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Nonprofit's new library in Menlo Park celebrates Chinese traditions and community

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

On any given Saturday during the summer at the Little Bookworm Library in Menlo Park, children can be found making kites, color ink paintings, rice paper and an array of other crafts during Chinese Culture Summer Camp. In another area of the library, there are children and parents learning how to make Chinese desserts and other dishes in the Little Chef Cooking Class. And at Chinese Story Time, preschoolers are enthralled by specially curated books written in Mandarin.

Part library, part community center, the nonprofit Little Bookworm provides a place where Chinese families can celebrate their heritage while encouraging literacy, and the broader community can learn about Chinese culture.

The newly opened library is the brainchild of Atherton mom LuLu Roberts, who moved to the

Midpeninsula from Taiwan in 2008. As a mother of four young children, Roberts said she struggled to find children's books or story times in Mandarin at the Menlo Park public library.

"There was a very small percentage of books for the Asian patron, and programs there seemed to be only in English or Spanish," Roberts said.

Roberts said she was dismayed that she had such a difficult time finding resources, especially since Asians represent a growing segment of the population. In Menlo Park, 15% of the population identifies as Asian, and in neighboring Palo Alto, Asians represent over 33% of the population, according to data from the 2020 Census.

After unsuccessfully petitioning the Menlo Park Library to provide more Chinese resources, Roberts decided to create the Joy Culture Foundation, the nonprofit Chinese cultural club

See **CULTURE CLUB**, page 13



Magali Gauthier

Joy Culture Foundation founder LuLu Roberts reads a book to families in the backyard of the Little Bookworm Library in Menlo Park on June 23.

Menlo Balance initiative sparks fervent debate among residents

By Cameron Rebosio

A ballot initiative that would take decisions on housing out of the hands of the Menlo Park City Council sharply divided community members at the July 26 meeting.

Eight residents voiced disapproval of Menlo Balance's initiative at the June 28 meeting, piling in comparison to the 33 residents who spoke out on July 26, with 15 in support and 18 against the initiative.

"It is very clear from the findings that this ballot measure is taking a very complicated and intricate problem and using a blunt instrument to solve only one part of that problem," said Evelyn Stivers, executive

director of the Housing Leadership Council. "This measure attempts brain surgery with a baseball bat."

The initiative proposed by Menlo Balance would prohibit the Menlo Park City Council from redesignating areas zoned for single-family homes without voter approval, effectively blocking development of multifamily housing in large swaths of the city. It has all the signatures needed to get on the ballot. The council on June 28 delayed action to put it on the ballot and authorized a study on the impacts to be conducted first. Council members voted unanimously at the July 26 meeting to put the initiative before voters in November. The council's other

option was to pass it immediately into law.

"Menlo Park's current system is broken when three City Council members who don't represent

'This measure attempts brain surgery with a baseball bat.'

EVELYN STIVERS,
HOUSING LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

a certain district can currently vote to rezone a low-density, single-family parcel against the wishes of the city councilmember for that district and against the wishes of the public," Menlo Balance founder Nicole Chessari

said. "People's homes are sacrosanct. People choose to live where they want to live, and they should have a vote."

Another resident countered the assertion that living situations are a choice.

"I think (the report) certainly puts the lie to the assertion that people choose to live where they live, because it shows that people live where they can afford to live," said Catherine Dumont.

The study found that the ballot initiative would impact 53 lots in Menlo Park that could have been developed, and zoning would be frozen throughout approximately 80% of Menlo Park's residential areas without a public vote. The ballot measure covers 1,540 acres of city

land, what translates to 43.8% of all land in the city. A similar initiative passed in Saratoga has been on the books for 26 years, never facing a vote to amend it, according to the staff report.

Residents shared their worries over what could happen if the initiative passed, with some fearing for the ability of current residents to continue living in the Bay Area, while others voiced concerns with their inability to take action if the initiative doesn't pass.

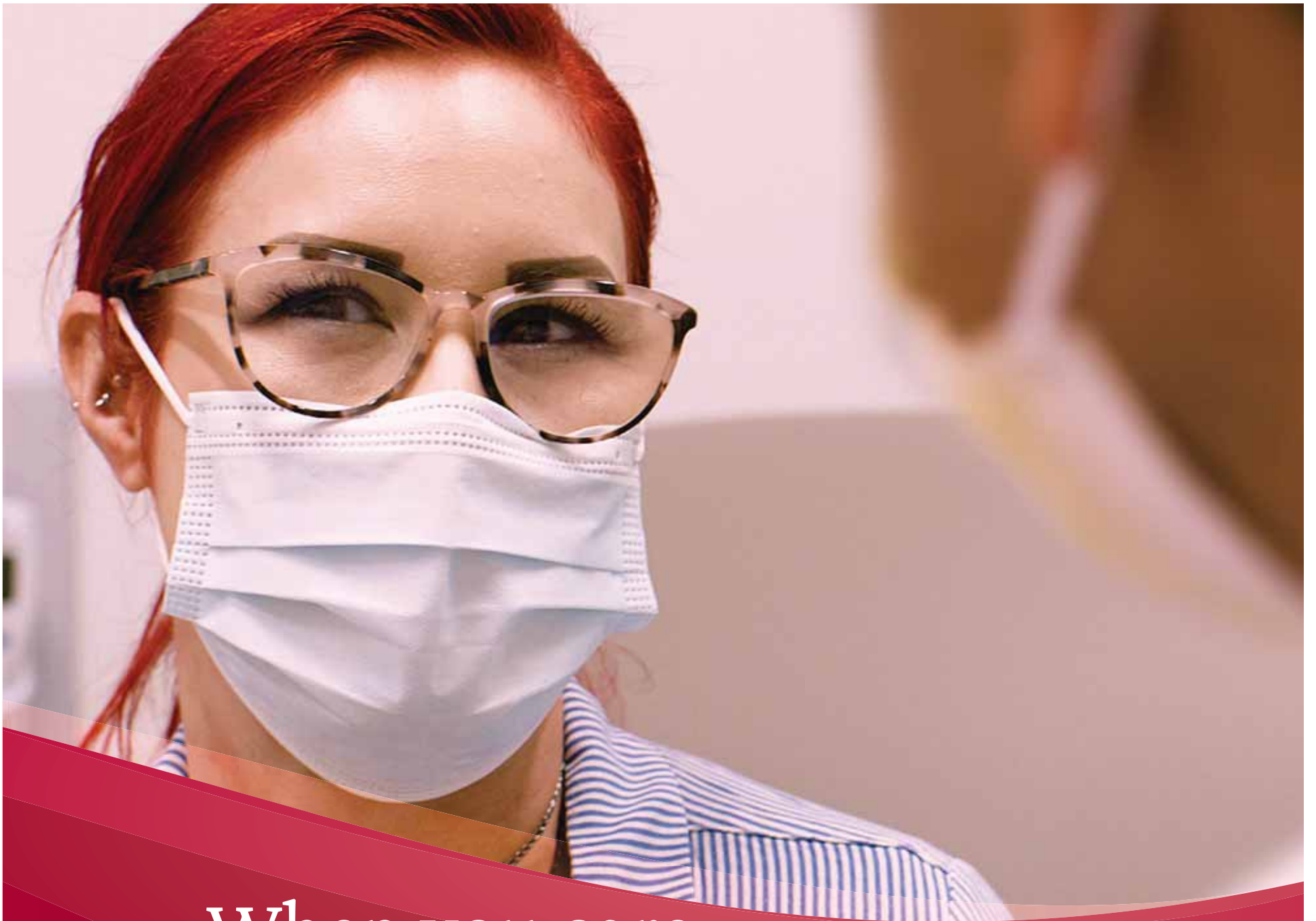
"(My sons) grew up in this community, they will not be able to live here," said Ronen Vengosh. "They're not going to be able to afford to do so and

See **MENLO BALANCE**, page 16

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Local News

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Courtesy Sweet Farm

Shari Brodmann, the associate executive director of Sweet Farm, pets Martin the sheep in New York. The Half Moon Bay animal sanctuary fled the West Coast's droughts and wildfires for a new home on the East Coast.

Why Sweet Farm fled Half Moon Bay for the East Coast with llamas, pigs and turkeys in tow

'We had to make that calculated decision to get out now,' says co-founder Nate Salpeter.

By Anthony Shu

For years, Kevin the pig, Gizmo the cow and Paco the llama enjoyed the Coastside air and sprawling pastures of Half Moon Bay's nonprofit animal sanctuary Sweet Farm. They even achieved a certain level of celebrity, popping up in virtual meetings with corporate executives as a part of the

"Goat-2-Meeting" program.

In May, Kevin, Gizmo, Paco and around 150 of their friends found themselves packed into 50-foot trailers headed on an impossibly complicated 47-hour road trip, one that Sweet Farm co-founder Nate Salpeter says his operation was forced to make.

Parents grimace with frustration when packing their children into a car with piles

of snacks and fully-charged tablets, but Salpeter assumed the far more daunting task of transporting his farm's animals, all of them rescued from potentially traumatic situations, from California to New York.

Since 2015, Sweet Farm has sheltered animals rescued from petting zoos and encumbered

See **SWEET FARM**, page 14

Amid burglary concerns, Woodside will install license plate readers in town

By Angela Swartz

Twenty automated license plate readers will be installed around Woodside despite concerns from some residents that the amount of crime does not warrant the privacy they'll lose by installing the readers.

The Town Council voted 5-0, with Sean Scott absent, to sign an agreement with Flock

Safety for \$61,100. Woodside joins neighboring towns, like Atherton (which uses Flock), Menlo Park, Redwood City and Portola Valley, that have added the readers in recent years. Automated license plate readers (ALPRs) are mounted on police cars or on fixtures such as road signs and bridges.

"I reluctantly support (this) with the caveat that we continue to negotiate an agreement

with Flock and finalize our privacy policy," said Council member Jenn Wall. "It's really important the council and staff take the privacy concerns seriously."

Based on public feedback, council members said there was an even split among residents who wanted the ALPRs and those who did not.

See **LICENSE PLATES**, page 10

Atherton council dumps townhouses from its state-mandated housing plan

By Angela Swartz

After canvassing the council, Atherton's city manager says the town will focus on backyard accessory units to meet its housing allocation

There was every indication going into a July 20 City Council meeting that Atherton intended to meet its state-mandated housing allocations, in part, by allowing multifamily housing development, a shift away from the town's history as a community with only single-family homes. There was a 300-page report outlining plans for future development in Atherton, including designating land for townhouses. A note from staff saying that the state won't support a housing element without multifamily housing.

Then City Manager George Rodericks spoke.

He said he reviewed the plan, called a draft housing element, with each member of the council before the meeting and they all wanted to make significant changes to it. The most notable: Removing the proposal for so-called multifamily housing zoning overlays in town. The town must plan for the development of 348 new housing units, per its 2023-31 state allocation, which is a large jump from the 93 units designated during the previous eight-year cycle.

"I don't want Atherton to change," said Councilwoman Elizabeth Lewis. "It is just heartbreaking and sickening to think we're facing this from the state."

Council members said they heard the complaints about a shift away from being a single-family home community "loud and clear." The council had gone back and forth over the last couple of months debating which parcels of land to include for future development of multifamily units.

Mayor Rick DeGolia said he realized over the last month it's infeasible to build affordable townhouses in a place where land sells for \$8 million per acre. About 85% of the 300 written comments the town received were in opposition to multifamily housing overlays.

"The only way you can reasonably offer affordable housing in Atherton is if you offer it on the existing land people own," DeGolia said. "For most of us that are residents, that means ADUs (accessory dwelling units) and it means offering them at below fair market value." He noted, for instance, that Sacred Heart Schools, Atherton, could build on its 60 acres of land, but it's not going to be able to afford to buy adjacent land and build affordable units. "That's a real serious revelation."

Town can't meet housing goals with focus on ADUs

Rodericks explained that the town wants to focus its housing efforts on creating more accessory dwelling units. However, even with a successful ADU program, Atherton will still fall short of the 348 units required by the state, he said. This can only happen if property owners rent them out at affordable rates and through an affordability program that will require the collection of the rental and income data of their tenants. Since the town revised its ADU ordinance in the last few years, production of the backyard units, sometimes called granny cottages, has "skyrocketed," he said.

"I believe that our success here is achievable but again, only with the full support of this community to follow through on the rental of those units," he said. "If ADU production and rental goes as projected, we will fall short at the very low and above-moderate income categories for housing production," he said. "To meet these objectives we will need to show housing production through lot splits under Senate Bill 9 (SB 9) and the development of vacant lots in town."

The state Housing and Community Development department (HCD) will be aggressive about the town providing proof that ADUs are being rented out, Rodericks said.

Town officials predict Atherton can produce 80 units under

See **HOUSING PLAN**, page 12



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

NOTICE OF TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, August 10, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.**, or as near as possible thereafter, on the following:

- To consider revisions to the Town's Master Fee Schedule concerning fees for the following departments: Planning.

The amounts of the proposed fees are based on information which will be available to the public at least 10 days in advance of this Public Hearing.

This public hearing will be held in the Historic Schoolhouse of the Town of Portola Valley, Town Center – 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, California, and will also be held virtually via Zoom, at which time and place interested persons may appear and be heard thereon.

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

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Town Clerk

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Cameron Rebosio (223-6536),
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Chief Visual Journalist

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■ **Newsroom:** (650) 223-6525
Newsroom Fax: (650) 223-7525

■ **Email news** and photos with captions
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NEWS

Longtime Portola Valley council members will not seek reelection

By Angela Swartz

After serving a combined 30 years on the Portola Valley Town Council, Maryann Derwin and John Richards will not run for office this fall. The pair told The Almanac they'd like to give others a shot to sit on the council.

The town faces major challenges, namely the continued efforts to harden homes to protect them against wildfires. The town is also working through the process of getting approval of its controversial state-mandated housing element.

Derwin joined the council in 2005, while Richards was elected four years later, in 2009.

Mayor Craig Hughes has pulled candidate papers to run for reelection and four others have expressed interest in running. They are Mary Hufty, Dale Pfau and Planning Commissioners Judith Hasko and Craig Taylor.

Maryann Derwin

Derwin, a resident of Portola Valley since the early '90s, thanked the community in a July 19 letter for having faith in her leadership even when her stands were controversial.

"As a seasoned elected official once told me, 'If you aren't making people unhappy, you aren't doing your job, and ... sometimes you must lead people where they don't want to go,'" she said. "Ever aware of the bigger picture and the greater good, I tried to live by these words, wrenching at times as it could be."

During her tenure on the council, Portola Valley completed the Town Center, created the Spring Down vernal pond and convened the town's Race & Equity Committee. She also oversaw the creation of an inclusive community process for the 2023-31 housing element and the passage of the strictest home hardening ordinance in San Mateo County.

As a member of San Mateo County boards and committees, she helped create the first-ever water agency in San Mateo County, One Shoreline, and the first Highway 101 Express Lanes project. On the San Mateo Library Joint Powers Authority (JPA), she worked to restructure the distribution of funding to make it more equitable, and approved funds for new libraries in Half Moon Bay, Brisbane and Atherton.

She also served on the San Mateo City/County Association of Governments, where she worked on efforts like expanding bike/pedestrian access, green infrastructure, climate action and housing.

Former Councilwoman Ann Wengert said Derwin represents the best in town government. Wengert described Derwin as "eloquent, fiery and impassioned."

"Part cheerleader and part pusher, Maryann doggedly encouraged us, her colleagues, to get involved with our county and regional counterparts by participating on committees and in regional events," Wengert said in a statement. "Maryann truly deserves credit for Portola Valley's emergence from its past isolation."

Derwin said she plans to endorse Hughes for reelection.

John Richards

Richards, a retired architect, said it was simply time for him to move on.

"I mostly decided 13 years is long enough on the council," he said. "I will miss the companionship of the other people on the council and having people in the community reach out with questions and comments."

Richards moved to Portola Valley when he was 4 years old and attended elementary school in the Old Schoolhouse before graduating from Woodside High School.

"Hopefully we can actually bring some of the lower-income parts of society back into the community; a broader mix than today," he said of efforts to create more housing in town. "When my folks moved here it was the cheapest place around to live back in the '50s. It's a healthier community to have that kind of mix."

As mayor, Richards spearheaded a gas-powered leaf blower ban, "which seems to have made a difference," he said.

About a decade ago, he helped start the Town Center farmers market.

Before joining the council, Richards served on the Portola Valley Planning Commission in the 1990s.

Richards said plans to endorse Hughes, along with Planning Commissioners Taylor and Hasko for the council this fall. He said the council's greatest challenges will remain fire safety and housing. ■



Maryann Derwin



John Richards

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Three candidates are vying for a seat on Atherton City Council

Two incumbents, one newcomer have announced candidacies

By Angela Swartz

Housing and infrastructure improvements are top of mind for the three candidates for Atherton City Council this fall.

Mayor Rick DeGolia and Vice Mayor Bill Widmer, along with newcomer Stacy Miles Holland, have said they will run for council.

Bob Polito, who is serving out the rest of former Vice Mayor Mike Lempres' term that ends in November, said when he was appointed that he does not intend to run this fall and has not pulled papers to file for candidacy. Miles Holland previously sought to fill Lempres' seat.

Rick DeGolia

DeGolia, a lawyer, first joined the council in 2013 and has since served as mayor in 2021 and 2022. His entry into civic life began the same year when he served as vice chair of the Civic Center Advisory Committee.

He said he thinks the most important role of a council member is to represent voters. This has particularly come into play when approaching planning for the state's 2023-31 mandated housing element update. The town must plan for the development of 348 new housing units, which is a large jump from its designation of 93 units during the previous eight-year cycle.

He said he wants to Atherton to contribute to affordable housing in this area, especially for school staffers who travel long distances to work.

"People (in Atherton) want to be informed; they generally don't want to be involved," DeGolia said. "That dynamic has changed. It's being impacted by the potential changes that possible zoning changes would create."

The town decided to reverse course on a plan to allow for townhouses. About 85% of the 300 written comments the town received were in opposition to multifamily housing overlays.

"We really take those opinions seriously," he said. "Leadership by not just being responsive but by thinking strategically. This is a very complex problem. Exactly what the desired solution is by requiring municipalities to increase (their housing allocation) by 370% by this eight-year cycle versus the last is a big question. ... We're different than other communities; land is too expensive."

DeGolia said last week at a

council meeting that he realized over the last month it's infeasible to build affordable townhouses in a place where land sells for \$8 million per acre.

"Offering townhouses for \$5 million a piece, that's not affordable," he said. "That's not going to help people who work in this area."

The only way you can reasonably offer affordable housing in Atherton is if you offer it on the land people already own, he said, like accessory dwelling units (ADUs), lot splits and building on school-owned properties. The town will need a robust ADU program to reach its goals, he said.

Among his accomplishments on the council are helping to create a quiet zone along the Fair Oaks rail crossing in Atherton. He hopes to also bring a quiet zone to the Watkins Avenue crossing in the next year.

He said the new civic center, long in the works before its completion this spring, is a "game changer" for Atherton that will help the town hire and retain staff. For example, the police department was previously housed in temporary trailers and a dated building that was "filthy and had rats."

"We couldn't hire," DeGolia said.

Bill Widmer

Widmer has taught at Menlo College in Atherton and has served as an executive for over 30 years. He has been on the council since 2010.

Like DeGolia, the housing element is a top priority for Widmer. The town learned through the process that they need to better engage the community.

"The job is not yet done," Widmer said. "We learned some lessons also on the housing element."

He is proud of the cost-effective building of the long planned civic center, which was completed this spring.

Improvements to the Marsh Road Channel have reduced flooding and the risk of eroding people's properties. The town is putting a "substantial amount of money" into revamping the Atherton Channel, he said.

Widmer led the effort to switch the town's garbage and recycling program service provider to GreenWaste in 2021. The town left the South Bayside Waste Authority so it could "control the impacts to resident's refuse collection and processing rates over the next 20 years."

With the spike of home burglaries in town over the last few years, the town installed automated license plate readers. Widmer said the council will bring

more innovative crime-fighting solutions to the town in the near future.

He said he'd like to see improvements to Holbrook-Palmer Park, including repaving the trail with decomposed granite since much of the asphalt has been uprooted by trees. He also wants to see the Carriage House renovated, one of two local carriage houses over 150 years old that are still standing (the other in Woodside has been refurbished).

He said he played a major role in the restructuring of town staff, the benefits program and paying down the town's long-term obligations which were in the tens of millions of dollars.

Stacy Miles Holland

Miles Holland, a public relations consultant who moved to Atherton in 2018, is chair of the Environmental Programs Committee (EPC) and joined the committee in June last year. Her husband has family from Atherton, so she spent time in town before ultimately

moving in.

When she applied to fill Lempres' position last fall, she said she would bring a fresh perspective to the council as a new resident and new mom. She received a vote from Council member Diana Hawkins-Manuelian at the time.

The CZU Lightning Complex fires in September 2020 prompted Miles Holland, who had a newborn son at the time, to get involved with local government.

"I had the realization that this might be how his birthdays could be every year," she said. "I thought, 'I need to get more involved and I need to start looking for ways to make a difference,' so I joined the EPC in summer of 2021 and hit the ground running."

Miles Holland said she wants to encourage more community building in town with more get-togethers (she organized the town's 2022 Earth Day event).

She said she also wants the town to establish reach codes that limit gas appliances in new buildings, which helps limit greenhouse gas emissions. She's also keen on banning gas-powered gardening equipment, which she said accounts for 7% of emissions in town.

Now that the civic center project

is completed, town staff and the council have more time to work on other priorities, and Miles Holland wants to see the focus shift to bike and pedestrian safety.

She said when she was pregnant and later, with her son in a carrier, she would walk around her neighborhood every day, but now that he's in a stroller she doesn't feel safe.

It's unsettling to her to see families pushing strollers through gravel to get to the library for story time, she said. There are no sidewalks in Atherton along El Camino, and she'd like to see the town push Caltrans to focus on pedestrian safety along the route. Before she was pregnant, she remembers riding her bike down Atherton Avenue and hoping no one mowed her down.

Candidates have until Friday, Aug. 12, to file candidate papers in the election. ■

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



Bill Widmer



Rick DeGolia



Stacy Miles Holland

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Weeks after Edgewood Fire, power outages vex Emerald Hills residents

Repeated service disruptions interrupt medical treatments, child care, remote work

By Leah Worthington

Rochelle Abrams was at home on the afternoon of June 21 when, without warning, the electricity shut off.

Like thousands of other residents in San Mateo County, her family lost power as the Edgewood Fire erupted along the nearby Edgewood Park and Nature Preserve. But for Abrams, it wasn't the loss of the refrigerator or internet that worried her most — it was her family's electricity-dependent medical devices.

"The 40 hours without power were the worst," she said. "It was really difficult."

Abrams lives with her elderly parents in a three-story, single-family home in the Emerald Hills neighborhood. Her 83-year-old father has dementia and relies on a CPAP machine to treat his sleep apnea. Her mother, who's 78 and has multiple sclerosis, uses a nebulizer and oxygen concentrator multiple times a day to breathe. Because of MS-related balance and strength issues, she also needs a chairlift to move between the three floors of their house.

"We all kind of care for each other," said Abrams, who has her own disability.

On a typical day, her mother



Magali Gauthier

Smoke from the Edgewood Fire is visible from Cañada Road on June 21.

makes several round trips in the chairlift between her bedroom and the first floor to eat meals and use her nebulizer. When the power went out, she was forced to reduce it to one trip per day to conserve the chair's limited backup battery. Her nebulizer and oxygen concentrators, on the other hand, were completely dark.

The hospital encouraged her to come in to use their nebulizer, but the treatment was expensive, and she worried about possible COVID-19 exposure. Without supportive oxygen, Abrams'

mother struggled to breathe for hours on end.

"She calls it a 'crazy head,'" Abrams said. "She can't think straight."

In addition to the respiratory issues, her mother's MS was exacerbated by the unusually hot weather, which they had to endure without air conditioning. And staying well-nourished without power was an additional challenge.

"We ate a lot of crap food," Abrams said. "I (was) trying to figure out how to feed two people without power, with food that

was going bad."

Though now contained, the Edgewood Fire was just the beginning for Abrams and her family. In the three weeks following the blaze, she counted seven more power outages — and she's hardly the only one.

Roughly 1,137 PG&E customers in the area have experienced repeated power outages in the last several weeks, which have caused disruptions of everything from medical treatments and child care to remote work and food preparation.

"These outages are related to

damaged electric equipment due to the Edgewood Fire, which continues to impact how the system operates," said PG&E spokesperson Mayra Tostado, adding that recent high temperatures put an additional strain on the system.

Several residents reported hearing a loud boom right before the fire started, which they speculated may have been from a blown transformer at the nearby substation, a casualty of the sweltering temperatures.

Cal Fire has declined to comment on the cause of the fire, which officials said remains under active investigation.

Tostado said that repairs were still being scheduled in the weeks since the fire. She warned that repairs might result in additional outages "to complete the work safely" and said that customers would be notified in advance. PG&E is also conducting additional patrols and power line safety inspections to identify and prevent further issues.

Additionally, the company's Enhanced Powerline Safety Settings "help prevent wildfires by turning off power automatically in one-tenth of a second when a hazard, such as a tree limb striking a powerline, is detected," according to Tostado. These

See **POWER OUTAGES**, page 18

November election: More candidates enter local council, school board races

By Angela Swartz and Cameron Rebosio

Election season is well underway as more candidates pull papers to run for office across the Midpeninsula.

Here's a roundup of those who are looking to run for local city councils and school boards on the ballot in the November general election. Candidates have until Friday, Aug. 12, to file candidate papers, subject to a five-day extension if no incumbents run for reelection.

Las Lomitas

Las Lomitas Elementary School District trustees Heather Hopkins and Gautam Nadella have pulled papers to run for reelection. There are three seats for four-year terms open on the board and one for a two-year term.

Nadella has filed his candidate papers for a four-year term. Trustees Cynthia Solis Yi and Molly Finn are also up for reelection but have not pulled papers.

Portola Valley School District

Portola Valley School District trustee Bob Bauer has pulled papers to run for reelection this fall for a two-year seat.

Trustees Aimee Armsby and Anne Fazioli-Khiari are also up for reelection, but for four-year terms. Neither has pulled papers to file for candidacy.

Menlo Park City School District

Incumbent Sherwin Chen has pulled papers for the Menlo Park City School District Board of Trustees race this fall. There are three seats open.

Trustees Stacey Jones and Scott Saywell, who are also up for reelection, have not yet pulled papers.

Ravenswood City School District

Ravenswood City School District trustees Tamara Sobomehin and Mele Latu have pulled papers to run for the district's school board. There are three open seats.

Sobomehin has filed her



Magali Gauthier

Candidates for the Nov. 8 general election are beginning to file papers to appear on the ballot.

candidate papers. Ana Maria Pulido is up for reelection, but has not yet pulled papers.

Woodside Elementary School District

Incumbent Jenny Hayden pulled papers to run for reelection to the Woodside Elementary School District Board of Trustees.

Newcomers Ricky Yost and

William Dunn have filed candidate papers to run in the race as well. Incumbents Jennifer Zweig and Peter Bailey have not yet pulled papers.

There are three open seats on the board.

Sequoia Union High School District

There are three seats up for election on the Sequoia Union

High School District's Board of Trustees.

Sathvik Nori, a former student trustee on the board, is running for the Area D seat, which includes parts of Menlo Park, Atherton and North Fair Oaks. Suvarna Bhopale, a Belmont-Redwood Shores School District trustee, is running in Area A, which includes a small portion of Menlo Park north of Highway 101.

Trustee Alan Sarver is up for reelection in Area A, while Chris Thomsen is up for reelection in Area D. Neither have pulled papers.

Menlo Park Fire Protection District

Jim McLaughlin is seeking reelection to the Menlo Park Fire Protection District this fall.

There are three openings on the board. The terms of McLaughlin, Chuck Bernstein and Robert Jones expire this fall. ■

Email staff writers Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com and Cameron Rebosio at crebosio@almanacnews.com.

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LICENSE PLATES

continued from page 5

One resident, Andrew Howard, pointed town officials to a March 2022 American Civil Liberties Union report that calls out Flock for building a mass surveillance system. The report notes “a proliferation of cameras and widespread sharing allow for the creation of intrusive records of our comings and goings, create chilling effects, and open the door to abusive tracking. And the scale of what Flock is doing goes far beyond what was contemplated

when ALPRs first arrived on the scene.”

Burglaries trigger request for cameras

Initially the town considered a pilot project with the readers in the Woodside Hills neighborhood, east of Interstate Highway 280, where there have been recent attempted home burglaries and burglaries. But they heard from residents throughout town that they’d like cameras installed as well.

In Woodside Hills, there was a burglary on the 600 block

of Woodside Drive on June 18 and a burglary on the 200 Block of Ridgeway Road on June 3, according to the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office police blotter. One neighbor told the council last month that installing the readers would help give residents peace of mind.

“We don’t know how many crimes are deterred because of license plate readers,” said Woodside Hills resident Sue Sweeney. “That’s something that cannot be measured. But even if you deter a couple a year, it will make a huge difference. But for someone like (my neighbor), whose house they tried to break into, it’s terrifying.”

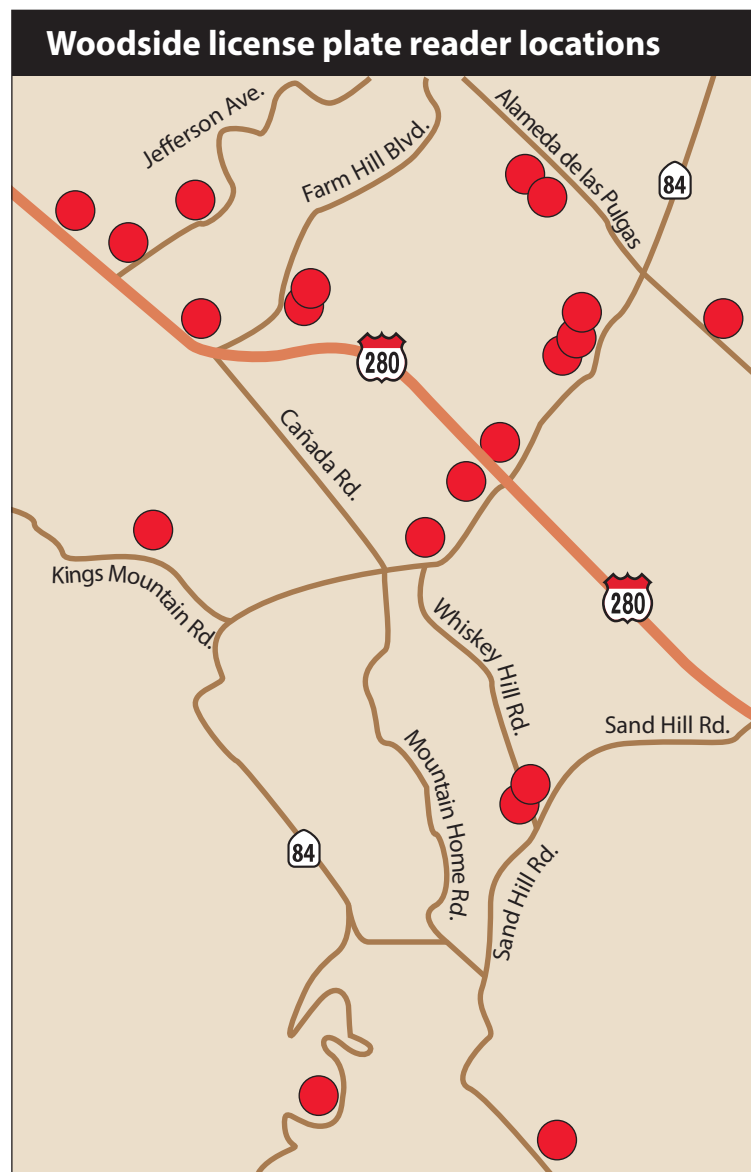
The readers have helped the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office solve a series of burglaries in Ladera, Lt. Mark Myers told the council. The readers helped officers discover the burglars were renting cars from a company in Vallejo.

“What they would do is every five or six days, they would go around the Bay Area committing burglaries and then go back to the rental car place and change the car out,” he explained to the council at a June meeting. “So we were actually able, by using ALPR identify that car, and then go and talk to the rental agency, and then we were able to actually find out when they were re-upping or getting the new car. And then we were able to eventually locate and chase them.”

Other privacy concerns, actual effectiveness

Brian Hofer, executive director of Secure Justice, an Oakland-based nonprofit that advocates against state abuse of power and for reduction in government and corporate overreach, told the council in June that he fears Woodside has no way to gauge the effectiveness of the readers.

“If you come back next year and say, ‘Oh, look, you know, we had 100 hits on these license plate readers,’ it’s meaningless,” he said. “You don’t have a baseline of data today to compare. Next year, the reporting provision, just capturing the



Information courtesy town of Woodside/Map by Kristin Brown

Woodside is planning to install automated license plate readers throughout the town in order to deter crime and track criminal activity.

hits and queries, isn’t going to tell you the results. Did it actually lead to a stolen recovered vehicle or a witness or an Amber Alert? Did you actually locate suspects for violent crimes? I would encourage you to look at a more robust annual reporting mechanism if you move forward.”

He said he worked with the city of Alameda on creating a detailed annual ALPR policy.

Hofer also encouraged the council to go with the 30-day retention limit on the collected data, which the town ultimately did. Myers recommended a longer retention period, of about three months, because if people go on vacation for an extended period of time by the time they report it, the footage could be close to being deleted. Or, if there are a series of burglaries police are investigating, and police get a lead on a suspect, it’s difficult for them to link cases if the footage is gone.

“The privacy invasiveness comes from the accumulation of data,” Hofer said. “An easy way to mitigate that concern is to have a shorter retention period so that you don’t have multiple data points. That’s how you track people

in playing the patterns and association. ... So although I do not endorse surveillance tech vendors I have been impressed with Flock. During these few years where they’ve been expanding into this market, my primary concern is that you have no way to gauge effectiveness.”

More on the plans

The council directed staff to create quarterly updates on the Flock cameras in town.

The town received six responses to the request for proposals.

The town can continue the agreement at \$52,500 annually if it chooses. ■

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

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OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include **Guido Budelli**, 98, a Menlo Park resident, on July 17.

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

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THEAGENCYRE.COM

With \$2 million, Ecumenical Hunger Program rolls out longer term aid to families in need

By Aliana Mediratta

For the first time in its history, the East Palo Alto-based nonprofit Ecumenical Hunger Program (EHP) will be offering individualized, comprehensive, long-term assistance to a select number of local families through its Family Sustainability Program.

Founded in 1975, EHP initially provided food to members of the community in need. Over nearly five decades, its mission has evolved to provide direct aid in a variety of ways, including food, furniture, back-to-school supplies, children's health resources and more. The organization primarily aims to

help those who are struggling by alleviating burdens on a one-time basis in order to prevent poverty from worsening.

"We help sustain people, we help keep people afloat," said EHP Executive Director Lesia Preston. "EHP is a lifesaver, we know we can't totally take people out of the water, but we can keep them afloat."

Preston said that the expanded safety net program will operate differently, providing long-term aid to families in order to transform their living situation alongside its temporary assistance services. While one-time assistance is vital for individuals and families who need to keep the lights on, the

aid is typically not enough to prevent them from continuing to live in poverty, which continues the 'revolving door of need.'

"It's going to make a tremendous difference in their life," Preston said, "we can help them month to month, help them budget their money better and make the proper referrals to help them hopefully get ahead, where they can stay ahead so once that time period is up they won't fall back into that same situation."

While the families have not yet been selected, Preston estimates that they will be able to accommodate between five and 10. Clients who are considered

"working homeless or on the verge of homelessness" are eligible. The goal for these recipients is to achieve long term self-sufficiency, rather than relying on one-time assistance as they continue to struggle through poverty.

The Safety-Net plan, which includes the new program, was developed after EHP's board of directors and executive leadership assessed the most effective way to use roughly \$2 million dollars received from recent generous donations.

Preston expressed her optimism about EHP's future given the tremendous response from those who contributed financially to support the East

Palo Alto community, which increased during the pandemic.

"How people came through for us, we were amazed," Preston said "It's just a blessing that we're able to do this now because of what people have done for EHP during these times, now we're able to help the community in a new way, in a better way, and at a higher level."

Information on how to support Ecumenical Hunger Program and its work or for information on accessing assistance, go to ehpcares.org. ■

Email Editorial Intern Aliana Mediratta at amediratta@almanacnews.com.

HOUSING PLAN

continued from page 5

SB 9 during the upcoming cycle. The state's so-called duplex law that took effect in January requires local agencies to grant ministerial approval to certain lot splits and allow up to two primary units on each resulting lot, with 4-foot side

and rear setbacks.

So far, the town has received four applications for SB 9 lot splits — at 78 Cebalo Lane, 2 Lowery Drive, 125 Glenwood Ave. and 94 Palmer Lane. There are three pending applications, at 47 Santiago Ave., 190 Selby Lane and 197 Glenwood Ave. Atherton expects to see about nine to 32 net new dwelling

units per year with SB 9, according to staff.

Councilman Bob Polito said a lot of the arguments against multifamily were just "plain NIMBY" (Not In My Backyard), but a lot are not. Polito, who ultimately agreed with the plan to remove multifamily overlays from the plan, said a well-managed project for townhouses for seniors wouldn't negatively impact the town as "we know it."

"I rather see a few good projects that get us to where we need to be by law than rely on the wild, wild west," he said, referring to SB 9 and ADU projects.

Although there is faculty and student housing at some schools in town, multifamily housing has never been seen outside of those narrow uses.

Pool houses are not currently allowed to be rented out for more than 30 days in Atherton and Councilwoman Diana Hawkins-Manuelian said changing that could really help bolster its numbers. She also thinks the town should allow housing units to be built on top of garages.

Menlo College has on-campus dorms and is interested in building a significant amount of faculty housing, but that likely won't happen during this housing cycle, for example, Lewis said.

The council also opted to remove a suggestion that schools in town rent their housing to the general public.

The council directed staff to come back on July 27 with an updated plan which includes dumping the multifamily overlay zones. The Atherton council was set to vote on its draft housing element at its July 27 meeting, after The Almanac's Wednesday press deadline.

What would have been a big change for Atherton

Of the roughly 300 comments on the draft housing element the town received, greatest volume, 85%, discussed the proposed multifamily zones, and voiced opposition to the use of overlay zoning to meet the requirements of the state mandate, according to the town.

Only a handful of residents spoke at the meeting, most in opposition to Menlo College and Menlo School acquiring land in the Victoria Manor neighborhood, claiming it would disrupt their way of life. Others said they were "relieved" the council members listened to neighbors who didn't want townhouses in Atherton.

Many of the comments in opposition spoke to concerns about pedestrians safety from increased traffic, the ability of existing infrastructure to support additional housing units, and the impacts of construction.

There were also letters from housing advocates prodding the town to include more

multifamily housing.

DeGolia noted that many Atherton residents are on vacation after two previous summers of restricted travel due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He said he'd rather engage them when the state's comments on the draft housing element come back in September or October.

"We shouldn't penalize them by creating some sort of dramatic policy," he said.

Hawkins-Manuelian said she'd like to see an ad hoc housing element committee formed to tackle the issue. Nearby Portola Valley formed a similar group earlier in the process, about a year ago, which met over a dozen times and ultimately came up with recommendations to the council.

Last week, both Portola Valley and Woodside's town councils approved draft housing elements, which included areas for multifamily housing units. ■

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

Guido Carlo Budelli

October 30, 1923 – July 17, 2022

A longtime resident of Menlo Park, Guido Budelli, beloved father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, passed away peacefully in his home surrounded by his loving family. Born in Alameda, CA to Fortunato and Maria Budelli, he graduated from St. Joseph Elementary School and Sequoia High School. He served four years in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

Guido married Florence Camporelli in 1946. Together they raised their family in Menlo where they were active members at St. Raymond Parish. A trained mechanic, Guido worked at Freeman-Sondgroth Paving Co. for many years and later moved on to BFI in San Jose where he became an equipment supervisor. Guido, an accomplished athlete, was also heavily involved in fast pitch softball traveling with his family to ballparks around the state from the Bay Area to Sacramento to Fresno.

In retirement Guido traveled with Flo, took up golf, and was the family's "go-to" all around handyman.

Guido was preceded in death by his wife, parents, and brother Louie.

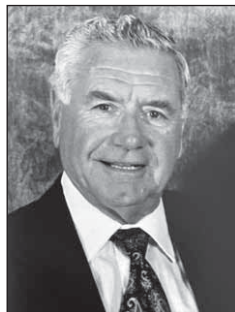
He is survived by his children Bob (Tana), Diane Garibaldi (John), and Dick (Robyn) and grandchildren Bobby (Sierra), Mikie (Brooke), Chris (Naomi), Adam (Sofia), Francesca Budelli Harter (Brady), John Ross (Alicia), Michael (Keely), and Joe (Sonia) Garibaldi, 15 great-grandchildren, and three nephews.

A special thank you to Malia "Tita" Ruocco for being Guido's dedicated caregiver.

A Memorial Mass in celebration of his life will be held on Thursday, August 4th, at 11 am at St. Denis Church, 2250 Avy Ave., Menlo Park.

In lieu of flowers, please honor his memory with donations to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105, or www.stjude.org or to a charity of your choice.

PAID OBITUARY



Angela Swartz

Atherton City Council members, left to right, Diana Hawkins-Manuelian, Bill Widmer, Rick DeGolia and Elizabeth Lewis during a July 20 meeting.

CULTURE CLUB

continued from page 1

that operates the Little Bookworm Library.

“I want to pass down my heritage to my kids,” Roberts said. “It is so important for them to recognize who they are.”

Roberts said she believes that many second-generation Chinese American children deny the Asian part of their ancestry or “become molded into a stereotype.”

“It is hard because their skin color is different, and the culture their parents infuse them with is different,” Roberts said.

Many Asian immigrant mothers also struggle, Roberts said. Life can be challenging because they lack English language skills or because they do not drive, she said.

Using seed money from her husband’s family, who cofounded the investment company Kohlberg, Kravis and Roberts, she established the Joy Culture Foundation with a board of directors that shares her vision.

Roberts said she wanted to establish a cultural space in Menlo Park because of the area’s central location on the Peninsula, and because she lives within minutes of downtown.

It was not an easy search, and the pandemic caused a delay in her timeline, she said.

Roberts said everything came together during the summer of 2021 after a landlord unexpectedly called to offer her 2,200 square feet of space in a building he owned in downtown Menlo Park.

“I seem to surround myself with supportive people,” Roberts



Magali Gauthier

Families play in the backyard of the Little Bookworm Library in Menlo Park on June 23.

laughed. The space at 934 Santa Cruz Ave. includes a private courtyard and dedicated parking. “It was a perfect fit,” she said.

Relying on a small staff, along with the work of many volunteers, the Little Bookworm Library opened in February — just in time for the Lunar New Year celebrations. Roberts pointed out that it was not just the work of interested Asian families that created the library.

“There were students from Menlo-Atherton High School who came to build the shelving,” she said, noting that “We welcome all races — people who are interested in Chinese culture.”

The foundation consists of three facets: play spaces, programs and the library. Roberts

lights up when she describes the mommy/baby programs that take place in the colorful, toy-filled section of the center.

“They can come and have quality time here with their babies,” said Roberts, adding that it is a chance for bonding to occur between mother and child and other mothers.

Ivy Sun, who lives in Santa Clara, brings her 3-year-old daughter, Summer, to the center nearly every other week to participate in the Mandarin story times and other preschool programs.

“This is a place where I can feel safe. ... The children have fun and make as much noise as they want,” Sun said.

Programs offered for

school-aged children are usually taught in both English and Chinese by experienced educators. They include a wide range of classes, from art workshops to calligraphy to cooking to mental math. Two multipurpose rooms are used for classes while parents sit outside in a shaded courtyard and socialize.

“I love it when I see parents out here having their own party,” Roberts laughed.

The library holds contemporary books, many published in Taiwan, that are written specifically for elementary school children. Roberts said that there are books in both traditional and simplified Mandarin, as well as graphic novels for the older kids — and their parents. The goal is to provide the all-important advantage of language skills.

“These children will be biliterate so they can read in Chinese,” Roberts explained. She pointed out that studies show it takes 13 years for a person to learn enough language skills to use them for a lifetime.

“Language is a tool, but

ultimately, it is about the culture and community they get to be within,” Roberts said. “First-generation parents were so busy trying to fit in, they lost their heritage and now want to get it back.”

Roberts said she believes the parent-child participation aspect really helps that process. Whether it is fostering hand-eye coordination through Play-Doh or solving clues together as part of the Go Game, “the important thing is that this is a place to build community,” she said.

The foundation operates on a membership basis, with families paying \$50 a year to use the center and borrow books out of the lending library. Roberts said there are currently 200 members, all of whom heard about the foundation through word of mouth. Families as far away as San Jose and Hayward have become members.

Jennifer Nguyen said she, her husband and two elementary-age children make the 30-minute drive down the Peninsula from San Francisco to the Little Bookworm Library every weekend.

“Our family is quite Americanized, and we only speak English at home, so we did not have much opportunity to partake in cultural activities prior to the Joy Culture Foundation,” Nguyen said.

Nguyen said her entire family uses the library: Her children participate in classes, such as calligraphy, while she and her husband look for books to take home and read together as a family.

“Ultimately, we want to help the community understand who we are,” Robert said. “We are all different, but everyone is included.”

The Joy Culture Foundation/Little Bookworm Library is located at 934 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park. For more information, go to thejoyculturefoundation.org. ■

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



Images courtesy LuLu Roberts

Left: Chinese cultural activities at the Menlo Park location include calligraphy. Right: The Little Bookworm Library houses a selection of books in Mandarin and hosts story times for children.

Monkeypox is spreading in the Bay Area, Stanford wastewater data shows

Virus has been detected in Palo Alto, Santa Clara County and southern San Mateo County

By Sue Dremann

Evidence of the monkeypox virus has shown up in Bay Area wastewater since mid-June, indicating the presence of infection, according to data from Stanford University's Sewer Coronavirus Alert Network (SCAN).

Stanford's SCAN tracks the presence of a number of viruses in wastewater, including SARS-CoV-2 and its variants, influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and human metapneumovirus. Monkeypox is the latest addition. The virus has been detected in 10 out of 11 sewersheds that Stanford researchers are studying, including Palo Alto, Sunnyvale, San Jose, Gilroy, Stanford, Silicon Valley Clean Water (in San Mateo County), Davis, Sacramento and two sewersheds in San Francisco, according to the data. Only the University of California, Davis came up negative thus far.

Monkeypox is a rare virus that causes fever, headache, muscle aches and backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills, exhaustion and a pimple-like itchy or painful

rash with pustules on the face, inside of the mouth and on other parts of the body. The rash goes through different stages and a person remains contagious until the rash dries up and disappears. The illness typically lasts two to four weeks, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The virus is related to smallpox but it is not the same as chickenpox, according to the CDC. It is spread by close contact, such as touching, and in particular by sexual activity. Recent cases have been among men who were intimate with other men, although it isn't considered a sexually transmitted disease, according to the CDC.

The SCAN team is collecting the DNA that's part of the virus. They are not detecting live, infectious viruses, just pieces of their genetic material, said Alexandria Boehm, professor at Stanford's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, which jointly runs the SCAN project with Marlene Wolfe, assistant professor of Environmental Health at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health.

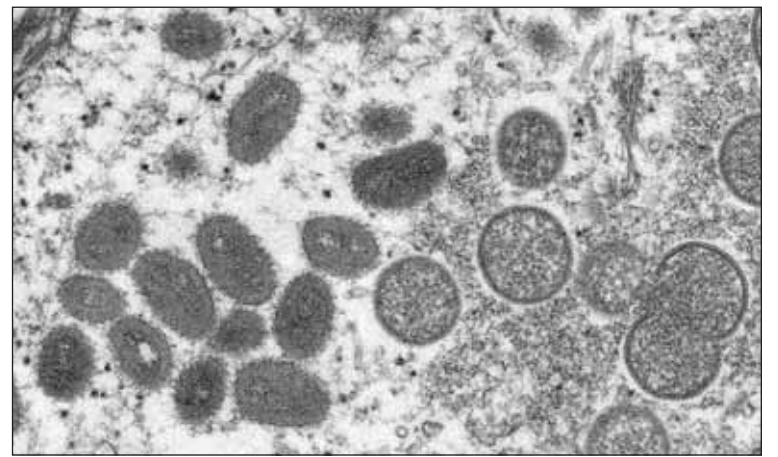
Palo Alto's sewershed, which serves Palo Alto, Mountain View, East Palo Alto, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, showed detectable levels of DNA starting July 15 and its highest spike so far on July 17. It again was showing a rise as of July 20, according to the data.

The Silicon Valley Clean Water sewershed, which serves the cities of Belmont, San Carlos, Redwood City and the West Bay Sanitary District, showed the presence of monkeypox on July 21. Codiga (Stanford), which is part of the Palo Alto sewershed, showed a detection on July 19, and Sunnyvale showed detections on July 9 and July 17.

The San Francisco, Sacramento and San Jose sewersheds were the hot spots, according to the data.

The presence of monkeypox in Santa Clara County also is corroborated by the Santa Clara County Public Health Department. As of July 21, the county confirmed 31 cases, according to its online dashboard.

It's likely monkeypox DNA will be present in wastewater of other large metropolitan areas, Boehm said.



Courtesy CDC/ Cynthia S. Goldsmith via Public Health Image Library

This image of the monkeypox virion from an electron microscope image came from a 2003 prairie dog outbreak. The disease is spreading in the Bay Area, Stanford University researchers said.

Given SCAN's experiences working with wastewater for successful surveillance for RSV and influenza, as well as COVID-19 and its variants, Boehm said it's not surprising that an emerging pathogen target like monkeypox DNA is appearing in the wastewater.

"(Monkeypox) DNA has been documented in a number of human excretions of infected patients, including urine and feces, all which end up in wastewater. It is encouraging to have evidence that this tool (wastewater surveillance) can provide community-level information on the spread of monkeypox," she said in an email on Monday.

"At the present time, we cannot say how many cases are in the sewersheds with positive

detections except to say when we have detected monkeypox DNA it indicates there is at least one person in the sewershed using the sewerage collection system. It will be useful to look at trends in the concentrations as we collect more data and compare those with trends in reported MPX (monkeypox) cases."

On July 23, the World Health Organization declared monkeypox a global health emergency. As of July 25, there are 16,836 confirmed cases worldwide and 3,487 in the United States, according to the CDC. California is the second top state with 356 cases; it is only surpassed by New York, which has 990 cases. ■

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



Courtesy Sweet Farm

Nate Salpeter, Sweet Farm co-founder, said staying in Half Moon Bay became "untenable."

SWEET FARM

continued from page 5

farms, cultivated organic fruits and vegetables and raised over \$10 million for startups solving challenges affecting our food systems. Husband-and-wife co-founders Salpeter and Anna Sweet (also the CEO of JJ Abrams' Bad Robot Games) are climate experts and entrepreneurs advancing a mission that aligns with Silicon Valley's interests in sustainability and venture capital. So what motivated them to spend \$250,000 to move over 100 clucking chickens and bleating sheep, and why are other farms following their lead?

The Coastside conjures images of foggy skies and grass dampened by condensation but a couple of years ago, Sweet Farm's buckets of striped squashes and oblong tomatoes stopped appearing in its farm cart and CSA boxes months earlier than usual due to drought conditions. Since then, the farm's wells have dried up to the point where they can no longer irrigate fields of fruits and vegetables.

Sweet Farm's agricultural program also hosts field trials for tech companies focused on feeding the planet's growing population. For example, the fields would receive a treatment of biochar, organic

matter burnt at high temperatures with limited oxygen, produced by a local waste management company. However, trials and experiments became ineffective when the wildly changing climate complicated the scientific process.

"There's a strong importance around the ag program being consistent, rote and robust. And really having predictable seasons

'You're not able to break up a rooster fight when you're barreling down an interstate.'

NATE SALPETER

... it just became untenable to operate a strong program (in Half Moon Bay)," says Salpeter.

Beyond agriculture, finding housing for Sweet Farm's employees also became a challenge. It's difficult to receive the permitting to build housing on Coastside farmland, and the cost of living was outpacing Sweet Farm's salaries even though they were far above market rates.

Then in August 2020, the CZU Fire spread suffocating smoke across Sweet Farm, which was located on Tunitas Creek Road

in the southern portion of Half Moon Bay. Salpeter and Sweet witnessed the evacuation line inching toward their property, and they joined other locals in evacuating their animals.

Thanks to an emergency response group operated by Robin Camozzi of Half Moon Bay Feed & Fuel, trailers crossed up and down the Coastside and Santa Cruz Mountains, shepherding animals across the Bay Area. Sweet Farm's staff acted rapidly but needed to control their emotions since the animals don't respond well to panic. "Maintaining your wits about you helps them make it through a stressful situation," Salpeter says.

It was two weeks before Sweet Farm's animal residents were able to return.

At this point, Salpeter asked himself, "What does the long term look like if these fires are becoming more and more commonplace?"

Salpeter and Sweet then traveled to upstate New York to take care of Sweet's parents and started considering a new home for Sweet Farm, or at least a second location. After some investigating, the couple began envisioning a property

See **SWEET FARM**, page 15

SWEET FARM

continued from page 14

with rows of farmworker housing and productive partnerships with businesses connected to the nearby Cornell Center for Excellence for Food and Agriculture.

In summer 2021, Sweet located a promising 50-acre property in Himrod, New York, a historic estate that Salpeter says once served as the region's first vineyard. He saw the potential in renovating and providing programming in two creaking 170-year-old barns and treasured the ability to build new structures "kind of at the drop of a hat." Just as valuable were the location's robust natural resources. "Water comes out of the sky, it comes out of the ground. We're located right on a freshwater lake," says Salpeter.

In October, he sketched out the first concept for a main barn in New York, and two months later, he learned that the new property owners in Half Moon Bay would be pursuing a project on their land that could not coexist with the animal sanctuary. Salpeter's original plan to operate both a Sweet Farm East and a Sweet Farm West turned into the project of moving the organization's entire operation across the country.

Construction on Sweet Farm in New York started this past March and thanks to Mennonite building crews, new barns went up within two months. May 16 was set as the moving date for Sweet Farm's animals.

Weeks ahead of the move, a California team started sifting through the blood tests, fecal tests and health checks required to move animals across state lines. Due to concerns about avian flu, the birds received careful attention. At the same time, larger animals like goats, cows and sheep all needed to be tagged, identified and connected to their testing in the event that the transport trucks were pulled over.

Beyond these required tests, plenty of questions demanded Salpeter's attention. These inquiries included: "Which transport company to work with, how to handle feeding, do we send team members (with the trucks)? Do we transport themselves in trailers? Do we send them all nonstop?"

Consultations with veterinarians and a search for a vendor that could handle the sensitive animals led to an unexpected solution, the blue-and-black striped trailers of Brook Ledge Horse Transportation, a company focused on transporting racehorses. Brook Ledge's website boasts a list of "High Profile Passengers," and it includes the last five Kentucky Derby winners.

Hiring Brook Ledge meant



Courtesy Sweet Farm

Sweet Farm staff prepare llamas Sheika and Dolly for their move to New York.

that Sweet Farm could house its animals in box stalls (commonly seen in horse stables), larger spaces that resembled the ones where the animals normally slept. And while farm animals aren't Brook Ledge's normal cargo, the company could provide drivers experienced in caring for finicky animals.

Now that two 50-foot trailers were secured, Salpeter had to assemble a puzzle that resembled a riddle posed on a standardized test. Each trailer was divided into seven different stalls, and some had the ability to be subdivided even further. Frail animals couldn't be roomed with others that had high stress responses, in fear that the excited flapping of wings might cause an injury.

"You're not able to break up a rooster fight when you're barreling down an interstate," Salpeter says. Other pairings provided a chance for close companions to sleep snout-to-snout, like pigs Sweet Pea and Spuds, who escaped from a factory farm and were rounded up by Animal Control in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

After organizing the animals, the Sweet Farm team needed to create a feeding schedule for the Brook Ledge drivers. Chickens had to peck at juicy berries to maintain their hydration levels, and some of the animals needed their usual medications. Each truck housed two drivers, who would alternate shifts in order to make the 47-hour drive, stopping only to distribute feed and water in the trailers.

When it came time to load up the animals in the carefully prescribed order, staff and volunteers lured each one into place with treats. "These animals are very food-motivated,"

says Salpeter. The first trailer left California's rocky coasts on schedule for an 8 p.m. arrival in New York, and the second truck departed four hours later. The team rushed to the airport to catch flights that would arrive ahead of the vehicles.

While designing the road up to the barns, the Sweet Farm team included a large roundabout that would allow for the trailers to pull up beside the stalls. The animals disembarked from the trailers like passengers exiting an airplane, as an exit ramp extended from the side of the container and led directly into the center aisle of the barn. At 3 a.m., the second trailer was completely unloaded under moonlit skies. One and a half semi-trailers filled with equipment soon followed.

Today, the pigs are sniffing around their new forested pastures, an environment that Sweet Farm was never able to provide in California. Garlic has sprouted, flowers are spreading their scent across the acre of cultivated land and the trellises of the vineyard are awaiting the vines that will wrap around them next year.

In conversations, Salpeter has encountered other animal sanctuary operators moving away from the West Coast. Property values around him in upstate New York, a region he calls one of the nation's most climate-stable, have started to skyrocket. He's heard that big farms are also leaving California thanks to increasing costs of feed. Water used for producing hay has

historically been heavily subsidized, but the drought might threaten this aid. The San Mateo County Department of Agriculture has reported instances of larger vegetable growers cutting back cultivation and selling land.

Other factors are influencing a farm's decisions to close or move, like how Half Moon Bay's 110-year-old Bay City Flower Company shuttered in 2019 due to competition from international producers and the region's shift toward tourism. Peninsula Open Space Trust's farmland program has focused on protecting properties from turning into private estates, and the organization estimates that 46% of San Mateo County's farms have disappeared since 1990.

Salpeter says that he doesn't want to sound "alarmist," but he recognizes that farmers are facing numerous challenges.

For Sweet Farm, the move cost the nonprofit approximately \$250,000, a quarter of its annual budget, not to mention the lost revenue from prioritizing the planning process over revenue-generating programs. However, Salpeter says he knows that they made the correct decision.

"When you consider runaway processes within climate, accelerated temperature increases ... it was a big enough long-term risk that we had to make that calculated decision to get out now, before it was an emergency. The last thing that we wanted to do was try and navigate a cross-country move at the 11th hour," he says.

Even in California, you can still meet Nibbles the goat and Spuds the pig on "Goat-2-Meeting" at sweetfarm.org. ■

Email Associate Digital Editor Anthony Shu at ashu@thesixfifty.com.



Courtesy Sweet Farm

Sweet Farm's new location in Himrod, N.Y. The land once housed a winery and sits on a freshwater lake.

MENLO BALANCE

continued from page 1

they'll probably end up leaving the Bay Area, probably the state. I've seen so many other young families and people leaving for that reason and it makes no sense to me. You know, worst of all, this is self-inflicted. There's no shortage of space in the Bay Area, there's no shortage of ability to build. What we have is a shortage of political will."

Wayne Muesse said there was no other choice but to support the initiative. "We're not being listened to, you know, there are many other sites that are more suitable for what's going on out here. But yet, they're not being considered."

One concern is that this initiative could contradict policies laid out in the city's general plan, as addressed in the report. One states that each neighborhood should shoulder its fair share of new housing developments, while another requires that the city support housing opportunities for all without discrimination. Also mentioned in the report are policies for identifying housing sites and to address local housing needs. All four policies could be affected if Menlo Balance's initiative was to pass.

Resident Adina Levin mentioned that Menlo Park had been sued for noncompliance with the housing element before.

"Because we have some famous companies in our city, the eyes of the world are going to be upon us," Levin said. "And this is something that's going to make the city very vulnerable if this (initiative) passes."

"We need housing in

communities throughout the state, and our region, especially housing for critical workforce, like teachers and school staff," said Alex Torres, director of state government relations for the Bay Area Council. "There is an economic benefit, and of course an equity benefit, in that we are undoing some of the harm that single families zonings at single homes zoning has caused in basically segregating our communities historically."

'People's homes are sacrosanct. People choose to live where they want to live, and they should have a vote.'

NICOLE CHESSARI,
MENLO BALANCE FOUNDER

While some arguments hinged on the report, others spoke of their personal experience with housing in Menlo Park. Resident Sandeep Gupta said Menlo Balance's initiative would preserve what he finds special and vital about his local community.

"The safety of our kids and families is important to the residents, and that was evident to me and other volunteers," said Gupta. "When we went for signature-gathering across the city, the traffic from commercial and high-density residential buildings and single-family neighborhood is (bad), especially during weekends, evenings, when kids are playing on streets, neighbors are taking a walk connecting with their neighbors. This has not been

thought through properly."

Another resident, Keith Diggs, spoke about what brought him to Menlo Park, and how housing could impact his life.

"I went to attend law school, worked for a national nonprofit for seven years, and then I got priced out of Phoenix, Arizona because my rent went up 30%," Diggs said. "It's frustrating to me that we're even having this conversation in the first place. Nothing about development requires anybody to give up the home they have, the problem is that so many of the rest of us are homeless. I don't even know where to register to vote because I don't have a home anymore."

One project that would be immediately affected is the redevelopment of the old Flood School site, a proposal that could build up to 90 units of affordable housing at the site of the former James Flood Magnet School. The 2.5-acre vacant school property is zoned for single-family housing.

Another focus throughout the meeting was the availability of units to teachers as opposed to general residents. Residents expressed concern about the availability of units to teachers.

Kathleen Daly spoke in support of housing for district staff, referencing a report by the Ravenswood City School District on the effect of the development would have.

"It would change my life," Daly said, quoting a staff member. "Say that again: 'It would change my life,' a super important point for teachers, staff, the people that feed our children, who take care of the facilities. These are people that are committed to the education of our young people going forward."

Others, however, voiced concern that the units wouldn't actually be made available to district staff, and that a developer would use the project as an opportunity to make a profit.

"I want to talk about the sort of false focus on teachers, how many units in this development are reserved for teachers? Zero.

There's nothing reserved for teachers," said resident Buck Bard, a claim that was rebutted by Ravenswood City School District officials.

Ravenswood's Chief Business Officer Will Eger said that the development agreement, regardless of zoning, would hinge on the idea that Ravenswood faculty and staff would always receive priority if there's a unit available. While non-staff members can take a unit if there's no other takers, Ravenswood district workers get priority.

The long term effects of the initiative were a focus of both the analysis and the commentary. According to the report, Menlo Park would feel the effects of the initiative not just with the Flood School site, but more dramatically in the future housing element cycles.

Over the next several eight-year housing element cycles, options for development sites could be drastically reduced, and may become incompatible with state housing law requiring that sufficient vacant land be zoned for residential use. If the initiative passes, it would become increasingly difficult for future city councils to plan for affordable housing, pushing all development into non-single-family housing areas.

"Please do not cede your authority in future planning for the city. Don't screw the future councils ... which would also, frankly, screw our future residents," said Katie Behroozi.

Resident Steve Wong, said he hoped that this would have a positive effect on the future of city residents.

"I support our initiative not just for my backyard, but for the backyards of all my Menlo Park neighbors who also have the right to maintain the expected quality of life in their neighborhoods," he said.

However, not all residents thought that the long-term effects would be helpful.

"This measure is a one-way door that's permanent, that will make it so that these sites that

are perfect housing sites, large tracts of land where schools used to be, where churches might want to build housing, very reasonable parcels will have to go to a vote and it will never happen," said Michael Levinson. "So they may say they support housing, but this measure in effect will make it impossible to build and these sites, these are not high-density sites."

Equity was also a focus of the comments, with some speakers saying they feared that the initiative could contribute to housing inequality along lines of wealth and race. Other speakers said that one could support both the initiative and low-income housing, and that they were not mutually exclusive.

Nothing about development requires anybody to give up the home they have, the problem is that so many of the rest of us are homeless.

KEITH DIGGS

"In 2020, we marched for Black lives. So I really want to thank the City Council for including racial and educational equity impacts in the study of the ballot measure, because the report validates, in government, to us what we have been hearing people say in human words for years and years and years, based on lived experience," said Karen Grove. "It will function as a continuation of this historic use of strict land use controls to perpetuate unequal and unfair governmental aids by enforcing and locking in residential, racial and economic segregation."

Ballot arguments will be submitted by Aug. 14, and the initiative will be available for public review beginning Aug. 19. ■

Email Staff Writer Cameron Rebosio at crebosio@almanacnews.com.

Burgess Pool contract extended one year

By Cameron Rebosio

A proposal to have Tim Sheeper operate Burgess Pool in Menlo Park for another year is approved by the City Council at the July 26 council meeting.

The contract, negotiated between city staff and Team Sheeper, Inc., would extend Sheeper's operations of Burgess Pool through Aug. 31, 2023. The rest of the terms remain unchanged from the current agreement, despite a request

from Sheeper for a five-year contract extension and compensation for revenue lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sheeper had also previously requested an end to a revenue-sharing agreement with the city.

The contract extension means Sheeper would retain exclusive use of the city-owned facilities, including operation of aquatic programs from swim lessons and recreational swimming to masters programs.

The approval comes on the

heels of a contentious debate last month, in which multiple council members expressed dissatisfaction with Sheeper's requested terms. Members of the public have been divided, voicing both compliments and grievances about Sheeper's management of the pool.

The council voted unanimously to approve the one-year contract extension. ■

Email Staff Writer Cameron Rebosio at crebosio@almanacnews.com.

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Researchers: Elementary students are recovering faster from COVID learning loss

By Ali Tadayon / EdSource

Elementary students are regaining the ground they lost during the pandemic at a faster pace than older students, recent research shows, but K-12 students are still years away from a full recovery.

Comparing the most recent nationwide Measures of Academic Progress, or MAP, assessment data from 8.3 million students in grades 3-8 in reading and math, researchers from the Northwest Evaluation Association testing group found that elementary school students had the most learning recovery last school year of any student group. Meanwhile, students in middle school either made slower progress recovering from learning loss or remained stagnant, NWEA researcher Karyn Lewis said in an interview with EdSource.

Lewis sees the data as a sign of hope for that group of younger students, who researchers initially anticipated would have the toughest time recovering from the pandemic's disruption to schools.

Schools and districts apparently kept that in mind when planning their learning recovery strategies.

"It was the group we were most worried about, and rightly so because our research and that of our colleagues have shown that that was the group that was hardest hit," Lewis said. "I think this is probably due, in part, to that message getting out, and schools and districts taking a triage approach,

focusing energy on our youngest learners."

NWEA now anticipates that elementary students, on average, will fully recover from pandemic learning loss in three or more years. Older students are expected to recover in five or more years.

When the pandemic was raging in the fall of 2020, hundreds of thousands of families across the country opted not to enroll their children in public school, with the biggest groups being kindergartners, and students in grades one through three. Researchers, at the time, were concerned that those students would struggle most to adapt when returning to school.

California K-12 schools lost 271,000 students since Covid struck in spring 2020. Enrollment as of Census Day, always the first Wednesday of October, was 5.89 million students for the 2021-22 school year; five years ago, it was 6.23 million.

Learning loss was also a top concern of policymakers, which is why billions in federal American Rescue Plan funds have been earmarked specifically for schools to address the issue.

Lewis found that the range of abilities among students in the same grade had widened in the 2021-22 school year. Lewis attributed that to the pandemic's uneven impact on students and said the spread was more dramatic among elementary students.

"Kids may be coming to the classroom at the same age, but they are not all stepping into the

classroom with the same levels of preparation and readiness to take on grade-level content," Lewis said.

That range of abilities will make teachers' jobs "exponentially harder" than before, Lewis said.

Students across all grades had bigger gains in math than reading, according to the study. Prior research indicated that the pandemic has had larger negative impacts on math achievement compared with reading achievement.

Identifying the most effective methods and strategies used to get students back on track remains the "million-dollar question everyone is wondering right now," Lewis said. NWEA, a not-for-profit organization that provides schools assessment options, research and professional development offerings, along with its partners, is researching what worked and what didn't, but it's "still too early to say," she said.

A similar analysis by NWEA at the end of the 2020-21 school year painted a starker picture of the state of learning loss: Data indicated that across all grades, the amount of unfinished learning was growing, meaning students ended the year even further behind.

"At that point, it wasn't even thinking about recovery, it was about stopping the bleeding," Lewis said. "The good news is at the beginning of this school year, it does appear the bleeding has stopped, but it's going to be a long

road before being fully healed."

The progress that students made last year was shared across income levels and ethnic groups, Lewis said. But the achievement disparities affecting Latino, Black and American Indian or Native Alaskan students have only widened since the pandemic began, according to the NWEA's research. The research also found that students experienced lower academic gains than a "typical year" prior to the pandemic, with students in high-poverty schools remaining disproportionately impacted.

The improvements that students made last year should be celebrated, Lewis said, but students — especially older students — still have a long road ahead to get back on track. Academic recovery among middle school

students either remained stagnant or fell further back last year. For some students, full recovery would not be attainable before the end of high school, according to NWEA's research.

Lewis was discouraged that NWEA's estimated timeline of full recovery extends further than the deadlines for federal recovery funds. The \$15 billion for schools and districts authorized by Congress in 2021 under the American Rescue Plan has a use-it-or-lose-it deadline of January 2025.

"This was such a challenging year. Schools are still taking an all-hands-on-deck approach to getting the supports and interventions in place, and there's still a long way to go," Lewis said. "So I'm worried that if we strip away those federal dollars while schools are still trying to get kids caught up, it will delay the process even further." ■

This story, from Bay City News Service, was originally published by EdSource.

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Google gives an update on its \$1B commitment to combat housing crisis

By Malea Martin

Three years after pledging to invest \$1 billion toward increasing the Bay Area's housing supply and supporting organizations that combat homelessness, Google released an update on how this commitment is unfolding.

So far, the tech behemoth has allocated \$128 million of a \$250 million investment fund to 18 organizations, which resulted in the development of 23 affordable housing projects across the Bay Area, according to a July 25 statement. The other chunk of the \$1 billion commitment will be in the form of land — the company is pushing forward a number of housing projects on Google-owned land worth \$750 million.

"We've worked closely with elected officials and residents to propose plans where residential

units, offices, retail spaces and open space will coexist on our land," Google said in the statement.

All together, Google aims to build close to 13,000 units of housing across the south Bay Area, the majority of which are planned for Mountain View. The San Jose City Council approved Google's Downtown West project in May 2021, which calls for 4,000 housing units. The company has also submitted plans for two mixed-use developments in Mountain View — the Middlefield Park and North Bayshore master plans — which together will generate nearly 9,000 housing units in the coming decades.

"While we've made progress across the Bay Area through funding and land allocation, we know that's only part of the solution," the July 25 statement said. "Fighting the housing crisis requires innovation and

collaboration across the community. So today, we're also sharing how we're using philanthropy to test new methods of intervention with trusted nonprofit leaders."

The company announced that over the next three years, it will be distributing more than \$10 million to Bay Area nonprofits in grants and pro bono support in the form of technical expertise provided at no cost, said Google Communications Manager Bailey Tomson.

"With this \$10 million in grant funding, we've granted a total of \$18 million of our 2019 Google.org commitment to Bay Area nonprofits providing services like food distribution, job training and case management," the statement said. "Through these grants, these organizations will help provide services to more than 90,000 people and house 10,000 individuals over the span of four years." ■

Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement

ETALON DIAGNOSTICS
ETALON EQUINE GENETICS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 291431

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

1.) Etalon Diagnostics, 2.) Etalon Equine Genetics, located at 485 Seaport Court, Redwood City, CA 94063, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):

ETALON
485 Seaport Court
Redwood City, CA 94063
California

This business is conducted by: A Corporation.

The registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A. This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on June 21, 2022.
(ALM July 8, 15, 22, 29, 2022)

RED TOWER ADVISORS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: 291406

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
Red Tower Advisors, located at 1150 White

Oak Way, San Carlos, CA 94070, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
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1150 White Oak Way
San Carlos, CA 94070
NV

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS



Magali Gauthier

Sgt. Edward Soares holds his K-9 partner Duke while Emmanuel, 9, pets him at a National Night Out event in Hamilton Park in Belle Haven on Aug. 6, 2019.

National Night Out

Atherton will host its annual National Night Out on Tuesday, Aug. 2, from 6 to 8 p.m. in Holbrook-Palmer Park, 150 Watkins Ave.

There will be barbecue, bounce houses, face painting, music and more, at the event intended to bring neighborhoods together to meet local police and fire department staff.

Email Francesca Reyes, office specialist, at freyes@ci.atherton.ca.us or call 650-752-0500 if you have questions about the event.

Menlo Park will also host a National Night Out at six locations: Little House, 800 Middle Ave., from 4 to 6:30 p.m.; Seminary Oaks Park, 299 Santa Monica Ave., from 5 to 9 p.m.; Cafe Zoë, 1929 Menalto Ave., from 5 to 8 p.m.; Hamilton Park, 545 Hamilton Ave., from 5 to 8 p.m.; Arbor Block Party, 900 block of Arbor Road, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.; and University Block Party, 300 Block of University Drive from 6 to 8 p.m.

Residents can also register to host local block parties on the city's website: beta.menlopark.org.

—Angela Swartz

Olympic equestrian hosts horse-riding clinic at The Horse Park in Woodside

Two-time Olympic silver medalist Jim Wofford will be hosting a clinic on Saturday, Aug. 20, and Sunday, Aug. 21, in Woodside on gymnastics and stage-jumping, as well as cross-country horseback riding. The two-day event, held at The Horse Park at Woodside, will be available to all ages and abilities.

Wofford, former president of the American Horse Shows Association, is "a living legend known internationally in eventing as an outstanding coach, teacher, author and Olympian," according to a press release from The Horse Park.

Each of the two days will start with a one-hour lecture and Q&A session with Wofford from 8 to 9 a.m. Following the lecture, Wofford will lead three two-hour sessions of between six to eight riders on gymnastics and stage-jumping during Saturday's session and cross country during Sunday's session.

The clinic serves as part of The Horse Park at Woodside's "ongoing educational efforts to provide interesting and informative events to our surrounding community," according to the press release.

Those interested and seeking more information can contact event organizer Kay Hitch at 650-326-1681 or kayhitch84@gmail.com. The entry form for the clinic can be found online at tinyurl.com/horseclinic.

—Miles Breen

POWER OUTAGES

continued from page 8

settings are typically in place when there is an increased wildfire risk, during the months of May through November, she said.

In a survey conducted by The Almanac's sister publication, the Redwood City Pulse, 71 participants shared details about how they were affected by recent outages.

Among the respondents, over 50% said they had more than four power outages in the past few weeks, many lasting more than eight hours at a time.

One woman, who suffers from a condition that affects her ability to sweat and relies on fans to keep cool, said she became "very sick" in the heat. Her husband, who has chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, was similarly unable to use his air purifier.

Robert Janssen said in an interview that the outages affected his ability to work from home, causing disruptions early in the morning and late at night. PG&E, he said, "definitely could have done better."

"And if our power goes off every week for the next year, that's not OK," he added.

Other residents described hundreds of dollars in wasted food, lost billable hours, wiring shorts and other damaged appliances. Many expressed frustrations towards PG&E, which they said sent out delayed notifications, if at any.

Becky Miller said that she had to throw out "several hundreds dollars of food" in her refrigerator after several rounds of outages.

"Not to mention our PG&E bills have been astronomical for

service that keeps getting interrupted," Miller added. "It's actually kind of obscene to be charged as much as we're being charged. I feel like the rates are absolutely absurd and the service is subpar."

But these were all "inconveniences" compared with what Miller described as the larger problem: being completely shut off from the world.

"We have terrible cell reception up on the hill, so if our power goes out, we are literally cut off from everything," she said. "This was especially terrifying during the fire in Edgewood as we were unable to reach family, get updates or even get official evacuation notices."

Until a crisis hits, she added, "You don't realize how much you rely on electricity for everything you do, especially communication."

Another Emerald Hills resident lamented difficulties navigating in the dark. "We are seniors forced to depend on flashlights and lanterns to maneuver in the dark," she wrote in the survey. "We receive slow updates with weak explanations."

"I feel like we (the community) are paying the price for PG&E's underinvestment in technology and lack of undergrounding of power lines," another participant commented.

In a statement, Tostado apologized for PG&E's unplanned outages and delayed restoration estimates, which she attributed to "the complexity involving repairs and the stress on the grid due to recent high temperatures." Tostado directed customers to the PG&E Outage Center for additional information about unplanned outages.

Several residents have also complained about being charged by PG&E for estimated usage on days when they were completely without power. According to Tostado, these estimates should be automatically corrected once the customers' power is restored and the system detects zero usage during the outage period.

For Abrams' part, she's well aware of her parents' reliance on electric-powered medical devices. And, fearing a situation like this one, she'd taken steps to prevent it.

In October 2021, she applied for PG&E's Portable Battery Program, which the utility company says "provides backup batteries for qualifying customers who rely on power for medical devices." But, Abrams said she never heard back.

When the fire broke out in June, she began inquiring about her application and was redirected to the Central Coast Energy Services, a PG&E partner. They instructed her to reapply, which she did that same day.

Abrams has yet to receive any updates.

"We're nine months into trying to get this thing," she said, exasperated. "We wouldn't have had to worry about nebulizing our oxygen; we would have been able to use the CPAP machine. And that would have solved a lot of problems."

"So the problem for us is two-fold," she added. "It's not just that the outage happened; it's that they didn't do the job in the first place." ■

Email Staff Writer
Leah Worthington at
lworthington@rwcipulse.com.

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Artscene

PEOPLE AND **PERFORMANCES** IN **ARTS** AND **ENTERTAINMENT**

DANCING WITH THE STARS

Complexions Contemporary Ballet moves to the cosmic music of Bach and Bowie

By Karla Kane

When Complexions Contemporary Ballet performs at Stanford University's Frost Amphitheater this summer, audiences will witness dancers paying tribute to a pair of musical giants — albeit from very different eras — classical master Johann Sebastian Bach and rock star David Bowie. Their work will be celebrated in a program showcasing the renowned dance company's exhilarating mix of styles and moods.

"STAR DUST: From Bach to Bowie," which will come to Frost on Wednesday, Aug. 3, brings together the sounds of two of Complexions founding artistic director and choreographer Dwight Rhoden's personal all-time favorites. Over the course of its two acts, the show "kind of goes from a contemporary ballet feeling to a whole other, very theatrical rock 'n' roll, fun feeling," Rhoden said.

The first half of the program ("Bach 25") was originally created to mark Complexions' 25th anniversary. Rhoden said he's choreographed to Bach frequently over the years.

"I think Bach in one way is very mathematical in how he



Courtesy Sharen Bradford/Complexions Contemporary Ballet

In Complexions Contemporary Ballet's "STAR DUST," dancers represent multiple David Bowie characters, telling the stories of his lyrics through movement.

composed music — it could even be argued to be scientific — yet I find an incredible amount of emotion in his music," he said. "The music is so rhythmical, with so many colors and textures. It lends itself to movement,

in my opinion, immediately."

Rhoden described the Bach portion of the show as a very physical, dynamic and abstract work for around 16 dancers, intended to capture and follow the energy of the music without

following a particular narrative or storyline.

The second act, "STAR DUST," is a love letter and thank you to David Bowie, one of Rhoden's longtime inspirations.

"I grew up listening to Bowie. I

even think I wanted to be David Bowie as a teenager," he said with a laugh. "I think what's really attractive about David Bowie is not only is he so theatrical and chameleon-like in his persona himself, but he was always stretching out in new directions," he said of the artist, whose eclectic career spanned four decades.

"His uniqueness is really strong and clear throughout all those years. He was very courageous in how he created music. That lent itself to a lot of visual inspiration in my head. Then there was the feeling and the lyrics and the stories he was telling in the songs themselves."

Unlike the abstract artistry and neo-classical choreography of "Bach 25," in "STAR DUST," dancers represent multiple Bowie characters, wearing costumes and makeup inspired by some of his most iconic looks, lip syncing, and telling the stories of his lyrics through movement.

"I always feel that his music conjures a bit of a picture or a scenario when you listen to it; there's more dimensions," Rhoden said. "I just found that extremely inspirational."

Audiences can expect to see

See **DANCING**, page 21

TheatreWorks explores doctor's revolutionary 'body' of work

"Nan and the Lower Body" transforms a clinical subject into a human one

By Karla Kane

THEATER REVIEW

Consider the Pap smear. For those with female reproductive organs and access to health care, it's a familiar procedure, part of a regular gynecological examination and, if the exam results are un concerning, probably not thought about again until the next check-up rolls around. But since its development and application in the mid-20th century as an early screening for cervical cancer, it has indisputably saved millions of lives.

In "Nan and the Lower Body," Jessica Dickey's one-act play receiving its world premiere from TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, the Pap smear gets its due as a major medical milestone, and audiences

get an informative, funny and touching peek into both the science and the scientists behind it, as well as a timely reminder of how science has too often neglected the health care concerns of half the population.

The Pap smear gets its name from the physician who developed it: George Papanicolaou, known as "Dr. Pap." "Nan and the Lower Body" is set in 1952, when the Greek immigrant Papanicolaou is working in a laboratory in the anatomy department at Cornell University. The titular Nan is Grace "Nan" Day, Dr. Pap's newly hired lab trainee (the only woman, he notes, to have applied

for the position).

Nan and Dr. Pap share a passion for science, a belief in women's rights and a strong desire to make their mark on the world. While the overbearingly enthusiastic Dr. Pap (Christopher Daftsios) is a bit much for Nan at first, they soon form a tight bond and a productive partnership in cytology. Also in the cast are the endearing Jeffrey Brian Adams as Nan's minister husband Ted, and Lisa Ramirez as Dr. Pap's spirited wife Mache, whose unfailing support over the years has been key to the doctor's scientific achievements.

Tensions both internal and external appear over the course of the play. Nan struggles with a

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Courtesy Alessandra Mello/TheatreWorks

From left, Dr. Papanicolaou (Christopher Daftsios) and Nan (Elissa Beth Stebbins) are surprised in the lab by Ted (Jeffrey Brian Adams) in "Nan and the Lower Body."

DANCING

continued from page 20

dancers interpreting classics such as “Space Oddity,” “Heroes” and many others. The piece begins with the haunting “Lazarus,” from Bowie’s final record, “Blackstar,” released just before the artist’s death in 2016, and includes songs from throughout his long career. Some other favorites of Rhoden’s include “Life on Mars,” “Rock ‘n’ Roll Suicide” and, fittingly for a celebrated choreographer, “Let’s Dance.”

Rhoden said “STAR DUST,” which debuted in 2016, has been one of the most widely requested of his shows. That, he said, is a

testament to Bowie’s enduring legacy. “He’s inspired entire generations of musicians and artists, going on beyond his life here,” he said. “It’s one of those things that has a real resonance.”

The New York-based Complexions has “always been about diversity and inclusion,” with a message of unity, Rhoden said. As the Complexions website states, “The company’s foremost innovation is that dance should be about removing boundaries, not reinforcing them.”

The company was founded by Rhoden and Desmond Richardson in 1994, after the two collaborated on a show that brought together many of their friends from a wide range of

dance companies, backgrounds and experiences. That diversity — “not only racially, ethnically and physically” but also in terms of dance genres, including classical ballet, modern dance, hip-hop and more, he said — proved to create an electrifying result on stage, and the success of the show led to the creation of what is now the long-running dance company.

“Nowadays it’s more common to mix genres. In many ways I think we were a bit ahead of our time,” Rhoden noted. “When you see a Complexions performance you will certainly see that diversity. In every area that we can, we push the beauty of celebrating our differences, celebrating the

fact that we come from different worlds, have different points of view, and show the beauty of harmony in very different elements mixed together.”

While Complexions shows have toured worldwide, the Stanford date will mark the company’s debut Bay Area appearance. The performance is co-produced by Stanford Live and San Francisco Ballet, which will present its own “Starry Nights” program on Aug. 5 and 6. Rhoden has an ongoing and fond relationship with San Francisco Ballet, having done a number of works with the company in the past including, most recently, premiering “The Promised Land” with the company in April of this year.

He hopes the local dance fans who’ve enjoyed his work with San Francisco Ballet will be interested in checking out Complexions as well.

“I’m really excited to bring my company and show the audience what we’re all about,” he said.

Complexions Contemporary Ballet performs “STAR DUST: From Bach to Bowie,” Wednesday, Aug. 3, at 8 p.m. at Frost Amphitheater, 351 Lasuen St., Stanford. Tickets start at \$40. More information is available at live.stanford.edu. ■

Email Contributing Writer
Karla Kane at karlajkane@gmail.com.

THEATER REVIEW

continued from page 20

mysterious health affliction, and she and Ted gently butt heads when it comes to career and family expectations. Meanwhile, Mache struggles with her own aging and changing body, and fears what those changes may mean for her personal and working relationship with her husband.

The tone of Dickey’s play is often funny, with humor being wrought, for instance, from the way the word “vagina” can make

people — especially men — squirm in discomfort. There are plenty of poignant moments too, including the comic-turned-serious scene in which Nan and Mache describe many of the positives and negatives that come along with having a vagina.

While the play doesn’t necessarily require elaborate scenic design, audiences are nevertheless treated to absolutely gorgeous work by Nina Ball, who’s created a marvelous, dollhouse-like set that switches between the mid-century laboratory and the cozy

Papanicolaou home.

“Nan and the Lower Body” is a blend of fact and fiction. Dickey’s grandmother, Nan, really did work as a cytologist for years and the play follows her life story (however, it is likely just family legend that she worked with Dr. Pap himself).

While the show celebrates the achievements of Papanicolaou, it is really a tribute to Dickey’s grandmother. And while it’s a nice idea, a little autobiography goes a long way here.

The superfluous inclusion of

Dickey herself into the story is the play’s weakest point.

The show was a part of TheatreWorks’ 2019 New Works Festival and its planned full staging was, as were so many things, postponed by the pandemic. Skillfully directed by New Works leader Giovanna Sardelli, the play’s premiere feels all the more relevant now, as noted in the program, thanks to the ongoing battle over reproductive rights in the United States, exemplified by the Supreme Court’s recent overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.

Ultimately, “Nan and the Lower Body” leaves one deeply thankful for science and the people who’ve dedicated their lives to using it for good, and transforms what could be a clinical subject into a human one. As Dr. Pap puts it, in the show’s most memorable line, “Science should always be personal. It’s too important to be anything else.”

“Nan and the Lower Body” runs through Aug. 7 at Lucie Stern Theater, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. For more information, visit theatreworks.org. ■



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Food & Drink

PALO ALTO GETS FANCY

Michelin-starred chef leaves fine-dining world behind with Ethel's Fancy

By Anthony Shu

For nearly three years, the iconic facade and tiled floors of The Prolific Oven lay vacant, though renovations hinted at the opening of Ethel's Fancy, a restaurant with a notable pedigree.

In January 2020, the Foodist wrote about the announcement of the project and recapped chef and owner Scott Nishiyama's distinguished career, which includes stops at Daniel, The French Laundry and Yoshi's and holding the executive chef role at Mountain View's Chez TJ (not to mention an MIT degree).

After a lifetime attached to these prestigious names and years of pandemic-related delays, Nishiyama's own restaurant will open soon in downtown Palo Alto. It was scheduled to open on July 27, but couldn't get all the inspections done in time.

"I'm a little hesitant to tell everyone about the places I've worked ... At this point in my career, I don't care for that kind of experience anymore. I tend to want to do something more fun and casual," he says.

Ethel's Fancy honors Nishiyama's mother and grandmother, both named Ethel. He credits his mother's cooking during his

childhood in Hawaii and trips to his grandmother's kitchen counter in Oregon for exposing him to different cuisines. He grew up with both sticky, short-grain Japanese rice and the creamy texture of risotto.

Living in a fraternity where the brothers cooked for themselves, Nishiyama first envisioned a culinary career while earning a degree in chemistry. He graduated from MIT in 1996 and then from the Culinary Institute of America five years later. For Nishiyama and his culinary school classmates, French restaurants represented the pantheon of culinary achievement, so he set off on a Michelin-starred path. After years of developing his skills, Nishiyama realized that this style of fine dining can sometimes be overcomplicated and esoteric. It didn't reflect the food he ultimately wanted to serve.

"I started thinking about what my place would look like, did I want to do French food? ... the answer I came up with was, not entirely," he says.

Nishiyama still appreciates aspects of French cooking, but his personal style is lighter and more vegetable- and seafood-forward. It also draws from the diverse cuisines he's been



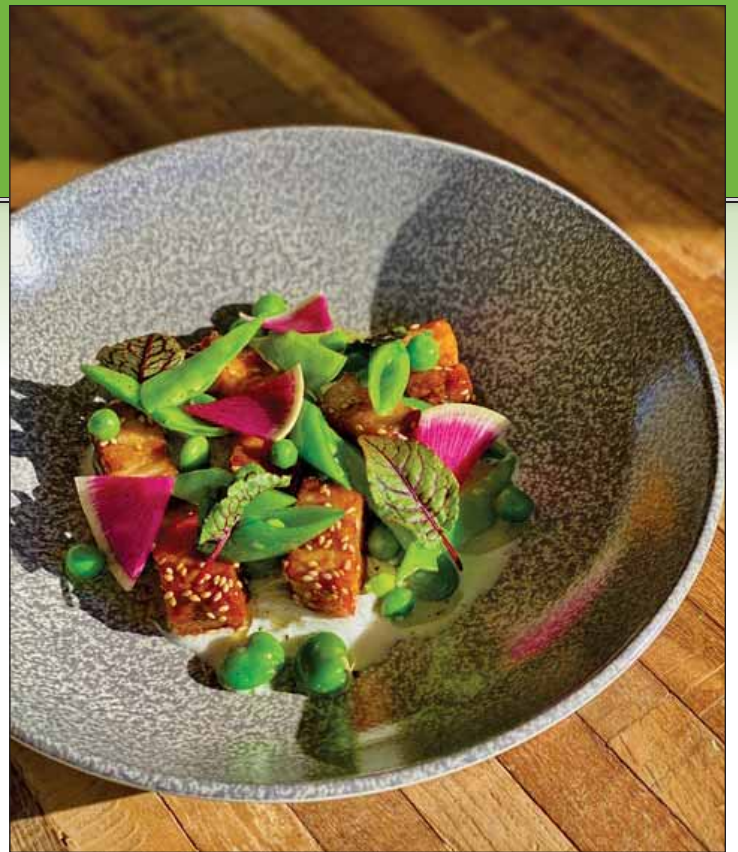
Courtesy Scott Nishiyama

Scott Nishiyama worked at Michelin-star restaurants across the region before launching his own location in Palo Alto.

exposed to since his childhood.

Planning for Ethel's Fancy began in 2017, and the team was ready to start construction in March 2020, the month a global pandemic was declared. In the following months, the development of a COVID-19 vaccine was still uncertain, and the project was nearly tabled. "We just kind of stopped everything that year. Not knowing if we were going to move forward or not," Nishiyama says. After struggling through a building process slowed by supply chain issues, Ethel's Fancy is finally ready to open.

The restaurant will prioritize shared, "interactive" dishes where diners might dunk segments of yellow stone fruit into a dip studded with cashews or assemble their own wraps. Unlike the fine-dining temples where he's spent most of his career, Nishiyama looks to host drop-ins at the bar and hopes that families visit multiple times



Courtesy Ethel's Fancy

A dish at Ethel's Fancy that includes crispy pork belly, burrata, grilled peas and miso caramel.

a month to peer into the open kitchen. He envisions a community gathering space where guests will pass dishes around the table and have lively discussions about the entrees they're enjoying.

Despite this more casual and communal approach, Nishiyama's food still evokes his training and the attention to detail espoused by fine dining. Cucumbers are peeled so that they bear a pleasing striped pattern, and crispy pork belly cut into uniform lardons is accented by green grilled peas and pink slices of watermelon radish. Items will represent the changing seasons and feature local produce, including ingredients sourced from the downtown Palo Alto Farmers Market. Nishiyama is teaming up with a general manager who

also hails from the three-star Michelin world to offer a wine and cocktail program.

Treasuring the opportunity to open his own space, Nishiyama is dedicating Ethel's Fancy to two women who supported him long before he could effortlessly shape quenelles or craft a menu pairing oxtail and octopus.

"I wanted the restaurant to be a very personal expression of everything I've done in my life. So what better way to do that (than) through a tribute to my mom and grandmother?"

Ethel's Fancy, 550 Waverley St, Palo Alto; 650-561-4860. Instagram: @ethelsfancy.

Prolific Oven cakes can still be ordered online. ■

Email Associate Digital Editor Anthony Shu at ashu@thesixfifty.com.

Humphry Slocombe opens first Peninsula ice cream shop

A Bay Area ice creamery is opening its first Peninsula storefront. Humphry Slocombe, founded in 2008 in San Francisco's Mission District by Jake

Godby and Sean Vahey, has locations throughout the Bay Area (and is available in pre-packaged pints at Local Kitchens' Peninsula micro food halls). The company opened up shop in Redwood City on Tuesday, July 26.

Humphry Slocombe doesn't sell classic ice cream flavors — most flavors on the menu, invented by chef and co-founder Godby, might need further explanation. The 10 current flavors sold at all locations include Secret Breakfast, made with bourbon and cornflakes, Chili Vanilla and vegan Toasted Sesame & Chocolate. Pints of Humphry Slocombe ice cream

are available at all locations, and the store also sells sundaes and floats in addition to scoops.

"This city is known for its great climate and profound sense of community, so it makes perfect sense that local ice cream aficionados now have place to gather with friends and family, get their 'weird' on and experience a grown up, delicious, full-flavored ice cream adventure," Sean Vahey, Humphry Slocombe co-founder, said in a statement.

The store celebrated the grand opening of its Redwood City location by handing out free scoops. Guests were encouraged to give an optional donation of



Courtesy Humphry Slocombe

Glenlivet ice cream with honey clove caramel and lemon zest is one of the unique flavors by Humphry Slocombe, which opened its first ice cream shop on the Peninsula this week.

\$1 to local nonprofit Redwood City Together. Humphry Slocombe Redwood City will be open daily from 1-10 p.m.

Humphry Slocombe, 2077 Broadway, Redwood City. Instagram: @humphryslocombe.

—Stephanie Gerson

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