

The Almanac

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SRI International site could become new Menlo Park neighborhood

Redevelopment plan envisions turning research park into mixed-use campus with 400 housing units

By Kate Bradshaw

SRI International has launched plans to redevelop its 63-acre campus as a mixed-use neighborhood with 10 acres for residential development and 29 acres of publicly accessible open space.

The 75-year-old research institute is launching plans to redevelop its Menlo Park headquarters at 333 Ravenswood Ave. by adding housing and opening areas to the public.

Menlo Park-based Lane Partners plans to start a community-guided process by holding a series of community listening sessions in July before submitting formal plans to Menlo Park's development department, said Mark Murray, principal at Lane Partners, in an interview.

"SRI has been a fixture in this community since before Silicon Valley became a household name — we are proud to have deep roots in Menlo Park," said William

Jeffrey, chief executive officer at SRI, in a statement.

"We are excited about the opportunity to work with Lane Partners to modernize our facilities and transform our campus into a new neighborhood that will truly be connected with the Menlo Park community. With this redevelopment, we are excited to continue building on our long history of discoveries making people safer, healthier and more productive," Jeffrey added.

SRI was chartered as the Stanford Research Institute by Stanford University trustees on Nov. 6, 1946, with the purpose of using science and innovation for local economic growth. As SRI International, it separated from Stanford University in 1970 and is now a major employer in Menlo Park. SRI researchers are credited with innovations including the development of the computer mouse, robotic surgery, internet

See **SRI INTERNATIONAL**, page 19



Courtesy Lane Partners

SRI International's 63-acre campus could become a mixed-use development with public open space and 400 housing units, under a preliminary plan released this week.

New task force cracks down on illegal fireworks in East Palo Alto, Menlo Park

By Sue Dremann

Determined to prevent a repeat of last year's overwhelming amount of fireworks explosions, the cities of East Palo Alto and Menlo Park have formed a joint fireworks task force that has already confiscated 1,500 pounds of illegal explosives in the past month, police said.

The task force, which includes the East Palo Alto and Menlo Park police departments and the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, is working to prevent another record-setting season of illegal fireworks. The task force's crackdown comes as the

San Mateo County Board of Supervisors approved a stricter ordinance for anyone caught with the explosives.

East Palo Alto police Cmdr. Jeff Liu said people won't necessarily notice the task force, which is operating in the city and in east Menlo Park, but already, there may be noticeable improvements. The 1,500-pound seizure of illegal fireworks that the task force has made thus far is "a lot," he added, and residents might notice the city seems quieter than last year.

On May 27, East Palo Alto sponsored a community town hall meeting to discuss its efforts and to work toward

changing the culture that has led to the out-of-control explosions.

City council member Lisa Gauthier said the impact on her pets "is heartbreaking." The

'We've chased a lot of fires in this town. We've seen fingers and hands blown off.'

CHIEF HAROLD SCHAPELHOUMAN,
MENLO PARK FIRE
PROTECTION DISTRICT

disruptive blasts, some of which happen as late as midnight and beyond, rattle windows and

disturb her and other working residents' sleep, she said.

The fireworks problem is not unique to East Palo Alto. A CNN story from last year revealed a more than 2,000% increase in fireworks complaints in some cities nationwide, she noted. Officials suspect part of the increase was due to the COVID-19 pandemic and cancellation of public fireworks shows, which put commercial-grade explosives on the retail market.

The impact has been devastating for some families, veterans and pets.

East Palo Alto resident Casey Kellogg and her husband have

two small children, ages 3 and 6. They spent many nights in the past eight years comforting their children. While the older child has grown accustomed to the noise, the 3-year-old has developed trauma as a result, Kellogg said.

"We spent most nights leading up to July 4 rocking her in her room: five, 10, 15 times a night. She has developed a sensitivity to other noises. She won't sleep without earplugs regardless of the time of day," Kellogg said.

Last year, they boarded up her bedroom window to dampen the sound, she said. The

See **FIREWORKS**, page 19

INSIDE

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Feature Story "Portola Valley delivers a fond farewell" by Julia Brown

Feature Photo "Marco makes his mark" by Magali Gauthier

News Photo "'Mixed feelings' as young students return to campus in the Menlo Park school district" by Magali Gauthier

Photo Coverage of Protest & Racial Justice "Black Lives Matter rally targets Amazon, Facebook in calls for racial justice" by Magali Gauthier

Wildfire Coverage - Feature "'It's eerie': Behind the lines of the CZU August Lightning fires" by Kate Bradshaw and Magali Gauthier

Editorial Comment "Atherton shows how not to be a good neighbor" by Renee Batti

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Local News

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Daniela Beltran B.

Tonga Victoria holds a copy of her book outside of her home in East Palo Alto.

Living the hyphen

East Palo Alto author looks to her Tongan roots to find a hero

By **Melissa McKenzie**

Growing up the daughter of Tongan immigrants, **Tonga Victoria** often felt stuck between her Tongan and American cultures — never feeling 100% American or 100% Tongan.

Although she was born and raised in East Palo Alto, her parents didn't speak English, so she spent the first eight years in school as an English as a second language student, embarrassed to read out loud in class.

"That can cause a lot of hidden trauma," Victoria said.

And she especially dreaded the first day of school with a new class as the teacher would read the roster of names.

"I literally conditioned myself every first day of school to go up to the teacher and tell them that (the roster) says my name is Tonga, but it's actually Victoria," said Victoria, who didn't use her real first name until after high school because it didn't sound like other American names.

She spent years struggling with her bicultural identity. Then, she went off to college and heard the phrase "hyphen American" in an ethnic studies

class to describe Americans who can trace their ancestry to another part of the world.

"That resonated with me," she said.

Now 28, Victoria has just released her first novel, "Hyphen American," a fictional book for young adults that weaves Polynesian culture and family traditions into an espionage story whose protagonist is a 21st-century Polynesian American girl named Sam Kelly who is working as a TechTon sales associate when she learns that she

See **AUTHOR**, page 15

Menlo Park budget aims to restore pandemic cuts

By **Kate Bradshaw**

It's June, and that means it's budget season. After releasing its draft budget May 10, the city of Menlo Park held a community meeting on the proposed budget June 1. Next, the Menlo Park City Council is scheduled to discuss the proposed budget on Tuesday, June 8, and consider its approval on Tuesday, June 22.

Compared to the last fiscal year, which was characterized by a global pandemic and its widespread impacts, the coming year's budget will focus on restoration.

"Whereas fiscal year 2020-21 was one of hard choices and ensuring stability, my proposed budget for fiscal year 2021-22 allows for restoration and regrowth, an opportunity for reflection and introspection on city service delivery models, the highest and best use of resources, and reestablishing support to the community," said City Manager Starla Jerome-Robinson in a public letter introducing the proposed city budget for the 2021-22 fiscal year.

Of note, Jerome-Robinson said, are four new items proposed to

receive funding in the upcoming fiscal year, based on priorities the City Council has identified. They are: redistricting in response to the results of the 2020 census, evaluating a Caltrain quiet zone, working on a complete streets study of Middle Avenue and increasing staffing by a half-time employee to support the new community center campus to be developed in Belle Haven.

In addition, two council priorities do not yet have funding set aside: reimagining both

See **BUDGET**, page 8

Bay Area health officials support full in-person schooling this fall

By **Bay City News Service**

Health officers from 10 Bay Area counties and one city on May 28 called for California schools to open for full-time, in-person learning in fall 2021.

Officers from Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Sonoma and the city of Berkeley issued a statement supporting opening schools for all grades.

"The lack of in-person learning has disrupted education, weakened the social supports provided by school communities, negatively impacted mental health, and prevented participation in the rituals and shared milestones that tie our communities together," according to the group statement.

"The science is now clear that the risk of transmission among children wearing masks is very low, even with reduced spacing between desks," the group asserted.

Factors supporting this conclusion include that in the Bay Area and throughout the state, there are high rates of vaccination among people at increased risk of severe disease, including older adults and those with a high risk of medical complications, according to the group.

Also, children 12 and older are now eligible for vaccinations and there is low overall community prevalence.

The group noted that "many

schools" in California have brought students and teachers back to campus under the guidelines of the California Department of Public Health, including requirements for face covering, basic cleaning, enhanced ventilation, and other measures to facilitate a safe return to in-person instruction.

Schools are not legally mandated to reopen in the fall, nor has Gov. Gavin Newsom called for them to do so.

California will reopen on June 15 without any capacity limits or physical distancing requirements for businesses or events, the state's health and human services secretary said May 21.

Newsom in April had announced the expected June 15 reopening date, which state officials confirmed as COVID-19 case numbers and hospitalizations continue to drop and the number of people vaccinated continues to increase.

A Sonoma County education official added his voice to the group endorsing a return to in-person education in the fall.

"Students, parents, teachers, coaches — and their families — deserve our thanks for the considerable sacrifices they have made," said Dr. Sundari Mase, health officer and public health division director of Sonoma County. "It's time to move past the remote-learning model and back to the full range of learning and support that our educational communities provide." ■



Magali Gauthier

Lisa Otsuka greets Menlo-Atherton High School seniors Kiana Pavlovic and Iris Riley in her classroom while the rest of her psychology class students attend virtually. Bay Area health officials are calling for schools to reopen fully in the fall to all grades.

Your COVID-19 vaccine questions — answered

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



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY NOTICE OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO ZONING ORDINANCE AND APPLICATION FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT AMENDMENT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing, via teleconference, on **Wednesday, June 16, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.** on the following:

ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY AMENDING SECTION 18.14.030 [CONDITIONAL USES PERMITTED] OF CHAPTER 18.41 [R-1 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT REGULATIONS] OF TITLE 18 [ZONING] OF THE PORTOLA VALLEY MUNICIPAL CODE; AMENDMENT TO CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT [XD7-5]; AND ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW FOR A PROPOSED EXPANSION TO AN EXISTING FIRE STATION [WFPD STATION #8] WITHIN THE TOWN'S R-1 ZONING DISTRICT; 135 PORTOLA ROAD; FILE #PLN_ZONA0001-2021 & PLN_ARCH0022-2019

The Planning Commission will consider a recommendation to the Town Council on amendments to the Portola Valley Municipal Code. Proposed Municipal Code amendments include: 1) changing the conditionally permitted uses in the R-1 Zoning District to include either fire stations or public buildings, and 2) allowing the development standards of such uses to be established by a conditional use permit approved by the decision-making body.

This project has been determined to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (e) – Existing Facilities, Section 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land, and Section 15061(b)(3) – Review for Exemption.

To join the Zoom meeting online:

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

Information pertaining to the proposal may be viewed at <https://www.portolavalley.net/departments/building-planning-department/development-projects/fire-station>. The agenda and staff report will be published at <https://www.portolavalley.net/town-government/planning-commission/minutes-and-agendas> in advance of the meeting.

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Laura Russell, Planning & Building Director

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CRIME BRIEFS

Suspect in Skyline double homicide found mentally competent for trial

A Pacifica man who is charged with the 2019 stabbing deaths of two men on Skyline Boulevard has been deemed competent to stand trial, according to the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office.

Malik S.J. Dosouqi, 28, faces charges of two counts of murder and use of a deadly weapon with special circumstances. He is accused of luring cab driver Abdulmalek Nasher, 26, to Skyline

See **CRIME BRIEFS**, page 17

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Menlo Park plans for reopening services

The city of Menlo Park released on May 22 a list of the types of venues and services it will allow to reopen in four phases through December.

The city noted in a statement that the rate of vaccinations against COVID-19 is rising. As of May 20, 85.1% of Menlo Park residents are either fully or partially vaccinated, according to the county health department's website.

In Phase 1 of reopening in Menlo Park, the city plans to allow picnic area reservations to resume (July 1); it will reopen the police department lobby, main library and Belle Haven branch library (July 6); and services at the main library and Arrillaga Family Recreation Center, including meals for seniors, will restart (July 12).

Phase 2, in August and September, will include indoor classes and programs for young people and those with special needs; permits for small-scale events; and then indoor classes and programs for the general population and indoor public meetings of city agencies.

Phase 3, later in September and in October and November, will include indoor gyms, general public access to City Hall, and indoor gymnastics.

And, finally, in December, the city plans to resume allowing large-scale events, indoor facility rentals, and "all other indoor access."

This schedule and additional information about when various activities will be permitted can be found online at menlopark.org/reopening.

The city called the schedule "partial" and "tentative" and said it is subject to change. More details will be announced later, according to the city's statement.

Essential city services like public safety, emergency maintenance and child care continued in-person during the pandemic, but many public services became virtual or were limited to curbside pickup, the city noted.

Light rail to stay closed after shooting

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority on June 1 refocused resources on regular bus service and wouldn't provide buses along light-rail routes following a shooting that killed nine VTA employees at a maintenance yard last week.

The changes are due to limited staffing as the VTA family grieves, attends funerals and supports each other. Regular bus service will be affected, too, with less frequent service also because of the May 26 mass shooting at the Guadalupe Light Rail Yard.

Light-rail service is suspended indefinitely, according to VTA officials, who said they have no estimate for when that service will resume.

VTA riders can get service information by calling customer service at 408-321-2300 or by using TransitApp for real-time bus information.

—Bay City News Service

New assistant principal for Oak Knoll

Menlo Park City School District (MPCSD) Superintendent Erik Burmeister and incoming Oak Knoll Principal Alicia Payton-Miyazaki intend to recommend Chana Stewart as the next assistant principal of Oak Knoll School for approval by the district's governing board on June 10, according to a June 1 press release.

Stewart is currently assistant principal of Aspire East Palo Alto

See **COMMUNITY BRIEFS**, page 16

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Much-loved longtime Menlo Park employee is battling COVID-19 in the ICU

Natalya Jones, the recreation supervisor who heads the city's child care programs, has been hospitalized for a month

By Angela Swartz

A longtime, beloved figure in Menlo Park is “fighting for her life” on a ventilator after contracting COVID-19. Her family is asking community members to rally together to raise funds for her medical bills.

Natalya Jones, director of the Menlo Children's Center and Belle Haven Child Development Center and the city's recreation supervisor, has worked for the city for over two decades. Jones, a Brentwood resident, landed in the ICU at Santa Clara Medical Center with pneumonia on April 24, said Karina Avila, senior office assistant at the Belle Haven Child Development Center.

“She's a mentor for a lot of our employees in Menlo Park and is a loving, caring person,” Avila

said. Parents whose children attended the child care center, even if it was years ago, are calling to check in, she said.

In 2020, the city of Menlo Park named Jones employee of the year and gave her a 20 years of service award.

Jones' family launched a GoFundMe page to support her recovery, and describes her as a “motivator when we are intimidated, our cheerleader when we're determined, and our comforter when we're discouraged.”

“With your continued prayers and support, it won't be long before we can see her smile, hear her laughter, and talk over good food!” her family wrote. “Continue to spread good vibes, well wishes, and prayers for our rock Natalya.”

Jones' family said she is slowly progressing.

“She is fighting through the

most challenging health obstacles with a silent strength that is surprising her medical care team,” her family wrote.

As of Wednesday, June 2, the GoFundMe had received contributions from 160 donors totaling \$17,685 of its \$40,000 goal.

Although her future treatment plan has yet to be finalized, she will need to stay in a rehabilitation facility to receive “intense” physical and occupational therapy after being released from the ICU, according to her family. The family is not financially prepared for the current and upcoming expenses of long-term care, physical therapy, medication and household accommodations. Donate at gofund.me/decd9938. ■

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



Courtesy Jones family

Natalya Jones, left, with her daughter, Brooklyn Jones, 23.

East Palo Alto council member's attempt to fire city attorney met with outrage, accusations

Mayor, vice mayor call Antonio Lopez's tactics a ‘power move’

By Sue Dremann

An East Palo Alto City Council member's effort to hastily convene a closed meeting and terminate the city attorney has drawn a fiery rebuke from the city's mayor and vice mayor, who called it a “power move” and possibly illegal.

Council member Antonio Lopez, who was elected last November, emailed the council on May 18, announcing that he and two colleagues, Lisa Gauthier and Regina Wallace-Jones, had formed a quorum to call an “emergency meeting” two days later to discuss termination of the city attorney. City Attorney Rafael Alvarado is currently away on family leave.

The email took Mayor Carlos Romero and Vice Mayor Ruben Abrica by surprise. Neither had been asked to attend the meeting nor informed of any issues regarding Alvarado. Lopez had circumvented the usual procedure of asking the mayor to put the item on the agenda for the next meeting, Romero and Abrica said.

Romero and Abrica refused to attend the May 20 closed session, but they did show up for the public portion of the meeting. Before the other three



Antonio Lopez



Carlos Romero



Lisa Gauthier



Regina Wallace-Jones



Ruben Abrica

council members went into the closed session, the senior members gave them an earful.

Abrica called the rushed meeting “a power move” and a disservice to transparency and community input.

“Whether a meeting is called by the mayor, as is the normal procedure, or imposed by three members as is the case here, the matter should be approached with respect for the public to be notified with plenty of time so they may comment or ask questions about any potential major decisions. For today, barely 24 hours' notice was given and the purpose of the closed session is now hidden from the public,” he said, reading a letter he wrote to the community into the public record during the May 20 meeting.

“This closed-session meeting is a very troubling example of secrecy and underhanded tactics to avoid facing the public. It's an assault on our local institution

of government, intended to democratically serve the people, not the egos of politicians. I, for one, will not participate in this farce of a ‘closed’ session. There are real urgent needs of the community to be addressed instead of this destructive power game playing,” he said.

Romero stressed the need for a fair, transparent process to evaluate the city attorney rather than a rush to judgment. The council supervises just two employees: the city manager and the city attorney.

“Any termination or discussion of the termination of any employee of ours must be accompanied by a thorough, full discussion with counsel. The liability you are imposing upon this city by doing this in an expedited, thoughtless manner will put this city and its administration in jeopardy,” Romero said.

Romero and Abrica also allege the closed meeting might not

have been convened legally.

Lopez's email categorized the session as an “emergency” and identified the city attorney as the subject of the confidential personnel meeting.

Shortly thereafter, Lopez corrected his first email to state that the meeting would instead be a “special closed session” and the topic would be on a “public employee discipline/dismissal/release,” no longer specifying the city attorney.

Tempers flared on May 20, as Romero and Abrica rebuked their three colleagues. Wallace-Jones said the accusations were unfounded.

“This feels disrespectful and belittling,” she said. “Let's make it very clear: This is a public process in which council members can indeed express their opinions and more importantly, express their concerns.”

Gauthier took exception to being berated by Romero. “I am your colleague. Treat me as such!” she told Romero during the meeting.

This past Tuesday, she told this news organization that she thought it would have been best

for all council members to be in the room for the closed meeting. She also hoped the council could come together collegially.

“Unfortunately, two of my colleagues were belittling and accusatory to other council members. We are not subordinate to them. I hope we can get to a point where there's more respect on the council,” she said.

Romero said during the meeting that the correction of the announcement (from “emergency” to “special” and from identifying Alvarado to not identifying him as the subject of possible termination) came too late and could subject the city to expensive litigation.

Pulling back on the original language doesn't change the error, Romero said.

“Trying to legitimize it by calling it a special meeting does not give a pig another name. The lipstick doesn't change the fact that it continues to be an illegitimate meeting,” he said.

Interim City Attorney Valerie Armento, who is filling in for Alvarado while he is away, said Lopez's first email did not comport with the Ralph M. Brown Act, the state's government transparency law that dictates the kinds of issues that

See **LOPEZ**, page 17

Coronavirus central: Newsom offers big bucks for Californians who get their shots

By Embarcadero Media staff

San Mateo County as of Tuesday had 42,097 cumulative cases of COVID-19, with 576 deaths. A total of 66.1% of the eligible county population is fully vaccinated; 15.2% is partially vaccinated. Santa Clara County as of Tuesday had 119,094 cumulative COVID-19 cases and 2,142 deaths. A total of 63.6% of the eligible county population is fully vaccinated; 12.7% is partially vaccinated.

Vax for cash with new \$116.5M statewide lottery

For Californians who are insufficiently compelled by civic duty and self-preservation to get vaccinated against COVID-19, Gov. Gavin Newsom is offering another reason to get the jab: cold, hard cash.

On May 27, Newsom announced a \$116.5 million “Vax for the Win” program, the largest inoculation lottery program in the country. The money will be split among dozens of lucky Californians: \$1.5 million to each of 10 “grand cash prize” winners who will be picked by random draw on June 15, and \$50,000 each to 30 “Fridays for 30” winners to be selected by random draw on June 4 and June 11.

The remaining \$100 million will pay for \$50 retail gift cards for each of the next 2 million Californians to complete their vaccine regime.

“These are real incentives,” the governor said at a press conference. “And these are an opportunity to say thank you to those not only seeking to get vaccinated, as we move forward, but also those that have been vaccinated.”

According to the most recent state vaccine data, a little more than half of all Californians over age 12 have been fully vaccinated. Another 13% have received one of two shots.

That still leaves more than 12 million Californians unvaccinated.

The percentage vaccinated varies wildly by race and income. Among Californians living in the top quarter of the healthiest

ZIP codes, 76.6% have received at least one dose. In the least healthy quarter in the state’s “Healthy Places” Index, the share is only 52.1%.

“Some Californians weren’t ready to get their COVID-19 vaccine on day one, and that’s okay. This program is designed to encourage those who need extra support to get vaccinated and help keep California safe,” Dr. Tomás Aragón, director of the California Department of Public Health, said in a statement.

H.D. Palmer, a spokesperson for the state Department of Finance, said the lottery funding will initially come out of the state’s emergency operations account, but will be repaid with the state’s multi-billion dollar allotment of federal relief funds.

“The cost of not getting vaccinated is exponentially, incalculably higher,” Newsom said.

The governor noted that Californians who have already been inoculated will be entered into both the \$1.5 million and \$50,000 contests. When the state rolled out its MyTurn website as a one-stop shop for vaccine appointments, most Californians turned elsewhere. But the state also maintains a confidential registry of all vaccine recipients. The names of winners will be kept confidential unless they volunteer to have them released, said Newsom.

Republican Gov. Mike DeWine of Ohio was the first to launch a lottery program in mid-May. Nearly 3 million Ohioans entered and a 22-year-old recent college grad was the first winner on May 26. According to one analysis, vaccinations jumped by 40% in the week after DeWine’s announcement.

Since then other state governors have followed suit. Colorado is offering a total of \$5 million to the newly inoculated. West Virginia has tempted vaccine-hesitant young residents with savings bonds, and New York has dangled the possibility of a public university education.

But California’s cash giveaway is the biggest yet.

For Newsom, the program represents a political win-win. The

governor has vowed to ease most of California’s COVID restrictions by June 15. The more vaccinated Californians, the more likely it is that the reopening process will go off without another surge in cases and hospitalizations. That, in turn, would be good news for the state, but also for a governor who is hoping to survive a recall election later this year.

In a Public Policy Institute of California poll released last month, 57% of likely voters said they oppose removing Newsom, while 40% said they supported the recall. In the survey, 61% approved of Newsom’s handling of the coronavirus pandemic and 75% gave the state excellent or good marks for vaccine distribution.

Last month, the governor went on a statewide tour announcing various goodies from his latest revenue-rich budget proposal — a convenient mix of policymaking and politics. Handing out even more cash to Californians in the name of public health can’t hurt the governor’s political image either.

Republican John Cox quickly accused Newsom of trying to “buy votes before the recall.”

Based on the nearly 20 million Californians who have received at least one dose now, the odds of winning the \$1.5 million prize are 1 in 2 million — 100 times better than the chances of winning the Powerball or Mega Millions jackpots, but for far less money.

Newsom said the administration consulted with researchers at UCLA’s COVID-19 Health and Politics project in putting the program together.

According to research conducted by political scientist Lynn Vavreck, lead researcher at the project, about a third of survey respondents said they were “more likely” to get a COVID vaccine if offered a cash prize of \$50 to \$100. That’s compared to other tactics, including pro-vaccine public messaging from celebrities.

“Those types of message treatments did not work, but changing people’s material condition — giving them a little bit of money

or telling them they don’t have to wear a mask anymore — made them more likely,” Vavreck told CalMatters.

But for a minority of survey respondents — about 15% — the offer of cash backfired. That’s consistent with some criticisms made of these lottery programs noting that some vaccine skeptics could falsely interpret a cash reward program as an indication that the vaccine presents a risk that has to be compensated.

Peter Chin-Hong, an infectious disease physician at the University of California San Francisco, said that different people remain unvaccinated for very different reasons — a lack of social pressure, inconvenience, concerns about common side effects and more unfounded and outlandish safety concerns — so a single policy isn’t likely to convince them all.

A possible cash incentive “will move the needle for the people on the fence,” he said. “The people who are watching and waiting, who are not necessarily opposed to the vaccine but waiting to see people they know get it ... that group will probably be most moved.”

Last month, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that fully vaccinated Americans can largely dispense with mask-wearing and social distancing — providing a powerful incentive for many. Though California has been reluctant to adopt more coercive measures, such as a statewide vaccine passport requirement, the reopening rules allow fully vaccinated people to attend larger events. Also, state and local governments have imposed selective requirements on certain Californians — public university students are likely to be required to have their shots, though prison guards are not.

Health officers support new CDC guidance for multiple vaccinations

Health officers in nine Bay Area counties and the city of Berkeley announced May 28

that they support recent federal guidance approving people to get vaccines for other illnesses at the same time they get a COVID-19 vaccine.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had previously recommended that people wait at least 14 days after getting the COVID-19 vaccine to get vaccinated against other preventable illnesses.

With more and more real-world evidence of the vaccines’ safety and efficacy, the CDC updated that guidance on May 14.

The Association of Bay Area Health Officials — which includes officials from the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Solano and the city of Berkeley — said May 28 that it will support that guidance going forward.

“We know a lot of people have delayed getting care and regular immunizations during the pandemic. This new guidance will make it easier for people to catch up on any immunizations they’re due for when they get a COVID-19 vaccine at their provider’s office,” Contra Costa County Health Officer Dr. Chris Farnitano said.

COVID-19 vaccines are available statewide for anyone age 12 and up. Residents who get vaccinated in the next two weeks and those who have already been vaccinated will also be eligible for the state’s drawings to win part of \$116.5 million in gift cards and cash prizes.

Comprehensive COVID-19 coverage

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

BUDGET

continued from page 5

public safety services and the city’s downtown area. The City Council needs to have study sessions on each of those topics before city staff can figure out the scope of those projects and how much they will cost to implement, Jerome-Robinson said.

In addition to the proposed budget, staff identified several tiers of service level enhancements that the City Council could authorize as a group, or in an “a la carte” fashion, picking and choosing specific items. The proposed budget does not recommend reductions in service levels from the current ones, staff noted.

The four tiers of service-level

enhancements are identified as those the City Council has flagged as priorities, followed by services staff members have identified; third, improvements to technology and customer service; and fourth, responses to public inquiries and requests.

The proposed general fund budget lays out expectations of \$57.6 million in revenue and \$61.6 million in expenses. And

while hotel taxes fell in the 2020-21 fiscal year, to about \$4.2 million compared to the pre-pandemic amount of \$10.3 million in the 2018-19 fiscal year, the tax levels are expected to rebound, with about \$8.2 million expected in the 2021-22 fiscal year, according to staff.

The baseline budget leaves an operating surplus of \$9,430, according to Nick Pegueros,

assistant city manager, who presented details about the budget to the community at the June 1 meeting. That’s an improvement over last year’s projected operating budget surplus of \$1.

Go to is.gd/mpbudget2122 to access the proposed budget. **■**

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



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High school sports roundup

Boys basketball

Last basket wins.

That playground call was certainly applicable Tuesday when Tayo Sobomehin made a layup as time expired to give **Priory** a 60-59 win over **Sacred Heart Prep** in a game that decided the West Bay Athletic League championship.

It was Sobomehin's game from beginning to end. The sophomore point guard finished with 26 points on 9 of 11 field-goal shooting, 6 of 7 from 3-point range, and was 2 of 2 at the foul line.

Sobomehin is listed at 5-7, but Priory coach David Moseley, the former Stanford standout, had this to say:

"He's 5-5, maybe 5-4, but he's stronger than he looks. You can't take advantage of him. And he's cat quick. I don't like to make this comparison, but Brevin Knight was the quickest player I'd ever seen. Tayo is nearly as quick."

The game featured a series of runs. Priory (14-1, 12-0) started off strong just like it did in the first meeting between the two teams, and led 7-0 and 13-2 in the first quarter. Sacred Heart Prep (12-7, 10-2), playing its up-tempo style, went on a 16-0 run to turn a 20-11 deficit into a 27-20

lead. The Gators led by 12 on three occasions late in the second quarter.

Priory gradually chipped away at the SHP lead and finally caught up at 58-58 when Sobomehin made his two free throws with 1:30 left.

"We went to a zone in the third quarter to slow them down," Moseley said. "We tried to make their scorers work on defense and tire them out. If you play their game it's hard to outscore them."

Harrison Carrington's free throw with 33 seconds to go put the Gators back on top and set up the final possession. Priory missed a shot under pressure and in the scramble for the loose ball was awarded a timeout with three seconds left.

"I called it around five times before they finally gave it to me," Moseley said.

After that timeout and one called by SHP coach Tony Martinelli, Sobomehin set up on the perimeter on the right side of the 3-point arc, cut off a screen set by David Akanaju-Makun, and received the inbounds pass from Ashton Axe on the left side of the lane where he put up the game-winning shot.

"Our inability to secure the defensive rebound cost us the

game," Martinelli said.

Now both teams look ahead to Wednesday's Central Coast Section seeding meeting (after The Almanac's press deadline).

"Hopefully we get in the Open," Moseley said. "We really want it."

Aidan Braccia led SHP with 19 points. Kevin Carney and RJ Stephens scored 9 points apiece.

Akanaju-Makun and Axe scored 9 while Zach Zafran and defensive standout Rostand Olama Abanda each had 8 points for Priory.

"Our group of seniors remembered getting their butts kicked by them," Moseley said. "We're young, but they're young, too. It will be quite the rivalry."

Swimming

Sacred Heart Prep's rise to the top of the Central Coast Section girls swimming championship Saturday in Hollister took a circuitous route and was nearly derailed by the pandemic.

Eleven different Gator swimmers scored as SHP accumulated 315 1/2 points, beating St. Francis (274 1/2) and St. Ignatius (271). Castilleja finished seventh (156) with the help of a 1-2 finish of Paige Lai and Madeline Parker in diving, and **Menlo School's**



Courtesy Abbey Liao

Annaliese Chen, a Sacred Heart Prep senior, will attend Swarthmore College this fall.

one-woman team of Ashely Scafetta was 16th with 30 points.

Gators' coach Kevin Morris missed the first day of practice because of a quarantine issue. Senior Day had to be canceled because of "close contact," and most of the seniors were relegated to staying home for a week.

The CCS meet was a surprise all on its own. Morris and most other swimming coaches set up a training regime that did not include the usual season-ending event.

"We really only had a four-week season before our league finals, and then CCS came two weeks after that," said Morris, in his 20th year at the school. "In fact, we didn't even find out the CCS

meet was happening until the week of our league finals, so we certainly couldn't have structured our training around a meet we didn't even know would exist."

Sacred Heart Prep certainly found a way to improvise, and it led to the most successful swimming season in school history.

Three different swimmers won individual titles. Sophomore Audrey J-Cheng won the 200 individual medley with an All-American consideration time of 2:02.99. Junior Kaia Li won the 100 back with a time of 55.60, also All-American consideration. Junior Margot Gibbons won the 500 free in 4:53.59,

See **SPORTS**, page 20

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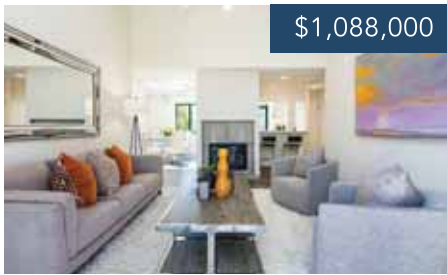
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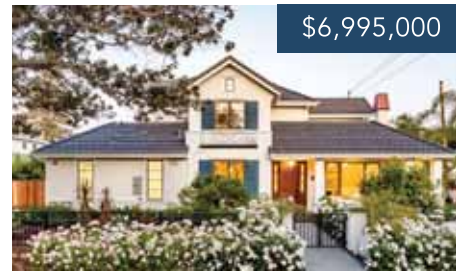
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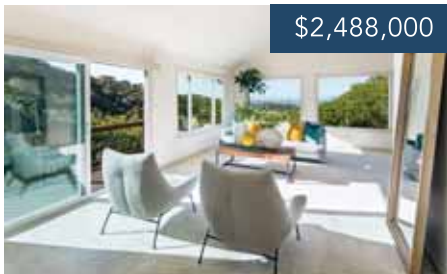
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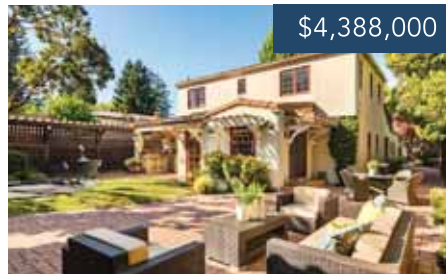
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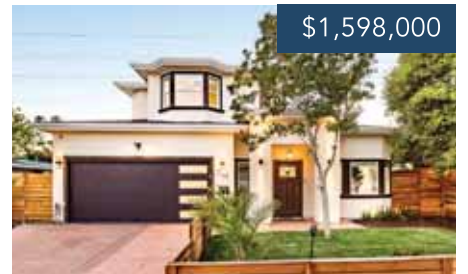
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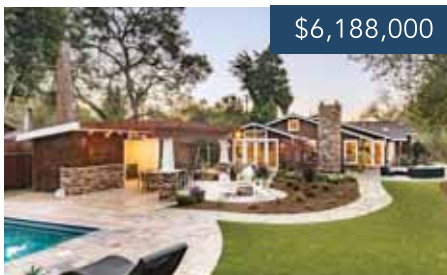
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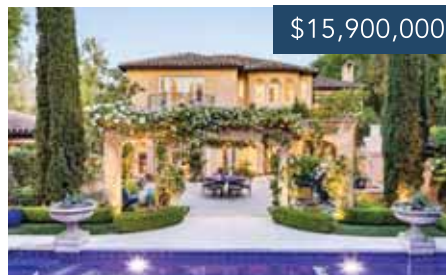
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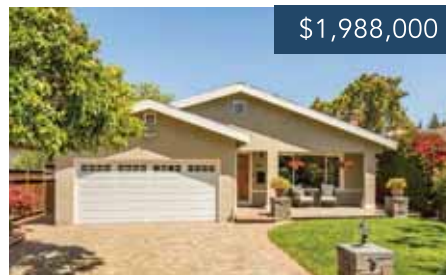
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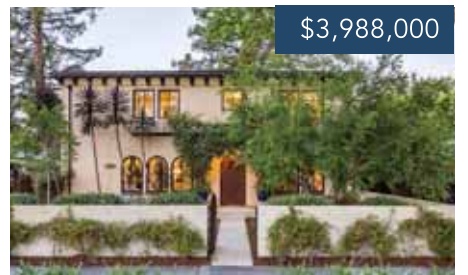
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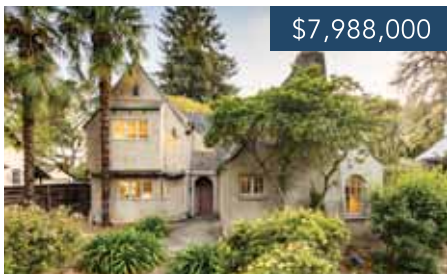
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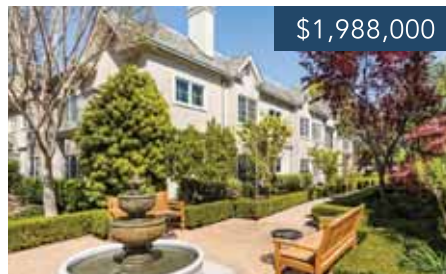
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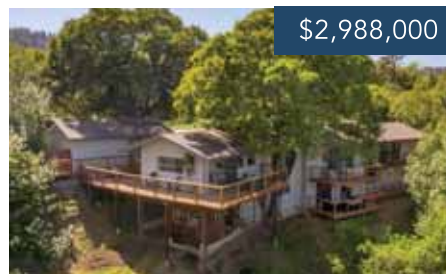
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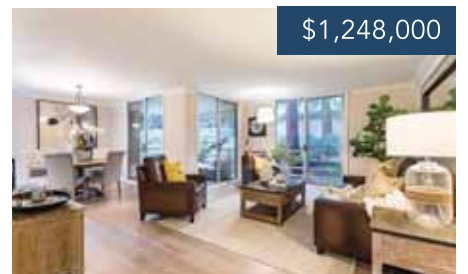
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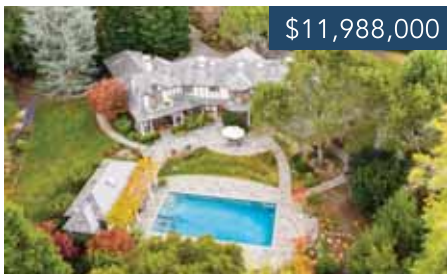
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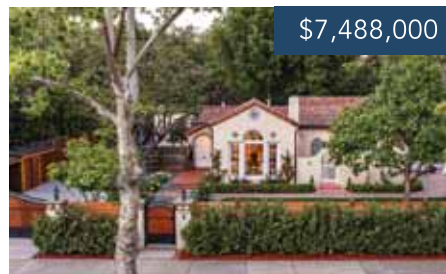
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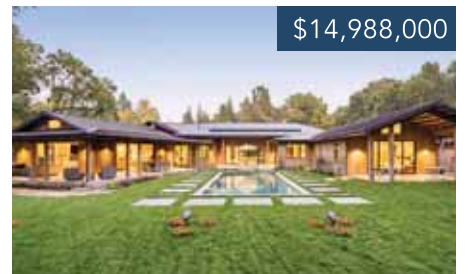
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Golden Acorn Awards highlight pandemic contributions

By Kate Bradshaw

Menlo Park's leaders celebrated on May 20 a year like no other by recognizing the pandemic response contributions of local businesses, nonprofits and public servants during the annual Golden Acorn Awards ceremony.

Conducted live on YouTube, the event featured a keynote address from Silicon Valley Leadership Group CEO and Menlo Park resident Ahmad Thomas, who reflected on the region's resilience and hopeful outlook. The event, hosted by the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce, was emceed by Menlo Park City Councilman Ray Mueller.

The award winners for 2021 were: the Facebook community engagement team, for excellence in business support; Menlo Park-based Avellino Labs, the Menlo Park Fire Protection District's Pandemic Emergency Response Unit, the Menlo Park City School District, St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room, LifeMoves, and local health care delivery services for the "Bridge to Wellness" award; the city of Menlo Park, the San Mateo County Health Department, Elections Office and county manager for the "COVID Governance" award; and Ali Elsafy, owner of Menlo Park restaurant Bistro Vida, as winner of the "Unsung Hero" award.

In his remarks, Thomas acknowledged the challenges the region faces in emerging from the pandemic and argued that policymakers should approach those challenges — both long-standing problems like traffic, housing and energy, and newer priorities for his organization, like business competitiveness, infrastructure, climate, innovation, racial justice and education — like a startup tackles obstacles, not just scrapping what doesn't work but "A/B testing what does."



Via YouTube

Ali Elsafy, left, owner of Menlo Park restaurant Bistro Vida and Menlo Park City Councilman Ray Mueller talk about how Elsafy and his business responded to the pandemic during the virtual Golden Acorn Awards on May 20.

"As the gap between the two Silicon Valleys widens, the leadership group and our member companies are working hard to partner and step in with concrete, sustainable solutions. The pandemic has created the inflection point we now face, but a long road of choices preceded it. It is up to California to pivot and to plot a new path forward," he added.

And while the challenges the region faces are not insignificant, and naysayers might encourage companies to seek out other regions to build up their businesses, he argued, Silicon Valley still has its competitive edge.

"Silicon Valley should be the 'next Silicon Valley' and Menlo Park and is, and with your leadership and support, will continue to be, a great hub of innovation, commerce and community for us all," he concluded.

Menlo Park Mayor Drew Combs congratulated the winners. "Since its inception, this award has represented the best of our community across business, nonprofit and government sectors. This year's recipients fit squarely into that tradition, (in the) second calendar in which COVID-19 has been our world's most challenging and defining

issue," he said.

Among other things, the recipients were awarded for the following accomplishments.

The Facebook Community Engagement Team helped to set up a COVID-19 vaccination clinic at the company's headquarters that vaccinated up to 1,300 patients each Saturday, created a fund with \$250,000 to give to more than 30 local recipients to help programs meet their needs during the pandemic, and donated personal protective equipment to front-line workers and medical professionals. It also supported small businesses by buying more than 44,000 meals to support 65 local restaurants to donate to nonprofits, schools and health care workers, made \$15 million in small business grants throughout the Bay Area and sponsored the 2021 Peninsula Restaurant Week. In addition, it partnered with local nonprofits to distribute farm produce boxes to those in need, offered prepared family meals with the Ravenswood City School District and donated hundreds of pallets of food to nonprofits working on food security efforts. Team members include Ashley Quintana, "Auggie" Torres, Dena Grimm, Juan Salazar and Lauren Swezey.

Avellino Labs, a gene therapy and molecular diagnostics company headquartered in Menlo Park, received emergency use authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to lead two types of COVID-19 tests and has performed more than 1.6 million tests, which translates to between 8,000 and 10,000 tests processed per day.

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District's Pandemic Emergency Response Unit responded to more than 5,000 emergency medical incidents, 219 of which were confirmed to have been COVID-19-related and 397 of which were possibly related to COVID-19. But the first responders had to be ready for every one of those responses to be COVID-19-related, pointed out Mueller.

"That underscores the reality that in every one of those 5,323 incidents, those first responders were putting their life on the line," Mueller said. "They were walking into a situation where they weren't sure if the situation they were dealing with in the moment was COVID-19." Members of the emergency response unit were Cameron Banks, Scott Blanford, Travis Hooper, Randy Kelly, David Magnan, Nick Marra and Mark Zamparelli.

The Menlo Park City School District was the first school district in the Bay Area to reopen its campuses back in September 2020, offering almost a full year of in-person learning to students. It also offered a virtual academy to families who preferred remote learning during the school year. The district was "an absolute beacon of hope to students on the Peninsula," Mueller said.

"It set such an example of how to bring students back in a collaborative manner."

Health care delivery services, or all of those essential workers in the health care sector who worked to test, diagnose, treat, care for and then vaccinate the community during the

pandemic, also received a special shoutout from the Chamber of Commerce. "It's just an unbelievable level of sacrifice," Mueller said. "We just wanted to take a moment to thank you."

St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room, a hot meal provider in the community that saw a 30% increase in the number of meals served over pre-pandemic times, received donations from companies like Greylock Partners and Facebook to provide meals for food-insecure people. The dining room is in its 47th year of serving hot, nutritious meals. It also offers produce and groceries in a to-go format six days a week.

LifeMoves, a Menlo Park-based homelessness services provider, served more than 8,200 people during the pandemic with emergency shelters, interim housing sites and services, and helped more than 2,000 people access stable housing since March 2020. In the past month, it has also opened a 52-room interim housing site in Half Moon Bay and a 100-unit interim housing community in Mountain View.

The city of Menlo Park started and operated a virtual emergency operations center, issued emergency orders to protect public safety, kept police and emergency public works services going during the pandemic, switched other meetings and events online, and provided meals and enrichment activities to seniors. There were many city employees who continued to do "incredible work" during the difficult times the community faced, Mueller said, commending City Manager Starla Jerome-Robinson for leading the city through the challenging circumstances. "We saw a tremendous staff reduction in the city during that time period, and the city rose to the occasion," he said.

The city also created grants for downtown businesses, installed

See **GOLDEN ACORNS**, page 19

Can California withstand a teacher retirement boom?

By Eli Wolfe/CalMatters

Earlier this year, the California State Teachers Retirement System issued an ominous statement: Teacher retirements in California are projected to hit nearly record-breaking heights in 2021.

The statement, which came in the form of a February blog post, said that the numbers will be almost as bad as the year after the Great Recession, when more than 16,000 teachers retired.

While short-term effects are

being felt in some areas, in many school districts the tsunami of retirements is barely registering as a ripple. While interviews with administrators, teachers, and union leaders do not paint a rosy picture of the situation, neither is it expected to be crippling.

Fremont Unified reported no significant difference between the number of retirees this year compared to last. At Long Beach Unified, which has about 12,000 employees, retirements over the past two years rose from 95 to

113. At Elk Grove Unified, there have been fewer certificated retirements this year than the previous one. At Oakland Unified, departures are higher than they have been in recent years, but the district is rapidly filling vacancies.

"We're retaining more people than ever," said Sarah Glasband, director of talent development, recruitment and retention for Oakland Unified. Looking to the fall, Glasband said her district is recruiting aggressively to make sure schools are

fully staffed, and they've already filled the majority of open positions.

Many more teachers could retire by the end of the school year. But the first surge already occurred in the second half of 2020, which saw a 26% increase in retirements over the same period from the previous year, according to CalSTRS.

David Fisher, president of the Sacramento City Teachers Association, said his city normally has 60 to 70 retirements annually, but this year has already

seen 110, and he expects more by the end of the school year. Fisher believes some educators bumped up their retirement timeline at the beginning of the pandemic when they realized it would be a brutal slog.

"From people we've talked to, they'd say, 'I was going to stick it out another couple of years but I'm out of here,'" Fisher said. "It's not worth that extra little bump on your pension if you're not physically or mentally well."

See **RETIREMENT**, page 18

Menlo-Atherton taps insider Karl Losekoot as new principal

By Angela Swartz

A 22-year veteran of the Sequoia Union High School District (SUHSD) is set to lead Menlo-Atherton High School this coming school year, replacing Principal Simone Rick-Kennel, who is leaving this month for a new district role.

Karl Losekoot has been M-A's instructional vice principal since 2016 and before that, served as an administrative vice principal and English teacher in the district since 1999, according to a May 26 press release. At M-A, he has served as Honors Institute and Compass program administrator, summer school principal, English department chair and in other capacities, according to the district.

"Karl Losekoot's contributions to SUHSD have had a phenomenal impact on our students,

staff, and families of Menlo-Atherton High School," said Interim Superintendent Crystal Leach in a statement. "His experience and passion for education have supported the district's mission of preparing students for excellence. We welcome him in this new role, and look forward to the leadership, goals and accomplishments he will bring as principal."

Losekoot said in a statement that he is "excited to continue the work of making M-A a place where all students feel like they belong, are connected to the M-A community, engaged in learning about the world around them, and of course are learning



Karl Losekoot

concrete skills along the way."

The school board approved his appointment as part of the consent agenda at its May 26 meeting.

Losekoot's pay and benefits totaled \$235,611 in 2019, according to Transparent California. A district spokesperson was unable to provide details of his new salary as principal in time for The Almanac's Wednesday press deadline.

Losekoot holds a bachelor's degree in English from the University of California at Berkeley, a master's degree in educational administration from San Francisco State University and a master's degree in secondary education from Stanford University. ■

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

AUTHOR

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is the rightful owner of a super nuclear energy mined from the Earth that she must protect from those trying to steal it. It's the first volume in her "Hyphen American" trilogy series.

She said the struggles she has experienced as a Polynesian American inspired the title of her first book, but action-comedy movies like "The Other Guys," (or just about anything starring Will Ferrell) inspired the storyline, which she describes as "crazy and adventurous."

Victoria said she didn't always consider writing as an art.

"Writing in general is very scary for me," she said. "It took six years just to write (this) book. I spent the majority of time convincing myself 'It's a good story.'"

Victoria's unexpected path into writing started in 2012 after she temporarily left college due to what she attributed to the culture shock of going from East Palo Alto to the University of Redlands in Southern California. Through a business grant from her college, she took time off and traveled to the Kingdom of Tonga to teach at Queen Salote College and Tupou College Toloa, respectively.

During that trip, Victoria said she finally felt connected to her heritage.

"I went there and fell in love with the culture," Victoria said.

The experience emboldened her to take on the name Tonga — the same name that she struggled with for so many years

and is now on her book jacket.

When she returned to California, she ditched her plan to major in business and instead majored in race and ethnic studies. As she grappled to transition herself from the cultural mindset she'd grown accustomed to abroad and back into "American thinking," she sought out spaces and internships that offered explanation and cultural knowledge and turned to writing as a way to sort out her thoughts.

In her first year back, she wrote every single day, thanks to programs like Pacific Islander Leaders of Tomorrow and platforms like TheWhatitDo.com. This eventually gave her confidence to write a novel.

After finishing her manuscript for "Hyphen American," Victoria launched Tonga Victoria Books and self-published the novel. She is currently working on the second volume in her trilogy, as well as her second book, "Tinsley," which draws on her experiences attending Menlo Park and Atherton schools through the Tinsley voluntary transfer program created in the 1980s to integrate East Palo Alto students into surrounding school districts that were mostly white. The book is scheduled for release later this year.

Victoria said her biggest challenge at the moment is reaching a cultural and ethnic community who might not consider themselves readers.

"It's a unique challenge. How do I make this relevant to a community that doesn't like to read," she said during an appearance on the "Coach V Show" on

Island City TV in March.

As a longtime advocate for the Pacific Islander community who has worked on everything from housing issues to educational opportunities, Victoria is currently working on several projects to improve the literacy rate in her community.

She's teamed up with local initiatives to build out curriculum that centers on culture, literacy and leadership development. She's mentoring others on how to self-publish their manuscripts. And she's working with educators from local school districts to develop the groundwork to possibly introduce "Hyphen American" as English subject, which could commence in 2022. She's also in the midst of launching a podcast in which she will discuss community, politics and all things Pacific Islander (Pasifika).

"I think there are topics and conversations that deserve our attention, but there is no support and resource that we're plugging into, so it becomes an echo chamber," she said. "I'm seeing that Pacific folk, we need to be at the table and having these conversations with other thought leaders for change, but I don't think we are equipped to have these conversations."

"So, it's taking these big issues and digesting them and simplifying them so they are more palatable to my community."

Book one of the "Hyphen American" trilogy can be purchased at tongavictoriabooks.com. ■

Associate Editor Linda Taaffe contributed to this article.

Marketplace

The Almanac offers advertising for Home Services, Business Services and Employment.

If you wish to learn more about these advertising options, please call 650.223.6582 or email digitalads@pawekly.com.

Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME

File No. M-270737

The information given below is as it appeared on the fictitious business statement that was filed at the County Clerk-Recorder's Office.

The following registered owner(s) abandoning the use of the fictitious business name(s):

VIVIENNE KELVIN

REGISTRANT'S NAME(S):

VIVIENNE KELVIN

251 Winding Way

San Carlos, CA 94070

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME(S):

VIVIENNE KELVIN DESIGNS

251 Winding Way

San Carlos, CA 94070

FILED IN SAN MATEO COUNTY ON: 09/14/16

THIS BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED BY:

Individual.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk Recorder of San Mateo County on April 27, 2021.

(ALM May 14, 21, 28; Jun. 4, 2021)

INNOVATIVE PIPING SYSTEMS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No.: 287206

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

Innovative Piping Systems, located at 608 Douglas Drive, Mill Valley, CA 94941, Marin County.

Registered owner(s):

VINCENT EDWARD PUCCELLI

608 Douglas Drive

Mill Valley, CA 94941

This business is conducted by: An Individual.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 1996.

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

(ALM May 14, 21, 28; June 4, 2021)

THE MANDARIN

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No.: 287619

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

The Mandarin, located at 1029 El Camino Real, Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):

CHINA WOK CHINESE CUISINE LLC

1500 W. El Camino Ave., Suite 8

Sacramento, CA 95833

CA

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 May 10, 2021.

(ALM May 21, 28; June 4, 11, 2021)

BRITISH BANKERS CLUB

THE BRITISH BANKERS CLUB

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No.: 287593

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

1.) British Bankers Club, 2.) The British Bankers Club, located at 555 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):

ROBERT S. FISCHER

566 Emerson St.

Palo Alto, CA 94301

This business is conducted by: An Individual. The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 12/24/2016.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on May 5, 2021.

(ALM May 28; June 4, 11, 18, 2021)

997 All Other Legals

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF:

MARYANN SMETZER

Case No.: 21-PRO-00632

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of MARYANN SMETZER.

A Petition for Probate has been filed by:

ROBERT J. KIDWELL in the Superior Court of California, County of SAN MATEO.

The Petition for Probate requests that:

ROBERT J. KIDWELL be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.

The petition requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A HEARING on the petition will be held on July 21, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in Dept.: 11 of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.

If you object to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

If you are a creditor or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58 (b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law. You may examine the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.

Attorney for Petitioner:

Alexandra Gadzo, Esq.

Gadzo Law, P.C.

220 State Street, Suite E

Los Altos, CA 94022

(650) 397-9300

(ALM May 21, 28; June 4, 2021)

For legal advertising call Alicia Santillan at 650-223-6578.

Work on new Portola Valley schools classrooms to begin this month

By Angela Swartz

Construction will kick off this summer at two Portola Valley schools, funded by a \$49.5 million bond measure passed in 2018.

District officials held virtual community meetings last week to answer questions about the upcoming Measure Z renovations, repairs and construction of new classroom buildings at Ormondale and Corte Madera schools.

Ormondale should be ready for students around August 2022,

and Corte Madera is set to be complete around December 2022, said Adam Lint, director of bond and facilities for the district during one of the meetings.

"We're right on track with beginning construction," he said.

Temporary classrooms have been installed on the campuses and there will be groundbreaking ceremonies at both schools on Monday, June 7, according to Superintendent Roberta Zarea. Construction begins June 14 and will continue into the fall.

Construction noise will be allowed between 8 a.m. and

5:30 p.m., according to a district presentation. There will be traffic flaggers and signage, and no deliveries will be permitted during pickup and drop-off to reduce congestion at the schools, said DJ Halbert, project manager at RGM Kramer, the district's construction management company.

Flood lights will not be on at night, Halbert noted.

Ormondale Principal Lynette Hovland said next school year it might be educational for project managers to update students about what work is being done during the week.

The district shared new classroom designs with community members in November 2019. The buildings will aesthetically match the surrounding residential neighborhoods, with gabled roofs, large clear windows and lots of natural light, Brent McClure, principal at CAW Architects, which is designing the new classrooms, told *The Almanac* at the time.

Teachers will be able to mix indoor and outdoor learning on the newly designed campuses, directly connecting students with nature, he said. Classrooms will be organized around a central

atrium at Corte Madera, the district's grades 4-8 school, and workers will build a deck which will overlook the Frog Pond. The deck could be used for lessons on the watershed and seasons, as well as bird-watching, McClure said. Superintendent Roberta Zarea noted that the Frog Pond is not currently used as part of classroom lessons.

For more information, go to tinyurl.com/PVSconstruction. ■

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

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

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Charter School and has over 10 years experience as a kindergarten/first grade classroom teacher, mentor teacher and wellness team lead.

"Chana's experience, commitment to teaching the whole child, and alignment with our mission and learner profile is a great fit for Oak Knoll," said Payton-Miyazaki in a statement. "She has all the things we were looking for and we are incredibly lucky to have this opportunity to hire her."

Stewart will bring her "wealth of experience" from a neighboring community, in which many district students reside, to the team as MPCSD "strives to serve every student equitably," officials said.

Stewart has authored publications and presentations, and engaged in research and volunteerism in various aspects of education, from implementing next-generation science standards to social-emotional learning to creating culturally responsive school communities, according to the press release.

The role became open when Payton-Miyazaki was tapped

to lead the school as its new principal starting this fall (current principal Kristen Gracia is leaving for a district role). The hiring team was impressed with Stewart's administrative background, her broad range of previous leadership activities, and her deep and well-articulated vision of how schools should serve each child, according to school officials.

Stewart holds a bilingual credential in Spanish, which she pursued along with her master's degree in elementary education, at Stanford University.

Stewart's first day will be July 1

if her contract is approved by the board.

—Angela Swartz

PHS rescues three little stinkers from from Menlo Park construction site

Peninsula Humane Society & SPCA staff rescued a family of skunks that fell into a deep hole at a construction site in Menlo Park.

Three skunks fell into the 14-foot-deep hole and were spotted by a worker on the construction site on May 25, according to PHS/SPCA spokeswoman Buffy Martin Tarbox.

Veterinary staffers weren't able to reach the skunks by hand, so they extended a 12-foot catchpole to get the mother skunk and her two babies and pull them up to safety.

It took about an hour to get all three back up, and "one baby skunk was being stubborn," Tarbox said.

All three were put in crates and examined at the scene for possible injuries, then were released on the back side of the property after staff determined they were in good health.

Tarbox said, "Without human assistance to help them out of the hole, it is likely they would have perished. Despite being scared, none of the skunks sprayed our staff, and seemed grateful to have been safely rescued."

—Bay City News Service

Menlo Park Rotary scholarship winners announced

More than 100 students from three local high schools received scholarships and academic achievement awards at a virtual ceremony presented by the Rotary Club of Menlo Park on May 24.

The annual event, usually held at the Menlo-Atherton Performing Arts Center, awarded \$208,000 in scholarships this year.

The two featured speakers

were Joel Valencia, who graduated from Eastside and Princeton University, and Alicia Mergenthaler, who graduated from Menlo School and Harvard and Oxford universities with a master's in science.

The following people are winners of the named scholarships: John D. Russell, Luis Mendoza Ramirez, Claremont McKenna College; Crittenden Family Scholarship, Stephanie Vargas, California State University at Chico; Robert G. Paroli Family Scholarship, Jonathan Martinez, University of San Diego; Orm and Doris Rector Scholarship, Ann Segura, University of California at Merced; Tom and Barbara Borden Scholarship, Moises Bravo, UC Davis; Mary Ann Somerville Scholarship, Lizeth Suarez, Azusa Pacific University; Wilcox and Sandra Patterson Scholarship, Ava Peyton, Oberlin College; Business and Professional Scholarship, Deisi Nava-Pulido, UC Berkeley.

The following are winners of the Rotary Club of Menlo Park Foundation scholarships: Sheyla Aguilar, University of San Diego; Karina Carlos, CSU San Diego; Alexa Gomez, Loyola Marymount University; Warimu Kimani, University of San Diego; Dulee Pacheco, Brown University; Jada Velazquez Medina, UC Berkeley.

The following are winners of the Tarlton Foundation Scholarship: Bridget Cruz, UC Merced; Francisco Lopez Espinoza Jr., Swarthmore College; Addy Palacios, UC Riverside; Naomi Perez, University of Redlands.

Ashley and Kari Trail won the Drue Kataoka Arts Grant.

Tiffany Valencia won the Tsui/Tsiang Family Math and Science Scholarship and will attend Lehigh University.

Five Menlo-Atherton High School seniors were awarded the Alice Kleeman Community College awards.

Idaly Garcia won the Peninsula College Fund/Rotary Club of Menlo Park Foundation Scholarship.

I'd rather be baked than wasted.



OFFICE OF
SUSTAINABILITY
COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

#ShopYourFridgeFirst
LoveFoodNotWaste.org

LOPEZ

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justify declaration of an emergency closed session.

“A work stoppage or something that would severely affect public health and safety; a terrorist attack or something like that,” she said.

Lopez’s first email “was not accurate with regard to the need for an emergency closed session,” she added.

Regarding naming Alvarado, Armento said that while the Brown Act states a special meeting must say what the agenda item is about, it is not typical to name the individual in a personnel matter. She did not state that doing so is illegal, however.

Romero and Abrica also raised concerns that Lopez, Wallace-Jones and Gauthier, in conferring to set up the special meeting, may have also discussed the city attorney’s performance, which would constitute another violation of the Brown Act.

Under the Brown Act, the majority cannot meet or communicate privately to discuss matters outside of a legal meeting because, in that case, no formal notice would have been given to the public of the discussion, Romero said.

Gauthier, however, said at the May 20 meeting that she did not discuss Alvarado with the other council members. Last week, she said during an interview that when Lopez asked for the emergency meeting, he didn’t go into details about his concerns regarding Alvarado. She agreed to attend because she wanted to understand what was going on.

“I didn’t know if something urgent was going on or if there was a crisis,” she said. She went to the meeting because she didn’t want to discuss the issue outside of a formal meeting or to violate the Brown Act, she added.

Abrica and Romero said in follow-up interviews that they remain baffled by Lopez’s actions, and why he felt his concerns about a city attorney they respect and with whom they find no fault rose to the level of an emergency and termination.

They also questioned why Lopez chose an end run around the mayor and vice mayor to schedule a meeting and didn’t bring the matter up through the usual procedure that involves the mayor.

Lopez did indicate during the council’s

May 18 meeting that he wants the council to open up the selection of agenda items to all five council members, which, he said, would be more “democratic.” But Romero and Abrica said the process is already democratic. If the mayor doesn’t include a requested item on the next meeting’s agenda, the council member can make the request during a public meeting and a vote can be taken by the council for the item’s inclusion at the next meeting. The council member can also draft a “colleague’s memo” requesting discussion of the topic for the other members to vote on. Such procedures are standard in city councils.

Is personnel investigation a factor?

While Abrica and Romero say they are unaware of the reason for Lopez’s urgency, Abrica said during the May 20 meeting that he’s concerned that the effort to fire Alvarado might be linked to a recent and separate personnel investigation.

Lopez, however, has stated that he simply wants the city to employ a more effective city attorney.

At the May 18 meeting, Lopez asked that two agenda items that had been scheduled for a procedural approval be rescheduled for a full discussion. Both items were written by Alvarado and pertained to ethics and the retention of an outside firm to investigate a personnel matter.

The council members agreed to take up the two items at their next meeting.

This past February, the city retained Kramer Workplace Investigations to perform a personnel investigation, and on May 18 the council was to approve the expenditure for Kramer’s continued services, according to a report written by Alvarado.

“The city has current and anticipated personnel matters that require specialized outside legal and investigatory services,” Alvarado wrote. “Special circumstances exist to waive the bid procedures on the grounds that the city must perform timely personnel investigations.”

The council was also set to approve a separate resolution, “Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials,” but Lopez said he has questions he’d like Alvarado to answer.

Likewise, Lopez said that he needed the city attorney to be present to clarify

questions about the outside investigative firm. Armento hadn’t been involved in the personnel investigation and couldn’t speak to it, the council determined.

Abrica said during the May 20 meeting that he’s concerned that the sudden urge to fire Alvarado might be linked to trying to shut down the investigation.

“Let’s not attack the messenger because the message makes officials uncomfortable. Why is the Office of the City Attorney being attacked and ambushed with such speed?”

“Whenever city government personnel investigations are conducted as a result of complaints, and including investigations involving elected officials, the best practice has been to retain an independent investigator and not an employee of the city to perform timely investigations of personnel matters. This is what the city attorney has done and in my opinion correctly so,” Abrica said.

Romero said last week that while some people could construct a possible connection between the move to fire Alvarado and the city attorney’s request to move forward with a sensitive investigation based on the timing, he would not question Lopez’s motive “because I can’t get into council member Lopez’s head.”

After the May 20 closed session adjourned, Armento reported publicly that no vote had been taken.

On May 27, Lopez released a statement to clarify his reasons for wanting to potentially terminate Alvarado.

He said he “will be seeking to hire a working city attorney that is present and

serves the city in a manner that is organizationally efficient.

“As the city attorney is the highest paid position within the city of East Palo Alto being paid a total of \$228,225 plus benefits, and a total compensation package for the attorney’s office of \$858,935 proposed for FY 21-22, Councilmember Lopez is seeking to create long-term cost savings, and in the process, to re-invest those savings into critical city services,” the announcement said, referring to Lopez in the third person.

“Our city attorney has demonstrated an inability to serve the needs of an ever-changing community. Staff needs an attorney who is present for the day-to-day operations of the city,” Lopez wrote. “While he is present for public meetings, I have seen firsthand the strain that his general absence causes on our city’s day to day operations.”

Romero, who read the press release, said on May 27 that it publicly airs unsubstantiated complaints about the city attorney before Alvarado even has a chance to know or address the accusations. It was “almost an indictment of the city attorney through a press release. It is akin to a public execution of his reputation,” he said.

When contacted for an interview by this media organization, Alvarado said that while he appreciated the opportunity, “I have no comments about the matter at this time.” ■

Email Staff Writer Sue Dremann at sdremann@paweekly.com.

CRIME BRIEFS

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Boulevard and stabbing him to death with a large knife on June 17, 2019. The next day, on June 18, he allegedly called for a tow truck near the same location and fatally stabbed John Pkipaki, 31, a tow truck driver for Specialty Towing in East Palo Alto.

Dosouqi was ordered to Napa State Hospital by San Mateo County Superior Court Judge Robert Foiles in December 2019 after a hearing determined he was not competent to stand trial. The court noted that Dosouqi at times laughed inexplicably during court proceedings and interjected that he would soon be getting out of custody.

On May 27, Judge Elizabeth Lee found Dosouqi fit to stand trial after the prosecution’s psychiatrist, Dr. Danica McDou-nough from Napa State Hospital, testified

that he is competent to stand trial and “it is not a close call,” the DA’s office said.

The case was continued to June 11 to set a preliminary hearing date. Dosouqi remains in custody with no bail set.

—Sue Dremann

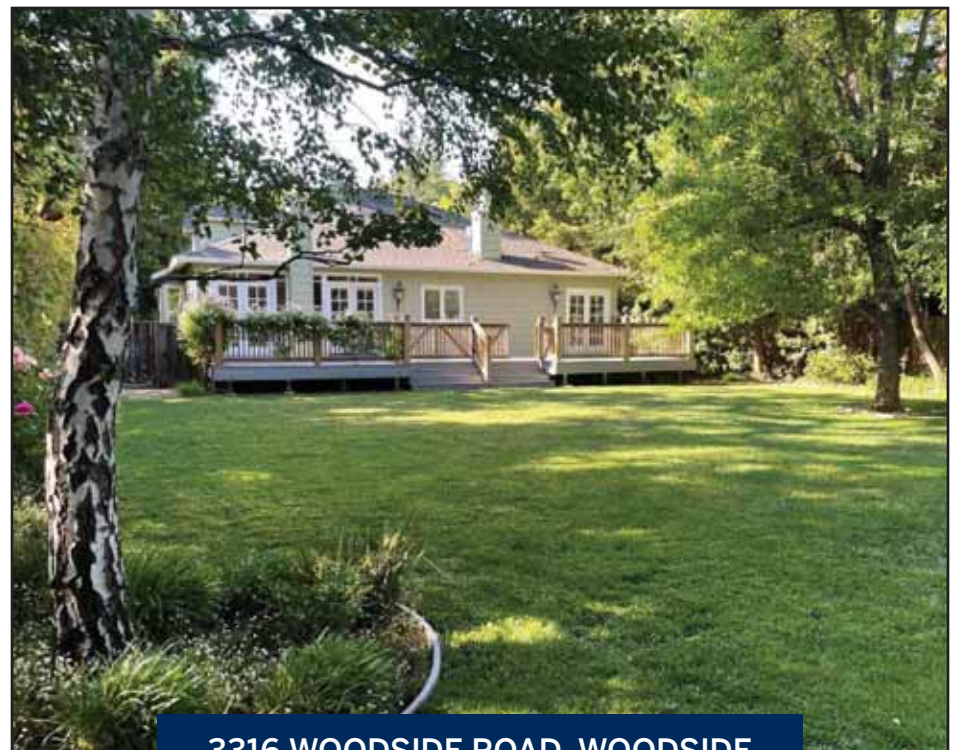
Memorial Day deaths, DUIs up

The number of people killed on the state’s highways and of those arrested for driving under the influence over the Memorial Day weekend rose significantly from a year ago, according to figures released Tuesday by the California Highway Patrol.

At least 35 people were killed in vehicle collisions, up nearly 13% from 2020. Of those, 22 were not wearing a seat belt, officers said.

The CHP made 979 arrests for driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, up 14.6% from a year ago.

—Bay City News Service



3316 WOODSIDE ROAD, WOODSIDE

Farmhouse with Fabulous Yard in Central Woodside

3 Bedrooms · 2 Full Baths

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RETIREMENT

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Enrollment drops

While districts generally haven't experienced retirements as a serious problem this past year, several administrators said they were overwhelmed by the large number of teachers who resigned or transferred during the pandemic.

San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools Nancy Magee said some of her districts have been hit hard as many educators left to be closer to family. Burlingame, for example, had twice as many teachers leave during the pandemic than during an average year.

However, record drops in enrollment have somewhat mitigated the retirement boom, she said.

Such enrollment drops would normally result in staff layoffs, but the sheer number of retirements and resignations appears to be canceling each other out.

Unexpected resignations, coupled with routine and early retirements, have created staffing shortages in some districts, raising concerns about how schools will manage when they reopen in the fall. Magee said her districts are trying to plan what classes will look like next year but they

still don't have guidance from the California Department of Public Health.

More immediately, districts are scrambling to find teachers who have the energy to pitch in for summer school sessions.

"Educators are exhausted, and many of our districts are having trouble staffing summer school programs," Magee said. "They're all making it happen to the best of their ability ... but they've been on emergency hours and activities for nearly two years straight without a break."

Fisher said Sacramento, following the lead of neighboring Elk Grove Unified, nearly doubled its normal summer rate to recruit teachers for summer sessions.

"Our normal summer school rate for teachers, it's not a bad rate, it's about \$40 an hour, but they couldn't hire teachers (at that rate)," Fisher said.

What about pensions?

One major concern with the rise in retirements is the effect it could have on teacher pensions. In an email, Rebecca Foree, a CalSTRS spokesperson, said the organization doesn't expect retirements to have a material impact on funding levels. Outside experts tend to agree with this assessment.

"In the scope of things, this is not that big of a number," said Paul Bruno, an assistant professor of education policy at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He noted that CalSTRS' outstanding unfunded liabilities dwarf the potential impact of an unusual number of retirements. As of the latest actuarial valuation report, CalSTRS has unfunded liabilities of \$105.7 billion.

"California is a really big state with an awful lot of teachers who are already receiving benefits and paying into the system, so a small increase in retirements this year would not by itself be a big threat to the pension fund," he said.

Administrators in California didn't express much surprise with the number of retirements during the pandemic. This is partly because teachers have to retire within a set age range to qualify for their pensions, so most districts can plan for their departure well in advance. Districts also incentivize teachers to give ample notice by offering financial bonuses for letting schools know of their plans by specific dates.

Some districts are also able to rely on retirees as a source of labor. Xanthi Soriano, a spokesperson for Elk Grove Unified,

said many of the district's retirees return to schools after they meet CalSTRS' six-month separation-from-service requirement.

"We have a pretty robust substitute list, and a good number are retirees," Soriano said.

'Educators are exhausted, and many of our districts are having trouble staffing summer school programs.'

NANCY MAGEE, SAN MATEO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Recruitment problems

Recruitment is also a challenge at the leadership level. San Mateo's Magee said it's been difficult to find replacements for several long-term employees who left her office during the pandemic because recruiting firms are struggling to find candidates.

"Statewide, they're seeing an unprecedented number of people either retiring or moving around," she said. "So those agencies are really very overbooked right now."

Several administrators said they were concerned that retirements and resignations may be exacerbating chronic staffing

shortages for positions that were already difficult to fill before the pandemic, specifically special education.

Christina Casas, a credentialed special education teacher, left her job at a charter school in Santa Ana earlier this year. She said the logistical challenges of organizing virtual special education classes while raising two children of her own were simply too much.

She also felt like the district could have marshaled more resources for teachers who were struggling to manage virtual classes that were overflowing with 30 to 40 students when they were supposed to only have 20. While there was only one resignation at her school last year, she knows several people are planning to leave at the end of this term. Going forward, she said school districts should recruit more reading and math specialists to make sure students don't fall farther behind.

"The school where I worked, the kids were already behind," she said. "And now they've missed a year of school, because we can't call what they did school." ▀

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SRI INTERNATIONAL

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precursor ARPANET and various cancer treatments.

The nonprofit's clients include government agencies in the United States and abroad, and corporations large and small, for-profit and nonprofit, domestic and international.

"This is a once in a career kind of opportunity," Murray said, noting that he is a Menlo Park resident himself.

Early plans for the development, to be called Parkline, dedicate 10 acres of the property for residential development. Adding up to 40 housing units per acre, the site could accommodate at least 400 new housing units, Murray said. Among the housing units would be a mix

of market-rate units and those aimed at being affordable to low-income households, he added.

Early site plan designs highlight the possibility for significantly increased public access to the property, which is currently fenced off to the public, Murray said.

Roughly 29 acres of the property would be publicly accessible open space, and drawings show bike routes running through the property and along Ravenswood Avenue that could more safely connect cyclists to Menlo-Atherton High School and Ringwood Avenue.

The property currently has about 38 buildings that are all enclosed within a security fence, Murray said.

"It's basically a void in town," he said.

The redeveloped site would reduce the number of buildings to eight or nine and make the buildings "better looking and more sustainable," Murray said. No additional square feet of office and research and development space would be built on the site.

Two or three of the current buildings would be kept for lab and research and development uses. The height of some buildings would be increased to five stories from the current three and four stories, Murray said.

The proposed development would create new office space for other tenants to occupy, he said.

The new buildings would also be set farther back from Ravenswood Avenue, and parking would be consolidated in out-of-sight parking structures,

leaving room for more open space instead of the current "sea of asphalt," he added.

There is also expected to be a "modest amount" of community-serving retail space along the open space areas, according to spokesperson Adam Alberti.

Because the SRI property is located outside of the city's Downtown/El Camino Real Specific Plan, the zoning for the property would need to be updated to accommodate mixed-use developments including housing, Alberti noted.

The city is just getting started with plans to update its housing element, said Menlo Park City Council member Jen Wolosin in an email statement. Wolosin represents Menlo Park's District 3, where SRI is located. Updating the housing element will involve

reviewing where more zoning for housing should be permitted in Menlo Park.

"I expect the SRI project to be reviewed on its own merits, and in relation to the Housing Element update, and I look forward to having many residents and stakeholders participate in the review process to help shape our community's future," Wolosin said.

If the project is approved, construction could take two to three years, and would likely be completed in one phase, Murray said.

"This is a big deal," he said. "It's a new neighborhood in Menlo Park." ■

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

FIREWORKS

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pediatrician said it sounds like their daughter has post-traumatic stress disorder. The family has now engaged a pediatric psychologist to address their daughter's sleep issues.

Dr. M. Raeem Ghorieshi, a Palo Alto psychiatrist, said he has seen many sides of the fireworks impacts, including triggering PTSD in patients. The person with PTSD can re-experience the trauma — what some call flashbacks — and the impact is devastating. He noted that many war veterans live in the community and on the Veterans Administration campus on Willow Road.

He has also seen the effects firsthand.

"My wife was a child during an armed conflict. It is extremely difficult. It brings up memories," he said.

Ghorieshi also has pets.

"If you can imagine a 130-pound German shepherd barking every time an explosion goes off," he said.

In addition, each explosion can pack a concussive force that can be felt before each colorful sparkle spans the sky. "You can hear and feel the lofting charge (the precursor that lifts the fireworks). It can be jarring," he said.

The fireworks have serious, detrimental impacts beyond noise, Gauthier noted. They create clouds of smoke that "contain harmful fumes and toxic dust that impact air quality," she said. In the current drought, the fireworks are especially dangerous and can set off wildfires, she added.

Menlo Park Fire Protection District Chief Harold Schapelhouman said firefighters and paramedics have responded to incidents that have led to house fires, car accidents and people losing limbs, noting last year someone lost an eye, he said. People have driven head-on into other cars while driving and looking up to view the colorful displays, he said.

"We've chased a lot of fires in this town. We've seen fingers and hands blown off," Schapelhouman said.

"It starts sooner now; the good news is there's less gunfire in the past," he said.

Menlo Park Fire Marshal Jon Johnston said last year, firefighters attended to three field grass fires ignited by fireworks. A small accessory dwelling unit also burned in Menlo Park.

Liu said police need the public to come forward and report the fireworks. While officers are responding to every call, the fleeting nature of these illegal acts makes it difficult for

officers to catch someone in the act, a requirement for a citation. No fireworks are legal in East Palo Alto, including those considered "safe and sane." All have the potential to cause fires, he noted.

If people want to report an incident, they can contact the fireworks task force tipline anonymously at epa@tipnow.org or call or text 650-409-6792.

"We need the address where they are setting them off and the names of people," if people know which of their neighbors are causing the problem. "Photos and videos would be extremely helpful," he said.

Johnston showed a video of a home that exploded into a ball of flames in Ontario, California, due to fireworks storage. He said the distributors in East Palo Alto aren't as large as the one in Ontario, but they do exist. Liu said if residents notice a truck or van dropping off or delivering a load of fireworks, they should take down the license plate number and take a video with their phone if they can do so safely.

Concerned about a repeat of last year's devastating wildfires as the state experiences its second year of serious drought, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved an ordinance on May 18 that makes possessing,

storing, using or selling illegal fireworks a \$1,000 fine for each violation, a tenfold increase over the previous fine for first-time offenses. The ordinance also holds owners accountable if violations occur on their property. The county's ordinance was last updated 35 years ago.

"Because of climate change and prolonged drought our fire season is longer and more dangerous than ever and that is why it is important to update our fireworks ordinance to prevent a catastrophic wildfire. Ultimately, fireworks can be the cause of fires, quickly becoming a health and safety hazard. With the danger of wildfire an ever-present concern, updating our ordinances to better deter against the use of illegal fireworks helps protect our forests, families, and communities," San Mateo County Supervisor Don Horsley, who co-sponsored the ordinance, said in a written statement.

The ordinance applies to the unincorporated areas of the county. Gauthier said the East Palo Alto City Council could consider updating its ordinance as well.

Fire officials and some residents said they feel people should be fined heavily but not be given criminal records. Instead, they hope to create a cultural shift so that residents

who use fireworks illegally will come to understand their responsibility to their neighbors and to look out for each other.

Whether the culture behind the fireworks could shift due to incentives, relentless education or other programs, Johnston said it will take a decade to make meaningful change. That's not an impossible task.

East Palo Alto has set standards that have been taken up across the state. When the community lost nine members of a family to a fire on April 26, 1997, they helped inspire passage of statewide legislation that prohibited unreleasable burglar bars on home windows; a fire at the Green Oaks Academy school led to the 2002 Green Oaks Fire Protection Act (Green Oaks Family Academy Elementary School Fire Protection Act), which requires statewide automatic fire sprinkler systems and automatic fire alarm systems be provided in school construction projects, Schapelhouman said.

"East Palo Alto can be a trendsetter," in terms of changing the fireworks culture. "It can be something the community can be proud about," Johnston said. ■

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GOLDEN ACORNS

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parklets for outdoor dining and services, created a curbside pick-up system for library services, installed disinfection stations at parks, reopened child care services and didn't have any reported workplace COVID-19 transmissions, according to the Chamber of Commerce.

The San Mateo County Board

of Supervisors and County Manager Mike Callagy were commended for their efforts to protect renters, provide financial relief, seed grant programs, fund testing and vaccination sites, and liaise with the business community.

The San Mateo County Health Department and Health Officer Dr. Scott Morrow were recognized for guiding the county's pandemic response, revising public health orders in response

to infection rates, creating public health safety protocols and timely updates.

The San Mateo County Elections Office and Chief Elections Officer Mark Church were recognized for the record participation in the 2020 general election during the pandemic despite quarantine restrictions. Voter registration hit 88% and the turnout of people voting early was reportedly 100%

higher than the previous general election, according to the Chamber of Commerce.

Elsafy, owner of Bistro Vida in downtown Menlo Park, was recognized as an "Unsung Hero" by the chamber as someone who sprang into action during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, Mueller said, Elsafy "was focused on, 'How do we create an environment that brings the community

together and makes people smile and enjoy each other?'"

The recipients were also provided with statements of recognition from local elected officials, including Reps. Anna Eshoo and Jackie Speier, state Sen. Josh Becker and state Assemblyman Marc Berman. ■

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

SPORTS

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an All-American consideration time.

J-Cheng went on to place second in the 100 back with an automatic All-American time of 1:02.26, which sets a school record.

Li swam second to J-Cheng in the 200 IM, finishing the race in yet another 'AAC' time of 2:03.61.

Gibbons started the day with a third-place finish in the 200 free (1:52.68) and Eleanor Facey, who will be playing water polo at Stanford in the fall, placed eighth in 1:56.26.

Sacred Heart Prep also won the first event of the day. Li, J-Cheng, Annaliese Chen (heading to Swarthmore) and Ella Woodhead went 1:45.18 in the 200 medley relay, edging St. Ignatius by about a half-second.

"That first race was the key race of the meet for us," Morris said. "It set the tone for the rest of the meet. A few minutes later, Audrey and Kaia went 1-2 in the 200 IM and Annaliese moved up to win the consolation final. That gave us a pretty big lead that we never relinquished."

Without the 14 teams of the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League, it was a much smaller event and that helped Sacred Heart Prep, which could count on its depth. In addition to Facey, who also placed sixth in the 500 free, the Gators have four other water polo players who swim only in high school and all of them scored.

"The smaller number of swimmers this year worked out fine for us because of our depth, but to be honest we probably had a better team last year when the meet was canceled," Morris said, pointing out that Sloane Reinstein was with the team. Reinstein just completed her freshman year at Georgia, where she qualified for the NCAAAs.

"I give a lot of the credit for this to the tradition of the team," Morris said. "With such a wacky season, we were able to hold some semblance of normalcy because of the culture of hard work and dedication the upperclassmen pass along to the underclassmen ... it has been a slow journey to get a bit better every year."

SHP's 200 free relay team, of Brie Lang, Bella Bachler, Gibbons and J-Cheng, was third and the 400 free relay (Lang, Gibbons, Woodhead, Li) placed fourth.

Lang was the consolation champion in the 50 free. Water polo players Bachler and Kate Brandin also scored in the event.

Katelyn Chan and Jessica Calderoni also contributed to the team's total

Scafetta scored her points finishing fourth in both the 200 IM and 100 breast.

In addition to having the top two divers in the section, Castilleja also has a promising freshman in Olivia Detter, who was third in the 100 fly (56.15) and second in the 50 free (23.68). Georgia Wluka, Nina Fearon and Serfina Cortez also scored for Castilleja.

The Sacred Heart Prep boys placed fourth, with Bellarmine winning, followed by St. Francis and Valley Christian.

Top individuals were Hugo Thomas and Cole Ballard placing 4-5 in the 500 free and Gavin West swimming in the championship finals of the 50 free and 100 free.

Will Swart, Conrad Ma and Will McGaughery contributed on the relays.

Girls soccer

Stella El-Fishaway changed the complexion of Menlo's girls soccer game against visiting Soquel on Saturday and it led to a Central Coast Section Division I championship.

El-Fishaway scored three times in Menlo's 5-0 victory over visiting Soquel as the Knights claimed their sixth CCS title since 2012 and ninth overall.

Menlo was ahead 1-0 midway through the second half when Knights goalie Sam Sellers was issued a yellow card and had to leave the game. It was just outside the penalty box and Soquel had a unique opportunity to tie the game.

Instead, a steady wall of Menlo players ("Don't jump," yelled Menlo coach Ross Ireland) stayed put and forced a shot high over the net.

Menlo (10-0-1) went on the attack and a minute later had a scoring opportunity. The Soquel goalie came out to challenge the ball and blocked it but could not control it. El-Fishaway got the rebound and tapped it into an open net.

From that moment, it was all Menlo. Carolina Espinosa, El-Fishaway and Colby Wilson added goals in the final 15 minutes of play.

"We overcame a lot, so just being able to hold the trophy and celebrate with your closest friends, it's just an amazing feeling," El-Fishaway said. "With the limited practice and the limited games, we were able to form that chemistry and that bond together. I think we've played together at least once in high school or club and to have that knowledge of each other and I think that just added to the chemistry we had."

Menlo's defense proved the star of the contest as Soquel (12-2-1) rarely found an opening. The free kick was Soquel's best scoring opportunity.

"Overwhelming team performance with discipline. We followed instructions about how to handle the opponent and once we



Courtesy Pam Tso McKenney/Menlo Athletics

Stella El-Fishaway scored three goals in Menlo's 5-0 victory over Soquel on Saturday.

scored, the confidence grew," Ireland said. "We just had even more fluency; there was a spring to their step and absolute belief that they could win at that point. Sometimes a team really brings it, and when they hit form in the final game, I couldn't ask for more. Great individual performances, brilliant team performance."

El-Fishaway put the Knights ahead, scoring in the 11th minute after taking a pass from Julie Deffner.

Gabby Kogler and Madison Li assisted on Espinosa's goal, Wilson aided El-Fishaway's second goal and Kogler assisted on Wilson's goal.

"We thought they would come out very physical and aggressive because we had heard from other teams, and I think they did that," El-Fishaway said. "But I think we were able to match their physicality this game, connect the passes, playing quickly and just tried to get forward and take our chances."

Deffner, El-Fishaway, Siena Gavin, Ellie Gruber, Kogler and Claire Pickering played their final matches in a Menlo uniform.

Boys soccer

Sacred Heart Prep, who finished second to **Menlo** in West Bay Athletic League boys soccer, took it to the next level during Central Coast Section play.

Despite earning the No. 7 seed and playing all three matches on the road, the Gators kept battling and capped their season with a 3-1 victory over host Evergreen Valley in the title match of Division II.

It's the first outright CCS soccer title for Sacred Heart Prep in 15 years and the seventh overall. SHP and Menlo shared a title in 2013.

After a scoreless first half, in which a potential SHP goal was negated by an offside call, the Gators struck in the first three minutes of the second half.

Chase Dolinko started the

scoring sequence, getting the ball to Tristan Mische-Reed, who fed it to Kyle Nilsson for the score.

Dolinko made it 2-0 with nine minutes remaining, converting a penalty after Nilsson was fouled in the penalty box.

Evergreen Valley got one back with three minutes left, converting its own penalty kick.

With time running down and Evergreen Valley on the attack, Luke Maxwell somehow scored an unassisted goal to make it 3-1.

Last season, Sacred Heart Prep made it to the finals of the Open Division before falling to Bellarmine. The Gators (10-3) were also the runners-up in 2015.

Boys tennis

The **Menlo School** boys tennis team has developed quite a rivalry with teams from the West Catholic Athletic League and Bellarmine in particular.

The last time the two teams met, in Los Gatos, for the Central Coast Section team title, Bellarmine took home the championship trophy.

This year, the trophy stays at Menlo. Juniors Soren Sutaria and Nik Khuntia, competing at No. 1 doubles, were the last men standing May 27 with the score 3-3 and both sides watching intently.

Sutaria and Khuntia's match went to a tiebreaker following an intense second set that saw the Bells squeeze out a 7-6 (4) win.

And this time, instead of using



Courtesy Pam Tso McKenney/Menlo Athletics

Menlo beat Bellarmine 4-3 May 27 to win the CCS boys team tennis title.

rally scoring, the third set was played out so that it really was 'game, set and match,' as the Menlo juniors worked a 6-2 victory, setting in motion a flood of Knights onto the court to celebrate a 4-3 win at Menlo.

"Every time we play them, it's a battle," Menlo senior co-captain Justin Tian said. "It was a match we really wanted to win. We worked really hard for it."

It was a satisfying finish to an undefeated, though abbreviated, season. Menlo (12-0) was the top seed, earning it home court advantage. No. 2 Bellarmine (12-2) delivered a quality championship match. The Bells only lost to Menlo this season.

Junior Rishi Jain was first off the court with a straight-set win at No. 4 singles. Menlo tied the score again at 2 when junior Mick Tamas also won in straight sets at No. 2 singles.

The Bells took a doubles match to go up 3-2 before freshman Evan Burnett secured the win at No. 3 singles.

The teams have played for the title six times in the last 12 years with Menlo winning five of them.

For the Knights, avenging the last loss to the Bells in a section final two years ago, and then coming back after a season lost to the pandemic, winning a title couldn't have made for a better ending, especially for the seniors.

"Last year, having our season cut short was pretty sad, especially because we stopped playing right before our big tournaments," Tian said. "It was really disappointing. And, at the beginning of this school year, it looked like we wouldn't even be able to play at all, but it all worked out and I'm really glad we got to play this year. Being able to play CCS this year was a blessing."

Menlo won its 16th CCS title overall.

Menlo Athletics' Pam Tso McKenney contributed to this report.

—Rick Eymer

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PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Stanford documentarians get a chance to share stories on the big screen

Frost Amphitheater to host screening of six short films by first-year MFA students

By Karla Kane

While viewing a film is an experience that lends itself pretty well to social distancing, there's still something special about watching on the big screen in the company of fellow audience members.

"I really miss the joy and the emotional journey of sitting next to people watching a movie," said Azza Cohen. She, along with her five fellow first-year students in Stanford University's documentary film MFA program, will get a chance to share the short films they've made this spring at an in-person, outdoor event at Stanford's Frost Amphitheater on Thursday, June 10.

"Nothing left to do but marvel," Cohen's film, is an experimental, immersive project rooted in her personal experience dealing with chronic migraine headaches stemming from a concussion. She juxtaposes anonymous audio interviews with other migraine and chronic pain sufferers with soft-focus, blurry visuals to express how pain can distort one's worldview. Coming from a journalism background, she said

this project was a chance to flex her creativity and push herself to try new ideas and techniques.

"It's amazing how many people relate to this topic," Cohen said. "It's been very interesting and very cathartic to connect with other people."

Maxwell Lee Mueller, too, wove his own life into his documentary, titled "The Key To It." His film starts out as the story of Conrad Bishop and Elizabeth Fuller, two long-married puppeteers, authors and theater-makers based in the North Bay. While he was originally drawn to the visual appeal of puppeteering, Mueller soon became intrigued by the couple's enduring bond, their spirituality, and their life and career together. Midway through the film, he incorporates conversations with his own partner, and the film becomes a parallel tale of two relationships.

"I find it really easy to assess what is interesting about other people, and making a film about someone else is sort of an act of love," he said. "It feels so hard to turn that same gaze on myself. It takes a leap of faith that what

I'm putting out there is something other people might be interested in."

The experience under the microscope wasn't easy on his relationship, but has ultimately been rewarding, Mueller said.

"It's been really, really hard," he acknowledged with a laugh. "It's really hard to be objective about oneself as a subject, and it created a lot of difficult conversations with my partner. It brought us closer and allowed us to talk through challenges, but it was not an easy road and I'm not even done."

While the COVID-19 pandemic has presented many challenges for the students' first year at Stanford, they said it's been full of valuable moments for learning and growth.

"In the throes of our editing you sort of lose sight of this but, being forced to be creative and create films within an extraordinary set of limitations — not just the literal state and local lockdowns, but filmmaking requires being physically close in a time people felt very nervous — really forced us to be extremely creative and push our boundaries," Cohen said, noting that the very first week of their time in the program was also when "the sky turned orange," thanks to California's raging wildfires.

"I just say if we can make films in the pandemic we can deal with any other possible hurdles that Hollywood can throw at us," Cohen said.

Having a supportive program and tight-knit cohort has been especially essential this year.

While classes were held over Zoom and screenings over Vimeo, "The six of us in the first-year cohort all live on campus and see each other regularly," said Drew de Pinto, who's especially interested in telling stories about labor and community organizing, and queer and trans characters.

De Pinto's film, with the working title of "Fishbowl," follows the struggle of the Fishbowl Collective, a group of artists and housing advocates living in the historic Red Victorian Hotel on Haight Street in San Francisco.

"They started living and working in the Red Vic in the summer of 2020, taking care of the building and putting on drag



Kyle Myers-Haugh

While screening films online has its benefits, including accessibility to a wider audience, Stanford University's first-year MFA documentary students (including Azzah Cohen, pictured) are excited to show their recent work on the big screen at Frost Amphitheater June 10.

shows in the storefront windows as a COVID-safe way to raise money to convert the building into affordable housing for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) queer and trans people," de Pinto said. "Since then, they've been fighting eviction by their landlords, and are still living in the hotel, although they have been locked out of the main room where they hosted the shows."

Other films on the slate include Connor Lee O'Keefe's "Imagine a Body," Alexandra Stergiou's "The Infinite Act" and Kyle Myers-Haugh's "The Yerba Buena Chess Club." A Q&A with the filmmakers follows the screening.

While they're thrilled for the chance to screen their films on campus in person, the student filmmakers are also appreciative for the wider reach and accessibility this year's virtual screenings have offered.

"One benefit of online screenings was that we were able to invite friends and family from all over the world," de Pinto said.

"I hope they keep doing that as well, that virtual screenings become normal. There's all

sorts of film festivals all over the world and finally I can go to them," Mueller said. "My parents in Massachusetts could see our screenings and see the Q&A and that's really cool, too."

The June 10 in-person event, though, will be an especially exciting achievement for the cohort after a long year.

"There's an experience of electricity, when people can view your film and you can be in a group watching it, and it's an essential aspect of understanding your film," Mueller said. "It's hard to know what people's reactions are if you don't experience the feeling in a group when they're watching the film. I haven't done that in a long time."

The 2021 Spring MFA Documentary Film Screening starts at 8 p.m. on June 10, at Frost Amphitheater, 351 Lasuen St., Stanford. Admission is free but advance tickets are required, and social distancing and safety protocols are in effect. More information is available at live.stanford.edu. ■

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



Courtesy Drew de Pinto

Drew de Pinto's "Fishbowl" (working title) chronicles San Francisco's Fishbowl Collective, a group of artists and housing advocates living in the historic Red Victorian Hotel on Haight Street.



Courtesy Azza Cohen

Azza Cohen's "Nothing left to do but marvel" is rooted in her own experience with chronic migraine headaches.



Courtesy Max Lee Mueller

Max Lee Mueller's short film, "The Key To It," explores both the long-term relationship between a pair of puppeteers and Mueller's own romantic partnership.

Food & Drink



Farm-to-kitchen table

Paly grad founds farm box service to help small farms stay afloat during the pandemic

Courtesy Brinkerhoff Photography

Helene Zahoudanis, co-founder of Real Good Greens, in a mustard greens field at County Line Harvest in Petaluma.

By Heather Zimmerman

Helene Zahoudanis has always dreamed of owning a farm. In her current venture, though she may not be working the land, she does help bring in a bountiful harvest every week. Through Real Good Greens, the farm box delivery service she co-founded, she ensures that the produce from about two dozen small Bay Area farms finds its way to local consumers' tables.

"When we started, I really wasn't intending to be a business, it was just kind of a response to the times," said Zahoudanis, a 2009 Palo Alto High School grad who founded Real Good Greens with her husband, Matt Petersen, at the start of the pandemic last year.

They were aiming to help address a major disconnect in the food supply that quickly surfaced after stay-at-home orders went into effect. As consumers were encountering empty grocery store shelves, small farms were facing the opposite problem: plenty of crops but no customers to buy them, since many restaurants — their primary buyers — had to

close temporarily. So, not long after the lockdown began, Zahoudanis and Petersen launched a service to help connect consumers with small farms looking to sell the organic produce that, pre-pandemic, would have been purchased by restaurants.

"Their supply chain was totally rocked and practically overnight they were left with freshly harvested food that they needed to sell really quickly. Our community was now stuck at home and looking for a better way to buy groceries, and our local farmers had an abundance of food, so we just wanted to help bridge that gap and facilitate that connection," Zahoudanis said.

In the early days, they helped spread the word about Real Good Greens over the neighborhood social networking app Nextdoor, and it took off from there.

Zahoudanis and Petersen may not have necessarily started off with the aim of launching a company, but their efforts have grown over the past year into a bona fide business. Real Good Greens now delivers produce and artisan goods to homes in Marin County, San Francisco, some parts of the

East Bay and Peninsula cities as far south as Los Altos Hills.

Despite Real Good Greens' current array of offerings, the business' name hearkens back to its first days. Greens were the primary crop of one of the first farms that Zahoudanis worked with, County Line Harvest in Petaluma, which grows many specialty varieties of greens for local chefs. On top of that, Zahoudanis identifies herself as a "veggie freak, a salad nut," and the name celebrates her love of fresh greens.

"That's the heart of it, finding amazing, quality stuff that tastes like you grew it and it's harvested that morning and getting that to people the same day — that was just the spirit of the idea," she said.

Zahoudanis studied English and marketing in college — she has a bachelor's degree in English and communications from Bucknell University in Pennsylvania — but her family has roots in both food and agriculture. Her father grew up on a farm in Greece and her aunt is chef and writer Donia Bijan, who ran well-loved downtown Palo Alto restaurant Lamie Donia for a decade.

"I grew up going to that restaurant and she was an advocate in the '90s for farm-to-table, so I witnessed farms coming and dropping off beautiful fresh produce. It was just ingrained in my DNA at a really young age," Zahoudanis said.

She noted that Petersen, as well, grew up in a farming family in Iowa.

The couple lives in the North Bay and Real Good Greens is based in Mill Valley, where they have a facility to assemble orders. Zahoudanis said that the business works with about 25 farms, mostly based in the North Bay, but also a few in Half Moon Bay and Yolo County.

Farm boxes are the centerpiece of Real Good Greens, but the business differs from a traditional Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm box model in which customers typically subscribe for regular deliveries, purchasing a share of the crops from a farm or group of farms. Zahoudanis, who said she's regularly been a member of various CSAs, recalled that as a customer, she found that model could be hard to plan around, and wanted to offer more flexibility.

Customers can choose to place orders each week through the Real Good Greens website, by Tuesday at midnight, with all orders delivered on Thursdays and Fridays.

"Our base product is the seasonal farm box. That's the way we can support as many farms as we can by having this kind of surprise box of what is freshly harvested and peak season," Zahoudanis said.

The Seasonal Organic Farm Box is a curated box of fresh produce that offers 10 to 13 items for \$45 or a smaller version with five to seven items for \$35. The selection rotates every week, with items based on what's in season.

In addition to its two curated boxes, Real Good Greens sells a variety of fresh produce. Among the items currently available on the website are a half-flat of strawberries, an assortment of stone fruit, a pound of sugar snap peas — and of course, bunches of greens. Shoppers can also pick up artisan goods such as bread, eggs, cheese, olive oil and honey. Those who are buying a box can add these goods and extra produce to their orders, but customers don't actually need to buy a farm box to be able to purchase individual produce and groceries. Even so, Zahoudanis estimates that

around 90% of customers buy a farm box and then add on extra goods.

"We've become more of a full-fledged online farmers market," she said.

Real Good Greens may have been founded in a unique moment when long-established supply systems were disrupted, but Zahoudanis doesn't foresee a complete return to how things were pre-pandemic. Even with restaurants now reopening more widely to customers, the pandemic has brought changes in how consumers shop for food and in how farms operate.

"Where a lot of farms used to sell exclusively to restaurants, they've realized the importance of selling direct to consumer and having multiple sales channels. Now that the restaurants are opening, we've established that steady relationship and even in times of downturn and uncertainty we've been a really steady customer," she said.

In fact, the business is ready to expand a bit more. Zahoudanis said that she and Petersen have been looking for a warehouse to expand Real Good Greens' volume and provide the space to increase offerings to include local meat and fish. And perhaps someday, Zahoudanis said, she hopes that the business might have its own storefront.

It's a big difference from Real Good Greens' beginnings just a year ago as an idea to step in and help fill a vacuum created by the pandemic that wasn't necessarily planned to be a business.

"We were kind of playing it week by week and seeing how it went, and I think after a couple months, we realized that we had a very loyal following, and we were building something really good," Zahoudanis said.

For more information, visit realgoodgreens.com. ■

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Courtesy Brinkerhoff Photography

A Real Good Greens farm box with additional products like bread and local farm eggs.

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