

The Almanac

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

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One last hurrah for the class of 2021



Magali Gauthier

Pandemic protocols meant that graduating seniors were carefully spaced 6 feet apart on Coach Parks Field during the commencement ceremony at Menlo-Atherton High School on June 3. Despite the masks and strict capacity limits, M-A and Woodside High schools held in-person graduations for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

Menlo-Atherton High School sends off its seniors with first in-person graduation in two years

By Angela Swartz

After a school year held almost exclusively remotely, about 500 members of Menlo-Atherton High School's class of 2021 received their diplomas during a graduation ceremony held on

Coach Parks Field, the school's football field, on Thursday, June 3. In addition to the traditional maroon caps and gowns, graduates wore face masks.

Keeping San Mateo County Health Department regulations in mind, the school's 70th commencement was kept shorter this

year, with fewer speeches than in years past. The school hosted a car parade-style graduation in 2020 due to pandemic restrictions on public gatherings.

Graduate Keilee Shepard read an excerpt from Margaret Walker's poem "For My People."

Senior class co-presidents

Alex Waitz and Peter Koenig welcomed the audience of graduates and their limited number of family members — each student was allowed to have two guests, who were separated from graduates with a white picket

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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Kate Bradshaw

Food aid boxes from the USDA Farmers to Families program have been left in a pile in the 1000 block of Weeks Street in East Palo Alto on Friday afternoons.

Getting foods from farms to families

How a federal program to help farmers during the pandemic is changing the local food landscape

By Kate Bradshaw

Every Friday afternoon from 3 to 6 p.m., the parking lot of St. Andrew's United Methodist Church on Alma Street in Palo Alto becomes a drive-thru food aid hub.

Last Friday, a team of volunteers that included organizer Rev. Saulisi Kanongata'a and his 9-year-old daughter Moala asked the drivers of vehicles lining up in the parking lot just

one question: How many boxes of food do you want?

Under a pop-up canopy there were pallets of food boxes that Kanongata'a said were from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, stacked for distribution alongside additional offerings. Those items, like broccoli, tea, cauliflower, bread and more, were provided through donations from Hunger at Home, a San Jose-based food aid nonprofit, he said. Although the tower of USDA food boxes was

still taller than this reporter, he assured me a little after 4 p.m. that, by five minutes to 6 p.m., all of the food would be gone.

To get the word out about the food boxes, he had created a WhatsApp group, posted about the boxes on Nextdoor, and, through a colleague, posted the information on Craigslist, he said. As a result, people had come from as far away as Tracy.

The volunteers stacked boxes

See **FOOD BOXES**, page 20

New Menlo Park firework penalties to skyrocket to \$1,000

By Kate Bradshaw

Anyone thinking of lighting illegal fireworks this Fourth of July, or any other time, now has another big reason to think twice: The Menlo Park City Council just enacted an urgency ordinance that makes anyone caught detonating fireworks subject to fines of up to \$1,000 and up to six months in jail.

The discussion was brought forward from Councilwoman Cecilia Taylor, who said that

illegal firework detonations in her district have had a significant impact on the community, and that after seeing a similar ordinance enacted for unincorporated county areas by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, she thought the ordinance could be a tool for the police department to get illegal fireworks off the streets.

The problem of disruptive and illegal fireworks has been escalating for the past several years, but worsened especially last year, she said.

"The amount of illegal fireworks in the city of Menlo Park was unbearable for a lot of people," she said. "Something needed to be done."

The new Menlo Park law is derived from a similar ordinance recently enacted in unincorporated San Mateo County by the Board of Supervisors that boosted existing fines for detonating illegal fireworks tenfold to \$1,000 for any violation of the county's fireworks ordinance.

See **FIREWORKS**, page 14

Portola Valley schools parcel tax passes, officially

By Angela Swartz

The Portola Valley School District's nearly \$1 million annual parcel tax measure to keep the district's programming afloat, which went before voters last month, has officially passed. On June 3 the San Mateo County Elections Office certified the results.

Measure S was the only item on San Mateo County's all-mail ballot May 4 special election, needed two-thirds majority to pass and received 1,972 or 75.1% votes in favor, according to an elections office press release. It has an eight-year term, expiring in 2029, and will raise \$997,000 yearly.

"The approval to continue the parcel tax in the PVSD was only possible thanks to the hard work of 100-plus community members, parents, PVSD teachers and staff volunteering their time and talent," said Linda Kamran, chair of the Yes on S campaign. "Our campaign team is grateful for the strong showing of support from the Portola Valley/Woodside community. We know that the PVSD will continue to be wise stewards of this critical funding. We look forward to being able to maintain the small class sizes and programs that have helped our kids thrive both in normal years as well as during the pandemic."

Superintendent Roberta Zarea said the district is grateful to the community for passing Measure S to help maintain its academic, music, arts, and library programs, retain teaching staff, and keep class sizes small.

"We believe the strong public schools our community values are the foundation of our thriving community and support property values," she said in an email. "We believe it is our duty to listen to stakeholders' priorities and make wise choices with tax dollars. We have worked hard to make over one million dollars in cuts over the past three years, and Measure S reflects the community's interest in a new lower parcel tax rate. Our school board and PVSD administration will continue earning the community's trust with sound financial management."

Of the 5,478 registered voters, 2,627, or 47.96%, voted in the election. Nearly all the ballots cast in this election were vote-by-mail, 2,617, or 99.6%.

Voters failed to renew the soon-to-expire tax, Measure O, last March. The district asked for less money this time around: \$471 per parcel annually versus the current rate of \$581.

Measure O, which expires this month, raises about \$1.2 million annually for the district. It funds advanced math, science and technology, reading, writing, art and music programs; reduced class sizes; and retention of teachers for the district's two schools, Ormondale and Corte Madera, according to the district website. The tax also covers 17% of district teachers' salaries, according to the ballot measure. ■

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



Magali Gauthier

A bin of balls outside a first grade classroom at Ormondale Elementary School in Portola Valley on Oct. 14, 2020. Measure S, a parcel tax to fund classroom programming, officially passed.



WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS GIVEN pursuant to Sections 5473, et. seq. of the California Health and Safety Code that the District Board of West Bay Sanitary District has, by general regulation, elected to collect its charges for sewer services for FY 2021-2022 on the tax roll in the same manner as general taxes and will cause to be filed with its Secretary a written report containing a description of each parcel of real property receiving sanitary sewer service from the District and the amount of the charge for each parcel.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that on Wednesday evening, July 14, 2021 at the hour of 7:00 p.m. at the meeting room located at the District's offices, located at 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA or by Zoom or telephone <https://zoom.us/j/98889306440?pwd=OFVYWjBnaGFobytFTmQwRU1zZGIzQT09>

Meeting ID: 988 8930 6440 Passcode: 677645 Telephone 1 669 900 6833

Meeting ID: 988 8930 6440 Passcode: 677645 the District Board will conduct a Public Hearing to hear and consider all protests and objections, if any, to the report.

Anyone wishing to address the District Board concerning these matters may do so in writing at or before the date of the Public Hearing or may be heard at the time of the Board's meeting.

Dated: May 26, 2021

/s/ Sergio Ramirez
Sergio Ramirez
District Manager

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Nearly all public schools to fully reopen in fall

More than 99% of the state's more than 1,000 public school districts plan to fully reopen for in-person classes in the fall, according to data state officials released Monday.

According to the data, 99.34 percent of the state's 1,037 school districts will fully reopen for the fall 2021 semester. In addition, 89 percent of school districts plan to offer summer education opportunities and support like tutoring and mental health services.

The data is from reports from 85 to 90 percent of the state's K-12 school districts.

The remaining 0.66 percent of districts that are not planning to offer full in-person classes is likely due to reporting error, according to a spokesperson for the governor's office.

State officials are also unaware of any districts that are not planning to offer in-person classes in the fall.

"A restorative summer filled with reconnection, enrichment and joy, followed by a return to full in-person instruction, is what's best for our students," Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a statement.

Newsom has previously said the state will tie school funding to whether schools and school districts fully reopen in the fall.

The California Department of Public Health also plans to launch a summer outreach campaign among parents in the state's communities hit hardest by the pandemic in an effort to build confidence in the reopening of schools.

The CDPH will use \$25 million from Assembly Bill 86, which focused on school reopenings and COVID-19 case reporting within schools, to fund the campaign and collaborate with local health departments and offices of education.

"We still have a long way to go in our recovery but providing our students with more support and opportunities is exactly how we bring California roaring back," Newsom said.

Pandemic delays Caltrain electrification project

Caltrain announced last week that electrification of its rail system has been delayed until late 2024, in part because of supply chain disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This delay adds almost two years to the electrification efforts, which were expected to be complete in 2022.

Unforeseen conditions under Caltrain's tracks and complications in the installation of signal systems also contributed to the delay, according to the transit agency.

The delay is being reviewed by the Federal Transit Administration, which estimated that the project will need an additional \$333 million to be completed.

Caltrain has a funding plan for almost half of this additional funding and the rest will be set aside as a reserve fund for unknown risks. Caltrain and its project funding partners will continue to work on a funding plan over the next several months.

These additional costs bring the total cost of electrification to \$2.3 billion. Electrification involves switching from trains fueled by diesel to electric trains. Caltrain also plans to ramp up service and increase its operating speed.

Caltrain officials said that electrification is vital for the Bay Area but it is a big task.

Jeff Gee, a board member of the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board that runs Caltrain, said that "converting a rail line that was established in 1863 from diesel technology to cutting edge green electric power with computerized signal and control systems on a live railroad track is a highly complicated task."

Caltrain executive director Michelle Bouchard said that the delays are disappointing but a lot has already been accomplished.

Construction is well underway to electrify the 51-mile rail system, from the Fourth and King station in San Francisco to the Tamien station in San Jose.

To date, the first electric trainset has already been completed and is being tested at the Transportation Technology Center in Pueblo, Colorado.

All 10 traction power facilities are under construction. These power facilities are the electric power stations that will provide electricity to the new trains. Poles and wires that make up the overhead contact system, which connects the trains to the power facilities, have been installed at all four of Caltrain's tunnels.

Most of the foundations for catenary poles, which are poles that support overhead wires, have been complete.

More information about Caltrain's electrification is available online at calmod.org.

County creates \$5.8M relief fund for business permitting fees

By Astrid Casimire/Bay City News Service

San Mateo County supervisors approved a relief fund of up to \$5.8 million Tuesday for local businesses that lost sales because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The program — the “San Mateo County Environmental Health Fee Relief Program” — covers annual permitting fees for local businesses that are monitored by the county’s Environmental Health Services Division.

The division oversees over 14,000 businesses in the county by conducting inspections, issuing permits, responding to complaints and ensuring that businesses comply with state regulations. The division charges businesses annual fees to cover the cost of these services.

Fees can range from a couple hundred dollars to thousands of dollars for larger businesses.

Supervisor Dave Pine, who cosponsored the proposal along with Supervisor Warren Slocum, said that the relief fund was a grassroots effort.

“A business in my district, Nuts for Candy, brought to my attention a series of invoices from the county that were coming due right in the middle of the darkest days of the COVID economic restrictions,” Pine said. “So, on the one hand we were standing up various programs to support small business but on the other hand we were sending them these permit fee renewals.”

With the relief fund, qualifying businesses that are

monitored by the division would receive funding to cover the cost of annual fees, starting with the July 2021 billing cycle.

The relief funding would help about 5,400 businesses, with a focus on small businesses and industries most impacted by the pandemic, like retail and food, public pools and spas, body art and massage, hospitality and commercial and industrial sectors.

Heather Forshey, director of the Environmental Health Services Division, said they aim to make it easy to access the relief.

“To do this, our strategy focused on identifying entire categories of permits or industries, rather than have teams of environmental health staff sift through our database and determine eligibility business by business,” Forshey said.

They plan to create an online process whereby eligible businesses will automatically see the credit applied to their next annual invoice.

While most retail food businesses like coffee shops, bakeries, candy shops, breweries and wineries would be eligible, larger markets would need to submit an attestation form proving that they are independently owned and have two or fewer locations in the county.

Those larger markets will receive the attestation form in the mail or by email, Forshey said.

John Hutar, president and CEO of the San Mateo County/Silicon Valley Convention and Visitors Bureau, thanked the supervisors for their leadership.

“It is a great example of the

board listening to small business,” Hutar said, adding that it will help businesses get back on their feet as the state looks towards reopening on June 15.

According to a staff report, about 5% of retail food businesses regulated by the Environmental Health Services Division had closed permanently because of the pandemic.

Others may be in danger of closing.

Amy Buckmaster, president and CEO of Chamber San Mateo County, a local chamber of commerce, said that it will take most small business owners years to fully recover from the impact of the pandemic.

“While we all celebrate full tables at restaurants, shoppers in stores, and office workers coming back in the coming months — we don’t see the credit card bills, unpaid rent, cashed-in 401k accounts, or loans used to survive the past 15 months,” Buckmaster said in a statement.

The total cost of the program is estimated at \$5,754,008. But since the number of eligible businesses may fluctuate, the board approved a fund of \$5.8 million.

The Environmental Health Services Division will contribute \$650,000 to the fund from its reserves. The rest will come from the county’s general fund and be reimbursed through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the economic stimulus plan approved by Congress and signed by President Joe Biden in March.

More information on the relief program is available at sanmateocounty.legistar.com. ■

Homegrown dahlias featured in art exhibit

By Kate Daly

Special to the Almanac

Barbara Tuffli describes her striking photographs of dahlias she grew in her garden in Atherton and printed on Japanese paper as “a bit of summer cheer coming out of the pandemic.”

The collection of framed floral prints, called “Conjuring Color” is on display at University Art in Redwood City through June.

A gardener at heart, Tuffli has grown her passion to include award-winning fine art photography over the past decade. She said she delights in taking pictures of her homegrown flowers and shrubs when the light is perfect and then manipulates the images.

She created this limited edition of prints of her favorite dahlias,



Courtesy Barbara Tuffli

expanding three of the images into a large format of 36 by 36 inches.

A member of the Woodside-Atherton Garden Club, Tuffli is also known for her lectures and expertise in camellias, floral arranging and judging flower shows.

Go to barbaratuffli.com to see more of her work. ■



Photo by Kate Daly

Above: Barbara Tuffli’s fine art photography features favorites from her Atherton garden. **Left:** This large print titled “Dahlia ‘Nick Senior’” is on display at University Art in Redwood City.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Seller’s Obligations In An As-Is Sale

Dear Monica: I am buying a property with As-Is with no contingencies and we are due to close this week. The seller is leaving lots of cut plants and trees and won’t remove them. Can I ask him to remove this debris? James C.

Dear James: The answer is “yes”, because there is a provision in the

contract that says that seller must remove all personal property and debris and leave the property “broom clean”. Even if the debris is not inside the home but on the premises, the seller should not expect that it is okay to leave it there without getting the buyer’s approval.

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Coronavirus central: Most vaccinated workers must continue masking

New rules from Cal/OSHA state masks are not required in a room where all employees are vaccinated

By Embarcadero Media staff

Most vaccinated workers must continue masking

The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health approved revised workplace guidelines that would require workers to continue wearing a mask in some situations even if they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

In a marathon hearing that lasted more than six hours June 3, Cal/OSHA's Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board voted to adopt the revised guidance, which mandates that fully vaccinated workers need to wear a mask if a co-worker in the same room is unvaccinated.

In addition, masks are not required in rooms in which all workers are vaccinated. Outdoors, vaccinated and unvaccinated workers without symptoms only need to wear a mask when working at an event with more than 10,000 attendees.

Employers will also be able to get rid of distancing requirements and protective partitions if they provide N95 respirators to unvaccinated employees.

The board took a circuitous route to approve the revised guidance, voting first against the rules after some business groups argued they're too strict and then voting again to adopt them roughly an hour later.

Those against the revised guidance noted that it is more strict than the guidance for fully vaccinated people issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which allows them to forego a mask in most indoor and outdoor settings if they are more than two weeks past receiving their last vaccine dose.

Board members and business and labor advocates backing the revised rules stressed that they are temporary, only codified until Oct. 2.

The board also said it would work to develop a replacement set of rules. Since last year, all workers have been required to wear a mask at all times, regardless of vaccination status, a rule that would have remained in place had the board voted down the revised rules.

The board also voted to establish a three-member subcommittee to advise Cal/OSHA officials

about developing a new set of workplace rules that would likely take effect in August at the earliest.

Most of the rules approved June 3 will take effect June 15 — the same day the state is expected to remove all capacity restrictions and reopening tiers — if the state's Office of Administrative Law finds them legally sound in the next 10 days.

Some additional portions of the revised guidance, like the removal of protective partitions and barriers between employees, will take effect July 31.

On June 4, Gov. Gavin Newsom was cagey when asked whether he would issue an executive order by June 15 to override the revised rules, saying only that he felt the board was "moving in the right direction" and that he looked forward to working with business and labor groups to develop future workplace safety guidance.

"We're processing this ... what happened last night just happened last night," Newsom said. "We look forward to updating you more as we make progress towards eventually getting (the pandemic) 100% behind us."

Bay Area health officials back full-time, in-person school this fall

Health officers from all over the Bay Area gathered in San Francisco on June 3 to voice their support for the return of in-person learning for all students in the fall.

With most COVID-19 restrictions being lifted across the state as California prepares to fully reopen on June 15, the gathering marked the first time all 10 Bay Area health officers met in person since the onset of the pandemic over a year ago.

The health officers are pushing for the reopening of all schools and all grade levels for this fall, citing a significant drop in COVID-19 case numbers and hospitalizations as well as higher vaccination rates among people at increased risk and children 12 and over.

"We're seeing a significant rise in all sorts of issues; anxiety, depression, self-harm, suicidality, alcohol and drug use and a host of other chronic mental health conditions. The data is clear. Kids must return to school. School must begin full time,

in-person, full classrooms, this fall, if not, sooner," San Mateo County Health Officer Dr. Scott Morrow said.

"We've chartered slightly different paths over the course of the pandemic, it was enormously difficult. On this we are 100% united," said Santa Clara County Health Officer Dr. Sara Cody. "We have learned more about the science of COVID, how it's spread, and how it impacts our schools and communities and we have pivoted, as necessary. And this is why at this moment and time we feel that schools should be open to all."

"We've seen first hand that the rate of transmission within schools is low," said Marin County Health Officer Dr. Matthew Willis. "We've found children are far more likely to be infected outside the school in the general community than within the school."

"This is an immense priority for all of us," San Francisco Health Officer Dr. Susan Philip said. "It's time to move past the remote learning model and back

See **CORONAVIRUS**, page 13

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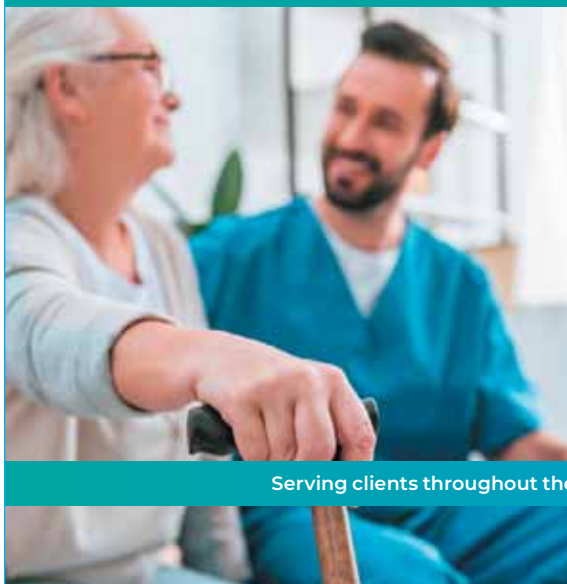


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**PLANNING COMMISSION
JUNE 16, 2021, 6:00 PM**

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

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Remote Public Comments:

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

Email: sharper@woodsidetown.org

PUBLIC HEARING

1. 60 Prospect, LLC
60 Prospect Street

ASRB2020-0021; XMAX2020-0010; GRAD2021-0002
Planner: Joseph Balatbat, Assistant Planner

Presentation and consideration of a proposal, requiring Formal Design Review, to demolish the existing main residence and construct a new two-story main residence with a basement, a detached personal office, a detached accessory dwelling unit (ADU), a detached guest house (ADU), a detached garage, a detached recreational building, a detached gym, a detached pergola, a pool and spa, and other site improvements.

Formal Design Review (ASRB2020-0021), Maximum Residence Size Exception (XMAX2020-0010), and a Grading Exception (GRAD2021-0002) for grading over 1,500 cubic yards will be considered by the Planning Commission.

THE APPLICATION MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW BY CONTACTING JOSEPH BALATBAT AT JBALATBAT@WOODSIDETOWN.ORG

High school sports roundup

Girls basketball

Here we are, the final week of a basketball season many people feared would never take place.

"This is the dessert," Pinewood girls coach Doc Scheppler said. "This is why we had the Zoom workouts, the practice on outdoor courts. Now we get to play meaningful games. In June. With school out. How cool is that?"

Four teams remain in the Central Coast Section girls Open Division. Semifinals take place Wednesday (after The Almanac's press deadline), and the is final on Friday.

Priory plays at No. 1 seed Mitty on Wednesday at 4 p.m. No. 2 seed Pinewood hosts St. Ignatius at 7 p.m.

Priory (10-3), the No. 5 seed, already came up with one upset, winning at No. 4 Valley Christian.

But playing Mitty is something altogether different. Most teams are lucky to have one 6-footer. Mitty can play 6-footers at all five positions if long-time head coach Sue Phillips cares to.

"You have to understand what you're good at," Priory coach Buck Matthews said. "We will play our game and do what we do best, not get caught up on Mitty and how good they are. We will go in confident and be prepared to play our butts off."

Yeah, but that Mitty team...

"Number one, you've got to prepare for their speed and tempo and length," Matthews said. "We played Pinewood twice and they're super fast. Now with Mitty we'll have to deal with their speed and their length."

Matthews had five players go the entire way against Valley Christian.

"It's all about being in shape," Matthews said. "We're in shape and we're athletic with Aniyah Augmon and Bineta Diatta and with our two shooters (Valentina Saric and Sydney Donovan). But Mitty is able to rotate players in every two minutes."

Mitty (12-1) has won the last five CCS Open championships, beating Pinewood on four of those occasions. Pinewood did come away with a memorable triple-overtime win over the Monarchs in the 2018 NorCal Open final.

Boys basketball

Defense has been Menlo-Atherton's staple during Mike Molieri's nine years as boys basketball head coach.

But on Tuesday the Bears saw an 11-point halftime lead disappear as host Piedmont Hills rallied for a 59-57 victory in a Central Coast Section Division I quarterfinal.

The Piedmont Hills comeback was in large part a one-man show as Alijah Washington, who finished with 33 points, scored 23 of his team's 34 second-half points.

"He took over," Molieri said. "We didn't have an answer. We weren't very good on defense, didn't do a good job of defending their screen action."

M-A (5-7) trailed 9-2 early, but came back to lead 14-13 at the end of the first quarter. The Bears dominated the second quarter, held the Pirates to 4 of 20 shooting and led 36-25 at halftime.

Spencer Lin hit a couple of long 3-pointers late in the second quarter and had 13 of his team-high 17 points in the first half. The Bears were 8 of 17 shooting in the second quarter. An offensive flow seemed to come easily at that point as they opened the 11-point halftime lead.

Maybe too easily. M-A struggled with its shot in the second half — 2 of 12 in the third quarter and 3 of 14 in the fourth quarter.

Ricky Martin, who pulled down a team-high eight rebounds, scored the first basket of the third quarter to increase M-A's lead to 13 before the Piedmont Hills comeback got going in earnest. Washington scored 13 points on his own the remainder of the quarter and M-A had its lead cut to 46-45.

Washington gave Piedmont Hills (16-5) its first lead since the first quarter, 53-52, on a basket with 3:50 left.

Amarion McCoy, who finished with 12 points, passed to Connor Cadigan for a basket in the low post that put M-A back ahead. But that was the team's last lead. Washington scored again to put the Pirates on top and they increased the lead to 57-54 before Martin's foul shot cut it to two.

M-A had to intentionally foul three times to put Piedmont Hills into the penalty. Finally with 6.5 seconds left Mykiah Wyche went to the line for a one and one and converted both shots for the final margin.

The pandemic-delayed season was a different experience for everyone in prep sports.

See **SPORTS**, page 15

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Hands-free technology helps Menlo firefighters find people 'twice as fast'

By Astrid Casimire/Bay City News Service

Firefighters with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District have new technology that helps them navigate through burning buildings and find people twice as fast, according to the fire chief.

The technology is called the C-Thru platform. It includes a navigation unit that attaches to the firefighter's helmet and allows them to clearly see objects in a burning building.

Made by a San Francisco-based startup, Qwake Technologies, the C-Thru navigator uses thermal imaging technology to help firefighters identify objects in their path, retrace their steps to find exits and communicate with other firefighters.

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District is the first in the nation to use the new technology.

Fire Chief Harold Schapelhouman said the district signed a contract on June 4 to purchase units for each of its 40 front-line firefighters, for a total of \$210,000.

"We're able to find people about twice as fast now compared to what we were before, with this

technology," Schapelhouman said. "It's a game changer."

Schapelhouman said they've been working with Qwake Technologies for the past two years, testing various prototypes of the C-Thru platform and providing feedback.

With this new contract, firefighters would work with designers to develop the final version of the product.

One of the biggest benefits of the navigator, according to Schapelhouman, is that it's hands-free.

Most firefighters use handheld thermal imaging cameras or TICs, which attach to their belts or air packs.

"You have to lift it up to look through it so it's not exactly the most convenient piece of equipment. But it is more beneficial than having nothing, which is what we had when I started. You didn't have any of this stuff so you were pretty much crawling around... blind," Schapelhouman said.

Back then, with zero technology, firefighters could easily get lost or disoriented, making it difficult to exit the building when they find someone to rescue.

The C-Thru navigator mounts

onto helmets with an eye piece that hangs down for firefighters to see through. Schapelhouman said that when looking through the eye piece, objects are painted with a green hue, making it easy to differentiate furniture from people.

The green lasers give firefighters depth and spatial awareness that they did not have before. Plus, the lasers are safe for the eyes.

Firefighters can also use the C-Thru navigator to communicate with other firefighters wearing the device, allowing them to call for help with the touch of a button. It also livestreams incidents to commanders outside the building, who can make tactical decisions based on what they see.

The units cost just under \$5,000 each, Schapelhouman said, cheaper than hand-held cameras which could go for \$7,000 to \$13,000 each.

The Fire District did a demonstration for other fire agencies and members of the media on June 4. Schapelhouman said people who saw it were amazed. "This isn't a pipe dream. This is real and it's happening," Schapelhouman said. ■

CORONAVIRUS

continued from page 8

to the full range of learning and support that our educational communities provide. Bay Area health officers urge school administrators, teachers and parents to work together now to plan for full classrooms for all grades in the fall."

"The classroom environment is a very safe environment and it's getting more and more safe as most of our older students and staff are vaccinated," said Contra Costa County Health Officer Dr. Chris Farnitano.

The officers said if schools reopen fully, they'll still have to follow guidelines set forth by the California Department of Public Health and federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which requires masks for all students K-12.

Vax for the Win scammer warning

The state Department of Public Health is asking Californians to be on the lookout for — and to report — any incidents of potential fraud involving scammers trying to take advantage of the state's recently announced COVID-19 vaccination incentive programs.

The public notified the

department of scammers impersonating state officials shortly after last Friday's announcement of the first cash prize drawing of the Vax for the Win program, which is intended to motivate people to get vaccinated before the state reopens on June 15.

People reported that scammers impersonating state officials contacted them by telephone, email, text messages and through social media, asking for fees and bank information.

State officials urge people who have been approached by such scams to email rumors@cdph.ca.gov or call the Vax for the Win incentives hotline at 833-993-3873.

Comprehensive COVID-19 coverage

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

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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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UC hosts wildfire symposium to talk new tech, better understanding of fires

By Victoria Franco/Bay City News Service

University of California experts gathered June 4 for a wildfire symposium where they discussed new technology created to assist in wildfire events and the overall understanding of wildfires in the state.

Neal Driscoll, a professor in the Geosciences Research Division at UC San Diego, kicked off the symposium by demonstrating ALERTWildfire, an early alert confirmation and situational awareness tool.

ALERTWildfire has 842 state-of-the-art panned tilt zoom fire cameras that monitor wildfire activity across

the state. The tool helps first responders and firefighters to confirm, locate and scale fire resources as needed.

The camera panels are able to time-lapse up to 12 hours to see the progression of the fires, which helps confirm fire ignition.

"On a clear day they can see 70 to 80 miles and at night with a near infrared they can see over 100 miles," Driscoll said. "This network provides unparalleled ability to confirm 911 calls."

He said if a 911 call comes in, ALERTWildfire can move the cameras to determine if there is ignition in an area, then they can proceed to scale their response.

Driscoll said they anticipate about 1,000 cameras throughout California by the end of this year or early next year.

He was asked how ALERTWildfire could ensure the alert systems won't fail when they are needed most.

"We have redundancy, we have a number of pathways to bring the data back," Driscoll said. "If one camera gets burnt over then we switch to another path, so we are constantly increasing the resilience of the system."

Another panel at the symposium discussed how modeling, visualization and data could help to inform on risk assessments and decision-making.

One panelist, Ilkay Altintas,

chief data science officer at San Diego Supercomputer Center, noted the use of a Firemap made by WIFIRE, a lab whose mission is to turn data, artificial intelligence and computing into a utility for advancing fire science and its application to practice, according to its website.

A Firemap is a tool that predicts the progression of fire perimeters and assists firefighters in effectively deploying resources on initial attacks.

Alex Hall, a UCLA professor in the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences and Institute of the Environment and Sustainability along with John Battles, professor and researcher at UC Berkeley,

discussed the role that climate plays in wildfire behavior.

"Even in the most optimistic future conditions, temperature is going to continue to increase through time," Battles said.

He said the consequence for fire is that it creates a huge influx of surface fuels as dead trees fall.

"The major concern is that this new surface fuel load can actually create new fire behavior ... fire behavior we haven't seen before," Battles said. "Where we have these large massive heavy fuels that burn for days and create new fire physics."

Various tools, research and data discussed at the symposium can be found at uckeepresearching.org. ■

FIREWORKS

continued from page 5

The Menlo Park ordinance, adopted unanimously by the City Council Tuesday, defines fireworks as inclusive of pyrotechnic devices that require licenses to use, along with

"firecrackers, torpedoes, sky-rockets, roman candles, cherry bombs, sparklers, chasers, snakes or other fireworks of like or similar construction."

In addition to safety risks associated with directly using fireworks, they also pose serious fire risks, especially

following last year's extensively damaging fire season, the ordinance noted. Plus, those same weather and low-moisture conditions are expected to continue into the future, the ordinance added, citing Cal Fire.

While some council members

worried about the impacts that a \$1,000 fine might have on, for instance, a teen from a low-income family, others argued that the point was to have a harsh penalty as a deterrent.

"The penalties seem somewhat draconian, but to some degree, that's the intent," said Mayor Drew Combs, who said that his district has also been impacted by illegal fireworks and called it a "major quality of life issue." The fireworks have triggered fear, woken people up, made it difficult to sleep and disturbed pets, he added.

In a public comment, Menlo Park resident Adina Levin said that she was concerned that the ordinance could disproportionately impact lower-income youth of color compared to affluent, white youth. "It's not going to be a white, wealthy kid that goes to jail," she said.

"It's only some people who have the most fines and jail times, and that has really negative consequences down the line," she added.

Taylor raised the question of enacting a community service requirement as an alternative to the \$1,000 fine, but City Attorney Nira Doherty said the police department doesn't have a community service program in place, and that nuisance ordinances aren't typically enforced with community service requirements.

Councilwoman Jen Wolo-sin said that her district also experiences the disruptive noise impacts of fireworks and raised concerns about disproportionate impacts.

Councilman Ray Mueller also raised concerns that the penalty seemed "pretty

severe," while acknowledging that fireworks haven't caused disruptions in District 5, which he represents. "One thousand dollars for a specific family can be a big, big, big deal," he said.

While he favored a sliding scale to increase the fines for repeated offenses, he said he'd defer to the council members for whom the fireworks are a problem, ultimately voting for the ordinance "with reservations."

Police Chief David Norris told council members that he planned to encourage officers to exercise discretion and focus on educating the community about the new policy, and said that the ordinance would provide law enforcement with a new tool in deterring fireworks. He noted that just as with fines associated with other violations of the law, like running stop signs or red lights, there's a simple way to avoid them: "Just stop."

"If you were to just not discharge fireworks, you're not going to receive any fine," he said. ■

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

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include **Norma Remke**, 74, a special education teacher and Portola Valley resident of four decades, on April 8.

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



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SPORTS

continued from page 10

M-A, which went a combined 47-10 over the last two full seasons, had to win its last two games against Sequoia just to get to .500 in league and qualify for the CCS playoffs.

"At the end of the day I'd like to compliment my four seniors," Molieri said. "I'm just happy they had some semblance of a season, that we were able to play in CCS. In that sense it was a successful season for our players. It was such a different year. From day one I decided I was going to play everybody. We will learn from it. Next year the Bears will be back."

In Division IV, **Sacred Heart Prep** beat visiting Harker for the third time this season to reach Thursday's semifinal.

The top-seeded Gators took care of Harker 86-42 on Tuesday as Harrison Carrington (26) and Aidan Braccia (24) combined for 50 points.

Teddy Purcell and RJ Stephens combined for another 20 points for SHP (13-7), which hosts Scotts Valley at 7 p.m.

Scotts Valley (10-8) downed San Lorenzo Valley 64-54 to advance.

Menlo School (7-9) also advanced into the semifinals by defeating visiting Pacific Grove 54-44 on Tuesday.

Lucas Vogel led Menlo with 16 points. Fellow sophomore Robby Enright added 10 points on 4-of-5 shooting from the field.

Junior Daniel Solomon had nine assists to go along with nine points and four rebounds while senior Hunter Riley contributed nine points, making 3 of 4 from long range.

The third-seeded Knights get another shot at No. 2 The King's Academy, which downed Terra Nova 92-57.

TKA, also known as the Knights, beat Menlo twice during the regular season, each time by four points.

Thursday's 7 p.m. contest, which took place after The Almanac's press deadline, was set to be held at The King's Academy.

—Glenn Reeves and Rick Eymer

Track and field

You might expect an athlete dividing time between two sports at the same time during this abnormal, pandemic-delayed spring season to perform at a little less than their optimal best in each sport.

Not so with Pinewood's Maia Garcia.

Garcia easily won the high jump June 2 at the West Bay Athletic League track and field

championships at Sacred Heart Prep with a clearance over 5-6.

The 6-foot-3 Garcia is also the starting center on Pinewood's basketball team.

"Doing both at the same time has got me in better shape," Garcia said. "Basketball has helped me do my runup faster in the high jump. Doing both has helped me more than hurt me."

She also noted how her training for the high jump has helped her vertical leap in basketball.

"I'd like to dunk some day," she said. "Now I can almost grab the rim."

Garcia's season best is 5-8, which is the top mark in the CCS. It's a position Garcia is not unfamiliar with as she won the CCS high jump championship as a sophomore and finished second as a freshman, both while attending Santa Clara High.

She transferred to Pinewood as a junior and played basketball, but her junior track season was wiped out by the onset of the coronavirus outbreak. Her play for Pinewood resulted in a scholarship offer to play basketball at Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo, where she will also compete in track and field.

Sacred Heart Prep took second in the WBAL girls team standings behind The King's Academy in large part due to the performance of Luci Lambert, who won the 1,600 in 4:59.14 and the 800 (2:12.83). Her time in the 800 was a personal best and the fastest time in the CCS this season. Lambert also took a second in the 400 in 59.24, behind Castilleja's Samira Kennedy, who was clocked in 58.92. Kennedy was the second-place finisher behind Lambert in the 800 in 2:14.72.

Keegan Shaw also provided

a first-place finish in the triple jump for the Gators with a mark of 33-7. Castilleja's Emily Takara took second.

Shaw was also second in each the long jump and 100. Pinewood's Nicole Maneatis was a double winner in both hurdles.

Menlo School won the boys team title with 152 points, nosing out TKA (144) in a tight competition.

Menlo used its strength in the distance races to come out on top. Calvin Katz was a double winner for the Knights, taking first place in both the 1,600 (4:36.10) and the 3,200 (9:37.59), while Justin Pretre took individual honors in the 800 with a school record time of 1:57.25. Katz took a third in that race in 2:00.72 while Pretre was a close second in the 1,600 in 4:36.19 and third in the 3,200 (10:05.71).

"We're a tight-knit team, and it's just sort of expected that everyone puts themselves out there, and really fights for the team," Katz said. "They know whatever you have left in the tank, you're going to use it for the team, and today it just all came together."

Vikram Seshradi was another double winner for Menlo in both hurdles. He led a 1-2-3 sweep in the 300 hurdles. The Knights also got valuable first-place points from sophomore William Floyd, who won the pole vault at 13-0 as the only competitor in the event. Floyd also placed third in both the 300 hurdles and the triple jump.

—Glenn Reeves

Read more online

Get the latest on local prep sports delivered to your inbox Monday through Friday by signing up for The Almanac's Express newsletter at almanac-news.com/express.



Courtesy Pam Tso McKenney/Menlo Athletics

Vikram Seshadri won both hurdles races.



Courtesy Pam Tso McKenney/Menlo Athletics

Calvin Katz takes the handoff from Justin Pretre.

Norma Remke

January 22, 1947 – April 8, 2021

Beloved teacher and mother, Norma Remke, passed away on April 8, 2021. Norma was born in East Detroit, Michigan. She moved to California, via Route 66, after earning her BA in Education at Michigan State University. She always said the decision was made to move to California after traveling across country to see Michigan State win the Rose Bowl. While attending San Francisco State University for her Masters in Special Education, she met her future husband on a blind date. They later moved to Mill Valley. Norma worked at St. Mary's Hospital helping adolescents in the McAuley Inpatient Unit. She loved providing care for children who needed it the most.



Norma and her family moved to Portola Valley in 1976, living in the same house in downtown for 40 years. Norma raised two children and worked as a Special Education teacher at Ormondale Elementary and Corte Madera Middle School in Portola Valley for 25 years. She was deeply involved in the Portola Valley community as a parent and teacher. She spent her time helping with her children's sporting events, scouting endeavors and giving that extra helping hand with school work. She always had time for you. Norma adored her students, coworkers, friends and family. She was a gifted teacher, mentor and loved by many.

After retirement, Norma's happiest moments were the births of her three grandchildren. She spent countless hours playing games, piecing together puzzles, dancing and singing with them. When she wasn't with her grandchildren, you could find her enthusiastically watching football and basketball. Norma will be greatly missed by her two children, son-in-law and grandchildren; son Scott Remke of Mountain View; son-in-law and daughter Nick and Lara Grant of Eugene, Oregon with Madison, Winter and Logan. A memorial mass will be held at Our Lady of the Wayside in Portola Valley at 11 a.m. on July 24, 2021.

PAID OBITUARY



1100 SHARON PARK DRIVE #9, MENLO PARK



Stylish, Private Condo in Sharon Heights

With the rolling hills of the Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club serving as the backdrop, this stylish 2-bedroom, 2-bathroom, end-unit condo offers luxury, privacy, and an unbeatable location in one of Menlo Park's most sought-after neighborhoods. Beautiful wood floors extend throughout expansive gathering areas, while floor-to-ceiling windows and sliding glass doors in every room fill the home with natural light and bring the outside in. Entertain guests in the large living room, craft delicious meals in the kitchen with stainless-steel appliances, and enjoy al fresco dining on the covered patio. This serene location offers an inviting retreat, yet you will still be just a short trip to downtown Menlo Park, downtown Palo Alto, and Stanford University, while Sharon Park is less than one mile away. Adding the finishing touch, this home is served by top-ranked Las Lomas schools.

OPEN HOUSE: SATURDAY & SUNDAY 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

www.1100SharonParkDr.com

Offered at \$1,148,000

Listed by Michael Repka of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in Menlo Park

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460 SHERWOOD WAY, MENLO PARK



Stylish and Modern with a Great Location

Just blocks to beautiful Burgess Park, moments to both downtown Menlo Park and Palo Alto, and convenient to Stanford University, this bright, inviting home enjoys an ultra-convenient location along with a floorplan tailor-made for a contemporary lifestyle. A brick-lined pathway leads past a vibrant garden to the covered front door, and inside, over 1,500 square feet of living space awaits with richly hued hardwood floors and tremendous natural light. Glide through open spaces that include the living room with a centerpiece fireplace, the sizable dining area, and the chef's kitchen with a suite of KitchenAid appliances. Three bedrooms are highlighted by the comfortable master suite with a marble-appointed bathroom, and all of the home's bedrooms enjoy stylish plantation shutters. For outdoor enjoyment, the backyard offers a peaceful, private retreat, with a sizable patio perfect for entertaining guests. Plus, this home enjoys access to top-ranked schools including Encinal Elementary, Hillview Middle, and Menlo-Atherton High (buyer to verify eligibility).

OPEN HOUSE: SATURDAY & SUNDAY 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

www.460Sherwood.com

Offered at \$2,488,000

Listed by Audrey Sun of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in Menlo Park

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Live jazz, classical, comedy and more will come to Frost Amphitheater this summer

Stanford Live welcomes back in-person arts events in July and August

By Karla Kane

After a successful spring of screening films al fresco at Frost Amphitheater, Stanford Live is ready to take the next step in a return to performing-arts normalcy: In-person shows in a variety of genres will come to Frost July 1 through Aug. 7.

Many of the performances will be presented in collaboration with other arts organizations.

"The big thing is, we recognized early on we were one of the few noncommercial spaces in the Bay Area that could start planning to have larger-capacity events," Stanford Live Executive Director Chris Lorway said. "We wanted to make sure it wasn't only us that benefited."

So, Stanford Live reached out to SFJAZZ and San Francisco Symphony to co-present multiple shows during the six-week run.

"Thursday nights became our jazz nights," Lorway said, with bookings in partnership with SFJAZZ including Gregory Porter, Fantastic Negrito, Robert Glasper and Terrace Martin, and Lavey Smith and Her Red Hot

Skillet Lickers.

But the series will kick off with acts especially near and dear to the local Stanford Live community. Stanford Jazz Workshop is presenting the first evening: a collaboration between saxophonist Joshua Redman and tabla player Zakir Hussain (the subject of a Stanford Live film last year) on Thursday, July 1.

"We thought it was important to start more with a Stanford Live feel," Lorway said. That vibe continues throughout the first weekend, with a live performance of Comedy Central's "The New Negroes" on Friday, July 2, and a Saturday night concert by the Kronos Quartet, Meklit and Bay Area spoken-word artists in a live reunion of the cast of "Testimony."

"Testimony" was a film released by Stanford Live last November, described as a musical reflection on civil rights. While many artists collaborated at a distance to create the work, Lorway noted that this will be the first time they will be able to be together in person.

Keeping up connections to the projects and relationships that were developed digitally during

the pandemic and giving them a new venue, Lorway said, showcases "not only the legacy of what we lost during COVID but what we gained during that time."

Starting July 10, Saturdays will be San Francisco Symphony nights, with concerts including two conducted by composer and San Francisco Symphony Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen (July 10 and 17). July 24's performance will be conducted by Michael Morgan, while Lina González-Granados leads the program July 31 and Xian Zhang takes over on Aug. 7.

Los Angeles roots fusion band Las Cafeteras are booked for Friday, July 9, and Sundays are reserved for acts with a community feel and a kid-friendly early start time.

On July 18, Graciela Beltrán, Lupita Infante and Mariachi Nueva Generación will perform; "My Bollywood Jukebox" offers a journey through Bollywood-hits history on July 25; and Bay Area family music favorites Alphabet Rockers take the stage Aug. 1, with their brand of empowering, inspiring hip-hop. Lorway said he hopes these Sunday

shows will "bring families out to have an intergenerational arts experience."

The spring film screenings at Frost have allowed Stanford Live to iron out practices for security, social distancing, restroom use, and food and beverage rules before flipping back into a fully live venue.

"We've been cooking away in the background trying to figure out the best possible strategies for reopening," Lorway said, including adherence to state, county and Stanford University safety protocols. While attendance is currently capped at 500, over the course of the summer that will gradually increase, from 1,200-1,600 up to 3,000-4,000, "and finally we might be back up to full capacity (around 8,000) in late summer or early fall," Lorway said.

As capacity increases, social distancing space, naturally, decreases. Starting with the July shows, therefore, patrons will need to present either a negative COVID test from within 72 hours of the show, or proof that they were fully vaccinated at least 14 days prior to the event.

"We're eyeing what the industry

standard is for large groups," Lorway said. "At this moment in time at least, people entering spaces are required to have proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test, so it's better to go out with a more conservative approach."

Last year, Stanford Live pivoted to a digital season, creating numerous films available to members. Lorway is hopeful that digital content will remain part of the organization going forward.

He's also optimistic about the future of Frost, which saw its grand reopening hampered by the pandemic year but has since proven invaluable as a flexible outdoor show space.

"It's such a great place, we now know, to see a movie, and for all different scopes of artists," he said. "I could definitely see that certainly being a resource we'll continue to utilize — and hopefully amplify — over the coming years."

Tickets for July shows go on sale June 11; tickets for August shows go on sale in July. A complete schedule, as well as health and safety information, is available at live.stanford.edu. ■

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

Find more arts & entertainment coverage in this issue on page 28 or at AlmanacNews.com/arts.

Healthy Hearing, Healthy Brain



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

Upcoming webinar:

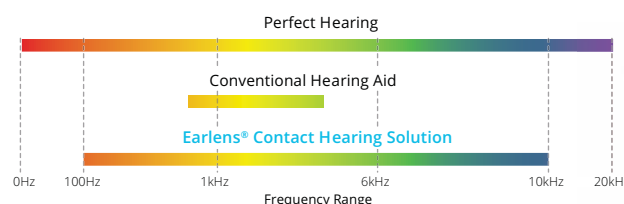
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June 23, 10:00 a.m. PST

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FOOD BOXES

continued from page 5

into trunks and backseats, loading up recipients with whatever they requested. Then, the volunteers broke the news to the drive-thru food recipients: This was the last week that the USDA food boxes would be available. And while Kanongata'a plans to keep providing boxes through the supplemental food provided by Hunger at Home at the Alma Street church, the halting of the federal program poses some concerns for food aid providers.

Throughout its run during the pandemic, ending in May, the Farmers to Families program, an initiative from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, met critical community needs but also experienced significant problems with its implementation, particularly at the local level in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

Some of the problems manifested at another food distribution site that Kanongata'a coordinated in a neighboring community.

Over the past few months, also on Friday afternoons, several pallets of food boxes — stacked three by three, and about six boxes tall — were dropped off in front of a home on Weeks Street in East Palo Alto and a message posted to the East Palo Alto Neighbors group on Facebook saying free food was available. And then the clock started. Would the perishable food be picked up before it went bad?

On a recent distribution day, a majority of the people picking up food at the Weeks Street dropoff site seemed to be generally pleased with the contents of the boxes, which included a gallon of milk, some frozen meat, yogurt, potatoes and celery. However, all but one didn't know where the food boxes had come from. They had just learned about the boxes from the Facebook group. About two hours after the boxes were dropped off, many still remained, with their perishable contents simply sitting out on the street.

Kanongata'a coordinates both food distribution sites, along with another on Euclid Street in East Palo Alto, through his connections with Hunger at Home and Milpitas Musallah, a Muslim faith organization. The boxes bore the logo of Daylight Foods, a large food distributor that received a contract with the USDA to distribute food boxes throughout the region. The company did not respond to emails from The Almanac requesting more information, including questions about concerns that leaving perishable food on the street may lead to



Kate Bradshaw

A Farmers to Families food box recently included milk, yogurt, celery, potatoes and frozen meat, all packed together and left on the street without refrigeration.

health hazards and food waste.

According to Kanongata'a, the Weeks Street site is supposed to be supervised, and the food boxes are generally taken by the following morning. Any food that is left over is taken to a nearby food aid provider, he said.

That the task of distributing these boxes, food aid authorized through the USDA's Farmers to Families food box program, was simply left to a local faith leader to orchestrate and resulted in boxes being left at a seemingly random spot on an East Palo Alto street highlights some of the challenges that have arisen with the USDA's Farmers to Families food box program.

Yet the program's earlier phases also generated new opportunities during the pandemic that helped nonprofits and farmers connect, opening doors to reshape the local food system.

Helping farmers

The Farmers to Families food box program was announced in April 2020, when the USDA created a Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. A total of \$16 billion was set aside to provide direct payments to agricultural producers and \$3 billion went to create and implement the Farmers to Families Food Box program. Later funding in December 2020 added another \$1.5 billion to the program.

The program had five contract rounds, and in the first two, the Concord-based Fresh Approach was included. Fresh Approach, a nonprofit that provides locally-grown produce, nutrition education and gardening skills to Bay Area communities, collaborated with local farms and organizations.

While the pandemic exacerbated local hunger needs, there was already a significant amount of food insecurity, both nationally and locally. Reports vary, but the average rate of food insecurity was about 17%

in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties pre-pandemic, according to the Silicon Valley Institute for Regional Studies, which authored a report on regional food insecurity.

Then, the pandemic hit, and the proportion of households with levels of what's considered very low food security rose to 11%, up from 4%, according to the report.

At the same time, when restaurants shut down, some farms had an excess amount of food and had to sell their products amidst the disruption in traditional food supply chains.

'Inexplicably, there was no requirement for distributors to pack meat, produce, and dairy separately, despite the USDA Refrigeration and Food Safety guidelines.'

FOOD LAW AND POLICY CLINIC AT HARVARD LAW SCHOOL REPORT

In the early rounds of the Farmers to Families program, Fresh Approach contracted with Pie Ranch, an organic farm and nonprofit in Pescadero, to act as a food hub, where farm produce was collected and distributed into boxes to deliver between San Francisco and San Jose.

Over time, Fresh Approach began to work with more farms, and at the peak of the program, it was distributing food to about 45 community-based organizations throughout seven counties in the Bay Area, according to Andy Ollove, food access program director at Fresh Approach.

At the same time, for the local food bank system, Second Harvest of Silicon Valley, the program created new obstacles.

The way that the program was run "was incredibly difficult

for food banks to work with," according to Tracy Weatherby, vice president of strategy and advocacy at Second Harvest Food Bank.

The Farmers to Families program was developed very quickly, and was created primarily to benefit distributors and farmers, Weatherby said. From the distributors' end, the main obligation was just to give the food boxes to a nonprofit. It didn't necessarily account for the challenges and costs nonprofits faced in getting the food boxes out to their clients, she said.

Each contract cycle would run only for a number of weeks before expiring, and then people had to figure out who had won the contracts to see if they could get access to that food, Weatherby said.

"A lot went to very random places," she said.

Farm impacts

Ash Colin, food education programs coordinator at Pie Ranch, said that the Pescadero farm and nonprofit signed on with Fresh Approach and the USDA's Farmers to Families food box program to serve as an assembly site to put the food boxes together, which were CSA-like boxes containing top-quality local organic produce sourced from farmers hit hard by the pandemic when restaurants shut down.

"Through this program we were able to pay farmers full price for the produce and had all that produce go to families in need," Colin said.

While they had USDA funding, the farm put volunteers and staff work to assemble between 500 and 800 boxes each week, following COVID-19 safety precautions, staying outdoors and remaining 6 feet apart. The food boxes were then distributed to around 15 community service groups in the Bay Area, roughly between San Francisco and San Jose.

The program, he said, identified and addressed a basic need that predated the pandemic — that low-income families don't have access to fresh, organic produce.

One aspect of the program that his team is sensitive to, Colin noted, is in trying to avoid imposing a "white savior" attitude — it's not as simple as saying, "Let's distribute organic boxes to communities in need; let's give them kale," he said.

They focused on crafting boxes that were culturally relevant to recipients and developed recipes with suggestions about how to use the vegetables included in the boxes, he said.

Fighting hunger

Then, around September, the contracts with Fresh Approach ended.

Starting in the third contract round of the Farmers to Families program, the program began to disproportionately leave out small- and mid-sized farms and focused exclusively on price, according to a February 2021 report on the program from the Food Law and Policy Clinic at Harvard Law School.

The new rules in later rounds of contracts also demanded that the packed food boxes contain not just produce but also meat and dairy products.

"Inexplicably, there was no requirement for distributors to pack meat, produce and dairy separately, despite the USDA Refrigeration and Food Safety guidelines recommending storing these foods at different temperatures," the report said.

According to Ollove, Fresh Approach was asked to reapply for the contract, but the new meat and dairy requirements were an obstacle. In addition, the USDA appeared to only give bids to the lowest-price bidders, he said. That meant that big food distributors and farms got the contracts over smaller farms.

"Being a small group, the changes made (in the USDA program) impeded our ability to participate," Ollove said.

"The contracts were awarded in such a strange way," Weatherby said. "We would be supportive of a program that really did prioritize local farmers with great product that they could deliver to local food banks. But a lot of the program did not end up being that," she said.

Ultimately, while Fresh Approach was OK after losing the contract, it was the families receiving the food that were impacted, Ollove said.

There wasn't a system through which a recipient of a food box under one contract would be transferred to receiving a box from a different distributor, he said.

Still, the initiative demonstrated that small, local farms can be a resource in the fight against hunger, he added.

"What we showed in our project was really how successful local farms can be at emergency food relief," Ollove said. "It shows how local farms should play a role in the hunger relief system. ... We can move high-quality food really effectively while simultaneously providing economic stimulus to farmers."

Both Pie Ranch and another farm that was part of the early Fresh Approach contract, Veggielution in East San Jose, have since expanded their programs to continue feeding those in need

at a smaller scale.

Veggielution has partnered with the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition in an innovative program to deliver food boxes via volunteer-powered bicycles, in addition to offering ongoing food box pickups at the farm.

And Pie Ranch has continued with a scaled-back version of the

'It shows how local farms should play a role in the hunger relief system.'

ANDY OLLOVE OF FRESH APPROACH

program, assembling and distributing roughly 200 boxes per week, Colin said.

Food for the boxes is generally sourced from within a 50 mile radius of the farm and includes produce from incubator farms that Pie Ranch supports, an initiative focused on encouraging people of color and women to get involved with sustainable farming

by providing them with land "at a pretty affordable price," he said.

Colin highlighted another challenge with the USDA contract: the federal agency mandates that its partners meet what are called "Good Agricultural Practices" or GAP certifications. Those protocols set stringent standards for how to reduce food-borne illnesses on farms but also came with an expensive auditing process to receive certification, he said.

And while many of the standards are good practices, some are logistically difficult to comply with, Colin said. "It's hard to keep everything on a farm clean," he said.

While people may be used to interacting with pristine produce at the grocery store, it's also not uncommon to find some dirt on fresh produce at a farmer's market, he explained. "That's just the nature of organic farms."

The bigger issue, he argues, is that organic produce isn't cheap to grow. Conventional agricultural practices that lower the costs of



Kate Bradshaw

Rev. Saulisi Kanongata'a, (left) stands next to his daughter Moala and family member Senita Uhilamoelangi at the pop-up food distribution site in the parking lot of St. Andrew's United Methodist Church in Palo Alto.

produce also carry environmental costs that will result, if not now, then in the future, he said.

"We have to start looking at it as a more comprehensive, environmentally focused issue where it's not just about 'organic.' It's about better wages. It's about tilling

practices. It's about irrigation practices. It's about sustainability practices," he said.

"There's a great need for governments and individuals to become more aware of the value of the type of work that agriculturists are putting in. It's not

easy work," he added.

A number of local farms are certified through other programs, such as the California Certified Organic Farmers certificate program, or CCOF, but are not GAP certified, so Pie Ranch wasn't able to source food products from them.

Now that the program isn't working with the USDA, they're once again able to partner with those smaller farms once again, Colin said.

"It would be really great to see more of a government incentive to fund and support local programs like these," he said. ■

This article was produced as a project for the USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism's 2020 Data Fellowship. It is the second in a series exploring the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on local food systems and policies.

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

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

continued from page 6

SamTrans launches series of anti-racism artwork on buses, shelters

SamTrans last week launched a series of anti-racism artwork that is being displayed on the transit agency's buses and shelters around San Mateo County.

Calling it an "effort to show its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion" following increasing numbers of hate crime attacks on the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, SamTrans worked with the Millbrae Anti-Racist Coalition and three Asian-American artists on the pieces, which will be showcased until mid-July.

Eli Africa designed full bus wraps on two SamTrans buses, while Vida Kuang made art being displayed on buses and LeUyen Pham's work is also featured on bus art as well as shelter ads.

The artwork and more information about the artists can be found online at samtrans.com.

Free county fair tickets with vaccine shot

The San Mateo County Fair kicked off on Saturday, featuring carnival rides, musical performances, food vendors and free entry for those who get vaccinated on-site.

It takes place at the San Mateo County Event Center at 1346 Saratoga Drive in San Mateo through June 13, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. each day.

Throughout the week, there will be a variety of booths and activities, including a farm,

livestock competitions and exhibits.

The fair will also display panels from the AIDS Memorial Quilt, which includes over 48,000 panels in memory of people impacted by AIDS. There will also be a Black History Museum featuring 100 exhibits.

For each day of the fair, there will be free outdoor concerts starting at 7:30 p.m. Some of the featured performers include Young MC, Coolio, C+C Music Factory, Queen Nation and Journey Revisited.

Plus, San Mateo County residents who get vaccinated on-site will receive free admission to the fair for themselves and anyone under 11 years old or younger in their household, a \$20 food voucher and four ride tickets.

Free vaccinations will be available at Gate 5 June 11-13 for county residents, including those 12 and older. Residents under 18 will need parental consent to get vaccinated. The parental consent form is available online from San Mateo County Health at smchealth.org/post/covid-19-vaccination-consent-form.

Free COVID-19 testing will also be available at the fair, every day from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Dana Stoehr, CEO of the San Mateo County Event Center, said in an online statement that the health and safety of guests is their top priority.

"The theme of the San Mateo County Fair is Where Tradition Meets Innovation, and we will certainly bring the favorite traditions of animals, pig races, BBQ, funnel cakes, carnival rides, and the Ferris Wheel back, with the innovations that provide a

healthy and safe space for our community," Stoehr said.

Masks and social distancing will be required at the fair and attendance will be limited to 35% capacity, per state guidelines.

People are encouraged to use touchless transactions, though cash will be accepted.

More information and tickets for the fair are available online at sanmateocountyfair.com. Same-day tickets can be purchased at the entrance for a higher cost. Tickets cost \$15 for adults and \$10 for juniors six to 12 years old or seniors 62 years and older.

—Bay City News Service

National Merit scholars announced

National Merit Scholarship Corporation announced over 3,100 winners of National Merit scholarships financed by U.S. colleges and universities on Wednesday, June 2, including two who attend Atherton schools.

Stella El-Fishawy of Los Altos, a student at Menlo School, was awarded a scholarship to attend the University of Chicago. She plans to study economics.

Jane L. Brockett of Menlo Park, a Sacred Heart Preparatory student, was awarded a scholarship to attend Tufts University.

Sponsor colleges selected their scholarship winners from the finalists in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program who plan to attend their institutions. Awards range from \$500 to \$2,000 annually.

—Angela Swartz

CRIME BRIEFS

Atherton sees spike in burglaries

Atherton police are reporting an uptick in burglaries in town, with 10 taking place over the last two months, totaling a little over \$12,000 in stolen goods, said Police Chief Steve McCulley.

In the majority of these burglaries, the thieves are targeting out-buildings and garages to steal bicycles and other valuable items, according to a June 3 news bulletin issued by Atherton Police. In almost all of these incidents, garage or shed doors were left open or unlocked.

"Our investigations have revealed that these recent burglaries are not related to our past string of burglaries involving organized gang members from Southern California," the post states, referring to a burglary spree in which millions of dollars of goods were stolen in 20 residential burglaries over a four-month period between November 2018 and February 2019.

The last reported burglary in town was on the morning of June 4 on Tuscaloosa Avenue, with tools being taken from a car, according to the town's crime blotter. A residential burglary happened sometime earlier in the week on Cebalo Lane. There were also residential burglaries reported on Faxon Road and Tuscaloosa Avenue on May 26 and 30. Another was reported on Selby Lane between May 11 and 12.

There are steps residents can take to make their residences a harder target for burglars. Call 650-688-6500 or email Jennifer Frew at jfrew@ci.atherton.ca.us to set up an appointment.

—Angela Swartz

Burglary suspects caught in the act

San Mateo County Sheriff's Deputies said Tuesday that they arrested a man and woman on suspicion of burglary after the pair walked out of a garage with items taken from a home in an unincorporated area of Redwood City.

Deputies responded to a 4:38 p.m. report of a burglary in progress in the 3000 block of Fair Oaks Avenue.

Upon arrival, deputies determined that the suspects had jumped over a neighbor's fence and broke into a garage.

As deputies set up a perimeter around the home, the two suspects walked out of the garage.

Deputies arrested a 42-year-old man and a 36-year-old woman on suspicion of committing multiple offenses, the first three of which are felonies: burglary, conspiracy, and possession of stolen property, drugs, and drug paraphernalia.

Deputies urge anyone who has information regarding this incident to call the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office Anonymous Tip Line at 1-800-547-2700.

—Bay City News Service

Seniors reflect on closing out their high school careers during a pandemic

By Angela Swartz and Lloyd Lee

Some members of the class of 2021 never stepped inside of a classroom during their senior years, but that doesn't mean they didn't pick up some lessons along the way.

Woodside and Menlo-Atherton high schoolers faced a set of challenges unique to students in a pandemic. They faced fears about family members contracting the virus, felt loneliness while sheltering in place, and relief about a return to normalcy after COVID-19 vaccinations. As they finished their high school careers, The Almanac asked a few local teens to reflect on how they've changed over the last 14 months, what they've accomplished and what they're looking forward to after graduation.

Here are some of their stories.

Tyler Chan: Opening up and 'ready to go'

Menlo-Atherton High School senior Tyler Chan, 17, of Menlo Park said he learned the value of friendships during lockdown and has become more forthright about his emotions.

"I didn't talk much about how I felt; I kept to myself," he said about himself before the pandemic. "Mental health is something I dealt with alone."

Then he faced a deep, month-long depression during the winter in which he barely left his bedroom.

"I felt really alone," he said. "It encapsulates how quarantine was for me and a lot of other people. At the time, it felt like I was really alone in it when in reality everyone else in the country was feeling this as well. Looking back, it definitely is a moment when all this tension and worry caught up to me."

Chan said he pushed himself to talk to friends and family to open up and get help when he was feeling overwhelmed.

He's since discovered new hobbies, such as playing electric guitar and spike ball, and acquired a gaming laptop. He also managed working part time at Fleet Feet, a running gear store in Menlo Park, while running track until he suffered a foot injury.

Three words that encapsulate his senior year? "Bittersweet, short-lived, unforgettable," he said.

A particularly weird memory he'll have of the school year is taking a ceramics class virtually. It was challenging to touch his computer with hands dirty with clay, he said.

Chan said he was never really worried about getting sick with COVID-19 but was always concerned about other family members, especially his grandpa. He was initially anxious about his mom, a flight attendant for Delta Air Lines, returning to work after an injury because of the risk of catching COVID-19 on a crowded plane.

"I think now she's getting a little bit less nervous about it," he said. "The thought of going on a plane during a pandemic is really strange to think about. Luckily we were really careful about disinfecting our house, so that sort of eased our stress and we were able to calm down."

Now that he's received his two doses of the Pfizer vaccine, Chan plans to spend time with friends before he starts at Lewis & Clark College in Portland in the fall. There, he'll share a dorm room with a friend. Chan said he plans to study biology in hopes of someday becoming a physical therapist.

"Being a little more independent is going to be exciting," Chan said. "With COVID, we've all been with our families for so long, I'm just ready to go."

Sathvik Nori: A crash course in government over Zoom

Last March, Sathvik Nori, 18, of Atherton expected about two weeks of remote learning before students could return to Menlo-Atherton's hallways. It wasn't until more than 12 months later that he would reunite with his classmates and teachers on campus again.

"I gained an appreciation for how events can turn our world upside down," said Nori, who served as student trustee for the Sequoia Union High School District's governing board. The

Almanac spoke with Nori on his final day of high school classes.

Nori, who was editor-in-chief of the M-A Chronicle, attended countless virtual board meetings, learning about how the public education system functions.

"One good thing that came out of the pandemic is that people are a lot more engaged; attendance (at school board meetings) was unprecedented this entire year," said Nori, who will attend Stanford University this fall. "Hopefully that sticks around."

Nori said he learned "so much in process about how the local school board works."

"Almost every meeting there was something controversial (being discussed)," he said. Ever since the district's decision to move to pass/fail grading last spring, it's been contentious, he said. "The sheer amount of learning loss that has happened because of the pandemic, the trauma they (students) faced this year, is a challenge for our district."

Nori believes the district's reopening of classrooms in the spring happened a "little bit too late."

"I saw from my friends just how unengaged they were in distance learning," he said. "More than school, they missed the social interaction. People were really hurting. Sitting in front of a screen for six to seven hours a day is clearly not healthy. ... There was generally a sense of, 'What's the point of online school and stuff?'"

He formed a social bubble with friends after it became clear COVID-19 wasn't just "going to go away" and he would hang out with them in backyards until they were vaccinated.

"I wondered, 'Am I just never going to see (other) people again?' For the class of 2020 that just happened," he said.



Magali Gauthier

Tyler Chan, a Menlo-Atherton High School graduate, stands in the doorway of his Menlo Park home.

M-A's in-person graduation last week gave his class the closure last year's missed, he noted.

Looking back, he won't forget the feeling that returning to school was worthwhile if only for the connection with other students just from eating lunch together for the first time in a year.

Beyond the fall, Nori isn't sure what's ahead for him. He sometimes imagines himself attending medical school or pursuing politics. He said he could even see himself running for a seat on the district's school board.

Naomi Perez: An artist ready to spread her wings

A swirl of purples, pinks, oranges, deep blue, sunflowers, and tentacles adorn what was once a nondescript trash bin on Woodside High School's campus. The artist is Naomi Perez, a recent graduate of the high school.

Perez, 18, an activist, softball player and resident of the Belle Haven neighborhood in Menlo Park, will take on a role that means a lot to her this fall: first generation college student. The recent Woodside High graduate will attend University of Redlands in Southern California this fall to study English and studio art. She dreams of one day designing shoes for Nike.

Perez was initially introduced to graffiti art during visits to the Mission District in San Francisco with her mom. She co-founded the Woodside Bin Project her sophomore year and recently painted a Black Lives Matter trash bin for the school. She said she uses her art as a platform for her passion for social justice and to express pride in her Latina and Salvadoran identity.

"I really just wanted to kind of like not let that (the Black Lives Matter) movement die out, at least on our campus," she said. "And so that people are reminded that police brutality and racism are still things that we're fighting against."

Perez, who has lived in Belle Haven for 15 years, said the pandemic has brought out the inequities that exist in Menlo Park. Perez's mom is helping to try to reduce these differences and works with the local non-profit Belle Haven Action, an advocacy group that has offered free COVID-19 testing and vaccination clinics.

"You can see how Belle Haven fell short," she said. "We didn't have the same resources. It took a while for there to finally be (COVID-19) testing. That's where that community outreach was really important. Everybody deserves a chance to have access to all of those things. ... Among all of these neighbors are just hardworking, dedicated people, who are fighting to better their neighborhood."

Perez describes her senior year as a "huge roller coaster" ride.

"I can't say it was all bad," she said, noting she discovered meditation and other outlets for channeling her stress, something she was too busy to focus on before the shelter-in-place order.

She picked up hobbies like learning to solve a Rubik's Cube, skateboarding and football. She's grown closer to her 12-year-old twin brothers and they painted a collage together on a household door.

Distance learning added flexibility to her schedule, allowing her to enroll in more community college courses and work part time at In-N-Out to save money for college (it's her first job, so she's only known how to work in a pandemic with a mask and gloves on).

The college application process was entirely new to her.

"Doing everything online was kind of difficult," she said. "It was time-consuming and at times stressful. When filling out FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), it was so difficult and confusing I was on a Zoom call for almost four and half hours straight just trying to get it done."

Perez said she feels a lot of



Magali Gauthier

Menlo-Atherton High School graduate Sathvik Nori served as the student trustee on the Sequoia Union High School District board.



Magali Gauthier

Naomi Perez, a Woodside High School graduate, is a first generation college student who's proud to be from "Belle Haven, Menlo Park."

pressure to succeed as the first in her family to go to college, but she also is excited to create a pathway for her brothers and younger family members.

She looks forward to stepping out of her comfort zone and meeting other artists.

"At first I didn't think it (college) was going to be in person (because of the pandemic)," she said. "Moving away from home the first time is a little scary. Part of me was hoping we were going to be distancing for a little bit. But at the same time, I know that this is all part of the process."

Her advice to first generation students is to always be proud of who you are and that your hard work will eventually pay off. She said she knows she comes from a low-income neighborhood, but she's proud of being from "Belle Haven, Menlo Park."

"I went to a predominantly white middle school — Corte Madera School," she said. "I was one of 10 students of color and it was a big adjustment for me. Then going to a high school that was more diverse, I became proud of where I came from. A lot of times you can feel overshadowed or isolated where you may not identify or connect with others."

Danny Salinger Brown: Starting a business during a pandemic

While most teens might be watching Netflix on their computers at home, Woodside High School graduate Danny Salinger Brown brought the movie theater experience to people's backyards during the pandemic, starting BackyardFilms last summer.

Salinger Brown, 18, a Menlo Park resident and valedictorian, is heading to University of California at Santa Barbara in the fall, where he will major in global studies. He was challenged by his friend's cousin to create a business. Salinger Brown and his co-founder, Connor Spackman, have hosted viewings once or twice a week, and at one point they were doing five or six

showings a week. He did learn it is "very difficult to run a business just with a couple people," especially at the beginning when you need to put a lot of unpaid time in before earning any money.

During the pandemic, he said he worried his dad, Lloyd Brown, would contract COVID-19, so a drop in cases and his dad's vaccination made him feel more at ease.

His dad is a pediatrician for Palo Alto Medical Foundation and ran the organization's respiratory clinics during the pandemic, where he would go even before there was a testing network for the virus.

"And he was seeing people who may have had COVID," Salinger Brown said.

Now, for the first time in over a year and a half, he can hug his grandparents who live in Half Moon Bay. The first time he saw his friends without masks on it felt "a little weird for an hour or so."

"During the pandemic I've gained an ingrained fear of COVID," Salinger Brown said. "It's been massively reduced."

A Peninsula Athletic League Scholar athlete, playing tennis and basketball this spring, he said he hopes to work in the sports industry in the future. His dream job is to be commissioner of the NBA.

In the nearer term, he looks forward to trips to San Diego and Hawaii after a year at home.

Fiona Fulton-Moskowitz: Pursuing a film career

A naturally social person, finishing off the year interacting with classmates on stage and making jokes as one of two masters of ceremonies at M-A's graduation was the perfect, albeit strange, way for Fiona Fulton-Moskowitz to cap off a year of isolation.

"After almost two years of not seeing any of my classmates and then suddenly seeing them all together at graduation, it felt incredibly strange," she said after the event. "In terms of speaking at the ceremony, I was not even nervous because my mind has been unable to process that I am graduating high school."

Fulton-Moskowitz, 18, of Menlo Park has her sights set on making short films; she will study media culture and communications at NYU in spring 2022, starting in Paris. She will take community college classes and continue working part-time tutoring and nannying jobs until then.

She said she found online learning to be a challenge. Distractions abounded, with two very loud dogs, five guinea pigs and her parents at home. She also remembers the first day of distance learning when her science teacher left the Zoom meeting because of Internet issues, so the class sat in silence for 30 minutes.

"There was the temptation to search a new tab on your computer or watch YouTube," she said.

Fulton-Moskowitz says her anxiety was a lot worse at times during the pandemic and she got less sleep. During the winter she wondered: "When will this end? When will life go back to normal? What will normal even look like?"

She's become more self-reliant in terms of her physical and mental state.

"I hold myself accountable for more things as well as using my newfound independence to start exploring the world," she said.



Magali Gauthier

Fiona Fulton-Moskowitz, who spoke at the M-A graduation, said the pandemic forced her to become more self-reliant.

This includes hikes at Water Dog Lake in Belmont and trips to Fort Funston in San Francisco with her dogs.

"I'm very, very lucky to live in an area where the weather is nice," she said. "I can go outside. I don't live in a cramped apartment with crying 5-year-olds. I have been lucky to be bored. People are facing eviction, struggling to make ends meet with jobs or being unemployed."

She has become a lot closer to her best friend, although they will be on opposite sides of the country. They have matured more than they would have if it were not for the pandemic, she said.

"Lockdown took away distractions of unnecessary relationships, poor mental health, and more things that would have prevented us from becoming young adults," she said.

Fulton-Moskowitz found her college application process less stressful with more students opting to skip the SAT and ACT. Applications were writing-heavy this year and she felt like it was a good way to express her personality.

What matters most to her now is that her family is healthy and fully vaccinated.

Cris Villa: 'Tunnel vision' to success

Cris Villa has mostly lived an independent life — not out of choice, but by necessity.

When Villa's family immigrated to the U.S. around 2007, his father left the household, leaving him, his mom and two sisters to fend for themselves.

Academically, Villa and his older sister Itzel were also on their own. He enrolled at Willow Oaks School for first grade and had to adapt quickly to the language and culture of the school without much guidance from his parents.

"My mom and my dad never even graduated," he said. "They never got to high school, so they weren't able to help in any way. I had to do my own thing and my older sister helped a little bit, too."

And growing up as the only male in a cramped household, Villa found it could get a little tedious at home with his mom and two sisters — no brothers to share common interests and no father figure to teach him life lessons about manhood.

"It was so boring," he said.

Living in a one bedroom apartment in East Palo Alto, sharing a space with his sisters, didn't help him socially, he said. He was embarrassed to bring friends over and let them see how he lived. And his undocumented status not only stripped him of an internship

opportunity (it required a Social Security number), but caused him and his family live in fear of deportation from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), especially during Donald Trump's presidency.

"When we heard ICE was coming to California my mom told me not to go out a lot," he said.

But Villa's love for learning and ability to adapt a "tunnel vision" to focus on his dreams — of working in aerospace, living up to his mom's expectations, driving a nice sports car, living in a bigger home and becoming a U.S. citizen — pushed him to persevere.

"I just thought of my future," he said. "I don't want my kids to have to go through all my problems that I went through. I don't want money to be an issue. And I want them to have papers here."

Towards middle school, after a brief period of indifference towards his education, Villa said he quickly picked up the slack and started seeing A's and B's on his report card. At Menlo-Atherton High School, Villa found teachers who were willing to bond with the students, like his coding instructor Chris Rubin.

Villa said he sought a community at Live In Peace, an East Palo Alto-based nonprofit that provides academic resources for students like him, and at his local boxing gym — meeting people who had the same love for the the sport and sharing passion with kids by training them.

During the pandemic, some of those community spaces were cut off. And as a house cleaner, his mom was no longer able to do her job.

But, Villa said he was still able to thrive and maintain his grades during remote learning. In class and on Zoom, he said he never shied away from seeking help.

"I'll unmute myself and just ask questions if I need it," he said. "I'm not afraid to ask."

And fortunately for his family, some of his mom's more sympathetic clients regularly sent paychecks and sometimes offered bonuses during the coronavirus lockdown.

Villa now lives in San Jose with his siblings, mom and stepfather. During the summer, Villa plans to go back to his boxing gym and earn some extra cash by working with his dad in plumbing.

He will be attending University of California, Merced, in the fall, pursuing a major in engineering.

"Man, it's a blessing," he said. "I think I deserve it. I put a lot of hard work into all this." ■

*Email Staff Writers
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Members of the class of 2021 toss their caps at the end of the Woodside High School graduation on June 4.

Magali Gauthier

Woodside High graduates its 62nd class

Not quite a normal ceremony, but close

By Angela Swartz

About 400 seniors in Woodside High School's Class of 2021 marched across Bradley Field, the school's football field, at 10 a.m. on Friday, June 4, to receive their diplomas.

The school held a more abbreviated graduation ceremony for its 62nd class, following San Mateo County health guidelines and featuring fewer

speeches than in years past. This ceremony was closer to the norm that last school year's when Woodside held a car parade commencement ceremony and livestreamed graduation speeches.

The school band played the processional and the national anthem, and Ava Krampert, the senior class president, welcomed the audience of family and friends in-person and over a video livestream.

Valedictorian Dominic Borg spoke on "A Time for Every Purpose." Graduate Anthony Neo Marcos talked about the adversity of his class has faced in his speech "Heart of a Lion," looking back on the yellow sky from last fall's wildfires, remote learning and the pandemic.

Principal Diane Burbank, who will retire at the end of this month, gave her last commencement speech as



Magali Gauthier

Graduates posed with their diploma cases at Woodside High School's graduation on June 4.



Magali Gauthier

Principal Diane Burbank bumps elbows with a graduate at Woodside High School's ceremony on June 4.

the school's head. (The district is still searching for her replacement.)

"I'm not calling you the COVID class because you're more than that," she told the class of 2021. "You're more than just a commemorative postage stamp for the pandemic."

She ended her speech with a

final "Go Wildcats!" in honor of the school's mascot.

The class graduated more than 30 valedictorians, who are students with a cumulative, weighted grade-point average of 4.1 or greater.

There were 420 candidates for graduation in the Class of 2021, according to the school. ■

MENLO-ATHERTON

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fence. The ceremony was also livestreamed on YouTube. They encouraged students to continue to embrace the chaos and the unknown in their speech

"Chaos and Entropy."

The event was emceed by seniors Fiona Fulton-Moskowitz and Katherine McDonnell, who peppered their comments with bear puns in reference to the school's mascot.

Other senior speakers were

Nohelia Morales on "One Dream Accomplished" and Alejandro Garcia Hurtado on "Live By Your Own Rules."

The student concert band and orchestra, under the direction of Kent Kurrus, played "America the Beautiful," "Pomp

and Circumstance" and "Everything's Coming Up Roses."

The Menlo-Atherton Choirs sang the national anthem. Later in the ceremony, the choir sang "A Million Dreams." The school set up photo booths around the campus for graduates to pose

together after the ceremony.

This was Principal Simone Rick-Kennel's last commencement before she moves on to a Sequoia Union High School District position in July. She called M-A her second home of 19 years.

She described the last 14 months as both "historical and momentous" in ways that have defined and challenged the community.

"As we have a lot to face and a lot to heal, embrace humanity as you pursue your future work," she said. "You may prevent the next disease. Educate children, work in healthcare, protect the earth, start a company, run for office. You might create art and fight for social justice."

There were 515 graduation candidates this year, according to the school. ■



Magali Gauthier

A Menlo-Atherton graduate is all smiles after crossing the stage at the June 3 commencement ceremony in Atherton.



Magali Gauthier

A Menlo-Atherton graduate gets a hug as she walks onto Coach Parks Field at the start of the graduation ceremony on June 3.

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

SUMMER 2021 Class Guide

In-person classes are back in time for summer

As COVID-19 health restrictions loosen, many in-person classes are back in session. Children once again can see their friends at summer camp, and dance classes don't have to be taken in seclusion at home. Students — young and old — can now come back to campus classrooms to enjoy the pleasures of learning a new language, or any other skill, alongside others. And for those who may not want to come back just yet, there are still plenty of online options. Check the listings and details below to find out what's available.

The Class Guide is published quarterly by the Palo Alto Weekly, The Almanac and the Mountain View Voice.

DANCE

Captivating Dance by Nona

1923 Menalto Ave., Menlo Park
650-980-8555 / captivatedance-bynona.com

Captivating Dance by Nona instructs youth of various ages and abilities in ballet, tap, jazz, lyrical, hip hop and other styles and skills. Classes are in-person or virtual. Registration for in-person camp is now open.

Dance Expressions

701 Laurel St., Menlo Park
650-450-3209 / danceexpressions5678.com / DanceExpression-MP@gmail.com

Dance instruction for students ages 3 and up, focusing on jazz technique at various experience and skill levels. Contact the studio for latest class schedule.

SPORTS & FITNESS

Menlo Swim & Sport

Burgess Pool, 501 Laurel St., Menlo Park / Belle Haven Pool, 100 Terminal Ave., Menlo Park
customerservice@menloswim.com / menloswim.com

Youth, adult and community programs at Burgess and Belle Haven pools, including year-round swim lessons, youth swim teams, masters swimming, water polo and water exercise, as well as other sports programs. Registration for summer camp is open.

One Heart Yoga

Little House Activity Center, Fitness Room, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park
415-494-7021 / oneheartyyoga.com

Weekly classes in Kundalini yoga and meditation, aimed at helping students increase flexibility and strength, learn breathing techniques to calm and focus and reduce anxiety and depression. The studio offers classes via Zoom. View schedules and register for classes online.

Isola Riding Academy

3639 Alpine Road, Portola Valley
805-857-5464 / isolastables.com

Hands-on programs teaching riders to groom their horses, tack and provide riding instruction depending on individual riding level. Both private and small group lessons are offered.

Menlo Park Tennis

Nealon Park Tennis Courts, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park
650-814-6734 / menloparktennis.com

Tennis classes for adults and children ages 5 and up and at all levels. Lessons include tips, strategy, drills and entertaining games. Check the website or call for information on the summer training schedule.

Spring Down Equestrian Center

725 Portola Road, Portola Valley
650-851-1114 / springdown.com / sdecenter@aol.com

Spring Down Equestrian Center educates children (beginning at age 3) and adults on horses and horseback riding. Instruction in basic riding, jumping, dressage, western riding and horsemanship is offered. Classes and camps held year-round. Registration for summer horsemanship camp is open.

Webb Ranch Riding School

2720 Alpine Road, Portola Valley
650-854-7755 / webbranchinc.com / lessons@webbranchinc.com

Instruction for beginning and intermediate riders in both group and private settings. Specialties include Western riding, dressage and hunt-seat riding. In addition, there are a number of weeklong camp sessions for children ages 7 to 18. Check online for available summer camp programs.

LANGUAGE

German-American School of Palo Alto

German-American International School campus, 475 Pope St., Menlo Park.

650-520-3646 / gaspa-ca.org

The German-American School of Palo Alto (GASPA) teaches immersive German language classes, which also cover culture and traditions, to students ages 2.5 to 18. No prior knowledge of German is required. Registration will open mid-summer. Check online or call for the latest updates.

Language Pacifica

1528 S. El Camino Real, San Mateo
650-321-1840 / languagepacificacom / esl@languagepacificacom

Language Pacifica teaches English to non-native speakers in both

full-time and part-time intensive courses. Classes are well-suited for Test of English as a Foreign Language exam preparation and learning English for business or personal enrichment. The school has currently shifted to a live virtual format via Zoom.

MUSIC, ARTS & CRAFTS

Music Together Menlo Park

75 Arbor Road, Suite N, Menlo Park
650-799-1624 / admin@mt-mp.com / mt-mp.com

Music Together holds classes exploring music and movement for children from birth up to age 5 and their guardians at the Allied Arts Guild. In-person and live online classes are available. Enrollment for 2021 summer is open. First session begins June 28.

Old World Designs

727 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park
650-321-3494 / info@oldworlddesigns.com / oldworlddesigns.com

In addition to stocking supplies and giving private lessons in stitching, Old World Designs organizes project classes and "stitch-ins." Year-round group and private lessons are available. Some events and private instruction will be in person. Contact the store for more information.

EDUCATION

Emerson School

2800 W. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto
650-424-1267 / emersonschool@headsup.org / emersonmontessori.com

Emerson School provides a year-round program for grades 1-8, teaching a personalized, Montessori curriculum. Lessons draw from classical subjects and other areas, including art, music, foreign language, physical education, communication, life skills and more. Classes are remote and in-person. Apply online.

HeadsUp! Child Development Center

2800 W. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto
650-424-1221 / kkostepen@headsup.org / emersonmontessori.com

HeadsUp! Child Development Center serves infants, toddlers and preschoolers (to age 6) with a full-day program, year-round. The Montessori curriculum focuses on building thinking skills and personal values. Classes are remote and in-person. Call or visit the website for more information.

Littlest Angels Preschool

1095 Cloud Ave., Menlo Park
650-854-4973 / preschool@bethanymp.org / bethany-mp.org/preschool
At the preschool, children ages 2 to

See **SUMMER CLASS GUIDE**, page 26



WRITE NOW!

2021 NOW ENROLLING

"The writer is an explorer."
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Summer Writing Camps

- Expository Writing** 7/12-7/16
- Creative Writing** 7/19-7/23
- Presentation Skills** 7/26-7/30

Grades: 2-8	Cost:
Hours: 10:00 AM — 4:00 PM Free extended care available	1 week: \$500 2 weeks: \$950 3 weeks: \$1,350



Emerson Montessori Schools



For applications and information: (650) 424-1267
EmersonMontessori.com/writenow



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Scan QR Code for Information on Summer Registration

Burlingame Campus Opening in August 2021!

815 El Camino Real, Menlo Park, CA 94025
650.321.0550 • lydianacademy.com

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**1bd/1ba Apt., 700 sqft
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or get a quote,
contact**

**Kevin Legarda
at 650.223.6597
or email
digitalads@
pawebkly.com.**



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED TOWN BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2021/2022

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing on the proposed Town Budget for Fiscal Year 2021/2022, Wednesday, June 23, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., via Zoom teleconference. To join the Zoom meeting, access the link provided on the June 23, 2021, Town Council agenda.

Comments may be submitted in writing prior to the Town Council meeting or presented at the meeting. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Town Council at the time and place herein above mentioned.

The Proposed Town Budget for fiscal year 2021/2022 is available for viewing on the Town website at www.portolavalley.net and by emailing the Town Clerk at shanlon@portolavalley.net net beginning 10 days prior to the meeting date above

The agenda and staff report will be published at <https://www.portolavalley.net/town-government/town-council/minutes-and-agendas> in advance of the meeting.

Dated: June 11, 2021

Sharon Hanlon, TownClerk



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY NOTICE OF TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, June 23, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom**, on the following:

ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY AMENDING SECTION 18.36.040 [ACCESSORY USES] OF CHAPTER 18.36 [USES PERMITTED IN ALL DISTRICTS] OF TITLE 18 [ZONING] OF THE PORTOLA VALLEY MUNICIPAL CODE AND A FINDING THAT THE ACTION IS EXEMPT UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA).

The Town Council will consider a recommendation made by the Planning Commission on June 2, 2021 regarding amendments to the Portola Valley Municipal Code related to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Proposed Municipal Code amendments include updates to be consistent with State law and associated items:

- State exemption ADUs allowed to exceed floor area and impervious surface, and other allowances
- State mandated ADU size, setbacks and height
- Incentives for ADUs that meet Town setbacks
- Updates to definitions
- Related updates for compliance

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

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

Publication Date: June 11, 2021

Sharon Hanlon, Town Clerk



SUMMER CLASS GUIDE

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5 follow a Christian curriculum that encourages creative, emotional, intellectual, physical and social development. Contact the school for the latest updates.

Lydian Academy

815 El Camino Real, Menlo Park
650-321-0550 / lydianacademy.com
Lydian Academy is a middle and high school offering individualized instruction to prepare students for college. Lessons include a mix of one-on-one teaching and group sessions. It also offers tutoring and after-school programs. In-person and online summer classes are available. Enrollment is ongoing.

Phillips Brooks School

2245 Avy Ave., Menlo Park
650-854-4545 ext. 137 / admission@phillipsbrooks.org
Phillips Brooks School is a coeducational day school teaching children in preschool through fifth grade and integrates social learning and individual instruction. In addition to core subjects, children can also study science, technology, music, art, library, physical education and Spanish. Instruction is on-campus and virtual. Registration for enrichment and day camps is open.

Sand Hill School

650 Clark Way, Palo Alto
650-688-3605 / info@sandhillschool.org
Located at the Children's Health Council, Sand Hill School teaches second through eighth-grade children with language-based learning differences and assists with attention and social difficulties. The school currently offers distance and hybrid learning formats. Learn more about the application process online.

Woodland School

360 La Cuesta Drive, Portola Valley
650-854-9065 / woodland-school.org
Woodland School is an innovative, project-based school for students in early childhood through eighth grade that gives individualized attention, develops leadership skills and emphasizes the values of caring, respect and community. In-person and distance learning options are available.

CAREER PREP

JobTrain

1200 O' Brien Drive, Menlo Park
650-330-6429 / info@jobtrainworks.org
JobTrain has a variety of training programs for adults — providing instruction in the culinary arts, business administration, health care, web technology, construction

Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

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)

A & A PAINTING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 287759

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

A & A Painting, located at 1327 Henderson Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
ALEJANDRO ARGUELLO
1327 Henderson Ave.
Menlo Park, CA 94025

This business is conducted by: An Individual.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on May 21, 2021.

(ALM June 11, 18, 25, July 2, 2021)

24 HR. LEGAL HELP
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 287734

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

24 Hr. Legal Help, located at 2811 Illinois St., East Palo Alto, CA 94303, San Mateo County; Mailing address: PO Box 51356, Palo Alto, CA 94303.

Registered owner(s):
TYRONE DAVIS
2811 Illinois St.

East Palo Alto, CA 94303
This business is conducted by: An Individual.

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

(ALM June 11, 18, 25, July 2, 2021)

Call Alicia Santillan at
650-223-6578 or email

asantillan@pawebkly.com for assistance with legal advertising.

and other fields — as well as programs specifically for youth, to help with GED preparation, job placement and vocational training. Classes are online. View currently available workshops on the website.

Sequoia District Adult School

3247 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park
650-306-8866 / seqsas.org
Sequoia District Adult Education holds classes in English as a second language and computer and business skills. Students can also earn a high school diploma or GED certificate. Counselors are available to help students transition to college programs. Classes are virtual. Registration is open.

SENIORS

Little House, Roslyn G. Morris Activity Center

800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park
650-272-5000 / penvol.org/littlehouse

Little House Activity Center offers classes for adults of all ages on various topics and activities, including health and wellness for seniors; fitness exercises like line dancing and Pilates; ceramics, drawing and other arts; languages; history and culture; and computer skills. Live virtual classes are available and open for registration.

ENRICHMENT

The Riekes Center for Human Enhancement

3455 Edison Way, Menlo Park
650-364-2509 / riekes.org

A nonprofit organization, the Riekes Center provides a number of programs focused on self-enhancement for youth and adults: strength and speed fitness courses, adaptive sports, a class for musical bands, photography workshops and nature exploration, among other opportunities. In-person programs are available and enrollment for summer camp is open.

BUSINESS & TECH

Career Generations

2225 E. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto
650-320-1639 / info@careergenerations.com

CareerGenerations offers group workshops and programs to meet the career needs of a variety of individuals, including college students looking for internships, graduates looking for employment and those re-entering the market.

The Class Guide is published quarterly in the Almanac. Descriptions of classes offered in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside are free, subject to editing and given priority.

To inquire about submitting a listing for the next Class Guide, email Editorial Assistant Lloyd Lee at llee@pawebkly.com or call 650-223-6526. To place a paid advertisement in the Class Guide, call the display advertising department at 650-326-8210.

How California can create a more equitable food system

By Robert Rivas and
Andy Naja-Riese

GUEST OPINION

Adrian Mondragan is a second-generation small-scale organic farmer on the Central Coast, working amid some of the largest growers in the state. He grew up in a low-income Hispanic farming family, and proudly launched his Watsonville-based farm, Urban Organics, in 2009. He grows a variety of organic berries, vegetables and leafy greens on 22 leased acres, including a new parcel at the Watsonville Municipal Airport. Mondragan sells his produce at eight certified farmers markets across the San Francisco Bay Area, where he has built lasting customer relationships.

Mondragan's biggest challenge is limited access to capital, a need that became even more acute during the COVID-19 pandemic. Large farms receive millions of dollars in federal COVID relief funding, but as a small producer, he has not received the support he desperately needs. Mondragan continues to struggle to recover from the lost months of income he experienced when he paused

operations during the peak of the pandemic.

California's food and farming system was tested in unprecedented ways this past year, with the overlap of the pandemic, climate change, and systemic inequities disproportionately affecting small farmers like Mondragan. The pandemic exposed the multitude of risks faced by the people who grow our food and the nutrition insecurity that left millions of Californians — particularly in communities of color and tribal communities — unable to access the nourishment they need. Meanwhile, rigid supply chains were disrupted, and smaller scale farmers had no safety net to get them through the difficult year.

Now that these vulnerabilities have been laid bare, we must take action to reverse their effect with solutions that build resilience into our food system to withstand future crises.

California can kickstart this much needed recovery now. In his May budget proposal, Gov. Gavin Newsom affirmed the

need for significant investments in a healthier and more equitable food system. The governor's proposal is complemented by a \$780 million food and farming budget request championed by a bipartisan, bicameral group of 16 legislators. The spending plan would fund long overdue food system infrastructure projects that shorten the distance from farm to table, protect farmworkers, help farmers transition to more organic agricultural and climate resilient practices, create and restore jobs, and bring healthy, local food to many more people.

Assembly Bill 125, a bond proposal that has bipartisan support in the Legislature and enthusiasm from more than 160 groups, also would invest around \$3 billion during five years in food system infrastructure projects, workforce training and the technical assistance needed for these projects to succeed. If it is approved by the

Legislature and the governor, then it will go before voters next year.

Ready and novel projects benefit low-income communities and tribes, and support farmers and ranchers who have historically been left out of publicly funded agriculture programs. They will be a crucial step to address historic discrimination patterns in our food system, prioritize climate resilience and encourage sustainable agriculture.

The additional resources proposed by Gov. Newsom, as well as the complementary investments in the budget spending plan, could be a game changer for Mondragan and other small-scale farmers. They would help Mondragan recover from economic stress and provide seed funding for his visionary projects to sell more of the delicious food he grows in his own community. First up is a new on-farm produce market in Watsonville, followed by a

community farm at his daughter's school.

Thankfully, our state's short-term economic forecast is encouraging, and California is fortunate to have a budget surplus. The proposed \$780 million investment will be a down payment for California's 21st century food and farming system.

We urge the Governor and the Legislature to approve comprehensive funding to ensure a climate-smart, healthy, and more equitable food and farming system for all.

Assembly Member Robert Rivas is a Democrat from Hollister. Andy Naja-Riese is CEO of the Agricultural Institute of Marin, a Bay Area nonprofit. This piece was first published by CalMatters, a nonpartisan, nonprofit journalism venture that works with media partners throughout the state, including The Almanac.

What's on your mind?

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

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

Letters should be no longer than 300 words.

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

Food reporting you won't find anywhere else.



Menlo Park Monthly Market Report

May 1, 2021 - May 31, 2021

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TOP 10 SALES*	
1. \$10,000,000	23 Sunset Lane
2. \$7,550,000	1325 Garden Lane
3. \$7,400,000	980 Wallace Drive
4. \$7,100,000	601 Menlo Oaks Drive
5. \$6,050,000	5 Zachary Court
6. \$5,400,000	765 Hobart Street
7. \$5,000,000	1799 Stanford Avenue
8. \$4,850,000	1250 Hermosa Way
9. \$4,420,000	180 Hanna Way
10. \$4,400,000	3122 Barney Avenue

ACTIVE LISTING

May: 62
Apr: 68
-9%

PENDING LISTING

May: 57
Apr: 70
-19%

SOLD LISTING

May: 60
Apr: 51
18%

AVERAGE SALES PRICE

May: \$3,338,155
Apr: \$3,044,781
10%

AVERAGE SOLD DAYS ON MARKET

May: 15
Apr: 16
-6%

SALE/LIST PRICE

May: 105.20%
Apr: 104.30%
1%

AVERAGE SALES PRICE/SQ Ft

May: \$1,513
Apr: \$1,366
11%

MONTHS OF INVENTORY

May: 1.00
Apr: 1.20
-17%

30 YEAR MORTGAGE RATE

4/28/2021 3.20% 5/26/2021 3.16%
-1%

*Source: MLS Listings for Single Family Properties | Townhomes | Condos

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Out of this world: Pace makes space for painter's cosmic landscapes

'Damian Loeb: Wishful Thinking' is on view in Palo Alto through July 2

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

The current exhibition at Pace Gallery, "Damian Loeb: Wishful Thinking," is an elegant, austere installation of just eight paintings. As with previous shows, the art is presented without labels, artist statements or curator essays (checklists are available upon request and helpful staff is always on hand). This allows the viewer to really focus on the art, without worrying about the artist's biography or backstory. In the case of Loeb's meticulously painted, otherworldly landscapes, however, a bit of background can definitely enhance the experience.

The New York-based Loeb, who just joined the Pace Gallery roster, is a self-taught painter whose work is informed by photography, cinematography and the appropriation of images found in such far-flung places as aerial photographs and the Hubble Space Telescope.

"Pace Palo Alto is thrilled to show Damian's inaugural exhibition with the gallery," Pace President Elizabeth Sullivan said. "The moment I saw his paintings in his studio I knew it would be amazing to show them in our space."

Loeb devoted his pandemic isolation to creating these paintings which, at first glance, are impressively photorealistic depictions of the galaxy, planets and surfaces of the moon. Read the press release for the show, however, and we learn that these works "extend the genre of landscape painting to encompass new realms, translating the 19th-century Romantic ideals of the sublime into contemporary images of the universe."

Said Sullivan, "There is a beautiful rawness in his work that really comes through in this new series."

And so an interesting dichotomy is set up: the spacy, sci-fi-looking paintings (made even more cutting-edge by their completely smooth and glossy



Courtesy Adam Guy, Damian Loeb, Pace Gallery and Acquavella Galleries

Damien Loeb.

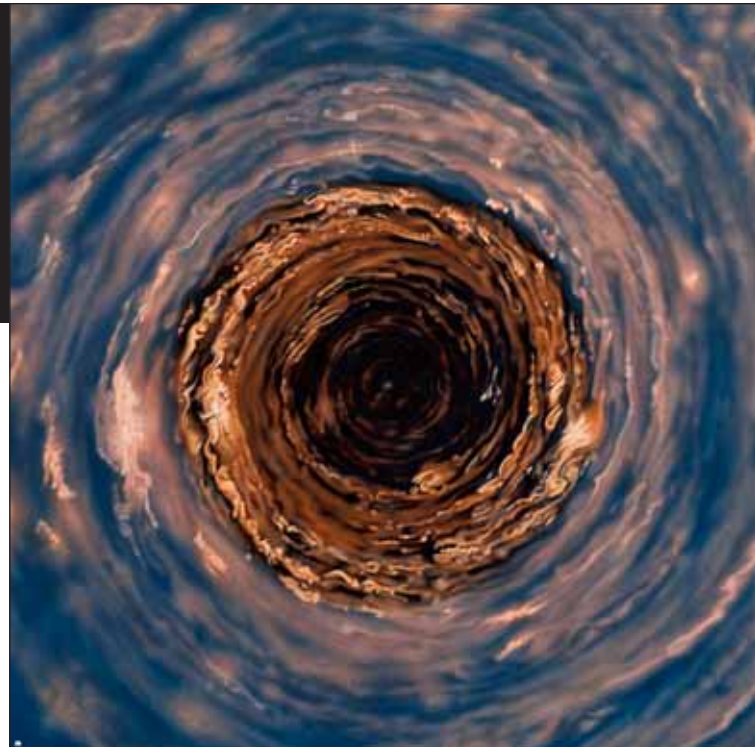
surfaces) have reference points to the Baroque age. If it has been a while since your last art-history survey course, Baroque refers to art of the 17th and 18th centuries that is hallmarked by dynamism, elaborate ornamentation and a penchant for the theatrical.

The titles of Loeb's paintings refer to Peter Paul Rubens, Tintoretto and Jean-Léon Gérôme, paying homage to these masters of history and landscape painting. But instead of mythological subjects or religious scenes of high drama and intensity, Loeb calls attention to the distant and unknowable. In "Consequences of War (After Rubens)," a planet (perhaps Earth) holds center stage against a black background of infinity but only half of the orb is in light. Has the dark side been obliterated? In "Romulus and Remus (After Rubens)," two planets abut one another so closely we wonder if they peacefully coexist or are on a path of collision and destruction. The dramatic rendition of the martyrdom of St. Paul by Tintoretto is the inspiration for a painting of the same name that consists of a whirling vortex, illuminated on the outer edge but dark and foreboding in the center.

In a way, both Loeb and the Baroque painters have a similar mission: to inspire humanity to a higher spiritual vision. In "Pygmalion and Galatea (After

Jean-Léon Gérôme)," a large orb floats in the universe, dwarfing a smaller planet in the lower right. Both exist in complete and utter blackness. The reference is to the Greek myth (popularized in contemporary drama by "My Fair Lady") that tells the tale of the sculptor Pygmalion, who kisses his statue Galatea, whereupon she is transformed into flesh. This also references back to the "Wishful Thinking" title of the overall exhibition — the "desire of a certain reality rather than what exists," as the press release puts it.

In the rear room of the gallery, visitors will discover a triptych inspired by the 2017 solar eclipse. Loeb went to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in order to get a premium view of this much-celebrated celestial event. The three paintings depict various phases of the moon obscuring the light of the sun. Loeb's title for these works, "All Hope is Lost," perhaps refers to a historical perspective of such phenomena, when uninformed



Courtesy Damian Loeb, Pace Gallery and Acquavella Galleries

Pace Gallery is currently exhibiting "Damian Loeb: Wishful Thinking," which includes "The Martyrdom of St Paul (after Tintoretto)."

earthlings were convinced that the world was coming to an end.

Perhaps many artists are emerging from the pandemic year with new work that reflects a deeper introspection around what is truly important and of value. The opportunity to ponder one's place in the infinite — as well as see Loeb's deft handling of the medium of painting (not unlike the old masters he references) — is worth the visit to Pace. It's a chance to see museum-quality, cutting-edge

art by a notable artist without leaving our own small universe.

"Damian Loeb: Wishful Thinking" is on view until July 2. Pace Gallery is located at 229 Hamilton Ave. in Palo Alto. Advance appointments are required and can be reserved online (for up to two people per visit). More information is available at pacegallery.com. ■

*Email Contributing Writer
Sheryl Nonnenberg at
nonnenberg@aol.com.*



Courtesy Pace Gallery

Works in the installation "Damian Loeb: Wishful Thinking" by artist Damian Loeb at Pace Gallery on view from May 19 to July 2.



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Food & Drink

Cheez(steak) whiz

A Philly native guides you through the Peninsula cheesesteak scene

Story and photos by Zack Fernandes

When I left Philadelphia six years ago, my first order of business on the Peninsula was to find proxies for each of the dining establishments I knew I would miss the most from the city I had called home. One by one, I found worthwhile facsimiles of all of my regular haunts in Philly: I found my new dive bar, my new wine bar, my new taqueria and even the closest thing I could find to a 24-hour East Coast diner.

But as a new Peninsula resident, my most intense craving was also the hardest to satisfy: a good Philly cheesesteak. Luckily for me (and other homesick East Coast transplants) a red-eye flight to Philadelphia International Airport is not entirely necessary when you crave the warm embrace of beef and cheese, because it turns out the Peninsula has plenty of great local cheesesteak options.

A brief history of the Philly cheesesteak

In 1930, in South Philadelphia, just outside the Italian Market, a street vendor with a hot dog stand grew bored of his regular menu and made himself a sandwich for lunch. As the story goes, a taxi driver and frequent customer saw the new creation, and asked for one too: a pile of grilled, chopped beef topped with onions, and packed into a lightly crusted, fluffy Italian roll. Neither the taxi driver nor the street vendor realized that they were witnessing the birth of a Philadelphia icon more beloved than Rocky Balboa and the Liberty Bell combined.

The street vendor, Pat Oliveri, and his brother Harry went on to found Pat's King of Steaks, upgrading from a stand to a full restaurant (in the same location) three years later, and laying claim to the title of Philadelphia's original cheesesteak. But are they the

best? That question has inspired hours of contentious debate from Philadelphia residents over the years, and Philadelphians even have their own litmus test to quickly establish credibility when meeting for the first time: "Pat's or Geno's?" — in reference to Pat's main competitor, Geno's Steaks, which opened in 1966 right across the street. In defiance of the competition, this punny Pat's slogan is emblazoned on their butcher paper, website and full-length bus ads: "Don't eat a mistake."

What makes a steak sandwich a Philly cheesesteak?

Everyone agrees a Philly cheesesteak needs three things: beef, cheese and a roll to put the beef and cheese on. From there, disagreements abound from how the beef should be cooked (sliced in thin strips, or chopped as it cooks on a griddle) to permissible toppings (requests for anything other than grilled onions will be met with scorn from purists).

Even with just three required ingredients, a multitude of permutations exist. For the choice of beef, ribeye is the most traditional, though some shops choose to use top round. Kraft Cheez Whiz, white American cheese and provolone (which Pat's owners claim was the first cheese to be placed on one of their steak sandwiches) are the most popular cheese options, though we shouldn't forget about the time John Kerry provoked the ire of Philadelphians by ordering a cheesesteak with Swiss cheese.

Then there's the bread, where even the most ornery Philadelphians find common ground on the type of roll, if not on which baker makes the best ones: any Italian roll, wider than a baguette, with a dense interior crumb capable of standing up to the sandwich's juices and a crust that yields under the pressure of your soft palate.

Here on the Peninsula, some restaurants pledge authenticity to the cheesesteak by importing their rolls from the East Coast and sticking with a tried-and-true formula, while others break from tradition and serve interpretations of the classic sandwich that are delicious in their own right. The next time you get a hankering, grab a Yuengling beer, put on "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia"

and try one of these local Philly cheesesteaks.

For the sophisticated palate: Wiz wit at The Refuge

When The Refuge opened in San Carlos eight years ago, it was meant to be an outpost for the type of great pastrami you could usually only find at delis on the East Coast. But beyond the sublime smoked meat, co-owner Matt Levin also wanted to serve the cheesesteaks he remembered eating while living just outside of Philadelphia.

The Refuge uses ribeye for its cheesesteaks, which is cut into cubes and mixed before forming it into slabs to be sliced and cooked on a flat-top griddle. Levin says that cubing and shaping the beef before slicing lends the best texture once the beef is cooked. "When it hits the flat top, it falls apart all by itself," he said, adding that, "you're not going to get any chewy pieces, and you shouldn't get any gristle."

Unsatisfied with the rolls sold by local distributors, Levin turned to Liscio's Bakery in New Jersey to supply The Refuge. The Italian rolls are shipped par-baked, and finished fresh daily at the restaurant.

The Refuge's cheesiest option is called the "Wiz Wit," which is Philadelphia shorthand for a cheesesteak with grilled onions and Cheez Whiz. But at The Refuge, the sandwich's velvety cheese is closer to a Mornay sauce than Whiz, made with a base of béchamel and "gang loads" of cheddar, according to Levin.

The Refuge: 963 Laurel St., San Carlos; 650-598-9813 and 1143 Crane St., Menlo Park; 650-319-8197.

For the Cheez Whiz lover: East Coaster at St. John's Bar & Grill

St. John's in Sunnyvale is best known for their barbecue, which you're likely to smell smoking gently on the grill as you walk up to the entrance, but the restaurant also devotes an entire section of its menu to the cheesesteak.

Though there are many cheesesteak options, including cajun and hickory seasoned sandwiches, St. John's offers the most classic of Philly cheesesteaks, which is dubbed the East Coaster. Featuring thinly sliced ribeye, onions



The Wiz Wit is the cheesiest option at The Refuge, which has locations in Menlo Park and San Carlos.

grilled almost to the point of caramelization and a generous helping of Cheez Whiz, the only way the East Coaster cheesesteak could be more East Coast is if they swapped the bag of Lay's Classics served with each sandwich for Utz potato chips.

St. John's Bar & Grill: 510 Lawrence Expressway, Ste.110, Sunnyvale; 408-738-8515.

For the homesick: The Cheese Steak Shop

If the logo featuring the Liberty Bell doesn't make you feel like you're in Philadelphia, perhaps the Amoroso rolls will; The Cheese Steak Shop uses the ubiquitous Italian rolls from Philadelphia for all its sandwiches. To the soft roll, they add sliced sirloin steak and gooey white American cheese. If you're feeling hungry, opt for "The King of Philly," which comes with an extra half-serving of steak and cheese.

It's not just the Amoroso rolls

that are sourced from Philadelphia — which the shop also sells for use at home. The Cheese Steak Shop sells Tastykakes, the famed Philadelphia baked goods found in every supermarket, pharmacy, hoagie shop and Wawa or Sheetz convenience store in the state of Pennsylvania. Grab a Butterscotch Krimpet with your next sandwich for the full Philly experience.

The Cheese Steak Shop: 832 W. El Camino Real, Sunnyvale; 408-530-8159.

For a crowd: Amato's 24-inch cheesesteak

Bill Dill and his wife Leda Amato Dill opened Amato's first location on Saratoga Avenue in San Jose in 1997 because they "couldn't find a good cheesesteak" in the Bay Area, according to Dill. The couple had just moved from Pennsauken, New Jersey, and sold their house to be able to afford to open Amato's.

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When a friend and I arrived for lunch and ordered one of Amato's 24-inch cheesesteaks to share, the cashier only had one question, and it wasn't about what toppings I wanted. "Do you know how big that is?" she asked. It was a good idea to check, as Amato's uses a whopping 2 pounds of Harris Ranch top round beef (sliced in-house) in the 24-inch cheesesteaks. The gargantuan sandwich, topped with white American cheese and grilled onions, was enough food to leave leftovers for both me and my dining companion, though Amato's Facebook page and Instagram feed show the smiling faces of a brave few who have completed the "Amato's Challenge" by eating the entire sandwich in a single sitting.

If you're not much of a competitive eater, try the "Shorty," a diminutive 7-inch sandwich in comparison, though still a full meal with 8 ounces of beef in it. Despite Dill's South Jersey roots, he's not a fan of provolone on his sandwiches, so order one as he'd have it — with white American cheese and grilled onions.

Amato's: 1162 Saratoga Ave., San Jose; 408-246-4007.

For the spice lover: Philly Bistec at Cuban Kitchen

When Lynna Martinez opened Cuban Kitchen in San Mateo

with the help of her daughter Lilah Arrazcaeta, they wanted to include a nod to the East Coast in the form of a cheesesteak crossed with a Cuban sandwich (which the restaurant specializes in). The restaurant's East Coast roots run deep, as Martinez operated a food truck, QBA (pronounced Cuba, but also an acronym for Quick But Authentic) in the northern New Jersey and New York City area before relocating to the Bay Area.

Though spiritually a cheesesteak, the Philly bistec more closely aligns with its Cuban cousins on the menu, featuring the same Cuban bread, house-made sweet and spicy habanero pickles and Swiss cheese used on the restaurant's other sandwiches. Even the preparation of the beef embraces a degree of Cuban influence, with sirloin steak marinated and then seasoned with a "proprietary" blend of spices before cooking, according to the restaurant. The sandwich is served with Cuban Kitchen's Guantanamo sauce, a mayo-based aioli.

Cuban Kitchen: 3799 S. El Camino Real, San Mateo; 650-627-4636.

For the antagonist: The Gem at Hidden Spot

The aptly named Hidden Spot, tucked away in the Hometown

Heroes sports bar in South San Francisco, is offering up what is decidedly the most gourmet take on the humble cheesesteak to grace this list.

The Gem features Angus steak, chopped on a flat-top with mushrooms, grilled onions and both provolone and Muenster cheeses. The restaurant offers optional toppings of lettuce, tomatoes, pickles, banana peppers, red onions and jalapeños, though the sandwich is rich and deeply flavorful without all of those things, featuring plenty of umami from the well-integrated beef, mushrooms and cheese.

Hidden Spot also offers a choice of bread, with diners able to choose between a French, sourdough or Dutch crunch roll. Though the French roll may be closest to the Italian rolls used in Philadelphia, the jagged and craggy veneer of the Dutch crunch roll's exterior is a worthy textural contender to the soft and unctuous beef and cheese mixture.

Hidden Spot: 303 Grand Ave., South San Francisco; 650-872-4484.

It's not a cheesesteak, but...: Cheesesteak spring rolls at Town

Although this list began as a transplant's search for an authentic Philadelphia experience,



San Jose's Amato's 24-inch cheesesteak (pictured cut into four smaller sandwiches) features two pounds of Harris Ranch top round beef, grilled onions and white American cheese.

sandwiches on this list like the Gem and the Philly Bistec have taught me to keep an open mind. In trying to fanatically preserve the rigid definitions of our favorite foods, it's easy to miss out on some startling (and delicious) innovation — like the Philly cheesesteak spring rolls at Town.

Though almost always consumed as an entrée the Philly cheesesteak has all the hallmarks of a great appetizer: cheesy, salty and juicy enough to stand up to a deep fryer.

At Town in San Carlos, they

take little bites of steak, American cheese, provolone and onions encased in a spring roll wrapper and deep fry them until perfectly crunchy. Served with horseradish sauce and a spicy ketchup on the side, the spring rolls are just as good eaten plain, preferably piping hot, while the cheese is still gooey and runny.

Town: 716 Laurel St., San Carlos; 650-595-3003. ■

Email Freelance Writer Zack Fernandes at hello@zackfernandes.com.

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ATHERTON



43 TUSCALOOSA AVENUE, ATHERTON Built in 2016 by renowned builder, Pacific Peninsula Group

Three level main home with 6 bedrooms, 6 full and 2 half baths | 1 bed, 1 bath Guest House with full kitchen

Library/Office with built-in cabinetry and French door to side terrace | Customized office/learning center off family room

Lower level has a recreation room, full bar, upgraded wine cellar, theatre, fitness center and frameless glass opening to patio

Over one acre professional landscaped grounds includes pool, spa, fireplace terrace, barbecue terrace and vast synthetic lawn

Three car garage with 2 Tesla chargers indoors and 1 outdoor | Whole-home water filtration system

Convenient location close to Sand Hill Road venture capital centers, all of Silicon Valley and Stanford University

www.43Tuscaloosa.com

COMPASS



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