

# The Almanac

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

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WWW.ALMANACNEWS.COM

## Where do we go from here?

With hopes of finally exiting the pandemic, locals consider the lingering impacts of the past two years

### PANDEMIC: TWO YEARS IN

It began with isolated and untimely deaths: a cruise ship passenger, a Silicon Valley worker. Then, one by one, counties began to declare local health emergencies.

Bans on large gatherings followed. Sports leagues canceled their seasons. Countries across the globe hurriedly instituted travel bans. And finally, on March 16, 2020, six Bay Area counties announced that everyone should stay at home until April 7 — the most severe directive at the time in the U.S.

It's been a long two years since, filled with public health mandates, littered with PPE, and marked by wave after wave of variants of the coronavirus. But as the omicron surge wanes and health leaders declare that we can go almost anywhere without a mask (though face coverings continue to be strongly recommended), the staff of The Almanac and Palo Alto Weekly asked community members to take stock of what we face. As we emerge from the pandemic, you'll find stories throughout this issue chronicling what they had to say.



Magali Gauthier

**Kristin Coronado**, a school nurse, makes a call in her office at Woodside High School on March 15. The Sequoia Union High School District was hit hard by COVID-19, making the last two years something of a blur, Coronado said.

## After two years, school nurses hope the worst is behind them

The pandemic brought long hours, 'ever-changing rules' and a new appreciation for the work they do

By Angela Swartz

During the week of Jan. 3, Kristin Coronado was wide awake in the early morning hours, hammering away at what felt like endless work as she received report after report of students and teachers at Woodside and Menlo-Atherton high schools testing positive for COVID-19. By week's end,

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case counts would skyrocket to 375 between the two schools, and 710 districtwide.

The past two years have been a blur for Coronado, a school nurse for the Sequoia Union High School District. When the omicron surge took hold of the

district — one of the hardest hit locally — this winter, she said she worked over the holiday break, on weekends and sometimes until 1 a.m.

"We never want to go back to anything like that again," Coronado said, noting that she entered every positive case into a spreadsheet, then followed up

See **NURSES**, page 17



Magali Gauthier

**Abbe Keane**, a school nurse, tests fifth grader Aaron's hearing at Corte Madera School in Portola Valley on March 15. "I don't think anyone can prepare for a pandemic," she said.

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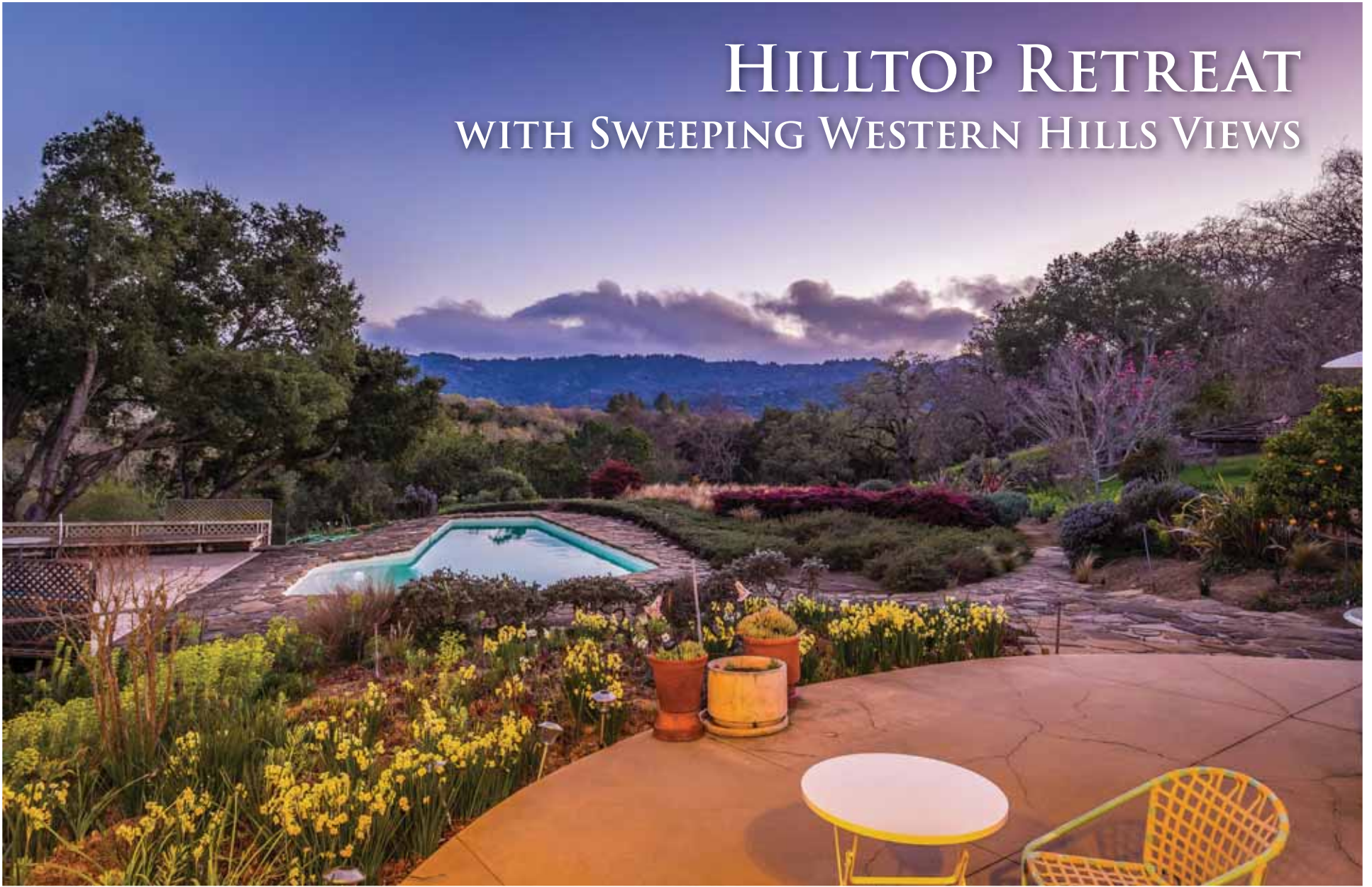
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# Local News

MENLO PARK | AThERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Magali Gauthier

**Elisa Spurlin**, owner of Peabody Gallery in Menlo Park, said the pandemic shutdown seems to have inspired people to focus on decorating their homes.

## For these small businesses, the pandemic had a silver lining

Customers flocked to their businesses, but things still aren't normal

By Lloyd Lee

In the niche world of custom art framing, Elisa Spurlin has noticed that when things are down, wall decorations go up.

The pandemic was the latest example. As homes also became classrooms and offices, giving classmates and coworkers a glimpse into each other's personal spaces, a new type of environmental awareness

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TWO YEARS IN**

formed. A wall was not just a wall, but a Zoom background or, even further, an insight into one's character. Others simply wanted to make home feel more like home. In either case, people turned to services like Spurlin's.

"It's weird," said Spurlin, owner of Peabody Gallery in Menlo Park. "Anything that

kept people at home was good for us."

Few businesses, especially the small ones, went unscathed during the pandemic.

Business owners have pleaded to their landlords to ease up on rent. They've wrestled with red tape and crowded phone lines to secure government loans. And many have confronted the tough choice of

See **SMALL BUSINESSES**, page 17

## Three out of 5 survey respondents continue to mask up in public settings

Local poll captures people's top concerns

By Jamey Padojino

Isolating. Frustrating. Disrupting.

These are some of the common words local readers used to describe their COVID-19 pandemic experience, according to an informal, 10-question survey that this news organization conducted earlier this month. To examine how the highly contagious disease upended our everyday routines, the survey asked people about their outlook on

**PANDEMIC:  
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their lives, attitudes on how the health crisis has been handled and opinions on what the future holds.

Over the course of nine days, 352 people from the Peninsula and East Bay responded. The poll results indicated that many people expect to continue taking precautions against COVID-19 and have faced numerous obstacles since March 2020.

When asked to capture their pandemic experience in three words, some people went with phrases, such as "Life's empty space," "real-life movie" and "Groundhog Day." While most answers touched on challenges, others shared an optimistic view through answers like "transformative," "eye-opening" and "gratitude-inducing."

Physical activity proved to be a main outlet from the stresses

See **SURVEY**, page 16

## Facing deep divisions, Atherton tables a gas-powered leaf blower ban

By Angela Swartz

Atherton residents have conflicting opinions about limiting gas-powered equipment use in town, with some saying they can't do their yard work without them and others pointing to the health impacts caused by the devices.

After hearing public feedback, Atherton council members tabled a proposed ordinance to put more limits on gas-powered garden equipment last month. It likely won't come back to the council until the end of 2022, according to Town Manager George Rodericks. Council members would like the ordinance to become effective once the state begins offering rebates for electric leaf blower purchases around January 2023, he said.

During a Feb. 16 meeting, town staff proposed limiting use of the devices on Spare the Air days, limiting use to daytime hours on weekdays and banning two-stroke leaf blowers — that tend to produce more pollutants than four-stroke blowers — after Jan. 1, 2023, according to a town staff report. The state is banning the sale of gas-powered small engines beginning on Jan. 1, 2024.

Last year, 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.

Emily Conn, chair of the environmental programs committee, said she is "frustrated" and "disheartened" with the pushback to a gas-powered leaf blower ban in town. She said the proposed ordinance seemed like a "half measure in light of the health effects and climate risks associated with pouring additional gas into our lungs and into the atmosphere."

Over 200 residents participated in a poll about the proposed changes. Some 54% supported the changes, while 46% opposed them.

Widespread interest in the topic is evident from the number

of comments submitted to the City Council expressing opinions on limiting gas-powered equipment in town. With 30 comments, the leaf blower issues generated far more input than most council agenda items normally receive.

Some commenters said electric leaf blowers don't have the power or battery life to clear their larger properties. Residents expressed concern about the cost of buying new equipment for gardeners. Resident Smith McKeithen called it a "regulatory overreach."

Conn fired back, saying the burden should be on the residents to buy the electric blowers, not on the gardeners.

"Residents in the most expensive ZIP code in America aren't willing to spend the \$99 to \$200, which is the cost of an electric blower at Home Depot, to reduce noise and air pollution for our children?" she asked. "Children who are already going to be forced to confront the climate crisis previous generations have saddled them with."

Councilwoman Diana Hawkins-Manuelian said the proposed ordinance didn't go far enough and she'd like to see gas-powered leaf blowers banned entirely.

"This (ban) has been in place with cities all around us," she said, noting that nearby towns like Redwood City given incentives to residents to switch to electric blowers by setting aside money for a gas-powered leaf blower buy-back program. "I'm disappointed we haven't made a decision on this."

### Health hazards

Stanford pediatric cardiologist Dr. David Axelrod, who lives on the border of Menlo Park and Atherton, told the council that he would like to see the devices banned "immediately" because of the health effects of air and noise pollution.

"I appreciate that there are important economic, political and societal implications of imposing an immediate ban on GPLB (gas-powered leaf

See **LEAF BLOWERS**, page 18



## Las Lomitas Elementary School District

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND OF PROPOSAL FOR INCREASING SCHOOL FACILITIES FEES AS AUTHORIZED BY EDUCATION CODE SECTION 17620 AND GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 65995

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that immediately following a public hearing on the matter, a resolution will be considered by the Board of Trustees of the Las Lomitas Elementary School District at its regular meeting on April 13, 2022 which, if adopted by the Board, will increase development fees established by the District against residential construction and reconstruction to \$4.79 per square foot and against new commercial or industrial construction to \$0.78 per square foot. The proposed fees are authorized by Education Code Section 17620 and Government Code Section 65995. Data pertaining to the cost of school facilities is available for inspection during regular business hours at the District's administrative offices at 1011 Altschul Avenue in Menlo Park. The increased fees, if approved by the Board of Trustees, will become effective on June 13, 2022 which is 60 days after the proposed adoption by the Board of the resolution levying such fee.

March 18, 2022  
1st Quarter 2022

#### AN IMPORTANT NOTICE REQUIRED BY CALIFORNIA DIVISION OF DRINKING WATER

Este aviso contiene información muy importante sobre su agua potable, por favor lea el aviso en español si va aquí incluido. Si el aviso en español no va incluido aquí, contacte al sistema de agua para pedir una copia.

#### The O'Connor Tract Co-Operative Water Company has levels of manganese above the secondary drinking water standard.

Although this is not an emergency, as our customers, you have a right to know what happened, what you should do, and what we are doing to correct this situation. Our water system is in violation of a secondary drinking water standard. Violation of a secondary standard does not pose an immediate threat to health.

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Average results for water samples for the last four quarters have manganese levels of 55 ppb in well #1 and 140 ppb in well #2 (ppb=parts per billion). This is above the secondary drinking water standard, or secondary maximum contaminant level of 50 ppb.

Manganese concentrations above the standard may have an effect on taste and tend to leave black deposits in some plumbing systems.

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- You do not need to use an alternative water supply (e.g., bottled water). There is no health risk.
- If you have other health issues concerning the consumption of this water, you may wish to consult your doctor.

#### What happened? What is being done?

O'Connor Water has been above the secondary standard for manganese for many years, and this has been described to members in the annual Report on Water Quality Measurements. Recent state regulations have imposed stricter requirements for complying with the secondary standard for manganese. The state has issued the company a citation for noncompliance. The state ordered the company to start quarterly monitoring in February 2012, and this monitoring is still ongoing at both wells. The state also required that manganese monitoring be continued quarterly and that the results of these tests be reported to all water consumers.

The Company is working with State agencies and the City of Menlo Park to complete the planning of a manganese treatment facility that will then be installed and operational on the Company's property.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this public notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this public notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

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### CRIME BRIEFS

#### Six cited for buying booze for minors

Six people were arrested and cited on Saturday, March 12, for purchasing alcoholic beverages for minors, according to a press release from the Menlo Park Police Department.

One of the individuals was cited for an outstanding warrant, the press release states.

According to the city's daily police log records, some of the incidents occurred near 3400 block Middlefield Road, 300 block Sharon Park Drive, 800 block Willow Road and 500 block Oak Grove Ave.

Business names of where the incidents occurred are not disclosed because the merchants were not directly involved, said Nicole Acker, the police department's public information officer.

The arrests are the result of a statewide program called the Decoy Shoulder Tap Operation.

Menlo Park Police Department partnered with agents of the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC), a state agency that monitors the sale and distribution of alcohol, to carry out the operation which catches any adults purchasing alcohol for people under 21 years old. It's funded through the Alcoholic Beverage Control, Acker said.

In the operation, a minor stands outside of a liquor or convenience store, under the supervision of an officer, and asks patrons to buy them alcohol, the press release states. The minor indicates that he or she is underage and can't buy alcohol. If the adult agrees to purchase it, agents arrest and cite the person.

The penalty can be a minimum \$1,000 fine and 24 hours of community service.

About 50 law enforcement agencies and ABC agents participated in the operation and resulted in over 170 citations on Saturday throughout the state, according to the statement.

"Unfortunately, thousands of young people die in alcohol-related tragedies every year in this country," ABC Director Eric Hirata said in the press release. "This collaborative effort among California law enforcement agencies spotlights underage

See **CRIME BRIEFS**, page 16

### COMMUNITY BRIEFS



Courtesy Kirsten Cahill

**Thunder Sisters** player Piper Cahill swings her bat on March 12 at Nealon Park in Menlo Park.

#### New all girls softball league launches

Alpine Little League, a youth baseball league for children in the Menlo Park area, celebrated opening day of its all-girls softball league on Saturday, March 12.

Organizers of the league, which is open to girls ages 7 to 11, said they started it because girls' participation in baseball drops off once they get older.

There are 145 girls signed up for the team's 11 teams.

#### Menlo-Atherton High fundraiser is live

Menlo-Atherton High School's annual fundraising auction is up but closes on Sunday, March 20.

Auction items this year include Golden State Warriors tickets, access to an Oakland A's luxury suite and a brunch with Principal Karl Losekoot.

Bid at [one.bidpal.net/mauction2022/welcome](http://one.bidpal.net/mauction2022/welcome).

See **COMMUNITY BRIEFS**, page 10

# Tech economy, not COVID-19, remains biggest uncertainty in real estate market

As talent moves outside of the daily commute radius, will companies follow?

By Linda Taaffe

Not even a pandemic has been able to slow down the Midpeninsula's housing market. After shutting down for nearly two months in early spring 2020 during the initial COVID-19 lockdowns, the local real estate market has come roaring back with surprising resiliency. Last year, it saw its highest sales volume in a decade.

Low interest rates, a strong tech economy and — surprisingly — all the turmoil of the pandemic fueled what some Realtors have described as a “historic market” in 2021, with single-family homes in all price ranges seeing a bump in activity.

A report compiled by Sotheby's International Realty found that housing sales throughout the Bay Area were 30% higher in February 2021 compared to prior to the pandemic in February 2020, while 67% of those transactions were higher than the asking price, compared to 50% a year earlier. And it wasn't rare for a home listed at \$2.5

## PANDEMIC: TWO YEARS IN

million to receive more than 20 offers and bids more than half a million dollars over asking price, according to local agents.

“The pandemic has definitely brought drastic changes to the real estate market. It has moved many variables in the market all at once. ... That's why 2021 was very active,” said Xin Jiang, a real estate agent with Compass in Palo Alto. “It has triggered people to reconsider where they want to live and how they want to live.”

Those choosing to work remotely long term now have the option to move to the mountains or next to the ocean, freeing up inventory for those who want to stay on the Peninsula and upgrade to a larger home on a larger piece of land, she said. This has created much more moving around within the Peninsula market.

“This is a trend that may remain for a while until we figure out how much (our lives) can get back to ‘normal,’” Jiang said.

The response to COVID-19 has redefined everything from the ways properties are shown and marketed to what kinds of renovations, floor plans and home features are most desirable, given that the pandemic changed the way people interact with one another in public and private spaces. The expected permanence of working from home and other factors may also lead tech companies to leave the area, or shrink their Silicon Valley footprint, which itself could have consequences for residential real estate, local agents said.

Silicon Valley Realtors interviewed by this news organization during the pandemic aren't certain if the housing industry will ever go completely back to its pre-pandemic ways once the virus fades away.

Derk Brill, a Realtor at Compass, said that some of the bigger changes occurred around the marketing of properties. With open houses on hold, virtual tours and 3D walkthroughs became the norm.

See **REAL ESTATE**, page 11

# As traffic returns to Bay Area highways, congestion is still less than before the pandemic

Silicon Valley is still experiencing shorter drive times, but how long will it last?

By Sue Dremann

Will traffic rebound to “carmageddon” levels now that employers are asking workers to come to the post-pandemic workplace?

The prognostications so far appear to be mixed, according to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the government agency responsible for transportation planning, financing and coordinating for the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

Traffic into Silicon Valley has not bounced all the way back, traffic data is showing, spokesman John Goodwin said. The MTC data tracks traffic volumes coming through the toll side of Bay Area bridges — one way only.

While most other Bay Area bridges show traffic volumes at 90% or greater of pre-pandemic levels, the numbers of vehicles crossing the Dumbarton and San Mateo-Hayward bridges

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continue to lag.

On the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge, westbound weekday crossings routinely hit 60,000 vehicles prior to the pandemic, but they have reached 50,000 vehicles only a handful of times since. The last time was Dec. 17, 2021.

“Not once in 2022 has the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge recorded 50,000 westbound crossings,” Goodwin said.

It's a similar story at the Dumbarton Bridge, which routinely had 40,000 westbound vehicles a day in 2019. It hasn't hit that mark once since February 2020, he said.

The median number of cars passing over the Dumbarton Bridge a day during the five-day work week starting March 14, 2020 — the week that six Bay Area counties implemented “stay at home” orders — was 15,094.

The number gradually increased to a median of more than 30,000 vehicles daily in Dec. 18, 2021, but it has dropped again into the 25,000 to 27,000 range. The median for the first week of March 2022 is still more than 31% lower than the number of cars that crossed routinely prior to the pandemic, according to the MTC data.

The median daily traffic volume on the San Mateo-Hayward Bridge during a five-day work week dropped as low as 24,764 vehicles early in the pandemic, a nearly 59% decrease from the routine 60,000 vehicles per day.

Traffic began to steadily rebound to a median of 46,000 vehicles per weekday by mid-March 2021. Yet, the median for the first week of March 2022 is still more than 23% lower than prior to the pandemic, according to the MTC data.

An analysis of traffic data by TomTom, a location

See **TRAFFIC**, page 12

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



### Hedging Inflation

Dear Monica:

I worry that real estate prices are too high but with inflation present, is real estate a possible hedge against inflation?

Jenny D.

Dear Jenny:

There are so many economic factors swirling that it's hard to see clearly what the future will hold for real estate. If you are buying a home now and getting a mortgage, a fixed rate mortgage would lock in your costs and protect you should interest rates rise, which they are likely to do. Rents may rise but your housing costs would stay the same. Home values also tend to rise over time so there is a good chance your real estate asset will increase in value too.

While inflation is not a good thing, there are ways to manage it and real estate is one of them.

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

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**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT  
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**NOTICE IS GIVEN** that the District Board of West Bay Sanitary District will conduct a public hearing on Wednesday, April 27, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. The hearing will be held in the District's Board Room located at 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA and by Zoom or telephone

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87293196887?pwd=eVhJclByK254czFyUUFpcnJYMWUzdz09> Meeting ID: 872 9319 6887 Passcode: 980806 or telephone 669-900-6833 Meeting ID: 872 9319 6887 Passcode: 980806.

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider a proposed increase in sewer services charges for fiscal year (FY) 2022/2023 and for FY 2023/2024. District Fiscal Years (FY) start on July 1st through June 30th of the following year. Additional information is available through the District's website at [www.westbaysanitary.org](http://www.westbaysanitary.org) and on the official notice that was mailed to every parcel address that pays District rates.

The annual sewer service charge proposed increase is 2% for the next two years from \$1,255 per single family residence to \$1,280 in FY 2022/2023 and to \$1,306 in FY 2023/2024. Approximately 89 homes in the Portola Valley area (located within the On-Site Wastewater Disposal Zone), who pay higher charges for the maintenance of their STEP or Grinder Sewer Collection Systems will increase from \$1,875 per single family residence to \$2,050 in FY 2022/2023 and to \$2,226 in FY 2023/2024 in order to realign charges with the cost of service. Non-residential rates will increase proportionately according to loading characteristics. The non-residential customer pays the single-family rate at a minimum. The increased charges are required to fund needed maintenance, reconstruction to the sewer system, levee improvements, and expenses for the Silicon Valley Clean Water regional wastewater treatment plant.

Protests against the proposed rate increase must be submitted in writing by 4:00pm on April 27, 2022, signed by the property owner, must identify the owner(s) of the property for which the protest is entered, and must include the property address and assessor's parcel number (APN).

/s/ Sergio Ramirez

Sergio Ramirez, District Manager

## Sequoia district lifts its indoor mask mandate

By Angela Swartz

For the first time in two years, students and teachers in the Sequoia Union High School District have the option to not wear a mask in classrooms.

The Board of Trustees voted 5-0 on March 9 to lift its mask mandate starting on March 12, the day after new state and county guidance lifts the requirement to wear a face mask inside schools. Masks are still strongly recommended.

The district joins the Woodside Elementary, Portola Valley, Las Lomas and Menlo Park City school districts, who moved to lift their mask mandates in the last week.

The Sequoia district was hit hard by the COVID-19 upon

the return from winter break, reporting over 1,800 cases during January, according to a March 9 district staff report.

Last week there were 17 cases reported to the district. Menlo-Atherton High School saw just four cases last week, while Woodside High School reported five. There were no cases at TIDE Academy last week. Case counts aren't yet back to the single-digit numbers the district consistently saw during the fall semester.

### Community responses

Some teachers and parents shared with the board their reservations about lifting the mandate, while others said it's time for the restrictions to be loosened.

Jenna Carson, who works in

the Student Support Services Department at M-A in Atherton, said she felt confident the district is "ready for mask choice." She does "worry deeply" about the number of students who are hiding behind their masks and their hoods.

"I would be surprised if many students remove their masks on Monday at all," she said. "The vast majority even wear them outside during the day."

One Sequoia High School teacher, who is immunocompromised, shared his fears about staying safe on campus if others aren't wearing masks.

Tricia Barr, a parent of three, one of whom attends M-A, said it's time to let the mask mandate expire and that mask wearing

See **MASKS**, page 17

## Ravenswood district to go out for \$110 million bond in June

The Ravenswood City School District is asking voters to consider a \$110 facilities bond measure this spring, which would help replace aging portables, upgrade classroom technology and more.

Last week, the school board voted 4-0 to put the measure, which would require 55% approval to pass, on the June 7 ballot. Trustee Ana Maria Pulido was absent.

The funds would go toward installing permanent classrooms, along with upgrading safety, technology, and energy efficiency measures.

"The district's elementary school buildings remain largely untouched since their 1950s construction, with many of the district's students learning in portable classrooms, designed to be temporary, that have exceeded their planned useful life, and

in certain cases such classrooms lack effective ventilation, dynamic technology, and level hallways for students in wheelchairs," according to the resolution the board passed on March 10.

The district is in the process of a \$50 million renovation of its middle school. That project is funded through the \$70 million measure S, a bond passed by voters in 2018.

— Angela Swartz

## East Palo Alto city manager announces resignation

Jaime Fontes to leave after his contract ends on April 30

By Sue Dremann

After three years at the helm as East Palo Alto's city manager, Jaime Fontes has resigned.

Fontes made public a brief letter he sent to Mayor Ruben Abrica on Monday, March 14, stating that he would leave on April 30 at the end of his contract. He plans to transition to "other career opportunities" that were not specified.

"In spite of the challenges we confronted as a team, we were able to achieve the following: Our citywide Covid-19 vaccination rate (once one of the lowest in the region) is now at the San Mateo County average. We achieved this having the greatest percentage of essential workers and economic and health care challenges of all cities in the region. Unlike many cities, we weathered the financial challenges of the pandemic without any layoffs or workforce

reductions, allowing the city to continue delivering much needed public service.

He pointed out that the city's current reserve fund is \$25.4 million, calling it a "respectable figure for a city of our size." The city is fiscally sound and ready to take on future challenges, he said.

When Fontes was hired by East Palo Alto in April 2019, he said he planned to turn the city into a "regional leader." He has experience negotiating complex multimillion-dollar real estate and wastewater treatment projects and improving the financial ratings of cities where he has worked. Before coming to East Palo Alto, Fontes was the city manager of Greenfield, a city in Monterey County.

"I believe that East Palo Alto can become a regional leader in terms of economic development and sustainable finance but the kind that supports a multicultural

and multilingual community in terms of public safety, public health, education, housing and infrastructure," he said at the time.

Fontes oversaw a turbulent period of staff turnover in East Palo Alto. After nearly 15 years, Assistant City Manager Sean Charpentier resigned on Aug. 27, 2019, by "mutual agreement," Fontes said at the time.

Last year, City Clerk Walfred Solorzano left for undisclosed reasons after signing a "separation agreement" with the city.

Longtime City Attorney Rafael Alvarado also departed months after council member Antonio Lopez attempted to have him fired last year, which sparked outrage in the community.

Abrica couldn't immediately be reached for comment. ■

Email Sue Dremann at [sdremann@paweekly.com](mailto:sdremann@paweekly.com)

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# Ravenswood district isn't ready to drop indoor masking rule

By Angela Swartz

Diverging from nearby districts, teachers and students in the Ravenswood City School District continued to mask up this week as the state dropped its indoor masking mandate at schools, making it optional.

Board members cited the fact the district is in one of the cities most heavily hit by COVID-19 in the county, and vaccination rates appear to still be lagging behind nearby districts.

The school board, which will revisit its policy on March 24, directed the staff on Thursday, March 10, to keep the mask mandate for now. Even though San Mateo County is "low" risk according to U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, East Palo Alto still has among the highest new case rates in the county, according to a district staff report. The district has four schools, three located in East Palo Alto and one in the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park.

"One constant throughout this pandemic has been the

importance of mask-wearing and how it has slowed the spread," Ravenswood Teachers Association President Ronda White told the board last week. "I hate this mask. ... I cannot wait for the day that I can burn them all and throw them away, but I like being in school. ... The idea that we wouldn't have masks on and that we would possibly have a surge and go back to January. There's three months left of school."

She pointed out that in two weeks, schools will be out on spring break, and the last surge in cases was after winter break.

At the peak of the omicron surge, the district reported 120 cases in the week of Jan. 8. There were just two cases in the most recently reported numbers from Feb. 26 to March 4.

The roughly 1,500-student district joins the Mountain View Whisman School District, which will also keep requiring masks indoors, though its outdoor mandate will drop. Mountain View Whisman Superintendent Ayinde Rudolph said he plans to give the school board another update at its March 24 meeting

and could change the guidelines at that point. The goal of all the district's safety measures, Rudolph said, is to keep as many students in class as possible.

The Sequoia Union High School District, along with the Woodside Elementary, Portola Valley, Las Lomas and Menlo Park City school districts, have lifted their mask mandates in the last week.

The Ravenswood district wants to give families the time to think about if they'll have their students move to independent study if masks are dropped, said Ann Waterman Roy, the district's strategic pandemic recovery consultant.

## Concerns about vaccination rates

East Palo Alto's vaccination rate has grown steadily, but it is still among the lowest in the county (89.2%, as of March 8). In the district specifically, student vaccination rates are low and underreported, according to the district. Some 21.5% are fully vaccinated, with 24% partially vaccinated. Nearly half (47.9%) of the district's middle schoolers



Magali Gauthier

**Kindergarteners** head to class on the first day of school at Los Robles-Ronald McNair Academy in the Ravenswood District on Aug. 25, 2021. Unlike many other local school districts, Ravenswood is keeping its mask rules in place.

are fully vaccinated, with 52.6% partially vaccinated.

"Other districts have much higher student vaccination rates (example: 74% at Menlo Park City School District)," according to staff. The district needs to especially encourage elementary families to share their students' vaccination statuses, staff noted.

Waterman Roy said only 20% of district families reported that their students are fully vaccinated.

"I'm confident it's higher than that, but we don't know by how much," she told the board.

The district learned on March 11 that it can access the COVID-19 vaccination data through the county database, Waterman Roy said in an email.

"That was great news, since

self-reporting would inevitably be undercounted," she said. "We are working to get access to the COVID vaccination records now, and we expect that we will have accurate vaccination rates for our students by the time we come back to the board on March 24."

The Sequoia district reported vaccination numbers last week that staff said were acquired through the California Immunization Registry.

Ravenswood district staff will monitor cases and vaccination rates to see that they are at safe levels, comparable to the rest of the county. ■

Email Staff Writer Angela Swartz at [aswartz@almanacnews.com](mailto:aswartz@almanacnews.com).

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				10. \$3,120,000 1012 Mallet Court

**ACTIVE LISTING**  
Feb: 31 ↑41%  
Jan: 22

**AVERAGE SALES PRICE**  
Feb: \$2,940,400 ↓-1%  
Jan: \$2,979,066

**AVERAGE SOLD DAYS ON MARKET**  
Feb: 23 ↓-8%  
Jan: 25

**SALE/LIST PRICE**  
Feb: 105.30% ↑0%  
Jan: 105.00%

**AVERAGE SALES PRICE/SQ FT**  
Feb: \$1,540 ↑0%  
Jan: \$1,534

**MONTHS OF INVENTORY**  
Feb: 1.60 ↑60%  
Jan: 1.00  
\*If no further homes/condos were to come to market, the area would be SOLD OUT of residential real estate in the number of MONTHS shown

**30 YEAR MORTGAGE RATE**  
Feb: 4.08% ↑10%  
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\*February 2022 compared to January 2022

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## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

continued from page 6

### TIDE Academy design wins award

The American Institute of Architects California (AIA CA) and the Coalition for Adequate School Housing (CASH) honored LPA Inc.'s design of TIDE Academy, in Menlo Park, with the top honor in the "new built" category at an awards ceremony to recognize the best school design in California, on Feb. 25,

according to a press release.

"TIDE Academy is an example of cutting-edge school design located in the heart of the Silicon Valley and its forward-looking ethos," jurors said in a statement, calling it a beautiful school. "This is an example of the successful design and execution of a school that supports the learning needs of present and future students."

### Atherton Earth Day event

The Atherton Environmental Programs Committee is hosting an Earth Day celebration from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, April 23, at Holbrook-Palmer Park, 150 Watkins Ave. in Atherton.

Speakers include Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, and Stanford Woods Institute's Rob Jackson. There will be food, music, a green vendor fair, an art exhibit, an electric vehicle and e-bike showcase, and activities for kids such as a butterfly garden, crafts and games.

Anyone interested in volunteering is asked to contact Councilwoman Diana Hawkins-Manuelian at [drdianahawkins@gmail.com](mailto:drdianahawkins@gmail.com).

— Angela Swartz

**REAL ESTATE**

*continued from page 7*

Purchasing a home without ever visiting it in person is not unheard of anymore, Paul Cardus, executive officer of the Cupertino-based Silicon Valley Association of Realtors, said in spring 2020. Agents have relied on Zoom and Facebook Live to convene and broadcast their online communications, he said.

“The technology that became commonplace as a result of the pandemic is likely to continue to play an important role in the real estate industry,” said Michael Repka, CEO, managing broker and general counsel of Palo Alto-based DeLeon Realty. “I anticipate this will continue long past the end of the pandemic.”

Repka said his company spent around \$10,000 at the start of the pandemic to show off premiere properties in detailed, extravagantly produced videos for the Internet.

“High-end buyers tend to do extensive online due diligence to target desirable homes for in-person visits,” Repka said. “This trend was occurring before (COVID-19), but the pandemic has made producing sophisticated online videos an even more important screening tool for buyers.”

**New priorities**

The priorities of prospective buyers also have changed dramatically since the start of the pandemic.

“In recent years, before COVID, buyers wanted very much to be close to work,” Menlo Park real estate agent Brett Caviness said last spring. “They wanted that short commute to Google or Facebook. Now, they are much less city specific in their searches and more focused on a bigger (geographical) area that might work for them.”

Elyse Barca, a Realtor and luxury home specialist at the Menlo Park office of Compass Real Estate, said space became extremely important for people working, educating children and exercising and recreating at home.

“When people were sheltering at home, they became acutely aware of the deficiencies of where they lived,” she said in 2021.

Arti Miglani, a Realtor at Compass, agrees.

“The focus has turned to more outdoor space and quality spaces within a home,” she said.

Early in the pandemic, she said the migration of people from larger cities to the suburbs was very noticeable. Families with young children chose to sell

their homes in San Francisco and move to the suburbs to buy a home or even rent a home. Condo and townhouse owners traded up to single-family homes, increasing demand for single-family homes.

**‘(The pandemic) has triggered people to reconsider where they want to live and how they want to live.’**

XIN JIANG, REAL ESTATE AGENT

By fall 2020, Realtors reported a thriving luxury market of \$5-million-plus homes across the region as well as strong activity in the local entry-level market of single-family homes priced between \$2.5 million and \$3 million in Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Mountain View. Semi-rural areas such as Woodside, Portola Valley and Los Altos Hills started drawing more interest.

Repka said the shift toward larger homes in less crowded areas seen early in the pandemic is still happening now.

“The consumer demand for real estate has shifted toward

nicer homes and larger lots,” he said. “The premium placed on properties with good walkability to restaurants, bars and coffee shops has waned. Some of the areas that were historically the hottest — such as parts of Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Los Altos near town centers — have been a little cooler when compared to homes located on larger lots, perhaps up in the hills or a little further away.”

Brill said many priorities have changed for homebuyers since the start of the pandemic, but some things have remained the same.

“COVID-19 has changed what buyers value in a property, be it location, square footage or lot size,” he said last spring. “What hasn’t changed is what buyers have traditionally valued: good schools and neighborhoods.”

**Market uncertainties**

The biggest market uncertainty moving forward isn’t the virus itself, but whether companies will continue to expand their workforce in Silicon Valley or move some operations to other areas with lower cost of living and low or no state taxes, according to local Realtors.

“Over the past two years (during the pandemic), we have seen

a lot of sellers moving to (other) areas. More recently, it has been more common for companies to hire in these other areas as well,” Repka said.

Jiang said if the local tech talent continues to migrate out of the area, market demand and home values could start to fall. She said the high cost of living, California’s climate crisis and the unknown outcome of new state laws intended to spur more housing are among the biggest threats to the market as we move into a post-pandemic era.

“To some extent, our community is forever changed,” she said. “It’ll be hard for those who let go of their homes during the pandemic to buy back based on the current upward price trend. ▣

*Email Associate Editor Linda Taaffe at ltaaffe@paweekly.com.*

*Information compiled from stories written by David Goll.*

**Want to read more?** Local real estate experts sat down with this news organization to share their views on the state of the real estate market for individual Q&As in the upcoming Spring Real Estate magazine, which publishes on April 15.

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**TRAFFIC**

*continued from page 7*

technology company, also shows a sustained decrease in Bay Area traffic congestion. The TomTom Traffic Index found that San Francisco went from the No. 3 spot in 2019 of most congested cities in the U.S. list to No. 5 in 2021, Jeroen Brouwer, program manager at TomTom, said.

San Jose's traffic-congestion ranking plummeted from No. 4 in 2019 to No. 30 in 2021.

The company calculates the baseline traffic levels per city by analyzing free-flow travel times and then compares those levels to those when the roads are congested. The percentages represent the amount of extra time it takes a driver to get to their destination. San Francisco experienced a 36% congestion level in 2019, meaning a 30-minute trip took 36% more time than it would in baseline uncongested conditions. In 2020, a 30-minute trip took 21% longer and in 2021 it took 26% more time, still significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels, Brouwer said.

In San Jose, traffic congestion was 33% in 2019 compared with 19% in 2021.

The traffic reduction is likely due to a variety of factors, but an obvious one stands out, Brouwer said: "One we believe to have the biggest impact is the nature of work within a particular city. A city like San Francisco has a lot of jobs that can be easily done remotely so you don't see the same traffic patterns and congestion as before the pandemic when most people still went into an office."

The ultimate question is whether the shift to less traffic is going to be the new normal, Brouwer said.

"We're seeing each city across the globe shift a bit differently. If a lot of companies in the Bay Area determine that working from home is here to stay, it could very well have a long-term impact on traffic patterns and congestion."

Goodwin said while some employers and employees might be finding their jobs are better suited to working remotely, that's still a broad generality.

Some large employers have already

brought back workers in large numbers, including Stanford University, which employs roughly 23,000 workers.

"While Stanford does have some remote workers, most of our employee population is on-site regularly — with most classes being taught in person, many staff fully on-site in support of our students and community, and those whose work supports a hybrid model coming in at least two days per week," said Kim Ratcliff, Stanford Transportation's communications manager.

Stanford kept many of its incentives throughout the pandemic, such as free transit passes, at a revenue deficit to the transportation program. As more people return, the Marguerite Shuttle has returned to approximately 80% of its pre-pandemic service, she said.

Palo Alto resident Alexandra Pora has been going to work throughout the entire pandemic and has observed the effects it has had during these past two years.

"At the start of the lockdown there was barely any traffic at all. The streets were pretty much deserted," she said.

However, she noticed that drivers were taking advantage of the lack of traffic and police presence to drive at excessive speeds, she said.

"I personally think that there has always been a significant increase in reckless driving even before the pandemic, but the circumstances recently have magnified the issue."

The number of cars on the road has been gradually increasing since the beginning of the year, and she worries that traffic and bad behavior will get significantly worse as more companies ask employees to come back to working on-site in early April, she said.

But there might be one thing acting against the steady rise in traffic, at least in the short term: higher gas prices due to sanctions against Russia.

"It has definitely been a factor in how much I drive, in that I limit the number of trips I make to run errands and we choose to stay closer to home for family activities on weekends," she said. ■

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

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765 Fourteenth Avenue, Menlo Park  
OFFERED AT \$3,495,000

JOHN SHROYER  
650.77.2121 LICENSE# 00613370



1181 Lincoln Avenue, Palo Alto  
OFFERED AT \$3,995,000

MICHAEL DREYFUS  
650.644.3474 LICENSE# 01121795  
NOELLE QUEEN  
650.427.9211 LICENSE# 01917593



3584 Lupine Avenue, Palo Alto  
OFFERED AT \$4,495,000

MICHAEL DREYFUS  
650.644.3474 LICENSE# 01121795  
NOELLE QUEEN  
650.427.9211 LICENSE# 01917593



1975 Webster Street, Palo Alto  
OFFERED AT \$15,300,000

GLORIA YOUNG  
650.380.9918 LICENSE# 01895672  
JOHN YOUNG  
650.862.2122 LICENSE# 02036387



101 Alma Street #805, Palo Alto  
OFFERED AT \$1,850,000

DULCY FREEMAN  
650.804.8884 LICENSE# 01342352



808 La Jennifer Way, Palo Alto  
OFFERED AT \$3,898,000

MIRANDA JUNOWICZ  
650.332.4243 LICENSE# 02019529



57 and 59 Los Trancos Road,  
Portola Valley  
OFFERED AT \$11,100,000

KERWIN COWPERTHWAITHE GROUP  
650.851.8030 LICENSE# 01012887



854 Corriente Point Drive,  
Redwood Shores  
OFFERED AT \$3,995,000

BRIAN AYER  
650.242.2473 LICENSE# 01870281  
NICOLE COLCLOUGH  
650.996.4221 LICENSE# 02090668



456 Hillcrest Road, San Mateo  
OFFERED AT \$3,650,000

PETER VECE  
650.619.2799 LICENSE# 00472241



615 Port Drive #101, San Mateo  
OFFERED AT \$925,000

RICKY FLORES  
408.565.5626 LICENSE# 02027985



300 Davey Glen Road Unit #3610,  
Belmont  
OFFERED AT \$625,000

RICKY FLORES  
408.565.5626 LICENSE# 02027985  
MARGOT LOCKWOOD  
650.400.2528 LICENSE# 01017519



401 El Cerrito Avenue, Hillsborough  
OFFERED AT \$25,000,000

JENNIFER GILSON  
650.642.6957 LICENSE# 01889172



16379 Skyline Boulevard, Woodside  
OFFERED AT \$7,895,000

SHALER BARNES  
650.814.3451 LICENSE# 01446634



12252 Menalto Drive, Los Altos Hills  
OFFERED AT \$11,800,000

GARY CAMPI  
650.799.1855 LICENSE# 00600311



11913 Murietta Lane, Los Altos Hills  
OFFERED AT \$5,695,000

GARY CAMPI  
650.799.1855 LICENSE# 00600311



147 PATRICIA DRIVE  
ATHERTON



## LUXURY, HOSPITALITY, AND ELEGANCE ON OVER 1 ACRE

Exemplary grounds of over an acre provide an intimate setting for this spectacular Atherton estate, custom-built in 2017 by renowned builder Lencioni Construction and boasting the latest in high-tech home automation. Natural tones create a warm, welcoming ambiance that puts you at ease from the moment you step inside, with a quiet elegance that emanates throughout over 9,300 total square feet of interior space filled with high-end appointments and finishes. The modern floorplan offers grand-scale formal rooms made for entertaining, as well as a gourmet kitchen with top-of-the-line appliances, a convenient office, family room with wet bar, theater, wine cellar, and much more. An impressive 5 bedrooms and 7 bathrooms include the detached pool house, as well as 4 en suite bedrooms in the main home highlighted by the primary suite with a spa-like bathroom and stunning walk-in closet. Enjoy true indoor/outdoor living as numerous glass doors open to impressive grounds filled with vast heated terraces, a fireplace, grilling station, and a lap pool. Plus, ample parking for family and guests is always available thanks to a gated motor court and oversized 4-car garage. Just moments to downtown Menlo Park, this estate is also within easy reach of downtown Palo Alto and Stanford University, with the venture capital firms of Sand Hill Road close at hand.

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

[www.147Patricia.com](http://www.147Patricia.com)

Offered at \$15,988,000

Listed by the DeLeon Team • 2.5% Commission Paid to Buyer's Agent • Waived if DeLeon Buyer's Agent

Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | 650.900.7000 | michael@deleonrealty.com

中文諮詢請聯繫 Audrey Sun, DRE #01933274 電話: 650.785.5822 | www.deleonrealty.com | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224



3513 WAVERLEY STREET  
PALO ALTO



## CONTEMPORARY LUXURY WITH A CONVENIENT LOCATION

Clean, modern lines and an open floorplan perfect for a contemporary lifestyle accentuate this stunning 5-bedroom, 5-bathroom home in Midtown. Built in 2018, this home showcases outstanding build quality throughout, with nearly 5,300 square feet of living space that circles around a striking 2-story glass atrium. Warm, sophisticated interiors brimming with high-end appointments and tremendous natural light are both scaled for entertaining and fit for everyday living. Highlights include the expansive living room, the chef's kitchen with an oversized island, and the family room with a fireplace and a wall of glass opening to the backyard for indoor/outdoor living. Downstairs, flexible-use space offers an abundance of possibilities, and a theater provides leather recliner seats to enjoy unforgettable movie nights. Both levels of the home feature luxe en suite bedrooms, including the primary suite with a wet room-style tub and shower plus a private backyard deck. Adding the finishing touch is a location within walking distance of Mitchell Park, just over a mile from the Midtown Shopping Center, and steps to top-ranked schools Fairmeadow Elementary and JLS Middle.

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

[www.3513Waverley.com](http://www.3513Waverley.com)

Offered at \$5,988,000

Listed by the DeLeon Team • 2.5% Commission Paid to Buyer's Agent • Waived if DeLeon Buyer's Agent

Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | 650.900.7000 | michael@deleonrealty.com | Equal Housing Opportunity  
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# Public Notices

## 995 Fictitious Name Statement

JMFINLEY PROPERTIES  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: 290249  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
JMFinley Properties, located at 1172 La Rochelle Terrace E, Sunnyvale, CA 94089, Santa Clara County.  
Registered owner(s):  
JAY M. FINLEY  
1172 La Rochelle Terrace E  
Sunnyvale, CA 94089  
This business is conducted by: An Individual.  
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on February 15, 2022.  
(ALM Feb. 25; Mar. 4, 11, 18, 2022)

TRUSHIELDS ADVISORY  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: 290228  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
TruShields Advisory, located at 50 Escuela Dr. Apt. 22, Daly City, CA 94015, San Mateo County; Mailing address: 447 Sutter St Ste 405 PMB 70, San Francisco, CA 94108.  
Registered owner(s):  
SHERYLL CAGASCA  
50 Escuela Dr. Apt. 22  
Daly City, CA 94015  
This business is conducted by: An Individual.  
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 1/5/2022.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on February 11, 2022.  
(ALM Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25, 2022)

PENINSULA HOME NETWORK PROS  
HILLSBOROUGH HOME NETWORK PROS  
PORTOLA VALLEY HOME NETWORK PROS  
ATHERTON HOME NETWORK PROS  
WOODSIDE HOME NETWORK PROS  
HOME NETWORK PROS  
MENLO PARK HOME NETWORK PROS  
PALO ALTO HOME NETWORK PROS  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: 290325  
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) Peninsula Home Network Pros, 2.) Hillsborough Home Network Pros, 3.) Portola Valley Home Network Pros, 4.) Atherton Home Network Pros, 5.) Woodside Home Network Pros, 6.) Home Network Pros, 7.) Menlo Park Home Network Pros, 8.) Palo Alto Home Network Pros, located at 597 Morse Ave, Sunnyvale, CA 94085, Santa Clara County.  
Registered owner(s):  
CorePoint360 LLC  
597 Morse Ave.  
Sunnyvale, CA 94085  
California Article Reg. #201310710175  
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 February 23, 2022.  
(ALM Mar. 4, 11, 18, 25, 2022)

SMILES MOBILE REMITTANCE  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: 290382  
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:  
Smiles Mobile Remittance, located at 1299 Bayshore Highway, Ste., 200,

Burlingame, CA 94010, San Mateo County.  
Registered owner(s):  
DIGITAL WALLET US LLC  
1299 Bayshore Highway, Ste., 200  
Burlingame, CA 94010  
Texas  
This business is conducted by: A Limited Liability Company.  
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 1, 2022.  
(ALM Mar. 11, 18, 25; Apr. 1, 2022)

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME  
File No. 289476  
The information given below is as it appeared on the fictitious business statement that was filed at the County Clerk-Recorder's Office.  
Registered Owner(s) abandoning the use of the fictitious business name(s):  
CABLE JUSTICE, INC.  
REGISTRANT'S NAME(S):  
Cable Justice, Inc.  
161 El Camino Real,  
South San Francisco, CA 94080  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME(S):  
HUMANITARIAN CABLE JUSTICE  
161 El Camino Real,  
South San Francisco, CA 94080  
FILED IN SAN MATEO COUNTY ON:  
November 16, 2021  
THIS BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED BY:  
Corporation.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk Recorder of San Mateo County on March 3, 2022.  
(ALM Mar. 11, 18, 25; Apr. 1, 2022)

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME  
File No. 289475  
The information given below is as it appeared on the fictitious business statement that was filed at the County Clerk-Recorder's Office.  
Registered Owner(s) abandoning the use of the fictitious business name(s):  
CABLE JUSTICE, INC.  
REGISTRANT'S NAME(S):  
Cable Justice, Inc.  
161 El Camino Real,  
South San Francisco, CA 94080  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME(S):  
HCJ  
161 El Camino Real,  
South San Francisco, CA 94080  
FILED IN SAN MATEO COUNTY ON:  
November 16, 2021  
THIS BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED BY:  
Corporation.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk Recorder of San Mateo County on March 3, 2022.  
(ALM Mar. 11, 18, 25; Apr. 1, 2022)

PUNCH MAGAZINE  
PUNCH  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: 290398  
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) Punch Magazine, 2.) Punch, located at 1047 El Camino #202, Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.  
Registered owner(s):  
36 Media, LLC  
1047 El Camino #202  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
California  
This business is conducted by: A Limited Liability Company.  
The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 1/1/2022.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 2, 2022.  
(ALM Mar. 11, 18, 25; Apr. 1, 2022)

**The Almanac is adjudicated to publish in San Mateo County.**  
Public Hearing Notices • Resolutions • Bid Notices • Lien Sale  
Notices of Petition to Administer Estate • Trustee's Sale

**Deadline is Monday at noon.**

Call Alicia Santillan at 650-223-6578 or email [asantillan@paweekly.com](mailto:asantillan@paweekly.com) for assistance with your legal advertising needs.

## SURVEY

continued from page 5

of the pandemic. Many found a release through running, hiking and exercise, among other means of movement. Respondents also found enrichment through watching television, reading, cooking, puzzles and friends.

In recent weeks, the region has seen indoor mask mandates end in most public places. Despite the lifted restriction, more than 3 out of 5 respondents said they would either likely or very likely continue to

wear a face covering.

About the same percent ranked their personal risk of contracting COVID-19 to be very low at this point in the pandemic, which could be attributed to various factors, such as protection through vaccines and boosters.

When it came to how well public health leaders handled the crisis, slightly more than 3 out of 5 respondents said that they were in full or nearly full agreement with health orders. But almost 1 in 5 said they were in full or nearly full disagreement during the pandemic.

## Rodney Harper Washburn

November 10, 1929 – February 13, 2022

Rodney Harper Washburn died peacefully on February 13 at his home in Atherton, California, after a 2-year battle with cancer. Rod was born on November 10, 1929, in Washington, DC to Daniel W. and Edna Harper Washburn. His three older siblings Paul Washburn, Nancy Binkley and Emory Washburn have predeceased him.



In the early 1940s, the family moved to New Mexico and then later to California. After graduating from Sequoia High School in Redwood City, Rod joined the Air Force. Stationed in US-occupied Germany, Rod was part of the team that provided logistical support for the Berlin Airlift. After his service, Rod completed his undergraduate degree from the University of California at Berkeley, then went on to take a law degree from Harvard Law School. Rod practiced law for a time in San Francisco, then spent most of his career with the US Postal Service.

Rod met his beloved wife of 50 years, Jane Elizabeth Caldwell, while working in San Francisco. They lived there until 1980, when they settled in Atherton. Rod and Jane were very active in the community, taking a special interest in the development of Atherton's Holbrook-Palmer Park. Rod was also active in the Civic Interest League, attended Atherton City Council meetings, and was head of the Friends of the Atherton Library. They also travelled extensively – Rod particularly liked to trace his family origins in England and Scotland. Jane passed away in 2013.

Later in life, Rod was blessed to have a family of live-in caregivers, Ana Hala'api'api, Miloni Tuitupou, and their son William Hala'api'api. In addition to helping with day-to-day tasks, they kept Rod active and enriched his life tremendously.

Rod had a voracious appetite for knowledge in all subjects, and especially liked to keep up with current events and the mercurial fortunes of Bay Area sports teams. His memory and storytelling abilities were legendary. No glassware on the table was safe from his energetic hand gestures.

Rod is survived by six nieces and nephews, numerous great- and great-great-nieces and nephews, and goddaughter Anne-Marie "Punky" Witt. Rod will be interred in a private ceremony next to his beloved wife Jane at the Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland. There will be a public memorial at 11:00 AM Saturday, March 19, at the Main House in Holbrook-Palmer Park, Atherton. Contributions in Rod's name may be made to the Division of Rheumatology at UCSF, or to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

PAID OBITUARY

The top three answers to the question "Which of the following has been the most difficult to navigate during the pandemic?" were "Judging whether it's safe to see relatives, friends, co-workers, etc. in person," (33.5%) followed by "The overall mental toll" (26.4%) and "Constantly shifting public health mandates" (21%).

Despite the health threat and risks of travel, survey takers showed a willingness to travel far from home in the past two years: 13.9% went outside of the country, while 47.4% went to other parts of the state. Just 5.6% stayed completely within their county's limits.

As we come out of the pandemic, surveyed readers also showed cautious confidence that we'll mostly return to normalcy a year from now. On a scale from 1-10, with 10 being a full return to normalcy, about 42% of respondents selected 8 or higher.

The survey was conducted online from March 4 to 13. It was open to readers of The Almanac, DanvilleSanRamon.com, Mountain View Voice, Livermore Vine, Palo Alto Weekly, Pleasanton Weekly and Redwood City Pulse. The poll did not use random sampling. Answers were provided anonymously. No demographic data was collected. ■

Email Digital Editor Jamey Padojino at [jpadojino@paweekly.com](mailto:jpadojino@paweekly.com).

## CRIME BRIEFS

continued from page 6

drinking prevention, increases public safety for communities, and boosts protections for California's youth."

—Lloyd Lee

## Burglary at The Sequoias in Portola Valley

Between March 3 and 4, someone broke into a Portola Valley retirement community condo under renovation and stole tools, along with a new washer and dryer.

San Mateo County deputies suspect burglar(s) entered the unoccupied unit, part of The Sequoias at 501 Portola Road, through an open window.

The tools belonged to construction crew members.

At the time of the burglary, the condominium unit was unoccupied and being renovated, according to police.

Anyone who has information regarding this incident can call the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office anonymous tip line at 800-547-2700.

—Angela Swartz

## SMALL BUSINESSES

continued from page 5

letting longtime employees go, or worse, completely shuttering.

But after being battered for the past two years, some small businesses have seen slivers of hope.

Anna Chow, who co-owns Cheeky Monkey toy store in Menlo Park with her husband Dexter, was eager to share that, as restrictions loosened, they saw the most sales since they first opened in 1999.

“2021 was our best year, sales wise, ever,” she said.

A year before, Chow was seriously considering dipping into her child’s college fund to support her staff and desperately trying to secure federal loans. Now, a third-party study of downtown Menlo Park reported that Cheeky Monkey was one of the top 20 sales tax revenue generators for the city in 2021.

Chow surmises that people have a newfound appreciation for shopping in person and supporting local businesses, after being holed up in their homes. Another theory she has is that, as people reconnect in person — grandparents with grandchildren, kids with other kids — there’s a pent up demand to buy toys as gifts.

“I think there’s a sense of



Magali Gauthier

**Anna and Dexter Chow** own Cheeky Monkey toy store in Menlo Park and said that, despite the pandemic, 2021 was their biggest year for sales since opening in 1999.

making up for lost time,” Chow said.

Spurlin also said she saw clients coming back during the pandemic.

Large retailers such as Target, Home Depot and HomeGoods, have all reported an increase in sales in their home decor departments by August 2020, according to a report from Business Insider.

“Anything that kept people home was good,” she said. “If you’re feeling threatened anywhere, where do you go? Go back

home to mom or go back to your home that you’ve made a safe haven.”

Spurlin saw a similar phenomenon during the Great Recession, when huge economic pressures shifted spending behaviors. The 2008 financial crisis ravaged Spurlin’s business, winnowing its three locations down to one. The only saving grace, she said, was that as people lost faith in the stock market, they shifted their money into other investments such as art.

“People were looking for

other avenues. They said, ‘Let me invest in weird things I never thought of,’” Spurlin said.

But despite these small yet unexpected blessings, both Spurlin and Chow said they can’t relax just yet.

Supply chain snafus continue to batter every industry, from home decor to toys. It’s not only delaying the shipment of goods, but also adding to costs, increasing the price of items and consequently the price of doing business.

In times like this, Chow and Spurlin found that resourcefulness isn’t just a value they’ve gained as small business owners but a necessity.

Chow saw the supply chain hiccups coming around April last year, so she started to stock up and place orders a lot earlier than normal. Spurlin did so as well, despite the lack of space in her store.

Both business owners said they’ve also had to scour for new vendors as some of their usual sources ran out of supplies or completely shut down.

When some of her longtime wood suppliers closed, Spurlin turned to vendors in Vermont or Kentucky.

“I have had to build relationships with vendors that I didn’t even know existed,” she said.

Even then, those fixes aren’t entirely foolproof. Shipping across the country adds to costs and turnaround times. Orders that typically take a week or two can now take up to three to four weeks to fulfill. In the age of overnight shipping, that can be tough on clients, she said.

“I think we will be dealing with supply chain issues for at least another couple of years in our industry,” Spurlin said. “It’s temporary ... but when it goes on for four to five years, that’s a major impact.”

On top of the price of toys going up, Chow said another challenge was keeping up with the costs of living for her employees. Cheeky Monkey raised salaries 15%, but still lost two workers due to housing costs.

Still, being in business for so long, Chow has learned how to ride out every wave.

“I think it’s one of those things as a small business owner you’re always kind of scanning the horizon, trying to figure out if there’s a bump coming,” she said.

“That’s what small business people do,” Spurlin said. “They just find ways. Because your livelihood depends on it.” ■

Email Staff Writer Lloyd Lee at [llee@almanacnews.com](mailto:llee@almanacnews.com).

## NURSES

continued from page 1

with those who had contracted the virus. “We were just inundated. It was just insane.”

Her work shifted from being “student centered” to “COVID centered,” she said. Before the pandemic, she coordinated case management for students with health conditions, and conducted vision and hearing screenings.

Abbe Keane, a nurse for both the Woodside Elementary and Portola Valley school districts, said she was pulling 12-hour days during the latest wave of cases.

“I don’t think anyone can prepare for a pandemic,” she said. “You’re trained to triage things. You always know the next step. With ever-changing rules, you are learning as you go.”

## Working with students and staff, coping

During remote learning, Keane did “drive by” check-ins at students’ homes with high medical or educational needs, making sure their needs were being met during remote learning.

She said she felt like a lifeline for the students emotionally, since many hadn’t seen anyone outside their homes for weeks.

Keane found herself cooking, talking on the phone and spending time outdoors — coastal trails, Edgewood Park and Crystal Springs Regional Trail — to cope with the stress of the pandemic.

“I wore out a pair of shoes,” she said.

Coronado said she tried to turn off work as much as she could when she got home. As a parent, she understands where other parents were coming from when it was 10 p.m. and they wanted to know if they should send their kids to school the next day.

“That time in January was stressful, trying to balance home and work life from home, when my family needed and deserved my attention,” she said. “I’ve never had to bring my work home as a school nurse prior to COVID, so this was new for me.”

## Need for more support

Coronado said this school year has been particularly tough because one of the district’s three nurses went on leave in the fall. The district hasn’t been able to find a temporary replacement because “to throw a new person into a COVID year as a short-term nurse is not an ideal job,” Coronado said.

She asked the district for extra help on contact tracing and testing in August. It didn’t come through until February, she said. Worksite Labs now conducts contact tracing and COVID-19 testing on campuses.

A lot of COVID-related work now has been taken off nurse’s plates, she said. “The support is there now. In a perfect world, it would have been there in August, September or October.”

Coronado said she wouldn’t have survived without the support of her district health team coworkers, which includes health aides at each school site.

“We masked up as best we could and did the best we could with social distance; it was hard because kids are in our faces all day,” she said. “By January everyone had KN95s on.”

When COVID-19 tests were in short supply this winter, a Woodside parent stepped up and donated tests to the school.

## Recognition

One day in November, Keane arrived at her Portola Valley office to find students had mounted posters expressing their appreciation for her work and held a “Nurse Abbe Day,” which included parties on both campuses. Messages included: “Thank you for keeping us

safe,” “Abbe is the medical industry” and “the moment.”

“My favorite is ‘vaccinated queen,’” she laughed.

Both nurses said that awareness of their role has grown since the pandemic.

Coronado said she received both nice and angry emails from district families, with some expressing irritation about masks and vaccines.

## Hope for the spring

Both nurses said their work is already starting to resemble what it looked like before March 2020.

Keane is starting to get back to her normal job of first aid, training staff to use EpiPens, tracking immunizations and health education.

Masks became optional earlier this week in their districts, aligning with new state guidance, but Coronado said she will keep her mask on for now.

“I think we aren’t out of the woods yet,” she said. “We haven’t been to this point yet so don’t know what’s going to happen. I fully also understand wanting to return to pre-pandemic ways. There’s burnout on COVID.” ■

Email Staff Writer Angela Swartz at [aswartz@almanacnews.com](mailto:aswartz@almanacnews.com).

## MASKS

continued from page 8

has an impact on mental health.

Trustee Shawneece Stevenson said it’s important that people not invalidate other people’s experiences or feelings once masks come off.

“I am wondering how people will act toward other people who exercise their right,” she said. “We are not going back to normal, we’re never going to ever go back to pre-pandemic. We will always have this experience, but we’re transitioning to an endemic state.”

## Vaccination rates

For the first time, the district released student vaccination information. 85.8% of all students in the district have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine as of March 2, according to the March 9 staff report.

Student data is from the California Immunization Registry, said Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Elizabeth Chacón.

As of March 1, 87.2% of staff are fully vaccinated as of March 1, the report states. ■

Email Staff Writer Angela Swartz at [aswartz@almanacnews.com](mailto:aswartz@almanacnews.com).

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A gardener uses a leaf blower to clear leaves in Atherton.

## LEAF BLOWERS

continued from page 5

blower) use," he said in a letter, which he initially submitted to the Menlo Park City Council in the fall. "I will trust experts in these respective fields to offer a creative and equitable proposal that addresses the needs of the workforce using the GPLBs and the community who needs their yards and fields kept tidy."

He said that the ban will also help protect the health of the gardeners, workers and citizens using the devices and inhaling the gas and particulate matter as they work. "It is our duty — in fact a mandate for our city — to protect our children and banning the use of GPLBs is one small step that will put us on the right side of history," Axelrod wrote.

Gas-powered leaf blowers burn a mixture of oil and gasoline, and, unlike cars, they have no exhaust filter or catalytic converters, releasing 300 times as much hydrocarbon than most cars and trucks, he noted. The emissions contain carcinogens such as uncombusted gasoline, benzene, formaldehyde and ozone.

Mayor Rick DeGolia said he thinks it's a good health provision to put limits on gas-powered leaf blowers, but it's not going to be easy to enforce.

### Use of leaf blowers in nearby towns

Portola Valley banned gas-powered leaf blowers in 2019, with a delay in enforcement until 2021.

In 2020, the Woodside Town Council adopted an ordinance limiting the hours that commercial leaf blowers can be used to the town's construction hours.

In Palo Alto, where gas-powered leaf blowers have been banned since 2005, residents have called for more enforcement of the ordinance.

Menlo Park reversed a ban on gas-powered leaf blowers two decades ago, but the City Council began revisiting the issue in late 2021. ▣

Email Staff Writer Angela Swartz at [aswartz@almanacnews.com](mailto:aswartz@almanacnews.com).

## Louis Steven Paponis

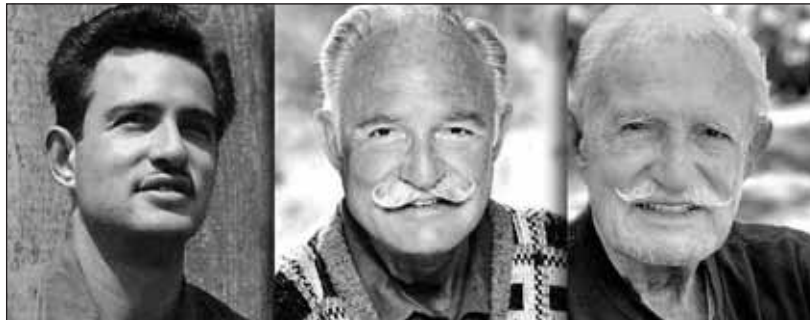
May 25, 1923 – February 17, 2022

Louis Steven Paponis was born on May 25, 1923 in Los Angeles, California, the second son of Steve and Dina Paponis, both immigrants from the Arcadia region of Greece. Four years later the family moved to San Diego, and when "Louie" was eight they relocated to San Francisco.

He attended Douglass Grammar School, Everett Junior High and Commerce High School.

During WWII, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps after studying for 2 years in the Civil Engineering program at San Francisco Junior College (now City College of San Francisco), and spent his basic training as a "jumping engineer", a paratrooper who is also an engineer. When his first two programs were liquidated, he was assigned to the 44th Infantry Division of the U.S. Army National Guard as a Mortarman and sent to France. It was during this period that he received a Combat Infantryman Badge and a pay raise. Not long after, however, he was injured in combat for which he received a Purple Heart... and a new assignment as an Army Air Corps photographer. His job entailed setting cameras in bombers to follow active bomb drops and to document strikes. He also photographed damaged aircraft, and pilots and their crews who had flown over 25 missions. Louie was discharged on January 21, 1946 after 4 years of military service.

Once back in the States, his injuries precluded him from being able to hold down a nine-to-five job but also gave him the courage to become his own boss. For ten years Louie owned "Plastic Palace" which



later became "Enterprise Plastics". During that time, he was introduced to the funeral business and soon formed the partnership "Mission Chapels of Pappas, Buzelich and Paponis". He graduated from the San Francisco College of Mortuary Science (president of his class) and became a licensed Funeral Director, Funeral Counselor and Embalmer. A year later he bought out his partners, and for the next several decades Louis Paponis was the Owner/Director of Mission Chapels Funeral Home at 435 Valencia Street in San Francisco.

In 1963 he met and married Marguerette Luella Shepard of Atherton, and three years later they had their only child, Dena. The family lived on Seville Way in San Mateo for 18 years, beginning in 1966. During that period, they purchased an empty acre of land owned by Marguerette's mother, Edith Shepard, and began the process of building their forever home, which was completed in 1984. Lou and Marguerette became very active in their new community as members of The Atherton Civic Interest League, the Atherton Transportation Committee, the Atherton Arts Council and the Menlo Park Historical Society. After Marguerette's passing in April of 2008, Lou continued to be active. He lived alone in their home until the age of 96 and then with the care of

family until age 98.

Lou was a life member of several organizations including The Veterans of Foreign Wars, The American Legion, and Disabled American Veterans. Within the Greek-American community he was Past District Governor of the Pan Hellenic Association, Past President

of The Young Arcadians of San Francisco and a 70+ year member of both The United Arcadians of San Francisco and The Order of AHEPA.

Louis Paponis passed away on February 17, 2022, three months shy of his 99th birthday. He is survived by his daughter Dena Marguerette Dahilig and son-in-law Gene Dahilig of Atherton, two step-granddaughters Jasmine Dahilig and Isabella Dahilig of Los Angeles and a mixed-breed pooch he adored named The Biscuit. He was predeceased by his parents and by his older brother, James Paponis, of San Francisco.

The family wishes to thank the VA Palo Alto Medical Center and specifically the Home Primary Care Team for their incredible support, as well as the staffs of Atria Park of San Mateo, the Health Center at The Sequoias in Portola Valley and Stanford Hospital ER and C3 for creating a calm, caring environment in these last few months.

Private services were held at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in San Francisco on February 25, 2022. Fr. Aris P. Metrakos of Holy Trinity and Fr. Stephen Kyriacou of the Annunciation Cathedral officiated. Interment will be at The Greek Orthodox Memorial Park in Colma, CA.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to a veterans' charity of your choice.

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## MENLO PARK BRIEFS

**City conducting survey for Middle Avenue Complete Streets project**

To help design bicycle and pedestrian improvements along Middle Avenue between El Camino Real and University Drive, Menlo Park is seeking community feedback about what features people would like to see on the street, how they use Middle Avenue and other concerns they have about the road.

The project will include bicycle lanes, parking safety and pedestrian crossing improvements and other “traffic calming elements” that aim to reduce vehicle speeds, according to the city. Stanford University, which will be responsible for design and construction of the street improvements, is expected to begin the project by this fall.

To find more information and participate in the survey, go to [beta.menlopark.org](http://beta.menlopark.org) or visit [bit.ly/35YhBV7](http://bit.ly/35YhBV7). The survey will remain open until 5 p.m. on March 24.

**Help Menlo Park reimagine public safety**

Menlo Park is giving residents the opportunity to address concerns about public safety and the city police department.

The city is conducting a series of community meetings in each district, where residents will be able to address where the Menlo Park Police Department can make improvements.

To encourage residents to participate and share their personal experiences, no police officers will be present at the meetings. Terri Givens, a professor of political science at McGill University, will be the facilitator of the meetings.

There will be separate meetings for each of the five districts, starting March 23 for District 5, and will culminate with a citywide conversation on June 1. To view the schedule, visit [bit.ly/3tca79F](http://bit.ly/3tca79F). To find your district, go to [bit.ly/3u6XlJ8](http://bit.ly/3u6XlJ8).

**Menlo Park wants to see how you walk, roll or bike**

The city is participating in a “Walk and Roll” video challenge, where people can share videos that show how they walk, roll or bike to their favorite places.

Interested participants are encouraged to apply in groups or individually. Prizes will be handed out for the most creative videos.

Videos should be submitted by April 11. To learn more about the challenge and how to participate, go to [bit.ly/37z6mmw](http://bit.ly/37z6mmw).

— Lloyd Lee

**NOTICE INVITING BIDS****TOWN OF ATHERTON, CA**

The Town of Atherton will accept bids for construction of the following public work:

**2022 SPRING PATCHING PROJECT**

Grind and replace approximately 35,000 square feet of asphalt to a 6-inch depth of pavement failures. Some hand work around utility access-hole covers will be necessary.

Plans & Specifications may be obtained at <http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/bids.aspx> at no cost. The Contractor shall be responsible for any addendums that may be posted on the Town's website.

SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, California 94027, until 1:30 p.m. Pacific Standard Time on **Tuesday, March 29, 2022**, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Bids must be for the entire work and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked: “Bid of (Contractor) for **2022 SPRING PATCHING PROJECT**”, along with date and time of bid opening.

**Lois Claire Teasdale Poole**

December 8, 1927 – March 3, 2022

Lois Claire Teasdale Poole passed away peacefully in her sleep on Thursday, March 3, 2022 in Woodside, California. Born December 8, 1927, in Oxnard, Ventura County, she was the daughter of Lawrence and Clara Handlon Teasdale, who came to California shortly after World War I. After working in the agricultural business, he started Teasdale Packing Company. She attended CK McClatchy High School in Sacramento and graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in San Jose in 1945, as Vice President of the Student Body. She started Stanford in June of 1945 and graduated in the class of 1949. She was a lifelong enthusiastic supporter of Stanford. She hosted tailgate parties before every home football game for forty years and attended 62 Big Games and 3 Stanford Rose Bowls. She was active as a Stanford volunteer and was President of the Stanford's Women's Club of San Francisco and Chairwoman of many of her Stanford class reunions. After graduating from Stanford, she lived in San Francisco and was a legal secretary at Cross and Brandt, volunteered as a Gray Lady at Letterman Army Hospital and was a member of the Young Republicans, where she met her future husband. Later in life, she participated in her children's school activities, the local Cub Scouts, was an American Contract Bridge, Life Master and active at Trinity and St. Bede's Episcopal Churches in Menlo Park, where she was the first woman Junior Warden.



She married Gordon L. Poole in 1954 who was an admiralty lawyer and managing partner with the law firm Lillick, McHose, Wheat Adams and Charles (now Nixon Peabody). Her husband predeceased her in July 2004, just shy of their 50th wedding anniversary. Although they both spent most of their lives in California, they spent over two enjoyable years in Bethesda, Maryland while Gordon headed Lillick's Washington, D. C. office. They enjoyed their home and gardens in Woodside, travel, Stanford football and basketball games, the San Francisco Opera every Tuesday night, wildflower hikes, bird watching and spending time with their many long-time friends and family.

She is survived by her three children, David W. Poole (Jane Barrigan Poole) of Portland, Oregon;

Edward G. Poole (Lynn Anderson Poole) and her grandchildren Sara and Mike of San Francisco; and Elisabeth Poole Parker (Tom) and her grandchildren Clarissa and Nate of Brooklyn, New York.

A memorial service will be held on March 18 at 12:30 pm at Alta Mesa Memorial Park in Palo Alto, California. Contributions can be made to Edgewood Natural Park and Reserve, 10 Old Stage Coach Rd, Redwood City, CA 94062.

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**Employment****BIOMEDICAL ENGINEER (PRODUCT MANAGER)**

Strateos, Inc. has job opp. in Menlo Park, CA: Biomedical Engineer (Product Manager). Partner w/custmr & internal dvlpmnt teams on implmntatn & delivery of biotech prdcts. To apply email resumes referencing Req. #PCR42 to [hiring@strateos.com](mailto:hiring@strateos.com)

To place an ad or get a quote, contact **Kevin Legarda** at **650.223.6597** or email **digitalads@pawekly.com**.

**Lisa Kiem Eiselstein**

April 19, 1984 – March 2, 2022

Lisa Kiem Eiselstein passed away unexpectedly March 2, 2022 at the age of 37 in Temecula, California, after a long illness.

Lisa was born April 19, 1984 in San Leandro. She was adopted by Lawrence Eiselstein and Barbara Kiem, who were overjoyed with the arrival of their first child.

Lisa was a beautiful and kind soul. Her loving personality radiated wherever she went. She had an infectious smile, a quick wit, and a laugh that could brighten any room. Lisa loved her dogs, Brutus and Billy, and she spoiled them with toys and treats. She also had a love for horses. Lisa never missed her daily phone calls with her sister and best friend, Laura. Lisa also enjoyed travel, especially where there was either sand or snow.

She had a passion for sports, and played soccer and basketball throughout school. Lisa won the Girls State Tennis Championship in Salt Lake City while attending Wasatch Academy in Mount Pleasant, Utah. She spent her teenage summers at Ladera Oaks Swim and Tennis Club where she honed her skills. She graduated from Wasatch Academy in 2003, where she met the love of her life, Bobby Stefanko. Together, they developed a love of physical exercise at the gym, as well as attending sports events, including Giants and Angels baseball games. Lisa continued playing tennis, placing second at the Pacific Athletic Club Women's Singles Competition at Redwood Shores in 2011.

After attending Menlo Presbyterian Preschool, Lisa began kindergarten at Laurel Elementary in Atherton. She moved on to Encinal in Menlo Park, Woodland School in Portola Valley, and then Pinewood Middle School in Los Altos. Lisa went to boarding school at Wasatch Academy. One of the highlights of being in school in Utah was the 2002 Winter Olympics, which she and Bobby attended as spectators on several occasions. Lisa earned her Associate's Degree from Canada College.

Since 2016, Lisa had struggled with ulcerative colitis. She was always courageous and upbeat to the end of her life.

She is survived by her parents, Lawrence Eiselstein and Barbara Kiem in Atherton; her sister, Laura Eiselstein, and her niece, Nahla Alcaraz, in Aptos; her brother Alex Eiselstein in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and his children, Tatum, Tatianna, and Ryker; her uncle, William Kiem (Louisa) and aunts, Carol and June Eiselstein.

Lisa is survived by her life partner, Bobby Stefanko, in Temecula. A celebration of life will be held in April at Temecula.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation at [crohnscolitisfoundation.org](http://crohnscolitisfoundation.org).

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## 50 WALNUT AVENUE ATHERTON



### BRIGHT, LUXURIOUS, AND AN OUTSTANDING LOCATION

A quintessential Atherton lifestyle awaits in this bright, stylish home offering 4 bedrooms and 3.5 bathrooms on a lot of close to a third of an acre. A brick pathway through a manicured garden welcomes you, and inside, over 5,000 square feet of well-appointed interiors enjoy hardwood floors, crown molding, and divided light windows. The traditional floorplan offers great space for both entertaining and everyday living, highlighted by the formal dining room with French doors opening to the grounds, the inviting kitchen with top appliances, the handsomely appointed office, and the expansive living room with a centerpiece fireplace. The downstairs level unfolds with a flexible-use area perfect for a family room or game center, while the nearby sauna provides a relaxing retreat. Upstairs, the primary suite includes a luxurious bathroom with a soaking tub and walk-in shower. Colorful plantings adorn the peaceful backyard with space ideal for outdoor enjoyment, including an expansive brick patio as well as planter boxes. Just steps to Holbrook-Palmer Park, this home is also only a mile from the amenities of downtown Menlo Park, convenient to downtown Palo Alto and Stanford University, and it offers access to acclaimed Menlo Park schools (buyer to verify eligibility).

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

[www.50WalnutAve.com](http://www.50WalnutAve.com)

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199 MAPACHE DRIVE  
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Supreme luxury, ultimate privacy, and every conceivable modern amenity – this incredible Portola Valley estate in Westridge presents all of these qualities and so much more, set on a peaceful lot of over 2.5 sweeping acres. Just completed in 2020, and offering 5 bedrooms, 6.5 bathrooms, 2 offices, and almost 9,500 square feet of living space, including a beautiful guest house, this custom estate boasts stunning architectural details, green features including solar power and well irrigation, smart home technology, custom automated window treatments, and high-end materials and finishes. Soaring ceilings craft an airy ambiance, and walls of glass open completely for true California indoor/outdoor living. Entertain guests in expansive, elegant formal rooms, and craft delicious meals in the gourmet kitchen featuring a suite of top-of-the-line appliances, including two oversized refrigerators and freezers. Enjoy the convenience of multiple offices, a home fitness center, and an extraordinary theater that provides a spectacular in-home cinematic experience with 14 leather recliner seats and a full bar. Delight in fantastic grounds that feature a sparkling pool, a wood-burning fireplace with a gas starter, and a horse barn. Topping it all off is a location close to numerous nature preserves, major commute routes, and with access to acclaimed Portola Valley schools (buyer to verify eligibility).

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# Camp Connection

Learn more at [PaloAltoOnline.com/camp\\_connection](http://PaloAltoOnline.com/camp_connection).

## ACADEMICS

### 7EDU Impact Academy

#### Cupertino

7EDU's summer program provides a great summer learning, fun and effective experience for your kids from K-12. For lower grades, 7EDU offers critical reading and writing with PBL hands-on STEM exploration and performance arts. For upper grades, 7EDU offers: unique Individual Research with university professors; Entrepreneur Summer Camp in real Silicon Valley startup companies, and Academic Boost under top college counselors' guidance to have a jumpstart in the fall. Multiple sessions, flexible online/on-site options. \$50 special discount for Camp Connection.

[7edu.org](http://7edu.org)

(408) 216-9109

### Athena Academy

#### Palo Alto

Athena Academy is proud to offer two, week-long academic skills programs for dyslexic and twice exceptional students entering grades 1-8. This program uses our unique strengths-based teaching approach to help our students build foundational skills for learning. June 20-24, July 18-22. Join us for one week or two!

[athenaacademy.org/summer](http://athenaacademy.org/summer)

(650) 543-4560

### Early Learning Institute

#### Palo Alto, Pleasanton

Emerson Montessori School offers three Write Now!® courses — camp-like sessions designed to improve students' writing and public presentation skills. Each one-week course features a different genre: Expository Writing (prose forms used in school assignments), Creative Writing (stories, plays, poems), and Presentation Skills ("Persuasion" this year).

[headsup.org](http://headsup.org)

Emerson: (650) 424-1267  
Hacienda: (925) 485-5750

### Harker Summer Programs

#### San Jose

Harker summer programs for preschool - grade 12 children include opportunities for academics, arts, athletics and activities. Taught by exceptional, experienced faculty and staff, our programs offer something for everyone in a safe and supportive environment.

[harker.org/summer](http://harker.org/summer)

(408) 553-5737

### Pinewood School

#### Summer Festival of Learning

#### Los Altos

Pinewood's two- or four-week program offers half-day or full-day options in both academic and enrichment classes. Specialized teachers and small academic classes maximize the summer school experience for grades K-8. Our curriculum emphasizes academic achievement as well as participation in the arts, technology, and athletics.

[pinewood.edu/summerprograms](http://pinewood.edu/summerprograms)

### STANFORD EXPLORE: A Lecture Series on Biomedical Research

#### Stanford

Explore biomedical science at Stanford through lectures from Stanford professors and graduate students about diverse topics in biomedical science including bioengineering, neuroscience, immunology and other topics.

[explore.stanford.edu](http://explore.stanford.edu)  
[explore-series@stanford.edu](http://explore-series@stanford.edu)

### Summer at Sand Hill School

#### Palo Alto

Our program balances fun group activities that promote social growth with academic remediation and a focus on student interests and talents. Appropriate for students who have completed Grade 2, 3, 4 or 5 and who have language-based learning differences, attention challenges and/or school-based anxiety. Learn to love school again. Camp dates: June 14-June 30.

[sandhillschool.org/summer](http://sandhillschool.org/summer)

(650) 688-3605

### Summer@Stratford

#### Palo Alto/Bay Area

Stratford infuses its STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) curriculum into an innovative and enriching summer camp experience. Younger campers engage in hands-on learning projects, while elementary-age students collaborate to tackle real-world problems. At the middle school level, individual subject-based enrichment classes are offered and tailored for each grade level.

[stratfordschools.com/summer](http://stratfordschools.com/summer)  
[pa@stratfordschools.com](mailto:pa@stratfordschools.com)

(650) 493-1151

## ARTS, CULTURE, OTHER CAMPS

### Camp Integem

#### Palo Alto

Camp Integem is the #1 AR camp for kids and teens (ages 5-18). It is a magical and unique experience for K-12 students who love STEM, Art, Coding, AI, Design, 3D Fashion, Animation, or Game Design to turn your imagination into cutting-edge designs.

[camp.integem.com](http://camp.integem.com)

(408) 459-0657

### Castilleja Summer Camp for Girls

#### Palo Alto

Casti Camp offers girls entering grades 2-6 a range of age-appropriate activities including athletics, art, science, writing, crafts, cooking, drama and music. Leadership program available for girls entering grades 7-9.

[castilleja.org/summercamp](http://castilleja.org/summercamp)

(650) 470-7833

### City of Sunnyvale Recreation

#### Sunnyvale

Offering 80+ camps for ages 3-17 featuring traditional camps, art camps, dance camps, theater camps, sports camps and STEM camps. Camps begin June 6 - Aug. 12. Check out swim lessons and recreation swim at three aquatic facilities with lessons opening early May.

[sunnyvale.ca.gov/activities](http://sunnyvale.ca.gov/activities)

(408) 730-7350

### Community School of Music & Arts

#### Mountain View

50+ creative camps for grades K-12! Drawing, Painting, Ceramics, Sculpture, Musical Theater, Summer Music Workshops and more! One and two-week sessions; full and half-day enrollment. Financial aid offered.

[arts4all.org](http://arts4all.org)

(650) 917-6800 ext. 0

### Hope Musical Theatre

#### Palo Alto

1 WEEK FULL DAY CAMPS: June 6 - July 29. This summer camp is an intensive musical theatre program where students, ranging in age from 6 - 15 years old, put on a Broadway style musical with high caliber sets, props, costumes, a professional choreographer, a director and a live band.

[hopemusicaltheatre.com](http://hopemusicaltheatre.com)

(650) 568-3332

### Midpen Media

#### Palo Alto

Midpen Media Center is hosting a series of media-making summer camps, including Studio Television Production, News & Journalism, Sports Broadcasting, Filmmaking, and Acting for the Camera.

[midpenmedia.org/summercamp](http://midpenmedia.org/summercamp)

(650) 494-8686

### Oshman Family JCC Camps

#### Palo Alto

At J-Camp, we build a spirited community where campers are immersed in joyful camp activities and develop meaningful relationships with others while engaging in individual personal growth. Our exciting day camp offers programming for incoming grades K-10.

[ofjcc-jcamp.com](http://ofjcc-jcamp.com)

(650) 223-8622

### Riekes Center

#### Bay Area

Explore all your interests with the Riekes Center this summer! Enrolling now for programs in Creative Arts, Nature, and multifaceted AFCANA including Athletic Fitness. For ages 5-18 with locations across the Peninsula.

[riekes.org/summercamps2022](http://riekes.org/summercamps2022)

(650) 364-2509

### Stanford Jazz Workshop

#### Stanford

Stanford Jazz Workshop on campus of Stanford University. Week-long jazz immersion programs for young musicians in middle school (Giant Steps Day Camp, starts July 5), high school (Jazz Camp, July 10 and July 17), and adults/advanced teens (Jazz Institute, July 24). All instruments and vocals. Jazz Camp tuition reduced by 1/3 for our 50th Anniversary Season!

[stanfordjazz.org](http://stanfordjazz.org)

(650) 736-0324

### TheatreWorks Silicon Valley

#### Atherton, Palo Alto

Campers bring their plays to life, make new friends and practice collaboration skills at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's PlayMakers Camp (grades K-5). Campers learn acting, playwriting, movement and stagecraft from professional teaching artists from the Tony Award-winning local company.

[theatreworks.org/education](http://theatreworks.org/education)

(650) 463-7146

## ATHLETICS

### Bald Eagle Sports Camps

#### Bay Area

The first camp ever approved by *The Positive Coaching Alliance* for message and *Development Zone* programming. We offer 4 camps: Non-Traditional MultiSports (TK-5th), Sports Leadership & Field Trips (6th-8th), Basketball Camp (3rd-8th) and Coach In Training (free, 9th-10th). Healthy lunch included for all. Extended Care 7:30 am - 6 pm.

[baldeaglecamps.com](http://baldeaglecamps.com)

(888) 505-BALD

### Dance Connection Palo Alto

#### Palo Alto

Share the joy of dance with us! Our studio is an extended family and a "home away from home" for our community of children and teens. At Dance Connection, we value the positive energy and atmosphere that we continuously strive to provide. Summer Dance Camps include all styles of dance for ages 4 and up including Teen Jazz, TikTok, and Hip Hop Camps. A summer session for ages 3 to adults will be offered from June 13-July 30.

[danceconnectionpaloalto.com/dance-connection-event-calendar/summer-dance-camps](http://danceconnectionpaloalto.com/dance-connection-event-calendar/summer-dance-camps)

(650) 322-7032

### Decathlon Sports Club

#### Los Altos

Decathlon Sports Club's environment we have created and fostered feels a lot like that "old neighborhood". Games and socializing, in combination with structured sports and instruction, creates the simultaneously relaxed, crazy, fun and educational feel of our program. Children play, get tons of exercise, and develop socially, physically, and athletically.

[dsclosaltos.com](http://dsclosaltos.com)

Text or Call: (650) 314-9775

### Kim Grant Tennis Summer Camps

#### Palo Alto Monterey Bay

Fun and specialized Junior Camps for Mini (3-5), Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, High Performance and Elite tennis levels. Weekly programs designed by Kim Grant improve player technique, fitness, agility, mental toughness and all around game. Weekly camps in Palo Alto and Sleep-Away Camps in Monterey Bay.

[KimGrantTennis.com](http://KimGrantTennis.com)

Text: (650) 690-0678  
Call: (650) 752-8061

### Maccabi Sports Camp

#### Atherton

Maccabi Sports Camp is an overnight Jewish sports camp. We welcome campers entering grades 3-11 with programs dedicated to building strong character and Jewish community through sports.

[maccabisportscamp.org/wp](http://maccabisportscamp.org/wp)

(415) 997-8844

### Camp Cardinal

#### Stanford

We hope you're ready for engaged and safety-focused staff, phenomenal facilities, and innovative programs. Our camps will empower your camper's physical, and mental skills in a social environment. Our main camper program is for kids 5 years old to 6th grade. Our Counselor-in-Training Program for kids 7th-10th grade for aspiring camp counselors.

[campcardinal.org](http://campcardinal.org)  
[campcardinal@stanford.edu](mailto:campcardinal@stanford.edu)

### Stanford Baseball Camps

#### Stanford

At Sunken Diamond on the campus of Stanford University. A variety of camps are offered to benefit a wide range of age groups and skill sets. Campers will gain instruction in several baseball skills, fundamentals, team concepts, and game play.

[stanfordbaseballcamp.com](http://stanfordbaseballcamp.com)

(650) 725-2054

### Stanford Water Polo Camps

#### Stanford

Whether you're new to water polo or have experience, we have a camp for you. Half day or full day options for boys and girls ages 7 and up. All camps provide fundamental skills, scrimmages and games.

[stanfordwaterpolocamps.com](http://stanfordwaterpolocamps.com)

(650) 725-9016

Please check directly with camps for updates and remote offerings. To advertise in print and online, call (650) 326-8210.

# Artscene

PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## A bad actor and his family

With 'Booth,' former Peninsula resident Karen Joy Fowler looks at the lives of a famous assassin's relatives before and after his crime

By Michael Berry

In her new historical novel, former Palo Alto resident Karen Joy Fowler chronicles the story of a family made notorious with one heinous act that reshaped the course of U.S. history.

In "Booth," her follow-up to the bestselling "We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves," Fowler explores the connections between the six surviving children of Junius Booth, once considered the nation's foremost Shakespearean actor. Among the children was John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of U.S. President Abraham Lincoln.

Fowler was born in Bloomington, Indiana, but moved to Palo Alto at age 11. After graduating from Palo Alto High School, she attended the University of California, Berkeley, and graduate school at the University of California, Davis. Fowler now resides in Santa Cruz.

In 2014, Fowler was among five finalists for the prestigious Man Booker Prize, the first American woman to be so nominated.

"It was the first year that Americans could be considered for the award," Fowler said in a telephone interview, "so there was that enormous bit of luck right away."

The novel was a bestseller in the U.S., but sold extremely well in the U.K. and other English-speaking countries.



Karen Joy Fowler

Courtesy Nathan Quintanilla

According to Fowler, "Booth" was born out of long-standing frustration with the level of gun violence in America, and wondering about the impact gun violence has on shooters' families. A short story about time-traveling tourists visiting Ford's Theatre led her to read more about the Booths.

"I think that John Wilkes Booth is arguably the most famous man with a gun in American history," said Fowler. "I knew he had a very large family, so I started wondering how they felt about the assassination and what their lives were like before and after the killing."

What factors turned Booth into a killer? What does it take to love a murderer?

"I'm not the first writer to think about these things," Fowler said, "but because I had already been reading about the family, it was a fairly easy step to go from those general questions about contemporary America into the Booth family."

Fowler said the more she read about their lives before the assassination the more she was fascinated by them.

In her novel, Fowler focuses on

June, the oldest Booth son and the first of his generation to enter the family business of theater; Edwin, who would be sent on tours as a teenager to look after his wayward father; Rosalie, who would wind up as the family caretaker; Asia, who worked to keep their literary legacy alive; and enigmatic and unambitious Joe.

Taking cues from his grandfather, father and older brother, young Johnny wanted to match their fame as an actor. When he couldn't equal them, he found solace in racist rhetoric.

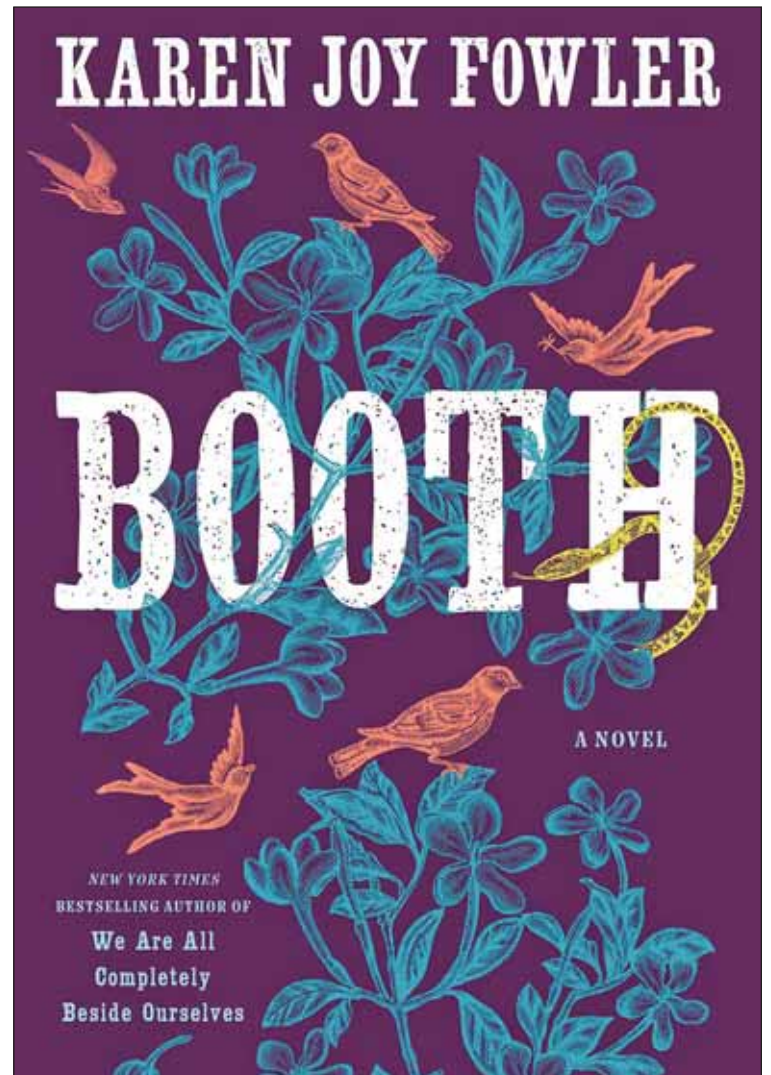
Across the decades, the Booths would enjoy brief bouts of prosperity until one of the men would drink up any profits and plunge the family back into poverty. Few were able to escape an addiction to alcohol.

Fowler strove to be as accurate as possible in presenting the historical aspects of the story. Pre-pandemic, she traveled to Maryland and visited a small museum and the farmhouse where the Booths once lived.

Edwin and Asia left behind a wealth of primary and secondary sources, as well as three books and a collection of letters. Rosalie's inner life is much more of a mystery.

"On the one hand you could say that she was the hardest to write because I had to make her up,"

See **BOOTH**, page 24



Courtesy Penguin Random House

Karen Joy Fowler was inspired to write "Booth," a novel about the family of assassin John Wilkes Booth, out of frustration with gun violence in the United States.

## Sister act

The bond between siblings has top billing in a musical adaptation of Jane Austen's 'Sense and Sensibility'



Courtesy Kevin Berne/TheatreWorks

Marianne (Antoinette Comer) daydreams about her dashing suitor in "Sense and Sensibility."

By Heather Zimmerman

Composer Paul Gordon's relationship with 19th-century literature may have had humble beginnings, but it quickly bloomed into deep admiration — not unlike a romance in a Jane Austen novel.

Gordon has adapted three of Austen's works into musicals, but discovering his ear for adapting classic novels began with Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre" in 2001, which garnered Gordon a Tony Award nomination for the music and lyrics.

"When I first tackled 'Jane Eyre,' my initial reasoning was (to take) public domain material that was immensely popular 200 years later," Gordon said. "But when I started to read these novels, especially Jane Austen, and really diving into her world, I found it truly inspiring. She is a brilliant writer, the social manners that she writes about I feel pertain to today. Her sensibility — no pun intended — is quite modern."

TheatreWorks is staging Gordon's musical adaptation of Austen's "Sense and Sensibility,"

about the trials and triumphs of sisters Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, through April 3 at Palo Alto's Lucie Stern Theatre.

"It's kind of an intimate production and Paul has written a beautifully intimate show in terms of the music and the focus of it. It's not huge production numbers. It's really about these characters," said TheatreWorks Founding Artistic Director Robert Kelley, who's directing "Sense and Sensibility."

The show tells of the Dashwood

See **SISTER ACT**, page 24

**BOOTH***continued from page 23*

Fowler said. “But on the other, you could say she was the easiest to write because I got to make her up.”

Fowler was able to include chapters about the Booths’ Black neighbors, the Halls, based on a real family. Under Maryland law at the time, a child born to an enslaved woman was

enslaved and a child born to a free woman was born free. Ann Hall, who had been enslaved but got her freedom some time close to the Civil War, had both free children and children who were enslaved on neighboring plantations.

One plot point Fowler added that is not based on a specific historical incident is about a Black childhood playmate of the Booths being sold into enslavement.

“I know those things happened,” Fowler explained. In the Booths’ community, “there was a lot of interaction with the children of the enslaved families when everybody was little, so they must have seen childhood friends sold away. How you would make sense of that as a 5- or 6-year old is difficult to imagine.”

Fowler acknowledged that she found herself unable to work on the book for at least a year after

the election of Donald Trump, which “brought me to a complete halt.”

She was able to resume work on the novel after discerning its connection to today’s political predicament.

“It had become more clear to me that this was all the same story, that things that were set in motion from the very beginning of the country’s founding — and that came so vividly and horrifically

to the surface during the Civil War — all of those same political vectors were ongoing and, once again, extremely visible.”

“Booth” was published on March 8. Fowler will appear at the Bay Area Book Festival, May 7-8. For more information, visit, [baybookfest.org](http://baybookfest.org). ■

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**SISTER ACT***continued from page 23*

sisters, who have recently been thrust into tough financial straits through a combination of inflexible inheritance law and selfish relatives. The sudden change in circumstances doesn’t help matters when each sister falls in love, with plenty of complications.

But much as romance figures in the story, it’s the sisterly bond that the show highlights, Kelley said, characterizing the overall story as a “romantic drama.”

“There’s still a lot of comedy in it, but the focus is on deep emotions and how to get through life with the support of someone you absolutely trust and love deeply, and that’s the way the two sisters interact,” Kelley said.

Elder sister Elinor (Sharon

Rietkerk) is pragmatic and hesitant to reveal her emotions, while the bubbly, artistic Marianne (Antoinette Comer) sometimes overshadows. But as different in temperament as the two sisters are, their love for each other helps them make the best of their sudden lack of fortune.

“Marianne is so feisty, which is why I loved writing for her because I saw sort of a pattern in her that I could develop with certain musical motifs, that would expand her energy and her sort of franticness. And her rebelliousness really was exciting to write for,” Gordon said.

“With Elinor, that was an entirely different challenge — writing for a character that is silent, that is quiet, and that is reserved, and that doesn’t speak all her thoughts. And yet, for

musicals, that’s sort of prime material, right? Because in musicals, you have the opportunity for a character to express what they’re thinking.”

Musical theater may finally allow Elinor to share what she’s feeling, at least with the audience, but setting Austen’s famous prose to show tunes might seem like a tall order. The challenge of matching music with Austen’s language is something that Gordon described as a “joy.”

“Her wit is amazing, her language is amazing. Why would you change it? When I’m writing the book scenes, I might have to shorten things, or maybe change a phrase here or there to make it more understandable to a modern audience. But I try to leave as much of her language intact as I can,” he said.

“When I’m approaching the lyrics, obviously, I can’t take her words verbatim. So that’s when I have to really try to interpret her language into lyrical form as my own. And that’s where I have the most fun, is trying to imagine, ‘If she were to write lyrics to this, how would she say it?’”

TheatreWorks and Gordon are longtime collaborators, with the Mountain View-based company having staged “Jane Eyre” and all three of Gordon’s Austen musicals, including the world premiere of “Pride and Prejudice” in 2019. The company presented his “Emma” in 2007 and 2015 and has staged several other musicals by Gordon, including “Daddy Long Legs” and “Being Earnest.”

“Certainly the music is different in how Paul has interpreted

each of them,” Kelley said of the three Austen musicals. “But what underlies it is a contemporary flavor to his songs that somehow manages to fit into the Regency era. And I think that makes it work ever so much better because you feel that you’re part of what’s going on, you’re not listening to something that’s antique, you’re listening to something that feels like now.”

“Sense and Sensibility” runs through April 3 at the Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto and will also be presented streaming. For more information, visit [theatreworks.org](http://theatreworks.org). ■

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# Food & Drink

## Bittersweet memories

With Shekoh Confections, a globe-trotting chef starts over in Palo Alto

By Anthony Shu

Inside Palo Alto's newest chocolate shop, Shekoh Confections, two aprons from the prestigious l'École Valrhona, a professional pastry training program in Tain l'Hermitage, France, hang on the wall. A plaque boasts that gaining admission to the program is as hard as breaking into a bank vault. However, when owner Shekoh Moossavi discusses her trip to France that took place 10 years ago, she portrays the accomplishment as an escape more than an achievement.

In 2012, Shekoh Moossavi shuttered Shokolaat, her downtown Palo Alto restaurant that ambitiously combined French cuisine, patisserie, baking and confectionery. The building was to be converted into a mixed-use project, and Moossavi was only offered one year of tenancy when attempting to renew her lease. Meanwhile, she was finalizing a divorce with her now ex-husband, who was a partner at Shokolaat and at the couple's first restaurant, Gervais in Saratoga (which closed in 2009 under different ownership). They also partnered on Pastry Smart, a wholesale bakery and confectionery in San Mateo.

In the preceding years, Moossavi had lost both of her parents, who had inspired her love of cooking. One of six sisters growing up in a household in Iran constantly bustling with guests, Moossavi treasures the carefree meals of her childhood. Moossavi's father was the first person she ever cooked for, and she still remembers how he pretended to enjoy the "horrendously bad" dinner she prepared.

Paired with an all-consuming

kitchen lifestyle, these personal challenges overwhelmed Moossavi. Referencing how airlines instruct passengers to put their own oxygen masks on before assisting others, she says, "I was not giving myself the oxygen first, and I was trying to help everybody. So after a while you suffocate."

About one week after signing the divorce papers, Moossavi packed two suitcases and headed off to Paris, hoping to "start fresh." "I went to a place where I had no memories. I didn't know anyone," she says.

While l'École Valrhona provided Moossavi with extensive technical training in chocolate, the time also allowed her to rest and reflect on her love of cooking. Moossavi points to one evening at Gervais that she thinks of frequently. With the clock nearing midnight, a man entered the kitchen with compliments for Moossavi and an unexpected request: He asked to paint her portrait. Puzzled, Moossavi agreed. The man was watercolorist Arne Westerman, and this painting, which he gifted to Moossavi, now hangs opposite the aprons in Shekoh Confections.

Moossavi eventually found herself longing to return to the Peninsula, the first place she truly considered home after leaving Iran for stints in Belgium and Florida. "I was very young when I left Iran and I always felt like I (was) passing through ... when I came to the Bay Area, it instantly felt like I'm home," she says. She says she treasures

driving to beaches, farms and San Francisco in the same day and the kindness of customers she has served over the years.

After a few years working in Texas and a second trip to l'École Valrhona, Moossavi returned to the Bay Area in 2018 with a new lifestyle that valued balance and developing personal connections outside the kitchen. She started working on Shekoh Confections, her first business to bear her own name, and began the search for a retail location while selling confections to wholesale and online customers.

Moossavi's chocolates harness French technique but reflect her experiences traveling across the world. These influences start with her parents, and Moossavi says that cooking is a way of holding onto their memory. "Every time I'm in the kitchen, (it's like) you see a ghost around you and you're the only one who sees them," she says. "Those memories are with you. And those people are with you."

The Persian Rose, a vibrant, red heart-shaped chocolate, has two layers made up of rose petal marmalade and rose water white chocolate ganache, in a clear nod to one of Iran's most well-known products. Moossavi says that as soon as she starts preparing the marmalade, she recalls the scent of roses in her family's garden. She will eventually serve a menu of her own blended teas in recognition of the drink she started enjoying before she could walk.

Moossavi also uses flavors that she finds comforting from



Magali Gauthier

**Shekoh Moossavi**, owner of Shekoh Confections, inside the new chocolate shop on El Camino Real in Palo Alto on March 7.

a variety of cultures. Drawing together the lavender fields of Provence, France, with local wildflower honey, the Honey Lavender chocolate is flavored with Moossavi's own lavender extraction. Caramel is one of Moossavi's favorite childhood treats and flows out of the golden Caramel and Praline, and an upcoming peanut butter and jelly chocolate will feature nut butter made in-house with a specialized machine.

Reflecting on the decadelong journey that led to opening Shekoh Confections, Moossavi says she feels excited about her return to the Bay Area.

"It's always very difficult to come back and start from the beginning again. But honestly, I believe that if you have that burning desire in your heart,

that you're willing to work very hard, anything is possible. And I'm the living proof," she says.

Shekoh Confections, 2305 El Camino Real, Unit B, Palo Alto; 650-384-6322, shekoh.com. Instagram: @shekohconfections. **A**

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**Shekoh Moossavi** fills a box of chocolates for customer Jennette Gonzalez at the chocolate shop in Palo Alto.



Magali Gauthier

**Burnt caramel chocolates** at Shekoh Confections. Caramel is one of Moossavi's favorite childhood treats.



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