

The Almanac

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

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Gusty storm claims van driver's life in Portola Valley

Atmospheric river brings rain, high winds that toppled trees and took out power lines

By Cameron Rebosio and Angela Swartz

A man died after a tree fell on his van at around 1:30 p.m. in Portola Valley, shortly after high winds and rain picked up on Tuesday afternoon, March 21.

He was traveling eastbound on Alpine Road near La Cuesta Road when high winds knocked down a large tree that fell on his vehicle, said CHP Officer David LaRock.

While crews were attempting to remove the man from the white van he was driving, three more trees fell in the same area, barely missing emergency crews and vehicles at the scene, according to Woodside Fire Protection District Fire Chief Rob Lindner and LaRock.

No one else was in the van with the man and no other injuries were reported, Linder said.

Medics pronounced the man dead at the scene after emergency responders removed large branches from the car to

get to him. He was identified Wednesday as 29-year-old Jesus Ivan Cruz Diaz of San Jose.

Woodside mudslide

On Wednesday morning, residents of the 600-800 block of Patrol Road in Woodside were "highly recommended" to evacuate due to a mudslide, according to the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office Twitter account.

The advisory impacted about 30 homes in the area and the mudslide shut down the road, according to the Sheriff's Office.

Outages

The fierce winds from Tuesday's atmospheric river put thousands of Menlo Park, Woodside, Portola Valley and Atherton residents in the dark, the latest in a string of storm-driven power outages in the Bay Area in recent weeks.

As of Tuesday at noon, 343 San

See **STORM**, page 15



Courtesy San Mateo County Sheriff's Office

Residents were advised to evacuate Wednesday, March 22, when a mudslide blocked Patrol Road in Woodside.

When conditions aren't safe for firefighters, NASA wants to put drones to work

NASA Ames' project explores ways to bring wildland firefighting into 21st century

By Kevin Forestieri

As wildfire season on the West Coast stretches longer each year, with fires scorching through record levels of acreage and burning down entire communities, scientists at NASA Ames want to use drones and other aerospace technology to help modernize firefighting for the better.

While some aspects of wildland firefighting have evolved greatly in recent history — such as recognizing the value of controlled burns as a fire prevention measure — other facets remain

largely unchanged. Firefighters still communicate via two-way radios, the way it's been done since the 1950s. And with human safety always the priority, operations often get put on pause when the sun goes down or smoky conditions make it too unsafe for people to be in the thick of things.

NASA's new Advanced Capabilities for Emergency Response Operations project, or the ACERO project, aims to make wildland firefighting more effective by putting drones to work.

"Firefighters often operate in

environments where they can't easily communicate with each other, or the systems that they do use to communicate may not interoperate," Dr. Marcus Johnson, ACERO project manager, said in an interview. "(As) the fire gets bigger and bigger, more people come to help support and the challenges get even more robust."

The ACERO project's approach to improving communication amongst firefighters is two-fold. First, Johnson said, the way information is exchanged needs to be modernized.

"One of the challenges that

we have right now in firefighting activity is that, for the most part, (they communicate) over two-way radios," Johnson said. "Nothing is digital right now. One of the advancements that we're trying to make is starting to digitize their operations such that they can allow for different types of aircraft to enter to support the operation."

Once communication is digitized, drones can make their way onto the scene. The ACERO project envisions using drones as communication nodes in the sky, to allow information to be exchanged not only among

firefighters, but also with the general public that may need to receive evacuation notices.

Drones can also be used to watch fires from above, providing critical information for those with boots on the ground. Johnson said it's like having "an eye in the sky."

"Being able to monitor these fires (allows) firefighters to make more informed decisions by getting that key information," Johnson said.

The ACERO project scientists also envision using drones

See **DRONES**, page 19

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Palo Alto/Bay Area

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Camp.Integem.com**(408) 459-0657**

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Sunnyvale.ca.gov/Activities**(408) 730-7350**

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DanceConnectionPaloAlto.com/Dance-Connection-Event-Calendar/Summer-Dance-Camps**(650) 322-7032**

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MedakaNoGakko.org**MedakaNoGakkoPaloAlto@gmail.com**

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OFJCC-JCamp.com**(650) 223-8622**

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RiekesSummerCamps.org**(650) 364-2509**

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Palo Alto, Atherton

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**VentanaSchool.org/
SummerCamp2023****(650) 948-2121**

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BaldEagleCamps.com**(888) 505-BALD**

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Mountain View

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MaccabiSportsCamp.org/wp**(415) 997-8844**

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Mountain View

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SpartansSportsCamp.com**(650) 479-5906**

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Palo Alto

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Local News

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From whiskey festivals to wildflowers: 15 spring events throughout the Peninsula

The promise of spring sunshine brings festivals, markets and other outdoor fun

By Julia Brown

Check out blooming blossoms, open studios and special markets to celebrate the season.

After this winter's onslaught of wind, rain and even snow in parts of the Peninsula, even those of us who had welcomed the storms in our parched state earlier in the season are anxious for some calm, cloudless days and opportunities to get out and explore the green hills and wildflowers of spring.

While the rain may not be done with us yet, spring's arrival on March 20 ushers in the return of more outdoor festivals and seasonal events and brings us that much closer to the long, warm days of summer. Here are 15 events this spring we have circled on the calendar:

Pacifica Rock and Roll Flea Market March 26: Over 40 vendors will be on hand at Winters Tavern in Pacifica, selling everything from records, musical instruments and memorabilia to tiki items and vintage clothing. Listen to live music from Rue '66, Three O'Clock Rock, Th' Losin Streaks and Muck And The Mires, with food from Satay By The Bay SF and a tap takeover from Alpha Acid Brewing

See **SPRING EVENTS**, page 18



Courtesy Kevin Henney

Marcus Shelby Quintet will play at the second annual Half Moon Bay Wine & Jazz Festival May 13.

Housing, downtown and safe streets are top priorities for Menlo Park council

By Cameron Rebosio

Menlo Park City Council members set the city's priorities at a special meeting on March 18, focusing on activating downtown and housing as the highest priorities for the next fiscal year.

Each council member received four stickers and placed those beside the four issues they saw as the top priority for the city to solve. When the city manager works with departments to develop the annual budget, they will pay special attention to solving the issues promoted as high-priority.

Residents by the hundreds weighed in with their own priorities, which were grouped by topic and summarized. According to the council, the largest number of comments advocated for the Caltrain quiet zone, followed by expanding pickleball opportunities, and preserving and expanding tennis opportunities in third place.

Activating downtown

Receiving four votes, "activating downtown" focused on revitalizing Menlo Park and general economic development, including hiring an economic director for the city.

For the city, promoting downtown vibrancy means "enabling conditions," said Council member Maria Doerr. The city is unable to legislate bringing businesses into Menlo Park and can

only create conditions that draw in businesses, she said.

"While we can't bring a specific restaurant or a specific kind of development, we can make it a lot more attractive for something like that to happen, which makes me excited," Doerr said.

The City Council decided to hire an in-house economic development director instead of using a consultant. Other discussions involved updating the aesthetics of downtown, favored by Council members Drew Combs and Betsy Nash. One other vehicle for the City Council to activate downtown was to consider zoning changes for the area beyond just parking lots, including a downtown specific plan, as suggested by Mayor Jen Wolosin.

"Our small businesses are the backbone of our economy," Vice Mayor Cecilia Taylor said.

Housing

Housing was the only other priority to receive four votes, and will be a main focus for Menlo Park going into the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Council members said that activating downtown and housing seemed to go hand in hand, particularly when revisiting the zoning ordinances downtown. Developing downtown parking lots played heavily into the idea of a revitalized downtown as well as housing opportunities in Menlo Park.

See **PRIORITIES**, page 19

Middle Plaza's retail development promises 'ultra-luxury'

By Cameron Rebosio

With Menlo Park's downtown poised for revitalization, eyes are turning to the luxurious Middle Plaza development at 500 El Camino Real, filled with fine jewelry and watches and topped with fine dining.

The ambitious retail hub boasts "ultra-luxurious" development and stores, calling itself "Silicon Valley's answer to Rodeo Drive." The project is

a collaboration between the late John Arrillaga Sr., the real estate developer who died in January; Stephen and Jared Silver, owners of the local Stephen Silver Fine Jewelry; and Stanford University.

The project was approved in late 2017 by the Menlo Park City Council. The three-story development is themed by floor, with the ground floor featuring six or seven branded boutique stores, including a Stephen Silver Fine Jewelry flagship store, a Bulgari

boutique and stores dedicated to Swiss watchmakers.

The second floor will showcase products from MESSIKA, Hermes and other high-end brands. Jared Silver worked with architect John de la Cruz to create the showroom area that mimicked a luxury apartment, where everything is for sale, from jewelry to watches to artwork. The faux-apartment consists of an entertaining space,

See **MIDDLE PLAZA**, page 8



Courtesy Ana Martins Communications

Middle Plaza's high-end retail is slated to open later this year.

When regulators took over Silicon Valley Bank, startups scrambled to make payroll

Here are stories from those impacted by the bank run

By Zoe Morgan and
Grace Doerfler

When Punit Singh Soni founded Suki in 2017, Silicon Valley Bank seemed like the natural place to put his company's money. Many other tech companies were clients, and the bank was viewed in many ways as the "default" for startups to use, Soni said.

"To be honest, when you're an entrepreneur, you don't want to be thinking about banking. You want it to work," he said. "And I think that there are



Punit Singh Soni

very few places who understand entrepreneurs the way SVB does."

Little did he know that roughly five years later, that "default" bank would collapse and be taken over by state and federal regulators. That's been the shocking reality many in the local tech industry have dealt with, after a bank run prompted the country's 16th largest bank to become insolvent. It was the second largest bank failure in U.S. history.

On Friday, March 10, government regulators stepped in to take control of the bank and told customers that they could get their access on March 13 to their deposits up to the \$250,000 cap that the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) insures.

'We should trust the government. They will do the right thing.'

PUNIT SINGH SONI, FOUNDER OF SUKI

What wasn't clear until March 12, when the FDIC announced that it would guarantee the full amount of all deposits, is what would happen to all the money over the quarter-million-dollar limit.

Over the past few years, Suki — an artificial intelligence company based in Redwood City that's created a voice assistant for doctors — has raised roughly \$100 million and used Silicon Valley Bank for its main operating account, Soni said. He opted to work with one bank because of the simplicity it provided.

"Who goes through a bank run, ever? Those are the things you read about in books," Soni said.

Soni wasn't the only one left scrambling in the days following



Magali Gauthier

Silicon Valley Bank on Hanover Street in Palo Alto on March 14.

the bank's collapse.

On March 13, Wilbur Properties, a real estate and property management company that manages more than 200 Bay Area properties, including tech sites, sent out a letter to its tenants notifying them that all online payments via Silicon Valley Bank were on hold until Wilbur Properties could set up accounts with a new bank. Wilbur Properties was unavailable for comment for this article.

Garry Tan, CEO and president of Y Combinator — a Mountain View-based accelerator for tech startups that has been used to launch more than 4,000 companies, including Airbnb, DoorDash, Reddit and Instacart — circulated a petition on Twitter the day after the collapse, asking the government to intervene swiftly to save startups whose sole bank accounts, like Suki's, were with SVB.

In the Y Combinator community, "one-third of startups with exposure to SVB, used the bank as their sole bank account," Tan tweeted. He estimated that more than 10,000 small businesses and startups could be at risk of payroll-related furloughs or shutdown, which would affect more than 100,000 jobs.

"The real victims of the SVB fallout are the depositors: startups (10 to 100 employees) who cannot make payroll, and will have to shut down or furlough next week," he tweeted prior to the FDIC's announcement that it would guarantee the full amount of all deposits. "If these startups wait weeks/months for their deposits, we have destroyed a generation of US startups, at random."

Tan wrote in Y Combinator's petition that these companies wouldn't have the money to pay their employees in the next month.

"Silicon Valley Bank's failure has a real risk of systemic contagion. Its collapse has already instilled fear among founders and management teams to look for safer havens for their remaining cash, which can trigger a bank run on every other smaller bank," he tweeted.

'People are jolly lucky that the government is bailing people out.'

ANGELA HEY, PORTOLA VALLEY
TECHNOLOGY CONSULTANT

Soni said when the bank collapse first happened, his top priority was to make sure that his company could make payroll on time. As investors started to urge companies to take their money out of the bank in the days leading up to the bank failure, Soni said he felt they were "seeding panic" and that he tried not to overreact, opting to leave Suki's money at Silicon Valley Bank.

The problem was that the panic created a situation in which those who stayed calm and left their money in the bank ended up getting put in a tougher spot, Soni said.

Through a combination of his own funds and money that investors put up, Soni said that the company got a plan in place to make sure employees got paid.

"I can't tell you with a straight face that that was just easy," Soni said. "Those two days were pretty nerve-wracking."

Reflecting on the crisis, Soni said that he believes that, while this was a failure of Silicon Valley Bank's executives, he also feels that Silicon Valley leaders failed to keep calm and communicate clearly. Instead, the panic created a situation in which depositors raced to pull out their money,

precipitating the collapse.

"I feel this was a classic moment where we should have shown more leadership," Soni said. "First of all, we should trust the government. They will do the right thing."

Soni noted that the government has an incentive to ensure confidence in the banking system. Throughout the last week, he felt it would be a matter of when, not if, Suki would be able to access its funds.

To protect itself in the future, Suki is looking at how to diversify its finances through use of multiple banks, Soni said. But as of March 14, its funds remained at Silicon Valley Bank, and Soni said he was considering continuing to use the bank.

Angela Hey, a Portola Valley technology consultant, said that any institution that uses a bank should be wise to the risks.

"People are jolly lucky that the government is bailing people out, as it would be more catastrophic otherwise," Hey said. "There will be ripples from the loss of SVB stock for those who held it."

"It is a lesson for businesses to diversify their holdings, particularly small businesses. Any business, nonprofit, church, school or other institution with more than \$250,000 in any bank would do well to split their holdings to ensure they are covered by FDIC insurance if there is a run on their bank," she said. "As we can see, this can happen very quickly and assets can vanish in an instant if even as much as a rumor of bank instability goes viral. A malevolent tweet, blog or video has the power to destabilize trust in a financial institution." ■

■

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Former community college head's corruption trial hearing delayed again

By Angela Swartz

Again seeking to exclude email evidence from his trial, former San Mateo County Community College District Chancellor Ron Galatolo is taking the fight to the California Supreme Court. Judge Amarra A. Lee intended to set a preliminary hearing date for Galatolo on Wednesday, March 22, but she agreed to the defense's request to continue the case for two months while the state Supreme Court reviews the appeal.



Ron Galatolo

In February, the state Court of Appeals upheld San Mateo County Judge Jeffrey Finigan's ruling on the discovery of emails

seized from Galatolo's former attorney's office by law enforcement, said District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe in March 22 media notes.

"One last stop before we can move this case forward," Wagstaffe said in an email.

The San Mateo Daily Journal reported that in January, a judge ruled that email evidence taken from the office of Stephen Pahl, Galatolo's former lawyer, would be admissible in the case against Galatolo.

In April 2019, the DA's Office received a "whistleblower" complaint of alleged public corruption against members of the executive leadership team of the college district.

Galatolo is charged with allegedly awarding construction projects to vendors from whom he received "multiple valuable gifts," including tickets to concerts and

sporting events, and international travel. Prosecutors also allege that Galatolo failed to disclose that he received "numerous valuable" gifts from construction firms that had business with the community college district. Elected and public officials are required annually to file a Form 700, also known as statements of economic interest.

Galatolo pleaded not guilty to all 21 felony charges filed against him on June 30, 2022. His initial arraignment was on April 27, 2022.

Galatolo remains out of custody on \$150,000 cash bail. He is represented by Charles J. Smith.

The case is reset for May 16 at 9 a.m. to set a preliminary hearing date. ■

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

Former community college PR head pleads no contest to sex with minors charges

By Angela Swartz

Richard Rojo, San Mateo County Community College District's former head of public relations, pleaded no contest on March 15 to engaging in sexual acts with two minors.

Rojo, 54, of Stockton, served as the district's interim director of public affairs and faces up to three years and eight months in prison.

Rojo allegedly met a 15-year-old girl on a dating app in November 2020. He then paid her and her friend, 14, to exchange nude photos, according to the DA's Office.



Richard Rojo

Rojo met the girls at a hotel at Santana Row in San Jose, gave them alcohol and sexually assaulted them, the girls told police.

Milpitas police were alerted in December 2020 of the alleged abuse, after one of the girls tried to kill herself by overdosing on melatonin, the Palo Alto Daily Post reported.

Rojo admitted the aggravating factors, namely that the victims

were vulnerable and that he committed the crimes in a manner that required planning and sophistication, according to the DA's Office.

In 2021, Rojo turned himself in to the San Jose Police Department after an arrest warrant was issued for him, police said.

The community college district placed Rojo on administrative leave in May 2021 after he was arrested. The district fired Rojo in June 2021, according to the district.

Judge Javier Alcala indicated that he would consider a probation sentence, according to the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office.

The prosecution is seeking a prison commitment. If the judge places Rojo on probation, then the prosecution will "object to alternative programs, as we believe a jail sentence is appropriate for this conduct," said Cynthia Sumida, public information officer for the DA's Office, in an email.

Rojo's sentencing is set for May 26 at 9 a.m. in Morgan Hill.

Any person who is feeling depressed, troubled or suicidal can call 1-800-784-2433 to speak with a crisis counselor. People in Santa Clara County can call

1-855-278-4204. Spanish speakers can call 1-888-628-9454.

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

Additional resources can be found at tinyurl.com/SCCsuicideresources. ■

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

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CORRECTION

In the Feb. 3 issue of The Almanac, the story "Maria Doerr brings the voice of Gen Z to the Menlo Park City Council" misstates the date of Council member Doerr's weekly office hours. They are on Tuesdays from 8-9:30 a.m. at Woodside Bakery, 325 Sharon Park Dr. in Menlo Park.

After their daughter's cancer diagnosis, Studio K-Fit raises over \$12K for Leukemia and Lymphoma Society

By Avery Luke

At Studio K-Fit, gym-goers support local charities while still getting a personalized, intensive workout. The family-owned gym has become a neighborhood favorite in Redwood City, largely for its donation-based fitness activities. Owners Kendrick and Angela Ribeiro work to cultivate an encouraging environment where community members can connect with each other through exercise and disconnect from the “fast pace” of life in the Bay Area.

“We tend to forget the social aspect of overall wellness, especially in fitness,” said Ribeiro. “Not only are people super friendly with each other here, but we go beyond the workout and really get involved with the community by working with local charity organizations.”

Studio K-Fit raises an average of \$15,000 annually by holding donation-based fitness challenges to benefit charities. One of the studio's most

popular challenges is the annual February Cardio Challenge, where participants complete a 2-kilometer row, 2-mile stationary bike ride and 500-meter ski, where K-Fit donates \$1 for every attempted challenge simply for showing up and giving it a shot.

The challenge usually benefits the American Heart Association in honor of Heart Health Awareness Month, but after Kendrick and Angela's 3-year-old daughter was diagnosed with leukemia in December, the couple decided to donate to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society instead.

“After spending nearly four weeks in the hospital with our daughter, Angie and I wanted to do something that would charge us up,” said Kendrick. “This year, the cardio challenge helped us restabilize our own lives.”

K-Fit initially set a goal to raise \$500, but after overwhelming support from regular clients, the gym was able to raise over \$12,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Kendrick notes that 117 personal records

were set during the month and 120 pounds were lost among all participants.

“February was the busiest month we've ever had,” said Kendrick. “I think the purpose behind this year's challenge touched the hearts of our clients and everyone wanted to be more involved. We also made it a fun, team-based thing.”

Erica Day has attended Studio K-Fit since 2020 and was heavily involved with this year's cardio challenge. She said that Studio K-Fit is the best gym she's ever been a part of.

“(Kendrick and Angela) pride themselves on having a really close community within the gym and the giving back part is just the icing on the cake. I haven't experienced that at other gyms I've been a part of,” said Day. “I think a lot of the reason why people tend to stay there so long is that they really do feel that sense of community.”

In addition to their monthly contribution to Feeding America, which has resulted in a total donation of 50,000



Courtesy Studio K-Fit

Cortney Hsu, left, and Studio K-Fit co-owner Angela Ribeiro participate in the February Cardio Challenge.

meals, the Redwood City studio plans to fundraise for New Creation Home, which supports single moms that are in transition from broken relationships and LifeMoves, which helps individuals and families experiencing homelessness to return to stable housing and self-sufficiency.

K-Fit will also hold a spring pickleball tournament this May, where participants will contribute \$50, and the total earnings will go to charity. More information is online at studiokfit.com. ■

Email Staff Writer Avery Luke at aluke@rwcpcpulse.com.

San Mateo County Board of Education announces new trustee

By Redwood City Pulse staff

Hugo Torres has been selected to represent Trustee Area Seven on the San Mateo County Board of Education.

Torres was provisionally sworn into office on Thursday, March 16. His appointment will become

permanent unless a petition for a special election is filed with the San Mateo County Office of Education within 30 days of the provisional appointment.

“I'm here to make sure that different perspectives are being brought to the table,” Torres said in a statement. “It's my main priority to make sure the needs

of our teachers and communities are being met and that their voices are being heard.”

Area Seven includes Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, Atherton, Woodside, Portola Valley and a number of unincorporated areas in the county.

Before taking on this role, Torres was director of programs

for Siena Youth Center and has been an active classroom teacher at Holy Family School in the St. Francis Center in Redwood City.

Torres holds a bachelor's degree in American studies, a K-9 teaching certification and a master's degree in nonprofit administration. He is currently pursuing his doctorate degree

in educational leadership.

The vacancy on the board comes after former trustee Joe Ross announced his resignation effective March 16. For more information, go to smcoe.org. ■



Hugo Torres



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MIDDLE PLAZA

continued from page 5

dining room, kitchen and wrap-around patio.

“(Cruz) has this sort of quintessential California luxury feeling, where it's embracing ... this natural environment,” Jared Silver told The Almanac.

Silver describes the sale items as a “cabinet of curiosities” where customers could stumble across a watch brand or artist they had never heard of before.

“The idea is that when you walk in anything you see is something that you can integrate into your life should it inspire you,” Silver said.

The over 35,000-square-foot development is intended to serve customers in the Bay Area, many of which consistently rank in the wealthiest zip codes in the United States. Last year, Atherton ranked as the most expensive zip code in the

country, according to Forbes.

Silver said that he hoped to stay true to the style of the Bay Area, as he grew up locally. He said that the Bay Area has a different style, energy and culture from other parts of California, let alone other luxury locations.

Still, Silver said he hopes that Middle Plaza will be open to all, and even believes that clients will come from overseas to visit the retail hub.

The third floor of the development houses Stephen Silver Fine Jewelry's salon space and new corporate headquarters in a penthouse-style plan. The retail hub will also feature high-end restaurants, including restaurateur Ayesha Thapar's newest restaurant, Eylan. Eylan is the “encore” to Thapar's Michelin-starred Ettan in Palo Alto. ■

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

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

TIDE Academy's design honored

The American Institute of Architects has awarded LPA Design Studios a 2023 Architecture Award for the design of TIDE Academy in Menlo Park, according to a March 6 press release.

The American Institute of Architects praised the high school for creating an "array of indoor-outdoor learning environments on a tight urban site."

"TIDE was a wonderful collaborative experience focused on spaces that encourage student choice, critical thinking and inquiry-based learning," said LPA Director of K-12 Kate Mraw in a statement. "These awards are validation from our peers that our work matters and it's making a difference."

The three-story campus earned the AIA Committee on Architecture for Education's Award of Excellence and a Coalition for Adequate School Housing (CASH) Award of Excellence in 2022.

Some 16 projects received the American Institute of Architects award in 2023.

Stanford, Sequoia partnership recognized with award

The Stanford Redwood City Sequoia School Mental Health Collaborative was recognized with a 2023 Community Partnership award by Stanford University's Office of Community Engagement on March 3, according to a press release. The collaborative is made up of the Redwood City School District, the Sequoia Union High School District, the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and their Communities, and the Center for Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing at Stanford.

The Stanford Redwood City Sequoia School Mental Health Collaborative formed in 2020 to address an influx of students in the area experiencing chronic sadness and/or hopelessness, with episodes lasting two or more weeks and disrupting their ability to do their usual activities. About a third of youth in the region are struggling with this issue, according to the 2023 Silicon Valley Index.

The partners have been supporting student mental health so that students can learn and provide research-backed information so staff can assist students. The partnership hosted bimonthly clinical consultancies, conducted original



Magali Gauthier

The exterior of TIDE Academy in Menlo Park on Oct. 27, 2021.

research to investigate district questions about advancing mental health support systems, developed coordinated systems to support students, and established research-informed support relating to program planning, design, evaluation and improvement.

"We get to go directly into

the child's world, partner with the important adults in their lives, and better serve the students and families we are consulting with," wrote a Stanford clinical fellow, who said it was unique for clinic-based work.

"If it weren't for this work, we wouldn't be where we are now,"

said Redwood City School District Superintendent John Baker in a statement. "The collaborative has done amazing things for us."

The campus community nominated winners and a committee of university and community representatives selected awardees. The awards recognize these joint efforts in tackling problems at the community level and advancing the public good.

Go to community.stanford.edu/engagement/community-partnership-awards for more information.

Matilda Jr. tickets on sale

Laurel School fourth and fifth graders will perform an adaptation of the Roald Dahl's "Matilda" starting Thursday, March 30.

Tickets are \$10 each in advance; and \$15 each at the

door (cash only).

Shows are 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 30, and Friday, March 31; and 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Saturday, April 1, and take place at the Hillview Middle School Performing Arts Center, 1100 Elder Ave. in Menlo Park.

For more information, go to laurelschool.ludus.com.

Boy Scouts pancake breakfast

Boy Scout Troop 206 will host its annual all-you-can-eat Menlo Park pancake breakfast on Saturday, April 22, from 8 a.m.-noon at Trinity Church Parish Hall, 330 Ravenswood Ave.

There will be Formula 206 Flapjacks, fruit, juice, sausage links, coffee, hot cocoa and assorted teas.

Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$10 for kids 10 and under.

—Angela Swartz

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San Mateo County Board of Education sues social media giants over alleged harm to youth

By Kiley Russell/
Bay City News Service

San Mateo County school officials filed a lawsuit this week alleging three major social media companies — YouTube, TikTok and Snapchat — are designed to be purposefully addictive and that the platforms have sparked a mental health crisis among young people.

In the suit filed March 13 in U.S. District Court in San Francisco, the San Mateo County Board of Education and Superintendent Nancy Magee claim the social media giants designed their products to target youth at the expense of their mental health.

The suit alleges the platforms harm schools, inhibit education, increase absenteeism and are even responsible for physical damage to school property.

“There is hard science behind the claim that social media is fueling a mental health epidemic in school-age children,” Magee said in a news release.

“Every day, schools are dealing with the fallout, which includes distracted students, increased absences, more children diagnosed with ADHD,

cyber-bullying that carries into the classroom, and even physical damage to our San Mateo Schools, an example is the vandalism caused by the TikTok so-called ‘Devious Lick Challenge’ at the start of the school year,” Magee said.

One of the lawyers who filed the suit on behalf of the school board compared the tech firms’ behavior to that of “Big Tobacco” regarding allegations that both industries deliberately target and exploit children.

“This case represents one of the most serious issues facing the nation’s students — as outlined in the complaint, social media companies have ignited a serious mental health crisis through their deployment of artificial intelligence algorithms designed to keep children and teenagers tied to social media programs in unhealthy ways,” said Joseph Cotchett of the law firm Cotchett, Pitre and McCarthy.

The suit alleges the platforms are a public nuisance and that they are negligent in the design and marketing of their products, among other things.

It also claims that the companies engaged in racketeering,

conspiracy and unfair business practices.

The plaintiffs are asking that the companies, including Alphabet Inc., XXVI Holdings Inc. and Google LLC — which are related to YouTube — and TikTok owner ByteDance Inc., are held liable for their alleged behavior and ordered to stop “engaging in further actions causing or contributing to the public nuisance.”

They are also asking for monetary damages and for the court to require the defendants to “fund prevention education and treatment for excessive and problematic use of social media.”

The school board’s decision to file the suit is part of an ongoing effort by critics of social media companies to hold them accountable for the perceived damage they do to individuals and society at large.

And as the plaintiff’s news release notes, even President Joe Biden called out the platforms “for the experiment they are running on our children for profit” during his State of the Union Address.

The same companies, along with Facebook and parent company Meta, face a similar lawsuit

in Seattle, and on March 14 Bucks County in Pennsylvania also filed suit.

“When used for good, social media can be an incredible tool for learning, sharing and communicating,” Bucks County District Attorney Matthew Weintraub said in a statement on the county’s website.

“Unfortunately, these companies have chosen to pursue childhood addiction as a business model, and to treat the attention of young people as a commodity to be traded,” Weintraub said.

Representatives for the three platforms named in San Mateo County’s suit didn’t comment directly on the lawsuit itself but emphasized the work they’re doing to keep their products safe.

“We have invested heavily in creating safe experiences for children across our platforms and have introduced strong protections and dedicated features to prioritize their well-being,” said Google spokesperson Jose Castañeda.

“For example, through Family Link, we provide parents with the ability to set reminders, limit screen time and block specific types of content on supervised

devices,” Castañeda said.

A Snap spokesperson said the company recently launched an in-app tool that lets parents better monitor their kids’ activity and has conducted anti-bullying campaigns, among other things.

“Nothing is more important to us than the well-being of our community. At Snapchat, we curate content from known creators and publishers and use human moderation to review user generated content before it can reach a large audience, which greatly reduces the spread and discovery of harmful content,” a Snap spokesperson said in a statement. “We also work closely with leading mental health organizations to provide in-app tools for Snapchatters and resources to help support both themselves and their friends. We are constantly evaluating how we continue to make our platform safer, including through new education, features and protections.”

A TikTok spokesperson said their platform also has features designed to protect young people, including parental controls and age-restrictions that limit messaging and livestreams, among other things. ■

New rules to phase out gas appliances stoke excitement, anxiety on the Peninsula

Bay Area Air Quality Management District aims to gradually switch homes and businesses to electric water heaters, furnaces

By Gennady Sheyner

When Palo Alto and Menlo Park launched their respective efforts to wean residents off natural gas appliances and promote electrification, both cities treated the switch as a valuable but risky proposition.

In each case, city officials view electrification as a key step on their road to sustainability. Both have adopted rules that require new developments to feature all-electric water heaters and space heaters. At the same time, both opted not to require residents to convert from gas to electric, citing the high costs of replacing equipment and an unreliable electric grid.

These risks took on a new sense of urgency for the region last week, when the Bay Area Air Quality Management District adopted new regulations that will make the region the first in the nation to ban sales and installation of new gas appliances. After a debate that featured hundreds of written and oral comments, the district’s board of directors voted

20-0, with one abstention, to amend its regulations so that gas-fueled appliances will be phased out in the district’s jurisdictions, which includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Napa counties as well as portions of southwestern Solano and southern Sonoma counties.

‘There are countervailing concerns, but those concerns aren’t reasons not to do it.’

PALO ALTO CITY COUNCIL MEMBER
VICKI VEENKER

The new policy takes aim at oxides of nitrogen (NOx), pollutants that are a byproduct of combustion and that, according to district officials, cause harm to both air quality and health. They also react with other airborne chemicals to form fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and ozone, according to air district staff. Both of these pollutants are harmful

when inhaled, a report from the air district states. Staff estimate that the policy could reduce NOx emissions reductions by 3,236 tons per year.

Phil Martien, director of the district’s assessment inventory and modeling division, said that reducing emissions of fine particulate matter would bring significant health benefits, particularly to areas like east San Francisco, cities in the East Bay and parts of San Jose. He noted that these areas also have highest concentrations of people of color and that these populations would benefit most from the proposed policy.

“We’re talking about particles here that are smaller than 2.5 micrometers in diameter,” Martien told the board at the March 15 meeting. “They can penetrate deeply into lungs and even cross the air-blood boundary to cause a long list of health impacts, including premature mortality.”

For supporters of the new policy, the health benefits are paramount. The air district estimates that reductions in secondary PM2.5, which result from

chemical reactions with other NOx, would avoid an estimated 23 to 52 deaths per year and about 71 new cases of asthma per year, according to a report from Executive Officer Philip Fine. When one includes primary PM2.5, which are directly emitted by the appliances, the policy is projected to avoid an estimated 37 to 85 premature deaths per year and about 110 new cases of asthma each year and save between \$400 million and \$890 million in health care costs.

Palo Alto City Council member Vicki Veenker, who represents Santa Clara County on the air district’s board, said in an interview that she was excited to vote for the new policy, citing its health and environmental benefits. She said she was particularly persuaded by the physicians and middle-school students who testified about the health impacts of pollution.

“Being able to reduce the costs on the system is huge,” Veenker told this news organization. “But to also have the co-benefit of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and aligning with our climate goals is a win-win. There

are countervailing concerns, but those concerns aren’t reasons not to do it. Those are reasons to make sure we do it well.”

San Mateo County Supervisor Ray Mueller, a former Menlo Park City Council member, had a different outlook. As the only member of the air district board who abstained, Mueller cited the high impact that the new rules would have on consumers, particularly those who do not qualify for financial assistance when they need to replace a furnace or a water heater.

“We’re going to be first in the nation, but this agency has never done that to the consumer before,” Mueller said at the hearing. “And that’s something we have to go ahead and be honest about too.”

Like Veenker, Mueller said he wants to see the transition to electric appliances happen. But he argued that the proposed timeline is too ambitious and that the air district policy fails to consider the cost of the conversion, the current lack of financing and

See **GAS BAN**, page 16

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**Andrea
Gemmet**
EDITOR

The **Almanac**

A message from our Editor, Andrea Gemmet

I'm Andrea Gemmet a news editor for Embarcadero Media, a small local news organization on the Peninsula that covers news for the Palo Alto Weekly, the Mountain View Voice, The Almanac and Redwood City Pulse.

It was a typically busy Tuesday afternoon in June when one of my reporters called to tell me the power had gone out in Emerald Hills and she planned to take her laptop to a coffee shop to finish working. We were still on the phone when she realized a wildfire had broken out.

In that moment, our conversation shifted. Smoke was in the air, firefighters were racing to the scene and she needed to evacuate. As she and her family scooped up their dogs and headed to safety, the rest of the newsroom team sprang into action. There was no telling how fast or how far the fire would spread, and we wanted to make sure the rapidly changing news about road closures and evacuation areas reached our readers as quickly as possible.

Being familiar with the steep, narrow, and winding roads in the area, I was worried about the havoc a large-scale evacuation might cause, and had been frantically posting emergency information on our social media channels in an attempt to reach as many people as possible.

As the Edgewood fire spread, our reporters worked the phones, our visual journalist hurried to the scene and I ended up grabbing a notebook and heading a press conference at Woodside Fire Protection District's Station 19. On the way there, I called friends to tell them that they were in the evacuation zone and needed to leave.

After more than a decade as the editor of the Mountain View Voice and more recently, The Almanac, it had been a while since I'd been out covering a fire. I vividly remembered being a pregnant reporter, eyes stinging and throat raw from the smoke as I walked all over Woodside on the sweltering day in August 2002 when wind-blown embers spread a six-alarm fire that started on the grounds of the Fleishhacker estate. Once the flames were quenched, I covered the efforts to make Woodside, Portola Valley and Emerald Hills more fire-resistant and better prepared for the next wildfire.

As journalists from this community, the work isn't always easy. These stories affect us, our families, and our neighbors. Yet, it gives us the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of local issues, and a responsibility to enhance our reporting with context. We wouldn't be able to do that without the ongoing support of our members.

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Legend: Condo (C), Townhome (T). Agents: submit open homes at AlmanacNews.com/real_estate

Sequoia district trustees may appoint Crystal Leach as superintendent

If approved, Leach will begin her term as superintendent on April 1.

By Redwood City Pulse staff

The Sequoia Union District Board of Trustees identified Crystal Leach as the finalist for the position of superintendent, the district said in a news release Friday, March 17.

The appointment is contingent upon successful negotiations of an employment agreement and approval by the Board of Trustees, which was set to be considered on March 22, after The Almanac's press deadline.

The district is proposing an annual salary of \$291,979, along with two \$1,283 stipends for her advanced degrees. She would also be up for a salary increase on July 1.

Crystal Leach expressed her appreciation to the school district community and the Board of Trustees for the potential opportunity to lead the district, according to the release.

The superintendent search, led by Leadership Associates, involved an extensive process that included a listening tour, community survey, board input sessions, and rigorous interviews. Feedback consistently indicated a preference for a candidate with experience overseeing a school district similar to Sequoia Union High School District and a demonstrated ability to bring diverse communities together.

"The more feedback the board received, the more evident it became that Superintendent Leach is the right person to lead our district moving forward," said Richard Ginn, president of the Sequoia Union High School District Board of Trustees.

He praised her for being a collaborative leader known for having the courage to have difficult conversations while also building relationships with various stakeholders.

Leach has been serving as the district's Interim Superintendent and has played a pivotal role in the district's leadership team, according to the release.

"Crystal Leach is committed to the mission of preparing and engaging all students to excel in a global society," said Shawneece Stevenson, vice president of the Sequoia Union High School Board of Trustees.

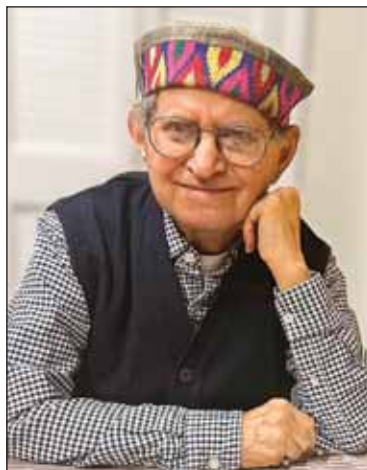
She emphasized Leach's understanding that embracing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging is vital for achieving academic excellence and success.

If approved, the contract before the Board of Trustees will have Leach begin her term as superintendent effective April 1. ■

Mahender P Mohllajee

Jan. 30, 1937 – March 6, 2023

Mahender Partap Mohllajee, a loving husband, father, grandfather, father-in-law, brother, uncle, and friend, passed away on March 6, 2023, at the age of 86. Born in Lahore, India (present day Pakistan) on January 30, 1937, Mahender was an unyielding spirit that inspired all who knew him.



Mahender's academic pursuits began at Panjab University Camp College in Delhi, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree. He left Delhi and reached the United States by ship via France and Britain on January 21, 1960. He then went on to earn a BSME from Howard University where he spent time touring the Northeast to talk to other college students about non-violence, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr. He was in attendance at the National Mall when Martin Luther King Jr. gave his powerful 'I Have a Dream' speech. He then moved to California and earned an MBA from Santa Clara University, paving the way for a successful career in real estate development.

In 1966, Mahender started working with Joe Whelan at Leland Investment Company, and ten years later, they began construction on the first homes built in Portola Valley Ranch. He poured his heart and soul into his work and community and quickly became well-known as a pioneer of the Portola Valley Ranch development.

In 1976, Mahender married Shyama, and in 1978, they welcomed their daughter, Anshu, into the world. Mahender also cared deeply about his extended family and friends, and he went above and beyond to support them as they immigrated from India.

In addition to his love for his family, Mahender had a keen interest in the news, politics, and reading. He was always deeply knowledgeable about current events and enjoyed discussing the latest developments with his friends and family. He was a lover of the performing arts, museums, National Parks, and traveling. He was a quiet, kind, and thoughtful man who listened attentively and especially enjoyed conversing with young adults.

He will be remembered as a devoted husband, father, grandfather, a pioneering entrepreneur, and a beloved member of his large family and local Portola Valley community. He will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and all those whose lives he touched. Om Shanti.

PAID OBITUARY

Judith Koch

May 18, 1943 – Feb 21, 2023

Judith Hootman Koch, a longtime Palo Alto resident passed away peacefully at her home on Tuesday, February 21, 2023. Three weeks earlier she was diagnosed with cancer. On the day she passed she waited until loved ones could arrive, including all six of her grandchildren, then she left us. She lived life on her own terms, and she left this world the same way. Judy was 79.

Judy was born May 18, 1943 in Ottumwa, Iowa to Mernace Hootman and Daisy (Goemaat) Hootman. She was raised in Ottumwa and was a graduate of Ottumwa High School. Judy attended college in-state and graduated from Iowa State University. Post college Judy moved to California and began her first career as a junior high school English teacher in Los Altos, CA. She was a teacher from 1967-1979. It was during this time she developed a passion for children's literacy and early childhood education.

In 1979 Judy began her second career at RSP Manufacturing, a precision sheet metal fabrication company serving high tech companies in Silicon Valley. She worked along side her former husband and life long friend Ron Koch. In 1989 she acquired the company and became the CEO. Under her leadership sales grew dramatically until she sold the business in 1997.

Judy was always an educator at heart. After the sale of RSP Manufacturing, Judy founded the Bring Me A Book Foundation. She initially modeled the foundation after a workplace book bag lending program she created at RSP. She was passionately involved with Bring Me A Book up until the day she passed. Her work with Bring Me A Book was recognized with a Lifetime of Achievements award from Avenidas in 2016, as well as several national awards.

Judy loved to travel and experience new cultures and was an active member of the Palo Alto University Rotary Club, but her greatest joy came from spending time with family and friends. Her six grandchildren were the light of her life!

Judy is survived by her sons and their spouses, Stewart and Jordan Koch, and Marshall and Heather Koch; her brother Jerry Hootman; nephew Kent Hootman; two nieces Kyra Hootman and Kellie Viets; and six grandchildren Daisy Koch, Reese Koch, Carson Koch, Peyton Koch, Cameron Koch, and Thatcher Koch.

A private Celebration of Judy's Life will be held in Menlo Park, CA. Please contact Judy's family for more details. If desired memorials in Judy's honor can be made to Bring Me A Book Foundation (www.bringmeabook.org).



PAID OBITUARY



Courtesy photo

A fallen tree knocked over a fence in the Vintage Oaks neighborhood of Menlo Park.

STORM

continued from page 1

Mateo County customers were affected by the outages before the wind and rain picked up this afternoon. By 4 p.m., that number was at 46,694 without power, dipping to 39,939 by 6 p.m., according to PG&E.

The utility company said that this was the 14th major storm event in its service area in the past 75 days, with last week's storm being the most significant, in terms of customer impact, in the Bay Area since 1995.

The most recent outages were widespread, with addresses in neighborhoods across Menlo Park losing power, including Linfield Oaks, Menlo Oaks, Vintage Oaks, Downtown, Allied Arts and West Menlo Park. The PG&E outage map showed some areas, such as Linfield Oaks, had power mostly restored by 4:30 p.m.

In Atherton, both Menlo School and Menlo-Atherton High School canceled classes on March 22 after losing power on March 21.

About 1,050 PG&E customers in Woodside and Emerald Hills neighborhood of Redwood City also were without power on Tuesday afternoon, according to the utility company's outage map.

Power also went out for about 4,500 customers in the Atherton and Redwood City area around 1:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Woodside Fire reported a pole fire on Glenwood Road in Woodside, according to FireDispatch.com.

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District responded to a downed tree on El Camino Real and Renato Court at 2:15 p.m. Tuesday.

Downed trees on El Camino

Real in Atherton closed the road in both directions, the town announced around 4:40 p.m. Tuesday, with traffic diverted onto Atherton and Watkins avenues. Additional road closures were reported on all side streets between Watkins and Ashfield Road, and Isabella Avenue at El Camino Real at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Menlo Park Fire reported a pole fire on Almendral and Austin avenues in Atherton around 1:40 p.m. on Tuesday as well as sparking wires down at 190 Fair Oaks Lane in Atherton at 2:20 p.m.

The city of Menlo Park reported Tuesday that its Public Works Department responded to over 24 downed trees in the city.

Thanks to the power outages, traffic signals were out at various Midpeninsula intersections Tuesday, including Valparaiso Avenue and El Camino Real in Atherton, according to ZoneHaven, and at the busy intersection of Sand Hill Road at Junipero Serra Boulevard at the edge of the Stanford University campus.

In Woodside, La Honda Road was closed to traffic from Portola Road to Fox Hill Road and on Mountain Home Road from Highway 84 to Portola Road, according to ZoneHaven. The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office reported around 3:20 p.m. Tuesday that Glenwood Avenue between Cañada Road and Hillside Drive in Woodside was closed due to live wires being down.

SamTrans reported around 6 p.m. Tuesday that it was experiencing significant systemwide delays due to severe weather and gridlock conditions all across San Mateo County, with multiple routes affected. The public transit

agency suggested people follow its @SamTrans_Alerts account on Twitter for updates. ■

Email Staff Writers Cameron Rebosio at crebosio@almanacnews.com and Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com.

Mary Foley Cooper

April 2, 1947 – Dec. 17, 2022

Mary Foley Cooper, of Portola Valley, CA died unexpectedly from a pulmonary embolism on December 17, 2022 at Stanford Hospital. She was 75. Mary lived her life with passion and purpose. Her exceptional energy and commitment were infectious, bringing out the best in people, communities and organizations in which she took part.



From the beginning of her career to the present, human development was always her focus: from her early days as a teacher in St. Louis, to her executive roles in Human Resources, to her leadership on non-profit boards including Manhattanville College (where she attended), The Peninsula College Fund, The Girls' Middle School, and the Women Donors Network.

Mary was an ardent supporter of progressive causes and candidates. She was also a passionate sports enthusiast – as a fan and a participant. She played in a senior women's basketball league, and was an enthusiastic tennis and pickleball competitor.

Family and friends knew Mary as a cheerleader, mentor and unflagging supporter. Her energy and optimism brightened the hearts of those who knew and loved her, as did her humility in all that she accomplished.

From her delight in her granddaughters, "the light of her life", to her love for her husband, Tom and children, Kim and Ben, to her role as the social glue for her family and to the friends she cherished, Mary's life abounded in love and meaning.

Mary is survived by her husband Tom of 51 years, her children Kim and Ben, Kim's partner Carlos Aguilar and Ben's wife Shreya Hedge, and her two granddaughters, Kamila and Olivia Aguilar-Cooper.

A Celebration of Mary's life will be held on Saturday, April 8 from 10am-12pm at the Portola Valley Town Center Community Hall (765 Portola Road, 94028).

PAID OBITUARY

**TOWN OF WOODSIDE
2955 WOODSIDE ROAD, WOODSIDE, CA 94062**

**PLANNING COMMISSION
APRIL 5, 2023 6:00 PM**

The public may observe and participate in Planning Commission meetings using remote public comment options or attending in person. Planning Commissioners shall attend in person unless remote participation is permitted by law. The Planning Commission may take action on any item listed in the agenda.

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Remote Public Comments:

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

Email: sharper@woodsidetown.org

PUBLIC HEARING

4. 2300 Woodside Road

CUSE2019-0001

Menlo Country Club

Planner: Sage Schaan, Planning Director

Planning Commission one-year review of the Menlo Country Club Conditional Use Permit (CUP) Operational Conditions. This review is required one-year after the completion date of the new fitness building and clubhouse, which occurred on October 28, 2021.

This item was continued from November 9, 2022, with Planning Commission direction to staff and the applicant to provide additional information. The item was scheduled for review on February 15, 2023, and was continued to allow the applicant additional time to fix a malfunctioning roof mounted exhaust fan.

THE APPLICATION MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW BY CONTACTING SAGE SCHAAN AT [SSCHAAN@WOODSIDETOWN.ORG](mailto:sschaan@woodsidetown.org)

GAS BAN

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the current shortage of electric appliances.

“Candidly, what I think is missing from this discussion is the fact that there is a middle class out there right now that is really hurting. Inflation is killing them,” Mueller said. “There are people who make a decent income, who are mortgaged, who are trying to figure out how to put their kids through college and I don’t hear a discussion about them here.”

For supporters and critics alike,

a major wild card in the new policy is PG&E. Everyone agrees that without a reliable grid, any conversion to electrification would be a risky proposition, and PG&E’s track record in recent months has given residents few reasons to feel confident. Mueller said he would support new laws that would require PG&E to improve reliability of its electric infrastructure.

Mueller noted that PG&E has made it clear that it will not prioritize the Bay Area for moving electric lines underground. In a region where trees topple on power lines with regular

frequency, the idea of making people more reliant on electricity is “very concerning,” he said.

Numerous residents also told the board that they were worried that the rule change would increase their risk of losing power and having no access to heat or hot water for extended periods of time. Los Altos resident Mabry Tyson, who lost power during last week’s storms, said the new policy would make life difficult during the winter months, when power outages occur with greater frequency.

“Don’t force us to jump onto a new horse unless you know that

horse doesn’t have brittle legs,” Tyson said.

While air district staff believe that more equipment will become available by 2027, Mueller and other critics of the rule change maintained that the timeline remains too ambitious. Under the newly adopted regulations, water heaters and boilers with capacity under 75,000 British Thermal Unit (BTU)/hour, which are typical in single-family residences, will be the first to go. As of Jan. 1, 2027, they will no longer be sold in the Bay Area under the new regulations. The ban would extend to natural-gas

furnaces starting on Jan. 1, 2029. And in 2031, it would encompass all water heaters and boilers with more than 75,000 BTU/hour, which are typical in multifamily complexes and commercial buildings.

For comparison, Mueller pointed to Tesla, which he noted was founded in 2002 and produced its first car in 2008.

“We still haven’t seen full saturation of the market and we still don’t have the infrastructure to support all those cars,” Mueller said at the hearing.

Others shared his concern. The Air-Conditioning, Heating, and Refrigeration Institute (AHRI), an industry group that represents manufacturers, took issue with the cost estimates that the air district provided for new heat pump equipment and noted the switch could be far more expensive if it requires upgrades to electric panels. The group pegged the average price for a water heater replacement in the Bay Area at \$8,577 and for heat pumps at \$22,745. The group recommended that the air district adopt an alternative that move the compliance date for all appliances until 2035.

Kyle Bergeron, the group’s senior regulatory engineer, noted in a letter that upgrades usually occur when an existing appliance fails. If the house needs a panel upgrade to accommodate a zero-NOx solution, it could go without space- or water heating for several days if not weeks, he wrote.

“If such an event were to happen during a cold snap, there could be significant concern for the health and safety of the occupant(s),” Bergeron wrote. “The District needs to consider solutions to the emergency replacement issue, including proactive replacement programs, such that the impact of proposed Rules 9-1 and 9-6 does not compromise safe and reliable access to services.”

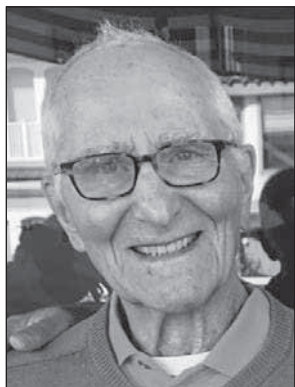
The district, for its part, plans to address the issue of grid uncertainty by creating an Implementation Working Group composed of 35 stakeholders, including PG&E, that will provide regular updates to the air district board about market availability and technical aspects of the transition.

Air district staff acknowledged in their report that zero-NOx space and water heating technologies are currently limited in availability and could be expensive to install in existing buildings. The district projects that availability will increase and costs will drop in the coming years, and it plans to perform interim reports before the policy kicks in to evaluate the availability of such equipment. As part of the reporting process, the district will consider “relevant market changes and ensure equitable

Raymond Louis Solari

Feb. 13, 1928 – March 17, 2023

Raymond Solari passed away peacefully on March 17, 2023. His great heart finally gave out just before midnight, and he’s gone on to his next Big Game. Born February 13, 1928 in San Francisco, he was the son of Antonio and Vittoria Solari, immigrants from northern Italy.



From earliest childhood, his dream was to play football at Cal and beat Stanford, a goal he accomplished in robust fashion. After graduation from Galileo High School, he went on to play guard and linebacker at Cal under the legendary Pappy Waldorf; the team played in three Rose Bowls. He was drafted by the Cleveland Browns and traded to the San Francisco 49ers, whose doctors advised that he not play professionally because of a back injury. He returned to Cal and earned a teaching credential, serving as a graduate coaching assistant under Pappy Waldorf. In 1952, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and sent to Korea, where he organized recreational programs, taught English grammar to NCOs, and ran the library.

In 1954, he accepted a teaching and coaching position at South Pasadena High School, where he eventually led the Tigers to five Rio Hondo League championships, four CIF championships, and a perfect season in 1969. In 1972, he returned to Northern California to coach the Menlo College Oaks, overseeing the team’s transition from a junior-college program to an NCAA division III team in 1986. In 1999, SPSHS named him Coach of the Century and named its football stadium after him, a measure of the degree to which he influenced the lives of young men. His unique coaching style combined strict discipline, quirky humor, and compassion. He was much loved.

In retirement, he and his wife Constance traveled frequently to Italy and Kauai. They were long-time subscribers to the San Francisco Symphony, and for over forty years they hosted literary and artistic salons in their Menlo Park home. He was also founder and head of the Zot Party, a group of friends from across the political spectrum who gathered quarterly to discuss politics—luncheons informed by spirited debate and civility. Above all things, Raymond was a man devoted to his family—a loving husband and dedicated father whose most recent years were brightened by the presence of four glorious grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife of fifty years, Constance Hines Solari; his children, Robin Solari, Antonia Solari Moran (Robert), and Christopher Solari (Jennifer); and four grandchildren, Arthur, Harrison and Aiden Moran, and Violet Solari. Donations may be made to the San Francisco Symphony, U.C. Berkeley or an organization of your choice.

A memorial mass will be celebrated on Friday, April 21 at 11 a.m. at Church of the Nativity in Menlo Park.

PAID OBITUARY

Celebration of Life for Walter and Grace Leclerc

A celebration of life for Walter and Grace Leclerc is planned for Saturday, April 1. If you would like further information, please contact: Michele Leclerc Email: micheleleclerc@aol.com Cell/ Texts: (310) 948-2231

PAID OBITUARY

Cecily Merrill

1944 – 2023

Cecily left us on February 21 after a 15-year struggle with Lewy Body Dementia. She was a fearless and highly motivated person all her life even as demonstrated through her long final struggle. Although it has been a long slow departure, she will continue to be missed. She left her brothers Frank, Paul, and Jim Merrill and her husband, Frank Friedlaender, behind.



Cecily was a California native and grew up in Northern California. Always interested in art, she enrolled and graduated from what was at that time the Oakland College of Arts and Crafts. Not only was she an artist in a traditional sense, but also a gifted musician and photographer, which she practiced throughout her life. However, to support herself she pursued a master’s degree in education at San Jose State University. She taught high school in Oakland. Although, initially she commuted by motorcycle to school from Felton in the Santa Cruz Mountains that morphed into a Lotus Elan as economics allowed. This early interest in classic cars further developed into a shared interest with her husband, with whom she collected a small collection of 60’s era classic cars. She also loved to travel and usually traveled with her husband to his science meetings around the world. In later years she became interested in genealogy and history. Specifically, she researched the role of the Indian trading posts in the development and colonizing west of the Mississippi. This fascination grew stronger and after much research culminated into a book documenting her Irish immigrant family history and migration from Virginia coal miners to professions on the west coast. Cecily had many interests and activities, including being a diligent jazzercise devotee and collector of more than 200 specimens of cactus.

Cecily was both a very kind and compassionate person, always willing to help when needed, as well as a very private person who valued solitude and enjoyed spending time alone at the family ranch in New Mexico. She brought to her marriage with Frank another way of living than that to which he was accustomed and together their approaches to life were highly complementary and made a stronger whole than each of them brought individually.

PAID OBITUARY

outcomes in the implementation of the proposed standards,” the report from district staff states.

Some proponents have suggested that the new rule change could boost the supply of zero-emission equipment by making it clear to manufacturers that there will be a market for the new technology. Debbie Mytels, a Palo Alto resident who serves as chair of Peninsula Interfaith Climate Action, a coalition of 35 congregations with “green teams,” urged the air board last week to move ahead with the new rules.

“It would be wonderful if you give a signal to the manufacturing community that we should go ahead and start creating many more opportunities for people to change their heating system and create the clean air that we all need to breathe,” Mytels said.

Even before the rule change, Peninsula cities have been carefully tracking the development of zero-emission technologies. Menlo Park already requires electric space heaters and hot water heaters in new construction, a law that took effect in January 2020. To date, however, the council has not mandated electrification in existing buildings, opting to instead rely on outreach, education and financial assistance for low-income residents.

Palo Alto has also adopted an electric-only requirement for water and space heating in new developments. The city also launched a new program this year that aims to convert 1,000 customers to heat pump water heaters this year through a streamlined approval process and on-bill financing that allows them to spread out payments for the new appliance. The program is off to a promising start, with 421 customers opting into it as of Tuesday, according to city staff.

These local efforts, Veenker said, will help local cities prepare for the air district’s new rules once they start taking effect in 2027. She said in an interview that believes the air district’s approach already takes into consideration the many challenges of electrification by incorporating interim reports, the implementation group and a timeline that prioritizes technologies that are more readily available and require less power.

“By the time these rules kick in regionally, our residents will be able to have a smooth transition and hopefully we’ll be a model for other cities too,” Veenker said. ■

*Email Staff Writer
Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@paweekly.com.*

CRIME BRIEFS

Palo Alto woman dies in Joshua Tree crash

A Palo Alto resident and Menlo School alumna was killed in a crash with a pickup truck that left three others with moderate to major injuries in Joshua Tree on March 11, according to the California Highway Patrol (CHP).

Identified as 45-year-old Katherine Loarie, she was pronounced dead at the scene, a press release from the San Bernardino Sheriff’s Department states.

The crash happened at around 12:20 p.m. on eastbound state Route 62, east of Sunview Road, according to a CHP press release. Loarie was driving a 2023 Nissan Rogue and stopped on the right shoulder before then turning left and crossing paths with a 2018 Ford F-250.

The Ford pickup truck, driven by a 68-year-old man from Muskego, Wisconsin, was heading east just before the crash. The front of his vehicle hit the driver’s side of the Nissan, the CHP press release states. Loarie was pronounced dead at 12:39 p.m., according to the Sheriff’s Department.

Loarie’s passenger, a 47-year-old man from Switzerland, was taken to Desert Regional Medical Center in Palm Springs with major

injuries. The Ford driver and his passenger, a 67-year-old woman, were both taken to Hi-Desert Medical Center in Joshua Tree for treatment of moderate injuries.

It doesn’t appear alcohol or drugs played a role in the crash, which remains under investigation, the CHP release stated.

Loarie graduated from Menlo School in 1996 and the University of California, Berkeley with a bachelor’s degree in economics and mass communications in 2000, according to her LinkedIn profile.

She obtained a master of business administration degree from Dartmouth University in 2009 and served as president of the Dartmouth Alumni Association of Silicon Valley board of directors for 12 years.

Her LinkedIn profile shows a bulk of her career was spent in the Bay Area, where she held positions in marketing, business operations and product management. She most recently worked a contract job with Meta as a technical program manager. She also served as treasurer and technology lead for WIRE for Women, a nonpartisan organization that aims to help women enter elected office in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, until this past August.

—Palo Alto Weekly staff

The Almanac
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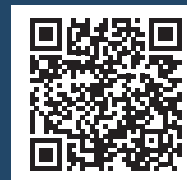
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SPRING EVENTS

continued from page 5

Company.
Pacifica Rock and Roll Flea Market March 26 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Winters Tavern, 1522 Francisco Blvd., Pacifica. The event is free.

Growing Natives Garden Tour April 1-2: Visitors can find inspiration for their gardens (or just admire all the native plants) by touring up to 60 private and public gardens landscaped with California native plants. These gardens are low-maintenance and water-wise, with minimal or no chemical use. Register online to access maps and addresses.

Growing Natives Garden Tour April 1 for southern area gardens, April 2 for northern area. The tour is free.

Easter Eggstravaganza April 8: The Easter bunny flies in by helicopter at 11 a.m. for Hiller Aviation Museum's Easter Eggstravaganza. Kids can get an Easter egg straight from the bunny, run around a bounce house and slide, and enjoy a model train display and face painting.

Easter Eggstravaganza April 8 from 10 a.m. to noon at Hiller Aviation Museum, 601 Skyway Road, San Carlos. Admission is \$19 per adult, \$12 for seniors and youth ages 5-17 and free for kids 4 and under.

Taste of Campbell April 15: A ticket to the fifth annual Taste of Campbell includes wine tasting for up to 24 different wines, wine bottle sales below retail, a silent auction, live music and dancing and cuisine from local restaurants such as Flights and Best Artisan Empanadas.

Taste of Campbell April 15 from 3-6 p.m. at Orchard City Banquet Hall, 1 W. Campbell Ave., Campbell. Tickets cost \$39-\$54 per person plus fees.

Love Our Earth Festival April 22: Midpeninsula cities will come together for a free event celebrating the planet and teaching people how they can address the climate crisis. Stop by the green vendor fair to learn about sustainable eating, how to create a climate-friendly home and more.



Courtesy Miramar Events/123EventPhotography.com

Freestyle motocross stunt shows are only a slice of the action at Pacific Coast Dream Machines in April.

Check out the electric vehicle and electric bicycle showcase and cooking demos, and while kids can enjoy crafts, story-time, interactive animal exhibits and other activities. Food vendors include Vegan Hood Chefs, Casita Vegana, Nixta Foods, Annie's T Cakes, LL's Kitchen and Christine's Cookie Co.

Love Our Earth Festival April 22 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Menlo-Atherton High School, 555 Middlefield Road, Atherton. The event is free.

Asha Stanford Holi April 22-23: Celebrate Holi with unlimited color (they'll have 5,000 pounds on hand for the weekend), Indian food and music. All net proceeds from the event will go toward funding the education of underprivileged children in India.

Asha Stanford Holi April 22-23 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at Sand Hill Fields on Oak Road at Stanford University, 450 Serra Mall, Stanford. Tickets are \$20 for youth under 15 and \$40 for adults. Free admission for Stanford students with SUID. The 4-6 p.m. time slot April 22 is limited to Stanford students and affiliates.

Coastal Wildflower Day April 23: Visitors to Half Moon Bay State Beach will be able to buy native plants, take guided nature walks and listen to music from Half Moon Bay High's jazz band and Lighthouse String Band playing traditional Irish and Scottish Celtic music. The beach's volunteer-run nursery will provide sheet-mulching demonstrations and native planting sessions. Booths will offer various interactive activities, including face painting.

Coastal Wildflower Day Festival Sunday, April 23, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Half Moon Bay State Beach, 95 Kelly Ave. The event is free. Day-use parking is \$10.

Cupertino Cherry Blossom Festival April 29-30: The 39th annual festival honors Cupertino's sister city relationship with Toyokawa, Japan. Watch music and dance performances and martial arts demonstrations, and check out arts and crafts exhibits, cultural demonstrations and special interest groups such as koi fish clubs. Food options include yakisoba, sushi, gyoza and more, plus sake, plum wine, beer and other beverages. Children's activities range from a petting zoo and pony rides to games and arts and crafts.

Cupertino Cherry Blossom Festival April 29-30 from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at Cupertino Memorial Park, the Quinlan Center and Senior Center,



Veronica Weber

A painted lady butterfly perches atop a pink ribes sanguineum plant in a native garden featured in a Going Native Garden Tour in 2019.

21121 Stevens Creek Blvd. The event is free.

Dream Machines April 30: Dream Machines is back for its 30th year of shows featuring cars, motorcycles, airplanes and tractors — roughly 2,000 machines from the 20th and 21st centuries. Get an up-close look at all kinds of vehicles, from Ford Model T's and muscle cars to low-riders and dragsters. New additions this year include a showcase of next-generation vehicles, a special display by Niles Railway Museum, R-44

helicopter rides and more. There will also be live music, food and drinks and a kids' fun zone.

Pacific Coast Dream Machines April 30 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Half Moon Bay Airport, 9850 Cabrillo Highway, Half Moon Bay. Tickets are \$25 in advance for adults (\$30 at the gate), \$15 in advance for youth 11-17 and seniors 65 and over (\$20 at the gate) and kids 10 and under are free with a paying adult. Early bird vehicle registration is \$40 plus fees.

May Fête Parade May 6: Get your costumes and floats ready for the 99th annual May Fête event. Enter your group for a chance to win big prizes or walk in the city's Friends, Family and Pets category. This year's theme will be announced soon.

May Fête Parade May 6 at 10 a.m. along University Avenue in downtown Palo Alto. The event is free.

Silicon Valley Open Studios May 6-21 (weekends only): Check out the artwork of 300 artists across 121 sites at Silicon Valley Open Studios, which gives people the opportunity to peruse and purchase art directly from the artists. Art of every medium is included, from paintings and sculptures



Christian Trujano

A family leads participants in the 98th annual May Fête Parade on University Avenue on May 7, 2022.

LEHUA GREENMAN



"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all."

650.245.1845 COMPASS

to photography and jewelry. The first weekend will focus on the San Mateo County Coastside, the second will include artists from San Bruno to Mountain View and the final weekend will focus on the southern stretch from Sunnyvale to Gilroy.

Silicon Valley Open Studios May 6-7, May 13-14 and May 20-21 at assorted locations (go online for the event directory). The event is free.

Half Moon Bay Wine & Jazz Festival May 13: The second annual celebration of jazz and California wine returns to downtown Half Moon Bay for one afternoon only. Participating wineries include a host of familiar names, including local establishments like Clos de la Tech and Half Moon Bay Winery, and artists scheduled to appear include Paula West, John Santos Sextet and Marcus Shelby Quintet, with more to be announced. Food from Breakwater Barbecue, Half Moon Bay Wine and Cheese and Sam's Chowder Mobile will be offered, plus beer and cider for those who aren't fans of wine. VIP lounge tickets (\$125 per person) offer exclusive seating, food and beverages. Don't want to drink?



Courtesy Cameron Rolfe/Hiller Aviation Museum

The Easter bunny will fly in by helicopter for the Easter Eggstravaganza at Hiller Aviation Museum in April.

Music-only tickets are \$25.

Half Moon Bay Wine & Jazz Festival May 13 from noon to 5 p.m. on Main Street. Tickets cost \$25-\$125 per person.

Soul Stroll May 20: Head to Coyote Point for the first in-person Soul Stroll since 2019.

Walk or run 1, 3 or 5 miles and check out the health fair with over 50 vendors providing screenings and information. Ticket cost includes a light breakfast, professionally led warm-up sessions, a healthy lunch and a commemorative T-shirt.

Soul Stroll May 20 from 8 a.m. to noon at Coyote Point Recreation Area, 1701 Coyote Point Drive, San Mateo. Tickets are \$30 plus fees.

The Silicon Valley Whisk(e)y Festival May 21: Sip whiskey (or whisky) at Domenico Winery's

inaugural festival with Italian food from Osteria, music from local artists, and whiskies and cocktails. Special VIP lounge tickets will include a special guest host whiskey.

The Silicon Valley Whisk(e)y Festival May 21 from 2-6 p.m. at Domenico Winery, 1697 Industrial Road, San Carlos. Tickets are \$50-\$200 a person plus taxes and fees.

FoodieLand Night Market May 26-28: Carnival games, live music, an artisan market and over 170 food vendors converge for the return of FoodieLand at the San Mateo County Event Center. Booths will be selling a wide range of food and drinks all weekend, from ramen burgers and dim sum to boba and Khmer barbecue. Alcoholic beverages will be available at various bars, and options for vegan and vegetarian eaters are noted on the lineup with a green leaf.

FoodieLand Night Market from 3-10 p.m. May 26 and 1-10 p.m. May 27-28 at the San Mateo County Event Center, 1346 Saratoga Drive, San Mateo. Tickets are \$5-\$7 per person; kids under 5 are admitted free. Parking is \$15 per car at the venue. ■

PRIORITIES

continued from page 5

Safe streets

Receiving three votes, safe streets also qualified as a top priority for Menlo Park's upcoming fiscal year.

The safe streets priority includes projects to fix any roadway dangers such as potholes, as well as having development projects go to the Complete Streets Commission as a part of the approval process.

"I don't see my role as just policy," Combs said. "My constituents aren't interested in the priorities of the city, they're interested in the fact that there's a pothole in front of their house. And so if I say the city has these priorities, they're like, 'Drew, I have a pothole.'"

Combs said that action is important, even when looking at the grand scheme of city priorities, and Nash said that the maintenance of streets is important for safety.

Taylor said that current

city legislation regarding safe streets maintenance and infrastructure is often viewed through a climate lens, and that Menlo Park's transportation master plan would need to be updated.

"There are some intersections in Menlo Park that are unsafe for anybody to walk through, but they do every day," Taylor said.

Climate action

Also with three votes, climate

action rounded out the highest-voted priorities of Menlo Park.

Menlo Park had climate action as a priority this past year as well, and has placed a heavy focus on converting natural gas use to electric through the city's joint venture with BlocPower.

While the City Council determined that there was a lot of overlap between the need for climate action and emergency preparedness, the latter would be based in practicality and climate action based in policy.

Other options

The other options for priorities did not receive as many votes, so while they'll be on the radar of the City Council they won't take precedence. Emergency preparedness, advancing equity and community engagement each received two votes, and organizational effectiveness received none. ■

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

DRONES

continued from page 1

to move vital equipment and goods like hoses, water and food to the front of the firelines: "To have drones really be the workhorse, especially in areas that are hard to traverse via cars and other such modes of mobility," Johnson said.

Drones could also be used to make aerial fire suppression safer and more effective. ACERO project scientists want to equip fire suppression helicopters — which carry hundreds of gallons of water or fire retardant to help quench fires — with automation technology to make those missions safer and more efficient.

"If there's heavy smoke or it's

nighttime, they ground those operations," Johnson said. "So we're looking at trying to really extend those operations by the use of drones, and being able to control the aircraft from the ground as opposed to putting that pilot at risk."

While the ACERO project is in its early stages, Johnson said NASA is already in communication with agencies like the U.S. Forest Service, the Federal Aviation Administration and CalFire to help bring a unified vision for the future of wildland firefighting to fruition.

"Our current task right now is looking at coming up with a concept of operations that tries to unify how we want to include technology into modernizing wildland

firefighting," Johnson said.

Some of the project's bigger goals, like incorporating drones into fire suppression, may take five to seven years to get off the ground. But Johnson said he and his team are motivated to get there — both professionally and personally.

"Every year, the big news for wildfires, often, is on the West Coast, and California unfortunately bears the brunt of those," Johnson said. "The folks that are impacted (work) at NASA Ames — our staff are the ones that are impacted by this problem."

"So there's passion that goes into the work." ■

Email Staff Writer Malea Martin at mmartin@mv-voice.com.



Courtesy NASA

Yasmin Arbab, a research associate at NASA's Ames Research Center, tests a prototype device designed for firefighting drone operators.

GROWING 'WILD AND FREE'

By Karla Kane

Although Molly Tuttle moved out of the Golden State more than a decade ago, the acclaimed musician will always be a California girl at heart — and in the hearts of her Peninsula family, friends and fans.

“People feel like I’m still a local,” she said during a recent interview from Nashville, Tenn., where she’s lived for the past eight years following a stint in Boston attending the Berklee College of Music. “I still get that feeling like I’m coming home when I get to come play in the Bay Area.”

The Palo Alto-raised Tuttle and her band Golden Highway will be back for a pair of concerts at The Guild Theatre on April 1 and 2.

Her visit comes on the heels of her recent Grammy Award for Best Bluegrass Album, honoring last year’s “Crooked Tree,” and a high-profile Best New Artist nomination.

Calling the Grammy experience “pretty surreal,” Tuttle said the week leading up to the awards, held in Los Angeles, was a flurry of activity and exciting music-industry events culminating, of course, in that gratifying win.

“To actually take home the bluegrass award was really validating,” she said. “It’s such an honor to be awarded that by my peers ... it’s really affirming of what I’ve been doing.”

Though she’s new to The Grammys, Tuttle is no stranger to accolades, as she’s racked up many honors over the years, from the likes of the International Bluegrass Music Association, the Americana Music Awards, and the International Folk Music Awards.

An astonishingly virtuosic instrumentalist (particularly on guitar), Tuttle is also a talented singer and songwriter,

FRESH OFF A GRAMMY WIN FOR HER ALBUM ‘CROOKED TREE,’ MOLLY TUTTLE RETURNS HOME TO THE PENINSULA IN A PAIR OF SHOWS AT THE GUILD



Courtesy Sacks & Co

and “Crooked Tree,” her third full-length album, is the first that fully leans into her bluegrass background.

The daughter of local bluegrass legend Jack Tuttle, a beloved Palo Alto music educator, she grew up performing both locally and internationally with her father and brothers. Bluegrass, to her, means music meant to be shared among family and friends, with a certain community spirit in addition to a recognizable sound. Acknowledging its roots in the southern United States, pioneered by Bill Monroe, “I think it’s always been a fluid thing since it was first created,” she said. “It’s really the spirit of simple music people can play together.” And, she noted, “there’s a lot of bluegrass that comes from California.”

The final track on “Crooked Tree,” “Grass Valley,” evokes memories of the West Coast bluegrass community she

grew up in, attending festivals and jam sessions with her family. Her California ties pop up in other parts of the album as well. In “San Francisco Blues,” she mourns for the Bay Area of the past, a time when artists and working families weren’t pushed out by rising rents and gentrification, and expresses a homesickness for both the Bay Area of her youth as well as the imagined one from long before she was born. Tuttle said she wished she could go back in time to see what Palo Alto was like in the 1960s, when her mother was growing up there. “She’s really seen it change,” she noted.

The haunting song “Castilleja” was definitely *not* written about the private Palo Alto girls’ school, but Tuttle, a graduate of nearby Palo Alto High School, did first encounter the word (meaning a desert-blooming flower) thanks to the Old Palo Alto neighborhood campus.

Tuttle’s songs often reflect the beauty she finds in the natural world, and she has a special love for the coastal region between Half Moon Bay and Santa Cruz, where the redwoods and the Pacific Ocean are both within reach. “That’s my happy place,” she said. The album’s title track uses an arboreal metaphor to explore the challenges and benefits of not always fitting in. Tuttle co-wrote the song with her friend and fellow Bay Area artist Melody Walker.

“Both of us kind of grew up feeling different from the other kids,” she said. Tuttle has the immune condition alopecia areata, and, at age 3, permanently lost all of her hair. “That was something that made me stand out,” she said, recalling the embarrassment and worry she felt as “a pretty shy kid,” masking the condition under hats and, later, wigs. As she grew older, though, she found a sense of community and acceptance, and has worked as an advocate and mentor with the National Alopecia Areata Foundation (an organization that meant a lot to her as a child). In “Crooked Tree,” she embraces not conforming to an expected mold.

“Oh can’t you see? A crooked tree won’t fit into the mill machine. They’re left to grow wild and free. Oh I’d rather be a crooked tree,” she sings. Feeling different, it turns out, can also be something many of us have in common.

“I wrote that song out of my own experience of feeling like I had something that made me different,” she said, “but it’s really for everyone, because I feel like we all have something like that.”

Though her music is steeped in bluegrass traditions, Tuttle’s never been one to be pinned down to just one genre, and enjoys exploring other sounds and styles. “I love going back to my bluegrass roots,” she said. “I could see going off and doing something different as well.”

The “Crooked Tree” album was recorded with Tuttle’s band, Golden Highway, which includes mandolinist Dominick Leslie, banjoist Kyle Tuttle, fiddle player Bronwyn Keith-Hynes, and bassist Shelby Means. They will be joining her at her local shows — and for the foreseeable future.

“We’ve been having such a great time on the road; I want to keep it going for as long as I can,” she said. Coming up, she’ll be busy with a slew of tour dates across the country, including summer gigs with Dierks Bentley and, in September, an appearance at acoustic-guitar icon Tommy Emmanuel’s Nashville guitar camp. But before that, she’s looking forward to her April homecoming.

“I’m really happy that The Guild exists,” she said of the former movie theater-turned-performance space. “It’s so nice to have a venue that size in Menlo Park.”

Coming back to the Peninsula to perform “used to make me a little more nervous,” she said, “now I feel a little more free to talk about growing up, where I went to school, my favorite places ... it’s a really good feeling to come back.”

At last year’s Guild performance, she brought her dad up to play, and is likely to call on some special guests again. “I haven’t started asking people yet — that’s a good reminder!” she laughed. “I hope to see a lot of old friends and maybe make some new friends.”

Molly Tuttle and Golden Highway perform at The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park, on Saturday, April 1, and Sunday, April 2, at 8 p.m. Both shows have a waitlist (tickets are \$48-\$88). More information is available at guildtheatre.com and mollytuttlemusic.com. ■



Don Ferial

Top: Palo Alto-raised singer-songwriter Molly Tuttle took home a Grammy for Best New Bluegrass Album for her third full-length album, “Crooked Tree.”

Above: Jack Tuttle, left, practices with daughter Molly Tuttle during a session at their Palo Alto home in 2010 in this shot from the Embarcadero Media archives.



Courtesy Bryant Street Gallery

"Gathering" is among the dozen paintings by Helen Steele featured in "Reflections," a posthumous show of her work at Bryant Street Gallery that also includes pieces of her early sculpture.

'Reflections' in paint

Bryant Street Gallery celebrates the life and work of Helen Steele

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

Enigmatic figures mainly found in isolation, rendered with bold, loose strokes of almost chaotic color — this is the work of San Rafael artist Helen Steele. Her paintings have been represented by the Bryant Street Gallery in Palo Alto for a number of years, but this current exhibition has a poignant note: Steele died unexpectedly at the age of 57 last year. "Reflections," on view until April 15, is a posthumous show of 12 of her last paintings and some early sculptures.

Karen Imperial, Bryant Street Gallery director, said that she first saw Steele's work at a gallery in Idaho. "I found the work extremely moving. I thought my clientele would respond to the work as well as I did." She was in the process of organizing an exhibition with Steele when she learned of her death. "It felt very natural to have a memorial show for her, so I spoke with Jeremy (her son and estate executor) and he was on board.

"I went to the studio and Jeremy allowed me to curate a show," she said, adding that she chose pieces that she felt were "strong in composition and palette."

Steele was born and raised in Immenstadt, Germany and earned undergraduate and graduate degrees there. She came to the United States in 1987, eventually settling in San Rafael where the hills and nearby San Francisco Bay influenced her work. "She loved color," noted her son, "It was her enjoyment of the beauty in the world. She would constantly remark on how the fog poured over the hill, or how the forest trees blended with moss."

Looking at the paintings, some on canvas and others on wood, it

is clear that Steele loved color and the application of paint in loose, broad — almost wild — strokes. There are thick applications of paint in some areas and, then, some so thin the pigment has dripped down the canvas. Jeremy Steele said that his mother used "great destroyed brushes with wild, curly hair, wooden scrapers and great, long swathing brushes. Anything to get the intricate, lifelike texture she loved." Texture is definitely an important facet of the paintings but it is trumped by the artist's choice of subject matter.

Each of the pieces portrays figures, but these are definitely not detailed, anatomically correct renditions of the human form. Rather, they are enigmatic, ghostly presences appearing as genderless, featureless bodies that exist in the space between figuration and abstraction.

In many of the pieces, there are just one or two figures facing away from the viewer and looking out at the unknown in the background. Even in pairs,

the figures look isolated and lost in their own thoughts. They are solid and grounded, yet situated in a whirl of color and frenzied brush strokes. Even with titles like "The Moment I Saw You" and "A Quiet Moment Together," there is an immutable space between figures, a gulf that cannot be bridged.

"Ultimately the figures are a Taoist, Buddhist representation of an entire person, with an entire complicated relationship with someone else. Body postures and distances begin to tell the story between the people. But she left the rest of the enigma up for the viewer to decide," Jeremy Steele said.

Although many of the paintings have a quiet stillness to them, Helen Steele was capable of capturing movement and energy. In "Rouge Reflections," her characteristic silhouettes stand in the middle ground, surrounded by slashes of pastel colors and, on the right side, a bright red zig-zag that creates a big and bold upward movement.

The painting that comes closest to the traditional placement of figure to ground is "Ashore From the Lake," in which the artist has placed two of her genderless forms in the foreground, facing out toward the outline of a boat in the middle ground. The water is rendered in energetic, horizontal strokes in virtually every color but blue.

Jeremy Steele described his mother's working method: "She worked late at night, after dinner and past midnight, usually alone. She was in such a flow state. That's why she was so productive and prolific. She truly loved the process, the colors, the images."

There is a meditative quality to these paintings. Without the need to examine details and how well the artist did — or did not — capture things realistically, we are free to just fall into the flow ourselves, of looking at color, form and texture.

Like many artists, Helen Steele worked on more than one canvas at a time. Her son recalled, "She

had a great big messy studio. The floor dripped with color, 10 canvases at a time, usually aligned with a color scheme and a series. She'd find a color that she mixed together, a light ocean blue, and apply it with a wooden scraper here, some on the next canvas, an outline on the third, and down the line, like a messy Disney factory cartoon."

In addition to the paintings, Bryant Street Gallery has included several small sculptures that Helen Steele created after attending a pottery class. Like the figures in her two-dimensional work, these heads are simplified, with tiny features (except for protruding noses) that a child might produce when first introduced to clay.

"She sculpted maybe 15 or 20 heads (compared to thousands of paintings); these strange biblical looking faces," Jeremy Steele said. He also noted that his mother was constantly observing and people-watching and that these

sculptures were influenced by "the long grimaces of old German mountain men."

Although no longer here to share her thoughts about her work, Helen Steele's legacy will continue thanks to Bryant Street Gallery and the efforts of her son. When asked what she hoped people will take away from the show, Imperial said, "I want people to arrive at a sense of the soul of this artist. As you look at the work many emotions come forward. There's a sense of longing, loss and solitude. A bit of sorrow, yet in that, a feeling of beauty within those emotions."

"Reflections," works by Helen Steele, are on view through April 15 at Bryant Street Gallery, 532 Bryant St, Palo Alto. The gallery is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. For more information, visit bryantstreet.com. ■

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

Public Notices

UNIQUE SPLENDOR YOGA THERAPY & COACHING

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-293342

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

1.) Unique Splendor Yoga Therapy & Coaching, located at 300 Davey Glen Road, CA, 94002.

Registered owner(s):
ADRIANA BUENAVENTURA
300 Davey Glen Road, #3423
Belmont, CA, 94002

This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on N/A.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on February 02, 2023.

(ALM Mar 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2023)

PALO ALTO SMART THERAPY

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-293543

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

1.) Palo Alto Smart Therapy, located at 4370 Alpine Rd, Suite 200, Portola Valley, CA 94028, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
KRISTA REGEDANZ, PH.D. A PSYCHOLOGICAL CORPORATION

3000 El Camino Real, Building 4, Suite 200
Palo Alto, CA 94306
CA

This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 02/09/2015

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on February 24 2023.

(ALM Mar 24, 31, Apr 7 and 14, 2023)

DANIEL PURINTON DESIGNS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-293628

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

1.) Daniel Purinton Designs, located at 1320 Academy Ave Belmont, CA 94002, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
DANIEL MARTIN PURINTON
1320 Academy Ave
Belmont, CA 94002

MARY GUADALUPE PURINTON
1320 Academy Ave
Belmont CA 94002

This business is conducted by: a Married Couple.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 02/29/2012

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March 06 2023.

(ALM Mar 17, 24, 31 and Apr 7, 2023)

MAISON MEDICAL GROUP

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-293440

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

1.) Maison Medical Group, located at 150 Portola Rd Ste A, Portola Valley, CA, 94028.

Registered owner(s):
DR. NEDA N. PAKDAMAN
205 De Anza Blvd #4
San Mateo, CA, 94402
CA

This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/01/2023

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on February 13 2023.

(ALM Mar 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2023)

LINEAGE & LEGACY

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-293665

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

1.) Lineage & Legacy, located at 2512 Farrington Way, East Palo Alto, CA. 94303, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):
HELPING OTHERS MAINTAIN EARTH, INC.
2085 East Bayshore Road
Palo Alto, CA. 94303
CA

This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant has not yet commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 10 2023.

(ALM Mar 17, 24, 31 and Apr 7, 2023)

The Almanac is adjudicated to publish in San Mateo County.

- Fictitious Business Name
- Abandonment of Fictitious Business Name
- Name Change
- Partnership Withdrawal or Dissolution
- Petition to Administer Estate - Probate Hearing
- Notice of Bulk Sale
- Legal Summons
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Food & Drink

Snacking our way through Ponyo

From seaweed crackers to kiwi candies, our staff sampled treats from Millbrae's new Asian snack market

Story and photos by Kate Bradshaw

When I first walked through the doors of Ponyo, a new market in Millbrae dedicated entirely to Asian snacks, I was drawn to all of the bright colors and cute characters emblazoned on the packaging.

The shop, which opened at the end of January, also has an assortment of pastries, cakes and cookies from Bay Area businesses like Neighbor's Bakehouse, MackBox and batch 22 bakery, as well as coconut jellies from Southern California-based MeloMelo.

My plan was to try out 10 different items from the store, so I went for a mix of savory and sweet, recognizable and unfamiliar, crunchy and soft to try to get a satisfying cross section of the goodies on offer. But once I'd gathered them, I realized there was no way I was going to be able to eat all of these snacks on my own anytime soon, and any approach for categorizing or describing them would be based solely on my personal preferences, which felt too subjective.

So I brought them to our office, where my colleagues gamely agreed to help me sample and judge the various snacks. Of the eight snacks and two beverages from Ponyo, the favorites were the koala mango cream biscuits and the strawberry sandwich cookies, while the most controversial pick was the Karinto wheat snack. Another plus of a visit to Ponyo was that the snacks were very affordable — I paid roughly \$27 for all of these.



Cherry blossom and melon sodas were covered in chocolate, and the consensus was that the

SHIRAKIKU CURVEE PUFFS

These corn puffs were crunchy, with a slightly fishy umami flavor. Similar in texture to Pirate's Booty, the puffs were a satisfying savory snack.

GGE SEAWEED FLAVOR WHEAT CRACKERS

These Taiwanese crunchy snacks were a combination of sweet and savory, with a strong smell and taste of seaweed. They reminded one reviewer of snacking on dry Maruchan soup packs. Ingredients included both peanut butter and shrimp powder, but neither could be tasted.

KARINTO WHEAT SNACKS

These very sweet brown sugar wheat and sesame crackers were a controversial pick, earning reactions like "visually displeasing" and "I had to spit it out." Other comments ranged from the snack "tastes better than it looks" to "slight BBQ vibes" with a "strong taste of dark brown sugar/molasses." Made with black sugar and honey, they had a caramelized and slightly chewy outside with a crispy interior, which resulted in a slightly stale texture.

LOTTE JAPAN KOALA'S MARCH MANGO CREAM BISCUITS

These little biscuits had a mango cream filling inside. "Kids would like these," one taster said, noting how cute the little koalas are. "Reminds me of Hello Pandas, which still reign supreme to me," another said.

KASUGAI KIWI GUMMY CANDIES

These Japanese chewy gummy snacks are made with kiwi fruit juice and seeds, each individually wrapped. "It's true, they are fruity and soft," says one reviewer. "A juicy center would take it up a notch."

SAKA MANJU

This red bean wheat cake earned a "sublime!" from one taster, who said the chewy mochi texture and sweet red bean flavor made for a happy belly. The red bean paste was dense, moist and mildly sweet.

CAPLICO PINK STRAWBERRY COOKIES

These pink strawberry wafers were covered in chocolate, and the consensus was that the



Above: Ponyo Foods in Millbrae. Below: A collection of sweet and savory snacks we sampled.

chocolate flavor dominated while the strawberry flavor was more subtle. "Great movie snack or quick energy burst," one reviewer suggested.

STRAWBERRY COOKIE SANDWICH

The strawberry-flavored filling packed a surprising punch between the two crunchy biscuits, yielding a hint of tartness, while the more mild flavor of the biscuits blended for a sweet and satisfying mouthfeel.

CHERRY BLOSSOM SODA

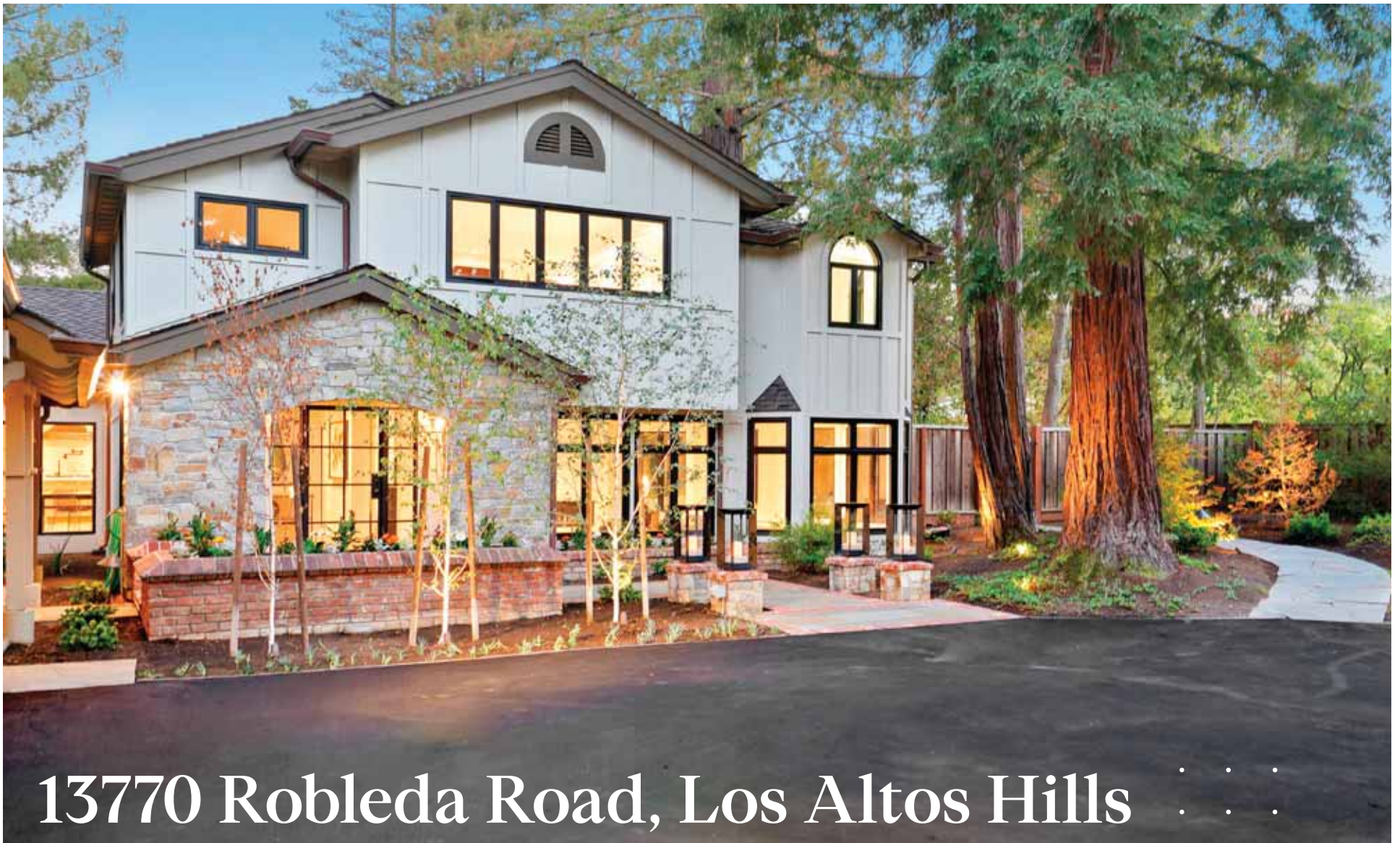
The cherry blossom soda was very sweet, with a slight cherry flavor and floral notes. It was a bit potent to drink with a meal, but it hit the spot as a dessert drink, the bubbles and the floral sweetness pairing well together.

MELON DRINK

This soda was also incredibly sweet. The sweetness blended with an artificial honeydew melon flavor that was satisfying and refreshing.

Ponyo Foods, 403 Broadway, Millbrae, 650-689-5333; Instagram: @ponyofoods. ■





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Extensively Restored Classic Spanish Home | 6 Beds | 4 Baths | 2 Half Baths | 4,898 sf | 16,627 sf Lot
\$10,250,000 | 40Crescent.com



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#1 Agent ENTIRE Bay Area *RealTrends*, 2021

#5 Small Team ENTIRE Bay Area *RealTrends*, 2022

COMPASS