track to finish on time, City Manager George Rodericks told the council.

A soft opening is planned for July, and the library should be ready in August, he said. A grand opening is slated for October.

Last week, construction work- ers planned to continue demolition of a roadway, curb and gutter on Station Lane and begin to install lower roof clay tile for City Hall and the police department building, according to a staff report. They also planned to con- tinue work on electrical and mechanical systems for the new library, City Hall and police department.

Email Staff Writer Angela Swartz at aswartz@ almanacnews.com.

RESTAURANTS
continued from page 7

are taking time to think about the long term and that’s where I see people really understanding the weight of ownership. It’s not about today. It’s not about what you get. It’s how do you survive and what does it take to sustain?”

Milo also researched manda- tory service charges, sometimes called a quality of life tax. A former restaurant owner told the Washington Post in 2019 that a mandatory 18% service charge improved the “food, the service, the pay, the customer satisfaction” at his business.

Increasing minimum wage and abolishing tipped wages could decrease poverty among restau- rant workers, Milo found. Instead of employers being forced to lay off workers to save money, experts have said that an increase in the minimum wage is predicted to increase employment, according to the Economic Policy Institute research.

A restaurant owner Milo inter- viewed said she combines her employees’ tips and distributes them equally among them, which she explained helps reduce burnout. This started during the COV- ID-19 pandemic when her work- ers had to become more flexible to accommodate online orders, often having to work many dif- ferent jobs within the restaurant. Her workers received less money in tips because fewer people were eating out. Pooling tips could help increase profits for her restaurant, Milo found. Her waiters, not normally interact with customers, the owner said.

Milo posted flyers in Redwood City and Ladera, which directed people to a website with infor- mation on how others can help restaurant workers make living wages. He includes links to local organiza- tions that advocate for restaurant workers, including the Cal Restaurant Association and the Restaurant Relief Fund.

For more on the project, go to supportworkers.wixsite.com/rashe/raise/theworld.

Email Staff Writer Angela Swartz at aswartz@ almanacnews.com.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS
continued from page 6

Menlo School’s student newspa- per won fourth place in the best paper category for a school of 1,500 students or fewer in the National Scholastic Press Asso- ciation’s Best of Show competi- tion, according to the organiza- tion’s website.

The association honored student journalists and their organizations during its Spring National High School Jour- nalism Convention, produced virtually March through May. Students registered for the

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include Philip Martin Humphreys, 78, a Portola Valley resident of nearly five decades, on April 14.

To read full obituaries, leave a message, or send photos, go to Lasting Memories at almanacnews.com/obituaries.
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Michelle Inserra, MD is an otologist with the Earlens Hearing Center. She holds a medical degree from Stanford University and completed a fellowship in Neurotology at the California Ear Institute.

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interested families and pods to match them with outdoor educators committed to complying with the family’s concerns, even selecting educators based on their living conditions, such as having just one low-risk housemate. Staff members for private cohorts often work with only one group, and up to three cohorts if they all agree. These staffs don’t mix with the other program instructors, and there are precautions: taking temperatures, washing hands, avoiding shared foods and wearing masks.

Looking to the future, McKinney said she expects that many families will return to school, though some will still want to participate in her outdoor learning programs after school.

Other families have expressed a commitment to the private pod model next school year, she said.

“I think there’s still an interest in people wanting to be safe for one more year, and limit the exposure their children have to people,” she said.

And a couple of families have turned to the Peninsula Beach and Forest School to provide all of their students’ schooling, she said.

Many of the families she’s worked with have attended traditional rather than home school. To transition to home school but also to having school fully outdoors has been a new concept for many parents, McKinney said.

The pandemic has exposed a whole new group of parents to the concept of “forest school” who might otherwise have thought it was a radical idea, she added.

“I’m hoping that this is an anchor in people’s lives, that they have this moment in time to build a connection to nature that’s not going away,” she said.

“I’m really hoping that this is the beginning of a beautiful nature connection and relationship for kids and families.”

Investment in outdoor classrooms

For Andrea Yeghoian of the San Mateo County Office of Education, the pandemic has created new interest from local school districts to expand facilities to provide outdoor learning spaces. And that interest has snowballed into a broader openness to environmental literacy programs.

Yeghoian is the office’s environmental literacy and sustainability coordinator and has been leading an initiative to provide technical support to public and private schools in San Mateo County, helping them figure out how to do more teaching outside during the pandemic.

Whether that meant taking math and English classes outside or developing specific curriculum for North Campus roughly half of the school districts in the county reached out for technical assistance in the past year.

One of the biggest obstacles schools faced was in their physical outdoor layouts, she said.

“A lot of schools needed to look at their infrastructure.”

In some cases, schools already had plenty of picnic tables, benches or other outdoor seating, and it was a matter of moving or clustering them differently to facilitate outdoor learning. Others had to invest in seating, shade structures or outdoor Wi-Fi hubs.

“Many saw that as a long-term investment to use in the short term,” Yeghoian said.

Her team provided training to staff and faculty members on how to feel comfortable teaching outdoors, thinking through what work better outdoors, or how weather might impact those activities and how to plan for them.

Circle time lends itself to taking place outside, she said.

The vast majority of the technical support provided to districts was before the vaccine, and many teachers were saying that they wanted to teach outdoors because of the lower transmission rates, she explained.

“I think another outcome has been helping more teachers feel safe and comfortable returning to teach in person,” she said.

The office also worked with private schools, some of which opted to have their students spend most of their school days outside.

“Regardless of COVID-19, having kids spend part of their time outdoors every day should be a part of their regular education process,” she said. “Learning and playing in the outdoors is a resiliency strategy that works no matter what the circumstances are.”

Research indicates that being in an outdoor environment can also help reduce the amount of trauma that kids feel in the moment, with a valuable tool for social-emotional learning as kids transition back into school, she said.

In the long term, Yeghoian added, it’s likely there are going to be more disruptions to learning due to climate change, and figuring out how to use outdoor spaces to benefit students and reduce each school’s environmental footprint will be helpful.

“You have to make the investment at some point,” she said.

For nonprofits, virtual options expanded, but finances didn’t

For other more traditional providers of outdoor and environmental learning, the pandemic has proven more disruptive.

The CuriOdyssey Science and Wildlife Center at Coyote Point in San Mateo has had to signifi-
cantly retool its approach to stay alive.

According to Carl Oosterman, director of education at CuriOdyssey, the nonprofit closed to the public when the pandemic started, and it was thanks to federal Paycheck Protection Program loans that the organization was able to “come out of the pandemic and not have to shutter completely.”

With the facility shut to visitors, leaders at CuriOdyssey quickly pivoted to offering virtual education programs. The shift to online lessons enabled staff to provide lessons more conveniently than it would have pre-pandemic, but it has resulted in a decline in revenues.

Successfully, fees from field trips had been a key revenue stream for the organization, Oosterman said, adding that it’s not likely that field trips are going to come back soon, since traveling by school bus is still a risk that makes many educators and parents wary.

They’re also anticipating that some local schools may be facing budget cuts and may not have funds for field trips next year, he said.

Not being able to hold summer camps last year also hurt. By the fall, CuriOdyssey was able to set up an outdoor learning space, offering an early learning program for parents and young children, an after school program and a program for home-schoolled students, he said.

Before the pandemic, most of those programs would have taken place in an indoor classroom, Oosterman said, but the kids seemed to enjoy playing with the tactile surroundings of leaves, rocks and sticks, while enjoying the distractions—which became learning opportunities when wildlife would run, either or fly through the outdoor “classroom.”

“A lot of natural learning opportunities … occurred by having our programs done outside,” he said.

As for what’s next, the organization is looking to continue with its virtual programming offerings and go back to providing in-person opportunities safely while focusing on tackling the learning gap that has emerged between students who have had the technological tools to engage with online learning and those who have not.

One added perk of virtual programs is that CuriOdyssey was able to include participants from far beyond the region, with people attending events from New York, Los Angeles, Washington and Sacramento, he said.

“We were popular when the pandemic hit. If we have any headwind, it is people’s fear or apprehension of going back to an institution where people are touching exhibits and it may be crowded,” he said.

The pandemic has laid bare the gap between those who have the resources to bring their kids to an after school program, sign them up for a virtual class and have the Wi-Fi and technological equipment to connect, and those who don’t, he said.

“What we are going to be focusing on as part of that building process is (that) we want to make sure that science is accessible to everyone … We’re keenly aware of that learning loss and that gap, and as an organization, we want to make sure that we’re leading and providing opportunities for those marginalized communities,” he said.

Email Staff Writer Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com.
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Atherton

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14 | The Almanac | AlmanacNews.com | May 7, 2021
Moments to the excitement of University Avenue, convenient to prestigious Stanford University, and offering easy access to eco-friendly public transportation – this fresh, modern home exemplifies the vibrancy of its setting in sought-after Old Palo Alto. Outstanding build quality is readily apparent on both levels of this 8-year-old property, which offers 4 bedrooms, 3.5 bathrooms, and over 2,000 square feet of living space. Stylish appointments including hardwood floors, marble finishes, and detailed ceilings create a sophisticated ambiance throughout the floor plan perfectly suited for a contemporary lifestyle.

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High school sports roundup

Sequoia district will not take part in CCS playoffs

The Sequoia Union High School District has made the decision to not take part in the Central Coast Section playoffs. The decision applies to all sports at Menlo-Atherton, Woodside, Sequoia and Carlmont high schools.

"The decision was made at the administrative level, but the (athletic directors) were all in support," Menlo-Atherton co-athletic director Steven Kryger said. "For myriad reasons. With the playoffs going on into June after graduation, there's just a lot going on."

The Peninsula Athletic League had earlier decided to allow traditional spring sports to take part in CCS, to make up for last year when all those sports had their seasons curtailed by the onset of the COVID-19 crisis.

"When we returned to play we decided no standings, no records, no league championships and no playoffs," Kryger said. "At the time we didn't think CCS would have one. We wanted records, no league championships - no playoffs,' Kryger said. "There's a lot of emotion on this. I understand where they are coming from."

Given the outpouring of sentiment, would the board reconsider?

"As of now, no," Metheany said. "My board is my board. This went from an ad hoc committee of athletic directors to the principals. It was tabled three times and we had public input three times."

Talks of football merger gaining momentum

The on-again, off-again talks to merge the two largely public high school athletic leagues on the Peninsula for football appear to be gaining traction.

Under the proposal, the 14-team Santa Clara Valley Athletic League and the 18-team Peninsula Athletic League would merge to form a 32-team, four-division league for football. A number of hurdles need to be cleared before the merger could take place, and no sooner than fall of the 2022-2023 school year.

"We're definitely open to it," Metheany said. "It makes sense. It would really help out teams that are struggling to keep their programs alive. It would help both leagues. All said and done it would save programs." SCVAL football coaches voted 14-0 in favor of the realignment.

The top division would include one "A" league with the top eight teams, two middle-level "B" leagues and one lower-tier "C" league, that would include programs that have struggled the most in recent years, such as Mills (which was unable to field a team this spring) and South San Francisco from the PAL, Monta Vista and Lynbrook from the SCVAL.

The four divisions would include one "A" league with the top eight teams, two middle-level "B" leagues and one lower-tier "C" league, that would include programs that have struggled the most in recent years, such as Mills (which was unable to field a team this spring) and South San Francisco from the PAL, Monta Vista and Lynbrook from the SCVAL.

The top division would include most of the top public school football programs in the Central Coast Section, such as three-time defending PAL Bay Division champion Menlo-Atherton along with traditional SCVAL De Anza Division heavyweights Los Gatos, Wilcox, Milpitas and Palo Alto. "It would be a killer league," Palo Alto coach Nelson Gifford said. "I don't think you'd find many leagues tougher than that. It would be good for football in the Bay Area."

The SCVAL has advocated for this merger for several years, but initially encountered resistance from the PAL, a sentiment that appears to be changing.

"PAL coaches shrugged their shoulders and said it seemed like it was the SCVAL's problem," said longtime Aragon coach Steve Sell. "I disagreed, I thought we should be more global. At the time our (three six-team divisions) were working right. The last couple years that fifth and sixth spot in the Bay became harder to fill and there was more discrepancy in the Lake. The changes were pretty dramatic and something we really needed to look at."

"The PAL is finally facing what we're facing," Metheany said. "Kids are being very discriminating about what activities they want to try to make sure the sport that will have four or five running clocks in a season and stare down the barrel of five miserable experiences? The gap between the top teams and lower teams continues to grow. We want to try to make sure the sport is an enjoyable experience."

An SCVAL/PAL merger would make a lot of sense, but it is not the only possible realignment scenario being discussed. The Campbell Union High School District schools (Del Mar, Prospect, Branham, Westmont and Leigh) have expressed some interest in leaving the Blossom Valley Athletic League and joining the SCVAL.

Again, from a geographic standpoint, that move would carry a certain amount of logic. "The lacrosse team at Lynbrook walks to Prospect for matches," Metheany noted. "Also, Leigh and Westmont are located right on the outskirts of Los Gatos in another geographic link. Only in time will we see how it all plays out."

—Glenn Reeves
PUBLIC NOTICES

Woodside, CA 94062
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Call Alicia Santillan at 650-223-6578 or email asantillan@paweeke.com for assistance with your legal advertising needs.
The deadline is Monday at noon.

NEWS

ACCESSIBILITY
continued from page 5

26 preserves in compliance with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act. On April 14, staff presented the board of directors with its first progress update since the district approved its federally mandated ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan in May 2019. The ADA’s 1990 law requires public agencies to provide equal access to programs, services and activities. Midpen’s plan, which identifies locations within its reserve that it serves as its facilities, is the district’s first update in 28 years.

So far, the district has removed 208 out of 544 barriers identified for upgrades within the first five years of the Transition Plan, Susanna Chan, district ADA coordinator and assistant general manager for project planning and delivery, said during the directors meeting.

In addition to widening trailhead stairs, district crews also have upgraded restrooms at Windy Hill, Russian Ridge and Monte Bello trails by replacing dilapidated, single-stall restrooms with new double-stall, ADA-compliant restrooms; installing an ADA-accessible parking spot; constructing accessible paths from the parking stalls to the restrooms; and adjusted door pressure at its buildings in high-usage areas. The district also purchased assisted listening devices for access to public meetings.

In the coming months, Midpen is prioritizing upgrades to restrooms, parking, signage and path access (see Daniels Nature Center, Skyline Ridge and Rancho San Antonio, Chan said.

“That is a significant accomplishment amid COVID, wildland fires and other disruptions,” noted an April 14 general manager’s report to the board.

The first round of projects is part of the district’s five-year barrier-removal work outlined in its Transition Plan. This phase is focused on widening sidewalks and gates at trailheads, removing logs and upgrading restrooms, drinking fountains, parking lots and trailhead signage to inform users about a trail’s distance, gradient and surface. Smaller capital improvements that cost under $50,000 are set to be completed in one to 10 years; larger projects, like buildings, bridges and major trail building could take up to 15 years.

Lobbying for change

Since his injury, Simonson has lobbied and worked with Midpen staff to assess and repair impediments to access. He did so in tandem with a group of folks with disabilities to make trails look at sections that are hazardous to hikers and those using walking aids.

“Of all the challenges, one stands out: the entrance and exit to open-space areas. Even to access fire roads and trails, there are gates, bollards and fencing that were put here to prohibit motorized vehicles years ago,” he said. “Midpen has replaced them with 36-inch-wide stiles that can now use. Parts of the Kearsarge Pass trails were eroded, loose rock atop hard rock made the surface slippery,” he said. The district has been responsive to addressing those issues, he said. “Wildlands and building an accessible trail are not mutually exclusive, he said. The Independence Trail outside of Nevada City in the western Sierra Nevada — the first identified wheelchair-accessible wilderness trail in the country — offers hard-packed surfaces, bridges over the Yuba River and a nearly leveled, wide trail, he said.

He acknowledged there’s a balance between making some trails accessible and not harming the environment. "Will resolving the issue to make it accessible make a better trail or ruin it for everyone?" he said.

The value of open space access for all is undisputed, he said. Open space is “a comforting kind of place” to listen to the wind, enjoy the greens of majestic trees, col¬ umbine and wildflowers and rushing water — a great asset for people who “spend 99% of the time indoors and the other 1% in the doctor’s office,” he said.

Leveraging progress

Midpen currently offers 11 “easy access trails” to accommodate seniors, families with strollers and people using assistive devices such as walkers and wheelchairs. Most easy access trails are at least 4 feet wide, have an incline generally not exceeding 5% and feature fairly uniform surfaces. Several proposed extensions to the trails are being considered. Bear Creek Redwoods and La Honda Creek preserves’ master plans call for additional easy access trails, for example.

The district has added to its progress by leveraging capital improvement and maintenance projects to add ADA access. The district has also replaced 322 wheelchairs over the past year, for example. As part of its 2019 Ravenswood Bay Trail project, which resurfaced 3,200 feet of trails, the board approved a contract change that resurfaced the entire levee trail surrounding Cooley Marsh as an easy access trail.

Plans for the Deer Hollow Farm White Barn Rehabilitation project currently under construction would add a new ADA-compliant drinking fountain and accessible path, according to the general manager’s report.

For Simonson, the updates indicate a recognition that improvement is no longer an afterthought.

As improvements make the open spaces more welcoming, he hopes they’ll attract more people to enjoy the outdoors. "I would love to see more folks with disabilities using open space areas. It’s everything that I do. It is my connection with nature. It is what I did before I got my injury and what I planned to do forever. It’s kind of like my religion, my church. I love going out there and exploring plants and ani¬ mals and the views in the fresh air,” he said. ■

Email Staff Writer
Sue Drenann at sdrenann@paweeke.com.

PARCEL TAX
continued from page 1

to renew the soon-to-end tax, Measure O, which expires in June and raises about $1.2 million annually for the district. It funds advanced math, science and technology, reading, writing, art and music programs; reduced class sizes; and retention of teachers for the district’s two schools, Ormondale and Corte Madera, according to the dis¬ trict website. The tax also covers 17% of district teachers’ salaries, according to the ballot measure. Measure O passed in 2013 with 99% of the vote and consolidated two existing taxing measures: Measure C (with an annual tax of $290 per parcel) and Measure D ($168 per parcel), and increased the rate by $1/20 $851, Nog said.

All voters who live within the school district boundaries, which extend beyond those of the town of Portola Valley, could vote on the bond measure. The district includes Woodside resi¬ dents who live in the Skylanda and Skywood Acres neighbor¬ hoods and off Phillips and Family Farm roads, and part of Skyline Road Home.

The next results will be released after The Almanac’s press deadline, on Friday, May 7, at 4:30 p.m., according to the San Mateo County Election Office. The Elections Office plans to certify the results on June 3. ■

Email Staff Writer
Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com.

995 Fictitious Name Statement
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File No. 287217
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AERIEL SKINNER OLYMPIC FUND.
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No. 287289
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It’s kind of like my religion, my afterthought. "I would love to see more folks with disabilities using open space areas. It’s everything that I do. It is my connection with nature. It is what I did before I got my injury and what I planned to do forever. It’s kind of like my religion, my church. I love going out there and exploring plants and ani¬ mals and the views in the fresh air," he said. ■

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Woodside, CA 94062
This business is conducted by: An individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A. This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on April 9, 2021. (AlM Apr. 23, 30, May 7, 14, 2021)

AUTO - VINO A PRESERVE FOR FINE CARS AND WINE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No. 287169
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: AutoVino - A Preserve For Fine Cars and Wine, located at 205 Constitution Dr., Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County Registered owner(s): ATHERTON ASSOCIATES, INC. 999 Woodside Rd. #400, Woodside, CA 94062, San Mateo County This business is conducted by: A Corporation. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 1-16-06. This statement was filed with the County Clerk Recorder of San Mateo County on April 11, 2021. (AlM Apr. 30, May 7, 14, 21, 2021)

BAY AREA MOBILE NOTARY & SERVICES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No. 287130
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: Bay Area Mobile Notary & Services, located at 1103 Carlton Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County Registered owner(s): DEADRA LAMPIN 1103 Carlton Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025 California This business is conducted by: A Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 1-16-08. This statement was filed with the County Clerk Recorder of San Mateo County on April 11, 2021. (AlM Apr. 30, May 7, 14, 21, 2021)
RESOLUTION NO. 2239 - (2021)

RESOLUTION OF INTENTION TO ANNEX CERTAIN TERRITORY TO THE WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT ON-SITE WASTEWATER DISPOSAL ZONE

Lands of Turnquist

District Board of West Bay Sanitary District finds and determines as follows:

A. This Resolution of Intention is adopted pursuant to the District’s “Zone Master Annexation Resolution” ("ZOMAR"), which was adopted by the District Board August 12, 1996. The provisions of ZOMAR are incorporated by reference into this Resolution of Intention.

B. The District has received an application to annex a parcel of real property (the “Parcel”) to the District’s On-Site Wastewater Disposal Zone (the “Zone”). The Parcel is described in Exhibit “A” attached to this Resolution of Intention and the information contained in the Exhibit are incorporated by reference.

C. The applicants have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the District Board that the Parcel constitutes “real property” for the purposes of Section 2(b) of ZOMAR in that:

1. It is the intention of the District Board to annex the Parcel to the Zone pursuant to the provisions of ZOMAR and applicable provisions of law.

2. In conjunction with a meeting of the District Board to be duly and regularly called and conducted, the Board will conduct a Public Hearing for the purpose of considering all matters pertaining to this Resolution of Intention.

The time, date and place of the Public Hearing are:

Date: June 9, 2021
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: West Bay Sanitary District Offices
500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025 & via Zoom

At the Public Hearing, all interested persons will be heard.

3. This Resolution of Intention shall be published and copies shall be delivered to the persons and entities as specified in ZOMAR Section 2(e)(ii).

4. A true copy of this Resolution of Intention shall promptly be filed for record in the office of the County Recorder of the County of San Mateo.

5. The District Manager shall cause the matters set forth in Sections 3 and 4 of this Resolution of Intention to be completed as directed.

In consideration of the foregoing findings and determinations, IT IS RESOLVED by the District Board as follows:

1. The time, date and place of the Public Hearing are:

Date: June 9, 2021
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: West Bay Sanitary District Offices
500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025 & via Zoom

2. In conjunction with a meeting of the District Board to be duly and regularly called and conducted, the Board will conduct a Public Hearing for the purpose of considering all matters pertaining to this Resolution of Intention.

3. This Resolution of Intention shall be published and copies shall be delivered to the persons and entities as specified in ZOMAR Section 2(e)(ii).

4. A true copy of this Resolution of Intention shall promptly be filed for record in the office of the County Recorder of the County of San Mateo.

5. The District Manager shall cause the matters set forth in Sections 3 and 4 of this Resolution of Intention to be completed as directed.
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EXTEND THE EVICTION MORATORIUM

By Miriam Yapanqui/CalMatters

I live and work in Silicon Valley, one of the most expensive places to live in the country. According to Zillow, the average price of a home is $1.3 million. But buried deep in this large swath of land, known for its dynamism and innovation, is East Palo Alto, a working-class Latino community where my extended family still lives.

During a pandemic where giant tech corporations saw record-breaking profits, people in my community saw record-breaking panic. High transmission rates of COVID-19 among the Latino community came because of factors like preexisting health conditions, type of employment and overcrowded housing.

As someone who grew up in a multigenerational working-class household, the scene playing out in East Palo Alto and other Latino communities like Portola Valley neighborhoods is one I understand. Families in these households were faced with the most challenging decision this past year — stay home to avoid exposure to the virus or lose the paycheck that helps pay the nearly unaffordable rent.

Right now, California has protective legislation in place that prohibits eviction and foreclosure for nonpayment of rent or mortgage during the COVID-19 period. It also eliminates debt for tenants who were unable to pay rent during the pandemic. Finally, it compensates small landlords and nonprofit housing operators who need assistance to ensure housing stability for their tenants.

Although California has these protections in place, saving millions of Californians from losing homes by protecting tenants from evictions due to missed rent, this protection ends in June. Hope is on the horizon with vaccination rates ticking up, but the financial impact of COVID-19 rages on.

This problem is echoed across the state as Californians have lost more jobs during COVID-19 than during the Great Recession, and unemployment is higher among Californians of color.

The urgency to extend eviction protections could not come at a more crucial time, especially since many of the people I serve at Nuestra Casa, a local nonprofit serving the Latino community in Silicon Valley, have lost jobs and have no income. Rent debt is growing at a staggering rate.

Unfortunately, this crisis requires systemic, longer-term interventions. At a minimum, California must extend the moratorium past June for people still impacted by the pandemic. Many people will not be able to return to work by then.

At a local level, thousands in San Mateo County receive support from robust rental assistance programs. But the scale of this problem is beyond those programs’ scope, and these resources are quickly exhausted. The application process is also complicated, especially for residents with limited time and English proficiency.

One step in the right direction is the California Legislature’s approval of Senate Bill 91, SB 91 authorizes the use of $2.6 billion in federal funds to pay landlords rent owed by qualifying tenants with COVID-19 financial hardships. Some of these funds will also go to organizations with deep roots in communities, like Nuestra Casa, to help tenants complete complicated rental assistance applications.

By extending the moratorium, we can ensure that rental assistance money achieves its intended purpose, preventing homelessness and getting money into the pockets of landlords who need it.

As a next step to address what was already a severe housing crisis before COVID-19, why not apply the same approach to keeping people housed during the pandemic? California can be a leader in a model that prioritizes getting the rent paid, preventing evictions and reducing homelessness, rather than prioritizing speedy evictions where landlords do not get the rent money owed.

If we don’t continue these interventions, vulnerable families living in Silicon Valley will be pushed out for good. They will be forced to choose between food or housing. Evictions will also increase the spread of COVID-19 and other health conditions, further harming all of us.

California can do the right thing. It can choose to look away and let this problem fester in our communities. Or it can choose people like my family and my neighbors — renters, homeowners, small landlords and essential workers.

Because in the Golden State, the fifth-largest economy in the world, everyone deserves a place to call home.

Miriam Yapanqui is the executive director of Nuestra Casa de East Palo Alto and can be reached at myupanqui@nuestracasas.org. This piece was first published by CalMatters, a nonpartisan, nonprofit journalism venture that works with media partners throughout the state, including The Almanac.
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COMPASS
A fruitful year for ‘Pear Slices 2021’

Bite-size play festival of new works features local playwrights

By Karla Kane

As we’re all too aware, we’ve been living under COVID-19 conditions for quite a while now. One way of marking this passage of time, in the Peninsula arts world anyway, is by noticing that we’re now onto the second year of virtual “Pear Slices.” And while 2020’s production was done via Zoom, as companies inch toward reopening for in-person audiences, the Pear Theatre has (in some ways) returned to a more traditional format for its annual roundup of short plays by members of its Pear Playwrights Guild while still presenting it digitally on demand.

Last year’s production was the Pear’s first show performed under lockdown regulations. Since then, the Mountain View-based theater company has had a year of experimenting with how to film and share its work. Now, thanks to the wonder of vaccines, testing and strict safety procedures, “Pear Slices 2021” looks and feels pretty much like theatrical procedures, “Pear Slices 2021” looks and feels pretty much like traditional look and feel yet accessible.

The actors performed together on stage, mask-free (except when it’s part of the story), with theatrical lighting, costumes and all. While audiences don’t get the energy and distraction-free vibe of being in person, one benefit of watching on video for verbal learners is the helpful closed-captioning option — another example of how pandemic adaptations have made theater more accessible in many ways. Because the nine Slices have been uploaded separately, audiences can choose when and in what order to watch them, although there is a suggested flow. Don’t have the time or attention to watch the whole shebang straight through? Pick and choose at your leisure.

“Pear Slices” is a time-honored Pear tradition. Even if individual “Slices” may vary in quality from one to the next, or from year to year, it’s always a treat to peek into the minds of local writers, to see the fruit of their efforts brought to life by a small cast and a couple of directors. In this case, the directors are Troy Johnson and Melinda Marks, and the actors are Maya Greenberg, Gaz Jemeel, Asha Kelly, Justin P. Lopez, Francheska Johanna Loy and Francisco Rodriguez. As usual, the bite-size plays cover a range of topics and tones, from mind-bending and mysterious to contemporary realism. Leah Halper’s two offerings both deal with real-world parenting and family themes, although in quite different contexts. In the over-long “Hello Heriberto,” a young couple on the verge of becoming parents frets over the struggle to live in modern-day California. In “Yes Yes Maybe,” one of the production’s strongest pieces and based in historical fact, a 40-year-old Buenos Aires man confronts his mother about some long-buried family secrets.

Matthew Fyffe’s “A Stable Family” also deals with parenthood, in the form of a lighthearted take on the fears of inadequacy experienced by Joseph and the Three Wise Ones at the birth of Jesus. Two plays — “Power(less) Pete” by Meghan Maugeri and “Sequestered” by Barbara Anderson — set the action within the COVID-19 pandemic, the former about a depressed superhero stuck at home and the latter about an unscheduled (and, it must be said, overprivileged and rather irritating) couple who can’t find time in their docket of online meetings and streaming hobby classes to be present together. “Sequestered,” boasts a winking moment of self-deprecating humor when the wife notes that while everyone in her online screenwriting class is writing about the lockdown, she’s sure she has a unique spin on it.

“Don’t Let Go” by Carol Wolf explores a primitive society in which having a useful extra sense may be more of a hazard than a benefit in terms of fitting in to the group. Bridgette Dutta Portman’s “Wheel of Fortuna” pits an anonymous goat herder, Queen Cleopatra VII and Emperor Nero against each other in a game show of destiny — which develops into a philosophy, ancient history and physics lesson — hosted by the unhappy goddess Fortuna.

Peggy Powell, like Halper, has two inclusions: “Keepsake,” about a wife who’s not too sure she’s ready for her long-dead husband to be resurrected from cryogenic storage; and “Roadside Attraction,” in which a couple stop for gas in the middle of nowhere and have an odd encounter (while I was intrigued by “Roadside,” I must admit to being baffled afterward).

Pear leader and show producer Sinjin Jones handles sound and video projections, with Kevin Davies as technical director, lighting designer Ben Hemmen, costume designer Patti Bristow and Kelly Weber Barraza as stage and production manager. Except for a few slight bits of buzz in the sound and a few trouble spots with filming focus, the Slices unfold smoothly and simply, with little interference from the camera.

“Pear Slices 2021,” with its traditional look and feel yet accessibility for at-home viewers, is a nice showcase for what the Pear Playwrights Guild has been up to over the past challenging — yet fruitful — year.

“Pear Slices 2021” is streaming digitally on demand through May 23. Tickets are $30-$34. More information is available at thepearbotickets.com/events.

Email Arts & Entertainment Editor Karla Kane at kkane@paweekly.com.
New Peninsula Restaurant Week launches May 14

In an effort to provide diners more opportunities to support local restaurants as the Peninsula slowly reopens, Embarcadero Media’s Peninsula Foodist is teaming up with Facebook to launch Peninsula Restaurant Week. From May 14-22, restaurants, bakeries and eateries of all stripes along the Peninsula will offer prix fixe deals and other menu specials available for dine in, delivery or curbside pickup.

As part of the new weeklong dining event, the Peninsula Foodist has asked participating chefs and restaurant owners to share their stories about what the past year has been like and where they see the industry headed. This week’s Q&A features Manuel Martinez of La Viga Culinary Inc. (La Viga Seafood & Cocina Mexicana and LV Mar Tapas in Redwood City and San Agus Cocina Urbana in Palo Alto).

For more information about Peninsula Restaurant Week, go to peninsularestaurantweek.com.

Restaurant Week Interviews:
7 questions for Manuel Martinez

La Viga owner thought ‘everything would be lost’ after multiple pandemic shutdowns

By Sarah Klearman

Tell me a little bit about you and your restaurants.

I’ve been in the industry for the last 25 years working as a cook, an assistant chef and then as a chef. After that, I began opening restaurants for other people and then opening places for myself. The last nine years I’ve spent working for myself.

I’m currently operating three restaurants that I own here on the Peninsula — two in Redwood City and one in Palo Alto. I’m a chef by trade, but I’m also the mind behind everything here. Each restaurant has their own chef, so they do the kitchen operations, and I oversee them.

Tell me about the year behind us — what’s been the trajectory of your restaurants?

The last year has been a rough year. It’s nothing like I’ve seen before. I’ve opened and closed LV Mar at least four times, because we experienced some COVID-19 cases there, and the first thing we did was close and make sure everybody was safe. Ultimately, we were shut down twice, but we closed on our own another two times during the pandemic.

With vaccinations increasing and California’s daily case counts way down, does it feel like we’re seeing the light at the end of the tunnel?

I hope so. Although after being through all of this, I’m preparing to wait and see because anything could happen tomorrow. It could be another shutdown or changing gears and operating at 25% or that we’re allowed to open at full capacity. It’s pretty unpredictable.

Tell me about the biggest challenges you’ve faced as a restaurant owner as it pertains to lockdowns.

I would say it’s the uncertainty that you don’t know what’s coming. I hope that we’re on our way to fully opening up the economy and to making our businesses stronger but it’s not up to me, unfortunately. There are things that I can do: have good food, serve it right and grow the business. And if the government lets me do business, I will do business. But unfortunately when they shut you down, and you can’t do anything other than food to go, it’s not good. That is basically tying your hands and your legs.

Are there moments or experiences you’ve had this year that you’ve drawn upon to keep you going?

Definitely my employees and my guests coming in and chipping in every day, trying to increase the volume of the business so we can bring another person back to work. Right when we closed the first time, we had like around 50 or so employees between our two restaurants. After we closed, we went down to four.

Opening the restaurants and bringing staff back — that’s one of the best feelings I’ve ever had. I thought everything would be lost, but we’ve brought people back...

And then seeing the customers come back — some customers that you haven’t seen for months, or even a year, now.

Has the pandemic forced any kind of innovation or revelation in the restaurant space that you’re excited about?

I think the first one would be teamwork. We work as one now. It’s not anymore, “I’m a server, and I only know how to serve people,” or “I’m a dishwasher.” It’s everyone working together to achieve our daily goals. My team has been the highlight (of this year).

I discovered some of the restaurants are better at doing food to go than others. LV Mar is a pure service-driven restaurant; people go there because they like the space, they like what they get and they want to be served and get together. La Viga and San Agus are also service-based, but the type of food we serve there can be served to go (pretty) well. So we’ve been exploring that.

What should customers know about supporting local restaurants during Peninsula Restaurant Week?

I’m a service-driven chef and owner. I mean, we’re no one without our customers. All that I ask is to be able to be open so I can serve them, and we can shine again. Customers want to go out and enjoy themselves. They want to go out with their friends and drink and eat. I would ask them to be patient with us and to be ready to support local restaurants.

This is a hard time for a lot of people. Some restaurants thought they would survive, and they didn’t; some closed for a year, and now they’re trying to reopen again, and everything is so different. The business is nothing like before.

(Reopening) might be overwhelming for a lot of restaurants, either because they are short people or resources. The industry is upside down, I think. We’re looking forward to a much better year, but patience is key while restaurants get back to — well, not normal, but the new normal, whatever that is.


Email Writer Sarah Klearman at peninsulafoodist@ embarcaderopublishing.com.

Restaurant Week — what’s been the trajectory of your restaurants? Tell me about the biggest challenges you’ve faced as a restaurant owner as it pertains to lockdowns. Are there moments or experiences you’ve had this year that you’ve drawn upon to keep you going? Has the pandemic forced any kind of innovation or revelation in the restaurant space that you’re excited about? What should customers know about supporting local restaurants during Peninsula Restaurant Week?
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