**Figuring out how to feed kids when they’re not in school**

The pandemic challenged child nutrition leaders to rethink strategies for getting school meals to those in need

By Kate Bradshaw

Every Wednesday in East Palo Alto, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 2 p.m., adults pull over on Pulgas Avenue between the Los Robles-Ronald McNair school campus and the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Peninsula clubhouse and pick up a week’s worth of food for their families.

On a recent Wednesday, Consuela Meza and Maria Gonzalez, two student nutrition staffers from the Ravenswood City School District, cheerfully offered food to everyone who showed up, loading bags of milk, juice, meatballs, mini pancakes, raisins, apples, macaroni noodles, cheese sticks and carrots, handing them off into vehicles or leaving visitors to tie the bags onto their bicycle handlebars before riding off.

Each week, their team distributes between 140 and 150 bags of food at that location, Meza said. Conversations with those picking up food indicated that the program was helping them. Marta Andulo of East Palo Alto said in Spanish that she’s experienced stress after losing work at a restaurant when it closed, and was picking up the food to help out a grandson.

Kenneth Pope of Menlo Park said that the pandemic has been hard, but that “it brought the family closer together.” The meal program has helped feed his four grandchildren, he added.

Through major efforts to feed children during the pandemic, school districts across San Mateo and Santa Clara counties have offered an important resource to families struggling with unprecedented changes and challenges.

Interviews with school district leaders involved in providing school meals tell a story about widespread and Herculean efforts to help families impacted by the pandemic’s seismic economic shifts.

An analysis of school meals data by The Almanac shows that while the number of school meals provided to children varied widely between districts, there was an overall 36% decline in the number of school meals distributed in October and November of 2019, before the pandemic, and during the same months a year later, in the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Across the two counties, that meant a total decrease in school meals to about 4.1 million meals provided to children in those two months a year earlier.

Without children in classrooms for more than a year, the pandemic forced most school districts to rethink how they feed children and what role schools should play in combating child hunger during the school day, even while kids weren’t physically in their care.

During the pandemic, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service has permitted schools to offer up to two free meals per day to anyone.

See **SCHOOL MEALS**, page 18

---

**Are local cops getting vaccinated? It depends on the police department**

By Kevin Forestieri

If an officer pulls you over during a routine traffic stop, there’s plenty to worry about. Will you get an expensive citation or a fix-it ticket? Did the officer approaching your window decline to get the COVID-19 vaccine and is putting you at risk?

Police departments throughout San Mateo and Santa Clara counties are encouraging officers to get vaccinated, but the results vary widely from one department to the next. Some agencies are publicly touting high rates, while others are struggling to get their cops to get the shot. And for some departments, like Menlo Park, there hasn’t been any effort to track vaccination rates, making it a mystery just how many officers are immunized.

Law enforcement employees in the Bay Area have had access to the COVID-19 vaccine since January, placing high on the priority list as first responders who interact with the public on a daily basis. But the early access hasn’t necessarily led to higher vaccination rates among sworn officers, particularly among those working in county jails.

On the high end is the Mountain View Police Department, which reports that 83% of its sworn officers had received the COVID-19 vaccine as of May 10. By comparison, about 73% of residents above age 12 in Santa Clara County have received the vaccine. For non-sworn personnel in the department, the vaccination rate is over 90%.

For the Santa Clara County Sheriff’s Office, it’s been more of a challenge. Among those working in the jails, only 476 sworn officers (59%) had received the vaccine as of May 11, up from 53% in early March but still well below the county average. The rate improves to 67% among enforcement officers outside of the custody setting.

The low vaccination rates among jail staff have raised alarm bells for county supervisors, who worry that widespread immunization is critical to protect those who are incarcerated. A total of 427 inmates have contracted COVID-19 while in custody since the pandemic began, averaging one to two active cases at a time in recent months, while 243 employees of the Sheriff’s Office have contracted the virus. The Sheriff’s Office does not disclose who has been vaccinated, and does not give different roles to correctional officers based on their vaccination status.

At a May 4 meeting, county Supervisor Joe Simitian questioned whether more could be done to improve the persistently low vaccination rates among sworn officers.

See **POLICE VACCINATION**, page 17

---

**Read up-to-the-minute news on AlmanacNews.com**
SILICON VALLEY HOMES

1333 Laurel Street, Menlo Park
Offered at $2,980,000
Annette Smith · 650.766.9429
Lic. #01180954

2499 Alpine Road, Menlo Park
Offered at $2,699,000
Dulcy Freeman · 650.804.8884
Lic. #01342352

1246 Hoover Street, Menlo Park
Offered at $2,450,000
Dulcy Freeman · 650.804.8884
Lic. #01342352

25 Preston Road, Woodside
Offered at $7,700,000
Shena Hurley · 650.575.0991
Lic. #01152002

3 Redberry Ridge, Portola Valley
Offered at $15,995,000
The Campi Group · 650.917.2433
Lic #00600311

30 Firethorn Way, Portola Valley
Offered at $6,850,000
Michael Dreyfus · 650.485.3476
Lic. #01128759
Noelle Queen · 650.427.9211
Lic. #01917593

1975 Webster Street, Palo Alto
Offered at $20,000,000
Gloria Young · 650.380.3918
Lic. #01895672
John Young · 650.862.2122
Lic. #02036387

1826-1828 Vera Avenue, Redwood City
Offered at $1,795,000
John Shroyer · 650.787.2121
Lic. #00613370

555 Byron Street #301, Palo Alto
Offered at $1,785,000
Lucy Berman · 650.208.8824
Lic. #01413627

1189 S. Springer Road, Los Altos
Offered at $2,395,000
The Campi Group · 650.917.2433
Lic. #00600311

340 West Oakwood Blvd, Redwood City
Offered at $3,495,000
Peter Vece · 650.619.2799
Lic. #00472241

24 South Palomar Drive, Redwood City
Offered at $2,470,000
Bedbury Group · 650.740.4494
Lic. #01817656

1140 Whipple Avenue #25, Redwood City
Offered at $698,000
Jim Thompson · 650.490.0302
Lic. #01944226

1240 Woodside Road #24, Redwood City
Offered at $698,000
Dulcy Freeman · 650.804.8884
Lic. #01342352

716 West Capistrano Way, San Mateo
Offered at $2,495,000
Charles Griffith · 415.672.3263
Lic. #01895993

3921 Orinda Drive, San Mateo
Offered at $1,788,000
Dennis Murphy · 415.310.7956
Lic. #01741159

More Listings at GoldenGateSIR.com

Each office is independently owned and operated.
1320 Orange Avenue, Menlo Park

Stunning New Construction Home in Menlo Park

5 BEDS  4.5 BATHS  6,291 SQ. FT. LOT

$4,627,000  1320Orange.com

Exquisite new construction; high quality finishes and acute attention to detail with classic style and zen-like Napa ambiance

Formal living/dining room and large open-concept great room

Stunning kitchen with quartzite countertops and top-of-the-line appliances

Main level en suite bedroom

Manicured front and backyard with lawn and patios for outside dining, relaxing, and enjoyment

Coveted Menlo Park location, close to parks, downtown, Stanford University, and Sand Hill Road

Award-winning Menlo Park Schools

Judy Citron
650.400.8424
judy@judycitron.com
judycitron.com
DRE 01825569

#1 Individual Compass Realtor in California
#3 Individual Agent in California
#7 Individual Agent in the USA
Thank you for supporting our local restaurants!

Peninsula Restaurant Week was a huge success and we couldn’t have done it without the 113 restaurants who participated.

A big congrats to our giveaway winners who received gift cards to La Bodeguita del Medio.

Thank you again to every one of you who made the first Peninsula Restaurant Week nine days to savour!

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Facebook supports local restaurants through Community Market Giving. Learn more at CommunityMarketGiving.com/support-local-restaurants
Local News

Menlo Park won’t rule out changes to single-family zoning

The hot-button issue is on the table for upcoming review of housing policies

By Kate Bradshaw

The Menlo Park City Council took a nearly unprecedented step Tuesday by narrowly deciding to not rule out possible changes to the city’s single-family zoning codes as part of upcoming revisions to the city’s housing element. California cities’ housing elements are treated as guides that each city must adopt every eight years laying out where new homes can be developed within city limits. Through a state-mandated process called the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), each city is allocated a certain number of housing units it is expected to plan and zone for, and this time, cities are seeing substantially higher allocations than in previous cycles. Menlo Park is no exception, with its allocation bumped up to 2,946 units in the upcoming cycle from 655 in the current one, according to Geoff Bradleay, principal and president at M-Group, the consultant firm leading the update project.

Menlo Park council members voted 3-2, with Mayor Drew Combs and Councilman Ray Mueller opposition to not rule out single-family use of California at Berkeley argues, "Although no longer racially explicit, exclusionary zoning such as single-family zoning is explicitly classist, designed to exclude lower-income residents and more affordable housing options, and be implicitly racist, designed to keep out certain groups of people based upon racist stereotypes." Some researchers critique single-family zoning as exclusive and inequitable, particularly to racial minorities. For instance, a report from the Othering and Belonging Institute at University of California at Berkeley argues, "Although no longer racially explicit, exclusionary zoning such as single-family zoning is explicitly classist, designed to exclude lower-income residents and more affordable housing options, and can be implicitly racist, designed to keep out certain groups of people based upon racist stereotypes." However, the "predominance of single family uses and larger lot sizes in racially concentrated areas of affluence" is only one of a number of examples of zoning and land use barriers that cities mandated to "affirmatively further fair housing" by proactively combatting housing discrimination, undoing historic patterns of segregation and stopping racial bias in the realm of housing.

Hey Midpeninsula, is your ZIP code?

By Jocelyn Dong

I f there were a prize given to the first Midpeninsula ZIP code to reach 100% vaccination for COVID-19, it may soon go to 94304, the Palo Alto Hills and Stanford West areas where it appears that everyone 12 years old or older has been either fully or partially vaccinated, according to California Public Department of Health data. The 12-and-over population, estimated at 3,264 by the state Department of Finance, is 86% fully vaccinated, with everyone else having already received one dose. As Santa Clara County moved into the least-restrictive phase last week, following San Mateo County’s move to the same yellow tier the previous week, county Health Officer Dr. Sara Cody said she is encouraged about the massive effort to protect the local population from COVID-19 through vaccinations. "For the first time, I feel optimistic. For a while, it seemed uncertain to me whether the vaccines or the variants would win. And now it looks like 'Team Vaccine' will come out on top," she said during a press conference May 18.

In all but two ZIP codes of the Midpeninsula area stretching from north Sunnyvale to south Redwood City, two-thirds of residents ages 12 and over are partially or completely inoculated. In concrete numbers, that’s 219,000 out of 361,000 people who’ve received a shot.

Menlo Park is zoned for, and this time around is to “affirmatively further fair housing” by proactively combating housing discrimination, undoing historic patterns of segregation and stopping racial bias in the realm of housing. Conclusively, a report from the Othering and Belonging Institute at University of California at Berkeley argues, "Although no longer racially explicit, exclusionary zoning such as single-family zoning is explicitly classist, designed to exclude lower-income residents and more affordable housing options, and can be implicitly racist, designed to keep out certain groups of people based upon racist stereotypes." However, the "predominance of single family uses and larger lot sizes in racially concentrated areas of affluence" is only one of a number of examples of zoning and land use barriers that cities mandated to "affirmatively further fair housing" consider in their analyses, according to an article.

Open space district launches yearslong process to make Portola Valley ‘Hawthorns area’ public

By Kate Bradshaw

M any locals are familiar with Windy Hill, an open space preserve in Portola Valley operated by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD) that features vigorous trails leading up to the namesake hill’s summit and a range of terrains to explore, from dry California grasslands to redwoods and creeks. But MROSD owns a separate property in Portola Valley that’s also considered part of the Windy Hill Open Space Preserve, and it’s easy to miss — mostly because it’s not open to the public. It’s a fenced-off 79-acre property known as the Hawthorns area of the preserve, and it is roughly bordered by Alpine Road, Los Trancos Road and Saddleback Drive, near Corte Madera School and the Portola Valley Ranch neighborhood. Its midpoint is across the street from the Portola Valley Roberts Market location. After taking on responsibility for the property in 2011, MROSD is just beginning to discuss how to open it to the public.

Some researchers critique single-family zoning as exclusive and inequitable, particularly to racial minorities. For instance, a report from the Othering and Belonging Institute at University of California at Berkeley argues, "Although no longer racially explicit, exclusionary zoning such as single-family zoning is explicitly classist, designed to exclude lower-income residents and more affordable housing options, and can be implicitly racist, designed to keep out certain groups of people based upon racist stereotypes." However, the “predominance of single family uses and larger lot sizes in racially concentrated areas of affluence” is only one of a number of examples of zoning and land use barriers that cities mandated to “affirmatively further fair housing” consider in their analyses, according to an article.

A view of the Hawthorns area of Windy Hill, looking toward Windy Hill. A process has just begun to figure out how to open the area to the public.

Menlo Park council members voted 3-2, with Mayor Drew Combs and Councilman Ray Mueller opposition to not rule out single-family use of California at Berkeley argues, “Although no longer racially explicit, exclusionary zoning such as single-family zoning is explicitly classist, designed to exclude lower-income residents and more affordable housing options, and can be implicitly racist, designed to keep out certain groups of people based upon racist stereotypes.” However, the “predominance of single family uses and larger lot sizes in racially concentrated areas of affluence” is only one of a number of examples of zoning and land use barriers that cities mandated to “affirmatively further fair housing” consider in their analyses, according to an article.

Hey Midpeninsula, is your ZIP code?

By Jocelyn Dong

I f there were a prize given to the first Midpeninsula ZIP code to reach 100% vaccination for COVID-19, it may soon go to 94304, the Palo Alto Hills and Stanford West areas where it appears that everyone 12 years old or older has been either fully or partially vaccinated, according to California Public Department of Health data. The 12-and-over population, estimated at 3,264 by the state Department of Finance, is 86% fully vaccinated, with everyone else having already received one dose. As Santa Clara County moved into the least-restrictive phase last week, following San Mateo County’s move to the same yellow tier the previous week, county Health Officer Dr. Sara Cody said she is encouraged about the massive effort to protect the local population from COVID-19 through vaccinations. “For the first time, I feel optimistic. For a while, it seemed uncertain to me whether the vaccines or the variants would win. And now it looks like ‘Team Vaccine’ will come out on top,” she said during a press conference May 18.

In all but two ZIP codes of the Midpeninsula area stretching from north Sunnyvale to south Redwood City, two-thirds of residents ages 12 and over are partially or completely inoculated. In concrete numbers, that’s 219,000 out of 361,000 people who’ve received a shot.

Menlo Park council members voted 3-2, with Mayor Drew Combs and Councilman Ray Mueller opposition to not rule out single-family use of California at Berkeley argues, “Although no longer racially explicit, exclusionary zoning such as single-family zoning is explicitly classist, designed to exclude lower-income residents and more affordable housing options, and can be implicitly racist, designed to keep out certain groups of people based upon racist stereotypes.” However, the “predominance of single family uses and larger lot sizes in racially concentrated areas of affluence” is only one of a number of examples of zoning and land use barriers that cities mandated to “affirmatively further fair housing” consider in their analyses, according to an article.

A view of the Hawthorns area of Windy Hill, looking toward Windy Hill. A process has just begun to figure out how to open the area to the public.
An urban water supplier shall follow, where feasible and appropriate, an alternative actions, provided that descriptions of the alternative actions the prescribed procedures and implement determined shortage re-

To place an ad or get a quote, contact Kevin Legarda at 650.223.6597 or email digitalads@paweekly.com.

From left to right: Sophomore Lucas Vogel, sixth grader Sajni Gaitonde, eighth grader Rishan Patel and ninth grader Sohan Gaitonde are raising funds for COVID-19 relief in India through their nonprofit Alley-Oop Kids.

NEWSROOM
Editor Andrea Gemmet (223-6537)
Assistant Editors Jolly Brown (223-6531) Heather Zimmerman (223-6515)
Staff Writers Kate Bradshaw (223-6530) Angela Swartz (223-6529)
Embarcadero Media Staff Writers Sue Drennan (223-6518), Kevin Forrestieri (223-6533), Lloyd Lee (223-6535), Gennady Sheyney (223-6513)

ADVERTISING
Vice President Sales and Marketing Tom Zahrahs (223-6570)
Display Advertising Sales Neal Fine (223-6583)
Real Estate Manager Alisa Sanfilippo (223-6578)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)

Sales & Production Coordinator Diane Martin (223-6597)
Mickie Winkler, former Menlo Park mayor, joins race for governor

Winkler says she wants to curb union powers, slash red tape

By Gennady Sheyner

It’s been 15 years since Mickie Winkler concluded her term on the Menlo Park City Council but she hasn’t stopped thinking about the issues that had preoccupied her as mayor and council member: aged infrastructure, excessive red tape and the influence of employee unions on public affairs.

Winkler, who now lives in Palo Alto, also hasn’t been shy about expressing her opinions. Over the past year, she has penned numerous opinion pieces devoted to local affairs and most recently published a satirical book that includes her thoughts on municipal topics such as the city’s heritage tree ordinance, resistance to new developments and labor negotiations.

On a more serious note, Winkler wants to be the next California governor. As such, she has joined a list of contenders that includes businessman John Cox, decathlete-turned-socialite Caitlyn Jenner and dozens of lesser known personalities in a race to replace Gov. Gavin Newsom, should California voters choose to recall him in November.

Just like her writings, which tend to call out City Hall over excessive staffing and high employee costs, Winkler’s gubernatorial campaign is taking aim at public sector units.

“We all know — and despair about — the power of the police unions,” Winkler wrote in her campaign statement. “Teachers, city, county and state workers cannot be fired, no matter how badly they perform. They are the only part of the state that is fire proof.

As governor, Winkler said, she will “call out every bill that is union-inspired and I will call out every legislator who introduces such a bill.”

“I just think we have to be aware of their huge power. I don’t think the public employee unions are viable. I don’t think they should exist,” Winkler said in an interview.

She also believes public sector unions and excessive red tape hinder Sacramento’s ability to respond to the most critical issues of the day: the statewide drought, the rising threats of wildfires and unreliable electric infrastructure. These issues, she said, “threaten the health and well-being of all Californians and we must face them much more seriously than we’re facing them now.”

She wants to see more state investment in water storage (to account for floods) and recycled-water systems (to protect from droughts).

There are many places in the world that reuse their water and even drink it,” Winkler said. “I think we have a huge budget surplus now and we need to start dedicating money.”

She also wants to see more housing get built — a goal that she believes is hindered by the California Environmental Quality Act. She can rattle off anecdotes about developments that were stuck in limbo for years because of legal challenges and permitting snags.

“We need a major rethink,” Winkler said. “CEQA was not designed to address the building projects that we have now. It’s irrelevant to the building projects we have now but it delays anything you want to do by two years and increases the building costs enormously.”

Another problem, she said, is “NIMBYism.” Residents need to become more community minded, less litigious and less fearful of bringing change.

Real Estate Q&A

Advice to First Time Buyers

Dear Monica: I am trying to buy my first house now that I have a good, stable income but I keep getting outbid by stronger buyers, many paying cash. How can I succeed in this market? Eric B.

Dear Eric: It’s not easy for buyers like you now but do not be dismayed. If you have an experienced agent to direct you, he or she will guide you through this. Stay focused and involved, expand your criteria, and watch the market carefully. You may start out as a somewhat timid buyer but you will learn to be more forceful as your experiences increase. Make a list with your agent of the things you will compromise on and those you won’t, and stick to this. While you probably can assume more risk, you should know what to give on and what not to. Have a good lender behind you, be patient, and keep at it. If you do these things, I am confident you will succeed.

Contact me at monica@monicacorman.com: Office: 650-465-5971, COMPASS. WSJ Nationally Ranked. Real Trends Bay Area Top 100 Agents

Deputy fire chief named interim replacement for Chief Schapelhouman

Menlo Park Fire Protection District board voted unanimously for Mike Shaffer

Mike Shaffer, Menlo Park Fire Protection District’s deputy fire chief, has been chosen as the interim replacement for outgoing Chief Harold Schapelhouman, the district board of directors decided in a unanimous May 20 vote. The board announced the decision during a public session after holding a closed hearing.

Shaffer has a long history and understanding of the district’s operations, having served in numerous positions since 1991. He was a firefighter, engine driver, rescue driver, truck driver, paramedic, airboard operator, station captain, truck captain and acting battalion chief prior to being promoted to battalion chief in April 2006 and division chief in 2017, according to his district biography.

He has been a longtime member of the state and federal Urban Search and Rescue Program and the fire district’s local and state water rescue programs. He is a veteran of national disaster incidents, including the Oklahoma City bombing, the World Trade Center collapse and Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

“Mike has pretty much held every position in the fire district,” board member Virginia Chang Kiraly said on Tuesday. “He’s the logical choice for continuity. We’re really lucky to bring him in that role. He has operations, management and labor experience. He really is a very well-rounded person for this job on an interim basis.”

The board must still discuss his salary, she said.

Schapelhouman leaves his position after 41 years with the district. His contract expires on June 30. He served as chief starting in March 2006 and has been with the fire district since 1981. He also held multiple positions during his career, from firefighter and dispatcher to battalion chief, division chief, deputy chief and fire chief. He also took part in responding to national incidents that included the Oklahoma City bombing, the World Trade Center collapse, the recovery of the Columbia Space Shuttle astronauts and the PG&E pipeline explosion in San Bruno, according to his district bio.

A dynamic and outspoken leader, Schapelhouman made his mark by modernizing the district’s operations and equipment, expanding communications with the public and the media and bringing technology to the fore.

Email Staff Writer Sue Dremann at sdremann@paweekly.com.
Private school to open in Redwood City on site of former school that merged with Selby Lane Elementary

By Angela Swartz

This coming school year, a new private preschool and K-8 elementary school is opening in Redwood City, at the former home of Adelante School. Adelante merged with Selby Lane School in Atherton in 2019 because of declining enrollment in the Redwood City School District.

The Harper School, located at 3150 Granger Way on the edge of Woodside Hills, is accepting applications for enrollment for full day and half-day programs for preschoolers, pre-kindergarteners and kindergarteners, according to a May 20 press release. In subsequent years, the school will add first through eighth grades.

Harper School founder Joe Wagner, who co-founded the private Stratford School in Palo Alto, said there is a use permit that limits enrollment to 110 students the first year, with the number growing to a cap of 546 students on the campus. The school has a 10-year lease with the Redwood City School District. "A hallmark of our school is going to be high expectations for students, academic excellence and character development," he said. "It's just a fantastic site. It's a really nice building and it has lots of green space."

For the 2021-22 school year, Harper is also offering morning and afternoon extended care.

The school is named after Harper Lee, author of "To Kill a Mockingbird." It has a sister campus in St. Louis, Missouri, which Wagner also founded.

"The novel is one of the all-time greats for fostering a love of reading in children and provides young and old readers alike an enduring lesson about living without prejudice and standing up for what is right," said Wagner in a statement. "You couldn't ask for a better message. After all, our goal at Harper is to help our young learners not only be good students, but good kids, and only by doing both will we succeed as a school."

With the current pace of COVID-19 vaccinations, Wagner hopes this coming school year students will be back on campus regularly.

District administrators extended the deadline because of lack of participation

By Angela Swartz

Sequoia Union High School District administrators extended the deadline for students to fill out the Healthy Kids and Panorama surveys because the district didn’t hit the target number of students it wanted to participate, officials said during a May 12 governing board meeting.

The last publically available Healthy Kids survey data from the district, which has an enrollment of roughly 9,300 students, is from the 2014-15 school year (during this cycle, the district had even lower participation). The survey, used by public school districts throughout the state, includes questions for students on their mental health, along with their alcohol, drug and tobacco consumption. The survey takes about 15 to 30 minutes for students, parents and staff members to complete, according to the survey’s website.

"The Panorama survey deadline has been extended for another week to increase participation," said district spokesperson Ana Maria Pulido in an email last week. "The survey’s preliminary results will be shared at the next board meeting (Wednesday, May 26, past The Almanac’s press deadline) along with our Healthy Kids Survey."

For the Healthy Kids survey, the district’s target sample size for ninth graders was 2,222 students and some 1,877 filled out the survey, an 84% response rate. The district aimed to have 2,256 11th graders fill out the survey; 73%, or 1,654 students, filled it out. The overwhelming majority of students who took the survey were remote learners. The response rate was 82% and 66% for ninth and 11th graders, respectively, for the 2014-15 survey.

Preliminary results for the Healthy Kids survey shared in the May 26 board packet show that 68% of ninth graders felt very lonely at least sometimes over the past month. Some 74% of 11th graders felt very lonely at least sometimes, according to the packet. Over the past year, 34% of ninth graders have had chronic sad or hopeless feelings, while 43% of 11th graders felt chronically sad or hopeless.

Some 12% of ninth and 11th graders have seriously considered suicide over the last 12 months. This is actually lower than the 2014-15 statistics, which show 16% of ninth graders and 17% of 11th graders at the time had contemplated suicide.

Some 2,743 students filled out the Panorama study. Some 78% of students surveyed said people at their school understand them well as a person. About 86% said they feel like they at least somewhat belong at their school. The survey also touched on race. With at least 85% stating that their school helps students, at least somewhat, speak out against racism.

Give the gift of Home Care this May

10% off all services when you book 20 or more hours weekly.*

Promo Code: MDAY21

*Exclusive offer for all new and returning clients. Lock in your rate for the remainder of 2021! One coupon per client and can’t be combined with any other offers.

www.careindeed.com  •  (650) 850-5945

Email Staff Writer Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com.
High school sports roundup

Tennis

Menlo School and Bellarmine will compete for the Central Coast Section boys tennis championship for the third straight season.

The top-seeded Knights advanced with a 7-0 semifinal victory over Saratoga, highlighted by a terrific match at No. 1 singles between Menlo’s Alex Volgin and Saratoga’s Anthony Zheng, with Volgin recording a 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-2 victory.

No. 2 Bellarmine, which advanced with a 4-3 victory over Cupertino, travels to play at Menlo Thursday, May 27.

Menlo (12-0) and Bellarmine (13-1) have faced each other for the CCS championship in six of the past 11 seasons. Menlo handed Bellarmine its only loss of the season.

The Knights will be making their 19th championship appearance in program history, 18 with coach Bill Shine.

“They really came to play today,” Shine said. “We knew it was going to be tough, but the boys made it look easier than it was. Hopefully, we can carry it into the finals against a great Bellarmine team. We’ll need all the boys to be on.”

In other singles matches, junior Mic Tamas, freshman Evan Burton and junior Rishi Jain all won in straight sets.

In doubles, Nik Khunta teamed with fellow junior Soren Sutaria to win at No. 1. Senior Justin Tian and Nishan Rajavasiridhy also won in straight sets at No. 2. At No. 3, senior Justin Creamer and junior Rohan Shah prevailed in a marathon first set to win 7-6 (3), 6-0.

Menlo will be playing for its 16th CCS title.

Menlo’s girls tennis team brushed the rust off a two-month layoff to beat visiting Notre Dame Belmont 7-0 in the quarterfinal of the Central Coast Section tournament Monday.

Menlo (9-1) beat NDB by the same score on March 29 in a West Bay Athletic League match.

The top-seeded Knights were scheduled to host No. 4 Evergreen Valley in Wednesday’s semifinal, after The Almanac’s press deadline. The Cougars (12-3) advanced with a 4-3 victory over Mitty.

No. 6 Harker (8-0) and No. 2 St. Francis (7-2) meet in the other semifinal. Harker beat Menlo 4-3 on March 11. St. Francis beat Castilleja 7-0 to reach the semifinal.

Against Notre Dame Belmont, senior Addie Ashlstrom, juniors Tricia Zhang and Brynn Brady, and sophomores Charlotte Yao each earned straight-set wins in singles.

In doubles, senior Lindsey Ball teamed with junior C.C. Golub at No.1, sisters senior Elisabeth Westermann and Sophomore Natalie Westermann at two and senior Penelope Anderson and junior Alex Viret at No. 3 all won.

Soccer

In Division I, Lucas Guida scored in the final minute of the second overtime to lift host Menlo-Atherton past St. Francis in the first round Saturday.

The third-seeded Bears (7-3-2) were slated to play again Wednesday against Leigh. M-A scored in the 25th minute to open a 1-0 lead, but St. Francis came back to tie it just before halftime. After another 59 minutes of scoreless soccer, Guida scored in a scramble in front of the net.

Woodside fell to No. 8 seed Watsonville 2-1 in another first round game at Sequoia on Saturday.

The top-seeded Wildcats (12-0-1) suffered their first loss of the season.

In Division II, No. 7 Sacred Heart Prep (8-3) beat No. 2 San Benito 8-1 on the road and was scheduled to meet Monta Vista on Wednesday.

In Division III, Priorry (6-4-1) dropped a 4-1 decision to host San Mateo.

In the Open Division, Menlo engaged in a serious struggle with host Leland in the quarterfinals Saturday and neither team seemed willing to give an inch.

It took overtime before fourth-seeded Leland finally got the tiebreaker, beating the Knights 4-3 and ending one of the finest seasons in Menlo history.

No. 5 seed Menlo (10-1) won its first league championship in four years in a season no one was sure would happen. The Knights outscored their opponents 63-14 on the way to their first Open Division bid.

“We didn’t even know if we were going to have a season, now the boys have memories that will last them a lifetime,” Menlo coach Mark Kerrest said. “My only disappointment is that I won’t have another chance to coach this group again; they were a lot of fun.”

Occidental-bound senior Christian Corcoran gave Menlo the early lead, scoring from the 6-yard box on a feed from senior Luke Appel.

The Chargers tied it but senior Brynn Brady won her singles match in Menlo’s win over Notre Dame Belmont.

Coast Section boys team tenured

With Santa Clara County loosening COVID-19 health restrictions on May 18 under the yellow tier, businesses may be welcoming what seems to be another push toward normalcy as they no longer need to post social distancing protocols on storefronts and can expand indoor capacity.

But one requirement has left many business owners concerned about privacy, enforcement and compliance: By June 1, employers in the county will have to obtain a record of their workforce’s COVID-19 vaccination status or face a $5,000 fine per day.

On Monday, The Silicon Valley Organization (formerly The San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce) hosted a 30-minute Q&A session on Zoom with county Counsel James Williams to field questions about the new mandate.

Nearly 300 participants, including college deans, members of various chambers of commerce, city officials and businesses small and large — from day care facilities to tech giants like Amazon — were among the digital audience, seeking clarification.

One point was emphasized early on by Williams: The mandate is not a requirement for anyone to go and get vaccinated.

“There’s nothing in the order requiring anyone to go and get vaccinated. It’s not a mandate. It’s not an order. It’s not a law,” Williams said.

Williams said the only requirement is that employers — who are subject to the mandate — are legally required to have a list of their workplace’s COVID-19 vaccinated and unvaccinated workers.

The question of what businesses will be able to access individual vaccination records, and what the penalties are if they aren’t ready to produce them by the deadline is one that is still to be answered.

By Embarcadero Media Staff

S an Mateo County as of Tuesday had 42,043 cumulative cases of COVID-19, with 573 deaths. A total of 64% of the eligible county population is fully vaccinated; 15.9% is partially vaccinated. San Clara County as of Tuesday had 118,963 cumulative COVID-19 cases and 2,117 deaths. A total of 61.7% of the eligible county population is fully vaccinated; 13% is partially vaccinated.

No social distancing, capacity limits with June 15 reopening

California will reopen on June 15 without any capacity limits or physical distancing requirements for businesses or events, the state’s Health and Human Services secretary said May 21.

Gov. Gavin Newsom last month announced the expected June 15 reopening date, which state officials confirmed last week as COVID-19 case numbers and hospitalizations continue to drop and the number of people vaccinated continues to increase.

Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly on a call with reporters May 21 said COVID-19-related hospitalizations are down to levels not seen since the start of the pandemic, while vaccines are available with no wait throughout the state for everyone ages 12 and up.

As a result, California will end its tiered system of restrictions for counties as it lifts the capacity and distancing limits on June 15.

“There are no longer needed for the foreseeable future,” Ghaly said.

He said the state will be laying out recommendations and guidelines for vaccine verifications for businesses, but will not be creating any sort of vaccine passport system.

“We need to move forward and will allow people to really plan in detail for their businesses or events in the coming weeks and months,” he said.

“We’re still in the middle of that transition, and not sure what the next normal is going to look like,” Myers said.

Ghaly said a priority will be working with local school districts to make sure K-12 schools are fully reopening for the new school year, and said while vaccines were recently made available for people as young as 12 years old, vaccine eligibility for children ages 2-11 might not happen until the late summer or early fall.

As California reopens fully, public health officials anticipate that COVID-19 cases will rise, but Ghaly said he doesn’t think it will have a significant impact on the state’s hospital systems given current levels of vaccination, and there won’t be any new metrics counties will need to stay out of further capacity or social distancing restrictions.

Employers must record worker vaccination status in Santa Clara County

With Santa Clara County loosening COVID-19 health restrictions on May 18 under the yellow tier, businesses may be welcoming what seems to be another push toward normalcy as they no longer need to post social distancing protocols on storefronts and can expand indoor capacity.

But one requirement has left many business owners concerned about privacy, enforcement and compliance: By June 1, employers in the county will have to obtain a record of their workforce’s COVID-19 vaccination status or face a $5,000 fine per day.

On Monday, The Silicon Valley Organization (formerly The San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce) hosted a 30-minute Q&A session on Zoom with county Counsel James Williams to field questions about the new mandate.

Nearly 300 participants, including college deans, members of various chambers of commerce, city officials and businesses small and large — from day care facilities to tech giants like Amazon — were among the digital audience, seeking clarification.

One point was emphasized early on by Williams: The mandate is not a requirement for anyone to go and get vaccinated.

“There’s nothing in the order

See CORONAVIRUS, page 11

See SPORTS, page 17

By Embarcadero Media staff

See AlmanacNews.com
Nearly 400 people, mostly children, vaccinated at Hillview clinic

By Angela Swartz

Nearly 400 people, most of them under 18 years old, received their first doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine at Hillview Middle School this past week.

The Menlo Park City School District partnered with Safeway to host drive-thru vaccine clinics on the Menlo Park school's campus on Friday, May 21, and Monday, May 24. About 250 people were inoculated on Friday, while 130 received their jabs on Monday, according to Vice Principal Danny Chui.

"The community is really grateful," Chui said on Monday as he directed drivers into the drop-off and pickup circle where they lined up for shots.

Chui said about 95% of the participants were under 18 years old.

The majority of the middle school's seventh and eighth graders will be vaccinated by the start of the 2021-22 school year, but those under 12 likely won't, so students will continue to wear masks, Chui said. There will be no virtual learning option in the fall, and all students will return to campus full time, he said.

There have been few cases of COVID-19 reported on the school district's data dashboard, with six documented since the beginning of May.

People who participated in the clinics will return on June 10 and 14 for their second doses of the vaccine. The district would like to host more clinics, but Safeway hasn't committed to another, Chui said.

"It's been pretty exhausting," he said. "The clinic itself is not difficult. The difficult part is running a school and after school sports (at the same time)."

The FDA has granted emergency approval for the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for people ages 12 and up. Sign up for an appointment on the state department of health's website at myturn.ca.gov.

Eight killed in shooting at San Jose VTA yard

By Bay City News Service

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority employee shot and killed eight people at a VTA maintenance yard in San Jose on Wednesday morning authorities said. The suspect died at the scene.

Local, state and federal authorities continue to investigate suspected explosive materials in the wake of the shooting. Investigators, law enforcement officials and political leaders held a briefing Wednesday afternoon, May 26. The suspect was identified by various media outlets as Samuel Cassidy, 57.

A spokesperson for the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office said that explosive-detecting dogs and robots and members of the sheriff’s bomb squad were expected to remain at the VTA's Guadalupe rail yard on West Younger Avenue into Thursday to ensure it is safe. As a result, the VTA's light rail service was suspended until further notice, with bus service put into place.

"We're going to be there throughout the night to clear every room and every crevice of that building," Deputy Russell Davis said.

Investigators with the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives were supporting the Sheriff’s Office in the investigation and supplying investigators with assets like ballistics and forensic equipment from the FBI's offices in Quantico, Virginia.

The Sheriff’s Office first received reports of the shooting at 6:34 a.m. and dispatched deputies to the rail yard, which is adjacent to the Sheriff’s Office’s headquarters.

The gunman opened fire during a shift change at the rail yard, with graveyard shift employees leaving the facility and day shift employees arriving, according to Davis.

More than 40 employees were at the facility at the time, said San Jose Police Chief Anthony Mata.

One shooting victim was in critical condition at a local hospital in addition to the eight victims confirmed dead as of Wednesday afternoon.

In addition to the FBI and ATF, local law enforcement in Santa Clara County, the California Highway Patrol, the state's Office of Emergency Services and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security assisted during the initial active shooter response.

Davis and Santa Clara County Sheriff Laurie Smith argued that the death toll could have been even higher if law enforcement officers hadn’t responded as quickly as they did.

"The deputy sheriffs from the Sheriff’s Office, the officers from San Jose Police Department ran into the building while shots were being fired and I know that it saved many lives," Smith said at the briefing.

Davis noted that sheriff’s deputies did not exchange gunfire with Cassidy and investigators are working under the assumption that he died by suicide.

Davis did not confirm whether a house fire at what is believed to have been Cassidy’s home was connected to the shooting.

San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo said it is “a horrific day for our city, and it’s a tragic day for the VTA family ... our hearts pain for the families and the co-workers because we know that so many are feeling deeply this loss.”

VTA board of directors chair and Sunnyvale Vice Mayor Glenn Hendricks described the Guadalupe facility as a maintenance yard where light-rail vehicles are dispatched.

"VTA is a family, people in the organization know everyone," Hendricks said. "This is a terrible tragedy."

The VTA was getting grief counselors in place for its employees, Hendricks said.

"My prayers are with the families and my gratitude goes to all the first responders," Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, said in a tweet.

Some elected officials called for more effective gun control measures.

Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Santa Clara, said he will continue to push for “common sense gun control measures.”

"While much still remains to be confirmed at this time, one thing is abundantly clear: the gun violence epidemic will continue to rage unless we take concrete action to protect our country. It was our community today, but it will be someone else’s tomorrow," Khanna said in an emailed statement.

Khanna said more than 80% of Americans favor measures like waiting periods, “red flag” laws and background checks.

"When I head back to Washington, I will continue to push for..."
that says all personnel must get vaccinated,” Williams said.

The order also is not a requirement that businesses need to disclose the information to the broader workforce within the company, the public or the public health department, he added. It only requires employers to keep track of the vaccination status of personnel. Complying with the order would include asking employees for their vaccination status. An employee who is fully vaccinated in this case means that they have reached the two-week mark since they received the second shot of the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine or the single shot of the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Employers need to record the responses, whether that may be “I’m fully vaccinated” or “I decline to answer.” The county has offered a sample vaccination status form for businesses or they can use their own system. It is not enough to send a mass email to all workers, Williams emphasized. Employers must get a response.

In addition, “personnel” covers all workers who regularly come to a work site in the county. This can include volunteers or unpaid interns. For contract workers, Williams said that the responsibility falls upon the vendor of the contractor to record the employee’s vaccination status. However, employers will still have to check that the vendor has done so.

The order does not apply to tenants, visitors of a work site or customers.

If an employee declines to answer, then employers should assume that he or she did not get vaccinated, according to Williams. Employers have to follow up with those workers 14 days later, including those who were only partially vaccinated.

If businesses are not required to report the data to the county or to their own larger workforce, some participants at the Zoom session questioned the point of the order.

Williams said one of the main reasons is because the rules are different for those who are fully vaccinated and for those who are not. Knowing who is vaccinated will help employers to be able to apply those rules accordingly.

“For example, right now, if you’re fully vaccinated, and you’re in contact with a COVID-19 case, you do not need to quarantine. You can continue to come to work, you can continue to work, but that doesn’t apply if you’re not fully vaccinated,” he said.

Mask requirements, which were recently updated following new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will also be based on vaccination status.

In the draft of new regulations put in place by the state’s workplace safety agency Cal/OSHA, if everybody in a room is vaccinated, then no one will have to wear a mask indoors and physical distancing rules and other requirements can be more relaxed, Williams said.

More broadly, Williams suggested that the new order is an effort to encourage more workers to get vaccinated.

“It’s because vaccination is the name of the game right now,” he said. “It is the best tool that we have available to us to prevent us (from) having a resurgence of cases like we’ve seen in other countries. It’s the best tool for us being able to keep businesses open and avoid another surge that’s going to lead to shutdowns, which I know nobody on this call ... wants to have happen again.”

Still, concern lingered among participants of Monday’s Q&A session.

Some business owners were troubled that asking about one’s vaccination status is a violation of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). In this case, Williams said HIPAA is not applicable since the law only concerns “health plans or health care providers with respect to their patients or clients.”

Others were worried that asking the question every two weeks may make some employees feel they’re being harassed and that having certain rules in place based on one’s vaccination status is a form of discrimination.

“It’s a very, very simple question that should take folks no more than 15, 20 seconds to be able to answer,” Williams said in response. “Provided that you’re just asking folks to answer that question and move on, that should be a complete non-issue.”

Williams said the 14-day follow-up requirement is aimed at people who change their minds or have gone from partially to fully vaccinated.

Robert Lindo, the vice president of Casino M8trix in San Jose and board member of The Silicon Valley Organization, which moderated Monday’s session, raised a concern that many business owners have maintained since a mountain of regulations was placed on them throughout the pandemic: How can employers make sure they’re complying and not get fined?

While violating a health order is a misdemeanor, Williams also added that no one’s been prosecuted for violating a COVID-19 health order.

“We’re just looking for people to be acting in good faith,” he said. “If we receive a complaint, you have to be able to, if asked, show that you demonstrated good faith in implementing things. ... Most of the provisions of the health orders have always been reliant on that.”

Comprehensive COVID-19 coverage


Awards presented by the California News Publishers Association for work published in 2020.
PALO ALTO | $4,950,000
www.750PaloAlto.com | Crescent Park Craftsman home with detached cottage. Approx. 10,000 sf lot. 4 bedrooms & 6.5 baths, meticulously expanded & remodeled with all modern amenities. Main house about 3,200 sf has formal living room, dining room, office, large gourmet kitchen & comfortable family room – all with direct access or views of landscaped garden. Detached cottage about 300 sf has heat & bath #4.
Julie Lau 650.209.2287
CalRE #01032394
Farnoosh Hariri 415.971.3592
CalRE #01031598

PALO ALTO | $2,498,000
Come & see this beautiful updated 3br/2ba single-story Midtown home nestled on a large lot near the border of Old Palo Alto. Only one owner, this home was built in 1973 by Woolworth of Los Altos. Enjoy the private and beautifully landscaped approximately 7,200 square foot lot. The front courtyard offers a welcoming yet private home entry. Enjoy a peaceful backyard w/patio, lawn & gardens.
Clara Lee 408.568.5576
claralee@cbnorcal.com
CalRE #01723333

EMERALD HILLS | $2,498,000
Stunning views of Edgewood Park! This Contemporary 4 bedroom, 2.5 bath home was built in 1992 and is located on a tranquil street in Emerald Hills. High ceilings, 2 gas fireplaces, granite kitchen. The use of mixed materials gives the feeling of bringing the outside in. This is truly an oasis in the heart of Silicon Valley just moments from Woodside, SFO, Half Moon Bay, San Francisco and San Jose.
Michelle Glaubert 650.722.1193
glaubert@pacificbell.net
CalRE #00646669
COLDWELL BANKER® SUPPORTS ST. JUDE

The Coldwell Banker® brand is proud to partner with St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital® in its mission: Finding cures. Saving children.® As part of the CB Supports St. Jude program, agents make a donation to this one-of-a-kind hospital every time they help a client buy or sell a home.

Contact us today to find out how we can work together to support one of the world’s leading children’s cancer hospitals and help the world’s bravest kids get back home even faster.

St. Jude patient

Pepe

ColdwellBankerHomes.com

GUIDING YOU HOME SINCE 1906

The property information herein is derived from various sources that may include, but not be limited to, county records and the Multiple Listing Service, and it may include approximations. Although the information is believed to be accurate, it is not warranted and you should not rely upon it without personal verification. Affiliated real estate agents are independent contractor sales associates, not employees ©2021 Coldwell Banker. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker and the Coldwell Banker logos are trademarks of Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. The Coldwell Banker System is comprised of company owned offices which are owned by a subsidiary of Realogy Brokerage Group LLC and franchised offices which are independently owned and operated. The Coldwell Banker System fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act. 

May 28, 2021  AlmanacNews.com  The Almanac  13
Mildred “Millie” Bader Urbain
August 15, 1927 – April 15, 2021

Mildred “Millie” Bader Urbain of Palo Alto, passed away peacefully at the age of 93 on April 15, 2021. A longtime resident of Menlo Park, Millie was born on August 15, 1927, in Little Rock, Arkansas to a single mother, Katherine Koch. She married her husband, John H. Bader, Sr., a Naval Officer, in 1945, eventually settling in Palo Alto in 1953 to raise their two boys.

She was a tireless volunteer in the schools and was a devoted fund raiser and organizer for both the Betty Wright Center and C.A.R. After being encouraged by her friend Ray Spinelli to explore real estate because she was “a natural,” Millie found time in the evenings to enroll in real estate law courses. In 1968 after getting her license, she started her career in real estate with Spinelli & Company. She found immediate success and love for the profession. Later, after obtaining her Brokers License, she managed the Menlo Park branch of Panzano Realty. In 1981, she started her own firm, Millie Bader Realtors, in Menlo Park. She retired in 2011 after 43 successful years in real estate.

Millie was a major contributor to Bay Area real estate, serving as President of the Menlo Atherton Board of Realtors, VP of Education, and the Regional VP for California Association of Realtors. She also served as a director of the National Association of Realtors for many years. She was very proud of her work on real estate ethics committees as well as her accomplishments as a real estate instructor and speaker.

Millie’s family circle was wide and always growing as she made room for so many — especially young Realtors seeking to be mentored and young families looking for help buying their first home. Millie was compassionate and generous — always willing to help others. She often said that she was so lucky to have discovered her penchant for real estate and that it brought her so much joy.

She married John T. Urbain in 1985, welcoming his son, Kevin Urbain into the family. She and John spent a wonderful life together, full of family celebrations, travel and fun experiences with friends.

She married John T. Urbain in 1985, welcoming his son, Kevin Urbain into the family. She and John spent a wonderful life together, full of family celebrations, travel and fun experiences with friends.

She was a devoted wife, mother and grandmother who prioritized family above all. She always brought boundless energy to her career, but her greatest focus and joy in her life were her two boys, John and Jeff. The grandchild and her three daughters-in-law were the cherries on top. Her grandchildren meant the world to her, and she set a wonderful example for them. She showed that one could be successful with drive, hard work, high moral standards and good character.

She is survived by her children, John H. Bader and his wife Linda Bader, Jeff L. Bader and his wife Jennie Bader, her stepson Kevin Urbain and his wife Charlene Morrow and her 4 grandchildren, Scott, Brett, Leland and Deanna. Millie was preceded in death by her mother Katherine Koch, her first husband John H. Bader, Sr., and her second husband John T. Urbain.

Millie cherished her many friends from all phases of life who provided laughter, strength and so many wonderful memories. She was forever grateful for the outpouring of love from her family and her lifelong friends.

She will be interred in a private-family graveside service. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date, to be determined.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation in Millie Bader Urbain’s name to Mission Hospice in San Mateo or AbilityPath in Redwood City or St. Denis Church in Menlo Park.

The Hawthorns area was developed in the late 1880s as a summer estate and was granted to the Public in 1869. Open Space Trust by the Woods Family Trust before becoming MROSD property.

The district has done some work and was working to restore native grasslands, improve fire safety and protect the historic buildings on the property, but now officials are working to figure out how to best offer the public access to the low-intensity recreational uses and improvements that are allowed by the conservation easement that governs the property, according to MROSD staff.

The long process to open Hawthorns to visitors began May 18, when the district’s Planning and Natural Resources Committee heard an early presentation by district staff about procedures and a timeline to create a plan and implement it.

It’s a process that’s expected to take a number of years and will be developed in response to feedback from the community, said Meredith Manning, senior planner with the district. A preliminary timeline MROSD staff presented indicated the agency planned to work through the vision goals through May 2022, identify a working group in 2022, spend 2023 developing a plan, spend 2024 working on the environmental review, and work on permitting and approval processes in 2025 and beyond.

Between now and early 2022, the district’s Planning and Natural Resources Committee will meet to draft the vision and goals for the project, plus the plan to create the working group. From there, the full MROSD board will finalize those details in early to mid-2022 before the plan is drafted.

Among the topics to be included in the use and management plan are wildland fire protection, structure management, and the types of public access that could be offered, she added.

It’s one of the last large remaining areas of undeveloped open space in Portola Valley, and “it really is a gorgeous landscape,” Manning said.

Allowing the public on the property would require working with the town of Portola Valley to arrange a conditional use permit, she said.

“We stand by to assist in any way, shape or form,” Town Manager Jeremy Dennis said.

“Obviously, the town has been, for a very long time, a host of Midpen’s (MROSD’s) other properties at Windy Hill. We were happy to accord to hosting this property as well,” he added.

One matter that staff also plan to iron out through the process of developing the use and management plan is just where the boundary is between Portola Valley and Palo Alto along Los Trancos Road. The border between the communities appears to be right at the Hawthorns area, Manning said.

Commissioner Zoe Kersten-Tucker suggested that the initial vision provided an opportunity for the town of Portola Valley to work with MROSD on ways to improve safety on its narrow trail along Alpine Road that’s shared by bicyclists, pedestrians and equestrians.

“It feels like a real safety issue, if nothing else,” she said. “I look forward to learning more about this.”

The project is funded by Measure AA, a 30-year, $300 million bond passed by local voters in 2014.

Email Staff Writer Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com.
The Almanac honored in California journalism competition

By Almanac staff

The Almanac was honored with nine awards for its newspaper and website, including fifth place for general excellence among weekly newspapers, in the annual California Journalism Awards competition.

Reporter Kate Bradshaw won first place for local coverage of election 2020 for her reporting on the candidates in the state Senate race and their positions on key issues. “Conversational and easy to read. I feel like I know a lot about each candidate after reading it,” wrote one of the judges.

Chief Visual Journalist Magali Gauthier won first place in the feature photo competition with an artfully framed shot from the story “Marco makes his mark,” about a 4-year-old Tibetan spaniel from Menlo Park that hit the big time with a showing at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. “Nice composition and framing with the door. Interesting subject matter with great moment of interaction,” commented a judge.

The story “Delivering a fond farewell: Portola Valley residents celebrate beloved UPS driver on his last day,” by Assistant Editor Julia Brown took second place in the metro stories. “Can’t recall seeing another story recently about a UPS delivery guy who seems to have endeared himself to his community after making deliveries in the area ever since 1984. Gets an extra point for finding the unusual and special in what would seem to be the ordinary,” a judge wrote.

Gauthier and Bradshaw shared credit for their story “Behind the lines of the CZU August Lightning fires,” riding along with a local restauranteur to deliver meals to firefighters and holdout residents. “The Almanac’s sister publications also earned significant recognition, including second place in general excellence for the Palo Alto Weekly, third place general excellence for the Mountain View Voice and fourth place general excellence for the Pleasanton Weekly, among numerous other categories. The Six Fifty, a lifestyle website geared for millennial readers, garnered three awards. Overall, this year’s journalism contest, put on by the California Newspaper Publishers Association, received more than 3,000 entries from print, digital and campus publications, an increase over the prior year’s total. The Almanac competed with other weekly newspapers in the 11,001-25,000 circulation category and in the digital division among news websites drawing between 100,001-400,000 monthly unique visitors.

ZIP CODES

continued from page 5

The Palo Alto Hills/Stanford West ZIP’s through-the-roof vaccination rate may be helped by its small population, but size isn’t necessarily an indicator: A dozen miles to the west, the ZIP code of 94020 in the Santa Cruz Mountains has among the lowest vaccination rates: 61.2%. Identified as the La Honda ZIP code, slightly fewer than half of its 1,580 residents aged 12 and older are fully vaccinated. Only the Stanford ZIP code, 94305, has a lower rate, but the university has been mostly shut down for the past year and its population has a higher percentage of transient residents.

Some of the Midpeninsula’s most populated areas are also trailing somewhat in vaccinations. Among the ZIP codes with the lowest rates:

94303, with more than 40,000 residents in East Palo Alto and a portion of Palo Alto, has a rate of 69.1% of fully and partially inoculated residents.

94061, with more than 33,000 in the Redwood City and Woodside ZIP code that crosses State Route 84, has a rate of 67.1%.

94063, where more than 29,000 people live in the Redwood City and North Fair Oaks area, east of Middlefield Road, has a rate of 68.4%.

The North Fair Oaks ZIP code, however, is also among several where residents have been jumping on the vaccination bandwagon in greater numbers recently.

The percentage of North Fair Oaks residents who are in the midst of the immunization process is 18.1%; compare that to the majority of Midpeninsula ZIP codes, whose partial vaccination rates are between 13% and 16%.

This could be due to the fact that North Fair Oaks has a younger demographic, and thus more residents had to wait until they were eligible for a shot. The median age of 94063 is 33.1 years, according to the 2020 American Community Survey.

It could also be attributed to recent pushes by the county to get more people vaccinated in lower income areas through pop-up clinics.

Other ZIP codes with vaccination momentum are the 94085 area of north Sunnyvale, where the median age is just 32.6 years. It has the highest percentage of residents midway through the vaccinations: 18.7%.

And 94040, central Mountain View’s ZIP code, has a partial immunization rate of 18% and a median resident age of 34.6 years.

The Palo Alto Hills neighborhood is not the only ZIP code to be bailing toward full immunization. In Los Altos’ 94022, which straddles Interstate Highway 280 and stretches east to El Camino Real, 91.7% of its 16,763 residents are either fully or partially vaccinated.

Also doing well: 94024, the Los Altos ZIP code that stretches from west of 280 to east of Foothill Expressway, where 86.8% have received at least one shot; and 94031, the Palo Alto area that includes the neighborhoods of Crescent Park, the downtown area and Old Palo Alto. There, 86.6% are either completely or halfway through the process.

Mark Nadim, a long-time resident of Palo Alto Hills, said that he is proud to live in a neighborhood that’s achieved full vaccination.

“As to why we have such a high vaccination rate, it might be that with a small neighborhood with mostly high-tech residents as well as many seniors, we tend to be less suspicious of new technologies, whether they are pharmaceutical or otherwise,” Nadim wrote in an email.

The state’s data does not include persons immunized through the Veterans Health Administration, which received its doses directly from the federal government. In addition, the population numbers from the Department of Finance are projections and may not be completely accurate, according to the Department of Public Health’s vaccination rate website.

Email Palo Alto Weekly Editor Jocelyn Dong at jdong@paweekly.com.
For eighth graders, the operetta must go on

By Kate Daly

After a one-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the 63rd eighth-grade operetta at Woodside School is back, but breaking with tradition and being streamed online.

A recorded version of “Schoolhouse Rock Live Jr.” will be shown twice, on Saturday, June 5, at 6 p.m., and on Sunday, June 6, at 5 p.m. Tickets are on sale until June 5 to watch the performances on electronic devices.

For safety reasons, all 46 students in this year’s graduating class were prerecorded in small groups in early May. A production company taped vocals when they spread out and sang in the school’s outdoor amphitheater, and then students wore identical face masks when cameras rolled in Sellman Pavilion to capture their acting, dancing and lip syncing.

Robin Freedman Corgyn, one of three parents co-producing the show, said that the upside to not going live in front of a large audience is the students felt a lot more relaxed and had less need to “nervously walk up to the microphone and then editing can correct any mess ups.”

Students returned to campus last fall, and have been keeping in the same socially distanced cohorts ever since. The same three groups rehearsed and taped together, which led to divvying up the main role. Following the 1970s cartoon’s musical is based on, new teacher Tom Mizer is anxious about his first day of school. Various characters advise him on what to do in 12 songs such as “Just a Bill” and “Conjunction Junction.” In this class’s version of “Schoolhouse Rock Live Jr.,” 11 students all play the role of Tom.

COVID challenges like that became all part of the job for Gaston Stanford, assistant principal at Woodside when he signed on as director, musical director and choreographer.

Tickets range from $25 for an individual to $60 for a family of four. There’s also an option to buy a concession box of baked goods and a program. They’re available online at tinyurl.com/wes-operetta.¹

The annual operetta at Woodside School is back this year, but in different form, due to the pandemic. Pods of students prerecorded performances that will be streamed online June 5 and 6.¹

The Almanac News Service

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include Mildred “Millic” Bade Urban, 93, a longtime Menlo Park resident and president of the Menlo Atherton Board of Realtors, on April 15; and Karl J Poppenberg, 77, a Woodside resident, on May 17.

“...to read full obituaries, leave your memories and post photos, go to Lasting Memories at almanacnews.com/obituaries.”
police said the city isn’t tracking vaccination rates among officers so long as it remains voluntary. “The Menlo Park Police Department has not gathered any data about how many of its officers have been vaccinated against COVID-19. Menlo Park and Palo Alto The Palo Alto and Menlo Park police departments could not provide vaccination data for their officers. James Reifschneider, acting captain for the Palo Alto Police Department, said officers are being encouraged to get the vaccine but the department has no records of how many employees have actually been immunized. Nicole Acker, a spokesman for the Menlo Park Police Department, said the city isn’t tracking vaccination rates among officers so long as it remains voluntary. “The Menlo Park Police Department has not gathered any data about how many of its officers have been vaccinated against COVID-19.”

More than $150K worth of handbags stolen More than $150,000 worth of handbags were stolen from the Neiman Marcus department store in a parking structure at an apartment complex a block away in the 1700 block of Woodland Avenue. He later succumbed to his wounds at a hospital, police reported at the time. Anyone who witnessed Sunday’s shooting or has information is asked to contact the East Palo Alto Police Department by calling

The Gators were likely to receive one of the top four seeds, which would mean a bye into the quarterfinals. All three of SH Prep’s losses were to St. Ignatius by a total of 11 goals. Sacred Heart Prep dominated WBAL play, outscoring its opponents 117-35. St. Francis, which lost its season finale on Tuesday.

Girls lacrosse Kat Showalter scored four goals in helping the Sacred Heart Prep girls lacrosse team to a 12-7 victory over host Mitty in its regular season finale on Tuesday. Kalista Hurel added three goals for the Gators (9-3, 8-0), who clinched the West Bay Athletic League Football Division’s best record with the victory. SHP, the defending WBAL champion, advances into the first-ever Central Coast Section girls lacrosse tournament, which is scheduled to begin in Wednesday, June 9. The seeding meeting is Monday, June 7.

The Gators are likely to receive one of the top four seeds, which would mean a bye into the quarterfinals. All three of SH Prep’s losses were to St. Ignatius by a total of 11 goals. Sacred Heart Prep dominated WBAL play, outscoring its opponents 117-35. St. Francis, which has a game remaining with Mittys, is second with 73 goals. Gators coach Wendy Kridel, a member of the U.S. Lacrosse Hall of Fame, also coached the U.S. U19 national team between 1999 and 2007 and owns a 20-0 record with Team USA. SHP assistant coach Liz Hogan was an All-American goalkeeper at Syracuse. Football Division’s best record with the victory. SHP, the defending WBAL champion, advances into the first-ever Central Coast Section girls lacrosse tournament, which is scheduled to begin in Wednesday, June 9. The seeding meeting is Monday, June 7.

The Gators are likely to receive one of the top four seeds, which would mean a bye into the quarterfinals. All three of SH Prep’s losses were to St. Ignatius by a total of 11 goals. Sacred Heart Prep dominated WBAL play, outscoring its opponents 117-35. St. Francis, which has a game remaining with Mittys, is second with 73 goals. Gators coach Wendy Kridel, a member of the U.S. Lacrosse Greater Baltimore Chapter Hall of Fame, also coached the U.S. U19 national team between 1999 and 2007 and owns a 20-0 record with Team USA. SHP assistant coach Liz Hogan was an All-American goalkeeper at Syracuse. Football Division’s best record with the victory.

Girls lacrosse Kat Showalter scored four goals in helping the Sacred Heart Prep girls lacrosse team to a 12-7 victory over host Mitty in its regular season finale on Tuesday. Kalista Hurel added three goals for the Gators (9-3, 8-0), who clinched the West Bay Athletic League Football Division’s best record with the victory.

speak by email to epa@tipnow.org or by text or voicemail to 650-409-6792. —Sue Dremann

Police plan to connect with other agencies in the area to see if the group is linked to other similar thefts in nearby cities. Anyone with information about the theft is asked to call the department’s 24-hour dispatch center at 650-329-2413. Anonymous tips can be emailed to palohalo@tipnow.org or sent by text message or voicemail at 650-383-8984. —Palo Alto Weekly staff

The Gators were likely to receive one of the top four seeds, which would mean a bye into the quarterfinals. All three of SH Prep’s losses were to St. Ignatius by a total of 11 goals. Sacred Heart Prep dominated WBAL play, outscoring its opponents 117-35. St. Francis, which has a game remaining with Mittys, is second with 73 goals. Gators coach Wendy Kridel, a member of the U.S. Lacrosse Greater Baltimore Chapter Hall of Fame, also coached the U.S. U19 national team between 1999 and 2007 and owns a 20-0 record with Team USA. SHP assistant coach Liz Hogan was an All-American goalkeeper at Syracuse. Football Division’s best record with the victory.

Girls lacrosse Kat Showalter scored four goals in helping the Sacred Heart Prep girls lacrosse team to a 12-7 victory over host Mitty in its regular season finale on Tuesday. Kalista Hurel added three goals for the Gators (9-3, 8-0), who clinched the West Bay Athletic League Football Division’s best record with the victory. SHP, the defending WBAL champion, advances into the first-ever Central Coast Section girls lacrosse tournament, which is scheduled to begin in Wednesday, June 9. The seeding meeting is Monday, June 7.

The Gators are likely to receive one of the top four seeds, which would mean a bye into the quarterfinals. All three of SH Prep’s losses were to St. Ignatius by a total of 11 goals. Sacred Heart Prep dominated WBAL play, outscoring its opponents 117-35. St. Francis, which has a game remaining with Mittys, is second with 73 goals. Gators coach Wendy Kridel, a member of the U.S. Lacrosse Greater Baltimore Chapter Hall of Fame, also coached the U.S. U19 national team between 1999 and 2007 and owns a 20-0 record with Team USA. SHP assistant coach Liz Hogan was an All-American goalkeeper at Syracuse. Football Division’s best record with the victory.

Girls lacrosse Kat Showalter scored four goals in helping the Sacred Heart Prep girls lacrosse team to a 12-7 victory over host Mitty in its regular season finale on Tuesday. Kalista Hurel added three goals for the Gators (9-3, 8-0), who clinched the West Bay Athletic League Football Division’s best record with the victory.
School meals served in 2019 and 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sequoia Union High School District</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>360,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redwood City Elementary School District</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravenswood City Elementary School District</td>
<td>250,000</td>
<td>360,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palo Alto Unified School District</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain View Whisman School District</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menlo Park City Elementary School District</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luther Burbank School District</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jefferson Elementary School District</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SCHOOL MEALS
continued from page 1

under 18 and issued a series of waivers offering additional flexibility to schools. Most recently, it extended a waiver program to allow its “Seamless Summer Option,” which usually runs during summer vacations, to operate during the regular school year through June 30, 2022. With it, schools can continue to provide up to two free meals per day to anyone under 18.

Here’s a look at the lessons learned by those on the front lines of child hunger during the pandemic.

What worked

Among those leading the charge to track school meal distributions during the pandemic is not a celebrated think tank but a rising, youth-led coalition of students and graduates called UnBox, which has built what it of students and graduates called UnBox, which has built what it first said. They’ve also surveyed families to find out what foods they like and have worked with their vendor to order meals that kids enjoy and that stay within the health guidelines for school meals, she said.

“I would say kudos to the kitchen staff for being really responsive to the kids liked and didn’t like,” she said.

The Ravenswood district took a similar approach in responding to feedback from families to switch to a weekly meal program, said June Richardson, child nutrition consultant for the district. The most popular meal? Pizza, by far, she said.

When the pandemic hit, the district’s nutrition program had just finished undergoing a rigorous review process when staff learned that the district might be locked down. Over a single weekend last March, Ravenswood set up its school meals program. The district experimented with different distribution approaches, offering multiple meals daily, then twice a week. After surveying families, the district now provides seven-day meal kits on Wednesdays, with curbside pickups available between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Staff received some surprising feedback from one respondent who didn’t want to leave home during that window because it would mean losing a parking spot at a crowded apartment complex. Another said they didn’t like receiving so much meat because they didn’t have enough room to store it.

In contrast, the Mountain View Whisman School District took a different approach after getting different feedback from its families, serving grab-and-go breakfasts at each school site daily. The district served record numbers of students during the pandemic and was on track to keep setting records in May, according to Debbie Austin, Mountain View Whisman’s director of food and nutrition services. Staff has also been providing meals to about 50 families at Moffett Field military base.

The district’s daily meal program reflects that many of its families don’t have a lot of refrigerator space, and some don’t have access to kitchens or may be doubled up with other families. People were most interested in picking up food around lunchtime, between 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Austin said.

“We’ve had parents that have literally been in tears saying if it wasn’t for us, they wouldn’t have food in their families,” Austin said. “That’s what kept our crew going.”

Her crew hasn’t skipped a day, providing food to families over the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays as well as spring break, she said.

“People have eaten every day and food insecurity is only growing. It’s not lessening,” she said.

People have been laid off longer than they thought, run through their minimal savings, and have been unable to pay rent for eight, nine or 10 months, and are concerned they’ll be evicted soon, she said.

Since families don’t have to apply to participate, they don’t experience any stigma that might otherwise come from accessing free school meals, Austin added. “I think parents are thankful they don’t have to put breakfast and lunch together,” she said.

Networking

Another key approach that aided Richardson was the informal partnerships that were formed during the pandemic to help mitigate the pandemic’s indirect impacts on local children.

“People were really opening their doors and sharing their resources with each other,” Bruce said. “That’s what kept our crew going.”

She said that whenever her staff had questions, other staff were always willing to help.

“I think that when everybody was so uncertain during the pandemic, schools became one of the primary anchor points for meals for kids,” Austin said.

They worked with food organizations like East Palo Alto’s Ecumenical Hunger Program to supplement the meals that organization was providing by purchasing more protein-rich foods.

“We bought them so much peanut butter and tuna,” Chamberlain recalled.

The coalition also crafted billboards with information about pandemic resources for families that were sent out with school meals. San Mateo County librarians, part of the coalition, pitched in by using their empty library facilities to make thousands of copies.

“We had to step outside our traditional roles and do things we would never be expected to do.”

Stephanie Martinez, Jefferson Elementary School District

“It was just this really wonderful partnership where everybody comes together to make things happen,” Chamberlain said.

Richardson also created public-private partnerships to bolster her efforts. Through a partnership with Palo Alto-based VMware, the district received fruit donations through most of the year. Her team partnered with Facebook and other organizations that bought food from local restaurant vendors to provide special meals and meal kits, she said. And she was able to get gift cards and meal donations for her staff. Those, along with certificates signed by the district superintendent that she created to thank her staff, boosted morale, she said.

“You would think they all got a piece of gold,” she said, describing what staff members’ response to the certificates.

Another tool was using social media, specifically the EPA Neighbors page on Facebook, to spread the word about the meal offerings, she said.

During the group’s twice-monthly meetings, members including Richardson learned about the needs facing the community and took action, said Dr. Lisa Chamberlain, who co-founded the group with Dr. Janine Bruce.

“The implications of food insecurity are so far-reaching,” Bruce said. “I think that when everybody was so uncertain during the pandemic, schools became one of the primary anchor points for meals for kids.”

They worked with food organizations like East Palo Alto’s Ecumenical Hunger Program to supplement the meals that organization was providing by purchasing more protein-rich foods.

“We bought them so much peanut butter and tuna,” Chamberlain recalled.

The coalition also crafted billboards with information about pandemic resources for families that were sent out with school meals. San Mateo County librarians, part of the coalition, pitched in by using their empty library facilities to make thousands of copies.

“We had to step outside our traditional roles and do things we would never be expected to do.”

Stephanie Martinez, Jefferson Elementary School District

“It was just this really wonderful partnership where everybody comes together to make things happen,” Chamberlain said.

Richardson also created public-private partnerships to bolster her efforts. Through a partnership with Palo Alto-based VMware, the district received fruit donations through most of the year. Her team partnered with Facebook and other organizations that bought food from local restaurant vendors to provide special meals and meal kits, she said. And she was able to get gift cards and meal donations for her staff. Those, along with certificates signed by the district superintendent that she created to thank her staff, boosted morale, she said.

“You would think they all got a piece of gold,” she said, describing what staff members’ response to the certificates.

Another tool was using social media, specifically the EPA Neighbors page on Facebook, to spread the word about the meal offerings, she said.

Continued on next page
The Ravenswood district also coordinated food pickup days when schools were distributing educational materials to families, or at sites that had mobile COVID-19 testing stations, which helped the numbers skyrocket, she said. Throughout the pandemic, the district also offered home food deliveries to families, which in turn helped keep its bus drivers employed. “At one point our home delivery was 60% to 70% compared to curbside,” Richardson said. Families would call by 9 a.m. and leave a message saying how many children they had and where they lived. In the beginning, this option was more popular because “nobody wanted to come out,” she said. As time went on, people began to pick up items in person more.

Through the “Seamless Summer” policy offered through the USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service, the district has also provided students with neighboring charter schools, Montessori schools and local day cares.

“It’s not restrictive to just students enrolled in your school,” she said. “It opens up to any-body in the community.”

She and her team just have to count the number of meals they distribute with a simple clicker.

Still, with all the food they’re distributing, the participation rate is about 50% less than it would be if students were in school, she said. Richardson said she suspects it’s because families are getting food from other places — and given the dramatic uptick in demand they’re seeing, families are reporting, this may very well be the case.

Second Harvest Food Bank continues to serve twice as much food to twice as many people as it did before the pandemic hit, said Tracy Weatherby, a vice president at Second Harvest, the primary food bank for San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

And they don’t see demand falling any time soon, she said. “Over 50% of our clients we surveyed have less than $100 in savings,” she said. “That’s not enough cash to pay most people’s grocery bills. We’re pretty certain this may continue.”

But some families are relying solely on the student meals for their extra food support. Two families picking up meals at a recent distribution in East Palo Alto said in Spanish that they weren’t getting nutritional aid from anywhere else.

Make it convenient

Ravenswood City School District staff prepare bags of food on May 19. After surveying families, the district now provides seven-day meal kits on Wednesdays.

Use existing staff in new ways

Other school districts, like the Jefferson Elementary School District in Daly City, met the new needs of their students by shifting the roles of existing staff members to help battle child hunger. Stephanie Martinez, program director of student services with the district, who also leads the district’s counseling program, said that many of her 15 counseling staffers switched to helping families get access to food — though counseling services continued during the pandemic as well.

They served food to between 100 to 250 families each month, said Arthur Melendez, a counselor with the district. They also retooled their menu, from hot meals to a grab-and-go style, after learning that the meals would sometimes be soggy or cold by the time they were picked up, and supplemented them with fresh produce through Second Harvest.

For families that couldn’t come pick up meals, counselors and district staff members delivered the meals to families themselves. Among the reasons that families didn’t pick up meals were that they were sick with COVID-19, didn’t have a car, lost their insurance, couldn’t pay for gas or had too many kids to fit into the car, Martinez said. She and her team also brought in additional resources through grants and were able to provide some bus passes and direct financial support to families.

Counselors, Martinez said, are “like super power people. They do a lot. We had to step outside our traditional roles and do things we would never be expected to do.”

What didn’t work

The global pandemic triggered plenty of challenges: Children were away from school, some families moved without reporting their new addresses and some were fearful of leaving home. Even so, it was a requirement in some districts for parents to bring the child with them when picking up food.

According to Weatherby, the free and reduced price meal program poses some obstacles to getting meals to children who could benefit. One is that some families are afraid to apply, perhaps concerned that it will negatively affect their immigration status. Another is that the income eligibility requirements are so low that they don’t include people who still struggle to pay for food.

“There are plenty of people struggling making over 185% of the federal poverty limit,” she said.

Yet another challenge associated with school meals outside of the “Seamless Summer Option” is that to be eligible for free and reduced-price meals, federal guidelines don’t take into account the significantly higher cost of living associated with the Bay Area, Martinez said. She noted that a lot of families and community members work in labor fields that may not provide full benefits, more than part-time pay or minimum wages to their workers.

To be eligible for free meals at school, a family of four can earn no more than $34,450 and no more than $49,025 to receive reduced-cost meals. The fair market rent of $2,923 for a one-bedroom apartment in San Mateo County (according to rentdata.org) is more than the monthly income threshold for free lunches of $2,871.

On one hand, there may be less stigma to getting school breakfasts and lunches than in going to a food bank, suggested Mary McGrath, executive director of Safe and Supportive Schools, a San Mateo County initiative focused on school-based behavioral and mental health services. On the other hand, she said, funds can be limited because some districts tend to undercount the number of children who are eligible for McKinney-Vento funds, a program aimed at making school services more accessible for students who experience homelessness or significant housing insecurity. One district, McGrath said, reports only having four students eligible for such funds, but contains a whole street full of RVs where children are living.

Another obstacle is that gaining access to free and reduced-price meals requires a certain amount of digital literacy from the families, but with little training and support available, Martinez said.

Many applications for housing, finances or food support are now online, and those take certain resources and skills to navigate. Families don’t always have the documents or the tools to scan and upload the requested information, Martinez said.

We’ve had parents that have literally been in tears saying if it wasn’t for us, they wouldn’t have food in their families.

DEBBIE AUSTIN, MOUNTAIN VIEW WHISMAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

“All of these things we learned as college students and educators — our families have never had to do this,” she said.

Pandemic EBT cards

One pandemic program that has been at the forefront of efforts is the Pandemic EBT program. Families that were eligible for free and reduced-price school meals were sent EBT cards, similar to SNAP/CalFresh cards, loaded with $5.70 per student per day, roughly covering the number of days that school was not in session.

The $5.70 aimed to cover the cost of breakfast and lunch. However, families that were not already qualified for the program had to fill out applications. Martinez said it was “harder for our counseling staff to navigate the applications, and they had to spend time going through rather personal questions with applicants.”

In the first round of the Pandemic EBT program, in which cards were mailed to eligible households, San Mateo County reported one of the largest gaps between estimated eligible participants and actual participants among California counties — the EBT cards reached only 85.9% of the estimated children who were eligible. The proportion in Santa Clara County was 90.4%, according to a California Department of Social Services report.

One reason for the gap in San Mateo County was that a number of families moved out of the pandemic, and the cards missed them in the mail, McGrath said.

“The address change issue is difficult … even for well-intentioned organizations wanting to implement that,” Weatherby said.

The next round of pandemic EBT is set to be disbursed shortly, with cards expected to be mailed to eligible families between June 21 and July 31, according to a state memo.

What’s next

Given all of the new ways of combating child hunger that were initiated during the pandemic, it’s perhaps unsurprising that there are efforts in the works to codify some of those changes. Assemblymember Marc Berman (D-Menlo Park), whose District 24 represents parts of San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, last year proposed a bill to reform the community eligibility provision, and this year is a principal co-author of state Sen. Nancy Skinner’s “Free School Meals for All Act,” Senate Bill 364. The legislation would promise free breakfast and lunch for all California students and end the application process to receive free meals.

If the proposed legislation passes, it will increase the workload for school meal programs, requiring more staffing and equipment.

At the same time, “It’s going to help farmers. It’s going to help everybody that produces food. It’s going to spread the wealth,” said Austin of the Mountain View Whisman School District.

“If you think about every other country in the world, they do not charge children in school for food,” she said. “We’re just now getting on the bandwagon.”

This article was produced as part of Kaiser news. Kaiser Permanente Center for Health Journalism’s 2020 Data Fellowship. It is the first in a series exploring the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on local food banks and policies. Second Harvest of Silicon Valley and UnBox provided data.

Email Staff Writer Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com.
The story of an artist

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

The current exhibition at the Pamela Walsh Gallery, "Mitchell Johnson, Color Continuum," may be perfectly timed to usher in a hopeful, post-pandemic era. The survey show, which features selected paintings by the Menlo Park artist dating from 1988 to 2021, is a bright, colorful and uplifting experience with the added benefit of taking the viewer, vicariously, to scenic spots around the country.

The idea for the show came after Johnson visited Walsh's Ramona Street gallery to see her Nathan Oliveira collection. A subsequent visit to Johnson's light-filled studio inspired her to suggest an exhibition that would showcase his latest, large-scale works but also include paintings from earlier in his career.

"The dialogue between these pieces showed a remarkable progression in Mitchell's evolution as a painter," Walsh said. "A large survey exhibition tells the story of an artist in a way that words cannot, and Mitchell has arrived at a very important moment in his career."

The show is a combination of new work and early paintings from Johnson's private collection, as well as works borrowed from museums and private collectors.

"Mitchell and I spent quite a bit of time in his studio going through paintings and thinking about the narrative. We are showing the arc of 30 years and how his work has evolved, so we were careful to include paintings that illustrate different time periods," Walsh said.

Born in 1964, Johnson's childhood involved frequent relocations due to his father's military career. In a recent email interview he explained, "I am sure I started painting and making things as a way to be grounded amidst the constant change. The interest in color was always there."

After graduating from Randolph-Macon College in Virginia, he found employment in the computer industry and took art classes in the evening. He saved enough money to attend Parsons School of Design in New York City, earning a master of fine arts degree in 1990. Although stimulating, New York was prohibitively expensive for a young artist. A call one day from his brother Ed in California would set him on a new life path.

Abstract expressionist painter Sam Francis, who lived in Palo Alto, needed a part-time assistant. Johnson moved west and continued to paint while working for Francis. It proved to be a transformative experience.

"Working for Sam made me realize that every artist decides what their work will look like and how about but also how they will build a career. Careers in the art world are cobbled together in unique ways; galleries don't run people's lives or careers and they certainly don't provide consistency or stability," Johnson said.

Johnson's early work, expressionistic landscapes of California, soon found an audience. But, perhaps because of the transient quality of his upbringing, Johnson sought out other venues in order to explore his passion for color and shapes. Soon he was traveling to Cape Cod, Italy, France and Asia (often with wife Donia and son Luca) in order to find new inspiration. His works, sometimes done en plein air (outdoors), more often from memory in the studio, are not the stereotypical renditions of scenic locations. Two lawn chairs on a beach, the rooftops of Cape Cod cottages and a lone picnic table are more likely to draw his attention because they are opportunities to pursue his quest for "colors and shapes that feel complex and challenging."

In the rear of the Walsh Gallery, a narrow corridor provides an intimate space in which to view very early examples of Johnson's work. One can see that, as a student, he was working in a soft, impressionistic manner of representation, as in "Green Car, Palo Alto" from 1992. Moving around the gallery, the canvases become larger, brighter, with more attention to the geometry of shapes. Johnson said that he views the canvas as "a stage where shapes and colors perform together."

These stages include places where we all have been, perhaps, or have wanted to go.

"I think the subjects of Mitchell's paintings allow people to access the work and are universally pleasing, but that is why they are great," Walsh said.

"North Truro" (2015) is an Edward Hopper-esque scene, a white clapboard cottage on the ocean's edge. Strong lines define the architectural features of the corner of the house, its roofline, open screen door and paneled window. But it is the color that draws our attention. Is the roof really green? Is the doorstep really purple and is the ocean ever that deep, deep blue? It doesn't matter because it all works and the overall feeling is one of warmth and nostalgia, Walsh said. "His true genius is his understanding of color; people are magnetically drawn to color."

Johnson's paintings also capture a moment in time, and they are usually not defined by having people as main characters. In "Yellow Table" from 2021, for example, the composition could not be simpler. A bright yellow picnic table sits solidly in the center canvas, resting on a ground of green grass. Horizons of light and dark blue delineate the beach and sea behind it. It's a compact composition but holds potential for so much meaning: We have been there, it was fun, and we want to go there again.

Johnson has also tackled the complex subject matter of cityscapes. In "Pine and Grant" (2019-21), the artist has started out depicting, in a realistic manner, a very specific location in San Francisco. But this realism is obscured by large square, rectangle and oblong shapes of secondary colors superimposed upon the city backdrop. It is a conscious effort on the artist's part to merge aspects of representation and abstraction in one canvas. This may not be every one's notion of a San Francisco city scene.

The show also includes examples of Johnson's purely abstract paintings, such as "Biarritz (Secret)" 2018-2020. Rectangles of flat, matte colors, applied with a hint of pentimento (traces of paint from previous layers), overlap and encourage the eye to travel in and around the canvases. Johnson, who has long been his own publicity and business manager, has found a loyal following for his work here in California and, thanks to ads in the Wall Street Journal Magazine, around the world. One local collector is tech entrepreneur Donna Dubinsky, who commissioned him to paint the view from her home on Taylor Street in San Francisco. "For me, Mitchell's work toggles between realism and abstraction in a very appealing way," she said. "Yes, there are buildings and recognizable objects, but when you look carefully, you realize they are really shapes and colors. He assembles shapes and colors to create a mood and a vivid sense of place."

As one collector said as she viewed the show, "I have such joy having his work in my house."

The artist shared his feelings about seeing 30 years of his work on display locally.

"After all the years here, I have rarely exhibited in Palo Alto, but each time I do I think about how Ed found me the job with Sam Francis and how fun it was to live with him on Channing Avenue for about eight months. Ed passed away from multiple myeloma on Valentine's Day 2020. I owe so much to him and think of his suffering every time I paint," he said. "All of my paintings have been about color, but they are also about the bit tersweetness of life."

"Color Continuum" is on view at Pamela Walsh Gallery, 540 Ramona St., Palo Alto, through June 26. Gallery hours are Tues day through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. (Sunday and Monday by appointment). More information is available at pemalwalshgallery.com.

Email Contributing Writer Sheryl Nonnenberg at nonnenberg@aol.com.

Magali Gauthier

Mitchell Johnson, a Menlo Park artist, stands among his paintings currently exhibited at Pamela Walsh Gallery in Palo Alto on May 19.
Craft cocktails without pretension?

Bar Zola says it has the recipe.

The long-awaited Palo Alto project offers French food and drinks that are fun, complex and sometimes alcohol-free.

Meehan’s strategy of making the bar’s concept fit the neighborhood rather than the other way around, Harrison decided on an intentionally curated menu for the bar’s opening to gauge the response of his customers. “Bars are supposed to be something that come in to make the neighborhood better, not change it,” Harrison said, adding that his plan was to remain flexible to the tastes of the local community. “If we need more vodka drinks on the menu, we’re going to do it,” he said.

Though Harrison estimates that the opening cocktail menu will be about half of its eventual length, Bar Zola has still tried to offer something for everybody, or as he puts it — a cocktail menu that is “unpretentious, fun to drink and complex enough to satisfy just about anybody.” The resulting menu showcases an assortment of cocktails across five categories: sparkling, citrusy and refreshing, stirred and boozy, low-proof and no-proof (mixed drinks containing no alcohol).

“IT’s kind of like a neo-tiki cocktail list,” Harrison said, referring to the flavors that are used in many of the bar’s cocktails, which feature plenty of citrus and spice — hallmarks of classic tiki cocktails. Though tiki flavors are certainly abundant in the “citrusy and refreshing” category of the menu, Harrison’s love of tiki has also influenced his “stirred and boozy” drinks like the Rude Boy, which he describes as an “old fashioned in a Hawaiian shirt.” The drink is made with a base of both Barbancourt and Plantation Caribbean rums for sweetness and complexity (in place of whiskey), and gets its tiki twist from Bittermens Elemakule Tiki Bitters, which lend cinnamon and allspice flavor, as well as orange bitters and gomme syrup (a sugar syrup thickened with gum arabic) for body and texture.

Where Bar Zola may stand out amongst many other craft cocktail bars on the Peninsula is in Harrison’s approach to thoughtfully crafted cocktails made with low or no alcohol. “If you come in and spend the money on something that doesn’t have liquor in it, it should be interesting,” Harrison said, noting that most non-alcoholic cocktails he samples at bars are merely reproductions of classic cocktails made with non-alcoholic distillates. Harrison has also considered the modified drinking habits of customers during the pandemic. “Going out to a bar and having like five or six drinks is kind of becoming less and less logistically possible,” Harrison said, noting that many customers are reluctant to use ride-sharing services that would have otherwise assured safe passage home after a long night. Seeking to provide low-alcohol offerings that are delicious enough for customers to order a second round while still drinking responsibly, Bar Zola uses smaller quantities of flavorful liqueurs and cordials like Haus Alpenz Byrrh Grand Quinquina (an aromatic wine-based aperitif) and Grand Marnier for complex flavor with less alcohol. For customers who prefer not to drink alcohol at all, Harrison noted that one of the most popular drinks served during the bar’s soft opening has been a non-alcoholic one. The Speak Low is made with muddled grapefruit and celery, lime juice and a hibiscus-cashew orgeat that Bar Zola staffers make themselves. “ Spirits provide body just as much as they provide booziness,” Harrison said, noting that the cashews in the drink provide the mouthfeel and richness that are usually imparted by spirits. Though other housemade syrups like the hibiscus-cashew orgeat and unique liqueurs like Pineau des Charentes abound in Bar Zola’s drink wells, Harrison says he wants to keep the menu as “unpretentious” as possible.

“We’re never going to tell you that there’s Ticoloid (a culinary stabilizer) and xanthan gum in our hibiscus-cashew orgeat,” Harrison said, noting that he wants to remove the “guesswork and Googling” that can come from trying to read an overly complicated cocktail menu.

Instead, Bar Zola relies on flavor-driven descriptors on their menu to help customers find cocktails that match their tastes. In the case of the low-alcohol Coupe de Ville, for example, the base of Martini & Rossi Fiero (a bittersweet vermouth imbued with flavor from Spanish oranges) is simply described as “Italian, red, bitter.”

Another area where Bar Zola hopes to be unpretentious is in its ability to provide access to cocktails that don’t break the bank. Though Bar Zola’s house cocktails are priced at $15 each (not uncommon for craft cocktails in the area), Harrison says that the team at Bar Zola will always be able to recommend a well-made classic cocktail like a daiquiri for between $10 and $12.

Though that price point will be a welcome one to budget-conscious drinkers, Harrison says offering drinks in that range is also about giving more options to regulars who always drinks from the menu should be offered the chance to branch out and try something else for the same price, or less than that of the house cocktails, depending on the customer’s choice of spirit. While Zola remains closed for dine-in service, Bar Zola will serve an abbreviated version of the restaurant’s pre-pandemic menu, which diners can enjoy inside, or in a newly constructed parklet. Bienaime has combined a number of small bites like olives, salmon tartine and tuna tartare with larger entrees of Hokkaido scallops cooked in a carrot-truffle nage with shiitake mushrooms, or steak au poivre served with pommes frites. Bar Zola is open from Thursday to Saturday, 5 p.m. until late. 585 Bryant St., Palo Alto; 650-521-0651. Email Freelance Writer Zack Fernandes at hello@zackfernandes.com.
WHY SUPPORT LOCAL JOURNALISM?

Our subscribing members say it best...

“We will definitely resubscribe and up our amount. You do an essential and superb job in really being ‘the glue’ of the mid-Peninsula. Special appreciation to your leader Bill Johnson, who has spent his life making this area and our lives better.”

- Linda and Sid L.

Will you join the thousands of others supporting local journalism?

Now’s your moment to step up when we need you the most.

Subscribe now at AlmanacNews.com/join

You can also subscribe for one year by mailing a check for $120 ($60 for seniors and students) to us at 450 Cambridge Ave., Palo Alto 94306.
JUST LISTED | Open House Saturday & Sunday, 1:00pm – 4:00pm

East Coast-Inspired Architecture & Chic Sophisticated Interiors

515 PALMER LANE, MENLO PARK
- Newly constructed in 2011 at the end of a gated driveway
- 5 bedrooms and 5.5 baths on two levels
- Approximately 3,176 sq. ft.
- New white oak floors, custom wallcoverings, and classic moldings
- Inviting rear yard with barbecue center, arbor with café lights, and custom playhouse
- Eco-friendly synthetic front and rear lawns
- Complete privacy on approximately 10,000 sq. ft.
- Detached 2-car garage with built-ins
- Minutes to the best of Menlo Park, Redwood City, Stanford, Palo Alto, major commuter routes, and San Francisco International Airport
- Proximity to top-rated schools and access to Menlo-Atherton High School

Offered at $4,195,000 | 515Palmer.com

JAIME LYNN JONES
JULIE MARIANI CASSEL
Lic. #01312426 and Lic. #01782731

INTERO
A Berkshire Hathaway Affiliate

650.430.7000
jj@jjphomes.com
www.jaimeandjulie.com