

The Almanac

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Meet the three candidates vying to represent Menlo Park City Council District 3

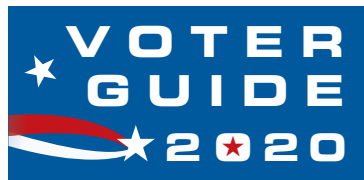
By Kate Bradshaw

Almanac Staff Writer

Three candidates are running to be the first District 3 City Council representatives in their historically underrepresented area of Menlo Park: Chelsea Nguyen, Max Fennell and Jen Wolosin.

Each of the three candidates brings unique experiences and perspectives to the table, and presented compelling ideas for how to solve some of the biggest problems being discussed in the community: housing and its affordability, climate change, police reform and more. But only one will join the (virtual) dais after Election Day.

Forums with District 3 candidates were scheduled on Wednesday, Sept. 30, and Saturday, Oct. 3. Go to is.gd/2020forums for more information about upcoming candidate events.



Chelsea Nguyen

Of the three candidates running for office, Chelsea Nguyen has lived in the area for the longest time. She immigrated to the U.S. from Vietnam as a refugee, and her family was sponsored by the Menlo Park Presbyterian Church. She grew up in the community and has lived here on and off for the bulk of the past 40 years, she said. She has three children — two sons who are involved in the military and a special needs daughter.

Her top three priority areas to address, if elected, are affordable housing, transportation and the environment, she said in an interview.

See **DISTRICT 3**, page 21



Sammy Dallal

All San Mateo County voters will be sent ballots starting next week, with in-person voting on Election Day, Nov. 3. To register to vote, go to smacre.org/voter-registration.

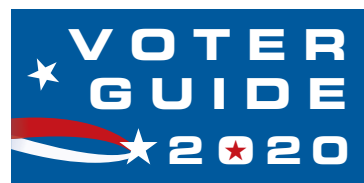
With housing and wildfires at the forefront of their minds, four candidates compete for Portola Valley Town Council seats

By Julia Brown

Almanac Assistant Editor

For the first time in seven years there is a contested Town Council election in Portola Valley, with four people vying for two seats: technologist Angela Hey, retired family physician Mary Hufty, community volunteer Sarah Wernikoff, and sustainability professional Jeff Aalfs, who is the current mayor.

While many of the chief concerns in town back in 2013 — such as retaining Portola Valley's rural character and preventing wildfires — are still top of mind for this crop of candidates, other issues have been magnified in recent months. The COVID-19



pandemic has decimated small businesses nationwide, with Portola Valley businesses also hampered by its economic effects. The housing shortage is a full-blown crisis, with state mandates that could require Portola Valley to build 200 to 300 new housing units in the next decade. And the death of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man killed by Minneapolis police in May, has prompted the council and residents to examine racial equity

issues and whether any reform is needed in the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office, as well as the town's status as a predominantly white, wealthy enclave.

The Almanac conducted videoconference interviews with the four candidates last month, asking them about all these issues and more.

Angela Hey

A 29-year resident who served on the town's first Sustainability Committee and has sat on its Bicycle, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee since 2013, Angela Hey now seeks to take her knowledge and experience to the council. She's running on "risks,

residences and relationships," with a desire to address the need for affordable housing, mitigate risks such as wildfires and cultivate relationships among people in town.

She believes the budget is the top issue facing Portola Valley currently (the Town Council is slated to approve the new 2020-21 fiscal year budget Oct. 14 after implementing an interim budget for the start of the fiscal year based on 2019-20 figures.) Fire risks and "the risk that people are worried, and health risks" round out her list of the top issues residents are confronting.

"People are stressed and worried, and by mitigating risks you reduce worry in people," Hey said.

To aid local small business owners hit hard by the pandemic, Hey says the council could ask residents to help them or seek grants, but she's unsure if the town should dedicate any of its own funding toward that endeavor.

"There have to be ways — maybe subsidizing peoples' rents for awhile or working with landlords — but I don't know that that's the job of the Town Council," she said. "The council has to set up the atmosphere where these people can get together and have a discussion."

Asked about where new housing could go and what types should be included, Hey said

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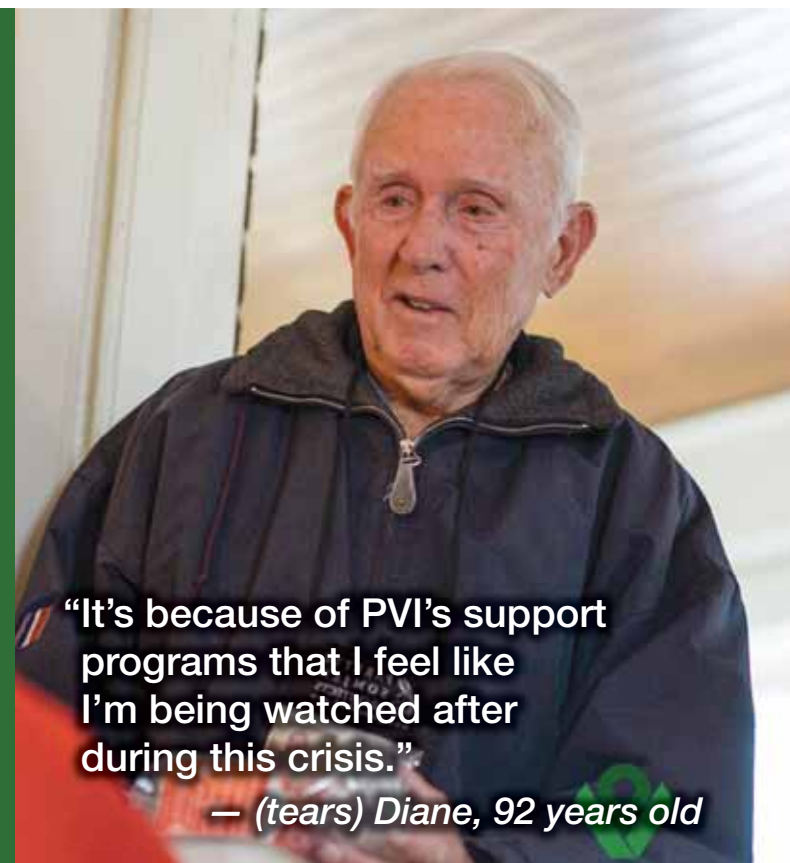
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Fall is upon us and the COVID-19 pandemic continues to reshape our lives and profoundly upend all we have known. Peninsula Volunteers, Inc.'s essential services for seniors are more critical now than ever. We are here for you, your loved ones and your neighbors.

We hope that you and your families are staying well and safe throughout this extraordinary time. Even with California's tiered blueprint for counties and the criteria for the safe progression to resume business and activities, COVID-19 remains a daily concern for you and those you know and love.

This is the season for giving thanks and we are deeply moved by your generosity which makes it possible for us to sustain our vital services to seniors. Our dedication to our mission is enduring - provide daily, nutritious meals, adult day care for those with Alzheimer's and dementias, and vital health and wellness activities to seniors living on the Peninsula.

Thank you! Your impact is being reflected in new and better ways!

PVI is onsite and also online for older adults and others who rely on us for their well-being. You have made this possible. Thank you! We have gone virtual with two of our core programs to ensure current and new participants and their families are still able to connect, be active, stimulated and safely supported.

PVI's Meals on Wheels onsite program continues uninterrupted and with contactless delivery and safety protocols in place in its daily mission to provide more nutritious meals and supplemental care packages than ever before. We are doing all we can to meet the skyrocketing needs of those who cannot shop or cook for themselves, including personal wellness, social and resource need check-ins. Microwave ovens are supplied to those who need them.

PVI's Little House, Senior Activity Center: New virtual online health and wellness classes are open for you or a loved one. Book online personal training, sign up for Pilates, Yoga, Tai

Chi, Zumba and other exercise classes, or join audio book club series and memoir writing classes and more. Ongoing client wellness and check in calls relieve isolation and loneliness.

Rosener House, Adult Day Services for Alzheimer's:

New virtual online activity and support programming, client and caregiver check-ins and activity package deliveries serve seniors and their caregivers at home. Clients and the community can participate in a variety of vital stimulating music, art, travel, tango, brain games and other activities for those with dementia, as well as ongoing group support for caregivers.

PVI's enhanced on demand transportation services provide rides to seniors for medical appointments and grocery store visits with protective protocols in place, supporting healthcare and food access and for other daily supplies.

We are grateful for the remarkable support of our communities. **PVI's COVID-19 Critical Care Fund** continues so that we can support seniors during this extended site closure period and beyond. Your gift will help us sustain our vital programs in the new environment. For more information visit www.penvol.org and www.penvol.org/donate



LITTLE HOUSE, THE ROSLYN G. MORRIS ACTIVITY CENTER,
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For more than 70 years, Peninsula Volunteers, Inc., duly recognized non-profit, 501 (c) (3), has demonstrated a profound legacy of caring for seniors, a commitment of providing high quality and nurturing programs so seniors are engaged, cared for and respected as vital community members. PVI's three core programs, Meals on Wheels, Rosener House Adult Day Care for those with Alzheimer's and other dementias and the venerated Little House, The Roslyn G. Morris Activity Center, address the most pressing issues of aging adults by offering critical services to sustain their daily physical, nutritional, emotional and mental health while achieving dignity and independence in their lives.

Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Magali Gauthier

Etika Fifita raises her fist in support of the Black Lives Matter movement alongside other protesters blocking traffic at the intersection of Menlo and Ravenswood avenues and El Camino Real in Menlo Park on Sept. 25.

Protesters demanding justice for Breonna Taylor stop traffic in Menlo Park

By **Kate Bradshaw**
Almanac Staff Writer

More than 150 people from around the Bay Area gathered Friday evening, Sept. 25, in Menlo Park to call for justice in the police killing of Breonna Taylor and push for reform in the Menlo Park Police Department.

Taylor, a 26-year-old Black medical worker, was killed in her apartment by police in Louisville, Kentucky, while they

executed a search warrant in March. On Wednesday, Sept. 23, a grand jury's decision was announced: Of three officers who fired shots, only one, who had been dismissed from the force, was indicted for "wanton endangerment," or recklessly firing his gun, into a neighboring apartment.

None were charged for causing Taylor's death, according to the New York Times.

In response, protests have flared up around the U.S. In

Menlo Park, last Friday's protest, according to event flyers, was organized by East Palo Alto-based art and activism collective Tha Hood Squad and Mountain View- and Los Altos-based anti-racism organization Justice Vanguard. Members of the local Raging Grannies advocacy group also participated.

The rally began around 6 p.m., when attendees gathered

See **PROTEST**, page 12

Trinity Church: Former rector misused more than \$200K in parish funds

By **Kate Bradshaw**
Almanac Staff Writer

The Episcopal faith community at Trinity Church in Menlo Park is now searching for an interim rector after an investigation found that its former rector misused more than \$200,000 in parish funds.

Five months ago, in late April, Trinity Church leaders announced that the community's rector, Rev. Matthew Dutton-Gillett, had admitted to using church funds for personal spending and been placed on

administrative leave.

The Episcopal Diocese of California then conducted a forensic investigation through Redwood City-based Evidentia Consulting over three months and found that that Dutton-Gillett misused more than \$200,000 in parish funds, substantially more than the \$125,000 initially believed to have been misused, according to Sept. 25 letter sent out to the Trinity Church community and provided to The Almanac by Steve Andrew, junior warden at the church.

Trinity Church is a community

of about 150 to 170 regular attendees, according to Andrew. It is located at 330 Ravenswood Ave. in Menlo Park.

Dutton-Gillett began using church funds for personal use back in 2011, shortly after becoming the rector, according to the letter. The Almanac's attempts to reach him were not successful.

The investigation's findings were also reported to the Menlo Park Police Department. The police department confirmed

See **CHURCH**, page 22

'Mixed feelings' as young students return to campus in the Menlo Park school district

By **Angela Swartz**
Almanac Staff Writer

Oak Knoll Elementary students on Monday sprawled in front of lap desks on yoga mats placed next to colorful dots 6 feet apart. Doors were left open and an air purifier was running. This is what in-person kindergarten looks like during the COVID-19 pandemic.

They are among the roughly 535 Menlo Park City School District students who returned to classrooms on Sept. 28 after the county approved the district's waiver application last week to reopen classrooms to kindergartners and first graders. The district's three elementary schools, Encinal, Laurel and Oak Knoll, are the first public schools in the county to reopen since schools closed down in March.

Students entered the school through multicolored balloon arches before having their temperatures taken. Their parents can't come on campus, but school officials said the arches were a special way to welcome the families, said Oak Knoll Principal Kristen Gracia.

"We've been spending the last six months planning for this moment," said Superintendent Erik Burmeister. "It's great to be living it. School is all about community and being together."

Bright clusters of painted stars, diamonds, dots, hearts and other shapes throughout campus help mark where students can stand to remain 6 feet apart. One teacher demonstrated how to keep distanced from other students by making "airplane arms" while standing in line to return to their classroom.

"Today was like a long overdue breath of fresh air watching our youngest students return to Oak Knoll," Gracia said. She said it's nice to "have life back" at the school. "I continue to be impressed with our teachers and staff as they, yet again, embark on this new adventure of in-person, socially distanced learning."

The district requires face coverings for all staff and students, physical distancing and limiting gatherings. Students are used to wearing masks; it's "their new norm," Gracia said. Children have their own crayons, pencils and other art supplies, and wash their hands before touching shared items such as books, she said.

Families of 80 kindergarten and first grade students have opted to continue online distance learning, said district public information officer Parke Treadway. The district has also offered a distance learning option, the Virtual Academy, and families enrolled in it will remain with distance learning even as the hybrid model students are on campus.

Kindergartners attend classes on either morning or afternoon schedules to accommodate smaller groups, with 10 to 12 students in each group, said Treadway.

First grade staffing will be increased to provide smaller class sizes, capped at 16 students. First graders will attend class from 9 a.m. to noon, but the school day may be extended later after initial phase-in and review from teachers about what is working and what needs to be adapted. Distance learning, likely for smaller reading groups and specialists, would then be scheduled for the afternoon.

Worry among teachers

Not all teachers are thrilled to be back in classrooms.

On Monday, first grade teacher Laura Fujimoto said she felt more like a babysitter than a teacher since social distancing and sanitizing were monopolizing class time. She said she spent last Friday placing dots on the floor of her classroom to mark 6 feet of distance.

"I'm teaching social distancing and hand-washing," said Fujimoto, who said she felt the reopening was rushed. "I'm able to accomplish a lot more

See **OAK KNOLL**, page 11

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TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY NOTICE OF TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

REVIEW PROPOSED UPDATE TO THE MUNICIPAL FEE SCHEDULE TO INCLUDE ALIGNMENT WITH CONSUMER PRICE INDEX INCREASES, ADMINISTRATION, PUBLIC WORKS/ENGINEERING, AND PLANNING AND BUILDING FEE INCREASE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a Public Hearing on the proposed changes to the fee schedule. The Public Hearing will be held on Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., via a Zoom teleconference meeting. To join the Zoom meeting, access the link provided on the October 14, 2020 Town Council agenda.

Public Hearings provide the general public and interested parties an opportunity to provide testimony on these items. If you challenge a proposed action(s) in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at a Public Hearing(s) described above, or in written correspondence sent to jdennis@portolavalley.net prior to the Town Council meeting date.

Information pertaining to the proposal is available on Friday, October 9, 2020, by contacting the Town Clerk at shanlon@portolavalley.net. All interested persons are invited to join the Zoom teleconference meeting at the time and place mentioned above.



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY 765 Portola Road Portola Valley, CA 94028

NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON A REVISED TOWN BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2020/2021

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing on a revised Town Budget for Fiscal Year 2020/2021, on Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., via a Zoom teleconference meeting. To join the Zoom meeting, access the link provided on the October 14, 2020 Town Council agenda.

Comments may be submitted via email to jdennis@portolavalley.net prior to the Town Council meeting or presented at the meeting. All interested persons are invited to attend the Town Council meeting at the time and place herein above mentioned.

The Proposed Town Budget for fiscal year 2020/2021 is available for viewing on the Town website at www.portolavalley.net, as well as electronic copies are available by contacting Sharon Hanlon, Town Clerk at 650-851-1700 ext. 210.

Sharon Hanlon
Dated: October 2, 2020
Portola Valley Town Clerk

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The Almanac

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CRIME BRIEFS

Portola Valley man accused of sexually assaulting minor pleads not guilty

A 19-year-old Portola Valley man arrested on suspicion of sexually assaulting a minor has pleaded not guilty, according to the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office.

James Nell Jr. was arrested Thursday, Sept. 24, in San Mateo on suspicion of lewd acts with a child under 14 years old, oral copulation with a child under 14 years old, sexual intercourse with a minor and furnishing harmful matter to a minor, according to the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

Nell Jr. and the victim, a 13-year-old girl, started talking through social media, according to District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe. Nell Jr. then sent her a sexually explicit video over Snapchat and said his friend would pay her for nude photos, Wagstaffe said.

The victim ran away from home, and Nell Jr. brought her to his Portola Valley home where he sexually assaulted her, according to the DA's office. Nell Jr. then warned the girl not to tell anyone or they would get in trouble, adding he would kill himself if he went to jail, Wagstaffe said.

The girl later returned home, and Nell Jr. visited her there and sexually assaulted her again, according to the DA's office. The victim's mother learned about the incidents upon reviewing text messages on her daughter's cellphone.

In August, Sheriff's Office detectives began investigating a report of a sexual assault case involving a minor under the age of 14 that occurred on July 1. The incidents took place between May 1 and July 1, prosecutors said.

Nell Jr. appeared at a felony arraignment hearing on Monday, where he pleaded not guilty and was appointed a private defender. A preliminary hearing has been scheduled for 2 p.m. on Oct. 7.

Nell Jr. remains in custody with bail set at \$200,000. The court granted prosecutors' request for an order barring him from contacting the victim.

See **CRIME BRIEFS**, page 20

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

M-A hires new girls volleyball coach

Menlo-Atherton High School has hired Lia Havili as the new head coach of the varsity girls volleyball team, according to a Sept. 28 press release.

Girls volleyball is ordinarily a fall sport at M-A, but has a delayed start set for Dec. 14 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, said M-A Athletic Director Steven Kryger in an email.

"M-A Volleyball has a long tradition of success that we're hoping to continue," Havili, who previously coached at Sacred Heart Schools in Atherton, said in a statement. She is currently a physical education instructor at Chabot College in Hayward. "We're all very excited to get in the gym and get back to work!"

M-A athletic teams are allowed to do conditioning with social distancing. Some of the teams have begun these sessions and others will be soon, Kryger said.

"We are beyond excited to have Coach Havili join our coaching staff at M-A," said M-A Athletic Director Paul Snow. "Her experience, philosophy, and love for the game make her a perfect fit for the program and the girls will enjoy learning from her."

While attending Missouri State University-West Plains, Havili was awarded the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Region 16 Player of the Year. When she transferred to Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky, she quickly became a starter there.

Before that, Havili played three years of varsity volleyball at



Courtesy Menlo-Atherton High School

Lia Havili has been named the new head coach of the Menlo-Atherton High girls volleyball team.

See **COMMUNITY BRIEFS**, page 9

COVID-19 updates: Playground rules, resurgence fears and expanded testing

By Embarcadero Media staff

San Mateo County reported 41 new cases of COVID-19 on Tuesday, bringing the county's total to 9,900. The death toll has stood at 150 since Sept. 24. Forty-two people are hospitalized. Santa Clara County reported 73 new cases of the coronavirus on Tuesday, raising the total to 21,294. Four more people have died, raising the death toll to 318. There are 89 people hospitalized, 13 of whom are new.

Playgrounds can reopen

Outdoor playgrounds are allowed to reopen to the public following certain guidelines for local officials and visitors, Gov. Gavin Newsom and the California Department of Public Health announced Monday.

Following Newsom's stay-at-home order in March, playgrounds and other outdoor recreational facilities were closed in an effort to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

On Sept. 16, numerous state lawmakers signed a letter authored by San Diego Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez, asking Newsom to

reopen playground and outdoor facilities, citing these spaces as "a critical resource for children and families to access outdoor space, exercise, and relax."

On Monday, Newsom's administration released guidelines for outdoor playground and outdoor recreational facility reopenings. They include maintaining social distancing, wearing masks at all times, and limiting visits to 30 minutes per day. Additionally, adults are asked to supervise children at all times to ensure adherence to the guidelines.

Local officials overseeing the playgrounds must post the rules and park capacity at the entrance of the playgrounds.

Outdoor playgrounds are open in Santa Clara County, while San Mateo County's outdoor playgrounds remain closed as of Tuesday morning, Sept. 29, according to county parks communication specialist Carla Schoof. The county is reevaluating its guidelines in response to the new state guidance, she said.

COVID-19 resurgence

While California's rate of new coronavirus cases is at its lowest

point in months, the likelihood of the virus resurging has increased in recent weeks in the state's largest metro areas, Gov. Gavin Newsom said Monday.

The state's average daily positivity rate over the last 14 days is now at 2.8%, Newsom said, down from 3.6% on Sept. 14.

Coronavirus-related hospitalizations and intensive care unit admissions have also continued to decline in recent weeks, both by around 20% over the last 14 days.

That trend of reduced viral spread has resulted in more than a dozen counties across the state, including several in the Bay Area, moving out of the state's most restrictive reopening tier since the state switched to the color-coded tier system on Aug. 31.

Newsom, however, echoed state Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly's recent warning that there are reasons to believe the virus may begin spreading exponentially once again.

"While it's true we have seen a three-fold decrease in the total number of cases since our peak in mid-July, we are seeing early signs that those decreases are

beginning to slow down, they're beginning to plateau," Newsom said.

The virus' effective reproduction number, which measures how many people can be infected at any given time, hit its nadir in the Bay Area and Southern California in late August and early September, according to Newsom, and has been trending upward since.

County expands free testing

San Mateo County announced last week that it will expand countywide COVID-19 testing through mobile sites and targeted testing in at-risk neighborhoods.

The county currently offers free COVID-19 testing through Verily's Project Baseline program. Testing is available Tuesdays through Saturdays at the San Mateo County Event Center.

Mobile testing through Project Baseline is also available on rotation at Half Moon Bay, Daly City, San Bruno, East Palo Alto and North Fair Oaks.

"At the most fundamental level, increasing access to testing is about equity," said Warren Slocum, president of the county's

Board of Supervisors. "We want to make sure that everyone, regardless of income or immigration status or whether they have health insurance or not, has access to a local testing site."

The tests are free and do not require insurance, though people must schedule an appointment to get tested. Volunteers at the testing centers can also help people get registered on site.

For a full list of testing locations and hours in San Mateo County, people can visit tinyurl.com/smc-covid.

Comprehensive COVID-19 coverage

View interactive charts tracking the spread of the coronavirus in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties online at paloaltoonline.com/atavist.com/tracking-the-coronavirus. Find a comprehensive collection of coverage on the Midpeninsula's response to the new coronavirus by The Almanac and its sister publications, Palo Alto Online, and the Mountain View Voice, at tinyurl.com/c19-Almanac.

CalMatters and Bay City News Service contributed to this report.

Atherton council challenger boasts biggest war chest

By Angela Swartz

Almanac Staff Writer

Candidates running in this November's Atherton City Council race filed campaign disclosure statements Sept. 24 for the period starting July 1 and ending Sept. 19.

There are four candidates running for two seats: incumbents Elizabeth Lewis and Cary Wiest, and challengers Christine David and Diana Hawkins-Manuelian.

Statements show that Lewis

plans to raise and spend less than \$2,000, which excuses her from filing campaign finance reports. View her report at tinyurl.com/Lewiscampaignfinance.

Wiest's committee reportedly raised \$3,135.26, which includes a \$1,310.26 loan from himself and \$300 from retired former councilman Jerry Carlson. Wiest spent \$3,135.26 on postage and postcards. View Wiest's report at tinyurl.com/Wiestcampaignfinance.

David's committee raised \$5,760, including a \$5,000 loan

to herself. She spent \$7,298.19 on office supplies, marketing, advertising, yard signs, a website, web development interns and Zoom and Google tools. Donors to her campaign during this period were: Sandy Crittenden, the former owner of the Park and Guild movie theater properties in Menlo Park, who's listed as retired, \$300; Marilee Gardner, retired, \$250; Michelle Olsen, orthodontist, \$100; Dan Fabiano, retired, \$50; Robert Ferrando, real estate, \$50. View David's report at tinyurl.com/

Davidcampaignfinance.

Hawkins-Manuelian's committee said it raised \$2,000 from her spouse George Manuelian, Amazon executive. She didn't spend any money during this period. View her report at tinyurl.com/

HawkinsManuelianfinance.

The next round of campaign disclosure statements are due Thursday, Oct. 22, for the period ending Oct. 17. ■

Email Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com

Menlo Park council candidate receives profane messages

By Kate Bradshaw

Almanac Staff Writer

Chelsea Nguyen, a candidate for Menlo Park's District 3 seat, has received two messages through her campaign website that contain profanity, insults and vague threats.

The emails, which she shared with The Almanac, but asked not be published because of their vulgarity, came from the anonymous accounts "whore@whore.com" and "Chelsea c---".

The messages, sent on Sept. 28 and 30, came through a form

on her website that invites community members to contact Nguyen about her campaign. She said she did not know who wrote them or if they are affiliated with a particular candidate or campaign.

"Just wait and see what is coming to you," said one message. "We will blow you away election day you dirty c---."

"I am not afraid of these people who are harassing me," Nguyen said. "I don't want this issue to be distracting. I want to be the voice for working families."

She added on her campaign blog: "I am not someone you can

bully. You are messing with the wrong person. Win or lose, I will not play dirty like you do."

The other candidates competing for the open seat representing District 3 are professional triathlete and small business owner Max Fennell and community advocate Jen Wolosin. The voting district includes a section of Menlo Park bounded between Palo Alto and Atherton, stretching southwest to Crane Street and northeast to the VA property off of Willow Road. ■

Email Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

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Dear Monica:
I am in contract to buy a house. I am concerned I won't get a loan, so I have applied to three lenders. Did I need to do this? Philip J.

Philip J: When buying a home, it is smart to talk to several lenders before you make an offer to find out about their rates and terms to see if you would meet their criteria for a loan. After this

initial process, you should have a good idea which lender you want to work with and you should make an application with them. It is not necessary to apply to all three lenders once you have a property you want to put an offer on. Unless there is a particular issue you are concerned with, you should be fine applying to just one lender and save yourself extra application and appraisals fees, and the extra work.

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Courtesy Fred Aron

The Main Gallery, a contemporary art gallery, is moving from Redwood City to the former space of Marcela's Village Gallery on Santa Cruz Avenue in Menlo Park.

Redwood City's Main Gallery moves to Menlo Park

By **Kate Bradshaw**
Almanac Staff Writer

The Main Gallery, a contemporary art gallery housed for 20 years in a yellow Victorian house in downtown Redwood City, is relocating to Menlo Park.

The gallery, run by a collective of Peninsula-based artists, has featured around 150 artists over the years, according to Monica Waldman, a ceramicist with the gallery, and Katinka Hartmetz, house manager and installation lead.

With expected rent increases at their former location, along with a long-term closure of the gallery's neighboring restaurant, Alana's Cafe, that curbed foot traffic, the group decided to search for a new location, they said.

They found it in the site of Marcela's Village Gallery at 883 Santa Cruz Ave. in downtown Menlo Park, where they have agreed to take on a nine-month lease from Marcela Del Alcazar.

Del Alcazar told The Almanac in early September that she planned to move her gallery to her Woodside home until July 2021 due to slow business,

COVID-19 and family reasons. She plans to reopen her downtown gallery, and Hartmetz said the Main Gallery hopes to stay in the neighborhood after that happens.

The pandemic has shifted some art gallery trends, said Waldman and Hartmetz. As people spend more time in their homes, they're looking for things to brighten up their environment, but many are also cost-conscious due to the current economic uncertainty. They are also interested in items that can be shipped. As a result, Hartmetz said, prints and reproductions are selling well, as well as home items like ceramics.

"Those lucky to work from home are spending all day in the house. You need a little color and happiness," said Waldman.

"We hope we bring the same kind of spirit and innovation, creativity and quality of art to our new location," Hartmetz said.

They are also in the process of recruiting new artists to work with, Waldman added.

The gallery is set to open Wednesday, Oct. 7, and will be open Wednesdays through Sundays from noon to 6 p.m. Its first exhibit is titled "Resilience." ▮

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Presented by **The Almanac**

Spanish-language resources help parents deal with challenges of distance learning

By Betty Marquez Rosales/
EdSource

While California school districts and counties confront the learning challenges of the pandemic, education organizations are developing new guides for Spanish-speaking parents to help them navigate distance learning.

In California public schools, about 40% of students speak a language other than English in their homes, and over 80% of those students speak Spanish, with 18.6% classified as English learners.

But, it's the parents that educators knew they needed to reach, and it was obvious there wasn't enough information that was easily accessible for Spanish-speaking parents.

"Reaching out to Spanish-speaking learners feels like a continuation of our work, but it's also borne of this time," said Katherine Stecher, Spanish content manager of Khan Academy,

a Mountain View-based nonprofit that provides free learning aids for K-12 through early college. "People are in need of more resources."

The educational nonprofit is just one of the educational groups offering help to bilingual and monolingual parents. Kahn expanded its offerings in May with Sigamos Aprendiendo to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking parents.

The free website provides a survival guide that teaches how to keep children motivated while distance learning, learning schedules children can follow at home and lesson plans for children in grades three to eight.

Sigamos Aprendiendo wasn't a spinoff of the English-language version, Keep Everyone Learning, but developed simultaneously. Both websites were published in May within a few days of each other.

"Spanish was a very obvious starting point for us," said Stecher.

Stecher noted that her team had long identified the high demand for Spanish-language resources in classrooms through their work with Northwest Evaluation Association, a nonprofit that used testing to change the way teachers teach and students learn.

"It naturally extended to what we were doing with school closures," she said referring to the March closings forced by the pandemic.

The website includes advice on creating a space in the home where children can do all their school-related work, provides suggestions on how to assess children's math skills, and offers guidance on self-care for parents.

Cesar Carrasco, a parent of three children in the Central Valley city of Fresno, said he wouldn't have been able to navigate distance learning without resources in Spanish from online and other sources.

"No, no, no, that would have

been extremely complicated," said Carrasco in Spanish, whose two older children are currently in school.

Their school, Leavenworth Elementary in Fresno Unified, has a dual-language program, so the information Carrasco receives is often in both English and Spanish.

An immigrant from the Mexican state of Oaxaca, Carrasco has been learning English through an application on his phone, but time is always limited in between work and his family.

It helps that he lives in an area with a high rate of Spanish-speakers who he can ask for help, as needed, and his 9-year-old son, Julio Cesar Carrasco, helps too.

Although Carrasco and his wife spend their days working in the Fresno agricultural fields, they have done their best to learn the software their children need for distance learning. Being able to navigate

the various platforms remains difficult.

"Many of us come from countries or places where other dialects are spoken. And honestly, when do you see a computer in those areas? So that's all new for us. Sometimes we don't know where to even click to open a webpage," he said. "I'll sometimes ask my son: 'I don't understand this: Where do I click?' And he's key in helping with his sister."

Both his 9-year-old son and his daughter Kalyn Valeria Carrasco, 6, spend their weekdays at a home childcare program, which Carrasco and his wife found through the Central Valley Children's Services Network.

Coordinators at the child care program help the children log on to their video calls and lead teaching lessons for them. When their parents arrive from work, they help with any additional schoolwork.

See **DISTANCE LEARNING**, page 23

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

continued from page 6

Haltom High School in Texas. There, she earned two "District Setter of the Year" honors, and was the team's most valuable player for two seasons. She was also named to the Texas Academic All-State First Team as a senior and Second Team as a junior.

Other M-A sports starting in December include boys volleyball, boys/girls water polo, football and cross country, Kryger said. All other sports will have staggered starts in February and March during "Season 2," he said.

—Angela Swartz

Library launches storytelling festival

The Storytelling Festival at the Menlo Park Library celebrates the power of words beyond the printed page, showcasing the enduring art of oral storytelling: that is, sharing a story without using a book.

The fifth annual edition of the festival just kicked off and is taking place entirely online, with events throughout the month. Though storytelling is often associated with young children, the festival offers programs for various ages.

The festival runs through Oct. 29, with most events taking place on Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m., unless otherwise noted.

Michael D. McCarty, who specializes in stories of African and African American history and culture, and multicultural stories, will share folk, personal and historical tales on Oct. 8 in an event for adults and teens. "The Spirit Survives" on Monday, Oct. 12, 4-5:30 p.m., features Dovie Thomason telling listeners ages 12 to adult about a shameful chapter in U.S. history, when First Nations children were forced to attend government boarding schools that stripped them of their culture and identities.

On Oct. 15, Chetter Galloway presents "A Tale of a Few Tricksters!", a collection of folktales from the African diaspora for adults and teens; and on Oct. 22, Linda Yemoto will share nature tales, Asian folktales and ghost stories for all ages.

The Storytelling Festival concludes on Oct. 29, with Día de Muertos/Day of the Dead tales for ages 11 to adult from Olga Loya, who often tells stories in both English and Spanish.

The Storytelling Festival is free. For more information, visit menlopark.org/adults.

—Heather Zimmerman

West Nile virus detected in dead bird

San Mateo County's Mosquito and Vector Control District has detected West Nile virus

in a dead bird for the first time this year.

The bird — an American crow — was collected in South San Francisco earlier this week, the vector control district said Wednesday.

It is the first case of the virus found in San Mateo County since 2018. Though reports of dead birds indicate presence of the virus, the risk to humans remains low.

West Nile virus primarily affects birds, but humans, horses and other animals can get infected if bitten by an infected mosquito, which are vectors for the virus. The virus cannot be spread from person to person.

The county's vector control district encouraged people to report fresh bird carcasses to the California West Nile Virus Hotline at westnile.ca.gov or by calling (877) WNV-BIRD.

People can reduce the risk of infection by preventing mosquito breeding and avoiding mosquito bites. Since mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water, the district recommends draining and eliminating sources of standing water on properties — including flower pots, old car tires, clogged gutters and pet bowls.

People should also wear clothing and mosquito repellent if outside during early morning and evening hours, as these are times the mosquitoes that transmit the virus

tend to bite. Doors and windows should have tight-fitting screens to keep mosquitoes out. Mosquito repellent containing ingredients such as DEET, picaradin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 can prevent mosquito bites.

The district will continue to treat mosquito breeding sources and collect mosquitoes

for testing in areas where dead birds are found.

For assistance with a mosquito problem, people can contact the district at (650) 344-8592 or visit smcmvcd.org for more information.

West Nile virus has also been found in Contra Costa and Santa Clara counties this year.

—Bay City News Service



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Voting by mail is safest choice, state official says

By Bay City News Service

California Secretary of State Alex Padilla spoke to reporters last month about voting access and safety this year during the pandemic.

“To say this is an unprecedented year” with the political climate and the pandemic “would be an understatement,” said Padilla, who is the state’s chief elections officer.

The Nov. 3 presidential election is approaching and is less than five weeks away. Padilla described the date as “the last day to vote,” and stressed voting by mail.

He said voting by mail is the safest choice.

Every registered voter will get a ballot in the mail if their address on file is correct. Vote-by-mail

ballots will be sent out during the first week of October.

The last day for mailing out ballots to voters is Oct. 5, but for military and overseas voters, ballots are mailed out 45 days in advance.

Ballots typically would be counted if they are postmarked by Election Day and received up to three days afterward, but this year ballots will be accepted up to 17 days after Election Day, Padilla said.

New this year is a notification system that allows voters to get a text, email or call telling them where in the process their ballot is, such as when it has been received and when it has been counted.

The system is called Where’s My Ballot and it is meant to build trust in the voting process,

Padilla said.

More than 900,000 voters have signed up, but there are 21 million registered voters in California. To sign up for Where’s My Ballot, visit california.ballottrax.net/voter.

In-person voting will still be available this year, but it’s going to be different, according to Padilla. There will be masks, hand sanitizer and social distancing, he said. In-person voting might be necessary if a person lost their ballot or made a mistake on the one they received.

Padilla said some polling locations have changed because of the pandemic. Some may have needed to be larger, and in larger cities some organizations are making their large facilities available.

Voters can drop off their ballot at a polling location or in a dropbox. Visit smcacre.org/vote/all for San Mateo County information.

The last day to register to vote is Oct. 19, but state law allows for same-day registration in case someone misses the deadline for registering online or updating their registration. Voters must go to a polling place to register and vote the same day.

Citizens can register to vote or update their registration by going to RegisterToVote.ca.gov.

Voters can check the status of their registration at voterstatus.sos.ca.gov. They are urged to update their registration as soon as possible to be sure they get a ballot.

“We also recommend you vote early,” he said.

To protect against fraud in the vote-by-mail process, Padilla said the state has several protections in place. Watermarks on the ballots are unique to each election. Companies that print the ballots must be certified by the state. Return envelopes have unique barcodes, and ballots are scanned to make sure people didn’t vote somewhere else. Also, each signature is checked.

People can help others to vote by becoming a poll worker, providing ideas for voting locations or even offering to host a location.

For more information, people can go to pollworker.sos.ca.gov. 

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Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

PRODUCT INSIGHTS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 285076

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
Product Insights, located at 678 College Av., Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
STEPHEN KENNETH KERSHNER
678 College Av.

Menlo Park, CA 94025

PAUL MICHAEL NEWBY
925 Lincoln Av.

Palo Alto, CA 94301

This business is conducted by: Copartners.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on August 20, 2020.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 27, 2020. (ALM Sep. 11, 18, 25; Oct. 2, 2020)

LA ESTRELLITA MARKET RWC
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 285130

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

La Estrellita Market RWC, located at 2211 Middlefield Road, Redwood City, CA 94063,

San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
CIELO STAR, INC.

2211 Middlefield Road
Redwood City, CA 94063

This business is conducted by: A Corporation.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on Nov. 13, 2014.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 4, 2020. (ALM Sep. 18, 25; Oct. 2, 9, 2020)

LA ESTRELLITA MARKET EPA
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 285131

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

La Estrellita Market EPA, located at 2381 University Ave., East Palo Alto, CA 94303, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
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This business is conducted by: A Corporation.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on Nov. 13, 2014.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 4, 2020. (ALM Sep. 18, 25; Oct. 2, 9, 2020)

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Magali Gauthier

First grader Mark writes with a pencil from his own box of school supplies at Oak Knoll on Sept. 29.

OAK KNOLL

continued from page 5

over Zoom. We're going from one bad situation to another bad situation."

She conceded she is happy to see the students "in the flesh," but fears for the health of her mother and mother-in-law, both in their 70s, who are taking care of her 2 1/2-year-old while she teaches.

Gracia acknowledged the normal pace of instruction will be reasonably sacrificed as the school prioritizes the health and safety of students, staff and community during this

pandemic.

"In-person learning is in many ways like chicken soup for the soul for our students, meeting their social-emotional needs," she said. "While everyone was honorably wearing their mask, it was clear that our students had bright smiles underneath and so did I."

Linda Cotter, a first grade teacher who has taught at Oak Knoll for 23 years, said she is hyper cautious about safety around spreading the virus. She is pleased there is COVID testing of staff members on Fridays through a partnership with Stanford Health Care.



Magali Gauthier

Oak Knoll Elementary School first graders eat a snack while socially distanced at the start of recess at the Menlo Park school on Sept. 29. All students must sit 6 feet apart facing the same direction. After eating, they can play in a predetermined area on campus: the field, the blacktop or the playground.

"It's so fun to see them and meet them for the first time," she said. "I have mixed feelings. Distance learning was hard work. I'm really happy for the parents and the kids (to be back on campus)."

First graders Elle and Bella

said they were most pleased with being able to see their friends in person, "not just on screen."

The district's school board voted to apply for a waiver to reopen during its Sept. 10 meeting, and applied for the waiver on Sept. 11.

The county moved out of the most restrictive purple or "widespread" risk tier to the red or "substantial" risk tier on Sept. 22. ■

Email Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com

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PROTEST

continued from page 5

in the plaza in front of Kepler's Books and Cafe Borrone before marching to the Menlo Park Civic Center, where they stood and chanted at various locations around the police department headquarters before returning to the plaza.

During the march, demonstrators stopped twice in the middle of the intersection of El Camino Real and Ravenswood and Menlo avenues for an extended period of time. Vehicles formed a line

along El Camino Real, and some honked.

Seth Donnelly, who teaches at Los Altos High School and has been involved with the Justice Vanguard and Tha Hood Squad, said that the protest was held in Menlo Park in an effort to establish a "culture of resistance" throughout the Peninsula, and to call specific attention to the Menlo Park Police Department and its policing practices with Black and Latino people.

While the group's action to stop traffic at a critical intersection was somewhat spontaneous, "Society itself needs to understand that it's not business as usual as long as business as usual is the murder of Black people and business as usual is the perpetuation of white supremacy. ... We need to understand that society itself needs to be interrupted in its normal function," Donnelly said.

Protesters carried signs saying "Silence is violence," "No more Black death" and "No Justice No Peace" and shouted chants like "Same story every time/ Being Black is not a crime."

"It's a shame that this is happening over and over again," said protest organizer JT Faraji, a longtime critic of Menlo Park police and founder of Tha Hood Squad. "We have to do something about it."

He spoke about policing practices in Menlo Park, including the city's acceptance of funds from Facebook to pay for police services.

"It's only a matter of time before we have our own Breonna Taylor. It's only a matter of time before we have our own George Floyd," he said. "We can no longer assume, hope and pray the system will fix itself."

At the midpoint of the protests, attendees gathered at the rear of the Menlo Park police station and shouted "Quit your job," and "No good cops in a racist system."

A number of protesters who spoke with this news

organization said they came from communities outside Menlo Park to participate.

Desiree Sakal, a Hayward resident, said she was not surprised by the grand jury verdict in the Taylor case. Accompanying her was Chelsey Monroe from San Francisco, who added that she was there because, as a Black woman, she felt so much grief at the decision and felt the only way to release that sadness was to participate with others in the protest.

Sequoia High School student and Redwood City resident Ray Evans said he was concerned about the idea that corporate-funded police departments could expand beyond Facebook's financial support of the city of Menlo Park to other communities. Oracle could start to fund the Redwood City Police Department, or Google could do the same in Mountain View, he posited.

Artist Edi Hsu, who has been documenting Black Lives Matter protests around the Bay Area through live-action watercolors, participated in the protest while drawing and painting with a small journal and watercolor kit.

Elijah Ezeji-Okoye made the trip from Watsonville. He said that he was disappointed in the outcome of the Taylor grand jury verdict and the limited responses by police departments to the demands of the Black Lives Matter protests. He said he'd favor redirecting funding from police departments and investing in community response efforts, as well as listening to people in marginalized and lower-income communities to hear about their needs.

Around 8 p.m., as participants disbanded from the plaza in front of Kepler's and Cafe Borrone in the darkening evening, Faraji told attendees to plan to return at a later date. ▣

Email Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com

Magali Gauthier

Top: Protesters hold up Black Lives Matter signs to drivers stopped at the intersection of Menlo and Ravenswood avenues and El Camino Real in Menlo Park on Sept. 25. **Above and right:** Black Lives Matter protesters assemble outside the Menlo Park Police Department.

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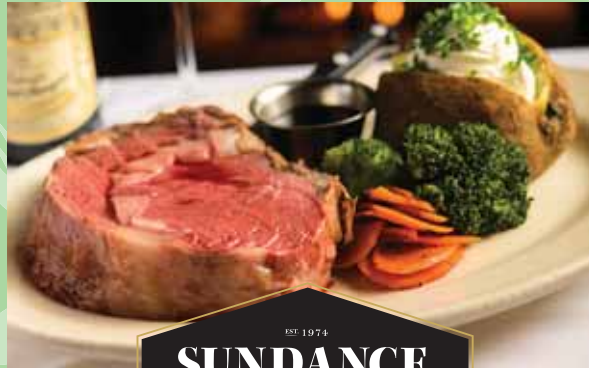
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Three newcomers compete for two seats on Las Lomas district school board

By Tyler Callister
Almanac Staff Writer

A finance executive, a legal executive and an anesthesiologist are competing for a seat on the Las Lomas Elementary School District board in the Nov. 3 election.

Jason Morimoto, Molly Finn and Jody Leng are all newcomers, vying for two seats on the board that governs Las Lomas Elementary School in Atherton and La Entrada Middle School in Menlo Park.

Like all local school districts, Las Lomas is currently navigating challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic. The district school board chose to keep students and staff home to start the fall semester, and all classes have been taught online since mid-March. The district recently applied for the state's waiver program, and if approved by the San Mateo County public health department, some students will be allowed back into the classroom.

Jason Morimoto

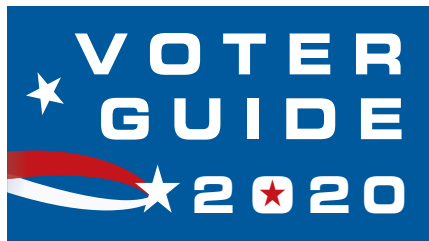
A financial executive, Morimoto said closing equity gaps in the district is his top priority. He said he also hopes to focus on financial oversight and COVID-19 safety.

"If you look at the California School Dashboard, you will notice that the success levels look very different across ethnicities and socioeconomic status," he said. "My first school board priority is to continue focusing on closing the equity gaps and providing both the opportunity and the personal support needed for each and every child to excel academically."

He said his financial background will be an asset when it comes to oversight of the school district budget. "Our school board is comprised of individuals with diverse backgrounds, but none of the current school board members or candidates has professional experience in finance," he said. "It is no secret that California school budgets will be challenged in the years to come and we need someone that has the experience of overseeing budgets through not only the good but also the challenging times."

On the question of reopening schools amid COVID-19, he emphasized safety.

"I want there to be very explicit safety protocols for teachers, students and parents as we contemplate school reopening," he said. "Reopening schools is a collective effort across our community and it only works if the entire community is aligned on the safety protocols and abides by them. In addition to safety, it is also important to focus



on the social and emotional well-being of students, teachers and staff during this time period."

Morimoto said that he brings wide-ranging relevant experience to the table, including education policy experience serving on the governing Board of Regents for the University of California, finance experience (Morgan Stanley, Citigroup, HP Inc. and ServiceNow), and being an active volunteer in the community (PTA, AYSO soccer coach, Little League, and Las Lomas Foundation Classroom Ambassador).

He is endorsed by Congressman Michael Honda, state Assemblymember Marc Berman, state Sen. Jerry Hill, state Senate candidate Josh Becker, Menlo Park Councilman Ray Mueller, and San Mateo County Harbor District Board and Menlo Park Fire Protection District Board member Virginia Chang Kiraly, and all four Las Lomas and La Entrada PTA co-presidents.

Molly Finn

Finn is a 14-year resident and parent of two children in the district. She said that her priorities are teachers, preparing students for the future and meeting the needs of all students.

"Teachers are the district's greatest asset and our biggest investment," she said. "I will continue to prioritize professional development, hiring great teachers and partnering with them for a safe return to school."

Finn commented on the need to retain teachers in the face of the rising cost of living in the district. "The first priority is to be sure we are paying teachers at-market and providing cost of living adjustments," she said. "This is a statewide issue for teachers and school employees broadly. Some affordable housing for teachers and administration has been created at the county level. I would partner with county officials to continue to make this a priority."

She said her vision is for a "progressive curriculum" that prepares young students for the future. "I will advocate for broad-based age appropriate computer science — not additional technology in the classroom, rather building computer science literacy which will be needed for the next generation of jobs."

On the question of COVID-19 and

online learning, she said that this fall's online semester has improved from the spring, "which is a testament to the efforts of our teachers and administrators," but she hopes to see younger students return to the classroom soon.

"They have streamlined the technology and have committed to a workable schedule — two big wins. Now that kids with learning needs and other impediments to online learning are back at school, I feel much better about the equity in education for the fall," she said. "I am still concerned about kindergartners and their ability to effectively learn and interact online. We need to prioritize, when safe, getting the kindergartners back in school."

Jody Leng

Dr. Jody Leng is an anesthesiologist who was the only physician on the Las Lomas Pandemic Recovery Planning Committee, which aided in the district's COVID-19 response.

"I have volunteered countless hours with a number of school administrators, staff, teachers, and parents to help our district with reopening plans," she said. "If elected, I will be the only health care worker on the board, whose No. 1 issue right now is trying to safely reopen our schools in person amidst a pandemic."

Leng said she supports reopening schools with appropriate safety protocols in place. The district applied for a waiver, but now that the county is in the "red" category, the waiver result and approval for schools to open in person will probably happen around the same time. "Many changes will take effect once school opens: mask wearing for staff and students, distancing, and improved indoor ventilation," she said. "I would still like to see a safe option for lunchtime. I would also encourage the use of outdoor space as much as possible."

Leng praised teachers for virtual instruction this fall, but expressed hope for better access to the curriculum and more communication. "There are a number of students who are not responding to virtual learning for many reasons: learning or physical disabilities, lack of reliable access to technology, parents who are essential workers or working from home, or the challenge of interfacing with a screen for many hours, just like all of us," she said. "If I could change anything, it would be to help improve communication and transparency of all the work that is being done between the administration, teachers, and families." ■

Email Tyler Callister at tcallister@almanacnews.com

Jason Morimoto

Jason Morimoto, 41, is a finance executive who's worked at Morgan Stanley, Citigroup, HP Inc. and ServiceNow. He cites his experiences as a member of the Board



of Regents of the University of California, president of Cal Alumni Association, a trustee of UC Berkeley Foundation and the library board of UC Berkeley. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration at UC Berkeley. His community service includes being the Las Lomas PTA treasurer, AYSO soccer coach, Alpine Little League coach, Las Lomas Foundation classroom ambassador and Las Lomas PTA financial secretary. He's lived in the district for five years. His campaign website is jasonmorimoto.com.

Molly Finn

Molly Finn, 44, is a Fortune 500 legal executive and nonprofit board member with a bachelor's degree in studio art from Franklin & Marshall College, and a law



degree and MBA from Santa Clara University. Her community service includes being a board member of global nonprofit focused on food security and an AYSO coach. She's lived in the district for 14 years. Her campaign website is mollyfinn.com.

Jody Leng

Jody Leng, 42, is a physician anesthesiologist and assistant professor of anesthesiology affiliated with Stanford Health Care whose experience includes serving as director of



regional anesthesiology and acute pain medicine at the Palo Alto VA Hospital and as associate program director of regional anesthesiology and acute pain medicine fellowship at Stanford Health Care. She holds a bachelor's degree from Tulane University in biomedical engineering, a master's from Stanford University in mechanical engineering, and an MD from University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. Her community service includes serving as Las Lomas PTA committee chair (Fun Fridays) from 2016-20 and La Entrada fourth grade Book Club lead parent from 2018-19. She's lived in the district for 10 years. Her campaign website is drjodyleng.com.

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PORTOLA COUNCIL

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accessory dwelling units have worked well in Portola Valley, but added that zoning should allow homes to be subdivided while retaining the appearance of single-family residences.

“You can either build high or sprawl,” she said. “I don’t think we have a contiguous space short of putting things on slopes where they’re prone to landslides or near the San Andreas Fault or where there’s a fire risk.”

Hey said the town’s disproportionately white population has “been a problem in the past,” with housing covenants, conditions and restrictions that once prohibited people from selling certain homes to people of color.

“I hope no one is going around saying this is a place for white people,” Hey said. “I would welcome anyone of color to come and live in Portola Valley, but of course you’ve got to have the money.”

She added that she would support building below-market-rate housing if a location and developer could be identified for it.

Hey said Stanford University has “done a decent job” on its initial plans for 27 single-family homes for Stanford faculty and 12 affordable multifamily housing units on a vacant property it owns along Alpine Road, and believes Stanford has the right to build on its own land; however, she thinks the plans may ultimately require more fire mitigation work. A proposal for the Stanford Wedge project is currently in the environmental review stages.

Town staff has been working hard on wildfire mitigation initiatives, she said, but she’d like to see the town conduct evacuation drills and would welcome a fire break on upper Alpine Road.

“I think the CZU fires have woken up the town. Was there enough done beforehand? No,” she said.

With climate change impacts like wildfires and sea level rise becoming increasingly stark, Hey believes Portola Valley could help the environment by installing more solar panels and holding a seminar series on climate change to further educate residents. Tree removal would improve conditions for solar power and lower the town’s fire risk, she said.

The town needs to preserve its rural character and open space, Hey said, noting that Windy Hill Open Space Preserve has seen an uptick in visitors this year that has led to the quandary of whether to create

more parking or whether “you say like the Getty Museum in LA, ‘No we don’t have a lot of cars parking, you come here on your own public transport or your bike or Uber, and we won’t provide the car parking.’”

Asked if she believes any changes are necessary at the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office, she said police should not shoot mentally ill individuals.

“When you have somebody with a kitchen knife trying to attack a policeman, you don’t pull out a gun and shoot them,” she said. “I’m not into defunding the police at all; I think one should fund the police because I think the police’s job is to keep order in society. But I do think we need to make sure when people are mentally ill and they’re confronting policemen, they’re not shot, and that they’re given the appropriate mental health treatment.”

Mary Hufty

A retired family physician, Mary Hufty now considers her role as an environmentalist (“and proud of it”) part of her occupation. Her concerns about protecting the environment propelled her to help found Portola Valley Neighbors United, a volunteer-run group created in January “to respond to several difficult town issues and preserve the town’s rural nature,” according to its website. She has stepped down as president of the organization in light of her council campaign.

Among her backers are Woodside Vice Mayor Brian Dombkowski; Peninsula Open Space Trust co-founder and board member Ward Paine; and Stanford Graduate School of Business professor George Parker.

Hufty has previously served on the town’s Westridge Architectural Supervisory, Conservation and Trails committees and said her knowledge of Portola Valley and experience as a “listener and facilitator” make her the best candidate.

“I’m trained in listening and finding out what the problem is and directing people to the solution to that problem without beating them over the head — that makes me completely different from anyone else that’s running, only in the sense that listening is key, not positioning myself,” Hufty said.

She believes the top issues facing residents are safety; diverse, equitable and affordable housing; and population diversity, respectively. State regulations “need to be pushed through the lens of a small town in a wildland urban

interface,” she said, adding that the most appropriate place for new housing would be near the Town Center.

“It’s going to be slow and steady,” Hufty said. “That being said, now is the time to start the change. The town has been sitting on \$3 million for years that should have been paid out for affordable housing and has failed to locate a place to spend that money. That has to be done forthwith, because we have people who need housing and people in town who could benefit from a subsidy on those things.”

Hufty, however, does not support the Stanford Wedge housing project as currently proposed due to concerns about wildfire hazards on the property.

She said she sees the town’s disproportionately white population as “a huge problem,” and believes council members should be reaching out to people of color in Portola Valley.

“People have to be recognized and celebrated for their diversity, not punished for it,” Hufty said. “I think they (the council) need to be respectful and reach out to people of color in town and support their points of view and find out what it feels like to be Black or Hispanic in town. Find out what’s going on instead of bringing in experts from elsewhere.”

To support small business owners during the pandemic, Hufty said, the town should ease restrictions on outdoor operations.

Preserving Portola Valley’s open spaces and keeping trails accessible is important, as is wetland protection, as far as climate change is concerned, she said. To mitigate wildfire risk, Hufty believes the town should create a fire ordinance and the job of a safety officer who would enforce the ordinance and lead other preparedness efforts, like evacuation drills. Grant funding could support those endeavors, she said.

Asked about opportunities for reform in the local Sheriff’s Office, Hufty said she believes police need an unarmed component to handle mental health calls.

“Doctors go into rooms of people with behavior disorders without a gun,” she said. “It is definitely not my style to think mental health issues and behavioral disorders are dealt with by an armed police force.”

Sarah Wernikoff

Community volunteer Sarah Wernikoff says her motivation to run for public office for the first time stems from a love for

Angela Hey

Angela Hey, 67, is a technologist who has lived in Portola Valley for 29 years. She has served on the town’s Bicycle, Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Committee since 2013 and previously sat on its first Sustainability Committee. As a volunteer, she also chairs the board of SpiritCare Ministry to Seniors, a Burlingame-based nonprofit serving the spiritual and emotional needs of seniors, and serves as vice president of the Imperial College Foundation. She has a Ph.D. in management science from Imperial College (which was part of the University of London), a master’s in mathematics from the University of Waterloo and a master’s in mathematics from the University of Cambridge. Her campaign website is angelahey.com.



Mary Hufty

Mary Hufty, 70, is a retired family practice doctor and mother of two adult sons who has lived in Portola Valley for 30 years. She is an environmentalist who has volunteered as a docent with Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve for over 30 years and has previously served on the town’s Westridge Architectural Supervisory, Conservation and Trails committees. She helped found Portola Valley Neighbors United, a volunteer-run organization started in January to help the community preserve and enhance its rural character. (She has stepped down as president of PVNU because of her campaign.) Hufty graduated with a bachelor’s degree in human development and biology from Stanford University and doctor of medicine degree from University of California at San Diego. Her campaign website is maryforcouncil.org.



Sarah Wernikoff

Sarah Wernikoff, 49, is a community volunteer with a background in web-based product management who has lived in town for 14 years. She has volunteered with the Portola Valley School District and served as trustee of a national Down syndrome research foundation. She has a bachelor’s degree in international relations from Miami University and an MBA from the George Washington University School of Business. She has three children: a son who’s a college freshman, a son in eighth grade at Menlo School and a daughter in her junior year at Woodside High School. Her campaign website is sarahforpvtowncouncil.org.



Jeff Aalfs

Jeff Aalfs, 51, is the mayor of Portola Valley and has served on the Town Council since 2011. Prior to that he served three years on the town’s Architecture and Site Control Commission. He works in energy and green building consulting and serves as the Portola Valley representative on the Peninsula Clean Energy board. Aalfs has a bachelor’s degree in molecular biology from University of California at Los Angeles and a Ph.D. in genetics from Harvard University. He has lived in Portola Valley for 14 years and has two children, a daughter in eighth grade at Woodside Priory School and a son in fifth grade at Corte Madera School. His campaign website is aalfs2020.com.



Portola Valley. As a Portola Valley School District volunteer she has served a number of roles, including on the Measure Z Leadership Committee and as parent-teacher organization president and vice president. She has also worked in a variety of leadership roles for private and public organizations, shifting from a career in consulting after business school to web-based product management.

For the last few years her

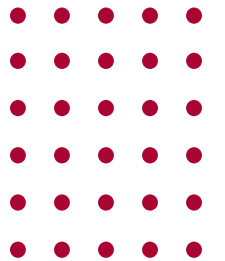
work has been focused in state politics, spending nearly two years as the chief of operations for Close the Gap California — a Palo Alto-based organization that recruits women to run for office and helps them launch their campaigns — and most recently working as campaign manager for state Senate District 15 candidate Ann Ravel.

Wernikoff has received the

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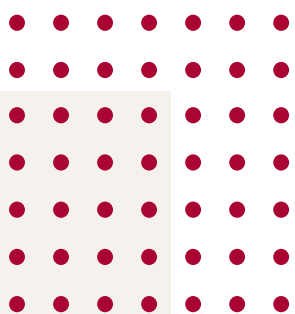
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PORTOLA COUNCIL

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backing of all current Portola Valley council members and school district board members, as well as endorsements from a number of local and regional officials such as Menlo Park Councilman Ray Mueller, San Mateo County Supervisor Don Horsley, and state Assemblyman Marc Berman.

"I really just appreciate the town, and I marry that with the experiences I've had over the last three years learning about state and regional issues and really growing a true appreciation for civic duty," Wernikoff said.

She identifies emergency and wildfire preparedness, the housing shortage and need for affordable housing and the need for a "refresh of community cohesion" as the top three issues residents are facing.

"We are a little bit more spread out and fragmented in Portola Valley," Wernikoff said. "There are silos based on peoples' interests or the age of their kids ... There are a lot of opportunities in town for us to cross-support the different groups we have."

The lack of diversity is a problem, she said, recalling that she sat in her now 18-year-old's kindergarten class and thought it was weird that the class was all-white.

"Currently speaking, the lack of diversified housing limits the number of people from being able to live in the town," Wernikoff said. "What I reflect on is, if I were a person of color of a certain minority group, would I want to live in Portola Valley? You don't want to live in a place where there's not a lot of people that look like you, and you don't want to raise your kids where they'll be feeling like they're the only ones who look a certain way."

On the housing front, Wernikoff said Portola Valley needs affordable housing, which she wants to prioritize for people who live and work in town.

"Diversity of people at

different levels of income is not only healthy for the community, but obviously the right thing to do for the region," she said.

Wernikoff is supportive of the Stanford Wedge project based on current information, but that support is contingent upon how Woodside Fire Protection District officials ultimately feel about the housing proposal.

"I would never, ever advocate for anything that wasn't in absolute lock step with the fire marshal and Woodside Fire," she said.

As far as wildfire safety is concerned, Wernikoff praised the town's communication when the CZU fires ignited nearby and the work of its Wildfire Preparedness Committee, which made a number of recommendations that the Town Council approved late last year. She said the town should make sure to follow through on executing those recommendations and work to synthesize communication.

Wildfire mitigation efforts are critical in tackling climate change, she said, and the town can also look at its own assets and make sure they're being run in the most environmentally friendly way possible.

Preserving Portola Valley's rural nature is a big priority for Wernikoff, and she said she would continue "prioritizing nature" as the Town Council has done.

The town could do a little more to communicate to residents about supporting local businesses, she said. Wernikoff is open to considering spending town funds to help small businesses if elected, but it's dependent upon the town's budget.

Asked whether she believes any policy changes are needed in the Sheriff's Office, Wernikoff said she's fully supportive of examining various policies.

"Every community needs to take a good look at the policies that are in place and how they're being executed," she said.

Jeff Aalfs

Mayor Jeff Aalfs is seeking his third term on the council, which he said will likely be his last if reelected. This election marks the first time he is running for a contested council seat, as he was appointed to the Town Council in 2011. He previously served on the town's Architecture and Site Control Commission for three years.

Aalfs has received endorsements from all of his fellow council members, as well as the Portola Valley School District board and a number of town committee and commission members.

"I've enjoyed a really good relationship with my colleagues on the council," Aalfs said. "We don't agree on everything but we discuss things, and I feel like the five of us come to very good decisions because we work together, and I plan to continue doing that."

The top three issues for residents are public safety, including fire and earthquake safety; housing; and security, Aalfs said.

"I don't think we've had a lot of crime here, but I think people do kind of worry about being safe around town," he said.

Aalfs said that accessory dwelling units have been a good solution to addressing the state Regional Housing Needs Assessment, and the town has also developed affiliated housing partners — institutions like Woodside Priory School — that it has agreed to work with if they want to build employee housing on their land. The school has 17 housing units on its property for faculty and staff members.

Aalfs sees ADUs and institutions as the "big thrust" for adding housing moving forward, adding "the more inventory we have, the better, really at almost any (income) level."

"The next level up would be somebody coming in and building duplexes or fourplexes or even an apartment building somewhere in town. That's a

big step, and I'd be very nervous about seeing that happen," he said. "To get to some of the numbers we're hearing it might be the next necessary step. I would think long and hard and it would take me a long time to get comfortable with that."

Aalfs said he thinks the Stanford Wedge property is a reasonable location to put housing, but he couldn't make a decision without seeing the forthcoming environmental and safety reports.

"If the fire marshal were to come back and say, 'This project is dangerous and we can't fully mitigate the increased hazard,' then I can't imagine moving forward," he said.

The last few years have served as "wake-up calls" for the town with regard to fire danger, Aalfs said. He represented the council on the Wildfire Preparedness Committee and said all of its recommendations that the town adopted are on course to be implemented by the end of the year. The town had planned to conduct an evacuation drill this summer that was postponed due to the pandemic, and it will do more to educate residents on when and how to evacuate, he said.

As climate change continues to exacerbate natural disasters like wildfires, Aalfs — who works in energy and green building consulting — said if reelected, he looks forward to continuing his work on the Peninsula Clean Energy board, which now provides electric generation services to 98% of county customers.

"We can extend decarbonization into transportation with more electric vehicles, we can make our houses more efficient and fossil fuel-free by electrifying them," Aalfs said. "We've talked about making the Town Center a free-standing microgrid. ... We ran into some large pricetags for doing it, that was one of the impediments, but I'd like to see that move forward."

Asked about the town's disproportionately white

The League of Women Voters of South San Mateo County is sponsoring a virtual Portola Valley Town Council candidate forum at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 4. To register, visit my.lwv.org/california/south-san-mateo-county.

population, Aalfs said single-family zoning has created a dearth of affordable housing, and adding affordable housing would be one way to promote diversity.

Aalfs said the Sheriff's Office has done pretty well, but there are causes for concern, pointing out that there have been several incidents in the county in which people having mental health episodes died in police custody.

"My guess is they're doing a pretty good job and they're trying to address these problems, and my guess is we'll find things to be changed," he said.

Asked about supporting small businesses hit hard by COVID-19, Aalfs said the town doesn't have enough money to keep those businesses afloat. That said, he said he would still listen to local business owners if they approached him with any ideas on how the town could help.

Portola Valley's rural character is "one of the bedrocks of the town," and Aalfs imagines the town, if mandated to build more housing, would construct it in areas that are already somewhat developed.

"We've always tried to concentrate the building in certain areas to keep it from overwhelming too much of the natural environment," he said.

Campaign finances

So far, none of the candidates has exceeded the \$2,000 threshold to file campaign finance reports, according to Town Clerk Sharon Hanlon. ■

Email Julia Brown at jbrown@almanacnews.com

CRIME BRIEFS

continued from page 6

Police investigating 'swatting' incident

Menlo Park Police Department detectives are investigating a false report of a double homicide on Saturday as a "swatting" incident, spokeswoman Nicole Acker confirmed Tuesday.

According to Acker, someone called the police department shortly before 3:30 p.m. on Sept.

26 and said he had killed his parents with an AR-15 assault weapon. Officers went to a home in the 2300 block of Tioga Drive in the Sharon Heights neighborhood, and "had the occupants of the residence exit," Acker said in an email.

After making contact with the residents and checking the home's interior, officers determined the call was a false report, Acker said. The suspect has not been identified, and the case has been

turned over to detectives.

Acker said the preliminary investigation indicates this was a case of so-called swatting, in which someone files a false police report in an attempt to draw a large number of officers to a particular location. The New York Times reported in January that such incidents have become more common "in communities rich with tech companies and their billionaire executives, like the Bay Area and Seattle." In 2018, a Los Angeles man

was sentenced to prison for 20 to 25 years after pleading guilty to making dozens of hoax calls reporting fake crimes, including a call in 2017 that resulted in a Kansas man being fatally shot by a police officer.

Sharon Heights residents flooded Nextdoor with reports about a heavy police presence on Tioga Drive on Saturday afternoon, saying the street had been blocked off and there were SWAT officers with assault rifles.

One person reported hearing a loud bang.

"There was a large police response," Acker said. "I can't confirm a loud banging noise, but you can imagine that when officers respond to a call as described below, they need to make sure that the whole house is searched and cleared. With the unknown threat and the possibility that there could be an armed person in the residence, all precautions were taken."

—Julia Brown

DISTRICT 3

continued from page 1

Locally, she's been involved with the Red Cross as a CPR and first aid instructor, with the Junior League of the Peninsula, and as a volunteer with the VA in Menlo Park, where she and other members of the Blue Star Mothers organization plan barbecues and game nights with the residents.

She said she's running, in part, because she is opposed to Wolosin's campaign. She characterized Wolosin as privileged and questioned her ability to understand discrimination through a video training, or to understand the city's need for affordable housing as a market-rate homeowner. Nguyen added she felt she would bring "more to the office than somebody who says, 'I go to meetings.'"

She expressed frustration with the city's below-market-rate housing program, noting that she lives in a below-market-rate home that became available after she had been on a waitlist for about 20 years.

"I'm not ashamed to say it. I know my kids are ashamed, but I'm not ashamed to say it. It took me 20 years to be on the list," she said. "It was a struggle."

She added that she'd like to increase the requirements the city places on developers to build and pay for below-market-rate (BMR) housing to 30% or 40%, up from the current 15%.

"We still have a 15% requirement for developers to give to the BMR program, and we have more than 15% of people in Menlo Park who are in the poverty threshold because we have a shrinking middle class right now," she said. The city should also focus on building affordable rental housing on public land that it already owns. It could consider acquiring the USGS site and developing affordable housing there, if possible, she said.

The city should also rezone properties on a quarter acre or larger to permit two homes, as well as some areas designated for businesses to permit more housing, she said. "I think we need to be less strict with our zoning rules. I think we need to start from there and be a bit more flexible."

She said she feels sympathetic toward a young couple she met recently who told her they can't afford to have a family.

"I think it's hard for young families," she said. "I think each partner would have to make \$100,000 just to buy a shack." She also talked about a senior who had lived in her district for many years but around five years ago had to move to the East Bay because she could not

Chelsea Nguyen

Chelsea Nguyen, 56, is a Vietnamese American U.S. Air Force veteran, single mom of three and former theology student who works as a project manager at Cisco. She holds a degree from Menlo College in business management, studied theology at Oxford University and has lived in the district on and off for 40 years. She served in the U.S. Air Force for almost 10 years, working in the Military Police and Information Systems Security areas and serving in Europe and the Middle East. She has volunteered with the American Red Cross, Junior League Mid-Peninsula and San Mateo Blue Star Mothers organizations and served on a mayor-appointed committee to administer community development block grants in Palo Alto. Her campaign website is chelsea4mp.com.



Max Fennell

Max Fennell, 32, is the owner of Fenn Coffee and a professional triathlete. He studied for an associate's degree at Montgomery County Community College near Philadelphia and has lived in the district for four years. He volunteered with programs to introduce youth to triathlons and endurance sports and was recently appointed to a diversity and inclusion board for USA Triathlon. His campaign website is fennellformenlo.com.



Jen Wolosin

Jen Wolosin, 46, is a community advocate and parent who founded the Parents for Safe Routes organization in Menlo Park in 2017. She holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from University of California at Berkeley and a master of business administration degree from UC Davis. She has lived in the district for seven years. Her community service experiences include serving on the city's Transportation Master Plan Oversight and Outreach Committee and a number of local traffic and safe routes task forces and advisory committees, being a former member of Menlo Together, and spending time as president of the San Mateo Mothers Club and program director of the Jewish Baby Network. She previously worked as a market research professional. Her campaign website is jenwolosin.com.



afford to rent in Menlo Park.

"I don't know how anyone can live here, unless you've owned your home for a long time and you didn't sell it and you pass it on generation to generation, or you're filthy rich and you move in and you can afford it. But for young families and single people, there's no place to go. ... I don't want someone like me to wait 20 years to get a place to live," she said.

She said she also would prioritize revitalizing downtown Menlo Park, saying that she often goes to downtown Palo Alto rather than Menlo Park because restaurants are open later and there is more variety when it comes to cost. Pre-pandemic, she said, Palo Alto used to have the Cheesecake Factory, where she liked to meet up with friends in the evening for dessert and chat until midnight. In Menlo Park, she said, "we don't have anything like that. It's a bit dead."

Building underground parking with multi-use buildings could help improve downtown vibrancy, she said, and there

should be more variety in restaurants between expensive and cheaper food options.

To help households struggling during the pandemic, she said she would favor a food drive or housing subsidies to assist people — without depleting the city's financial resources.

On police reform, Nguyen said she would favor halving the police force. "We are not a high-crime city," she said. The funding not spent on policing could be repurposed for community outreach and services.

Police reform should focus on more than just training, she said. "It's about attitude. It's about background. You have to have empathy," she said. "You can train somebody who is a racist all your life but (if) that person doesn't have empathy and care, then it doesn't matter."

On climate matters, Nguyen said she favored things like planting more trees, using fewer cars and reducing light pollution. One idea to reduce driving is to build a tram or light rail system up and down a lane of El Camino Real, she said.

When someone recently told her that a similar idea was discussed and nixed years ago, she said, "You can't say just because something didn't work a decade ago that we can't bring it back and put it on the table. Let's talk about it."

Max Fennell

Max Fennell, a professional triathlete and owner of Fenn Coffee, is running for City Council for a number of reasons, but key among them is that he, like many city residents, is a working person struggling with rent.

He sees a crisis in the community members he observes — people leaving the area or friends considering living in a van. "I'm in the same boat, and I just don't see anybody stepping up to tackle these issues," he said. "The reason I'm running ... is because I think it's important for there to be a voice on the City Council that is really able to tap into what the common person is going through, not just someone who's trying to assume what the community members are going through."

The four-year resident of Menlo Park says he regularly cycles the streets of the city, but his first appearance in City Hall was more recent, when he pitched the City Council on an idea to offer a free swimming lesson program to children at the Belle Haven pool. The proposal requested a \$12,000 pool fee waiver from the city and the contract didn't come together. The experience, he said, opened his eyes to who's on the City Council and how the process works. It also made him wonder: "Where are all the initiatives for individuals like myself, that are just working folks, that are renters?"

Max's first name is actually Jeremy, but he picked up the nickname from his brother and it stuck, he said. He's from Philadelphia, where so-called affordable housing rents align with what he calls "reasonable" housing — set between \$700 and \$1,500 per month for a one- or two- bedroom apartment. "I think we've got to be around the \$1,000, \$1,400, \$1,500 (number) to be reasonable," he said. However, he added, "When I talk to property builders, their idea of affordable housing is around the \$2,800 number."

He added that he'd like the city to prioritize working with and incentivizing companies interested in building one- to two-bedroom housing units that cost about \$1,400 per month over those proposing to build luxury apartments.

As a small business owner, he added, it's a problem when many

potential customers are spending the majority of their money on rent. The high cost of housing "causes us to pull back on the amount of money we spend with our local businesses," he said.

He has several proposals for how to mitigate the impacts on renters struggling with pandemic-related unemployment or underemployment. First, he said, landlords could have some type of longevity discount. Loyal tenants who have paid high rents consistently for at least two or three years should be eligible for longer-term leases of two years at lower monthly rates.

As a Black resident of Menlo Park, he also sees problems with the Menlo Park Police Department. He said he has been pulled over five or six times since he's lived in the city. He said he'd favor reducing the number of officers and its budget. Some of the budget cuts from the police department could go toward helping residents who have been hardest-hit by the pandemic, Fennell said. That could be helping with housing costs, or providing those in need with a stipend or paying for part of the rent. He said if he were on the council, he'd make phone calls to property managers and have conversations with them about how to keep renters from moving out.

But cutting funding to the department won't necessarily fix policing in Menlo Park, he added. "The problem is how they view certain people, and there is a systematic structure that's in place," he said.

He said he'd favor creating a mandatory racial understanding training that all officers have to complete and track. "There's a reason why I've been pulled over so many times ... and community oversight's not going to do anything to deal with those types of situations," he said.

When it comes to traffic and climate change, Fennell said he favors promoting alternative forms of transportation like bikes. He'd favor a bike-share program coming to Menlo Park. He's also interested in helping more people feel comfortable navigating the city by bike.

Fennell said he was also interested in working with former inmates. The city could help support those looking to join local fire departments, or consider hiring them to remove trees and clear brush in high fire risk areas, he said.

He also had a number of ideas for bringing vitality to downtown Menlo Park. The city could start a program like other cities have on the first Friday of every month, when businesses

See **DISTRICT 3**, page 22

DISTRICT 3

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open up their doors, showcase local artwork and vendors, and serve wine and cheese. The city could create a program to allow small vendors like him to set up shop at a table somewhere downtown. The city could also be more proactive about helping fill the empty storefronts downtown by offering commercial rent subsidies to small businesses, he said.

“We have the ability to have this diverse community, but that just takes the right leadership coming with the ideas and then creating that environment,” he said. “I would like to see more diversity in Menlo Park, but you can’t be pricing people out. We can’t have people being discriminated against.”

Jen Wolosin

Menlo Park resident Jen Wolosin got involved in local politics several years ago on a simple premise: to help her third-grade kid get to school safely on a bike. She started appearing at City Council meetings around August 2016, identified herself as a “Laurel Mom” and asked the council to consider a detailed plan she’d developed to make biking and walking safer for neighborhood kids before the new Upper Laurel Elementary School opened.

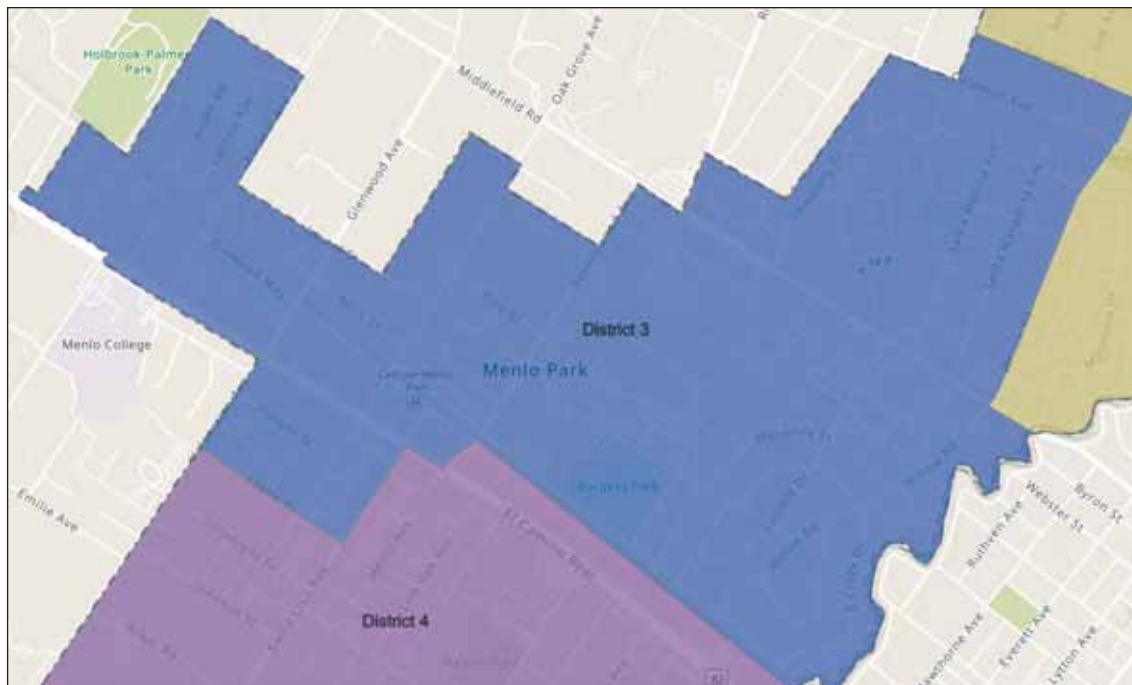
In 2017, she founded the Parents for Safe Routes organization and began advocating to make roads safer for kids trying to get to school on foot or by bike throughout the city.

Over time, she said, she has expanded her interests outward beyond “safe routes” issues to larger transportation problems, as well as land use, housing, sustainability and equity.

That she’s running for City Council is not surprising — she filed paperwork signaling her run for office in 2018, announced her candidacy in January and began campaigning before the pandemic hit. Prior to the COVID-19 shelter-in place order, she said, she was able to canvass about 20% of the households in her district.

She also had a head start on campaign fundraising compared to the other candidates. As of Sept. 24, she had raised \$11,179 and had collected a number of endorsements from local leaders, including San Mateo County supervisors Dave Pine and Don Horsley, and 27 current or former appointed city commissioners. Nguyen and Fennell have each raised less than \$2,000 and told *The Almanac* they are not seeking or reporting endorsements for their campaigns.

Wolosin’s desire to run for City



Courtesy city of Menlo Park

District 3 encompasses a section of Menlo Park bounded between Palo Alto and Atherton, stretching southwest to Crane Street and northeast to the VA property off of Willow Road. It includes the Civic Center, the Caltrain station and the neighborhoods of Vintage Oaks, Linfield Oaks and Felton Gables, among other areas.

Council came from a desire to pivot from being an advocate to a decision-maker, she said. She was also a part of local nonprofit Menlo Together for about two years but stepped back in June, she said.

“I’ve spent years going to City Council meetings, organizing community members, making a case for different policies, but at the end of the day, advocates have to convince decision-makers. And so, in order for the values that I care about to be realized in the city that I love, I realized that I need to become a decision-maker,” she said.

The top three issues facing Menlo Park are COVID-19, the economy and climate change — though each is also infused with a fourth issue: inequity, she said. To tackle the first two issues, she said, the city should focus on public safety efforts such as broadening community outreach beyond online posts and ensuring that staff has adequate personal protective equipment. Hosting City Council meetings online during the pandemic has made them more accessible to community members, she said, adding that she’d like them to continue to allow online participation.

“While we are all focused on COVID and the economy, we cannot take our eyes off of the existential threat of climate change,” she said.

While traffic may be in a lull during the pandemic-driven “techsodus,” a term she ascribed to the departure of remote-working tech employees from the Bay Area, the future of work in the Bay Area will probably still involve a lot of people wanting to be in Silicon Valley, she said.

“I think we’d be fooling ourselves to think that it’s just going

to go away,” she said. “We still have to reduce vehicle miles traveled. We still have to get people out of their cars to reach their climate goals.”

She favors building electrification, sustainable transportation, and land-use policies that put more housing near jobs and transit, and increasing the number of electric vehicle chargers. Wolosin said she supports recommendations from Menlo Park’s Environmental Quality Commission for the city’s Climate Action Plan, which is to either halt the use of natural gas citywide by 2030 or require that gas appliances be replaced by electric alternatives when they stop working. She also favored subsidies, rebates and other programs to help low-income residents meet those requirements.

“The way we reacted to climate in the past, for the most part, hasn’t been to scale at the level of the threat that climate change is. You know, recycling is wonderful ... but that’s not going to lower the temperature of the planet to where it needs to be so that Belle Haven doesn’t flood.”

Both COVID-19 and climate change are having disproportionate impacts on communities of color and low-income residents, she said. “The Belle Haven neighborhood will be first area of Menlo Park to flood when sea level rise hits. We’ve seen higher death rates and hospitalizations among people of color, so we have to look at all of the levers at the City Council’s disposal to right a lot of these wrongs of historical inequities and the legacy of redlining and segregation.”

Wolosin also brought up the topic of equity in the context of the city’s zoning processes. As the City Council embarks on a

new cycle under a state mandate to zone for more housing, she said, the city should reflect on its precedent of concentrating housing growth in Belle Haven and District 1. “It’s left a huge concentration of development in and development impacts for our lowest-income, formerly redlined neighbors, and we’ve also left them with the fewest services,” she said. “We really need to look at ourselves and the community and say, ‘Who do we want to be and how do we want to grow?’”

She added that she favored increasing the density of housing downtown, near services, and considering additional steps to increase the availability of housing in single-family neighborhoods through accessory dwelling units. She likes the duplexes

CHURCH

continued from page 5

Monday that the case is under investigation, according to department spokesperson Nicole Acker.

As a result of the misuse of church funds, Dutton-Gillett faces disciplinary actions through the Episcopal Church. His ministry as a priest will be restricted for the next four years, and he will be under the supervision of Bishop Marc Andrus, according to the letter.

He will not be permitted to work as a priest or in any church position that involves managing funds.

After four years, he may be removed from the priesthood, or the restrictions may be modified, kept or stopped. He also must provide restitution for the misused funds. So far, he has paid back about \$52,000, according to

in her neighborhood in Vintage Oaks, she added.

“I think people tend to fear the unknown, but I see it as an opportunity to create a community that is multi-generational and inclusive and friendly. And when we have this greater concentration of people, then we can have all the things we want in our community,” she said.

As a cost-effective way to support low-income residents affected by the pandemic, Wolosin said she’d favor investing in communication with residents through multi-language mailers or delivering information door to door, and expanding or increasing the city’s contributions to local nonprofits like Samaritan House, LifeMoves or Second Harvest.

Wolosin said she favored police reform, adding she felt that issues of systemic racism extend beyond the police department.

“The police do the bidding of the community,” she said. “I think we can’t just look at the police and say, ‘Shame on the police.’ I think we have to look at ourselves as a community and ask what we have asked the police to do, which is basically to keep our communities segregated.”

Within the police department, she said, the city should: Adopt a process to recruit a new police chief that uses community feedback; establish a citizens advisory committee that is more transparent and representative of the community; evaluate how money is spent in the police department; and study “if it’s appropriate for people with guns to be doing all the things they’re doing,” she said. ▣

Email Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com

the letter. The church’s insurance company has paid out \$100,000, the maximum amount that was covered.

Dutton-Gillett had been on paid leave since April 16 and was removed as the rector on Sept. 4.

The church stopped paying his salary and pension but will continue to pay for his family’s health insurance through the end of the year and permit them to continue living in the rectory rent-free until Jan. 15, the letter said.

Before working at Trinity Church, Dutton-Gillett had about 17 years of experience working in different ministry settings, including at St. Elizabeth’s Episcopal Church in Knoxville, Tennessee.

The church hopes to find an interim rector to serve for up to two years, according to the letter. ▣

Email Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com

DISTANCE LEARNING

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Carrasco knows his children may be experiencing a learning gap because distance learning is not the same as being in the classroom with their teacher, he said. But he at least understands how to help them at home as best as he can because the information has been relayed to him in his native language.

“If those resources weren’t available, it would have been extremely different and a miserable situation,” he said.

A few weeks after school campuses were closed in March, the team at Early Edge California, a nonprofit that advocates improving access to high-quality early childhood education, discussed developing a phone application on distance learning resources for Spanish-speaking parents.

They couldn’t move forward because there wasn’t sufficient content to include in the application at the time, according to Patricia Lozano, the organization’s executive director.

“This is the first time we have faced something like this... this was just so immediate that maybe (translating resources) is something they didn’t think about,” said Lozano, referring to school districts and counties in the state.

In place of the phone app, Early Edge began compiling a list of distance learning resources in Spanish for parents and educators. The list includes activity ideas for young children, an illustrated guide to discuss the pandemic with children, and suggestions for easing stress and isolation while social distancing.

“We know they’ve been affected by the crisis more than any other group,” she said. Latinos hold over half of front-line worker jobs in California, according to a 2018 report from UC Berkeley Labor Center.

They make up less than 40% of the state population but lead with 60% of the COVID-19 cases and nearly 50% of coronavirus-related deaths.

A recent survey by Latino Decisions, a political opinion research group, and Abriendo Puertas, an early childhood foundation, shows that 65% of Latino caretakers report

having a difficult time “helping their children because they are too unfamiliar with the class material.”

The national survey, conducted in both English and Spanish between June 12 and June 19, includes responses from 1,195 Latino parents and grandparents. With a +/- 2.8% margin of error, and larger margins for sub-samples, the data was matched to the U.S. Census American Survey for parents and grandparents of Latino origin.

For Lozano, being too unfamiliar with the class material is

a sign of language barriers.

Despite the numbers, Lozano is hopeful that more people in the position to develop resources will begin to consider making them accessible in various languages.

“This crisis has evidenced all the things that don’t work for the system,” said Lozano. “But I think it’s a lesson learned that when crises happen, it’s important to have all those materials available so all parents can understand what to do.” ■

This story was originally published by EdSource.

Marz John Garcia

February 16, 1937 – September 8, 2020

Marz J. Garcia, beloved father, grandfather, brother, uncle and dear friend to so many, died of complications stemming from a head injury at the age of 83 on September 8, 2020. He was the third of five brothers born to Francisco and Mariana Garcia in the Bronx, New York. He lived a unique story and left behind a multitude of friends and family whose lives he had deeply impacted.



He lifted himself from a hard-scrabble upbringing on one side of the continent to a varied and highly successful career and personal life in California. Stops along the way included teenage reform school at Lincoln Hall in New York (where he later came back to speak as a success story), a US Army posting in Germany, undergraduate study at Ohio University (where he met his wife Nancy and formed life-long brotherhoods within the Phi Delta Theta fraternity), several graduate degrees in economics and law, and ultimately a move to California to begin a successful career in banking, finance and politics in San Francisco and Menlo Park, CA, where he raised his family. He served as a State Senator in the California Legislature representing San Mateo County from 1978 - 1982 and functioned proudly as a political outsider who followed his principles over political gain. After leaving the Senate he continued serving the public in high-level appointments within former California governor Pete Wilson’s administration for several years. After his time in public service he had a variety of entrepreneurial pursuits, as well as a stint teaching business classes at Menlo College.

He was an avid traveler, skier, tennis and pickleball player and draft beer enthusiast, who introduced his two sons Marz and Quin to many of these pursuits. He and Nancy enjoyed a decades-long passion for tennis both as rivals and partners - their career series as opponents has been declared a draw. Throughout his life those who met him appreciated his unique, well-considered and principled views on almost any topic. In his 80’s he remained incredibly vigorous; traveling, maintaining friendships, exercising daily, actively investing, working on home improvement and enjoying his family.

He believed in self-reliance, but never failed to offer a helping hand to those in need, be they friends, family or strangers. In his final few days those people surrounded him and his family, sharing stories validating the impact he had on so many lives. He is survived by his wife of 55 years Nancy, son Marz and daughter-in-law Ferol with grandsons Marz and Rhys, son Quin (expecting a daughter in Spring ‘21 with his partner Theresa Strawn), younger brother Mel and extended family in New York, and an array of deeply treasured friends from throughout his life.

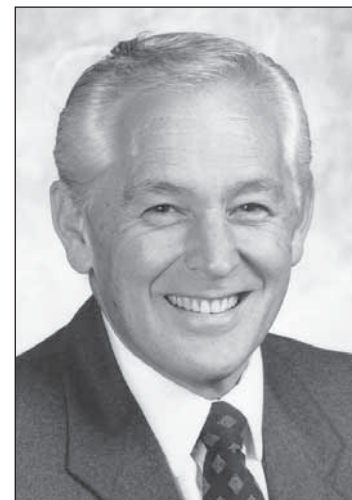
Memorial service information: Planned for October 10, 2020 - details pending.

PAID OBITUARY

Arthur A. Dugoni

June 29, 1925 – September 23, 2020

Arthur Albert Dugoni, a retired orthodontist and dental educator, passed away on Sept. 23, 2020 at his home in Palo Alto, CA. He was 95.



Art was born in San Francisco, CA, on June 29, 1925, the oldest child of Italian immigrant parents, Arturo B. Dugoni and Orsolina (Bianco) Dugoni.

Art was valedictorian at St. James High School where he also excelled in track and basketball. In 1943, while finishing his senior year of high school, Art was accepted into the Navy V-12 College Training Program at the University of San Francisco. After one year, he was transferred to Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA, where he met the love of his life, Katherine (“Kaye”) Groo.

Art began his dental education at UMKC before earning his DDS degree in 1948 from the College of Physicians & Surgeons in San Francisco (the school that would later bear his name). As part of his commitment to the Navy, Art spent time at Naval hospitals in Bethesda, MD and Oakland, CA before completing his service as a Marine Corps officer at Camp Pendleton.

In 1949, Art and Kaye were married in St. Aloysius Church at Gonzaga. The couple and their growing family lived in San Mateo, CA, while Art worked as a dentist in South San Francisco. In 1963, Art completed an Orthodontics degree at the University of Washington in Seattle.

The couple eventually settled in Atherton, CA, with their five sons and two daughters. Art enjoyed hosting summer vacations at Lake Almanor and Tahoe Donner and, in later years, on several family cruises.

Art was an avid sports fan and loved to play golf. He was a longtime member of the Olympic Club and Peninsula Golf & Country Club.

In 1978, Art was named dean of the University of the Pacific School of Dentistry after teaching there for two decades. He maintained a private orthodontic practice in South City with his oldest son, Steven, until 1987. During his silver anniversary as dean, the UOP dental school was renamed in Art’s honor in 2004. He retired as dean in 2006 at the age of 80, but continued to work for the school as Senior Executive for Development until his passing.

Art was a past president of the CDA, ADA, American Dental Education Association, and American Board of Orthodontics. Among his many honors, Art was elected to the FDI World Dental Federation’s distinguished List of Honour in 1998, which is limited to 30 living members. In 2008, Art was proud to receive the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor.

Art was preceded in death by his parents, Arturo and Lina; his wife of 66 years, Kaye; and his brother, William. He leaves behind his companion of recent years, Cathie Perga of Palo Alto; his sister, Evelyn Fiorina of Denver; and seven children: Steven (Lisa) of Hillsborough; Michael (Marianne) of Fremont; Russell (Maureen) of Fairfield; Mary Rouleau (Bertrand) of Los Altos; Diane Harris (Robert) of Foster City; Arthur (Kristin) of Sacramento; and James (Lisa) of Stockton. He is also survived by fifteen grandchildren, nine great grandchildren and numerous nieces, nephews and many other extended family members.

Memorial gifts to The Art Dugoni Scholar Fund may be made online at www.dentalgifts.org to support the annual tuition of a dental student at the Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry.

PAID OBITUARY

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING PROPOSED INCREASE IN REFUSE RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, AND GREEN WASTE RATES IN THE TOWN OF ATHERTON

Property Owner/Tenant:

Pursuant to the requirements of Proposition 218 and Article XIID of the California Constitution, this notice provides information regarding proposed increases to the existing refuse and green waste rates in the Town of Atherton.

Notice of Public Hearing Regarding Proposed Increase in Refuse, Commercial, and Green Waste rates

A public hearing on proposed increases in residential garbage cart rates will be held by the City Council on:

Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2020

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Place: This meeting is being held virtually, Atherton CA Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/506897786>

Meeting ID: 506 897 786

One tap mobile

+16699006833,506897786# US (San Jose)

Dial by your location

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 506 897 786

<http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/Archive.aspx?AMID=41>

This notice is being sent to the refuse service billing address for all parcels in Atherton. This notice also describes how to file a protest regarding the proposed rate increase. All property owners/tenants and other interested parties are invited to attend the public hearing and be heard on the proposed rate increase.

Description: The purpose of this notice is to provide information regarding proposed increases to the existing refuse and green waste rates in the Town of Atherton. A full and complete listing of the proposed new rates for Residential Garbage Carts, Green Waste Carts, Commercial Rates and Commercial Organic Rates are available by request and included in the mailer. The explanation and reasons for rate increases and methodology for rate calculations are also available by request and included in the mailer. This notice was mailed to all Atherton Residents with detailed rate information described.

A copy of the City Council staff report and supporting material can be found online, by Friday October 16, 2020 here:

<https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/Archive.aspx?AMID=41>

Protest Procedures:

The City Council of the Town of Atherton will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, October 21 at 7:00 p.m. ***This meeting will be held virtually.*** At this hearing, the City Council will consider public comment as well as written protests by ratepayers and property owners against the proposed increase in green waste fees. Any person may appear at the public hearing and be heard on any matter related to the proposed increase in rates.

Written protests must be received prior to the close of the public hearing on October 21, 2020. In order to be valid, a protest must clearly bear date, designation of service address or assessor's parcel number (APN), printed name, and original signature of the record owner, or trustee, or authorized signatory of a corporation/partnership, or customer of record with respect to the property identified on the protest. The customer of record is the name of the person whose name is printed on the refuse bill for the parcel. Protests not bearing the original signature shall not be counted. Protests which have been altered by someone other than the person who signed them shall not be counted.

The Town of Atherton must receive any written protest at Town Hall by 5:00 p.m. on October 21, 2020, or the written protest must be presented at the virtual City Council meeting on October 21, 2020 prior to the close of the public hearing on the matter. If you wish to mail a written protest, please send it in a sealed envelope addressed to Garbage Cart Rates, Attn: City Clerk, Town of Atherton, 150 Watkins Ave., Atherton, CA 94027. In accordance with the California Constitution as amended by Proposition 218, only one protest is allowed per parcel. For example, if both the tenant and the owner of the same parcel filed a protest, only one protest would be counted.

If written protests are presented by a majority of affected property owners/customers prior to close of the public hearing, the City Council cannot adopt the proposed rates and another rate structure would have to be proposed.

If you have any questions on the item please contact Robert Barron, Finance Director, at rbarron@ci.atherton.ca.us or 650-752-0552. Any attendee who wishes accommodation for a disability should contact the City Clerk at (650) 752-0529 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Date Posted: October 2, 2020

Date Published: October 2, 2020

Date Published: September 11, 2020

/s/ Anthony Suber

Anthony Suber, City Clerk

Jen Wolosin for Menlo Park City Council

The first-ever District 3 council race in Menlo Park features three strong candidates with a diverse set of backgrounds.

Chelsea Nguyen is a Vietnamese American U.S. Air Force veteran with three children who currently works as a project manager at Cisco and has lived in the district on and off for 40 years. She has a business management degree from Menlo College and served in the Air Force for nearly a decade, working in the Military Police and Information Systems Security areas. She has volunteered with San Mateo Blue Star Mothers, Junior League Mid-Peninsula and the American Red Cross, and served on a mayor-appointed committee in Palo Alto to administer community development block grants.

Max Fennell is the owner of Fenn Coffee and a professional triathlete who has lived in the district for four years. He has volunteered with programs to introduce youth to triathlons and endurance sports and is now serving on USA Triathlon's Diversity and Inclusion Board.

Jen Wolosin is a community advocate, parent and founder of the Parents for Safe Routes organization in Menlo Park who previously worked as a market research professional. She has lived in District 3 for seven years and has a bachelor's degree in sociology from University of California at Berkeley and an MBA from UC Davis.

EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

Wolosin has served on a number of local traffic and safe routes task forces and committees and has held leadership roles with the Jewish Baby Network and San Mateo Mothers Club.

While we believe each candidate would bring a lot to the table as a Menlo Park City Council member, The Almanac endorses Wolosin for the seat. We believe her experience on numerous city task forces and committees, her work as the Parents for Safe Routes founder and understanding of — and ideas to address — the various issues facing the city make her the top pick.

Wolosin got involved in local politics several years ago out of an interest in getting her child to school safely on a bike. That desire led her to found the Parents for Safe Routes organization in 2017, where she has advocated for making roads safer for children trying to get to school by walking or biking in Menlo Park. Wolosin isn't a single-issue candidate, however; she has expanded her interests and knowledge to other transportation issues, including traffic and green transit, as well as climate change, housing and equity.

She's been a consistent attendee and participant at City Council meetings for

more than four years, which is indicative of her civic interest and passion. Between that and her extensive committee work, Wolosin has a familiarity and understanding of how city government operates and has undoubtedly worked with some of the staff she would be engaging with as a council member.

Wolosin sees the top issues facing Menlo Park — which she identifies as COVID-19, the economy, and climate change — through the lens of equity, and pointed out measures that the city can undertake or continue with equal access in mind, such as continuing to allow online participation during City Council meetings after the pandemic subsides.

She is eager to implement or consider a variety of initiatives to combat climate change, from transitioning from gas to all-electric buildings and more electric vehicle chargers to land-use policies that put more housing near jobs and transit. Wolosin tied equity into climate change considerations during her interview with The Almanac, pointing out that the Belle Haven neighborhood will be the first in the city to flood due to sea level rise and saying the council should look to “right a lot of these wrongs of historical inequities.”

Wolosin also believes the city should reflect on its precedent of concentrating housing in Belle Haven and District 1 and

said she is open to a number of ways to increase the housing stock, including adding density downtown and near services, and increasing the availability of housing in single-family neighborhoods through accessory dwelling units. She recognizes that more housing is needed at all income levels throughout the city and said she appreciates that District 3 is “50% apartments,” with duplexes in her neighborhood in Vintage Oaks.

She also has several ideas for improving the Menlo Park Police Department, including establishing a citizens advisory committee and evaluating how money is spent in the department. Wolosin emphasized any analysis of the local police force should involve the community, since “the police do the bidding of the community.”

Wolosin's work starting and expanding Parents for Safe Routes shows she can build consensus and see an initiative through, skills that are essential for a council member. Her focus on equity and openness to weighing different ideas and considerations for how to address issues facing the city, combined with her experience in local government, make her the best District 3 candidate. That being said, we hope Nguyen and Fennell stay active and involved in city politics, as we believe they have a lot to offer as Menlo Park navigates a period that will be marked by significant change and challenges. ■

Jeff Aalfs and Sarah Wernikoff for Portola Valley Town Council

There are plenty of things that unify the four candidates for Portola Valley Town Council: a deep love for the town's rural beauty, with its network of trails and bucolic open spaces; a determination to protect it from the ever-present threat of wildfires; and concern over the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on residents, local businesses and the town's bottom line.

But with only two seats on the council to fill, voters need to make a choice between incumbent Jeff Aalfs and challengers Sarah Wernikoff, Angela Hey and Mary Hufty. The Almanac recommends reelecting Jeff Aalfs and electing Sarah Wernikoff.

With nine years' experience on the council, Aalfs has shown admirable leadership as mayor during an extraordinarily difficult year, as the coronavirus turned life upside down and the CZU Lightning Complex fires, the largest to ravage the area in at least 100 years, came chillingly close to town. His weekly emails were notable for their clarity, compassionate tone and useful information during the pandemic, and he's well-versed in the town and Woodside Fire Protection District's fire prevention strategies.

Climate change is a major threat to Portola Valley, and Aalfs' experience as a sustainability professional and board member of Peninsula Clean Energy gives him an edge. His idea of turning the Town Center into a microgrid that generates and

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The opinion of The Almanac

stores solar power is interesting and worth pursuing. He's committed to taking a close look at the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office policies and practices with an eye to improving them, banding together with other small towns to increase Portola Valley's clout in effecting change.

Aalfs' cautiously progressive approach to the perpetually controversial topic of building more housing — an inevitability, given state law — acknowledges the important role housing plays in increasing diversity in a town that was 91% white according to the last census. Wanting to weed out racial bias in policing is easy to get behind, he points out. Adding more housing for people of different income levels is a tougher sell in Portola Valley, but flows from the same values of equality and justice.

Wernikoff stood out among the challengers for her thoughtful, constructive approach to issues facing the town, her willingness to do her homework and her years of volunteering with the Portola Valley School District as well as her work with Close the Gap California, a nonprofit that recruits and supports progressive female candidates to close the gender gap in the state Legislature. Her experience from holding leadership

roles in e-commerce companies and non-profits should serve her well.

Wernikoff says she fell in love with Portola Valley the moment she laid eyes on it, and that its lack of diversity is one of the only things wrong with the town. Among the candidates, she had some of the most insightful answers on the value of increasing the town's ethnic and

socioeconomic diversity. Wernikoff is well-versed on fire safety issues and we feel she can be counted on to consider divisive development proposals, like the Stanford Wedge project, fairly and reasonably. We think she's the candidate most likely to hit the ground running if elected, and serve with energy and an open mind. ■

Why does The Almanac make endorsements?

Every election season, we are sure to be asked why we run endorsement editorials and what it means to endorse a candidate.

A shocking number of people believe that once a newspaper endorses someone, everyone on the staff, reporters included, is actively working to get that person elected and slanting news coverage to that end. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Almanac clearly marks opinion pieces to make clear that they are distinct from the news reporting side of our organization and do not impact the fair and dispassionate reporting of the news.

We also hear from readers who really dislike endorsements and ask us to stop making them. From our perspective, choosing candidates to endorse is a way to give a not-so-well-informed voter the benefit of the news organization's insights gained from closely following

local politics, day in and day out. Not everyone has time to pay such close attention, but that's our job and we feel it's our duty to share what we've learned.

We're not forecasting the winners or selecting people who match our personal politics; we're making a judgment call on the candidate who seems most capable of doing the job well and meeting the moment — taking the council or the district board in the direction it ought to be going while faithfully representing the community's needs and wishes.

For anyone who already has their mind made up, feel free to ignore the endorsements. No one on the staff is broken-hearted if the person who was endorsed doesn't win, and we have no trouble fairly and impartially covering all the candidates. When you get right down to it, the only side we're on is that of our readers. ■

Leveling the ground: Yes on Proposition 15

By Karen Grove

Last year, The Almanac ran a three-part series by Kate Bradshaw, describing the lasting impacts of racial segregation in our community. The COVID pandemic has further revealed the stark racial disparities in health outcomes, economic resilience as well as the racial digital divide. George Floyd and Breonna Taylor's murders have made clear that we have work to do, if we hope to live up to our lawn signs' assertion that Black Lives Matter.

That's why I support Proposition 15.

Proposition 15 — 10 years in the making and supported by a broad coalition of community groups, elected officials, and other leaders, including the governor himself — offers a structural correction to racial and class injustice through tax policy that has plagued California since 1978.

Tax policy is not the subject of most protest signs, but it should be! When a tiny number of commercial property owners don't pay their fair share, the rest of us do, and the burden falls most heavily on those who have the least. By closing

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a loophole in how California taxes commercial properties, Prop 15 will reclaim \$12 billion dollars a year to fund public schools, local government, and the social safety net.

The loophole comes about because California property taxes are based on the purchase price of a property, no matter how long ago it was bought. They only reset to a market value assessment when the property changes ownership or is upgraded, and corporate-owned properties don't change majority ownership very often.

The loophole reduces revenue for public schools, local government, and the social safety net, and also creates an unfair local business environment.

Let's look at some Menlo Park examples. On Santa Cruz Avenue, we have two rug stores of similar size, within two blocks of each other. One pays about \$36,000 in property tax and the other pays less than \$6,000 per year. We have two popular grocery stores — Draeger's and Trader Joe's. Trader Joe's pays just

\$36,000 a year in property taxes, while nearby Draeger's pays two and a half times that, almost \$92,000 a year because they invested in a significant remodel a few years ago.

In addition, since houses change ownership much more often than commercial properties, homeowners pay an increasingly large share of property taxes over time. The average new homeowner in Menlo Park pays \$24,000 a year in property taxes, while a single commercial property downtown, which houses a large Walgreens, a busy Starbucks, an Una Mas and a hair salon, pays only \$17,000.

Prop 15 rebalances the equation. It does so by requiring commercial properties worth more than \$3 million to pay property taxes based on current market values. Importantly, it leaves residential property tax rules untouched.

Prop 15 will bring an estimated \$12 billion per year to the state's schools and communities and help to advance equity for our students with the greatest needs. Statewide, 40% of reclaimed revenue will go to schools, with more funding allocated for schools with low-income, foster

care involved and English language learner students, and at least \$100 more per student per year in all districts.

As for communities, according to a University of Southern California Dornsife report, Prop 15 will reclaim \$770 million for San Mateo County. Our local governments will allocate that revenue on the things we, together, prioritize. We could build affordable housing and do more to address homelessness and climate change. This would help us address the historic and present-day impacts of racial segregation and inequity, something many of us are eager to do in these times.

Prop. 15, the Schools & Communities First initiative, is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Californians to deliver on the promises of fairness and equity. Join me and Menlo Together in supporting yes on Prop 15. ▣

Karen Grove is a Menlo Park resident and member of Menlo Together, a group of Menlo Park and Peninsula residents focused on issues of housing, transportation, sustainability and equity in Menlo Park.

Setting the record straight on Atherton and the fire district

By Mark Lempres and Bill Widmer

We are two council members from Atherton who are not currently up for reelection. We are concerned about repeated misrepresentations of Atherton's relationship with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District. The Almanac recently published an article, "Atherton mayor endorses newcomer for council over incumbent" (Sept. 25) that may mislead readers about the position of the town on this important issue.

The town is not pursuing detachment from the Menlo Park Fire Protection District. We believe the services provided by MPFPD are critically important and want to strengthen those services. Unfortunately, a member of the council and at least one candidate have misled the public about the town's position and the council's actions during this election season. Furthermore, these individuals have sought to create an election issue by misleading on a subject when the town has responsibly delayed holding education and feedback sessions with the public due to COVID restrictions.

The Almanac article quotes current Mayor Rick DeGolia as saying that council member Cary Wiest supports the town's detachment from the fire district. That statement is simply false. Wiest has publicly stated that he is opposed to detaching from the fire district. DeGolia has acknowledged that he misstated Wiest's position on this issue, but he has not publicly apologized or clarified his misstatement. Thus, DeGolia has identified what he considers to be the most important issue in the current election and completely

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misrepresented Wiest's position on this same issue.

The town conducted a fire services fiscal review that determined Atherton residents contribute over \$18 million per year in taxes to the MPFPD and also concluded that the cost of providing services was between \$4.6 and \$7.4 million per year. This surplus of \$11 million to \$13 million was in 2016. That difference is expected to exceed \$20 million within the next five years. This imbalance has caused the town to try to understand options and improve the value of the services it receives.

It is important to note what the town has and has not done. Critically, the council has taken no vote or action to detach from the MPFPD. Instead, the town has focused on collecting data, learning about the issue and seeking public input. The council unanimously requested the town look into the question of revenue and costs associated with fire protection services. Finding it very difficult to obtain information from the MPFPD, the town retained expert consultants to develop the 2016 fire services fiscal review, a copy of which is available on the town's website, ci.atherton.ca.us.

Next, the town held a joint meeting with the fire board to discuss the findings. One positive result was the town and fire district agreed to appoint subcommittees to meet and discuss the concerns raised in the fire services fiscal review. Unfortunately, the MPFPD has not agreed on Atherton's suggestions to improve fire preparedness (such as housing an emergency response vehicle

at the new Town Center).

The town also gathered information from state and local officials to learn what other communities have done in similar situations and what options exist. Next, the council decided to pursue education and to seek public input from Atherton residents. The town sent a mailer to all residents providing information and establishing two communitywide meetings to gather input. DeGolia was the only council member to vote against sending out the public education and outreach newsletter. Because the COVID pandemic created new priorities, the council postponed the two community meetings indefinitely.

The council has repeatedly acknowledged the quality of service provided by the MPFPD. The question involves the unusually high cost of those services to Atherton. Even asking this question

may threaten entrenched political forces. Appeasing those forces may provide short-term political advantage, but it may also impose significant unnecessary costs on Atherton residents.

There are many real issues that Atherton is addressing as a town, including our budget, traffic, rail and our new Town Center project. These issues are real enough that no one needs to create false issues by misstating the position of a council member or of the town. Voters deserve the truth; that's why we write to set the record straight here. ▣

Mike Lempres and Bill Widmer are members of the Atherton City Council. Widmer is also a Menlo Park Fire Protection District Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) member and a volunteer for the Atherton Disaster and Preparedness Team (ADAPT).

What's on your mind?

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

Tell us what's on your mind by sending your letters to letters@AlmanacNews.com. Or snail-mail them to: The Almanac, 450 Cambridge Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306.

Letters should be no longer than 300 words.

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

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

The Almanac

Tim Bond's 'all-consuming situation'

New TheatreWorks artistic director takes over company in a 'complicated, exciting' time

By John Orr

Tim Bond, the new artistic director of TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, was recently asked if he would be building the Tony Award-winning company anew, or building off what already existed.

"If you'd asked me that pre-COVID, right after I got the position (announced in November), I would have said, 'Building off it,'" he said.

"That's still true, but like all theaters, as we work our way through this COVID pause and are getting ready to come back to in-person performances. ... It's complicated, and exciting. The foundation of this company is so strong. And its audience base and reputation and family of artists and community members will really help us as we're kind of building it new, from what we have already been."

The company has already been busy with a catalog of online performances and fundraisers.

"We have TheatreWorks from Home (theatreworks.org/tworksfromhome); we streamed the video of 'They Promised Her the Moon' (in March and April); worked a deal with Paul Gordon's 'Pride and Prejudice' — tens of thousands of people saw that, and Amazon Prime picked it up," Bond said. "We



Courtesy Alan V. Alabastro

Tim Bond is TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's new artistic director.

have interviews with various people, NewWorks videos from Giovanna Sardelli, and have had two Hershey Felder shows. We did 'Shakespeare in Vegas' that Giovanna directed."

TheatreWorks' board and Executive Director Phil Santora and his staff have been finding many ways to keep money flowing into the company's accounts, ranging from online parties to

say goodbye to retired founder Robert Kelley to a James Bond-themed party coming up on Oct. 17 to welcome Bond to the company.

Tickets range from the Pierce Brosnan level (\$250) to the Sean Connery level (\$3,500). Those who spend more, get more, including at higher levels, a life-size cardboard cutout of Tim Bond himself (to pose with in

photos), a catered dinner, Grey Goose vodka, online interaction with actors and other bits.

Artistic Director Emeritus Kelley, who founded TheatreWorks in 1969 and ran it for 50 years, has been meeting with Bond weekly to brainstorm about what TheatreWorks is, and can be, during the COVID restriction, and afterward.

Kelley "is just a really great guy, and a really smart guy, and a very generous guy," Bond said during a recent Zoom interview. "This is the third time I've taken the reins at a theater, and I've never had the generosity and the welcome, and felt the support that I feel from Robert Kelley. I deeply appreciate it. ... I feel honored to be following in his footsteps."

Though he's the new guy at TheatreWorks, Bond's been directing shows and administering theater companies for more than 30 years.

He began his career in 1984 with Seattle Group Theatre, where he directed more than 20 shows, and served from 1991 to 1996 as artistic director and curated the company's Multicultural Playwrights Festival. From 1996 to 2007, Bond was an associate artistic director of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

He then became producing artistic director at Syracuse

Stage and the Syracuse University Department of Drama, from 2007 to 2016. There, he directed 18 plays, and produced more than 100 plays and musicals.

"With his stellar national career at major regional theaters as both an award-winning director and administrator, his tireless promotion of new works, and his extensive commitment to diversity and inclusion, Tim brings an extraordinary blend of experience and expertise," TheatreWorks Board of Trustees Chair Roy Johnson said in a press release. "We are confident he will honor the profound legacy of Robert Kelley."

Before taking the TheatreWorks job, Bond was a professor at University of Washington's School of Drama, spending the last two years as head of the Professional Actor Training Program.

He does not expect to return to teaching at the University of Washington while working at TheatreWorks.

"This is a full-time-and-a-half job," Bond said. "Kelley is fond of saying, 'What part of full-time did you not understand?' This is an all-consuming situation."

But, he added, he might, sometime, pick up a class locally. "I love to teach," he said. He and his wife, with whom he has two grown children, are currently living in Belmont.

As for future productions, Bond noted that "all theaters will be coming back a little different from what they were before COVID. And we don't know what that means yet ... I'm here to guide us through it, along with Phil Santora, a great board and a terrific staff." ■

Freelance writer John Orr can be emailed at johnorr@regardingarts.com

A brief look at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's hoped-for 2021-2022 season

■ Hershey Felder as "Monsieur Chopin," directed by Joel Zwick, March 17-April 21. Felder's shows are popular, and make more money for TheatreWorks than any others. If we're lucky, he will add one of his singalongs to his visit. Quarantined in Florence, Italy, he has done three livestreamed shows from his home so far, with some of the proceeds going to TheatreWorks.

■ "Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years," by Emily Mann, directed by Tim Bond, June 2-27. "Their 'Say' is an irresistible celebration of our potential," according to a press release.

■ "Nan and the Lower Body,"

by Jessica Dickey, directed by TheatreWorks New Works Director Giovanna Sardelli, July 14-Aug. 8. This world premiere about a lab assistant who has mysteries to unravel and choices to make was an audience favorite at the New Works Festival.

■ August Wilson's "Gem of the Ocean," directed by Bond, Oct. 6-31. "His plays are lyrical," said Bond. "They chronicle the 20th century, but they are not history plays. ... They are plays for everyone, not just a Black audience. He was one of the most amazing craftspeople I've ever known. He was a genius."

■ "It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play," adapted by

Joe Landry, directed by Sardelli, Dec. 1-26. TheatreWorks always offers something family oriented during the holidays. The show "is on tonight at a snow-bound 1940s radio station, with every memorable character, wacky sound effect, and the heartwarming conclusion of the iconic film recreated live before your ears — and eyes."

■ "Sense and Sensibility," by Paul Gordon, directed by Robert Kelley, Jan. 19-Feb. 13. Regional premiere. "A glorious musical of Jane Austen's beloved romantic masterpiece. Overflowing with intrigue and humor." Gordon and Kelley have enjoyed a rare and productive partnership.

■ "Queen," by Madhuri Shekar, directed by Jeffrey Lo, March 2-27. Lo is TheatreWorks' director of community partnerships, and casting director. This "high-stakes environmental drama" is about the collapse of bee colonies worldwide, and careers and marriage at risk.

■ "Ragtime," book by Terrence McNally, music by Stephen Flaherty, lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, from the novel by E. L. Doctorow, directed by Kelley, April 13-May 8. Vaudeville, baseball, labor rallies, racial unrest woven in a tapestry including a Jewish immigrant, a Harlem pianist and a conflicted upper-class wife. ■

LEHUA GREENMAN



"The heart of a volunteer is never measured in size, but by the depth of commitment to make a difference in the lives of others."

650.245.1845 COMPASS

Food & Drink

Five new Peninsula restaurants to try right now

Where to get squid ink dumplings, enormous tacos and Singaporean breakfast.

Story and photos by Elena Kadvanj

It takes enormous effort and commitment to open a restaurant during “normal” times, let alone during a pandemic. Amid the sad news of closures and the dire state of the restaurant industry, there are also optimistic

openings worth celebrating — and supporting.

Here are five new restaurants on the Peninsula serving up excellent eats, ranging from kaya toast at a Singaporean cafe to cochinita pibil tacos I’m already planning to have again.



The famed kaya toast and kopi (coffee with condensed milk) from Killiney Kopitiam, newly open in Palo Alto.

yogurt sauce on the side.

Call ahead to place your to-go order or use the wait as an excuse to peruse the aisles of Trinethra, a well-stocked Indian market in the same strip mall.

808 W. El Camino Real, Sunnyvale; 408-685-2039; bandibiryani.com. Open for takeout and delivery.

Killiney Kopitiam, Palo Alto

Singaporean restaurants are few and far between on the Peninsula. Perhaps that explains why people waited up to an hour to eat at Killiney Kopitiam when it opened in downtown Palo Alto last week, prompting the cafe to close for two days to regroup.

This is the first U.S. location of Singapore’s oldest cafe, known for its coffee and charcoal-grilled toast spread thick with kaya and pats of butter. At the Palo Alto restaurant, you can watch employees making the toast and pouring coffees from long-spouted metal kettles through a window into the open kitchen. (Get the toast. The subtly sweet kaya layered with pats of salty butter on humble Pullman bread is a delicious lesson in “less is more.”)

A friend from Singapore told me that for laksa — a spicy coconut soup with springy rice noodles, shrimp, fish cakes, bean sprouts, hard-boiled eggs, fried tofu and sambal chili — the broth is what separates the great from the mediocre. (He gave Killiney Kopitiam’s broth, coconutty but not overly sweet, an A+ rating.) Round your order out with some roti prata, a tangle of griddled, buttery flatbread served with a yellow curry dipping sauce, and char kway teow, wide rice noodles stir fried with shrimp, fish cakes, Chinese sausage, onions, bean sprouts and egg.

552 Waverley St., Palo Alto;

650-752-6039; killineykopitiam.getbento.com. Open for takeout only at this time. Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4-8 p.m.

La Cocina de la Abuela, Redwood City

Every time I bite into a fresh, handmade tortilla I instantly regret all the inferior supermarket versions I’ve consumed. This was the case at La Cocina de la Abuela, a new Redwood City restaurant from the owner of the nearby La Casita Chilanga.

Jose Navarro’s latest restaurant, open since August, is inspired by Mexico City fare cooked by the women of his family — hence the name, which means “grandmother’s kitchen” in Spanish. The pliant, charred tortillas are the anchor for excellent tacos. I had to try the restaurant’s specialty, tacos los mamalones, which comes on a single large tortilla that’s been lightly charred on the plancha. It’s filled with breaded steak, sautéed potatoes, nopales (cactus) and salsa on a bed of melted cheese. More the size of a burrito, this dish is not for the faint of heart — or the only slightly hungry. One taco could serve as a single meal or shared between two.

If you come for the tacos los mamalones, stay for the cochinita pibil. Navarro marinates the incredibly flavorful Yucatan-style pork overnight with achiote and other spices and cooks it in banana leaves using his mother’s recipe. The pork comes on a fresh, pliant tortilla, topped simply with pickled red onions and a squeeze of lime. Make sure to ask for extra servings of “grandma’s sauce,” a spicy, slightly acidic and nuanced hot sauce I wish they would bottle and sell.

314 Arguello St., Redwood City; 650-362-3533; tinyurl.com/abuella-rcw. Open for takeout,



Cochinita pibil perfection at La Cocina de la Abuela.



Somsa, an Uzbek savory pie typically filled with lamb, onions and black pepper from Zamira in Palo Alto.

delivery and outdoor seating daily from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Zamira, Palo Alto

Pavel Sirotin opened a restaurant within a restaurant earlier this month.

Sirotin owns Bevri, the Georgian restaurant in Palo Alto, and is now also using the space to run Zamira, a ghost kitchen that will highlight cuisines that are “underrepresented” in the Bay Area.

Zamira opened in mid-September with a small menu of dishes from Uzbekistan, where Sirotin was born. He said he wanted to build off the success of Bevri, the Bay Area’s first Georgian restaurant, in exposing more local diners to a lesser-known cuisine. He decided to create a separate concept so the kitchen staff can experiment with other kinds of foods rather than causing confusion by adding them to the Bevri menu.

The Zamira menu is simple (read: cost-effective) and Sirotin hopes it will become a reliable source of additional revenue as his business navigates the post-coronavirus landscape. They’re deliberately choosing dishes that travel well, both for delivery and the prospect of corporate catering when Silicon Valley offices reopen, he said.

The three dishes available at Zamira right now are somsa, a triangle-shaped puff pastry typically filled with lamb, onions and black pepper; a tomato-onion-herb salad and spicy carrot salad.

Sirotin said he’s “hoping that this will expand and we’ll be able to bring more exciting foods here — just to dilute the excessive presence of burgers and pizzas here.”

530 Bryant St., Palo Alto; zamira.delivery. Zamira is available for pickup at Bevri or delivery. ■



Asian Street Eatery’s squid ink lobster dumplings.

Asian Street Eatery, Sunnyvale

Asian Street Eatery opened on El Camino Real in Sunnyvale last week with a massive menu inspired by China and Southeast Asia’s “legendary” street food stalls. Normally a menu this large — including dim sum, baos, mantou, customizable banh mi sandwiches, noodle soups, braised meats and build-your-own stir fries — would be a red flag, but the food here is worth exploring.

The restaurant comes from the same owners of Ginger Cafe in Sunnyvale, Fu Kee in San Jose, and Rice + Noodles Asian Kitchen in Campbell. You’re greeted by large, touch-screen kiosks on which you place your order — no need to come within 6 feet of a human — and can opt for takeout or to eat your food on a large outdoor patio.

Do try the squid ink dumplings, filled with sweet, oceanic lobster and corn encased in a dumpling skin shaped like a shell you’d find on the beach. And don’t miss the zhua bing, a massive layered Chinese pancake wrapped around lettuce, a Chinese donut, pickled carrots and radishes, cucumbers, cilantro and your choice of protein (the grilled pork was rich and delicious).

1146 W. El Camino Real, Sunnyvale; 408-930-4798; asianstreeteatery.com. Open for take-

out and outdoor dining from Monday-Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Open for takeout and outdoor dining from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily.

Bandi Biryani, Sunnyvale

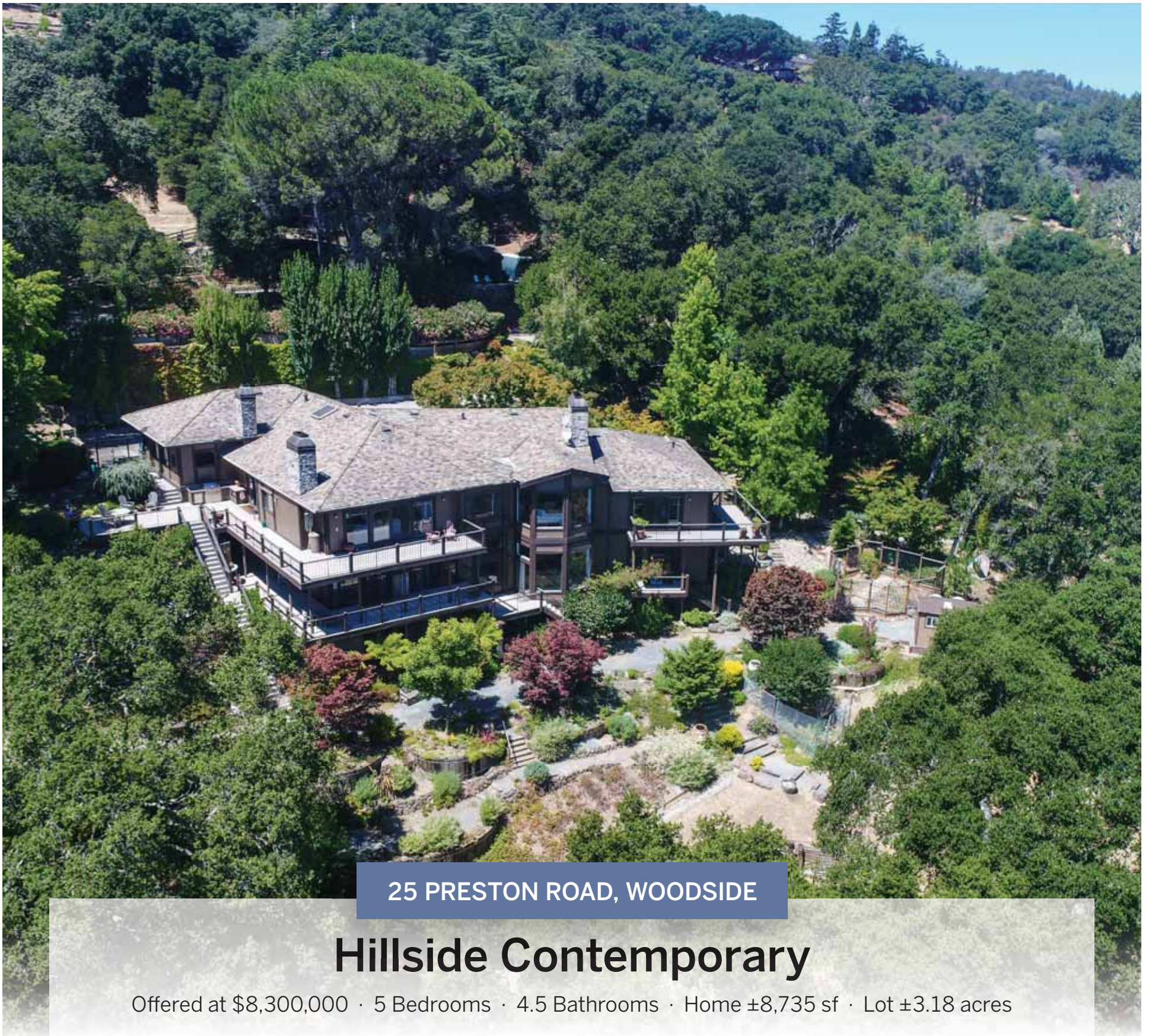
You might miss Bandi Biryani, tucked between a barbershop and Popeye’s in a Sunnyvale strip mall, unless you’re seeking it out. Owner Kanagalakshmi Nagarajan, a former software engineer, opened the South Indian restaurant in July with chef John Annachi. Annachi is also behind other local Indian restaurants, including Annachikadai in Mountain View and Star Udipi Cafe in Santa Clara. Both owner and chef are originally from Tamil Nadu in South India.

Bandi Biryani serves several kinds of biryani and curries, as well as some Indo-Chinese dishes.

Nagarajan suggested I try the chicken biryani, aromatic and filled with pieces of bone-in chicken, and the mirchi bajji, which she warned are “hot, hot” (eat them and you understand why she used the word twice). Here, mirchi bajji are halved jalapeños that are fried and then stuffed with diced red onion, peanuts, coriander, chilis and cilantro. They are indeed “hot, hot” but you can temper the heat by dipping them into a



Spice fanatics: Order the mirchi bajji (fried and stuffed jalapeños) at Bandi Biryani in Sunnyvale.



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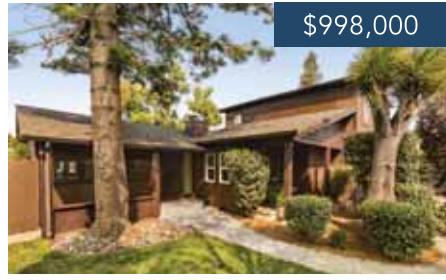
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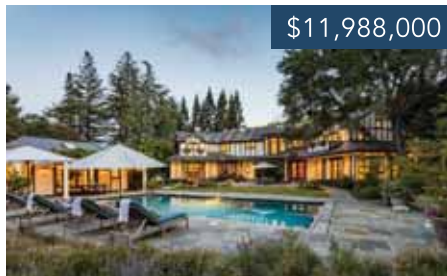
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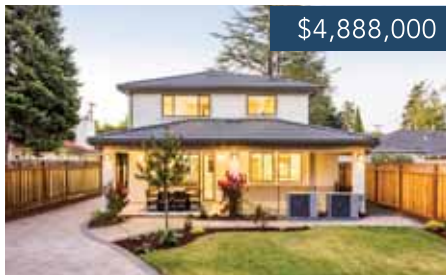
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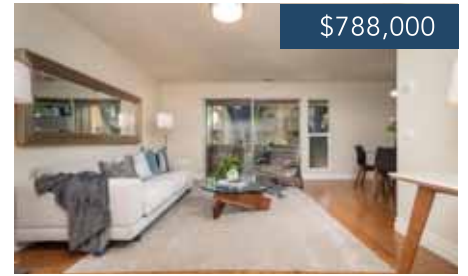
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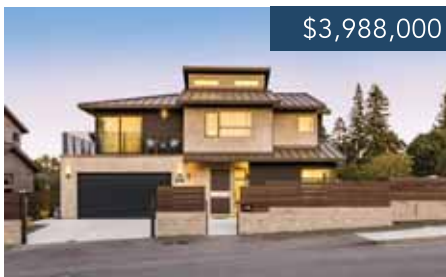
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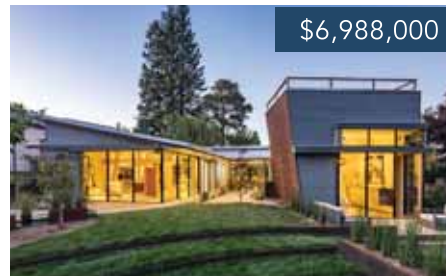
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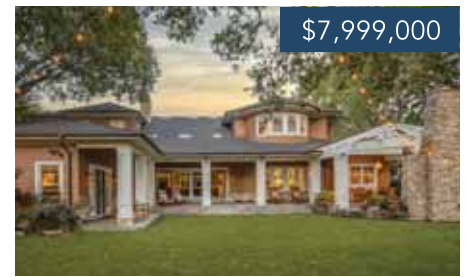
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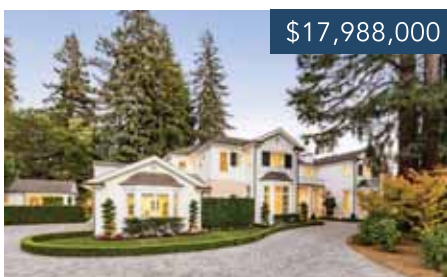
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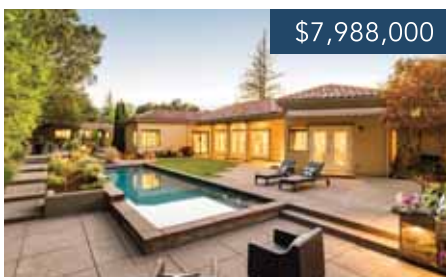
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