

The Almanac

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No handshakes at graduation, proms without dancing or high heels

Local high schools offer pandemic-altered rites of passage for seniors

By Angela Swartz and Lloyd Lee

Planning for modified proms, graduation parties and picnics is underway at some local high schools to ensure graduating seniors enjoy at least some of the usual senior rites of passage amid a pandemic that's stretched over a year. Seniors attending Menlo-Atherton High School's "Enchanted Forest" prom will have to go without high heels, as the masked outdoor event will take place on the Atherton school's soccer field. There won't be dancing at Los Altos High School's "Seniors Under the Stars."

Wearing well-fitting face masks, giving shorter commencement speeches and keeping 6 feet of distance between attendees are just some of the guidelines San Mateo County has given schools for safely conducting graduation ceremonies this year. Even with state guidance put out in March that bans handshakes and hugs at ceremonies, this year still offers more than the class of 2020's car parade graduations and canceled proms.

Other schools are more hesitant to put on big parties. Palo Alto Unified School District officials said there won't be proms or graduation activities

other than formal graduation ceremonies at Palo Alto and Gunn high schools this spring.

San Mateo County graduation celebrations

M-A will hold its 70th annual commencement in person this school year after hosting a car parade-style graduation in 2020.

The graduation ceremony will take place at 4 p.m. on June 3 on Coach Parks, the school's football field, as it has in years past. Each graduate and two family members will be invited to attend in person, said Principal Simone Rick-Kennel in an email, and the ceremony will be streamed live. At 7:30 p.m. seniors will gather near M-A's gym where they will catch buses to a surprise venue for their graduation night celebration. Leading up to graduation, there will also be a senior picnic on the baseball field June 1.

Woodside High School will also have an in-person graduation ceremony. Seniors will graduate on Bradley Field as usual on the morning of June 4, said Principal Diane Burbank. It will also be livestreamed, she said.

Graduates are limited to just two guests. There will be a no-touch diploma pickup, no handshakes from the principal



Magali Gauthier

Charlie Smith, a Menlo-Atherton senior, holds a mask and wears sneakers with her prom dress in anticipation of an outdoor event on the school's soccer field.

and no reception following the ceremony, Burbank said. To limit the spread of COVID-19, seniors will be allowed to keep their orange gown, cap and tassel at no cost, she said.

Sacred Heart Preparatory in Atherton is planning an in-person May 22 graduation

ceremony. Similar to the Sacred Heart class of 2020's "atypical" ceremony last year, the school plans as "traditional" an event as possible, said Elizabeth Nixon, the school's associate director of communications and public relations, in an email. It will include remarks delivered by the

class valedictorian and salutatorian and a faculty speaker, and diploma distribution.

The San Mateo County Office of Education's recent guidance declares that speakers may remove masks during their

See **CELEBRATIONS**, page 14

Menlo Church says worship leader fired over allegations he asked a teen for nude photos

By Kate Bradshaw

A worship leader at Menlo Church's Mountain View location was fired after allegations emerged that he solicited nude photos online from a teen boy while working at a church in Oklahoma several years before joining the staff of Menlo Church, according to

statements from church leaders.

Menlo Church is a local evangelical Presbyterian faith community that attracts about 6,000 weekly congregants across six Bay Area campuses, and is headquartered in Menlo Park.

The announcement comes on the heels of another revelation in the church community as it grappled with news that its

senior pastor, John Ortberg, had permitted his son to continue to work with youth for more than a year after learning that he was sexually attracted to children. Ortberg stepped down in early August last year.

Michael Bryce Jr., who led worship services at Menlo Church's Mountain View location, is alleged to have

repeatedly solicited nude photos from a teenage boy online while working at a church in Oklahoma, according to a March 20 announcement authored by the church's Transitional Pastor John Crosby and Elder Board Chair David Kim. The alleged solicitations occurred several years before Bryce began work at Menlo Church, and they

said they have not received any reports indicating concerns with his actions while working at Menlo Church. Bryce was terminated from his position March 19.

On April 19, Crosby and Kim released an announcement to the community detailing more

See **MENLO CHURCH**, page 19

INSIDE

VIEWPOINT 21 | ARTS 22 | FOOD 23

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Local News

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Magali Gauthier

Elizabeth McCarthy, a Stanford nurse and dedicated crafter, glues “protein spikes” made out of paper straws and pompoms onto coronavirus piñatas in her Menlo Park home.

Taking a whack out of COVID

Stanford nurse crafts coronavirus piñatas

By Kate Bradshaw

Elizabeth McCarthy, a nurse at Stanford Hospital, gets what it’s like to want to smack the bejesus out of the coronavirus.

The Menlo Park resident has been taking care of patients with COVID-19 throughout the pandemic, and knows better than most the anger and frustration that many people feel toward the invisible virus that has taken so many lives and derailed so many plans.

Now, she’s offering a way for people to get that cathartic thrill as an artisan making handmade,

biologically accurate piñatas shaped like the coronavirus.

The project creatively combines McCarthy’s background as a nurse and as a crafty connoisseur of Mexican folk art. Before becoming a nurse, she was a cake decorator who specialized in creating sugar skulls celebrating Mexico’s Day of the Dead.

After the first COVID-19 vaccine was approved, she said, “I started thinking, people are going to start wanting to celebrate. What better way to celebrate the end of COVID than by having a COVID piñata where you can beat COVID with a stick?”

Piñatas had long been associated with birthday celebrations in her household — as one of four children in her family, they were always a part of birthday parties, and the garage door that the family’s piñatas were suspended over accumulated some scars over the years from blindfolded strikes missing their target, she said.

After running across images of other coronavirus piñatas online, she said, she decided to try crafting her own.

“I saw some that looked poorly done, and as a nurse, they didn’t

See **PIÑATAS**, page 17

Woodside High principal to retire in June

Diane Burbank has headed the high school since 2012

By Angela Swartz

Woodside High School Principal Diane Burbank will retire at the end of this school year, she told families last week. Burbank is the second Sequoia Union High School District principal to announce their departure this spring — Menlo-Atherton Principal Simone Rick-Kennel is stepping down to take on a new

role in the district office.

Burbank, who has headed Woodside High since 2012, told families in an April 16 email obtained by The Almanac that she has loved her time in the role.

“I’ve enjoyed, and tried to make the most of, the privilege of leading our Woodside staff, community and students,” she said. “As an educator for 38 years, what I’ve embraced is

the pace and the rock-n-roll of student life on a large public high school campus. Helping teens navigate their learning, their changing lives, and the changing world has been my career’s work as a teacher of English, activity director, coach and administrator. I’ve valued my opportunities to help teens make sense of our world in

See **PRINCIPAL**, page 16

Menlo Park maps road to reopening city services

By Kate Bradshaw

With more than 80% of eligible Menlo Park residents vaccinated against COVID-19, the Menlo Park City Council began to start thinking about how to relaunch city services and programs at its April 27 meeting.

As of April 27, 82.8% of Menlo Park residents ages 16 and up had received at least one vaccine dose against COVID-19, according to San Mateo County health data, which compares the number of residents receiving shots to the city’s population.

Sean Reinhart, director of library and community services for the city, laid out the city’s proposed path to reopening city services, a four-phase approach that would ease in increasingly risky activities over the course of the next six to eight months.

In phase one, the city would launch its plans to transition services offered at the Onetta Harris Community Center and Menlo Park Senior Center in Belle Haven to the Arrillaga Recreation Center and Belle Haven Library. The community center and senior center are slated for demolition starting this summer as part of Facebook’s project to rebuild the facilities into a new multi-use, multigenerational community center, he said.

Phase one would also allow for indoor public access to the city’s main and Belle Haven branch libraries, outdoor recreation programs, and additional

virtual classes and events. The police station’s lobby would also reopen in the first phase, and there’s a possibility of reopening the neighborhood service center and police substation in Belle Haven, potentially as a community meeting space.

In a separate meeting held April 19, the city’s Library Commission unanimously recommended that the city reopen indoor access to its libraries on or near July 1, according to staff.

Phase two, which could begin in late summer or early fall, would ease in community service programs considered to pose a more moderate risk of transmitting the coronavirus, such as indoor recreation programs. It would also reopen the chambers for City Council meetings to occur in person again, according to Reinhart.

Phase three would reopen City Hall to the public and permit high-contact indoor programs like gymnastics. However, since the gymnastics program isn’t being funded right now, City Council members will have to decide under what conditions they want to relaunch those services first.

Lastly, phase four, which could begin around the end of 2021 or early 2022, would allow facility rentals for high-density indoor gatherings and large-scale special events, both indoors and outdoors, as well as all other indoor programs, Reinhart said.

During the pandemic,

See **REOPENING**, page 14



Magali Gauthier

Woodside High School Principal Diane Burbank takes a photo with a graduate at commencement on June 7, 2019. Burbank will retire at the end of the school year.

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TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY NOTICE OF TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, May 12 at 7:00 p.m.**, via Zoom on the following:

ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY AMENDING 15.04.20 [AMENDMENTS TO THE BUILDING CODE] OF TITLE 15 [BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION] OF THE PORTOLA VALLEY MUNICIPAL CODE

The Town Council will consider amendments to Chapter 15.04 to address fire safety and add recommendations of the Ad-Hoc Wildfire Preparedness Committee into the Building Code. The proposed amendments would extend the provisions of Chapter 7A to additional construction projects in Town and implement best fire-safe practices for elements such as roofing material, exterior wall coverings, and fences.

Information pertaining to the proposed ordinance may be viewed by contacting Laura Russell, Planning & Building Director at lrussell@portolavalley.net. The agenda and staff report will be published at <https://www.portolavalley.net/town-government/town-council/minutes-and-agendas>. In advance of the meeting.

Public Hearings provide the general public and interested parties an opportunity to provide testimony on these items. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Town Council to be heard via the Zoom platform. If you challenge a proposed action(s) in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at a Public Hearing(s) described above, or in written correspondence delivered to the Town Council at, or prior to, the Public Hearing(s).

Publication Date: April 30, 2021
Sharon Hanlon, Town Clerk

Notice of Public Hearings

Due to COVID-19 protocols, the Woodside School District will hold two separate public hearings on the proposed Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), with the Budget Overview for Parents cover page, and the proposed budget for fiscal year 2021-22 on Tuesday, May 11, 2021, virtually at 6:00 pm. Details of the meeting can be found at www.woodsideschool.us. A copy of the LCAP, with the Budget Overview for Parents cover page, and the proposed budget will be available for public examination at the Woodside School District, 3195 Woodside Road, Woodside, CA 94062 from May 7, 2021 through May 11, 2021 between the hours of 8:00 am to 4:00 pm and on the school website, www.woodsideschool.us. Please contact Cathy Stienstra, 650 851-1571, cstienstra@woodsideschool.us to request a printed or electronic copy. Public members or stakeholders may complete a comment card and speak to the LCAP and proposed budget or any item therein.

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THE ALMANAC

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Stop Asian Hate march and rally set for Sunday

A Stop Asian Hate march and rally led by Palo Alto City Councilman Greg Tanaka is set for Sunday, May 2.

The march is set to begin at 528 High St., or Garage R, in Palo Alto at 2 p.m. and the rally is set to begin at 250 Hamilton Ave., or Palo Alto City Hall.

Tanaka is launching an “8 by 8” campaign encouraging people to vote, in which individuals are challenged to invite eight friends, family members or acquaintances to register to vote within eight days. The campaign is in response to concerns that although people who are Asian make up 38% of Silicon Valley residents, they represent only 15% of registered voters, according to a press statement.

Participants who post with the hashtags #StopAsianHate #8by8 to social media will benefit from giveaways of milk tea and baked goods while supplies last. Attendees will also be provided with yellow whistles, part of a national campaign called “The Yellow Whistle” to support self-protection and solidarity against anti-Asian violence and discrimination.

Scheduled guest speakers for the rally include Tanaka, Palo Alto City Councilwoman Lydia Kou, former Congressman Mike Honda, former “Survivor” winner Yul Kwon, Old Navy co-founder Jenny Ming, state Treasurer Fiona Ma, Assemblyman Marc Berman, president of Ascend Foundation Anna Mok, and trustee of the Foothill-DeAnza Community College District and former Cupertino Mayor Gilbert Wong.

After the remarks, booths will be set up by the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters, Palo Alto Chinese Parents’ Club, and Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association Peninsula Chapter. There will also be exhibits showing the Chinese rail workers in North America and the Arboretum Chinese Labor Quarters projects at Stanford.

Participants are encouraged to register for the rally, which also helps organizers with contact tracing, at gregtanaka.org/8by8.

Funds sought to build memorial bench

Cafe Zoë, a coffee shop in the Willows neighborhood of Menlo Park, is working with the nonprofit group Get Human, Inc. to raise funds to build a bench in memory of longtime Willows resident and community volunteer Katherine Strehl to place in Willow Oaks Park. People may donate online at gethumaninc.org or make checks payable to Get Human Inc.

—Kate Bradshaw

Media literacy tips talk

Michelle Lipkin of the National Association for Media Literacy Education will host a talk on how to help children become critical thinkers called “Digital Media Literacy Tips and Tools” on Friday, April 30, from noon to 1 p.m. through the Parent Education Series. Sign up online at tinyurl.com/sequoiamedialiteracy.

Portola Valley annual Youth Photography Exhibit

The Portola Valley Cultural Arts Committee is calling for all youth photographers who reside or go to school in Portola Valley to submit their photos for the town’s annual art show.

Whether you use an old film camera, a digital camera, or your cellphone, selected images will be shown at an exhibit at Town Center. Photo entries are due May 14.

Visit tinyurl.com/PVphotography for more information.

Sudden Oak Death event

The 2021 Sudden Oak Death (SOD) blitzes will soon come to Bay Area neighborhoods. Organizers need help to map the distribution of the disease that kills many oaks, tanoaks and — since 2017 — some of the California-unique manzanitas and the animals that depend on them, according to an April 22 town of Portola Valley newsletter. Portola Valley’s blitz will take place from May 14 to 18.

This year, organizers need as many people as possible to complete the yearly statewide survey, given that a dangerous novel strain of the SOD pathogen was detected in California forests last year, according to SOD chairperson Debbie Mendelson. All plant material submitted will be tested for infection by the SOD pathogen and for presence of the EU1 variant, known to be more aggressive than the NA1 variant, currently present in the vast majority of California forests. Mendelson said it is imperative

See **COMMUNITY BRIEFS**, page 18

Menlo College to require students to be vaccinated before fall return to campus

By Angela Swartz

After over a year of full distance learning, Menlo College plans to have its 800 students return for in-person instruction this fall. The private four-year Atherton college is following the lead of other universities nationwide by requiring its students to get vaccinated against COVID-19 prior to stepping back on campus.

Menlo College students will need to submit proof of vaccination two weeks before they start classes on Aug. 23, school officials told students via email on April 21. As the pandemic continues, different degrees of

social distancing, mask wearing and testing protocols might be needed during the fall, the email states.

"It's what will allow us to provide the type of student experience we offered in the past safely," said Angela Schmiede, vice president for student success and chair of the pandemic planning team at Menlo College.

California public university officials and Stanford University joined Menlo College in making vaccines mandatory when they announced on April 22 that they intend to require students, faculty, academic appointees and staff to be immunized in order to return

to campus this fall.

Menlo College also plans to resume sports competitions and other on-campus activities that were put on hold during the pandemic. These plans are subject to change depending on the trajectory of the virus, Schmiede said.

"The college will continue to make evidence-based decisions, and together we will adapt nimbly as circumstances change," officials said in the email. "We all know the past several months have been hard. Throughout, many of us have looked to the fall 2021 semester as a beacon of light — the time when our entire community might safely come together in



Magali Gauthier

Menlo College plans to require students to receive COVID-19 vaccines before returning to in-person classes this fall.

person again. With the arrival of effective and safe COVID-19 vaccines, we can now make that hope real."

It's "murky" legal water when it comes requiring employees

to be vaccinated, Schmiede explained.

"At this point we're strongly encouraging faculty and staff

See **MENLO COLLEGE**, page 16

Despite pandemic, one last hurrah for local centenarian

Eleanor McLoughlin, longtime Menlo Park resident, dies shortly after her 100th birthday celebration

By Heather Zimmerman

Eleanor McLoughlin, who recently celebrated her 100th birthday, died at her Menlo Park home on April 19. By her side were Deacon Dominick Peloso and Monsignor Steven Otellini of Church of the Nativity and her caregiver, Edith.

McLoughlin was a longtime Menlo Park resident and active volunteer in the community who saw many milestones in the Bay Area. Her family recalls she was particularly proud of being one of the first, along with her brother, Cedric, to walk across the newly completed Golden Gate Bridge in 1937 on the day before it opened to vehicles.

In mid-April, McLoughlin's five daughters organized a drive-thru birthday celebration to mark her turning 100 on April 4. The party was held in the back parking lot at the Church of the Nativity in Menlo Park, where McLoughlin had been a parishioner since 1945, and a member of the choir for 53 years. Her family said she loved the church's Children of Mary meetings, which she attended until just last year.

About 50 family members and friends came to celebrate, some driving in from as far as Reno, Nevada.

Flanked by her daughters, McLoughlin, wearing a tiara, was seated beneath a tent in her wheelchair, which had been decorated to look like a throne. Well-wishers in vehicles slowly drove past, leaning out of windows to chat and waving colorful signs with birthday



Courtesy McLoughlin family

Eleanor McLoughlin, who turned 100 on April 4, is decked out for a drive-thru birthday celebration on April 10 at the Church of the Nativity in Menlo Park, where she was a longtime parishioner and volunteer.

greetings. The Menlo Park Fire Protection District and Menlo Park Police Department each sent several vehicles to participate in the procession, and sounded their sirens to mark the festivities.

"It was so sweet to see her reaction, with all the people driving by. ... It was delightful," said her daughter Joanne Taylor. "I think she was pleased and it was a success."

McLoughlin was born Eleanor Julia Lussier in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on April 4, 1921, to Eva Julia Leveque and Norman Albertus Lussier, who met in France during World War I. She moved to the Bay Area with her family in 1925 following her mother's death. The family first lived in San Leandro and moved several times before

settling in San Francisco in the 1930s.

She attended Sacred Heart School in San Francisco and San Francisco College for Women, also known as Lone Mountain College, and which later became part of the University of San Francisco. Her mother had been a nurse during World War I and McLoughlin followed in her footsteps, training in nursing at St. Joseph's Hospital during World War II and graduating in 1945.

After the war, she worked at her father's dental office in San Francisco.

Her daughters remember how proud she was of her registered nurse pin, cape and hat, which she kept all her life.

The same year McLoughlin graduated from nursing school, her family moved to 1 Flood Circle in Atherton's Lindenwood neighborhood, bringing her to the area that she would call home for the rest of her life.

In 1948, she met Menlo Park native Joseph Ross McLoughlin at a square dancing class in Palo Alto and they married in 1949. After the death of his father that same year, Joe McLoughlin took over McLoughlin's Shoe Repair, which he ran for more than 35 years.

After getting married, McLoughlin left nursing and focused on raising a family that would grow to six daughters.

The McLoughlins enjoyed traveling, with a highlight being a trip between New York and London on the supersonic Concorde. They were both longtime Meals on Wheels volunteers and were very active at the Little House Senior Center

in Menlo Park.

The couple was married 66 years, until Joe McLoughlin's death in 2015.

McLoughlin was also preceded in death by her daughter, Margaret Sarah, her brother, Cedric Stephen Lussier, and her sons-in-law Russell Moore and David Haughton. She is survived by her daughters Eileen (David) Haughton, Cecelia (John) Dickinson, Julia (Wayne) Usher, Mary El (Russell) Moore, and Joanne (Bill) Taylor; 11 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

A memorial mass will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday,

May 6, at the Church of the Nativity, with interment at Holy Cross Cemetery in Menlo Park. Funeral arrangements are under the direction of John D. O'Connor, Menlo Park Funerals.

The family asks that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Church of the Nativity, Peninsula Volunteers Inc, Macular Degeneration Research, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital or a favorite charity. ❏

Email Assistant Editor Heather Zimmerman at hzimmerman@almanacnews.com.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

Prop 19 Opens New Counties for Some Buyers



Dear Monica: Since Prop. 19 passed I have expanded the area that I am considering for my next home. Has the market been impacted by this change?

Julia C.

Dear Julia: Prop 19 just passed in November of 2020 and it is too soon to see much effect. Among other changes, now buyers 55+ years of age can move

to any county in California and pay the same property tax on the new property they had on their former one. We are beginning to see buyers do this.

Sellers must still pay capital gains taxes on the appreciation but not all sellers are affected in the same way. It will take months to see the any real impact of Prop 19.

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

High school sports roundup

Sacred Heart Prep lacrosse teams score easy victories

Phoebe Kim scored seven goals and the Palo Alto girls lacrosse team beat visiting Menlo-Atherton, 12-6, in a nonleague contest Monday to remain unbeaten in four games.

Rachel Ellisen added three goals and Laney Henry scored twice for the Vikings, who are scheduled to host Wilcox in a Santa Clara Valley Athletic League game Saturday.

Lilly Cobos scored three goals for the Bears (1-4), who were scheduled to host Mitty in a West Bay Athletic League contest Wednesday.

Megan Cobos scored twice and Amelia Poirer also netted a goal for M-A.

Henry also recorded five draw



Courtesy SHP Athletics

Ellie Noto scored three goals in Sacred Heart Prep's win over Woodside High.

controls while Kim and Lulu Gaither each recorded three.

In another nonleague contest, Ellie Noto and Ava Shenk

each scored three goals to lead Sacred Heart Prep past host Woodside, 16-4.

Shenk added three assists and Noto recorded a pair for the Gators (3-1), who travel to play St. Francis in a West Bay Athletic League match.

Genna Gibbons, Kat Showalter and Tess Espinosa each scored twice for SHP. Kalista Hurel added a goal and three assists.

In a West Catholic Athletic League boys match Monday, Sacred Heart Prep drilled visiting Sacred Heart Cathedral, 29-2 as Max Sloat scored five goals.

Kai Lockton scored four times and Ben Ramsey three as 15 different Gators (3-1-1) scored in the contest.

Sloat added four assists, while Eric Bollar and Will

Garlinghouse each had three.

Elsewhere, Palo Alto beat host Sequoia.

In other sports, the Palo Alto boys volleyball team downed visiting Gunn in three sets and the Menlo-Atherton girls swamped host Sequoia in a girls water polo match.

Three M-A pitchers combine to shut out Homestead

Nate Baxter, Colin Galles and Will Ryan combined to throw a two-hitter in M-A's win over visiting Homestead on Monday.

Baxter struck out eight, walked one and did not allow a hit in his four innings. Galles and Ryan combined for five strikeouts without a walk.

Griffin Williams and Joe Meyer each drove in three runs for the Bears (6-5), who have won three straight heading into their PAL Ocean Division

opener Tuesday at El Camino in South San Francisco.

M-A broke a scoreless tie with four runs in the bottom of the third. John Quinlan and Max Coupe each singled and Tommy Eisenstat walked to load the bases. Williams and Galles each followed with a two-run single.

Coupe singled home two runs in the fifth, and Meyer, pinch hitting for Williams, tripled with the bases loaded in the sixth.

Ben Cohen and James Roberts each added two hits and drove in a run. Rowen Barnes and Ethan Bergan also drove in runs.

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—Rick Eymer

Coronavirus central: County to resume mass vaccinations this week

By Embarcadero Media staff

San Mateo County as of Tuesday had 41,404 cumulative cases of COVID-19, with 564 deaths. There were 12 people hospitalized. Santa Clara County as of Tuesday had 118,036 cumulative COVID-19 cases and 2,048 deaths. There were 76 people hospitalized, nine of whom were new.

San Mateo County to resume mass vaccination sites this week

Starting Thursday, April 29, San Mateo County will have weekly COVID-19 mass vaccination

clinics for anyone who lives or works in the county.

The San Mateo County Event Center mass vaccination clinic will return as the county's vaccine supply increases following weeks of constrained supply that prompted county officials to pause mass vaccination sites in mid-March.

Moving forward, the county will host two to three mass vaccination sites every week as supply allows. These are in addition to the community clinics in hard hit neighborhoods, where vaccine efforts have been focused for the past month.

County Manager Mike Callagy

encouraged people to get the vaccine, saying in a statement that the more vaccines the county can get out, the safer the county becomes.

"We need to have everyone think of this vaccine as a life-saving measure that moves us closer to normalcy," Callagy said.

People can sign up for drive-thru appointments at the Event Center through the state's MyTurn.ca.gov website.

The county will also resume use of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, per guidance from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The county will continue to

target vaccination efforts for people who are homeless, farmworkers and residents in communities with low vaccination rates.

First- and second-dose clinics will continue in neighborhoods and cities like North Fair Oaks, East Palo Alto, San Mateo, Daly City, El Granada and Half Moon Bay.

As of Monday, 445,776 San Mateo County residents have received at least the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. This number represents 69% of the adult population eligible for the vaccine.

For vulnerable communities — those with lower vaccination rates and which have had high exposure to the virus — vaccination rates are at 56%.

County health officials: Johnson & Johnson vaccine is safe

Nine health officers from the greater Bay Area on Sunday released a statement supporting recent federal guidance to lift the pause on the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine for adults.

The health officers, from the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Solano, and the city of Berkeley, said they agree with findings that the vaccine is safe and the risk of developing the rare clotting disorder is extremely low.

On April 23, the Centers for Disease Control and the Food and Drug Administration announced they would accept the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' recommendations to lift pausing on the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine for all adults.

According to the CDC, there have been 15 confirmed cases of the rare clotting event among nearly 8 million total doses administered in the U.S. Nearly all the cases have been in women.

Sunday's statement from the health officers recommends Bay Area health providers resume administering the Johnson & Johnson vaccine in an effort to prevent community spread and severe illness and death from COVID-19.

The region's health officers also support adding a warning label and the Western States Scientific Safety Review's recommendation that culturally and linguistically appropriate informational materials in an accessible reading level be made available.

Anyone who has received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine should contact their primary health care provider if they have concerns or if they develop severe symptoms of headache, abdominal pain, leg pain or shortness of breath within three weeks after vaccination, the health officers said.

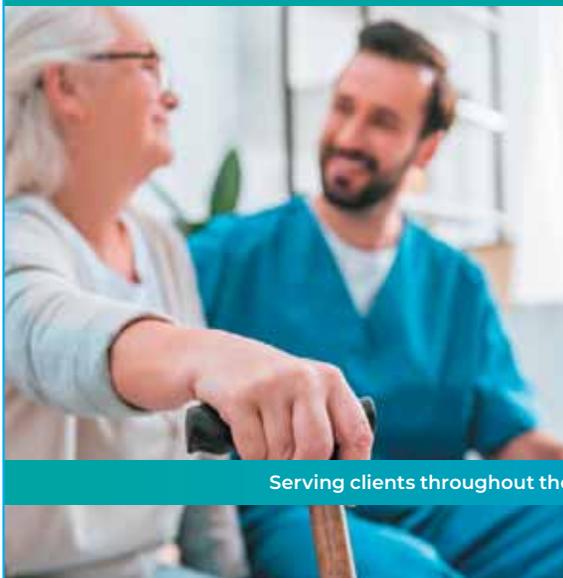
Comprehensive COVID-19 coverage

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

CalMatters and Bay City News Service contributed to this report.

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Paying up, getting in

Netflix doc “Operation Varsity Blues” delves into college admissions scandal

★★★ (Netflix)

Money talks in every aspect of American life, a history we’re doomed to repeat. Lately, the scuttlebutt’s been about the well-connected “jumping the line” for vaccines, but it wasn’t so long ago that scandal erupted in the sphere of college admissions. The nationwide bribery scheme, which broke in 2019, included a Stanford University sailing team coach as well as parents from Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Atherton and Hillsborough among the dozens indicted during the investigation.

Netflix revisits this recent history in its new, utterly fascinating, and plenty juicy white-collar crime documentary/docudrama “Operation Varsity Blues: The College Admissions Scandal.”

Director Chris Smith, well known in the documentary world for such films as “American Movie” and the Netflix docs “Jim & Andy: The Great Beyond” and “Fyre: The Greatest Party That Never Happened,” elevates the art of reenactments to fuel his account of

independent college counselor Rick Singer and the conspiracy he coordinated. Between 2011 and 2018, Singer infamously guaranteed parents the desired college admissions for their children — for a price. “Operation Varsity Blues” — named for the FBI investigation into Singer, his clients and his collaborators — intriguingly psychoanalyzes the mastermind, seen in archival video footage but also played by Matthew Modine of “Full Metal Jacket” fame.

Singer scoffed at the “front door” of colleges (whereby students earned their own admissions) and decried the “back door” (donations in the tens of millions to all but guarantee a spot by sanctioned bribery). Instead, he built his own “side door” into colleges: targeted bribes to athletic programs — funneled through Singer’s bogus philanthropic organization — that would gain mostly nonathletic students spots on college teams and, with them, admission to the college of their choice.

In a nod to convention, Smith employs bits of news footage and



Courtesy Netflix Inc.

Matthew Modine portrays college counselor Rick Singer in the Netflix docudrama “Operation Varsity Blues: The College Admissions Scandal.”

expert talking heads, including former Stanford University admissions officer Jon Reider (whose observations are as informative as they are delightfully acerbic). The film also can boast Oscar-winning composer Atticus Ross (“The Social Network”) as one of three credited contributors to the film’s original score. But what sets “Operation Varsity Blues” apart are its reenactments of wiretapped conversations.

Using montages of social media college-acceptance (and non-acceptance) videos as Exhibit A, Smith contextualizes the elusive and, more importantly, illusory nature of

college “prestige,” built on low supply and high demand for top-ranked colleges. The manic expectations around the college application project mean big money for independent college counselors (a mix of adviser, coach, therapist, and Hollywood talent agent for high school juniors) and the test prep market. Not surprisingly, the highly desirable Stanford University plays a central role, with Smith indicting its practices even as he paints John Vandemoer, Stanford sailing team head coach, as something of a tragic figure, almost more a victim of Singer than a conspirator in a bribery scheme. To be fair, Vandemoer

differed from other coaches and university administrators in taking money not directly for himself but instead for the Stanford sailing program.

The Singer case got most of its attention because two of his clients were Hollywood actors: Lori Loughlin and Felicity Huffman. Though neither takes up much screen time here, Loughlin takes more of a hit, with Smith highlighting her daughter Olivia Jade’s academic failings and including a story of Loughlin’s husband, Mossimo Giannulli, intimidating Olivia Jade’s college counselor. That the barely mentioned Huffman escapes such attention probably owes more to her story being less gossipy in the details, but it’s hard not to wonder if she was spared due to her own Hollywood “cool kid” status, which would certainly be an irony of ironies.

The later passages of “Operation Varsity Blues” move on from the athletic recruitment scheme to elucidate a test cheating scheme, also cooked up by Singer. In the end, it’s everyone but Singer who pays the most, as his cooperation with FBI investigators has allowed him, thus far, to remain free from prosecution. As Fisher puts it, “There

See **PAYING UP**, page 17



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CELEBRATIONS

continued from page 1

remarks as long as they are at least 6 feet away from other attendees and are advised to keep their comments brief to limit the time they are unmasked.

M-A's prom party

Senior Maya Kennedy, 18, is part of the leadership class planning M-A's May 7 prom and is eager to host the dance. This will be the class of 2021's first prom, as their junior prom was canceled due to COVID-19. Students will be allowed to dance, but with masks on, she said.

"It definitely feels great (to be able to host the event)," she said. "I was on the prom committee last year planning that one; it was a bit of disappointment because we put a lot of time into that one. A lot of us haven't seen each other in now over a year. It will be nice to see everyone back on campus and together."

The soccer field will be decorated with vines and fairy trees for the "Enchanted Forest" theme, she said.

Charlie Smith, 17, a fellow



Magali Gauthier

Brynn Baker, a Menlo-Atherton High School senior, wears her prom dress and a mask in Menlo Park on April 27.

senior at M-A, plans to wear a yellow-gold dress that looks similar to Belle's in the movie "Beauty and the Beast."

"This is probably one of the most unique proms ever," she said. "It just shows how my peers and friends have adapted to such unique circumstances; it's not every year that we get a masquerade ball as prom."

Michael Amoroso, the activities director at M-A, said he is "super grateful to honor this senior class with a prom," even if it's a scaled-down event outdoors instead of the usual glammed-up prom in San Francisco.

"It's no San Francisco, but it is a prom," he said. "Seniors have expressed their feelings that they just want to do something to get together as a class."

Limited celebrations in Palo Alto

Although Palo Alto schools plan to host in-person graduations, prom is off the table, much to the disappointment of some students and parents.

Paly and Gunn principals emailed parents on April 23 that the schools "will not be entertaining a prom or modified prom event this year" to ensure students "remain healthy and are able to participate in their graduation ceremony."

PAUSD Superintendent Don Austin said county health officials are reluctant to individually sign off on events. The health department's approach so far has been to leave the decision to hold certain events to school leaders' discretion, he noted.

"They (the health department) won't even entertain the question," Austin said. "As a veteran former high school principal and former activities director, I fully understand and empathize with the desire with everyone involved to have activities at the end of the year. Unfortunately that's not our reality right now ... We continue to prioritize in-person graduation and don't want to do anything to jeopardize that."



Magali Gauthier

Charlie Smith, 17, says that M-A's event for the class of 2021 will be "probably one of the most unique proms ever."

Some parents are trying to devise their own plans for a prom, which some students would choose to attend over a graduation ceremony, said Julie Dubrouillet, Gunn PTSA senior parent network coordinator. She hasn't been able to secure a venue for the event and noted that every venue seems to be waiting for June 15, when Gov. Gavin Newsom said the state's coronavirus tier system restrictions could be lifted.

Dubrouillet said it's not just the events that are gone, but all the little moments that come with it: a day to shop for prom dresses, "promposals," and the video reveal of the year's venue.

A planned grad night celebration is also off the table at Gunn, after the school's PTSA Executive Council announced on April 25 that it won't be sponsoring an event because its insurance doesn't cover "communicable diseases," Dubrouillet said. Gunn seniors will graduate on the school's football field on June 2.

Gunn senior Madeline Siu, 18, recalls how there were a flurry of rumors about an "improvised senior prom" on the football field.

"It's a bummer," she said. "We got excited about it, we had our hopes up. But now I think we've all kind of reined back and sadly taken that reality check of 'things can't always be the

normalcy.' At this point, I'm just really glad to have a graduation at the bare minimum."

Castilleja School, a Palo Alto private school for girls in grades 6-12, was able to hold its Fabulous Dinner Dance (FDD) for students accompanied by one of their parents on April 24, said Lorraine Brown, the school's director of communications and community relations, in an email. The event typically is open to all seven grades, but only included seniors this year to limit its size because of the pandemic.

"We wanted to honor our seniors who've missed so many of their favorite traditions in the past year, so we held FDD just for the Class of 2021," she said. FDD included a dinner, slideshow of the students, and a dance performance by the parents.

"While everyone was distanced and masked, they still loved the chance to dress up, be together and celebrate," she said.

Mountain View Los Altos Union High School District events

Mountain View and Los Altos high schools will use the PayPal Park stadium, home of the San Jose Earthquakes soccer team, for their ceremonies. Since the venue is large, graduates can invite more guests, who will be able to properly physically distance, according

to LAHS Assistant Principal Suzanne Woolfolk.

In addition to graduation ceremonies, MVHS and LAHS will have their own themed proms.

Los Altos High's "Seniors Under the Stars" prom on May 15 will be held on the school's football field. So far 290 of the class' 500 seniors have signed up, Woolfolk said. The venue can hold up to 350 people. Although there won't be dancing, there will be a senior talent show. Students must stay in their assigned seats — they can choose who will sit at their table using an app — and can't mingle with other pods. Servers will bring food to tables.

"These seniors haven't had a chance to gather as a class at all this year," she said. "To be able to say hello and goodbye is something that is encapsulated in this evening. ... The seniors just needed a chance to be kids one more time before they graduate."

Prom will look a little different at MVHS. There won't be a dance floor for the carnival-themed event, which will take place on the campus' main quad and science quad, according to junior Dylan Leahy, 17, a member of the dance committee and of the school's Associated Student Body. There will be carnival games, mini golf, a DJ and food trucks. Unlike LAHS, Mountain View students will be able to move around.

Although the plan was to keep the event to seniors, organizers announced on Monday, April 27, that juniors can also attend the modified prom event. They've sold over 200 tickets so far and aim to sell 500.

"I think that this is a great replacement," he said. "Even if we had to compromise a little bit with dancing and stuff like that. ... It's going to be a really good last send-off and I'm excited about it." ■

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REOPENING

continued from page 5

a number of city services have remained open, including police operations, the public works department and most parks.

The city has continued to feed seniors by delivering meals, and the city's child care and after school programs, aquatic centers and skate park, tennis courts, sports fields, playgrounds and the City Hall permit counter have reopened with limitations. The library also has reopened to offer curbside pickups. Roughly 45% of the city's

workforce is working remotely, according to City Manager Starla Jerome-Robinson.

The discussion raised several questions that are not yet resolved. One question from Councilman Ray Mueller about the proposed phase-in is to what degree the city plans to track the vaccination status of its employees.

Another, raised by Complete Streets Commission member Adina Levin in a public comment, is whether some of the ease that offering public meetings virtually has provided community members will be

retained as the pandemic's threats ease.

She pointed to proposed state legislation, Assembly Bill 339, which would, if passed, permit people to continue to provide comments in public meetings over the phone or online rather than having to attend in person. The city could perhaps consider supporting the legislation, because it allows people in the community, particularly those with family or work obligations in the evenings, to more easily participate, she said.

Vice Mayor Betsy Nash asked about how many staff need to

be added back to reopen services and when, and Councilwoman Cecilia Taylor asked about how the city could go about permitting on-site sign-ups for facilities like pool lanes rather than requiring advance reservations.

Councilwoman Jen Wolosin asked about the possibility of setting up portables near Willow Road and Ivy Drive rather than busing seniors from Belle Haven to the Arrillaga Family Recreation Center for senior programs, a suggestion raised by Belle Haven resident Pam Jones. Prior to the pandemic,

the council had agreed on the busing option, but the council could revisit the topic in the future.

Mayor Drew Combs noted that the Menlo Park City School District was ahead of many other school districts in the region to reopen, and so families in the community have high reopening expectations. "That's not a bad thing," he said, adding that "every decision should be led by safety and science." ■

Email Staff Writer Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com.



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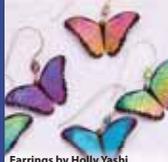
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MENLO COLLEGE

continued from page 7

to get vaccinated,” she said. “We may require it if the law allows; once there is a switch to more formal approvals (of the vaccine, which is being administered via an emergency authorization by the FDA).”

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued guidance in December suggesting that employers can make it mandatory for employees to receive one of the COVID-19 vaccines.

Colleges have the legal

authority to require proof of vaccination for students — they already require that students be vaccinated against measles, mumps and rubella, meningitis, and other vaccine-preventable diseases — but the emergency use authorization status of the COVID-19 vaccines “raises a wrinkle,” Joanne Rosen, an associate lecturer in the Department of Health Policy and Management at Johns Hopkins University’s Bloomberg School of Public Health, told Inside Higher Ed.

Few cases on campus

About 250 students are currently living in dorms on campus in residence hall pods and 100 come onto campus for athletic training, Schmiede said. Some students living on campus needed emergency housing, such as those who didn’t have a safe or productive place to engage in online learning, and international students who would face difficult time differences if they did distance learning in their home countries, she said.

Just two cases have been reported on campus since Jan.

9, Schmiede said. She credits twice-a-week rapid COVID-19 tests and quarantining that’s required of students before they can move into the dorms for the college’s low infection rate.

Although the goal for the fall is to have all instruction be in person, some students awaiting visas in their home countries or students with medical conditions that don’t allow for them to be vaccinated may be offered online courses, Schmiede said. Menlo College will only grant medical exemptions and not religious or philosophical

vaccine exemptions, according to the email.

The school received a \$2.7 million Paycheck Protection Program loan in April, according to ProPublica. Menlo College employs 185 people, according to the loan. In January, the school received \$802,478 through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, according to the school’s website. ■

Email Staff Writer Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com.

Stephen Norman Hynding

1940 – 2021

Stephen Norman Hynding died on January 31, 2021 at his home in Woodside after a short battle with Acute Myeloid Leukemia.

Steve was born in Mills Hospital in San Mateo. He grew up in South San Francisco with his parents Norman C. Hynding, his mother Dorothy May Hynding, his older brother the late Dr. Alan A. Hynding and his younger brother Norman C. Hynding, Jr. As kids the boys would climb the hill behind their house and slide down historic Sign Hill: “South San Francisco-The Industrial City”.

Steve always excelled at sports, football at Lick Wilmerding High School and then at College of San Mateo. At Cal, Berkeley, he threw the discus and shot put. After college it was rugby. He had a rugby game the day before his wedding and showed up with a faint shiner!

He graduated in 1963 with a Bachelor of Science degree from the College of Engineering. Then it was off to Lubbock, Texas to complete his Air Force Reserve commitment. Returning to Berkeley to “find a wife” he met Gail Wilson from Palo Alto while playing bridge. They were married in 1967. They played bridge with friends for the next 54 years.

Steve was very comfortable around tools. He could fix anything. When his future mother-in-law first met him she handed him a combination lock she had forgotten the combination to. He solved it in five minutes. We never had a repairman in our house. He could repair anything with duct tape and glue! And tools, if necessary.

In February 1968 his Air Force Reserve group got called up to deal with the capture of the USS Pueblo by the North Koreans. Steve was assigned to Hamilton Air Force Base in Marin. For almost two years he commuted between his home in Millbrae, his job in South San Francisco, and Hamilton. It took its toll on his health. After his honorable discharge his doctor suggested he take up golf to relieve his stress. Obviously that doctor had never played golf!

Steve became an active member of California Golf Club in South San Francisco. After a year his handicap was about a 10. It would eventually get down to a 4. One of his greatest joys was shooting a 69 on his 40th birthday. In 2007 he joined Menlo Country Club in Woodside and a year later bought a condo on a golf course in Palm Desert. The man loved golf. Over his golf career he had 5 holes-in-one.

Steve and Gail raised three children in Woodside: Steve Jr., Scott and Kristi. They had many parties in the backyard. Steve will always be remembered for being the first one in line at any buffet. And he never met a dessert he didn’t like, especially ice cream. He would say ice cream filled all the nooks and crannies in his stomach so he always had room.

Steve will be missed for his wry and irreverent sense of humor, his honesty and love of family. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Gail, his children Steve and wife Sheri, from Los Angeles, their two kids Lily 13 and Max 10.

Also, son, Scott, of Pacific Grove; daughter Kristi and her husband, Darryl, from Iowa and their daughters Kelsey 19 months and Hailey seven weeks.

Steve would rather have donations made to the Michael J. Fox Foundation or Sequoia Hospital Foundation instead of flowers.

PAID OBITUARY

PRINCIPAL

continued from page 5

the moment — when even the campus adults are sometimes struggling to make sense.”

Burbank noted that she is working with campus colleagues to help students

respond to social injustice and navigate the isolation of the pandemic.

“While it won’t be my work after this year, it will be your work,” she said.

The Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce named Burbank principal of the year in 2011, according

to The Almanac’s archives.

Prior to joining Woodside, she was principal of Prospect High School in Saratoga from 2008 to 2012, according to the school’s website, and at Aptos High in Santa Cruz County from 2003 to 2008. Prior to that, she worked at Cupertino and Gunn high schools, Jane Lathrop Stanford Middle School in Palo Alto and Newark Junior High School in Newark, where she began her teaching career in 1984.

The district will also have a new superintendent joining in July, officials announced two weeks ago.

Burbank closed her message to families by saying, “As I’m fond of reminding people, ‘We let our students graduate; we have to let our adults, too.’ As I’m fond of ending, let me roar (beneath a face mask) ‘Go WILDCATS!’”

The district posted an application for Burbank’s position on April 26. The application deadline is May 15 at noon and the salary is listed as between \$182,617 and \$210,698, plus \$1,456 if the person selected holds a master’s or doctorate degree.

“The position has been posted in both EdCal and EdJoin and we will be conducting stakeholder meetings at Woodside within the next two weeks,” said district spokesperson Ana Maria Pulido in an April 26 email. Burbank’s final day with the district is June 30. “A recommendation to the Board (of Trustees) for the appointment of the next principal of Woodside will be at the first board meeting in June.”

Last week, the district conducted stakeholder meetings at M-A to gather input regarding the characteristics and skills that staff, parents and students would like to see in that school’s next principal, Pulido said. The board will vote on a finalist for the role at its last meeting in May. ■

Email Staff Writer Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com.

Mary Lou Carlsen

August 15, 1922 – April 23, 2021

Mary Lou Carlsen passed away peacefully on April 23, 2021 at the Vi seniors facility in Palo Alto, where she resided for 15 years. She was 98 years old.

Born Mary Louise Martin in Hanford, California on August 15, 1922. Her Central Valley roots ran deep and were a source of considerable pride. Following his service in the Civil War her beloved great grandfather, Claude Giddings, settled in Visalia where he would become a founding member of the emerging local business community. In 1891, Mary Lou’s grandmother Blanche “Mimi” Giddings married James Hickman. They moved to Hanford where James became a fixture in the local banking industry. In 1892, Mimi and James gave birth to Mary Lou’s mother, Nadine. Mary Lou’s father, Robert Martin, hailed from the mountains of rural Kentucky, which was also a source of pride. It bears mention that like grandmother Mimi and mother Nadine, Mary Lou was an only child and a strong female.

Mary Lou attended UC Berkeley where she was a member of the Sigma Kappa sorority. It was at Berkeley that she met her future husband, Carl Carlsen. The couple was married in 1946 and made their home in Pacific Grove, Marin County, and later in Woodside and Portola Valley.

Carl and Mary Lou loved to travel and spent many happy years boating in Mexico and the Pacific Northwest. Mary Lou’s adventurous spirit was evident in her hiking the Colorado Trail with friends, her trekking to remote parts of Canyonlands National Park in Utah, and her various visits to Mayan Indian villages in highland Guatemala. Mary Lou was also an avid bird watcher and enjoyed her birding expeditions.

Mary Lou and Carl were longtime members of the St. Francis Yacht Club. She was a member of Menlo Presbyterian Church for many years. Mary Lou is preceded in death by her husband of 59 years. She is survived by daughter Kristin (Gary) Wheeler, son Robert (Gail) Carlsen, daughter Leslie (Rich) Tincher, grandchildren Wade, Daniel, Maya, Katherine, Laurel and great grandchildren Torrik, Woodson, Coen, Quincy, Reese. She will forever live in our loving memories.



PAID OBITUARY

PIÑATAS

continued from page 5

look very accurate, either,” she said.

She developed a series of prototypes, honing the design over time. Cardboard turned out to be too stiff for the piñatas, while tissue paper was too flimsy. She found a certain type of paper-board to create the front and back, and made the sides with corrugated cardboard. It’s stuck together with fiberglass-reinforced paper packing tape, like what comes on Amazon boxes, and some of the decorative elements, like textured, shiny crepe paper, are sourced from Italy. The red protein spikes are made of shiny red paper straws and pompom balls, she said.

McCarthy says she’s been advertising her piñatas on the neighborhood-based social media website Nextdoor and via

flyers on her busy street in the Willows neighborhood.

As a full-time nurse, her crafting time is limited, but she’s been having fun with it — in contrast to what’s otherwise been an awful year, she said.

“It’s definitely been the worst year of my life, professionally,” she said.

“My house is a piñata factory right now,” she said. “It’s just a great distraction. It’s better than sitting and eating ice cream or any other vice.”

As people get vaccinated and begin gathering with friends and loved ones again, she said, she’s hoping that people use the piñatas to safely celebrate with one another.

“It’s just been so much fun to think that people are going to be able to enjoy them and get their frustrations out — and celebrate the end of this, God willing.”

McCarthy added that there’s

one person she definitely plans to send a coronavirus piñata to: Dr. Anthony Fauci, the country’s leading expert on contagious diseases.

“He seems like the kind of guy who, I imagine, more than anyone, would get it on the first whack,” she said.

People interested in purchasing a piñata from McCarthy can reach her at (650) 328-2083. They cost \$40 to cover the cost of materials, she said. ■

Email Staff Writer Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com.

OBITUARIES

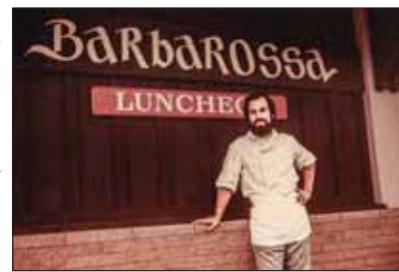
Local residents who died recently include **Stephen Norman Hynding**, 80, a Woodside resident, on Jan. 31; **Gary Oliver Maffia**, 68, co-owner of the now closed Barbarossa European Restaurant in Atherton, on April 6; and **Mary Lou Carlsen**, 98, a former Portola Valley resident, on April 23.

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

Gary O. Maffia

August 9, 1952 – April 6, 2021

Gary Oliver Maffia, age 68, passed away peacefully on Tuesday April 6, 2021 while surrounded by family in Redding, California. Those who knew Gary will remember him for his larger than life personality, sense of humor and delicious food.



Growing up in Redwood City, Gary loved playing baseball and was an outstanding young athlete. After graduating from Sequoia High School, Gary discovered a passion in the culinary arts and pursued an education in European Cuisine. At the young age of 21, he opened Barbarossa European Restaurant in Atherton, CA as the chef and co-owner. For 25 years, local patrons celebrated Barbarossa as a regional favorite offering a fine dining experience. As the chef and owner, Gary received several prestigious awards including Mobile Four Stars and Chefs of America recognition in 1988. Although extremely busy, Gary always found time to coach his sons’ baseball teams for many years. He took coaching to the next level by organizing weekend campouts, whiffle ball tournaments, and frequent backyard BBQs.

Later in his career, Gary opened a Olivio’s European Bistro in Belmont, CA where he served continental cuisine in a more casual atmosphere. Oftentimes, you would find Gary mingling amidst the tables sharing old stories, jokes or a recipe. His gregarious nature, soul filled laugh, and engaging personality delighted friends and patrons over the years.

In 2011, Gary retired to the Mt Lassen foothills where he enjoyed golfing, fishing and sharing his recipes with family. He is survived by brother Ron (Dorene), sons Anthony (Brittany) and Michael (Vanessa), and grandchildren Mariana, Lucas, and Daniela.

PAID OBITUARY

PAYING UP

continued from page 11

aren’t many federal cases where you have 50 people,” most of them Singer’s clients, “indicted for a crime.” As Singer “flipped” on others, the nakedly corrupt colleges and universities took their complicity in stride

(denying any conscious wrongdoing, Stanford redistributed Singer’s \$770,000 in donations “following recommendations from an outside philanthropic group”). And so money will keep doing the talking, albeit on the hush hush until the next scandal breaks. ■

— Peter Canavese

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Michelle Inserra, MD is an otologist with the Earlens Hearing Center. She holds a medical degree from Stanford University and completed a fellowship in Neurotology at the California Ear Institute.

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Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

LANDA CLEANING SERVICE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 287097

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

Landa Cleaning Service, located at 671 Stanford Ave., Redwood City, CA 94063, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
ANA L. LANDA VERA

671 Standord Ave.
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 March 25, 2021.

(ALM Apr. 9, 16, 23, 30, 2021)

GABRIEL V. GARCIA GARDENING SERVICES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 287154

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

Gabriel V. Garcia Gardening Services, located at P.O. Box 51187, Palo Alto, California, 94303, San Mateo County; Mailing address: 1657 Purdue Ave., East Palo Alto, California 94303.

Registered owner(s):
GABRIEL GARCIA VAZQUEZ

1657 Purdue Ave.

East Palo Alto, California 94303

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 March 29, 2021.

(ALM Apr. 9, 16, 23, 30, 2021)

NUCLEATION CAPITAL MANAGEMENT
CLIMATE COALITION
U.S. CLIMATE COALITION
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 287183

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

1.) Nucleation Capital Management, 2.) Climate Coalition, 3.) U.S. Climate Coalition, located at 750 Menlo Avenue, Suite 300, Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County; Mailing address: P.O. Box 15, Menlo Park, CA 94026.

Registered owner(s):
KIT VENTURES LLC

18 McCormick Lane
Atherton, CA 94027

California

This business is conducted by: A Limited Liability Company.

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 March 31, 2021.

(ALM Apr. 9, 16, 23, 30, 2021)

NELSON CAPITAL
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 286974

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

Nelson Capital, located at 545 Middlefield Road, #200, Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County; Mailing address: 545 Middlefield Road, #200, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Registered owner(s):
NELSON CAPITAL MANAGEMENT, LLC

545 Middlefield Road, #200
Menlo Park, CA 94025

CALIFORNIA

This business is conducted by: A Limited Liability Company.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on Not Applicable.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on Mar. 16, 2021.

(ALM Apr. 9, 16, 23, 30, 2021)

MINT CHIROPRACTIC CARE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 287217

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

Mint Chiropractic Care, located at 600

McLellan Drive, So. San Francisco, CA

94080, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):

KRISTY CARRANZA

600 McLellan Drive

So. San Francisco, CA 94080

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 April 2, 2021.

(ALM Apr. 16, 23, 30; May 7, 2021)

BUCIO TRUCKING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 287212

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

Bucio Trucking, located at 909 Tinsley St. #E110, E. Palo Alto, CA 94303, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
N&N TRANSPORTATION LLC

909 Tinsley St. #E110

E. Palo Alto, CA 94303

California

This business is conducted by: A Limited Liability Company.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 5/14/2019.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on April 1, 2021.

(ALM Apr. 16, 23, 30; May 7, 2021)

AERIEL SKINNER OLYMPIC FUND.
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 287289

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

Aerial Skinner Olympic Fund., 2995 Woodside Rd. #400, Woodside, CA 94062, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
STEVEN FLYNN

2995 Woodside #400

Woodside, CA 94062

California

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 April 9, 2021.

(ALM Apr. 23, 30; May 7, 14, 2021)

AUTO - VINO A PRESERVE FOR FINE CARS AND WINE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 287368

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

AutoVino - A Preserve For Fine Cars and Wine, located at 205 Constitution Dr., Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
ATHERTON ASSOCIATES, INC.

205 Constitution

Menlo Park, CA 94025

California

This business is conducted by: A Corporation.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 1-16-08.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on April 15, 2021.

(ALM Apr. 30; May 7, 14, 21, 2021)

BAY AREA MOBILE NOTARY & SERVICES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 287381

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

Bay Area Mobile Notary & Services, located at 1103 Carlton Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
DEADRA LAMPKIN

1103 Carlton Ave.

Menlo Park, CA 94025

California

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 April 16, 2021.

(ALM Apr. 30; May 7, 14, 21, 2021)

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

continued from page 6

to detect this variant as soon as possible, as its spread could accelerate the demise of oaks and tanoaks.

Go to sodblitz.org to find a local SOD Blitz, enroll in the program and find out where to collect and return testing materials. Most SOD blitzes run Saturday to Tuesday, from April to mid-June.

New Oak Knoll principal

Menlo Park City School District Superintendent Erik Burmeister will recommend Alicia Payton-Miyazaki as the next principal of Oak Knoll School in Menlo Park pending approval by the board of trustees on May 13.

Payton-Miyazaki currently serves as Oak Knoll's assistant principal and would start her new role in August. Assuming the principal role at Oak Knoll is a "momentous" step, said Payton-Miyazaki, who began her tenure at Oak Knoll as a student in the 1980s and also attended Hillview Middle School, according to an April 28 press release. She began teaching science at Hillview in 2001.

"Alicia showed herself to be an able communicator, a passionate visionary, and an eager learner throughout the process," said



Magali Gauthier

Catching some air

Arya Nazemi soars high above the skate park located in Menlo Park's Burgess Park on March 30. With the warm spring weather, the park is proving to be a popular destination for people eager to get out of the house.

Burmeister in a statement.

Payton-Miyazaki is also the first person of color, to the district's knowledge, to be selected as a district principal. She will bring the perspective of growing up with two backgrounds — Japanese and American — to her leadership role in MPCSD's increasingly diverse student community, according to the district.

She earned a bachelor's

degree in biology from Vassar College and conducted HIV research at Stanford Medical Center.

Payton-Miyazaki said increasing equity has always been a focus for her. At 14 years old, she started a small nonprofit making science kits for students in inner-city schools.

"Inequitable access and outcomes in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields have lifelong implications for students, and my depth of knowledge in both of these areas is what we need at this moment," she said.

Payton-Miyazaki said she looks forward to a full return to classrooms and hopes to spend next year "pod busting."

"The pods we have formed to keep ourselves safe during the pandemic have also tended to reinforce our existing relationships," she said. "I want us to have authentic conversations with people who have different experiences than ourselves. Our diversity really does make us stronger."

She would replace Kristen Gracia, who is leaving to take on a role at the district office. The district will conduct a search for the next assistant principal of Oak Knoll, according to the press release.

Earth Day cleanup

Two dozen Kings Mountain community members held a trash cleanup on April 24 for Earth Day, according to resident Janie Dawies. They collected more than 50 bags of garbage, which they then worked with Caltrans to pick up. The event was put on by friends and neighbors Aiden Zahedi and Niamh Dawes, two children who led a cleanup in Kings Mountain back in December after noticing a trash problem.

—Angela Swartz

TOWN OF WOODSIDE 2955 WOODSIDE ROAD, WOODSIDE, CA 94062 PLANNING COMMISSION MAY 5, 2021 6:00 PM

This meeting is compliant with the Governor's Executive Order N-25-20 issued on March 4, 2020, allowing for deviation of teleconference rules required by the Brown Act. The purpose of this is to provide the safest environment for staff and the public while allowing for public participation. The meeting will be held by teleconferencing. The public may participate via: Zoom meeting or by coming to Independence Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, where a microphone and speaker will be available to allow for participation.

PLANNING COMMISSIONERS PARTICIPATING BY TELECONFERENCE:
BILDNER, BRUCH, DARE, KUTAY, LONDON, ROSEKRANS, AND VOELKE.

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+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: : 837 9639 8977

Weblink: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83796398977>

Remote Public Comments:

Meeting participants are encouraged to submit public comments in writing in advance of the meeting. The following email will be monitored during the meeting and public comments received will be read into the record.

Email: sharper@woodsidetown.org

PUBLIC HEARING

2. Steve Peterson ASRB2017-0007; XSET2017-0002; VARI2021-0001
215 Grandview Drive Planner: Sage Schaan, Principal Planner

Presentation and consideration of a proposal, requiring Formal Design Review (ASRB2017-0007), to construct a two-story single-family residence, including an attached garage and an attached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). Site Improvements include, but are not limited to, a driveway, parking area, retaining walls, vehicle gate, and replacement fencing adjacent to the north and east property lines.

The project requires approval of a Setback Exception to reduce the required 50-foot front, side, and rear setbacks (XSET2017-0002); and a Variance to allow development on slopes greater than 35% (VARI2021-0001). The Planning Commission will consider the ASRB's recommendation on the project design and take action on all requested entitlements.

THE APPLICATION MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW BY CONTACTING SAGE SCHAAN AT [SSCHAAN@WOODSIDETOWN.ORG](mailto:sschaan@woodsidetown.org)

Call Alicia Santillan at 650-223-6578 or email asantillan@paweekly.com for assistance with your legal advertising needs.

Teen substance use treatment center shuttered after few show up

By Kevin Forestieri

In 2018, San Mateo County launched a specialized clinic in East Palo Alto aimed at providing treatment to underserved teens suffering from substance use disorders. It was meant to be a hub for troubled teens to tap into low-cost therapy and mental health support, with an eye toward relapse prevention and mindfulness.

But three years later, the clinic has been permanently shut down, and both the county and the nonprofit running the program — Healthright 360 — agreed to cut the program loose after its short-lived run. The reason? Too few kids were willing to show up, making it an ill fit for tackling the problem of teen drug abuse.

The clinic was meant to be there for the long haul. Healthright had spent a year finding a suitable place for outpatient services, and sought to weave itself into the safety net services available in southern San Mateo County. Though the doors were open to all, the clinic sought to serve the most vulnerable youth, including those with a criminal record and those with incarcerated parents.

Since opening, however, the clinic barely served more than a

half-dozen people at any given time, well below what Healthright had hoped, said Vitka Eisen, president and CEO of the nonprofit.

“We never really saw more than five clients at any given time, maybe six, which is not a lot,” Eisen said. “Despite our team working very closely in the community, we did not see lots of clients who were coming in for care.”

Unpacking what went wrong, Eisen said it likely comes down to a fundamental mismatch between the services provided and what teens are willing to voluntarily attend. The program was funded by Medi-Cal, Eisen said, which has a narrow scope for what services are eligible for reimbursement. And it turns out those limited services — specifically individual and group therapy — don’t hold enough allure to attract teens suffering from drug abuse. Most clients in traditional outpatient treatment are in their late 30s and 40s, she said.

“Young people are more engaged in care when you have social activities, athletic activities, field trips and things that are more engaging, and you build therapy around that,” Eisen said. “Medi-Cal doesn’t really fit that.”

Also suppressing the number of kids showing up at the clinic were changes to mandatory substance use treatment by the courts. San Mateo County health officials say a decline in court-ordered treatment means fewer teens are being compelled to enter outpatient treatment programs, which had been a common source for new referrals. When Healthright began its effort to open the clinic, there were 140 kids in juvenile hall with some history of either drug use or possession of drugs, Eisen said. By the time the program opened up, that number had plummeted.

Eisen said the changes to the criminal justice system are positive, and that there is an overreliance on coerced treatment that criminalizes health conditions. Telling people they can either go into substance use treatment or go to juvenile hall for drug arrests causes long-term damage, particularly in Black and brown communities, she said. But it also means more people who could benefit from outpatient treatment are now falling through the cracks.

“The circumstances changed so we weren’t coercing people into treatment, which is great, but it means young people aren’t necessarily going into

treatment,” she said.

Healthright was among the nonprofit mental health providers that switched to telehealth during the pandemic, meaning the clinic’s shutdown at the end of December last year was a quiet loss. Instead, Eisen said the nonprofit will continue to provide drug treatment services within East Palo Alto without a brick-and-mortar clinic, meeting clients in places like schools and community centers. The goal is to stay integrated in the community,

she said, and it doesn’t take a physical location to do it.

“The important part is to remain visible and engage with the community, and having an office in a place, staffed at all times, where people don’t come is not necessarily welcoming,” she said. “Having a connection to the community, I think, is just as effective.” ■

Email Staff Writer Kevin Forestieri at kforestieri@mv-voice.com.

MENLO CHURCH

continued from page 1

information about the allegations and the steps church leaders took to respond.

According to the statement, a young man had been following news stories about a prominent Christian leader’s sexual misconduct, which had triggered “unexplained anger,” so he began working with a therapist and, through that process, allegedly remembered receiving unwanted solicitations from Bryce. He contacted Menlo Church, and the church asked Bryce about the allegations.

Bryce, according to the church announcement, had “confirmed the solicitations but denied knowing he (the young man) was a minor at the time.” As mandated reporters, the church then contacted law enforcement with the information, the statement said.

From there, the Oklahoma City Police Department conducted an investigation, according to the statement. Working with the district attorney there, charges were not filed against Bryce because they were unable to confirm if the solicitation had occurred within the police department’s



Sammy Dallal

Menlo Church, an evangelical Presbyterian faith community headquartered in Menlo Park, draws about 6,000 weekly congregants to its six Bay Area campuses.

jurisdiction. There also was uncertainty about when the solicitations occurred, and it was not clear whether the young man was 16, 17 or 18 years old at the time the solicitations took place, according to the statement.

“Law enforcement’s decision to not file charges does not change Michael’s termination status with us,” the announcement stated.

Menlo Church leaders plan to have a forensic specialist examine Bryce’s work computer, they added.

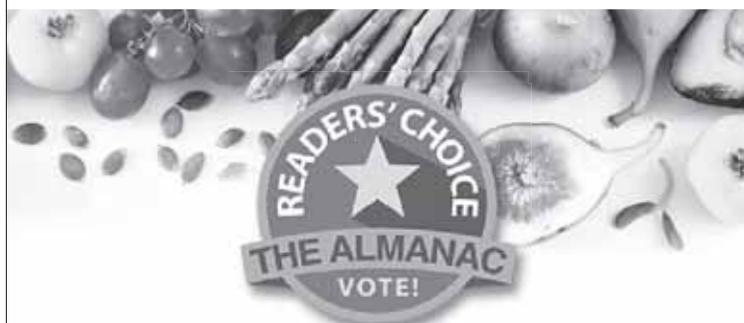
“In Michael’s case, the past

solicitations with a teen demonstrated poor judgment on his part, which was compounded by his withholding of this information when he was hired at Menlo Church. Neither action is consistent with our expectations of our staff,” Crosby and Kim wrote.

People with concerns should contact their campus pastor or Zero Abuse, an outside party the church is working with, at menlo@zeroabuseproject.org. ■

Email Staff Writer Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com.

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Why we decided to send our kids back to school

By Josh Becker

Last week, my two kids returned to high school. They sat in an actual classroom and spoke to their teachers and friends, in person. This is something they have done countless times growing up. But for over a year, neither one of them had been inside a classroom. Our school gave families the option to go back, and we discussed it with our kids and said yes.

My family is not alone.

In California, we say trust the data and the science. Both show that it is safe to return to school. As Dr. Grace Lee, professor of pediatrics at Stanford University School of Medicine, has said, "It's possible to open schools safely — it's being done."

There are dozens of reports from around the country that support this assertion. Experts at UCSF recently cited CDC studies in Wisconsin and North Carolina that all showed K-12 schools can have in-person learning with limited in-school COVID-19 spread, and no spread is known to have

GUEST OPINION

occurred to or from staff.

This has been an incredibly difficult year for teachers. I believe it is important that our teachers feel as safe as possible. That is why I called for prioritizing teachers for the vaccine back in December. Now all teachers and staff in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties have been given the opportunity to receive the vaccine. Most are now fully vaccinated, and all available data shows that once vaccinated you can't transmit the virus.

Evidence also demonstrates that K-12 schools that have implemented prevention strategies have been able to safely open for in-person instruction and remain open. As a result, states such as Florida have been back five days a week since September to some form of in-person learning without major outbreaks of COVID-19.

We can do the same here in California. We have the benefit of incorporating the

proven best practices from around the country, and we have extensive resources to do so, along with a much lower community transmission rate. Due to our temperate climate, we can cut down on airborne particles with more ventilation by opening windows and installing MERV filters. Masks work and 3 feet of separation will help keep our schools safe, even without a broadly vaccinated community. The CDC has called for children to return to American classrooms as soon as possible, and with adequate masking, distancing, and ventilation, the benefits of opening schools outweigh the risks of keeping kids at home. To ensure our schools are able to implement such measures, I voted for an additional \$6.6 billion in funding for school safety.

The past year has been unimaginably difficult for all of us. We have all suffered in different ways. For many students and parents, this suffering has been particularly acute. I have seen firsthand the mental and emotional toll this takes as I

have watched my own kids struggle with distance learning and isolation. The negative consequences and loss of learning are significant, and the long-term impact is unclear.

This is why it's imperative that we return, as much as science allows, to normal in the fall with school five days a week with full instructional minutes.

Now that we see that bright light at the end of the tunnel, and we have the science and data to prove it, it is time to reopen our schools, while allowing for flexibility for those with risk factors as we have always done. For the majority of children in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, it is reasonable, responsible and delightful to allow them to pack a lunch, strap on their backpacks and head back to the wonderful schools our community is fortunate to have.

Josh Becker (D-Menlo Park) represents California's 13th Senate district in the state Legislature.

San Mateo County DA should speak out against death penalty

By Henry P. Organ

Across the nation, there has been a gradual decline in death penalty indictments and convictions. Twenty-three states have abolished the death penalty, with Virginia being the latest. Increasingly, more district attorneys have pledged not to seek the death penalty, or governors declaring moratoria against it. Thankfully, the current president of the United States has halted federal executions, which were regrettably resurrected by the last president.

Concurrently, there has been an increase in "life without parole" indictments and sentences. It should be noted that one particular international religious leader, Pope Francis, has commented that life without parole is in substance "the death penalty in disguise." Life without parole, considered by many as

GUEST OPINION

an acceptable option, is probably plagued with the same failures as the death penalty when race and social equality are considered.

In California, thankfully and wisely, the governor has invoked a moratorium on the death penalty. It is to be noted, however, that this action is operative as long as the governor desires, and is subject to revocation and revision by him — and his successor. The solution to this uncertainty would be abolishment of the death penalty by the state, again, by ballot initiative.

Which leads to San Mateo County. The current district attorney, Steve Wagstaffe, was elected to this office in 2010, where he had previously served for several years. Last December, Mr. Wagstaffe

stated in an interview that "...the views on the death penalty here in California, and specifically with me, are evolving." This statement is important and pivotal.

Mr. Wagstaffe played a major role in opposing an initiative to abolish the death penalty, Proposition 66, in 2016. Further, on the same ballot, he supported a competing initiative, Proposition 62, in support of the death penalty. At that time, he was also president of the California District Attorneys Association, further emphasizing the criticality of his "evolving."

Consummating his "evolving" with a pledge not to seek this penalty in this term, and if reelected, is welcomed and encouraged. It would be a moral credit to him, especially as a person of religious conviction who hungers and thirsts for righteousness. Consummating his evolution would enhance his electability as

well. As an astute public servant he will take note that Proposition 66 in support of abolition of the death penalty was approved by the voters in San Mateo County by an impressive margin of 15%.

Beyond Mr. Wagstaffe's personal commitment to such a pledge, it would have an enormous effect on his fellow district attorneys throughout the state and nation. It would have a positive impact on gaining signatures to get an abolition initiative on the ballot, and on its ultimate passage.

I hope Mr. Wagstaffe will seek and welcome this opportunity to serve the common good, and to be a faithful citizen.

Henry P. Organ has lived in Menlo Park for almost 50 years, and was a member of the 2010 Charter Review Committee for San Mateo County.

LETTERS

Our readers write

Vote for Measure S

As parents, our children's education is a high priority. We moved to Portola Valley to raise our family because of the close-knit community and the outstanding schools. It didn't hurt that one of us — Brendan — grew up in town!

As doctors, we have seen the toll that the COVID-19 pandemic has taken across the world. We understand the precautions needed to keep people safe. We also

recognize the incredible hardship that many children across the world have faced, learning only via computer (if at all) and missing critical social interactions with peers and access to caring adults at school.

As parents and doctors, we are incredibly grateful that our local Portola Valley schools were resourceful and motivated to get kids back to on-campus learning as soon as they could responsibly do so. Our children have loved being back at school this year, and it is so healthy for them to be there. The exceptional instruction and enrichment that we value is still there, too,

despite the extreme challenges of running schools during a pandemic.

We are proud of our local district. It deserves our support, as do the kids of our community. Passage of Measure S will keep the very best teachers, instruction, and enrichment here in Portola Valley. If you value protecting the exceptional quality of our local schools — whether to prepare students for success or simply to protect your property values — then S deserves your yes vote, too.

*Dr. Lindsey Pierce and
Dr. Brendan Pierce
Wyndham Drive, Portola Valley*

Put a price on carbon

As a 17-year-old climate activist, my most recent excitement has come not from college acceptances, getting my driver's permit, or passing my classes. It has come from the reintroduction of the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (EICDA) to the new Congress.

My excitement baffles my peers, even as I lecture them incessantly about the bill's effectiveness, financial responsibility, economic justice, and political strength. EICDA will reduce carbon emissions by 30% in the first five years and achieve net-zero

carbon emissions by 2050. It will stimulate economic growth, and a predicted increase in carbon costs will be offset by the regular check all Americans will receive to spend as they see fit, especially benefiting low-income individuals. As a senior in high school, I am celebrating my future. The time has come to put a price on carbon.

*Lanier Poland
Wayside Road, Portola Valley*

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THE SOUND OF A STORY: HOW THE DRAGON IS BRINGING 'THE CREATURE' BACK TO LIFE

THEATER COMPANY RELEASES PODCAST OF TREVOR ALLEN'S 'FRANKENSTEIN' ADAPTATION

By Karla Kane

The story is a classic: The chilling tale of a mad scientist and the grotesque “monster” he creates. But the 200-year-old “Frankenstein” narrative has been given new life with Dragon Productions Theatre Company’s “The Creature,” a serialized podcast production of Bay Area playwright Trevor Allen’s radio play.

It’s the Dragon’s first podcast, and it’s also the directorial debut of Dragon co-leader Alika Spencer-Koknar.

“It’s been quite a roller coaster ride,” Spencer-Koknar said of the long-awaited production, which was scheduled as an in-person staged show in 2020 before transitioning into a podcast last autumn, then rescheduled and revamped again for this spring.

“We decided to go back to square one and figure out how to properly produce this podcast the way we wanted to instead of rushing into it,” she said. “It’s been a really cool experience experimenting with the available technology and with what we can do with those tools on a low budget to sound like a really high-quality, fully produced audiobook.”

Key to that quality is the work of sound engineer, designer and composer Gregory Holmes, who’s created an original musical score, along with being responsible for the show’s many sound effects and ambient audio.

“This production for me has been something of an ‘alignment of the planets,’” Holmes said. While he’d long dreamed of composing and designing sounds for such a project, he originally signed on to serve

solely as sound engineer, helping with recording and tech support. But after the production was put on hold and rebooted, Holmes was again offered the chance to do the sound design and scoring.

“By doing both jobs, I could make the music fit the actors, and make the actors fit the music,” he said. “Staggering technology was available to me that was extremely cost prohibitive just a few years earlier,” including high-quality MIDI instruments for his orchestrations (MIDI, or Musical Instrument Digital Interface, allows electronic instruments and devices to communicate with each other), and affordable binaural microphones. Binaural recording (“bi” meaning two and “aural” meaning ears) captures the way human ears and brains process sound in the real world, allowing for a lush, three-dimensional sound quality.

“If this project had come to me in 2012, it would have been entirely impossible at worst, and embarrassing at best,” he noted.

The score uses a 19-tone equal temperament system, “an alternate carving up of Western music’s divisions of the octave,” he said. This choice “complicates the music, but it gives us some truer harmonies, while allowing some complex chords that are not possible with the standard 12 notes.”

He’s also been playing with convolution reverb, which simulates the reverberation situation of different environments. In the case of “The Creature,” these environments can include the wilds of the Arctic, “the cramped quarters of a ship’s captain, or a Bavarian forest near Ingolstadt,” he said.

“For the full experience of this podcast,” Spencer-Koknar noted, “headphones are a must.”

While there have been many “Frankenstein” adaptations over the years, from musical comedies to campy melodrama, Spencer-Koknar said she’s partial to Allen’s incisive take on it because of how true it is to Mary Shelley’s 1818 novel, and how compassionately it brings forth the perspective of the “monster” himself.



Courtesy Dragon Productions Theatre Company

“The Creature” boasts an immersive soundtrack thanks to binaural recordings and an original score by Gregory Holmes.

“This adaptation really makes you stop and ponder: How is our society open to people who are different — and not open to people who are different?” she said. “I’ve seen a lot of other adaptations where the point of view of the Creature is kind of lost.”

Playing the title role is Spencer-Koknar’s husband and Dragon co-leader Bora “Max” Koknar. Paul Rosenfield performs the role of the scientifically brilliant but ethically challenged Victor Frankenstein, with Filip Hofman portraying Captain Walton, and others.

When switching the production plans from stage play to podcast, it was important to Spencer-Koknar and her team not only to create a rich acoustic atmosphere, but also to maintain the chemistry and energy that comes from performers interacting with each other.

“This was a big thing at the very beginning of the pandemic: ‘How do we still do things that are “live” but not in person?’” she said. “I wanted to keep that ‘live’ kind of feeling.” To capture that energy, the cast rehearsed over Zoom and recorded those sessions, their isolated vocal tracks edited and processed after.

“Every rehearsal, we all came

together,” she said. “That back and forth you have with the actors, it’s really hard to do on Zoom but it is possible.”

“The Creature” is being released as a serial in nine episodes, one per week through June 21, with the first two episodes out May 3 and 4, respectively.

“Serializing this is really quite fascinating,” Spencer-Koknar said. “It’s a really dense piece, so it’s nice to take our time in each episode instead of just plowing through, as we normally would in theater.”

Listeners can find and subscribe to the episodes directly from the Dragon’s website (dragonproductions.net/creature) on a donation basis, as well as via Spotify, Apple Music and SoundCloud, with closed-captioned versions coming out on Fridays on YouTube.

“We’re trying to keep it as accessible as possible,” she said. Each chapter also boasts original digital artwork by Spencer-Koknar, some incorporating writing from Shelley’s original manuscript. A vinyl record edition is in the works for a limited release in June, which will include the artwork in the packaging.

The Dragon’s downtown

Redwood City theater space is not likely to be open for in-person activity any time soon, but hopes are high for some outdoor performances and classes in the coming months. Online programming, meanwhile, continues at a steady pace.

The company has also undergone a staffing and structural reorganization with an emphasis on serving artists, and launched a fundraising campaign with a goal of reaching \$150,000 by the end of 2021.

“We live in an age where we must approach our work not like a factory, but like a garden; an ecosystem to be supported, cared for and nurtured so that it can grow and flourish,” Spencer-Koknar said in a video announcing the company’s relaunch.

More podcast-style theater may be in the Dragon’s future. “Now that we’ve got this one under our belt, I’d love to keep finding ways to keep telling these stories,” Spencer-Koknar said.

More information is available at dragonproductions.net/creature. ■

Email Arts & Entertainment Editor Karla Kane at kkane@paweekly.com.

LEHUA GREENMAN



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Food & Drink

By Zack Fernandes

Spring is here and the Peninsula's sidewalks, parklets and dining rooms are beginning to fill with people tired from a long year cooped up at home, drinking wine in sweatpants.

On the cocktail front, there's something to be said for the classics — after all, they're classics for a reason — but we also love to find bartenders willing to take a winning formula and mess with it a little bit. After a year of routine, it's a welcome change.

So put yourself back in the capable hands of the Peninsula's most creative bartenders and venture out to try one of these riffs on the classic cocktails we know and love. They prove you can teach an old cocktail new tricks.

Sarakku at Ettan

Ettan: 518 Bryant St., Palo Alto; 650-752-6281.

At the Palo Alto restaurant Ettan, the cocktail menu is designed to complement the "Cal-Indian" flavors of Michelin-starred chef Sriyith Gopinathan's menu.

The Sarakku is cheekily named after the colloquial catch-all term for booze in Tamil, a South Indian language, and is Ettan's take on a piña colada. Built on a base of Battavia arrack instead of rum, with pineapple and lime juices, Liquid Alchemist coconut syrup and nutmeg, the tall drink goes down quickly, especially on a warm evening.

If you'd prefer not to imbibe, Ettan also offers a "sober" version of the Sarakku, swapping out the booze for Seedlip Grove 42, a non-alcoholic distillate made with orange, lemon, lemongrass and ginger.

Polanco at San Agus

San Agus: 115 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto; 650-847-1334.

Having pushed their customers off the beaten path of margaritas to try other Mexican-inspired cocktails, San Agus in Palo Alto has set its sights on another category of drinks ripe for experimentation: tiki. On Thursdays, San Agus offers tequila and mezcal-based variants of the boozy, chuggable, citrus-packed rum drinks that typify the genre.

In the Polanco, blanco tequila is mixed with La Luna mezcal, elderflower liqueur, Benedictine D.O.M. (a French herbal liqueur), lemon and lime juices, bitters and house-made pineapple-ginger and passion fruit-sage syrups for a supremely complex tiki drink with a strong influence of agave.

Sequoia Sour at Nighthawk

Nighthawk: 2033 Broadway St., Redwood City; 650-503-8025.

Nighthawk, in downtown Redwood City, is serving up seasonal variations on the classic whiskey sour.

For its Sequoia Sour, the bar combines Larceny bourbon whiskey with kiwi fruit, ginger, black pepper and rosemary, which is then infused under gentle heat, sous vide, before being mixed with lemon juice, agave simple syrup and egg white and served with Amargo Chunchu Peruvian bitters. The infusions rotate every two to three weeks

Mix it Up

Creative twists on classic drinks from Peninsula bartenders

- 1 Sarakku at Ettan
- 2 Sequoia Sour at Nighthawk
- 3 Admiralty Kay at Amandine
- 4 Aged Rum Old Fashioned at Timber & Salt
- 5 Lovely Bubbly at Faith & Spirits
- 6 Bloody Mary at Alpine Inn.
- 7 Polanco at San Agus.

to feature new seasonal fruits.

Though it's not a classic (yet), Nighthawk also serves its own version of White Claw, the canned flavored malt beverage that you've probably seen encroaching on the beer selection at your local supermarket. To make the drink, aptly named the Night-claw, the bar clarifies passion fruit purée in a centrifuge and mixes it with vodka and seltzer to serve as a highball.

Admiralty Kay at Amandine

Amandine: 235 First St., Los Altos; 650-204-9222.

Amandine opened in Los Altos in late July of 2019, promising its customers a "Japanese-inspired cocktail experience" before shuttering at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, the bar and its vest-clad bartenders are once again inviting guests to sip and savor in its plush, exquisitely comfortable interior bar room and heated parklet.

The Admiralty Kay is a flip — a category of drinks that's usually served hot, sweet and with tons of body and mouthfeel from the addition of a whole egg. At Amandine, the Admiralty Kay is served cold, with lots of flavor coming from a base of Scotch whisky

infused with masala (a blend of spices), vanilla syrup, cream, bitters, an egg and a house-made allspice tincture, shaken and served up in a coupe. It's perfect as liquid dessert or a nightcap, but not too sweet to enjoy as your first drink of the evening. As Amandine prepares to rotate its cocktail list, you can ask a bartender for the Admiralty Kay even if it's not printed on the menu. The bar says that the drink will always be around.

You could also try one of Amandine's cocktails on tap. They serve a black Manhattan which, though not original to this bar, is a popular variation on the classic Manhattan that substitutes Amaro Averna, a bitter Sicilian liqueur, in place of sweet vermouth. Also on tap is Amandine's Gran Negroni, a symphony of bitter and sweet flavors made with gin, Campari, St. George Bruto Americano, Tempus Fugit Gran Classico and Carpano Antica Formula as well as Punt e Mes vermouths.

Aged Rum Old Fashioned at Timber & Salt

Timber & Salt: 881 Middlefield Road, Redwood City; 650-362-3777.

Though Timber & Salt in Redwood City is known for its rotating seasonal craft

cocktail menu, often entirely based on a pop culture theme of the bar staff's choosing (their current cocktails are all named after Neil Young songs) there's one spin on a classic that hasn't left the menu since the bar opened over six years ago: the Aged Rum Old Fashioned.

The drink abandons the classic old-fashioned's base liquor of whiskey for an eight-year aged Barbancourt rum from Haiti. But the star of the cocktail's complexity is a house-made mauby syrup, based on a bitter drink consumed in many of the Caribbean islands. Timber & Salt's version of mauby is made by boiling the dried bark of the mauby tree with spices and citrus zest before sweetening the infusion with both brown and white sugars. The bar uses the intense bitterness of the mauby syrup to round out the vanilla notes of the aged rum.

Though you could get the drink as part of Timber & Salt's to-go cocktail menu, you're better off enjoying it at the restaurant, where it's served over a perfectly clear, hand-carved cube of ice. The bar staff whittle individual cubes down from a large block that can usually be spotted behind the bar, tempering as the night goes on.

Lovely Bubbly at Faith & Spirits

Faith & Spirits: 765 Laurel St., San Carlos; 650-394-8466.

Faith & Spirits, which opened in San Carlos in the middle of the pandemic, bills itself as equal parts craft cocktail bar and live music lounge, complete with a raised stage and piano in its interior.

If you don't fancy yourself talented enough to jump on their stage but still want to feel like a crooner, you can order a classic gin martini, Frank Sinatra's second favorite cocktail (after Jack Daniels on the rocks), which Faith & Spirits says they take pride in.

For a twist on a classic, try the Lovely Bubbly, a drink reminiscent of a French 75, but lighter and more aromatic, with the flavor of lemon swapped for grapefruit. To make the drink, Hendrick's gin is perfumed with pamplemousse liqueur and topped with prosecco for the perfect patio spritz.

Bloody Mary at Alpine Inn

Alpine Inn: 3915 Alpine Road, Portola Valley; 650-854-4004.

Tweaks on the Bloody Mary are usually limited to the variety of garnishes a bar chooses to adorn the drink with. Last year, one Minnesota bar attempted to set a world record by offering 219 different garnishes.

At Alpine Inn (affectionately known to locals as Zott's) in Portola Valley, the bar keeps the garnish simple with a green bean and cherry tomato, and looks to their smoker to imbue additional flavor to their take on the brunch cocktail staple (available on the weekends).

To amp up flavor, Alpine Inn leaves whole tomatoes in a smoker before they are juiced and mixed with Tito's vodka and lime for its Smoked Bloody Mary. ▣

Email Freelance Writer Zack Fernandes at hello@zackfernandes.com. An expanded version of this story is online at thesixfifty.com.



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