

The Almanac

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

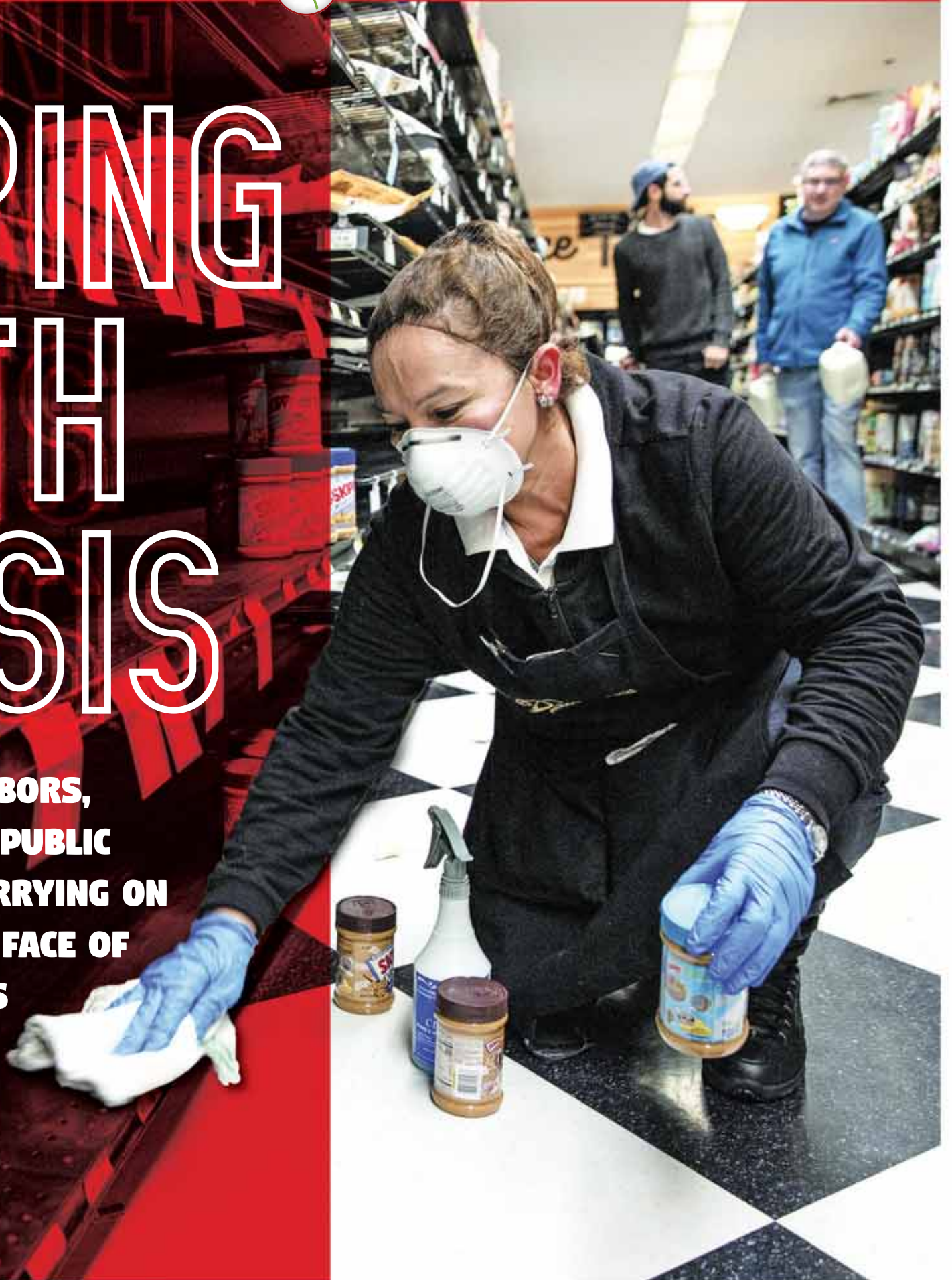
MARCH 25, 2020 | VOL. 55 NO. 29



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COPING WITH CRISIS

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In the wake of this crisis, we need your support.

Dear Reader:

During these uncertain and scary times, trusted sources of local news are more important than ever.

But like so many other local businesses, we are struggling to cope with the current health and economic crisis.

Our staff is working around the clock to keep you informed in this rapidly changing environment. Our office is nearly empty, but our 50 employees are hard at work at their homes and, when necessary, in the community bringing critical news stories to you.

And you are following our reporting in record numbers. Our web traffic has soared in the last three weeks. We've dropped our pay meter so that everyone can access the latest news whether they are subscribing members or not. In the last 30 days more than 125,000 unique visitors were following the news coverage on The Almanac Online.

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Please go to **AlmanacNews.com/subscribe** today to become a subscribing member.

Thank you, and best wishes to all of you doing your best to get through this difficult time.



Bill Johnson
Publisher

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The **Almanac** *Online*

Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

When home becomes the classroom

Uncharted territory: How local school districts are tackling the transition to distance learning

By **Angela Swartz**
Almanac Staff Writer

On March 13, amid a cascade of school districts announcing closures, San Mateo County announced a mandatory three-week closure of all K-12 schools. As of March 16, the vast majority of children in California are not going to school.

On March 17, Gov. Gavin Newsom said he anticipates that schools would remain closed through the rest of the school year. While this option had not become a mandate as of the morning of March 18, the possibility is putting school districts across the state on notice that the current closures could well last far longer than initially anticipated.

The San Mateo County Office of Education posted on its website that educational institutions are exempt from the March 16 “shelter at home” order for purposes of facilitating distance learning and performing essential functions, so teachers and administrators can continue to work on campuses. Facilities may be used by faculty and staff to manage at-home learning efforts, including technology support for students and staff.

State testing may also be suspended, according to a joint letter by the California departments of education and health and human services issued March 17.

“Given the impact of COVID-19 on students and school communities, we want to let you know that we will prioritize the mental and socioemotional health of students, and are examining all options for suspending state assessments,” the letter says.

Amid constantly changing mandates, in a matter of days school districts around the region have focused on switching their primary mode of learning for thousands of students, instructing teachers in how to use new platforms, and ironing out plans to continue to serve their neediest students breakfast and lunch each weekday. Here’s what we know about what online learning will look like for students, from Woodside to Menlo Park.

Woodside Elementary School District

The Woodside district began its distance learning program on March 18. Students were dismissed on March 16 and 17 to give teachers time to prepare lessons.

For grades 2-8, teachers are using the Google Classroom platform, and for students in lower grades — transitional kindergarten through grade 1 — they are using Seesaw, a shared learning platform that is tailored to younger children, said Superintendent Steve Frank in an email.

“The needs of a 1st grader are



Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

Brian Darmanin, a teacher at Hillview Middle School, in Menlo Park, works from home along with his daughter, Madeline, a first grader at Oak Knoll Elementary School, also in Menlo Park, and his wife, Brooke, a biology teacher at Woodside High School, in their home in Redwood City on March 18

very different than a Middle School student, but the expectations for student work will be daily,” he wrote. “Teachers will communicate with students each school day in a variety of ways, including live, through email, via chat in Google Classroom or Seesaw, through the completion of assignments, etc. Work could be online textbooks, workbooks, projects, and a myriad other ways to continue learning in a virtual world.”

Menlo Park City School District

The school board of Menlo Park district, which has schools in Atherton and Menlo Park, convened for a special meeting on March 19 to discuss progress

on the distance-learning efforts, which began last week.

Public Information Officer Parke Treadway said officials will meet over video conference, which the public could view and participate in online.

The district is loaning students internet-enabled devices for distance learning, if they need them, according to a March 13 email to parents. School officials are distributing iPads for grades K-1 and Chromebooks for grades 2-5 at each school’s front office. Hillview students will continue using their assigned iPads.

Students who require temporary internet services in their homes to access the district’s digital learning resources can

contact the district’s family engagement coordinator.

The district is using several online platforms for distance-learning instruction. For example, in grades K-5, teachers will use Seesaw to share video messages, as well as assignments with their students, a parent guide the district created for distance learning states. Students regularly post evidence of learning in Seesaw and teachers share feedback with their students there as well.

Second through eighth grade teachers may also use Google Classroom to post lessons, facilitate online discussions and accept student assignment

See **HOME CLASSROOM**, page 20

Almanac to suspend publishing print edition after this week

Online reporting will continue to serve readers during coronavirus crisis

Embarcadero Media Staff

Faced with the mandated closure of virtually all local businesses and the resulting advertising cancellations, The Almanac will suspend publishing its print edition after the March 25 issue, Embarcadero Media President Bill Johnson has announced.

The suspension will continue until the coronavirus crisis has been brought under control, businesses reopen and consumer

See a message from the publisher, Page 6

activity resumes.

In the meantime, The Almanac will continue and expand its extensive online reporting as the only news organization devoted to local news coverage of the community. With monthly unique visitors now exceeding 125,000 and 9,000 receiving Express, our free daily news digest email, The Almanac is the

primary source of local news on the virus crisis and all other local issues for residents.

“As an advertising-dependent business, it is simply not viable to continue absorbing the high costs of printing and mailing newspapers in this environment,” Johnson said. “Our hope is that readers and major community institutions will recognize the important role we play in our communities — Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside — and step up to help

stabilize The Almanac through subscriptions and Institutional Memberships.”

The Almanac and its editorial staff have been honored repeatedly with statewide awards for in-depth reporting and local news coverage of city issues and the schools.

“Our ability to weather the COVID-19 crisis and the associated economic impacts depends on thousands more readers becoming subscribing members. That will help us shift

our revenue model from one dependent on struggling small businesses to one that relies on readers each contributing a modest amount of as little as \$5 per month,” Johnson said.

Readers can sign up to support The Almanac at AlmanacNews.com/subscribe.

The Almanac’s sister paper, the Palo Alto Weekly, will continue to publish a smaller edition with a reduced circulation. The Mountain View Voice, like The Almanac, will temporarily suspend its print edition until the COVID-19 crisis is over. ■

Message from the publisher about the Almanac in print

Why your support is needed, at this pivotal moment, to sustain local journalism

By Bill Johnson



Bill Johnson

These are frightening and disorienting times, and on behalf of our organization I wish you and your families the strength we all need to get through the weeks and months ahead. I'm afraid the impacts will be profound, but am equally confident that we will pull together to get through it.

Local news organizations and the journalists who work so hard to provide their communities with reliable and thoughtful news were endangered long before the COVID-19 crisis hit.

But today's public health emergency, and the economic devastation that threatens all small businesses, may very well be the final blow that ends local journalism as we know it.

Across the country, even local newspapers that are adapting to the migration of readers to the web and are successfully transitioning from print publishing to online publishing face an existential threat to their survival.

We, unfortunately, are among them. But since we are betting our future on you — loyal readers who understand the importance of an independent press to our democracy — we remain optimistic.

I started our company, Embarcadero Media, 40 years ago with the help of 14 local residents who believed in the need for an independent and locally owned newspaper that would be responsive to the community and dedicated to producing thoughtful, quality journalism that is trusted and respected. The company bought The Almanac, established some 55 years ago, in 1993.

We've successfully managed our way through many economic ups and downs, including the dot com bust, the launch of Craigslist, Google and Facebook, 9/11, the 2008 financial collapse and Great Recession and many other challenges large and small. And we were at the

forefront of the news industry back in 1994, as the first to publish the entirety of our editorial content on the web. We have expanded our editorial staff to deepen our coverage and to provide a 24/7

news service.

But the COVID-19 crisis represents, by far, the greatest threat to the survival of good local news organizations. While advertising revenues are plummeting, the work we do has never been more urgent. Our reporters and editors have been working around the clock to keep you informed on every angle of this terrible story, now working from mostly from home but venturing out into the community when necessary.

If readers who value journalism don't step up to support their local newspapers and their websites now, many will become additional victims of the coronavirus crisis.

Local news has been funded primarily by the advertising of independent local retail businesses. But as local retail has struggled, cut its ad budgets and all too often gone out of business, most local newspapers have had to cut costs, usually by reducing staff, to stay in business. It's a recipe for failure because when staffs are cut, good journalism isn't possible and readership quickly evaporates.

We are determined not to let that be our fate. Our south San Mateo County communities — Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside — need their local news organization.

Our ask is simple: Please join your many neighbors and support the work of our staff in bringing you news of your community. For as little as \$5 per month, you can make a difference. Go to AlmanacNews.com to get your subscription membership started.

Thank you, and best wishes to all of you who are doing your best to get through this difficult time. ■

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The Almanac

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PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that immediately following a public hearing on the matter, a proposed resolution will be considered by the Governing Board of Sequoia Union High School District at its regular meeting on Wednesday, April 15, 2020, at 6:00 p.m., which if adopted by the Board will implement development fees established by the District against residential construction and reconstruction at \$4.08 per square foot against new commercial or industrial construction at \$.66 per square foot. The proposed fees are authorized by Education Code Section 17620 and Government Code Section 65995. Data pertaining to the cost of school facilities is available for inspection during regular business hours at the district's administrative offices. The fee, if approved by the Governing Board, will become effective on June 15, 2020, which is 60 days after the proposed adoption of the resolution levying such fee by the Governing Board.

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LET'S DISCUSS:
Read the latest local news headlines and talk about the issues on Town Square at AlmanacNews.com

Fire agency creates new pandemic response unit

In the wake of placing six emergency workers off duty because of possible exposure to the coronavirus, the Menlo Park Fire Protection District now has a Pandemic Emergency Response Unit.

The two-person team will respond to calls of suspected COVID-19 cases, according to a press release from Fire Chief Harold Schapelhouman.

The district recently received seven calls of suspected COVID-19 in one day and expects to see that number go up.

Schapelhouman said that the district will aim to minimize contact with whoever may have COVID-19 while on a call to decrease possible exposure to the disease.

“Captain Paramedic Jason Martin and Engineer Carlos Carpenter became the first two firefighters to staff the Fire District’s new Pandemic Emergency Response Unit (last week),” Schapelhouman wrote in the

press release. “Perhaps the first of its kind in the nation, this unit will only respond to all suspected COVID-19 incidents in the Fire District.

“As a result, hopefully only two personnel per day will come into direct contact with suspected COVID-19 patients. Individuals on this specialized unit will be using the highest level of Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and personal protective equipment (PPE) on each call, along with minimizing contact time that should help decrease the potential for exposure.”

The new team will also be

responsible for decontaminating each scene it visits and fire apparatus used on the call to prevent traces of the virus

on equipment, clothing and/or the apparatus as outlined by district guidelines, Schapelhouman said.

“We believe that by raising the bar on our personal protective clothing and by putting this new special response unit in place, we can slow or help to hopefully more effectively stop

its spread,” he said.

Some fire district personnel have volunteered to serve on the unit, he said.

“The number of our off-duty

‘We believe that by raising the bar on our personal protective clothing and by putting this new special response unit in place, we can slow or help to hopefully more effectively stop (the coronavirus)’ spread.’

CHIEF HAROLD SCHAPELHOUMAN,
MENLO PARK FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT.



Photo courtesy of Menlo Park Fire Protection District

Fire Captain/Paramedic Jason Martin, left, and Engineer Carlos Carpenter in full PPE — personal protective equipment — are the first to staff the fire district’s new Pandemic Emergency Response Unit

firefighters grew again today, as yet another Menlo Park Firefighter, the seventh, was home sick and scheduled for testing,” Schapelhouman wrote in the press release.

“At some point, we know one of our firefighters will contract

COVID-19,” he added. “Most are not in the risk categories and all are extremely healthy and fit based upon the daily expectations of our profession, but our collective goal is to delay, or stop, the spread for as long as possible.”

Is legislation coming to limit grocery store hoarding?

San Mateo County Supervisor Canepa is considering it.

By Tyler Callister
Almanac Staff Writer

By this point in the coronavirus crisis, any Bay Area resident who has been to a grocery store over the past few weeks knows the scene: Long lines. Anxious customers. Empty shelves.

As the total number of coronavirus cases in the state has risen to close to 1,900 as of March 23, and Gov. Gavin Newsom issued a statewide stay-at-home order on March 19, the grocery stores remain both busy and with

curtailed supply, with staples like dry goods and toilet paper especially hard to find.

But as the image of an empty grocery store shelf is quickly becoming a symbol of the coronavirus saga, one San Mateo County supervisor says he has a solution: Limit the number of items customers can purchase at one time.

In a statement sent out on March 17, county Supervisor David Canepa lamented the grocery store “hoarding,” saying he was concerned that it “jeopardizes the health and safety of our most vulnerable residents.”

“This is unacceptable,” Canepa said in a written statement. “I will propose legislation to mandate purchase limits to no more than four items during the COVID-19 shelter in place order. We can get through this if we consider that the needs of our neighbors are equal to our own needs. Selfishness and greed put lives at risk.”

Canepa’s policy adviser Bill

Silverfarb confirmed that the supervisor’s office has drawn up a resolution regarding grocery store hoarding, which Canepa is considering going forward with. However, Silverfarb added, it remains undecided whether the supervisor will introduce the legislation or if another solution may be found.

He said that solution may come in the form of discussions with the California Grocers Association, who may devise

another way to mitigate the dwindling grocery store shelves.

“We are talking with the state grocers association now,” Silverfarb said. “We will know more in the coming days.”

Meanwhile, The Almanac contacted the offices of supervisors Don Horsley and Warren Slocum for their thoughts on Canepa’s potential anti-hoarding legislation.

“Interesting, but I suspect that the store is in a better position to limit purchases,” Horsley said.

Slocum did not respond for comment by press time. ■

Portola Valley suspends construction beginning this week due to virus

By Rick Radin
Almanac Staff Writer

Portola Valley council members voted last week to suspend construction projects in town beginning March 23 due to the coronavirus crisis.

There are currently 30 to 40 projects now in progress, according to Mayor Jeff Aalfs.

“Having workers on site increases the likelihood of the spread of the virus,” Aalfs told The Almanac. “We don’t want staff and building inspectors exposed.”

On the other hand, public safety inspectors will be available in case of an emergency, such as a trail being damaged or a tree falling on a road.

Town Hall will also be closed indefinitely, with minimal services that town staff can do remotely concerning community safety, employee safety, delivery of essential public services and information on health and economic assistance.

The council is anticipating a county eviction moratorium, a

See **CONSTRUCTION**, page 8

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Safety net for low-income residents spreading wider

City OKs fund for residents whose wages affected during health crisis, but how do people sign up?

By Tyler Callister
Almanac Staff Writer

As the novel coronavirus whips across the Bay Area, forcing businesses to shutter and workers to stay home, many low-income residents living on the edge are being put at risk. Without regular wages, workers paid by the hour could be hit especially hard by a coronavirus-induced economic recession.

What's the solution? In Menlo Park, one answer comes in the form of a \$112,000 fund recently earmarked by the city to support low-income residents in need.

At its meeting on March 10, the City Council voted to devote the six-figure fund to the easing of economic hardships coming like a tidal wave toward low-income residents whose work is curtailed or disappears entirely during the public health crisis.

While the fund had originally been set up last year as a tenant relocation assistance program, the mounting coronavirus crisis forced the council to see the fund through a new lens. During the meeting Councilman Ray

Mueller said, "We have this fund already set aside, and I think people are going to need it."

These funds will be at the fingertips of the local nonprofit Samaritan House, which will be able to use the cash reserve for Menlo Park residents who have had the financial rug pulled out from under them.

According to Samaritan House CEO Bart Charlow, the city chose to facilitate the funds through the nonprofit organization because Samaritan House is well set up for it. "The city of Menlo Park knew we already had the infrastructure in place, so they sat down with us and worked out an agreement," he said.

How to get help

Charlow explained that Samaritan House doesn't give cash directly to residents. Instead, once someone has established his or her need with a Samaritan House case manager, the nonprofit pays the entity that the resident owes money to — such as a landlord or PG&E. "We don't hand people a direct check; we help them pay their bills," Charlow explained.

He noted that the funds from the city administered by the Samaritan House are not meant to supplant other available sources of economic aid, such as unemployment benefits from the state. "This would be something on top of those funds, if your situation is dire," he said.

So what's the process for getting economic aid from this program? Menlo Park residents should start by calling the nonprofit's south office at 650-294-4312, Barlow said. Callers will talk to a case manager, who will direct them from there. For now, like many workplaces, the organization is trying to help people remotely.

Despite the stress on Samaritan House's resources at the moment, Barlow expressed assurance that the nonprofit could rise to the occasion. "We have a nimble system," he said. "Even though we are having to go through many of the same precautions as other places to keep safe, we are bringing all of our resources to bear."

The City Council had approved the arrangement with Samaritan House in March 2019 for an assistance program that would ease burdens on tenants dislocated

from their homes.

Latrice Taylor, Samaritan House's assistant director for programs and services, updated the council on that trial program at its March 10 meeting. She explained that the four-decade-old nonprofit serves all of San Mateo County, with a focus on low-income residents. Free

services provided by Samaritan House include shelter and housing assistance; medical and dental clinics; clothes for children; personalized case management and others.

The Samaritan House's south office is located at 1852 Bay Road in East Palo Alto, and can be reached at 650-294-4312. ▣

CONSTRUCTION

continued from page 7

delay in property tax deadlines, and an emergency reimbursement from the federal government for essential projects, Aalfs said.

"Town staff has done tremendous work preparing for this," he said. "A lot of residents have come forward to help out neighbors, and a lot of people have stepped up to help."

The council will be holding "a very short meeting" on Wednesday, March 25, that will be held online and broadcast on AM radio station 1680.

Details will be available on the town website, Aalfs said.

"As stressful as the past few

weeks have been, I am continually amazed at the spirit of friendship and concern I see," Aalfs wrote in a message posted on the town website. "So many of you have reached out to us, or simply acted on your own, to look out for your neighbors and our most vulnerable citizens."

The March 17 council meeting was the town's first-ever virtual meeting, and about 40 people joined online.

"While we chose not to field comments during the meeting, we will try to incorporate public participation in our future meetings," Aalfs wrote. "Your input is important to us, and thank you for your patience as we navigate the new normal." ▣

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Town suspends most construction amid coronavirus crisis

Atherton council OKs first step to ditch Recology garbage collection service

By Angela Swartz
Almanac Staff Writer

During a uniquely formatted video meeting, the Atherton City Council decided to cut non-essential construction in town — including much of the work on its \$31.6 million civic center project — until a countywide shelter-in-place order is lifted on April 7.

The March 18 meeting was the first of its kind for the town, with council and community members teleconferencing into the meeting remotely, a result of the spread of the novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19.

The council directed staff to prohibit non-emergency private

residential construction, along with civic center construction work. Construction crews were allowed to work on March 21 to allow for a “timely shut down of the project,” according to a memo written by City Manager George Rodericks.

“We are in uncharted waters with the COVID-19 contagion,” Vice Mayor Elizabeth Lewis said during the meeting, which took place via the Zoom online video conferencing service. “To prevent spread coming into our community, until the April 7 deadline, it would behoove us to stop work” on the civic center project, she said.

The project had been scheduled for completion in 2021 and

includes a police and administration facilities, building and planning offices, and a library. Council members noted that if one person on the civic center project site catches the virus, the whole site must be shut down anyway.

Council member Mike Lempre said it was a hard decision to close down the civic center project. He didn’t want to put people out of work, he said, but added that it’s important to “flatten the curve” or the trajectory of infection to save lives and reduce the intense pressure on the medical system.

Emergency construction services that can continue, in accordance with the county order, include fixing a broken water heater or plumbing leaks, addressing electrical problems and other urgent needs that would ensure safety, Rodericks explained.

Landscaping is not considered an essential service, so it will be barred in town during the shelter-in-place period. Flyers will be left on vehicles of contractors and landscape service personnel in town advising that work is not allowed.

All project managers will be encouraged to hire security guards to keep the construction sites safe during closures and install video surveillance cameras, as the Atherton Police Department will be unable to patrol all sites, Rodericks said.

Home cleaning and home care services, such as those provided by nannies or home health aides, are considered essential services

and can continue during the shelter-in-place period, he said.

Rodericks said the town doesn’t have the resources to enforce all of the provisions of the shelter-in-place order and that emergency response personnel will address issues as they see them in the field, adhering to maximum safety protocols.

“There will be limited in-person contact unless such contact is possible through technology options and social distancing protocols,” he said. “Residents are encouraged to self-regulate all non-essential services to their home..” Those services include non-essential construction or renovation work by house painters, field design workers, and projects such as flooring replacement, minor interior remodels, landscaping or gardening, and window washing services.

Town staff plans to put a “frequently asked questions” page about the stipulations of the shelter-in-place order on the town’s website.

Rodericks said that since the council’s next meeting is scheduled for April 15, after the shelter-in-place order ends unless extended, the town will likely hold a special meeting before April 7 to reassess its state of emergency guidelines.

Changing garbage services

The council also voted to take the first step in replacing the town’s longtime garbage and recycling pickup service provider, Recology, a move that would

require the town’s withdrawal from a joint powers authority, the South Bayside Waste Management Authority, that contracts with Recology. The town now will send an “intent to withdraw” letter to the JPA.

Mayor Rick DeGolia explained in an email to The Almanac that the City Council began pursuing leaving the JPA because there is a “significant difference between Atherton and the other JPA members who use Recology in that Atherton has essentially no commercial businesses,” as do other members. Those commercial customers “have different needs than residential customers, some of which are quite costly,” he said.

“All members, including Atherton, share some of the infrastructure cost that supports those commercial businesses,” DeGolia said. “Atherton has asked for some terms with (the JPA) to deal with our lack of commercial businesses and the impact of the costs related to (its) commercial customers on Atherton and we haven’t been able to solve that issue, so we decided to see if there is an alternative that would be more attractive to Atherton.”

The town is now considering employing the services of GreenWaste Recovery Services, which “responded with a proposal that could be better for Atherton residents than Recology,” DeGolia said.

There was no public comment on the item at the meeting.

See **TOWN SUSPENDS**, page 17

How San Mateo County courts are reacting to the coronavirus threat

By Rick Radin
Almanac Staff Writer

State Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye on March 17 issued an emergency order enabling the San Mateo County Superior Court to mitigate the effects of the rapidly spreading coronavirus crisis.

San Mateo County Presiding Judge Jonathan Karesh then ordered that all trials be suspended for up to 30 days and the time limits on conducting preliminary hearings be continued from 10 court days to 15 court days.

All jury trials are being rescheduled to new dates beginning on April 7, according to San Mateo County District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe.

“This will cut down on the thousands of jurors that appear in court,” he said.

The time period in which someone is charged and brought to court, which is an in-custody arraignment, has also been changed from 48 hours to five days, Wagstaffe said.

The court’s goal is to reduce its staff down to 11 judges. It currently has 28. Wagstaffe said he has reduced his staff in the workplace by 55%.

“We are all telecommuting from home,” he said. “It keeps people out of the workplace so they can shelter in place.”

“If there is room to send more people home, we will do so,” he added. “We will reassess the situation in two weeks.”

Suspension of trials and all traffic matters has taken effect, he said. People who have misdemeanor arraignments or misdemeanor pre-trial conferences, family law, probate, civil, small claims, or traffic hearings scheduled through April 15 will be notified by mail of their new court date.

Traffic court is closed through April 7 and all hearings between through April 7 are excused, according to the court’s website.

The presiding judge also ordered that the following matters be continued or rescheduled: all civil and small claims matters, all criminal matters unless the defendant has invoked his constitutional right to a speedy trial or speedy preliminary hearing, all traffic matters, and nearly all family law and probate hearings.

With few exceptions, the court will be closed to the public through April 7.

“The courts are continuing a number of matters,” said Lisa Maguire, chief defender in the county private defender program. “People are coming to court thinking they were moving forward with their case, and now we’re seeing a new and problematic situations.”

For now, the order is allowing the courts to operate on a limited basis until April 7, Maguire said.

“We’ll take it day by day and see how it goes,” she said. “One thing we know is that keeping people in custody requires keeping them in close quarters.”

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Improve your student's writing skills this summer at Emerson School of Palo Alto and Hacienda School of Pleasanton. Courses this year are Expository Writing, Creative Writing and Presentation Skills.

headsupsup.org

Emerson: (650) 424-1267
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castilleja.org/i2camp

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Stanford

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Stratford infuses its STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) curriculum into an innovative and enriching summer camp experience. Younger campers learn, explore, and engage in hands-on learning projects, while Elementary-age students collaborate to tackle real-world problems by utilizing academic principles and concepts in a fun and engaging way. At the Middle School level, individual subject-based enrichment classes are offered and tailored for each grade level.

stratfordschools.com/summerpa@stratfordschools.com

Palo Alto/Bay Area

(650) 493-1141

ARTS, CULTURE, OTHER CAMPS

Art and Soul Camp

Art, cooking, tinkering, yoga and mindfulness. We celebrate multiple perspectives and recognize the many ways for our children to interpret their world. Summer Unplugged! is appropriate for ages 6-11 years. Located at Walter Hays School.

artandsoulpa.com

Palo Alto

(650) 269-0423

Castilleja Summer Camp for Girls Palo Alto

Castilleja Summer Camp for Girls Palo Alto Casti Camp offers girls entering grades 2-6 a range of age-appropriate activities including athletics, art, science, computers, writing, crafts, cooking, drama and music classes each day along with weekly field trips. Leadership program available for girls entering grades 7-9.

castilleja.org/summercamp

Palo Alto

(650) 470-7833

Community School of Music

Community School of Music and Arts (CSMA) Mountain View 50+ creative camps for grades K-12! Drawing, Painting, Ceramics, Sculpture, Musical Theater, Summer Music Workshops and more! One and two-week sessions; full and half-day enrollment. Extended care from 8:30am-5:30pm. Financial aid offered.

arts4all.org

Mountain View

(650) 917-6800 ext. 0

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Let's Go Crafting

Let's Go Crafting's Studio is where your child will have fun while learning many different fiber related arts. We teach sewing, knitting, crochet, weaving and jewelry making to children ages 8 to 15 years. AM or PM camps \$275/week. Full day camps \$550/week. 5 student minimum for all sessions; 10 student maximum.

letsgocrafting.org

Palo Alto

(650) 814-4183

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Camps at the OFJCC introduce your child to new experiences while creating friendships in a fun and safe environment. We work to build confidence, stretch imaginations and teach new skills.

paloaltojcc.org/Camps

Palo Alto

(650) 223-8622

Palo Alto Community Child Care (PACCC)

PACCC summer camps offer campers, grades 1st to 6th, a wide variety of engaging opportunities. We are excited to announce all of your returning favorites: Leaders in Training (L.I.T.), Camp YOUNIQUE, F.A.M.E. (Fine Arts, Music and Entertainment), J.V. Sports, Operation: Chef and Chef Jr.! Periodic field trips, special visitors and many engaging camp activities, songs and skits round out the variety of offerings at PACCC Summer Camps. Open to campers from all communities. Register online.

paccc.org

Palo Alto

(650) 493-2361

Stanford Jazz Workshop

World-renowned jazz camps at Stanford. Week-long jazz immersion programs for middle school musicians (July 6-10), high school (July 12-17 and July 19-24), and adults (July 26-31). All instruments and vocals. No jazz experience necessary!

stanfordjazz.org

Stanford

(650) 736-0324

TheatreWorks Silicon Valley

Campers bring their plays to life, make new friends, and practice collaboration skills at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's PlayMakers Camp (grades K-5). TheatreWorks offers four sessions in Palo Alto and Atherton from June 8 - July 31. Campers learn acting, playwriting, movement, and stagecraft from professional teaching artists from the Tony Award-winning local company.

theatreworks.org/education

Palo Alto

Atherton

(650) 463-7146

ATHLETICS

Dance Connection Palo Alto

Share the joy of dance with us! Our studio is an extended family and a "home away from home" for our community of children and teens. At Dance Connection, we value the positive energy and atmosphere that we continuously strive to provide. Summer Dance Camps include all styles of dance for ages 4 and up and features our new "This is Me!" Empowerment Camp along with Teen Jazz and Hip Hop Camps. A Summer Session for ages 3 to adults will be offered from June 8 - July 31.

danceconnectionpaloalto.com/dance-connection-event-calendar/summer-dance-camps

(650) 852-0418 or (650) 322-7032

Palo Alto

Kim Grant Tennis Summer Camps

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Palo Alto

Monterey Bay

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Call: (650) 752-8061

ATHLETICS

Nike Tennis Camps

Junior Overnight and Day Camps for boys & girls, ages 9-18 offered throughout June, July and August. Adult Weekend Clinics (June & Aug). Camps directed by Head Men's Coach, Paul Goldstein, Head Women's Coach, Lele Forood, and Associate Men's and Women's Coaches, Brandon Coupe and Frankie Brennan. Come join the fun and get better this summer!

ussportscamps.com

Stanford University

(800) NIKE-CAMP
(800) 645-3226

Run for Fun Camps

Run for Fun's mission is to provide creative and engaging play for all youth by getting kids active in an inclusive community centered around outdoor fun! We pride ourselves on hiring an enthusiastic, highly trained staff who love what they do. Summer 2020 features four weeks of Adventure Day Camp and two weeks of Overnight Camp High Five. Adventure Day Camp is a new discovery every day filled with sports, crafts and nature, including explorations to Camp Jones Gulch, Capitola Beach, Foothills Park, Shoreline Lake and Great America. Camp High Five is six days and five nights of traditional overnight camp mixed with challenge-by-choice activities, campfires, friendships and lots of laughter.

runforfuncamps.com/summer-camps-and-school-holiday-camps/camp-overview

(650) 823-5167

Bay Area

Spartans Sports Camp

Spartans Sports Camp offers a wide variety of sports, performing arts, and academic enrichment camps for kids entering grades 1-9. Experienced staff ensures everyone has fun. Daily on-site swimming is offered for all camps. Camps begin June 8th and run weekly through July 31st at Mountain View High School. The camp is run by MVHS coaches and student-athletes and all proceeds benefit the MVHS Athletic Department. Lunch and extended care are available for your convenience. Flexible cancellation policies.

spartanssportscamp.com

Mountain View

(650) 479-5906

Stanford Athletics & Youth

We can't wait to have you join us this summer at Stanford! We hope you're ready for engaged and safety-focused staff, phenomenal facilities, and innovative programs. We'll have camps that challenge your camper's physical, mental, and social skills in age-appropriate activities. When your camper registers for Camp Cardinal, they are a Cardinal Kid for life. Our main camper program is for grades K-6 and then campers graduate to our Counselor-in-Training Program where they become camp leaders!

campcardinal.org

campcardinal@stanford.edu

Stanford

Stanford Baseball Camps

At Sunken Diamond on the campus of Stanford University. A variety of camps are offered to benefit a wide range of age groups and skill sets. Campers will gain instruction in several baseball skills, fundamentals, team concepts, and game play.

stanfordbaseballcamp.com

(650) 725-2054

Stanford

Stanford Water Polo Camps

New to water polo or have experience, we have a camp for you. Half day or full day options for boys and girls ages 7 and up. All camps provide fundamental skills, scrimmages and games.

stanfordwaterpolocamps.com

Stanford

YMCA of Silicon Valley Summer Camps

At the Y, children and teens of all abilities acquire new skills, make friends, and feel that they belong. With hundreds of Summer Day Camps plus Overnight Camps, you will find a camp that's right for your family. Sign up today, camps are filling up! Financial assistance is available.

ymcasv.org/summercamp

(408) 351-6473

Silicon Valley



NOTICE REQUESTING BIDS WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT Diesel Tanks Replacement Project

Sealed proposals for the DIESEL TANKS REPLACEMENT PROJECT will be received at the West Bay Sanitary District, 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, California 94025 until 2:00 PM on Wednesday, April 15, 2020 at which time they will be publicly opened and read. Bids shall be labeled "West Bay Sanitary District, Proposal for "DIESEL TANKS REPLACEMENT PROJECT."

The Work will include the furnishing of all labor, materials and equipment for the replacement of 3 existing diesel fuel tanks at 3 of the District's Pump Stations; at 63 Los Trancos Road, Portola Valley, 1002 Hamilton Court, Menlo Park, 17 Stowe Lane, Menlo Park, with additive work to provide 1 additional spare tank at the District's FERRF at 1700 Marsh Road, Menlo Park.

The contract documents may be inspected at the office of the West Bay Sanitary District; San Francisco Builders Exchange, Attn: Deanna Johnson, 850 So. Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, California 94110; Construct Connect, Attn: John Fermiza, 30 Technology Parkway South, Suite 100, Norcross, Georgia 30092; Peninsula Builders Exchange, Attn: Andrea Nettles, 282 Harboar Blvd, Bldg D, Belmont, California 94002; Santa Clara Builders Exchange, Attn: Kanani Fonseca, 400 Reed Street, Santa Clara, California 95050; Builders Exchange of Alameda, Attn: Jeannie Kwan, 3055 Alvarado Street, San Leandro, California 94577; Construction Bidboard, Incorporated, Attn: Plan Room, 11622 El Camino Real, Suite 100, San Diego, California 92108; Contra Costa Builders Exchange, Attn: April Hamilton, 2440 Stanwell Drive, Suite B, Concord, California 94520.

Copies of the Contract Documents may be obtained at the office of the West Bay Sanitary District upon payment of a check or money order in the amount of \$60.00 for each set. The check or money order must be issued to the West Bay Sanitary District. All payments are nonrefundable.

A non-mandatory pre-bid meeting will be held at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at the office of the West Bay Sanitary District.

Each bid proposal shall be accompanied by a certified or cashier's check or a proposal guaranty bond payable to the order of the West Bay Sanitary District in an amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the amount of the bid as a guaranty that the bidder will execute the contract if it be awarded to him in conformity with the proposal. The successful bidder will be required to furnish a performance bond in an amount not less than one hundred percent (100%) of the contract price and a labor and material bond in an amount equal to one hundred percent (100%) of the contract price.

The District ("Owner") reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to determine which proposal is, in the judgment of the District, the lowest responsible bid of a responsible bidder or group of bidders and which proposal should be accepted in the best interest of the District. The District also reserves the right to waive any informalities in any proposal or bid.

Bid proposals received after the time announced for the opening will not be considered. No bidder may withdraw his proposal after the time announced for the opening, or before award and execution of the contract, unless the award is delayed for a period exceeding forty-five (45) days.

Pursuant to the provisions of Public Contract Code Section 22300, and upon the request and at the expense of the Contractor, securities equivalent to the amount withheld by the District to insure performance under the Contract may be deposited with the District, or with a state or federally chartered bank as escrow agent who shall deliver such securities to the Contractor upon satisfactory completion of the contract. Only those securities listed in Government Code Section 16430 or other securities approved by the District are eligible for deposit. The deposit of securities with an escrow agent or the District shall be made in the form and on such terms and conditions as the District may require to protect the interest of the District in the event of the Contractor's default. The Contractor shall be the beneficial owner of any securities that are deposited and shall receive any interest thereon.

Pertaining to Sections 1770, 1773, and 1773.1 of the California Labor Code the successful bidder shall pay not less than the prevailing rate of per diem wages as determined by the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations. Copies of such prevailing rates are on file at the District office of the West Bay Sanitary District and which copies shall be made available to any interested party on request. The successful bidder shall post a copy of such determinations at each job site.

In accordance with the provisions of California Public Contract Code Section 3300, the District has determined that the Contractor shall possess a valid Class A License or a combination of the Class C licenses indicated in Article B8.01-License Requirements, at the time this contract is awarded. Failure to possess the specified license(s) shall render the bid as non-responsive and shall act as a bar to award of the contract to any bidder not possessing said license(s) at the time of award.

West Bay Sanitary District
Board of Directors
San Mateo County, California

/s/ Phil Scott
District Manager

Dated: March 2020

Nonprofit starts virtual group for early learning ed

By Angela Swartz
Almanac Staff Writer

A Menlo Park-based nonprofit is launching a virtual discussion group for early childhood education program administrators in San Mateo County as many cope with the challenges of continuing to provide services during the statewide shelter-in-place order to stop the spread of COVID-19.

As most schools and businesses close in the county, some day care centers remain open and child care providers are confronted with very difficult choices, according to a March 19 press release from the Community Equity Collaborative that facilitates partnerships between organizations to expand educational opportunities for Silicon Valley's youth.

There are provisions in county shelter-in-place orders to allow child care providers that support essential workers and first responders to remain open, the nonprofit's co-founder Dayna Chung explained in an email.

"Many of the products needed to, at a minimum, maintain a sanitary space are in short supply, not to mention the greater risks of asymptomatic spread," she wrote. "And, social distancing with a toddler is not exactly feasible! The early learning community was already one that operates with razor-thin margins and a workforce known for low wages. These are very tough questions for preschool owners/directors to grapple with and that is why we are organizing this virtual discussion group where ideas and solutions can be shared. And, frankly, where participants can also find support."

Many providers are searching for support and solutions, according to the nonprofit. The purpose of the group is to:

- Share resources and offer support to other early childhood learning administrators during this time.

- Gather information about on-the-ground early childhood learning needs for the San Mateo County COVID-19 Early Childhood Response Committee.

Sign up for a discussion group at tinyurl.com/ECEdiscussion?. Join the online forum at pt-roundtable.boards.net?

For information, contact Heather Hopkins at heather@communityequitycollaborative.org.

Schools close, but meals still offered to students in need

Districts in Woodside, Menlo Park, Atherton and Portola Valley take steps to ensure all students stay fed during closures

By **Angela Swartz**
Almanac Staff Writer

While schools are closed temporarily, students and families in Woodside, Menlo Park, Atherton and Portola Valley will still have access to free meals provided by the public school districts. Gov. Gavin Newsom announced March 17 that schools will likely be closed for the rest of the school year.

Food distribution to students is considered an “essential” activity and can continue to operate despite new restrictions placed on nonessential activity, travel and business under a new shelter-in-place order announced by Bay Area public health officials on March 16. Food can only be provided for pickup and dropoff and it cannot be eaten at the locations where it’s picked up, the order states.

Districts in The Almanac’s coverage area are taking different approaches to preparing lunches and/or breakfast for its students who receive free and reduced-price meals.

The Menlo Park City School

District is delivering meals to the homes of students on free or reduced-price lunch plans.

Breakfast and lunch will be provided to Sequoia Union High School District students who are in need of meals, according to the district’s website. All school sites, which include TIDE Academy in Menlo Park, Woodside High in Woodside and Menlo-Atherton High in Atherton, will have packaged meals for student or parent pickup during the following times:

■ Breakfast/lunch meals: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Students will be able to pick up lunch and the following day’s breakfast after 10 a.m. To receive meals, students will need to provide their name, student identification number and the name of the district school they attend.

Bus drivers for the Las Lomitas Elementary School District — which has one school in Menlo Park and one in Atherton — is delivering lunches to all its students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch daily, Superintendent Beth Polito said in an email to The Almanac.

The Woodside Elementary



Photo by Sammy Dallal/The Almanac

A student picks up a meal at Menlo-Atherton High School on March 19. County school districts are required to continue providing free and reduced price meals to students during a three-week shutdown.

School District has nearly 40 students who are eligible for its lunch program, Superintendent Steve Frank said in a March 17 email to The Almanac. Woodside is partnering with the Ravenswood City School District for meal distribution, which began March 16 and runs

through March 26, when Ravenswood is off for spring break.

Families can pick up meals at Ravenswood schools through that time. During the Ravenswood district’s six-day spring break, the Woodside district will be delivering meals to students.

All families have been notified

of the locations at the Ravenswood schools where there is a coordinated pickup time each day, Frank said.

If the school closure continues beyond Woodside’s spring break, which ends on April 13,

See **SCHOOL MEALS**, page 17

Support local food businesses and stay well-fed

Check out our guide to local takeout, delivery

We’ve compiled this ever-evolving list of restaurants, cafes, breweries, wine shops and bakeries throughout the Bay Area that are providing takeout or delivery service while in-person dining has been suspended due to public health restrictions to stem the spread of the coronavirus.

The **Almanac**
Online



Find local takeout and delivery options at [AlmanacNews.com/restaurants](https://www.almanacnews.com/restaurants)

COPING WITH CRISIS



A group of people walk around Bedwell Bayfront Park by a very empty Bayfront Expressway in Menlo Park on March 19.

HOW YOUR NEIGHBORS, BUSINESSES AND PUBLIC AGENCIES ARE CARRYING ON WITH LIFE IN THE FACE OF THE CORONAVIRUS THREAT

Photos by Magali Gauthier and Sammy Dallal

How people respond to crisis can be seen as a measure of character, as well as of common sense, resiliency and determination. Those traits are on full display in our community as residents and others who work and volunteer in the area don masks, take precautions while traveling to their destinations, take to the outdoors for a respite from their concerns, and otherwise perform everyday tasks in order to take care of their families and friends.

Almanac photographers Magali Gauthier and Sammy Dallal spent much of the last two weeks capturing images of people coping with the COVID-19 threat that has disrupted our lives. Here are some of the photos they returned with.



Above, An electronic marquee reads “DISINFECT 2 PROTECT WASH YOUR HANDS” along southbound Highway 101 in Menlo Park by the Willow Road exit during commute time on March 17. **At right,** a medical professional speaks to a driver by a testing tent in Menlo Park that closely resembles COVID-19 testing drive-thrus throughout the Bay Area. Signage around the lot indicates the testing site is run by Stanford Health Care. Stanford did not confirm whether this site is being used to test people for COVID-19.



Clockwise, from right: Ada Braun shops with caution at Bianchini's Market in Portola Valley on March 20; Zoua Her and Lene Lauese, staff members at Ecumenical Hunger Program, put bags of produce in a client's car at the nonprofit in East Palo Alto on March 19; a woman walks past an Atherton house with sheets of paper spelling out "Hi Friends"; Brian Perez, 18, picks up lunch from Maria Vilchez at Menlo-Atherton High School on March 19; a woman looks at signs outside the closed Menlo Park Library after the city declared a "local state of emergency."



On the cover: Flora Sosa cleans a shelf that holds peanut butter at Draeger's Market in Menlo Park on March 16. Photo by Magali Gauthier.



Clockwise, from left: Jamie Kerr, an Alice's Restaurant co-owner, rings up customer Rachael Garcia on March 20. The restaurant is still open for take out and limited deliveries; Katherine Tincher shops at Bianchini's Market on March 20; five people sit in a train car leaving the Menlo Park station heading northbound around 5 p.m. on March 13; two gift cards, each worth \$50, sit in a box at Alice's Restaurant in Woodside. Customers who can afford to have started purchasing gift cards and leaving them at the restaurant for future customers who may need help paying for a meal.



Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

ROYAL TLC
 FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
 File No.: 284025
 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
 Royal TLC, located at 656 Walnut St. Suite 100, San Carlos, CA 94070, San Mateo County.
 Registered owner(s):
 NANTAWAT CHINKULWONG
 657 Elm St. #4
 San Carlos, CA 94070
 APISAK RUANGPIPHOP
 657 Elm St. #4
 San Carlos, CA 94070
 This business is conducted by: A General Partnership.
 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 February 26, 2020.
 (ALM Mar. 11, 18, 25; Apr. 1, 2020)

ROBERT KING ASSOCIATES
 FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
 File No.: 284214
 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
 Robert King Associates, located at 919 Clinton St. #5, Redwood City, CA 94070, San Mateo County.
 Registered owner(s):
 HOSPITALITY DESIGN INC.
 919 Clinton St. #5
 Redwood City, CA 94061
 California
 This business is conducted by: A Corporation.
 The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 6/1/18.
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 12, 2020.
 (ALM Mar. 18, 25; Apr. 1, 8, 2020)

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COVID-19 delays updates on parcel tax measure

Only two-thirds of votes have been counted

By Angela Swartz

Almanac Staff Writer

Updated election results for Measure P, a parcel tax measure for the Portola Valley School District that is currently falling short of the votes needed to pass, will be delayed because of restrictions on the vote-counting process due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The elections office website previously indicated that officials would post updates on vote counts from the March 3 election at 4:30 p.m. on March 17, 20, 24 and 27. Due to the countywide shelter-at-home order issued on March 16, a team of minimal staff will be at the elections office on March 20 and 27 to complete the processing of these ballots, said Jim Irizarry, San Mateo County's assistant chief elections officer and assessor-county clerk

recorder, in an email.

"Our results reporting process requires two-person integrity in our tally room, with both staff members watching the same monitor," Irizarry said. "Given the necessarily close quarters, the fact that the tally room has limited ventilation, and the number of remaining ballots, we made the decision to limit further results reporting to the Statement of the Vote. This is both for our staff's safety, and to ensure our key personnel are healthy and available to continue in their roles during the preparation for the Presidential General Election."

Staff should be able to count the remaining ballots during the two designated tallying days, and if that fails to happen, the county will have staff members count votes on additional days, Irizarry said. Certification will proceed on schedule no later than April

1, he said.

The only ballots still being processed fall into two categories. The first are those that are challenged due to a missing or non-matching signature, Irizarry said. The county will be resolving challenged ballots and counting them until two days before certification. He expects that the county will be adding to the total number of ballots up until around April 1.

The second category involves ballots cast under conditional voter registration, which require elections staff members to review the registration to ensure it was valid before the vote is counted. The majority of these ballots have been processed, and those that remain are awaiting information from other counties, he said.

"We appreciate the county's continued effort to count every ballot and certify the election," said Portola Valley School

District Superintendent Roberta Zarea. "We understand that this is especially difficult in these challenging and unprecedented times."

With 67.77% of the votes counted by the afternoon of March 13, 64.43% of voters supported the measure, which requires a two-thirds, or 67%, voter majority, county election officials reported.

Semi-official election results released at 4:30 p.m. on March 13 show Measure P with 2,210 votes of support and 1,220 opposing votes (35.57%).

Those results include vote by mail ballots received by post by the Monday before Election Day, on March 3, vote by mail ballots returned at vote centers and drop boxes by the Sunday before Election Day, and a portion of votes cast at vote centers on Election Day, according to county elections officials.

The numbers have shifted only slightly from the last results released in the early morning hours of March 4, when the measure had 63.46% voter approval. There were 1,525 more ballots counted between then and March 13.

Measure P would update the

district's Measure O parcel tax, which expires in June 2021. It would continue the tax at its current rate of \$581 per parcel in its first year, then increase it by 3% in each following year for the duration of the tax, which would expire in 2028.

The current parcel tax generates about \$1.2 million annually for Portola Valley School District classroom programs and teaching staff. The yearly boost in the tax would amount to an additional \$17 to \$21 per parcel annually, said district Chief Business Officer Connie Ngo.

In addition to Portola Valley residents, the district includes Woodside residents who live in the Skyllonda and Skywood Acres neighborhoods and off Philips and Family Farm roads, and part of Mountain Home Road.

The current tax, Measure O, funds advanced math, science and technology programs; reading and writing programs; art and music programs; reduced class sizes; and retention of teachers for the district's two schools, Ormondale and Corte Madera, according to the district website. District staff asserts that the measure "must be renewed" to maintain these programs. ■

TOWN SUSPENDS

continued from page 9

If the town were to withdraw from the JPA, it must issue a notice of intent to do so at least six months prior to the end of the current rate year, according to a staff report.

In May 2019, town staff released a request for proposals for solid waste services, according to a report staff prepared for the meeting. The town's franchise agreement with Recology, through its membership in the JPA, expires in December 2020.

In June 2019, the town awarded a contract to R3 Consulting Group to research alternative garbage collection services.

The Bayside JPA includes 11 other public agencies, the

town's website states. It owns the Shoreway Environmental Center in San Carlos, where all trash, recyclables and organics are delivered after collection, according to the website.

"The town has financially supported each of the JPA's initiatives, predominantly including the development, construction, and management of the Shoreway Environmental Center," a letter from Rodericks to the South Bayside Waste Management Authority JPA states. "If the Town was to withdraw from the JPA, the value of the Center — proportionate to the Town's contribution to the Center's development — would properly be valued as an asset owed to the Town, less the value of the Town's use of the Center until

the time of withdrawal."

State of emergency

The council also approved a "local state of emergency" proclamation issued by Rodericks on March 13. The order allows the town to change its operations during the coronavirus outbreak.

For example, the town has canceled all committee meetings until April 30; City Council and Planning Commission meeting agendas will be limited to essential action items only.

The town is still obligated under an order from Gov. Gavin Newsom to provide the public access space, so staff will set up a seating area, appropriately spaced, a speaker system and a microphone in Holbrook-Palmer Park's Pavilion. ■

family is eligible for meals equal to the number of children in the car. Both districts are asking families to stay in their cars and to avoid congregating when picking up meals.

Students in Palo Alto Unified's Voluntary Transfer Program (VTP) who live in East Palo Alto can pick up meals at Ravenswood schools. Ravenswood is offering meals to any students in East Palo Alto, regardless of whether they attend district schools.

Ravenswood also will offer home delivery for families who cannot come to the schools. Those families can contact the district's transportation department at 650-329-2800, ext. 60172.

The Ravenswood Education Foundation has launched an emergency fund to provide

financial relief related to the school closures for families, teachers and staff. The district is working to identify needs for the funds, including food access and distribution; support with rent, bills and groceries for families; distance learning; and financial support for staff, particularly certificated, hourly employees. If emergency needs do not deplete the fund, donations will roll over to support district programs when school resumes.

Ravenswood is also looking for volunteers who speak Spanish and English to help teachers and families communicate during distance learning. Adults who are bilingual and available to be part of virtual conference calls with teachers and families can fill out the form at tinyurl.com/vv8u6c8. ■

SCHOOL MEALS

continued from page 13

Ravenswood will continue to provide lunch service, he said.

A San Mateo County health department order issued on March 13 to close all transitional kindergarten through 12th grade schools required all schools to dismiss students from regular attendance from March 16 to April 3. Facilities may be used by school districts to provide free and reduced price meals to students.

Palo Alto and East Palo Alto

In Palo Alto and East Palo Alto, the meals will be distributed in a drive-through model to reduce contact. Children must be present in order for the food to be provided, and each

WEST BAY
SANITARY DISTRICT



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT
500 LAUREL STREET
MENLO PARK, CA 94025

NOTICE IS GIVEN that the District Board of West Bay Sanitary District will conduct a public hearing on Wednesday, April 22, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. The hearing will be held in the District's Board Room located at 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park.

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider a proposed increase in sewer services charges for fiscal year 2020/2021. Additional information is available through the District's website at www.westbaysanitary.org and on the official notice that was mailed to every parcel address that pays District rates.

The annual sewer service charge will increase from \$1,177 per single family residence to \$1,224 in fiscal year 2020/2021. Approximately 79 homes in the Portola Valley area (located within the On-Site Wastewater Disposal Zone) who pay higher charges for the maintenance of their STEP or Grinder Sewer Collection Systems will increase from \$1,497 per single family residence to \$1,694 in fiscal year 2020/2021 in order to realign charges with the cost of service, charges for the maintenance of the STEP/Grinder Sewer Collection Systems. Non-residential rates will increase proportionately according to loading characteristics. The increased charges are required to fund needed maintenance and reconstruction to the sewer system and to the Silicon Valley Clean Water regional wastewater treatment plant.

Protests against the proposed rate increase must be submitted in writing by 4:00pm on April 22, 2020, and signed by the property owner, must identify the owner(s) of the property for which the protest is entered, and must include the property address and assessor's parcel number (APN).

/s/ Phil Scott

Phil Scott, District Manager



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Community

STORIES ABOUT PEOPLE AND EVENTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Facebook launches \$10M match fundraiser for coronavirus efforts

By Tyler Callister
Almanac Staff Writer

Menlo Park-based tech company Facebook has initiated a \$10 million match fundraiser to support efforts to fight the novel coronavirus, a move announced in a Facebook post by CEO Mark Zuckerberg on March 13.

The social networking company has opened a fundraiser page where people can donate, and Facebook said it will match the donations up to \$10 million.

The current amount of contributions to the page as of March 23 totals about \$4.9 million.

The funds raised will go toward the World Health Organization's efforts to battle the coronavirus, according to the fundraising page.

"It's critical that global and national health organizations leading the response efforts have the financial support needed in rapidly emerging response needs," the company said in a statement. "Following major crises, like COVID-19, our community always steps up to help.

Because this is a health crisis, it's not as easy for people to know how or where to help.

"Now, with the launch of the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fundraiser, they can support and donate to the WHO's global efforts to track the outbreak, help patients and frontline workers, and speed up vaccine and treatment development."

The recent fundraising announcement comes after Zuckerberg announced in a March 3 post that the company would be giving the World Health Organization free ads on the social network, which the company says has 2.5 billion active users.

The company also said that it plans to launch a second fundraiser in the coming weeks for the CDC Foundation, a nonprofit that supports the efforts of the national Centers for Disease Control.

Facebook, which is Menlo Park's largest employer with over 15,000 employees, was among the first of Silicon Valley companies to ask employees to begin working from home two weeks ago in order to help slow

the spread of the coronavirus.

Closer to home

As the coronavirus crisis deepens, so too does the economic impact — a big risk for low-income residents at the local level.

In addition to its worldwide efforts, Facebook has been making contributions to local organizations bracing for the economic effects of the pandemic, according to a statement from the company.

"The current COVID-19 situation has impacted people everywhere, including many of our neighbors, and we're committed to helping them weather this storm," said John Tenanes, Facebook's vice president of global facilities and real estate. "Just this week (of March 15), we've provided more than \$650,000 in food and donations to help feed more than 20,000 in the Bay Area."

Menlo Park residents will see the benefits of these donations, as many organizations including the Menlo Park Senior Center and the Ravenswood Education Foundation have received contributions. ■

Former Menlo Park resident Magda Fischel Levy dies at 97

By Rick Radin
Almanac Staff Writer

Former Menlo Park resident Magda Fischel Levy, who drew on her experience as a Hungarian Holocaust survivor, artist and maxillofacial prosthetician to provide reconstructive facial prosthetics for cancer survivors, died on Wednesday at age 97.

She was living in Bristol, Rhode Island, at the time of her death, according to her son-in-law, R. Todd Johnson of Menlo Park. Before moving there, she lived with her daughter and son-in-law, Lil and Todd, residing in Sharon Heights since 2011.

Levy was born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1922. She knew from the age of 7 that she wanted to be a surgeon, but Hungary's laws prevented Jews from attending university, and the Nazi occupation ended her dreams, according to her family.

Following the end of the war in 1945, Levy attended university for a few months, just long enough to obtain a passport to

Austria on her way to an Italian displaced persons' camp. For the next several years, she became one of a generation of Eastern European wanderers, her family said.

Upon her arrival in Italy, she was deported back to Austria because "people with valid passports couldn't stay in displaced persons' camps."

Levy plotted her illegal return to Italy with a guide to lead a nighttime trek over the Alps, her family said.

In Italy, Levy received her first formal training in sculpting at the Academia Albertina di Belle Arte in Torino, where she began a six-year period that proved to be the most prolific of her career.

She later moved to New York, joining her sister and brother. There, she continued sculpting and worked in a medical laboratory. In 1951, she married Michel Levy, who preceded her in death in 1984.

Her work as a prosthetician began when she was encouraged to help a friend who needed a prosthetic hand. Without

formal training in the field, she worked with scientists at chemical companies who were experimenting in the new field and plastics and foams, and worked to perfect the art of sculpting faces for those suffering deformities, her family said.

Although she never became a surgeon, her facial reconstructive work at medical centers such as Columbia Presbyterian Hospital, New York University and Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center produced results that received great acclaim in the U.S. and abroad, according to her family. She retired in 1984 as a result of macular degeneration.

While living in Menlo Park, Levy had limited mobility because of her vision limitations, but she was active in Stanford Wellness programs and the Peninsula Community Jewish Center, Johnson said.



Magda Fischel Levy



Contributed photo

Eagle Scouts Hazen Stribling, left, and Kevin Box

Troop 206 sends two more scouts soaring with the Eagles

Contributed by Kim Freitas of Troop 206

Two local scouts — Kevin Box and Hazen Stribling — received their Eagle award from Troop 206 at a Court of Honor held in January at Trinity Church in Menlo Park.

Troop 206, first chartered by Trinity Episcopal Church in Menlo Park in 1958, has advanced 187 scouts to Eagle rank in the past 55 years. Its membership currently includes 44 active scouts from Atherton, Menlo Park, Woodside and Redwood City.

The scouts, who each earned at least 21 merit badges, acquired leadership and outdoor skills, and completed independent service projects, are:

Kevin Box, 18, the son of Michelle and Mark Box of Menlo Park. During Kevin's seven years with the troop he has thoroughly enjoyed his outdoor experiences, including summer camp at Camp Meriwether in Oregon (three times) and on Catalina Island, and his trek at Philmont in 2016. He served in a number of leadership roles, including patrol leader, quartermaster, and troop guide.

For his Eagle project, Kevin and a team of scouts he led provided landscaping and clean-up of the grounds at the Rich May Field in East Palo Alto. The field is used by soccer and rugby teams based in and around East Palo Alto. It was built and is maintained through

contributions and volunteer work projects of community members.

Kevin attended Oak Knoll Elementary School and Hillview Middle School. He is a senior at Sacred Heart Prep and is captain of the SHP soccer team.

He will attend Harvey Mudd College in the fall, where he will study engineering and play on the Claremont Mudd Scripps soccer team.

Hazen Stribling, 17, is the son of Michela and Jeff Stribling of Menlo Park. He is currently the senior patrol leader for Troop 206, and is a member of the Order of the Arrow.

For his Eagle project, Hazen led the building of 28 raised redwood planter boxes, a number of which were compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), for a North Fair Oaks Community Garden in unincorporated Menlo Park. The boxes will help local residents grow vegetables.

Hazen is a senior at Menlo-Atherton High School, where he has excelled academically. He is particularly interested in the sciences and mathematics and intends to study biochemistry in college. His ultimate goal is to go to medical school and become a surgeon.

A gifted musician, Hazen has studied guitar for more than 10 years and has self-published two albums of original music. He follows in the Eagle Scout footsteps of his father.

She is survived by her children Diana Levy of Tiverton, Rhode Island, Joseph Levy of Chicago, and Lil Johnson (Todd) of Menlo Park.

The family requests that memorial donations be made to USC's Shoah Foundation, Doctors Without Borders, or the Jewish National Foundation. ■

HOME CLASSROOM

continued from page 5

submissions.

K-8 teachers may opt to hold live video chats over Google Hangout with students for instruction, to host discussions and to continue to build social-emotional connections with students, district officials said.

Brian Darmanin said he has been using platforms such as Google Classroom in his video production and leadership classes at Hillview Middle School since 2012.

“This made the transition a little easier, but certainly not without obstacles,” he said in an email. “Our video production classes rely upon creating a collaborative and creative team environment. We are starting off slow with at-home daily vlogs that students can edit about their experiences and share family life from the ‘new normal.’ This will allow students to contextualize the experience while still practicing storytelling through a visual medium. I also think it will make for an interesting time capsule for them.”

The school will pilot virtual spirit weeks with ideas like “Wag Wednesday,” in which students can post a photo with their pet to the leadership group’s social media page to “spread messages of encouragement and support.”

Portola Valley School District

Upper-grade teachers in the Portola Valley district will use Google Classroom to upload content — from podcasts to Khan Academy videos to online textbook assignments, said John Davenport, a grades 7-8 social studies teacher at Corte Madera School.

Davenport said he planned to use Google Meet video conferencing to have live meetings with students as well, and that students will give a lecture to other students online through the platform.

Students in grades K-3 can pick up and drop off assignments at Ormondale School, he said. Pick up and drop off times are intentionally staggered so there aren’t many people together at one time, he noted.

All students in the Portola Valley district already have a district-issued Chromebook, which they can use for distance learning, he said.

Davenport said the transition to distance learning has been smooth. Teachers were given the afternoon of March 13, along with March 16 and 17, to prepare materials.

“My sense of things from talking to other teachers is everyone is fine with it,” he said. “We’re well situated with our access to technology. A lot of it has to

do with how the administration handles the transition, and they made it a lot easier on the teachers. ... It’s interesting to see how quickly, strongly and well this district has made this transition.”

Las Lomitas Elementary School District

Las Lomitas district teachers are using SeeSaw, Google Classroom, DreamBox, BrainPop, Khan Academy, audiobook app Access and other platforms for distance learning, along with workbooks, journals and textbooks, said Shannon Potts, the district’s assistant superintendent, in a March 17 email.

Teachers are recording videos and group video-conferencing with students, posting virtual field trips and more, she said.

The number of assignments and the amount of time students will be engaged in learning increase from kindergarten through eighth grade, with eighth graders spending about three and half hours per day on work, Potts said. All elective teachers will contribute up to 20 minutes per day with ideas and lessons that support and complement the core curriculum.

“Things we considered when picking the delivery model and the apps: software programs; the age of the students; the impact your plans might have on the adults working with the students at home; families with students at multiple grade levels; resources available to families (we supported students with Wi-Fi and a device as needed); the number of devices students may or may not have available; and the isolation factor (incorporate a virtual conversation or meeting to support students through this time away from



Photo by Magali Gauthier/The Almanac

John Davenport, a social studies teacher at Corte Madera School, looks over projects his students have submitted online at his home in San Carlos on March 17.

their teachers and friends.),” she wrote in the email.

Sequoia Union High School District

The high school district, which stretches from the southern border of San Mateo County to Belmont and serves nearly 10,000 students, began distance learning, using an online platform called Canvas, on March 16, according to an email to district families on March 13.

The district surveyed students and handed out Chromebooks to students who said they didn’t have devices they could work on at home, according to the district website. Mobile hotspots for internet access also became available to students on March 18.

Students with an Individual-

ized Education Plan (IEP) were contacted by their providers regarding how their plans will be implemented during the week of March 16. The district didn’t provide further details on how these plans will be carried out with the move to distance learning.

Menlo-Atherton High School physical education teachers assigned students at-home workouts during the school closure, said department head Pamela Wimberly in an email. For example, Wimberly asked students to do warm-up stretches and a 15-minute brisk walk; to jog, bike or do any activity that gets their heart rate up; and to do four sets of 10 curl-ups, two to four sets of pushups and 20 jumping jacks.

“Some of us have them doing

a workout and recording their workout in a log which their parent will need to sign off on,” she said. “Students will need to write a paragraph about their experience. Other teachers have students writing about their upcoming activities.”

Lisa Prodromo, an English teacher at Woodside High School, said the transition to distance learning has been “pretty easy” for her. She has used Zoom for one of her class’ lessons on “Frankenstein.” She said she recorded a live video on Instagram to invite students to help her test the video service, and six students joined her for the test.

Although the switch to distance learning has been fairly seamless, Prodromo misses seeing her students in person and doesn’t like feeling so out of control about when she can return to her classroom.

“I really hope we don’t do distance learning for the entire semester, I think I’ll lose my mind,” she said.

Prodromo mentioned that her upper-grades English students were worried about whether they would be able to take their Advanced Placement exams this spring. The College Board, which administers AP tests, announced on March 20 that it is developing a new at-home testing option.

College visits are on hold for many of her students, Prodromo said. ▀



Photo by Sammy Dallal/The Almanac

Heleine Feao, picks up a loaner computer to complete distance-learning assignments from Hugo Reyes and Alex Egbery at Menlo-Atherton High School on March 19.

This is a shortened version of a story that ran online last week. The full version of the story includes information on distance learning efforts in Mountain View, Los Altos and Palo Alto schools. Go to tinyurl.com/dis-learn25 for the full story.

Artscene

PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT



CANTOR REVEALS MORE OF ITS WORLD-CLASS PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION

‘Outside Looking In’ focuses on the lives of others

By Sheryl Nonnenberg
Special to The Almanac

When the Cantor Arts Center received a gift of 1,000 photographs from the Capital Group Foundation last year, it must have been very tempting to present all of the prints in a blockbuster-type exhibition. Instead, curator Elizabeth Mitchell wisely decided to choose works from the gift to be shown in

three separate shows.

Until the center closed earlier this month because of the coronavirus threat, it featured an exhibition, “Outside Looking In: John Gutmann, Helen Levitt and Wright Morris,” in the Ruth Levison Halperin Gallery. The exhibit was scheduled to continue until April 26. (The date of the center’s reopening, and when the exhibition might be rescheduled, is unknown at this time.)



Photo by Helen Levitt, c. 1940, from the photography collection at Stanford University.

We should all applaud Mitchell’s restraint, because these works demand slower consideration and work well for viewing in smaller quantities.

The first installment featured two masters of modern photography, Ansel Adams and Edward Weston. The new exhibition is quite different, as it presents three artists who worked during the nascent years of social documentary, or “street photography.” If Adams and Weston sought to portray the beauty and grandeur of nature, Gutmann, Levitt and Morris looked at the urban landscape and the changes wrought by the Great Depression and, later, World War II.

“This exhibition focuses on the approach taken by each photographer when they used their cameras to observe the lives of other people,” Mitchell said.

Helen Levitt was notable not only because she was a pioneering woman photographer but also because she was one of the first to experiment with color photography. Her prints in this exhibition are poignant glimpses of inner city children playing and

people interacting — just going about their everyday lives. A wall statement explains that she used a right-angle lens, so her subjects were unaware of what she was doing. The results are spontaneous slices of life.

In the “New York” series from 1940, we see two small African American boys sitting on a street curb. One is comforting the other as he cries into his crumpled hat. The slight blurring of the boy’s arm as he reaches for his friend confirms that Levitt was capturing a special, fleeting moment in time. We get a sense of place, thanks to the wrought-iron fence and front stoop steps, but the boys are front and center in the composition and it is their sweet and innocent interaction that we remember.

In another print we see a tableau that could be a classical frieze (or a scene from “The Godfather”). Four men, all gazing away from the camera, are caught in a moment of pensive contemplation. Given their close proximity, they probably know one another but are completely



Above, self-portrait by John Gutmann, 1934; at top, photo by Helen Levitt, c. 1940, from the photography collection at Stanford University.

isolated in their own thoughts. In the background, a young girl, in a pose very similar to a Raphael cherub, observes the scene. It’s an enigmatic picture — Why are these men together? Why are they so serious? In another print from the series, Levitt captures the uninhibited happiness of a little girl and boy dancing in the

See CANTOR, page 22

CANTOR

continued from page 21

street. These were, undoubtedly, hard times and impoverished neighborhoods but Levitt was able to find small moments of joy.

Gutmann's work offers a different perspective on American life, probably because he was an "outsider." Born in 1905 in Germany, he emigrated to the U.S., as so many other European artists did, in order to flee the Nazis.

He settled in San Francisco, worked as a photojournalist and taught at what is now San Francisco State University. His

black-and-white prints, taken with a Rolleiflex camera, tend to focus more on the quirky aspects of American life.

In "The Beautiful Clown" (1940), two circus performers are captured in a close-up, double portrait. Fully made up, they seem a bit grotesque and we wonder why they chose this unusual profession. The woman, who stares at the clown in admiration, must be a fellow performer — maybe the one who works with the knife-thrower or who swings from a trapeze? Gutmann also displayed a sense of whimsy and humor in "Artist



Photo by Wright Morris, 1947, from the photography collection at Stanford University.

Lives Dangerously" (1938), a print

showing a small boy creating a chalk drawing on the street while cars whiz perilously close by.

While the Levitt and Gutmann photographs in this collection are categorized as "street theater," the work of Wright Morris is about places and spaces without people. Morris was born in Nebraska and attended Pomona College. He bought his first camera (a Rolleiflex) in 1934 and found a way to combine his first avocation, writing, with photography by creating photo-texts (short narrations that accompanied photos).

He did find success as a writer and, like Gutmann, also taught at San Francisco State. In this exhibition, his prints depict the places he knew while growing up in Nebraska. These are quiet studies, composed and shot with an eye toward capturing a facet of life in middle America that was quickly going away.

"Stove and View of the Parlor" (1947) could be a museum period room, with the prominently placed cast-iron stove, rocking chair and floral-patterned carpets and curtains. In "Eggs in Pot," Morris homes in on a humble subject but arranges it so carefully, so artfully, that we might imagine they are precious objects.

"The works I selected by Wright Morris demonstrate what he did

best: construct precise, haunting images," noted Mitchell.

The Capital Group gift adds to what was already a prestigious collection of photography at the museum, including the archives of Andy Warhol and Civil Rights documentarian Bob Fitch.

In addition to the prints, the gift included funding for a curatorial fellowship position. "We just hired Maggie Dethloff as assistant curator of photographs and new media, and the future will tell how we continue to grow," Mitchell said.

When one remembers that it was Leland Stanford who initially funded the groundbreaking motion photography work of Eadweard Muybridge, it all seems like a natural evolution that the university he and wife Jane founded would become home to such a valuable collection.

An exhibition devoted to another American photographic master, Gordon Parks, had been scheduled for May 13 to Aug. 23. As with the "Outside Looking In" exhibit, however, uncertainty prevails, and before heading to the Cantor Arts Center, go to museum.stanford.edu/exhibitions for the latest information on the center's schedule. ■

Sheryl Nonnenberg is a freelance writer



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Your guide to restaurants offering food for pickup or delivery

Here's how to safely support local food businesses during the coronavirus shutdown (and stay well-fed, too!)

by Elena Kadvany

While it's clear the coronavirus shutdown is going to keep people from gathering together in local restaurants for some time, there are still many eating establishments that are fighting tooth and nail to stay open during what's already a monumental economic crisis for the industry.

To that end, we put together a running list of the many Peninsula restaurants still offering delivery and takeout, from neighborhood spots to fine-dining establishments pivoting to new service models.

It's not an exhaustive list and is subject to change given how rapidly things have been shifting on the public health front, so we'll be updating it as much

as possible and appreciate your help in letting us know about any places we've missed.

There's no question that the coronavirus is going to have a devastating, unprecedented impact on restaurants and their workers. So if you feel safe doing so, take a night off from cooking and order from a local restaurant (and tip well!). If not, many places are also offering gift cards.

To check out the list, go to thesixfifty.com. Feel free to email any updates, additions or inaccuracies for this list to editor@thesixfifty.com. ■

Elena Kadvany is a writer for the Palo Alto Weekly, The Almanac's sister publication.

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Viewpoint

IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES

Atherton shows how *not* to be a good neighbor

When Atherton leaders first began making noises about how the town was paying far more than “its share” in taxes to the fire district that serves it, and the possibility of detaching from the district as a result, it was almost inconceivable that the idea of such a separation would survive. Hard to believe that it wouldn’t die a quick, well-deserved death after town officials considered the consequences of such a detachment to the town and to the surrounding communities that are also served by the first-rate Menlo Park Fire Protection District.

The fact that not only has the idea survived, but that the town is paying tens of thousands of dollars to study and consider it is astounding. Even though two City Council members — first Elizabeth Lewis then Mayor Rick DeGolia — have shown the good sense to publicly oppose it, council members Cary Wiest, Mike Lempres and Bill Widmer insist on pursuing this folly.

The notion that Atherton taxpayers, who own some of the highest-valued property in the entire country, are somehow being abused by having to bear a higher proportion of the cost for emergency services in the wider community is absurd. And sad. It rejects the widely held principles of a just society, and the values that underpin the belief in a common good that ensures that all citizens — rich or poor, and everyone in between — are entitled to equal access to education, medical care and emergency services.

The argument of town officials who are pushing for this move is that property tax revenue from Atherton, whose residents make up 8% of the population served by the fire district, constitutes about 32% of the district’s property tax revenue. As a result, they assert, Atherton property owners “subsidize” emergency services for the district’s poorer communities, such as East Palo Alto, portions of Menlo Park and unincorporated areas. Those figures come from a consultant’s study, released in 2018, that considered merely the bottom line of tax contributions from Atherton versus the percentage of population served. Calculations based on such rudimentary information, with no consideration

of other factors that might be involved in providing emergency services to the town, make the figures suspect right out of the gate.

But aside from that, the premise that the wealthiest citizens of a wider community shouldn’t bear more of the financial burden to keep that community safe and healthy is one that should be soundly rejected by members of a commonwealth whose stability depends on strong institutions that support everyone.

After more than a year of discussing this misguided notion, which gained traction after the release of the costly consultant’s study, and of souring the relationship between the town and the fire district, the council majority appears unwilling to change course. But in January, Councilwoman Lewis showed the courage to question pursuit of detachment, and Mayor DeGolia, early this month, added his voice in opposition.

“I think that it is a waste of time and money to pursue detachment from the fire district,” he told *The Almanac*. “I don’t think that detachment would benefit Atherton residents because I believe that we get better service from (the Menlo Park fire district) than we could get from any alternative service provider” given the district’s history of service to the community.

Lewis and DeGolia are the voices of reason in this debate, and they deserve kudos from people who care about keeping their emergency services strong and their neighbors — even those without the abundance of resources enjoyed by the wealthiest residents of our greater community — safe. Atherton’s withdrawal from the district would severely impact the fire agency’s budget and the services it would be able to provide to the wider community.

Local resident Jim Lewis floated an idea that, if Atherton leaders can’t bring themselves to change course at this point, might be worth trying: Call upon a mediator to help the town and the fire district work through the questions surrounding the matter. This option would be less costly and, one would hope, more productive and less damaging to the relationship between the town and the fire district, which has taken a hit as the talk of detachment has dragged on. ■

EDITORIAL

The opinion of *The Almanac*

What’s on your mind?

From City Hall politics and the schools to transportation and other pressing issues, *The Almanac* aims to keep readers informed about their community. But we also want to hear from you.

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