

The Almanac

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‘We are not done’: Local leaders want schools to mandate vaccines for employees

Call to action comes as students prepare to go back to class while COVID cases remain on the rise

By Lloyd Lee

State Sen. Josh Becker and East Palo Alto City Council member Antonio López called on school districts to mandate vaccines for its employees during a joint press conference hosted at the Ravenswood Family Health Center on Tuesday.

“As we prepare to send our kids back to school, as my wife and I prepare to send our kids back to our public schools, now is the moment for us to create a wall of safety around our kids,” Becker, D-Menlo Park, said during the morning event in East Palo Alto.

This academic year, most students are expected to return to the classroom, a move that local, state and federal health officials have urged given the learning loss as well as other health and economic burdens that come with distance learning.

But the urgency to get back inside the classroom also comes

as COVID-19 cases are once again on the rise, particularly due to the more infectious delta variant. Eight Bay Area county health officers reinstated mask mandates in indoor settings effective Tuesday, Aug. 3.

All the while, children under 12 years old are still not cleared to receive any of the available vaccines, leaving them vulnerable to the virus.

During the news conference, Becker suggested schools should aim to get 100% of their staff inoculated.

“Even if 80%, 90% of teachers and staff are vaccinated, what if your kid is interacting with the other 10% to 20%?” Becker said. “So let’s put our kids first.”

The senator also added that he has recently heard of several COVID-19 outbreaks in schools, including at Brentwood Union School District in Contra Costa County.

California and Santa Clara

See **SCHOOL EMPLOYEES**, page 16



Lloyd Lee

Antonio López, an East Palo Alto City Council member, urges school district employees to get vaccinated against COVID-19 at a press conference at the Ravenswood Family Health Center on Aug. 3.

Menlo Park’s child care program director survives COVID-19 after more than two months in hospital

By Kate Bradshaw

Natalya Jones doesn’t remember a lot about her COVID-19 experience.

The woman who for many years has overseen the Menlo Children’s Center and the Belle Haven Child Development Center as director of Menlo Park’s child care programs was hospitalized with a severe case of COVID-19 for nearly two and a half months, from April 25 to July 6.

She’d just come back from Mexico and felt fine, but she got tested as a just-in-case measure,

she said in an interview.

“Everybody’s tests came back negative except for mine,” she said.

She was feeling fine and checked in with her doctor. Later, she began to cough.

She said her daughter Brooklyn, who also works at the Menlo Children’s Center, took her to the Kaiser hospital in Antioch in the middle of the night after she became kind of delirious, speaking but not making sense.

“That’s all I remember,” Jones said.

She woke up a month later at a hospital in Santa Clara.

Jones is still piecing together what happened to her while she was hospitalized, but once she did wake up, she said, her recovery seemed to progress remarkably quickly.

“From what I hear from the nurses, there were many people in my same situation that didn’t make it,” she said. “They expected me to go from the hospital to have to go either (to) a nursing home or a rehab facility, and I was able to come home.”

She said she’s still on oxygen support and relies on her family to help her with basic household activities, like cooking meals

and using the stairs in their home in Brentwood.

While her family moved to Brentwood in the East Bay about seven years ago, Jones said she was raised in East Palo Alto and spent much of her youth in Menlo Park.

Right now, she’s working on occupational and physical therapy and trying to be patient with her body while it recovers. The experience has made her look at life differently and value the people in her life more, she said.

“Now that I’m home, I know I’m getting stronger each day,” she said. “It’s a very, very slow

process.”

Daughter Brooklyn said the experience was “definitely scary.”

“When she was in the hospital, I had to step up to pay bills and figure out all that,” she said.

The family is receiving disability benefits, but Brooklyn has since returned to work to help with expenses, even while she’s had to help her mom coordinate doctor’s appointments.

Battling vaccine hesitancy

Before contracting COVID-19,

See **NATALYA JONES**, page 17

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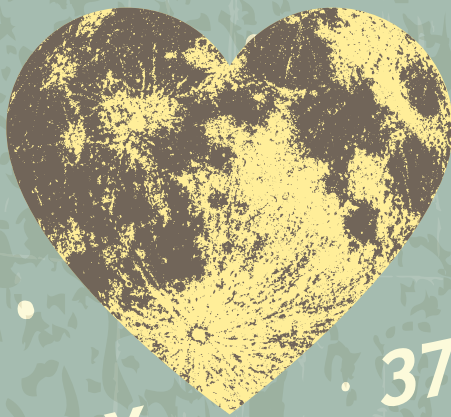


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Local News

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Magali Gauthier

Libraries, fitness clubs, restaurants and other public indoor spaces, including office buildings, are subject to a new mask mandate that took effect Aug. 3 in seven Bay Area counties, including San Mateo.

Indoor mask mandates are back in Bay Area as COVID cases surge

By Kevin Forestieri

Seven Bay Area counties announced Monday that residents will be required to wear masks in nearly all indoor settings, marking the first major step in reversing a statewide rollback of public health restrictions in June.

The mask mandate, which began on Tuesday, Aug. 3, comes as COVID-19 cases spike across the Bay Area, with some of the highest case rates since February of this year.

Public health officials said at an Aug. 2 press conference that the delta variant of the virus is far more contagious and now accounts for the vast majority of new cases in the region, requiring protective measures to keep infection rates and COVID-19 hospitalizations under control.

"The delta variant is now the dominant variant in our area," said George Han, Santa Clara County's deputy public health officer. "And because it's more contagious, we need more

protection, and that comes in the form of masks as the easiest and best tools that we have."

All of the county public health orders are nearly identical, requiring vaccinated and unvaccinated residents alike to wear face coverings when indoors with people who aren't part of their households. In San Mateo County, the regulations include a short list of exceptions including work in closed rooms or

See **INDOOR MANDATE**, page 14

Portola Valley 'quieter' after gas-powered leaf blower ban

Atherton still considering options for reducing blower use in town

By Angela Swartz

Portola Valley has seemed noticeably quieter in the last half year. Councilman John Richards attributes the change to the town's ban on gasoline-powered leaf blowers, which took effect on Jan. 23.

That doesn't mean all residents, or their gardeners, have dumped their gas-powered leaf blowers. There have been 49 complaints (including repeat offenders) of people using

gas-powered leaf blowers as of July 8. The ban also applies to electric leaf blowers over 65 decibels. The code is flexible and there is no set fine for violations, said Town Manager Jeremy Dennis.

The town is well-staffed to manage violations, he said.

Some 40 people took advantage of the leaf blower trade-in program, which ran from January to June, in which residents could bring town officials their old gas-powered model and

receive 40% of the cost of the electric blower up to \$120. Portola Valley paid out about \$3,855 for the trade-in program, according to the town.

Portola Valley partnered with Remoov, a South San Francisco-based recycling/repurposing agency that recycles gas-powered leaf blowers.

"I know of several people in town who have stepped up to purchase electric blowers for

See **LEAF BLOWERS**, page 16

A year after protests, Menlo Park council launches talks on police reform

By Kate Bradshaw

After more than a year of national tumult over instances of racialized police violence and a subsequent renewed interest in police reform, the Menlo Park City Council began its own community conversations about policing July 29.

During the study session, the council agreed to create a subcommittee, made up of council members Cecilia Taylor and Jen Wolosin, to work with police Chief Dave Norris on an upcoming series of community conversations and assembling an advisory committee to explore changes to policing.

After the murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer last year, a protest was held June 1 near Menlo Park City Hall and was attended by Cecilia Taylor, the council member serving as mayor at the time, and then-police Chief Dave Bertini.

A couple of weeks later, during a June 18 City Council meeting to discuss police reform ideas and gather public input about the Menlo Park Police Department, Bertini abruptly announced his retirement. Public speakers at the meeting said they wanted changes in the police department: increased data and transparency, improved tracking of police stops, a halt to the city using Facebook funding

to pay for police services, and improved interactions with people of color, particularly Black residents.

Others suggested outsourcing the police services to the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office or launching a pilot program to permit community-based organizations to respond to some emergencies instead of police officers.

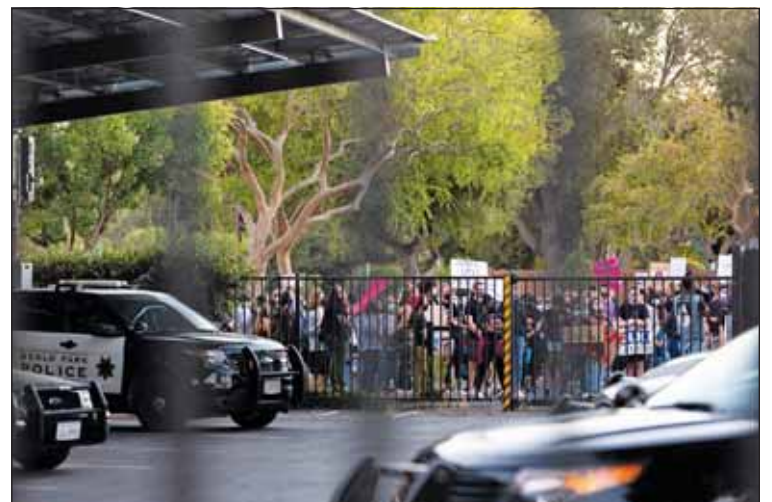
How council members responded

The City Council favored having a series of three interactive public discussions about various aspects of policing and creating an advisory committee or commission of community members and police officers to collect input on new policies or changes to the department. Vice Mayor Betsy Nash said she favored not including City Council members on the committee.

However, further details about the advisory committee's role and who it might answer to were not decided.

The Menlo Park Police Department has for years had an informal advisory group that provided input to the police chief about policing issues that affected residents, such as body-worn cameras and automatic license plate readers, but some council members expressed interest in having a different

See **POLICE REFORM**, page 17



Magali Gauthier

Black Lives Matter protesters assemble outside the Menlo Park Police Department on Sept. 25, 2020.

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Go from mountain top to beach along the epic Pacifica Grand Tour Loop

By Kate Bradshaw

If you're looking for an epic foot-powered Peninsula adventure, venture no farther than the route I'm calling the Pacifica Grand Tour. I didn't invent it — I found it through the trail website and app AllTrails — but am evangelizing the heck out of it because it's stunning.

It's a massive day hike or a gutsy trail run at about 14 miles and 2,900 feet of elevation change, but if you're up to make a day out of it, it's got a little bit of everything: windswept ocean vistas, fresh eucalyptus groves, a stone labyrinth, historic points involving Cold War missiles and colonial explorations, beaches, opportunities to pick up lunch, snacks or some reading materials along the way, and some serious cardio climbs. Plus, it's all dog-friendly.

It'll make you fall in love with Pacifica if you're not already. And the best part is, you don't have to deal with weekend Coastside traffic to access it.

Go to is.gd/pacificagrand-tour to see the route map on AllTrails.

The starting point for the route is at the entrance to the Sweeney Ridge Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Bruno.

There's a small parking lot at a dead end on Sneath Lane and you can find somewhere nearby to park, even on busy days, if you're willing to walk a short distance.

Start by walking through the gate at the Sneath Lane Trailhead onto the Golden Gate National Recreation Area property, where you'll head uphill on a paved road for the first 2 miles or so.

You'll get great views of Crystal Springs Reservoir and the fresh scent of eucalyptus trees, but brace for fairly little shade, here and along most of the hike. Once you make it up to the upper part of Sweeney Ridge, you'll see some pit toilets signaling you're at the top. Turn right to start what will be about a 10-mile loop.

As you continue on the Sweeney Ridge Trail, you'll come to some concrete platforms that until 2019 were home to an abandoned Nike missile site. During the 1950s and 60s, these



Gennady Sheyner

The author jogs along a section of the Pacifica Grand Tour loop trail along Milagra Ridge.

Nike anti-aircraft missiles were set up around the U.S. to combat long-range Soviet bombers during the Cold War, and included 11 sites throughout the Bay Area, according to the National Parks Service. There was a control station atop Sweeney Ridge and a missile launching site at Milagra Ridge. The site at Sweeney Ridge was abandoned by 1974 under the provisions of an arms-reduction treaty, the service noted.

From the Sweeney Ridge Trail you'll stay to the right onto the Notch Trail.

There's an easy-to-miss left turn around the 3.5-mile mark as you go toward the backside of Skyline College until you hit the intersection of College Drive

and Sharp Park Road.

Cross College Drive and continue straight onto Milagra Road into Milagra Ridge. Take the Milagra Ridge Trail to the left onto the Milagra Overlook Trail. Before heading downhill, you may opt to bop up to Milagra Summit or reflect while walking in a spiral along a stone labyrinth overlooking the ocean. The trail will veer left as it curves down the hill toward Highway 1 and Oceana High School.

Follow the loop of Oceana Avenue downhill until it parallels Highway 1, and take it south until you hit Paloma Avenue. Then turn right. You'll

See **PACIFICA GRAND TOUR**, page 16

Leave them be or you'll be sorry

Rash-causing poison oak is abundant this time of year, county warns

By Kate Bradshaw

Poison oak is locally abundant this time of year, the San Mateo County Poison Control System warned in a recent announcement.

The dense shrub known for the oak-like shape of its three-leaflet clusters can trigger physiological symptoms among people who either come into direct contact with the plant or by touching pretty much anything — clothing, shoes, gloves, pets and tools — that has come into contact with the plant. It can have either glossy or dull leaves, and shrubs can range from 1 to 6 feet high.

People adventuring outside are advised to keep in mind the saying, "Leaves of three, let it be," as an easy way to identify and remember to avoid poison oak, the system stated.

The county's poison control system reports that people who are allergic to poison oak and

are exposed can experience an itchy rash and water blisters between one and six days after coming into contact with the leaves. (And most people are allergic to poison oak, reports the American Academy of Dermatology Association.)

Unfortunately, repeated exposure to poison oak can increase one's sensitivity to it, the county poison system reports.

To minimize the risk of a negative reaction to poison oak, people should first avoid exposure by wearing boots, gloves and long pants while hiking and stay on trails away from brush where poison oak grows, it advises.

Anyone exposed to poison oak should wash the area exposed thoroughly with lukewarm water and apply rubbing alcohol to help wash away the poison oak oil. They should also wash all clothing, tools and pets that have been exposed.

People who experience an



Kate Bradshaw

Poison oak is abundant along the Alpine Road bike and pedestrian path between Menlo Park and Portola Valley.

allergic reaction to poison oak should not scratch the rash, since that can cause infection, but use calamine lotion, hydrocortisone cream or antihistamines to help soothe the itching.

If you need help

Anyone who experiences trouble breathing or swallowing; experiences swelling, especially of the eyelids, face or genitals; has many blisters or has the rash covering much of their body should get immediate medical attention.

For any questions, people can

call poison control at 1-800-222-1222 and receive free and confidential information from trained pharmacists, nurses and other providers.

The service is available 24/7 and interpretive services are available. People can also get weekly safety tips by texting 20121 and writing "TIPS" to receive the tips in English or "PUNTOS" to receive them in Spanish. **A**

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

LifeMoves CEO's ambitious agenda: Build network of housing projects and end homelessness

By Kevin Forestieri

When Aubrey Merriman joined the nonprofit LifeMoves as its new CEO in April, he had to hit the ground running. In just three months, it was operating a homeless shelter in Half Moon Bay and shortly after opened up a 100-unit interim housing facility for the homeless in Mountain View in less than a year.

The work got the attention of state officials, with Gov. Gavin Newsom visiting Mountain View to praise LifeMoves and its new approach to housing the homeless.

In an interview, Merriman said he wants to keep the momentum going, laying out a path for Menlo Park-based LifeMoves to grow immensely in the coming years. His plan is a tenfold replication of the quick-turnaround housing project in Mountain View spread through the greater Bay Area, with an ultimate goal of solving the regional homeless crisis. It's going to require a surge in funding and political willpower on the part of local cities, he said, but it's no longer acceptable for Silicon Valley to have incredible wealth alongside abject poverty.

"How is it that in the richest area we can still have people who are plummeting into homelessness?" Merriman said. "We have CEOs who are building space-ships and self-driving cars, but we aren't finding a solution to end homelessness once and for all."

Merriman has spent most of his career in the nonprofit world, mostly in youth development. He served as CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of North San Mateo County, before that working in a leadership role with Special Olympics Northern California and Nevada. He said he always had an affinity for working with marginalized communities, and that the opportunity to help those grappling with housing affordability felt too important to walk away from.

LifeMoves was already growing pretty quickly when he was hired, with more than two dozen homeless housing sites in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. But new plans announced by Merriman in May call for something even more ambitious: A network of interim homeless housing projects throughout the region, each built from the ground up, with a total cost of around \$250 million. The plans hinge on replicating LifeMoves Mountain View, which was built



Magali Gauthier

Aubrey Merriman, CEO of LifeMoves, speaks at an event celebrating the opening of LifeMoves Mountain View, a 100-unit interim housing complex, on May 25.

in six months and cost \$25 million — a price tag that includes the cost of land and running the 100-unit facility.

The homes themselves are prefabricated, modular units that are arranged like Lego bricks on-site, making it much cheaper and quicker than traditional construction. Homeless residents are expected to stay for 90 to 120 days before landing a permanent place to live, making a critical step between being on the street and moving into an apartment.

Merriman said the Bay Area is not on pace to build enough traditional housing for all of its homeless residents, and that these interim housing projects can make a huge dent in the problem in a short amount of time. It provides those who are living in parking lots and in encampments a bed and a safe space, giving them a dignified place to live where they won't be hassled by law enforcement.

"While permanent housing is the ultimate long-term goal, it's expensive and takes years to build," he said. "We need to add capacity today. Our unhoused neighbors need to be brought indoors today. The streets can no longer be the waiting room."

In order to build out the network of homeless housing projects, Merriman said local city councils will have to keep an open mind and be willing to solve the problem locally rather than shift the problem to the next town over. His hope is that LifeMoves Mountain View will be an example for other cities, showing that interim housing can be woven into the community and blend right in, and can one day be viewed as a public resource not unlike a library or a post office.

As for the money to pay for

it, Merriman said he is openly leaning on corporate sponsorship and massive tech companies in the area to pitch in, and that he cannot harbor any shame or shyness around making the big financial ask.

"Far too often public benefit corporations try to dance around that, but the situation is too dire for me to speak in code," he said. "Silicon Valley has big hearts and big wallets."

While LifeMoves has traditionally operated in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties — it runs shelters for homeless families in Menlo Park, Redwood City, San Mateo, Daly City and San Jose — Merriman said the organization is looking at options across all nine Bay Area counties. Possible projects even farther away would likely need to be spearheaded by another organization, he said, but LifeMoves could still provide resources to get the ball rolling.

Homelessness has been a perennial problem in the region, and it's getting worse. The latest census from 2019 found that homelessness is surging in many Bay Area counties, and that the vast majority do not have access to a homeless shelter.

Despite the daunting task, Merriman stands by his goal of eliminating homelessness, and that LifeMoves has the road map to get there.

"Supportive interim housing solutions can visibly and dramatically impact the homelessness crisis in much the same ways as the pandemic impacted traffic," he said. "This is part of what fuels my optimism and conviction." ■

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

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Are Masks Required?

Dear Monica: My home is on the market now and I am still living there. May I insist all visitors wear masks? Jenny L.

Dear Jenny: Yes, you may set the mask and other Covid protocol rules that you want. Some companies have

already told employees not to come back to the office unless they can show proof that they are vaccinated. Most Bay Area counties have just mandated indoor mask use. This includes real estate open houses whether or not you are vaccinated.

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Woodside moves ballot measure election to November

The measure would allow outdoor community spaces to be added, reversing restrictive measures passed in the 1980s

By Angela Swartz

Woodside residents will have to wait an extra two months to vote on changing zoning to allow for more outdoor community gathering spaces. The special election, originally set for Sept. 7, has been moved to Nov. 2 because San Mateo County doesn't allow for elections immediately after a holiday (Labor Day).

Town Clerk Jennifer Li said the San Mateo County Elections Office caught the error prior to printing the ballots for the measure, which would change zoning regulations so a parking lot behind Buck's Restaurant on Woodside Road can be developed. The measure would also allow for a parcel of land next to the Woodside Community Museum to be developed into an outdoor amphitheater.

"The town needed to pick a new date and go through the process again," she said in an email. In June, the council

originally approved putting the measure on a ballot in September. On July 28, the council called a special election on Nov. 2, she said.

Current land use regulations limit two residentially zoned pieces of land adjacent to the Town Center, a town-owned complex along Woodside Road from Whiskey Hill Road to Roberts Market that includes government buildings and commercial businesses, and Cañada Corners at the Cañada Road intersection (owned by Roberts Market). To overturn these rules, established by ballot measures J and I in 1988 and 1989, respectively, residents must submit a petition to the town for a ballot measure to get voter approval.

The measure, which needs a simple majority in favor to pass, would allow the property behind Cañada Corners to be outfitted with surface parking to accommodate permanent outdoor dining, trails and play

structures, all of which are now prohibited. It would also allow for the possible construction of a public building — an amphitheater or gazebo — for community events in the residentially zoned Town Center area.

Measure J, approved by the voters in 1988, prohibited development of commercial or office space on a then vacant, town-owned parcel near where Town Hall is now located. It also required residential properties within and adjoining Town Center to remain in residential use unless commercial parking on those properties had been permitted prior to June 1, 1988.

Measure I, approved by voters the following year, created an exception to Measure J's requirement that residential parcels in Town Center remain in residential use. Upon its approval by the voters, residentially zoned parcels in the Woodside Road Whiskey Hill Road Parking Assessment District were authorized to be



Magali Gauthier

A parcel of land next to the Woodside Community Museum could be developed into an outdoor amphitheater if a November ballot measure passes.

improved to provide access, parking and open space — as shown in the 1989 Town Center site plan — so long as at least 50% of the residential parcels were maintained in open space. Approval of Measure I allowed the town to construct Town Hall parking and access improvements which now serve Town Hall, commercial

businesses in the Town Center and the public.

Arguments for and against the ballot measure are due to the county on Aug. 10. Instructions for submission can be found at smcacre.org. ■

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

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Sheryl Sandberg donates \$10K to Menlo Park school district parcel tax measure campaign

By Angela Swartz

Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg gave \$10,000 last month to support the Menlo Park City School District (MPCSD)'s parcel tax measure campaign effort. Her donation constituted about a quarter of the total contributions the campaign received for the period starting May 19 and ending June 30. The proposed tax will appear on the Nov. 2 ballot.

Sandberg, who lives in Menlo Park, made the donation to the "Committee to Support Menlo Park Schools, Yes on Parcel Tax Measure" on June 21. The

committee raised \$40,275 from May to June to support the measure, which would provide \$4.6 million annually for 12 years. Statements show a total of 65 donations made.

Jacob Mizrahi, a partner at investment firm Oval Partners in Palo Alto, gave the second-highest donation: \$5,000.

Notable donors associated with the district included: board President Sherwin Chen, \$3,500; trustee Stacey Jones, \$250; trustee David Ackerman, \$200; Terry Thygesen, former trustee, \$2,500; and trustee Francesca Segrè, \$250. Trustee Scott Saywell was the only board member

who didn't contribute to the committee during the latest campaign finance reporting period.

San Mateo County Community College District trustee John Pimentel contributed \$250. Menlo Park City Councilwoman Jennifer Wolosin gave \$200.

During the reporting period, the campaign spent nearly \$6,800. The bulk of the expenses were \$5,000 for campaign consulting fees from Whitehurst/Mosher Campaign Strategy and Media, a political consulting firm hired by the district to advise on the parcel tax.

This isn't the first time Sandberg has supported the district's

parcel tax measures. In 2016, she donated \$10,000 to the campaign for the district's unsuccessful attempt to pass two other parcel tax measures.

The proposed tax, which requires two-thirds voter approval to pass and has not yet been named by the Elections Office, would replace the district's Measure X, which passed in 2017 with an initial annual rate of \$360 per parcel for \$2.83 million annually. The measure expires in July 2022. ■

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



Michelle Le

Sheryl Sandberg in 2016. She recently donated \$10,000 to the Menlo Park City School District's parcel tax measure effort.

Superintendents: Kids should begin school year in classrooms

By Eli Walsh/Bay City News Service

School superintendents in six counties and the city of Berkeley jointly announced their support July 30 for full in-person classes for the entirety of the 2021-2022 school year.

The announcement came from superintendents in Santa Clara, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo and Alameda counties in addition to the city of Berkeley and aligns with guidance from the California Department of Public Health that encourages schools across the state to reopen with modifications.

The guidance from the CDPH states that all students should have access to "full, in person

learning" with safety precautions in place, including more targeted quarantine practices and stronger COVID-19 testing.

The officials also advised all students age 12 and up to get vaccinated against COVID-19 if they have yet to do so. Under state public health guidelines, students will be required to wear a face covering when indoors regardless of their vaccination status.

"We highly encourage our students to take advantage of vaccination opportunities and universally wearing their masks," Contra Costa County Superintendent Lynn Mackey said in a statement. "These strategies are proven to be the most effective way to prevent in-school transmission of the COVID-19 virus and its variants."

State public health and education officials have yet to mandate that eligible students get vaccinated against COVID-19 before they return to school.

They have, however, hinted that such a mandate will be considered once the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issues its full approval of the three available vaccines.

Similar vaccination mandates already exist for communicable illnesses like measles and whooping cough unless a child has a documented exemption from a doctor.

"It is important for all students to have access to a safe learning environment, and universal mask-wearing and the COVID-19 vaccine are proven to be the two most effective



Magali Gauthier

First grade teacher Linda Cotter leads a lesson on addition on the second day of in-person instruction at Oak Knoll Elementary School in Menlo Park on Sept. 29, 2020.

mitigation strategies in preventing in-school transmission of the coronavirus and its variants," Santa Clara County Superintendent Mary Ann Dewan said.

Parents and students can

view a set of frequently asked questions about the state's K-12 guidance at cdph.ca.gov.

Parents and students can also find a vaccination location at myturn.ca.gov. ■

Coronavirus central: County reaches goal of 90% vaccination rate for eligible population

By Embarcadero Media staff
County hits milestone vaccination rate, but some communities lag

As COVID-19 cases continue to rise in San Mateo County, health officials have set a goal to vaccinate at least 80% of people in every community and subgroup by year-end. Overall, the county aims to vaccinate 90% of residents countywide.

During a meeting of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, Louise Rogers, chief of San Mateo County Health, said once more that vaccines remain the most powerful tool amid the "concerning rise

in the number of COVID-19 cases."

"Each time a San Mateo County resident chooses to receive the vaccine, we are all safer. Thus our major focus remains maximizing the reach of vaccines among our residents," Rogers said.

A schedule of weekly vaccine clinics is available online at smchealth.org/vaccine-clinic-calendar. The clinics are welcome to all and do not require an appointment.

As of Monday, the county has hit its goal of vaccinating 90% of people countywide, as 89.6% of residents 12 and older have received at least the first dose of the vaccine.

But there are still pockets of the population — such as specific communities, racial/ethnic groups and age groups — where less than 80% have been vaccinated.

Geographically, the communities of Broadmoor, East Palo Alto, North Fair Oaks, El Granada, Loma Mar and Moss Beach have vaccination rates that range from that range from 51% to 76%.

In terms of race and ethnicity, vaccination rates lag below 80% among African American, Hispanic, multiracial and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander groups.

And in terms of age, the youngest and oldest population groups

have had the lowest vaccination rates, with 68% of 12- to 15-year-olds vaccinated and 64% of residents 85 and older vaccinated.

Dr. Anand Chabra, San Mateo County Health COVID-19 mass vaccination section chief, said that "each day brings relatively small increases" in the number of vaccinated residents, but it was important that no communities are left behind.

About 74,000 of county residents eligible for vaccination remain unvaccinated, Chabra said.

To address the low vaccination rates in some groups, the county will focus on creating convenient vaccination strategies and

increasing people's confidence in vaccines.

The county also has a vaccine education task force working to share materials that answer questions about the vaccine.

To reach its goal, the county aims to hold 14 vaccine clinics per week from August to at least October.

Rogers emphasized that unvaccinated individuals are at a higher risk of being hospitalized or dying from COVID-19. Plus, most COVID-19 cases nationwide have been among unvaccinated people.

Breakthrough cases

See **CORONAVIRUS CENTRAL**, page 14

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Portola Valley hosts neighborhood cleanup this weekend

Portola Valley is hosting a summer cleanup day on Saturday, Aug. 7, from 8 to 11 a.m. at the Town Center, 765 Portola Road. With some exceptions, the program accepts furniture, appliances, construction debris, green waste and electronic equipment that is no longer working.

The exceptions include liquids, tires, oil- or gas-fired space heaters, fuel cans and engine parts, hazardous wastes, green waste that includes poison oak or poison ivy, and large amounts of rock, dirt asphalt or concrete.

The event is free but participants will need to bring a copy of their GreenWaste garbage bill or the mailer insert as proof of residency.

The town notes that the lines were a lot shorter after 10 a.m. at previous events.

— Angela Swartz

Settlement reached over water damage at middle school

The city of Menlo Park has reached a settlement with the insurance company of the Los Lomitas Elementary School District, the Lexington Insurance Company, after its water main broke in October and November 2018 and caused damages at La Entrada Middle School.

The October 2018 water main break caused water to leak into 17 classrooms, including nine of the 21 classrooms at the school's

new two-story building, and prompted two days of school closures. The November 2018 break leaked into four classrooms and also triggered the school to shut down early and resume classes the next day with port-a-potties and bottled water provided to students. And while the water main belonged to the Menlo Park Municipal Water District, Cal Water, which runs the neighboring Bear Gulch water district, stepped in to help the municipal water agency with the repairs.

The settlement covers two claims at La Entrada Middle School resulting from a break to an underground water line that the city owns, according to City Attorney Nira Doherty. The amount of the settlement is \$1.05 million, but of that, the city will only pay a portion of that, the so-called self-insured retention, or a specified dollar amount to its liability insurance policy, according to Doherty.

That amount will be paid through the city's municipal water fund rather than the city's general fund, Doherty added.

"The settlement that came from the city went directly to our insurance provider that covered the district's cost associated with the water main breaks. I believe the pay out did not cover the cost of the damages," said Beth Polito, superintendent of the Las Lomitas Elementary School District, in a statement.

"We're really disappointed that these water main breaks occurred and glad that this matter could be resolved with all impacted parties," said Menlo Park Mayor Drew Combs in a statement.

Input open for new R&D building

A proposal to redevelop 1125 O'Brien Drive in Menlo Park by demolishing offices and industrial buildings and replacing them with a five-story research and development and commercial building is beginning the environmental review process. That means that the public may weigh in and suggest which possible environmental impacts should be studied in the upcoming environmental impact analysis. The new building would have about 132,000 square feet of research and development space and about 2,500 square feet of commercial space, with surface parking, and would be expected to provide community amenities in exchange for building at a greater density than the city would otherwise permit. The Planning Commission is expected to weigh in on what should be studied in the environmental review at its upcoming meeting Aug. 9.

People may provide comments at that meeting or should share their comments in writing no later than 5:30 p.m. Monday, Aug. 30, via email to Contract Planner David Hogan at dwhogan@menlopark.org or via letter to him at Community Development, 701 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Sidewalk Sale at Allied Arts Guild

The Allied Arts Guild is hosting a sidewalk sale on Sunday, Aug. 15, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at 75 Arbor Road in Menlo Park, featuring crystal, silver, china,



Natalia Nazarova

Nine of the 21 classrooms in a brand-new two-story Las Lomitas school building were flooded after a water main broke on Oct. 25, 2018. The city of Menlo Park agreed to a \$1.05 million settlement to help pay for the damages.

vintage costume jewelry, framed Asian art and collectibles and more. All proceeds support Lucile Packard Children's Hospital. The guild's artisan shops will be open as well.

The event is cash-only and masks are required. Social distancing will be enforced. Go to alliedartsguild.org/sidewalk-sale for more information.

Tour de Menlo to return Sept. 18

The Tour de Menlo, a Peninsula-based bike ride for cyclists of all abilities and a fundraiser to support community grants and scholarships through the Rotary Club of Menlo Park, is set to return in person this year on Saturday, Sept. 18.

The ride will offer three routes of varying lengths, at 35, 43 and 63 miles, and support along the way.

This year's ride will begin at a new location, the parking lot of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints at 1105 Valparaiso Ave. in Menlo Park.

The routes are well-marked and all riders will make their way toward Stevens Canyon Road and a rest stop at Madrone Park. Riders will then head back toward the starting point. The traditional post-ride lunch won't be happening this year to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

Funds raised from the event will go toward the Rotary Club's Menlo Park Scholarship and Academic Awards program to provide need-based college scholarships for local high school graduates; grants to local community-based philanthropic organizations; and The Almanac's Holiday Fund, which supports 10 local nonprofits, including Second Harvest Food Bank, LifeMoves, and Saint Anthony's Padua Dining Room.

Go to tourdemenlo.com to register.

Grants open for small businesses

Microgrants of \$5,000 to \$25,000 are available to eligible small businesses and nonprofits that have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through the California Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program.

Eligible small businesses bring in \$2.5 million or less in yearly gross revenue or are a small nonprofit that has been operating since June 1, 2019, and have been impacted by the pandemic through business interruptions or closures, among other conditions. New applicants and wait-listed applicants from certain previous rounds should be aware that the application window runs Thursday, Sept. 9, through Thursday, Sept. 30, according to an announcement from the city of Menlo Park.

— Kate Bradshaw

Woodside committee hands out Backyard Habitat Award

Woodside resident Carol Fischer was given the Woodside Backyard Habitat Award last month by the town's Environment: Open Space, Conservation & Sustainability Committee.

Judges noted that a significant portion of her property is maintained in a natural state, dominated by native vegetation and free of nonnative invasive plants. Unused areas of the property have been allowed to revert to a wild state, allowing native plants to spread and thrive, and it has plants that feed bees, butterflies and birds. Raccoons and coyotes frequent Fischer's gardens. She also sees local chickens and an occasional opossum, judges noted.

— Angela Swartz

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Sports roundup

Football

Following a football season that ended in mid-April, rather than November or December, high school coaches find themselves in an unfamiliar position heading into what everyone hopes will be a conventional fall season.

The first official day of practice is coming right up on Friday, Aug. 6.

"I didn't have a spring with the sophomores," Palo Alto coach Nelson Gifford said. "Usually I have January to June to get to know those guys."

The off-season staple for high school football players dating back multiple decades of 7 on 7 football has taken on added importance for Gifford's program. A 7 on 7 team is composed of the six skill position players, the backs and ends who are allowed to touch the ball on offensive plays in regulation football, and a center.

"Now 7 on 7 is really important as a way to spend time with the kids in a football environment and give them a chance to play varsity football," Gifford said. "It's a ton of fun. It gives kids lots of reps in a short period of time. There's a lot of drudgery in football, but not in the summer. Unlike other sports, you can't play pickup 11 on 11. So we do 7 on 7."

Teams running a version of the spread offense receive an obvious benefit from the synchronicity, the similarities in structure between the spread and 7 on 7. What about those running teams that rarely put the ball in the air and still thrive at the high school level?

"When we play 7 on 7 it's the only time we focus on passing," said Gunn coach Jason Miller, whose double-wing offense is one of the most run-heavy in the Central Coast Section.

Regardless of offensive philosophy, having a grasp on how to defend and contain the spread is an absolute must in the current football environment.

"It gives us the opportunity to play against talented, polished spread attacks," Miller said.

Paly engaged in some sort of 7 on 7 competition in five consecutive weeks this summer, including hosting a 16-team tournament that has become a yearly event at the school. And who won the tournament but Burlingame, which has run a traditional ground-oriented Wing-T offense for years.

The championship game featured two traditional running teams as Wing-T Burlingame (or Fling-T as Gifford dubbed them) beat Bellarmine in the final. But the Bells, always associated with a heavy running emphasis during Mike Janda's 35-year tenure as head coach, are now a spread team under second-year coach Jalal Beauchman.

Miller chose to wait until the start of summer school on June 14 to begin his summer football program, and has since had his team take part in several 7 on 7s.

"The shorter offseason has had a tremendous impact," Miller said. "Do you push the kids harder, or do you give them a break, let kids be kids? Football stuff vs. life stuff. We chose life stuff."

Menlo-Atherton did not take part in its first 7 on 7 competition of the summer

until last month at Paly.

"At the end of spring we were still concerned about exposure to COVID," M-A coach Chris Saunders said. "So we've been doing things on our own, competing against ourselves. We did not want to have to shut down for two weeks and miss time in the weight room."

Some negative aspects of the shortened offseason have been experienced at Sacred Heart Prep.

"We got a late start, everything seemed a little behind in terms of what we want to accomplish in the summer," SHP coach Mark Grieb said. "Kids going to camps, some on the East Coast, we have an unpredictable number of kids showing up. And we have a pretty young team this year. We're going to have to be teaching kids on the run."

SHP, which has used a fly offense for a number of years, has also taken part in several 7 on 7 competitions, though Grieb was quick to note the footwork differences that exist for quarterbacks on teams that line up under center, like his own.

7 on 7 competition has been around for decades. Gifford and Grieb both mentioned taking part in them during their high school playing days in the 1990s. What's new now are travel teams, like we've grown accustomed to seeing in other sports, such as AAU basketball and club volleyball. Local high school coaches have divided feelings about 7 on 7 travel ball, understandably mostly negative.

But 7 on 7 is not going anywhere, largely because — as most anyone who grew up playing flag football or even two-hand touch can tell you — it's fun. At the high school level it's a counter to drudgery; quarterbacks get plenty of practice throwing, receivers and defensive backs receive ample repetition.

Tons of fun for skill-position players. But what about those interior linemen, the guys who are so instrumental to any kind of success in "real football," the 11 on 11 version played in pads?

"They'll go off on another field and play their own 7 on 7 game," Gifford said. "Or sometimes our coaches will take them in the gym and have them play 3 on 3. The goal is the same, get them playing, let them have some fun, get them sweaty."

— Glenn Reeves

Rowing

Like most student athletes, rising Priory senior Meena Baher grew tired of working out on her own while the world tried to survive the COVID pandemic last summer.

Her mom suggested Los Gatos Rowing Club's 'Learn How to Row' camp last July and, as a result of attending, she's grown into a rising star in the sport.

Her rapid development, from camper to novice to varsity, led to a fifth-place finish (third in her semifinal) in Single Scull at the Youth National Regatta in June in Sarasota, Florida, and an invitation to the selection camp for the Under-19 National team in Chula Vista last month.

Baher, who lives in Mountain View, earned a spot on the Women's Quadruple Sculls and will compete at the World



David Hickey

Palo Alto and Menlo-Atherton competed in a 7-on-7 football contest on July 21.

Rowing Junior Championships in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, in mid-August.

"During the pandemic I lost the ability to play team sports, which was something I was so used to," Baher wrote in an email from Chula Vista, where the 60-member team is currently preparing for competition. "I was running on my own to stay fit but it just wasn't the same."

Baher began her high school career at Cate School, a boarding school in Carpinteria, where she ran cross country, played basketball, swam and ran track and field.

As a sophomore, she led the Rams basketball team in scoring (16.2 points a game) and a Frontier League title.

Baher transferred to Priory for her junior year when she decided to join the Los Gatos Rowing Club. After four months as a novice, Baher was promoted to varsity.

"After my first rowing camp, my legs and upper back were the most sore," Baher wrote. "It's a common misconception that rowing is an arm sport. It's actually the legs that play the biggest role!"

Baher spent most of her junior year online, making it easier to work out once a day with the rowing club without having to rush off to a physical location.

It's an entirely different situation now

that she's working with the national team, and 5:30 a.m. wake-up calls are routine.

"I went from only practicing once a day to having two practices a day, each around three hours," Baher wrote. "It is a lot more volume and higher intensity work than I was used to but it's been so great because I learn more about myself as a rower every day."

Baher credits her coaches Jaime Velez, who also serves as the club director, and Peter Cannia for their support.

"Both of them did everything they could to help all of my dreams become a reality from the start," Baher wrote.

Baher's teammates for the quadruple sculls are Annie Henning, a Dallas resident who recorded the fastest mark during the time trials in Sarasota, Jackie Oruci of Oyster Bay, New York, and Heather Schmidt of Niskayuna, New York. **A**

— Rick Eymer

Read more online

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431 LAUREL AVENUE MENLO PARK



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All Kaiser Permanente employees must be vaccinated by October

Eli Walsh/Bay City News Service

Kaiser Permanente officials announced Monday that the health care provider will mandate all of its employees nationwide get vaccinated against COVID-19 by the end of September.

Roughly 78% of Kaiser employees and more than 95% of Kaiser physicians are already fully vaccinated as of July 31, according to Kaiser officials. The health care provider set a deadline of Sept. 30 for all of its employees to get fully vaccinated.

Michelle Gaskill-Hames, Kaiser's senior vice president for

hospital and health plan operations in Northern California, said Kaiser has worked with the labor unions representing its employees to craft the vaccine requirement and both sides did so with an emphasis on maintaining employee safety.

"Our health care workers are tired, they are disappointed that we've got a fourth surge and when we look at it, we believe that this was mostly preventable with vaccinations," she said.

While Gaskill-Hames avoided giving exact numbers, she did confirm that Kaiser has had some so-called breakthrough COVID-19 cases among its vaccinated staff members.

She also noted the amount of those cases has been low, even when compared to other health care organizations and hospital settings. Across the entire Kaiser system, roughly 97% to 99% of current hospital admissions have been among unvaccinated people.

The mandate will apply across all of Kaiser's locations in Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Maryland, Oregon, Virginia, Washington and Washington, D.C., in addition to the health care provider's locations in California, where Gov. Gavin Newsom announced a requirement last week for all health care workers to get vaccinated or be subject to

frequent COVID-19 testing.

Locally, Kaiser has a sprawling campus in Redwood City and a medical facility in Mountain View.

Across the country, Kaiser has more than 216,000 employees and employs more than 23,000 physicians.

"The COVID-19 vaccines offer us the path to move beyond the pandemic in the same way vaccination has brought an end to the epidemics of smallpox, polio, measles and other deadly diseases," The Permanente Federation co-CEO Dr. Ramin Davidoff said in a statement.

Gaskill-Hames said Kaiser will require its unvaccinated workers

to begin testing regularly on Aug. 23, but that Kaiser officials hoped to go one step further and render the testing requirement unnecessary after Sept. 30 by reaching full vaccination.

She argued that the best way to support the industry is to get vaccinated and significantly reduce the chance of getting hospitalized because of a COVID-19 infection.

"We saw a huge outpouring of love and support to the health care industry as we were going through the first and second surges," she said. "We need that same help now as we're starting to see our (intensive care units) fill up again." ■

INDOOR MANDATE

continued from page 5

offices; indoor dining while patrons are actively eating or drinking; and swimming and showering at the gym.

Residents are strongly discouraged from dining indoors and are asked to mask up in crowded outdoor areas.

The mandate was simultaneously rolled out in the counties of Santa Clara, San Mateo, San Francisco, Alameda, Marin, Contra Costa and Sonoma. These public health orders do not have a sunset date, and come just days after the California Department of Public Health recommended universal masking in public indoor settings statewide.

In Santa Clara County, there is now an average of 202 new cases per day over the last week, the highest rates since late February, according to county data. That's almost 10 times higher than

the low point in June, despite a countywide vaccination rate of 78% among residents age 12 and older. San Mateo County saw a similar large spike to 87 cases per day during the week of July 15.

Health officials said residents are strongly discouraged from dining indoors and are asked to mask up in crowded outdoor areas.

Sonoma County Health Officer Sundari Mase said the COVID-19 vaccine remains one of the strongest protections against the virus, and that the infection rate among the unvaccinated is six times higher than those who are vaccinated — a stark difference, given that unvaccinated residents make up just a small minority of the county

population. But she said the vaccine alone is not enough to combat the delta variant, which is a much more widespread and aggressive opponent.

The California Department of Public Health reported that the delta variant accounts for 84.4% of COVID cases this month, a rapid increase from just 53.1% in June and 5.9% in May. In Sonoma, it accounts for 95% of all new cases.

"It's not the same virus that we were combating last year, or even a few months ago," Mase said.

Fully vaccinated residents are included in the mask mandate because they, too, can get infected with so-called breakthrough cases, and Los Angeles County health officials reported last week that 20% of all new cases were among those who were vaccinated. Though people who are vaccinated are far less likely to suffer severe illness or end up in the hospital, they may spread the virus in public settings like

grocery stores and restaurants.

In a statement following the press conference, Scott Morrow, San Mateo County's health officer, described the mask mandate as a less disruptive public health requirement that can reduce community transmission while still allowing higher-risk activities to take place.

"As San Mateo County joins its neighbors in issuing these orders, the goal is to avoid disrupting businesses and residents' everyday activities," Morrow said. "We want our communities to stay open while being as safe as possible."

Like past mask mandates, Han said he recommends people wear a surgical or medical-grade mask and, barring that, a well-fitted cloth mask. Enforcement will largely fall to individual businesses, many of which made face coverings optional for vaccinated individuals less than two months ago.

Though the new public health

orders are even-handed with residents regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status, public health officers were emphatic in encouraging people to get vaccinated. Broad nationwide trends show that 97% of people ending up in the hospital with severe symptoms are unvaccinated, and local hospital admissions for people with COVID are surging. In Contra Costa County, the number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients doubled in just the past 10 days, and was up 400% in the month of July.

In Sonoma, 100% of the ICU patients with COVID were unvaccinated and could have protected themselves from the virus.

"This is really tragic given the widespread availability of vaccines in the area," Mase said. "It's needed now more than ever." ■

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

CORONAVIRUS CENTRAL

continued from page 9

— COVID-19 cases among vaccinated individuals — have been rare in San Mateo County.

Between December and mid-July, less than 1% of COVID-19 cases in San Mateo County have been among vaccinated individuals. Specifically, there have been 158 breakthrough cases out of 17,148 cases total, Chabra said.

However, Rogers said vaccinated people infected with the delta variant can still spread the virus, as the delta variant is more transmissible than other variants.

Rogers also noted a rise in cases at long-term care facilities.

Supervisor Dave Pine asked whether the cases at long-term care facilities were breakthrough cases, as long-term care

residents were one of the first groups in line for the vaccine.

"We've done a very good job of getting everyone vaccinated," Rogers said. "But the flow of patients in and out of those facilities also introduces some risk so I can't confirm that they are actually all breakthrough cases."

A recent state health order will require long-term care facilities to verify the vaccination status of their workers, starting Aug. 9.

While board President David Canepa agreed with the idea of "vaccine passports," which would require proof of vaccination in certain settings, Rogers said they would have to consider who has the authority to regulate a vaccine passport.

Canepa reminded the public that vaccines are safe and effective.

"Vaccinations do work and

there's the science and data to back it up," Canepa said. "So I want to reaffirm that to people who are non-believers."

San Mateo County's COVID-19 health data and information are available at smchealth.org/coronavirus.

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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LEAF BLOWERS

continued from page 5

their gardeners, or have helped finance them,” said Richards, who lives near Corte Madera School, in an email. “I have also personally handed out the flyers announcing the buyback program to a number of gardeners who didn’t seem to be aware of the new ordinance but who have since made the switch. ... The tendency is to continue with the long tradition in Portola Valley of relying on friendly neighborhood persuasion.”

Mayor Maryann Derwin agreed that it seems quieter in town since the ban, she said in an email.

Portola Valley’s recent ordinance is part of a regional effort to ban, or limit use, of the devices, which are known to create excessive noise and disseminate toxic chemicals, such as formaldehyde and hydrocarbons. Los Altos banned gas-powered leaf blowers in 1991, Palo Alto in 2000, and Los Gatos in 2014. Last year, Woodside adopted an ordinance limiting the hours that commercial leaf blowers can be used to mirror the town’s construction hours. Since the ordinance took effect in October, Woodside Town Manager Kevin Bryant said he has only received one complaint of someone violating the time limits.



Embarcadero Media file photo

The Portola Valley Town Council banned gas-powered leaf blowers earlier this year, while Atherton officials are still considering their options.

Hesitant Atherton officials start with pilot program

Atherton council members are a little more skeptical about banning gas-powered leaf blowers, though some are passionate about making some changes to reduce the noise and spread of pollutants from gas-powered blowers. At its July 21 meeting, the council directed the Environmental Programs Committee to create an education campaign on the effects of gas-powered blowers and draft an ordinance with proposed

restrictions.

Nearly two years ago, Atherton officials began examining how to manage leaf blowers in town. In January, council members stopped short of a ban and opted to institute a pilot project to test battery-powered leaf blowers in Holbrook-Palmer Park and on public streets in town. The City Council also voted to restrict the use of leaf blowers on Spare the Air days through fall 2022.

With the test complete, staff shared several takeaways after purchasing and testing an EGO Power+ backpack blower (at a cost of \$1,210 for batteries, the leaf blowers and chargers):

■The electric blower is a “bit quieter” and lighter than their gas-powered blower

■The battery life was “substantially” lower than the unit’s guide indicated (180 minutes versus just 15 to 20 minutes for the 5.0 Ah battery and 30 to 40 minutes for the 7.5 Ah battery). If sufficiently charged, it would just be adequate to blow the main pathway loop around the park if there were limited heavy debris or wet areas.

■The electric blower effectively blew debris off the tennis court, but appeared to be underpowered in moving heavy debris, larger piles and wet material as compared to the gas-powered blower.

■The police department

measured the battery-powered leaf blowers ranged in noise levels from 60 to 80 decibels versus about 70 to 85 decibels from gas-powered blowers. The reason for the only slight difference is because the battery blower operated at a lower decibel level and at a higher pitch, lowering its perceived noise level.

The town’s mowing subcontractor will continue to use its gas-powered blower to clear mowed grass from the pathways and other areas.

Atherton resident and council response to the pilot

Residents shared their hesitancy about banning gas-powered leaf blowers in town. John Maulbetsch said at the July 21 meeting that gas-powered blowers have “more power” and “work better.”

“Do the residents care more about the noise than the performance?” he asked the council.

Residents Patti and Ross Spezzaferro said as master gardeners they know that leaf blowers can damage soil health, but it would take a lot more time to maintain their gardens without gas-powered blowers. They also said residents may have to pay more for gardening if the work takes longer.

Ross said he supports reducing greenhouse gas emissions so he is “conflicted” because electric leaf blowers are “nowhere near

as powerful” as gas-powered blowers. With the size of yards in Atherton, gardeners would need to have portable generators handy where there are no outlets to keep the blowers going for longer.

“It’s nice to encourage them (electric-powered blowers) where they make sense, but it wouldn’t make sense to ban gas-powered leaf blowers because they’re so practical,” Ross said.

Mayor Elizabeth Lewis and Councilman Rick DeGolia said a rake and broom could do the same job as a leaf blower without spreading exhaust generated by the blowers.

Councilwoman Diana Hawkins-Manulian noted the town can make a lot of changes short of banning all gas-powered blowers, such as limiting times residents can use the blowers, dictating different rules for residents versus commercial properties (such as the schools in town or the Menlo Circus Club), and banning two-stroke leaf blowers that tend to produce more pollutants than four-stroke blowers.

“When the air is full of ashes after a fire, people are blowing all sorts of toxic ashes,” she said. “There’s already all sorts of information about how it affects allergies and health issues.” ■

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

PACIFICA GRAND TOUR

continued from page 6

take Paloma Avenue all the way to the ocean, then turn left at Beach Boulevard. This thankfully flat section goes along the Coastal Trail at Sharp Park Beach until Mori Point. It’s around here you’ll be a little past the 6-mile mark, and might consider taking a snack or lunch detour from Paloma Avenue onto Palmetto Avenue, perhaps to sample a healthy-ish pastry at Saltwater Bakery, or even a more extended hiking pause to enjoy Florey’s Books, a new and used bookshop with delightful browsing options. Just keep in mind that you’ve got a steep hike ahead of you, so maybe don’t pick up any hefty hardbacks.

Whether or not you stop for snacks or shopping, you’ll need

to find your way to Sharp Park Beach next. From there, you can stroll out and back along the Pacifica Pier, or simply continue southward down the Coastal Trail. Once you hit Mori Point, it’s a climb up the Mori Bluff Trail and back down the other side toward Rockaway Beach, with lots of winding trails through the bluff. It’s easy to get off the official route here, so just know you need to cut somewhat inland and down to get back on the paved trail from the Mori Point park area to Rockaway Beach.

From Rockaway Beach, near the 9.5-mile mark, there’s another option to pick up a snack or coffee in the little shopping district before crossing Highway 1 from Rockaway Beach Avenue onto Fassler Avenue. You’ll turn left at the Shell Station and head

back northeast along Harvey Way toward the church on the corner, called Our Savior’s Lutheran Church.

And now comes the hard part: finding the trail connection behind the church. If you’re looking uphill at the church, the trail is tucked behind the right side.

It’s called the Farallones View Trail, and is an unrelentingly steep uphill climb for about a mile.

This section of the route is the least pretty and toughest, but it’s got to be done to get back up toward Sweeney Ridge.

As you hike up the Farallones View Trail, it’s worth taking a pause as you go uphill to turn around and admire the view behind you — and to catch your breath. This is also a section in which you’ll want to stay

vigilant to avoid any mountain bikers coming down, since they’ll be going fast.

Keep going uphill (it’s a slog) and stay straight to connect with the Baquiano Trail around the 11-mile mark, which will take you back to the Sweeney Ridge Trail. The trail plateaus for a bit and then keeps going uphill at a more reasonable incline as you approach the 12-mile mark.

At the intersection of the Baquiano Trail and the Sweeney Ridge Trail, you’ll turn left to loop back onto the Sweeney Ridge Trail. Just after the intersection to the right is the San Francisco Bay Spanish Discovery Site, where Captain Juan Gaspar de Portola and his expedition became the first Europeans to see San Francisco Bay on Nov. 4, 1769.

They were assisted by Native

American people along the way, including the local Ramaytush Ohlone people, according to the National Park Service. The Aramai tribe of what’s now Pacifica went with the explorers to the top of Sweeney Ridge, the service notes. It’s a unique historical site and a great spot to take a photo (and another breather).

Continue a short distance back along the Sweeney Ridge Trail until you see the pit toilets you saw on your way up the Sneath Lane Trail. Turn right to go back down the hill on the Sneath Lane Trail and from there it’s a comparatively easy 2 miles of downhill back to the car.

It’s an exhausting adventure but a glorious one. ■

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

SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

continued from page 1

County so far have been reluctant to implement a vaccination mandate outside of their own public employees, instead sticking with recommendations to implement them in the workplace, for example.

On July 26, the American Federation of Teachers, which represents about 1.7 million educators across the nation, according to its website, issued a press release that stated vaccinations should “be negotiated between employers and workers, not coerced.”

Some universities and local school districts are already

requiring teachers and students to be vaccinated before they come to campus this fall.

Stanford University announced its decision to do so in late April; the Foothill-De Anza Community College District Board of Trustees adopted a vaccine mandate for its students and employees in June; and San Jose

Unified School District, the largest school district in Santa Clara County, announced on July 27 that it will require teachers and staff to be vaccinated or tested twice a week for COVID-19.

López said on Tuesday that he has not yet had conversations with the Ravenswood City School District regarding its

vaccination progress, but followed Becker in urging everyone to get the vaccine.

“We are now largely vaccinated,” López said, referring to the East Palo Alto population. “But we are not done.” ■

Email Editorial Assistant Lloyd Lee at llee@paweekly.com.

POLICE REFORM*continued from page 5*

type of group that instead would advise the City Council.

How to select committee members was another question. On one side of the argument, Nash said she favored having a formal commission or committee that is mandated to have public meetings and has certain transparency and accountability expectations.

On the other, Councilman Ray Mueller said he was convinced of the existing approach years ago, when former police Chief Bob Jonsen said he didn't want appointments to the committee to become politicized.

Council members raised various other issues they hoped the police department would address. Nash said she wanted to have more discussions around Taser use, the city's K-9 unit, mutual aid and how the number of workers who come into the community during the day affects police resources.

She also suggested inviting leaders from other cities who

are piloting different approaches to policing to speak to the city — for instance, San Francisco's Street Crisis Response Team, which deploys teams made up of a community paramedic, mental health clinician and peer counselor and serves as first responders to nonviolent mental health calls. She also pointed to how the city of San Jose assigns code enforcement matters to its planning and building department rather than the police department.

Police chief's response

Norris, Menlo Park's new police chief, explained that his first 100 days have involved an extensive listening tour, meeting with police officers and staff as well as city staff and community members.

He said many of the concerns voiced about policing at a national level are likely to be addressed by the implementation of Senate Bill 230, which passed in 2019 and lays out clearer rules limiting the use of deadly force by police, especially when interacting with people

who experience physical, mental health, developmental, or intellectual disabilities.

"We in California are way ahead of the game on a lot of the pieces that are in the national narrative," Norris told the council.

In addition to taking steps to comply with that legislation, he said, the Menlo Park Police Department is working on making public records more transparent. The department offers a daily police log, which generally presents a limited but detailed view of daily activities, while a daily log in the city's open data portal lists more interactions but provides fewer details. He's looking into which format to use to share those public records with the community, Norris said.

He said he's open to shifts toward more progressive public safety approaches, like boosting transparency, providing better responses to homelessness and mental health issues, reducing the need for armed police to respond to the community, and having a community-police

advisory team that provides input on police policies.

Over the coming months, he added, he's also hoping to provide more information about how the department works with the community and find common goals.

Locals' input

In public comments, residents weighed in on which aspects of policing in the community ought to change.

Kathleen Daly, owner of Cafe Zoe, said she's interested in the topic as both an employer of young people of color and as someone who has family members with mental illness and developmental disability. She urged the city and police department to figure out ways to reform policing so that young people of color don't feel emotionally traumatized when they interact with the police, and so that police don't have to worry if they'll survive their next interaction.

"We live in the Bay Area of the U.S. of A," she said. "We have the ability to figure this out. We

should be figuring this out."

Resident Gail Sredanovic asked the council to review topics such as police interactions with U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, how to prevent Taser-related deaths, the pitfalls of facial recognition technology, and how to avoid racial bias in policing. "Racial bias is hard to get rid of," she said.

One question, from Belle Haven resident Alejandro Vilchez, was why the city hasn't yet enacted some recommendations developed in the Belle Haven Visioning Process, conducted in 2013, which he helped lead. One of the recommendations, he said, was to hire a new city employee to facilitate communication between the community, the police department and city staff. He also encouraged the police department to extend the hours of its neighborhood service station in Belle Haven.

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



Courtesy Brooklyn Jones

Natalya Jones, Menlo Park's director of childcare programs, with daughter Brooklyn in Hawaii in December 2020. Jones was wary of COVID-19 vaccines before getting so sick in April that she was hospitalized for over two months.

NATALYA JONES*continued from page 1*

Jones said, she was wary of the COVID-19 vaccines and hadn't received one.

"I just felt it was developed really fast," she said. "I didn't necessarily trust it."

Now, she said, she works to dissuade other skeptics of their vaccine hesitancy.

"I try to tell people, yeah, it was created really fast, and yeah, there's a lot of questions, (but) it could save your life," Jones said. "I could have been dead. I don't want somebody to go through that."

"If I had (the vaccine), I wouldn't have gotten hit as hard," she added.

The message she's sharing, she said, is that COVID is real.

"Protect yourself. Protect your loved ones," she said.

The virus doesn't follow rules, and if you become ill, you don't know what's going to happen, she said. "They couldn't explain why I got it so bad but the person next to me (didn't). There's no rule to it. It's so real, and it's deadly. I would just say, take every precaution you can."

She said she received her second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine

on July 23, the same day she spoke with The Almanac.

'I was just shocked'

To support Jones and her family while she was hospitalized, a crowd fundraiser on the website GoFundMe has, to date, generated about \$21,000 for Jones' recovery from 192 donations, with many donors from the local community.

'It's so real, and it's deadly. I would just say, take every precaution you can.'

NATALYA JONES

Jones said she was overwhelmed with appreciation when she learned about the fund.

"When I woke up and saw it, I was just shocked, surprised and very grateful," she said. "Even now, I'm still shocked at how much was raised by families in the community that I've been working with. I never expected that outpouring of love and support."

Right now, she doesn't yet have a timeline for when she'll get back to her work with children.

But she's not done, she said.

"Once I can get back to a baseline, I'll be going back. I have a lot more I think I can offer to the community," she said. ■

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

Your COVID-19 vaccine questions — answered

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

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Call Alicia Santillan at 650-223-6578 or email asantillan@pawekly.com for assistance with your legal advertising needs. The deadline is Monday at noon.

Viewpoint

IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES

Untold stories of the strength and resilience of low-income students

By Randi Shafon and Amika Guillaume

GUEST OPINION

Since March 2020, we have worried about the health, grief, finances and social isolation of low-income students and families. There has been heart-breaking loss, financial strain and unemployment, and a clear, disproportionate impact on low-income communities. East Palo Alto has seen four times more COVID-19 cases than Menlo Park and seven times more than Atherton.

And yet, there have also been incredible stories of joy, strength and celebration from these hard-hit communities.

Against all odds, low-income students and families have continued to prevail. East Palo Alto Academy High School saw their college persistence rate improve from 26% to 80%. At Peninsula Bridge, 100% of 12th grade students are matriculating to college this fall, with 95% being the first in their family to do so.

It is resilience — rather than heartbreak — that we want to illuminate and celebrate. As author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie reminds us, there is danger in the single story. While we acknowledge the tragedy the last year brought, it is imperative to also shed light on the incredible complexity and triumph of low-income students during this pandemic.

Like many students this past year, Daniel began his first year at UC Riverside at home, struggling to find a proper learning environment where he could focus on his physics classes. Countless low-income students have found themselves taking classes from their families' studio apartment, with no quiet space to work. After finding an old tent in storage, Daniel began to use it as his own "backyard dorm." With a space to call his own, Daniel is now at the top of his class, attending office hours religiously and on track to join the physics department's honors program.

Juan*, a high school senior, had to work double-duty after his family lost their home last year; he attended school full time and picked up shifts at the family restaurant to help keep it afloat. Determined to not lose the restaurant as well, he raised enough money to build outdoor dining, allowing the restaurant

to continue serving customers. Through the many lockdowns and changes in regulations, the business survived. Juan is now a freshman at UC Berkeley, and the family is "thriving — because we are still together, strong and healthy."

Jessica* was just a sophomore in high school when she was forced to step up as the head of her household last year. After the death of a family member to COVID-19, Jessica was left to pick up the pieces, planning the funeral and figuring out finances. At the age of 15, she had to find \$2,700 for funeral services. What do you do if that money is your rent money? With the help of East Palo Alto Academy's social services team, Jessica was able to successfully fundraise, negotiate with the mortuary, and ultimately found a way to honor her family member.

These stories are not exceptions. There are countless more examples of the hardships our students and their families faced and the innumerable institutional barriers that we must continue to dismantle.

It is not OK that a student is using a tent in his front yard to get space for his college studies. It is not OK that a 15-year-old is responsible for planning a funeral. And it is certainly not okay that BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) continue to bear the brunt of this pandemic.

And yet, each story also continues to prove that the impact of COVID-19 on poor communities is complex and nuanced.

We must celebrate the triumphs. We must recognize the strength and resilience that has emerged from this painful year.

Psychological resilience is defined as the process of adapting in the face of challenges, crises and threats. Dr. Ryan Matlow, a child clinical psychologist and director of community programs for Stanford's Early Life Stress and Resilience Program, found that having a mission, objective and valued activity in times of crisis is a protective factor and indicator of adaptive adjustment. It is this psychological resilience that allows our students to adapt and achieve despite adversity.

For this reason, programs like Peninsula Bridge and East Palo Alto Academy emphasize perseverance. Strength already exists

inside of our students — they just need our support as they access it.

Peninsula Bridge teaches risk-taking, agency and self-advocacy from fourth grade through college. Our Middle School Academy uses literature and a focus on global education to demonstrate that children around the world navigate adversity and challenges — and that we can collectively identify personal and community resources to overcome those challenges. Through education and discussion, students can examine human qualities like courage, bravery and resilience, and discuss key strategies to overcome adversity.

East Palo Alto Academy helps to shed light on our first-generation, BIPOC students' incredible wealth of experiences and inner strength. Students learn the "The Bulldog Way" beginning the summer before ninth grade, which comprises five attributes of success: love, attitude, mindset, power and grit. Students harness their grit forged by life experiences and are able to use this to develop an increased sense of belonging and preserve in challenging circumstances.

We firmly believe that it is this tenacity and resilience that will give our students the power, access and opportunity to dismantle the immeasurable and unacceptable barriers that lay ahead.

Young people who have not yet faced adversity can develop perseverance through experiencing productive struggle and delayed gratification. There are countless avenues to help understand the joys of working hard and earning success, including playing sports, learning a musical instrument and participating in community service. Yet, it is still crucial that our community continue to ask questions about inclusivity, communal responsibility and sense of belonging in the hopes of building a more just, equitable and caring community. When we listen to and support diverse perspectives, we all flourish.

**Name has been changed to protect underage students.*

Randi Shafon is the executive director of Peninsula Bridge and can be reached at randi@peninsulabridge.org. Amika Guillaume is the principal of East Palo Alto Academy and can be reached at aguillaume@seq.org.

MAKING BEAUTIFUL MUSIC TOGETHER

Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra School nurtures small ensembles with collaborative spirit

By Karla Kane

Violinist Claudia Bloom has been hooked on chamber music from a young age.

“For me, it’s so exciting to be able to be heard in a group and to express your music in a very intimate setting,” she said. “It’s so much fun. It’s very gratifying, and you learn how to interpret music along with other musicians.”

Her musical family (including a cellist brother and father and twin sister who are pianists) and her teacher, renowned violinist Anne Crowden, fostered in Bloom a lifelong love of playing in small ensembles. Wanting to encourage new generations of chamber musicians, she founded the Palo Alto School of Chamber Music, which has been offering locals the chance to learn, bond and play with peers since 2015.

Bloom grew up in the East Bay, studying and playing music intensively. After earning a bachelor’s degree from Manhattan School of Music and a master’s degree from Yale School of Music, she got her dream job: a spot on Duke University’s music faculty and in its resident string quartet.

In 1992, after some time in Zurich, her husband’s career brought the family to Palo Alto.

‘I love that in chamber music, everyone works together and roots for each other because we all have our own part to contribute.’

WILLA BEDNARZ,
GUNN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

“I had to start all over again,” she said. But she quickly became part of the local music scene, forming and joining numerous chamber groups, serving as second violinist with Opera San Jose, subbing for the San Francisco Symphony, playing in a klezmer group alongside her husband, and teaching private lessons. Still, “chamber music is really my passion,” Bloom said. Inspiration to develop a school came out of the small groups she



Magali Gauthier

Claudia Bloom, the director of the Palo Alto School of Chamber Music, plays the violin in her Palo Alto home on July 29.

was hosting at her home.

“I thought, ‘You know, I would really like to do this and collaborate with my friends who are also private teachers,’” she said. And so, the Palo Alto School of Chamber Music was officially born in 2015, starting out as a summer program, then expanding into year-round coaching sessions for children, teens and adults.

“There’s so much that goes into playing chamber music — teamwork, being responsible, public speaking, we have a theory component now, a little composition — they perform for each other and parents and friends at the end of the session,” Bloom said. “They come away feeling really good about themselves because they have input, they have a voice.”

At the school, interested students are matched in a group (trio, quartet or quintet) of peers at their level. Each group receives coaching from the faculty and rehearses weekly, forming a tight bond with both their coach and their fellow musicians. An optional orchestral ensemble also rehearses weekly. In addition to Bloom, local musicians Be’eri Moalem, Lucinda Breed Lenicheck, Virginia Smedberg, Gulnar Spurlock, Yueh Chou and Susan Macy make up the faculty.

Moalem, who in addition to coaching small groups also

conducts the school’s Allegro Ensemble (and has contributed as a music writer to this news organization), recalled fondly the first time he played a duet in harmony, at age 12.

“It felt like my soul was being tickled and I burst out in tearful laughter. It was such an exalting experience and I’ve been chasing that feeling ever since,” he said. “I’m very happy to have an opportunity to teach chamber music, passing on the gift that was once passed to me.”

While private lessons and participation in large orchestras are undoubtedly invaluable experiences for musicians, Bloom said chamber music offers a unique opportunity for students to both work as an ensemble and an individual.

Willa Bednarz, 16, is a Gunn High School junior who’s been playing violin for nine years. “I love that in chamber music, everyone works together and roots for each other because we all have our own part to contribute,” she said. “Playing with just a couple other kids my age, we have a lot of freedom to collaborate and have fun coming up with our own ideas for the music.”

Max Chang, 17, another Palo Alto violinist, has been part of the school for three years, joining after taking private lessons and being part of the orchestras at Greene Middle School.

“I really liked to play in a small group, where every person had their own unique role, and their part to fill or else the music wouldn’t work. It was a different experience than the orchestra, where as long as most people played their part the rest could do whatever they wanted,” he told this news organization.

San Jose-based cellist Tyler Biesemeyer, 16, agreed.

“It feels a lot more personal,” he said. “Everyone has direct communication with each other, and everyone’s opinions are heard and valued equally.”

The school, which was formerly housed at First Lutheran Church in Palo Alto, this September will move to a new home in a new city, on the

campus of Yew Chung International School of Silicon Valley (310 Easy St., Mountain View). For the foreseeable future, participants will be masked, and auditions are currently held via video rather than in person.

When the COVID-19 pandemic first struck, the school was forced to cancel planned performances by its 10 chamber groups.

“We had to say goodbye right before they performed for the spring session,” Bloom said. The faculty pivoted to online lessons, with some chamber groups continuing to meet in outdoor and distanced rehearsals.

“During the pandemic, my quartet was able to keep playing on my teacher’s front lawn,” Bednarz said. “Being with friends and practicing under the trees was always a highlight of my week.”

The school also serves a social function, offering a way to meet new people and form friendships. And Bloom and the rest of the faculty strive to offer an empowering experience, free from pressure.

“I have students who are also in youth orchestras. Some of them have a lot of expectations and are high-powered,” Bloom said. “Ours is, I would say, a little different. We are trying not to compete with other programs. The main draw is that we are encouraging, we’re nurturing.”

More information is available at schoolofchambermusic.com. ■

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



Courtesy Claudia Bloom

Palo Alto School of Chamber Music Director Claudia Bloom sits with students playing together at the First Lutheran Church in Palo Alto.

Food & Drink

Asian Farm Cuisine brings pad thai burritos and more to Redwood City



Courtesy Yelp

Pad thai burritos, hot bowls of ramen and banh mi-inspired sandwiches with shrimp tempura are on the menu at Asian Farm Cuisine in Redwood City.

By Sara Hayden

Chef Sok Hor is cooking up old favorites in new ways at Asian Farm Cuisine in Redwood City. Since opening in the spring, Hor and her family have been refining the menu, figuring out what resonates best with hungry guests at 3176 Middlefield Road.

Owned by Hor's son Nick Khov, the restaurant has drawn diners from as far as San Jose just for the pad thai burrito. The dish riffs on a favorite pad thai recipe at Asya, another restaurant by Khov, featuring Japanese and Thai cuisine at 3215 Oak Knoll Drive (also in Redwood City). The burrito, however, is unique to Asian Farm. Khov's younger brother, Try, got the idea from social media for bringing together the best of both worlds, adding noodles to burritos. He saw potential in a ramen burrito, as well as Panda Express's introduction of an orange chicken chow mein burrito.

"I said, 'Why not try something new and see where it goes?'" Try Khov says.

This spirit of inventiveness extends to other dishes too. There's a shrimp tempura banh mi that takes inspiration from Vietnamese sandwiches, and incorporates elements from a sushi roll with special sauce,

imitation crab and deep fried shrimp. There's also udon served with kimchi and Spam.

"In this day and age, it's not that you open a store and people will come," Try Khov says. "Everybody wants an Instagrammable picture, and a new concept they haven't done before."

Originally, the family aimed to offer a fast-casual Chinese food experience at Asian Farm.

"Think of a Panda Express- or Chipotle-style restaurant," Try Khov says. But with those restaurants already so firmly established, they found it hard to stand out from the competition. They also wanted to improve on the business model for better food.

"A lot of the issues we had were logistical: How could we better prep the food, and keep it for customers that come later in the day?" Try Khov says. "Now we

cook the food as people order to maintain freshness and quality, while minimizing food waste."

Asian Farm offers takeout and delivery. On-site, there are a few tables guests can sit at after ordering from the counter. Those who visit can also pick up freshly baked croissants, muffins and bagels at Brew Coffee — the cafe and bakery, owned by Try Khov's brother-in-law Ken Huot, shares the same space as Asian Farm.

If you have room for dessert (say, something peanut butter and jelly- or chocolate Nutella-inspired), Brew Coffee is also now collaborating with Yessi's Cake Creations, a fellow Redwood City business. Its founder first started coming to the Middlefield Road location as a customer, and the family was taken by a cake she made for an anniversary celebration. "It's just absolutely adorbs,"

Try Khov says. Now Brew Coffee offers customers her cupcakes alongside matcha lattes, blended drinks with boba, coffee and other treats.

"In the future we might scale it up and do cakes. It's just great in terms of local businesses doing partnerships with each other. I find that really great, especially during these times," Try Khov says.

From dad Hong Cheam's Donut Delite in San Mateo to bagels in Oakland, the family's been cooking up different creations throughout the Bay Area for more than 20 years. Try Khov says they'll continue to do so, including at Asian Farm and Brew Coffee.

"We're still experimenting on a few things," he said. "Our current

menu is not going to be our final menu."

Asian Farm Cuisine, 3176 Middlefield Road, Redwood City; (650) 679-6448.

Email Associate Editor Sara Hayden at peninsulafoodist@almanacnews.com.

Dig into food news. Follow the Peninsula Foodist on Instagram @peninsulafoodist and subscribe to the newsletter at almanacnews.com/express/foodist to get insights on the latest openings and closings, learn what the Foodist is excited about eating, read exclusive interviews and keep up on the trends affecting local restaurants.

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Courtesy Brew Coffee's Instagram

Redwood City businesses are partnering to offer something sweet. Yessi's Cake Creations is now supplying cupcakes to Brew Coffee.



Courtesy Try Khov

Brew Coffee's Thai iced tea. Owner Ken Huot "puts a lot of time and pride into his drinks, making something unique you can't find in other areas," says brother-in-law Try Khov.

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