

The Almanac

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

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County enters COVID-19 'purple tier,' nightly curfew

Record surge in cases prompts new health restrictions

By Sue Dremann

Continued steeply climbing COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations have pushed San Mateo County into the state's most restrictive "purple tier," and a nighttime curfew and Santa Clara County's health officer has ordered additional restrictions on top of the already declared purple tier in that county, press statements announced on Nov. 28.

San Mateo County had been in the less restrictive red tier since late September. A statement issued by the San Mateo County Emergency Operations Center announced the new designation and a nighttime curfew, beginning on Nov. 30.

All retail, including shopping malls, are restricted to 25% of capacity and indoor restaurant dining is prohibited. A full list of what's regulated can be found at cdph.ca.gov.

The county is also under a nightly curfew order that runs from 10 p.m. through 5 a.m.

San Mateo County has seen an 85% spike in COVID-19 cases between October and November, according to county health data.

"This is not unexpected considering the virus is surging across the state," Supervisor David Canepa said in a separate statement. "That being said, we have doubled the rate we are testing and are now second in the state behind only San Francisco in the rate that we do test. We are well positioned to handle the surge considering the hospital capacity we have and resources needed to battle COVID. As the holidays approach, we must double down on the core behaviors of frequent hand washing, socially distancing, avoiding crowds and most importantly wearing our damn masks. It's on us to take the personal responsibility to protect our families, friends and neighbors from this very deadly disease."

See **PURPLE TIER**, page 10



Magali Gauthier

Father Ted Magpayo prays during an outdoor Mass at Church of the Nativity in Menlo Park on Aug. 6. On Monday, San Mateo County entered the state's purple tier, which puts stronger restrictions on gatherings and indoor activities, due to spiking COVID-19 cases.

Opening Woodside Elementary campus like a '100K-piece puzzle'

Pandemic safety measures cost school district \$500K to return students to classrooms

By Angela Swartz

Almanac Staff Writer

Masked first graders lined up in areas marked with orange traffic cones in the Woodside Elementary School parking lot on a crisp, sunny day Tuesday, Dec. 1, waiting for rides home from parents who aren't allowed on campus.

Woodside is one of just a few school districts on the Peninsula that received waivers from San Mateo County's Office of Education to have students return for in-person learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Students in

other nearby districts have now been learning from home for almost nine months.

Five grades of the K-8 school's 369 students have returned to classrooms. The district began to phase in students, starting with kindergartners and first graders in October — aside from five cohorts of about 30 at-risk students who returned to campus in August.

Unlike nearby school districts that have reopened, the district has not instituted a hybrid learning model. Students are either signed up for virtual classes or in-person classes. It's also one of

the only local districts with almost every grade level back on campus, said Superintendent Steve Frank. About 84% of the student body is returning to the school, with 45 students who have chosen to continue with virtual learning, he said.

In-person learning has been challenging, but worth it for the mental health of students, Frank said. He received five emails from parents of eighth graders since they returned to campus on Monday, all saying something like "thanks for giving me my child back."

"It's like trying to put a 100,000-piece puzzle together,"

he said. "There are so many guidelines and rules and it's stretching our resources."

There is the coordination of multiple lunches and recesses, daily temperature checks and specific drop-off and pickup times. Officials installed 50 hand sanitizer stations and four portable outdoor hand-washing sinks. Red dots painted on cement mark how to stand 6 feet apart.

The district saved close to \$1 million in costs last spring while students were distance learning, according to Frank. But this fall it has taken on half a million dollars in expenses for new COVID-related safety

precautions, which include the administrative costs of testing staff members weekly, HEPA air filter installations, building outdoor classrooms and hiring additional substitute teachers to oversee more fragmented students groups.

The district received \$180,000 in Child Care Relief Fund grant funds from San Mateo County to help county schools that have been adversely impacted by COVID, Frank said.

The district budget will be on the agenda at the Dec. 15 school board meeting.

See **WOODSIDE SCHOOLS**, page 8

INSIDE

Help local families in need 14, 15

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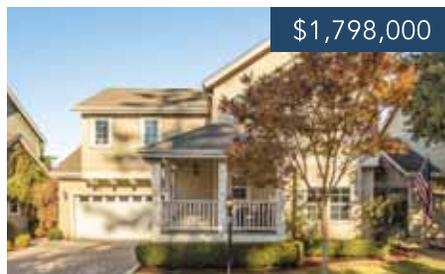
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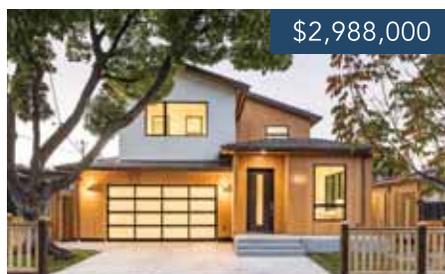
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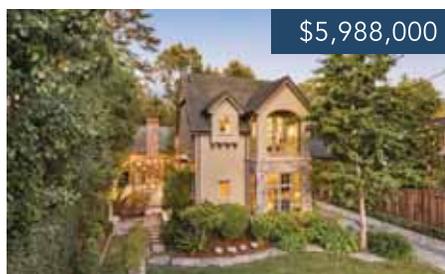
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Local News

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Magali Gauthier

Vegan Outreach staff member Ben Gardner talks to a client about an alternative turkey product at the Fair Oaks Community Center in Redwood City on Nov. 24. During the pandemic, the nonprofit is distributing free vegan groceries to people in need.

Vegan Thanksgiving: Nonprofit hands out meatless turkey roasts and food aid

By **Kate Bradshaw**
Almanac Staff Writer

An anonymous foundation in Redwood City is funding a vegan nonprofit called Vegan Outreach to provide food aid to hundreds of local families each week.

Since the pandemic hit, Vegan Outreach, an international nonprofit loosely based in Davis, has retooled its model to focus on food aid in select cities across the U.S., including Redwood City.

Since August, a handful of employees and volunteers have built up a series of partnerships

and connections that offers food aid that's vegan, meaning it does not contain animal products, for pickup to 100 families each week and for home distribution to around 400 families twice each month, according to Ben Gardner, a food aid coordinator with the organization leading Redwood City operations. The foundation supporting the Redwood City efforts has asked to remain anonymous, he said. Other similar programs have been launched in Stockton, Dixon, Los Angeles, Albuquerque and a number of cities in Iowa, he said.

During Thanksgiving week, the nonprofit's weekly in-person distributions, which are usually held Thursdays from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Fair Oaks Community Center at 2600 Middlefield Road in Redwood City, were moved to Tuesday. Visitors were able to pick up an additional bag of produce beyond the two usually provided. In addition to the fresh produce and vegan "meats" and "cheeses" offered weekly, the Thanksgiving week distribution included faux turkey and holiday roasts alongside

See **VEGAN**, page 11

Menlo Park school group aids local families in need

MPCSD Helps raised \$100K, collected thousands of donations

By **Angela Swartz**
Almanac Staff Writer

From donating an entire furniture collection to furnishing a warehouse to create a home for a family coming out of a homeless shelter, Menlo Park City School District community members have stepped up to help others struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When the pandemic hit in March, parents immediately wanted to know how they could help families in need. These inquiries sparked the creation of MPCSD Helps, an initiative that has so far raised over \$100,000, in addition to thousands of donations of food, baby items, clothing, furniture and other items for these families, said Parke Treadway, public information officer for the district that operates public schools in Atherton and Menlo Park.

"It's hard to explain how incredibly this network has expanded to meet the needs of our most vulnerable families," Treadway said in an email. "The network has grown just by word of mouth and is quite impressive."

MPCSD Helps is run by the district and Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation and supports over 60 district families regularly with groceries and grocery gift cards. The economic fallout from the pandemic grows and many local

families are suffering job loss, home eviction, and food insecurity, according to the district.

"We have managed to get children off of the floor or sofa and into their own bed and keep food on the table, clothe students with summer and now winter items," said Debi Rice, who runs the district's lunch program. "Next will be holiday dinners and gifts. Our need for food will continue for some time with no real end in sight. The families are grateful and in some cases have relied solely on what we can get to them."

MPCSD Helps started with four vans delivering food and school supplies, along with answering questions about school, homework and keeping the connections open in the district, Rice said.

As summer approached, the need for food grew and Rice started to network with friends and the school community. Kelly Morehead and Liliana Perazich also collect food on each side of Menlo Park and deliver it to the district office weekly. Rice and Flor Espinal, the district's family engagement liaison, help deliver the groceries and clothing confidentially on Thursdays to the families most in need.

"Initially, due to COVID, all of the donation houses were closed and not accepting any donations," Rice said. "I started

See **MPCSD**, page 16

Former Almanac owner Elaine Levine dies at 91

By **Almanac staff**

Elaine Margaret Levine, the former co-owner of The Almanac who was the editor and publisher of a group of community weekly newspapers in the Bay Area during the '60s and '70s, died Nov. 17 of congestive heart failure. She was 91.

She died peacefully at her historic home in the Saratoga hills with family members nearby, according to her

daughter Amy Levine.

Elaine was born on a Wisconsin dairy farm near Campbellsport to Elmer and Esther Schrank on February 3, 1929. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin at Madison where she majored in American Institutions. It was on the staff of the campus daily newspaper that she met her future husband, Morton Levine. They celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary in September.

The couple came west in

1953 intending to start a local community newspaper. They founded their first paper, The Milpitas Post, in 1954 with the help of her sister, Mae Schrank. Over the years, they owned additional newspapers throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, including The Almanac (then known as The Country Almanac), Los Altos Town Crier, Cupertino Courier, Saratoga News, Los Gatos Times Observer, and five San Jose Sun

neighborhood newspapers.

In her professional career, Elaine was at the vanguard for women newspaper executives, her family said. Her efforts at recruiting and training reporters brought a high level of professionalism to the coverage of local government and education, and the papers were honored with many awards for editorial content.

Richard Hine, the longtime

See **ELAINE LEVINE**, page 16



Elaine Levine

Las Lomas parents seek recall of board member

Online petition says John Earnhardt should be removed from office for comments to local newspaper

By **Angela Swartz**
Almanac Staff Writer

Amid a search to fill two school board seats, after a trustee-elect said she would not assume her seat and a sitting trustee resigned on Nov. 8 over his wife's racist and misogynistic tweets, a change.org petition is now circulating to recall Las Lomas Elementary School District Trustee John Earnhardt. Parents say his comments in a local newspaper reacting to Mehredith Venverloh's insulting tweets about Vice President-elect Kamala Harris lacked sensitivity and warrant his removal.

An official recall petition would require signatures from a quarter of the district's registered voters in order to move forward.

District parent Marie Summers helped start the online petition, which had 133 signatures as of the afternoon of Dec. 2, after Earnhardt declined her request that he step down from the board. The parents took issue with statements he made to the Palo Alto Daily Post, calling Venverloh "very diligent as a board member and impactful for the district" and noting the "controversy moved quickly because it spread through electronic media and parents are more engaged in the district than in the past" because board meetings are happening over Zoom.

"There is no integrity in saying,



Magali Gauthier

Las Lomas Elementary School District office in Menlo Park on Nov. 10.

"We got away with all this stuff before because they (families) weren't watching," said district parent Brianna Caldwell, one of the petition organizers. "Maybe there is a correlation between more participation and more questions being asked."

Earnhardt declined to comment on the petition, but pointed The Almanac to the board of trustees' statement on the district website denouncing the tweets. During last week's school board meeting, Earnhardt told audience members they could find the statement about the incident on the website, while trustee Dana Nunn told attendees she was "disgusted and deeply sorry for the pain and hurt this has caused in our community."

If a school district trustee is to be recalled, at least 25% of registered voters in the electoral jurisdiction must sign a physical petition for it to go forward for a district of this size, according to state election rules. There are 8,213 voters registered in the Las Lomas district, so 2,053 voter signatures would be required for it to be filed with the county and get on a ballot, according to Jim Irizarry, San Mateo County's assistant chief elections officer and assessor-county clerk recorder.

"It would take a lot of work (to get the necessary number of signatures for a recall) but it's a small district and I think it's work worth doing," Caldwell said. "The most important thing is to move forward in taking action that we think is important for minoritized and underrepresented members of our community, as well as ethnically dominant members of our community who won't grow or learn if things don't change. We see very clearly that Earnhardt serves as a component of systemic racism, and I don't think it's right to look the other way because of what we may have to overcome. It will take some time, but I believe in what we are doing and I believe it is in good faith and with clean hands."

In a year marked by civic unrest and increased awareness of both white privilege and systemic racism in our society, Earnhardt's failure to take an anti-racist stance to Mehridith Venverloh's Twitter posts is unacceptable in this community, the petition states.

"It is very telling that Earnhardt, a former corporate communications executive who is well-versed in handling the media, did

not explicitly denounce the hate speech of Mehridith Venverloh," according to the petition. "Instead, John Earnhardt used his privilege to defend Jon Venverloh, and trivialized the gravity of the trauma to our community by minimizing it as a social media controversy."

Summers would like to see board members receive "rigorous" anti-racism training. The petition claims that Earnhardt does not have the understanding, background or training in diversity and inclusivity to represent the district's interests.

"Families (in the district) are very powerful and wealthy in Silicon Valley," Caldwell said. "Their kids are more likely to grow up and be in positions of leadership and take over businesses. To raise children this privileged in a school (district) that turns a blind eye to obvious systemic racism will affect everyone."

Nicky Colaco, a school district resident, said though the area is progressive, district members don't always speak out when they should to help others.

"When rubber meets the road, people don't understand what it means to actively provide allyship," Colaco said.

The school district must also fill the seat left vacant by Jody Leng, who was elected to the board in the Nov. 3 election and recently informed the district she would not take her seat. Trustees voted to pursue an appointment process. They have to either order a special election or make provisional appointments within 60 days of the vacancies (on or before Jan. 7, 2021, for Venverloh's former seat, and Feb. 9, 2021, for the seat to which Leng was elected), according to the county. **A**

Email Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com

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CRIME BRIEFS

Suspected homicide in Woodside

Investigators are treating the discovery of a body found Tuesday, Dec. 1, near state Highway 35 and Quail Court in Woodside as a homicide, the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office said.

The office was notified about 5 p.m. of a possible body just off Highway 35, better known as Skyline Boulevard, an elevated and somewhat isolated area near Burleigh Murray Ranch State Park.

Medics determined that the man had been dead "for quite some time," said Detective Rosemerry Blankswade. "Due to the specific nature of how he was found, our investigators are treating it like a homicide."

The victim has been identified as Eddy Cervantes, 40, of East Palo Alto, Blankswade said Wednesday afternoon.

Skyline Boulevard was closed between Quail Court and state Highway 92 until about 3 p.m. Wednesday, officials said.

Anyone with information about the case is asked to call 650-599-1536. Detectives are looking to speak with anyone who was with Cervantes or knew of his whereabouts before his death; anyone who saw suspicious activity or behavior on Skyline; and anyone who might have trail or surveillance camera footage.

—Bay City News Service

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Atherton police, Las Lomas district host holiday toy drives

The Atherton Police Activities League and Police Officers' Association are collecting holiday toys and other gifts for students at Adelante Selby Lane Spanish Immersion School in Atherton.

Toys can be dropped off in the lobby of the Atherton Police Department, 83 Ashfield Road, and at the Menlo Circus Club,

190 Park Lane.

Suggested donations include: art supplies, Hot Wheels, jump ropes, science projects, Barbies, dolls, action figures, blankets, warm clothes, basketballs, soccer balls, sports equipment, beads and jewelry-making kits.

In past years, the organizations had held a shopping spree at Target for students in need at local

Atherton schools, but that is not feasible this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, the groups will give students Target gift cards instead, said police Chief Steve McCulley in an email. Selby Lane is part of the Redwood City School District which includes unincorporated areas of Redwood City.

The deadline to drop off

donated items is Dec. 14. For more information, contact Jennifer Frew at 650-752-0503 or jfrew@ci.atherton.ca.us.

The Las Lomas Elementary School District is also collecting toys for newborns through 15-year-olds through Dec. 9 in partnership with the nonprofit Good Tidings.

Unwrapped toys can be

dropped off at the district office at 1011 Altschul Ave. in Menlo Park. The most-needed items are large Lego sets, L.O.L. Surprise dolls, sports equipment, action figures and Disney dolls.

Toys will be donated to over 1,000 Bay Area children in need at Good Tidings' Winter Wonderland from Dec. 12 to 20.

—Angela Swartz

Coronavirus central: Hospital capacity concerns mounting

Governor weighs a new stay-at-home order to curb virus' spread

By Embarcadero Media staff

Santa Clara County reported 14,812 cumulative cases as of Tuesday, Dec. 1, with a death toll of 170. There were 72 people hospitalized as of Tuesday. The seven-day rolling average of new daily cases ending Nov. 23 was 132 cases (case numbers in the most recent week are subject to change). Santa Clara County as of Tuesday had 35,457 COVID-19 cases and a seven-day rolling average of 481 new cases per day. Six more people have died, raising the death toll to 482. In addition, 288 people were hospitalized with the virus, 46 of which were new.

Hospitals reaching capacity

Santa Clara County public health officials raised alarm bells in a Wednesday press conference, saying that local hospitals are nearing capacity for treating patients sick with COVID-19, after a surge in cases that is only expected to worsen following the Thanksgiving holiday weekend.

Only 44 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds were available countywide as of Monday, Dec. 1, and hospitals serving communities hardest hit by the virus — specifically the southern end of the county and eastern parts of San Jose — are even closer to maximum capacity, said Dr. Jennifer Tong, associate chief medical officer for Santa Clara Valley Medical Center. Across all five hospitals serving these parts of the county, there are less than a dozen ICU beds still open, she said.

"What this means is that the hospitals in our hardest-hit communities have the fewest beds available for those in need," Tong said.

Among hospitals elsewhere in the county, ICU bed capacity was at 84% as of Monday, Tong said. If trends continue, the county could exceed hospital capacity by as soon as the middle of next month.

Governor weighs new stay-at-home order

Gov. Gavin Newsom suggested Monday the state could issue a new stay-at-home order for the majority of California's counties as new coronavirus cases and hospitalizations surge across the state.

Coronavirus hospitalizations are on pace to rise by up to roughly 30% by Christmas Eve in much of the state, according to Newsom, as the state's health care system absorbs a surge of new cases due in part to gatherings on Thanksgiving.

Intensive care units are also on track to reach and surpass 100% capacity sometime in December in most of the state's major population centers.

The Bay Area fares slightly better than other parts of the state in both of those metrics, with 58% of its hospital beds currently occupied and 62% projected to be occupied by Dec. 24.

Likewise, 72% of the Bay Area's ICU beds are currently occupied, a figure projected to rise to 91% by Dec. 24, putting the region on track to hit its maximum ICU capacity in early January.

Newsom said the projections did not take into account mitigating factors like a potential stay-at-home order and assumed the state's current surge would continue unabated.

"This is in the absence of making better decisions," he said Nov. 30 during a briefing on the pandemic.

Newsom said state officials

have discussed over the last week issuing a new stay-at-home order that would apply to counties in the purple tier of the state's pandemic reopening system. As of this week, that includes San Mateo County.

A new stay-at-home order, Newsom and state Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly said, would not be entirely the same as the order the state issued back in March, shutting down most businesses for several weeks.

For now, state officials are most focused on community transmission and decreasing social mixing, according to Ghaly.

"The truth is, when you have this level of community spread, it's happening in our communities first and foremost. So, the minute you walk into an entity indoors, the chance of encountering someone with COVID, who can actually transmit it, is higher than it's ever been," he said.

Controversial Stanford doctor leaves task force

Dr. Scott Atlas, Stanford University's Hoover Institution senior fellow and controversial White House coronavirus task force adviser, resigned his position in the Trump administration on Monday, according to his tweet. He posted the resignation letter on his Twitter account, @ScottWAtlas.

He said he was "honored to have served @realDonaldTrump and the American people during these difficult times."

Atlas, who has come under fire for his support of herd immunity to control the deadly virus and who has largely dismissed mask wearing and social distancing, joined the task force as a special advisor in August. The appointment lasts 130 days and this week would have been his last. Atlas officially left on Tuesday. He

defended his and the White House's actions to fight the virus, according to Fox News.

Members of Stanford's Faculty Senate approved a resolution on Nov. 19 to condemn Atlas for his statements promoting "a view of COVID-19 that contradicts medical science."

Comprehensive COVID-19 coverage

View interactive charts tracking the spread of the coronavirus in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties online at paloaltoonline.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.

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Supervisors OK purchase of hotels for homeless

By Bay City News Service

San Mateo County on Tuesday purchased two hotels that will eventually house unsheltered residents as part of the state's Project Homekey initiative, despite pushback from some residents who said the process was rushed and lacked clear communication.

During a special meeting, county supervisors voted unanimously to complete the purchase of the Pacific Inn Hotel at 2610 El Camino Real and the TownePlace Suites Hotel at 1000 Twin Dolphin Drive, both located in Redwood City.

Project Homekey is an initiative through the state's Department of Housing and Community Development that provides funding to purchase hotels and other buildings and convert them into long-term housing for people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless,

especially those who are vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The county received over \$33 million in Project Homekey funding to purchase the two properties and provide a total of 170 rooms.

"The fundamental duty of government is to provide for the health, safety and welfare of all its residents: rich, poor, those that are healthy, those that are ill, those that are housed, those that are unhoused," County Manager Mike Callagy on Tuesday. "We serve everyone."

Once converted, TownePlace Suites will provide permanent affordable housing for low-income seniors at a discounted rate. The county purchased the 2.1-acre property, which includes 95 rooms, from Redwood Suites LLC for \$29.3 million. The hotel is located in the Redwood Shores community.

The Pacific Inn Hotel has 74

rooms, plus a manager's quarters. The county purchased the 1.5-acre property from Reno Motel Investments Inc., the hotel's owner, for \$21.5 million.

Pacific Inn will provide interim housing and 24/7 on-site services for those experiencing homelessness until they find permanent housing.

In addition to the Project Homekey grant, the county also used federal funds through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) to purchase the properties.

Callagy said once an operator is selected for the TownePlace Suites hotel, seniors will be able to apply for a room there, with priority given to San Mateo County residents.

Residents of Redwood Shores, where TownePlace Suites is located, said there has not been enough community engagement about the project.

Sue Nix, board president of the Redwood Shores Community Association (RSCA), said that "there has no discussion back and forth with the city and the community," adding, "We feel that the county is rushing it."

Callagy said in an interview on Tuesday that the county didn't get Project Homekey funding until the seventh round of applications, leaving

a short window of time to close the deals.

San Mateo County received funding on Oct. 29, according to the Project Homekey awards lists on the state's housing department website. A county news release that same day stated that the funding would be used to purchase two locations, but that the county "is not yet releasing the property names because negotiations are ongoing."

On Nov. 5, the board voted to submit a grant application for Project Homekey funding with the intention of acquiring the two properties, and disclosed the names of the projects in a press release online.

RCSA said it learned of the project in early November, and on Nov. 18 hosted a virtual meeting with Callagy and other county and city officials to discuss the project. However, residents say they were not satisfied with the answers to their questions.

Residents raised concerns about how the site would be operated and whether it will be used for senior housing in the future.

Callagy said the Redwood Shores site would be professionally operated by a nonprofit that would provide on-site security, and that funding would be sustained by the rent paid, the nonprofit operator,

housing grants and ongoing Project Homekey funds.

Moving forward, Callagy said that the county will share the project's Request for Quotes with the association and that the community will be involved in ongoing discussions.

During the meeting, there were no specific concerns raised regarding Pacific Inn, the other hotel property. Callagy said he planned to meet with the community where the Pacific Inn is located soon.

Despite resident concerns, supervisors fully supported the projects and praised the swift process.

"If we were to build something like this it would probably take us five years of planning, going through the process and looking at buildings and selecting vendors," Supervisor Don Horsley said. "This is a way of getting housing for people who need it really fast-tracked."

Jordan Grimes, a San Mateo County resident and lead member of housing advocacy group Peninsula for Everyone, said he was troubled that some people requested "more process" and a longer waiting period for the projects.

"Process has historically been and continues to be the problem, not the solution," Grimes

See **HOMELESS**, page 10

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Woodside's musical First Friday

Woodside Arts & Culture Committee is starting the weekend off on the right note with an online concert on Friday, Dec. 4.

The latest installment of the committee's monthly First Friday Zoom series features a performance by Bay Area contemporary acoustic folk/Americana duo Jager & Reid.

Singer/songwriters Judi Jaeger and Bob Reid play a mix of original music and contemporary interpretations of songs written by others. Their music emphasizes strong, soaring vocal harmonies, accompanied by acoustic guitar and ukulele.

They have been performing together since 2015, according to their website, and have released an album, "From Way Up Here," which features their originals as well as some well-loved covers.

The performance takes place 7-8 p.m. For more information, visit woodsideartandculture.org.

—Heather Zimmerman

COVID-19 surge halts high school sports

Local high school student-athletes whose seasons have been delayed this year won't be playing games any time soon, with the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) pausing all full practice and competition start dates until the state issues updated youth sports guidance.

In a statement, the California Interscholastic Federation said the California Department of Public Health postponed its guidance due to worsening COVID-19 rates across the state and is not likely to issue any recommendations until after Jan. 1.

This summer, CIF announced that instead of the usual three high school sports seasons — fall, winter and spring — they would be consolidated into two delayed seasons starting in December or January, dubbed season one and season two.

Now, the governing body for high school sports in California is canceling all regional and state championship events in season one so that "more student-athletes will have the opportunity to participate in a longer season, rather than a truncated season with regional and state post-season play for a limited number of schools," the announcement states.

"The CIF is confident this decision is a necessary and reasonable action for our member schools, student-athletes, and school communities in light of the current statewide crisis," CIF said.

Boys volleyball will also be moved to season two to avoid the loss of a second full season.

Schools will be able to plan for a return to full practices and games once the state releases its updated guidance, CIF said.

—Elena Kadvanly

WOODSIDE SCHOOLS

continued from page 1

'Roller coaster' of emotions

Longtime staff member Sharon Lacrosse, the school librarian, describes her experience returning to campus as a "roller coaster" emotionally. She's been a little anxious about catching the virus with the number of cases rising.

"I go up and down," she said. "There's times I wonder if we're doing the right thing, but there are so many safety precautions. It's a big campus and we have so much outdoor space; we're lucky and unique."

She said the slow rollout of grades returning to school has eased her mind.

Although she brings boxes of books to classrooms, the library isn't open for students to check out books. She's also dusting off her social studies teaching skills to fill gaps in district staffing.

Despite the costs, school officials have accomplished their goal of getting kids back to school safely. Frank said this has been the only



Olivia Treynor

First graders Garrett and Julian wait to be picked up from Woodside Elementary School on Dec. 1.

school year in his nearly two decades with the district he hasn't seen a kindergartner cry on the first day of school. In fact, he saw children jump out of their family's cars upon arriving at Woodside Elementary.

On Monday, Dec. 7, fourth and fifth graders will join the rest of the school in returning to campus, completing the

return of student body members who have chosen to learn in person.

The district has yet to report a positive COVID case among students and staff.

For more information on the district's return to campus, go to woodsideschool.us. ■

Email Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com

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Police offer \$20K reward in 2018 double homicide

By Sue Dremann

East Palo Alto police have identified Julian Rico Santana as the person who allegedly shot and killed two men during a Halloween party on Oct. 14, 2018.

Authorities are seeking the public's help in locating Santana for the deaths of Eduardo Alvarado Sandoval, a 22-year-old Stockton resident, and Mario Andres Vidalesmendez, 23, of East Palo Alto.

On Tuesday, the police department announced a \$20,000 reward in partnership with Palo Alto-based nonprofit Mothers Against Murder for information leading to the arrest and

conviction of the suspect in the double homicide.

Santana, 20, of East Palo Alto, came uninvited to the party, which was held outside the rear of a business in the 2500 block of Pulgas Avenue near Bay Road, police said. He allegedly became involved in a dispute that incited a physical altercation and shot four people before he fled the scene, according to police.

Police received a ShotSpotter activation at about 2:44 a.m. and 911 calls reporting the shooting. Officers found four people with gunshot wounds. Sandoval and Vidalesmendez died at the scene and the other two were transported by emergency response crews to nearby hospitals with

life-threatening injuries.

Santana is described as being 5 feet and 10 inches tall, weighing 240 pounds and having black hair and brown eyes. People who see Santana are warned not to confront him but to call the police and wait for them to arrive, police said.

The \$20,000 reward is an increase from a \$5,000 reward Mothers Against Murder previously offered to find the shooter in April 2019.

"He's nowhere to be found for two years now, leaving families of his violence in a lot of pain and desperate for justice," Margaret Petros, executive director of Mothers Against Murder, said in a separate statement.

"Remember, the milestone that the City of EPA had reached of zero murders in 2017 and through 2018, until Julian, a young man with a gun brought so much damage and pain to four young men and ruined his life in (a) few moments of anger."

Veronica Sandoval, the mother of Eduardo Sandoval, previously asked for the community to help find her son's alleged killer. In a Dec. 1 video, she begged for the public's help.

"Oct. 14, 2018, the last day I saw my living son. That day our lives changed forever, as a mother, every member of my family and anyone else's hearts that in some way were touched

by my son," she said.

Based in Palo Alto, Mothers Against Murder advocates for families of murder victims and works to ensure the rights of homicide victims within the criminal justice system since 2003.

Anyone who might have witnessed the shootings or has any knowledge of this incident is urged to contact the East Palo Alto Police Department by calling Detective Aleyda Romero at 650-853-7249. Anonymous tips can be made by email to epa@tipnow.org or text or voicemail to 650-409-6792. ■

Email Sue Dremann at sdremann@paweekly.com

PURPLE TIER

continued from page 1

Santa Clara County, which was already in the "purple tier," was forced to take a more serious step, however. Record-shattering numbers of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in the county have prompted worried health leaders to issue new directives, the county health department announced on Saturday.

As of Nov. 28, the county had 760 new cases of COVID-19 and 239 COVID-related hospitalizations, 71 of which are in the intensive-care unit, county officials said in a press release. These numbers set new records for the highest single-day counts since the outset of the pandemic. To reduce the likelihood of a surge in hospitalizations that would exceed the capacity of hospitals within the county, Health Officer

Dr. Sara Cody announced new mandatory directives that accompany her prior Risk Reduction Order.

The changes include a maximum 10% capacity indoors in many stores and facilities, prohibiting contact sports, and reducing the size of outdoor gatherings. The county is also issuing a mandatory directive on travel, which strongly discourages leisure and nonessential travel, and requires anyone entering the county to quarantine for 14 days after returning from travel of more than 150 miles. The new mandatory directives began Monday, Nov. 30, at 12:01 a.m. and will remain in effect until at least Dec. 21 at 5 p.m. unless they are extended.

"I am gravely concerned by the continuing surge in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations," Cody said in a public statement. "The number of patients hospitalized with COVID-19 in our county has doubled in just the past couple of weeks, and we are at risk of exceeding our hospital capacity very soon if current trends

continue. During this critical time of surging COVID-19 transmission in our community, I urge every resident to exercise caution and to the greatest extent possible, minimize contact with anyone outside of your immediate household."

The new orders include:

■ Capacity limits for indoor facilities. Stores and other facilities open to the public will be limited to 10% capacity indoors. Grocery stores, drug stores, and pharmacies will be allowed to operate at 25% capacity indoors to ensure adequate access to food and medicine.

All facilities open to the public must establish a "metering system" to ensure the capacity limits, such as by posting an employee at the facility entrance to track the number of people entering and exiting.

■ Gatherings continue to be allowed only outdoors, with a maximum of 100 people. The state limits such gatherings, however, to First Amendment-protected activities, such as religious services or protests.

■ Professional, collegiate, and

youth sports are banned. All recreational activities involving physical contact or close proximity to people outside one's household, including all contact sports, are temporarily prohibited. This include football, with the San Francisco 49ers unable to use Levi Stadium. People can continue to engage in outdoor athletics and recreation where social distancing can be maintained at all times.

■ Card rooms are temporarily closed.

■ Hotels and other lodging facilities will be open only for essential travel and for use to aid isolation or quarantine.

■ Leisure and nonessential travel are strongly discouraged, and a new mandatory directive on travel will require people to quarantine for 14 days upon return to the county after travel of more than 150 miles. Health care workers traveling into the county to provide care or patients traveling into the county to obtain treatment are exempted from this requirement. ■

Email Sue Dremann at sdremann@paweekly.com

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WEST BAY

SANITARY DISTRICT



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held before the Board of Directors of the West Bay Sanitary District at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 13, 2021, at the District Offices, located at 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, California to consider the adoption of an ordinance amending Section 209 "Board Member Compensation" of the District's Code of General Regulations to increase the amount Board Members shall be compensated for attendance at meetings of the Board or for each day's service rendered as a Director by request of the Board from \$230.00 per day up to \$240.00 per day, not to exceed six days in any calendar month.

WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT

By: /s/ Sergio Ramirez

Sergio Ramirez
District Manager

HOMELESS

continued from page 8

said. "I hope that we can work to streamline the production of affordable housing and projects like this rather than continue to tie them up in more red tape."

Representatives from the Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County, the Coast-side Progressive Democrats and Redwood City District 3 Council member-elect Lissette Espinoza-Garnica also supported the projects.

Some supervisors said that residents are often fearful of new affordable housing projects but many come to

appreciate them over time.

"I think there's a lot of fear in the Redwood Shores community and I want to assure those members that the folks who are there are going to be good citizens and just as productive," Supervisor David Canepa said. "Please, let's not be the Grinch of Christmas by denying people housing. Housing is a right."

To view the agenda and video link for Tuesday's meeting, go to sanmateocounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx.

The county's Joint Information Center at cmo.smcgov.org/jic has press releases regarding Project Homekey. ■

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Palo Alto residents launch referendum to keep nonresidents out of Foothills Park

By Gennady Sheyner

Palo Alto's recent decision to expand access to Foothills Park by welcoming nonresidents to the exclusive nature preserve is facing a challenge from a group of residents who are hoping to reverse it through a referendum.

If the referendum effort succeeds, the City Council would have to cancel its plan to open Foothills Park to nonresidents on Dec. 17. It would also likely revive the lawsuit against the city by a coalition that includes the American Civil Liberties Union, the NAACP and residents from Palo Alto and neighboring cities over the exclusive nature of the 1,400-acre preserve where admission is currently limited to Palo Alto residents and their guests.

In challenging the 1965 law that restricts Foothills Park access, the plaintiff coalition has argued that it violates several fundamental rights of nonresidents, including the right to travel, the right to free speech and their right to free assembly. The Sept. 15 lawsuit also argues that the law "traces its roots to an era when racial discrimination in and around the City was open and notorious," citing the prevalence of blockbusting, redlining and racially restrictive covenants in home deeds.

Because these policies have kept many Black residents from purchasing homes in Palo Alto, the law on Foothills Park access "traces its roots to an era when racial discrimination in and around the city was open and notorious."

"The ordinance perpetuates this historic exclusion and violates the constitutional rights of individuals who are not Palo Alto residents," the lawsuit states. "It bars non-residents



Magali Gauthier

A smoky landscape is visible from Foothills Park on Aug. 22.

from entering a public park that occupies nearly 10% of the land in Palo Alto. And it transforms this vast space into a preserve for the fortunate few: for people who were not systematically denied the right to reside in the City during the era of outright racial exclusion, and people who are wealthy enough to afford to move into the City today, as it has become one of the five most expensive places to live in the United States."

The council was preparing to expand access to the preserve even before the lawsuit, though council members were planning to do it on a more limited and gradual basis. In August, the council approved a pilot program that would allow nonresidents to buy up to 50 permits per day to visit Foothills Park. The council also specified at that time that it intended to send the issue of nonresident access to the voters in November 2022.

But faced with the lawsuit, the council voted 5-2 on Nov. 2 to follow the advice of City Manager Ed Shikada and City Attorney Molly Stump and strike the ban on nonresidents from the municipal code. The council also agreed to limit park access to 750 visitors at any one time for the first 90 days (after that, the limit would revert to the current level of 1,000 visitors). Council members Lydia Kou and Greg Tanaka both dissented, with Kou arguing that the lawsuit "circumvents the democratic process."

Now, Kou is supporting a citizen effort to overturn the action of the council majority. On Nov. 26, she sent out a mass email informing her supporters of the referendum drive and urging them to get involved.

Much like Kou had argued at the Nov. 2 meeting, supporters of the referendum are alleging that because the council made

its decision to settle in a closed session, the council should suspend the policy change until a public vote.

Irina Beylin, who is gathering signatures for the referendum, told this news organization that she does not oppose Foothills Park opening to nonresidents. She said she supported the council's initial proposal for a one-year pilot program with limited nonresident permits and careful evaluation of impacts on the nature preserve.

She strongly objected, however, to the council's Nov. 2 decision to scrap the provision based on a lawsuit. This, she said, creates a "slippery slope" in which other outside groups can pressure the city with lawsuits to overturn policies favored by the public.

She noted that even if the signature-gathering effort succeeds, it doesn't mean that the city will have to wait until November 2022 to welcome

nonresidents. The council, she said, can simply revert to the pilot program that the council had initially approved through a public process.

"We have to do it openly and transparently. Nothing behind closed doors," Beylin said.

The referendum petition similarly frames the issue as one based on transparency.

"The democratic process should be followed," the referendum petition states. "The current changes to Foothills Park Ordinance were approved by City Council behind closed doors without input from the public. The measure to open Foothills Park to General Public should be put on the ballot and details should be openly discussed with constituents."

As of Monday afternoon, proponents of the referendum have already gathered a "few hundred" signatures, Beylin said. They need to get more than 2,500 by the Dec. 16 deadline to force a referendum. With the pandemic raging across the nation and Santa Clara County recently adding new restrictions to contain the recent increase in COVID-19 cases, she knows the signature-gathering effort remains an uphill climb, particularly since local law requires all signatures to be gathered by hand. But she believes that if the council rescinds its Nov. 2 policy and instead moves ahead with a more gradual pilot program, it will have the added benefit of securing buy-in from more residents.

"When people see that the pilot program works, I'm positive that it would be overwhelmingly supported by Palo Alto residents to open the park, with certain conditions," Beylin said. ■

Email Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@pawekly.com

VEGAN

continued from page 5

traditional Thanksgiving ingredients like sweet potatoes and cranberries, according to Gardner.

Since starting to distribute vegan food aid in late August, the number of families served weekly by the program has roughly doubled, with 73 families served last week, Gardner said. The in-person distributions are open to anyone, although the intention is to serve primarily families in need, he added. The delivery-based distributions are limited

to Redwood City households, including those in North Fair Oaks that have Redwood City addresses, he said. People interested in receiving food can email vegan-food-aid@veganoutreach.org.

The vast majority of families who receive food supplies through the program are not vegan, he said. In addition to working with small vegan meat-substitute vendors like the East Bay-based Something Better Foods, he said, they also seek to purchase food supplies from small businesses and those run by people of color. For instance, they also work

with La Estrellita Market, a local tortilleria, to purchase non-vegan tortillas for the families they work with, he said.

The nonprofit, which is normally based on college campuses and focused on outreach to students, pivoted during the pandemic when college campuses shut down and food aid became a more significant community need. Since April, Gardner said, the organization's efforts have expanded to six or seven cities. Operations in Redwood City are led primarily by about three employees and three volunteers, he said.

While the nonprofit is still interested in raising awareness about how poorly animals are treated in the food system and encouraging people to avoid eating animal products, the focus is less about evangelizing and more about feeding people, he said.

"We don't want to take advantage of people who are vulnerable. ... Our mission is to feed people in need during the pandemic," Gardner said.

The vegan meats and non-dairy cheeses that the nonprofit sources are purchased each week in bulk by their team, often from restaurant

distributors or chains like Grocery Outlet, and the products they select are designed to be used as easy-to-cook substitutes for traditional meat or cheese products, he said.

"Whether or not they like it is another story," he added.

The program has limited funding to last at least through the end of the year and is actively seeking additional funds. "We'd really like to continue to be able to do this," Gardner said. ■

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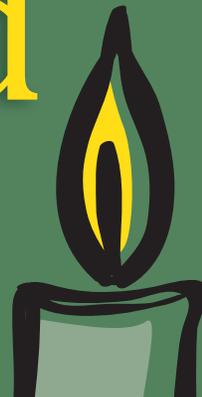
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Give to The Almanac Holiday Fund

Your gift helps local children
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Contributions to the Holiday Fund go directly to programs that benefit Peninsula residents. Last year, Almanac readers and foundations contributed \$150,000 from more than 150 donors for the 10 agencies that feed the hungry, house the homeless and provide numerous other services to those in need.

Contributions to the Holiday Fund will be matched, to the extent possible, by generous community organizations, foundations and individuals, including the Rotary Club of Menlo Park Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. No administrative costs will be deducted from the gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law.

All donations to the Holiday Fund will be shared equally among the 10 recipient agencies listed on this page.

Boys & Girls Clubs

Provides after-school academic support, enrichment, and mentoring for 1,800 low-income K-12 youth at nine locations across Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, and the North Fair Oaks neighborhood of Redwood City.

Ecumenical Hunger Program

Provides emergency food, clothing, household essentials, and sometimes financial assistance to families in need, regardless of religious preference, including Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for more than 2,000 households.

Health Connected

Serves over 5,000 students and their families each year through comprehensive sexual health education programs. Students learn to have ongoing communication with parents and to make informed decisions that will apply to their lives, now and in the future.

LifeMoves

Provides shelter/housing and supportive services across 18 sites in Silicon Valley and the Peninsula. Serves thousands of homeless families and individuals annually on their path back to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

Literacy Partners — Menlo Park

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

Ravenswood Family Health Center

Provides primary medical and preventive health care for all ages at its clinic in East Palo Alto. Of the more than 17,000 registered patients, most are low-income and uninsured and live in the ethnically diverse East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, and North Fair Oaks areas.

St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room

Serves hundreds of hot meals six days a week to people in need who walk through the doors. Funded by voluntary contributions and community grants, St. Anthony's is the largest dining room for the needy between San Francisco and San Jose. It also offers take-home bags of food, as well as emergency food and clothing assistance.

St. Francis Center

Helps low-income, working families become self-supporting members of the community by providing long-term solutions through educational programs for children and parents, as well as after-school programming at Siena Youth Centers. St. Francis Center also provides housing, food and clothing services to address short-term needs.

StarVista

Serves more than 32,000 people throughout San Mateo County, including children, young people and families, with counseling, prevention, early intervention, education, and residential programs. StarVista also provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services including a 24-hour suicide crisis hotline, an alcohol and drug helpline, and a parent support hotline.

Upward Scholars

Upward Scholars empowers low-income adults by providing them with financial support, tutoring, and other assistance so they can continue their education, get higher-paying jobs, and serve as role models and advocates for their children.

The organizations below provide
major matching grants to the Holiday Fund.



www.siliconvalleycf.org



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The Almanac will make every effort to publish donor names for donations unless the donor checks the anonymous box. All donations will be acknowledged by mail.

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The Almanac

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P.O. Box 45389
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The Almanac Holiday Fund is a donor advised fund of Silicon Valley Community Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. A contribution to this fund allows your donation to be tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

Holiday Fund: StarVista adapts services during pandemic

Transitional housing nonprofit adds safety measures to its youth program

By **Angela Swartz**
Almanac Staff Writer

Mornings at DayBreak, a transitional housing program in Redwood City, start with walking downstairs to say “good morning,” a quick temperature check and cooking breakfast before logging onto an online class from the couch in the living room.

The 30-year-old program, run by San Carlos-based nonprofit StarVista, houses homeless 16- to 21-year-olds and is still offering its services despite the COVID-19 pandemic, albeit with some changes.

Health screenings are just one change, along with wearing masks, social distancing from others around the house and staying in at night. Therapy sessions have moved to Zoom. The precautions are especially necessary since COVID can often present without symptoms in this demographic, said Program Manager Michelle Mayes.

So far, no DayBreak residents have tested positive for the virus. The program, which usually serves 10 young adults from San Mateo County, has capped housing at seven residents since April because of the pandemic. A staff of seven full-time employees run the operation, said Mayes. StarVista’s services include counseling, skill development, and crisis prevention to children, youth, adults and families.

“We have a really brave team that are still willing to work during a pandemic,” she said.

StarVista is one of the beneficiaries of The Almanac’s Holiday Fund. Because The Almanac and its partner the Silicon Valley Community Foundation cover all the administrative costs, every dollar raised goes directly to this year’s 10 nonprofit organizations. Donations to the Holiday Fund can



Courtesy Michael Maylan

Adrian Esqueda, the program coordinator at StarVista’s Daybreak youth homeless shelter in San Mateo County, hands Michelle Mayes, Daybreak’s program manager, a mask on Nov. 17. StarVista is one of 10 local nonprofits that benefit from donations to The Almanac’s Holiday Fund.

be made at almanacnews.com/holiday_fund.

Some tensions over cleanliness and noise have arisen between residents who feel cooped up at home all the time, Mayes said. During the spring, it was also challenging for residents to land jobs, given the economical upheaval caused by the pandemic. Overall, residents are respecting safety guidelines, such as hand-washing, wearing a mask outside of their bedroom and bathroom, and using hand sanitizer, she said.

Clients stay in the house for about six months on average. Staff members provide them with training in finding and keeping a job; personal health and self-care; money management; meal planning and preparation; performing daily chores; locating and renting housing; and pursuing educational opportunities. Residents are required to attend school and work.

This year, of the residents who stayed for more than 30 days, 73% transitioned to a positive

placement, 80% were either enrolled in school or had their GEDs, and 100% were referred to appropriate substance abuse treatment providers if needed.

About StarVista

StarVista’s services were first known in San Mateo County in 1966 under the name of “Peninsula Suicide Prevention, Inc.” — a small human services agency, according to StarVista’s website. It grew into Youth and Family Enrichment Services and adopted the name “StarVista” in 2011. Its staff now includes 240 doctors, clinicians, social workers, and professionals and 45 clinical interns who work with 41,000 individuals and families annually.

Earlier this year, former Daybreak client Ozzy filmed a testimonial video explaining how StarVista helped him become more mature and responsible, and opened up doors to him. He now wants to become a counselor or a therapist.

“They’ve shown me I can



count on someone and what a friend looks like,” he said. “My life now is full of friends. I have my own place. I bought a new car, I have a steady job.”

When someone is homeless, sometimes their grades fall and they lose their jobs, Mayes said. It’s great to see them transform their education and career, she said. Mayes said one resident saved \$10,000 while part of DayBreak.

“It’s great to see them (DayBreak residents) blossom into themselves,” she said. “And see them feel as if they can achieve their goals.”

The pandemic has given staff an even greater sense of purpose, said StarVista CEO Sara Mitchell during a recent discussion the nonprofit hosted over Zoom.

“I think they’ve always been very passionate about the work that they do, but they see the ways that they are positively making changes in the community despite all of the challenges,” Mitchell said. “On the flip side, for our clients, in the midst of so much uncertainty, there’s a sense of ‘when will this end.’ For the individuals we serve, they feel a sense of reassurance knowing that there’s this organization of people who care about them and are invested in their communities.”

For more on StarVista and DayBreak, go to star-vista.org/daybreak. ■

Email Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com

Thank you for donating to the Holiday Fund

Almanac Holiday Fund Donor List

As of Dec. 1, 37 donors have contributed \$31,910 to the Almanac Holiday Fund.

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Nancy Stevens*
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* Donor did not want to publish the amount of the gift.

Online talks to support families’ health

There are a variety of upcoming online programs for parents and their children about topics ranging from mental health to the importance of sleep.

Dr. Shashank Joshi, a Stanford University psychiatrist and an expert in mental health and suicide prevention, will lead a talk on how parents can support the mental health of children and teens, especially during a pandemic, on Dec. 7.

Joshi will address how parents and schools can promote youth mental wellness, teach

parents to identify and support children impacted by mental health concerns, and to recognize the signs of suicidality. The presentation is sponsored by Peninsula Health Care District, in partnership with The Parent Venture. Register for the event at tinyurl.com/Dec7talk.

Eran Magen, founder of the Center for Supportive Relationships, will host a forum titled “How to Give Advice Your Child (Might) Listen To” on Dec. 11. The Sequoia Healthcare District, in partnership

with The Parent Education Series and The Parent Venture, are organizing the talk. Register for the event at tinyurl.com/Dec11event.

Sleep specialist Matthew Walker and research psychologist Kelly McGonigal will discuss the benefits restful sleep and exercise have on well-being during The Common Ground Speaker Series “Underslept and Idle: The Transformative Effects of Sleep & Movement” on Dec. 8. Register for the event at tinyurl.com/Dec8talk.
—Angela Swartz

express

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Former mayor pens humor book from alien perspective

By **Kate Bradshaw**
Almanac Staff Writer

Mickie Winkler, a former Menlo Park City Council member and mayor, has released a humor book containing local anecdotes and reflections called “Politics, Police and Other Earthling Antics.”

The book is published by Austin Macauley Publishers and is narrated from the perspective of an alien from the imaginary planet Zalaria. But for locals, it’s not hard to find stories from around the community embedded in its pages — scattered with observations about pop culture and other personal anecdotes.

Having lived in seven cities around the U.S. and several other countries — Turkey, Thailand, Russia and China — Winkler said in an interview she wanted to apply the different perspectives she’s picked up living around the globe. Even within the U.S., she said, she was considered a liberal in New York, a “damn Yankee” in the South and then was recast as a conservative in California. Winkler



Courtesy Mickie Winkler

Mickie Winkler, a former Menlo Park mayor, has released a humor book called “Politics, Police and Other Earthling Antics.”

served on the Menlo Park City Council from 2002 to 2006 and was mayor in 2005.

Writing from an alien’s perspective, she said, made it easier in some instances to talk about awkward subjects. For instance, why so much of what humans do seems to be tied to an obsession with sex.

“It’s a perspective you can have from the outside, (but is) less fun to talk about from the

inside,” she said.

It’s also a perspective she’s learned to apply in her own life, holding subjects at an arm’s length and finding a way to laugh at the absurdity of it all.

Absurdity, she says, “is part of who we are, our human heritage.”

Several of her stories point to what she sees as the absurdity of some local and state politics. When she was elected to the City Council, she said she laughed when she was asked to swear to protect the California Constitution from all sworn enemies.

“Nobody reads the Constitution of California,” she said, “It’s hundreds of pages of mishmash.”

A number of the anecdotes in the 147-page book are loosely veiled stories about Menlo Park. Winkler’s stories describe a town called “Menlo Lark” of which she served as mayor, and how she achieved what she describes as a rare distinction of not being reelected after her first term. Still, she told The Almanac she considers her time on the council to have been “an incredible experience and privilege.”

Included in the book is a story

called “The Naked Cop,” which draws on a news story The Almanac broke in 2013 about an on-duty Menlo Park cop who was found wearing nothing with a prostitute at a Motel 6 in Sunnyvale. He was later allowed to return to duty following an internal affairs investigation. Winkler frames the story as a comical bedtime story dialogue between a grandmother and her granddaughter.

In one anecdote, she says that she earned enemies among voters while in office for voting against police raises, opposing using a baseball park as a dog park (she said she warned that it would become known as “Poop Park”), and calling the city’s heritage tree ordinance a Heritage Twig Ordinance “because it protects even the newest and tiny trees from nearby development.”

“For this, I was accused of liking people more than trees,” she said.

She also makes pointed jabs at police body cameras and their frequent “malfunctions” and California’s ballot initiative and legislative processes.

Winkler’s stories also draw

heavily on her experiences teaching conversational English around the world and in the U.S., and in one piece points out the difficulties of teaching English learners the distinctions between words like led and lead, read and read, and hour and our.

“English is a really hard language to learn,” she said. “I really respect people who ultimately master it.”

Winkler recently moved across the Menlo Park border into a retirement community in Palo Alto, but remains politically active in Menlo Park. She’s working on more humorous materials, she added.

The stories, she said, are short and can be read and shared with friends quickly.

“I hope they make people think a little,” she said. “There’s a lot that people in Menlo Park will recognize here. I do think they’ll enjoy it.”

The book is available at Kepler’s, Barnes & Noble and Amazon for \$10.95. ■

Email *Kate Bradshaw* at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com

MPCSD

continued from page 5

to spread the word that I would be willing to take in clothing and household furniture. I have met the most amazing and generous families that have been quick to provide items and donations that a family may need once the

message is sent out.”

Several families have welcomed babies since the pandemic started, and MPCSD has been able to set them up with furniture, strollers, car seats, clothing and diapers.

Facebook donates a weekly supply of organic groceries to MPCSD Helps.

During Giving Tuesday, an international fundraising day on Dec. 1, community members raised \$11,547 for MPCSD Helps’ efforts, according to Carrie Chen, executive director of the education foundation.

Donations of gift cards to Safeway and Amazon, or financial contributions, to MPCSD

Helps go toward purchasing food and necessities. Gift cards may be dropped off at the district office, 181 Encinal Ave. in Atherton, between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, or online gift cards sent to mpcsdhelps@mpcsd.org.

Food and necessities, such as cereal, rice, baby wipes, paper

towels, fruits, vegetables and other items listed on the district website, also can be dropped off at the district office during the same hours.

For more information, go to district.mpcsd.org/Page/2447. ■

Email *Angela Swartz* at aswartz@almanacnews.com

ELAINE LEVINE

continued from page 5

Almanac managing editor who retired in 2018, credited Elaine for her guidance as he took over supervision of the “well-established and talented staff” in 1988, saying that without her, he wouldn’t have enjoyed some of the best years of his life doing what he loves.

“By buying The Almanac in 1980, Mort and Elaine sustained this reliable and conscientious source of local news and information,” he said. “In the mid-1980s, they greatly expanded The Almanac’s reach from Portola Valley and Woodside to Menlo Park and Atherton. They retained the experienced staff, which had deep roots in the community and covered the schools, town halls and all manner of community affairs for decades.”

The Levines sold The Almanac to Embarcadero Media in 1993.

“Elaine was a great writer,

always sharp, witty and direct, and a leader with a deep commitment to quality journalism,” said Bill Johnson, Embarcadero Media’s CEO and publisher of The Almanac.

Elaine was an avid gardener and an active member in the California Native Plant Society, Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County, and Western Horticulture. When she and her husband restored the historic Fremont Older House in Saratoga, she supervised the restoration of the gardens. She also was a founding member of the Milpitas Historical Society. She and Mort traveled far and wide, enjoying museums, opera, and music festivals, and participated in 35 Elder Hostel trips both in the U.S. and abroad.

She is survived by her husband Mort Levine; daughters Deva Luna and partner Terra Lee of San Jose, Meg Levine and husband Jeff Hargreaves of Oakland, Kay and Ned Spencer of Conway, Mass.,

and Amy Levine of Forestville; six grandchildren, Anna Levine-Beard of San Jose, Casey Levine-Beard and husband John McShane of Brooklyn, New York; Peter Hargreaves and partner Ema Guerrero of San Leandro, Toby and Kori Hargreaves of Rio Linda, California, Maia Spencer-Bunch and Allyson Spencer-Bunch of Northampton, Massachusetts, and Nathan Koman and fiancée Jasmine Wingard of Petaluma; and great-grandchildren Mira Mae McShane and Orin Emrys Hargreaves.

In her final months, Elaine was well cared for by Victoria Kamsler and the Kaiser Hospital Hospice team, her family said.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the family is postponing a memorial service. The family prefers donations in her memory be made to the Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County or the Milpitas Historical Society c/o the Milpitas Library, 160 S. Main St. Milpitas, CA 95035. ■



Courtesy Amy Levine

Elaine Levine, former owner of The Almanac and a string of local newspapers, sits in the newsroom of the Milpitas Post in 1960, with daughter Amy in her lap.

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Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

CJW ARCHITECTURE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 285670
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
CJW Architecture, located at 130 Portola Road, Suite A, Portola Valley, CA 94028, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
CARTER J. WARR
130 Portola Road, Suite A
Portola Valley, CA 94028
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on September 1994. This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on November 5, 2020.
(ALM Nov. 13, 20, 27; Dec. 4, 2020)

CHERUBIC IN-HOME CARE SERVICES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 285643
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
Cherubic In-Home Care Services, located at 3290 San Jose Ave., CA 94501, Alameda County.
Registered owner(s):
ELITISI SEKONA
3290 San Jose Ave.
Alameda, CA 94501
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 10/19/2020. This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 29, 2020.
(ALM Nov. 20, 27; Dec. 4, 11, 2020)

HAPPY HOME
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 285792
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
Happy Home, located at 258 Lowell St., Redwood City, CA 94062, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
DANIELLE MARTIN
258 Lowell St.
Redwood City, CA 94062
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 6/17/20.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on November 12, 2020.
(ALM Dec. 4, 11, 18, 25, 2020)

997 All Other Legals

Title Order No. 05942225 Trustee Sale No. 84977 Loan No. HUELIN APN: 088-030-100 NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 2/22/2018. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. On 12/16/2020 at 12:30 PM, CALIFORNIA TD SPECIALISTS, AS TRUSTEE as the duly appointed Trustee under and pursuant to Deed of Trust Recorded on 3/1/2018 as Instrument No. 2018-014763 in book N/A, page N/A of official records in the Office of the Recorder of San Mateo County, California, executed by: DAVID L. HUELIN, TERESA F. WHITE-HUELIN, TRUSTEES OF THE DAVID HUELIN AND TERESA F. WHITE HUELIN LIVING TRUST DATED JUNE 24, 2016, as Trustor CHI-KOU, LILY FAN, HUSBAND AND WIFE AS JOINT TENANTS, as Beneficiary WILL SELL AT PUBLIC AUCTION TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER FOR CASH (payable at time of sale in lawful money of the United States, by cash, a cashier's check drawn by a state or national bank, a check drawn by a state or federal credit union, or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, savings association, or savings bank specified in section 5102 of the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state). At: Outside the Marshall Street entrance to the Hall of Justice and Records

located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063, NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE — continued all right, title and interest conveyed to and now held by it under said Deed of Trust in the property situated in said County, California described the land therein: Lot 9 as shown on that certain Map entitled "Dearborn Park, Map No. 2, San Mateo County, California", filed in the Office of the County Recorder of San Mateo County on March 7, 1924 in Book 11 of maps at Page 51. The property heretofore described is being sold "as is". The street address and other common designation, if any, of the real property described above is purported to be: 730 DEARBORN PARK ROAD PESCADERO, CA 94060. The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address and other common designation, if any, shown herein. Said sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by said Deed of Trust, with interest thereon, as provided in said note(s), advances, if any, under the terms of the Deed of Trust, estimated fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee and of trusts created by said Deed of Trust, to-wit \$525,052.98 (Estimated). Accrued interest and additional advances, if any, will increase this figure prior to sale. The beneficiary under said Deed of Trust heretofore executed and delivered to the undersigned a written Declaration of Default and Demand for Sale, and a written Notice of Default and Election to Sell. The undersigned caused said Notice of Default and Election of Sell to be recorded in the county where the real property is located and more than three months have elapsed since such recordation. DATE: 11/16/2020 CALIFORNIA TD SPECIALISTS, AS TRUSTEE, as Trustee 8190 EAST KAISER BLVD., ANAHEIM HILLS, CA 92808 PHONE: 714-283-2180 FOR TRUSTEE SALE INFORMATION LOG ON TO: www.stoxposting.com CALL: 844-477-7869 PATRICIO S. INCE; VICE PRESIDENT CALIFORNIA TD SPECIALIST IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. "NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS: If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a trustee auction. You will be bidding on a lien, not on the property itself. Placing the highest bid at a trustee auction does not automatically entitle you to free and clear ownership of the property. You should also be aware that the lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien. If you are the highest bidder at the auction, you are or may be responsible for paying off all liens senior to the lien being auctioned off, before you can receive clear title to the property. You are encouraged to investigate the existence, priority, and size of outstanding liens that may exist on this property by contacting the county recorder's office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge you a fee for this information. If you consult either of these resources, you should be aware that the same lender may hold more than one mortgage or deed of trust on the property. NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER: The sale date shown on this notice of sale may be postponed one or more times by the mortgagee, beneficiary, trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about trustee sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and, if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, you may call 844-477-7869, or visit this internet Web site www.stoxposting.com, using the file number assigned to this case T.S.# 84977. Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on the Internet Web site. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale."

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Viewpoint

IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES

Holiday Fund: Looking to the future with hope and resilience

By Nicole Taylor

GUEST OPINION

There is no denying that 2020 has been a difficult year. Families in our communities have faced health challenges and even the deaths of loved ones from COVID-19, and the pandemic has devastated the economy. The West Coast has confronted a record-breaking fire season. The murder of George Floyd in May started a nationwide reckoning regarding racial injustice. And we have just come through a contentious election, showing us just how deeply divided our country is. On top of all that, our region still faces ongoing challenges: affordable housing, food insecurity and equity in education, to name a few.

Yet, the Bay Area has long been known for its innovative spirit, its problem-solving ability, and its resilience. We take care of our neighbors — as has been evident in this extraordinary year, when the community has come together to support the members most affected by the multiple crises we have faced.

One role Silicon Valley Community Foundation fills in our community is helping get aid to the people in the community who need it most. That's why once again this year, SVCF is proud to partner with The Almanac on the annual Holiday Fund campaign — a great way to help those in need locally. Your generous gift to the fund will support causes including housing and food support, mentoring for youth and health care access for low-income and uninsured

residents, among others.

SVCF's efforts are both local, like the Holiday Fund, and regional. In all cases, we help direct funding and resources to the people and organizations who need it most, including nonprofits that help low-income workers, undocumented immigrants, people facing food insecurity, and those who need housing assistance. We have worked with community partners and donors to respond to several challenges this past year.

As the COVID-19 pandemic caused enormous health and economic hardship across our region, SVCF channeled donor support to more than 370 nonprofit organizations working on the frontlines. SVCF's fundraising helped provide food assistance to more than 626,000 residents in 10 Bay Area counties, as well as housing support to more than 31,000 households.

SVCF has also worked to elevate the voices of community leaders of color in the wake of Floyd's murder. We created a giving guide that supports Black-led organizations in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties focused on health, education and cultural programs for the Black community — organizations that have received more than \$3 million from our donors in recent months.

And after the CZU, SCU and other fires affected our region, SVCF set up a Wildfire Relief Fund to provide emergency grants to local nonprofits that are helping

those affected. Our community members once again stepped up with funds and allowed us to provide grants to groups providing immediate relief: search and rescue, shelters and financial assistance for victims. Other grants focused on the recovery phase, helping with issues such as rehousing, mental health services, and legal services. Still others went to groups looking to the long term, helping rebuild homes, workplaces and infrastructure — as well as planning for resiliency and preparedness for when the next wildfire season strikes.

You may be wondering how you can help. One way is to support local nonprofits, which are doing critical work in our community. Many nonprofits are seeing the number of volunteers decrease due to COVID-19, just as they need help the most. Volunteering, if you are able, is a great way to give back. Another option is to make a financial donation. Your gift will support their efforts year-round, and the Holiday Fund is a great way to support multiple nonprofits. To contribute online, visit almanacnews.com/holiday_fund. To contribute via mail, see our instructions on Page 14.

As we look to next year with hope and optimism, know that together, we can make a difference, addressing our local and regional challenges and building a stronger, more equitable, and more inclusive community.

Nicole Taylor is president and CEO of Silicon Valley Community Foundation. To learn more visit siliconvalleycf.org.

LETTERS

Our readers write

Community gardens

One of my favorite memories and activities growing up in Menlo Park was planting vegetables in the elementary school gardens. As a resident today, I would love to see a public community garden space in Menlo Park (in addition to the Belle Haven community garden) that is equally accessible to all community members, creates a healthy and safe environment to learn about nature, and promotes collaboration and a sense of unity.

Community gardens have a multitude of benefits, especially

as the COVID-19 pandemic continues on. With kids and parents spending so much time indoors, it could provide an opportunity to get outside and be active while socializing and bonding with neighbors. If anyone is experiencing economic hardship, and the space is large enough, they could potentially grow their own fresh, healthy vegetables, which saves money on groceries and could lessen the stress of food security, even just a little. For kids that do not have access to their school gardens right now, this gives teachers an opportunity to extend their curriculum to include more science and health-related topics, and motivate students by providing hands-on activities to be able to apply what they are learning in school and see how science is not

just abstract but relates to something meaningful and real. Later on, these spaces could be used to run after-school programs or have high school students volunteer to keep up the spaces.

There are many public facilities where we could add this type of space, such as Burgess Park, Flood Park or Nealon Park. By adding garden beds, some benches and tables, and a few basic gardening supplies, residents could bring in their own plants and begin growing fruits, herbs and vegetables. In addition to the above-mentioned benefits, gardens at a minimum provide safe spaces for people to focus on their mental health and try to reduce stress levels.

*Naomi Fuson
Elm Street, Menlo Park*

Artscene

PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Home for the holidays

Where to find virtual concerts, dazzling displays and unique gifts this December

By Karla Kane, Sheryl Nonnenberg and Heather Zimmerman

This holiday season is a time to stick close to home and stay healthy rather than traveling afar or gathering in big groups. However, it doesn't mean the community is lacking for seasonal cheer that can be enjoyed from a safe distance, whether it's via livestream, from a vehicle, or outdoors in the fresh air (bring your masks).

While the coronavirus has curtailed many holiday plans and activities this year, Filoli House and Garden in Woodside is among those local organizations keeping spirits bright. As in past years, a plethora of programs will be offered, including outdoor light displays, cozy fire pits and special theme nights. The major difference this year is the need for masks, social distancing and advanced reservations (the house is currently closed, as of Nov. 29, thanks to San Mateo County's move into the state's purple tier).

"With the challenges we have all experienced in 2020, hope for a season that brings peace and calm is central as Filoli serves our community as a place of respite. To spread the season of cheer, we have extended our Holidays program into January 2021 and, for the first time, we will be open every night of the week

for Holiday Lights," said Chief Executive Officer Kara Newport.

A recent media preview was a bright and festive escape, despite steady rainfall. The lights in the garden are dazzling and have been extended into two new areas, the Woodland Garden and the Garden Court. Seasonal music sets the tone for a casual walk through the gardens, with the opportunity to stop for a hot cider or mulled wine.

Those in the mood for shopping can stop by the Clock Tower Shop, where everything from ornaments to food products to clothing is available. It is also beautifully decorated and smells, well, it smells like the holidays. And if all of this walking and shopping has built up an appetite, the Quail's Nest Cafe serves soups, salads and sandwiches (limited outdoor seating), as well as holiday cookies. Beer and wine are also on the menu.

If your visit takes place on a Monday, you can participate in a Theme Night: Holiday Hats (Dec. 7), Holiday Pajama Party (Dec. 14), Night Lights (Dec. 21; sold out) and Vintage Christmas (Dec. 28). And it would not be the holidays without Ugly Sweater Day on Friday, Dec. 18. Wear



Courtesy Tiffany Zabala

Santa Claus himself will be available on select days at Filoli House and Garden for some socially distant selfies.

yours and you might win a prize. Finally, the big man himself, Santa Claus, will be on hand the three Saturdays prior to Christmas for a safe-distance selfie.

For a full list of events and activities and to make reservations, information is available at filoli.org.

Some more December holiday highlights are presented below. Event info is subject to change with short notice; check directly with organizations to confirm. To search for more listings, or to submit your own, check out the community calendar at almanacnews.com/calendar.

Performances

Palo Alto Players' 'Holiday Family Sing Along'

What: For the third in its Homebound Cabaret series, Palo Alto Players invites audiences to sing and dance along with actors performing holiday classics and more offbeat festive tunes.

When: Streaming Dec. 4-13.

More information: palyplayers.org/event/sing-along.

Melita Music

What: Children's musician and singer-songwriter Melita Silberstein will perform a virtual holiday concert for families, hosted by Stanford Research Park.

When: Streaming Dec. 8 at 5 p.m.

More information: stanfordresearchpark.com/blog.

TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's 'Simple Gifts'

What: TheatreWorks Silicon Valley presents an online multicultural celebration of diverse holiday traditions, featuring songs and stories from winter celebrations including Kwanzaa, Christmas, Hanukkah, Noche Buena, Diwali and Las Posadas.

When: Streaming Dec. 10-28.

More information: theatreworks.org.

'Holiday Shorts'

What: The Oshman Family JCC is offering access to "Holiday Shorts" by Hank Kimmel, a series of comedic short plays with holiday themes.

When: Streaming Dec. 10-23.

More information: paloaltojcc.org.

'The Christmas Ballet'

What: Smuin Contemporary Ballet presents its first virtual edition of the annual "Christmas Ballet," featuring its trademark blend of classical ballet with holiday tunes and styles including tap, jazz and swing.

When: Streaming Dec. 11-24.

More information: smuinballet.org/christmasballet.

'Broceliande Winter Solstice Concert: Wassail!'

What: Celtic/Medieval ensemble Broceliande will celebrate the winter solstice with a virtual concert featuring winter

dances, carols, and ballads from many times and places, hosted by East West Book Store.

When: Streaming Dec. 11 at 7 p.m.

More information: eastwestbooks.org/events.

'Taylor Mac's Holiday Sauce ... Pandemic!'

What: Stanford Live will present access to the multitalented Taylor Mac and a crew of collaborators celebrating the glorious dysfunction of the holidays, through music, burlesque, film and more, followed by a virtual after-party.

When: Streaming Dec. 12 at 7 p.m.

More information: live.stanford.edu/calendar/december-2020.

Latke-pa-zoom-sa

What: The Oshman Family Jewish Community Center hosts an online Hanukkah celebration. Participants are invited to bring a hanukkah (menorah) to light and enjoy a Hanukkah singalong led by Bay Area musician Isaac Zones. Registration required.

When: Streaming Dec. 13 at 5:30 p.m.

More information: isaaczones.com/calendar.

Ragazzi Boys Chorus 'Beyond the Stars'

What: Ragazzi Boys Chorus

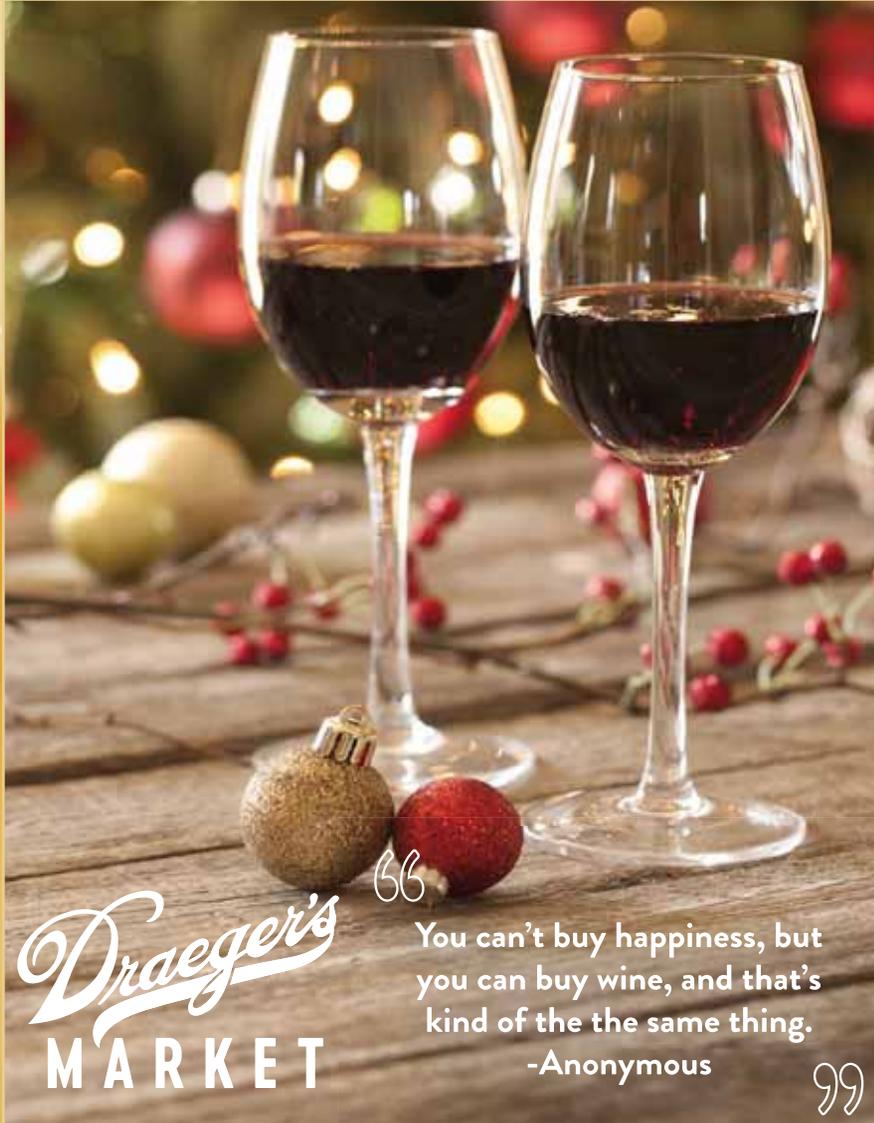
See **HOLIDAYS**, page 21



Courtesy Chris Hardy

Each year, Smuin Ballet presents "The Christmas Ballet" — a blend of classical and contemporary dance set to holiday tunes. This year, the performances will be virtual.

Here come the Holidays



Draeger's
MARKET

You can't buy happiness, but you can buy wine, and that's kind of the the same thing.

-Anonymous



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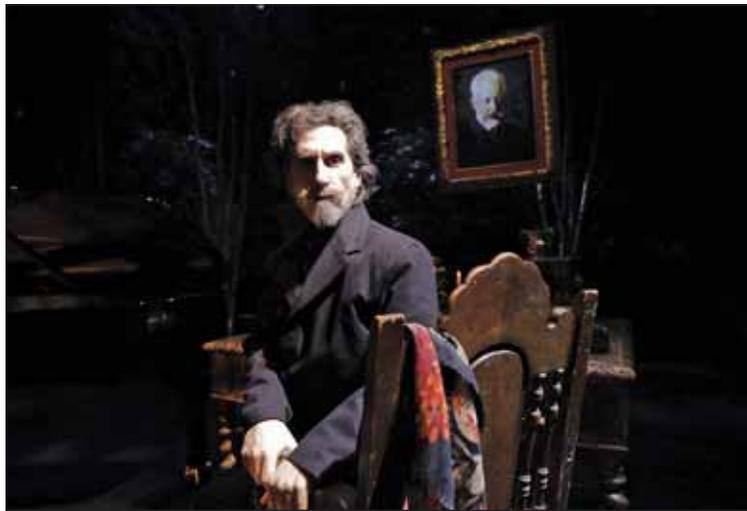


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Courtesy Hershey Felder Presents

Pianist/actor/writer Hershey Felder will livestream a new version of his ode to Tchaikovsky — with emphasis on “The Nutcracker.”

HOLIDAYS

continued from page 19

will livestream its holiday concert, with its local youth choirs singing in real time from home.

When: Streaming Dec. 13 at 4 p.m.

More information: ragazzi.org.

‘A Virtual Chanticleer Christmas - From Darkness to Light’

What: Chanticleer — the Bay Area a cappella ensemble — can’t perform its traditional Stanford University holiday concert, but it can present an online version, complete with candlelight procession.

When: Streaming Dec. 15-Jan. 1.

More information: chanticleer.org.

‘Manual Cinema’s Christmas Carol’

What: Stanford Live members and Stanford University students can access Manual Cinema’s world premiere adaptation of the Dickens Christmas ghost story classic, involving Zoom calls, puppets and visual innovations.

When: Streaming Dec. 17-19.

More information: live.stanford.edu/content/manualcinema.

‘Winter’s Gifts’

What: The Choral Project and the San Jose Chamber Orchestra presents a virtual version of their annual holiday concert, “Winter’s Gifts.”

When: Streaming Dec. 19 at 7 p.m.

More information: choralproject.org/winters-gifts-treasures.

‘Hershey Felder Tchaikovsky’

What: TheatreWorks Silicon

Valley favorite Hershey Felder is currently based in Florence, Italy. Thanks to livestreaming, local audiences can catch “Hershey Felder Tchaikovsky,” a spinoff of “Our Great Tchaikovsky” with an extended emphasis on “The Nutcracker,” online.

When: Streaming Dec. 20-27.
More information: hershefelderlive.com.

Community events

Ernie’s Trains

What: John Bianco continues his late father’s tradition of putting on a holiday model train display, this year running on indoor tracks (visible through windows) only. Engines and trains change daily.

When: Planned to run Wednesdays-Sundays from about 6:30-9 p.m. through Christmas Day.

Where: 2387 Adele Ave., Mountain View.

Christmas Crèche Exhibit (online)

What: The 33rd annual event presented by the Menlo Park and Los Altos Stakes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints goes virtual this year with an online exhibit of photos and videos of Christmas Crèches submitted by the community.

When: Through Dec. 25.

More information: christmascreche.org.

Holiday Traditions

What: The San Mateo County Historical Association will offer a virtual presentation on holiday traditions from around the world, plus a recorded concert from the San Francisco State University Handbell Choir.

When: Streaming Dec. 5 at 10 a.m.

More information: historysmc.org/events/hometown-holidays-online.

Gamble Garden Festival of Trees (online)

What: Visitors can enjoy a virtual “stroll” among holiday trees decorated by creative individuals, groups, and organizations. All trees are available for purchase by online silent auction with proceeds benefiting Gamble Garden.

When: Dec. 5, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (opening reception Dec. 4).

More information: gamblegarden.org/festivaloftrees.

Palo Alto Christmas: A Visual Christmas Experience

What: Four local churches are inviting visitors to each of their campuses to enjoy a socially distanced scavenger hunt by car, bike or on foot to spot items hidden among holiday decorations. After visiting each church, guests can register their findings online and be entered in a prize drawing for gift cards, a Kindle and an iPad.

When: Dec. 12-25, 5-10 p.m.
More information: paloaltochristmas.com.

Christmas Tree Lane

What: Every year, neighbors along two blocks of Palo Alto’s Fulton Avenue adorn their yards and houses with lights and festive displays. This year will mark the 80th anniversary of this beloved neighborhood tradition.

When: Dec. 12-31, 5-10 p.m.

Where: 1700 and 1800 blocks of Fulton Avenue, Palo Alto
More information: christmasreelane.org.

Hometown Holidays

What: Downtown Redwood City’s annual celebration is planned to go on with COVID-19 precautions in place.



Courtesy Little Fang Photography

The multitasking Taylor Mac and friends will livestream a holiday show spanning genres including music, burlesque, film and humor, plus a virtual after-party.



Courtesy TheatreWorks Silicon Valley

Maya Greenberg, Michael Gene Sullivan, Velina Brown, David Crane and Amy Lizardo perform in TheatreWorks Silicon Valley’s virtual presentation of “Simple Gifts” — a collection of multicultural holiday celebrations.

Participants must register in advance for a slot in the car parade, from which they can spot Santa, collect treats and observe music and decorations.

When: Dec. 19, 3-6 p.m.

Where: Downtown Redwood City (directions will be released upon registration).

More information: hometownholidays.org.

Homage to the Holidays Video

What: The city of Los Altos, Festival of Lights Parade Association and town of Los Altos Hills present a video homage to local holiday traditions — the town of Los Altos Hills Barn Lighting, the city of Los Altos holiday lights and street decorations, Festival of Lights Float Display — airing on local access TV.

When: The video airs Dec. 6-Jan. 3 Saturdays and Sundays at 7 p.m. and Wednesdays at noon on KMVT 15 (Silicon Valley Community Media Comcast Channel 15, Uverse Channel 99).

More information: losaltoshills.ca.gov/calendar.

Holiday markets

German Holiday Market

What: German International School of Silicon Valley’s annual Germany holiday market is virtual this year, available online and offering an array of traditional German holiday treats.

When: Through Dec. 20.

More information: germanholidaymarket.org.

Palo Alto Art Center Holiday Sale

What: Palo Alto Art Center artists in a variety of media are selling their creations in a virtual holiday sale (orders placed online and then picked up on-site).

When: Online through Dec. 6.

More information: paacshop.org.

FabMo Artisan Showcase

What: An online showcase of creations by about 60 artisans that features unique clothing, fine art, fashion accessories, jewelry, home decor items, gifts, toys and dolls and holiday items, all crafted at least in part from FabMo’s stock of discontinued designer samples that have been rescued and repurposed.

When: Through Dec. 31.

More information: fabmo.org/artisan-showcase.

Hanukkah Pop-up

What: The Oshman Family Jewish Community Center has partnered with Wise Sons Jewish Delicatessen to present a contactless drive-thru pop-up where visitors can purchase all the trimmings for a Hanukkah meal. Preorder and pick up; early orders are encouraged.

When: Dec. 10, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. (pickup)

Where: Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto

More information: facebook.com/events/133623771637080.

Food & Drink



The 2020 vintage:

How Peninsula wineries are struggling — and innovating

Battered by the pandemic and wildfires, wineries offer Zoom tastings, DoorDash delivery and vineyard yoga

By Elena Kadvany

Testarossa Winery started 2020 on a high. The Los Gatos winery saw its highest sales to date the year prior. It won winery of the year from Connoisseur's Guide to California Wine. The owners were excitedly planning the largest renovation to the winery in 70 years, hoping to open a sparkling new 10,000-square-foot private event space on March 1.

We all know what happened next: the arrival of the coronavirus and mid-March shutdown that upended virtually every aspect of our lives, including how we drink and buy wine. Testarossa not only saw private events and weddings canceled overnight but had to refund hundreds of thousands of dollars in deposits. They had to shut down their popular tasting room. Profits plummeted by 80%. The winery went from a robust 152 employees to just 22.

"We've been through 9/11. We've been through the dot-com bubble. We went through the Great Recession. This was the worst of all of those," said Rob Jensen, who owns Testarossa with his wife, Diana. "The most important thing is you've got to get your ship through the other side of the storm and then you can assess the damage."

Testarossa is among many wineries on the Peninsula still grappling with the losses brought on by the pandemic, compounded by a devastating fire season

that caused some wineries to lose entire crops due to smoke damage. Many have adapted to their new normal by reinventing the wine tasting experience to comply with constantly shifting public health restrictions, hosting virtual events, offering COVID-19 discounts (one winery offered a cheeky 19% discount at the start of the shutdown) and even putting bottles of wine on DoorDash for the first time. More than ever, they're thinking creatively about how to draw in more support for small, local wineries at a dire time for the industry.

For independent wineries, tasting rooms and events are the best way to bring in new — and hopefully repeat — customers. Wineries were closed for months until COVID-19 rates improved enough in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties to allow them to reopen outdoors with some modifications. Wineries can't operate indoors until their counties return to the state's orange, or "moderate," COVID tier, and even then capacity is limited to 25% or 100 people.

Testarossa was lucky to have 8,000 square feet of space to repurpose for outdoor tastings. Dubbed Wine Bar 107, the outdoor patio is set with tables that are separated by at least 10 feet and set with QR code menus (no more communal wine spittoons). Reservations are now required for tastings, which are limited to 45 minutes. Communal bathrooms were converted to only allow one person at a time and equipped with lights outside



Above: Waxwing Cellars' COUNOISE rosé. The Belmont winery has tried outdoor tastings and delivery during the pandemic. Image via Waxwing Cellars Facebook.

Top: Guests of the fundraising wine tasting event sit at distanced tables at Kings Mountain Vineyards in Woodside on Nov. 8. Photo courtesy Federica Armstrong.

that turn red when occupied, like on an airplane, to prevent crowding.

"Of course, hand-washing is one of the most important things, other than wearing a mask, that you can do to keep healthy and safe," Jensen says as he turns on a faucet attached to the top of a wine barrel during a four-minute video tour of the new, socially distanced setup. "If you haven't washed your hands in a wine barrel lately, next time you come to Wine Bar 107 that would be a great time to do it."

When Santa Clara County moved into the less restrictive yellow tier several weeks ago, allowing wineries to resume indoor operations, Jensen weighed his chances and decided against doing so.

"Out of an abundance of caution we decided to not hire additional staff and reopen indoors due to the risk of having to shut these spaces down again, which is exactly what happened," he said.

At Kings Mountain Vineyards in Woodside, which is only open by appointment, the winery pivoted to offering private, seated tastings capped at six

people. Only two staff members are now working at the winery and only one usually at the tastings, said Kristi Bowers, Kings Mountain Vineyards' director of sales and marketing (she's often that one person). They pour fewer wines and, in accordance with state COVID-19 guidance, if a bottle touches a glass that someone drank from, they dump that bottle. They now put an order form on every table so customers can fill out their names, car make and model, and license plate so any wine they purchase is delivered to the trunk of their car by the time they leave. (On the back of the order form? Tasting notes.)

"Tastings are extremely important because for us, besides a few outlets, our club and our online sales — that's it," Bowers said. "Coming to the vineyard is a special thing."

It's hard to imagine tasting wine while taking a mask on and off, but winery owners are trying to emphasize safety while not policing customers.

"I'm not the law," said Nicolas Vonderheyden of Chaîne d'Or Vineyards, a tiny,

three-decade-old winery in Woodside. “I try to emphasize the fact that we all have to do our part. I think everyone knows it will take a lot of individual efforts to try to get rid of this virus and I don’t see the need to argue with anyone about wearing a mask during tastings.”

Wearing masks during tastings can feel awkward — “you don’t know if people are smiling but at least you can hear it in the tone of their voice,” Vonderheyden said — but like most pandemic adjustments, “it’s something that we easily get used to.”

In a time when we’re being told to stay home and stay apart, Vonderheyden still feels attached to the in-person experience of wine tasting. He’d rather convince someone to come to the winery for a safe, in-person tasting than hold one on Zoom.

“I’m not old by any means, but I’m this old-school thinker and believer that you need to see and touch and feel wine to really enjoy it. I’ve seen a huge difference in people tasting the wine without having been on-site and people tasting the wine while they’re on-site,” he said. “The experience is really, really different. It’s almost like the wine doesn’t taste the same.”

For months, Waxwing Cellars in Belmont was only open for curbside pickup of its limited-production pinot noir, Syrah, riesling and Chardonnay. With revenue down 50%, the winery started offering free delivery between Burlingame and Palo Alto. Waxwing usually hosts tastings inside on Fridays; instead, owner Scott Sisemore recently experimented with outdoor tastings in the parking lot.

It’s wine club season, so money is coming in, he said, but uncertainty hangs heavy over the next few months.

“Once there’s some sort of a vaccine and I feel safe again, I’ll be excited to go back to what I usually do, which is indoor, Friday night tastings,” Sisemore said, “but who knows when that’s going to be.”

Pre-pandemic, many local wineries relied heavily on private events — weddings and corporate events made up nearly 60% of Testarossa’s profits in 2019 — many of which were booked by the tech companies whose offices are now indefinitely shuttered. So wineries are experimenting with new kinds of events.

Neely Wine, a small Portola Valley winery, just launched an online cooking series with wine pairings. In August,

Portola Vineyards in Palo Alto tried out “yoga in the vineyard,” carving out circles for people to get into downward dog and meditate among the vines.

Kings Mountain has started hosting philanthropic events, which Bowers described as a win-win to support local causes while exposing more people to its wines. They’ve included a Zoom tasting in partnership with the 49ers Foundation (Bowers is on the organization’s board) and a fundraiser for Cristo Rey San Jose Jesuit High School held at the winery, with socially distanced tables set with individually packaged antipasto skewers and hand sanitizer.

“I’m always an optimist. I believe things will get better. But they probably won’t be the same,” Bowers said. “You have to observe the new world order, or whatever you want to call it, and you need to pivot. That’s what I’m trying to do.”

One silver lining of the shutdown for Silicon Valley wineries, owners said, is that people who live in the area but would have typically driven to Napa and Sonoma for wine tastings are now looking to the wineries in their own backyards. They hope this will create a sustained allegiance to drinking local wine, just like the heightened calls of the last few months to support local restaurants.

The Peninsula’s wineries are “not the kind of tourist destinations as those in Napa,” said Len Lehmann of Portola Vineyards. “No big tour buses pull up. They’re authentic. They’re intimate. They’re on windy roads that may be hard to locate. But they’re the wineries of the neighborhoods where your readers live.”

At Testarossa Winery, Jensen is still working to get the permits necessary for the renovation. They’re expanding local retail sales, which is helping to offset the major losses from restaurants that, struggling themselves, haven’t been able to purchase as much wine. He urged customers to think of local, independent winery owners like him, who have no investors and are fueled in many cases by a lifelong passion for winemaking and community.

“The big corps, they’ll live or die without you,” Jensen said. “We need you.”

For a list of wineries on the Peninsula, go to winesofthesantacruzmountains.com. **A**

Email Elena Kadvany at ekadvany@paweekly.com

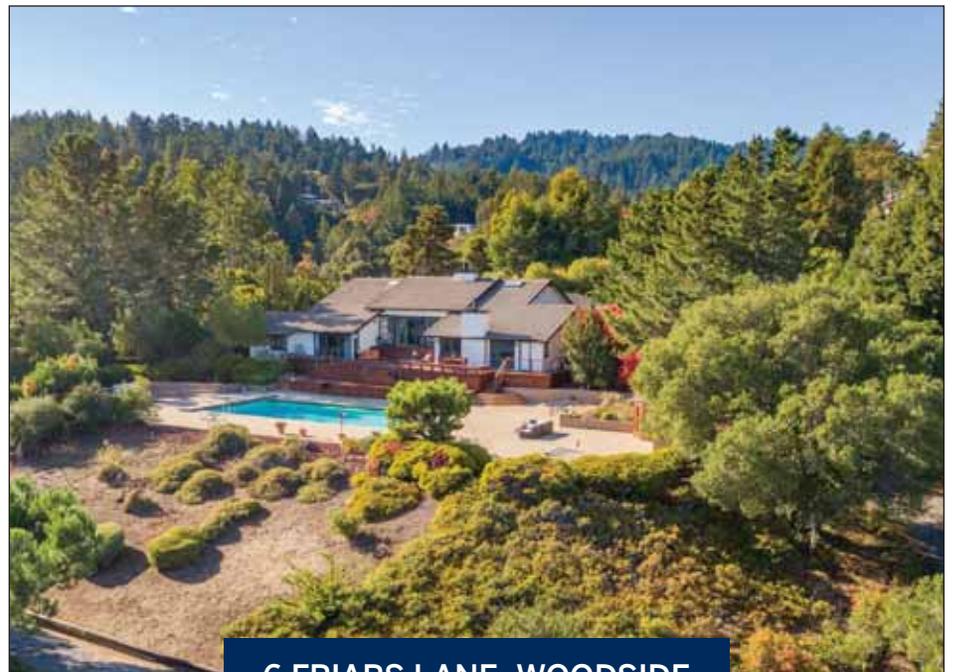


Magali Gauthier

Lucy Neely of Neely Winery in Portola Valley, which just launched an online cooking series with wine pairings.



Testarossa Winery in Los Gatos has revamped outdoor wine tastings for the COVID era. Photo via Testarossa Winery’s Facebook page.



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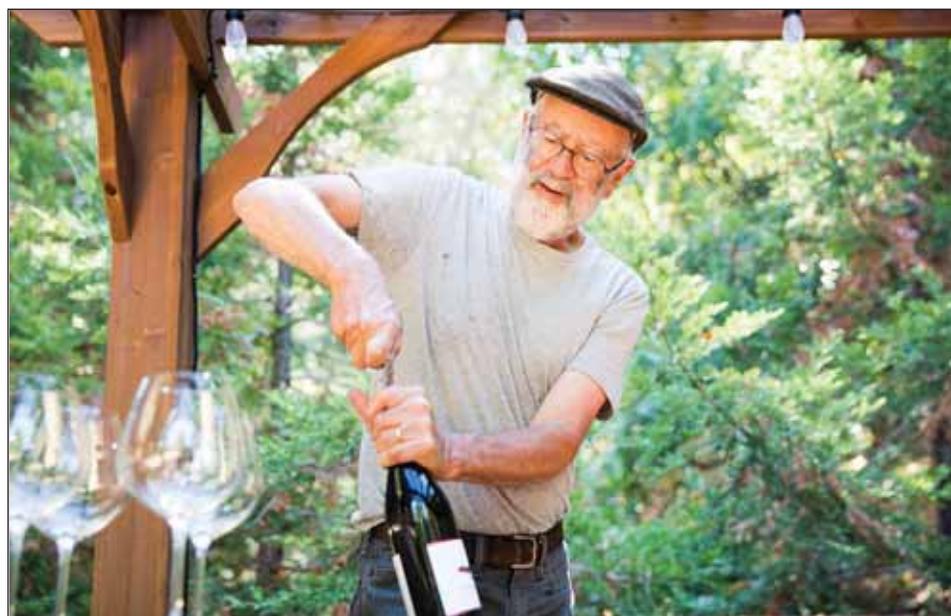
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Michelle Lee

Len Lehmann opens a bottle of his estate’s 2012 pinot noir at Portola Vineyards on Sept. 9, 2016.



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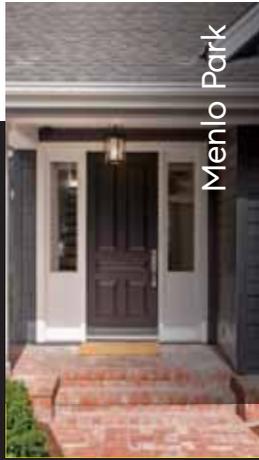
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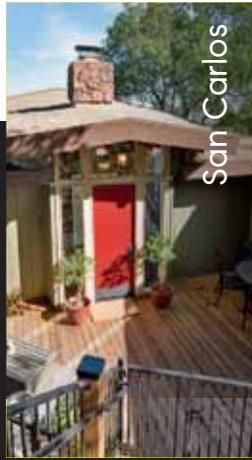
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