Demand is soaring for COVID-19 booster shots, pediatric vaccinations are on the rise

San Mateo County officials urge ‘resilience’ and ‘stamina’ to get through the current omicron strain

By Sue Dremann

San Mateo County health officials have a message for the public when it comes to COVID-19 vaccination: Keep up the momentum.

The health officials are pleased with the strong demand for COVID-19 vaccinations for children, and a rise in booster vaccination rates, they said during a San Mateo County Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 7.

Since the Food and Drug Administration’s approval of the vaccine for 5- to 11-year-olds, 38% of eligible children in that age group have received their first shots, said Louise Rogers, chief of the San Mateo County Health System. It’s an auspicious start, considering a recent Kaiser Foundation study found nationally only one-third of parents planned to seek vaccination for their children in the eligible age group, she noted.

Rogers acknowledged the challenges ahead due to the emergence of the omicron variant.

“This is a time when we find ourselves needing resilience and stamina,” she said. Rogers emphasized that it’s important for everyone who is eligible to be fully vaccinated and to get their boosters.

Rogers said her department is heartened by the initial turnout, and hopes it will continue to ramp up as more clinics become available. The health department is working in partnership with the San Mateo County Office of Education to establish vaccine sites in 13 school locations, she said.

Dr. Anand Chabra, the county’s COVID-19 mass vaccination section chief, said the county would have a fuller picture of vaccination rates for children ages 5 to 11 next week.

The county health department will continue to push for greater public education to help parents understand that the vaccines are safe and necessary, particularly in light of the recent appearance of the omicron variant. Omicron is thought to be more transmissible than previous variants, including the ubiquitous delta strain, but it isn’t yet known if it causes more severe infection, Rogers said.

One good bit of news: The level of COVID-19-related hospitalizations in the county has not greatly risen and remains at 10 to 15 patients over the past seven days, she said.

The county is also seeing a high demand for booster shots among people who are already fully vaccinated, she said.

On Dec. 6, the county experienced understaffing for clinics due to the high number of people coming to walk-in clinics, she said. The county is encouraging people to make appointments so that adequate staffing can be lined up. Rogers said the county needs more help from contracting agencies.

Teddy Jester, 6, looks at his mom while getting his first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine from Erica Smith, LVN, at Las Lomitas Elementary School in Atherton on Nov. 10.

Menlo Park commits more than $5M for solar and electric tech for new community center

By Kate Bradshaw

The Menlo Park City Council voted unanimously Tuesday to spend an estimated $5.2 million to add a solar battery storage microgrid, solar thermal pool heating system and 27 electric vehicle (EV) charging spaces to the new community center under construction in the city’s Belle Haven neighborhood.

The microgrid would generate solar electricity at the new community center and store extra solar energy in a battery for energy needs at night, and could provide clean backup power instead of a diesel-powered generator in the event of an emergency.

Those facilities are expected to be designed, built, operated and maintained by contractor ENGIE Services Us. Inc. following a request for proposals issued in the spring, though the city manager is still negotiating some final details. The council also authorized an additional 10% of the project costs, about $500,000, to be set aside as a contingency. The resolution to approve the contractor is expected to be officially approved at the council’s Dec. 14 meeting.

It’s expected that the construction costs of the microgrid will be recovered by energy cost savings between the 16th and 18th years of the community center’s operation, according to Sustainability Manager Rebecca Lucky.

In public comments, residents Lynne Bramlett and Pam Jones raised concerns that the public hadn’t been notified or its input solicited sufficiently before the City Council discussed it. Bramlett asked how many residents in Belle Haven had electric cars to make use of 27 EV charging spaces.

According to a staff report, less than 3% of multifamily properties have access to charging at or near their homes.

Councilwoman Cecilia Taylor, who represents Belle Haven, said she had hoped there would be better notifications about the
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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 six 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.

VISIT US ONLINE TO READ THE STORIES OF LOCAL SENIORS LIKE NORMA, WESLEY, AND ANNETTE.

For nearly 75 years, Peninsula Volunteers, Inc., a duly recognized 501 © (c) (3) non-profit organization, has enabled seniors to age in place, driven by a profound legacy of caring and our core values of respect, commitment, trust, dedication, and compassion. Our essential programs serve over 6,000 Peninsula households and address the most pressing issues of aging adults by offering critical services to sustain their daily physical, nutritional, emotional, and mental health while achieving dignity and independence in their lives. PVI’s innovative programs: Nutrition Services/Meals on Wheels, Adult Day Services at Rosener House; Health, Wellness and Lifetime Enrichments offerings at Little House; and on-demand Transportation Services at Little House, the Roslyn G. Morris Activity Center.
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**Woodside**
- **FOR SALE**
  - 3 LEVEL ACRES | OFFERED AT $8,750,000
- **FOR SALE**
  - 17.79 ACRES | OFFERED AT $27,500,000
- **SOLD**
  - EQUESTRIAN, 3 AC | OFFERED AT $11,500,000

**Portola Valley**
- **FOR SALE**
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December 10, 2021  The Almanac  3
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- Clay L.

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The Toy Project founder Sarah Weintraut, a sophomore at Menlo-Atherton High School, sorts through thousands of used donated toys in Portola Valley on Dec. 2.

Toy trucks, blocks and stuffies, oh my!

M-A teen finds new homes for discarded toys to help kids in need

By Angela Swartz

Boxes filled with thousands of used board games, books, dolls, Matchbox cars and more lined a driveway in Portola Valley last week. It was distribution day for The Toy Project, a nonprofit started by a local teen to help solve two problems: providing toys to kids in need during the holidays and stopping loads of playthings from ending up in landfills.

Learning from home during the first couple of months of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sarah Weintraut, 16, the group’s founder, had free time on her hands and looked for a project to tackle.

“My mom told me that parents need a resource to donate toys their kids discard,” said Weintraut, now a sophomore at Menlo-Atherton High School.

“(Some) toys are left untouched; kids swear on their life they love it at the store, then never touch it.”

Unlike most other toy drives, Weintraut’s group, which is co-founded by fellow La Entrada Middle School graduates, accepts used items. Most toy drive organizers ask for unopened, new toys, she noted.

Weintraut said response from local residents has been “astounding.” Last year, its first in existence, the nonprofit served over 400 children. In total, it collected between 3,000 and 4,000 toys, she noted.

The teens work with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul to serve over 400 children. In 2018, the city of Menlo Park expanded clientele, with a new name and related skills and education. These programs are for families that fall outside Project Read’s focus.

In 2018, the city of Menlo Park doubled its annual support from $55,000 to $110,000, according to a September 2020 letter from Literacy Partners. With the increased funding, the nonprofit no longer needed to focus its sole attention on Project Read. The city funds finance the Project Read adult literacy program, but a need still existed for broader resources to support community literacy, according to the nonprofit. These include services for youth and enrichment programs for families that fall outside Project Read’s focus.

Students are in great need of academic support after more than a school year of distance learning during the pandemic, said John Schniedewind, Literacy Partners board member and treasurer. These programs are also helping students sharpen skills that might have gotten rusty while learning from home.

“I think like many or even most of us, our recipients have talk about the pandemic as a moving target that complicates, and through isolation can impede, progress toward the educational goals they are continuing to try to meet,” said Literacy Partners President Mike Goodkind. “When we review funding requests we try to evaluate what may be needed immediately to get folks through the pandemic, to keep education moving. But we never lose sight of the need to support programs in their efforts to look ahead to be successful beyond the pandemic.”

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CRIME BRIEF

Five convicted in major retail theft ring
California Attorney General Rob Bonta on Dec. 3 announced five people have been convicted of crimes linked to a retail theft ring that involved $8 million in merchandise stolen from stores throughout the Bay Area.

Speaking in Burlingame, Bonta made the announcement alongside law enforcement officials from San Mateo County, where a majority of the thefts occurred, Bonta said.

The announcement came on the heels of a multi-city wave of smash-and-grab robberies and burglaries.

"The organized retail theft we’re seeing throughout California, it’s unacceptable. Let’s be clear," Bonta said.

The investigation, which began in April 2020, revealed a theft ring in which five suspects transported, sold and stored merchandise stolen from retail stores in the Bay Area. The stolen goods, which also included over-the-counter medication, were then resold places such as eBay, according to prosecutors.

"Organized criminals resell their stolen goods, and in many cases, use the money to fund additional illicit activity like organized crime and human trafficking, for example. Those who break the law and peddle stolen goods, they will be held accountable," Bonta said. "The lead defendant organized what"
**Menlo Park briefs**

**Downtown block to reopen to cars**

The 800 block of Santa Cruz Avenue in downtown Menlo Park, which includes Fleet Feet and Galata Bistro, will reopen to vehicle traffic as soon as this week, according to Menlo Park City Manager Starla Jerome-Robinson. The parklets on that block, however, will remain in place. The move is supported by the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce, Jerome-Robinson said.

**Springline development inching toward opening**

The developers of the Springline mixed-use development at 1300 El Camino Real in downtown Menlo Park, formerly called “Station 1300,” are working to open the project. They cleared a hurdle Dec. 7 when the City Council approved some minor changes that will permit about 5,900 additional square feet to be added at the project, including repurposing existing basement space for mail and storage. In exchange, Springline agreed to give $300,000 to help fund a quiet zone feasibility study — a step that has already received $75,000 in city funding — and add to the city’s downtown public amenity fund. The city is doing a study to evaluate if it is feasible to enable Caltrain to safely avoid sounding its horns at Menlo Park’s rail crossings. Further changes the council signed off include approving alcohol sales at the new development, expanding outdoor seating, modifying the residential building entry and adding a ramp to improve accessibility. The residential portion of the development could be complete by May, according to Cyrus Sanandaji of Presidio Bay Ventures.

**Sister Cities program becomes new nonprofit**

Menlo Park’s former Sister Cities Committee has recently become a separate nonprofit entity called the Menlo Park Sister Cities Association. Five of the outgoing members of the committee incorporated the organization and plan to add two more to create a seven-member board, according to a city staff report.

The Menlo Park City Council also agreed Tuesday to give $10,000 to the group to support it through its first year. The Sister Cities International organization aims to promote citizen diplomacy by encouraging people from different communities to foster bonds around the world. The network has about 500 cities in the U.S. that participate and nearly 1,800 partnerships in 138 participating countries. Currently, two of Menlo Park’s four sister city relationships are active: Galway, Ireland, and Bizen, Japan. Other friendship city affiliations with Zhangzhou, China, and Kochi, India, are relatively inactive, according to the staff report.

— Kate Bradshaw

**Recount continued from page 5**

or to offer support (mental or otherwise) along the way,” said Measure A co-author Alex Tabber in an email. “The folks above waged a campaign characterized by facts and a strong ethical compass, despite weathering the constant attacks.”

He thanked the broader community of Woodside for allowing a discussion to formally occur. “We have tremendous confidence that our town staff and elected officials will make us proud in how they manage this discussion and process moving forward,” he said.

**Measure details**

Measure A amends current land use regulations that 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 parking lots, and Cañada Corners at the Cañada Road intersection (owned by Roberts Market). Because the rules were established by ballot measures 1 and 1 in 1988 and 1989 respectively, only voters could overturn the restrictions.

The measure allows the property behind Cañada Corners to be outfitted with surface parking to accommodate permanent outdoor dining, trails and play structures, all of which were previously 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. Measure J prohibited development of commercial or office space on a then-vacant, town-owned parcel near Town Hall. A new residentially zoned parcel in the Town Center area has been rezoned to allow additional square feet to be permitted before June 1988. On those properties had been required residential properties within and adjoining Town Center to remain in residential use unless commercial parking lots within and adjoining Town Center to remain in residential use unless commercial parking lots on those properties had been permitted before June 1988.

Measure L created an exception to Measure J, allowing residually zoned parcels in the Woodside Road Whiskey Hill Road Parking Assessment District to be improved to provide access, parking and open space, so long as at least 50% of the residential parcels were maintained in open space. It allowed the town to construct parking and access improvements for Town Hall, commercial businesses and the public.

The Woodside Town Council’s emergency ordinance allows the town to waive the restaurants’ parking requirements that are part of a conditional use permit, something allowed thanks to Gov. Gavin Newsom’s executive order that extends parts of his March 4, 2020, COV-19 emergency proclamation through March 31. Mayor Brian Dombkowski said outdoor dining is likely to be extended through March, which was set to occur regardless of the outcome of Measure A.

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

— Kate Bradshaw

**Real Estate Q&A**

**Waiving the Home Inspection**

Dear Monica: I would like to make an offer on a property that will likely receive multiple offers. The sellers have not provided a home inspection as part of the disclosures and I’m hesitant to make an offer without an inspection contingency. What would you advise?

Mary D.

Dear Mary: It is unwise to make an offer on a property that has not been inspected by a reputable inspector. It’s best to have an inspection contingency and if you get into contract you will have time to confirm the property condition. But the seller may choose another offer that has no contingency.

Decide what the risks are and if you can afford to take them you can act accordingly.

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

**Public Notices**

**995 Fictitious Name Statement**

**LIFE-HYPO**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No.: 289404

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:

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Registered owner(s):

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624 Berkeley Ave.

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This business is conducted by: An Individual who has posted the following in this newspaper:

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County supervisors approve new maps with majority minority districts

By Bay City News Service

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday approved new supervisorial district boundaries that will stay in effect for a decade and used the most recent numbers from the 2020 U.S. census.

The board on Dec. 7 unanimously approved what was called the "Communities Together" proposal for the county’s five districts. Two of the new ones, District 1 and District 5, will have a majority of eligible voters who are racial or ethnic minorities, while the new districts 2 and 4 have about even numbers of white and minority voting-age residents.

“Four of the five districts provide significant opportunities for traditionally under-represented groups to elect candidates that reflect the values of their communities,” Board of Supervisors president David Canepa said. “This is a significant achievement in drawing lines that respect the makeup of our communities today.”

A 15-member Supervisorial District Lines Advisory Commission with the county had voted in October to recommend two maps to the Board of Supervisors following a series of public meetings.

Federal and state law requires the districts to be updated every 10 years following the release of the new census data. They must be balanced in population, with communities of interest and cities staying intact as much as possible, among other criteria.

The board gave its initial approval Tuesday for the "Communities Together" proposal, with a final vote tabbed for Dec. 14. When approved, the boundaries will first be used in the June 2022 primary election.

"Ensuring we have districts that minimize divisions and empower local communities is the very essence of representative democracy," Supervisor Don Horsley said.

In a press release, Horsley said the new districts also respect the geographical integrity of local communities and neighborhoods with shared interests. The new map, for instance, minimizes the division of coastal communities and those living in East Palo Alto, Menlo Park’s Belle Haven neighborhood, North Fair Oaks and Redwood City.

Mullin nets Speier’s endorsement in race for her Congress seat

By Gennady Sheyner

State Assembly member Kevin Mullin, D-South San Francisco, received a big boost in his bid for a seat in the U.S. Congress on Monday, when he received an endorsement from Rep. Jackie Speier, whom he is seeking to succeed in 2022.

Mullin, who served as an aide to Speier during her tenures in the state Assembly and the state Senate, is running in a field that includes San Mateo County Supervisor David Canepa and the new one, District 5, that will have a majority of eligible voters who are racial or ethnic minorities, while the new districts 2 and 4 have about even numbers of white and minority voting-age residents.

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Email Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@paweekly.com.

Menlo Park Firefighters Toy & Food Drive

We Need Your Help To Make Wishes Come True This Year.

Deadline: December 18th

This year, Menlo Park Firefighters are looking for assistance in getting toys to 704 children in need.

Due to the Pandemic, we’ve needed to make significant changes to our normal operations.

For Food Donations: Please go to this website to donate: https://impact.shfb.org/team/390460

For Toy Donations:
If you wish to participate, please follow these 5 rules:
1. Contact John Wurdinger @ johnw@iaff2400.org with how many children you wish to sponsor. You will be assigned a child on our website: www.iaff2400.org/menloparkfirefighterstoyandfooddrive
2. Purchase 3 toys from the child’s list www.iaff2400.org/menloparkfirefighterstoyandfooddrive expect to spend $60 to $80.
3. Package the gifts in a clear 55 gallon bag with the: Child’s Name and Assigned Number clearly legible on a piece of paper inside the bag (we need to be able to see both the toys and child ID)
4. Deliver the bag to one of Menlo Park Fire Districts 7 Firehouses by the 18th of December
Station 1 - 300 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park
Station 2 - 2290 University Avenue, East Palo Alto
Station 3 - 32 Almedral Ave, Atherton
Station 4 - 3322 Alameda de Las Pulgas, Menlo Park
Station 5 - 4101 Fair Oaks Ave, Menlo Park
Station 6 - 700 Oak Grove Ave, Menlo Park
Station 77 - 1467 Chilco St, Menlo Park

5. When you drop the toys off, please be mindful that due to COVID19 the Firefighters are not allowed to have visitors in the firehouse.

www.iaff2400.org/menloparkfirefighterstoyandfooddrive

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Tori Atwell
650.996.0123
DRE 00927794

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Anna Park
650.387.6159
DRE 01473188

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Sean Foley
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DRE 00870112

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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.

The Almanac Holiday Fund is a donor advised fund of Silicon Valley Community Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. A contribution to this fund allows your donation to be tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

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 52 million pounds of food last year. It gathers donations from individuals and businesses and distributes food to more than 250,000 people each month through more than 770 agencies and distribution sites in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

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.

* Donor did not want to publish the amount of the gift.
### Holiday Fund: In times of crisis, StarVista’s hotline offers support 24/7

**By Zena Andreani**

Alana* received a flyer with StarVista’s 24/7 crisis hotline number on it after she attended a school presentation on suicide prevention and intervention by StarVista’s Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Center. At first, Alana wasn’t sure if she would need the flyer, but she decided to take it anyway. Little did Alana know that the flyer she almost left behind would play a vital role during a challenging moment in her life.

A few months later, Alana found out that her aunt had recently been diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease and was struggling to accept the diagnosis. In a phone call, Alana’s aunt shared openly about her struggles to understand life after the diagnosis and expressed that she was feeling hopeless and without motivation to keep living. Alana was in shock.

As she was trying to process her aunt’s situation, Alana recalled the Crisis Center presentation and reflected upon the early signs and symptoms of suicide that she had learned about. In addition to hearing her aunt talk about feeling hopeless, she also noted that her aunt discussed feeling her diagnosis would be a burden to the rest of the family and was overwhelmed by having to ask others for support. Alana remembered being told by a StarVista presenter about the importance of asking directly about suicide. After Alana asked, her aunt began to express her relief “yes” and asked her niece for help.

Grabbing the Crisis Center flyer she kept in her bag, Alana immediately called StarVista’s crisis hotline at 650-579-0350 for support. A crisis line counselor provided emotional support to her by listening without judgment and exploring coping strategies. The crisis line counselor also encouraged Alana to share the crisis line number directly with her aunt, so that she may call when feeling overwhelmed by her feelings of hopelessness. Alana and the crisis counselor also spoke about her desire to help her aunt practice resilience and work through her diagnosis.

Later in the conversation, a crisis counselor provided resources and referrals to Alana. She received information on caretaker support groups and chronic illness support groups hosted by one of StarVista’s community partners. Additionally, the crisis line counselor discussed referrals for individual counseling and Alana requested a referral to another StarVista program, the StarVista Counseling Center, which could provide individual therapy to help her cope with her fears and worries associated with this family change. At the end of the call, Alana said she was very grateful for the support she received from the crisis line, and she felt comforted knowing she could call back anytime for additional support.

StarVista is a nonprofit agency that delivers high-impact services through counseling, skill development and crisis prevention to children, youth, adults and families in San Mateo County. From struggles with substance abuse and thoughts of suicide to family violence and homelessness, StarVista helps approximately 40,000 people every year. It’s also one of 10 local nonprofits that benefit from donations to The Almanac’s Holiday Fund.

StarVista’s crisis hotline is 650-579-0350. More information is at star-vista.org.

*“None changed to protect client confidentiality.”

Zena Andreani, AMFT, is the assistant director of the StarVista Crisis Center.

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### Used donated toys gathered by The Toy Project volunteers are sorted on Dec. 2.

To help distribute the donations to socioeconomically disadvantaged kids in East Palo Alto.

*Parents know the toys they bought are going to a better place,* she said.

Weintraut collected items at several donation bins at locations such as M-A, La Entrada Middle School, Burgess Pool in Menlo Park, Alpine Hills Tennis and Swimming Club and Bianchi’s Market. She doesn’t have her driver’s license, so her dad acted as chauffeur and she stashed the toys at his home.

Weintraut said she first became environmentally aware as a seventh grader and student in science teacher Whitney Thwaite’s class at La Entrada Middle School. She watched the documentary “50 Minutes to Save the World” and learned that most plastic can’t be recycled.

At least 14 million tons of plastic end up in the ocean every year, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s website, and marine wildlife eat or are entangled in plastic debris. Plastic pollution also threatens food safety and contributes to climate change, she said. Weintraut said plastic toys play a part in that pollution since they don’t have the time to manage the nonprofit year-round now that in-person learning and sports have resumed.

“We’re teenagers too,” she said. Logistically, she said, storing toys at parents’ homes isn’t “going to fly” all year long. They’ve also discussed creating an app to post about used toys. The group is recruiting volunteers to lighten the workload for the current members. The Toy Project has surplus toys it needs to distribute. To help it figure out what can do out the items, email then project@almanacnews.com.

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### SOLAR

continued from page 1

plans to the community, including in Spanish.

Weintraut said Betsy Nash said that there had been input from the community and desire expressed for the building to be environmentally sustainable, adding that avoiding using a diesel generator could have health benefits by improving the air quality around the community center. “The city is doing everything possible to make it as clean as possible and not contribute to the air quality issues that are there,” she said.

Councilor Ray Mueller added that given the expected lifespan of the solar technology is 30 years, and that by 2035 all new cars will have to be electric, "I don't think there will be many cars on the road that won't be electric." He added that if the community doesn't want it, the city doesn't have to spend the money on the proposal.

“This is one of the most advanced clean energy projects on the Peninsula for a community center," Mayor Drew Combs said he was shocked by the cost of the project, but said he was willing to go along with it. "This is a community that has not been given historically as much resources," he said. Given the circumstances, "we should in this instance do all we could to make sure we got not only a top-quality project but a project that leaned into the future."

Councilwoman Jen Wolosin said that the project, while it could significant upfront costs, is expected to ultimately save the city money in the long run. It seems, she said, “fiscally responsible to do this project.”

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

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### DONOR LIST

As of Dec. 6, donors have contributed $80,840 to the Almanac Holiday Fund.

**New Donors**

<table>
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**Businesses & Organizations**

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**Previous Donors**

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<td>Leslie &amp; Michael Crisp</td>
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<td>Dennis McBride</td>
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### Almanac Holiday Fund 2021

The Almanac invites you to support our holiday fund. As we enter the season of giving and gifts, we are deeply grateful for the generosity of our donors.

Donations to The Almanac's holiday fund support approximately 40,000 people every year. It’s also one of the local nonprofits that benefit from donations to the Almanac’s Holiday Fund.

For more information, email star-vista.org.

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### Image: Magali Gauthier
Pets in Need, the troubled nonprofit animal shelter weathering upheaval after the deaths of seven puppies in its care, has a new interim executive director, the organization has announced in a statement on its website.

Board member and animal welfare expert Valerie McCarthy will immediately replace outgoing Executive Director Al Mollica, who resigned from his position in November after the puppies’ deaths and the overheating of 21 other dogs in a hot transport van in August. McCarthy has served on the nonprofit’s board of directors for the past year and a half. She is the research editor for the Animal Law and Public Policy Program at Harvard Law School and did graduate work at New York University in animal welfare, according to the statement. She cares for two male rescue cats at her home.

Pets in Need is the animal shelter contractor for the city of Palo Alto and runs a no-kill shelter in Redwood City. The 55-year-old organization came under a firestorm of criticism after three staff managers were charged with animal cruelty in late October by the Santa Clara County District Attorney’s Office. A police report noted that the seven puppies likely died from heat stroke after being transported for hours in a van that lacked efficient cooling. The compartment where the puppies and 21 other dogs had been confined in cages lacked adequate ventilation in the nearly 100-degree heat. All of the dogs exhibited symptoms of heat distress, a police investigation found.

Staff members wrote a highly critical letter to the nonprofit’s board about management’s handling of the animals and the aftermath.

Mollica abruptly announced on Nov. 15 that Pets in Need would terminate its contract with the city and would only run the shelter through the end of 2022. He blamed the city of Palo Alto, which he claimed had not provided funding and repairs to the aging facilities in a timely manner. The city refuted that characterization, and some critics considered Pets in Need’s assertion a red herring to deflect from the crisis.

Three days later on Nov. 18, the Pets in Need board confirmed that Mollica had given notice he would resign. A date for his departure was not given at that time.

Mollica’s replacement would, hopefully, help the organization regain the public’s and donors’ confidence in the nonprofit’s services, the board said. "Valerie will provide much-needed stability at this time and ensure PIN continues to provide the very best, most compassionate care for the animals in our charge. She has agreed to serve in this interim capacity for up to six months," the organization said in the statement. McCarthy and the board plan to soon begin a nationwide search for a permanent executive director, the announcement said.

Email Staff Writer Sue Dremann at sdremann@paweekly.com.
Wishing you good health and happiness this holiday season and throughout 2022

Please join me in giving back by donating to the

MENLO PARK-ATHERTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION
mpaef.org

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**COMMUNITY BRIEFS continued from page 6**

**New Sacred Heart assistant principal of athletics named**

Sacred Heart Schools, Atherton, announced Jason Armstrong is Sacred Heart Preparatory’s (SHP) assistant principal of athletics, effective July 1, according to a Nov. 16 press release.

Armstrong, who has been the school’s assistant athletics director for three years, will succeed Frank Rodriguez.

“I’m thrilled that Jason Rodriguez in a statement.

Under Rodri-

Jason Strauss/Almanac

**Dr. Arthur A. Biedermann**

*October 21, 1935 – December 4, 2021*

Dr. Arthur A. Biedermann passed away on December 4, 2021. A humble, kind, and selfless Renaissance man died December 4th, 2021 thinking of others and his precious family. He died at home among the sights, sounds and memories of his life and others with his devoted wife by his side.

Arthur Biedermann was born October 21, 1935 in Richmond, California to immigrant parents. He returned to Germany to be Christened and Baptized in the family’s Lutheran church. They returned home due to an undercurrent of unrest in Germany but continued to write and maintain family ties.

Arthur grew up during turbulent times. As an only child his best friend became the public Library and, while his parents worked, he enlarged his academic world and became a voracious reader. Everyone in the family played the musical instrument and soon Arthur was at the piano and being taught by his mother and aunt.

His quest for knowledge led him to develop a stock collective in sixth grade. Having ten members each putting in $1.80 into what was then called penny stocks they invested in Mindanao Mining Company. Their literal investment of $18 grew to thirty within 5 months. But concerned parents approached Arthur’s father and told him that Arthur was teaching their sons how to gamble and this collective had to be disbanded.

Arthur’s childhood Victory Garden in Healdsburg won awards during the war. Not being citizens, Arthur’s parents had to relinquish their property until after the war and maintain family ties. In the family’s Lutheran church. They returned home due to an undercurrent of unrest in Germany but continued to write and maintain family ties.

His devotion and ethical, he was a master negotiator and held people accountable for wrong behavior but with the benefit of doubt and kindness in regard to their dignity and self respect. He will be missed by all who knew him. There wasn’t anything that he couldn’t do.

When Minou Yamate met him at Stanford, she convinced him to give up his private practice in San Francisco and join him in San Jose to form a partnership. They became Allergy and Asthma Associates in February 1970. For the next fifty years, Arthur lived and loved his practice of medicine. He withheld nothing of his love, expertise and sleuthing to help his patients and partners.

But his greatest accomplishments were his friends and family. Bone cancer may have taken his life and severed his spine but it didn’t take away his sense of fair play, love and teaching and promoting independence, honor and the ability to make wise and thoughtful decisions that put neighbor above self. He will be dearly missed by his most significant family.

His devoted wife and best friend, Susan Biedermann and his beloved daughters: Stephanie Biedermann and Karen Biedermann. Arthur was an only child but spent his life-time accumulating brothers and sisters behind his two brothers, Mario Di Cicco and David Bevin. Also his sister-in-laws; Toni Di Cicco and Kathleen Bevin. Ellen Moffatt and Pamela Anderson as cherished friends along with son-in-laws; Jon Jensen and Diego Salas.

We will all patiently wait for the resurrection to see him once again.

---

**CRIME BRIEF continued from page 6**

we believe is one of the largest retail theft rings to have ever been busted in state history.

San Mateo County Sheriff Carlos Bolanos described the ring as “a hierarchy of criminals who were purchasing and distributing stolen property consisting mostly of retail merchandise and electronics.”

He added, “It was a network of criminals responsible for an international distribution center, moving millions of dollars in stolen merchandise.”

“This case is a great example of how organized retail theft rings are wreaking havoc across county lines and how through collaboration we can really do something to combat these crimes that are plaguing our community,” said San Mateo County Assistant District Attorney Shin-Mee Chang.

The five defendants — Danny Louis Drago, Michelle Renee Fowler, Jose Villatoro, Isis Vasquez Villanueva, and Edgar Geovery Morales — were arrested in September 2020. At the time, more than $1.8 million was seized from multiple bank accounts, prosecutors said.

The lead defendant, Drago, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit organized retail theft, receiving stolen property, and money laundering, and an aggravated white collar crime enhancement. He’s set to be sentenced in February and could receive up to six years in prison, prosecutors said.

Fowler pleaded guilty to organized retail theft, receiving stolen property, and an aggravated white collar enhancement. She was sentenced to three years in prison, with two years of supervised probation.

Robles Morales and Villanueva have pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit organized retail theft. They’ve both been sentenced to probation.

Villatoro pleaded guilty to receiving stolen property and was sentenced to probation, according to prosecutors.

—Bay City News Service

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**Rotary Club’s turkey drive**

The Rotary Club of Menlo Park revived a charitable tradition of holding a turkey drive in local schools for Thanksgiving.

The Rotary Club, Sacred Heart Preparatory and Woodside Priory collected over 500 turkeys to donate to St. Anthony’s Padua Dining Room, the St. Francis Center and Catholic Charities.

In addition, students developed a lesson plan on ‘Dining with Dignity’ for fellow students about food insecurity and income disparity.

The school collecting the most turkeys per capita was dubbed the winner of the drive. The second place school must present a $1,000 check to St. Anthony’s, and Menlo Park Rotary will match the $1,000 donation.

—Angela Swartz

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**Marketplace**

The Almanac offers advertising for Home Services, Business Services and Employment.

If you wish to learn more about these advertising options, please call 650.223.6582 or email digitalads@pawweekly.com.
Judge rules sexually violent convict can be housed in East Palo Alto

By Sue Dremann

A man with a history as a “sexually violent predator” will be released from prison to a residence in East Palo Alto over the objections from the San Mateo County District Attorney’s Office.

On Dec. 2, Superior Court Judge Jeffrey Finigan approved the release of Lamar Johnson, 60, who was arrested in 1984 and again in 1992 for multiple sexual assaults both within and outside of San Mateo County. A jury unani- mously determined him to be a sexually violent predator.

Johnson has served 27 years of a 36-year sentence. The California Department of State Hospitals has deemed him no longer a threat to the public and recommended that he live in East Palo Alto, said Deputy District Attorney Alpana Samant, who presented the DA’s office’s opposition to Fini- gan during a hearing on Dec. 1. Assistant District Attor- ney Shin-Mee Chang said she doesn’t know the reasoning behind placing Johnson in San Mateo County. He isn’t from the East Palo Alto community and his association with the county is due to being the loca- tion of his last conviction.

This is a target-rich envi- ronment for this particular offender,” Chang said, noting that East Palo Alto is densely popu- lated, and perhaps even more so than many of its neighboring cities. Typical- ly, sexually violent predators would be placed in more rural communities where they are less likely to encounter poten- tial victims.

At least six schools and chil- dren’s/teen support programs are approximately within a 2,000-foot radius of the home on Beech Street where Johnson

Palo Alto couple to plead guilty in college admissions scandal

By Sue Dremann

A Palo Alto couple charged with paying to cheat on their son’s col- lege entrance exam have agreed

Under a plea deal, the Col- burns will plead guilty to their roles in a pay-to-play scheme where college admissions con- sultant William “Rick” Singer received $25,000 to bribe test administrator Igor Dvorskiy and test proctor Mark Rid- dell to secretly correct the Colburns’ son’s SAT exam answers. The goal was to obtain a fraudulently inflated score to increase his chances of admis- sion to a top-level college or university, according to federal prosecutors.

Singer, Dvorskiy and Riddell have pleaded guilty for their respective roles in the nation- wide scheme that implicated more than 50 people.

The Colburns each accepted plea agreements that include two-month prison sentences, one year of supervised release, 100 hours of community ser- vice and a fine of $12,500, subject to a federal judge’s approval.

The Colburns will be the 36th and 37th parents in the college admissions case to either plead guilty or be convicted by a jury following trial, the U.S. Attor- ney’s Office said in a statement. The Colburns had steadfastly pleaded not guilty until right before trial was set to begin. They faced a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of $250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater, if convicted.

The Colburns join a group of Bay Area residents who have or will be sentenced in the nation- wide scam. Other residents, who have taken plea deals and were sentenced to punishments ranging from fines with no jail time to a few months in prison with hefty fines, include former Stanford University sailing coach John Vandemoer; Menlo Park residents Marjorie Klapper and Peter Jan Sartorio; Atherton residents Manuel Henriquez and Elizabeth Hen- riquez; Hillsborough resident Marci Palatella; former TPG Capital senior executive Wil- liam McGlashan Jr., previously of Palo Alto; and Napa vintner Agustin Huneeus Jr. Bruce and Davina Isackson have pleaded guilty but have not yet been sentenced.

Palo Alto couple to plead guilty in college admissions scandal

By Sue Dremann

A

Using a cost quote for a project or a

of its funds are set aside to revamp the library tutoring program’s space.

“We want to make sure kids have excellent opportunities — such as housekeepers or landscape- ers — learn technol- ogy skills like digitally sending a cost quote for a project or a receipt to a client, Goodkind said. They also help businesses market themselves on social media.

By working with Literacy Partners, the recipients are also introduced to similar programs, helping them learn from each other.

In the next year, the non- profit plans to begin offering individual scholarships and offer more grants, Goodkind said. It’s also recruiting board members and volunteers it can send to the organizations it supports.

Find more information about Literacy Partners at literacypartnersmenlopark.org.

Email Staff Writer Sue Dremann at sde@paweeekly.com.

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The Colburns each accepted plea agreements that include two-month prison sentences, one year of supervised release, 100 hours of community ser- vice and a fine of $12,500, subject to a federal judge’s approval.

The Colburns will be the 36th and 37th parents in the college admissions case to either plead guilty or be convicted by a jury following trial, the U.S. Attor- ney’s Office said in a statement. The Colburns had steadfastly pleaded not guilty until right before trial was set to begin. They faced a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of $250,000 or twice the gross gain or loss, whichever is greater, if convicted.

The Colburns join a group of Bay Area residents who have or will be sentenced in the nation- wide scam. Other residents, who have taken plea deals and were sentenced to punishments ranging from fines with no jail time to a few months in prison with hefty fines, include former Stanford University sailing coach John Vandemoer; Menlo Park residents Marjorie Klapper and Peter Jan Sartorio; Atherton residents Manuel Henriquez and Elizabeth Hen- riquez; Hillsborough resident Marci Palatella; former TPG Capital senior executive Wil- liam McGlashan Jr., previously of Palo Alto; and Napa vintner Agustin Huneeus Jr. Bruce and Davina Isackson have pleaded guilty but have not yet been sentenced.

Email Staff Writer Sue Dremann at sde@paweeekly.com.
The Sacred Heart Prep football team improved to 7-7 on the season Dec. 4 and won a NorCal championship. This weekend the Gators will attempt to move above .500 for the first time since the first game of the season, and win a state championship.

An unlikely scenario, but true. The Gators beat University Prep of Redding 20-0 Dec. 4 to capture the CIF NorCal Division 5-A regional bowl game. This Saturday at 1 p.m. they will host a state championship game against Righetti of Santa Maria, a 14-7 winner over Northwood of Irvine in the Southern California 5-A bowl game.

And this team has a chance to go where no Sacred Heart Prep team has gone before.

Saturday’s win was the third time the Gators won a NorCal title. But on the two previous occasions, in 2013 and 2015, they lost in the state final in games played in Southern California.

“This is the only school I’ve ever gone to,” said quarterback Jack Herrell, who has attended Sacred Heart Schools from elementary school on up and passed for 199 yards Saturday. “When you look at the history of this program, at players like Ben Burr-Kirven, who is in the NFL now, at Mason Randall, Andrew Daschbach and John Oppenheimer, who was a mentor to me. We’re such a group of motivated guys. We’ve been through so much adversity, we’re so ready to finish the job. We want to make it 8-7.”

SHP went 3-7 in the regular season, with six of its seven losses by eight points or less. But the team qualified for the Central Coast Section playoffs with a fourth-place finish in the Peninsula Athletic League Bay Division.

After receiving a No. 3 seed in Division IV the Gators came alive offensively, beating Alisal 42-0, Hillsdale 42-14 and No. 1 seed Homestead 51-28 to advance to the Dec. 4 game against a UPrep team that went 13-0 and averaged nearly 40 points per game.

So the SHP defense pitched a shutout.

“Our defense really bond- ed well,” said linebacker Mat Bucher, one of several defensive standout on Saturday. “Every- one on defense knows every guy was going to do their job.”

Defensive coordinator Ed Larsen has been around high school football for some six decades and previously coached at Jef- ferson, Burlingame and Aragon. “These guys give every ounce they can, every day,” Larios said. “They respect their opponent and execute the game plan.”

SHP took the opening kickoff and drove 86 yards for a touch- down, a 2-yard run by fullback Andrew Latu. Pass completions by Herrell of 34 yards to Jake York and 20 yards to Bucher were the big gainers on the drive.

University responded by driv- ing from its own 28 to the SHP 10, but turned it over on downs when a University fumble was recovered by SHP. SHP was forced to punt on the first play after the turnover. University responded by driv- ing from its own 28 to the SHP 10, but turned it over on downs when a University fumble was recovered by SHP.

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We have enough clean power for aggressive, affordable building electrification in Menlo Park

By Jan Pepper

T he proposed ordinance from Menlo Park’s Environmental Quality Commission discontinuing the installation of new methane gas appliances in favor of cleaner electric models is one of the strongest measures communities can take to address the climate crisis. These proposed changes to the building codes have sparked a healthy debate over whether we have sufficient and affordable clean power to successfully meet such a requirement. I can emphatically answer: Yes! But to help underscore that, some key questions should be addressed:

Can the electric grid handle the increased power needed if we go to all-electric buildings AND adopt lots more electric vehicles (EVs)?

Yes, because the increased demand for electricity by both all-electric buildings and EVs will happen over time, allowing for the grid to adapt. Nevertheless, investment in upgrades to the electric distribution and transmission system will be required over time. This is similar to the modernization of the electric grid when air conditioning became widely used in the 1970s. The successful strategy was to emphasize long-term reliability of generation, modernizing the grid and improving the efficiency of systems. And that same time-honored strategy will be deployed now, alongside the current growth in renewable generation, modernization of the distribution and transmission systems and installation of more efficient appliances.

Is there enough clean electricity to meet this increased demand?

Renewable energy is the least expensive and fastest growing source of energy in California. It is also an essential component of our climate action plan to meet all-electric buildings and EVs. These proposed changes to the building codes have sparked a healthy debate over whether the building codes have sparked a healthy debate over whether the code changes in favor of far cleaner electricity matter. They do.

Energy is aggressively pursued in California and the United States. As the energy consumption rises, so does the need for more electricity to meet this increased demand. In California alone, the electricity demand is expected to increase by more than 7% by 2040, according to the California Energy Commission. This growth is driven by the continued growth of electric vehicles, electric heating, and cooling.

The proposed ordinance in Menlo Park would require all new homes and businesses to be designed and built to meet specific criteria outlined in the California Building Code. This code is designed to ensure the safety and comfort of occupants, but it also plays a critical role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. By requiring all new homes and businesses to be designed and built to meet these criteria, the proposed ordinance would help to decrease the carbon footprint of the city.

The success ofồ this initiative will depend on a number of factors, including the extent to which the energy grid is expanded and modernized, the rate at which new renewable energy sources are developed and deployed, and the degree to which consumers adopt and use electric vehicles.

Questions? Email editor@AlmanacNews.com, or snail-mail them to: The Almanac, 979 San Mateo Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306.

What's on your mind?

From City Hall politics and the schools to transportation and other pressing issues, the Almanac aims to keep readers informed about their community. But we also want to hear from you. Tell us what’s on your mind by sending your letters to letters@AlmanacNews.com. Or snail-mail them to: The Almanac, 979 San Mateo Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306.

Letters should be no longer than 300 words.

Questions? Email editor@AlmanacNews.com, or call 650-223-6537.

By Alexander Cannara

T he growing belief that we must electrify everything, including home and building heating, may sound environmentally “green,” but it’s fraught with environmental danger. Electricity produced by wind and solar can vary with weather, wind and sun. These are our “peaker” plants.

In California, most of our electricity is produced by gas combustion, in about 50% efficient combined-cycle plants or about 30% efficient turbines in “peaker” plants. Past regulators (such as the CPUC and CEC) and governors have added new gas plants, as Gov. Gavin Newsom recently has, rather than add reliable clean power sources, as the California Commission on Science and Technology advised in 2011.

What's on your mind?
The Silicon Valley Boychoir celebrates both the chilly winter weather and the warmth of the season with the holiday concert “Fire & Ice,” Dec. 12 at Grace Lutheran Church in Palo Alto.

The concert will be the first in-person performance in nearly two years for the choir, which teaches boys ages 7 to 18 to sing.

The group was founded in 2010 by Julia Simon, who serves as the choir’s program director. The Boychoir features four levels for singers of different ages and skills: the beginning-level Overture Choir, for ages 7 and up; the intermediate- and advanced-level Concert Choir for ages 8 to 14; the advanced-level Ovation Choir for ages 9 to 14; and the advanced-level Encore Choir for ages 14 to 18.

Richards, who is in her first year as artistic director, has been with the Boychoir for five years and directs the Ovation and Concert choirs. Composer and arranger Allen H. Simon, who is also the artistic director of Soli Deo Gloria, the Bay Area choir for adult singers, directs the Encore Choir and musician Chloe Billings is the new director of the Overture Choir.

All four choir levels, led by their respective directors, will perform in the Dec. 12 concert, the theme for which was inspired by the nature of winter and the festive season.

“Although we don’t live in a place where it snows, it’s the concept that winter has the coldness and the darkness, yet also has the warmth and the light that people bring in to combat the darkness of the season. A lot of repertoire — choral music — plays on those themes,” Richards said.

The program includes seasonal favorites and other holiday-themed works. Among the highlights: The Encore Choir will perform “You’re A Mean One, Mr. Grinch” from “How the Grinch Stole Christmas;” the Overture Choir will sing the classic “Christmas Time is Here,” from the 1965 TV special “A Charlie Brown Christmas;” and the Ovation Choir will perform “Unending Flame,” a song for Hanukkah by composer Paul Carey. The piece, which includes clapping and some tempo shifts, also features accompaniment from Joel Jaffe on clarinet.

“There will be some traditional gems like ‘The Christmas Song (Chestnuts roasting on an open fire);’ and then some more classically inspired,” Richards said.

She also noted that in a first for the Boychoir, the Concert and Ovation choirs will team up to perform “Fire” by composer Mary Goetze, which is inspired by a 13-year-old’s poem exploring the nature of fire. The piece uses the poem as its text.

Richards also sought pieces that work for a smaller sized group of singers than the Silicon Valley Boychoir is accustomed to, as its membership has decreased due to the pandemic, down from 64 singers pre-pandemic to just under 40.

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All four choirs will come together at the very end of the concert where everyone is singing. So it’s a fun opportunity for the very young boys to have the experience of singing SATB — soprano, alto, tenor, bass — a full group sound as opposed to just the music that they do in their individual groups. So ‘We Need a Little Christmas’ will be fun,” Richards said.

In choosing music for the holiday program, Richards said that she was mindful of finding pieces that are fun and educational for the young choristers.

“I like to choose music that I think is beautiful, things that I think they will enjoy singing’” Richards, Silicon Valley Boychoir Artistic Director

By Heather Zimmerman | Photos courtesy Silicon Valley Boychoir

The Silicon Valley Boychoir, which offers musical education for boys ages 7 to 18, returned to in-person rehearsals in August.
“Our numbers dropped dramatically because of it. So we’re in a very strong push to build our numbers back,” Richards said, noting that the limitations of virtual performance had a major impact on choirs in general.

Before the Boychoir’s singers were able to reunite in person a few months ago, rehearsals took place virtually, a method that has brought challenges for anyone trying to make music together, due to inherent delays in video-conferencing, known as latency. During that time, the organization also temporarily adapted its teaching model to what worked best online. Since the choristers couldn’t sing together, instruction was more individualized.

“We actually used the year to focus more on the individual singer and we gave each boy a private voice lesson with his director once a week for a shorter amount of time. It was more about personal growth,” Richards said.

Now the Silicon Valley Boychoir is back to performing in person, Richards noted, it’s all the more special for the members to perform a live concert — and for their families to witness it, but also to keep in mind that personal growth is always a key part of the singers’ experience.

“What we do here is teach the boys musicianship, how to become the tenors and basses of the future for high school choirs and beyond, in college. Even if they don’t go to college to become a music major, they’ll hopefully still retain the love of singing and find a community choir — (and they will) be able to read music and find the flexibility and improvisational skills to be fluid with what music has to offer.”

“Fire & Ice” takes place Dec. 12, 3:30 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church, 3149 Waverley St., Palo Alto. Tickets are $10-$35. For more information, visit svboychoir.org.

Email Arts & Entertainment Editor Heather Zimmerman at hzimmerman@almanacnews.com.

Here come the Holidays

The Ladera Country Shopper
Merchant’s Holiday Fair

Saturday, December 11th  *  11 am-12:30 pm

Konditorei: Photos with Santa

First 20 people receive Konditorei gift card and Surprise gifts for kids for the first 20 people

~Plus~

Ladera Garden & Gifts: Holiday Planting
Bianchini’s Market: Candy
UPS Store: Holiday Cards – First 20 people receive gift cards worth 100 copies

Ladera Cleaners and Diane’s Beauty:
Ivy’s Nails, Holiday Candy

Chase Bank: Cookies, Drinks, and Gifts
The latest openings and closings in Midpeninsula dining

Local Kitchens brings several eateries under one roof, while Anatolian Kitchen makes way for Naschmarkt

By Sara Hayden

While 2021 is winding down, the local restaurant scene continues to see change as eateries open and close.

In Palo Alto’s California Avenue neighborhood, Anatolian Kitchen has closed, to be replaced by a cozy Austrian-themed restaurant slated to open by February. And around the corner, Local Kitchens has opened up shop, offering food from several different restaurants and cuisines. Another outpost is set to open in Mountain View this month.

Naschmarkt to replace Anatolian Kitchen in Palo Alto

Anatolian Kitchen is closed, making way for a new concept: By no later than February, restaurateur Dino Tekdemir and team are aiming to reopen as Naschmarkt Palo Alto, a sister restaurant to the broader concept.

Tekdemir has been working in the restaurant industry for more than a decade. After arriving in the U.S., Tekdemir worked as a janitor, busser, server and manager. After nine years, he pursued opening his own restaurant. In addition to Anatolian Kitchen and Naschmarkt, he owns Nemea Greek Taverna in San Jose.

“Most customers know me, because I’ve been here a long time,” Tekdemir said.

With a laugh, Tekdemir continued, “I want to let them know that — don’t worry, something very good is coming. You won’t be missing Anatolian Kitchen, because you’ll be thankful for me opening Naschmarkt.”

Naschmarkt (coming soon), 2323 Birch St., Palo Alto; naschmarkt-restaurant.com.

Restaurateur Dino Tekdemir and his team are remodeling Anatolian Kitchen, with plans to reopen the restaurant as Naschmarkt Palo Alto in early 2022.

Local Kitchens opens ‘digital food halls’

If you’ve ever craved curry, Reubens and ice cream all at once, you’re in luck: Local Kitchens makes it possible to buy all of the above and then some from different restaurants in a single order. On Nov. 30, the team opened a new Peninsula location in Palo Alto at the former site of The Counter. A Mountain View location will follow in mid-December.

Led by DoorDash alumni, Local Kitchens bills itself as a “micro food hall” with a focus on local food purveyors. At a Local Kitchens location or on its website, customers can order dishes from a variety of Bay Area restaurants for pickup or delivery, or to eat on-site.

“It’s a little bit of a different mix,” co-founder and CEO Jon Goldsmith said. “Our goal is to capture the diversity of the Bay Area food scene.”

Participating restaurants vary by location. For example, Oren’s Hummus is available in Lafayette, but not on the Peninsula (you’ll have to go directly to Oren’s for their legendary hummus instead). From the Palo Alto Local Kitchens location, the biggest to date, customers can order:

- Curry Up Now: Indian street food
- MIXT: gourmet salads
- Proposition Chicken:

Local Kitchens recently opened on California Avenue in Palo Alto.
 Falafels from SAJJ, one of several restaurants serving food out of Local Kitchens’ new Palo Alto food hall.

DIETING continued from page 2

sandwiches, salads and entrees
- SAJJ: Mediterranean dishes
- Señor Sisig: Filipino street food
- The Melt: burgers and comfort food
- Humphry Slocombe: ice cream
- Rooster & Rice: Thai chicken and rice
- Wise Sons: Jewish deli classics

From the Mountain View location, in addition to MIXT, Proposition Chicken, Señor Sisig, The Melt, Wise Sons and Humphry Slocombe, customers will also be able to order Israeli street food from Sababa.

Investors are banking on Local Kitchens, which currently has locations in Lafayette, Cupertino and San Jose, and has plans to expand to Sacramento, Los Angeles and beyond. The startup raised $25 million in a series A funding in June with the support of venture capital firm General Catalyst, which includes the likes of Airbnb, Instacart, Warby Parker and Deliveroo in its portfolio.

Locals Kitchens’ Peninsula presence isn’t entirely new: Proposition Chicken, which was founded in San Francisco, partnered with the team at Local Kitchens — then called Local Food Group — to reach Santa Clara County, business leaders pushed for a cap on delivery fees.

“We came up with a model we hope is sustainable for them,” Goldsmith said. “We were so excited to have an opportunity to help restaurants.”

The Local Kitchens team believes that convenience and choice will ultimately benefit customers, and they’ll also be able to help their restaurant partners with a revenue share agreement.

“We can provide something that will complement DoorDash and UberEats. At the time, Ari Feingold and Dennis Lim, the restaurants’ respective leaders, were interested in a new model that could support their businesses.

Since then, the Local Food Group has turned into Local Kitchens, with a slightly different model: In its current iteration, dedicated Local Kitchens staff prepares different restaurants’ dishes on-site at the Local Kitchens locations.

To fulfill delivery orders, Local Kitchens contracts with DoorDash, a company that’s recently faced heat from “Dashers,” the city of Chicago and others. Last month, DoorDash agreed to pay $5.3 million to settle allegations of violations of past benefits for San Francisco delivery workers. Last year in Santa Clara County, business leaders pushed for a cap on delivery fees.

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Local Kitchens, 369 California Ave., Palo Alto; (coming soon) 1711 W El Camino Real Suite B, Mountain View; localkitchens.com.

Email Associate Digital Editor Sara Hayden at peninsulafoodist@almanacnews.com.

Dig into food news.

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The Almanac 23
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