

The Almanac

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

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Magali Gauthier

First graders at Oak Knoll Elementary sit at least 6 feet apart from each other while eating snacks at the start of recess on Sept. 29. Local schools began allowing young students back on campus in the fall, with a battery of health and safety measures in place.

A world turned upside down

Documenting an unreal year in photos

By Magali Gauthier

Face masks and nasal swabs. Isolation and inequality. Wildfires and social justice movements. Kindness. Resiliency. Hope.

The past 12 months have been unlike any other. As The Almanac's visual journalist captured this historic, life-changing year that included weeks of civil protests, unprecedented fires and a pandemic that transformed everyday life, the images reflect a range of unfamiliar — and sometimes surreal — moments that shaped 2020.

When viewed together, these

images reveal just how much life has changed over the past 12 months. Photos predating the Bay Area's stay-at-home health order in mid-March feel like they were taken during another era, in a different world. In January, it was strange to see someone wearing a mask; by midyear, it was disconcerting to see someone who wasn't. No sooner had we adapted to this strange stay-at-home life than people in every community mobilized and took to the streets. Hundreds of local residents peacefully protested against social injustice to draw

See **YEAR IN PHOTOS**, page 12



Magali Gauthier

Etika Fifita raises her fist in solidarity with fellow Black Lives Matters protesters on Sept. 25 at the intersection of Ravenswood Avenue and El Camino Real in Menlo Park.

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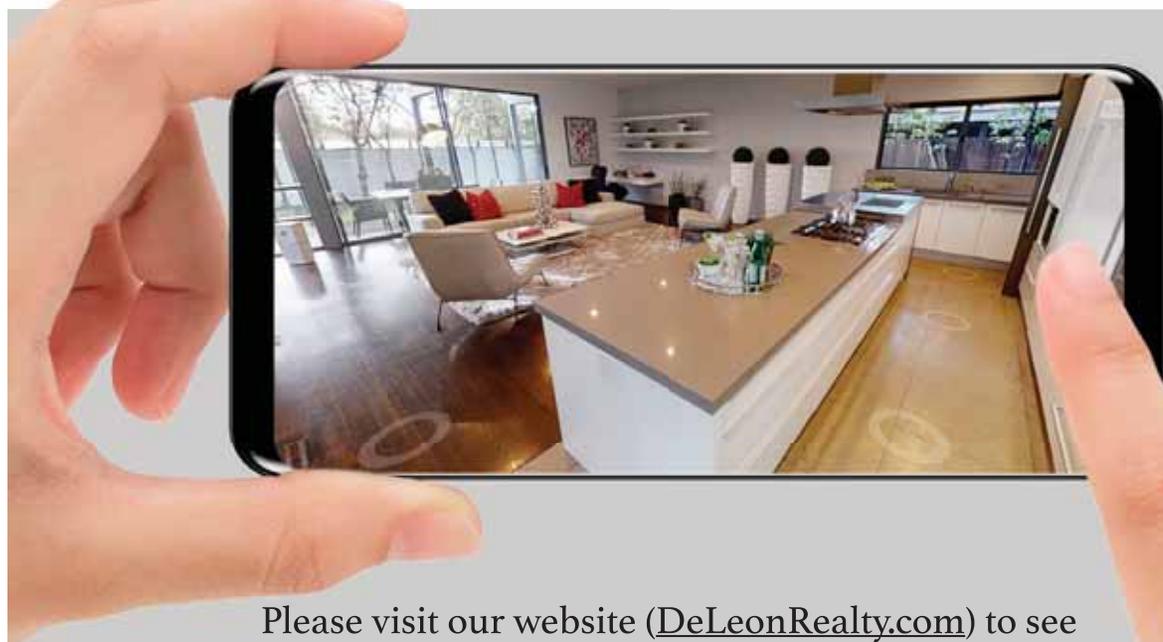
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Local News

MENLO PARK | AThERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Magali Gauthier

Andy Kerr, co-owner of Alice's Restaurant, hands California Highway Patrol Officer Adrian Baez a breakfast sandwich while he guards a roadblock in the CZU wildfire zone on Highway 1 near Pescadero on Aug. 25.

Woodside kept calm and carried on in 2020

Even when wildfires sparked nearby, town stayed steady during the year's upheaval

By Heather Zimmerman

The town of Woodside met the challenges of 2020 and its many curveballs, particularly in both town finances and governance.

Early on, town officials expressed confidence in Woodside's finances, saying

they were well-positioned to weather the economic downturn spurred by the coronavirus pandemic. As in other communities, local merchants and restaurants were greatly affected by stay-at-home orders, and the town allocated \$80,000 grants from the general fund to support local businesses through the

San Mateo County Strong program and streamlined permits for outdoor dining.

By summer, the Town Council — via videoconference, of course — was also back to tackling regular council business in addition to its COVID response.

See **WOODSIDE 2020**, page 19

'It really leaves one so shaken': Local officials react after rioters storm U.S. Capitol

Rep. Anna Eshoo calls for impeachment of President Trump

By Sue Dremann

U.S. Reps. Anna Eshoo and Jackie Speier were among hundreds of legislators who fled the House floor on Wednesday, Jan. 6, as thousands of rioters supporting President Donald Trump stormed the Capitol building.

Locked in a windowless room in an undisclosed place, U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo said Wednesday afternoon that the five-plus hours she has spent sheltering

from mobs of Trump supporters who stormed the nation's Capitol building marked the worst day of her life in politics.

"This is the tabernacle of our democracy. To see a mob break through, break windows, shooting their way into the building, it really leaves one so shaken," she said.

Protesters against the election of Joe Biden as president entered the Capitol on Wednesday morning as both houses of Congress met to certify the

Electoral College votes. Trump had spoken to his followers earlier in the day at a rally and told them to march to the Capitol to protest the election results, which he has claimed, contrary to all evidence, are fraudulent.

Eshoo said she was walking from her office through a tunnel to the House chamber when the mob breached the building. She was headed to the gallery to observe the proceedings, as

See **RIOT**, page 19

New East Palo Alto council member calls for more diverse leadership in Sequoia district

By Angela Swartz
Almanac Staff Writer

A newly elected East Palo Alto City Council member is imploring the Sequoia Union High School District to diversify its leadership so students from his city are better represented in the district.

Antonio Lopez, a 26-year-old doctoral student, wrote a letter to district governing board president Alan Sarver on Tuesday, Jan. 5, saying he has "grave concerns regarding the current relationship" between the district and East Palo Alto.

"When you have entire leadership teams, from the administration to the principals/vice principals level, that do not in any way reflect the diversity of our region, that is a choice," Lopez told The Almanac in an email. "And that choice is extremely problematic because it subconsciously informs you of the only point of view that matters to the current decision-makers ... The community needs to be able to see itself in the district's leadership teams. We are in the epicenter of the Silicon Valley economy and

the innovation that comes with that, and somehow, the Sequoia Union High School District hasn't figured out that you need diversity within your leadership teams. If that's the culture at the top, it explains why my community feels so disconnected from the district."

The district represents a diverse population and is home to Woodside High School in Woodside, Menlo-Atherton High School in Atherton and TIDE Academy in Menlo Park. According to 2019-20 enrollment data, 45.2% of students in the district identify as Hispanic or Latino, while 34.9% are white, 8.2% are Asian, and 2.4% African American.

In the letter, which Lopez explained is not intended to be antagonistic, he said the COVID-19 pandemic has "only widened the gap between those with ready access to educational resources, and those students who may feel pressured to take an extra job to help their unemployed parent."

"Now more than ever, the district needs to proactively reach out to their East Palo Alto families and reassure them that this year of socially distanced learning does not result in their child losing an entire year's worth of schooling," he said.

Lopez, a graduate of Menlo School, said that as the first person in his family to attend college, he's seen the power a quality education



Antonio Lopez



Alan Sarver

See **LOPEZ**, page 8



Sadie Stinson

Rep. Anna Eshoo speaks at a town hall meeting in Mountain View in July 2019.

Kings Mountain youths rally community to clean up roadside trash piles

Stretch of Skyline Boulevard is routinely covered in litter

By Angela Swartz

Almanac Staff Writer

Couches, mattresses, car seats and even a quarter of the body of a car were among the piles of trash that lay untouched on a scenic corridor of state Highway 35 near Highway 92.

Two Kings Mountain residents decided the area deserved a cleanup.

Friends and neighbors Aiden Zahedi, 10, and Niamh Dawes, 14, arrived at the location on Dec. 19 with dumpsters, trash grabbers, trailers, masks and work gloves in hand to scavenge 18 cubic yards of trash, said Niamh. The two- to three-hour cleanup drew 32 community members.

"I've lived here my whole life," Niamh said. "There's a lot of dumping and lately (since the pandemic) there's

been a lot more."

In March, the two started delivering pizzas — through Aiden's family's restaurant Rise Pizzeria in Burlingame and San Mateo — to Kings Mountain homes. They then decided to take a portion of the proceeds from the pizza delivery to clean up Skyline. So far, they have raised \$1,250 for the cause.

"Our family has always been really passionate about the environment," Aiden said. "We go camping a lot. When we're hiking, we've always picked up trash on trails. So when we saw the dump site, we were like, 'What?'"

Before the cleanup, they enlisted the help of San Mateo County Supervisor Don Horsley ("Who's going to not take a call from a couple of kids who want to do a cleanup?" he said). An email to Horsley led to a Zoom call. Horsley



Courtesy William Goebner

Niamh Dawes' youngest sister, right, picks up trash in areas not accessible to Caltrans.

then contacted trash collector Republic to waive the fees to dump the trash at Ox Mountain landfill in Half Moon Bay. Caltrans sent out a crew

during the cleanup day, which picked up 30 yards of waste but couldn't gather trash behind

See **TRASH**, page 16

Menlo Park Councilman Ray Mueller announces run for county Board of Supervisors

By Kate Bradshaw

Almanac Staff Writer

Weeks after being sworn in for a third term on the Menlo Park City Council, Councilman Ray Mueller announced on Jan. 5 he plans to run for the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors.

Mueller will be running in the 2022 election to represent the county's District 3 seat, which is

currently held by Supervisor Don Horsley, who cannot run again due to term limits.

San Carlos Mayor Laura Parmer-Lohan has also filed paperwork signaling her plan to start raising funds and campaigning for the seat, according to county



Ray Mueller

documents. Belmont Mayor Charles Stone has already announced his candidacy for the county's District 2 seat.

"I'm really looking forward to this opportunity to run for this office and bring this campaign to the voters," Mueller said.

District 3 is geographically the largest district within the county, covering Atherton, Menlo Park west of El Camino Real, San Carlos, southeast Belmont, Woodside and Portola Valley, as well as the Coastside communities of Half Moon Bay and Pacifica and a number of unincorporated neighborhoods.

"One of the primary roles of a supervisor is to be a problem-solver, called upon to collaborate with officials and stakeholders, to empower and bring resources to decision making that improves the lives of every San Mateo County resident," Mueller said in a statement.

Among his endorsers are U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, state Sen. Josh Becker, state Assemblyman Marc Berman, former state Sens. Jerry Hill and Joe Simitian, and state Assembly Speaker Pro Tem Kevin Mullin. Among the county elected officials endorsing him are supervisors Dave Pine and Warren Slocum, former supervisors Adrienne Tissier and Tom Heuning, and San Mateo County schools

Superintendent Nancy Magee.

The full list so far includes close to 100 current and former elected officials from throughout the Peninsula.

Mueller holds a bachelor of science degree from University of California at Berkeley and a law degree from University of California Hastings College of Law. He has served on the Menlo Park City Council since 2012 and served as mayor in 2014 and 2019.

He also served as chief of staff to Supervisor Simitian in Santa Clara County, worked on the county's affordable housing task force in 2015 and 2016, and served on the board of directors for LifeMoves for six years. Currently, he is a board member at the Peninsula Democratic Coalition, an advisory board member of Green Foothills, and is a member of the Blue Water Task Force of the Surfrider Foundation's San Mateo County chapter, according to LinkedIn.

Between now and the 2022 elections, he said, he'll serve on the Menlo Park City Council.

"I continue to look forward to serve and work hard for Menlo Park residents," he said. "We have big issues to tackle recovering from the pandemic." ■

Email Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com

CORRECTIONS

In the 2021 edition of Our Neighborhoods magazine published on Jan. 1, the fact box for the Willows neighborhood in Menlo Park incorrectly listed information for a different neighborhood.

The following information was omitted:

The Willows is located between Middlefield Road, Willow Road, U.S. Highway 101, O'Connor Street, Euclid Avenue and Woodland Avenue. The current median home price is \$2.35 million (according to Redfin). Nearby shopping areas include a Hacienda Market, Menalto Avenue, The Willows Market, and Middlefield Road. The nearest park is Willow Oaks Park. The neighborhood is served by Alto International School, a private school, and the following public schools: Laurel School (Atherton), Encinal School (Atherton) and Hillview Middle School, all in the Menlo Park City School District; Willow Oaks School, which will merge with Belle Haven School in fall 2021) in the Ravenswood City School District; and Menlo-Atherton High School (Atherton) in the Sequoia Union High School District.

In the story with the headline "2020: A difficult year that showcased Menlo Park's resilience" from the Jan. 1, 2021 edition, The Almanac incorrectly stated that the city of Menlo Park's community development director position, not the community services director's, was eliminated in budget cuts earlier this year.

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Coronavirus central: New COVID strain found in California

State has administered just 35% of vaccine doses so far

By Embarcadero Media staff

San Mateo County as of Tuesday had 26,497 cumulative cases of COVID-19, with 234 deaths. There were 177 people hospitalized. The county has seen more than 8,000 people test positive for COVID-19 in the last month and was down to one available intensive care unit bed on Jan. 5, county Board of Supervisors president David Canepa said in a tweet. Santa Clara County as of Tuesday had 76,235 cumulative COVID-19 cases and 771 deaths. The rolling seven-day average of new cases ending Dec. 28 was 1,076. There were 709 hospitalized, 119 of which were new.

More transmissible COVID strain recorded in California

The first case of the more highly transmissible strain of the deadly virus that causes COVID-19 has been recorded in California, Gov. Gavin Newsom said Dec. 30.

Newsom made the announcement during a livestreamed interview with Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, noting that he had just received word around noontime of the confirmed case. The variant, also called strain B.1.1.7, infected an person in San Diego County, the California Department of Public Health said in a statement. The person does not have any known travel history.

Fauci, who sat down for a one-on-one virtual interview with Newsom, said he wasn't surprised. It's likely that more cases will be reported in California and in other U.S. states, considering the prominence of the variant in the United Kingdom, where it was first identified. Travelers between the two countries and travelers who arrive indirectly from the U.K. through other countries could also contribute to the spread, he said. The variant was first reported in the U.S. Dec. 29 in Colorado where there are now two confirmed cases as of Dec. 30.

"I don't think Californians should think this is something that's odd. This is something that's expected," Fauci said.

"It looks pretty clear" that the new strain more easily binds to receptors on human cells and is therefore more easily transmitted, Fauci said. U.K. health

officials have said there's no indication that the new variant increases the virulence or spread of the disease — meaning it doesn't seem to make people more sick or increase mortality rates, he said. It also doesn't seem to evade antibodies from the new vaccines.

"People who have had COVID-19 don't seem to get reinfectured by this," he said.

Ribonucleic acid (RNA) viruses such as SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, are notorious for their ability to mutate, but most mutations are insignificant, he said.

California health officers urged public vigilance.

"The detection of the first case of this United Kingdom variant strain in California is concerning," state Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly said in the statement. "As we learn more about how this patient contracted this strain, I want to stress the importance of continuing our mitigation efforts to prevent COVID-19 and this new strain. This includes masks, physical distance, and during this current surge in California, staying at home and not mixing outside households, and not traveling."

State administers 35% of vaccine doses to date

California has administered just 35% of the COVID-19 vaccine doses it has received to date, Newsom said Monday.

The state has received approximately 1.29 million doses of vaccine from the pharmaceutical company Pfizer and the biotechnology company Moderna, according to Newsom.

Of those, 454,306 have been administered as of Jan. 3 to health care workers and long-term care facility staff and residents. The yet-unused doses remain in storage units across the state.

Newsom called the lag in vaccine administration "not good enough" and noted anecdotal evidence of some health care workers turning down their chance to receive the vaccine, but did not have hard data on just how many doses have been refused as the vaccines have been rolled out.

"Regardless of those that are unwilling to take the shot — their right — we have plenty of people that want to take that shot," Newsom said, adding "we're trying to address

that concern without putting people in a position where they feel like they've done the wrong thing."

The 11-county Bay Area has already received 298,305 doses of vaccine from both Pfizer and Moderna, according to the state's Department of Public Health.

More vaccine shipments are expected in the next week, including second doses for those that have already received a first vaccination.

The vaccination rollout will also begin expanding this month, according to Newsom, beyond the health care workers and long-term care facilities that were prioritized first.

People ages 75 and older as well as education and child care, emergency services, food and agriculture workers will be eligible to receive the vaccine next.

Newsom and Ghaly said California is also working to make its vaccination schedule somewhat flexible in the event the number of refusals begins to pile up.

The two said that would allow those with a lower vaccination priority level such as people between the ages of 50 and 74 to get vaccinated earlier than they would normally be eligible for.

The state is "clarifying the guidance that is already out that gives those vaccination sites flexibility to make sure they aren't wasting any vaccine and then also continuing to add more description to how we make sure we have people lined up in the case that there's some extra doses," Ghaly said.

Newsom, previewing his proposed budget for the next fiscal year, said he intends to allocate some \$300 million for vaccinations in the coming year with the intent of vaccinating millions of California residents.

However, both he and Ghaly said the vaccine distribution is still in its nascent stages and warned the state not to lower its guard.

"Even if 100% of the doses that California has received were in arms already, it would not be soon enough so we need to look forward to the vaccine and the solution that it's going to bring us as part of our mid-term and longer-term response but right now it's about reducing our individual and our community risk of transmission," Ghaly said.

See **CORONAVIRUS**, page 16

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



How Much To Disclose?

Dear Monica: We are getting ready to sell our house and wonder how much we have to disclose. We have a moisture issue from an unknown source. Should we have an expert inspect it or can we just disclose it and let the buyer deal with it? Jane D.

Dear Jane: You have a duty to disclose any issue that is material to the property and having a moisture problem is material. You are not obliged to have it inspected by an expert but a potential buyer

will almost certainly want to understand the source and how much it will cost to fix it. Even if a buyer plans to do a major remodel to the property or build new, they will want to know if there is a drainage issue that will need to be eliminated to prevent trouble in the future. Buyers may be wary of a moisture problem without further information so it makes sense to have an expert assess the problem and disclose the solution and cost to buyers.

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Anne Creevy

March 19, 1935 – September 27, 2020

Anne Creevy died peacefully at home on September 27, 2020 surrounded by her long-time caregiver, AneMarie, and beloved pets. She was 85 years old.

Anne was born and raised in Minneapolis, Minnesota. For her entire life, she passionately pursued a variety of interests and was very driven in all of her endeavors. She was the valedictorian of her high school class at Marshall High School in Minneapolis and she went on to graduate with honors from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor's degree in Music Theory and Composition. She was a long-time church organist and her love for music lasted throughout her lifetime.

Anne relocated to California in her mid-twenties with her then husband, Dr. Don Creevy, to support him with his residency in Obstetrics at Stanford Hospital. They ultimately settled in Portola Valley and raised their three children, Cathy, Jonathan and Kristin. While they eventually divorced, they remained friends until the time of her death.

While in California, Anne pursued her teaching credential and initially began her teaching career at the Cupertino School District. In 1972, she joined the teaching staff at Ormondale School in Portola Valley. She remained at Ormondale for twenty-eight years, first as a Resource Specialist and later as a first-grade teacher. During her time at Ormondale, she became a Master Teacher and helped countless children learn to read and develop the critical foundation necessary to be successful in their future pursuits.

In addition to being a dedicated teacher, Anne had a number of other interests and talents. For example, she obtained her Master's degree in Counseling Psychology from Santa Clara University. She also always loved animals, which included providing loving homes to countless canine companions over the years, and spending over two decades as a docent at the San Francisco Zoo. Once she retired, she pursued her long-time passion of ornithology and taught birding classes through the Adult Education Program at the Palo Alto Unified School District. She later combined her experience in the education field, her love for her grandchildren, and her passion for birding to write a children's book titled, "Let's Go Birding You and Me" (illustrated by Anne Creevy and Jan Reeves). Finally, it is important to note that she could always play a wicked game of Scrabble and she had a wonderful way with the written word.

Anne was preceded in death by her parents, Richard and Vesta Bachelder, her son, Jonathan Creevy, and her long-time friend and companion, Barbara Jones. She is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Cathy Creevy and Aksel Fjaera of Bergen, Norway, her daughter and son-in-law, Kristin Creevy Lewis and Marc Lewis of Arroyo Grande, CA, her grandchildren Lauren Creevy Love, McKaila Lewis, Tessa Lewis, Karijanne Pfeiffer and Adrian Haavik-Marthinussen, her brother and sister-in-law, Allen and Florrie Bachelder, her niece and nephew, Lisa and Christopher Bachelder (and families), her ex-husband and his wife, Don and Ginger Creevy, her brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Mike and Kendra Creevy, her life-long friends, Ruth and Chuck Eggen (and family), and many of her fellow teachers. She will be truly missed by the community of Portola Valley and by those whose lives she touched.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Pacific Wildlife Care (link: www.pacificwildlifecare.org) or Meade Canine Rescue and Sanctuary (link: www.meadecaninerescue.net).



LOPEZ

continued from page 5

has in the East Palo Alto community. During his campaign, concerned parents would go out of their way to share with him how disconnected they feel from their school district. The approach has always been one where the district has "imposed its views" rather than allowed for the community to act as its partner, he said.

"Statistically speaking, it is the single-most reliable predictor of socio-economic mobility," he said. "I ran for office on a pledge — a pledge that on

closer examination is not so much a pledge, but a fundamental right: to make experiences like mine not the exception, but the norm."

Lopez told The Almanac that one can go as far back as 2000 to see the lack of East Palo Alto representation in the district, when Menlo-Atherton High School was featured in the Wall Street Journal because of its inability to integrate East Palo Alto students.

"In my mind, the only way we are going to ensure East Palo Alto is not purposefully neglected is by ensuring that the Board of Trustees and the administration take back the helm and ensure

that there is diversity at every level of the district's leadership teams," he said. "It is clear that the current principal-driven model has failed East Palo Alto students, and candidly, other communities similar to EPA (East Palo Alto)."

This fall, district residents for the first time voted for school board members based on the geographical area of the school district they reside in. Longtime East Palo Alto resident Shawneece Stevenson won the seat for Trustee Area E, which includes Menlo Park neighborhoods east of Highway 101 as well as East Palo Alto. Lopez said her leadership is a positive step, but it shouldn't solely fall on Stevenson's shoulders to better represent East Palo Alto in the district.

District response

Sarver called Lopez's email "thoughtful, constructive, and extremely important" and offered to meet over Zoom in the coming days.

"Your comments strike directly to the heart of the most critical issue facing the Sequoia Union High School District and our community, and further illuminate the greatest challenge district leadership has had on our front burner throughout my 11-year tenure on the board," Sarver told Lopez in a Tuesday email. "I strongly welcome your voice and advocacy to this conversation, and look for meaningful ways in which your engagement in this effort helps us achieve continuously improved outcomes for students from East Palo Alto."

Sarver said that during the board's Dec. 16 meeting, the first with newly seated trustees Stevenson and Rich Ginn, members expressed a desire to reinstitute regular meetings with Ravenswood City School District leadership, and potentially include the East Palo Alto City Council.

Sarver also said the governing board selected a search firm it felt would help them find a new leader who values equity after former Superintendent Mary Streshly resigned in September amid calls for her ouster. An upcoming board retreat will also focus on equity and the drive for positive impact in the district's "most poorly served communities," he said.

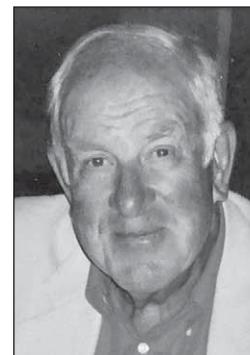
According to district spokesperson Ana Maria Pulido, the district's recent equity-driven initiatives include the launch of school site equity/diversity leadership committees, approval of an ethnic studies course as a graduation requirement and hiring a district-wide equity and diversity lead.

The school board is also working with an equity and diversity leader, Nicole Anderson, for over a year to continue formulating a plan for how the district can implement more equity-driven practices, Pulido said. ▀

Patrick James Goodenough

July 6, 1930 – December 25, 2020

Patrick James Goodenough, husband, brother, father, grandfather, great grandfather, friend, mentor, golf partner, artist, sailor, teacher and incredibly giving citizen passed away peacefully on Christmas day with his best friend and wife Pam by his side. Patrick lived a full life and at 90 had traveled most of the world, including sailing across the Pacific. He had a successful business career and a very active retirement that was focused on helping and inspiring others.



Born in England in 1930, Patrick immigrated with his family to Canada in 1938 just prior to the outbreak of the war in Europe. His father enlisted in the Canadian Air Force shortly after their arrival in Canada which required another move to Ottawa, there Patrick attended Ashby College. In 1943 the family moved to Vancouver Island and Patrick attended the Shawnigan Lake boarding school where he graduated two years early at the age 15. Following a year working in a foundry and later a sash and door factory, he attended McGill University in Montreal, receiving a bachelors degree in 1951. After McGill, He joined the United States Air Force during the Korean conflict, assigned to a unit that studied how to best utilize the skills of the recruits. This training steered him towards his career in Human Resources. His first job was as personnel manager at Sylvania Electric in Mountain View. Later he started his own business, Patrick Goodenough Services, which served corporations and individuals in insurance, estate planning and executive benefit programs, he retired in 1995.

Upon retirement Patrick dedicated himself to the service of others. This manifested in his spending 25 years working with The Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula in various capacities as a volunteer: art teacher, mentor, tutor, board member and friend. When he wasn't spending time volunteering he honed his skills as a painter and could be found sailing his boat Trinity on the bay.

When Patrick celebrated his 90th birthday his favorite gift came from Andreas a former mentee. Andreas now a chef and a BGCP employee served 900 teens dinner in Patrick's honor.

Patrick is survived by his wife of 42 years Pam, His Brother Thomas Goodenough (Sue) and his Sister Anne Moser, His three sons, Bill(Sharon), Jim (Linda), John(Jodi), his two step daughters Cathy Friedman Duane(Jon), Caren Lee(Warren), 16 Grandchildren Ryan(Kendra), Kevin(Emily), Elizabeth(Lance), Graham(Samantha), Anna(Dan), Mathew(Ashley), Patrick, Andrew, Jack, Caren, Charlie, Michael, Peach, Erin, Katie and Kristi and 6 Great Grandchildren, Jeremy, Peyton, Carson, Ariel, Juniper and Tristan. His family and their ties to each other were of utmost importance and he created over two decades of Family vacations to Alisal Ranch to bask in family fun.

Patrick's family is forever indebted to his angelic caregiver Wendy Mamiam.

In Patrick's honor, perform unexpected and unsolicited acts of kindness.

If you'd like to make a gift in his memory please make an investment in the future of the youth he cared so deeply about and consider donating your time or your treasure to the Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula.

www.bgcp.org/donate, Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula, 401 Pierce Road, Menlo Park, California 94025

PAID OBITUARY

PAID OBITUARY

New Menlo Park fire station to break ground this month

Demolition of the old Station 4 set to start Jan. 21

By Sue Dremann

Menlo Park Fire Protection District plans to demolish its 72-year-old fire station on Alameda de las Pulgas starting Jan. 21, making way for a new structure the district says will offer improved services.

The new 13,200-square-foot, two-story building will replace the existing single-story, 3,800-square-foot Station 4, the district's oldest, which is located at 3322 Alameda de las Pulgas at the corner of Valparaiso Avenue. The fire district's board of directors greenlighted the approximately \$10.5- to \$11.5-million building during its December meeting. The sum is about \$5.5 million below a budget estimate, Chief Harold Schapelhouman said.

The new building would increase the capacity for more staff, adding 10 bedrooms for firefighters, an energy-efficient system including solar panels and an electric vehicle charging station; a conference room for training and meetings; earthquake and disaster features such as early earthquake warning and automatic gas shut-off; a drone aerial port for surveilling fires; an emergency backup generator; and a 1,000-gallon above-ground fuel storage tank. Decontamination systems will help protect firefighters from cancer-causing chemicals brought into their quarters on gear and from spreading viruses within the



Courtesy Menlo Park Fire Protection District

firehouse, he said.

The station will help solve numerous problems in an area that is fraught with firefighting and safety challenges. Station 4 serves West Atherton, West Menlo Park, including unincorporated areas, parts of Stanford University and the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory. Homes are large and expensive, there's hilly terrain and dense vegetation in places, Schapelhouman said. It's a place where firefighters often get "thrown a curveball," he said. In one incident, a home fire went to five alarms.

The new station will enhance fire service in multiple ways. It can house the largest ladder truck in the district's firefighting arsenal, which will aid accessing fires in multiple-story, large residences. An aerial drone port allows firefighters to launch specialized, camera-equipped drones from atop the building for fire surveillance.

The "smart" station will also be

equipped with an early-warning system to open bay doors in an earthquake or power outage to prevent equipment from getting locked inside.

The new station will add more than firefighting prowess to Station 4. It will also be safer for the community and firefighters. Currently, the trucks and engines must back into the building.

Schapelhouman said that's nearly caused accidents when impatient drivers swerve around the large vehicles and firefighters who guide the equipment in the street.

"I've seen cars drive up on the lawn and tear up the grass" as they tried to get around the fire vehicles, Schapelhouman said.

Three drive-thru bays will remedy that situation so the engines won't need to turn around to back in, he said.

For firefighters, living conditions and personal safety are also improving. A total of 10 bedrooms — more than double

the current four — will allow additional staffing as needed. An upgraded heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system with HEPA filters will keep living quarters safer, reducing pollutants and pathogens from viruses and bacteria. The station will have separate rooms for storing fire gear, a source of concern after a fire since it off-gases cancer-causing pollutants deposited from blazes, he said.

Some things won't be coming back, however.

An air-raid warning system from the 1950s and '60s will be replaced by long-range communications with the capability of sending out emergency voice alerts as far as a mile away. And the classic, old brass fire pole will be replaced with a stainless steel one to eliminate having to maintain the brass, he said. There will also be an elevator for those who can't or don't want to use the pole.

Staff and equipment have

A rendering of what Menlo Park Fire Protection District Station 4 will look like when it is rebuilt.

already moved out of the building. They are temporarily housed in a single-family residence adjacent to the station on Valparaiso Avenue. The district purchased the residential property for \$3.2 million and will merge the station and residential lots for the new station, Schapelhouman said. They have added a temporary structure to house the apparatus, he said.

The district used cash reserves it has set aside in its capital improvement account to replace fire Station 4. The construction should be completed in about one and a half to two years, he said.

Schapelhouman is excited about having a fire station that will last and be adaptable for 50 to 75 years, but he is also sentimental about the old station. It's the first station the chief worked in as a captain.

"It's a bittersweet thing for me to see it go," he said.

Although he has talked about retiring after 40 years of service in the district, he said he's asking the board if he can stay on after his contract expires in June.

"I would like to stay. I didn't get everything done," he said. The COVID-19 pandemic has set back projects, and besides, he still loves the job, he said.

There is one more station to rebuild to complete the district's upgrades, and he's looking forward to seeing that project through: "Station 1," he said. ■

Email Sue Dremann at sdremann@paweeekly.com



NOTICE INVITING BIDS TOWN OF ATHERTON, CA

The Town of Atherton will accept bids for construction of the following public work:

JAMES AVENUE OVERLAY PROJECT

Removal and replacement of 2 inches of asphalt concrete pavement on James Avenue (between Middlefield Road and Magnolia Drive). Once roadway is grinded down, the contractor and the Town's project engineer shall identify any pavement failures for repairs. Grind and replace approximately 10,000 square feet of asphalt to a 4-inch depth; then contractor shall perform crack sealing (per specification). Some hand work around utility access-hole covers will be necessary. Repave the entire street with a self-propelled paver & finish per Town Standard Specifications. Striping and pavement marking installation is also included in this project.

Plans & Specifications may be obtained at <http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/bids.aspx> at no cost. The Contractor shall be responsible for any addendums that may be posted on the Town's website.

SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 150 Watkins Ave. (Temporary Trailers), Atherton, California 94027, until 1:30 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on **Thursday, January 21, 2020**, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Bids must be for the entire work, and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked: "Bid of (Contractor) for **JAMES AVENUE OVERLAY PROJECT**", along with date and time of bid opening.

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Give to The Almanac Holiday Fund

Your gift helps local children
and families in need



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

Supports literacy programs and projects through fundraising and community awareness. Helps community members enhance their reading, writing and related skills and education to improve their economic, professional and personal wellbeing.

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

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



Rotary Club
of Menlo Park

*The William and Flora
Hewlett Foundation*

*The David and Lucile Packard
Foundation*

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.

DONATE ONLINE:
[siliconvalleycf.org/
almanac-holiday-fund](http://siliconvalleycf.org/almanac-holiday-fund)

Please consider donating online, which enables your gift to be processed immediately. The secure website is:
siliconvalleycf.org/almanac-holiday-fund

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The Almanac

All donors and their gift amounts will be published in The Almanac unless the boxes below are checked.

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Silicon Valley Community Foundation

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02 – The Almanac Holiday Fund
c/o Silicon Valley Community Foundation
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San Francisco, CA 94145

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.

Thank you for donating to the Holiday Fund

Almanac Holiday Fund Donor List
As of Jan. 5, 161 donors have contributed \$244,917 to the Almanac Holiday Fund.

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

Changes or corrections to listings may be made by contacting Kali Shiloh at kshiloh@almanacnews.com.

DONATE ONLINE: siliconvalleycf.org/almanac-holiday-fund

Holiday Fund: Reimagining sexual health education in a digital world

By **Abigail Karlin-Resnick**

Special to The Almanac

Just like almost everything in our world, sexual health education was upended in March as shelter-in-place orders blanket California counties to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Like many education-focused organizations, the pandemic and the shift from in-person to distance learning has forced Health Connected, a local nonprofit, to consider the very nature of health education. Is public health the responsibility of the individual or of the collective community?

Many people think that the goal of sexual health education is to ensure that individuals are given tools to make informed choices about their health — to prevent pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections, for example. And certainly that is an important element. But sex ed is as much about building collective social skills as it is about providing information to individual students. Individual choices don't happen in a vacuum, they happen within a social environment. Sexual health choices made by a young person today and throughout their lives not only affect themselves, but others as well.

It was for this reason that pre-COVID, Health Connected, a leading provider of school-based sexual health education in the Bay Area and throughout California, had a strong bias toward delivering sex education in person as a strategy to cultivate vital adolescent social skills. We considered the online environment to be impersonal, denying students a crucial connection with each other and with our health educators. Nothing

can replace face-to-face engagement, but come March we found ourselves needing to try. Like many nonprofits providing vital services, the pandemic wasn't something we could wait out — literally thousands of students were counting on us.

The question we faced was how do we continue to cultivate the collective social skills of students at a time when everyone is more physically isolated from one another? How do we establish social norms of respect, affirmation, and empathy in a “classroom” of rectangles on a screen? We had to entirely reframe how we think about the balance of the individual and collective elements of sex education.

With those questions in mind, Health Connected's team quickly pivoted from 100% in-person instruction to 100% online instruction starting in April 2020. We have developed live, virtual classrooms for students that promote participation and maintain student safety. We are creatively using the available technology to continue providing students a fun and interactive learning experience. To ensure that students with different learning styles could connect with the material, we developed a variety of additional activities that students can do on their own time.

It turns out distance learning has its perks when it comes to sex education. Some students have expressed more comfort in learning about their bodies from the privacy of their homes. Increased anonymity through virtual classrooms has encouraged some students to inquire more boldly. And online

See **HEALTH EDUCATION**, page 17



Courtesy Health Connected

Health Connected provides sexual health education to local youth and is one of the 10 nonprofits benefiting from donations to the Almanac Holiday Fund.

YEAR IN PHOTOS

continued from page 1

attention to racism toward Black community members, and call for meaningful change in policing practices.

We were forced indoors again when wildfire smoke choked the air and turned the sky orange, taking away the outdoor dining and recreation that served as a lifeline for many. Families with children were hit hard when schools and day cares closed, teaching moved online, graduations became drive-thru and the first day of school was marked by temperature checks, hand sanitizer and socially distanced desks.

We saw residents who rose above these challenging times, like Alice's Restaurant co-owner Andy Kerr, who delivered meals to first responders combating the CZU Lightning Complex fires in the Santa Cruz Mountains. And there are images of hope and the possible return to normalcy as some of the first recipients rolled up their sleeves to get the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine.

Here are those moments that illustrate how our community persevered through this trying year. 📸

Email Magali Gauthier at mgauthier@almanacnews.com



A masked cook works the grill as unmasked diners sit at tables inside the Village Pub in Woodside on July 6.



Magali Gauthier

Benjamin Hinton II, a pharmacist, gives Channing House resident Jean Aitchison the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine on Dec. 28.



The Rev. Ted Magpayo offers a prayer during an outdoor Mass at Church of the Nativity in Menlo Park.



Magali Gauthier



Magali Gauthier

Lilley Nava places a self-administered swab in a test tube at a community-run COVID-19 test site in Belle Haven on Dec. 13.



Magali Gauthier

Flora Sosa cleans a shelf at Draeger's Market in Menlo Park on March 16, as the grocery store stepped up its cleaning practices during the pandemic.



Olivia Treynor

Aurelie Harou drops off her ballot for the Nov. 3 presidential election outside of Menlo Park City Hall on Oct. 27. Californians voted by mail in record numbers.

Continue to page 14 for more of year in photos.



Magali Gauthier



Magali Gauthier

Gina Hampton arranges Kathy Berra's hair at DJ's Hair Design Inc. in Menlo Park on July 8. Hair salons were among many businesses that struggled when state health orders forced periodic closures.



Magali Gauthier

Eric Woodman tries to get the attention of his wife Marty Woodman, who has Alzheimer's disease, outside Silver Oaks Memory Care in Menlo Park on April 15, as Linda Mittelstadt and Paula Trujillo assist her. Visitors were banned from entering the facility due to COVID-19 concerns.



Left: Rickey McLane gestures to his T-shirt listing the names of Black victims of police violence at a protest in East Palo Alto on June 12.

Below left: The smoke-filled sky glows an eerie shade of orange, as seen from Interstate 280 looking from Sand Hill Road north toward Woodside on Sept. 9.

Below right: Costaño Elementary School kindergartner Matthias looks up from a white board in a classroom at the Boys and Girls Club in East Palo Alto on Sept. 16. After schools closed their campuses, nonprofits stepped in to offer some children a supervised place to study.

Magali Gauthier



Magali Gauthier



Magali Gauthier



Magali Gauthier



Magali Gauthier

Far left: A Woodside High School graduate waves to Principal Diane Burbank during the car parade through the school's parking lot on June 5, after health mandates made traditional graduation ceremonies impossible.

Left: Menlo-Atherton High School sophomore Lily Martin and freshman Lauren Wago spar during a training clinic on Jan. 4. Student athletes were sidelined by the pandemic for most of 2020.

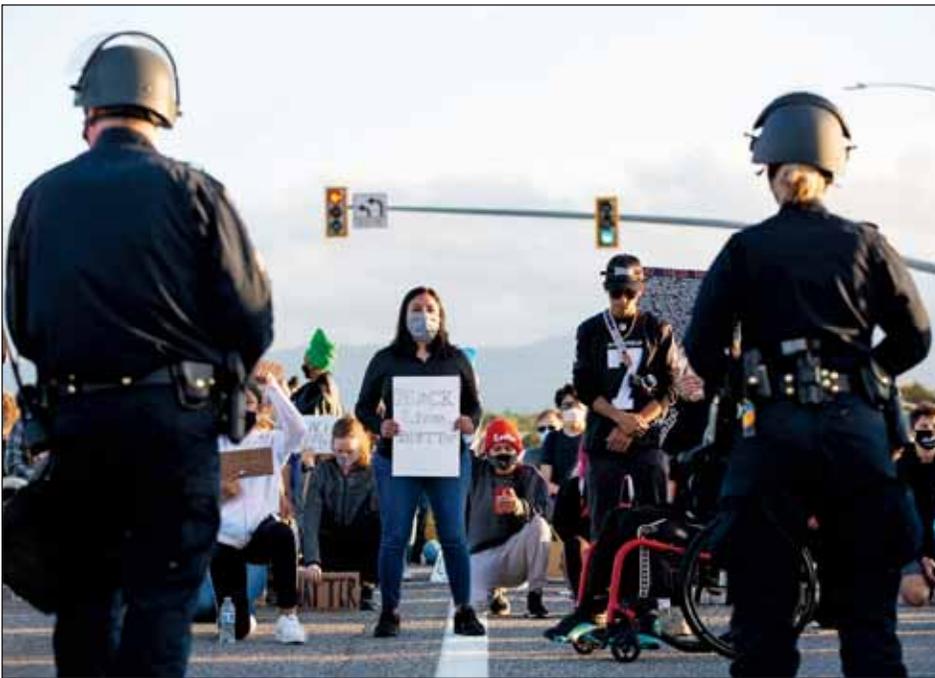


Left: Andy Kerr of Alice's Restaurant chats with a group of firefighters who just finished a shift battling the CZU Complex fires, as part of his daily food delivery rounds behind the fire lines.

Below left: Protesters facing California Highway Patrol officers observe a moment of silence after blocking traffic on the Dumbarton Bridge on June 12.

Below right: Hannah Gallagher teaches fourth and fifth grade students in an outdoor classroom space at Synapse private school in Menlo Park on Sept. 16.

Magali Gauthier



Magali Gauthier



Magali Gauthier



Magali Gauthier

Hundreds of demonstrators kneel for nine minutes of silence in memory of George Floyd at a protest at Burgess Park in Menlo Park on June 1.

CORONAVIRUS

continued from page 7

Stay-at-home orders in effect until at least Jan. 8

State stay-at-home orders will remain in effect in the Bay Area until at least Friday, Jan. 8, with potential to extend depending on intensive care unit capacity projections, state health officials said Jan. 2.

The state's stay-at-home order is triggered when a region's average ICU capacity falls below 15%. The Bay Area's ICU capacity was at 5.9% as of Jan. 5, according to the California Department of Public Health.

The San Joaquin Valley, Southern California and greater Sacramento regions remain under the stay-at-home orders because their four-week ICU capacity projections do not meet the capacity to exit the order, the department said.

No announcement had been made on the status of the Bay Area order as of The Almanac's press deadline Wednesday afternoon, although health officials indicated that they expected it would be extended. Visit almanacnews.com for the latest information.

Dentists now allowed to administer COVID-19 vaccines

California dentists have been added to the state's army of medical providers who will now be able to administer COVID-19 vaccinations, according to an order by the director of the California Department of Consumer Affairs.

The order, which was signed on Jan. 4, takes effect immediately. It will allow the state's 36,000 dentists to administer the vaccine, which would

hopefully help speed up administration of the vaccines.

"Dentists are ready, willing and able to help administer COVID-19 vaccinations to the public," California Dental Association President Judee Tippet-Whyte said in a statement released on Jan. 4. "We can help with surge capacity at clinics and vaccinations sites — wherever we're needed to quickly administer vaccinations and save lives."

Dentists are in a singular position to administer vaccines because they receive extensive training in anatomy, pathology, pharmacology and autoimmune response as part of their dental education, the association said.

"Additionally, dentists are already trained to provide injections in objectively more complex areas of the mouth that commonly have gag reflexes, major blood vessels, nerves and a moving tongue. Dentists already have the ability to practice outside of their traditional scope of practice during declared states of emergency under the implied or express direction of government entities. The DCA waiver establishes the necessary training dentists must complete through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that is specific to vaccine administration, contraindications and adverse reactions," according to the association.

The dentists would most likely administer the vaccines at hospitals, clinics and vaccination sites to be set up to meet the demand, the association said.

The new order fits under Newsom's March 4 state of emergency order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The state Department of Consumer Affairs director may waive statutory or regulatory professional licensing requirements

and amend scopes of practice for people licensed under Division 2 of the Business and Professions Code, including dentists.

The order waives the code section where it prohibits licensed dentists from independently initiating and administering COVID-19 vaccines that are approved or authorized by the federal Food and Drug Administration to anyone 16 years of age or older and, in cases involving a severe allergic reaction, epinephrine or diphenhydramine by injection.

The waiver is subject to conditions. Dentists must successfully complete a series of COVID-19 training programs available through the CDC; comply with federal and state recordkeeping and reporting requirements; provide documentation to the patient's primary care provider; and enter information in the appropriate immunization registry designated by the immunization branch of the state Department of Public Health. Dentists are also required to give the vaccine in accordance with any FDA emergency use authorization.

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.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

M-A junior wins Congressional App Challenge

Audrey Ha, an 11th grader at Menlo-Atherton High School, won the 2020 18th Congressional District's App Challenge for a hurricane app she created, Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, announced on Dec. 21.

Ha's "SurveyHurricane," uses artificial intelligence to accurately and quickly detect damaged houses on aerial imagery of storm-impacted regions.

"Audrey Ha was inspired to assist the efforts of the federal government to help Americans recover from hurricanes and storms which have been increasing year after year due to climate change," Eshoo said in a statement. "This tool can assist first responders and government organizations in efficiently assessing hurricane damage and planning critical storm relief efforts. I applaud Audrey for using her creative energy and technical expertise to address an immediate problem. I'm proud of Audrey and all the students who entered their app this year to help others during a difficult year while they, too, have had many new challenges."

High school students nationwide participated in the Congressional App Challenge, with winners chosen in each congressional district. The House of Representatives began the contest in 2013. The challenge is designed to promote innovation and engagement in STEM education fields.

An independent panel of expert judges chose Ha's app as the winning submission from Eshoo's district. Winners are invited to the virtual reception and her app will be displayed in the U.S. Capitol and on house.gov for a year.

—Angela Swartz



Audrey Ha

Deadline to apply for small business relief grant extended to Jan. 13

Gov. Gavin Newsom's Office of Business and Economic Development announced Monday that the deadline for the first round of applications for the Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program has been extended.

The first round has been extended to Jan. 13 at 11:59 p.m. from Jan. 8. Details for the second round will be announced shortly.

On Nov. 30, Newsom and the state Legislature announced that \$500 million was available to small businesses and non-profits that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is administered by California's Office of the Small Business Advocate, part of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development.

"Inclusive, equitable relief is fundamental to the small business support developed by this administration," CalOSBA Director Isabel Guzman said. "This grant program provides that support through a network of community development financial institutions and community based organizations, ensuring reach to those highly impacted small businesses in disadvantaged communities, underserved small business groups, and industries disproportionately impacted by this pandemic."

The California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program provides grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000. Grants are not being reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis but all will be reviewed, state officials said Monday.

So many businesses were trying to complete the application online that website traffic was high, and some businesses may have had trouble accessing the application, according to the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development.

Adjustments have been made to the website and the deadline extended so that everyone interested can apply, state officials said.

Help with the application process is available in multiple languages and formats. For more information on grant requirements and eligibility, visit careliefgrant.com.

—Bay City News Service

TRASH

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the bushes along the road, Niamh noted. Horsley asked the California Highway Patrol to keep the volunteers safe on the stretch of road people tend to speed on.

"It's one of those things that gives you hope for the future: Kids that decide they want to make the community better," said Horsley. "It's mystifying to me that some people will just dump trash, hoping somebody else will pick it up or it will go back to dust, but it doesn't. It just causes environmental degradation."

Niamh feels empowered after the event that kids "can really take charge of something" and "really rally the community."

Aiden and Niamh plan to



Courtesy William Goebner

Large items not accessible to Caltrans were pulled from the side of the mountain using chains and trucks. Three Kings Mountain residents brought their trailers to haul away the debris.

host another trash pickup day in the new year. 

Email Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com

Biennial homelessness count faces delays due to pandemic

By **Kate Bradshaw**
Almanac Staff Writer

Every other year, on one day in January, volunteers across the country come together before dawn to complete a federally mandated count of how many people are sleeping unsheltered in their communities.

At the most recent count, held in January 2019, The Almanac witnessed the process, which involved carpooling with volunteers, a training breakfast, and interviewing volunteers looking to find and count unsheltered people while driving each street of a single census tract in the Wil-lows neighborhood and East Palo Alto — some of them activities

that no longer pass public health guidelines amidst the pandemic.

Now, with COVID-19 surging in California, the likelihood that the count — mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) — will look like it has in the past is dwindling.

In San Mateo County, the homeless count scheduled for Jan. 28 will not take place, but a new date has not yet been selected, according to Bryan Kingston, a spokesperson for the county's Human Services Agency. In Santa Clara County, officials were evaluating what to do about the count and planned to announce modified plans within the next couple of weeks, according to a county spokesperson.

San Mateo County plans to monitor COVID-19 conditions and reschedule the count when it's safe to do it using the same method that has previously been used, according to Kingston. The county's Human Services Agency is among a number of other jurisdictions that are requesting a waiver from HUD to delay the count, and it does not expect that the shift will have any funding implications, he said.

Throughout the pandemic, the county and community nonprofits have been operating three non-congregate shelters at hotels to help people experiencing homelessness who are vulnerable to developing serious complications from COVID-19. As of Jan. 5, there were



Magali Gauthier

A volunteer holds a map showing the census tract the group was assigned to survey during the biennial point-in-time count of people experiencing homelessness held in January 2019.

183 people who were being sheltered in these programs, Kingston said. In addition, between March 19 and Dec. 20 last year, 46 of those

individuals moved into permanent housing, he added. ■

Email *Kate Bradshaw* at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com

HEALTH EDUCATION

continued from page 11

instruction enables a more democratic classroom where no single student can dominate the conversation.

The digital world has also unlocked tremendous possibilities for sexual health education. Health Connected can now

serve communities that may not have had access to inclusive, comprehensive sex education. This not only creates important social-emotional learning opportunities available to more students, but also provides invaluable support to more trusted adults in their conversations about relationships and sexual health with their

children and teens.

To date, Health Connected has delivered sexual health education online to 6,000 students, with another 8,000 yet to receive instruction in the current school year. At some point schools will return to "normal," and our educators will again be in front of a classroom. But COVID has taught us that sex

ed is not an either/or situation but rather a "both/and." The physical classroom provides valuable opportunities for collective social experiences in sex education, and the virtual classroom provides important opportunities for deeply personal individual experiences in sex education.

Health Connected is one of 10

local nonprofits that benefit from contributions to the Almanac Holiday Fund. To donate to the Holiday Fund, go to siliconvalleycf.org/almanac-holiday-fund. To learn more about Health Connected, go to healthconnected.org. ■

Abigail Karlin-Resnick is the executive director of Health Connected.

Community Event

Wish hearing aids sounded better?

Join us to learn why Earlens®, a revolutionary new hearing solution, was recently named a top 100 Invention for 2020 by Time Magazine. Unlike conventional hearing aids, the Earlens solution uses a small lens to directly vibrate the eardrum — delivering the broadest frequency range available for clear, natural sound.



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An Exciting Alternative to Hearing Aids
Tuesday January, 13th at 11am

Register at: <http://earlensevents.com/EHCwebinar0113print>



Five things to know about California's new U.S. Senator, Alex Padilla

By Ben Christopher

CalMatters

Political junkies and capitol insiders, pat yourselves on the back.

Ever since Joe Biden picked Sen. Kamala Harris as his vice presidential running mate in August, the parlor game of choice for California's most politically plugged-in has been: Who will Gov. Gavin Newsom pick to fill her vacant Senate seat?

Alex Padilla — California's Secretary of State, a loyal Newsom ally and a Latino in a state that has never had a member of that largest ethnic group serve as senator — was a top pick. Sure enough, the Democrat from Pacoima is on his way to Washington.

But for many Californians — perhaps the majority — Padilla's nomination is likely to elicit more curiosity than self-congratulation, less "I knew it" and more "who knew?"

If you're acquainting yourself with Padilla for the first time, here are a few takeaways from his California CV.

1. California's #1 turnout booster

Like surfing, Silicon Valley and unaffordable housing, California has made easy access to the ballot box its calling card. While many GOP-run states have embraced voter ID requirements and have balked at the prospect of sending ballots by mail, Californians have gone in the opposite direction.

Padilla can take credit for a lot of that. Consider these recent changes to the state's voting rules:

- Eligible adults are automatically registered to vote when they apply for a driver's license — though California's new motor voter program hit a few speed bumps along the way
- 16- and 17-year-olds can



Rich Pedroncelli, AP Photo

California Secretary of State Alex Padilla talks during a news conference on Jan. 28, 2019, at the Capitol in Sacramento. Padilla has been named Newsom's pick for U.S. Senate.

pre-register to vote, ensuring that they are automatically added to the voter rolls when they turn 18

- If a registered voter's official signature doesn't match the one they put on their mail-in ballot envelope, counties are now required to give them the opportunity to try again

- Before the pandemic made it a statewide practice, over a dozen counties sent ballots to every active, registered voter — whether they signed up to vote by mail or not

- California's 2020 primary was bumped up from June to March, giving the state's voters an earlier say in this year's presidential contest.

All of that is thanks to legislation sponsored by Padilla. And as head of the national coalition of Democratic state election administrators, he has also been one of the most prominent evangelists for California's election model on the national stage.

2. Leaving behind an ethically dicey \$35 million bill

With mammoth turnout expected in an election like no other, staff inside the Secretary

of State's office spent the summer of 2020 scrambling to inform voters about the what, when, where and how of voting.

That's why they inked a contract in September with the political consulting firm, SKDKnickerbocker, to run a statewide PR campaign called Vote Safe California. The total tab: \$35 million.

That contract got Padilla into hot water with Republicans. SKDKnickerbocker has longstanding ties to the Democratic Party and was a client of president-elect Joe Biden, then a candidate in the election the firm had been hired to promote. GOP members of Congress launched an investigation and the conservative Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association took Padilla to court.

As CalMatters reported, the contract also didn't go over well with the state's Democratic controller, Betty Yee, who is responsible for approving all state government payments. According to Yee's staff, Padilla's office planned to draw the necessary \$35 million from a pot of cash that was supposed to fund county government voter outreach operations. In a letter Padilla wrote to Yee, he argued that the SKDKnickerbocker campaign was being conducted "on behalf of counties."

But so far Yee has refused to budge. And it's unclear who will ultimately be left holding the bag.

3. Patron saint of tote bags

Padilla hasn't just changed the way Californians vote. As a state Senator, he's changed the way we shop too.

In 2014, Gov. Jerry Brown signed what was arguably the most controversial bill of Padilla's eight-year legislative tenure, outlawing single-use plastic bags at grocery stores.

The statewide ban wasn't

enacted without a fight. Padilla drew flack from fellow Los Angeles Democrats who worried the bill would harm a major plastic bag manufacturer south of downtown.

Conservative critics piled on, both in California and nationally, highlighting Padilla's effort as a measure par excellence of California nanny statism. The Pacoima senator made an easy target for the libertarian critique.

Prior legislative efforts of his included a successful bill to force chain restaurants to list calorie counts on their menus and an unsuccessful one to ban the sale of tobacco products near schools.

Padilla brushed off the concerns about the bag ban during a speech on the Senate floor in 2014.

When local governments have introduced plastic bag bans, he said, "the sky does not fall and consumers adapt and life goes on."

Even after the bill was signed — two years after it was first introduced — it didn't become law immediately. In 2016, plastic bag manufacturers took to the ballot to override Padilla's ban. But that campaign failed. The cloth bags you might store in your closet or in the trunk of your car are testament to that and to Padilla's work.

4. The first senator of Generation 187

Like an entire generation of young Latinos, including former Senate leader Kevin De LeUn, Padilla insists he had no intention of getting involved in politics until 1994.

That year, Proposition 187 was on the ballot, a measure to exclude undocumented immigrants from all non-emergency public services, including public education. Padilla said it was the naked nativism of that campaign — and of Gov. Pete Wilson's, who was running for re-election as a supporter of 187 — that drew him to Democratic party activism. The son of Mexican immigrants who grew up in the San Fernando Valley, Padilla told CalMatters in 2018 that he felt that he "had to get involved so that families like mine, communities like mine, would not continue to be scapegoated or targeted."

Padilla was in early 20's at the time. Fresh out of college with a big ticket bachelor's degree, his parents were not immediately on board with his turn to politics. As he recalled it: "Wait a minute, four years of MIT engineering school ... for what?"

He started behind the scenes. He worked the campaigns and made friends with up-and-coming members of the Legislature, including Tony Cárdenas, now a congressman. He served as an aide to Sen. Dianne Feinstein.

In 1998, he finally ran for a seat of his own and a year later, at 26, he was elected to the Los Angeles City Council. At 28, he became the council's youngest president — a feat not just for Padilla, but for the growing coalition of Latino Democrats in the valley's northeast.

On the Los Angeles City Council, Padilla had a knack for bringing "consensus and calm and peace," said Harvey Englander, a longtime lobbyist and public affairs consultant in Los Angeles. "It's not that he didn't make waves but he didn't make enemies."

With the appointment, a quarter century after California voters passed Prop. 187, Padilla will become the state's first Latino U.S. Senator.

5. A friend of Newsom's

Padilla's alliance with Newsom began as a marriage of convenience.

When Newsom announced his bid to run for governor in 2010, challenging the elder statesman and front runner Jerry Brown, the San Francisco mayor knew he needed to make inroads in southern California — particularly with Latino voters.

And so the gubernatorial hopeful picked Padilla, a newly elected state senator and a rising star in the party, to help him do just that.

Newsom's bid was a long shot that predictably failed. He dropped his campaign before Brown even officially announced his own run, opting instead to campaign for lieutenant governor. But Newsom was a rising star in his own right and Padilla's early support gave the young senator a prominent role in a statewide campaign. It also earned him an ally on the rise.

In 2017, when Newsom decided to run for governor again, Padilla once again offered his endorsement, supporting the lieutenant governor over Antonio Villaraigosa, who had served as Los Angeles mayor when Padilla was on the council.

That loyalty seems to have paid off. ■

This piece was first published by CalMatters, a Sacramento-based nonpartisan, nonprofit journalism venture that works with more than 130 media partners throughout the state, including The Almanac.

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WOODSIDE 2020

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The council updated several planning and zoning ordinances, including those that govern granny flats, and OK'd amending portions of the zoning code related to "natural state," requiring that when a property is developed, a certain percentage of a hillside lot be left undisturbed.

The council also implemented a new law aimed at reducing the noise and air pollution from leaf blowers, and unanimously approved the establishment of a Youth Advisory Committee to encourage more young people to get involved in local government.

But the month of August saw particular challenges when the CZU Lightning Complex fires erupted nearby. The largest wildfires in San Mateo County history brought ash and smoky skies, closed many key roads in the area and spurred evacuations of nearby communities.

Threat of wildfire closes in

Though no Woodside residents had to evacuate during the weeks that fires burned, through road closures and an abundance of smoke and ash, the conflagration still brought disruption and renewed already heightened concerns about local fire prevention measures.

But in the face of twin calamities, the community also came together to help. Andy Kerr of Alice's Restaurant aided by



Magali Gauthier

The pandemic upended everyday life, with restaurants making do by offering takeout and, while it was permitted, outdoor dining. Local restaurants like Buck's rolled out new outdoor dining areas over the summer.

donations from the local community, went behind fire lines to deliver meals to firefighters. Alice's, with community support, early in the pandemic began providing meals to homebound seniors and first responders.

In September, the council issued a proclamation recognizing the community service of Alice's Restaurant and its co-owners, brothers Andy and Jamie Kerr, for their support of the community during the fires and the pandemic.

Road safety issues and collisions

The forested, winding roads in the area continued to attract visitors, a number of whom were speeding and in some cases, racing each other, with

the problem most pronounced in the Four Corners area at the intersection of highways 84 and 35. Neighbors said the speeding problem had worsened during stay-at-home orders.

The ongoing speeding issue was a major focus of the town's Circulation Committee and a frequent topic of discussion for the council, with requests to the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office to step up enforcement resulting in larger numbers of citations issued, and data showing that most of the cited drivers were not Woodside residents, according to Sheriff's Office reports made to the Circulation Committee.

This year saw several fatal collisions on Woodside roads, including a two-car incident that killed both drivers in

August and a fatal solo vehicle crash in July that resulted in the driver's arrest on felony DUI charges after his friend, a passenger, died in the incident. Another collision in August involved a bicyclist who was fatally injured when a car moved into his lane to pass another cyclist. Though the latter collision took place on a county-owned stretch of Kings Mountain Road, the incident restarted a town project stalled by the pandemic to install bicycle turnouts and signs along the mile and a half of Kings Mountain Road under town jurisdiction.

A move to address housing needs

In July, the council unanimously voted to make it easier to get permission to build granny units, officially known as accessory dwelling units (ADUs). The change brought the town's ordinance into alignment with a state law that went into effect at the beginning of the year, streamlining ADU requirements to help alleviate the statewide housing shortage. The changes include shorter timelines for approval and loosening of setback requirements, allowing, per state law, for at least one 800-square-foot ADU to be built a minimum of 4 feet from the side and rear property lines. The updated ordinance is likely to get some fine-tuning, particularly as it relates to building height.

In updating the town's

ADU ordinance, the council embraced the concept as a method of providing additional housing in town without adding density, in order to maintain the community's rural character.

An uncontested election

During a year when so many things were in flux, the results of Woodside's Town Council election never seemed in doubt, even well before Election Day, with the races for the four seats up for election in 2020 — in districts 1, 3, 5 and 7 — all uncontested. Voting went ahead as officials are required by the town charter to hold an election to allow for the possibility of write-in candidates.

In December, the council swore in two new members: attorney Jenn Wall, elected to the District 1 seat, and management consultant John Carvell, elected to the District 5 seat. They are replacing Daniel Yost (District 1) and Tom Livermore (District 5), who both declined to run for reelection. Also seated were reelected members Chris Shaw (District 3) and Ned Fluet (District 7).

Fluet served as the mayor in 2020. Brian Dombkowski, mayor pro tem and council member for District 2, was sworn in as the town's new mayor on Dec. 8. ■

Email Heather Zimmerman at hzimmerman@paweekly.com

RIOT

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only those who were speakers were allowed on the floor due to COVID-19 protocols.

Capitol police came running toward her. "They said, 'Turn around! Turn around! Go back! Go back!'" she said. "This was a determined, vicious crowd driven by and embracing the lies of the president."

She had not been allowed to return to her office, she said. Eshoo's whereabouts were not being revealed for safety reasons, the congresswoman's spokesperson Katy Nystrom said from Washington, D.C., but she and her staff were safe.

When she came to work Wednesday morning, Eshoo said she thought the security seemed "totally inadequate." There didn't seem to be more officers in place than on any other day, she said.

"When I looked at the plaza, I didn't have a good feeling," she said.

Congress was expected to

return to its proceedings to certify the results of the presidential election, after The Almanac's Wednesday afternoon press deadline.

Eshoo said Wednesday that she was still waiting for her Republican colleagues to condemn the actions of the president or his followers.

"They certainly don't seem to have very much to say," she said.

She had strong words for the president.

"Demonstrators have a Constitutional right to protest," she said. But "he urged them to do more than that. He did damage to not just a building and its room. This is where the representatives of the people speak on their behalf. This is not a window broken in the basement of public works," she said.

This started with the president "inciting people. He incited them," she said.

Asked what actions she thinks should be taken against Trump, she said, "I would impeach

him. I would impeach him in the next 24 hours. He should not be president. He's brought our country, he's brought our democracy to its knees. ... Beyond his party registration, I think he's a sick, broken individual."

'I would impeach him. I would impeach him in the next 24 hours.'

REP. ANNA ESHOO

Speier tweeted updates to her followers Wednesday afternoon, offering the news that Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell had been escorted out. "The Capitol has been breached. We are in lock down. Thank you, POTUS!" she wrote, followed a couple of hours later by, "We are in a safe place. I will have lots more to say about this. We

are not a 3rd world country but you couldn't tell that today."

Gov. Gavin Newsom said what was being witnessed in the U.S. Capitol was reprehensible, and "an outright assault on our democratic institutions."

"The people of California have spoken, and our congressional delegation should never have to fear for their lives to represent Californians," he said in a statement.

President-elect Biden strongly condemned the attack on the Capitol, blaming "a small number of extremists dedicated to lawlessness." He called on Trump to go on national television to fulfill his oath to defend the Constitution and "demand an end to this siege."

"To storm the Capitol, to smash windows, to occupy offices, and to threaten the safety of duly elected officials is not protest. It is insurrection," he said in remarks delivered to the nation.

"America is so much better than what we're seeing today."

Local Assemblyman Marc Berman said in a tweet, "We

are watching in real time an attempted coup of the American government, and it's being led by the President of the United States. Shame on all who have emboldened, coddled, and made excuses for him and his seditious actions. All of them."

Around 3 p.m. officials reported that the Capitol was once again secure following the assault. ■

Andrea Gemmet contributed to this report.

Email Sue Dremann at sdremann@paweekly.com

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Viewpoint

IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES

California's plan to bring many students back to school for in-person learning in careful stages

By Linda Darling-Hammond/
Special to CalMatters

GUEST OPINION

As one of the most challenging years we have faced in recent history is ushered out, we enter 2021 with trepidation and hope.

Amid the darkest moments of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is light at the end of the tunnel, with new vaccines arriving and a renewed sense of purpose about how to make the country safe again.

As solutions for addressing the virus come into view, we must also figure out how to keep solving for learning: how to maximize opportunities to learn for all our children and youth as we work to get everyone vaccinated.

With new evidence about how schools can be open safely — and new resources to ensure that this can be done — we can start planning in the new year to bring many students back to school in person in careful stages and with supports that enable success.

Throughout this pandemic, Gov. Gavin Newsom and the Legislature have supported our schools with guidance, personal protective equipment and resources to support distance learning. Our investments have prioritized equity and the most vulnerable Californians. We worked hard to provide quality distance learning and devices to students in need.

California has certainly made great strides in distance learning, and this option will remain for parents and students who choose it and for those whose health status does not allow them to return to school soon. Yet despite significant training that has helped teachers develop new instructional skills, remote learning is still challenging for many children and their caregivers, especially the youngest students, those with special needs and those dealing with family challenges due to the pandemic. Schools provide supports to children in all these situations, especially when they are open in person.

In order to continue to solve for learning for all these groups, Newsom has proposed new measures to support schools in safely bringing back the youngest children and those who are

most vulnerable starting in late January and early February, then phasing in other grade levels through March.

To provide resources that schools need, the governor will continue to partner with the Legislature to secure \$2 billion in early action state funds that schools can use for staff and student testing, PPE, ventilation improvements and other health and safety measures.

These investments, coupled

We can and must meet the remaining challenges with urgency, determination and creativity to provide the benefits of safe in-person learning to as many students as possible.

with other pillars of the governor's plan — safety and mitigation, oversight and assistance, and transparency and accountability — will keep school communities safe as workplaces for teachers and as learning environments for students.

Our strategy reflects mounting evidence, recently summarized by Harvard and Brown University researchers, demonstrating that schools can safely remain open, even in conditions of wide community spread, and protect students and educators alike.

Our own experience in California bears this out. For example, among the more than 39,000 students and 5,000 staff back to school in Marin County this fall, there were only five cases of suspected in-school transmission. Other districts have reported similar results. A study released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention noted that children who attended school did not experience increased rates of infection from COVID-19, while those who attended family gatherings and other kinds of social events did.

Our safety measures should be coupled with new ideas about

how and when we can best educate our children. We need not be constrained by the traditional concept of the school year and should instead consider how to add learning time this summer and year-round. In the coming months, educators can build on what they have learned during the pandemic and make plans to tackle learning loss with effective interventions, along with teaching and tutoring models that can help students make gains quickly.

We can and must meet the remaining challenges with urgency, determination and creativity to provide the benefits of safe in-person learning to as many students as possible.

We all know that, in a classroom of peers led by an expert teacher, students learn not only critical academic content and skills: They also learn to listen, to share, to wait their turn, to encourage others and to allow others to encourage them. They learn to focus despite distractions. They learn that everyone makes mistakes, and that it's OK to struggle with a difficult task — and to ask for help while doing it. They gain the confidence to take risks with their learning and to persist despite difficulty. And they begin to learn skills like self-awareness, social awareness, self-management and responsible decision-making that will carry them through life.

Our creative and committed teachers have been doing as much of this as possible online, often while working overtime to educate their own children at home as well. Now it's time to boost our support for their efforts with resources for getting and keeping schools open safely, so that we can, as a state, continue to solve for learning together. ▀

Linda Darling-Hammond is president of the California State Board of Education and can be emailed at californiasbe-president@gmail.com. She is the Charles E. Ducommun professor of education emeritus at Stanford University. This piece was first published on Jan. 3 by CalMatters, a Sacramento-based nonpartisan, nonprofit journalism venture that works with more than 130 media partners throughout the state, including The Almanac.

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Artscene

PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Chalk Granny delights neighbors with her COVID creations

By Kate Daly
Special to The Almanac

Most people have little nice to say about 2020, but for one local woman, “It has been a blast.”

Bored during lockdown in March, Mary Kay Mitchell pulled out a box of Crayola chalk and drew a heart and a rainbow on her driveway, along with the words: “When this is all over what will you remember?”

When neighbors walked by and made comments, Mitchell felt compelled to go out and create more chalk art, averaging three to four different pieces a week in front of her home on Anamor Street in Redwood City.

People stop to take pictures and chat, oftentimes dropping off ideas and thank you notes in her mailbox. When an admirer wrote a fan letter to the talented “young artist,” that really made Mitchell laugh because she’s a 68-year-old grandmother.

After a toddler neighbor called her “Chalk Grammy,” Mitchell decided to go by the name Chalk Granny, and has since turned her whimsical pursuit into a side career “to cheer people up.”

On Christmas a friend emailed Mitchell, saying “You’ve brought so many smiles with your art,” and then requested surprise

drawings of champagne bottles, Happy New Year! We miss you! Thank you for your support! chalking outside three elementary school teachers’ homes on New Year’s Eve.

Thrilled to spring into action, Mitchell says she likes to think of herself as a bit of a Banksy, the mysterious street artist whose pieces pop up in Britain.

Ellen Jacobson lives nearby and asked Mitchell to draw a “rainbow unicorn Pegasus” to celebrate her twins’ birthday. The girls were delighted as were many others, says Jacobson: “Mary Kay’s artwork brings smiles and happiness to anyone who walks by her masterpieces.”

During the week, Mitchell works as a receptionist, scheduler and notary at O’Donnell & Associates, a law firm in Menlo Park. Off hours when she’s not teaching yoga or drawing, she’s researching new ideas, adding them to her binder of images, and posting pictures of her projects on Instagram and Facebook using the hashtag #chalkgranny.

With the help of a hose, her husband, Marcos Domingos, keeps their driveway and sidewalk prepped for new creations. He also suggests content.

Through word of mouth Mitchell has landed assignments as far away as Marin County and



Kate Daly

Mary Kay Mitchell, a Redwood City resident, has become known as the Chalk Granny for her sidewalk illustrations during the pandemic.

the East Bay. A longtime friendship with Willie Brown’s wife, Blanche, led Mitchell to drive to Oakland to chalk the characters from the movie “Trolls” for a great grandson.

Mitchell will travel up to 50 miles and charges \$50 an hour, usually completing most murals in less than two hours. She donates a portion of her proceeds to Second Harvest Food Bank.

Crouching down with chalk, a whisk broom and sponge in double-gloved hands, she is dripping in sweat by the time she is finished. Moving quickly, she draws from pictures, and has learned mistakes cannot be corrected so it’s best to work from

the top down, from light to dark colors, and to add details last.

When asked to enter Redwood City’s Chalk Full of Fun Festival last Fourth of July, she sought out high-quality chalk and has been using Eternityarts.com’s vibrant long-lasting collection ever since. A box of 60-plus colors costs about \$100, but Mitchell says it’s worth it because now her artwork lasts as long as four weeks — unless it rains.

Rain has forced her to do some pieces on paper instead, such

as a poster for her 100-year old neighbor’s birthday on Dec. 26. Upon request, Mitchell will also do a keepsake version of her chalk drawings using other art materials.

“I really like that chalk is temporary, just like I hope COVID is temporary,” she says.

Sometimes the pandemic inspires works such as a light-saber-wielding Darth Vader warning, “Wear a mask or else,” or a masked Spock from “Star Trek” accompanied by the words “Stay safe & prosper.”

Mitchell received a bachelor of fine arts degree from Nazareth College in Rochester, New York. She earned an art teaching certification at Arizona State and taught art therapy to special needs kids for several years. She then worked as a waitress and felt that wasn’t a match, but she ended up staying when the restaurant hired her to hand-letter its menus.

She worked for the San Francisco Chronicle before joining the law firm.

Mitchell is grateful for the positive creative outlet her alter ego Chalk Granny has brought into her life, saying, “I have met more people during COVID than I have living in Redwood City for 12 years.”

And she is excited — she already has birthday and graduation artworks booked well into 2021. ■



Right: Rain or a request can lead to a paper version of Mitchell’s work.

Far right: Mitchell surprised a young neighbor with a chalk drawing for her birthday.



Courtesy Mary Kay Mitchell

Food & Drink

Kale and community

Local nonprofit helps small farms bring produce to Peninsula neighborhoods



Courtesy Jacque Rupp/Tera Farm

Three generations of the Magaña family pack boxes at Magana Farms, whose produce is delivered to the Peninsula through Tera Farm.

By Elena Kadvany

Last spring break, Los Altos School District computer science teacher Sheena Vaidyanathan spent her vacation building a website for a new grassroots effort she had formed to support local farmers.

Ten months later, that home-grown project has become a volunteer-run nonprofit that delivers fresh, organic produce directly from Bay Area farms to more than a dozen cities throughout the Bay Area, as far south as Monterey and as far north as Oakland.

Vaidyanathan, a Los Altos resident, started Tera Farm after realizing how small, independent farmers were suffering due to the pandemic shutdown, with restaurants closed and the entire food supply chain disrupted. She reached out to a local farmer through Kitchen Table Advisors, a nonprofit that provides business advice to farmers, and asked if she could buy a box of kale from him directly. She shared the kale with friends and sent their pooled payment to the farmer. The next week, her friends asked what other produce she could get from the farmer. The model quickly took off, spreading through word of mouth.

Fostering that direct relationship between consumer and farmer — no wholesaler or grocery store in between — became the driving purpose of Tera Farm.

“The money was going directly to a farmer we knew and we could put a face to. It was actually going to where the food was coming from,” Vaidyanathan said. “This was something positive we were able to do during these months that were otherwise so difficult.”

Tera Farm works primarily with Maria Ana Reyes of Narci Organic Farms and Bertha Magaña of Magana Farms, both immigrants who graduated from the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA) in Salinas, an intensive training program that helps farmworkers become farmers.

They let the nonprofit volunteers know what they’re growing

each week, and the produce is posted to an online store that customers can shop from Monday through Wednesday. The entire proceeds go directly to the farmers that same week — before the produce is even harvested — and by Saturday, they drop off packaged orders at designated pickup sites. Tera Farm volunteers manage the pickup locations, including in Los Altos, Menlo Park and Palo Alto. (People who are interested in hosting a pickup site can email info@terafarm.org.)

The vegetables and fruits change every week, depending on what’s available. A recent week included delicata squash, celery, broccoli, Dino kale, shallots, chard and parsley.

Unlike a CSA box or subscription service, customers can choose which items they want and don’t have to commit to a certain number of weeks or months of ordering. There’s no delivery fee but customers have to spend at least \$25 to make it financially viable for the farmers. People can team up with friends or neighbors on orders if they can’t meet the minimum on their own.

Prior to Tera Farm, the farmers only sold their produce wholesale. Through the nonprofit, they can set their own prices for the first time and connect directly with their customers. The farmers have diversified their crops in response to customer feedback,

Vaidyanathan said, which also helps reduce their own financial risk. If the price of celery suddenly drops, for example, they have other vegetables they can turn to.

“Especially with the pandemic, many of these small farmers don’t make enough money to just live off the farm. Their family members work other jobs,” she said. “This really helped at that time when they lost all their off-farm income.”

Tera Farm is not the only local farm-to-consumer project launched during the pandemic. A Palo Alto resident started Giving Fruits, a weekly pickup of fresh fruits and vegetables, though orders are placed in bulk and picked up from a single site in Palo Alto.

As a teacher, Vaidyanathan wants Tera Farm to have an educational impact. Before the most recent shutdown, she organized farm visits so families could meet the farmers and learn more about organic farming. The nonprofit has a food blog to share recipes customers make from the produce they receive. Vaidyanathan sends out a weekly newsletter focused on a relevant topic of interest, such as how last fall’s wildfires impacted local farms.

Tera Farm has also nurtured unexpected connections between local residents and the people who grow their food, Vaidyanathan said. During the wildfires,

a customer donated extra N95 masks to the farmers. Another person made face masks for them.

“We feel the connection to local food is important. Unless we understand how our food

grows,” Vaidyanathan said, “we won’t appreciate it.”

For more on Tera Farm, go to terafarm.org. ■

Email Elena Kadvany at ekadvany@paweekly.com



Courtesy Tera Farm

Through Tera Farm, local residents can pick up fresh, organic produce in their neighborhoods.



Courtesy Tera Farm

Local residents visiting Narci Organic Farms in Salinas through Tera Farm.



Courtesy Tera Farm

Narci Organic Farms in Salinas partners with Tera Farm for its produce pickup program in the Bay Area.


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Gordon Ferguson
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