Pandemic-induced enrollment plunge persists for second year at local public schools

Local private schools see a big jump in applications

By Kate Bradshaw

Local public schools are still seeing dwindling enrollment tied to the pandemic, but the declines were not as significant as last school year. At the same time, some private schools have seen big increases in applications.

The Almanac and Palo Alto Weekly teamed up for a data project to examine eight years’ worth of enrollment figures for local public schools. Although school year’s numbers may shift slightly as the data is finalized.

School administrators attribute enrollment decreases in part to families moving out of the area because of skyrocketing housing costs, now that many parents can work remotely, and students choosing to attend charter schools. The 2020 U.S. census also shows the number of young people on the Midpeninsula is shrinking, even as the overall population grows.

By Zoe Morgan and Angela Swartz

School districts in California collect enrollment data every October. Because the state hasn’t released final numbers for this school year, the 2021-22 data was self-reported by school districts to the Weekly and Almanac. Data from prior years is based on California Department of Education records. This school year’s numbers may shift slightly as the data is finalized.

Developers officially submit Parkline proposal to rebuild SRI campus

By Kate Bradshaw

It’s official: There’s now a proposal under review at City Hall to rebuild the 63-acre SRI campus hidden in the heart of Menlo Park.

Lane Partners, a Menlo Park-based developer, recently submitted plans to demolish the aging research and development campus at SRI and replace it with state-of-the-art research buildings, 400 new housing units, new landscaping with bike and pedestrian paths, and more than 25 acres of publicly accessible open space, according to proposal documents.

SRI, an independent, nonprofit research institute that is headquartered in Menlo Park and has a history of launching a number of pioneering technologies, is currently housed in “obsolete and unsustainable buildings,” according to the documents.

SRI is “outdated and, frankly, kind of out of place in a city like Menlo Park,” said Mark Murray, principal at Lane Partners, in a recent interview.

Right now, he noted, there’s a security fence running around about 90% of the site, and it’s “not great looking.”

“It impedes a huge chunk of land right in the middle of town,” he said.

The plan is to remove that fence and open up routes through the property to safely walk, bike and recreate on 28 new acres of landscaed, publicly accessible land, all while creating new and improved workplaces for SRI employees and adding housing for the community.

The development wouldn’t add any square footage beyond what exists there now for office and research and development space, 1.38 million square feet, and would retain the same number of parking spots as currently exist — 3,200. Three of the existing buildings would be left on-site to allow SRI to continue operations during the construction process, according to proposal documents.

Among the open space offerings would be a multi-use sports field sized to accommodate under-10 soccer teams, a children’s playground, outdoor exercise stations, a dog park, a
Nearly 75 years of vital services, enabling seniors to age in place.

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Peninsula Volunteers, Inc.’s vital services for seniors are more critical now than ever. The pandemic’s disproportionate impact on older adults has led to more widespread loneliness, isolation and health vulnerabilities. Hunger has more than tripled in Bay Area counties, jeopardizing the health and well-being of older adults. Now nearly 1 in 6 seniors is facing hunger risk and cannot cover the cost of basic needs.

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You have been with us every step of the way. Because of you, we extended our reach during the pandemic, preparing and home delivering almost 288,000 nutritious Meals on Wheels from our Menlo Park kitchen; placing over 47,500 wellness care calls and visits; holding 12,462 combined virtual and in person sessions with active seniors and with Alzheimer’s clients to engage in exercise and stimulating learning activities; providing 4,093 transportation rides for medical and grocery needs and 23,750 volunteer hours. We continue to partner with local companies and restaurants to secure additional meals for those in need and continue to envision new and better ways to expand our support for our senior community in the new environment.

You may ask “how can I help local seniors like Raymond right now”? Join us as we continue strengthening the senior community by helping us provide high-quality programs that keep your loved ones and neighbors fed, engaged, and living independently. Your gift of any size made securely online at penvol.org/donate will change the lives of seniors now.

* A $500 donation will support one month of daily Meals on Wheels for two seniors, or full services for a week at Rosener House for an adult with Alzheimer’s, or sixteen 30-minute personal training sessions at Little House, or 100 transportation rides at the subsidized rate.
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Woodside
FOR SALE
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Woodside
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Local News

Menlo Park again mulls a ban on gas-powered leaf blowers

By Kate Bradshaw

Twenty-three years after Menlo Park voters halted a ban on gas-powered leaf blowers, the city is once again thinking of enacting one.

On Tuesday, Nov. 16, the Menlo Park City Council voted 4-0, with Councilwoman Jen Wolosin absent, to set up a study session to discuss the details of a gas-powered leaf blower ban, including how it should be implemented, how it could be enforced, and what staff resources it would take to do so.

In 1998, Menlo Park voters split 45% for and 55% against Measure E, a referendum asking whether the city should adopt a ban on gas-powered leaf blowers.

In contrast, other nearby communities have bans on gas-powered leaf blowers: Los Altos has had one since 1991, Palo Alto’s ban on them in residential areas took effect in 2005, and Portola Valley banned them in 2019 with a two-year delay in enforcement. Portola Valley also offered a leaf blower trade-in program in which residents could bring in their gas-powered leaf blowers to receive 40% of the cost of an electric blower, up to $120.

As of August, some Portola Valley residents said they’ve noticed that the town seems noticeably quieter since the ban took effect in January. In Atherton, officials haven’t gone for a ban, but the town is conducting a pilot project to use battery-powered leaf blowers in Holbrook-Palmer Park and on public streets.

Recent state legislation pushed in their gas-powered leaf blowers to receive 40% of the cost of an electric blower, up to $120.

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Recent state legislation pushed

Jackie Speier’s retirement fuels speculation about Democratic successor

By Gennady Sheyner

Jackie Speier’s announcement on Tuesday that she will not seek reelection in 2022 will not seek another term in the U.S. Congress has created a rare political opportunity for elected officials throughout the 14th Congressional District, who seldom get a chance to run for an open seat.

Speier, a political icon who won her first election 41 years ago, hinges on a major wildcard: The district that Speier has been representing is in the midst of being reshaped and its boundaries won’t be known until late December. The redistricting process, which could result in some would-be candidates falling outside the lines of the heavily Democratic district, is adding a layer of complexity to plans to find Speier’s successor. While the U.S. Constitution allows candidates to run for a seat outside their district, previous cases, including when House Ways and Means Committee Chair Richard Neal ran for an open seat from Massachusetts, resulted in court challenges that spoke to the constitutionality of the move.

Several years back, longtime Menlo Park resident Jim White and Patty White started to research where their daughter, Amy, who has Down syndrome, could live independently once she became an adult. They were struck by the lack of options.

With this in mind, the couple plans to bring a proposal to build 13 apartments for adults with disabilities at 4388 Alpine Road to the town’s Architectural & Site Control Commission on Dec. 13.

The proposed project, estimated to cost between $8 million and $10 million, would be located in a commercial corridor known as the Nathorst Triangle. It’s an area former County Supervisor Steve Mariano and other officials have discussed as an ideal location for affordable housing.

The housing would only be available for adults with intellectual and/or emotional or developmental delays. She is now renting a house in Portola Valley to continue to exercise independent skills, he said.

Finding affordable housing for the I/DD population is a “chronic problem,” according to the Whites. San Mateo County has lost 11% of its licensed care facilities, while demand has grown 20% to 30% over the last six years (to a little over 300,000 people in the I/DD category), according to a presentation last week by Housing Choices, a group that helps people with developmental and other disabilities secure housing.

This housing could also count toward the town’s significant increase in the number of units it must plan for in its 2023-31 Regional Housing Needs Allocation.
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Nominees should be 65+ and live on the mid-Peninsula. You will find the nomination form for the Avenidas Lifetimes of Achievement Award at www.avenidas.org.

Contact mdavis@avenidas.org for more information.

The deadline for a complete nomination is November 30th.

Mail to Avenidas
450 Bryant Street, Palo Alto
Menlo Park inches closer to ‘hypercompetitive’ $50 million grant to combat sea level rise

By Kate Bradshaw

In a bid seeking funding for a pricey project to protect the bayshore from sea level rise, the city of Menlo Park has teamed up with PG&E and Meta (formerly Facebook) to apply for a $50 million grant from the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The grant is part of FEMA’s new “Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities” program, aimed at providing grants to help jurisdictions with projects to mitigate the threat of natural disasters and reduce the risk of injuries, loss of life, or damage to critical services and infrastructure, according to a project summary. The highly competitive federal grant program received 991 subapplications, 406 of which have been selected for further review, according to an announcement on the FEMA website.

The city (of Menlo Park) was the only project sponsor to be selected in this country for further consideration at the maximum amount of $50 million, said MidPen Housing Trust’s Nikki Nagaya.

The program, said Councilman Ray Mueller at the council’s Nov. 9 meeting, is “hypercompetitive.”

“To get a full allocation with our partners is tremendous,” he added.

Councilwoman Jen Wolosin talked about the importance of a regional coordination to tackle sea level rise throughout the San Francisco Bay. Otherwise, she said, “sea level rise is a little bit like Whack-a-Mole. You fix it in one place and it pops up in another.”

The council also talked Nov. 9 about whether the city should move forward in signaling its commitment to lead the ambitious project should it be selected to receive the funds, and what that might mean for the city.

In a study session, council members signaled support for the project, indicating support for the next legal steps to move forward with the possibility, such as signing a memorandum of understanding of what the city’s commitments would be if selected for the grant, adding a provisional full-time employee for at least a three-year term to help lead the project, and researching additional funding sources to maintain a positive cash flow during the project, to start.

The city has joined forces with the San Francisco Creek Joint Powers Authority, Meta and PG&E to apply for the federal grant to secure a 3.7-mile section of the Peninsula shoreline in Menlo Park and East Palo Alto from sea level rise, including parts of Bayfront Expressway. It’s part of the SAFER Bay project, an effort led by the creek joint powers authority to provide flood protection, restore ecosystems and offer recreation along the Bay in East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Palo Alto.

The entire SAFER Bay project is estimated to cost a whopping $130 million, according to staff, while the part of the project under discussion is estimated at about $67.7 million, according to FEMA.

The section of the shore-

Project could bring affordable homeownership to Belle Haven

By Kate Bradshaw

Under a proposal by local nonprofit affordable housing developer MidPen Housing, the Menlo Park community might be able to offer 12 new for-sale townhomes for low-income households.

During a study session the Menlo Park City Council held Tuesday, Nov. 9, council members signaled support for the concept, asking for staff to bring back further proposals for approval in the near future, including dedicating $200,000 to MidPen Housing to explore forming a community land trust, and contributing $3.4 million to support the construction of the proposed affordable townhomes.

MidPen Housing owns the property at 335 Pierce Road, in Menlo Park’s Belle Haven neighborhood, which has one vacant parcel and one four-unit apartment building. It aims to redevelop the dozen townhomes on the property that can be affordable to low-income households in Belle Haven.

In the Belle Haven neighborhood, 57% of homes are renter-occupied, higher than the overall 40% percent of renter-occupied homes throughout San Mateo County, according to data from a recent University of California at Berkeley study exploring Menlo Park’s housing inventory.

The median household income in the neighborhood is $58,274 while the median sale price of homes in the neighborhood is over $1 million, indicating that homeownership is out of reach for many in the community, according to a staff report.

MidPen Housing proposes to create a rare homeownership opportunity for those low-income local households through the formation of a legal structure called a community land trust rooted in Belle Haven. A community land trust is an entity that controls the ownership of a property and is responsible for its stewardship, according to staff. These usually make homeownership more affordable because the homeowner is buying just the house, not the land that the property sits on.

The homeowners have a long-term lease on the land from the community land trust and agree to sell the home at a restricted price to keep it affordable in perpetuity, although they may be able to realize the appreciation from improvements they make while living in the house, according to Grounded Solutions Network, a Bay Area-based housing policy nonprofit.

New state legislation offers a partial property tax exemption on community land trust properties, permitting homeowners within these trusts to pay property taxes on the improvements to the land but not the land itself, said Jan Lindenthal, chief real estate development officer for MidPen Housing Corporation.

An additional benefit of the community land trust approach is that the community retains the power to make decisions about the land itself, she said.

Woodside’s Measure A holds razor-thin lead of five votes

By Angela Swartz

Measure A, an initiative to allow two sites in the Town Center area of Woodside to be considered for outdoor community gathering spaces, has a slim, five-vote lead (50.1%) in the latest results released on Nov. 12. Measure A requires a simple majority to pass.

The San Mateo County Elections Office reported Nov. 12 that 1,159 people voted yes on the measure, and 1,154 voted no, tightening the already close race which had a 20-vote difference on election night. The county has just 50 votes left to count for the only two measures on the ballot, Measure A and the Menlo Park City School District’s Measure B, according to the county’s website. Measure B, a parcel tax, is still leading by a comfortable margin.

As of Monday, Nov. 15, there are only seven challenged ballots remaining for Measure A, said Jim Irizarry, assistant chief elections officer for the county.

Two are for having no signature and five are for “non-matching signature.”

There are no other results to be released before the certification of election results, which is scheduled for Friday, Nov. 19 (after The Almanac’s Wednesday afternoon press deadline), he said.

The last day to “cure” challenged ballots was Wednesday, Nov. 17. A challenged ballot is one with an issue that would prevent it from being counted, Irizarry said. Other than late- ness, the vast majority of the time it’s due to a signature that is missing or does not match county records, he said.

There is no provision in California law for an automatic recount in any election, Irizarry said. Someone requesting a recount needs to file an applic-

See LAND TRUST, page 12

See MEASURE A, page 12
Despite millions of vaccine doses administered across the country, the COVID-19 threat is still real, Dr. Anthony Fauci said during a virtual town hall meeting on Nov. 9.

The country still has 70,000 new infections per day; 62 million people ages 12 and older who are eligible to be vaccinated still have not gotten their shots. The number doesn’t include the latest eligible group of 5- to 11-year-olds, he said.

“We’re vulnerable. We could get a surge unless we get more people vaccinated,” said Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and chief medical adviser to President Joe Biden. Fauci spoke of the ongoing threat as well as about vaccines, new drugs on the horizon and the post-pandemic future during the hourlong event, which was hosted and moderated by Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Palo Alto.

Eshoo, who chairs the House subcommittee on health, presented Fauci with audience questions about all sides of the pandemic, including so-called long COVID and childhood vaccinations.

With Thanksgiving fast approaching, the first question on many minds was whether it is safe to gather inside.

“Clearly, if you are fully vaccinated, you can enjoy the holiday with your children, grandparents and families,” Fauci said.

But for people who have just had one shot out of the recommended two, the risk is “obviously present” although diminished, he said. People who have had just one shot should take a rapid COVID-19 test before they gather with loved ones to minimize infection, he said.

The country still has a long way to go to be safe. Among people of all ages, only 58% have been fully vaccinated; 67% have received one dose. Of those who are 12 and older, 68% are fully vaccinated and 79% have had only one dose, he said.

“Not getting vaccinated is ‘inexcusable,’” Fauci said. The vaccines are a very effective tool to control the virus.

He recommended every eligible person get a booster shot. Studies show the booster shots greatly improve immunity against the virus. Protection from the initial series of shots begins to wane in the months afterward. People who have had COVID-19 infections and who later received the complete vaccination regimen should also still get the booster shot because of waning immunity and the possibility of being reinfected, he said.

Currently, the CDC recommends only people ages 65 and older or those who have medical conditions that make them vulnerable to serious illness can receive a booster shot. Drugmaker Pfizer submitted data to the Food and Drug Administration on Nov. 9 for an emergency use authorization of booster shots for anyone ages 18 and older, he noted.

Children ages 5 to 11 who are now receiving their initial vaccinations will also likely need booster shots, but studies on that are still underway, he said. Although vaccine doses for that age group are only one-third the dose of an adult vaccine, Fauci said that doesn’t decrease the vaccine’s efficacy. The children are receiving reduced doses because they are smaller, he said.

Eshoo noted that Lucille Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford is among the facilities doing clinical trials using the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for children.

“The clinical trials done in

Letter from Pets in Need staff alleges major errors led to puppy deaths

Staff asks board of directors to hold executive director accountable

The deaths of seven puppies while they were being transported by the nonprofit Pets in Need on Aug. 2 were caused by multiple senseless violations of law and protocol, stated a letter written days later to the Pets in Need board of directors.

The letter from a group of staff members, as well as with the subsequent response from leaders of Pets in Need, raise questions about what protocols have been put in place since the deaths to prevent future tragedies.

The puppies, who were being brought to the Palo Alto Animal Shelter from the Central Valley, were packed into a pet crate that allegedly gave them no room to turn around, the letter claimed, and the animals were not given water, proper air conditioning and ventilation.

Pets in Need, which has a shelter in Redwood City and is contracted to operate Palo Alto’s shelter, routinely rescues animals from other shelters. Charges of animal cruelty and neglect, which are misdemeanor, have been filed by the Santa Clara County District Attorney’s Office against the three employees involved in the Aug. 2 incident.

The letter cited multiple failures that should have been known to the already seasoned staff, one of whom is an operations manager with 20 years of experience, according to her LinkedIn page.

Although the nonprofit owns two vans, one which is larger and has full air conditioning in the front and back, the staff took the smaller van outfitted only with air conditioning in the passenger area.

In a Nov. 11 email attributed to Executive Director Al Mollica, Pets in Need disputed the employee’s claims that the van used in the Aug. 2 rescue didn’t have temperature control.

“The van is a two-year-old Mercedes-Benz crew van that has been used hundreds of times to safely transport animals from all over Northern California, including the Central Valley. The air conditioning system is powerful and is designed to provide air-flow from the front of the van to the back,” Mollica wrote.

Three managers went on the rescue run: Patty Santana, the Redwood City shelter operations manager; Maggie Evans, the behavior manager; and Ingrid Hartmann, human resources manager. The letter said it is unusual for a third person to attend a rescue run, let alone HR staff.

As a result, the animals, who should have been kept comfortable, cool and hydrated, traveled for more than four hours in 90-plus-degree heat, according to the letter.

“The transport team should have taken the larger van on a rescue run of this nature. Instead, the Van A was chosen because it contains two rows of seats, unlike Van B, which can accommodate only the driver and one passenger. This was the first of many avoidable mistakes made throughout the day,” the letter said.

What’s more, while shelter administrators planned and approved of picking up only 20 animals on the Aug. 2 rescue trip, the trio took eight additional animals, the letter noted.

“The transport team was also aware that the puppies were in questionable health when they took them, the letter said, but decided to take them anyway without contacting the Palo Alto medical director.”

The letter also noted crowded conditions. The transport team packed a single, medium-sized crate with all seven puppies.

“Crates of this size have a maximum weight capacity of 40 lbs., but this crate held over 70 lbs. It provided no room for the puppies to lie down or even turn around without stepping on each other. This kennel was placed on the floor of the van, directly behind Ms. Hartmann’s seat, not in a designated kennel space. The crate was shrouded in a towel to ‘protect the other animals from potential disease,’ completely blocking what little airflow that was able to reach the back of the van and leaving the puppies with minimal ventilation,” the letter said.

None of the 28 animals was given water or allowed time out of their kennels during the long drive, which violates the Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters, the letter said. This was not the first time that a member of the transport team had been reminded that animals on rescue runs need water, a person close to Pets in Need told this news organization, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

The letter to the board also

A dog in his outdoor cage at Pets In Need’s Palo Alto animal shelter on June 15. Fallout from the deaths of seven puppies in August has rocked the organization.

See FAUCI, page 20

See PETS IN NEED, page 18
Contributions to the Holiday Fund go directly to programs that benefit Peninsula residents. Last year, Almanac readers and foundations contributed $260,000 from more than 170 donors for the 10 agencies that feed the hungry, house the homeless and provide numerous other services to those in need.

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

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

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- **The David and Lucile Packard Foundation**

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

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

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

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

Literacy Partners — Menlo Park
Supports literacy programs and projects through fundraising and community awareness. Helps community members enhance their reading, writing and related skills and education to improve their economic, professional and personal wellbeing.

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

Second Harvest Food Bank
The largest collector and distributor of food on the Peninsula, Second Harvest Food Bank distributed 5.2 million pounds of food last year. It gathers donations from individuals and businesses and distributes food to more than 250,000 people each month through more than 770 agencies and distribution sites in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

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

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

Upward Scholars
Empowers low-income adults by providing them with financial support, tutoring, and other assistance so they can continue their education, get higher-paying jobs, and serve as role models and advocates for their children.
the issue further — on Oct. 9, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill that will phase out the sale of gas-powered leaf blowers by 2024.

The legislation, authored by Menlo Park resident and state Assemblyman Marc Berman, calls on the California Air Resources Board to, by July 2022, create policies to prohibit the sale of new “small off-road engines” by 2024, a category that includes gas-powered leaf blowers, generators, pressure washers and chainsaws.

During Tuesday’s discussion, about six community members spoke in favor of enacting a ban included two pediatric physicians in the community who are tasked with maintaining the yards of Menlo Park residents. Many gardeners were hanging fruit, but its impacts are more dense, and their lungs, hearts and brains are more sensitive because they are still developing, he said.

Gas-powered leaf blowers emit harmful pollutants like benzene, formaldehyde and hydrocarbons, and propel hazardous particulates from the ground into the air, such as dust, dirt, brake lining powder from vehicles and herbicides. In addition, the noise levels they produce can increase blood pressure and stress hormone levels, he said.

“IT’s our duty to protect our children, and one small step to put us on the right side of history,” he said.

Carlos Myers-Asencio, a 15-year-old Menlo Park resident, also supported the ban. “Banning leaf blowers is low hanging fruit, but its impacts are sure to be fruitful,” he said.

Kathleen Daly, who runs Cafe Zoe in the Willows neighborhood, said she agreed that leaf blowers are annoying, but raised concerns about the impacts of the ban on the service workers who are tasked with maintaining the yards of Menlo Park residents. Many gardeners were out of work during at least a portion of the pandemic, and asking them to spend a significant amount of money now to swap out their tools could pose a hardship, she said.

One of the significant questions with any ordinance banning gas-powered leaf blowers is how to enforce the ban. In Palo Alto, residents have complained for years about the lack of enforcement — a problem that became worse last year when budget cuts prompted the city to cut a code enforcement officer position.

Mayor Drew Combs said he anticipated that the ordinance could require a full-time code enforcement officer. City Manager Starla Jerome said she supported the ordinance but hadn’t heard back. The council’s discussion of a possible leaf blower ban came up as part of a larger conversation about what the city’s Environmental Quality Commission should work on over the next year. Among its other priorities are to support the city’s work toward its Climate Action Plan, work on preserving the city’s urban tree canopy, and pursuing other “green and sustainable initiatives.”


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Eventually, the goal is for the trust to operate as a self-sustaining nonprofit, which could even provide resources such as counseling for prospective homeowners, she said.

"Homeownership is the most important wealth-building vehicle for families and one of the few paths to build generational wealth and financial security," she wrote in a letter to city staff.

MEASURE A
continued from page 7

limit two residentially zoned pieces of land adjacent to the Town Center, a town-owned complex along Woodside Road from Whiskey Hill Road to Roberts Market that includes government buildings and commercial businesses, and Cañada Corners at the Cañada Road intersection (owned by Roberts Market). Because the rules were established by ballot measures J and L in 1988 and 1989, only voters can overturn the restrictions that limit future development on the sites.

The measure would allow the property behind Cañada Corners to be outfitted with surface parking to accommodate permanent outdoor dining, trails and play structures, all of which are now prohibited. It would also allow for the possible construction of a public building—an amphitheater or gazebo—for community events in the residentially zoned Town Center area on a portion of a 1.65-acre plot called Village Hill. Measure J, approved by the voters in 1988, prohibited development of commercial or office space on a then-vacant, town-owned parcel near where Town Hall is now located. It also required residential properties within and adjoining Town Center to remain in residential use unless commercial parking on those properties had been permitted prior to June 1, 1988.

Measure L, approved by voters the following year, created an exception to Measure J’s requirement that residential parcels in Town Center remain in residential use. Upon its approval by the voters, residentially zoned parcels in the Woodside Road Whiskey Hill Road Parking Assessment District were authorized to be improved to provide access, parking and open space—as shown in the 1989 Town Center site plan—so long as at least 50% of the residential parcels were redeveloped in open space. Approval of Measure J allowed the town to construct Town Hall parking and access improvements which now serve Town Hall, commercial businesses in the Town Center and the public.

Measure A’s backers argued that its passage was necessary for outdoor dining to continue beyond the pandemic.

The Woodside Town Council’s state of emergency ordinance allows the town to waive the restaurants’ parking requirements that are part of a conditional use permit. Gov. Gavin Newsom issued an executive order last week that extends parts of his March 4, 2020, COVID-19 emergency proclamation through March 31, 2022. The town operates under the state umbrella.

The town must take action every 60 days to continue the state emergency on a local level, said Mayor Brian Dombkowski. Outdoor dining is likely to be continued (assuming the council continues to observe the city’s emergency actions through March 2022, regardless of the outcome of Measure A).

When the emergency declaration ends, the town must once again enforce the parking requirements, he said.

FEMA GRANT
continued from page 7

line under discussion includes a portion near Meta’s original Menlo Park campus and PG&E’s Ravenswood substation, which provides power to customers from San Mateo to Palo Alto, according to a staff report. PG&E has offered to pay $10 million and Meta has offered to pay $7.8 million toward the project.

The proposed project would build a series of levees using “nature-based solutions” and include the habitat restoration of 550 acres of former salt ponds, according to the project summary. "The Menlo Park SAFER Bay project demonstrates how climate mitigation and adaptation can go hand in hand by utilizing nature-based solutions to protect critical electric and transportation infrastructure from sea level rise, which in turn will support Menlo Park’s and neighboring communities’ efforts to meet their Climate Action Plans and decarbonization efforts,” wrote Lauren Sweeney, sustainability and landscape project lead for Meta, in a letter supporting the project.

The proposed project is complex, large and expected to take about five years to design and build, according to staff. If Menlo Park is awarded the grant, the City Council should vote to either hire consultants or additional provisional staff to manage the project, city staff said.

Another challenge, according to city staff, is that FEMA reimburses the lead agency for expenses, which sometimes can take six months, so managing a positive cash flow while waiting would be difficult. The grant will likely come in will likely take additional staff work to navigate.

The FEMA decision on whether Menlo Park will receive the grant is expected no sooner than January. From there, the likely earliest possible date for the project to be completed would be July 2027, according to staff.
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running loop over a mile long, and bike pathways to connect the neighborhood to Burgess Park, the future Caltrain undercrossing at Middle Avenue and Menlo Park’s downtown area. There would also be a bike and pedestrian path connecting Menlo Park’s Caltrain station to Menlo-Atherton High School and Ringwood Avenue along Ravenswood Avenue. “The idea is to create a new, massive, park-like amenity right in the core of downtown Menlo Park,” Murray said.

Across the street from Menlo-Atherton High School, the developer plans to build a bike repair shop and juice bar, along with a new student drop-off area at Ravenswood Avenue and Middlefield Road.

One emphasis of the proposal is sustainability, and the developer proposes to work to attain certain LEED certifications, minimize carbon emissions, and meet the city’s all-electric reach code requirements. To promote renewable energy, solar panels would be installed to generate power on-site, and to reduce water, recycled water options would be considered and efficient fixtures installed. The construction process would also focus on diverting waste from landfills.

To complete the rebuilding project, the developer proposes to remove a total of 529 of the existing 1,375 trees on the campus, including 198 heritage trees and 331 non-heritage trees, and plant 795 new trees, boosting the overall tree count to 1,641.

Lane Partners also proposes to build 400 new rental units in four buildings, including 19 to 20 retail townhomes near the existing Classics of Burgess housing development. Of those, 15%, or about 60, of the new homes would be affordable to low, very low, and moderate-income households.

The proposal builds on community input collected over a series of outreach events held over the summer. One community that Lane Partners listened to closely was the residents at the Burgess Classics, 33 single-family homes that were formerly part of SRI property, according to Murray. In response to concerns from those residents, Lane Partners opted to place lower-density townhomes nearest that neighborhood.

Another modification made in response to neighbor concerns about traffic was to separate commercial traffic and have it exit onto Ravenswood Avenue and Middlefield Road rather than the more residential Laurel Street, according to Murray. For the proposal to move forward, the city needs to rezone the property to permit up to 40 homes per acre on that site. Currently, city zoning only permits 18.5 units per acre and sets the maximum building height at 35 feet. The proposal seeks to have two, five-story buildings set back far away from the residential areas.

The next step for the project will be for the developer to receive staff input and then hold feedback sessions with Menlo Park’s Planning Commission and City Council, Murray said.

Go to menloparkline.com for more information.

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

Willow Commons continued from page 5

A master plan map of the proposed Parkline project that would redevelop the 63-acre SRI campus in the heart of Menlo Park:

The residents, who for the most part would not have driver’s licenses, would have multiple opportunities for employment within walking distance of their homes, the Whites note in their proposal. Woodside Priory School, the Sequoias, Robert’s Market and the Portola Valley School District have written letters of support for the project. Residents have the potential to be a “loyal, local labor force,” the proposal states.

“The needs for Stanford faculty are so different,” Jim White said. “This project (the Willow Commons) is not a fire risk area. ... It will be the same height as the (current) building. It won’t be visible from the streets. It will improve it from an old, and not well-maintained, building.”

The residents

The housing would only be open to people eligible for supportive living services offered by California’s network of regional centers.

The Golden Gate Regional Center, which supports San Mateo County residents, reports that over two-thirds of adults with I/DD in the county do not have independent housing. This figure includes 100% of adults with I/DD who live in Portola Valley, a statistic that must be reported annually to the state for RHNA compliance.

The couple would create a nonprofit to run the supported living services and have hired an executive director, Brenda Bachechi, who has worked in special education for decades in San Mateo County.

Project design and timeline

The project is proposed on a 53,473-square-foot site that is zoned administrative/professional and uses the legal provisions of the state’s density bonus and supportive housing laws to enable the creation of permanent and affordable supportive housing.

There is currently a small building on the site that formerly housed Linwood Real Estate and Langley Hill Quarry (a sep- tic systems company) before the Whites acquired the land. They would build 11 one-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment units spread over six buildings. Each would be less than 500 square feet in size. There would also be an attached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) of similar size and design, and a second, detached two-bedroom, two-bathroom ADU of about 870 square feet. The small unit size also serves to accommodate 13 units on the site. They would each come with a washer and dryer.

The average building would be 18 feet tall. Town code dictates a height limit of 28 feet. The buildings would be set back about 75 feet from the street (similar to the existing Linwood building).

The ADUs are intended as homes for staff so the facility can “attract and retain quality support staff in a high cost of living area,” according to the fact sheet.

“The specific needs of the intended population have guided the decisions around the components of the proposed supportive housing community,” according to the fact sheet.

“The size of the apartment units is intentionally small, to be large enough for residents to have a space that is all their own, but not so large that they would prefer spending all their time there rather than interacting with others in the community. This is important because research has shown many adults with I/DD who do not have adequate social interaction become isolated and may develop depression.”

The Whites expect a fast-tracked approval process (between 15 to 18 months) since the 13 units proposed are allowed “by-right” (without a conditional use permit) per the density bonus law. White said they hope to see residents move in as early as late summer or early fall 2023.

 Residents would enter the Willow Commons through a common entrance to a building housing a staff office. This common building would include a kitchen, dining and lounge area where residents can prepare and share meals.

The architecture of Willow Commons aims to “preserve and enhance the native ecosystems and habitats of the site and the region,” according to the proposal. The residences would be organized behind a main support building that fronts Alpine Road. The roofs would be outfitted with photovoltaic panels. There would also be 17 parking spaces on-site.

For more information on the project, go to willowcommons.com.

Email Staff Writer Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com.
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The new, multi-generational facility is set to replace the Onetta Harris Community Center and Senior Center previously located at 100 Terminal Ave.

According to a spokesperson from Meta (formerly Facebook), the development represents a $45 million investment from the Menlo Park-headquartered company.

The facility is set to include a recreation center, fitness center and senior center, as well as after-school child care, a pool, a library, a space for teens, a makerspace and community rooms. It is expected to open in 2023.

Residents petition to move planned soccer field at Flood Park

A petition to add property to Flood Park that would ensure a planned soccer field to be relocated to a place that doesn’t require removing heritage trees has garnered about 170 signatures as of Wednesday, Nov. 17.

The idea has been put forward by a group called Flood Park Tree Advocates, which describes itself on the Change.org website as “a small ad hoc group of local people concerned about preserving California native trees and ecosystems and who want to help the public become more aware of which trees are slated for removal in Flood Park.”

The group would like for San Mateo County to acquire rights to use part of the Flood School property that currently belongs to the Ravenswood City School District in order to create new playing fields and recreational green space rather than move forward with an existing plan to install a sports field along the park’s Bay Road side, which would involving the removal of more trees.

“Extending the park to the former school site ... enables preservation of the historic woodland of the park, along with the amenities currently in that area — the ‘nature-oriented’ side of the park,” say supporters of the idea.

The matter is urgent, they say, because the Flood School is planning to be leased for development at the end of November.

They have created a website offering more information at floodpark.org.

Belle Haven Action offers outreach office hours

Anyone interested in learning more about health and wellness resources, or simply asking neighborhood leaders questions, can attend office hours hosted by Belle Haven Action at the Belle Haven School Library at 415 Ivy Drive from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays in November.

— Kate Bradshaw

PETS IN NEED

continued from page 8

states information that differs from what the transport team and other staff told police during the investigation.

According to an Aug. 26 Palo Alto Police Department press release, the employees had said that none of the animals appeared distressed when they checked them during a stop for gas, and they did not notice any signs of heat stroke on their return to Palo Alto. But the puppies were apparently ill before and during the transport, the letter stated.

The staff noted that the seven puppies had vomited and experienced diarrhea, yet nothing was done about this during the trip. These seven puppies died from neglect during transport: They were stiff to the touch but still hot, indicating they suffered fatal hyperthermia, also known as heat stroke. All 21 of the surviving animals were dehydrated and exhibiting signs of heat stroke as well, the letter said.

The deaths were reported after a Palo Alto Animal Control officer saw the bodies and opened a police report to investigate this.

The letter from staff requested three changes to help prevent future tragedies: Have trained professionals update the nonprofit’s safety protocols; hold the transport team members accountable; and hold Executive Director Mollica accountable for failing to uphold the standards of Pets in Need in response to the situation.

Mollica said in the Nov. 11 email that “the Aug. 9 letter was directed to the board, and I did not respond to it. To help us move forward, and in recognition of the challenges during the pandemic, we are working closely with consultants to assist with an improved work-place environment, and we have instituted stern measures to address the events of Aug. 2.”

The email didn’t specify what changes have taken place.

A request for comment from Pets in Need Board President Rob Kalman was not returned, and Pets in Need didn’t provide a copy of the board’s response to the letter to this news organization.

In an Aug. 10 email to staff obtained by the Weekly, however, Kalman said the board held an emergency meeting on Aug. 9 and voted unanimously to hire an outside investigator to discover and document all of the facts related to the incident.

Pets in Need was also asked to clarify many of the allegations made in the employees’ letter, including against Mollica. The staff letter claimed Mollica was aware of other incidents in which animals had died during transport and had discussed this with staff individually. However, the email that “the Aug. 9 letter was directed to the board, and I did not respond to it” also alleged that he is suggesting worms or vaccine reactions, not negligence, caused the puppies’ deaths, the letter said.

In the Nov. 11 email, Mollica told police that “new” Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters would be implemented, even though the nonprofit has used the protocols for years. It also alleged that he is suggesting worms or vaccine reactions, not negligence, caused the puppies’ deaths, the letter said.

In the Nov. 11 email Mollica stated: “Until we have necropsy results on the puppies, we can only speculate about what caused the animals to die. Pre-conceptions, such as their care before they were retrieved, Parvo, vaccine reactions, and gastro-intestinal problems are all possible contributing factors to their death, according to our two experienced medical directors.”

Mollica also said that the police investigation prevented Pets in Need from following "what would have been our existing unusual death investi-
Districts seeing declining enrollment pre-pandemic

The K-8 Ravenswood City School District, which has schools in East Palo Alto and Menlo Park, had the region’s “most severe” enrollment decline pre-pandemic, according to the San Mateo-based Education Construction Consultants. District officials declined to comment when asked about enrollment figures.

Students enrolled at charters and private schools by the thousands ballooned from 18% in the 2014-15 school year to 45.4% this school year. The district has seen a nearly 44% decline in non-charter school enrollment (1,501 students are enrolled) since the 2017-18 school year. There are 260 fewer students enrolled in the district’s non-charter schools this fall.

Students are choosing the charter schools KIPP Valiant Community Prep and Aspire East Palo Alto, and the private Primary School in East Palo Alto. This means the district loses students and the government funding affiliated with them. The district is one of the few primarily state-funded districts on the Midpeninsula, which has schools.

The Los Altos School District’s enrollment has been declining for years, but during the pandemic that trend has accelerated. Last school year, the number of students attending district schools dropped by double digits (10.6%). This fall, there was another 6.3% decrease. In total, the district’s enrollment has fallen by nearly 44% from 3,999 students in 2019 to 3,344 today.

Superintendent Jeff Baier said some students moved out of the state or country, with others moving to other parts of California and some switching to private or charter schools. The pandemic has also made it more difficult to track where students end up, Baier said.

Because most Midpeninsula school districts are funded primarily with local property taxes, rather than based on the number of students, the enrollment decline doesn’t translate into less money for these districts.

PETs in NEED

continued from page 18

The district’s numbers don’t account for Bullis Charter School, which the state doesn’t include in the Los Altos School District’s enrollment total. Although Bullis is located within the district’s boundaries, it is overseen by the Santa Clara County Office of Education.

Bullis’ enrollment increased 5.2% last school year (from 1,039 students in 2019 to 1,091 students in 2020). This year, it decreased 2.4% to 1,067 students. The charter school’s enrollment is currently capped at 1,111 students under the terms of an agreement with the Los Altos School District.

Palo Alto Unified School District

The Palo Alto Unified School District saw its enrollment drop by nearly 1,000 students last school year over the prior fall, and then by another roughly 275 this fall. The school district currently has 10,476 pupils.

Before the pandemic, the district was seeing its numbers dip, but more slowly. Palo Alto saw 2.1% declines in enrollment between this school year and the two school years preceding the pandemic.

As with many districts, Palo Alto’s enrollment plunged in the fall of 2020, declining 8.4%. Superintendent Don Austin said that although many districts expected to see a rebound this fall, he took a more conservative approach and thought it was likely to stay flat. Instead, enrollment dropped another 2.6%.

“I did not expect a big rebound, but yeah, it was a little bit of a surprise that we were down again,” Austin said.

The 2019-20 Palo Alto’s student body is more pronounced in some areas of the district. Barron Park Elementary School now has fewer than 200 students. Elihu Vedder Elementary School’s roughly 500, which is much lower than the 800 to 1,000 students at each of the district’s other two middle schools. Both Fletcher and Barron Park sit in the southeast corner of the district.

Fletcher’s shrinking population has prompted the district to consider running a lottery for Fletcher Elementary students who would allow families in other parts of the district to apply to have their children attend Fletcher. The district’s board supported that possibility at a Nov. 16 board meeting.

Mountain View Whisman School District

Enrollment in the Mountain View Whisman School District dropped 6.5% last fall compared to the prior year, and then by another 5.2% this school year. In total, the district has gone from 5,082 students in 2019 to 4,511 this fall.

That’s in contrast to the years before the pandemic. Before the pandemic, the district’s enrollment was holding relatively steady. The number of students was fluctuating only slightly year to year, with a net change of just two students between the fall of 2015 (5,084 students) and 2019 (5,082).

Superintendent Ayinde Rudolph said that besides families voluntarily leaving, the recent demolition of a number of apartment complexes in Mountain View may have forced other families to relocate.

The pandemic was a perfect storm before the pandemic. Rudolph said some families decided to leave that created a drop in enrollment,” he said.

The district did see some students who withdrew last year come back this fall, even as the district’s overall population continued to drop, Rudolph said.

Despite the current drop in enrollment, Mountain View Whisman officials continue to project a long-term increase in students as a result of planned housing growth in Mountain View. State housing targets call for the city to plan for 11,135 housing units between 2023 and 2031.

High school district outliers

The Mountain View Loos Altos Union High School District is one of the few high school districts that was seeing its student body grow before the pandemic hit, but for the past two years, the district’s enrollment has essentially remained unchanged.

Last fall, the district had just 15 more students than the year before, which works out to a 0.3% increase. In total, the student body of 8,553 in 2018-19 saw the district’s enrollment drop for the first time in at least eight years, with a 1% decrease to 8,416 students.

That’s a marked difference from what MVLA was experiencing before COVID-19 disrupted education. In the five years from 2014 to 2019, the district’s enrollment shot up by over 500 students.

Overall enrollment in the Sequoia Union High School District decreased from 20,192 (2019-20) to 19,640 this school year. Preliminary 2021-22 data shows enrollment decreased by about 2.5% (510 students) from last year.

Individual schools in the district, like Woodside and M-A, saw declining enrollment over the last two years.

Woodside High School has seen an almost 11% dip in enrollment (1,752 students this school year) from the 2018-19 school year (1,964 students). This school year, 2226 students are enrolled at Menlo-Atherton High School in Atherton, down from 2,368 last fall, an over 6% drop.

Small school districts

Portola Valley Elementary School District administrators formed a study group in response to their enrollment dip — PVED has 477 students, down more than 13% from the fall of 2019-20, according to Superintendent Roberta Zarea.

The group will study enrollment trends in Portola Valley and comparable local school districts, facilities capacity, student demographics, performance data, how to attract and retain students and more. They will also form a committee to Zarea and the governing board.

Enrollment is down 2.3% from last school year, to 2,716 students, in the Menlo Park City School District. In September, Superintendent Erik Burmeister explained that some families re-enrolled last spring for the fall term, but ultimately dropped out. It’s rare that we have this level of attrition between re-enrollment and the beginning of the school year, he said.

“it’s safe to say this is a temporary decline, not a trend,” he said. “Some folks don’t want to come (to school) in person until COVID is in the review mirror.”

Las Lomitas Elementary School District, which has one school in Menlo Park and one in Atherton, “lost families during the pandemic to people moving away, a few learning pods, who ultimately returned,” said Superintendent Beth Polito in an email. The Las Lomitas Elementary School District has 999 students enrolled this year, down about 9% from the fall of 2019 (1,208 students).

“a portion of (the) continued enrollment decline is the loss of students who were away, who largely worked/studied at Stanford (University),” she noted.

The one-school Woodside Elementary School District has 365 students. Enrollment is down almost 11% from the 2018-19 school year.

Applications rise at longitude schools

Forbes reported last June that the pandemic bolstered private school enrollment when parents saw how differently private schools handled learning at the onset of COVID-19.

Although some local elementary-aged students last fall returned to classrooms, at least on a hybrid basis, many public high school students did not. On the other hand, many private schools resumed full-time in-person learning during the last school year.

“the pandemic revealed a view behind the ‘school system’ curtain, which promulgated some families to move and to change education paths,” said Karen Aronian, a parenting and education expert, in an email. “The whiplass turnstile of remote, hybrid, in-school, quarantine, and repeat has left public schools, their students, and community leaders grasping for a clear protocol on what to do.”

Menlo School in Atherton was open for in-person learning sooner than the comprehensive high schools.

The private school, which serves sixth through 12th grade students, has “seen an uptick in admissions interest since the pandemic started,” said Alex Perez,
children are quite gratifying,” Fauci said. In 5- to 11-year-olds, it is 91% effective in preventing symptomatic disease. In children ages 12 to 15, the efficacy is close to 100%. In both age groups, the safety profile is also high, he said. Trials are also underway for two younger age groups: children ages 2 to 5 years old and those ages six months to 2 years. The data will likely be available in the first quarter of 2022, he said.

Many people are concerned about what the government is doing about “long COVID,” the mysterious syndrome that causes some people to remain sick with heart, lung and neurological problems, among other issues, for many months after their initial COVID-19 infection. When the House subcommittee on health held hearings long on COVID, patients said they couldn’t work or attend school because of the debilitating effects, Eshoo noted. “Patients that testified were deeply frustrated,” on behalf of the doctors came up with a diagnosis that (their symptoms) could be long COVID,” she said. Fauci said $1.15 billion has been dedicated to the National Institutes of Health to study long COVID and ways to recognize, intervene or prevent the syndrome after a COVID-19 infection. An estimated 10% to 30% of patients have persistent symptoms that last months or longer, including debilitating fatigue, tachycardia (a heart condition) and brain fog, he said.

The future of COVID-19
Fauci also touched on potential societal changes from COVID-19. It’s likely some people will continue to voluntarily wear masks long after the pandemic is over, he said. For some, it may become the “new normal” during the winter flu and cold season, he said. Buildings, shops and restaurants are also likely to be more attentive to good air ventilation, with newer protocols, as part of building codes, he said. The drug front, COVID-19 has kickstarted research into antiviral medications. Merck’s new oral medication, molnupiravir, in clinical trials diminished the likelihood of hospitalization and death among COVID-19 patients if given in the early course of the infection. The United Kingdom’s medicine regulator approved its use on Nov. 4.

Fauci announced that research on its promising oral drug called paxlovid, a protease inhibitor, showed 89% efficacy in preventing hospitalization and death from COVID-19 when given within three to five days of the initial symptoms, he said. The National Institutes of Health has also invested $3.2 billion in antiviral drugs to prevent the progression of the disease. Eshoo called these developments “a blockbuster.” Asked what one piece of legislation he would like to write to change society, Fauci said he wouldn’t rely on legislation. Funding for research and development and to rebuild the country’s decimated public health system would go a long way to securing a safer future, he said. This he did note one desirable change.

“I would love to change the divisiveness in our society. The common enemy is the virus and not each other,” he said.

He noted that other countries, notably England, have again seen recent spikes in their COVID-19 cases because they pulled their guard down on precautions such as mask requirements and they didn’t have children vaccinated. Cases surged when the cold weather started and people began indoor activities. In countries where cases went up, they’d also pulled back on the vaccine push, he said.

“Here, it depends entirely on what we do” to prevent another surge this winter in the U.S. Fauci said. He encouraged any one who was vaccinated six or more months ago to get a booster shot and those who haven’t yet been vaccinated to receive their shots as soon as they can.

The big question is how to talk to people who are misinformed about the pandemic and vaccines, Fauci said. “Many people have valid questions that have never been answered. There’s a lot of disinformation and misinformation,” Fauci said, distinguishing between deliberate falsehoods and mistaken or inaccurate information.

“Be patient; don’t be accusatory,” he said.

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN**
that the Planning Commission of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing, via teleconference*, on Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. on the following:

AMENDMENTS TO AN EXISTING CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (XDT-30) AND MASTER PLAN TO: (1) PERMANENTLY INSTALL EXISTING MODULAR BUILDINGS, (2) INCREASE THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND SUPPORT STAFF, AND (3) INCREASE THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ON-SITE PARKING SPACES; 302 PORTOLA ROAD (WOODSIDE PRIORY SCHOOL); APN# 079- 053-320; FILE # PLN_USE01-2019; PURSUANT TO PORTOLA VALLEY MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 18.72 – CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS.

This project has been determined to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15314, which exempts minor additions within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25% or ten classrooms, whichever is less. The addition of portable classrooms is included in this exemption.

**HOW TO JOIN MEETING:**

**VIA ZOOM WEBSITE / APP**
Visit Zoom.com or Zoom app, click “Join Meeting”
Enter Meeting ID: 837 5009 3463
Enter Passcode: 554370

**VIA TELEPHONE**
1-669-900-6833 Local
1-888-788-0099 Toll-free
Enter Meeting ID: 837 5009 3463
Enter Passcode: 554370
“*Star symbol* = raise hand function

Public Hearings provide the general public and interested parties an opportunity to provide testimony on these items. If you challenge a proposed action(s) in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at a public hearing(s) described above, or in written correspondence delivered to the Town of Portola Valley at, or prior to, the public hearing(s).

Meeting participants are encouraged to submit public comments in writing in advance of the meeting. Please send an email to Dylan Parker, Assistant Planner at dkleist@portolavalley.net by 12:00 PM on the day of the meeting. All comments received by that time will be transmitted to the Planning Commission prior to the meeting. All received questions and comments will be included in the public record. Members of the public can ask questions/provide comments using the “raise your hand” feature in the Zoom platform (9" for telephone).

For more project information, please visit: https://www.portolavalley.net/departments/planning-building-department/development-projects. The agenda and staff report will be posted on the Town’s website by 5:00PM the Friday prior to the meeting at: https://www.portolavalley.net/town-government/planning-commission/minutes-and-agendas.

Dated: November 19, 2021
Laura Russell, Planning & Building Director

**ENROLLMENT continued from page 19**

its director of media relations. Menlo has seen a 10% increase in applications over the last two years, he noted. The school has 795 students enrolled, according to its website.

“It’s a record year for us,” he said. “We have certainly seen greater demand from families who are seeking an independent school education.”

Amory Healy, a sophomore at Menlo School, transferred from Palo Alto High School this school year, in part because she didn’t feel like her public high school had the resources available to support her.

“At Paly, there were around 30 people in each class, and many teachers were so busy that there weren’t really time for students to reach out and get extra help,” she said. “I think as well with how competitive college admissions are, having a school that gives easy opportunities to obtain leadership opportunities and provides great college counselors is a very popen-
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PROVIDED THEY live in the state, the shift could deter candidates concerned about being perceived as outsiders by the district’s current Tuesday.

The draft map that the California Citizens Redistricting Commission released last week shows shifts in the northern and southern portions of Speier’s district, which would no longer include the spacious coastal area south of Half Moon Bay and east of Woodside. Those cities would now fall into the new District 18, which is represented by Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Palo Alto. A portion of Redwood City would also shift from District 14 to District 18, an adjustment that could deter political aspirants from the city to vie for Speier’s seat. The same applies to East Palo Alto, which is currently in Speier’s district but which would be in Eshoo’s under the draft map, which is subject to further adjustments before its expected adoption in late December.

The portion of San Francisco that is part of District 14 would also shift, moving from the western neighborhoods of Sunset and Parkside to the Ingleside and Excelsior neighborhoods in the south and southeastern sections of the city. But even despite these uncertainties, the race to succeed Speier is expected to have no shortage of candidates, numerous elected Democrats who were interviewed by this news organization predicted Tuesday.

“I think there will be a big scramble,” said Jenny Hill, who represented the Midpeninsula in the state Assembly and the state Senate between 2008 and 2020 and who served as a San Mateo council member and a county supervisor before then. “A lot of people will be running, certainly, because of the fact that this is a once-in-a-generation event.”

Assembly member Kevin Mullin, D-South San Francisco, who has been representing the northern portion of San Mateo County in Sacramento since 2012, is expected to be the prominent candidate should he choose to enter the race, according to Hill and other current and former elected officials. Mullin currently serves as speaker pro tempore in the Assembly, the second-highest position in the Legislature’s lower chamber. He won 75% of the votes in his most recent reelection effort, in 2020, and his political resume includes a stint as district director for Speier during her days as a state senator.

In a Tuesday statement, Mullin called Speier “an icon and a legendary figure in San Mateo County and California legislative and political history.” And as her district director, he said he “was awed by her ability to stand up to powerful interests regardless of potential political consequences.”

“It was the embodiment of integrity, with a fidelity to the public interest above all other considerations,” Mullin said.

On Wednesday, Mullin confirmed what many have suspected with a tweet: “With the announcement by my mentor, Congresswoman Jackie Speier that she will be retiring after a legendary career in both the CA State Legislative and U.S. Congress, I am seriously considering a campaign to succeed her in the United States House of Representitives.”

State Sen. Josh Becker, a Menlo Park resident with a proven record of winning in San Mateo County, is also viewed as a possible candidate for Speier’s seat, according to Hill and other Democrats who spoke with this news organization.

“His senatorial district covers much of Speier’s turf, though it’s not clear whether his hometown will fall under her congressional district under the new maps. Currently, Speier represents the Belle Haven neighborhood in Menlo Park, while Eshoo represents the remainder of the city. The draft map currently under consideration would shift Belle Haven to Eshoo’s district.”

Becker, who was elected to the Senate in 2020 and who has strongly advocated for climate change legislation, would not confirm Tuesday whether he will seek Speier’s congressional seat, which candidates are allowed to do even if they don’t reside in the district. In a statement Tuesday, he called Speier a “true superhero” who has “done so much for the people of the Peninsula, our state and our country.” He did not, however, respond to an inquiry about the political implications of her decision not to seek reelection.

“That should be our focus today: honoring Jackie for all she has accomplished. Her legacy is tremendous at every level of government,” Becker said in a statement. In a video shared on social media Tuesday announcing her decision not to seek reelection, Speier recalled being shot five times at the Jonestown massacre in Guyana in 1978 while working as a staffer for U.S. Rep. Leo Ryan, who was fatally shot on the trip to investigate Jim Jones and the Peoples’ Temple, a cult that had previously been based in her Peninsula congressional district.

“Speier said her career in public office has been “a remarkable journey that has surpassed my wildest dreams,” adding that it was “time to be more than a weekend wife, mother and friend.”

Palo Alto Vice Mayor Pat Burt was among those who cited Mullin and Becker as the two most prominent potential contenders in San Mateo County, though he was quick to note that neither has declared his intention to run.

“There are a few real top-tier folks currently in San Mateo County and none are yet indicating whether they are open to pursuing this spot,” Burt said. “I think they’re both exceptionally capable.”

Assembly member Marc Berman, whose district includes Menlo Park, Palo Alto and Mountain View, is not considering a run for Speier’s seat because he does not live in her congressional district (notwithstanding the fact that this is allowed by law). He predicted, however, that there will be no shortage of candidates.

“It’s not every day, it’s not every year, it’s not every decade that a seat opens up on the Peninsula,” Berman said.

Berman declined to speculate about who will vie for seats but noted that any successful candidate has to have a demonstrated ability to build relationships across the dozens of small communities that make up San Mateo County. Unlike Santa Clara County, which is dominated by San Jose, and San Francisco, which is both a city and a county, San Mateo County doesn’t have a clearly established power base.

“I think San Mateo County is a unique place,” Berman said. “It’s a lot of small cities—there is not one big city that sucks it all up. So it has to be someone who has developed relationships in all those communities, someone who has shown an ability to get along well with colleagues.”

While the decentralized nature of San Mateo County makes it hard for local mayors and council members to win election, the candidates who would seek Speier’s position also give a natural advantage to members of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, who benefit from a broader geographical reach and greater name recognition (the advantage is somewhat mitigated by the fact that the county has district elections, which limit each supervisor’s political base to their specific district). Speier herself served as a county supervisor between 1980 and 1986, before she began her 20-year stint in Sacramento.

Several political veterans who spoke to this news organization thus see David Canepa, president of the Board of Supervisors, as a potential candidate for Speier’s seat. William Sorvaino, Canepa’s policy aide, did not respond to this news organization’s inquiry about Canepa’s possible candidacy, though he told the San Francisco Chronicle on Tuesday that Canepa is “definitely considering running for this seat.”

Another name that has come up in interviews is that of Redwood City Vice Mayor Giselle Hale, who did not respond to an inquiry about her potential candidacy.

The race is expected to start taking shape relatively quickly, given that California’s primary election is set for June 7. Political experts throughout the region who had served with Speier in Sacramento or Washington, D.C., lauded her legacy as a legislator. Hill, whose term in Sacramento and political constituency both overlapped with Speier’s, said he was particularly struck by her commitment to the people of her district. He said he constantly runs into people around town who have stories about Speier helping them out.

“Her constituents always feel a strong comfort level and confidence in her leadership,” Hill said. “You can’t say that about a lot of people.”

Burt called Speier “a courageous person in both Congress and in her personal life” and lauded her “great compassion in general and a great commitment to her district.” Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian, who as a former state senator also represented a large swath of San Mateo County, called Speier a “first-rate legislator,” while Belmont Mayor Charles Stone said she was a “legend in her own time.”

“She is a woman who has done more for the Peninsula than most people could do in 10 generations. Her story is one of tragedy and triumph, and I’m incredibly grateful to her for her service in San Mateo County,” Stone said.

Staff Writer Kate Bradshaw and Bay City News Service contributed to this report.

Email Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@paweekly.com.
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committee. This occurred at
the end of 2018. In 2019, 2020
and 2021 the program went to
sleep. The hope was that
a group of citizens would form
a nonprofit organization to
united. Local newspapers also get
in on the giving. Each year at
this time, The Almanac, along with
the Palo Alto Weekly and
Mountain View Voice, shines a
light on important stories about
community needs and raises money
for non-profits serving families and
children. The Almanac’s own
Holidays Fund raised more than
$270,000 during the 2020-2021
holidays, thanks to over-whelming support from local
donors. Silicon Valley Community
Foundation covers the majority of
the operating costs for these
campaigns, allowing recipient
organizations to maximize donations.
(To donate, visit almanacnews.com/holiday fund or see the ad on page 9.)

One such recipient is the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula (BGCP), which provides high-quality programs to 2,500 K-12
students in Redwood City’s North Fair Oaks neighborhood. Their programs help students
in school and beyond; they can participate in and benefit from the opportunities Silicon
Valley has to offer.

This work is especially important as the pandemic disrupted academic progress
for many students and caused feelings of loneliness and stress among youth. BGCP was able
to redesign and implement new programs, including

Explain: By laying out the history of the Sister City program and the
impact of the pandemic on academic progress, Nate Taylor
stresses the importance of local giving.

Local giving does not end with the holidays. Menlo Park has
had a Sister City program for many years. In fact, it’s relationship
with Galway, Ireland, can be traced back for nearly 150 years. In
more recent times, another city was added as a Menlo Park sister
city, it being Bizan, Japan. For the last several years, exchange students from
both Menlo Park and Bizan have been traveling to each
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than answers. Maybe the
staff report will address these
concerns, or maybe not.

By Nicole Taylor

HOLIDAY FUND DEMONSTRATES THE POWER OF LOCAL GIVING

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GUEST OPINION

Sister City program
Menlo Park has had a Sister City program for many years. In fact, its relationship with Galway, Ireland, can be traced back for nearly 150 years. In more recent times, another city was added as a Menlo Park sister city, it being Bizan, Japan. For the last several years, exchange students from both Menlo Park and Bizan have been traveling to each other's city on alternate years. Two other cities have gone dormant, with little to no activity since their creation. Those cities are located in India and China. It may be well to terminate those relationships as it appears there is little interest by either city to participate in the program.

A few years ago, for unknown reasons, the City Council voted unanimously to terminate and stop the Sister City Committee. All seven of its members were removed from the committee. This occurred at the end of 2018. In 2019, 2020 and 2021 the program went to sleep. The hope was a group of citizens would form a nonprofit organization to carry on the tasks formerly handled by the committee. It is anticipated that a $10,000 gift will be provided to this unknown group of citizens to help jump-start a new program. How they will spend it is unknown. What oversight there will be is unknown. What accountability is unknown. More questions than answers. Maybe the staff report will address these concerns, or maybe not.

Jim Lewis
Oak Grove Avenue, Menlo Park

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By Sheryl Nonnenberg

The art world is notorious for overlooking or dismissing the contributions of women artists, especially in movements that involve “macho” media such as sculpture, assemblage and installation art. Pace Gallery in Palo Alto is attempting to rectify the situation by presenting the work of Mary Corse, a Southern California artist who was affiliated with the light and space movement of the 1960s. The gallery is featuring seven pieces, paintings and light boxes that, although executed recently, reflect the artist’s lifelong fascination with light and perception. This spare, elegant show is on view until Jan. 29. The light and space movement was a sort of West Coast answer to minimalism, with its emphasis on cool, objective geometry that rejected the painterly angst of abstract expressionism. Its most famous proponents were Larry Bell, Robert Irwin and James Turrell. Mary Corse was right in the thick of this group, having trained as an abstract painter at University of California, Berkeley, but then relocated to Los Angeles in the mid-1960s in order to attend the Chouinard Art Institute. While there she, like her contemporaries, became entranced by the radiant light of Los Angeles. Unlike her male colleagues, however, Corse was interested in making objects that emitted, reflected and refracted light from within. A 2020 exhibit walk-through video from New York’s Lisson Gallery quotes Corse: “Nothing is static in the universe, so why make a static painting? It’s an unreality.” In order to achieve her goals, Corse had to move away from traditional painting techniques and began using unconventional materials like fluorescent light tubes and high-frequency Tesla coils. She even took a course in quantum mechanics at the University of Southern California in order to better understand the principles behind light waves and particles. She eventually found the perfect medium in the form of something functional yet prosaic that most of us encounter every day: the glass microspheres that are used in signage and highway markings. By adding these to acrylic paint, Corse was able to instill light within the painting. This light is variable, depending upon the position of the viewer. “As you move, the painting changes. Your perception changes the painting,” Corse said in the Lisson Gallery video. The first of these works, “Untitled (2020)” is installed in the gallery foyer. This large-scale painting, executed using the microspheres in acrylic, was painted on aluminum. The painting was intended for outside installation and, in this setting, has the full advantage of raking light from the gallery’s front windows. There are vertical bands with very subtle gradations of color, gray and white, and, as the artist intended, the colors change in intensity as you walk from side to side. It is possible to see the microspheres embedded in the paint, but they are so tiny they do not impact the smooth surface.

In the second gallery, “Untitled (White Multiband)” and “Untitled (White Inner Band),” both from 2021, are executed on canvases. In these pieces, one can see the paint application, with broad strokes going both horizontally and vertically. In a 2018 video for an exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Corse showed how she paints the surface of the canvas, then pours the microspheres over it before shaking the excess off. It’s a seemingly rudimentary process that results in a silver/grey luminosity. The paintings might be construed as reminiscent of those of Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman, because of the stripes, but these works are much more subtle and less color-driven. We humans are naturally drawn to light and Corse plumbs this tendency by making us part of what she refers to as a “triangular relationship: the viewer, the surface, the light.”

Like most of the light and space artists, Corse also worked in sculptural form. She did a series of light boxes in the mid-1960s that she has revisited here with four pieces, “Untitled (Electric Light),” all created in 2021. These works rely much more on technology, utilizing argon, light tubes and high frequency generators. Encased in Plexiglas, these works emit light, flicker and are lit from inside, according to Pace Gallery’s press release, thanks to “Tesla coils that wirelessly transfer electromagnetic fields through the walls.” It isn’t really necessary to know how these sculptures were made, or from what materials, because standing in front of them is not so much visual as it is visceral. Free of the need to examine the formal elements (color, form, line, texture, etc.), we are able to understand one of Corse’s strongest credos, “Art is in the experience.”

In the third gallery area, two more boxes have been installed. These pieces are smaller and rest on white stands (where the complicated wiring system is hidden from view). There is almost a feeling of being in a sacred place, due to the ethereal glow from the boxes and the added drama of the darkened space. Corse’s art does not translate well in reproductions; it really is necessary to encounter them in person. Explained Pace President Elizabeth Sullivan, “Mary Corse’s work inspires and transforms ways we receive — and most importantly, perceive — light, space and ourselves.”

It is impressive to realize that, at age 76, Corse is still working, still striving to create — and still has the same motivations that drove her as a young artist in Los Angeles 50 years ago. Her work has been shown at major museums and, in 2018, she had a retrospective at the Whitney Museum. So why isn’t she as well-known as her counterparts? The prevailing theory cites the fact that she moved her studio away from the downtown art scene in Los Angeles in the ’70s in order to raise her two children in Topanga Canyon. The Whitney catalog maintained that, although she was still working, “moving and distancing herself from feminism was a hedge against being marginalized as a ‘woman artist.’” Whatever the backstory, it is nice to have the opportunity to see Corse’s engaging, innovative work. In a year darkened by the pandemic, a show that focuses on light seems both timely and hopeful.

Works by Mary Corse are on view through Jan. 29 at Pace Gallery, 229 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto. For more information, visit pacegallery.com.

Email Contributing Writer Sheryl Nonnenberg at nonnenberg@aol.com.
By Sara Hayden

Sociologist and author Priya Fielding-Singh’s book ‘How the Other Half Eats: The Untold Story of Food and Inequality in America’ looks at how Bay Area families put food on the table and much more. Fielding-Singh focuses on four Bay Area families: all have teenagers, but their experiences differ based on income, education and ethnic-racial backgrounds. Fielding-Singh’s approachable and thoughtful pages give space to explore: What food makes us feel good and why? How do we handle pickiness, scarcity, abundance? How do we use food as a signal of status or cultural assimilation, as a demonstration of love?

Fielding-Singh’s approachable synthesis of interviews and observations — carried out with parents and children in 75 families during her doctoral research at Stanford University — is an engaging primer on a critical topic. It leaves me hungry for more accounts like this, that factor in people’s lived experiences in shaping policies about how to ensure people get the nutrition they need.

Diving into some of these complexities, Fielding-Singh, a University of Utah Department of Family and Consumer Studies assistant professor, recently joined the Peninsula Foodist in conversation about her book, which is out now in bookstores, or may be ordered through the Hachette Book Group.

Peninsula Foodist: I’m interested to learn more about your journey... You have such extensive expertise in the subject (of nutritional inequality). That comes through in your education, your training, your work, and it felt like there was an underlying passion just from personal experience.

Priya Fielding-Singh: I think my interest in the topic really came from a broader long-standing interest in inequality that was seeded when I was pretty young. Growing up in Tucson, Arizona, my family decided to become a foster family. Pretty much all my middle and high school years, we fostered children from different backgrounds, many of whom had been born into poverty, had experienced different forms of traumas, resolute of being raised in really difficult circumstances.

I became really interested in understanding what the structural roots of those problems were, and how those inequalities manifested in my foster siblings’ lives — even though we shared the same room, the same house for a short period of time, why we were on such different trajectories.

You know, I really came to food from an interest in inequality and an interest in health — these very stark, very consequential health disparities in the United States, a number of which stem in part from differences in diet and nutrition and the different ability of individuals in American society to secure a nutritious diet for themselves and others.

In sociology, there was definitely work on food, but very little work connecting food to diet to health. I felt like a lot of the conversation around diet, nutrition and inequality tended to be dominated by folks in the fields of public health and medicine who don’t necessarily always have the on-the-ground experience, really seeing how these behaviors play out in people’s lives and what food means to people. That was my hope as a sociologist: to be able to bring that into the conversation in a way that would nuance and deepen our understanding of where these dietary disparities come from and what we can actually do to reduce them.

Foodist: Thinking about all the structural inequities, it feels daunting to even start to unravel. Diet seems so key to that, and you write about “nutritional equality.” What is “nutritional equality”?

Fielding-Singh: The way that I think about “nutritional equality” is that every individual, every family, has the means to eat a diet that will promote their health, instead of undermining it. This is often talked about in terms of access. I think about it that way too, but I think about it less in a sense of being able to afford food or being able to geographically access food. I think about: How do we create a society in which everyone lives a life in which eating nutritious food is easy, it’s the default, it isn’t something that’s an uphill battle that has to be fought for, or is a privilege to which an elite few are entitled?

What that means to me is, how do we create a society where people earn enough money where they can afford the food, they live in neighborhoods where there’s access to that food,
and also they work hours that are reasonable so there's time to cook the food and they're treated well by their employers. So that they don't experience the stress and trauma of economic exploitation, and they have access to health care and providers that give them guidance and support in meeting a nutritious diet, they live in safe neighborhoods where their kids can run around and get physical activity.

How do we create “environments” that are health-promoting?

To me, that's what being able to have access to nutritious foods is, and structural changes that I think are really important if we're going to have nutritional equality in this country.

Foodist: You were saying that every single one of us deserves the means to eat healthfully. It also has entire chapters on topics like picknicks. How can we ensure that we have access to healthful foods, and also meet individual preferences? I'm also thinking about “acculturation” and the dietary choices that might be informed by cultural contexts and cuisines.

Fielding-Singh: One argument of the book is that the food and beverage industry has really created a situation in which our preferences are really fundamentally shaped by their interests in profits. So you go to the grocery store, you look on your phone, you watch TV, you open a magazine and there is just so much advertising and marketing of unhealthy food that also happens to be really cheap and engineered to be really delicious.

It creates a situation where it's extremely difficult, especially for parents who are trying to teach their kids some healthy eating habits and to eat some fruits and vegetables. It's really difficult for parents to do that, because their kids are so exposed to these products that parents' desires for what their children eat become secondary. It becomes a situation where parents have to fight against the food and beverage industry to secure it.

I talk about this in the book in part in the context of dietary acculturation — that part of what it means to emigrate to this country is that your kids are going to be exposed to lots of unhealthy processed foods. When I think of different cultural preferences, different class preferences, just different preferences around what families eat — I think the food industry has actually taken away a lot of that, because it's created an environment that's so saturated by certain types of products that it's undermined parents' ability to feed their kids the food that they grew up with, the food of origin, the old family recipes.

Getting kids to eat that becomes a challenge, rather than something that's really easily and beautifully passed on.

Foodist: How can we curb Big Food?

Fielding-Singh: I think about it on a spectrum. I don't think we're ever going to be a country where Big Food doesn't have a lot of power and a lot of reach, but I think we can do more than what we're doing.

I talk in the book about at least充分肯定ing marketing to children. We know that kids don't have the ability to tell what is an advertisement and what is the truth. They're extremely impressionable ... and kids' preferences matter a lot in what families eat.

Foodist: With the people that you wrote about, there's a judgment that comes through. There's a double standard in how society perceives what affluent moms are able to provide versus lower-income moms.

Fielding-Singh: This goes to “intensive mothering” a bit, and societal definitions of what “good” mothers are.

Foodist: I had never heard of some of these terms before, like “intensive mothering.” It's described as ideology that arose in the 1980s and 1990s as a way to institutionalize women through motherhood. As more women in North America became more educated and increasingly entered the workforce, it placed the onus of raising kids on the mothers rather than community or society.

Foodist: That’s a very sociological term.

Fielding-Singh: (laughs) That’s a very sociological term.

Foodist: Having those terms defined and outlined, it was so eye-opening.

Fielding-Singh: When we picture in the U.S. what a “good” mom is, we picture Julie (in the book), someone who is affluent, who's white, who's devoted to her children in a way that manifests in her being a stay-at-home parent. She was being vigilant about what her children eat and someone who devotes a lot of time and energy to making sure her kids has a healthy diet. It becomes a situation where her type of privilege — she has all the resources at her disposal to feed her kids a healthy diet. And even Julie has a hard time. Even she struggles in her rich DIY world of being a smile to her face. And it also reassured Nyah that she was a good mom, that she could provide for them, that she was competent, that she was doing the right thing.

I think it’s so interesting how something that for lower-income mothers is so meaningful and powerful and a testiment to their devotion to their children is pretty much always read externally as negligence, or carelessness or bad motherhood. There's such a disconnect there about what it means to mother much higher income and much lower income.

Foodist: Do you have some concrete examples of how that plays out for high-income families versus low-income families?

Fielding-Singh: This goes to “intensive mothering” a bit, and societal definitions of what “good” mothers are.

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Fielding-Singh: When we describe this tension with going to the pediatrician's office where you don't want your kids to be too thin, because that could signal negligence, and you also don't want them to be over- and you know, by the time health care providers, showing your person who works at the WIC office, you're trying to show that you're really investing in your kids, versus that your kid is going hungry.

Nyah always wanted to err on the side of them being fed more than lesser, because being fed less could be grounds for her kids being taken away.

Fielding-Singh: That’s a very sociological term.

Foodist: If my daughter's weight had been interested in nutritional inequality, the Bay Area actually seemed like a really strategic place to study, because you have the opposite ends of the pole in one region.

I make the argument in the book, and I stand by it, that I think this is the direction that a lot of major metropolitan areas are going. Even being in Salt Lake City, which for pretty much ever has been a pretty small town with pretty affordable housing prices, the rents and prices and housing prices are shooting up. It’s one of the hottest housing markets. With that, you're also seeing increasing food insecurity. I think the Bay Area is really a trendsetter in that regard.

Foodist: You also have entire chapters on food in the Bay Area. There's a double standard in how something that for lower-income families is so meaningful and powerful and a testiment to their devotion to their children is pretty much always read externally as negligence, or carelessness or bad motherhood. There's such a disconnect there about what it means to mother much higher income and much lower income.

Foodist: Do you have something that is the source of pride for a higher-income mom — that her kid threw out a fast-food burrito is an extreme source of stress for a lower-income mom.

Low-income moms, especially low-income moms of color, I’m specifically thinking of Black and Latina moms, always lived with the threat that their kids could be taken away.

That kind of judgment, that kind of real repercussion, also shapes how their kids' dietary choices are read, and how they prioritize making sure their kids have enough versus too little.

Foodist: I think about one of the examples in the book where a low-income mom is doing a really impressive job of making sure her kid has a healthy diet.

Fielding-Singh: Something that the examples in the book where a lower-income mom — that her kids were experiencing because of growing up in poverty, food was one of those things she could give her kids everything she was trying to give her kids.

I think it's so interesting how something that for lower-income mothers is so meaningful and powerful and a testiment to their devotion to their children is pretty much always read externally as negligence, or carelessness or bad motherhood. There's such a disconnect there about what it means to mother much higher income and much lower income.

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Foodist: That’s a very sociological term.

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Foodist: Having those terms defined and outlined, it was so eye-opening.

Fielding-Singh: When we
2415 SHARON OAKS DRIVE
MENLO PARK

STYLISH TOWNHOME IN SOUGHT-AFTER SHARON HEIGHTS

The coveted neighborhood of Sharon Heights sets the stage for this remarkably stylish 3-bedroom, 2.5-bathroom townhome of nearly 2,000 square feet. Bright, fresh interiors enjoy appointments including crown molding, high ceilings, and beautiful vinyl wood floors, while numerous glass doors fill the home with natural light and open to private patio space for indoor/outdoor living. A fireplace centers the living room, while the sleek kitchen embraces modern design and features a suite of Samsung appliances. Two upstairs bedroom suites, including the spacious primary suite, both enjoy access to a private balcony perfect for enjoying a morning coffee, while an additional bedroom can also be used as an office. Plus, this home offers a Nest thermostat, laundry, and a 2-car garage with EV charging, while this incredible enclave of homes also includes a community pool and clubhouse. Just moments to the amenities of the Sharon Heights Shopping Center, this home is also convenient to both downtown Menlo Park and Palo Alto, Stanford University, and Interstate 280, and it is served by the acclaimed Las Lomitas school district (buyer to verify eligibility).

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Nearly 2,200 square feet of bright, spacious interiors perfect for both entertaining and everyday living highlight this remodeled 5-bedroom, 3.5-bathroom home in sought-after Menlo Park. Excellent use of glass allows an abundance of natural light, and the home exudes a warm, welcoming ambiance from the moment you step inside. The floorplan includes the comfortable living room, the open kitchen with stainless-steel appliances, and the expansive dining room/family room that anchors the home. The primary suite offers a private retreat with a large walk-in closet and luxurious bathroom, while the home’s additional bedrooms are privately arranged and include a guest suite with its own outdoor entrance. Plus, an extended driveway and carport ensure ample parking is always available. This great location is just a short drive to both downtown Menlo Park and Redwood City, convenient to Holbrook-Palmer Park, and offers easy access to both Caltrain and US 101 for Bay Area commuting.

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MENLO PARK

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Bright, updated interiors and a floorplan perfectly suited for a modern lifestyle make this West Menlo home on a 7,000 square foot lot an excellent choice for Silicon Valley living. Beautiful hardwood floors extend throughout over 1,800 square feet of living space with a light, airy ambiance thanks to ample natural light. A fireplace centers the living room, which flows into the dining room, and the granite-appointed kitchen includes stainless-steel appliances and a butcher block-topped island. Three spacious bedrooms in the main home, including the expansive primary suite, each feature outdoor access, and this home also includes an ADU with a kitchen and additional full bathroom for added accommodations. Find great space for outdoor enjoyment in the peaceful backyard with colorful plantings, fruit trees, a deck, and an expansive patio. Plus, you will be just moments to the amenities of downtown Palo Alto, a short drive to Sharon Park, and to Stanford University, and enjoy access to the acclaimed Las Lomitas school district (buyer to verify eligibility).

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This spacious home of over 4,000 square feet exemplifies the rustic charm of its sought-after location in Woodside Hills. Nested on over 1.1 acres of peaceful, verdant land at the end of a cul-de-sac, this home enjoys a warm, welcoming ambiance that permeates expansive gathering areas perfect for both entertaining and daily living. Highlights include a fireplace in both the living room and family room, the bright kitchen, and the dining room opening to the front deck for al fresco enjoyment. Multiple bedrooms, including the primary suite, lead to private balconies overlooking the home’s magnificent grounds, while another bedroom leads to bonus space. Experience true indoor/outdoor living as numerous rooms open to decks on both sides of the home, including a refreshed rear redwood deck with beautiful views. Plus, this home includes office space, and an attached 2-car garage with an extended driveway for ample parking. Just moments to parks and nature preserves, you will also be convenient to downtown Redwood City, and have easy access to Interstate 280.

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835 WESTRIDGE DRIVE
PORTOLA VALLEY

RESORT-LIKE PROPERTY OF OVER 3.5 ACRES

The quintessential beauty of Portola Valley provides the perfect backdrop for this spectacular estate of over 7,400 square feet, including a beautiful guest home of more than 700 square feet, resting on over 3.5 verdant acres of resort-like grounds. A gated paver motor court introduces the property, and inside, this home presents a luxurious ambiance with soaring ceilings, fine millwork, floors of marble and hardwood, and stunning walls of glass that bring the outside in. The floorplan is scaled for entertaining yet comfortable enough for everyday living, and features the living room with a fireplace, the chef’s kitchen with high-end appliances, and the expansive family/game room, plus a theater, wine cellar, yoga/fitness room, and so much more. Accommodations include 4 bedroom suites, highlighted by the incredible primary suite with a sitting room and fireplace, while the detached guest home offers an additional bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen. Experience true indoor/outdoor living as multiple points throughout the home open to a multi-level deck with a built-in grill and peaceful views of the home’s magnificent grounds, featuring meandering walking trails, a gazebo, and a side area with an enticing blend of both natural and synthetic grass. Moments from beautiful nature preserves and trails, this home is just minutes to the iconic Roberts Market, and offers access to acclaimed Portola Valley schools (buyer to verify eligibility).

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