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Despite months to prep, why California lags on COVID vaccination

By Ben Christopher/CalMatters

No one ever said that distributing a vaccine to tens of millions of Californians spread out across 58 counties in the middle of a pandemic would be easy.

But Gov. Gavin Newsom came pretty close last October.

At a press conference on Oct. 19, the governor assured the public that California has “long been in the vaccination business.” That projection of confidence came just three days after the CEO of the pharmaceutical giant Pfizer announced the company would seek the regulatory green light for its new COVID-19 vaccine. California, the governor said, would be ready.

Roughly 19 million flu shots every year. The recent history of a mass Swine Flu inoculation program in 2009. An early partnership with the federal government to plan for the coming distribution campaign. A new “Logistics Taskforce” established within the governor’s Office of Emergency Services. The governor cited all this as evidence that “experience with vaccinations is

‘For the past year, the entire approach that the governor has taken to the pandemic has been disorganized and petulant.’

JEFF SMITH, EXECUTIVE OFFICER FOR SANTA CLARA COUNTY

well established here in the state of California.”

More than three months later, the state is still scrambling to deliver. And the mammoth logistical headache of inoculating a state desperate for a return to pre-pandemic normalcy has become a pressing political one for Newsom. According to the most recent federal data, California is still sitting on 40% of its allotted vaccine, putting it in the bottom third of all 50 states. The messaging also has been hard to decipher, with information from the governor’s office sometimes at odds with that being issued by the counties.

And Californians are not happy. A mere 22% approve of how



Magali Gauthier

Emiliano Preciado receives the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine from nurse Jill Vandroff at Ravenswood Family Health Center in East Palo Alto on Jan. 30.

Newsom and the state government are overseeing vaccine distribution — while 40% rate it poor or very poor — according to a statewide survey released

Tuesday, Feb. 2, by the UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies. Overall, the poll shows a catastrophic fall from grace compared to early

in the pandemic, when Newsom ranked among the most popular governors nationwide.

See **VACCINATION**, page 14

Pandemic recovery, housing and climate among Menlo Park City Council’s top 2021 goals

By Kate Bradshaw

Almanac Staff Writer

The Menlo Park City Council met Saturday for its annual goal-setting meeting, ironing out its top priorities for the year ahead and letting the community air its grievances and recommend which new priorities should be adopted.

Ultimately, the council generally opted to hone in on several top priorities for the year ahead: helping the community recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and its fallout, including rebuilding departments that were scaled back significantly

in budget cuts last year; updating the city’s housing element, a state-mandated process that involves planning for housing growth; and moving the city’s climate goals forward by supporting a project to protect the city’s Bay side from sea level rise.

They also responded to input from many community members who were primarily focused on two issues: Caltrain noise and leaf blowers.

Other community members urged the council to follow up on its summer discussions of police reform, which have faltered in the absence of a permanent police chief. And some asked that the council declare

implementing its climate action plan a top priority.

City staff planned to iron out the nuances of the Saturday discussion and report back at the council’s Feb. 9 meeting.

The top goals

When it comes to responding and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, Councilman Ray Mueller said he wanted the city to be more proactive about helping where it can to improve outcomes at a hyperlocal level. He said he was interested in seeing how the city can help to support vaccinations for underserved populations, and

existing county and state efforts to support small business recovery and programs supporting child care providers. He said he favored assigning a staff member to working exclusively on COVID-19 response matters.

“There’s so much information that has to get out to the public — we are in the best position to do that with our stakeholders,” he said. “We are in the middle of something that has altered everybody’s life — and delivering on that right now is of critical importance.”

While other council members disagreed that it was the city’s role to get as involved with the COVID-19 response as Mueller

suggested, there was a consensus that one significant piece of recovery for the city will be to restore its library and community services departments, where operations have been severely curtailed due to the pandemic. The city will need to figure out a plan for services like gymnastics and in-person classes to be restored, including details like who will teach them — contractors or employees — said City Manager Starla Jerome-Robinson.

Another big project coming up this year is planning for the 2022 RHNA, or Regional

See **GOALS**, page 11

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Local News

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Magali Gauthier

Pastor Paul Bains, a longtime advocate for the homeless, stands outside a modular home in East Palo Alto on Jan. 25.

Are modular homes the answer to Bay Area's affordable housing demand?

Inside the latest chapter in one pastor's bid to solve the region's housing crisis

By Lloyd Lee

Two steel houses were delivered on the back of a big rig on Jan. 7 to a parking lot in East Palo Alto, one coming all the way from Pueblo, Colorado, and the other from Caldwell, Idaho. They're not exactly ready-to-live-in homes, but possibly by Valentine's Day or earlier, they can be.

For Pastor Paul Bains, that's

just part of the beauty and benefit of modular houses — factory-built homes that come ready-made in sections to be stacked or put together like Lego blocks. One of the newly delivered modular dwellings is a 960-square-foot, three-bedroom house made of three sections; the other is a 640-square-foot, two bedroom home made of two sections.

The big-rig delivery marked

a new chapter in the Palo Alto native's 21-year pursuit to address homelessness in the Bay Area.

"My goal has always been to disrupt generational poverty," Bains said. "You do that through education and home ownership, and this makes it much more affordable for people to own their own home."

See **MODULAR HOMES**, page 17

Two school districts to ask voters to pass parcel tax measures this year

By Angela Swartz

Almanac Staff Writer

There will be two parcel tax measures on local ballots this spring and next fall in an effort to maintain current educational programming and keep teacher salaries competitive. One measure is to fund the Portola Valley Elementary School District and the other is for the Menlo Park City School District.

During a Jan. 21 meeting, the Portola Valley school board

adopted a resolution to authorize the district to call for a parcel tax election in May. It would generate approximately \$1 million for the district annually. The cost of a special mail-in election is between \$94,000 and \$113,000, according to a Jan. 14 board agenda.

This comes on the heels of the failure of Measure P, a parcel tax renewal measure for the Portola Valley district, last March.

"To avoid significant instructional program reductions and to protect the academic excellence

of our schools, the administration along with the parcel tax advisory committee recommends the renewal of the measure at a reduced amount (by \$110) to \$471 per parcel," according to a report prepared by staff for the Jan. 14 meeting. There would be no annual increase in the tax to adjust for inflation, said district Chief Business Officer Connie Ngo in an email.

The current tax, Measure O, funds advanced math, science

See **PARCEL TAX**, page 12

Portola Valley's new mayor lays out what to expect in 2021

By Angela Swartz

A new housing project up for review, preparing for wildfires and just trying to "keep the trains running on time" during the COVID-19 pandemic should make for a busy year for Portola Valley officials.

This is Maryann Derwin's fourth time heading the Town Council as mayor since she was elected in 2005. She recently discussed the town's priorities with



Maryann Derwin

On Feb. 10, Derwin will begin to host virtual coffee chats, possibly with Vice Mayor Craig Hughes, for residents. This is in response to the influx of comments and questions residents have had during meetings, she said. The Zoom meeting ID for Wednesday's virtual chat, which is from 8 to 9 a.m., is 969 6615 5815, with the passcode 582679.

Housing

The town kicked off meetings to review Stanford University's proposed 39 housing units on part of 75 acres of university property referred to as the "Stanford Wedge" during a three and a half hour Planning Commission study session on Jan. 20.

Residents have had strong opinions about it, both in support and opposition, and Derwin said she hopes the civil discourse at the recent Planning Commission meeting will continue at all of the Stanford Wedge project meetings. She said she is excited to see the environmental impact review for the project, which is expected in the spring.

The project will probably not come to the council for review until next fall at the earliest, Derwin said.

The town will also tackle its housing element, a state-mandated blueprint for providing housing to people of all income levels. The town is in the midst of developing its latest plan for

the next housing element cycle, which runs 2023 through 2031 and is required to be certified by the state by Jan. 1, 2023.

In November, council members Craig Hughes and John Richards penned a letter to the Association of Bay Area Governments following a council discussion on the state Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) process, stating that the town will remain highly susceptible to wildfires and that it would like to engage "on the sensibleness" of adding significant numbers of new homes in high-fire danger areas. They also said that, as the smallest staffed city in San Mateo County, "it is improbable that there would be an ability to hire enough staff to ensure a transparent and equitable entitlement process for any future applicants" if the draft state methodology is implemented.

Portola Valley's allocation for the eight years from 2014-22 is one of the lowest in San Mateo County, at a total of 64 housing units. Of these, 13 are for above-moderate income households; 15 are for moderate-income households; 15 are for low-income households, and 21 are for very low-income households.

"The numbers are very challenging for all of us," Derwin said.

The state requires the town to plan for and encourage construction of these housing units, but the town does not have to build the housing. In the past, second units have been Portola Valley's most important source of moderate- or lower-income housing, and that program is expected to continue.

So far, identification of town-owned properties, which would be the cheapest to build on, has fallen short.

Wildfire prevention

In 2020, the community also dealt with the threat of wildfires and two related PG&E public safety power shutoffs.

In the summer of 2021, the town plans to conduct an emergency evacuation drill to prepare residents for potential fires,

See **PORTOLA VALLEY**, page 16

Coronavirus central: State OKs reopening elementary schools in county

Santa Clara County hits grim milestone nearly a year into pandemic

By Embarcadero Media staff

Santa Clara County as of Tuesday had 36,214 cumulative cases of COVID-19, with 395 deaths. The rolling seven-day average of new cases ending Jan. 25 was 258. There were 122 people hospitalized. Santa Clara County as of Tuesday had 102,836 cumulative COVID-19 cases and 1,433 deaths. The rolling seven-day average of new cases ending Jan. 25 was 667. There were 463 hospitalized, 45 of which were new.

County K-6 schools may reopen for classes

Four Bay Area counties can now resume in-person classes at all public K-6 schools after their rate of new coronavirus cases fell below the state's threshold to reopen schools.

Public schools that have yet to resume in-person classes in San Mateo, Santa Clara, Marin and San Francisco counties can now do so under the state's school reopening framework, California Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly said Tuesday during a briefing on the pandemic.

Prior to the state's winter stay-at-home order, counties were required to remain out of the state's most-restrictive purple reopening tier for two weeks to begin reopening schools for in-person classes.

Schools that had opened prior

to the stay-at-home order taking effect in the Bay Area on Dec. 11 were allowed to remain open for in-person instruction, but unopened schools were barred from doing so.

With the average daily case rate per 100,000 residents for all four counties now under 25 for at least five consecutive days, the state has permitted each county to reopen all K-6 schools if they choose to do so.

"You'll remember just a few short weeks ago, the state was knocking on the door of a case rate of 100 per 100,000 per day," Ghaly said. "So, good news to see a number of counties below 25."

Schools with grades 7-12 that have already reopened are also allowed to continue providing in-person instruction under the state's reopening framework for schools.

However, schools with those higher grades that have not yet opened will have to wait for their county to leave the purple tier to do so, according to the California Department of Public Health.

Leaving the purple tier requires a county to record a rate of new cases per 100,000 residents below seven and a coronavirus test positivity rate below 8%.

Gov. Gavin Newsom has implored state legislators to approve \$2 billion to support schools reopening amid the pandemic as the state works to

vaccinate wider swaths of its population.

The fate of that funding package and the timeline for how soon teachers can receive vaccinations remain up in the air and could hamper the number of schools that reopen before spring.

Information on the state's plans for reopening schools can be found at schools.covid19.ca.gov.

Sobering milestone for Santa Clara County

It's been almost a year since the first COVID-19 case was confirmed in Santa Clara County and now the county has reached the unfortunate milestone of surpassing 100,000 cases.

As of Jan. 28, the county had a total of 100,468 cases, of which 1,344 people have died.

"I am very sad," said Dr. Marty Fenstersheib, the county's COVID-19 testing and vaccine officer. "(The death toll) is not a number, it's a person. It could represent your parents, your brother, your sister."

But, Fenstersheib said, the county's swift response likely prevented more deaths.

In early March, Santa Clara County was among the first counties in the state to impose a stay-at-home order and since then, has kept various forms of lockdowns in effect.

And with vaccinations

ramping up, the county is starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

As of Jan. 28, the county has administered 185,535 doses of vaccine — of which 147,838 were first doses and 37,697 second doses — making up 8% of all county residents over 16 years old, Fenstersheib said.

Fenstersheib and Dr. Jennifer Tong, associate chief medical officer for the county's medical center, emphasized equity as a "top priority" in vaccination distribution.

This means ensuring vaccine availability to residents 65 years and older, the Latinx community and individuals living in East San Jose.

So far, the county has made "substantial progress" in vaccinating those 75 years and older, Fenstersheib said.

About 28%, or 1 out of every 4 residents 75 years and older, have received the first dose of vaccine.

This is significant as residents 65 years and older made up 80% of COVID-19 deaths.

"Again, with the high mortality rate in our senior citizens, getting the vaccine into the arms of our seniors in this community will go a long way to preventing further deaths and

hospitalizations," Fenstersheib said.

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.

LEHUA GREENMAN



"Ultimately, the greatest lesson that COVID-19 can teach humanity is that we are all in this together."

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Menlo Park police: No violent crime increase in 2020

By Kate Bradshaw
Almanac Staff Writer

When it comes to policing, 2020 was a unique year, according to an annual report from the Menlo Park Police Department detailing crime counts and trends throughout the city last year.

Generally, there were far fewer demands for service and fewer interactions between police officers and the community due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the department announced. In addition, traffic enforcement trends shifted with fewer people commuting.

Still, throughout the year, police responded to more than 21,000 calls for service, conducted more than 3,600 traffic stops, more than 870 bike and pedestrian stops, arrested 750



Magali Gauthier

A Menlo Park Police Department community service officer vehicle is parked by City Hall on July 15. Throughout 2020, policing shifted as fewer people commuted and gathered in large groups.

people and wrote 2,800 reports, according to the department.

There was also no increase in reported violent crime over the previous year, with 47 incidents reported in 2020, the same

number as in 2019. There were no reported homicides in 2020. The percentage of violent crimes solved dropped to 40.4% in 2020

See **MENLO POLICE**, page 19

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

Seeing Property During Covid



Dear Monica: A property came on the market last week that seemed perfect but because of COVID rules it sold before I was able to get in to see the property. Do you think this was fair? Jim G.

Dear Jim: The 2021 real estate market has begun and it is very active. Covid rules require agents to space appointments at certain intervals so that two unrelated groups are not in the property at the same time. This is easier to do if the property is vacant but

if it is occupied, showings can be more restrictive. Some sellers have children who are remote learning and can only be out of the house after classes are finished for the day, and many are uncomfortable having lots of buyers tour their home.

Because of tight rules, some buyers are making non-contingent offers on a property without having seen it and some sellers opt to accept such offers. If the supply of properties improves, which it should, buyers will have access to more homes.

Contact me at monica@monicacorman.com: Office: 650-465-5971, COMPASS. WSJ Nationally Ranked. Real Trends Bay Area Top 100 Agents

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Health officials: Prioritize older adults amid COVID-19 vaccine shortages

Santa Clara, San Mateo counties among eight in Bay Area that recommend vaccinating ages 65 and up

By Sue Dremann

The scarcity of COVID-19 vaccine doses throughout the Bay Area has caused health officials in eight counties to urge all health care providers to prioritize injections for residents ages 65 and up because of the virus' high mortality rate among older people.

Bay Area health departments are collaborating with medical providers to get the shots into people's arms as quickly as possible. Marin, Napa, Santa Cruz and Solano counties are prioritizing residents ages 75 and older. Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties are prioritizing people ages 65 and older. The shift to an age-based system for the vaccines is in keeping with the state's policy and is in addition to continuing

vaccines for Phase 1A-eligible health care workers, many of whom are now expecting their second doses, according to a joint press release issued Feb. 3.

"Across the region, most COVID-19 deaths have been in the 65-and-up age group. Thus, focusing vaccination efforts on those at greatest risk of death will have the biggest immediate impact on saving lives," county officials said in the statement.

The older demographic is bearing a staggering proportion of COVID-19-related deaths. As of Jan. 28, upward of 80% of the deaths are among the 65-plus age group, according to the release. This older demographic makes up 81% of deaths in Santa Clara County and 84% in San Mateo County. Other counties also have high numbers of deaths in this age group: Contra Costa, 82%;

Marin, 92%; Napa, 79%; San Francisco, 83%; Santa Cruz, 90%; and Solano, 78%.

"Three out of four COVID-19 deaths in Marin are among residents age 75 or older," said Dr. Matt Willis, public health officer for Marin County, which has the highest per capita older adult population of any California county. "A vaccine offered to a resident above age 75 is 300 times more likely to save a life than a vaccine offered to someone under the age of 50."

The Bay Area continues to receive only a small fraction of the doses needed to vaccinate residents ages 65 and older, much less than the broader occupation-based groups the state has included in Phase 1B Tier 1, including educators, food and agricultural workers, and emergency services personnel, health officials noted. Weekly dose allocations from the state, which is based on a formula officials said is designed to ensure fair distribution across California, have slowed compared to shipments in December and early January. At the current pace, it would require several weeks to offer a first dose to all older adults who would like to be vaccinated, they said.

"We need to be direct and honest with the public that, although we want to vaccinate everyone, right now we just don't have enough vaccine to do so. Given limited supply of vaccine, we must prioritize vaccinating those



Magali Gauthier

Empty vials of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine at Ravenswood Family Health Center in East Palo Alto. A shortage of vaccine supplies has led to frustrating delays and canceled appointments throughout California.

at greatest risk of death or serious illness. We are anxious to vaccinate a much broader segment of the population, and are ready to do so as soon as vaccine supplies allow," Santa Clara County Health Officer Dr. Sara Cody said.

The limited vaccine supply is causing widespread inability to make new appointments, and in some cases, can lead to cancellations of existing appointments. Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines require a second dose a few weeks after the first; the need for second doses limits the number of people who can be newly vaccinated each week, the region's

health officials said.

Also on Wednesday, President Joe Biden's administration and Gov. Gavin Newsom announced separately that they are launching a pilot mass-vaccination effort in the state. They will initially be opening centers at the Oakland Coliseum and at University of California, Los Angeles where they expect to begin vaccinating a minimum of 6,000 people a day. Federal officials also said they are increasing vaccine distribution to states by 20%.

People would be able to make appointments through the state's

See **VACCINE SHORTAGE**, page 15

Pull to the Right for Sirens and Lights



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Woodside: Highway 84 weekday shutdown beginning Monday

Caltrans planning to close entire roadway for daytime tree removal

By Julia Brown
Almanac Assistant Editor

Beginning Monday, Feb. 8, Highway 84 in Woodside will be fully shut down between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. on weekdays until the end of the month for planned tree removal work by Caltrans, according to a Feb. 3 traffic advisory from the agency.

The fuel break project, in coordination with the Woodside Fire Protection District and funded by a U.S. Fire Service grant, will lead to the closure of the major thoroughfare during weekday work hours through Feb. 26, according to Caltrans. Highway 84 will be closed to traffic between Portola and Fox Hill roads, with work estimated to take two to three weeks. No work will take place on holidays or weekends.

Crews will be removing 25 eucalyptus and two Monterey pine trees "identified to be

hazardous to the traveling public due to concerns over falling limbs and fire danger," RocQuel Johnson, Caltrans District 4 public information branch chief, said in an email Wednesday.

For people traveling eastbound on Highway 84, the detour will be at Skyline Boulevard to Kings Mountain Road to get back on the highway, according to Caltrans. For westbound motorists, the detour will be at Kings Mountain Road, turning left at Skyline and back on Highway 84.

Caltrans had announced Feb. 1 that the project's work hours would be 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, but work hours were revised Wednesday afternoon "to accommodate morning commuters and limit inconvenience to the traveling public," Johnson said.

Woodside Town Manager Kevin Bryant said in an email Wednesday morning that a week-long full closure of Highway 84 "is very uncommon," and added

the town was lobbying Caltrans to allow one lane to remain open while crews complete the tree removal work.

"The closure would have a major impact on residents of Woodside and the surrounding areas who would have to add substantial time to make routine trips," Bryant said.

Asked why the full road closure is necessary, Johnson said it's a move to protect motorist safety and accommodate equipment necessary for the project, "including one crane with a 26' wide footprint when its stability outriggers are fully extended," she said.

"The closure will also protect the public from work zone hazards created by the volume of material marked for removal from certain sections of the project area," Johnson said. ■

Email Julia Brown at jbrown@almanacnews.com

Palo Alto banned from bringing back residents-only requirement for Foothills Park

By Gennady Sheyner

Palo Alto is permanently barred from limiting access to visitors to Foothills Park on the basis of residency under an injunction that a U.S. district court judge signed off on Monday, Jan. 25.

The injunction, which was issued by U.S. District Judge Edward Davila, is the product of a settlement between the city and a coalition of plaintiffs that included the American Civil Liberties Union, the NAACP and residents from Palo Alto and other Peninsula cities. The City Council approved the settlement on Nov. 2, at which time it also voted to repeal the 1965 ordinance that restricted access to the 1,400-acre preserve to Palo Alto residents and their guests.

The permanent injunction that took effect Monday ensures that the city will not be able to reverse that decision. It states that the city and its employees are “permanently enjoined from restricting or prohibiting access to Foothills Park on the basis of Palo Alto residency.” It also prohibits the city from “discriminating between Palo Alto residents and non-residents as to access to Foothills Park,” though the prohibition does not apply to facilities within the park.

The injunction also officially snuffs out Palo Alto’s earlier plan to bring the issue of Foothills Park access to voters in 2022. That was part of the plan the council approved in August, at which time it also launched a pilot program that would allow up to 50 nonresidents into the park

daily. In September, the coalition of plaintiffs filed the lawsuit, charging that the policy violates First Amendment rights, including free speech and freedom of assembly.

The lawsuit also stated that the city’s ban on nonresidents “traces its roots to an era when racial discrimination in and around the City was open and notorious” and cites mid-20th century policies such as redlining and “block busting” that prevented Black people from buying homes in Palo Alto.

“It is long past time to relegate this unlawful exclusion to the dustbin of history,” the suit states.

The council approved the settlement on Nov. 2 by a 5-2 vote, with council members Greg Tanaka and Lydia Kou dissenting, paving the way for the city to officially drop the residents-only

restriction on Dec. 17.

The injunction prohibits the city from placing on a future ballot or supporting “any referendum or initiative that has the purpose or effect of prohibiting or restricting access to Foothills Park by nonresidents of Palo Alto.”

With the preserve now open to all, Palo Alto has seen a surge of visitors, particularly on weekends and holidays. One weekend in late December, shortly after the park was opened to all, the preserve saw roughly six times as many visitors as in the prior year.

Even before the November decision, the number of Foothills Park visitors has been on the rise. According to a report from Daren Anderson, division manager at the Community Services Department, about 222,608 people visited the park last year, an increase

of 42.5% over 2019, when the park saw 156,250 visitors. The report states that visitation levels have remained consistent over the years at about 150,000 people annually, with somewhat higher levels in 2011 and 2012.

Before the policy changed on Dec. 17, the city had turned away 4,260 vehicles in 2020 because of resident status, up by 13% from the prior year. The city also reported 523 “dog turn-aways” last year, an increase of 55.2% from 2019 (dogs are not allowed at the preserve on weekends and holidays).

Now, spurred by stories about hazardous traffic conditions and environmental degradation, the council is preparing to institute new restrictions for visiting

See **FOOTHILLS PARK**, page 15

San Mateo County plans to pair cops with mental health workers to help those in crisis

By Kevin Forestieri

Starting in September, four police departments in San Mateo County will welcome a new staff member to the force: a mental health clinician, ready to be deployed into the field.

Following a wave of police reform efforts across the Bay Area, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors voted last month to launch a pilot that embeds mental health professionals into several law enforcement agencies. The hope is that the added expertise will help cops better respond to people experiencing a mental health crisis and avoid conflicts that can be fatal.

Under the program, the cities of Redwood City, San Mateo, Daly City and South San Francisco will each have a full-time clinician responding to 911 calls, dispatched alongside a sworn officer to incidents involving someone suspected of having a mental health crisis. Though working in a tag team, it will be up to the clinician to assess those in crisis and “exercise their independent judgment” for how to handle the situation.

In less extreme cases, clinicians will refer those in crisis to mental health services. In cases where the person is a danger to themselves or others, they will be placed in a psychiatric hold and transferred to a medical facility. The pilot makes no mention of arrests and jail transport, and makes clear that the goal is intervention over incarceration.

“I think this is going to make

a world of difference in peoples’ lives,” said Supervisor Carole Groom.

The pilot, which will cost \$876,000 split between the cities and the county, has been spearheaded by Supervisor Don Horsley a retired law enforcement officer who served as San Mateo County’s sheriff for 14 years. He said people suffering from a mental illness are often dealing with serious conditions by the time they have a run-in with the cops, leading to altercations that can result in serious injury or even deaths. Some of the incidents in San Mateo County have been “heartbreaking,” he said, and the pilot is a response to that.

“I just thought there must be something we can do better,” Horsley said.

Controversial incidents include the police killing of 36-year-old Chinedu Okobi in 2018, who was unarmed and reportedly struggling with mental health issues. Sheriff’s deputies stopped Okobi after he was found walking into traffic and forcefully apprehended him, shocking him with a Taser multiple times. He later suffered cardiac arrest and died, and officers have since been cleared of wrongdoing.

Other deadly confrontations with the mentally ill the same year include Warren Ragudo, 34, who was shocked with a Taser by Daly City police while handcuffed and later died, and Ramzi Saad, 55, who was killed by Redwood City police following Taser use.

Police routinely find themselves doing social work, responding

to non-violent and non-emergency calls related to mental health, drug addiction, poverty and homelessness, Horsley said. He remembers handling his own encounters with the mentally ill well, but that he didn’t have the formal training or background to identify symptoms and act accordingly.

“There were times where you can get exasperated,” he said. “I didn’t really understand schizophrenia as a young officer, and what I said to someone who is

schizophrenic could be dramatically misinterpreted.”

The police chiefs in San Mateo and Redwood City were quick to jump on the idea of a pilot and were eager to partner with the county, Horsley said. South San Francisco and Daly City later came on board, while smaller cities to the south did not make a push for participation. While the county has buy-in from top police officials, Horsley said he believes the rank-and-file officers will be open to change.

The pilot comes at a time when activists along the Peninsula and throughout the Bay Area are calling for police reform, including changes to the way communities respond to non-violent emergency calls. In lieu of armed officers, social workers and health care staff may be better suited to respond to those suffering from drug abuse, mental illness or homelessness.

See **MENTAL HEALTH**, page 18

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Sign-ups for vaccine notifications

People can sign up to receive updates and alerts about when they are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine through either a San Mateo County or state system.

Access the San Mateo County alert system at is.gd/smcvax or the state system at myturn.ca.gov.

People may also call a state COVID-19 hotline at 1-833-422-4255 (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturdays and Sundays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

"We appreciate the tremendous public interest in understanding how we are doing in this critical work to achieve the fastest, safe reach possible for those eligible to be vaccinated," said Louise Rogers, chief of San Mateo County Health, in a statement.

As of Sunday, Jan. 31, 63,702 people had received COVID-19 vaccinations in San Mateo County and of those, 13,977 had received both doses.

—Kate Bradshaw

Buck's co-owner returns to his Woodside roots

For Woodside's Tyler MacNiven, the journey home has included a 2,000-mile walk across Japan, an "Amazing Race" around the world and business ventures ranging from film production to meal kits. He grew up lending a hand at his parents' restaurant, Buck's of Woodside, the well-loved local eatery. But after college, it looked for a time as if MacNiven's future would be in travel or entertainment, or perhaps a combination of the two.

MacNiven shares his unusual trip back to the food world, and to Woodside, in an online talk on Feb. 5 hosted by the Woodside Arts & Culture Committee, part of the committee's First Friday series.

MacNiven first made headlines as a high school student who mounted a political-style campaign to "run" for admission to Stanford University. When it turned out that wasn't in the cards, he attended the University of California, Santa Cruz. Post-college, he backpacked the length of Japan, a distance of 2,000 miles, and created a documentary about the experience. He later produced travel documentaries about Iran, Cuba, India and Mongolia.

MacNiven also appeared on — and with teammate BJ Averell won — the ninth season of the TV show "The Amazing Race," a reality show that combines travel and competition.

Back in the Bay Area, he opened a restaurant in San Francisco and co-founded meal kit delivery service Sun Basket.

His latest adventure, which began last year, brought him back to the Midpeninsula to join his brothers, Dylan and Rowan, in taking over ownership of Buck's from their parents, Jamis and Margaret MacNiven, following their retirement.

This year marks the restaurant's 30th year in business.

MacNiven's talk takes place on Friday, Feb. 5, at 7 p.m. For more information, visit woodsideartandculture.org.

—Heather Zimmerman

Free Valentine grams for pet owners

Fun fact: 1 gram of dog waste contains 23 million fecal bacteria, states a new campaign by Flows to Bay, the San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention Program.

What's more fun, though, is that the agency is sponsoring a Valentine Gram program in which people can send free dog bag dispensers, along with a cute "Life is ruff without you" Valentine's Day message to the pet owners in their lives this year.

The campaign is aimed at mitigating the environmental impacts of dog waste, which contains bacteria that can threaten animal and human health. Pet waste is one of the largest contributors to water quality programs in the county. It should not be used as lawn fertilizer or incorporated into compost piles and can contaminate soil and water, according to Flows to Bay.

Recipients of Valentine grams should live in San Mateo County, and while the program could certainly be used to send a hint to one's neighbors and their fecally flagrant furry friends, people are encouraged to also consider sending them to friends, loved ones or co-workers. People can send as many of these Valentine grams as they'd like, according to the agency. Go to is.gd/flows2bayvalentine to learn more.

People can also treat themselves to the free disposal bags and dispenser by taking a "Scoop the Poop" pledge at is.gd/flows2baytreat.

See **COMMUNITY BRIEFS**, page 19

Redwood respite: 10 places in the Santa Cruz Mountains you can still seek out sequoias

By **Kate Bradshaw**

Almanac Staff Writer

When it comes to getting outside, there are few landscapes that help me get out of my head and feel like I'm escaping the world outside more than a grove of giant redwoods.

These majestic, sometimes ancient, trees tower as the tallest species in the world, and since they grow only along the Pacific coast, having them in the backyard of the Peninsula feels extra special.

The CZU August Lightning Complex fire, which burned 86,000 acres in the Santa Cruz Mountains, has shut down well-loved favorites like Big Basin, Butano State Park and Pescadero Creek County Park, among others. But luckily, plenty of areas are still open and offering access to redwoods which are worth seeking out on their own terms.

Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve

Half Moon Bay

Parking: free/ no dogs

Purisima Creek Redwoods is a 4,711-acre open space preserve operated by Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD), offering abundant second-growth redwoods, a creek, shade and ferns to enjoy.

The forest was logged in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and most of the trees are around 100 years old. However, stumps from much wider trees that were probably about 1,000 years old before they were felled are still visible, according to the space's website. Go to is.gd/purisima1 for more information.

Bear Creek Redwoods

Los Gatos

Parking: free/ no dogs

Located just south of Los Gatos, this relatively new open space preserve covers about

1,430 acres — including hundreds of acres of redwood forests — and 6 miles of trails, with more on the way. It was once slated to become a golf course and luxury development and remains home to protected species, according to MROSD.

It tends to fill up on weekends, according to open space district spokesperson Leigh Ann Gessner, so mornings and weekdays work best for a visit.

Go to is.gd/bearcrk1 for more information.

Huddart Park

1100 Kings Mountain Road, Woodside

Parking: \$6 (seniors free, M-F; vets always free with ID)/ no dogs

Huddart Park, located in the Woodside hills, offers about 900 acres of lush forest to explore, with plenty of second-growth redwoods to shade the trails.

Carla Schoof of San Mateo County Parks recommends the following three trails:

■ Chinquapin Trail (create a 7-mile loop by using Dean and Crystal Springs trails)

■ Chickadee and Redwood Nature trails, which are great for families with young children

■ Skyline Trail, which connects Huddart to Wunderlich Park.

Go to parks.smcgov.org/huddart-park for more information.

Sam McDonald Park

13435 Pescadero Creek Road, Loma Mar

Parking: \$6 (seniors free, M-F; vets always free with ID)/ no dogs

During the wildfires this fall, parks staff worked alongside paid and volunteer firefighters to create a fire break along Old Haul Road in Pescadero and keep the fire from spreading to the county's Sam McDonald and Memorial parks.

Sam McDonald Park, which contains about 400 acres of redwood forest, connects to

Pescadero Creek County Park, which sustained fire damage. As a result, all of the trails that connect to that park are closed and marked with signs and barricades. However, visitors may access other areas of the park, Schoof said. She recommends seeking out the Heritage Grove Trail, which offers views of old growth redwoods just a short hike from the parking lot.

Go to parks.smcgov.org/sam-mcdonald-park for more information.

Loma Mar Redwoods

Loma Mar

Parking: free

These redwoods are somewhat hidden, accessible only via unmarked trails, but are popular with locals. About 170 acres of this forest were added about five years ago to San Mateo County's Memorial Park, Schoof said. To reach the small parking area, drive toward Memorial Park but continue past the main park entrance another mile west. The area can also be accessed from Highway 1 on Pescadero Creek Road. On a recent Sunday afternoon, I had the roughly 1-mile trail nearly all to myself.

El Corte de Madera Creek

16040 CA-35, Redwood City

Parking: free/ no dogs

This open space preserve is less popular with hikers due to its heavy use by mountain bikers, said Gessner.

In addition to lush, forested trails, the open space offers a few unique features. There is a trail to see tafoni sandstone formations, which are lace-like natural indentations in sandstone boulders, and just across Skyline Boulevard on Cal Water land is the Methuseloh tree, a nearly 2,000-year-old behemoth of a redwood.

Go to is.gd/ecdmosp for more information.

Portola Redwoods State Park

9000 Portola State Park Road, La Honda

Parking: \$10/ dogs restricted in most areas

Farther toward the coastside and deeper into the Santa Cruz Mountains you'll hit Portola Redwoods State Park. This area is adjacent to areas that were burned, and as a result, a number of trails in the park are currently shut down, including the Coyote Ridge Trail, the Pomponio Trail, and the service road beyond Summit Trail. In



Photo by Kate Bradshaw

The Loma Mar Redwoods area, owned by San Mateo County Parks, is hidden about a mile past Memorial Park on Pescadero Creek Road.

See **REDWOODS**, page 18

GOALS

continued from page 1

Housing Needs Assessment, which mandates that the city plan for thousands of new housing units — one recent proposal indicated Menlo Park may have to plan for 3,075 new housing units, including 1,218 designated as affordable to low- and very low-income households.

While the assessment is done every seven to eight years, this assessment cycle will look different from previous ones, said Cara Silver, interim city attorney. There will be a lot of housing units to accommodate and required discussions about fair housing and environmental justice, she said.

In addition, the city has partnered with PG&E, Facebook and the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority to submit a grant application to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a project to protect areas near the Dumbarton Bridge from flooding and sea level rise. The city is expected to learn whether the funding proposal, for \$50 million, will be approved in the summer. In the meantime, it is working with the other agencies to iron out how the project would proceed if approved.

Mayor Drew Combs pushed back on the recommended goals and said he wanted to better reflect what residents want the City Council to accomplish. “I have a concern that a lot of those goals are things that aren’t having direct impacts on residents enough,” he said.

A quiet zone?

When it comes to what the residents want, there was no shortage of nearby locals, including Atherton Town Council member Rick DeGolia, sharing impassioned pleas to look into making the Encinal, and possibly Glenwood and Oak Grove avenues, Caltrain crossings into a “quiet zone.”

Atherton was the first community along the Caltrain line to create a quiet zone at its Fair Oaks crossing and is working to install one at Watkins Avenue, DeGolia explained. To do so, the rail crossing must be fitted with what’s called a “quad gate,” blocking vehicle and pedestrian access in all directions when the train is approaching. Otherwise, train operators are mandated to blow the horn starting about a quarter-mile from each crossing, he said.

And with four crossings in Menlo Park, residents noted, the noise can be incredibly disruptive for daily living. Residents talked about how their lives go on pause whenever a train

passes by, since nobody can hear anything else, and how the train routinely wakes up sleeping babies. Radu Mihaescu, who said he has lived in several locations near the Caltrain tracks in Menlo Park, added that the noise can have public safety impacts too — once, he and his neighbors failed to hear a crime taking place near their homes since they all wore earplugs to bed because of the train.

“What was an irritant has grown into an unbearable problem,” said Martin Mazner, stating that the number of trains on the Caltrain line has tripled over the past 15 years.

The council asked staff to look into how much it would cost to install such gates at the Encinal and Glenwood rail crossings. Replacing all of the gates would be estimated to cost \$1 million per crossing, while adding new ones would be estimated at \$500,000 per crossing, said Public Works Director Nikki Nagaya.



Magali Gauthier

The Menlo Park City Council and City Hall staff will have to figure out how to restore community services when in-person events and activities are permitted again.

Leaf blower ban?

Another frequently voiced problem that a number of residents urged the council to act on was that of gas-powered leaf blowers. Such blowers, residents said, pollute the environment

with their relatively high carbon emissions and can cause respiratory issues by blowing dust and particles around. They are also very noisy. Residents urged the council to ban gas-powered blowers and only

permit electric ones.

Previously, the Environmental Quality Commission did not recommend a ban because the batteries of electric-powered blowers weren’t considered to be as powerful or reliable, but the technology has improved since then, said Mueller. Enforcement is also a challenge — for instance, should gardeners or the homeowners who hire them be penalized when rules are not obeyed? Currently, the city has some electric leaf blowers but staffers don’t use them all the time because the batteries tend to run out before a full work day is over, Nagaya said.

Ultimately, the council decided to refer the matter to the Environmental Quality Commission again and ask its members to develop a recommendation as part of its work plan this year. ■

Email Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com

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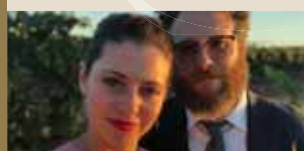
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PARCEL TAX

continued from page 5

and technology programs; reading and writing programs; art and music programs; reduced class sizes; and retention of teachers for the district's two schools, Ormondale and Corte Madera, according to the district website. Measure O, which expires on June 30, generates about \$1.2 million for the district annually. District staff asserted that the measure "must be renewed" to maintain these programs.

Measure O passed in 2013 with 69% of the vote. It consolidated two expiring measures: Measure C (with an annual tax of \$290 per parcel) and Measure D (\$168 per parcel), and increased the rate by \$123 per parcel to \$581, Ngo said.

During a Dec. 17 governing board meeting, trustees discussed the possible future role of the Portola Valley Schools Foundation. If the renewal fails, the district would have to rely more heavily on the foundation, trustees agreed.

Menlo Park City School District

The Menlo Park City School District governing board voted in December to put the renewal of Measure X, its \$360-per-parcel tax, on the November 2021



Magali Gauthier

Ormondale Elementary School first grade teacher Adam Ahlbach speaks to his students before they head out for recess in Portola Valley on Oct. 13. The Portola Valley School District's board voted to hold a parcel tax election in May that would raise about \$1 million annually if it passes.

ballot. The district's governing board began looking at potential areas to cut costs by \$1.5 million during the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years, respectively, to help address deficit spending that could result from 2019's teacher salary hike (88% of the district's 2020-21 budget will go toward staff salaries, according to the district).

"One of our primary responsibilities is that the district does not go bankrupt," said board president Sherwin Chen during a Dec. 17 meeting. "I think it is appropriate that we're super conservative as we model out a

budget. The cost of being wrong is huge; that's layoffs and that's a cost we want to avoid at all costs."

With declining enrollment, the district does have to lay off some staff this year, Superintendent Erik Burmeister said during the meeting. The district grew its staff this school year even with decreased enrollment because of the need for smaller class sizes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the meeting, trustee David Ackerman said teacher salaries are the last place he is willing to make budget cuts.

"I don't want our staff to have to carry the burden to get us

through," he said.

Other trustees noted that the district can't take any potential cuts off the table.

In 2019, the board had preliminary discussions about putting a measure before voters to renew or replace 2017's Measure X, which expires in 2024, at a higher taxation rate. It passed in 2017 with an initial annual rate of \$360 per parcel.

Two weeks ago, the district began a process of determining the strategy and scope of a replacement parcel tax that would provide greater long-term financial solvency, according to a presentation prepared by staff for the Jan. 21 meeting.

At that meeting, Burmeister recommended that the board pursue various ways to cut costs, which include:

- Elimination of the director of finance position and creation of a new classified-level position

- Elimination of the directors of technology and human resources and the creation of one new combined position: assistant superintendent of talent & technology

- Agreement of the implementation of "combination classes" in those cases where doing so would save the need to hire another full-time teacher at certain schools/grade levels and still maintain class size goals.

With implementation of a 5% raise for district teachers during the 2019-20 school year, the district's required reserve funds will drop below the minimum amount specified in board policy — at least 15% of total annual spending — by the 2022-23 school year (below 10%) without a higher level of tax revenue, according to the district.

Last February, the school board voted to hold off on placing a parcel tax measure on the November 2020 ballot.

According to a December presentation from Whitehurst/Mosher Campaign Strategy and Media, a political consulting firm hired to advise the district on the parcel tax, the November 2020 election showed that voters in San Mateo County and neighboring areas were supportive of local school measures at a high rate, despite the pandemic. All school bond measures and parcel taxes within San Mateo, Alameda and Marin counties were approved. Some 70% of school bond measures and parcel taxes passed in Santa Clara County.

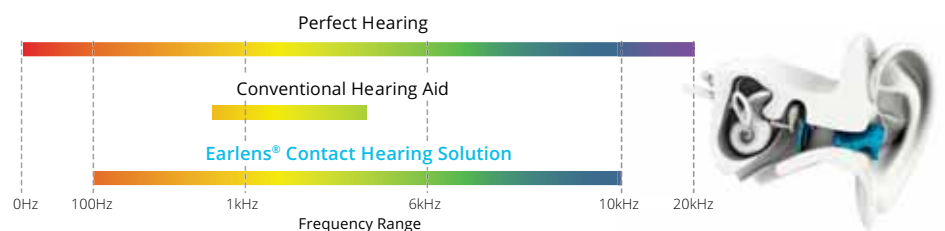
Both the Portola Valley and Menlo Park City school district measures would require two-thirds voter support to pass. ■

Email Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com

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VACCINATION

continued from page 1

With Newsom now facing an increasingly credible recall effort, the slow, sputtering vaccine rollout raises the question: Didn't the state have a plan for this?

Originally yes, it did — although the governor's Office of Emergency Service isn't responding to questions about those early preparations. During that Oct. 19 press conference, Newsom said that a state logistics task force had been working on a vaccine distribution plan for months. Public health experts say the state's initial approach was modeled on the tried-and-true approach it uses to distribute flu shots — a plan that placed the bulk of the administrative onus on county governments, with the state serving a standard-setting and advisory role.

In the past, giving local health officers that flexibility “has been very advantageous,” said Dr. John Swartzberg, an infectious disease specialist and professor emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley School of Public Health.

“Unfortunately, during a pandemic, that approach can make it very difficult to implement things. And I think the state has recognized that.”

So last week, Newsom announced Plan B: proposals that he promises will simplify and speed up the process of pumping out vaccines.

What went wrong with the initial plan — and shouldn't the administration have anticipated these hiccups?

Many public health experts say most of the factors that have slowed the state's inoculation plan are outside the governor's control: California's size and complexity, a fragmented public health care system spread over 58 counties, unsteady federal leadership and the challenges of transporting, storing and administering current COVID-19 vaccines.

But some of the hurdles may be of the administration's own making.

The state's initial distribution framework, which prioritized Californians by occupation group, underlying medical conditions and housing status, may have slowed the process by creating a system that was difficult to administer and hard for the public to understand.

And some critics bemoan what they see as the governor's penchant for making vague, premature announcements prior to consulting those most affected.

Jeff Smith, executive officer for Santa Clara County, is one of those critics.

“For the past year, the entire approach that the governor has taken to the pandemic has been disorganized and petulant,” said Smith, who disagrees that county governments are sitting on unused vaccine. “Whenever he feels like he's getting bad press, he does something. And the things that he does are not wise things and they're not driven by scientific decisions.”

A vaccine rollout that is unprecedented

No matter how much blame Newsom deserves, Democratic consultant Garry South said the governor is sure to get the lion's share.

“I've seen this movie before,” said South, former campaign manager to Gray Davis, the only governor in California history to be successfully recalled. Davis, South noted, was booted from office in large part for his handling of the state's electricity crisis in 2001. “The governor gets blamed not for the problem, but for not solving the problem.”

California is not the only state struggling. Vaccine production has been slower than many experts expected. Public health authorities say the outgoing Trump administration offered neither the guidance nor the necessary funding to states. The Pfizer vaccine must be stored at -94 degrees Fahrenheit, while the Moderna version can be kept at a balmy -4 F. Once thawed, both have a short shelf life.

“I would be hesitant to make any really strong judgments right now as to where things have gone wrong,” said Demo-

‘There have been so many fits and starts and changing directions of the vaccine rollout that it's really tied the hands of counties.’

GRAHAM KNAUS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE CALIFORNIA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

cratic state Sen. Josh Newman from Fullerton, one of roughly a dozen state Democratic legislators who get weekly Zoom briefings on COVID from the governor's office. “It's unprecedented (and) it's inherently complicated.”

The complexity of the current vaccine campaign is “a quantum leap” ahead of all of our other vaccination programs, said Swartzberg. “No one that I know expected it to go smoothly. And, you know, right now it looks like it's gone just horrifically. But I think we're really being

granular, when — day by day — we critique it.”

It's no coincidence that the states that seem to have had the most success in pushing out vaccines — West Virginia, the Dakotas — have populations a mere fraction of Los Angeles County's and with nothing close to the linguistic and cultural diversity, said Jeff Goad, chair of the Department of Pharmacy Practice at Chapman University. He sits on the state's Drafting Guidelines Workgroup, a panel of experts that help determine which groups should receive vaccines first.

“We're in a class by ourselves,” he said.

In explaining the slow rollout last week, the governor likened changing policy to “shifting course” on a “large ship.” But given how fragmented the state's health care system is, with vaccine distribution responsibilities split up among 58 county governments, nine multi-county hospital networks and at least half a dozen pharmacy chains, “it's more like a flotilla,” said Anthony Wright, director of Health Access and a member of the state's vaccine advisory committee.

The state's early planning efforts were also the victim of bad timing, said Tony Iton, a senior vice president of the California Endowment. Vaccine deployment planning took place just as the state's COVID caseloads were peaking once again and hospitals in Southern California were turning away ambulances.

“The very people you need to sit back and do the analysis and research and the planning are caught up managing the day-to-day issues related to the just incredible surge we saw over the winter,” he said. “I know the folks that are working up there (in Sacramento) are — they're burnt. They've just been running full speed for a year, and humans can't take that.”

The governor's early optimism notwithstanding, none of these hurdles were lost on those inside the Newsom administration this winter.

Six months = 300,000 shots a day

In a mid-December podcast produced by the Office of Emergency Services, Grady Joseph, assistant director for the state's Covid-19 Logistics Task Force, predicted that the vaccination campaign would make the state's earlier organizational struggles to buy and distribute personal protective equipment and ramp up testing “look fairly trivial.”

“If you want to vaccinate everybody within a six-month time period, assuming you have

the supplies and the vaccine, we have to do an excess of 300,000 vaccines a day,” said Grady. “If you compare that to the amount of COVID testing we've done, some of the highest days we've ever had have been 215,000.”

On Monday, the state administered a little over 167,000 doses, according to data collected by the Los Angeles Times.

The overhaul of the state vaccine plan announced over the last two weeks is intended to speed up the process.

On Jan. 22, the state launched a website where anyone in the state can sign up to be notified when they are eligible for a vaccine. Up until then, confused and anxious Californians seeking information would often ping pong between their county, providers and insurers.

The governor also announced that the state would hire Blue Shield to coordinate where vaccines will go and to gather data on distribution.

And last week, the governor announced a simplified eligibility system. Once counties finish vaccinating health care workers, next in line will be teachers, child care workers, agricultural workers and emergency responders, and Californians over the age of 65. After that, counties will move through their populations solely by age.

But demonstrating just how politically fraught vaccine distribution is, both the new eligibility plan and the Blue Shield announcement have earned the governor ire from fresh quarters.

The cost of simplifying the eligibility framework is that many high-risk candidates like big box store clerks and younger people with chronic health issues or disabilities have been pushed to the back of the line.

José Padilla is director of the nonprofit California Rural Legal Assistance and sits on the state's community vaccine advisory committee. He said he was taken aback when, two weeks ago, State Epidemiologist Erica Pan and Surgeon General Nadine Burke Harris floated the idea of the new approach.

“Changing the eligibility criteria that is going to impact the rollout six meetings into the process just didn't feel fair to me,” he said.

On Jan. 29, the directors of lobbying groups that represent the state's counties and county

Your COVID-19 vaccine questions — answered

We've compiled a list of who can currently get vaccinated in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, plus answers to common questions and links to resources. Access the page at tinyurl.com/COVIDvaccinequestions. Have a question? Send it to editor@pawebly.com and we'll do our best to answer it.

health executives wrote a joint letter to the governor warning that the Blue Shield proposal, “for which there is little detail, threatens to eclipse our members' core local public health expertise and functions.”

“There have been so many fits and starts and changing directions of the vaccine rollout that it's really tied the hands of counties,” said Graham Knaus, executive director for the California State Association of Counties. We “have gotten in our own way, in terms of the instability of what the game plan is.”

Vaccination: Newsom ‘shooting for the moon’ yet again?

Smith, the executive of Santa Clara County, argued that the state's decision to bring in a company to ensure that doses are accurately being administered is a “solution looking for a problem” and based on inaccurate data. In an email exchange he shared, an employee with the California Department of Public Health inquired about 24,159 doses that were “unaccounted for.” Smith said the real number is zero.

“The main problem right now is the amount of vaccine that's available, not the utilization or distribution,” he said. “This one-size-fits-all (approach) hiring an insurance company is really just a political effort to try to take the heat off of the governor for not having a confident approach to the pandemic.” Smith noted that the county was only informed of the Blue Shield decision an hour before it was made public.

To critics, the Blue Shield announcement is part of a pattern of unclear and premature communication from the administration.

In mid-January, for example, the governor announced that all Californians over 65 were now eligible for the vaccine. But that was a state recommendation, a subtlety lost on many Californians who set about scrambling for their dose. Some counties expressed frustration, noting that limits on vaccine supply would make it impossible to vaccinate all residents over that age anytime soon.

“If there's an expectation in a community that they're now eligible and can hop into a

See **VACCINATION**, page 15

VACCINATION

continued from page 14

provider or make an appointment and get it, but we can't deliver that, that's a very difficult place to be," said Knaus at the California State Association of Counties.

For Newsom, California's vaccine delay poses a quandary. He has long made big ambitious goal-setting a hallmark of his political style. When running for governor in 2018, he promised to introduce a state-funded single-payer health care system, despite

a prohibitively high price tag and no obvious political pathway in the Legislature. He also vowed to oversee the construction of 3.5 million new homes — which would require the state to break its annual construction record by 36% every year for eight years.

That shoot-for-the-moon approach may serve the governor well on the campaign trail, said Dan Schnur, a professor at USC's Annenberg School of Communications who has worked the press operations for Republican politicians such as former Gov. Pete Wilson and the late Arizona

U.S. Sen. John McCain.

On most issues, making big, inspiring promises and then failing to fully deliver "hasn't caused him any problems because most voters aren't paying close attention to the day-to-day machinations of government," said Schnur.

"But when it comes to COVID, they are paying close attention." ■ *CalMatters is a Sacramento-based nonpartisan, nonprofit journalism venture that works with more than 130 media partners throughout the state, including The Almanac.*

FOOTHILLS PARK

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Foothills Park. On Jan. 19, the council directed staff to prepare an emergency measure that would lower the cap on the number of people who can visit Foothills Park at one time from the current level of 750 to 400 (though staff has leeway to raise it to 500). Prior to last November, the visitor cap was 1,000 visitors.

The council, meanwhile, is moving fast to rewrite the rules for Foothills Park access. On Monday, council members voted 6-1 to approve the emergency ordinance establishing the \$6 entry fee and capping the number of visitors who can be there at one time at 400. The vote came just days after the Parks and Recreation Commission held its own review of Foothills Park policies, with most commissioners

agreeing that the city's new system should also include an annual pass. And while they didn't reach a consensus on a visitor limit, most suggested that the 400-person cap is too low and favored a cap of 600 or 650 visitors.

'It is long past time to relegate this unlawful exclusion to the dustbin of history.'

NAACP AND ACLU'S LAWSUIT AGAINST PALO ALTO

The commission is scheduled to revisit the issue and make a formal recommendation on Foothills Park policies on Feb. 11.

With the emergency ordinance now in effect, the council plans to roll out the weekend fee in

mid-February and to institute the weekday fee in mid-March.

While most council members agreed Monday to enact the new restrictions, council member Alison Cormack, who regularly volunteers at Foothills Park, suggested that the city may have acted too quickly in adopting an emergency ordinance without carefully considering what the visitor limit should be and without including an annual pass or discounts for certain visitors, including students and low-income residents. The city has created a situation that "harms Palo Alto residents who use Foothills Park often," she said.

"Throwing out our favorite number for a capacity limit is a pretty careless way to make policy," Cormack said. ■

Email Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@paweekly.com

VACCINE SHORTAGE

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new website, myturn.ca.gov, which notifies users when it is their turn for a vaccine.

The state is scheduled to receive more than 1 million doses of the vaccines this week, which Newsom said is "an encouraging sign."

California has now tripled its number of daily vaccinations; it has risen from being at the bottom tier to the top quarter of U.S. states for vaccine administration, he said. The state is also reallocating about half of the 170,000 doses that remain in storage at CVS Pharmacy to Kaiser Permanente to use in minority and low-income communities where virus infection rates have been high, he said.

The state is also seeing improvements in case and hospitalization numbers, which state Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly on Tuesday attributed to regional stay-at-home orders and an increase in public adherence to social distancing, mask wearing and travel protocols. One month ago, the state had 60,000

new cases; today, it has 10,501 new cases, he said. The seven-day positivity rate has dropped from 14.3% on Jan. 7 to 6.1% today. The state also has a 22% decline in intensive care unit occupancy.

Health officials warned, however, that they are concerned about new variants that could be more infectious. The state has 150 cases of the U.K. variant and 960 cases of the West Coast variants, Newsom said. With the

Super Bowl taking place this weekend, health officials said they are concerned the state could see another surge if people don't use caution. They urged the public to continue to socialize with their household members only or to hold any Super Bowl gatherings outside and maintain social distancing and mask protocols. ■

Email Sue Dremann at sdremann@paweekly.com

Gail Blach

November 24, 1936 – January 14, 2021



Gail Dolores Blach passed peacefully into the gates of Heaven. She was 84. A lifelong resident of Menlo Park, she is survived by her loving and faithful husband of 61 years, Richard Blach, her sons, Daniel and Matthew, both of Napa, and her granddaughter, Emily.

Her sister, Sr. Joan Marie Derry, a retired Catholic nun in the Sisters of the Holy Family order, and her brother, Fr. Daniel Derry, a parish priest currently serving at Madonna del Sasso Church in Salinas, also survive her as do many nieces and nephews from both the Blach and Derry families.

Gail, a lifelong Menlo Park resident, was the fourth child of six. Her parents, Edward and Helen Derry, her sister, Nancy Madigan Nejmich Derry and her brothers, Edward Jr. and James Derry, predeceased her.

Gail had a love of holiday celebrations. She was born two days before Thanksgiving and wedded to Richard the day after Christmas in 1959 at St. Raymond's Church on Santa Cruz Avenue in Menlo Park. Dick and Gail were the first couple to be married at St. Raymond's after it was built. Following the passing of her mother, Gail and Dick took over the joyful Blach-Derry holiday celebrations hosting family, friends, priests and nuns for more than 30 years. Dick is the last surviving member in a family of eleven brothers and sisters.

Gail, a robust people person, truly loved a good story — a characteristic she shared with her husband. With a broad, rosy-cheeked smile and good-humored Irish insistence, she would urge friends and guests to launch into a more in-depth tale so she could capture all the details, often while enjoying her favorite cocktail, a Canadian Club whiskey with 7-up. Gail had an inquiring mind and she enjoyed good company as well as being "in the know."

Throughout her life, Gail attended Catholic schools, graduating from Menlo Park's St. Joseph's Elementary School, Sacred Heart High School in 1954, and attending San Diego College for Women (now the University of San Diego) before "coming home" and graduating from Notre Dame de Namur in Belmont. She went on to earn her teaching credential from San Jose State University.

Gail taught fourth grade at Hillview Elementary School in Los Altos for four years, then substitute taught at St. Raymond's and Nativity schools in Menlo Park.

Gail met the love of her life by way of introduction from one of the early Menlo Park Fire Chiefs, Thomas F. Cuff. The firehouse was next door to Gail's family's longtime business, Derry's Feed and Fuel on Oak Grove Avenue, owned by her father and, in addition, Chief Cuff's daughter was married to Bob Blach, Gail's soon-to-be husband's brother. Gail and Dick, who had recently finished his service in the Air Force, were introduced at a wedding reception.

Throughout her life, Gail supported many organizations while raising her two sons including St. Francis Center Redwood City, the Medical Mission Sisters in Los Altos and the Corpus Christi Monastery in Menlo Park.

She enjoyed playing bridge with friends, swimming and tennis.

Her main focus was always on family, gatherings for any happy occasion and showering her two sons and granddaughter with love and affection.

In her later years, she became a Good Samaritan for many friends and family members who reached out to her in times of need. She would spread the word among friends and family as well as numerous Catholic organizations asking for prayers, comfort and the Lord's help.

Contributions in Gail Blach's memory may be made to Corpus Christi Monastery, 215 Oak Grove Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025, 650.322.1801 -or- St. Francis Center, 151 Buckingham Avenue, Redwood City, CA 94063, 650.365.7829, schristina@stfrancisrwc.org.

PAID OBITUARY

Karl Handwerk

November 27, 1937 – January 13, 2021

Karl was born in Nuremberg, Germany and passed away in Woodside, California due to complications from a fall. Karl was an apprentice at Le Meridien Grand Hotel Nuremberg in Hotel and Restaurant Management. When he moved to Woodside he opened, Barbarossa Restaurant. Karl loved taking walks with his dog, Casey, along the trails in the Woodside Glens. He always said, "Life is not a race, life should be a stroll in the park." Karl was nicknamed "The Mayor of the Woodside Glens". He often went to Half Moon Bay to enjoy the local eateries. He loved a good meal!



PAID OBITUARY

PORTOLA VALLEY

continued from page 5

Derwin said. The town's Emergency Preparedness Committee discussed setting up neighborhood leaders to help with emergency response during a Jan. 7 meeting, according to meeting minutes. The town is also hoping to purchase a trailer to use as a command post during emergencies, the minutes state.

The town has also put \$130,000 in work toward vegetation management, she said.

In April 2019, the Town Council formed a committee to look

at ways to reduce the threat from wildfires. The committee's recommendations include adopting "reach codes" that go beyond state requirements for in all new construction, such as banning all combustible roofing and fencing materials, requiring ember-resistant vents and enclosed eaves, and multi-pane tempered glass windows and skylights.

Conversation on race and equity

In 2020, the town began a series of conversations about race and equity and plans to continue this

into 2021, Derwin said.

She said it's important to keep conversations about racial equity and the Black Lives Matter movement active.

Derwin would like to host a presentation on the history of housing disparity in town similar to ones held in Menlo Park on "The Color of Law" about housing segregation as a result of historic U.S. government-backed policies. The Menlo Park talks aim to educate residents about how policies such as red-lining led to a segregated Menlo Park

Derwin said she hopes the town can host a talk in the near future

about the history of the Ramaytush Ohlone tribe that lived on the Peninsula, including in Portola Valley. In December, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to read a land acknowledgment statement at the beginning of every meeting.

In November, the council approved an acknowledgment that Portola Valley was previously inhabited by Ramaytush Ohlone peoples and that "acknowledges the violent history of the land that it dwells upon ... and recognizes that it has, and will continue to, profit from land stolen from the Indigenous Ohlone peoples, and commits to an ongoing effort to dismantle these legacies."

Town Manager Jeremy Dennis said in an email that the town plans to reach out to the tribal leaders in the next month or so to continue the work the council began last year on this issue.

The tribe began consulting with The Scape Martinez Projects Team on one panel of a

multi-panel mural in East Palo Alto in December. Part of the mural will feature the Ramaytush Ohlone across history.

Town Historian Nancy Lund is working on finding a way to recognize the early European immigrants of Portola Valley, Derwin said.

"I want to honor our immigrants and educate the community about them," Derwin said.

Poet laureate

Derwin, a retired writer who holds a master's degree in writing from University of Illinois at Chicago, is hoping to establish a town poet laureate.

"I would really love to do that this year," she said. "Especially now that poetry has become sexy because of the incredible (National Youth) Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman at the inauguration." ■

Email Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com

Dr. Mary Kim Hom

July 13, 1955 – January 13, 2021

Mary shone as her family's North Star even through five years of pain, limited mobility, and multiple surgeries following a 2015 car crash. She was the first person others would call for advice and guidance and was extraordinarily selfless, kind, warm, strong-willed, and loving. In what was to be her final surgery in hopes of a pain-free life, Mary peacefully passed away from complications in the presence of her family and Dvorak music.

Mary (Geem Haing "golden charm") was born and raised in San Francisco, California. Her father Jimmy (Oh Ming) Hom passed away in 1962, leaving their hard-working mother to raise and support six children.

Mary spoke Toisan Chinese and English (mostly learned from television). Mary often translated for her mother and helped care for her younger siblings, run errands in Chinatown, and sew clothes — including her own.

Mary loved and excelled in school, expressing her artistic, scientific, and caring nature through creative writing, the science club Lux Lab, and the Red Cross. Mary double majored in Biology and Mandarin Chinese at Stanford University, where she met her husband of 35 years, Tom Cooper. She attended Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York and did her residency in OB/GYN at Mt. Zion Hospital in San Francisco.

Mary especially loved traveling, first studying at Stanford's Vienna campus and then exploring Europe by herself and with friends. Later, she traveled across the globe including visiting her parents' childhood villages in China. Her gift for languages enabled her to become conversant in Spanish, German, and Swedish. She did not want to miss anything in each place, which sometimes meant a missed train or plane.

Not long after having fraternal twins (discovered by a self-performed ultrasound) and a third child two years later, Mary retired from medicine to become actively involved in her children's lives. She took on countless volunteer roles, ranging from sugar egg event co-leader to soccer commissioner, earning several PTA awards. While teaching Art In Action, Mary developed a love of oil painting, taking classes and workshops

locally and in Carmel, Los Angeles, Russia, and Italy. She loved to create something of beauty and enjoyed the new friends and adventures painting offered. She grew

to think of herself more as an artist than a physician, though she continued to keep diligent notes and a keen memory on just about everything — except the location of her cell phone and glasses.

Mary loved flowers, especially roses and irises, and memorized an impressive number of plant names. She kept a beautiful rose garden and enjoyed fresh flowers at home. Mary was an avid reader, Scrabble player, and murder mystery novel fan. She loved a mug of Tetley tea with a NY Times

crossword puzzle in the morning and a glass of red wine with a crime show at night.

Family life was central to Mary. She demonstrated love for others with unconditional support, including camping at bluegrass festivals while driving cross country, pampering the children with fancy pancakes and Dutch Babies, attending every child's music and sporting event, and carefully researching the best windows to install in a fixer-upper.

Mary was a fierce advocate for her family and anyone in need. She always went out of her way to help others, from frequenting a struggling local market, to bathing her neighbor's skunk-sprayed Siamese cat in tomato juice. In every aspect of life, Mary chose her own path, unequivocally staying true to herself and living on her own terms. Her adventurous spirit and playful, caring nature will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

Mary leaves behind her husband Tom Cooper, children Andy, Emily and Robert Cooper, mother Pauline (Po Yuen) Hom, brothers Leland and Daniel Hom (Alice Hom), sisters Marilyn, Margaret and Sharon Hom (Lance Fong), and ten nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be planned post-Covid. Until then please share any memories at <https://www.weremember.com/mary-hom/2x1m/memories>.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to Doctors Without Borders, the Pacific Art League, or a charity of your choice.



STREHL

continued from page 6

or the politics of the city," said Kathleen Daly of Cafe Zoë, adding that Strehl had been a "very wonderful friend."

Strehl joined the Menlo Park Planning Commission in 2013, and had previously served on the city's Transportation Commission.

She chaired the Planning Commission in 2016 and was a member of the city's General Plan Advisory Committee. During that time, she was vocal in expressing her reservations about Menlo Park's general plan update, and co-signed a 2016 guest opinion in The Almanac, arguing that the plan did not account adequately for the infrastructure that would be needed to accommodate the major increase in growth the updated zoning permitted. It also argued for the need for a fixed Dumbarton corridor.

As a commissioner, she often asked about how a project would affect the city's jobs-housing balance and what developments planned to contribute in the way of affordable housing.

She was also a longtime supporter of the Commonwealth Club and served on its Silicon Valley Advisory Board.

She is survived by her husband, Dempsey, whom she met when they were involved in California environmental issues and he was at the Nature Conservancy.

Last week, City Council members teared up talking about her many contributions to the community, and Mayor Drew Combs read a proclamation describing her accomplishments and noted that he and the

council "recognize and gratefully acknowledge Katherine Strehl both for commitment to addressing some of our region's most challenging issues and for being an all-around great neighbor."

"As someone who has sought her counsel and advice — I will miss her and recognize she was a great member of this community," he said. "She's one of the people that makes this community special. It was a life well lived and I applaud her."

Other council members added their condolences: Councilwoman Jen Wolosin said she often bumped into Strehl at Cafe Zoë. "She's Menlo Park," she said. "I'm glad I got to know her."

Councilman Ray Mueller praised her "sharp public policy mind, amazing political acumen, quick wit and class."

"She was one of my dearest friends in the city and it's hard to stomach she's gone," he said. ■

Email Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include: **Dr. Mary Kim Hom**, 65, a Menlo Park resident, on Jan. 13; **Karl Handwerk**, 83, a Woodside resident of 54 years, on Jan. 13; **Gail Blach**, 84, a longtime Menlo Park resident, on Jan. 14; and **Katherine A. Strehl**, 76, an executive manager at BART and Menlo Park resident, on Jan. 24.

To read full obituaries, leave remembrances and post photos, go to Lasting Memories at almanacnews.com/obituaries.

PAID OBITUARY

MODULAR HOMES

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Bains and his wife, Cheryl, founded East Palo Alto's We Hope nonprofit in 1999, which now operates 100-bed shelters in San Francisco, a 74-bed shelter and Safe Lot RV parking program in East Palo Alto and mobile fleets that provide showers, bathrooms and laundry services in 17 cities, across four counties, according to Bains.

But to address homelessness more directly, a problem made worse by the pandemic, the pastor is venturing into affordable housing development with his new nonprofit, United Hope Builders.

"We cannot solve a homeless problem without having housing, no matter what," he said.

Through a partnership with IndieDwell, an Idaho-based B corporation that manufactures modular housing units, United Hope Builders will construct a roughly 60,000-square-foot factory by leasing seven acres of the old Romic Environmental Technologies site on Bay Road. The facility will churn out steel modular homes like the two recently delivered to East Palo Alto's RV Safe Lot at 1798 Bay Road.

A burgeoning trend in housing

Prefabricated homes are not a new concept, but they've become an increasingly popular answer to the Bay Area's affordable housing crisis.

In August, as part of San Jose's goal to provide emergency housing for the homeless, the city broke ground on one site that will host more than 100 beds, using modular dwellings that each cost \$85,000, according to a report from San Jose Spotlight.

Sand Hill Foundation, the nonprofit arm of Sand Hill Property Company of Palo Alto, purchased the modular units for the San Jose project, Bains said.

As another sign of the demand for modular housing, Factory OS, a 3-year-old Vallejo-based modular housing factory, recently completed 1,000 housing units, according to multiple media reports, and raised \$55 million in Series B funding, receiving support from tech and finance corporations such as Facebook, Google and Morgan Stanley.

In September, the company announced that it will open a second facility to meet the demand.

"The floodgates have opened," Bains said. "I'm getting inquiries every single day about this product and people wanting to come see it."

Two of the most attractive reasons for the shift toward modular homes lie in time and cost.

"Modulars can reduce construction expense, but most importantly, reduce (construction) time sometimes by as much as 40%," said Michael Brownrigg, United Hope Builders' chief of staff.

In 2019, the average cost of building affordable housing in the Bay Area was \$664,455 per unit. According to the Bay Area Council Economic Institute, an economic and policy think tank, that figure includes construction, land acquisition, materials, labor and legal fees, among other costs, unique to the region.

Brownrigg couldn't yet provide the total price tag for a United Hope Builders modular home, due to some of the uncontrollable variables beyond construction, but he is certain that modular units will cost a "small fraction" of the typical new home.

"Even when you peel all those different expenses away, we're still, we think, much more competitive from a cost point of view," he said.

Construction time is also a big selling point, especially for a region where supply can't meet the demand.

Unlike traditional stick-built homes, modular homes are put together off-site in a factory, without any of the on-site construction delays that might arise from factors like weather.

Solving the land problem

There are, however, hurdles both generic to any type of affordable housing development and unique to modular housing, Brownrigg said.

"Challenges for all of us in the Bay Area is the availability of land — I'd actually put that as No. 1," he said. "Then, No. 2, just the red tape and cost of building."

One way United Hope Builders wants to address issues of land availability is by targeting "non-traditional landholders" such as the churches and other religious organizations throughout the Bay Area that own often wide-open parking lots. Citing research from U.C. Berkeley's Turner Center for Housing Innovation think tank, Brownrigg claims there are about 5,000 acres of unused land controlled by religious organizations in the Bay Area.

"We think there's an opportunity to work with other mission-aligned people in the Bay Area who want to create great, beautiful, environmentally sound, affordable housing," he said.

And to move through red-tape, Brownrigg said modular units can come already compliant to state code before developers have to put them together.

Specific to modular housing, however, one of the biggest hurdles is facilitating the shift in the housing industry's approach to

development, where, traditionally, design decisions such as flooring, windows and appliances are made over a longer period of time rather than early-on as required with modular houses.

A study on modular construction by McKinsey and Company, published in June 2019, found that while modular homes can cut the development schedule by 20% to 50% and construction costs by 20%, "modular projects currently tend to take longer to design than traditional projects" because of the early decision-making process.

"Design decisions need to be made upfront and changes later in the process are both more costly and more difficult," the study said. "The industry is not used to working in this way."

This, as a consequence, also requires larger down payments at the front end, and Brownrigg finds that it can discourage some developers who may rely on low-income housing tax credits to fund an affordable housing project.

Without greater control of the construction process, Brownrigg said, a developer may be nervous to pull tax credits early on since there are very strict deadlines between the moment tax credits are issued and when a tenant moves into the property.

"If (developers) missed the deadline, they put at risk their allocation of future tax credits, which for an affordable housing developer is like an existential threat," he said. "I think we have a solution to that. I think we can find a way to finance that sort of downpayment stage so the affordable housing developer doesn't have to."

To date, United Hope Builders has raised \$4 million through foundations and private investors. Some of the largest investors include Anastasia Vournas and Bill Uhrig, who is the owner of Three Cities Research investment firm, and both helped lease the factory site on Bay Road, according to Bains. To get the factory open by the third quarter of this year, the organization will need to raise another \$2 million.

With the opening of United Hope's factory, Bains also hopes to bring around 100 jobs to East Palo Alto, where employees will earn equity by owning 20% of the factory.

The organization is projected to produce around 400 homes per year at a minimum for the Bay Area, Bains said.

As for the homes already delivered, two families who are clients of WeHOPE will be surprised with them soon, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on the site planned on Valentine's Day. ▀

Email Lloyd Lee at llee@paweekly.com.

Lou Filippi

E. Louis (Lou) Filippi passed away peacefully at his Atherton home on January 10, 2021. He was 80.



Lou was a graduate of CSM where he studied architecture and was later enlisted in the Army where he served as a draftsman in Florida and then in San Francisco's Presidio. Lou went on to lead American Terrazzo as the President, continuing a 100 year tradition of the family owned and operated business.

His most prized work was not at the office, it was in his beautiful gardens that he tirelessly created, lipping an unlit cigar in Atherton where he was a resident for almost 75 years. He didn't need to travel to see the world's beauty; he created a piece of it that he and everyone around him could always enjoy. People would often stop by for a quick visit and find themselves staying for dinner because of his warm and gracious hospitality and generous offering of his wife's fresh baked treats.

He leaves behind his wife of nearly 45 years, Jeannine and four children — Anna-Marie, Nicholas, Evan & Juliana along with their spouses and four grandchildren who all imagine him reading this with his coffee at heaven's kitchen table. A private entombment was held on January 15 at The Italian Cemetery. Lou loved flowers. In lieu of sending, plant something in your garden and enjoy it as he would.

PAID OBITUARY

Katherine A. Strehl

October 4, 1944 – January 24, 2021

Katherine Strehl, a 30-year Menlo Park resident, died at home on January 24, 2021. She was 76.



Katherine's 40-year career in Bay Area public affairs and service was founded on a commitment to collaboration among business, government and community.

Katherine was Executive Manager of External Affairs for BART, Manager of Public Affairs for Lockheed Martin, and worked at the Bay Area Council. She also was a member of the California Transportation Commission.

Her involvement in Menlo Park included serving on four commissions, most recently the Planning Commission.

Katherine was a longtime supporter of the Commonwealth Club, serving on its Silicon Valley Advisory Board and embracing its mission of education and connectivity to policy makers and great intellects.

Katherine was born in Oakland, graduated from Skyline High School, earned a degree in economics and sociology from UC Berkeley in 1977, and earned a master's degree in communications research from Stanford University in 1979. She was a graduate of the Coro Women's Program in 1979.

She is survived by her husband, Bill Dempsey, whom she met when they were involved in California environmental issues and Bill was at The Nature Conservancy. Her many friends, family and colleagues will miss her.

A celebration will be held once the Covid threat has passed.

PAID OBITUARY

REDWOODS

continued from page 10

In addition, the Iverson Trail to Tiptoe Falls is currently closed due to Covid-19 restrictions, and the bridge on the Coyote Ridge Trail between Portola State Park Road and Escape Road is damaged and unsafe to cross. The Coyote Ridge Trail is closed at the Iverson Trail junction and at Portola State Park Road. Camping in all state parks is currently shut down due to the pandemic.

Go to is.gd/portola2 for more information.

Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park

101 N. Big Trees Park Road, Felton
Parking: \$10/ dogs restricted in most areas

Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park is also open, but the adjacent Fall Creek Unit is partially closed. During the wildfires in August and September, the Felton park was used to shelter people who had been evacuated from their homes.

The Buckeye Trail between river crossings is closed, making hiking between Buckeye Trail and Big Rock Hole impassible.

In addition, the following trails are closed: Lost Empire, Pine Flat, Sunlit, Tan Oak, Big Ben, Ridge, S-Cape and North Fall Creek (between Cape Horn Trail and Big Ben Trail), according to the State Parks Department.

Go to is.gd/cowell2 for more information.

Castle Rock State Park

15451 CA-35, Los Gatos
Parking: \$10/ no dogs

Castle Rock State Park offers more than 30 miles of trails, including a number of staff-recommended hikes at is.gd/castlehike1.

There are a number of trail and facility closures in effect including the Falls Overlook, interpretive shelter, connector trails leading to Castle Rock Trail Camps and the trailhead for Skyline to the Sea Trail, the Castle Rock Trail Camps, the amphitheater at Kirkwood entrance, all picnic tables/benches, Sempervirens Point and the overflow dirt parking lot. Access the latest trail advisories at parks.ca.gov by going to the Castle Rock page.

Park staff advise visitors arriving at busy times on weekends

and holidays to try alternate, and free, parking areas along Highway 9 south of Skyline Boulevard (Highway 35).

Wilder Ranch State Park

1401 Coast Road, Santa Cruz
Parking: \$10/ no dogs

This coastside Santa Cruz park offers both ocean and redwood views; the best trails for redwoods are the Old Cabin, Enchanted Loop, Woodcutters, Long Meadow, and Twin Oaks trails, according to parks staff. Access recommended trails at is.gd/wilder2.

And Big Basin?

According to state parks staff, "There is no set date or timeline for the reopening of parks damaged by the CZU Lightning Complex Fire" — including Big Basin and Butano state parks.

The State Parks Department is continuing to assess damage from the initial fire and additional damage from seasonal weather, and is balancing several key priorities: offering public recreation, allowing natural resources to recover and protecting people from the safety problems created

from fire-damaged infrastructure, trail systems and park lands, according to parks staff.

A few tips

■ Some parking lots have been filling up on weekends. People should make backup plans if their preferred destination is full, or plan to come back another less busy time — earlier in the day or on a weekday, Gessner said.

■ Destinations that are closer to cities tend to draw more visitors, but those that are more remote tend to have less parking, so both can pose challenges at busy times, she said.

■ While the pandemic continues, the state recognizes that outdoor activity is critical for mental health and physical health, state parks staff said. People should stay local, plan ahead to find out what is open, wear a face covering, practice physical distancing and avoid gatherings with people outside the immediate household. Access more information at is.gd/spcovid. ■

Email Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com

Charlene Dowley

July 8, 1933 – January 30, 2021

Our beloved Charlene passed away on January 30, 2021, at home comforted by family. She leaves behind her daughters Nora, Jane Paolucci (Andrew), four sons: Philip (Linda), Matthew (Michelle), James, Tom (Catherine), 15 grandchildren: Heather (Dan), Peter (Anna), Thomas, Andrew (Patricia), Margaret, Katherine, Elizabeth, Madeline, Grace, Sofia, Laura Anne, William, Jack, George, Philip, one great-granddaughter: Juniper, and many nieces, nephews, and lifelong friends.



She was preceded in death by a fifth son, Peter, her husband, George, parents Joseph and Carrie Bianchi, brother Frank Bianchi, and sisters Elvera Pagani, Florence May, and Emma Malan.

Charlene was born and raised in Rockford, Illinois. After graduating from Rosary College in River Forest, Illinois, she moved to San Francisco and shortly thereafter met George. The two were married at St. Vincent de Paul Church on December 1, 1956, and subsequently moved to the mid-peninsula to raise their family.

The focus of Charlene's life was family, education, and her deep Catholic faith. She was a model mom and grandmother, singularly vested in the happiness and wellbeing of those around her, grateful for each minute spent with loved ones, yet resistant to accepting any credit for the incredible family legacy she leaves behind.

Charlene's dedication to family ran deep and her love, kindness, gratitude, and affection extended to relatives across the U.S. She was especially close to her nephew, Tom White of San Jose. Just five years her junior and closer in age than her siblings, he was like a brother to her.

She was an avid reader who also loved to watch old movies, cheer local sports teams, play games, and rapidly solve the daily crossword puzzle. She shared her appreciation of art and music with her children and grandchildren through regular visits to museums, the symphony, and the ballet, never one to miss the annual Nutcracker to celebrate the holidays. Outside of the home, she enjoyed her time as a Certified Medical Assistant at the Palo Alto Medical Foundation, always focused on the health and wellness of children.

The family wishes to thank her physical caregivers, Dr. Ami Laws, Tilisa Vaka, and Meliame Westall, and her spiritual supporters, Msgr. Otellini and Deacon Andrews of Church of the Nativity for their gentle care of her body and spirit during her final days.

Her selfless caring as a mother, grandmother, relative, friend, and devout Catholic will live on in those she touched. Her Funeral Mass will be held outdoors at 11:00 AM on Monday, February 8, at the Church of the Nativity in Menlo Park followed by a private interment. The Funeral Mass will also be live-streamed on the Church of the Nativity - Menlo Park Youtube channel.

PAID OBITUARY

MENTAL HEALTH

continued from page 9

Last year, Oakland created a new program called the Mobile Assistance Community Responders of Oakland, or MACRO, which has emergency medical technicians and trained members of the community responding to emergency calls without the presence of an officer. Unlike the pilot in San Mateo County, MACRO does not include mental health professionals, which are costly and difficult to recruit, and do not have sworn officers responding in tow.

Some argued the San Mateo pilot doesn't go far enough in creating a firewall between social work and law enforcement. At the Jan. 12 Board of Supervisors meeting, Redwood City Councilwoman Lissette Espinoza-Garnica said she could not be more "vehemently opposed" to having police ride along with the clinicians to respond to suspected mental health crises. She said the insistence on having cops at the scene is predicated on the idea that people suffering mental health issues are presumed to be violent.

"I disagree with folks saying this is a way of decriminalizing mental health when you're literally sending in mental health clinicians with a paramilitary force," she said.

Horsley said he understands the criticism, and that multiple outreach programs run by the county are exactly that — social work without police. But he said

there are situations, like when someone is armed or barricaded with a weapon, where the clinician simply cannot work solo.

"There are those cases that require an immediate response,

and law enforcement should always be there to stabilize the scene," he said. ■

Email Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com

CRIME BRIEF

Burglar steals new TVs

Three new televisions still in their packaging were stolen from an unlocked guest house in the unit block of Selby Lane in Atherton sometime between Jan. 25 and 29, according to an Atherton police press release Jan. 30.

The burglary is the 12th reported in town since Oct. 1.

Residents are encouraged to lock and secure all doors and windows when leaving their home for any length of time and to always set the security alarm.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Atherton Police Department at 650-688-6500.

—Julia Brown



Atherton police have reported 12 burglaries in town since Oct. 1. Data courtesy Atherton Police Department.

MENLO POLICE
continued from page 7

from 59.5% in 2019. Property crimes, which include burglary, larceny, auto theft and arson, were nearly flat, rising by 0.65% over the previous year, with 776 property crime reports taken compared with 771 in 2019.

There were six complaints that were investigated internally in 2020. Three were sustained. One was for conduct, one for safety and the third was for performance, according to the report. Of the other three cases, one was not sustained, one was withdrawn and one was determined to be frivolous.

The number of internal investigations was down from 10 in 2019, according to the department.

Email Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com

COMMUNITY BRIEFS
continued from page 10

Library hosts virtual film screening for Black History Month

Between 6 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 20, and 5 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 22, the Menlo Park Library is hosting a virtual film screening of the film "Healing from Hate: Battle for the Soul of a Nation." The film follows activists from a group called Life After Hate that works to deradicalize white nationalists.

The film will be available for those 48 hours for free at is.gd/mpfilm.

At 6 p.m. on Feb. 22, director Peter Hutchison is set to talk about his experiences making the film with the community. People can register for the event at is.gd/mpfilmtalk.

Police phone line scheduled for maintenance

The Menlo Park Police Department announced it will undergo system maintenance on its non-emergency phone lines, including its general number, 650-330-6300, on Tuesday, Feb. 9, between 5 and 10 p.m.

People should call 650-325-4424 for non-emergency matters. They will still be able to access 911 via phone and text.

—Kate Bradshaw

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RESOLUTION NO. 2235 - (2021)
RESOLUTION OF INTENTION TO ANNEX CERTAIN TERRITORY TO THE WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT ON-SITE WASTEWATER DISPOSAL ZONE

Lands of Kavanaugh

The District Board of West Bay Sanitary District finds and determines as follows:

- A. This Resolution of Intention is adopted pursuant to the District's "Zone Master Annexation Resolution" ("ZOMAR"), which was adopted by the District Board August 12, 1996. The provisions of ZOMAR are incorporated by reference into this Resolution of Intention.
- B. The District has received an application to annex a parcel of real property (the "Parcel") to the District's On-Site Wastewater Disposal Zone (the "Zone"). The Parcel is described in Exhibit "A" attached to this Resolution of Intention and the description contained in the Exhibits are incorporated by reference. The name and address of the applicants and the number, type, volume and location of on-site wastewater disposal systems which are proposed to operate on the parcels to be annexed are described in Exhibit "B" attached to this Resolution of Intention and the information contained in the Exhibit are incorporated by reference.
- C. The applicants have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the District Board that the Parcel constitutes "real property" for the purposes of Section 2(b) of ZOMAR in that:
 - X. All of the conditions described in Subsections i., ii., iii., iv. and v. of ZOMAR Section 2(b) are satisfied; or Other conditions exist which demonstrate that the Parcel will benefit directly or indirectly from the activities of the Zone. If applicable, those conditions are also set forth in Exhibit "B" and are incorporated by reference.
- D. All of the conditions and requirements of ZOMAR Sections 2(a), 2(c), 2(d) and 2(e) have been fully satisfied.

In consideration of the foregoing findings and determinations,

IT IS RESOLVED by the District Board as follows:

1. It is the intention of the District Board to annex the Parcel to the Zone pursuant to the provisions of ZOMAR and applicable provisions of law.
2. In conjunction with a meeting of the District Board to be duly and regularly called and conducted, the Board will conduct a Public Hearing for the purpose of considering all matters pertaining to this Resolution of Intention.

The time, date and place of the Public Hearing are:

Date: March 10, 2021

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: West Bay Sanitary District Offices, 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025 & via Zoom

At the Public Hearing, all interested persons will be heard.

3. This Resolution of Intention shall be published and copies shall be delivered to the persons and entities as specified in ZOMAR Section 2(e)(i).
4. A true copy of this Resolution of Intention shall promptly be filed for record in the office of the County Recorder of the County of San Mateo.
5. The District Manager shall cause the matters set forth in Sections 3 and 4 of this Resolution of Intention to be completed as directed.

Exhibit A

EXHIBIT "A"
Date: September 26, 2020
Annexed to: West Bay Sanitary District
Name of Annexation: West Bay Sanitary

Geographic Description

All that certain real property, situate in Rancho El Corte Madera, Town of Portola Valley, County of San Mateo, State of California, described as follows:

Beginning at the South corner of West Bay Sanitary District Resolution No. 1117;

From the Point of Beginning:

Course 1.) North 19°12'29" West, 60.00 feet along the Southeastern line of existing boundary, thence,
Course 2.) Leaving the existing boundary, South 73°30'00" East, 266.00 feet, thence,
Course 3.) South 30°12'07" West, 242.82 feet to the center of Arapahoe Court cul-de-sac, thence,
Course 4.) North 59°45'04" West, 215.33 feet to the Southeastern line of West Bay Sanitary District Resolution No. 936, thence,
Course 5.) North 19°12'29" East, 102.25 feet along the Southeastern line of existing boundary to the Point of Beginning containing 1.08 acres, more or less.

For assessment purposes only. The description is not a legal property description as defined in the Subdivision Map Act and may not be used as the basis for an offer for sale of the land described.

APPROVED
SAN MATEO LOCAL AGENCY
FORMATION COMMISSION
455 COUNTY CENTER
REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063

EXHIBIT A PAGE 1 OF 2

Exhibit B

WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT
EXHIBIT "B"
SITE LOCATION
25 ARAPAHOE COURT
PORTOLA VALLEY, CA
STEP OR GRINDER SYSTEM

Dear Gov. Newsom: Don't ignore the disabled in distributing vaccine

By Jennifer Panighetti

Dear Gov. Gavin Newsom,
I am young.
I am beautiful.
I am successful.
I am a student.
I am a wife.
I am a daughter.
I am an aunt.
I am a friend.
I am disabled.

And I am at a high risk of dying from COVID-19.

I should not need to be any of these things for my life to have value. That I am alive should be enough. But right now, I

GUEST OPINION

am being told — along with hundreds of thousands just like me — by the state of California that we are not worth protecting from this virus.

In December, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended that people with high-risk medical conditions be given the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time as non-frontline health care workers. But in late January, you completely scrapped that plan. Instead,

you are recommending a basic age-based grouping in prioritizing vaccine distribution. By doing so, you are neglecting the health and safety of all Californians living with disabilities.

We disabled people often need help with the basic activities of daily life: getting in and out of bed; eating; bathing. Not everybody with disabilities lives in long-term care facilities that have been devastated by COVID-19, and not everybody with a disability is elderly; yet we are susceptible to the same dangers. We rely on kind, loving people who come into our

homes to do essential work for us every day. Sometimes our caregivers work even when they are sick because there is no other option for us.

We need the compassionate care of our government. We are at a much higher risk of getting and dying from COVID-19, and we are helpless to stop this on our own. It is not our fault that we need the help of multiple people every day, or that our lungs don't work at full capacity, or that our immune systems are compromised.

Your citizens are begging for

help. No, we are dying for help.

Do not leave us to flounder in the ocean without a lifeboat. We will not survive. Gov. Newsom, you must expand access to the vaccines to those of us whose lives depend on it.

I am a woman.
I am creative.
I am an athlete.
I am a granddaughter.
I am a sister.
I am a colleague.
I am disabled.
I have a voice.
And I will use it.

Jennifer Panighetti lives in Mountain View.

We need a balanced population

I write in response to two guest opinions in the Jan. 22 issue — one by Yvonne Boxerman, "The many contradictions of COVID-19" and Rusty Day, "A very dangerous place for fire" in Portola Valley."

Yes, I have noticed the many construction projects either taking place now, or just completed on El Camino Real — and more are proposed in North Menlo Park.

Menlo Park and Stanford University have both talked about eliminating global warming, but neither have followed through. Both are into high-density housing. How many people can we cram into a telephone booth? There is no way residents can depend on **passive** solar energy to heat their water, their homes, their bodies, dry their clothes or open a window for a cool breeze of fresh air in a high-density community.

Yes, the development could have an active solar system (solar panels), but what happens when the power goes out? How much pollution and toxic chemicals result from manufacturing solar panels and backup batteries? Where do the batteries go when their useful life is gone? To hazardous waste?

What if a natural disaster or wildfire occurs? Will people in the community be able to get out of the area in a safe and harmonious way? Rusty Day's opinion stated: "As one fire expert recently remarked, 'houses are 'fuel bombs' that release exponentially more intense thermal energy over a much longer duration than

LETTERS

Our readers write

vegetative wildfires."

The last 11 months we have been going through a health crisis. We are told to wear a mask and keep 6 feet away from each other. Will high-density housing support or hinder the spread of COVID-19 — or some similar illness?

Where is our food going to come from? This experience has reinforced in me the need for all of us to grow our own food and be more dependent on the sun for our daily needs with passive solar energy having priority over solar panels. This means houses and office spaces cannot be jammed up against one another. It also means property owners need to keep their trees and bushes cut back short and thinned out so everyone can reap the benefits of the sun.

Bottom line: We don't need more housing and jobs, but fewer people. What is affordable today will not be affordable tomorrow, if we don't have a balanced population in the Bay Area. This can be done through education: family planning, and hiring people locally instead of hours away. Let's support each other in contributing to a healthy planet.

*Jackie Leonard-Dimmick
Walnut Avenue, Atherton*

Thank you Woodside fire district

Fire Marshal Don Bullard's repeated, candid warnings about the dangers of over-development

in hazardous, fire-prone settings, such as Stanford's proposed Wedge project, exemplify the district's mission to protect life, property and the environment through prevention, education, preparedness, and emergency response.

During the Planning Commission's Jan. 20 meeting on Stanford's proposed project, Bullard explained clearly why a densely clustered development of 27 houses at the mouth of a steep canyon is a dangerous design, and how fire could rapidly spread up into the surrounding community. Despite strong pressure to push this project through, Bullard fulfilled his responsibility to educate us all about the hazards and risks we confront. Thank you.

Now our attention must turn to Portola Valley's town officials responsible for initiating, reviewing and approving Stanford's project. Will they prioritize our residents' public safety over private development and stop or substantially change this reckless project? Or will they persist in pushing private development at the risk of public safety?

Last August, we were extremely lucky that the CZU fire started many miles away and did not reach us. With the ever-increasing impact of global warming on our fire-prone lands and vulnerable housing, we must act now to prevent future disaster. Please help me appeal to the Town Council to immediately prioritize our safety above development and to stop promoting developments whose extreme hazards threaten us all.

*Rob Younge
Westridge Drive, Portola Valley*

A gross management failure

The state has spent a lot of time pointing fingers at Washington about vaccine supply, an easy dodge ("Editorial: We need a real shot in the arm," Jan. 29). But at the same time 12 days ago, the governor admitted that barely a third of California's vaccine supply had been administered; if 85% had been used up and no shipment was arriving, that might be an issue. (The shortages at PAMF and Kaiser are an example of local agency fumbles.)

From its arrival in state, vaccine distribution and use has been the state's failure. We had months to prepare for this. In industry projects, we plan out all the steps, write a critical path schedule, identify and assign

tasks, get commitments through the entire chain and then manage each step daily. Yes, all that is scaleable. It isn't miracle work, it's competence. This life-critical vaccine rollout didn't have that.

*Henry Riggs
Callie Lane, Menlo Park*

A Republican opportunity

Think about it. Democrats just did Republicans a huge favor, should they choose to seize it, by providing them an opportunity to rid themselves of their destructive fringe elements and join in the important work before us — work that includes saving our warming planet and our democracy, commitment to facts and truth, and the constitutional separation of church and state.

*Don Barnby
Spruce Avenue, Menlo Park*

What's on your mind?

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

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

Letters should be no longer than 300 words.

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

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

The Almanac

Artscene

PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

'BEFORE FIDDLER' CELEBRATES THE RICHNESS OF KLEZMER MUSIC

Streaming Hershey Felder musical about author Sholem Aleichem to premiere Feb. 7

By John Orr

Hershey Felder has spent most of the past year in lockdown in Italy, where he happened to be living when the pandemic struck.

But rather than sit around wishing he was doing shows, the pianist/actor/playwright (and TheatreWorks Silicon Valley favorite) has become a major theatrical force, producing several of his biographical musicals — “George Gershwin Alone,” “Claude Debussy: A Paris Love Story,” “Irving Berlin,” “Beethoven,” and “Hershey Felder: Tchaikovsky, Live from Florence” — for livestreaming from his Italian home.

But with his next role, as author Sholem Aleichem in

“Before Fiddler — Live From Florence,” Felder enters new territory. “Before Fiddler” is not one of his older works, modified for streaming. It is an all-new show, written for the screen.

“I’m looking forward to seeing the result as much as anybody,” Felder said during a recent Zoom interview, “because it’s a premiere — this one is being constructed first for the screen. Film has to be less of a performance, and more of a capture ... “It is literally what comes out, comes out.”

The show is a happy confluence of coincidences.

“You always have ideas for shows,” Felder said, speaking of himself. “I thought, ‘Maybe one day, I’ll do a show about Sholem Aleichem.’ Then, here

in Florence, I was introduced to Klezmerata Fiorentina, who are all first-chairs in (the orchestra of the) Maggio Musicale Fiorentino. I heard Klezmerata Fiorentina play, and I thought, ‘You know, this might just work.’

“Sometimes a show happens just because the elements just happen to be there.”

Klezmer music essentially echoes through the history of Judaism, especially in the joyous tunes heard at weddings. It developed as a named genre in central and Eastern Europe in the early 20th century, and has enjoyed popularity in the United States. Klezmer loudly proclaims both happiness and sadness, music that imitates, according to the show’s press release, “talking, laughing, weeping and singing.”

Klezmer can be almost anything, and wildly innovative, involving extreme musicianship and boisterous performances. It often features multiple melody lines, and can make use of almost any kind of noisemaker as a musical instrument. Its influences can be heard in many types of modern music, including in such swinging big band-era performers as Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw.

It is fun music, generally speaking. Felder’s show can be expected to be extremely fun.

For one thing, he plays several parts in the show, including as two different women. He’s never played a woman before.

“I fit perfectly into a dress — you can’t imagine,” he said via Zoom. “I am playing a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. It’s very, very funny.”

And he is not alone in the show, unlike most of his composer stage shows — “Before Fiddler” has a cast of 30 performers, including Klezmerata Fiorentina.

Sometimes referred to as the “Jewish Mark Twain,” Aleichem, as a press release announcing the production notes, is a central figure in Yiddish literature.



Courtesy Hershey Felder Presents

Hershey Felder debuts his new show “Before Fiddler” about author Sholem Aleichem.

“Tevye’s Daughters,” a collection of tales about Tevye the milkman, was published in 1894, and eventually became the basis for the beloved musical “Fiddler on the Roof.” Felder’s show is based on Aleichem’s novel “Stempenyu: A Jewish Novel,” which was published in 1888.

“Stempenyu” is the story of an itinerant klezmer musician, a talented violinist, who seduces a woman in every town he visits. Although married, he falls in love with a married woman in one of the towns, and emotional complications ensue.

Felder said he is performing “Before Fiddler” in Aleichem’s voice, and that it “is very romantic, the story of his life, and something he wrote.

“Originally, I set it somewhere in Kiev, but realized I could use Florence as locations in Kiev, and also in Italy. ... Tomorrow, we will go to his (Aleichem’s) house in Nervi, on the Italian Riviera. We’ll be able to set it where it actually took place.”

Italy was also featured in Felder’s Tchaikovsky show, because that great composer also lived in Italy for a while — not all that far, really, from Felder’s home.

Felder’s live shows have

proved hugely popular, and have helped many theaters maintain their production budgets. The livestream versions offer a more intimate look at his performances.

“Before Fiddler” is being produced by Felder’s company, Hershey Felder Presents, but he is again partnering with TheatreWorks to promote the show, and donating a portion of the proceeds back to TheatreWorks.

“Most of what I make from these shows goes away, is donated away,” Felder said. “I am giving away most of it; the rest goes into production.

“I think they (online audiences) are buying it for the entertainment value. If I can help others, why shouldn’t I?” he said. Despite the challenges faced by artists during the pandemic, “I am able to pay my staff. I wanted to make sure I could continue paying them.”

The performance launches live on Sunday, Feb. 7, at 5 p.m. Tickets for the livestream are \$55 per household, and include a week of on-demand access after the Feb. 7 performance. More information is available at hershefelder.net. ■

Email John Orr at johnorr@regardingarts.com



Courtesy Hershey Felder Presents

Igor Polesitsky of quartet Klezmerata Fiorentina is featured in “Before Fiddler.”

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Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

THE MIDNIGHT RAVEN
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 286417

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
The Midnight Raven, located at 1885 East Bayshore Rd. #82, East Palo Alto, CA 94303, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
ZOE YOUNG

1885 East Bayshore Rd. #82
East Palo Alto, CA 94303

This business is conducted by: An Individual.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on Jan. 19, 2021. This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on January 19, 2021.
(ALM Jan. 29, Feb. 5, 12, 19, 2021)

HUMBLE HELP STUDIO
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 286326

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: Humble Help Studio, located at 1250 Arguello St. Apt. 7, Redwood City, CA 94063, San Mateo County, USA.

Registered owner(s):
VAHRAM ANTONYAN
1250 Arguello St. Apt. 7
Redwood City, CA 94063
This business is conducted by: An Individual.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A. This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on January 12, 2021.
(ALM Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26, 2021)

THE COIN BROKER
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 286342

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
The Coin Broker, located at 23 Shasta Lane, Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
JIMMIE JOE BEER
This business is conducted by: An Individual.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on May 1980. This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on January 13, 2021.
(ALM Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26, 2021)

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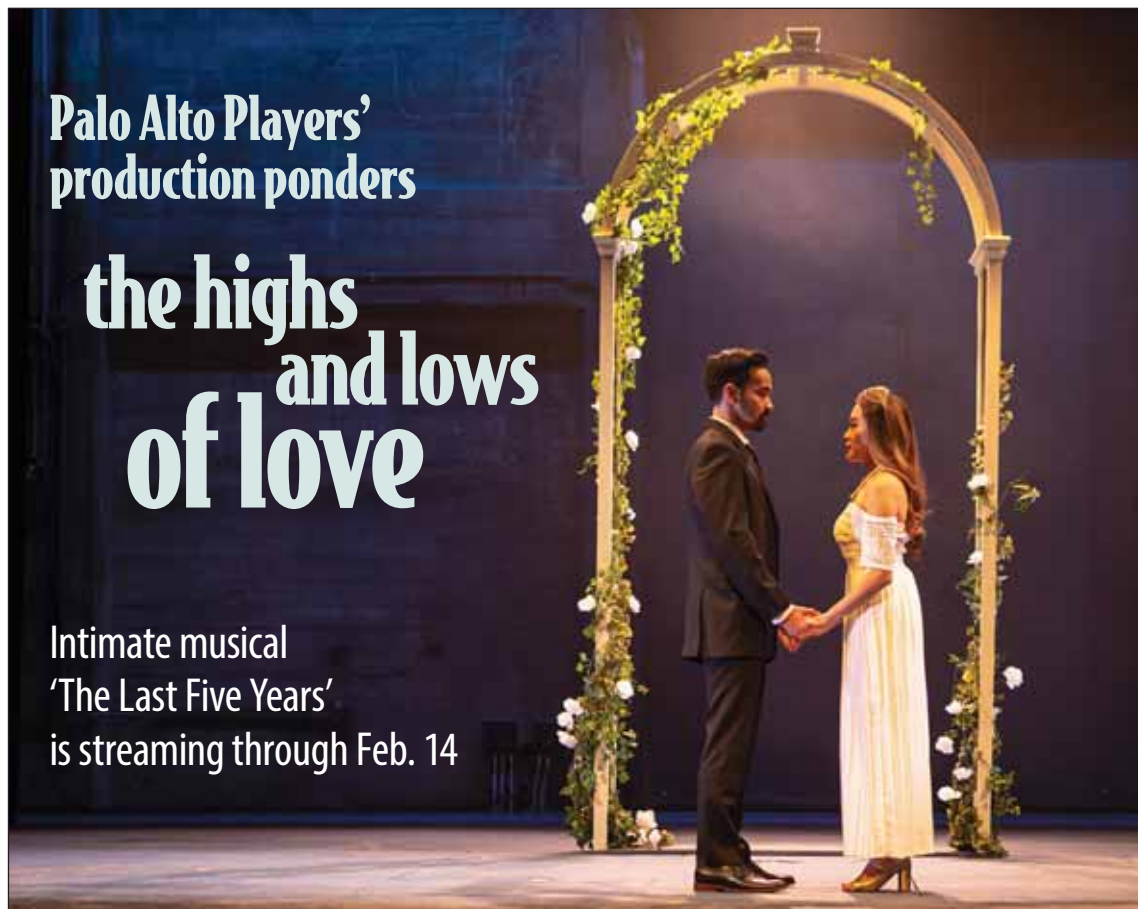
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Palo Alto Players' production ponders

the highs and lows of love

Intimate musical
'The Last Five Years'
is streaming through Feb. 14



Courtesy Henry Wilen

Real-life couple Chris and Marah Sotelo play Jamie and Cathy in Palo Alto Players' "The Last Five Years."

By Karla Kane

A love story: What could be more simple, or more complex? The highs and lows of a relationship are chronicled in time-bending fashion — and song — in Jason Robert Brown's musical "The Last Five Years," which Palo Alto Players is currently offering as an on-demand video stream.

The two-person, one-act show opens brief windows into the romantic life of Jamie (Chris Sotelo) and Cathy (Marah Sotelo), from their breathless and giddy early courtship to their partnership's sad demise. The gimmick — and it's a good one — is that while Jamie's side of the story is revealed chronologically, Cathy's is told backward, with one brief intersection where they exist on the same plane. For much of the show, each half of the couple is alone on their part of the stage, responding to the ghost of the other. Through parallel vignettes, from opposite perspectives, we watch wunderkind author Jamie's career taking flight while aspiring actor

Cathy's stalls. We see them boost each other, stew in jealousy, and make and betray vows, almost entirely through Brown's pop-folk score, enhanced by minimal but effective set and props (in this version, designed by Scott Ludwig, and an especially delightful touch are the credit sketches by artist Natalie Long). The show was filmed by videographer Grant Huberty from Palo Alto's Lucie Stern Theater.

That's right, "The Last Five Years" was performed in person on the real stage, directed by Palo Alto Players' Artistic Director Patrick Klein, with vocal direction by Dolores Duran-Cefalu. As you may have guessed by their last name, Marah and Chris Sotelo are married in real life, which allows them to perform together mask-free, and also gives their fine performances an extra layer of intimacy and poignancy.

As noted in the pre-show text, the eight-person cast and crew took care to ensure health and safety for all involved. Their efforts are much appreciated.

The prospect of watching a

play in the lockdown era is different — and often less appealing — than it was before. Yes, that energy that comes from being transported en masse to another world inside a theater is impossible to replicate. No, local theater groups cannot be expected to magically transform into professional film studios in a few months. Yes, it is hard to focus when watching on a screen at home, interrupted by the myriad distractions of life.

On the other hand, watching on-demand, as is possible with "The Last Five Years," makes the show more accessible to those who couldn't otherwise make it out to a theater (plus, there can be more snacks, bathroom breaks, pajamas and cats on laps).

All this to say, Palo Alto Players have succeeded in creating a quality production, complete with good lighting, sound and editing that's actually a (bittersweet) pleasure to watch. "The Last Five Years" may be just the perfect choice for this sort of intimate offering. And I'll admit, when the Sotelos appeared for their curtain call, even though they couldn't hear me, I clapped.

No, it's not the same experience as "normal" theater. But what it is, is lovely.

Access to "The Last Five Years" is pay-what-you-will: \$25-\$100 per household. On-demand video stream is available through Feb. 14. For tickets or more information, go to paloalto.org.



Courtesy Henry Wilen

Chris and Marah Sotelo star in the two-person, one-act show that opens brief windows into a couple's romantic life.

Email Karla Kane at kkane@pawekly.com



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and receive the following complimentary services:

- Tax and legal services to review disclosures and provide legal counsel for issues related to the transaction**
- All buyer's-side commission waived when DeLeon agent represents buyer
- Dedicated interior designer
- Staging (delivery, set-up, de-staging, furniture rental)
- Eight hours of field coordinator services to pre-inspect and prepare your home
- Property inspection and pest inspection
- Professional architectural photography
- Professionally produced and narrated videos
- Television commercials for properties with an anticipated sales price over \$3.8 million
- Virtual 3-D tour
- Custom home website on DeLeonRealty.com
- Custom 12-page home brochures*
- Double-sided feature flyers for flyer boxes at the property*
- Extended-hours Open Houses first weekend on the market*
- Online and social media marketing campaigns
- Marketing to international community
- Multiple, full-page newspaper ads
- Quarter-page ad in *The DeLeon Insight* newsletter

* Subject to governmental restrictions

** Courtesy of The Law Offices of Michael J. Repka



Michael Repka

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94025

MENLO PARK



NEW CONSTRUCTION
www.23SunsetLane.com



23 SUNSET LANE is a sleek contemporary that features 5 bedrooms and 6 full baths

Builder: Peninsula Dream Homes; Architect: Beverly Hills One | Exceptional details include: Custom pivoting front door; Floating stairs; European white oak floors; Book-matched porcelain slab surrounding a linear gas fireplace; Fleetwood sliding glass doors that retract into the wall | Kitchen with large island and top-of-the-line Miele appliances | Upper-level suite has linear gas fireplace, large walk-in closet, retractable Fleetwood glass doors to an upper garden terrace, en suite bath with heated floors, and free-standing tub | Daikin 9-zone heat recovery system with separate heating and cooling | Wired for home automation to control audio, video, lighting and pool | Outdoor areas include a loggia with fireplace, 2 ceiling heaters, arbor-covered outdoor kitchen and dining area, pool and spa | 2-car garage wired for 3 EV charging stations | Over one-third acre | Las Lomas school

COMPASS

  @GULLIXSONTEAM

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RANKED #1 COMPASS SMALL TEAM
 IN CALIFORNIA AND #6 SMALL TEAM
 IN THE NATION, PER *The Wall Street
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