

# The Almanac

THE HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER FOR MENLO PARK, ATHERTON, PORTOLA VALLEY AND WOODSIDE

SEPTEMBER 25, 2019 | VOL. 55 NO. 4



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## A poet's journey to the past

Nature writer Nick Neely retraces Portolá Expedition's 650-mile trek on foot

Page 14



**Golden Acorn Awards presented** | Page 5  
**Restaurant review: Oak + Violet** | Page 19  
**Info Menlo resource guide** | INSIDE



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# Local News

MENLO PARK | AThERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

## Community leaders honored with Golden Acorns

By **Kate Bradshaw**  
Almanac Staff Writer

Community leaders and public servants were recognized on Sept. 19 for their distinct contributions to the community of Menlo Park at the Chamber of Commerce's 43rd annual Golden Acorn Awards, held at Hotel Nia.

The 2019 ceremony was an event, as described by Mayor Ray Mueller, "that celebrates what it means to be here in Menlo Park and honor those who make it a special place to live." Recognized this year are:

- Cafe Zoe: Business Excellence Award.
- Tour de Menlo: Community Service Award.
- MidPen Housing: Professional Leadership Award.
- St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room: Unsung Hero Award.
- Tarlton Properties/West Bay Sanitary District/Sharon Heights Golf & Country Club: Environmental Stewardship.

### Reclaiming politics

The event was kicked off with a keynote address by Santa Clara County supervisor and longtime public servant Joe Simitian, who talked about the different criteria voters use to pick the people they elect to office. His criteria, he said, are a set of questions: Do they share my values? Do I think they have the ability to make those values real and tangible? And do they have a snowball's chance in hell of getting elected?

But there are plenty of other valid factors people use, he noted, and that's their prerogative in a democracy. He explained some of the pros and cons of

judging a candidate based on his or her legislative achievements, leadership skills, identity, religion, ability to articulate a vision, or ability to identify and combat political opponents.

Ultimately, he argued, politics and government should be about helping people and solving problems, creating opportunities and making one's city, state and nation a tangibly better place for all of its residents. He urged attendees to be cognizant of these factors at play the next time they vote, and to resist the temptation to engage in what he terms the "otherization" of politics — to turn small differences into polarizing positions and to weaponize people's identities for political reasons.

Candidates should also be willing to talk about what they're for, not just what they're against, he added.

"I think if we can do that, we can reclaim a politics that is practical, productive and unifying," he said. "God knows we could use it."

### Cafe Zoe

The cafe, which is located at 1929 Menalto Ave. in the Willows neighborhood, is run by Kathleen Daly and her daughter Zoe Sharkey. It celebrated its 10th year in business last year. As a Menlo Park proclamation declared, it is a "little independent shop with big community spirit."

Sharkey, in accepting the award, talked about the many roles her mother fills at the cafe — crossing guard, impromptu therapist, donor, guardian of lost neighborhood dogs and community leader. "With Kathleen, it's never a marketing



Photo by Sammy Dallal/The Almanac

**Cafe Zoe** owners Zoe Sharkey, left, and her mother and cafe founder Kathleen Daly accept the Golden Acorn Award for Business Excellence. Addressing her mother, Sharkey said, "Golden hearts like yours deserve golden acorns and much more."

tactic, it's just pure heart," she said. "Golden hearts like yours deserve golden acorns and much more."

### Tour de Menlo

Tour de Menlo is an annual fundraiser sponsored by the Rotary Club of Menlo Park Foundation and The Almanac. It raises funds for initiatives the Rotary Club supports and The Almanac's Holiday Fund, supporting scholarships for college-bound high school seniors in need and local community-serving nonprofits. The tour invites participants on several bike loops from Menlo-Atherton High School up to 100

kilometers.

Event co-founder Tom Gibboney, former publisher of The Almanac, said that the event draws upon the support of the Rotary Club's members, who voluntarily take on the work of registering participants, marking the course and running the event.

According to a city proclamation, the event raises about \$50,000 a year, and over 15 years the Rotary Club has distributed about \$1.5 million in college scholarships.

### MidPen Housing

MidPen housing is a nonprofit housing developer that built

Sequoia Belle Haven, a senior affordable housing development, in 2017, and is working on a project to redevelop old affordable housing on Willow Road into 140 new affordable housing units for families.

According to Matt Franklin, president and CEO, the nonprofit provides about 213 units of affordable housing in the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park, housing more than 600 residents. He added that his group needs three things when it pursues affordable housing projects: money, land and political support.

See **GOLDEN ACORNS**, page 16

## Nonprofit aims for more early childhood education teachers

By **Angela Swartz**  
Almanac Staff Writer

San Mateo County will need to fill about 2,500 teaching spots by 2025 to keep pace with the growing need for early childhood education programs, according to a 2016 early learning facilities needs assessment for the county. During that same period, there is a projected shortage of about 14,000 slots for children in early education classrooms, according to the assessment.

With these statistics in mind, Menlo Park-based nonprofit Community Equity Collaborative partnered with Foothill College in Los Altos Hills in 2018 to create the Teacher Pipeline Program. The aim: to boost the number of high-quality early education teachers in the area. The program for this school year began this week, and includes early childhood education courses through the community college, along with meals, child care, coaching and loaner laptops, all free of charge.

"The Teacher Pipeline Program has the potential to become a model for how we can successfully bring new educators into the workforce to address the teacher shortage, expand our capacity to serve more children and professionalize the field," said Peggy Pizzo, director of Stanford University's Early Learning Project, in a prepared statement. "The benefits of such collaborative efforts go beyond its participants or partners as many are watching and hoping for archetypes that can

be replicated and scaled."

During the first year of the program, students took classes in Redwood City through Foothill's child development department. This year, students can also take classes, which run from September to June, at the Menlo Park outpost of the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Peninsula. Students can participate in the program to simply bolster their skills, or they can follow one- and two-year pathways to becoming an assistant teacher or a teacher in early childhood

classrooms, respectively. Courses include child growth and development, prenatal through early childhood; positive behavior management; and how to plan art activities.

For Olivia Saachi, a teacher's aide at the Early Learning Center preschool in Menlo Park, the program offered her a chance to brush up on her prior early learning training and the latest best practices in early childhood education. Saachi, one of the 40

See **TEACHERS**, page 6

Jewelry by Hester VanDiggelen

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## Menlo Park district bond refinancing saves \$3.7M

The Menlo Park City School District will save taxpayers over \$3.7 million by refinancing its voter-approved bonds.

The district refinanced the bonds on Sept. 10 after receiving a triple A rating from Moody's Investors Service, according to a district press release. The school board approved the refinancing at an Aug. 29 meeting.

The move will lower district residents' property tax bills, according to the district's financial adviser Keygent.

"Our primary mission is to serve our students, making sure they are all engaging, achieving, and thriving in the classroom and as developing young people," said Superintendent Erik Burmeister in a prepared statement. "Every voter and taxpayer in MPCSD can be proud that our business office is looking out for their

bottom line. They should also know that this smart management allows MPCSD to punch above its weight, consistently delivering the highest quality education at a much lower per student cost than any of our neighboring community-funded districts."

The district refunded bonds sold in 2005, 2012, 2014 and 2015 in a process similar to refinancing a home loan, according to the district's website. The district took advantage of the current low interest rates and replaced bonds with an average interest rate of 4.5% with new bonds at an interest rate of 2.61%.

In the past decade, the district has saved the taxpayers \$28.9 million by taking advantage of refunding opportunities, according to the press release. ■

— By Angela Swartz

## TEACHERS

continued from page 5

students who took classes in the program last year, plans to enroll in classes this year as well.

The classes "made me much more mindful about how I would talk with children," she said.

Program organizers provide students and their families with dinner 30 minutes before week-night classes and snacks on Saturdays. The Boys and Girls Club provides programming for children ages 6 to 12 and child care for infants to 5-year-olds on weekday evenings.

One student said the child care and meals helped make it possible for her to take the classes.

"For a single mother, the fact [that] I can go to school and have my child at the school day care is phenomenal," she said in a prepared statement from the Community Equity Collaborative.

This student's story illustrates why Community Equity Collaborative leaders thought the program would help bring more people into the early childhood learning field: its access to child care for people who otherwise might not be able to complete such coursework.

"The ROI (return on investment) is pretty remarkable," said Dayna Chung, co-founder of the Community Equity Collaborative, which was formed in 2017 to organize local groups to solve educational inequities. "Communities are paying the price by not having as many women engaged in the workforce and people are definitely needing these child care spaces."

The Redwood City and Menlo Park City school districts are also partners in the collaborative, helping to spread the word about the program. Pati Ortiz, the Redwood City district's community-school partnerships director, helped connect program organizers with Spark-Point, which offers individual online financial and career coaching, Chung said.

This school year, the program is operated through \$125,000 in private donations, according to Heather Hopkins, a Community Equity Collaborative co-founder. Half of this funding goes toward tuition costs, she said. These funds also go toward child care expenses, meals and other program expenses.

The nonprofit is pursuing grants to help fund the program that could be used during the second half of the school year, according to the group.

The collaborative held 2019-20 program information sessions on Sept. 9 and 11 in Menlo Park and Redwood City, respectively, to welcome participants and program partners.

Classes in Menlo Park run from 6:30 to 8:20 p.m. on Mondays and every other Saturday from 9 a.m. to 12:50 p.m. Classes in Redwood City will run from 6 to 7:50 p.m. on Wednesdays and every other Saturday from 9 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.

Registration is open until the first day of classes on Sept. 23, or until classes are full, at bit.ly/ece\_teacher. As of last week, there were about 40 student slots in Menlo Park and 50 in Redwood City, Chung said. ■

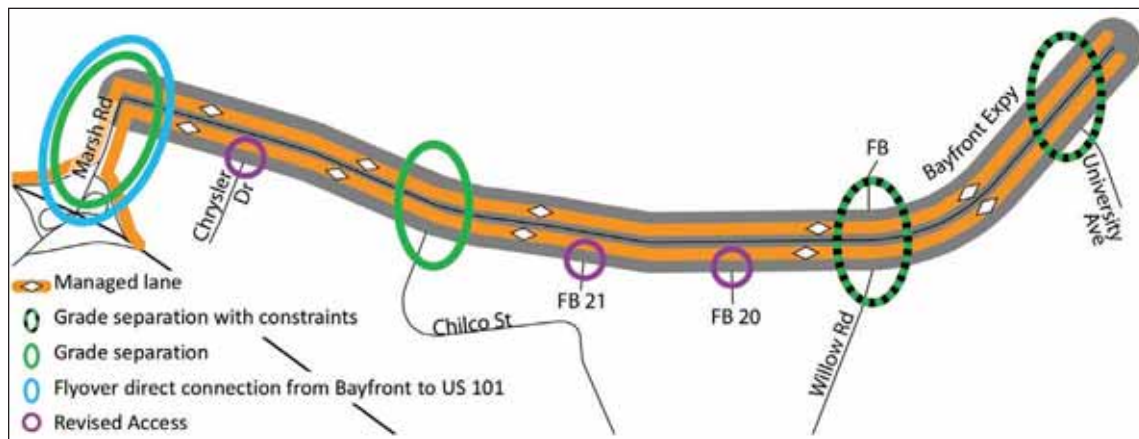


Image courtesy city of Menlo Park.

A preliminary diagram of what might have to be changed to turn Bayfront Expressway into a highway, including the construction of several grade separations.

## City looks at ambitious project for Bayfront Expressway connections

By Kate Bradshaw  
Almanac Staff Writer

In Menlo Park's draft Transportation Master Plan, which the city of Menlo Park, consultants, committee and commission members and the public have been working and reworking since 2017, there are more than 150 transportation projects proposed that its authors are now requesting feedback on.

The biggest project on the list could transform how traffic moves along the city's Bay side: a complete revamp of Bayfront Expressway to turn it into a freeway between U.S. 101 and the Dumbarton Bridge.

The project, as envisioned in a very preliminary concept plan, would involve connecting Bayfront Expressway to U.S. 101 at Marsh Road, removing the existing traffic signals, adding grade separations where the expressway now intersects with streets, and adding a shared carpool and toll lane in each direction.

It's also a project that would be more expensive than what the city could afford to build, noted Menlo Park Senior Transportation Engineer Kristiann Choy.

"It's definitely a long-term vision," she said.

The project would need the support of Caltrans, which has jurisdiction over the expressway, she added.

The concept was initially explored in the 2008 "2020 Peninsula Gateway Corridor Study" by C/CAG, the City/County

Association of Governments of San Mateo County.

According to the city, preliminary research has found that even if the reactivation of the Dumbarton rail line — a separate enormous project — moves forward, given current regional traffic projections, it is still expected to take 20% to 70% longer for commuters to traverse the Bayfront Expressway during the peak commute periods in the future. On Willow Road, travel time would not increase; conditions would remain gridlocked at peak periods.

On the other hand, if both Dumbarton rail service and a reconfigured Bayfront Expressway were put in place, travel time could decrease by 40% to 60% during the peak commute periods, travel time along Willow Road would decrease by 20%, and the expressway would have the capacity to move about 40% more people through its corridor, the city reports.

### Master Plan

Re-doing Bayfront Expressway is just one of more than 150 projects proposed in the city's massive Transportation Master Plan, a comprehensive document aimed at creating a list of all of the transportation projects needed citywide to improve safety, promote sustainability, give people transportation options other than solo driving, and manage congestion.

Another significant project on the list is construction of a bike and pedestrian bridge over U.S.

101 near Marsh Road between Independence Drive and Scott Drive, Choy said. Many of the proposed projects are much smaller in scope and involve things like adding bike lanes and sidewalks to streets that aren't currently very bike- and pedestrian-friendly.

The plan, which has gone through extensive reviews in workshops by the 11-member Transportation Master Plan Oversight and Outreach Committee, and heavily discussed by the city's Complete Streets Commission, is now on a timeline for potential City Council approval sometime in 2020, according to staff.

### How to comment

The city has released an online open house with an interactive map where people can weigh in on the projects and their proposed priority.

Access it at [menloparktmp.participate.online](http://menloparktmp.participate.online).

In addition, the city hosted an open house on Sept. 17 at the Arrillaga Family Recreation Center for the public to learn more about the project, and has scheduled pop-up events to answer questions and collect input on the plan at the following places and times on Wednesday, Sept. 25.

■ At Belle Haven Elementary School at 415 Ivy Drive between 12:30 and 2:30 p.m.

■ At the weekly Off the Grid food truck market held at the Menlo Park Caltrain Station, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. ■

## Flegel's building, not business, for sale

The building that houses Flegel's Interior Design & Distinctive Home Furnishings, at 870 Santa Cruz Ave. in Menlo Park, is for sale, but there's no need for alarm bells, says the store's general manager, Brian Flegel.

The Flegel family has decided to sell the building, but plans to

keep the business in place.

"Nothing is happening to the business. Everybody is going to stay employed. The business is fine," Flegel told The Almanac.

"We've been paying rent to the family trust. Now we'll pay it to someone else."

The two-story, 22,500-square-

foot building is listed for \$22.75 million, down from \$25.75 million when it was first listed online in May.

An online listing saying that the building is to be delivered vacant on a month-to-month lease is inaccurate, Flegel said.

"They effed that up," he said. "They're supposed to change that."

— By Kate Bradshaw

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## Las Lomitas Elementary School District Bond Oversight Committee Vacancies

The District is currently searching for members of the Las Lomitas Elementary School District Community to serve on a Citizens' Oversight Committee for Bond Measures to fulfill the criteria of:

- **One (1) member who shall be both a parent or guardian of a child enrolled in the District and active in a parent-teacher organization, such as the PTA or a school site council.**
- **One (1) member who shall be active in a business organization representing the business community located in the District.**

Individuals interested in being appointed to the Bond Oversight Committee can access application information online at [www.llesd.org](http://www.llesd.org), by emailing [sfuentes@llesd.org](mailto:sfuentes@llesd.org) or calling 650-854-6311.

**Deadline for Application:  
October 4, 2019 by 4pm.**

# Town panel nixes Ford Field site for affordable housing

By Rick Radin  
Almanac Staff Writer

The long-running saga of Portola Valley's quest to identify land that could be used for affordable housing took a further step on Sept. 5 when the committee in charge of town-owned property basically eliminated one of four plots it was considering.

Based on evidence gathered by town staff, Ford Field, a 7.5-acre site that includes an athletic field, was brushed aside because the 4-acre portion of it that is not dedicated open space is too irregular to build anything substantial, the Ad Hoc Committee for Town Owned Property concluded.

The field, on Alpine Road at the intersection with Westridge Drive, was deeded to the town in 1971 for \$90,000 with the qualification that the athletic field portion of it should stay with that use in perpetuity, Town Attorney Cara Silver told the committee and about 30 residents in

attendance at the Sept. 5 meeting. "The payment that was made was for open space rather than a higher use," Silver said.

The rest of the parcel is made up principally of land hemmed in by Los Trancos Creek and Alpine Road that requires a 75-foot setback on both sides, according to Carter Warr, an architect who serves as a public member of the committee.

"The only developable area is next to the oak tree by the ball field," Warr said. "We'd be drawn and quartered by town members if we built something there."

"It's not a palatable site," agreed committee member Steve Toben. "Perhaps a 1,200-square-foot home could be squeezed in somewhere."

The committee likewise expressed skepticism about a design developed by Warr for eight condominium units to be located at one end of the soccer field at Town Center.

The plan calls for six three-bedroom and two one-bedroom units in a three-story,

8,400-square-foot building on a narrow lot that would be a maximum of 20 feet in depth.

Committee members suggested that the lot could contain four units maximum.

"Four units would be better and one less floor would be better," said committee member Chris McIntosh.

"The density is too great for this area," said Planning Commissioner Nicolas Targ.

The total cost to build it would be \$6.5 million, according to Warr. Since the town has only \$3.4 million in its housing fund, the extra money would have to come from some other source, he said.

The committee asked Warr to develop a four-unit design that it could consider for the site.

A third site, between Los Trancos Road and Los Trancos Creek in the Blue Oaks subdivision, was given to the town by a developer in 1998 in return for the go-ahead to build in another area.

The committee concluded that

the 3.1-acre parcel would be ideal except that it was set aside as a gift of dedicated open space, Silver said.

The site could combine housing with hiking trails and other amenities, said resident Kris Moriarty.

The committee appointed a subcommittee made up of Warr, Toben and Silver to investigate whether restrictions on the site could be overcome.

"We're going to be looking into additional documents," said Town Manager Jeremy Dennis. "The open space designation is likely part of the conditions of approval for construction of the subdivision, to be confirmed in the document search."

It has not been determined how many units could be built on the site if it could be developed.

Town leaders have met with significant opposition to development of the fourth site, known as the Road Remnant, on Alpine Road west of the intersection with Portola Road, because it is adjacent to the Frog Pond, the

vernal pool that is much loved by many residents because of its scenic beauty and environmental sensitivity.

The final four parcels were honed from a list of about 40, most of which were determined to be too small to develop.

Some residents have also raised the idea of the town buying property to build the affordable housing, but Mayor Ann Wengert has said that it can't be done because Portola Valley must use property that it already owns to make the total cost of development realistic.

The pressure to move on the issue comes from the desire to build affordable housing before mandates come down from the state Legislature requiring that the housing be built, with a possible time limit for doing so.

The state could withdraw the road maintenance allocation or possibly take other action against cities and towns that don't comply with the requirements, according to Councilwoman Maryann Derwin. ■

## Woodside OKs new spending on wildfire prevention efforts

By Rick Radin  
Almanac Staff Writer

The Woodside Town Council took a couple of actions Tuesday, Sept. 10, in an effort to keep residents safe in the event of a wildfire.

Council members unani-

mously approved \$40,000 toward a \$242,000 project to remove eucalyptus and acacia trees that are overhanging power lines along Sand Hill Road between Portola Road and Interstate 280.

The tree removal, which would be led by the Woodside

Fire Protection District, would lower the risk of a wildfire starting from sparking power lines and better secure a key evacuation route for residents in an emergency, according to a staff report on the project.

Near the area are a key California Water Company pump

station at the corner of Sand Hill and Whiskey Hill roads and a 230-volt electric line for the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory.

PG&E has contributed \$25,000 toward the project, and the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors is considering a \$177,000 amendment to the budget to finance the remainder of the cost. Supervisors are scheduled to adopt the 2019-20 fiscal year budget at their Sept. 24 meeting.

Properties to the north and west of Sand Hill Road are in Woodside, while the Sand Hill right-of-way itself is in unincorporated San Mateo County.

Woodside is increasing its 2019-20 budget for tree removal by \$40,000 to \$215,000 to support the project, which would also lower the fire risk for the homes in Woodside that are adjacent to Sand Hill Road.

See **WILDFIRE**, page 10

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### TOWN OF ATHERTON

#### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING PROPOSED INCREASES TO THE MASTER FEE SCHEDULE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Atherton City Council will hold a public hearing to receive public input regarding proposed changes to the Town of Atherton's Master Fee Schedule concerning fees for general government, police, planning, development, engineering, and park services.

Said Public Hearing will be conducted at a Regular Meeting of the Atherton City Council scheduled to commence at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 16, 2019 at Atherton Holbrook Palmer Park Pavilion, 150 Watkins Avenue, Atherton, at which time and place all interested parties may appear and be heard. A copy of the proposed Master Fee Schedule is available for review at the Office of the City Clerk, 150 Watkins Avenue, Atherton, California, during normal business hours beginning on Friday, September 27, 2019.

The Town of Atherton must receive any written protest at Town Hall by 5:00 p.m. on October 16, 2019, or the written protest must be presented at the City Council meeting on October 16, 2019 prior to the close of the public hearing on the matter. If you wish to mail a written protest, please send it in a sealed envelope addressed to Master Fee Schedule, City Clerk, Town of Atherton, 150 Watkins Avenue, Atherton, CA 94027.

/s/ Anthony Suber

Anthony Suber, City Clerk  
Dated: September 25, 2019 and October 2, 2019  
Publication: Almanac

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Resolution No. 2169\_ (2019)

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

Lands of Stone

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

- A. This Resolution of Intention is adopted pursuant to the District's "Zone Master Annexation Resolution" ("ZOMAR"), which was adopted by the District Board August 12, 1996. The provisions of ZOMAR are incorporated by reference into this Resolution of Intention.
- B. The District has received an application to annex a parcel of real property (the "Parcel") to the District's On-Site Wastewater Disposal Zone (the "Zone"). The Parcel is described in Exhibit "A" attached to this Resolution of Intention and the description contained in the Exhibits are incorporated by reference. The name and address of the applicants and the number, type, volume and location of on-site wastewater disposal systems which are proposed to operate on the parcels to be annexed are described in Exhibit "B" attached to this Resolution of Intention and the information contained in the Exhibit are incorporated by reference.
- C. The applicants have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the District Board that the Parcel constitutes "real property" for the purposes of Section 2(b) of ZOMAR in that:
- X All of the conditions described in Subsections i., ii., iii., iv. and v. of ZOMAR Section 2(b) are satisfied; or  
Other conditions exist which demonstrate that the Parcel will benefit directly or indirectly from the activities of the Zone. If applicable, those conditions are also set forth in Exhibit "B" and are incorporated by reference.
- D. All of the conditions and requirements of ZOMAR Sections 2(a), 2(c), 2(d) and 2(e) have been fully satisfied.

In consideration of the foregoing findings and determinations,

**IT IS RESOLVED** by the District Board as follows:

- 1. It is the intention of the District Board to annex the Parcel to the Zone pursuant to the provisions of ZOMAR and applicable provisions of law.
- 2. In conjunction with a meeting of the District Board to be duly and regularly called and conducted, the Board will conduct a Public Hearing for the purpose of considering all matters pertaining to this Resolution of Intention.

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

Date: October 9, 2019

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Bay Sanitary District Offices, 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025

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

- 3. This Resolution of Intention shall be published and copies shall be delivered to the persons and entities as specified in ZOMAR Section 2(e)(i.).
- 4. A true copy of this Resolution of Intention shall promptly be filed for record in the office of the County Recorder of the County of San Mateo.
- 5. The District Manager shall cause the matters set forth in Sections 3 and 4 of this Resolution of Intention to be completed as directed.

Exhibit A

Exhibit B

WILDFIRE

continued from page 8

"There's a clear benefit to Woodside residents," Town Manager Kevin Bryant told the council.

Preventing a road closure caused by burning or downed trees is critical to maintaining evacuation routes, the staff report noted.

The council additionally directed town staff to ask the fire district if Portola Valley and Stanford University would be willing to contribute to the project.

Council members also voted unanimously to allow residents to pay for home hardening using grants of up to \$3,000 that the town currently makes available to homeowners who want to clear brush and debris from their properties.

Home hardening includes replacing wood shake roofs and installing ember-resistant vents, spark arresters and automatic gas shut-off valves.

The program began in 2010 to help residents finance defensible space around their homes.

Woodside spent \$232,500 on the program during the 2018-19 fiscal year, up from \$102,428 the previous year, Bryant said.

"Unless the cost gets really high we aren't going to turn people away," he said. "We don't expect it to turn into a \$1 million program." □

Correction

In The Almanac's Sept. 18 edition, in the story "Uneven Ground: Chasing Equity in a Changing Climate," the first name of Nuestra Casa employee Roxana Franco was spelled incorrectly as Roxano Franco. We regret the error.

LEHUA GREENMAN



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# A poet's journey to the past

Nature writer Nick Neely retraces Portolá Expedition's 650-mile trek on foot



Photo by Nick Neely

**Nick Neely** photographed his shadow by the historical marker on Sweeney Ridge in Pacifica as he first approached it on Nov. 4, 2018. This is said to be the spot where the Expedition first sighted the Bay. **On the cover:** Neely poses for a portrait in El Palo Alto Park on Aug. 20. Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

By **Kate Daly**

Special to the Almanac

My impression of the Portolá Expedition is that they had crossed through Portola Valley. Why else would they name the town that?"

Like many who grew up here, Nick Neely, 34, assumed the men who made the first recorded European sighting of San Francisco Bay in 1769 went through what's now Portola Valley. But after two years of research and retracing the Portolá Expedition's steps on a 650-mile-long trek, Neely believes the men marched and rode through Woodside, then turned east before reaching his hometown.

Neely, a naturalist, journalist and poet, has a new book coming out in early November, "Alta California: From San Diego to San Francisco, a Journey on Foot to Rediscover the Golden State," to coincide with the 250th

anniversary of the Portolá Expedition's arrival on what is now called Sweeney Ridge, an uphill climb on the east side of Pacifica.

On July 14, 1769, Captain Gaspar de Portolá left San Diego with a caravan of 64 Spanish army soldiers, Roman Catholic priests, native Indians and more than 200 horses and mules, hoping to find Monterey Bay and create a settlement there.

The group, however, failed to recognize Monterey Bay from the sand dunes and kept heading north, and then inland. The men camped along San Pedro Creek and a scouting party first scaled the knoll overlooking the Peninsula watershed. The rest of the expedition followed, making a second mistake. When the men spotted the bay they called it San Francisco Bay, thinking it was what Sir Francis Drake had discovered several years earlier. But that body of water was in fact near Point Reyes, which on

a clear day can be seen from this vantage point 1,220 feet above sea level.

On Nov. 4, Juan Crespí, the Franciscan friar who kept a diary for the expedition, described finding "...a large arm of the sea ... some sort of harbor there within the mountains."

Portolá wrote a more mundane report that momentous day: "We traveled for three hours, the entire road was bad, we halted without water."

Cresting the same hill at dusk on Nov. 4, 2018, good and grumpy from walking the expedition's path for almost 12 weeks, Neely halted to celebrate with champagne, family and friends near the discovery site stone marker on Sweeney Ridge.

By Feb. 1 of this year he had trimmed his backpacking beard, gained a little weight back and completed drafting his 432-page book for Counterpoint Press, the same publisher who printed his



Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

**A copy of Neely's book** "Alta California," with the hat he wore on his trek across California.

first book, “Coast Range: A Collection from the Pacific Edge.”

While Crespi wrote about experiences with “heathens,” bears, earthquakes, and the natural supply or lack of water and grasses, Neely weaves that narrative into his book, and then adds his “own interest in contemporary California and what I was seeing along the way,” he says.

He calls his book “a composite portrait of current California. ... it’s my homage to the state.”

Carrying a tape recorder, computer, iPhone, lightweight tent, sleeping bag and very few clothes in a backpack on his lean 6-foot, 4-inch frame, Neely looked more like he was “hiking through and not like a true vagrant,” he says. He believes that’s why he rarely ran into hassles and most people were willing to talk to him.

And he was careful because he didn’t want his gear stolen. He largely kept out of sight at night, camping about five nights a week, sometimes in campgrounds, but more often in dry creek beds. Other nights he slept at motels and enjoyed the luxury of a shower.

Along the route fast food restaurants provided fuel, water, restrooms, and air conditioning, he says.

Neely planned to cover eight to 10 miles every day like the expedition did, reading Crespi’s journal the night before he hit the trail. He lined up guides in places such as Camp Pendleton where he needed permission to pass. Other times he took chances and trespassed — for example, when he followed 20 miles of train tracks in the middle of the night near Point Conception without using a flashlight.

He writes that, while he anxiously waited for darkness to fall, “I pictured the orange-eyed great horned owl I had watched

through my binoculars along these tracks the night before. Their feathers are frayed so that they make no sound in flight.”

Neely talked into his recorder frequently, and also sat down three or four times a day to write down observations. He also took “10,000 photos,” but the book came out so long, he decided to use none, just maps to illustrate his “creative non-fiction ... where along the way I tell micro-stories.”

One that stands out is when he ambled into Cabrillo Village area of Ventura and a local urged him to move through quickly and go on to Oxnard to avoid arousing suspicion among rival gangs.

Neely’s travels took him through every environment — suburbs, cities, preserves and wilderness areas.

“Time, I have come to believe, is the one true wilderness,” he writes.

His travelogue account of natural and human history is sprinkled with firsthand encounters with wild animals, a tarantula, ants, nettles and poison oak, as well as detailed descriptions of Native cultures and Spanish missions.

He also touches on more modern-day topics such as immigration, agriculture, resources and development.

A parallel can be made when looking at why and where the Portola Expedition turned around in the Bay Area.

After the group made its way down the San Andreas Valley, camping out where Crystal Springs Reservoir now exists, and progressing somewhere along current-day Canada Road and Interstate 280, the expedition camped along the San Francisquito Creek from Nov. 6 to 10. The men reported running into hostile Native Indians,

stretches of burned-over land (so livestock had little to graze on), and having to resort to eating acorns from white oaks, which caused indigestion.

The expedition, Neely writes, “would have seen and admired the standout redwood” now known as El Palo Alto, which grows near the train tracks at Alma Street and El Camino Real in Palo Alto. The theory is that somewhere in that vicinity the men decided to backtrack. They did eventually find Monterey Bay on their return trip to San Diego.

On the last day of his trip Neely covered 25 miles, stopping in for a beer at Rossotti’s Alpine Inn, also known as Zott’s, before walking to his childhood home in Portola Valley.

He hasn’t lived in the area since he attended Crystal Springs Uplands School, where he ran long distance. He went to college in the East and earned master’s degrees in literature and the environment in Reno, and in nonfiction and poetry in New York.

He observes that between California’s sprawling suburbs and extensive highway network, “not a lot of people are walking in California. ... California remains very unfriendly to walkers,” especially along the coast where it’s not accessible to all.

“We are totally dependent on cars. We should all walk more; you see more, see the world at a different pace. Walking seemed to me to be too fast,” he says.

Neely lives in Hailey, Idaho, with his wife, a painter, and their two young children. In the future he sees himself teaching at a university, possibly in California, but his next book project may keep him in Idaho for a while since it’s based on a new bird species discovered there. ■

## Another trek and two public talks

Nick Neely will be hiking up Sweeney Ridge on Nov. 2 at 2 p.m. with his trekking backpack filled with books to sign. He will be talking to the Pacifica Historical Society on Nov. 3. On the anniversary of the bay sighting, Nov. 4, he will be speaking at Books Inc. in Palo Alto at 7 p.m.



Photo by Holly Myers

**Neely and his wife** celebrate on top of Sweeney Ridge with a bottle of champagne.



Photo courtesy of Nick Neely

**Nick Neely’s last campsite** off Polhemus Road in Baywood Park near San Mateo.



Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

**Neely poses** for a photo at El Palo Alto Park.

**GOLDEN ACORNS**

*continued from page 5*

“This award gives me great hope,” he said. “I look forward to working with you all for many years to come to create more affordable homes in Menlo.”

**St. Anthony’s Padua Dining Room**

The volunteer-run program, which has been operating since 1974, provides up to 500 people hot meals six times a week.

The program has provided over 5 million hot meals since it started, according to a city proclamation, and relies on about 35,000 hours of volunteer service each year as well as donations and local grants.

Max Torres, who has worked at the dining room for 37 years, told The Almanac that the program has changed significantly since he started, from serving just a few people to now satisfying the needs of the local community.

Jim Bramlett, who has volunteered for years with the organization and now serves on its board, said the financial support the program receives has enabled it to put money toward capital improvements to rehabilitate aging facilities in recent years.



Photo by Sammy Dallal/The Almanac

**From left:** Kathleen Daly and Zoe Sharkey representing Cafe Zoe; Tom Gibboney and Sonya Sheffield representing Tour de Menlo; John Tarlton representing Tarlton Properties; and Nevada Merriman and Matt Franklin representing MidPen Housing stand for a photo after the 43rd Golden Acorn Awards ceremony at Hotel Nia on Sept. 19.

**Tarlton Properties**

Tarlton Properties, led by property owner and developer John Tarlton, was awarded for environmental stewardship because of the environmental efforts taken at Menlo Park Labs, life science business park on the city’s Bay side.

Tarlton Properties has bike and car share programs, runs shuttles from neighboring cities, has EV charging stations and uses energy-efficient materials.

Tarlton has been an active participant in City Council discussions about how to make proposed green building policies work with his life science buildings.

In accepting the award, Tarlton said, “Let us not kid ourselves; the only truly sustainable initiatives must also be financially sustainable. Thank you to the team and community members who help us to operate in that intersection between



Photo by Sammy Dallal/The Almanac

**Max Torres**, operations manager at St. Anthony’s Padua Dining Room, who has worked at the free meal program for 37 years, and Jim Bramlett, board chair and longtime volunteer, received the “Unsung Hero” Golden Acorn Award.

environmental sustainability and financial sustainability.”

**West Bay Sanitary District & Sharon Heights Golf Course and Country Club**

The West Bay Sanitary District and the Sharon Heights Golf & Country Club were also given an environmental stewardship award for their partnership to bring the city’s first recycled water system to the

golf course, which uses about 164,000 gallons of water a day.

The project, when completed, is expected to save about 50 million gallons of potable water a year by using treated wastewater for the golf course, said West Bay Manager Phil Scott. The step will allow that much more Hetch Hetchy water to go directly to local residents instead of being used to water the private golf course. ■



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# Newcastle disease sidelines this year's Tour De Coop

By Angela Swartz  
Almanac Staff Writer

Since 2012, locals have biked around Silicon Valley every fall to get a peek inside residents' backyard chicken coops.

But this year, organizers of the Silicon Valley Tour de Coop opted to cancel the annual daylong chicken coop tour, which was scheduled for Sept. 14, because of a disease spreading among chickens in California.

"Sadly, we are cancelling the Silicon Valley Tour De Coop for 2019 due to safety concerns of the highly contagious chicken virus call[ed] Newcastle," organizers told prospective attendees in an Aug. 1 email. "There is a 120 day restriction waiting period since the last recorded find of the virus, and the date when restrictions could be dropped does not come until October 2019, after the scheduled coop tour event."

Virulent Newcastle disease is spread by direct contact between birds through coughing, sneezing and droppings. Although the disease rarely affects people, they can spread the virus by moving infected birds, equipment and bird feed, and by wearing clothing and shoes that have been in infected areas. It's especially easy to pick up the disease at bird feed stores, since people often don't change their clothes or shoes between stepping into their coops and walking in the store, said Dr. Rodrigo Gallardo, an associate poultry medicine professor who studies avian diseases at the University of California at Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. The disease can cause swelling around a chicken's eyes, a fluid buildup in beak and nasal areas and sometimes sudden death, according

to the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

The disease broke out in Southern California in May 2018, and the first case in Northern California stemming from that outbreak was reported in Alameda County last March, according to state and San Mateo County officials. As of Sept. 11, the U.S. Department of Agriculture confirmed that 451 premises in California have been infected since the outbreak began. The disease was last detected in the state in early June.

The last outbreak in the U.S. occurred in Southern California in 2002, resulting in the death of 3.2 million birds and a response cost exceeding \$160 million, according to the state Department of Food and Agriculture.

To limit the spread of disease, the department is asking backyard chicken owners to take extra precautions, such as disinfecting their bird supplies and asking visitors to disinfect their shoes before entering a coop.

The Tour De Coop, a free self-guided tour founded and organized by Los Altos Hills resident Scott Vanderlip, encouraged residents to bike to participating chicken coops in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties one day each fall to learn about urban farming and "gardens, bee hives, hoop houses, and (the) coolest Silicon Valley urban homesteads," according to the event website. In previous years the tour included stops at properties in Portola Valley, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills.

Vanderlip decided to cancel the tour with input from coop hosts, called "coopsters." He hopes to host the event again next fall, but decided he would rather be "safe



Photo by Magali Gauthier

Scott Vanderlip, Tour De Coop organizer, feeds his chickens in his backyard in Los Altos Hills on Sept. 20.

than sorry" this year, he said.

"To me, it's a fabulous tour that brings together the backyard farming community," said Vanderlip, who keeps eight chickens and a hive of bees in his backyard. "A lot of people have been hosting their coops on the tour for many years and love to share the benefits of backyard chickens."

Vanderlip also runs Slow Food South Bay, an organization that promotes locally and sustainably produced food.

Anke Schumann has opened her South San Jose backyard, which includes chickens and bees, twice for the tour and was disappointed it was canceled this year.

"I loved past events and think it's important to increase awareness for local farming on a small

scale," she said in an email. "Raising chickens are a great entry way to introduce the food chain back into people's lives. Eggs and honey are just a byproduct of raising chickens and keeping bees. There's great lessons for all ages in taking care of living beings, feeding and tending to them, and experiencing the joy of clucking and buzzing."

About 11 coops participated in the first year of the tour, and it covered roughly 20 miles, according to the event website. By 2014, in its third year, organizers recruited 29 coop owners over 250 miles, and had nearly 1,500 registered attendees, according to the website. About 1,781 registered to visit coops last year.

The tour has always had safety measures in place to prevent

cross-contamination from flock to flock, but in past years, the current level of concern for bird health was not present, Vanderlip said. Coopsters would ask visitors to wear disposable protective shoe covers when visiting their coops, according to the event website. The shoe covers were disposed after each visit and weren't reused at another coop.

Even without an outbreak of disease, Gallardo notes, it's best for people to wear new shoe covers at each flock they visit. It's also safest for the birds to have people observe the flocks from outside the coop, he said.

"If you're going to have these kinds of events (coop tours) — something the community really enjoys — take precautionary measures," Gallardo said. ▀

## Guild Theatre to close Thursday

Menlo Park theater to be transformed into a live music venue

By Kate Bradshaw  
Almanac Staff Writer

Landmark's Guild Theatre, a single-screen movie theater that's been in Menlo Park since 1924, is set to officially close after showings on Thursday, Sept. 26, according to the operator.

Landmark spokeswoman Laine Kaplowitz confirmed with The Almanac that the theater will be closing, a development first announced on Facebook on Sept. 20.

"Landmark Theatres will continue showcasing our signature variety of quality films paired with a top-tier entertainment experience at the Aquarius Theatre in Palo Alto," the

announcement adds.

The Guild was built in 1924 and began offering "moving pictures" around 1925, according to a historical report by Bonnie Bamburg, excerpted on the Imagine Menlo website.

According to the report, the theater, initially called The Menlo, started out showing silent films accompanied by a live organist, but by 1929 had upgraded its sound system to offer "Movie-Phone" sound. The lobby was shortened by about 30 feet in 1942 when El Camino Real was widened. The theater changed its name to the Guild when a newer theater in town took the name "The Menlo."

Ownership changed hands

several times. In the late 1980s, the theater was remodeled in the Art Deco style, and it moved into its current niche in the local theater-scape as an art house theater, the report explains.

### The new Guild

The Menlo Park City Council approved plans in May 2018 to transform the vintage movie theater into a nonprofit live music venue.

The initiative is led by the Peninsula Arts Guild, made up of Menlo Park resident Drew Dunlevie and backed by two locals: investor Pete Briger and entrepreneur Thomas Layton.

As to the current status of the project, Dunlevie explained in an

email to The Almanac on Monday, Sept. 23, "We're (hopefully) close to getting permits from City of Menlo Park so we can get started in earnest."

Dunlevie said he gave Landmark 30 days' notice a few days ago and is in conversations with the theater operator to have some additional final film screenings after Sept. 26.

He said he thinks they're close to completing all of the steps necessary to get permits from the city, but acknowledges that it's been a complex process. "I don't want to jinx it," he said.

According to the preliminary plans for the new Guild, the project would convert the single-screen theater into a three-level venue with a main viewing area on the ground floor, a second-story mezzanine, and a basement with a "green room" and a

comfortable area where performers can shower and relax prior to shows.

The organization plans to operate the venue as a nonprofit, Dunlevie said. It would charge for admission to cover the costs of operations and paying the musicians, and would funnel any extra revenue back into the venue's programming, and offering discounted tickets.

The new Guild would be about 11,000 square feet, with a maximum height of 34 feet and a capacity of about 150 to 200 seats, or about 500 people at a standing-room-only show.

For those interested in one last movie at the historic theater, the Guild is screening the film "Official Secrets" at 1:45 p.m., 4:15 p.m. and 7:05 p.m. through Thursday. Ticket information is available at [tinyurl.com/guildshowtimes](http://tinyurl.com/guildshowtimes). ▀

# Public Notices

## 995 Fictitious Name Statement

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Registered owner(s):  
SUZETTE HAINES  
130 Hildebrand Rd.  
La Honda, CA 94020  
This business is conducted by: An Individual.  
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 19, 2019.  
(ALM Sep. 4, 11, 18, 25, 2019)

WPV-READY  
WPV-CERT  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: 282373  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) WPV-Ready, 2.) WPV-CERT, located at 808 Portola Valley, Portola Valley, California 94028, San Mateo County.  
Registered owner(s):  
CITIZENS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM, INC.  
808 Portola Road,  
Portola Valley, California 94028  
California  
This business is conducted by: A Corporation.  
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 26, 2019.  
(ALM Sep. 4, 11, 18, 25, 2019)

MANDY MONTOYA  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: 282384  
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:  
Mandy Montoya, located at 1000 El Camino Real, Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.  
Registered owner(s):  
AMANDA MONTOYA  
2060 Sterling Avenue  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
This business is conducted by: An Individual.  
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 27, 2019.  
(ALM Sep. 11, 18, 25; Oct. 2, 2019)

M&M HARDWOOD FLOORS  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: 282445  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
M&M Hardwood Floors, located at 928 B Willow Rd., Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.  
Registered owner(s):  
M&M HARDWOOD FLOORS, INC.  
928 B Willow Rd.  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
CA  
This business is conducted by: A Corporation.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 5, 2019.  
(ALM Sep. 18, 25; Oct. 2, 9, 2019)

LAW OFFICE OF ALISON MADDEN  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: 282411  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
Law Office of Alison Madden, located at 2995 Woodside Rd., #620650, Woodside, CA 94062, San Mateo County.  
Registered owner(s):  
ALISON M. MADDEN  
1548 Maple St., #52  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
This business is conducted by: An Individual.  
The registrant commenced to transact

business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on August 15, 2019.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 30, 2019.  
(ALM Sep. 18, 25; Oct. 2, 9, 2019)

TRUSTED BUSINESS INSURANCE PARTNER  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: 282394  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
Trusted Business Insurance Partner, located at 182 Poplar Avenue, San Bruno, CA 94066, San Mateo County.  
Registered owner(s):  
JEFFREY PAUL JOHNSTON  
182 Poplar Avenue  
San Bruno, CA 94066  
This business is conducted by: An Individual.  
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 28, 2019.  
(ALM Sep. 25; Oct. 2, 9, 16, 2019)

GREGORY LYNN WINE COMPANY  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: 282528  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
Gregory Lynn Wine Company, located at 1681-1697 Industrial Rd., San Carlos, CA 94070, San Mateo County; Mailing address: 101 Hartstene Dr., Redwood City, CA 94065.  
Registered owner(s):  
B & G PROPERTY VENTURES, LLC  
535 Ramona St., Ste. 4  
Palo Alto, CA 94301  
California  
This business is conducted by: A Limited Liability Company.  
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on Sep. 16, 2019.  
(ALM Sep. 25; Oct. 2, 9, 16, 2019)

HOPEFUL CARDS  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: 282546  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
Hopeful Cards, located at 1175 Park Pl. #301, San Mateo, CA 94403, San Mateo County.  
Registered owner(s):  
ECE GEZER  
1175 Park Pl. #301  
San Mateo, CA 94403  
This business is conducted by: An Individual.  
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 17, 2019.  
(ALM Sep. 25; Oct. 2, 9, 16, 2019)

**997 All Other Legals**  
ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO  
Case No.: 19CIV04931  
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:  
Petitioner: JOAN RINGSTAFF filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:  
JOAN RINGSTAFF to JOAN RAVIER.  
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.  
NOTICE OF HEARING: October 11, 2019, 9:00 a.m., Dept.: PJ of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.  
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:  
THE ALMANAC  
Date: August 27, 2019.  
/s/ Jonathan E. Karesh  
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT  
(ALM Sep. 11, 18, 25; Oct. 2, 2019)

# Valpo Fun Run supports Peninsula Bridge with flying colors

By Kate Daly  
Special to The Almanac

Registration is now open to all runners, walkers and strollers looking for a colorful way to have fun and raise money for a local cause.

On Sunday, Oct. 6, the seventh annual Valpo Fun Run benefiting Peninsula Bridge will start at 8:30 a.m. with a warmup at Menlo School, 50 Valparaiso Ave. in Atherton, followed by a 5K-dash around local streets. The younger set (6 and under) may ride bikes and scooters with a helmet.

Registrants will receive T-shirts and race numbers, and have the option of being showered with nontoxic colors as they go by.

The event supports the summer academic enrichment program held for 420 low-income middle school students on the campuses of Menlo School, Sacred Heart, Woodside Priory, Castilleja, St. Matthew's and Crystal Springs.

Go to active.com and search Valpo Fun Run 2019 to register. Prices will increase on Tuesday,



Photo by Pete Zivkov

Menlo School hosts the Valpo Fun Run, a benefit for the Peninsula Bridge program.

Oct. 1. Right now they range from free for Peninsula Bridge families, teachers and their families at the six independent participating schools; to \$25 for an individual, \$60 for a family of three, \$80 for a family of four or five, and \$95 for six or more family members.

Online registration will close on Oct. 3. Anyone signing up at the race is not guaranteed a T-shirt.

Prizes will be awarded in

different age categories and for best costume/most spirit.

The lead sponsor of the event is Cardinal Education, educational consultants based in Woodside and Burlingame. ■

## Cañada College to host annual fashion event

By Angela Swartz  
Almanac Staff Writer

The Cañada College fashion department will put on its 30th annual "Arts in Fashion" event on Saturday, Sept. 28.

The event, which runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., will include outdoor shopping on the quad with clothing, jewelry and accessories by local designers, according to a press release. There will be a fashion show at 11 a.m. in the school's amphitheater featuring fashions for sale by the designers.

"Our program was somewhat a pioneer for this type of sale well before all the Art and Wine Shows in the Bay Area," said Ronda Chaney, the college's fashion chair, in a prepared statement.

Students with fashion lines can participate in the event as emerging designers. The event is an opportunity to test their products, hear from customers and determine their price points, according to the press release.

Cañada fashion students Naz Saeed and Rubab Huq launched their business, Kopolo California, at a past event to "rave review" and "high sales," according to the press release. Since then, the two are selling their clothing at various locations.

An open house displaying student projects will take place

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# Food & Drink

## A blooming dining scene in Menlo Park

Oak + Violet offers farm-to-table fare in upscale setting

By Edward Gerard Fike

The most buzzed-about hotel restaurants tend to be located in major cities, providing easy access to business travelers with sizable expense accounts. Menlo Park is hardly a metropolis, yet the location of Facebook's headquarters on the edge of Menlo's marshlands has spiked demand for luxe accommodations — and great food — near the social media giant's sprawling campus.

Oak + Violet, the California farm-to-table restaurant located in the chic, stylish Park James Hotel, is the latest addition to Menlo Park's burgeoning hotel dining scene. (Other notable players include Michelin-starred Madera in the Rosewood Hotel, clubby Menlo Tavern in the Stanford Park and the year-old Porta Blu in the Hotel Nia.) The restaurant, which celebrates its first anniversary in October, showcases seasonal, simply prepared dishes and the bounty of Golden State produce. The name is an homage to Menlo Park's official tree and flower.

When I first entered the restaurant from the unassuming hotel lobby, I immediately wanted to walk out. That's precisely what the design team envisioned when they installed a north-facing retractable glass wall that opens onto a vast courtyard, smartly furnished with couches, gas lamps and high-top tables. The after work crowd has discovered the space — it serves a separate, limited menu — and packs it most evenings. Director of Food and Beverage Marigene Mabalot pegs the area as a focal point: "The outdoor guests create such wonderful energy and it tends to flow through the entire



Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

**Oak and Violet's** stuffed whole branzino with a side of crispy Brussels sprouts. The restaurant is celebrating its first anniversary in October.

restaurant," she said.

Oak + Violet's interior exudes California cool with wood finishes, cowhide-stitched walls and billowing drapes. The neutral palette is punctuated by pops of color (violet, naturally) from plush, comfortable dining chairs. A long, partially open air bar straddles the courtyard while a smaller patio at the opposite end of the restaurant offers a more intimate al fresco dining option.

Beverages include an impressive array of local wines and craft beers. Cocktail selections include original creations and fun variations on upscale bar classics. During a pair of recent visits, I enjoyed the smooth and

refreshing Lynchburg Lemonade (\$14) which added blackberry to intensify the tartness. The Paper Plane's (\$14) blend of Aperol, bourbon and amaro delighted with its herbal complexity and bright, mood-elevating orange hue.

The dinner menu lists a dozen shareable plates, including mini lobster tacos with avocado crema (\$20), a dish Mabalot cites as a customer favorite. Our party split the charcuterie board (\$22), a generous assortment of locally sourced meats and cheeses accompanied by almonds, truffle honey and fresh bread drizzled with a luxurious olive oil. (Minor quibble: Neither the menu nor our server identified the types of meats and cheeses we were served.) Half-shell Pacific oysters with horseradish cocktail sauce (\$18 for 6, \$34 for a dozen) were a creamy, briny delicacy, while stuffed chorizo dates (\$15) with Applewood smoked bacon struck a nice balance between sweet and salty.

For my salad course, I reflexively rejected the two kale-based offerings. (Dear Kale, these past couple of years have been lovely, but I need to see other greens.) I instead settled on the tomato and burrata salad (\$15). While pieces of watermelon added a delicate

sweetness to the dish, the tomatoes were a tad underripe.

According to Mabalot, chef Simona Oliveri's menu features a mere five "large plates" to ensure consistent, masterful preparation. I savored the pan roasted king salmon (\$34), perfectly prepared to a medium pink. Juices from the filet combined with the accompanying seasonal vegetables — which included fava beans, bok choy and potato leek nage — to form a savory stew at the base of the bowl.

Though it's the sole non-meat main course on the menu, vegetarians have little need to venture beyond the superb toasted farro risotto (\$23). I relished the nutty-flavored, slightly chewy ancient grain which was layered with spinach, English peas, asparagus and pecorino Romano.

On the carnivorous side of the spectrum, the 46-ounce ribeye (\$115, including two sides) was the show-stopping choice of my dining companions. Intended as an entrée for two, it could easily have served twice as many. The massive bone-in cut, prepared medium-rare, was tender and buttery. They deemed the sensational steak worth the premium price.

Side dishes were substantial and satisfying. Brussels sprouts (\$9) can be a tough sell for some, but Oak + Violet boasts a winning recipe. The sprouts were nicely crisped and caramelized with a tangy balsamic vinegar. Chopped hazelnuts and toasted garlic ratcheted up the flavor. Between two potato options, I gave the edge to the black pepper and sea salt-seasoned Parmesan ripped potatoes (\$9) over the slightly oily white truffle French fries (\$10).

A light dessert was imperative following the ample portions. The dark chocolate mousse (\$8) fit the bill perfectly. Topped with

whipped cream and chocolate almond clusters, the mousse was light, creamy and not cloyingly sweet. It was the ideal final indulgence.

Service was earnest, but uneven. Wait staff maintained an easy, good-humored rapport with the table. When we experienced an error on one of our entree orders, it was quickly rectified and followed by a gracious apology from the manager. A couple of food runners, perhaps new to their jobs, delivered multiple plates to the wrong tables. Bobbles such as these can be avoided with additional training.

The restaurant serves lunch during the week, brunch on weekends and a special courtyard menu daily. Complimentary valet parking is offered for the first three hours, sending a message to locals that Oak + Violet wants you to check them out even if you're not checking in.

*Edward Gerard Fike is a freelance writer.*

### INFORMATION

#### Oak + Violet

1400 El Camino Real, Menlo Park  
parkjames.com/oak-and-violet  
650-304-3880

**Hours:** Lunch: Monday-Friday  
11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dinner: Monday-  
Sunday 5-10 p.m. Brunch:  
Saturday-Sunday 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Reservations: Yes  
Credit cards: Yes  
Parking: Valet (first 3 hours  
complimentary, \$10 after) and  
street parking  
Alcohol: Full bar  
Happy hour: No  
Corkage: \$35 per bottle  
Children: Yes  
Takeout: Yes  
Outdoor dining: Yes  
Noise level: Moderate to loud  
Bathroom cleanliness: Excellent



Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

**Simona Oliveri**, the executive chef at Oak + Violet, checks on some of the housemade bread.

### FASHION

*continued from page 18*

from noon to 3 p.m. in the school's fashion department in building 3, room 255. People interested in the program can come to learn about course offerings and certificate programs. Pattern designer Sarah Veblan, an expert in design and fitting, will lecture in the classroom at 12:30 p.m. and 2 p.m., according to the school's

website.

There will also be food vendors in parking lot 4 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Organizers request that attendees make a \$10 donation upon entry, which will go toward student scholarships. Last year, the event raised \$13,000.

The college is at 4200 Farm Hill Blvd. in Redwood City.

For more information, go to [artistryinfashion.com](http://artistryinfashion.com) or call 650-306-3370. ■

# Calendar

MEETINGS, MUSIC, THEATER, FAMILY ACTIVITIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS

## Submitting items for the Calendar

Go to **AlmanacNews.com** and see the Community Calendar module at the top right side of the page. Click on "Add your event." If the event is of interest to a large number of people, also e-mail a press release to **Editor@AlmanacNews.com**.

### Concerts

**Domenico Severin** Internationally renowned French-Italian organist Domenico Severin will play a program, featuring works by Bach, Buxtehude, Froberger, Bruhns, de Grigny, Marchand, Sweelinck, Frescobaldi and Gabrieli. Sept. 29, 4-5 p.m. \$15; discounts for students, seniors. St. Bede's Episcopal Church, 2560 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park. [stbedesmenlopark.org/upcoming-arts-events/](http://stbedesmenlopark.org/upcoming-arts-events/)

**Hungarian-gypsy twist to Redwood Symphony season opener** This concert will include: Kodaly: "Hary Janos Suite,"

Stravinsky: "Ragtime for 11 Instruments." Michael Tilson Thomas: "Street Song for Symphonic Brass," Brahms/Schoenberg: "G-minor Piano Quartet," pre-concert insights and discussion. Sept. 28, 8-10 p.m. \$30; discounts for children, students, seniors. Canada College Main Theatre, 4200 Farm Hill Blvd., Redwood City. [redwoodsymphony.org](http://redwoodsymphony.org)

### Festivals & Fairs

**Artistry in Fashion** The 30th annual Artistry in Fashion event features an outdoor shopping extravaganza with local designers selling clothes, jewelry and accessories; an open

house displaying student projects from noon to 3 p.m.; a designer fashion show at 11 a.m.; food; and free parking. Sept. 28, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. \$10 donation to support scholarships. Canada College Main Theatre, 4200 Farm Hill Blvd., Redwood City. [artistryinfashion.com](http://artistryinfashion.com)

**'We Art the Willows'** This Willows neighborhood fun fair includes painting, ceramics, photography, linocut prints, jewelry, sculpture, macrame, herbal medicine and beauty products, habitat and pollinator gardening information, providers of local services and more. Sept. 28, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. 1929 Menalto Ave., Menlo Park. Search [nextdoor.com](http://nextdoor.com) for more info.

### Talks & Lectures

**'Belonging in the USA: The Story of Michael D. McCarty'** "Belonging in the USA: The Story of Michael D. McCarty" is an award-winning documentary sharing the journey of a man who, even in the face of the greatest obstacles, spreads joy wherever he goes. Sept. 30, 7-8:30 p.m. Free. Menlo Park Library, 800 Alma St., Menlo Park. Search [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) for more info.

**Free Seminar: Holistic Senior Care** Author and admin at Motherhealth LLC Connie Dello Buono shares holistic methods and tips for caring for seniors. Sept. 30-Oct. 2, 1-2 p.m. Free. Atherton Library, 2 Dinkelspiel Station Lane, Atherton. [clubalthea.com](http://clubalthea.com)

**Barry Eisler** Espionage fiction writer Barry Eisler launches "All The Devils," a new installment in his Livia Lone detective series. Sept. 26, 7:30-9 p.m. \$7; \$32 with book. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. [keplers.org](http://keplers.org)

**'Prize Stallions and Beasts of Burden: The Horse and the English Country House'** Oxford historian Oliver Cox will deliver a lecture that explores the roots of the British love for horses and horse racing while showing great houses, from Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland to Wimpole Hall in Cambridgeshire. Oct. 1, 2-3 p.m. \$30 for members, \$40 non-members, and free for circle level members. Filoli Gardens, 86 Old Canada Road, Woodside. [filoli.org](http://filoli.org)

**USGS September Evening Public Lecture** USGS biologist Gabriel A. Reyes presents "Bats in the West: Discoveries, Questions and Future Research," a lecture covering bat ecology, diversity and the role they play in the ecosystem. Sept. 26, 7-8 p.m. Free. U.S. Geological Survey, 345 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park. [usgs.gov](http://usgs.gov)

**Societal Impact of Social Media** In this discussion, an academic, an artist, an author,

an executive, an influencer and a journalist explore the cultural effect of people's collective digital footprint. Ticket price includes a glass of wine, beer or non-alcoholic beverage per person and a cheese board. Sept. 29, 2-5 p.m. \$44. Park James Hotel, 1400 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Search [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) for more info.

### Family

**BioBlitz! 2019** During BioBlitz!, participants discover species of birds, plants, mammals, fish, invertebrates, reptiles and more that the park has to offer. Sept. 28, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Flood Park, 215 Bay Road, Menlo Park. Search [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) for more info.

**Menlo Park Sidewalk Fall Art Stroll** The Sidewalk Fall Art Stroll features an array of original works by more than 90 artists and craft makers, including collectibles and wearables to take home or for gift-giving. Sept. 27-28, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sept. 29, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. Santa Cruz Avenue, Menlo Park. [business.menloparkchamber.com](http://business.menloparkchamber.com)

**Science Night** Science night includes exhibits and hands-on activities and experiments aimed at elementary-school-age children all the way up to adults. Sept. 26, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Free. Menlo Park Library, 800 Alma St., Menlo Park. [menlopark.org](http://menlopark.org)

### Film

**'LIKE: The Impact of Social Media On Our Lives'** Woodside High School presents a screening of "LIKE," the new IndieFix documentary that explores the impact of social media on people's lives and the effects of technology on the brain. Light refreshments will be served. Spanish interpretation (subtitles) will be available. Sept. 26, 7-8:30 p.m. Free. Woodside High School (Performing Arts Center), 199 Churchill Ave., Woodside. Search [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) for more info.



PALO ALTO WEEKLY  
**Moonlight Run & Walk**  
AT PALO ALTO BAYLANDS  
**Friday, Oct. 11, 2019**  
5K • 10K • Half Marathon  
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[PaloAltoOnline.com/moonlight\\_run](http://PaloAltoOnline.com/moonlight_run)

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# Viewpoint

IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES

## A call for new models to improve the downtown, make staff more accountable

By Lynne Bramlett

Sloane Citron's recent guest opinion on the state of the Menlo Park downtown raised many important points. Some comments:

Neighboring cities are actively working to revitalize their downtowns. For example, the Burlingame Downtown Business Improvement District initiative shows an inviting and creative approach. There are other local examples.

Reconsidering the role of the Chamber of Commerce would also help. I always thought a city's Chamber of Commerce focused on supporting small business owners. So I was surprised to see local "titans of industry" serving on the Menlo Park Chamber's board. These include the vice president of development at Facebook, a senior Facebook lawyer, and David Bohannon II. A former Menlo Park city manager also serves. Instead, I would prefer a focus on helping the small business owners and in revitalizing our commercial corridors.

Citron's column suggested "putting a can-do person in charge unleashed from the paralyzing Menlo Park bureaucracy." Unfortunately, staff can hinder, delay or halt council directives they disagree with, and I've personally witnessed blatant obstructionism. I'm not the only person to believe that staff runs Menlo Park although the council tries to lead. We need a healthier balance of power in our city.

To begin, we need more transparency into the staff organization and how it functions. This is shrouded in too much mystery. Some have suggested an overall performance/efficiency audit of the staff organization. Finding this kind of consultant may be difficult. Instead, the council could institute the role of city auditor, reporting directly to the council to promote honest, efficient, effective and fully accountable city government. The city auditor in Palo Alto works from an annual

council-approved work plan, with the findings going directly to the council. Let's add this role in Menlo Park without needing to go to the ballot box.

The true size of the Menlo Park staff organization is also unclear when one considers the

number of temporary employees, contractors, consultants, outsourced operations and "public-private partnerships." Our staff organization is also considered large for a city our size.

The biggest portion of the city's annual operating budget goes to pay for the staff organization. Development, especially the annual amounts coming in via development agreements, generates significant revenue. A smaller staff organization would reduce the need for development revenue, and perhaps reduce the staff's perceived focus of serving developers over residents.

The council also needs final approval power over the city manager's ability to hire direct reports. Recent senior hires have come from promotions and appointments. Instead, let's institute a more open hiring process designed to foster diversity and fresh ideas.

The city satisfaction surveys also need to include benchmarking information, to allow Menlo Park to objectively place its staff

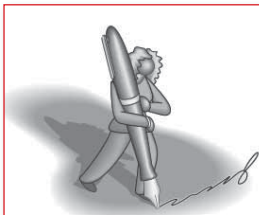
organizational performance into context. The National Research Council's community survey is considered the "gold standard" for city satisfaction surveys. This firm conducted Menlo Park's surveys in 2008, 2010 and 2012.

Longer-term, the city needs a community-led strategic plan that would sit above all other city plans. Instead of horizontal planning, we have many master "vertical" plans, such as the Transportation Master Plan and Parks and Recreation Master Plan, or development-focused plans (i.e. ConnectMenlo). These are not strategic plans. Forward-looking municipalities in the U.S. and abroad consider strategic plans a best practice.

Meanwhile, we could start by hearing the formal plans from the two City Council subcommittees working on plans designed to fix problems aired at the June development moratorium discussion.

I suspect the silence is partly because actual plans would require at least a tacit admission that ConnectMenlo was misrepresented as an authentic update to the city's General Plan Land Use and Circulation elements. Its benefits to residents were overstated and it lacked accountability. Current staff may also not know how to solve the problems, so outsiders may be needed along with allowing residents to help.

It's time to admit error, to learn from our mistakes and to re-do this process. The time cannot come soon enough.



Lynne Bramlett is a former Menlo Park library commissioner and a longtime resident of the community.

### GUEST OPINION

## 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](mailto:letters@AlmanacNews.com). Or snail-mail them to: The Almanac, 450 Cambridge Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306.

Letters should be no longer than 300 words.

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

Questions? Email editor Renee Batti at [rbatti@AlmanacNews.com](mailto:rbatti@AlmanacNews.com), or call 650-223-6528.



## TOWN OF ATHERTON

### NOTICE OF COMMUNITY MEETING

NOTICE IS HERBY GIVEN that on October 2, 2019 at or after 4:00 P.M. in Holbrook-Palmer Park, Jennings Pavilion, 150 Watkins Avenue. The Atherton Police Department will present a report to the City Council regarding the uses and applications of Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR) and Public Safety Cameras within Town. This meeting is to serve as an educational meeting and to gather community input that will be used in the consideration of any future implementation.

Topic: Automated License Plate Readers and Public Safety Cameras

**DESCRIPTION:** The Town of Atherton will be considering the benefits and applications of using Automated License Plate Readers and Public Safety Cameras to the Town. Town staff will present to City Council and Council will solicit feedback from the community

**LOCATION:** Town of Atherton  
150 Watkins Avenue  
Holbrook-Palmer Park, Jennings Pavilion  
Atherton, CA 94027

Residents unable to attend are welcome to submit input via email to Joe Wade, Police Commander, at [jwade@ci.atherton.ca.us](mailto:jwade@ci.atherton.ca.us) You can also contact the Office of the City Manager for more information at 650.752.0500 | [asuber@ci.atherton.ca.us](mailto:asuber@ci.atherton.ca.us)

## TOWN OF WOODSIDE 2955 WOODSIDE ROAD WOODSIDE, CA 94062

### PLANNING COMMISSION

October 02, 2019

6:00 PM

#### PUBLIC HEARING

1. Woodside Glens ZOAM2019-0002

Review and Approval/Denial of a Resolution of Intention and Recommendation to the Town Council to Amend Chapter 153 (Zoning) of the Woodside Municipal Code to allow the following development standards for the Glens:

- Progressively increasing maximum residence sizes for smaller lots (which would no longer be designated as "nonconforming"), subject to Design Review;
- Incentives for garages for smaller lots by counting them as zero floor area, subject to Design Review;
- Reduced setbacks for constrained lots and maintenance of existing development patterns, subject to Design Review;
- Parking within the right-of-way and off the paved way to count as "onsite parking"; and,
- A tiered approach (for landscape improvements, minor improvements, and major improvements) for development on slopes > 35 %, where deemed safe by the Town Geologist and Town Engineer and subject to Design Review.

Additionally, a Planning Commission request for the Town Council to consider that historic evaluation Primary Records (approximately \$500 each) be paid by the Town. Primary Records are required for structures > 50 years old when they are to be demolished or significantly altered. Applicants would continue to cover the cost of full reports needed for significant historic structures. The Town-paid Primary Record policy is proposed to apply Town-wide.

Finally, further discussion of Town right-of-way and Encroachment Permits/Covenants as requested by the Planning Commission on July 10, 2019.

All application materials are available for public review at the Woodside Planning and Building Counter, Woodside Town Hall, weekdays from 8:00 – 10:00 AM and 1:00 – 3:00 PM, or by appointment. For more information, contact the Woodside Planning and Building Department at (650) 851-6790.



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Michael Repka, Managing Broker, DRE #01854880

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1:00 pm - 5:00 pm**

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

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

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## GRAND ESTATE IN PRESTIGIOUS WEST ATHERTON



### 285 ATHERTON AVENUE **ATHERTON**

- Custom estate property built in 2004 by Joe Comartin of Woodlane Properties
- Sought-after West Atherton
- 6 bedrooms, 7 full baths, and 3 half-baths in the main residence
- 1-bedroom, 1-bath guest house with full kitchen
- Approx. 11,440 total sq. ft.
  - Main residence: 9,855 sq. ft.
  - Guest house: 545 sq. ft.
  - Attached garage: 495 sq. ft.
  - Detached garage: 545 sq. ft.
- Main level: public rooms include grand foyer, living room, formal dining room, library, gourmet kitchen, family room
- Lower level: billiard room, recreation room, wine cellar, playroom and fitness center
- Two-story master bedroom suite with sitting room, fireplace plus main- and lower-level baths and dressing rooms
- Stunning grounds with heated fireplace terrace, built-in barbecue center, and vast level lawn
- Approx. 1 acre (43,416 sq. ft.)
- Gated entrance, significant off-street parking, plus attached 2-car garage and detached 2-car garage
- Top-rated Menlo Park schools

**Offered at \$14,850,000**

For video, floor plans, additional photos, and information, please visit: [www.285Atherton.com](http://www.285Atherton.com)

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