

The Almanac

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

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A year after CZU fires raged, governor visits Big Basin State Park

Gov. Gavin Newsom praises firefighters, reflects on state's response to climate change-fueled threats

By Kate Bradshaw

One year after lightning strikes ignited what became the largest recorded fire in San Mateo County history, California Gov. Gavin Newsom visited Big Basin State Park — California's oldest state park and home to old-growth redwoods over 1,000 years old — on Tuesday, Aug. 17, to reflect on the state's response to wildfires, drought and other threats from climate change.

The CZU August Lightning Complex fires, which began Aug. 16, 2020, burned about 86,500 acres in Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties and destroyed about 1,500 structures. The wildfire tore through the Santa Cruz Mountains, destroying rural homes and buildings in its path, as well as causing major damage to several beloved parks and open space preserves, including San Mateo County's Pescadero Creek County Park, Butano State Park,

San Vicente Redwoods and especially Big Basin State Park.

The park's headquarters — which previously boasted a museum, information center and a gift shop that sold frozen yogurt and refreshments to parched visitors and was surrounded by the cool shade of giant redwood and towering Douglas fir trees — was unrecognizable Tuesday. All that remained of the structures was the chimney from a lodge building. The trees' bark had blackened and their needles turned brown. Some trees showed new sprouts of growth coming out of the charred bark.

In front of the 200-foot-tall, roughly 1,500-year-old giant redwood known as the Auto Tree, Newsom described how the news of the CZU wildfires last year had impacted him. Accompanying him was Michael Regan, administrator with the Environmental Protection Agency.

"Of all the fires ... this one



Magali Gauthier

Gov. Gavin Newsom and EPA Administrator Michael Regan listen to Chris Spohrer, superintendent for California State Parks' Santa Cruz district, discuss on Aug. 17 how last year's CZU August Lightning Complex fires damaged Big Basin Redwoods State Park.

was perhaps the biggest gut punch last year because of what it means to people — their memory, traditions, history — and the fragility that is the world

we're living in at the moment," Newsom said.

California is facing unprecedented threats from "Mother Nature," he said. While he

stood in the place where the Big Basin park headquarters once stood, the largest single-source

See **NEWSOM**, page 16

Nearly 20% of Menlo Park district firefighters, EMTs still aren't vaccinated against COVID-19

By Sue Dremann

With nearly one-fifth of its firefighters and emergency medical technicians still unvaccinated against COVID-19, Menlo Park Fire Protection District board members on Tuesday night said they will consider mandating vaccinations or daily testing.

The board unanimously voted to refer the matter to the district's Human Resources Committee for study.

Director Chuck Bernstein had asked for a staff report on the issue. Fire Chief Mike Shaffer reported that 77 district personnel are vaccinated and 19 are

not and that the district hasn't regularly tested its employees. Instead, an infection control officer advises whether someone can come to work based on a flow chart of symptoms and exposure.

Three firefighters have tested positive for COVID-19 since the pandemic began, he said. None of the infected firefighters' exposures was traced back to the district.

Bernstein said firefighters and EMTs are in close contact with the community and could, if infected, expose district residents to the virus.

"To allow those people to be in the midst of clients would be

irresponsible for us and subjects us to significant liability," he said. "I don't want us to get sued by the family of someone who dies or is disabled" by the transmitted infection, he said.

There had been an employee complaint early in the pandemic claiming the district wasn't maintaining a safe workplace in terms of COVID-19 precautions, Bernstein said. Firefighters are in a communal living situation. There are also state and federal OSHA requirements for COVID-19 protections.

Some firefighters have been quarantined as a precaution in the past, Shaffer said. Bernstein noted that personnel taken off

line to quarantine represents another cost to the district.

"It doesn't seem reasonable for taxpayers to incur that or for our readiness to be compromised," Bernstein said.

Director Robert Jones said the number of unvaccinated personnel sounds significant.

"It has to be a no-brainer, at least at a minimum, testing on a daily basis, I think is imperative," he said.

A state mandate now requires that health care personnel in hospitals and congregate-care facilities such as nursing homes be vaccinated, but so far that hasn't extended to firefighters and emergency personnel,

Jones said. That could change. Staff said that Los Angeles County is changing its definition of health care workers to include paramedics and EMTs. Other counties or the state could follow.

Bernstein said the district will need to discuss the proposed vaccine requirement with the unions and staff. The Human Resources Committee will report its findings to the board regarding the possible vaccine mandate and testing, perhaps as soon as September. ■

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

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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Magali Gauthier

The United States Geological Survey campus in Menlo Park is being vacated as its employees move to Moffett Field in Mountain View and will be put on the market soon.

Menlo Park U.S. Geological Survey campus to hit the market

By Kate Bradshaw

It's an announcement years in the works: The federally owned U.S. Geological Survey property at 345 Middlefield Road in Menlo Park will soon go up for sale.

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) plans to put the 17-acre property up for sale "in the near future" in an online auction, a GSA spokesperson told The Almanac in an email.

An ad has been posted online on the website Loopnet, and other ads are expected to go up shortly before the sale takes place.

The GSA plans to hold a public online auction, and will issue a sale solicitation package and offer bidders opportunities to inspect the property.

Bidders will also receive information about Menlo Park's zoning "and other details which will influence any reuse plans for the property."

"The federal government does not control local zoning and thus any permitted uses will be subject to the city of Menlo Park," said the spokesperson in an email.

GSA has already received "multiple inquiries" and is likely to "receive many more once marketing is in full swing," the spokesperson said in an email. However, it does not release the names of interested

See **USGS PROPERTY**, page 17

On a seafaring vacation, a Menlo Park doctor helped out a researcher in distress

By Kate Bradshaw

Dr. Latha Palaniappan of Menlo Park and her family were sailing on a catamaran off the coast of the Florida Keys when she was called upon to put her medical training to use.

The family, which loves water sports like scuba diving and snorkeling, was enjoying a trip they'd put off six months due to the pandemic. Palaniappan, a pharmacogenomics specialist at Stanford who is trained in advanced cardiac life support,

had been very busy due to COVID-19, and her family had long looked forward to the June vacation, she said in an interview.

About 70 miles west of Key West, their boat was approached by someone seeking help at the nearby island, where a person had collapsed on the beach and needed medical aid. Fort Jefferson, used to protect the Gulf Coast, is atop an island that's part of Dry Tortugas National Park.

As Palaniappan's 12-year-old son, Rohan Ramanathan,

described it, his mom left the boat where they'd been spending their days snorkeling and exploring, witnessing sea creatures and a shipwreck, to go help someone. At the time, he said, he and his 16-year-old sister kept an eye out for what was happening on the island with their binoculars, but couldn't see much.

The person in need turned out to be world-renowned shark biologist Wes Pratt, something Palaniappan said she

See **SHARK**, page 16

After vulgar phone calls and death threat, Palo Alto council member speaks out

Menlo Park man pleads no contest to charge of harassing Lydia Kou

By Sue Dremann

Palo Alto City Council member Lydia Kou is accustomed to speaking her mind on local policy issues, from housing to local retail protections. But it's taken her nearly a year to decide to come forward about a painful criminal case in which she was the target of sexual harassment and a death threat.

She's doing so now, she said, because hers is a story about how violent political rhetoric is inspiring people to act in ways that have long-lasting consequences. She said she hopes there will be a message for both the perpetrators and victims of harassment.

The phone calls started on Sept. 26, 2020, while Kou was campaigning for her second term on the council. At about 12:30 p.m., during a Zoom meeting, she received five calls in rapid succession. When Kou picked up the phone, a man, later identified by police as Alexander Brea, 29, of Menlo Park, was acting belligerent and made sexual and vulgar remarks.

"I said, 'I don't have anything to talk to you about,' and hung up," Kou recalled.

Brea proceeded to leave three voicemails, according to a police investigative report. The voicemails were "very disgusting and demeaning," Kou said during a recent phone interview. "I couldn't finish listening to them. It makes me feel like rubbish, like dirt, like meat."

She received a fourth call in which another unknown man asked for donations to a church. At the end of the message, Kou said she heard a laugh in the background. She recognized the laugh as belonging to the man who had left the previous harassing calls, she said.

For nearly two weeks, there was silence. Then, on Oct. 9 at 10:23 p.m., she received five phone calls and a voicemail message.

"I'm back. I'm going to call you until you change your number," he said. "You deserve to have

your throat slit."

Kou contacted Palo Alto police. On Oct. 10, an investigator tracked the two phone numbers through a police database to two men. The first man denied any knowledge of making the phone calls, but Brea, who answered the second phone, admitted that he had made the calls, according to the police report. He agreed to meet with police the next day because he was intoxicated that night.

Brea was charged with two counts of making annoying and harassing phone calls using obscene language or threats to injure for his volatile words against Kou. On June 9, he pleaded no contest in Santa Clara County Superior Court to one count of the same charge, which is a misdemeanor. Although punishable with a jail sentence, the court ordered him to complete 10 Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, 40 hours of community service and to pay \$795 in fines and fees. He must also comply with a 100-yard stay away order and not have any contact with Kou, according to court records.

Brea told the police investigator that he had seen a Facebook ad for Kou on Sept. 26, which contained a campaign position he didn't like. He commented on Kou's Facebook post and became upset when he thought she had him blocked from further posting on her site. Kou doesn't recall blocking anyone, she said.

Intoxicated at the time, Brea located a phone number for Kou and made the calls, he told police. He said he asked his friend to leave a "funny message" — the church donations call — for Kou. Regarding the Oct. 9 phone calls, he told police he was too drunk to remember exactly what he'd said but that if he did threaten Kou, he "was just joking."

Brea told police he was sorry he made Kou feel scared and agreed to stop attempting to contact her, according to the police report.

See **KOU**, page 10

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NEWS

CRIME BRIEFS

Police: Man pointed gun during parking dispute at Safeway

A 58-year-old Mountain View man was arrested early Sunday morning after he allegedly pointed a gun at a woman over a parking dispute at a Menlo Park grocery store.

The victim told police that shortly before 6 a.m. she asked the man to move his car because it was taking up two spaces at the Safeway parking lot at 525 El Camino Real.

Instead, the suspect allegedly pointed a handgun and told her to leave, Menlo Park police said.

She walked away and called police, who arrived a few minutes later and found the suspect in his car. Officers spotted a loaded handgun near the front passenger seat and one officer took it out of the car as another talked with the suspect on the driver's side.

The man was arrested without incident and booked into San Mateo County Jail on suspicion of being in possession of a loaded firearm, making threats, and brandishing a firearm.

The handgun was found to be unregistered.

—Bay City News Service

Apple devices worth \$14K stolen from Encinal School

About \$14,460 worth of iPads and other items were reportedly taken from Encinal School in Atherton overnight last Friday.

Between 8 p.m. on Aug. 13 and 8 a.m. on Aug. 14, someone broke into the gym at the elementary school and took one pull wagon, 47 iPads, two iPad Pros and one iPhone, Atherton police said in a news bulletin Sunday.

The stolen devices belonged to one of the summer camps that leases space from the school, said Parke Treadway, public information officer for the Menlo Park City School District (MPCSD).

“While not school-related, MPCSD shares its disappointment

See **CRIME BRIEFS**, page 9

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

‘What Goes Where’ trash-sorting virtual seminar

Join Greenwaste on Saturday, Aug. 20, at noon and learn “What Goes Where” for Atherton, Los Altos Hills, Portola Valley and Woodside service areas. GreenWaste Recovery staff will discuss sorting best practices and recovery that takes place for each waste stream. Bring your waste-sorting questions.

Find more information and the Zoom link at tinyurl.com/greenwastewhatgoeswhere.

‘Celebrate Our Trees’ at Holbrook-Palmer Park

There will be an art show in Jennings Pavilion, botanical art draw, a talk with artists and botanical art crafting for children in Holbrook-Palmer Park in Atherton on Saturday, Aug. 21, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday, Aug. 22, from noon to 4 p.m.

On Sunday, there will also be docent-led tree walks, gardening information tables and children's nature activities from 2 to 4 p.m. in the park.

The park is located at 150 Watkins Ave.

For more information, go to the town's website at ci.atherton.ca.us.

—Angela Swartz

Summer concert in Portola Valley

On Thursday, Aug. 26, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. — after Portola Valley's farmers market — the band Windy Hill is performing at the Town Center, 765 Portola Road.

Windy Hill, featuring Portola Valley native Ryan Breen on banjo and vocals, is a four-piece bluegrass band.

“While the band is steeped in the traditional style, they've cultivated their own distinct bluegrass sound,” according to the town newsletter. “The balance between their love for classic bluegrass and keenness for exploring fresh musical ideas defines their style and approach, and makes them a fan-favorite for music lovers of all types.”

Bring lawn chairs, a blanket and a picnic. Masks are required for those who aren't vaccinated.

Environmental, social and racial justice panel

A discussion featuring San Mateo County community leaders who work daily at the intersection of environmental, social and racial justice will take place on Thursday, Aug. 26, from 6 to 8 p.m. on Zoom. It is being hosted by the San Mateo County Office of Sustainability.

See **COMMUNITY BRIEFS**, page 14

Portola Valley council gives go-ahead for 'long overdue' fire station remodel

By Angela Swartz

Station 8 in Portola Valley will soon get a facelift, after more than two years of planning.

The Town Council voted 5-0 at its Wednesday, Aug. 11, meeting to change the Portola Valley's fire station zoning code to upgrade and renovate the station, which is run by the Woodside Fire Protection District. Fire Chief Rob Linder called the project "long overdue" and "necessary" during the meeting. Construction is tentatively set to begin in March 2022, said Mike Wasserman, vice president of Capital Program Management, the company managing the construction of the project.

Station 8, which is located at 135 Portola Road, is considered a legal nonconforming use, which limits updates or additions that otherwise would be considered typical, according to a March report prepared by staff. The fire station property is located within the town

zone that permits single-family dwellings and conditional uses, according to the March 17 staff report. However, public buildings or similar uses are not currently a permitted or conditional use in this zone.

It wasn't always the case. From 1967 to 1980, the property was zoned for public buildings. However, the public building portion was removed from the code in a 1987 ordinance.

The project planning hasn't come without pushback. In March, some residents shared concerns that more public buildings could be added to the site in the future. With feedback from residents, the fire department amended its plans.

Bob Schultz, who lives near the fire station, said the planning process for the renovation has been "long and stressful."

"We feel that many complex issues have been worked through," he said. "We are supportive of this project. ... Give the fire station the tools they need to continue their work protecting our community."

The fire department made the following changes:

- Moved parking to the front of the station instead of at the back of the property
- Increased the landscape buffer
- Included groundwater and soil testing
- Added a landscape maintenance agreement
- Removed a San Mateo County Sheriff's substation
- Removed exterior lighting
- Moved the trash collection area away from neighbors

Assistant Planner Dylan Parker said the project underwent an extensive deliberation process, having been through the Planning Commission three times and Architectural and Site Control Commission twice.

In March, Lindner said the fire department has outgrown its current facilities and is in desperate need of a remodel. But town planning staff say since the station, which is located on a 46,970-square-foot lot just slightly north of the intersection of Portola and Alpine roads, is



Courtesy Woodside Fire Protection District

Portola Valley's Station 8 will be remodeled. The Town Council had to update zoning code to make it happen.

zoned for residential use, the town code would need to be updated first. The station would add 1,837 feet of building space in the renovation, according to staff.

The station was built in the late 1970s and last remodeled in 1994, according to The Almanac's archives.

The rezoning of the property created a discrepancy and town staff doesn't know why the fire station would have deliberately been made nonconforming. It is possible that it was an unintended consequence of the past code amendments.

In the past, Lindner said the station needs additional sleeping quarters (some staff working 48-hour shifts currently sleep in makeshift bedrooms in the office and exercise room), a reception area, and more parking spaces. The station has three bedrooms and the remodel would add two more, for a total of five.

For more on the project, visit the town's website at portolavalley.net. ■

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

Sustainable Silicon Valley seeks students for hyperlocal air quality monitoring project

By Kate Bradshaw

Students around the region may soon be participating in a citizen science project that demands little more than carrying some extra weight on a backpack as part of a new initiative from the local nonprofit Sustainable Silicon Valley.

The BackpackAQ initiative, by Sustainable Silicon Valley's Clean Air Equity Project, is conducting a pilot project to

pair up to 100 Bay Area students with personal air quality monitors they can carry around to track particulate matter and gas-related compounds in the air.

Specifically, the low-cost monitors will track pollution from a variety of sources, including traffic and wildfires, by measuring particulate matter, volatile organic compounds, carbon dioxide, temperature, pressure, relative humidity and GPS coordinates.

Sustainable Silicon Valley is a local nonprofit that focuses on water and air as well as decarbonization in the Bay Area. Its leaders call it a "think and do tank," emphasizing its hands-on problem-solving approach.

Chief scientist with the organization, Anthony Strawa, said in an interview that the project grew out of some of the findings from an earlier initiative by Sustainable Silicon Valley, called Smart TA, or transportation analytics. In that project, the nonprofit set up air monitors at three locations in East Palo Alto to track air quality related to vehicle emissions and other air pollutants.

Over about four months of monitoring air quality there, Strawa said, they found that there was a connection between traffic and air quality, but in general, the air quality was good most days, although it occasionally dipped into the "moderate" category. It spurred them to dig deeper into studying a variety of air quality metrics both at a hyperlocal level and at an affordable price point.

As part of that effort, Sustainable Silicon Valley scientists tried out different sensors to measure the air quality and ultimately became interested in

developing a low-cost sensor to measure both particulate and gas-based pollutants.

They were also inspired by a journalism project published by the New York Times in

December 2020 that tracked the air pollution exposure two children faced living in different neighborhoods of Delhi, India, over the course of a single day using a variety of air quality sensors.

Strawa teamed up with Andrew Clark, board chair

See **AIR QUALITY**, page 17



Courtesy Andrew Clark

The BackpackAQ air quality monitor costs about \$85 and clips onto the outside of a backpack to make it easy for high school students to track air quality in their neighborhoods for a citizen science project led by Sustainable Silicon Valley.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

Dividing the Tasks To Be Done



Dear Monica: I plan to sell my house and need guidance on what tasks I should do and what I can ask my agent to do. Can you advise?

David J.

Dear David: An agent works on your behalf and can facilitate the activities that need to be done to prepare the house for sale. But you as the owner of the property are the primary party who contracts with the various

vendors. Your agent can then oversee all of the work to be done, including obtaining inspections. Some owners are very "hands on" with the work and others rely on their agents to do this.

Your agent is responsible for executing a marketing plan and preparing materials needed. You and your agent should decide how best to divide the work for your property.

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

As delta variant spreads, how safe are nursing homes?

New protocols, vaccines have local leaders optimistic

By Chris Kenrick

The early months of the pandemic highlighted long-standing flaws in the nation's fragmented system of care for frail seniors. Before vaccinations became available last December, nursing home residents accounted for up to 40% of COVID-19 deaths. And while coronavirus-related deaths among seniors have plummeted since that time, the pandemic is not over as infections from the more contagious delta variant surge.

So where does that leave nursing homes?

This news organization reached out to local health leaders to find out the state of nursing homes a year into the pandemic. Many declined to respond, but those who did, say they are much better prepared and optimistic about keeping

residents safe.

Should another outbreak occur, it would be "horrendous, but entirely different," said Bethany Murray, administrator at Cedar Crest Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Sunnyvale, which experienced an outbreak in early 2020 that infected 44 residents and resulted in five deaths.

"We're leaps and bounds ahead of where we were then in terms of process, structures and knowledge," Murray said.

With no uniform response in place for care centers at the start of the crisis, Cedar Crest developed its own protocols and created a walled-off COVID-19 unit. It was later asked to run a unit for other facilities in Santa Clara County that could not manage it on their own, Murray said. No COVID-19 cases have originated in her facility since the March 2020 outbreak, she

said.

Brad Heap, administrator of Atherton Park Post-Acute in Menlo Park, which experienced COVID-19 cases early in the pandemic, is also hopeful.

"Obviously the pandemic has been pretty tough on this whole industry, but now I'm feeling optimistic," Heap said. The crisis led to better communication procedures with residents' families, he said.

Though his facility has not had a COVID-19 case for months, Heap said he and other nursing home administrators are required under state law to file daily reports to health agencies, including on weekends, or face fines. In addition to increased reporting requirements, facilities also must have a full-time staff member dedicated to infection prevention and control.

Other precautions that facilities have adopted include the use of surgical masks for anyone entering the building, limited visiting hours and proof of

vaccination for family members who wish to take off their masks inside a loved one's room. The precautions are constantly evolving, Heap and Murray said.

tested negative for COVID-19 in the prior 72 hours before indoor visits, according to the department's press release.

The regulation comes amid a recent uptick in COVID-19 cases due to the delta variant. Statewide, 76.3% of health care workers were fully vaccinated as of June 20, according to a recent AARP analysis of government data. Vaccination rates nationwide among nursing home workers, however, continue to lag, with only 1 in 5 facilities hitting an industry target of getting 75% of their health care staff fully vaccinated.

Locally, rates vary among facilities from 60% to 100% fully vaccinated. The Sequoias and Villa Siena in Mountain View are among local facilities that had the highest employee vaccination rate at 100% as of July 18, according to data from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Palo Alto Sub-Acute and

See **NURSING HOME SAFETY**, page 14

'The pandemic has been pretty tough on this whole industry, but now I'm feeling optimistic.'

BRAD HEAP,
ATHERTON PARK POST-ACUTE

On Aug. 5, the state Department of Public Health issued a new health order requiring workers in health care facilities, including skilled nursing homes, to be fully vaccinated by Sept. 30. A second public health order, also issued that day, requires skilled nursing facilities, hospitals and intermediate care facilities to verify that visitors are fully vaccinated or have

Dignity Health reaches agreement with Anthem Blue Cross following contract standoff

By Kevin Forestieri

Anthem Blue Cross customers can now go back to Sequoia Hospital and get in-network rates after an impasse over contract negotiations briefly killed a long-standing contract between the insurer and Dignity Health's network of hospitals.

In a statement Monday, Aug. 16, Dignity Health announced that it had reached a contract agreement with Anthem and settled a monthslong standoff over what the insurance company was willing to pay for hospital services. Dignity argued last month that Anthem was using aggressive cost-cutting tactics

that failed to even keep up with the rate of hospital inflation costs.

The previous contract between the two parties lapsed on July 15, and most of Dignity's hospitals and medical facilities no longer provided in-network rates for most patients covered by Anthem. But the newly inked

contract is retroactive to July 15, erasing any out-of-network costs customers faced during the last month. The contract lasts through April 2025.

Though neither Anthem nor Blue Cross disclosed what prices were negotiated and settled, Dignity Health Medical Foundation CEO Robert Quinn praised the new contract as a way of ensuring that the hospital can meet the needs of patients now and in the future.

"This is a win for our patients who deserve access to local high-quality care. We deeply appreciate the patience of our patients, employers, and physicians as we have worked through this process," Quinn said.

Anthem has clashed with multiple health care systems in the Bay Area in recent years, including El Camino Hospital in Mountain View, over the high cost of hospital services

in the region. Everything from hip replacements to delivering a baby costs far more in Northern California than the rest of the state, which the insurance company cites as a reason to demand lower rate increases when contracts are renewed.

Anthem, for its part, argues that these hospitals are partly responsible for the escalating costs of health care in the U.S., and that its tough approach to contract negotiations is part of its fiduciary responsibility to keep costs low for its customers. The difficult seven-month negotiations with Dignity Health were necessary to reach an agreement that "helps protect affordability," said John Pickett, Anthem's regional vice president of provider solutions.

"We are pleased to continue working with Dignity," Pickett said. "While we understand this wasn't easy for consumers, it was necessary for us to stand firm as part of our efforts to help slow the sharp rise in health care costs."

Anthem customers who sought care from other providers during the contract dispute have the option to return to Dignity Health immediately. Anyone with questions may call Dignity at 1-800-483-1568. ■

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

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San Mateo County Health says it may help deliver booster vaccines

By Kate Bradshaw

San Mateo County residents wondering whether they should get a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine should talk to their health care provider about it first, the San Mateo County health department announced this week.

Federal health officials on Wednesday announced plans to offer booster shots of the same vaccine for everyone who received the Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccines eight months after they received their second shot. According to federal officials, booster doses will be made available starting Sept. 20 to people who received their second vaccine dose at least eight months prior.

"At that time, the individuals who were fully vaccinated earliest in the vaccination rollout, including many health care providers, nursing home residents, and other seniors, will likely be eligible for a booster," the HHS officials said Aug. 18.

Follow-up strategies for people who received Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine still need to be developed, the health department announced Aug. 16. Booster doses will likely be necessary, but federal officials expect to have more data in the coming weeks since the J&J vaccine did not become available in the U.S. until March.

The county expects that it will remobilize some of its mass vaccination capacity to provide booster vaccines to supplement whatever health care providers

give their patients, according to the announcement. However, the precise roles that health care providers and the health department are planning appear to not be fully determined yet.

"We are learning from these key partners the roles they will expect to play as we develop the plan for the county," the health department stated.

The department is now mostly focused on providing booster immunizations to people who are immunocompromised and offering first and second vaccine doses to people who haven't received them yet. Effective Aug. 13, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended that people who are moderately to severely immunocompromised receive an additional dose of either the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA COVID-19 vaccine at least 28 days after receiving their second dose.

Earlier this week, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors also voted on a plan to make booster shots widely available for those living or working in the county. The plan will allow people to get a booster shot across all county sites, regardless of insurance coverage or health care provider. County health officials will further develop the plan over the next month.

Staff Writer Kevin Forestieri and Bay City News Service contributed to this story.

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

CRIME BRIEFS

continued from page 6

that an individual or individuals would steal technology that clearly belongs to children," she said, adding that district officials have confidence in the Atherton Police Department's investigative efforts and look forward to those responsible being brought to justice.

This was not the first time electronic equipment was stolen from Encinal. In 2018, \$14,000 worth of electronics were taken during the first weekend of December.

This marks the 36th burglary in town so far this year — though there was a lull in thefts for the most part over the last month, according to police and the town's crime blotter. An estimated \$278,396 worth of goods have been stolen in 2021,

police said.

In June, police held a community meeting to address a spike in burglaries in town. They discussed ways to prevent burglaries, information about automated license plate readers (ALPRs) in town and general police operations. In July, the Town Council accepted a donation of \$21,000 to install four more license plate readers and four ALPR warning signs. Some 22 of the town's 43 license plate readers are privately funded. The town planned to place two new cameras northbound at El Camino Real and Walnut Avenue, and southbound at El Camino Real at and Selby Lane.

Anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to contact the Atherton Police Department at 650-688-6500.

—Angela Swartz



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KOU

continued from page 5

Even though the harassment has ended, Kou said she remains deeply affected by it. At the time, she became concerned her harasser might find her because she was out in public campaigning for council at farmers' markets last fall. She stopped answering her phone and hesitated to listen to messages, she said. The harassment also affected her real estate business, which in part relies on taking calls from new or referred clients, she said.

When she goes to the grocery store, Kou said, sometimes she still reacts out of fear, looking to make sure no one is stalking her.

"For people making these calls, it's fun for them or they hope to intimidate," she said. But "it has a lasting effect on the person they are doing it to."

Kou is critical of what she considers the lenient sentence meted out for the harassment and death threat and the fact that Brea never apologized to her directly.

Brea was not present in the courtroom nor by video for his hearings. He didn't hear her victim-impact statement when the prosecutor read it into the court record.

"He didn't have enough courage to face me," she said.

According to Deputy District Attorney Sheryl Leung, the case's prosecutor, many misdemeanors don't require the defendant to be present as long as the person's attorney is in court.

Leung also said these kinds of stranger-harassment cases typically don't receive jail time — particularly if the defendant doesn't have a criminal record. His conduct, while inexcusable, didn't rise to the level of "criminal threats," she said. To meet that standard, the victim must be in immediate fear of their lives.

San Mateo County District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe, however, said that his office would press for jail time in most misdemeanor harassment cases, particularly if threats are involved. Some judges don't choose to give a misdemeanor defendant a jail sentence but rather mete out community service, but it is up to the judge's discretion, he said.

Shelley Dwyer, Brea's attorney, said on Aug. 11 that she couldn't comment on the case, citing attorney-client privilege.

In an email to this news organization, Brea said he was sorry for his actions.

"First of all, I've felt awful about this from the moment I found out what I said to her. I know alcohol is not an excuse. I've been trying to make this mistake right for the last 10

months," he said.

"When the police contacted me I immediately and fully cooperated. I took full responsibility for my actions and recorded a statement with a full apology to Ms. Kou. I offered to apologize to her directly and was told by the police that I should not do this. I have respected that advice. But to be clear, I am very sorry and embarrassed about what I did. It was an awful voicemail, but I certainly never intended to hurt her or cause her any kind of distraught."

He said he attended AA meetings, performed his community service, and paid the court-imposed fines, all of which were completed in July.

Asked about Brea's claim of a recorded apology, Palo Alto police acting Lt. Brian Philip said the department doesn't comment on investigative material. The police report filed in the court notes the apology was part of the recording made of the police interview with Brea, and it was recorded on the officer's body-worn camera. There is no indication that a separate recording of an apology was made specifically to Kou.

Kou said she didn't receive anything from the police nor did the officers tell her that Brea had apologized.

Brea said his actions have had

real consequences, including the inability to seek full-time work while he performed his community service. He is now concerned that news about this case will make it difficult or impossible for him to find work. He asked through this news organization for Kou to give him a chance to get his life back in order.

Listening to Brea's statement being read to her over the phone this week, Kou began to cry. She said that while she understands Brea's predicament, his actions have made a long-lasting impact.

Her intention in coming forward is to make it clear to anyone thinking about pranking or harassing another person that doing so has consequences for both the victim and the perpetrator. She hopes to prevent future incidents, she said.

She also wants other victims to know they aren't alone. As a community leader, she hopes she can inspire victims to take action and be empowered, she said.

"I don't think anybody can understand the level of threat each person feels. For women going through this, it's important to talk about it. It is healing."

The Palo Alto Police Department encourages harassment victims to document anything they can, Palo Alto police Acting Capt. James Reifschneider said: Make screenshots of emails; save

voicemail messages. Although in California, one party can't record a conversation without the agreement and knowledge of the other party, an exception is made when documenting a crime, he said.

The department doesn't receive many harassment cases, but they tend to pop up around election time, he said. Just telling a harasser the communication is being documented can sometimes be enough to stop the person, he said.

"Don't be afraid of calling us," he said. ▣

Help is available

Any person who is feeling troubled can call 800-784-2433 to speak with a crisis counselor. People in Santa Clara County can call 855-278-4204. Spanish speakers can call 888-628-9454. San Mateo County has a 24-hour crisis line at 650-579-0350 or 800-273-TALK (8255).

Anyone who is struggling with substance use can call the Santa Clara County Department of Behavioral Health Services at 800-488-9919 or San Mateo County Health at 800-686-0101.

For a list of local Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, visit find-recovery.com.

People can reach trained counselors at Crisis Text Line by texting 741741.

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

continued from page 6

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Caltrain to boost service beyond pre-pandemic levels

Beginning Monday, Aug. 30, Caltrain will increase its service to the highest level it has ever been.

In addition to running 104 trains per weekday, including hourly all-stop trains and baby bullet express trains, Caltrain will discount all non-go pass fares by 50% during September.

During peak commuting hours from 6 to 9 a.m. and 4 to 7 p.m., there will be four trains per hour. Weekend service will be identical, rather than separate Saturday and Sunday schedules, with two additional round trips added to the morning and late

evening.

Under the new timetable, the majority of connections at the Millbrae Transit Center will be between eight and 15 minutes.

The increase in service is due to post-pandemic ridership increase, with weekday ridership often exceeding 12% of pre-pandemic levels and 40% on the weekends.

—*Bay City News Service*

WHOA! seeks equestrian artwork for Day of the Horse art show

The Woodside-area Horse Owners Association (WHOA!) is inviting artists to celebrate the beauty of all things equine. The organization has put out a call for artists to submit works to its juried show of horse-themed art that will kick off the association's annual Day of the Horse weekend in mid-October.

The exhibition, called Art of the Horse, is open to all artists,

and all ages, with two shows: works by adult artists and a youth art show for artists 18 and under.

An artists' reception is planned for Oct. 8, 6 to 8 p.m. at the Woodside Village Church, with refreshments, live music and awards for artists. Some works from the young artists' show will also be chosen for WHOA!'s 2022 calendar of equestrian art.

The pieces submitted for jurying must be original work that celebrates the horse and may be paintings, drawings, photography, mixed media, sculpture, miniatures or jewelry. Artists are asked to submit two to three pieces. The deadline to submit works is Sept. 7, with the entry fee set at \$15 per artist.

The in-person Art of the Horse show will take place throughout the Day of the Horse weekend, Oct. 8-10. The adults' show will also be viewable online through Nov. 8.

Artists can choose to donate works to an online silent auction — new for this year — that will raise funds for WHOA!'s equestrian programs in San Mateo County.

The Day of the Horse weekend features a progressive trail ride on Woodside's town trails, with riders encouraged to dress in costumes inspired by this year's "Oktoberfest" theme, and a horse fair, where artists have the option to rent an exhibition booth.

For more information, visit whoa94062.org/day-of-the-horse/ or email art@whoa94062.org.

—*Heather Zimmerman*

Menlo Park city staff raises approved

The Menlo Park City Council voted unanimously Aug. 17 to approve 3% raises for the city's AFSCME and SEIU labor units starting July 1, 2022.

The agreement also offers each employee a lump sum payment

of \$2,000 each after the contract is approved in 2021 and in the pay period after July 1, 2022, interim Human Resources Manager Kristen Strubbe told the City Council.

In addition, the city agrees to increase contributions to the units' "flexible benefits" plans in 2022 and 2023 based on the increase in the consumer price index, which generally rises between 2% and 4% each year.

The agreement is expected to cost the city a total of \$809,000 for the SEIU Local 521 members and \$330,000 for the AFSCME Local 829 members, or a total of \$1.139 million over the life of the contracts.

In addition, the city plans to complete a total compensation survey of the units by the end of October 2022 and to renew an allowance that gives unit members 34 floating holiday hours each year, according to Strubbe.

—*Kate Bradshaw*

NURSING HOME SAFETY

continued from page 8

Rehabilitation Center and Grant-Cuesta Sub-Acute and Rehabilitation Center in Mountain View had the lowest rates at 60% and 79.77%, respectively.

Murray, who last year took over management of Cedar Crest from her mother, Tracie Murray, said 100% of the facility's long-term residents and almost 100% of the staff have been vaccinated.

The March 2020 outbreak at Cedar Crest came after an asymptomatic but infected nursing assistant reported to work. Cases went from zero to 38 residents in 12 days, peaking at 44, Murray said.

The outbreak hit early in the pandemic — even before the Santa Clara County mask mandate — when precautions were not well understood, Tracie Murray said in an interview last year with the insurance risk-management firm Health-Cap. One-third of residents who tested positive were asymptomatic, and half of the positive staff members were asymptomatic.

Murray said her mother engaged a construction team to build a temporary wall, creating an isolation unit containing a nursing station, break room and staff bathroom. She rented an RV so staff members could shower before going home. She posted signs inside the building to ensure that food and laundry from

the COVID-19 unit did not come into contact with the rest of the floor.

"Mom was very smart to ask the county if COVID-19-positive staff could work in the COVID-19 unit if they didn't have symptoms. They said yes, and later suggested it to other facilities," Murray said.

A single person was tasked with communicating with families so clinical staff could focus on patient care. A simple binder system was established to quickly record and track any and all coronavirus-related events, including test results, communication and guidance.

Seven weeks after the first reported coronavirus case at the center, Cedar Crest was declared coronavirus-free.

"(Afterward), we were asked to run a COVID-19 unit for other facilities in the county that had outbreaks but could not manage their own COVID unit," Murray said.

Though still under significant COVID-19 precautions, Murray said things have "relaxed a lot from where we were at the height of the pandemic when we couldn't have visitors and residents couldn't be in the hallways."

The California Department of Public Health issued new guidance in March allowing vaccinated nursing home and long-term care residents to receive indoor and in-room visitors following a yearlong lockdown.

"From a residents' perspective we've definitely come a long way to have activities and communal dining," she said. "Most facilities are even letting residents go out on a pass if their loved ones want

to take them to dinner or something."

The lockdown took a particular toll on long-term residents who were not even permitted to leave their rooms to go into the hallway or visit with a neighbor, she said. To try to keep them "oriented to reality and to time passing," Murray said she solicited photos from families and brought them to the residents' rooms along with balloons or flowers.

And while COVID-19 cases in long-term care facilities are at historic lows since the start of the pandemic, many providers are struggling to recover from the economic crisis the pandemic has induced.

According to a national survey released in June by the American Health Care Association, a Washington, D.C., advocacy group for thousands of for-profit and nonprofit facilities, only a quarter of nursing homes said they're confident they'll make it through to next year.

More than half said they're operating at a loss due to fewer residents as well as extra expenses, including additional staff pay because of COVID-19.

Murray and Heap said they will survive. Both said they are now especially focused on helping their staff feel supported after the crisis.

"I know our ability to care for patients is good," Heap said. "Our motto is to uplift, nurture and heal, and we believe if we do that first, success in other ways will follow." ▣

Email Contributing Writer Chris Kenrick at ckenrick@paweeekly.com.

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NEWSOM

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wildfire in the state's history, the Dixie Fire, had grown to more than 600,000 acres, despite the firefighting efforts of about 10,000 people and many more tools and resources, he said.

"The most powerful force in the world is Mother Nature, and right now we are struggling, as are many of our colleagues around the Western United States (and) all around the rest of the globe, to reconcile her

fury," he said.

"We have the largest civilian firefighting force in the world in the state of California, yet still it's not enough to address the challenges we're facing," he added.

One challenge is that the vast majority of the forest fires happening are taking place in federal jurisdictions, he said. About 57% of the state's forest lands are federally owned, while 3% are under state control; the rest are privately owned. He credited President Joe Biden for convening proactive

forums with governors across the Western U.S. to discuss the problem of wildfires.

There are also many firefighting success stories that are never told, he added.

"The reality is every day we're dealing with initial attacks and we're keeping these things under 10 acres — I mean hundreds and hundreds, thousands and thousands of fires that don't have names, that you attach no identity to, are being suppressed every single day," he said.

The CZU August Lightning Complex incident started with 27 small fires ignited by lightning, and 22 of those were suppressed. The five remaining fires were what eventually expanded and combined into the complex fire that left so much damage behind a year later.

The federal government is invested in working to provide tools and resources to enable faster responses to droughts and fires, Regan said. "There's absolutely no question that the president's vision is to have a whole-government approach."

"We cannot solve these problems sitting behind a desk in Washington, D.C.," he added.

Mandatory drought measures possible

With reservoirs across the state at historically low levels — the California Department of Water Resources reports that as of Aug. 17, the San Luis



Magali Gauthier

Green new growth is seen on trees in Big Basin Redwoods State Park one year after the CZU August Lightning Complex fires ravaged the park.

Reservoir was at 16% of its capacity and Lake Oroville at 23% of its capacity — the state has only enacted voluntary water reduction measures so far.

That could change by the end of next month, Newsom said. Already, 50 of the state's 58 counties have been declared to be facing drought emergencies and the entire state may be headed that direction, he said. While water reduction requests are not mandatory at the moment, he said, "We will have likely more to say by the end of September as we enter potentially the third year of this drought."

One effort to strengthen communities' resilience to the impacts of both wildfires and drought is investing in safe drinking water. In the aftermath

of the CZU August Lightning Complex fires, some people in households impacted by the fires also faced the threat of contaminated drinking water as water infrastructure, especially infrastructure made out of plastic, was subjected to high temperatures, leading to the threat of chemicals entering the water supply. Newsom said that with the many water systems across the state — more than 7,700 small water systems statewide — sometimes people who can least afford it are left bearing the infrastructure costs, but a new state funding program for drinking water can help. ▣

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

Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

MANUEL'S PAINTING AND REGLAZING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 288312
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
Manuel's Painting and Reglazing, located at 2246 Menalto Ave., E. Palo Alto, CA 94303, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
MANUEL PAINTING AND REGLAZING INC.
2246 Menalto Ave.
E. Palo Alto, CA 94303
California
This business is conducted by: A Corporation.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 16, 2021.
(ALM July 30; Aug. 6, 13, 20, 2021)

COLLEGE DECRYPTED
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 288402
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
College Decrypted, located at 17 Parker Ave., Atherton, CA 94027, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
METIS BIOCONSULTING LLC
17 Parker Ave.
Atherton, CA 94027
CA
This business is conducted by: A Limited Liability Company.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on January 1, 2021.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 28, 2021.
(ALM Aug. 6, 13, 20, 27, 2021)

GARAGE DOOR REPAIR PROS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 288334
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
Garage Door Repair Pros, located at 906 Tinsley St., East Palo Alto, CA 94303, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
DUCK CLEANING, LLC
906 Tinsley St.
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
California
This business is conducted by: A Limited Liability Company.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 19, 2021.
(ALM Aug. 6, 13, 20, 27, 2021)

DISCOVER AL FRESCO
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 288385
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
Discover Al Fresco, located at 176 Tallwood Drive, Daly City, CA 94014, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
SEAN JOSEPH MANGUBAT REYES
176 Tallwood Drive
Daly City, CA 94014
FRANCESCA REYES
176 Tallwood Drive
Daly City, CA 94014
This business is conducted by: Married Couple.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 26, 2021.
(ALM Aug. 6, 13, 20, 27, 2021)

AA PAINTING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 288443
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
AA Painting, located at 1327 Henderson Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
ALEJANDRO ARGUELLO
1327 Henderson Ave.
Menlo Park, CA 94025
This business is conducted by: An Individual.
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 07/02/2021.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 3, 2021.
(ALM Aug. 13, 20, 27; Sep. 3, 2021)

NAIROBI EPA ADVOCATES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 288492
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
Nairobi EPA Advocates, located at 1364 Sevier Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
JUANITA LOUISE CROFT
1364 Sevier Avenue
Menlo Park, CA 94025
VULINDLELA I. WOBOGO
2776 Hunter Street
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
MARTHA HANKS
1184 Laurel Avenue
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
KALAMU CHACHE
1038 Runnymede Street
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
This business is conducted by: An Unincorporated Association Other than a Partnership.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 6, 2021.
(ALM Aug. 13, 20, 27; Sep. 3, 2021)

PELLARIN ENTERPRISES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 288512
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
Pellarin Enterprises, located at 1520 Main Street, Redwood City, CA 94063, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
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1520 Main Street
Redwood City, CA 94063
CLAUDE PELLARIN
1520 Main Street
Redwood City, CA 94063
ALICE PELLARIN
1520 Main Street
Redwood City, CA 94063
This business is conducted by: A General Partnership.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on June 25, 1985.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 9, 2021.
(ALM Aug. 20, 27; Sep. 3, 10, 2021)

SHARK

continued from page 5

learned after responding to the emergency.

The biologist has been studying sharks for more than 40 years and has been featured widely in National Geographic magazines and documentary TV programs, according to the National Park Service.

Under good Samaritan laws, Palaniappan said, trained medical professionals are not required to respond in emergency situations, but it is considered humanitarian to provide aid.

"People may not realize how helpful they can be in these remote areas," she said.

One condition of such laws is that doctors are not permitted to receive any sort of compensation or money for their service, Palaniappan said.

But people can pay it forward, she added.

After providing initial emergency care to the researcher on June 21, she and her family returned to the island the following day to check in on him.

Pratt was grateful to the doctor for her help and ended up giving Rohan a book about sharks.



Courtesy Latha Palaniappan

The Ramanathan family of Menlo Park poses on the deck of a catamaran during their vacation in the Florida Keys. After Dr. Latha Palaniappan helped rescue a shark researcher at Dry Tortugas National Park, the researcher named a shark after her son, Rohan.

Later, the family found out that the biologist had also decided to name a shark after Rohan, "to inspire him in his interests of marine biology and the sea," Palaniappan said.

It's pretty unusual to have an Indian name for a shark, likely because there aren't many shark scientists in India, Palaniappan said.

"I think this is probably

the world's first shark named Rohan," she said.

The gesture, she said, was very meaningful for her son.

"I'd never seen a happier look on his face," she said. "Nothing could have made this 12-year-old boy happier." ▣

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

USGS PROPERTY

continued from page 5

parties or bidders to preserve the competitive bidding process and maintain privacy, according to the spokesperson.

The site has, for years, been one that public officials have expressed interest in seeing used, at least in part, for housing — and particularly affordable housing — as the site transitions from federal property to land under the jurisdiction of the local city government.

“Zoning and land use decisions are the responsibility of local government, and once the USGS land is sold, the federal government will no longer play a role in this process. As the City Council works to develop consensus for its future use, I encourage them to include affordable housing for our community as we deal with astronomical housing costs,” said Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-Menlo Park) in a statement.

Menlo Park Councilwoman Jen Wolosin, representing District 3, which includes both the USGS property and the SRI International campus now slated for potential redevelopment, said there haven’t been any official conversations about how to rezone the property at this point.

Just recently, developers announced plans to transform the 60-acre SRI International campus, a closed research and

office park, into a mixed-use campus with housing that’s more publicly accessible.

Wolosin said in an interview that she doesn’t want whatever comes next at the USGS property to worsen the city’s existing jobs-housing imbalance, and sees the USGS site as an opportunity to provide housing near transit and services. She also noted that she doesn’t want her district to become the only place where new homes are considered in the upcoming housing element discussions.

She added that she does expect the USGS property’s future to be included in the city’s housing element update discussions. As part of a state-mandated process, the city is required to come up with potential locations for more than 3,000 new homes citywide, including a mix of residences at below-market-rate affordability levels.

“It makes a lot of sense for these two sites in District 3 to have a big role, but I don’t think any one district should take all of the new housing or all of the impacts,” Wolosin said. “I think it needs to be a citywide perspective ... This site has a lot of opportunity, but it has to be looked at in conjunction with all the other development going on and how our city is being shaped for the future.”

USGS has for the past several years been moving its operations to Moffett Field in Mountain View, where NASA is

located.

Under federal law, the GSA is required to charge market-rate rent for its properties, and the USGS was paying about \$7.5 million per year for its Menlo Park space as part of a 10-year lease that expired after moving plans were announced. The USGS announced in September 2016 that it planned to move to the NASA Ames Research Park at Moffett Field to save money on rent.

The campus includes 17 buildings and 390,217 square feet of rentable space.

While the USGS staff has been relocating offices, the Public Buildings Reform Board identified the Menlo Park property a “high-value asset” and with other properties, was approved by the Office of Management and Budget to be sold on Jan. 24, 2020, according to the GSA spokesperson.

More information about the sale will be posted at disposal.gsa.gov and the auction will be held on realestatesales.gov.

Other details, like the starting bid, have not yet been finalized but will be posted at those websites, according to the spokesperson. ■

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

AIR QUALITY

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of Sustainable Silicon Valley and director of air quality and mobility programs, to develop a small, lightweight, low-cost sensor. They wanted it to be easy to carry around and easy to use, so that it could tie into STEM-based learning opportunities for local high school students.

Clark then developed software that enables readings from the air sensors to be accessed via smartphone, Strawa said. The sensor they developed, which is estimated to cost about \$85, now comes with an app, called “BackpAQ,” which offers Wi-Fi connectivity and an open source design that can be viewed online for easy classroom use. Importantly, the BackpAQ app shows the air quality data being collected in real time from the sensor.

Since then, Sustainable Silicon Valley completed a feasibility study to test out the monitors with 10 Bay Area students, six in Dublin and four in East Palo Alto, and had them weigh in on the experience. The East Palo Alto youth who participated were recruited from Youth United for Community Action, an environmental justice nonprofit based in East Palo Alto.

Some students who partici-

pated in the feasibility study reported that using the devices helped them feel empowered, motivated to explore their communities more and eager to take longer walks or get outside more often, according to the feasibility study report.

The Clean Air Equity Project aims to expand to 100 students based in the Peninsula, South Bay and East Bay. The program also aims to teach students about air quality, the scientific method and data analysis. Students will be expected to identify and walk a neighborhood route regularly throughout the course of the program to track air quality variations over time.

One concern that the Sustainable Silicon Valley team took efforts to tackle was student privacy, Strawa said. While the coordinates of each sensor are a critical part of the data they’re collecting, the researchers don’t know which student is associated with which sensor.

“We don’t want to know who has those sensors,” he said.

Students or school districts interested in participating in the program should reach out to Strawa at airquality@sustainablestv.org. ■

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

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'The No One's Rose' blooms at Stanford Live

World premiere of avant-garde opera, based on WWII survivor's poetry, takes on new dimension amid pandemic

By Janet Silver Ghent

When the world splinters after a cataclysmic event, how does a poet, an artist, a dancer or a composer move forward without plunging into hopelessness or wallowing in optimistic platitudes? Those are questions Paul Celan, a Holocaust survivor, wrestled with through his poetry and composer Matthew Aucoin raises in "The No One's Rose," a music, dance and theater piece based on the poems of Celan (1920-1970).

Celan, a Romanian-born Jewish poet, survived the Shoah, which claimed the lives of his family. In the post-war years, Celan settled in Paris, creating hundreds of poems in German that grapple with war, blood, death and rebirth. But the ensuing guilt and trauma led him to die by suicide at the age of 50. Aucoin includes three of Celan's poems in "The No One's Rose," which has its world premiere Aug. 25-29 at Stanford's Bing Concert Hall, presented by American Modern Opera Company (AMOC) in partnership with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Stanford Live.

"Psalm," one of the three Celan poems, offers the metaphor of a devastated postwar congregation as a "no one's rose," which despite everything continues to bloom. Like the poems themselves, Aucoin said his music includes both "darkness and light, and we don't want to be too simplistic — about one side or the other winning out." It's also about "joy and warning signs of the challenges that lie ahead."

The show, which was six years in the making, is the first performance before a live audience at Bing Concert Hall since March 2020. "The No One's Rose" was originally scheduled to premiere in October 2020, to commemorate the hundredth birthday of Celan. Amid the

pandemic, the piece evolved.

"The artists of AMOC and I wanted to make a dance and theater piece about how you rebuild after the last year," Aucoin said during a phone interview from Vermont, where performers rehearsed and bonded earlier this summer. "We built a kind of scene out of their experiences."

In "The No One's Rose," dancers, instrumentalists and singers also serve as storytellers, offering glimpses of their lives much as the pilgrims do in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," or the dancers in Broadway's "A Chorus Line." Violinist Keir GoGwilt, for example, talks about the emotional impact of performing via Zoom to hospitalized COVID patients around the world.

The performers are "characters onstage with us as well as music makers," said Zack Winokur, a trained dancer who co-founded AMOC with Aucoin in 2017 and directs the performance. Just as the separations between dancers, vocalists and instrumentalists are blurred, so are those between performers and audiences. Because of their pandemic experiences, "the people onstage are navigating the same circumstances as those who are watching," he added in a Zoom interview.

In dance as well, choreographer Bobbi Jene Smith seeks to create links with the audience. "I love to take everyday movements that are familiar to everyone and then amplify them until they become something else," she wrote in an email.

Aucoin, Winokur and Smith describe the creation of the show as a collaborative process. During weeks of rehearsals in Vermont before coming to Stanford in mid-August, participants became a community, dining together and sharing their lives. As the show opens, with performers seated casually around a dining room table, Winokur said he expects



Courtesy Carlos Cardona/American Modern Opera Company

Members of American Modern Opera Company (AMOC) perform in a previous original production by the company, which is presenting the world premiere of "The No One's Rose" at Stanford Live in partnership with Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra.

audiences will pick up on the raucous mood that spurred the creative process.

Smith agreed, emphasizing the "collaborative" nature of the piece's development. It "doesn't just come from a few minds. It comes from the collective imagination in the room."

Artists making up AMOC's "collective imagination" are soprano Julia Bullock, counter-tenor Anthony Roth Costanzo, tenor Paul Appleby and bass-baritone Davóne Tines. In addition to Smith, dancers include Or Schraiber, Julia Eichten and Yiannis Logothetis. Instrumentalists include GoGwilt, cellist Coleman Itzkoff, and percussionist Jonny Allen.

Aucoin, a MacArthur Fellow, is both writer and composer. He was introduced to the work of Celan at Harvard, where he graduated summa cum laude in 2012, majoring in English. At Harvard, he studied poetry with Jorie Graham, whose poem "Deep Water Trawling" is also included in the piece.

Celan, he observes, "always struck me as a poet whose work is very close to music." For one, the poems "are very fragmentary — little islands or oases within a vast ocean of silence." For another, "I think he felt the need in the wake of World War II and the Holocaust to reinvent the German language as a mother tongue, but he felt alienated because of the taint of Nazism. In his middle and later poetry, he is looking very hard at individual words and renaming them, treating them as musical objects."

Aucoin said his decision to major in English was not so

unusual, adding that two Harvard graduates in the show also majored in other fields: Violinist GoGwilt, also a poet and music historian, majored in literature, and bass-baritone Tines, a sociology major, created a music video about Breonna Taylor, who was killed by a police officer in her home in Louisville, Kentucky.

"There's a funny culture at Harvard, where a lot of the serious musicians wind up majoring in something else," said Aucoin, noting that he's "drawn to writing vocal music. It's always felt very natural to me to build on a text. A poem is like a piece of firewood that music sets aflame. Some composers regard words with suspicion." Aucoin sees poetry and music as "two languages. I try to be fluent in both." Opera is often regarded with similar suspicion. Aucoin hopes to erase some of that through his forthcoming book "The Impossible Art: Adventures in Opera."

When Aucoin began composing "The No One's Rose," his "original impulse was to juxtapose Bach with Paul Celan," contrasting the goodness of God and the universe and the "tonal certainty" in Bach with the uncertainty in Celan's poetry. But his piece, which begins with music from Bach's "St. Matthew Passion," continued to take on new directions.

As far as his own music, Aucoin said it "owes a lot more to beloved Bay Area resident John Adams than to some older composers." That said, the avant-garde AMOC will be performing with the Bay Area-based Philharmonia Baroque

Orchestra, best known for classical and baroque repertoire, using period instruments.

"I really admire what Philharmonia Baroque does by introducing new pieces," Aucoin said. "I don't see a contradiction. Anybody who writes music for a violin is working with an old instrument." The "color and texture and blends are a lot of fun to work with." Besides, he said, "I'm literally married to a baroque musician, bassoonist Clay Zeller-Townson."

Now rehearsing while masked at Bing, the cast continues to grapple with the uncertainty and challenges of the pandemic. For Aucoin, if God forbid the performance at Stanford is put on hold, what happens next?

"In a way, my heaviest lifting is done," he said. "I can sleep peacefully at night. I feel the piece will come to life eventually."

"The No One's Rose" will premiere Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 25 and 26, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Aug. 29, at 2:30 p.m. at Bing Concert Hall, 327 Lasuen St., Stanford. Tickets are \$15-\$225. Visit live.stanford.edu/calendar/august-2021/philharmonia-baroque-orchestra. ▀

Email Contributing Writer
Janet Silver Ghent at
ghentwriter@gmail.com.

COVID attendance requirements

Attendees must meet at least one of two criteria: 1) provide proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 or 2) proof of a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours before the performance. All are required to wear a mask.



Matthew Aucoin



Zack Winokur



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Food & Drink



Beloved Silicon Valley institution

Photo via Buck's of Woodside on Matterport.

Buck's of Woodside goes up for auction as an NFT

What is the digital replica of the quirky restaurant & tech meetup mecca worth?

The first bidder says \$250,000.

By Sara Hayden

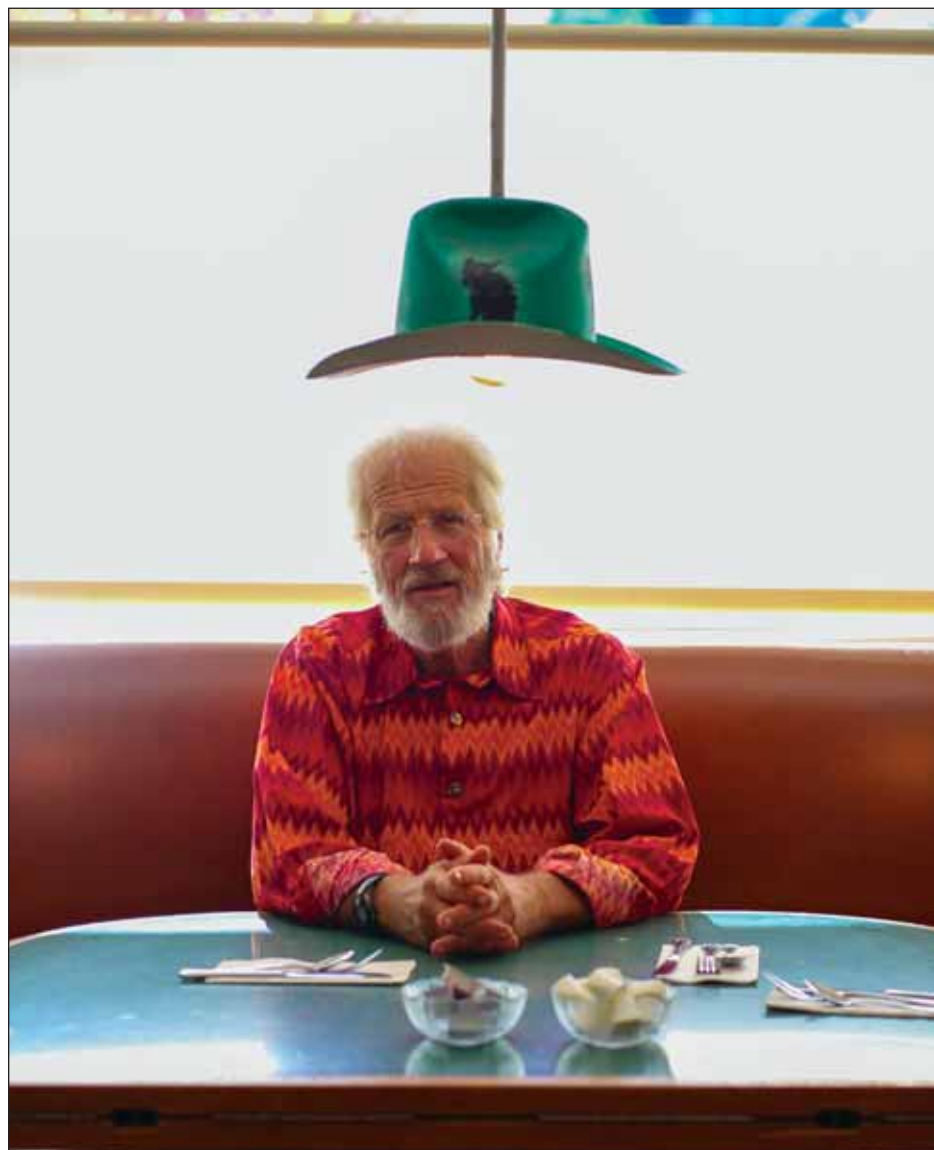
On a Monday morning, Jamis MacNiven — equal parts restaurateur, entertainer and teller of (sometimes) tall tales — stood beneath an enormous, leathery anaconda hide that runs the length of the dining room inside his Silicon Valley restaurant, Buck's of Woodside. There, in a cowboy hat and a bright red, short-sleeve button-down shirt, MacNiven addressed a packed dining room filled with entrepreneurship students who'd just rolled in on a bus from a San Mateo university founded by third-generation venture capitalist Tim Draper.

MacNiven had joked that he was going to “scream the history of Buck's” to his breakfast audience, an often-invoked spiel that he says is “all just fun. I tell truths and lies in equal amounts.”

His latest announcement — delivered beneath that sprawling serpent skin with a sign that boasts it was stripped from a snake in the Amazon that had attacked a child — also existed somewhere in between fact and fiction: MacNiven was putting Buck's up for auction.

No, not the actual, physical restaurant at 3062 Woodside Road that's seen the birth of many a tech company over the years, but its digital doppelgänger, via non-fungible token. “We've recently launched an NFT,” MacNiven declared. Some of the students responded with a laugh, but it was true — Buck's was indeed listed on the Open-Sea marketplace as “the world's first 3D immersive NFT.”

By the time the auction closes Aug. 19, whoever places the winning bid for Buck's NFT will own access to the one and only complete digital re-creation of the restaurant. These days, with something akin to a digital deed on a blockchain database, you



Sammy Dallal

Above: Jamis MacNiven, the owner of Buck's restaurant in Woodside on Nov. 4, 2019.

Top: Buck's of Woodside went up for auction as a digital recreation of the historic Silicon Valley restaurant, billed as “the world's first 3D immersive NFT.”

can own digital assets like a tweet or an animation. So why not a replica of a near-legendary Silicon Valley institution?

As a place to meet and greet, wheel and deal, Buck's is a big deal. Indeed, the NFT brochure states that since Buck's opened its doors at the start of the '90s, “An invitation to ‘Breakfast at Buck's’ would go on to become an official step in the high-tech startup funding process.” The practice has even been the subject of a Harvard University study.

The breakfast gathering that morning marked entrepreneur Julianna Crivello's first visit to Buck's, a pilgrimage that was coinciding with a new fund she was launching, supported by Draper. “It feels historical,” she said. “The inner child in me is screaming.”

But when you remove these interactions, and bring Buck's back solely in pixels, does it hold the same kind of draw?

MacNiven seems to be betting that when treated like a digital museum filled with tech artifacts and lore, preserved at a specific moment in time, Buck's still has plenty of appeal.

A virtual welcome to Buck's

On the matter of non-fungible tokens, MacNiven says, “I think I'm an authority now.” He breaks down how it will work for Buck's: “In this case, there is only one digital copy of this. Once the auction closes, you need a password to see it. You get the keys, and it allows you to unlock the original.”

With the proverbial digital keys, visitors can virtually tour Buck's at their leisure from a screen, and check out the items and stories that MacNiven has curated and collected over the years.

With a click or tap, viewers go through the doorway at Buck's, where a replica of the

Statue of Liberty greets you. Head around the corner, and you find yourself in the warm glow of a backlit photograph of sculptor Liz Hickok's "San Francisco in Jell-O" hanging over a copy of a Playboy magazine in Braille signed by Stevie Wonder ("I met him at a conference once," MacNiven said; the explanation at the digital Buck's says it was the Grammy Awards). Near the bar is an Apple 1 computer, hanging over lip-shaped barstools. Pinned to the wall next to the office is a TED Talk pass from Al Gore. Peppered throughout are Little League and family photos, reminders that despite all the celebrities who've come to Buck's, "We're just a neighborhood joint serving pancakes to kids and cowboys and neighborhood folks."

Visitors virtually experience all this in "the space somewhere between a video and a still (image)," MacNiven said. They have the details down to the alligator farm-inspired carpet that patrons have trekked over the last three decades. "The process of digitizing wasn't that difficult. You use a camera that flies around, and then it networks the whole series of images together," he said.

All that's missing is the smell of hot coffee and the taste of coffee-cake, though surely those aren't too far behind.

"This is what happened to photography. When photography came out, it was so revolutionary and so shocking," MacNiven says. "It's the same kind of jump."

Making the jump

NFTs certainly have their critics: If digital media can be

unlimitedly reproduced, can it retain real value for the buyer? Can the creator of an original work be fairly compensated? What about the environmental impact, what with all the power required to keep it all running?

There's also an element of risk, as with any investment. Physical property could get damaged or lost. For example, the valuable Apple 1 computer model that was on display at the physical Buck's restaurant was removed to help protect it. A digitized version of it is now available via NFT, but even that's not foolproof: An NFT could become inaccessible, should one of its service providers go out of business or change their systems. Or an investment just might not pan out. Still, for some investors, the allure of ownership remains strong enough that the risk is worth stomaching.

For his part, MacNiven said he's never been skeptical about NFTs, though he's thought a lot about them. "I think it's a bold and wonderful experiment to slice up the world. If people want to spend their money on it, that seems OK to me. I'm always searching myself for what's wrong with this," MacNiven said.

A desire to share what Buck's is all about has also motivated MacNiven, especially since he and his wife Margaret retired and passed the restaurant reins to their kids in 2020. "I want people to see my collection," MacNiven said. "I've always been a showman. I've been on deck for 30 years and I've stepped back a little bit, but I want to share it with others."

With a team of about 16 people from five different companies, preparation for Buck's NFT only

took about four months, from capturing the images to issuing the token and opening the auction. But inspiration for the project was seeded years prior.

MacNiven used to collect rare books, and he recalls seeing someone pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for a document signed by Spanish monarchs Isabella and Ferdinand in 1492, though many copies were already in circulation. What set it apart was that it was an original. MacNiven has noted countless similar examples since then.

"Somebody paid real money for it, to own the original," MacNiven said. "When NFTs started popping up, I followed them as an interesting curiosity. Then I realized they were very real."

What it's worth

While Buck's team kept orange juice flowing and cooked up hot plates of pancakes and eggs for the students and other customers, MacNiven checked his watch to see if it was time to pick up his grandchild. It wasn't a smart-watch, though Apple co-founder Steve Jobs looked out through a mustached pair of funny glasses from a black and white portrait on the wall.

Instead, it was a digital watch, blinking back numbers in a liquid crystal display. The timepiece, like so many of the objects in Buck's, seemed both nostalgic and somehow, well, timeless. And maybe NFTs will turn out to be equally so, the pendulum of innovation swinging back to something very basic.

"This desire of humans to possess stuff is a durable idea that we've had throughout history.

But now, because of the internet, you've got the digital world, and people want to possess things there," MacNiven said.

As of Tuesday, Aug. 17, the top bid was \$329,575.05, a nearly \$80,000 increase from the initial bid from a friend who offered up a not-so-tiny \$250,000 to "set the tone." MacNiven said he'd also call on another friend for help in the hopes of reaching their nearly 59 million followers on Twitter: "Elon (Musk) is a friend. I'm going to say 'Guess what Elon, I need a hand.'"

After the NFT auction, MacNiven and his family will maintain access to the physical Buck's and keep it open to patrons. He expects that whoever places the winning NFT bid will do likewise, and keep the digital Buck's open to the public too — though that will be entirely at their discretion, as the holder, and buyer, of the digital keys.

Making history

At the conclusion of his presentation, several students rushed up to MacNiven to take selfies with him, and also to get his take on their startup ideas. Many jetted around with phone cameras, snapping pics of a silver disc that commemorated the first million downloads for iTunes in its first week in 2003, and tables where historic deals took place for Tesla,

PayPal, eBay, Hotmail and more. "Where's the Apple 1? I need to get a picture of that," one student said. Another said that he'd bid on MacNiven's NFT once his own company takes off.

So what then is the digital form of Buck's worth?

Time will tell. But if nothing else, MacNiven said, "This is just a fun experiment ... How could we preserve the historical record, and show the majesty that we've created here over the years? That's really what it's about." ▀

Buck's of Woodside, 3062 Woodside Road, Woodside; (650) 851-8010, buckswoodside.com.

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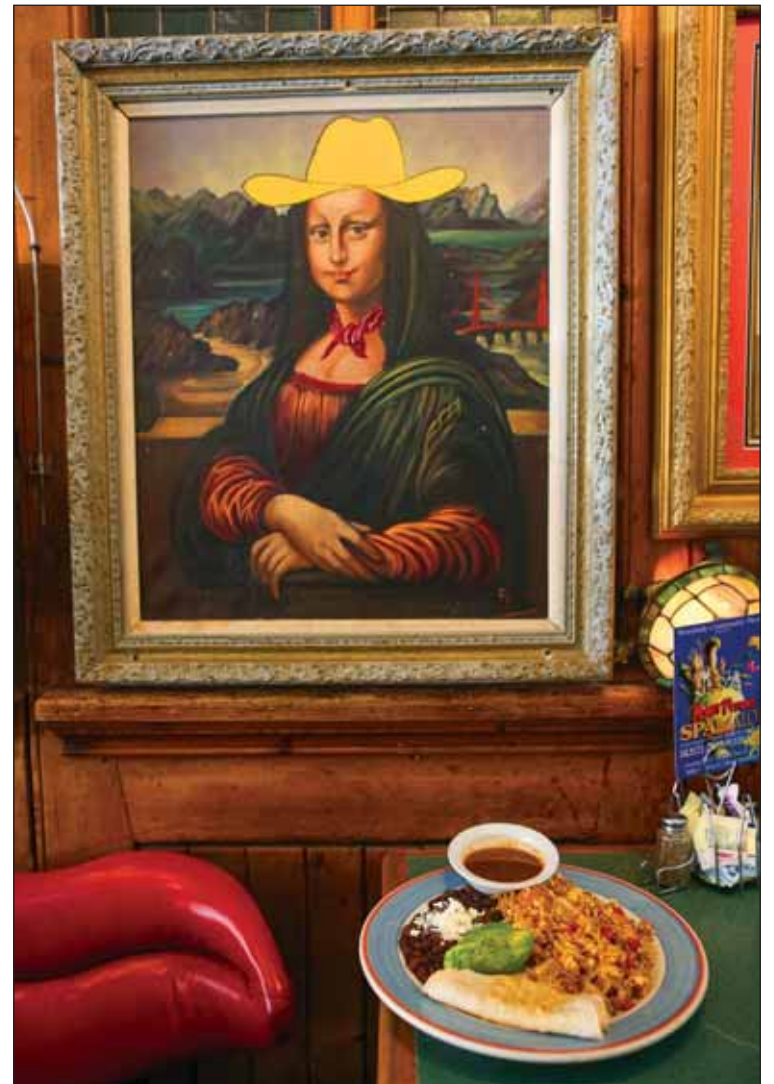
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Magali Gauthier

After their retirement, Jamis and Margaret MacNiven's children took over the operations at Buck's of Woodside. Above, Tyler, far left, Rowan, center left, and Dylan, center right, in front of Buck's with Tyler's son, Aden, and the restaurant's head chef, August Schuchman, far right, in Woodside on July 31, 2020.



Sammy Dallal

Buck's is a restaurant, but it's also a museum of sorts, housing items and stories that MacNiven has collected over the past three decades.

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