

The Almanac

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

DECEMBER 4, 2019 | VOL. 55 NO. 13

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HOW A MENLO PARK BASEBALL COACH IS
TEACHING TEENS ABOUT TECH-LIFE BALANCE

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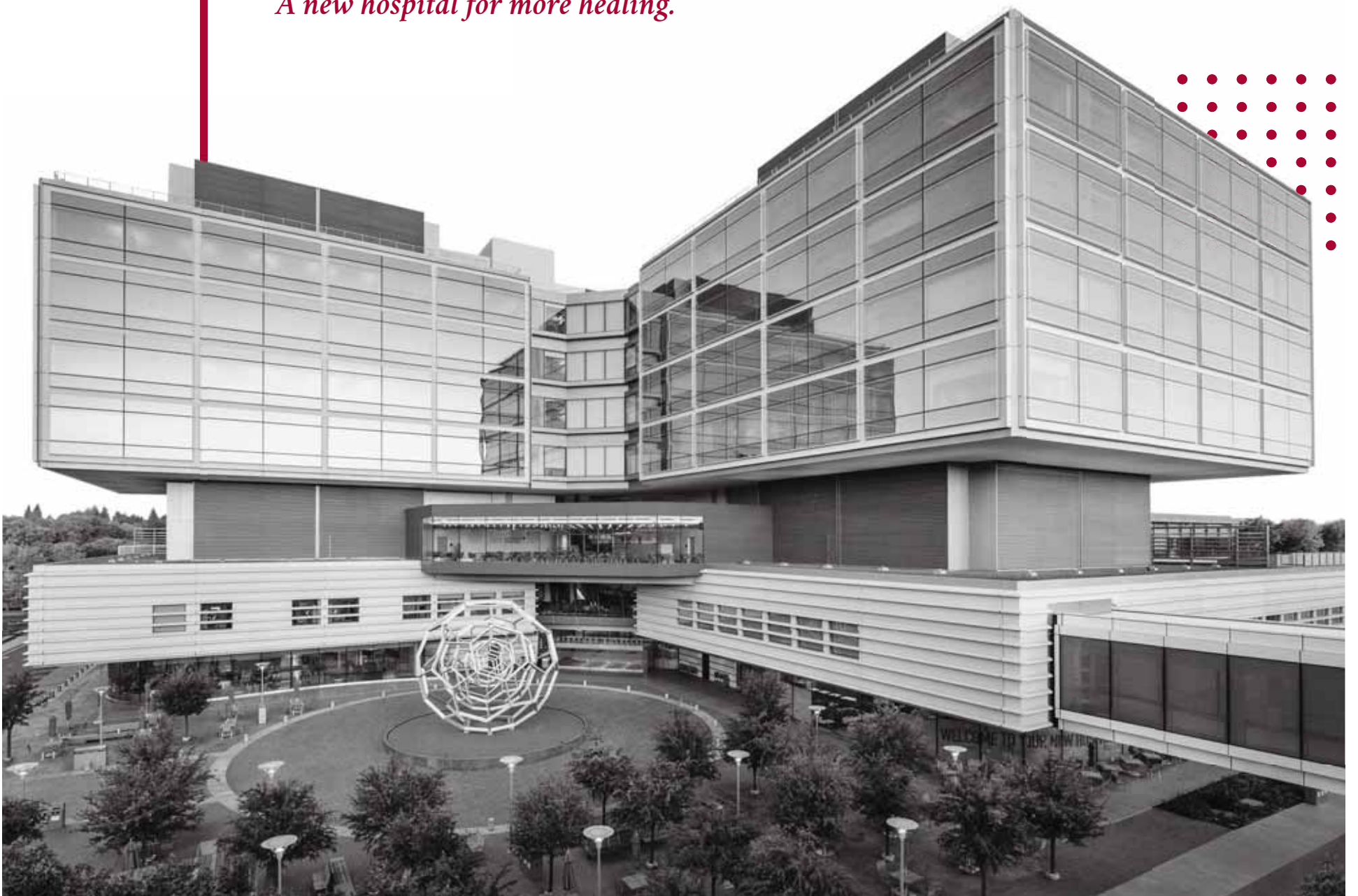
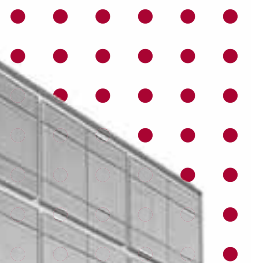


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Local News

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Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

Ready, set, go!

Six-year-old Matthew, shown running down a netted tunnel of a play structure, was among the kids and parents who checked out the new all-abilities playground at Nealon Park in Menlo Park in late November. For additional photo and story, see Page 12.

Woodside council tosses doubts, signs GreenWaste disposal contract

By Rick Radin
Almanac Staff Writer

After weighing its options, the Woodside Town Council voted 5-0 on Nov. 19 to approve a 10-year solid waste disposal contract with its current provider, GreenWaste Recovery, that will lead to an average increase of 32% in curbside service rates.

Council members Dick Brown and Sean Scott were absent.

So-called “concierge service” customers, who need drivers to walk on or drive onto their properties to empty disposal carts, will receive a rate hike ranging from 50% to more than 400%, according to Sloan Vasquez McAfee, the solid waste consulting firm that negotiated the contracts with Woodside and Portola Valley over the past 18 months.

The top-end concierge service increases apply only to customers who need drivers to drive from 100 feet to more than 400 feet onto their properties to reach the carts.

The move follows the Portola Valley council’s approval of a virtually identical contract on Nov. 13.

The Woodside council had discussed seeking other bidders at its Nov. 12 meeting because of the magnitude of the proposed

increases.

“There are only a limited number of providers,” Woodside Mayor Ned Yost said on Nov. 19. “We might have saved 1% or 2% (by going out for bids). Saving 5% to 10% would have been worth it.”

Twelve percent of Woodside customers will receive a 33% to 100% increase, 10% will receive a 101% to 200% increase, and 5% will be hit with an increase surpassing 200%, according to GreenWaste communications director Emily Hanson.

“We figured out the cost if everything was curbside, and then subtracted that from our total projected cost to determine what to charge (for special services),” she said.

The new contracts will allow for a 9% annual profit for GreenWaste, compared with a 2% loss in 2018-19, according to Hanson.

The contracts also include an annual cost-of-living increase. GreenWaste can come back to the towns and request a rate hike beyond the cost of living, she said.

A number of negative factors are squeezing GreenWaste’s bottom line, according to the company, including China’s recent refusal to buy all but the cleanest and most valuable recycling.

Stocks of waste paper for recycling are piling up at collection

points in the Bay Area, said Joe Sloan of Sloan Vasquez McAfee. Before China’s change in policy, a ton of waste paper sold for between \$100 and \$200. Today, a recycler must pay \$40 a ton to get someone to haul it away, Sloan said.

The price of a full-sized garbage and recycling truck providing curbside service has also risen from about \$250,000 when the current contract took effect to between \$400,000 and \$500,000 today, Hanson said.

Statewide, communities are receiving an average of 30% to 70% in rate increases, Sloan said.

“The (current) rates are artificially suppressed,” Hanson said.

GreenWaste implemented a 3% hike in 2014 exceeding cost-of-living increases that the two towns agreed to, according to the company.

The huge concierge service increases come from a number of factors, including the need to buy and use smaller collection trucks to serve hillside neighborhoods where most of the drive-on and walk-on collection occurs, Hanson said.

“The smaller trucks also have to make more trips to San Jose to dump their loads during the day (which takes them offline),” she said. ▣

Menlo Park’s office space growth exceeds that of similar small cities in state

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park ranks fifth among small California cities for the amount of office space constructed over the last five years, according to a new report by the commercial real estate website commercialcafe.com, which used data from Yardi Matrix, a commercial real estate research and data platform.

But compare that growth against the city’s population growth during the same period, and a stark picture emerges as to just how much of the city’s developed space is devoted to office space.

According to the analysis, between 2014 and 2019, developers in Menlo Park constructed 2.45 million new square feet of office space at 13 projects of 25,000 square feet or larger citywide. This expanded the amount of rentable office space citywide by 38%, to 8.93 million square feet total.

Most of the top 10 small cities (defined as those with populations under 300,000 people) that have undergone dramatic growth in office space statewide over the last five years are in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. They include Sunnyvale (ranked number 1), Santa Clara (2), Cupertino (4), South San Francisco (6), Mountain View (7), San Mateo (8), and Foster City (9). Only two are in Southern California: Irvine, ranked third; and El Segundo, ranked 10th.

The eight cities on the list in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties have added a total of 25.7 million square feet of large office-space developments in the last five years.

The report’s authors explained that they did not include square footage of other uses like retail or hotel spaces.

Diving into these numbers further, The Almanac compared the new and total office square footage of these cities with their populations.

Menlo Park stood out as the city with the largest increase in office space per capita compared with the other Bay Area communities on the list.

For each of the city’s roughly 34,500 residents, as reported in the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, the city has added about 71 square feet of office space within the last five years, and now has a total of about 259 square feet of office space per resident. This ratio significantly surpasses the ratios in the other local job-heavy communities that made the list such as Santa Clara,

Menlo Park stands out as the city with the largest increase in office space per capita compared with the other Bay Area communities on the list.

Cupertino, Sunnyvale and Mountain View, which all had ratios of 200 square feet or less of total office space per resident.

Given the fact that a worker in Silicon Valley is estimated to take up between 75 square feet of space at a startup, and about 150 in a more typical work environment, that

means there could be anywhere between 1.7 and 3.5 workers per resident housed in Menlo Park.

The explosion of office-space growth in small cities in the region spells traffic for an area already struggling with a skewed jobs-housing balance, a term to describe the ratio of the jobs located in a city compared with the number of homes, which has also come to be an indicator of sorts for commute-related traffic.

Some cities have somewhat mitigated the traffic impacts of expanded office space by imposing “trip caps” on some large companies, which limit how many vehicles can enter and exit an office park daily.

For instance, the city of Menlo Park maintains a trip cap with Facebook, allowing 15,673 trips per day to and from its east and west campuses in Menlo Park, with stricter limits on the maximum number of trips permitted during peak hours. Fines are imposed if the company

See **OFFICE SPACE**, page 6

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OFFICE SPACE

continued from page 5

surpasses those limits, up to \$100 per trip per day.

However, as such companies expand their employee head counts in formerly suburban communities, they have to work increasingly hard to abide by trip caps. Facebook last year took steps to curb where Uber and Lyft can drop off and pick up employees to avoid triggering the trip cap, and last year got approval to build a permanent bus stop to better accommodate its bus and tram system to shuttle employees around its campuses.

But with another roughly half-million square feet of office currently under development in the city, more creativity by area employers to mitigate traffic may yet be called for.

Neither Mayor Ray Mueller nor Vice Mayor Cecilia Taylor could be reached for comment by press time.



Photo by Sammy Dallal/The Almanac

Construction continues at the Station 1300 site on El Camino Real at Oak Grove Avenue. The development includes retail and restaurant space, 183 apartments and about 200,000 square feet of office space. The office space is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2020 and the apartments in the fourth quarter, according to the project website.

Water billing vendor shutter, leaving city scrambling

By Kate Bradshaw

Almanac Staff Writer

FATHOM, the water billing contractor that Menlo Park Municipal Water has worked with for the past nine years to read water meters, bill customers, collect bills and provide customer service, has gone out of business suddenly, leaving the city scrambling to find a new contractor.

The water billing company alerted the city of Menlo Park on Nov. 9 that it would be going out of business at the end of the month.

The only explanation the city was given was a brief statement from the company that said, "Despite a massive effort this year, we (FATHOM) have not been able to secure an investment or additional debt to save our

business," Christopher Lamm, Menlo Park's assistant public works director, said in an email.

Despite the business' closure, customers who receive water from Menlo Park Municipal Water will continue to receive water; the change in billing services is not expected to impact water delivery to homes or businesses, according to the city website.

Households that received their water bill for November should pay the bill, as usual, by the due date. The last bills from FATHOM were mailed on Nov. 15.

Households that have not received a water bill should not be alarmed: Their water meter will continue to track water usage, and bills will be issued when a new billing system is in place, according to the city.

However, the bill may cover a longer-than-normal reporting period. Customers will not incur late penalties, the city said.

Households wishing to cancel automatic payments should call FATHOM at 650-330-0385.

After receiving the notification, Lamm said, city staff immediately started researching options for obtaining the same services provided by FATHOM, talking to other agencies in California that were impacted by the shutdown, and meeting with a number of potential vendors in person and via video conferencing, he said.

"We anticipate entering into two separate agreements with contractors this week or next to fulfill the full range of services provided. There will still be some work that needs to be performed

before new bills can be issued and we hope to be able to provide an update on the timeframe for those activities next week," Lamm told The Almanac in an email.

"In the meantime, we want to make it clear that water will continue to be delivered to the home or business of every customer and that no disconnections or penalties will be incurred during the transition between billing contractors," he added.

Menlo Park Municipal Water provides water, purchased from the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, to two main areas of Menlo Park: the Sharon Heights area and the portion of the city east and north of El Camino Real. It serves about 16,000 residents at 4,000 service connections. ■

Neely tasting room application on Dec. 4 Planning Commission agenda

By Rick Radin

Almanac Staff Writer

The Portola Valley Planning Commission will hold a third hearing on Wednesday, Dec. 4, on a revised application from Neely Wine, located at 555 Portola Road, for a conditional use permit to allow a wine tasting room and event space on its 230-acre property.

In the latest adjustment to the permit application, wine tasting using a reservation system would be allowed from Friday through Sunday for a maximum 16 hours

per week, limited to an average of 12 visitors per hour.

Tasting would also be allowed by appointment from Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., limited to 30 visitors per day.

Up to 10 events for larger groups would be allowed per year. Four of the events would have a 100-person limit and six would have a 150-person limit.

Four of the events could end after the regular closing time of 7 p.m.

No amplified music would be

allowed.

All of the events would be related to membership in the winery's wine club and no rentals to outside groups would be allowed.

The conditional use permit application has met with some resistance over concerns with noise, parking and possible inebriated drivers, particularly from the winery's neighbors across Portola Road.

The commission meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in the Historic Schoolhouse at 775 Portola Road. ■

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Portola Valley district approves pay increase, possible bonuses

By **Angela Swartz**
Almanac Staff Writer

Portola Valley School District teachers and other certificated staff are getting pay hikes, including the potential for a bonus and a boost to overtime pay, as part of a new three-year contract approved by the school board. The district's school board unanimously approved a new contract agreement with members of the district's teachers union, the Portola Valley Teachers Association, during a Nov. 20 meeting. The contract is retroactive to July 1, and ends on June 30, 2022. The union's previous contract ran from July 1, 2016, through June

30 of this year.

District teachers, unlike educators in nearby districts, receive raises based on their performance, advanced training, and their students' performance, and not on the number of years they have been in the district, according to a system established in 2013. The new contract establishes a \$1,500 bonus for teachers who receive a positive annual evaluation. Under the previous agreement, teachers received a 1% raise for a positive evaluation.

New hires are not eligible for the performance pay program for their first two years, but will continue to receive salary step increases until they are approved as permanent employees. New

certificated employees will receive a 0.39% pay increase during the 2019-20 school year, a 0.78% increase in 2020-21 and a 0.71% increase in 2021-22, according to the district.

"Bargaining is bargaining," said John Davenport, president of the teachers union. "You never get everything you want, but have to be able to live with what you get. This was the best deal we were going to get. Although I am not jumping up and down, this is something I could endorse."

The district will maintain its \$1,000 annual compensation increase that's tied to student achievement and a 2.4% annual salary increase for completing professional development.

Davenport said the negotiations were made more difficult by the fact that former superintendent Eric Hartwig left the district and a new superintendent took over the process. Davenport said that, by no fault of her own, current Superintendent Roberta Zarea didn't know where the negotiations stood when she joined the district.

Zarea said the district's goal has been to maintain the exceptional educational experience it offers students by coming to an agreement that balanced the interests of teachers and the district's fiscal health.

"I believe we have an agreement that both parties can be happy with, and will enhance

our ability to attract and retain quality educators to our district," Zarea said in an email. "I want to thank the Portola Valley Teachers' Association for their efforts in working through this process together. This three-year agreement invests in educators and the future of our community."

Teachers will make \$130,782 on average during the 2019-20 school year, which includes stipends for advanced degrees and overtime, according to the district. Overtime pay for teachers will increase from \$50 per hour to \$55 per hour on July 1 of next year, and to \$60 per hour on July 1, 2021, according to the contract. ■

High levels of probable carcinogen reported at Menlo Park restaurant

By **Kate Bradshaw**
Almanac Staff Writer

A building housing a Japanese restaurant and, formerly, a dry cleaning business in Menlo Park has been found to have elevated levels of tetrachloroethylene, a solvent often used at dry cleaning facilities that is "probably carcinogenic to humans," according to the California Department of Toxic Substance Control.

According to a letter the department's project manager Jessica Tibor sent to the Menlo Park City Council, San Mateo County Supervisor Don Horsley and county health officials on Nov. 20, a preliminary air sampling analysis at Gombei,

a restaurant located at 1438 El Camino Real, found that the indoor air concentration of the substance was at 38 micrograms per cubic meter. The standard concentration used to screen for cancer risk is 2 micrograms per cubic meter, she explained in the letter.

These levels are not expected to harm human health, according to Gamaliel Ortiz, public information officer at the Department of Toxic Substance Control.

Tetrachloroethylene, or PCE for short, can in high concentrations lead to dizziness and eye irritation. Chronic exposure can also lead to liver damage, Ortiz explained in an email

to The Almanac.

In addition, PCE in high concentrations can probably cause cancer in humans, according to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, or OEHHA for short.

The levels of PCE detected in the restaurant are below the agency's threshold for screening for health effects other than cancer, but are above the threshold for screening for cancer, he noted.

"The cancer screening level is set at a concentration that if one million people breathed air with a screening level concentration of PCE during each workday over a 25-year period,

one of those people might develop cancer as a result," he explained. "The maximum detected concentration in the kitchen area of the restaurant is associated with a predicted cancer risk of two in 100,000, meaning if 100,000 people were exposed to that concentration for 25 years there is the potential for two of those people to develop cancer."

The notification has been given in order to comply with California's Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986, or Proposition 65, which "requires businesses to provide warnings to Californians about significant exposures to chemicals that cause cancer,

birth defects or other reproductive harm," according to the OEHHA.

The property owners have hired an environmental consultant who will take samples, and there will be ongoing remediation efforts, Ortiz noted.

The restaurant owner could not immediately be reached for comment. ■

Council revises Transportation Impact Fee

By **Kate Bradshaw**
Almanac Staff Writer

The proposed fees the city plans to charge for new buildings have been revised to ease the growth of new restaurants, childcare and retail spaces, in alignment with recommendations made by a subcommittee of Menlo Park city council members Betsy Nash and Cecilia Taylor who met to discuss the matter.

"It made sense that if we did want to try and incentivize the retail and the restaurant and we need to get it somewhere, since all the others are essentially at the maximum fee already," Nash said.

During a first reading of the new ordinance on Tuesday,

Nov. 19, the council agreed to the subcommittee's recommendations with a unanimous vote.

Under the new fee rates, net new restaurants and retail spaces would pay a reduced \$10.26 per square foot while fees would be waived entirely for childcare and secondary dwelling units.

The new fees are as follows: new single family homes would trigger \$15,155.24 per unit in fees, and per-apartment fees would be \$5,108.02. Per-square foot fees for office space will rise to \$17.60, research and development space to \$7.50, warehousing space to \$2.91, manufacturing space to \$10.26, and medical office space to \$52.97. Transportation impact fees for hotels will rise to \$9,155

per room.

A second reading of the ordinance is scheduled for Dec. 10, with the ordinance set to go into effect Jan. 9 and the new fees set to go into effect Feb. 8, according to city staff. ■



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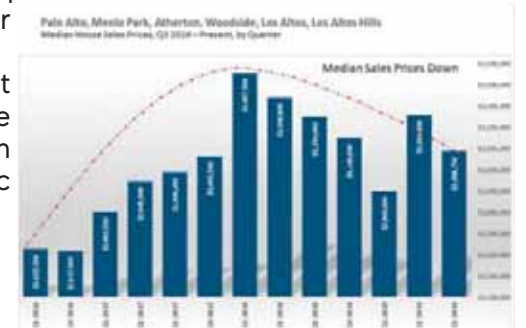
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December 2019



I'm frequently asked about the status of our market, particularly sales prices, by both buyers and sellers. The following chart illustrates the trend in prices over the past 3 years in our communities. The combined median house sales price in Q3 2019 was down 5% from our peak in Q3 2018, but we're still 3% higher than Q3 2017.

Contact me for more information and strategic guidance.



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Contributions to the Holiday Fund go directly to programs that benefit Peninsula residents. Last year, Almanac readers and foundations contributed \$150,000 from more than 150 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.

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.

Project Read

Provides free literacy services to adults in the Menlo Park area. Trained volunteers work one-on-one to help adults improve reading, writing and English language skills so they can function more effectively at home, at work and in the community. Basic English classes, weekly conversation clubs and volunteer-led computer enrichment are also offered.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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HOLIDAY FUND 2019

Offering a free meal in a safe, friendly place

By Bob Dehn, St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room volunteer

St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room has been providing a free meal in a safe, friendly place for 45 years. With welcoming hospitality, we ask no questions and turn no one away. We provided a remarkable 230,000 hot meals and take-home bags of food and over 30,000 articles of free clothing in the past 12 months.

We seek to reduce the fear of food insecurity in our local community of southern San Mateo County. We help lessen the fear of where the next meal might come from, as our guests know that we are a stable organization where anyone can enjoy a free meal Monday through Saturday.

This year the Dining Room's service to the community was publicly recognized by the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce with a Golden Acorn Award, along with a proclamation by the city of Menlo Park, which cited, among other contributions, over 5 million meals served to the community since the Dining Room started in 1974. The Dining Room was also recognized by the Redwood City Council with a Welcoming Stars award for creating a welcoming environment for everyone in our community.

HOLIDAY FUND

Donations to The Almanac's Holiday Fund benefit St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room and nine other nonprofits serving the local community. To donate, use the coupon on Page 8 or go to siliconvalleycf.org/almanac-holiday-fund.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are the busiest days of the year, when we serve as many as 800 meals on these holidays. In conjunction with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, toys are collected during the Christmas season for our annual giveaway just before Christmas, when as many as 2,000 children receive these gifts.

St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room, at 3500 Middlefield Road in Menlo Park, serves from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Saturday. In addition to the meal, guests may take home a bag full of food including fresh produce and bread items. We also provide basic health consultation two days a month through the assistance of a San Mateo County public health nurse.

The Clothing Distribution Center offers free clothing, shoes, blankets, sleeping bags, and baby and infant wear to over 1,000 patrons a month. Adjacent to the Padua Dining Room, the clothing center is



Photo by Adam Pardee/The Almanac

St. Anthony's clients can also pick up fresh produce and bread items when they come back for a hot meal in the Padua Dining Room.

open Wednesdays for women and Thursdays for men.

St. Anthony's, one of 10 organizations supported by The Almanac's Holiday Fund this year, is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. It is funded through donations and grants from many individuals, local businesses, and foundations.

The operating costs to serve

over 230,000 meals this year is significant, and additional donations are always welcome. The operation requires nine full-time employees, with more than 200 dedicated core volunteers and other helpers who serve as many as 35,000 volunteer hours a year. New volunteers are always welcome and appreciated. ■

LifeMoves: A haven of support for displaced families

By Jeannie Leahy, LifeMoves' director of grants and contracts

The homelessness crisis playing out across the county is particularly severe in Silicon Valley due to extremely high rent prices and lack of affordable housing options, pushing many families into homelessness. Nick and his wife, Bobby, never imagined their family would experience homelessness after moving to Silicon Valley.

Nick, a disabled veteran, was injured and honorably discharged from the U.S. Air Force, and is unable to work full time due to medical issues. Bobby had just graduated with a degree in sonography and, with several interviews lined up in the area, the family moved to Silicon Valley with their two young children, Brooklyn and Logan.

"You get out [of the military] and just hope and expect things to be smooth but, of course, it doesn't work out that way," says Nick. Bobby was not able to find

HOLIDAY FUND

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full-time employment as quickly and easily as hoped, and the family was not able to maintain paying the high cost of living with Nick's part-time earnings.

The family experienced an unsettled period of living with family and friends, which is when Nick and Bobby reached out for help. Thankfully, Nick's veterans service officer (VSO) referred the family to LifeMoves. The family moved into a fully furnished apartment at Haven Family House, an interim shelter for families run by LifeMoves.

"It has been incredible. It is the most ideal place in such an unfortunate situation," says Nick.

Each family residing at Haven



Photo by Annie Tao Photography/Courtesy of LifeMoves

The family of, from left, Nick, Logan, Brooklyn and Bobby received the support of LifeMoves when they were pushed into homelessness.

Family House works closely with a LifeMoves case manager with whom they create a realistic plan to exit homelessness. Through LifeMoves, Nick has been connected to local resources for veterans, Bobby has secured several job interviews, and the family has worked on a savings plan.

"LifeMoves has supported us in looking for housing and connecting us with services for

veterans. One of the best things about living here is that it's such a great community," says Nick. "It's really great to meet people who are in a similar, difficult situation because there's that support."

Thanks to the housing and supportive services Nick and Bobby have received at

See **LIFEMOVES**, page 11

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Amigos Grill: Piñatas	Chase Bank: Cookies, Drinks, and Gifts
UPS Store: Holiday Cards – First 20 people receive gift cards worth 100 copies	Lobster Shack: Live Music and hot clam chowder samples
Portola Kitchen: The Madrigal Singers	

Registration open for Early Learning Center preschool

By **Angela Swartz**
Almanac Staff Writer

Registration is now open for the 2020-21 school year at the Early Learning Center (ELC) preschool in the Menlo Park City School District.

The preschool, which has sites at Lower Laurel School in Atherton and Oak Knoll School in Menlo Park, is accepting applications until Dec. 7, at midnight.

The first lottery will be open only to children who live in the school district or are eligible for the Tinsley Voluntary Transfer Program, those whose parents or guardians work for the district, and current ELC students and their siblings, according to ELC's website.

Eligible children must be 3 years old by Dec. 1, 2020, and fully potty trained by the first day of school.

Children applying for the ELC program for the next school year are given priority in the following order: if they are a current ELC student or their sibling attends the preschool; if they are a district resident or they're eligible for the Tinsley Voluntary Transfer Program, qualify for an ELC scholarship and their sibling is enrolled in the district; if their parents are district staff (children of ELC staff receive first priority among staff); if they live outside of district borders; and families that apply after Dec. 7.

Applicants will be notified of their lottery status in late December and will be asked to

enroll by mid-January to secure a space.

If there are still spaces available after the first lottery, a second lottery will be conducted in 2020.

The lottery for families requesting tuition assistance will be conducted in January.

There will be part-day and full-day programs next school year.

At ELC Laurel, located at 95 Edge Road, there will be two full-day classrooms running from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with a minimum day on the first Thursday of each month. There will also be one part-day classroom open from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., with an option for early care for 7:30 to 8:30 a.m.

At ELC Oak Knoll, located at 1895 Oak Knoll Lane, there

will be one full-day classroom running from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with a minimum day on the first Thursday of each month.

There will be tours of both preschool campuses: on Dec. 6, 8:30 to 9:30 a.m., Oak Knoll; and on Dec. 4, 9 to 10 a.m., Laurel.

Most spaces are full for this

school year, but openings do occur, according to ELC's website. Contact 650-463-1236 if you are interested in a space for your 3- to 5-year-old child during the 2019-20 school year. Children must be fully potty trained and 3 years old by Dec. 1.

Apply for the 2020-21 lottery at tinyurl.com/elcregistration2019. ■

LIFEMOVES *continued from page 9*

Haven Family House, the family received a HUD-VASH housing voucher, and they are ready to take the next step to secure sustainable housing.

LifeMoves' mission, since 1987, has been to provide interim housing and supportive services

for homeless families and individuals to rapidly return to stable housing and achieve long-term self-sufficiency. On any given night, we feed, clothe and house approximately 850 people, about one-third of whom are children.

To learn more about LifeMoves, visit livemoves.org or call 650-685-5880. ■

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New playground invites kids of all abilities to romp

After nearly five months of closure, the playground at Nealon Park is back and better than ever.

The city's first all-inclusive, all-abilities playground is now also its largest, according to Menlo Park Community Services Director Derek Schweigart.

Development of the playground, which cost about \$1 million, was overseen by a subcommittee on the city's Parks & Recreation Commission that offered advice to city staff on what they'd like to see and established goals to support inclusivity and "meet more needs of more children,"

Schweigart explained.

A community meeting early on in the process also engaged the neighborhood and enabled feedback on the playground design.

While it's still early, the initial response from local families to the new playground has been very positive, Schweigart said.

"I went out to the playground yesterday, hoping for a quieter day, and it was amazing how many people were out there," he said. "I think people are seeing that it is quite a special park."

—By Kate Bradshaw



Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

Children and parents checked out the new all-abilities playground at Nealon Park on Nov. 25.

Nonprofit fights climate change by planting trees at local schools

By Angela Swartz

Almanac Staff Writer

A local group recently started planting trees on Sequoia Union High School District campuses. CityTrees, a Redwood City nonprofit, planted 15 trees at Woodside High School in Woodside on Nov. 2 as part of a \$42,300 grant, group organizers said.

The nonprofit will ultimately plant 58 trees at six district

campuses, the group announced in a July press release. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) Social Equity Grant Improvement Program is funding the project to help combat climate change by reducing greenhouse gases, according to the press release.

Since August, the nonprofit has also planted 11 trees at Carlmont High School and four trees at Everest High, said David Grabel, CityTrees treasurer, in an email.

CityTrees also planted trees at Menlo-Atherton High School and East Palo Alto Academy on Nov. 16, and another planting is scheduled at Sequoia High School on Dec. 7, he said.

CityTrees and the Redwood City public works department will also plant 71 trees in Redwood City's Stambaugh-Heller neighborhood, a designated "disadvantaged community area" — an official term for an area that suffers from a combination

of economic, health and environmental burdens.

The life of these trees is estimated to be about 40 to 50 years, Grabel said. The group is planting live oaks, crepe myrtles, coast redwoods, ginkgos and other species.

"During their lives, these new trees will remove over 500 tons of greenhouse gases from the environment while transforming concrete landscapes and beautifying the city and surrounding communities," said CityTrees

board President Simms Duncan in a prepared statement.

In addition to reducing greenhouse gases, the press release says, the project is expected to decrease fossil fuel-based energy use and restore wildlife habitat.

The mission of CityTrees, which was founded in 2000, is to improve the quality of life in the greater Redwood City area through a coordinated program of education, outreach and advocacy for tree planting, maintenance and support.

For more on the nonprofit, go to citytrees.org. ■



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..... **IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY CALL 911**



Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

David Klein, founder of America Offline, sits at his microphone where he records his podcast in San Mateo.

AMERICA, offline

HOW A MENLO PARK BASEBALL COACH IS TEACHING TEENS ABOUT TECH-LIFE BALANCE

By **Kate Bradshaw**
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park native David Klein has spent the last decade helping young athletes succeed in baseball through the Menlo Legends program and camp, and during several years as a baseball coach at Menlo-Atherton High School.

Klein, 32, has worked with thousands of local kids and teens — about 5,000 over the years, he estimates. And they've done well. Almost 50 have gone pro. Just this year, the first athlete he worked with has made it to the major leagues: Zac Grotz, a 26-year-old from San Mateo and pitcher for the Seattle Mariners.

But over the last few years, Klein has noticed a shift among the youth he spends his days coaching. They've become quieter than they used to be, and very focused on school — not necessarily bad things, he notes — but they also seem, in general, stressed out and anxious.

"There was an inability to navigate certain social situations," he explains.

An M-A grad who grew up in Menlo Park himself, he senses a difference between these kids' experience and the childhood he spent, not too long ago,

enjoying days outside with friends, riding bikes around town, and getting into mischief.

Now, he says, "I drive around town almost daily. You can't find the kids anymore."

So he set out to learn why.

After interviewing more than 40 of the athletes he worked with and their parents, some patterns became clear.

The students he worked with, he realized, were spending somewhere between six and 10 hours a day on their phones.

"I started to put some pieces together," he says. Talking to other coaches, he learned that his observations were not unique to him.

A personal experience also brought home the reality of the mental health crisis among young people. After meeting with a teenage family friend in Detroit who said that two of her good friends had died by suicide, Klein said he decided to dedicate his work to helping teens develop "intentional tech-usage habits so they can act more like kids again."

He dove headfirst into researching the digital wellness field, then identified a path he believes can help young teens navigate the minefields of digital distraction: helping them feel more socially

connected, embrace unstructured free time, "swap out video games for in-person activities" and "do the things that make them feel good and alive."

Immersing himself in the field, he says, he noticed that there were many awareness-based programs warning how bad tech can be for kids, but most of

it targeted parents. There weren't many that focused on solutions, or anything that engaged young people directly to teach them about how to use tech intentionally, he notes.

After doing a significant amount of survey work, he says, he created a pilot overnight program with some of the athletes he had worked with in the Legends baseball program, inviting thirteen 13- to 15-year-old boys out to Little Basin in the Santa Cruz Mountains for a two-night, three-day retreat.

The program showed early signs



Photo courtesy of Fog Coast Productions

On the cover and above: Klein leads teens during an outdoor retreat to teach them about "tech-life balance." Photos courtesy of Fog Coast Productions.



Photo courtesy of Fog Coast Productions

Teen participants in Klein's "GameChangers" retreat program practice yoga as a group.

of success: two weeks after the retreat, he says, 11 of 13 parents said they saw a noticeable difference in their child's tech interactions.

While the retreat was tech-free, it involved more than just wresting phones away from the teens for a few days and hoping they'd discover on their own the joys of being unplugged in a beautiful place — though the setting in the coastal redwoods likely didn't hurt.

Building on that pilot program, he's developed a curriculum for outdoor experiences focused on "experiential learning," that offer hands-on tools, strategies and methods the teens can call upon after camp to develop habits around being offline, all without being too preachy, he says.

He sees the program, in one sense, as "Driver's Ed" training, but for young people learning

how to use their cellphone instead of drive a car.

The goal? To help teens use tech as a tool, rather than become a tool of tech — another set of eyeballs to sell to advertisers.

At the retreat, teens are expected to surrender their phones. Camp leaders then change their phones' default settings to increase privacy and minimize distractions. "A lot of the defaults are set up to ping you multiple times a day," Klein notes. Then, on the last day of camp, participants reintegrate the phone back into their lives with the new default settings and leave with a plan.

After the first retreat and developing the concept into its current form, called "GameChangers," Klein in March transformed the concept and other digital wellness programs into a business called America Offline. The

'If all or the majority of their time not spent in school or sleeping or on the sports field ... is on Snapchat, Instagram or YouTube, there's so much being lost.'

DAVID KLEIN,
FOUNDER OF AMERICA OFFLINE

GameChangers retreat program is focused on young teens, ages 13 to 15, because that's typically the age when many youth get their first cellphones, he says, adding that it's also when mental health problems can begin to manifest.

Stakes are high at this point of life: Youth brains are still developing, he notes.

"It's an important time for them to learn how to develop relationships; how to address problems; how to think out of the box," Klein says. "If all or the majority of their time not spent in school or sleeping or on the sports field ... is on Snapchat, Instagram or YouTube, there's so much being lost."

Some indicators suggest, however, that at least some cellphone use by teens can be benign. A 2018 study by the Pew Research Center, for example, found that 81% of teens ages 13 to 17 reported that social media makes them feel more connected to what's going on in their friends' lives. In addition, 91% said they use their cellphones to pass the time; 84% said they use it to connect with other people; and 83% said they use it to learn new things.

On the other hand, the same study yielded some concerning data: 45% of respondents reported that they were "almost constantly" on the internet, and 43% said they use their cellphones to avoid

interacting with people. Girls, in particular, were more likely to report this, with 54% of girls saying they often or sometimes use their phone to avoid such interaction, compared with 31% of boys.

And a majority of teens — 54% — worry that they spend too much time on their phones, while 56% associate the absence of their phone with loneliness, being upset or feeling anxious, the report noted.

Whether increased phone use by teens has directly caused elevated rates of depression and anxiety in recent years may still be up for debate, depending on whom you ask, but there is a demonstrable

correlation. And the statistics are concerning: According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness in San Mateo County, one in five teens ages 13 to 18 experiences a mental health condition in any given year, though four-fifths of them do not receive treatment.

Jean Twenge, a San Diego State University psychology professor and author of the 2017 book "iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy — and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood," sums up some of her findings in the title. In an excerpt of the book published in the Atlantic magazine the same year called "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?," she writes about research tying a decline in mental health among teens to screen time, noting a particularly precipitous drop in teen mental health since 2012, when the proportion of Americans who own smartphones became a majority.

Citing the results of a Monitoring the Future survey, funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, she reports, "The results could not be clearer: Teens who spend more time than average on screen activities are more likely to be unhappy, and those who spend more time than average on non-screen activities are more likely to be happy."

In the Atlantic piece, she addresses some of the differences in trends in how girls and boys use technology and how they're impacting mental health. Girls use social media more, and

See **OFFLINE**, page 16

TIPS FOR BUILDING TECH-LIFE BALANCE

When asked for some "best practices" for individuals and families who are looking for more tech-life balance, Klein offered the following tips:

■ **Try to spend the first and last hour of each day offline.** Establish routines to start and end the day that are phone-free. Blue light from screens can suppress the secretion of melatonin, a hormone that regulates the sleep cycle, making it harder for kids to fall asleep and enter deep sleep. Without good sleep, it becomes harder to focus in class and get good grades, he adds.

■ **Emphasize distraction-free work time.** During work or homework time, mute notifications and move apps to harder-to-access pages of phones.

■ **Wait as long as possible to give kids access to screens.** As a parent of a 2-year-old, Klein says this can be challenging. "We're now raising a new generation of digital natives. It's important not to give in." While many phones can have controls set on them, children are smart and can learn how to bypass them. Parents should monitor and educate kids about how to use the devices, he adds.

■ **Know that some apps are designed to be addictive.** Flipping through one's Instagram notifications, he says, triggers the same dopamine neurotransmitters, or brain signals that make one feel good, as those that are set off when one eats sugar, takes drugs or has sex. "Yet, we're going ahead and opening the snack cabinet and giving kids at 10 smartphone access to the entire world," he says.



Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

Klein holds an old picture of himself posing for his Menlo-Atherton High School baseball team portrait.

OFFLINE

continued from page 15

reported an increased frequency of feeling left out — up 45% between 2010 and 2015, compared with 27% among boys. They're also reporting a greater rise in symptoms of depression than boys — up 50% between 2012 and 2015, compared with 21% among boys.

And the suicide rate is also rising faster among girls than boys, Twenge reports. Between 2007 and 2015, three times as many 12- to 14-year-old girls died by suicide; a twofold increase was reported among boys during the same period. This phenomenon might be a consequence of girls' increased risk of experiencing cyberbullying, she notes.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Since Klein launched America Offline, the business has announced a series of tech retreat camps around the country, with 2020 events planned in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and Dallas. It currently has three employees, six "experience designers" based in the different locations, and an advisory board of six people, he says. The business is also now developing a game-based app to help families develop offline habits and better social connections.



Photo courtesy of Fog Coast Productions

America Offline participants hike during a retreat focused on learning digital wellness.

Klein says his next camp for teens is scheduled for President's Day weekend. Thanks to a GoFundMe campaign, he says, he'll be offering 12 full or half scholarships. Programs cost between \$600 and \$1,000, depending on location and duration, he adds.

He says that the next steps for the growing business include making the programs available to other groups in need of tools for creating "tech-life balance."

Looking ahead, Klein is planning to run similar camps geared toward adults, called "ReCharge," with groups like sports coaches, mothers of young kids, or singles, he says. He also offers custom offline retreats for people with a number of different internet-related problems — including addictions to video games, social media, pornography or gambling — who seek support.

"At the end of the day, it's

all about showing people the beauty of being offline in nature to reconnect with themselves, nature and the world," he says.

Want to learn more? Klein has started a podcast, also called America Offline, in which he interviews experts about tech and mental health. He's released nine episodes since early September.

Access it at americaoffline.info/podcasts or via the Apple store. 📱

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Any person who is feeling depressed, troubled or suicidal can call 1-800-784-2433 to speak with a crisis counselor. Spanish speakers can call 1-888-628-9454. People can call the StarVista San Mateo County crisis hotline, available 24 hours every day, at 650-579-0350. People can also reach trained counselors at Crisis Text Line by texting 741741. Additional resources can be found at is.gd/mentalhealthhelp.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

- menlopark.org/breakfastwithsanta
- facebook.com/menloparkevents
- 650-330-2220



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Winter Class Guide

The Midpeninsula may be heading into a wet winter, but that doesn't mean you have to stay stuck at home. There's a plethora of classes offered this season to satisfy every niche, hobby and passion, so we compiled this resource guide to let you know what activities are being offered throughout the area. The extensive list covers the arts, career and test prep, fitness and more. Whether you have been planning on learning a new language, a new instrument, taking a new yoga class, or perhaps all of the above, now's the perfect time to do so. Our Winter Class Guide will tell you where to go and who to call.

Dance

Captivating Dance by Nona

1923 Menalto Ave., Menlo Park
650-980-8555

captivatingdancebynona.com

Captivating Dance by Nona instructs youth of various ages and abilities in ballet, tap, jazz, lyrical, hip hop and other styles and skills. Classes take place at various times during the week. The studio also has competitive teams.

Dance Expressions

701 Laurel St., Menlo Park
650-450-3209

danceexpressions5678.com

Dance instruction for students ages 3 and up, focusing on jazz technique at various experience and skill levels.

Sports & Fitness

Fleet Feet Sports

859 Santa Cruz Ave.,
Menlo Park
650-325-9432

fleetfeetmenlopark.com/training

Training programs throughout the year bring camaraderie and skill building to runners and walkers of all levels. Registration for the winter training program is now open.

Menlo Swim & Sport

Burgess Pool, 501 Laurel St.,
Menlo Park / Belle Haven Pool,
100 Terminal Ave., Menlo Park
650-781-5525 / menloswim.com

Youth, adult and community programs at Burgess and Belle Haven pools, including year-round swim lessons, youth swim teams, masters swimming, water polo and water exercise, as well as cycling, running, fitness and tennis programs.

One Heart Yoga

Little House Activity Center,
Fitness Room, 800 Middle Ave.,
Menlo Park

650-649-3055 / oneheartyyoga.com

Weekly classes in Kundalini yoga, aimed at helping students increase flexibility and strength; learn calming breathing techniques; and reduce anxiety and depression.

Peninsula Boxing & Fitness

2860 Spring St., Unit 1,
Redwood City
650-290-1920

peninsulaboxing.org

Recreational boxing programs for both youth and adults. The youth program is non-competitive

and non-contact, instructing kids in fitness in a safe, structured environment.

Kidz Love Soccer

Burgess Park Auxiliary Field 9,
701 Laurel St., Menlo Park
650-330-2200 / kidzlovesoccer.com

com

Menlo Park Community Services and Kidz Love Soccer offer youth soccer classes for boys and girls of all abilities, beginning at age 2.

Arrillaga Family Gymnastics Center

501 Laurel St., Menlo Park
650-330-2215

bit.ly/arrillagagymnastics

The City of Menlo Park offers a number of gymnastics classes for youth, with a focus on children under the age of 6. Parent-participation classes are also available for children with special needs.

Glenoaks Stables Riding School

3639 Alpine Road, Menlo Park
650-867-8201 / isolastables.com

Hands-on programs teaching riders to groom and tack their horses, as well as providing riding instruction depending on individual riding level. Both private and small group lessons are offered.

Menlo Park Tennis

Nealon Park Tennis Courts, 800
Middle Ave., Menlo Park
650-814-6734

menloparktennis.com

Tennis classes for adults and children ages 5 and up, at all levels. Lessons include tips, strategy, drills and entertaining games. Registration for classes is open.

Spring Down Equestrian Center

725 Portola Road, Portola Valley
650-851-1114 / springdown.com

Spring Down Equestrian Center educates children (beginning at age 3) and adults on horses and horseback riding. Instruction in basic riding, jumping, dressage, western riding and horsemanship is offered. Classes and camps held year-round. Registration for holiday camps is open.

Webb Ranch Riding School

2720 Alpine Road,
Portola Valley
650-854-7755

webbranchinc.com/home.htm

Instruction for beginning and

intermediate riders in both group and private settings. Specialties include Western riding, dressage and hunt-seat riding. In addition, there are a number of weeklong camp sessions for children ages 7 to 18. Registration for winter camp is open.

Language

German-American School of Palo Alto

German-American International School campus, 475 Pope St.,
Menlo Park

650-520-3646 / gaspa-ca.org

The German-American School of Palo Alto (GASPA) teaches immersive German language classes, which also cover culture and traditions, to students ages 2.5 to 18. No prior knowledge of German is required. Saturday classes are offered year-round.

Language Pacifica

1528 S. El Camino Real,
San Mateo

650-321-1840

languagepacific.com

Language Pacifica teaches English to non-native speakers in both full-time and part-time intensive courses. Classes are well-suited for TOEFL exam preparation and learning English for business or personal enrichment.

See **CLASS GUIDE**, page 18



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CLASS GUIDE

continued from page 17

Music, Arts & Crafts

Draeger's Cooking School
1010 University Drive, Menlo Park
650-685-3704
draegerscookingschool.com

Draeger's Cooking School classes are taught by chefs and cover an array of regional cuisines, dishes and cooking skills. Arrangements for private classes are available year-round, with several tutorials offered on a monthly basis.

Music Together Menlo Park
75 Arbor Road, Suite N, Menlo Park
650-799-1624 / mt-mp.com

Music Together holds classes exploring music and movement for children up to age 5 with their guardians at the Allied Arts Guild. Registration for winter semester is open and starts Jan. 6.

Old World Designs

727 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park
650-321-3494

oldworlddesigns.com

In addition to stocking supplies and giving private lessons in stitching,

Old World Designs organizes project classes and "stitch-ins." Classes and events start at 10 a.m. and are offered year-round.

Education

Emerson School

2800 W. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto
650-424-1267

headsup.org/emerson-school

Emerson School provides a full-day, year-round program for grades one to eight, teaching a personalized, Montessori curriculum. Lessons draw from classical subjects and other areas, including art, music, foreign language, physical education, communication, life skills and more.

HeadsUp! Child Development Center

2800 W. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto
650-424-1221

headsup.org/headsup

HeadsUp! Child Development Center serves infants, toddlers and preschoolers (to age 6) with a full-day program, year-round. The Montessori curriculum focuses on building thinking skills and personal values. A bilingual Chinese-English preschool classroom is also available.

Littlest Angels Preschool

1095 Cloud Ave., Menlo Park
650-854-4973

bethany-mp.org/preschool

At the preschool, children ages 2 to 5 follow a Christian curriculum that encourages creative, emotional, intellectual, physical and social development.

Lydian Academy

815 El Camino Real, Menlo Park
650-321-0550 / lydianacademy.com

Lydian Academy is a middle and high school offering individualized instruction that prepares students for the workforce and college. Lessons include a mix of one-on-one teaching and group sessions. It also provides tutoring and after-school programs.

Phillips Brooks School

2245 Avy Ave., Menlo Park
650-854-4545

phillipsbrooks.org

Phillips Brooks School is a coeducational day school for children in preschool through fifth grade and integrates social learning and provides individual instruction. In addition to core subjects, children can also study science, technology, music, art, library, physical education and Spanish. Learn more about the application process online.

Sand Hill School

650 Clark Way, Palo Alto
650-688-3605

sandhillschool.org

Located at the Children's Health Council, Sand Hill School teaches first through eighth-grade children with language-based learning differences and assists with attention

and social difficulties. Learn more about the application process online.

Woodland School

360 La Cuesta Drive, Portola Valley
650-854-9065

woodland-school.org

Woodland School is an innovative, project-based school for students in early childhood through eighth grade that gives individualized attention, develops leadership skills and emphasizes the values of caring, respect and community. Applications due Jan. 17.

Career Prep

JobTrain

1200 O' Brien Drive, Menlo Park
650-330-6429

jobtrainworks.org

JobTrain has a variety of training programs for adults — providing instruction in the culinary arts, business administration, health care, web technology, construction and other fields — as well as programs specifically for youth to help with GED preparation, job placement and vocational training. View available workshops online.

Sequoia District Adult School

3247 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park
650-306-8866 / seqsas.org

Sequoia District Adult Education holds classes in English as a second language and computer and business skills. Students can also earn a high school diploma or GED certificate. Counselors are available to help students transition to college programs.

Seniors

Little House, Roslyn G. Morris Activity Center
800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park
650-326-2025

penvol.org/littlehouse

Little House Activity Center offers classes for adults of all ages on various topics and activities, including health and wellness for seniors; fitness exercises like line dancing and Pilates; ceramics, drawing and other arts; languages; history and culture; and computer skills. Register for classes online.

Enrichment

The Riekes Center for Human Enhancement

3455 Edison Way, Menlo Park
650-364-2509 / riekkes.org

Nonprofit organization Riekes Center provides a number of programs focused on self-enhancement for youth and adults: strength and speed fitness courses, adaptive sports, a class for musical bands, photography workshops and nature exploration, among other opportunities.

The Class Guide is published quarterly in the the Almanac. Descriptions of classes offered in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside are free, subject to editing and given priority.

To inquire about submitting a listing for the next Class Guide, email Editorial Assistant Lloyd Lee at llee@almanacnews.com or call 650-223-6526. To place a paid advertisement in the Class Guide, call the display advertising department at 650-326-8210.



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Food & Drink



Photo by Sammy Dallal

At the Table

Goat polo, tech titans and running a family restaurant with Jamis MacNiven of Buck's

Story by Elena Kadwany

I'm deep in Kurdistan right now," Jamis MacNiven wrote back to my late-summer email asking to meet him for a lunch interview. "I have to go play polo now with a dead goat. It's a Kurdistan thing."

It was classic MacNiven. The longtime owner of Buck's in Woodside has a reputation for outlandish stories that make you question his footing in reality, and then, more often than not, turn out to be true. (As it turns out, MacNiven had been in Kurdistan and had played goat polo. There's readily available photo and video evidence on the Buck's Instagram.)

MacNiven opened Buck's in 1990, creating a one-of-a-kind restaurant that draws children and families as well as titans of the tech industry, heads of state and famous actors. The dining room is a museum of the weird, every available inch of wall and ceiling given over to artwork and collectibles, from an enormous Shaquille O'Neal shoe won at an auction to a statue of Lenin to the orange car that set the record as the fastest gravity-powered car in the world at the first-ever Sand Hill Challenge soap box derby in 1997.

The menu is down-home and cheeky, with pancakes, burgers, soups, Hetch

Hetchy water (no charge), a Dueling Louis Armstrong salad and "savagely popular" tacos. The dessert menu advises: "Combat global warming, eat ice cream."

So much about Buck's feels frozen in time, in a good way — though it's not totally immune to food trends of the moment. The kitchen now serves the plant-based Impossible Meats and Beyond Meat burgers.

When MacNiven's not working the room at Buck's wearing one of his trademark colorful, wacky shirts, he's writing. The restaurant's menu is updated quarterly with columns he writes about his travels and musings. He's the author of three books, including his autobiography, "Breakfast at Buck's: Tales from the Pancake Guy," and "California From 500 Feet: A Story of the Coastline," a history from California as seen from a 247-foot-long Zeppelin named Eureka. He's currently working on an illustrated children's book for his 9-year-old granddaughter.

I recently had lunch with MacNiven for the next installment of At the Table, a series of my interviews with local chefs and restaurant owners over a meal at a restaurant of their choosing.

Over a tomato burrata salad at his choice, Oak + Violet in Menlo Park, in between plenty of tall tales that all checked out when

I went home and googled them, we talked about the heyday of Silicon Valley, the secret to running a successful restaurant for three decades, a new book he's working on, and why he's so fascinated by, as he put it, the "whimsical human stuff." Oh, and psychedelics.

This interview has been lightly edited and condensed for clarity.

Were you actually in Kurdistan earlier? What were you doing there?

We went to Kurdistan to just see what the country's like. I've been to the Middle East a lot. We hunted with golden eagles. It turns out these eagles — we didn't see this, but you can see it online — an eagle can actually kill a wolf. (MacNiven pulls up a

photo on his phone to illustrate.) They do it by going right into the shoulders with their talons and when the wolf looks around, they rip its throat out. They're fierce.

Then we tried playing goat polo. I had a picture of that, where we're mounted trying to reach down to the ground and pick up a dead goat off the ground and throw it whole. I could never reach the ground. I could barely stay on course. These young guys were much better at it. There's a big ring at either end and they dragged this goat. You try and take it away from the other guy. When you get a certain score then the winner gets to keep the goat and eat it. Kurdistan's a little dull.

See **BUCK'S**, page 20



Photo by Sammy Dallal

Top: Jamis MacNiven, raconteur, author and owner of Buck's, poses with one of his most striking customer-greeters in his whimsical Woodside eatery.

Above: Quirky memorabilia covers virtually every surface at Buck's, the family-style restaurant that draws a steady stream of patrons who want to be served a good time along with their meal.

BUCK'S

continued from page 19

We did some exciting things, but I'm really into the uranium processing, strip mine and factory where they poisoned the whole town. It's one of those places you're not supposed to go but we go to all the places you're not supposed to go.

What did you do before you opened Buck's?

My wife and I had a construction company. We used to build restaurants. ... We had a chain called Croutons. We built the Hard Rock Cafe in San Francisco back in the '80s. All the trendy places I built are all gone, except for the ones that I built that the family owns. We own five places in the city (San Francisco). We have the Woodhouse Fish Company, West of Pecos in the Mission, we have a brand-new one called the Wooden Spoon at Cafe du Nord, which is an old nightclub.

Why did you open Buck's?

We'd built a lot of restaurants and I was really tired of construction. It's so hard to get paid ... I hated that part of it. But in the restaurant business people pay to leave the room. Plus, construction is not a real people business. It's all about ass kicking and phone calls. The restaurant business is all about talking to people and being convivial. It's a much more human business. I've been at Buck's for 29 years and I'm addicted to the crowd. I can't get anything done. So I try to stay home, but then I find myself going to work. The people are so amazing.

What is it about that connection and community that draws you in and keeps you going?

It's like living in a really exciting, well-written movie. It's like all around are these magical people — not just the people you would expect me to mention, like the famous Silicon Valley people,

we see Elon (Musk) — but it's the little kids, old people, people you've known for 20 or 30 years. It's kids that come in and end up being hosts and hostesses and then go on to college. All my kids worked there.

How have you seen tech change this area over the last 10 years?

I think we can no longer claim we're innocent. I think that's the biggest thing — we're out of the garden now and the blinders are off. I actually think artificial intelligence combined with bad actors and access to pathogens is a serious existential threat. But here in Silicon Valley, we really held up people — even Zuckerberg a few years ago, and certainly the Google guys — as being international and American heroes. I'm not so sure now. It's not about the money because they're all so fabulously rich. ... But they're not working hard enough on our behalf. And certainly Amazon isn't. Between Amazon and Walmart, they're crushing America, and they're also teaching people — you know what Walmart's slogan is? It's 'always low prices.' In Germany, that kind of statement embarrasses them. Theirs would be 'always best quality.' We're about trying to do it cheaper and crappier — the fast food and the proliferation of plastic and consumerism is a concern. And it turns out Silicon Valley's fueling this big time. Amazon started selling pool toys — a lot of them, and I know because I just bought a bunch. I'm not innocent at all. But I helped end the Vietnam War so I've done my part.

What's the secret to running a restaurant for three decades? So many restaurants are struggling right now just to survive in Silicon Valley.

It's no real secret. You have to have good food and convivial atmosphere. You have to really see the customer for who they are and if they have a complaint, you have to just say, 'I'm sorry; I'll do better.' ... With all those hundreds of thousands, millions of moving parts, stuff doesn't always go perfectly. But it generally does. I want every complaint to come to my desk, and weeks



Photo by Sammy Dallal

MacNiven entertains his granddaughter Myla Moon MacNiven.

go by — I get nothing. So I think we do OK.

We've been able to retain our staff incredibly. I have people who've been there 29 years (and) a lot of people over 20 years. The average tenure of the front-of-the-house people is about 16 years. Nobody's got that. ... It's challenging to get people for the kitchen, but we always seem to stay open.

I have to ask you about all of the decorations in the restaurant. Where do they all come from?

People give me things, but I take very little, although recently a guy (Andy Rubin, former Google senior vice president and creator of Android software) loaned me his Apple 1, which is the No. 1 collectible in all of Silicon Valley history. (Editor's note: The Apple 1 is a 1976 desktop Apple computer designed and hand-built by Steve Wozniak.) It's probably worth a million dollars. He said, 'Well, it was just kicking around my house. I thought you should display it at Buck's.' I take it with me when I give talks about Silicon Valley.

Have you changed the Buck's menu? It seems pretty similar to when I went there as a kid.

The basic menu stays almost the same, although we have the Impossible Burger now and Beyond Meat, but it looks pretty much like it did 10 years ago. That's the basic menu: breakfast, lunch and dinner. We have our specials that change every two weeks. We have the dessert menu, the kids' menu and the wine list. ... if I went in there and I really worked on super innovative stuff I know I would appeal to a broader audience. It's really hard to do that because I've got so much other stuff going on.

How have restaurants on the Peninsula changed since you opened Buck's?

They have attempted, from Wolfgang Puck on out, to bring super-sophisticated dining to the Bay Area — and it hasn't happened. Is it Nobu that's over



Almanac file photo

MacNiven poses with copies of his first book, "Breakfast at Buck's: Tales from the Pancake Guy," in 2004.

in the hotel over there? People don't rave about that place. ... it's a little forgettable. I hear Tim Cook lives on the top floor.

You're clearly a storyteller with a penchant for the fantastical, odd, bizarre. Have you always been like that?

Pretty much. My wife doesn't like me very much, but that's OK. Everybody else does.

Where does that come from?

Psychedelics. Honestly, I think that I was largely formed by one single psychedelic experience in college (with) ibogaine. Across the whole panoply, from mushrooms, LSD, psilocybin, MDMA ... ibogaine is way up there. It's extremely rare. I'm working with it professionally now, ibogaine and the drug (that) comes from this animal (he points to a large gold ring in the shape of a toad on his finger), 5-MeO-DMT. This is a model of a Sonoran desert toad, and in this gland contains all the truth you'll ever need to know.

Next year will mark Buck's 30th anniversary. Do you have any plans to retire? Where will Buck's be in 10 years? Or are you not thinking about that?

I don't even think about six o'clock. One of my kids is moving to Skyline, so probably (he'll) take it over. We don't make plans. ▣

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Holiday cheer: Local traditions continue

By **Kate Daly**
Special to The Almanac

Locals are in luck with so many popular holiday happenings back on the calendar this year.

Holidays with the Friends, a free family event, will take place again at Folger Stable in Wunderlich Park in Woodside on Sunday, Dec. 8, from 1 to 4 p.m.

Friends of Huddart and Wunderlich Parks is hosting the party with ponies, a petting zoo, a Woodside Vaulters demonstration, ornament making, cookie decorating, choral music, refreshments, and photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

Last year more than 600 people attended. On-site parking is very limited, so guests are asked to go to nearby Woodside School at 3195 Woodside Road and take the free shuttle bus.

Starting on Dec. 8, with shows at 1 and 4 p.m., more than 85 members of Dancers Repertory Theatre will perform **“Twas the Night Before Christmas”** at Woodside Performing Arts Center at Woodside High School, 199 Churchill Ave.

Based on Clement C. Moore’s Christmas poem, the dance and theatrical production will repeat with shows on Dec. 14 at 3 p.m. and Dec. 15 at 1 and 4 p.m.

Tickets are \$24. Go to twasthe-night.org to book seats.

This is Coleen Duncan’s 15th year as artistic director. She’s a fan of glittering costumes and mainly works with children, but many adults participate in this annual tradition as well.

Once again, the Menlo Park-based professional ballet company Menlowe Ballet has brought in students from Menlo Park Academy of Dance to perform in the annual production of **“It’s a Wonderful Nutcracker.”**

The two-hour show at Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center, at M-A High, 555 Middlefield Road in Atherton, combines the classic Nutcracker story with Frank Capra’s film from the 1940s, **“It’s a Wonderful Life.”** As a result, Tchaikovsky and ballet go hand-in-hand with Duke Ellington and ballroom dancing.

There will be seven full performances starting on Friday, Dec. 13, at 7 p.m., Dec. 14 at 2 and 7 p.m., Dec. 15 at 2:30 p.m., Dec. 21 at 2 and 7 p.m., and Dec. 22 at 2:30 p.m.

On Dec. 15 at 11:30 a.m., audience members with special needs are invited to attend a 50-minute sensory-sensitive version of the show. On Dec. 22 at 11 a.m. the program will be shortened to 65 minutes to appeal to families with children ages 5 and under.

Tickets range from \$25 to \$62. To order them go to menloweballet.org.

On Wednesday, Dec. 18, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., **Santa will greet visitors** at the Woodside Fire Protection District’s open houses at all three stations.

There will be free photo opportunities with Santa and refreshments served at Station 7, 3111 Woodside Road in Woodside; Station 8, 135 Portola Road in Portola Valley; and Station 19, 4091 Jefferson Ave. in Redwood City.

The firefighters have championed a holiday toy drive for years. Collection bins are set outside of each station. Families are encouraged to bring new unwrapped toys for needy children on the Peninsula.

On Friday, Dec. 20, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., the **Village Hub Holiday Party and Gift Faire** will feature 15 local designers and makers selling clothing, jewelry, wooden furniture, paintings,

cards and honey, plus a selection of wares made by younger members of the community.

The event, at 3154 Woodside Road in Woodside, includes live music, cookie decorating, lunch by reservation, and a bouncy house.

Photos with Santa from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. will benefit the Young Dreamer Network.

For more information go to thevillagehub.org. ■

Bill Gates to award \$10M to local Alzheimer’s group

By **Kate Daly**
Special to The Almanac

Part the Cloud founder Mikey Hoag of Atherton is “thrilled” and “energized” to announce a new partnership with philanthropist Bill Gates to help fight Alzheimer’s disease. Gates, she said, is personally going to donate \$10 million to Part the Cloud after the organization raises \$20 million by the end of April.

“The potential is so significant,” Hoag said. “With Bill’s partnership we really have the ability to turn this disease around.”

Hoag’s father had Alzheimer’s, and her mother currently suffers from it; Gates’ father and uncle both have the disease.

“It’s something Bill is worried about; that’s his vulnerability,” Hoag said.

She had tried to connect with Gates for a couple of years when finally she received an email from him acknowledging how “compelling” Part the Cloud’s work is, she said.

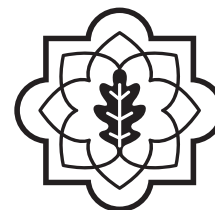
Alternating between galas

and luncheons every other year, the organization has raised more than \$30 million for the Alzheimer’s Association, funding 39 research grants since 2013. Much of the focus has been on supporting early clinical trials of drug development, which in turn has enabled grant recipients to procure additional funding from other sources.

Hoag described Part the Cloud’s three new research targets: how brain cells use energy and fuel, how brain cells remove waste and debris to avoid protein clumping, and how the brain’s blood supply is maintained.

She and Gates haven’t met in person yet, but Hoag is hoping to get the Microsoft co-founder to attend the next Part the Cloud event, a gala to be held in Woodside on April 25.

In the meantime, she plans to continue to work tirelessly to get people to donate to the cause and eventually find a cure. Go to alz.org/partthecloud for more information. ■



MIDDLE PLAZA

CONSTRUCTION ALERT

Night Work on El Camino Real – Starting December 2019

WHAT:

Middle Plaza construction crews will be doing night work and partially closing travel lanes on El Camino Real between Middle Ave and Ravenswood Ave in both directions for the demolition and installation of West Bay sanitary sewer lines. For a given direction of travel, a maximum of two lanes of travel will be shut down each night, leaving at least one lane of travel open at all times. Work will take place at night when traffic volumes along El Camino Real are lower.

WHEN:

Mid-December, 2019 – mid-January 2020

Construction schedules are approximate and subject to change due to weather and unforeseen conditions.

WORK HOURS:

10:00 P.M. to 5:00 A.M., Sunday through Thursday. No night work will occur on Friday and Saturday

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the Middle Plaza project and to sign up for construction alerts, please visit our website at middleplaza.stanford.edu

If you have any comments or questions, contact **(650) 497-4052** or middleplaza@stanford.edu

Office of Government & Community Relations
450 Jane Stanford Way
Building 170, 1st Floor, Main Quad
Stanford, CA 94305

Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

THE CLEAN MASTER
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 282972
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
The Clean Master, located at 3510 Hoover St., Redwood City, CA 94063, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
JAZMIN MARTINEZ
3510 Hoover St.
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 10/29/19.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 29, 2019.
(ALM Nov. 13, 20, 27; Dec. 4, 2019)

JR JANITORIAL
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 283020
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
JR Janitorial, located at 2224 Menalto Ave., East Palo Alto, CA 94303, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
MIGUEL MORENO MORENO
2224 Menalto Ave.
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 11/1/2019.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on November 4, 2019.
(ALM Nov. 13, 20, 27; Dec. 4, 2019)

EMBLT FINANCIAL GROUP
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 283035
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
EMBLT Financial Group, located at 80 Yale Rd., Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.
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80 Yale Rd.
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 November 5, 2019.
(ALM Nov. 20, 27; Dec. 4, 11, 2019)

GO EZ MAINTENANCE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 283058
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
Go EZ Maintenance, located at 618 Bay Road, Redwood City, CA 94063, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
FELIPE DAVID GOMEZ
618 Bay Road
Redwood City, CA 94063
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact

Call Alicia Santillan at 650-223-6578 or email asantillan@pawekly.com for assistance with your legal advertising needs. The deadline is Thursday at 5pm.

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 November 12, 2019.
(ALM Nov. 27; Dec. 4, 11, 18, 2019)

THE UPS STORE #5639
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 283171
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
The UPS Store #5639, located at 3130 Alpine Rd. Ste. 288, Portola Valley, CA 94028, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
HAN GROUP, LLC
3130 Alpine Rd. Ste. 288
Portola Valley, CA 94028
CA
This business is conducted by: A Limited Liability Company.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 03/30/2018.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on November 20, 2019.
(ALM Nov. 27; Dec. 4, 11, 18, 2019)

M&J TOWING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 283166
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
M&J Towing, located at 427 Macarthur Ave., Redwood City, CA 94063, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
MIGUEL ANGEL SANDOVAL LARA
2329 Menalto Ave.
E. Palo Alto, CA 94303
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 November 20, 2019.
(ALM Nov. 27; Dec. 4, 11, 18, 2019)

997 All Other Legals

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE OF LIEN SALE
NOTICE OF LIEN SALE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Menlo-Atherton Storage ("MAS") intends to sell the personal property described below to enforce a lien imposed on said property pursuant to Sections 21700-21716 of the Business & Professions Code, Section 2328 of the UCC, Section 535 of the Penal Code and provisions of the Civil Code.

MAS will sell at public sale by competitive bidding on Wednesday, December 11, 2019, at 9:30 AM on the premises where said property has been stored and is located at 3757 Haven Avenue, Menlo Park, San Mateo County, State of California, as follows: the property includes general household goods, tools, furniture, and cargo box.

Carrasco, Richard M.; Davis, Tyrone; Santiago, Liliana; Weisman, Stuart; Manuofetoa, Taufa; Tuionetoa, Tefini; Zlogar, Alfred W.; House, April

Purchases must be paid for at the time of purchase in cash only. All purchased items sold as is where is and must be removed at the time of sale. Sales tax is applied to items sold. Sale subject to cancellation in the event of settlement between MAS and obligated party. Auctioneer Paul D. Tyson, Phone 650.366.3757, Surety Bond #251541C.
(ALM Nov. 27; Dec. 4, 2019)

Theater

'Miracle on 34th Street' The holiday classic "Miracle on 34th Street" is retold in the tradition of a live 1940s era radio broadcast. Dec. 4-Dec. 22; times vary. \$20-\$38; discount for students. Bus Barn Theatre, 97 Hillview Ave., Los Altos. losaltosstage.org

'Pride and Prejudice' TheatreWorks Silicon Valley brings one of literature's most popular battle of the sexes to life. Dec. 4-Jan. 4; times vary. \$34-\$108. Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. theatreworks.org

'The Secret Garden' Peninsula Youth Theatre presents Karen Simpson's adaptation of Frances Hodgson Burnett's children's novel, "The Secret Garden." Dec. 6-7; times vary. \$11-\$13. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. tickets.mvcpa.com

'You/Emma' Paz Pardo's "You/Emma" is a witty, award-winning solo show about Emma Bovary, a woman with voracious desires suffering from domestic boredom. Dec. 5-15; times and dates vary. \$20-\$37; discounts for seniors and students. The Pear Theatre, 1110 La Avenida St., Mountain View. thepear.org

Concerts

'Early Music Singers: Music in Italy' William Mahrt, associate professor, directs the Early Music Singers' fall concert with music by Italian composers such as Rore and Marenzio. Dec. 4, 7:30-9 p.m. Free. Memorial Church, 450 Serra Mall, Stanford. events.stanford.edu

Friends of Music Holiday Musicales Friends of Music presents the annual holiday show-case featuring Stanford Chamber Chorale, Stanford Philharmonia, Addison Septet, and organist Ethan Chi performing works by Holst, Handel and others. Dec. 7, 2:30-4 p.m. \$13-\$18; discounts available. Memorial Church, 450 Serra Mall, Stanford. events.stanford.edu

Music

A Festival of Lessons and Carols The Memorial Church Choir and the Stanford Chamber Chorale host a service of Advent and Christmas readings and music based on the famous "Lessons and Carols" service held annually at King's College, Cambridge. Free. Memorial Church, 450 Serra Mall, Stanford. events.stanford.edu

Wintersongs with Kitka Wintersongs is Kitka's critically acclaimed and popular winter holiday program showcasing seasonal music from a variety of Eastern European ethnic and spiritual traditions. Dec. 8, 4 p.m. \$20-\$40; discounts available. St. Bede's Episcopal Church, 2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park. brownpaperickets.com

Talks & Lectures

'Under Pressure' Lisa Damour, psychologist, New York Times columnist and CBS News contributor, shares critical steps adults can take to shield daughters from the pressures of today's culture. Dec. 10, 7-9 p.m. \$20; free for members. Sacred Heart Schools, 150 Valparaiso Ave., Atherton. eventbrite.com

Family

2019 Holiday Train Show Watch model trains run through a scenic layout while club members answer questions. Dec. 7-8; times vary. Free; donations welcome. Menlo Park Caltrain Station, 1090 Merrill St., Menlo Park. wbmrra.ning.com

CALENDAR

Museums & Exhibits

Tree Treasures The San Mateo County History Museum hosts several programs including hands-on activities like making an old-fashioned Victorian ornament, a handbell performance and a photo shoot with Santa Claus. Dec. 7, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. San Mateo County History Museum, 2200 Broadway, Redwood City. historysmc.org

Baylug Lego Holiday Show Bay Area Lego User Group and the Bay Area Lego Train Club co-host the annual holiday show featuring featuring train layouts, Bay Area landmarks, castles, miniature cities, sculptures, portraits, and more made out of Legos. Dec. 6-Jan. 5, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. \$3. The Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto. moah.org

Edward Weston and Ansel Adams This exhibit features landscapes, still lifes, nudes and portraits created by Edward Weston in Mexico and Ansel Adams in the American southwest. Through Jan. 6, 2020, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed Tuesdays. Free. Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive, Stanford. museum.stanford.edu

Richard Diebenkorn See an intimate and interactive installation of famed Bay Area artist Richard Diebenkorn's paintings and sketch-books that shed light on the artist's process, including his shift from figurative to more abstract work. Ongoing; times vary; closed Tuesdays. Free. Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive, Stanford. museum.stanford.edu

'Surf Sequence' "Surf Sequence" explores Ansel Adams' relationship with water in different forms with a series of spontaneously captured surf images. Through May 18, 2020; times vary. Free. Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive, Stanford. events.stanford.edu

Galleries

'Collusion' A joint exhibition by Inna Chernykhina and Marina Goldberg, "Collusion" displays oil and watercolor paintings of landscapes, cityscapes and still lifes. Through Dec. 31, 10:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Free. Portola Art Gallery, 75 Arbor Road, Menlo Park. portolartgallery.com

Dance

'The Nutcracker' Celebrate the holiday season with Western Ballet's "The Nutcracker" and meet the dancers and grab a treat in the lobby afterwards. Dec. 6-8; times vary. \$28-\$38; discounts available. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. westernballet.org

Film

'Na Kamalei: the Men of Hula' "Na Kamalei: the Men of Hula" is a film that goes beyond deep-rooted stereotypes of "grass skirt girls" and reveals a story of Hawaiian pride, past and present. Dec. 4, 7-8 p.m. Free. Menlo Park Main Library, 800 Alma St., Menlo Park. eventbrite.com

'Reason' In "Reason," documentarian Anand Patwardhan charts India's slide away from secular democracy and toward divisions of power, caste, religious belief and the violence that has followed. Dec. 5, 4:45-9 p.m. Free. Stanford University, 450 Serra Mall, Stanford. arts.stanford.edu

Food & Drink

Brunch on the Farm Gather ingredients from the Hidden Villa farm and make a colorful, fresh breakfast the old-fashioned way. Dec.

8, 9:30-11:30 a.m. \$25. Hidden Villa, 26870 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. hiddenvilla.org
Kafenia Wednesdays Kafenia Wednesdays is a weekly communal event where space is reserved to share meals, dialogue, music and more. It is a reimagining of the traditional Greek kafenio where men shared food, friendship and social and political life together. Dec. 4, 6-9 p.m. \$10-\$20; children 13 and under free. Cafe Zoe, 1929 Menalto Ave., Menlo Park. eventbrite.com

Kepler's Holiday Party As a way of thanking loyal customers and supporters, Kepler's Books throws a holiday party with champagne, chocolate and a gift-wrapping stand. Dec. 8, 3-5 p.m. Free. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. keplers.org

Garden Lights "Holidays at Filoli: Garden Lights" features a outdoor lights program with festive lights throughout the estate and the Terrace Bar, serving apple cider and mulled wine. Dec. 5-29, 4-8 p.m. \$18-\$35; children ages 5 and under free. Filoli Gardens, 86 Old Canada Road., Woodside. facebook.com

Lessons & Classes

'Are You Ready?' This disaster preparedness class hosted by the Redwood City Fire Department and Sequoia Healthcare District covers the basics of what to do before, during, and after a major emergency event. Dec. 5, 5-7 p.m. Free. Sequoia Healthcare District Headquarters, 525 Veterans Blvd., Redwood City. redwoodcity.org

English Conversation Club Native and non-native English speakers can join the English Conversation Club to develop English speaking and listening skills. Dec. 4, 5-6 p.m. Free. Menlo Park Library, 800 Alma St., Menlo Park. menlopark.org

One On One Resume Review Volunteers look over resumes and make recommendations on how to improve applications and how to stand out from other job seekers. Dec. 4, 9 a.m.-noon. Free. Jobtrain, 1200 O'Brien Drive, Menlo Park. eventbrite.com

Health & Wellness

Weekly Meditation In this weekly program, Segyu Rinpoche introduces the Vajrayana system in the form of the healing practices of the Medicine Buddha and the meditations and philosophies that underline those practices. Dec. 4, 11, 18, 7-9 p.m. \$25 per class. Guild Hall, Woodside Village Church, 515 Hillside Drive, Woodside. eventbrite.com

Windhover Tour Open for public tours every Saturday, the Windhover building is a meditative space built with the intention of promoting mental and spiritual well-being. Ongoing; Saturdays, 11:00 a.m.-noon. Free. Cantor Arts Center, 370 Santa Teresa St., Stanford. museum.stanford.edu

Community Groups

'Dubliners' Literature Book Club discusses "Dubliners," a James Joyce classic that reinvented the art of fiction with 15 short stories. Dec. 4, 7:15-8:30 p.m. Free. Menlo Park Library, 800 Alma St., Menlo Park. menlopark.org

How to add events to calendar

Go to AlmanacNews.com and see the Community Calendar module at the top right side of the page. Click on "Add your event."

'Friends' host book sale at the library

AROUND TOWN

Alma St. in the Menlo Park Civic Center.

'Gathering' at Marcela's Village Gallery

Marcela's Village Gallery, will host a seasonal gathering featuring champagne, hot cider, cheese and fruit on Friday, Dec. 6, from 5 to 8 p.m. The event will highlight the works of Joseph Vella, a San Francisco-born painter whose style reflects neoclassic influence and still life subjects from everyday life.

Marcela's Village Gallery is at

883-1 Santa Cruz Ave. in downtown Menlo Park.

Kepler's Holiday Party

Kepler's Books will host its annual holiday party on Sunday, Dec. 8, from 3 to 5 p.m. at its 1010 El Camino Real bookstore.

The event will feature champagne and chocolate; gift-wrapping services provided by community volunteers will be available. Members of Kepler's Literary Circle will receive 10% off all purchases made that day.

Go to is.gd/keplersholiday to RSVP online.

— By Kate Bradshaw



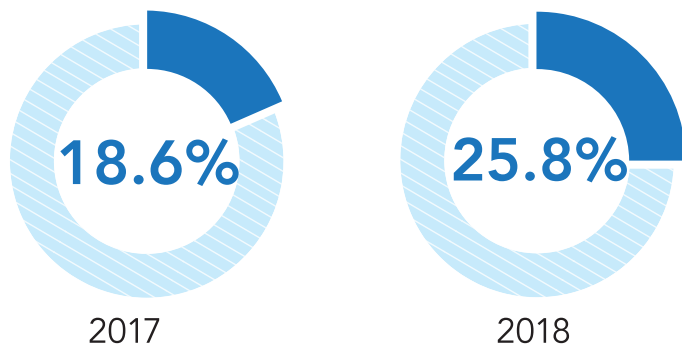
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