

The Almanac

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

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Soaring 300-foot building proposed for Menlo Park's Linfield Oaks neighborhood

'Builder's remedy' development at former Sunset Magazine campus would be taller than the Statue of Liberty

By Cameron Rebosio

A towering development has been proposed in Menlo Park's Linfield Oaks neighborhood under builder's remedy laws, with one of its proposed buildings even taller than the Statue of Liberty.

The development company N17 has proposed a gargantuan four-building plan for the single-story former Sunset Magazine headquarters at 80 Willow Road in Menlo Park, as allowed under SB 330, known as builder's remedy. The surrounding Linfield Oaks neighborhood is largely made up of one- or two-story homes and small apartment buildings, but N17's plans include 800 residential units, an approximately 90,000-square foot hotel, and 8,400 square feet

of retail and 280,000 square feet of office space.

N17 is a real estate development company started by Oisin Heneghan, the former vice president of Trammell Crow, a global real estate firm headquartered in Dallas, Texas. According to his LinkedIn page, Heneghan started N17 in June after leaving Trammell Crow, and the new company does not have a website yet.

"I started a new real estate developer company called N17," his LinkedIn biography said. "We have some exciting announcements coming soon #buildersremedy."

The Almanac reached out to Heneghan but has not yet gotten a response.



Michelle Le

The longtime home of Sunset Magazine at 80 Willow Road in Menlo Park is the site of proposed development of dense high-rise buildings.

See **LINFIELD OAKS**, page 19

Educators say the pandemic made chronic absenteeism even worse

The number of local children missing 10% or more of school days is higher than it was before COVID-19

By Angela Swartz

Warning: This story mentions suicide.

At Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Middle School in East Palo Alto, Athletic Director Mario Zamora has seen firsthand the effects of the pandemic on students' mental health and attendance records.

The East Palo Alto native said the vibe at his school has been "weird" since the return to classrooms. He's noticed students are more on their toes after the extended school closures.

There's more bullying. Sometimes it's new students trying to make a name for



themselves. Kids are also dealing with parents who are wrestling with mental health issues or addiction, he said.

"My mother and father tell me, 'Education starts at home,'" he said. Students bring their family struggles with them to school, he said.

Schools in the Ravenswood

This is the second of three stories in a series exploring why chronic absenteeism has spiked in East Palo Alto and Menlo Park's Belle Haven neighborhood. The series was produced as a project for the USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism's 2023 California Health Equity Fellowship with the support of EdSource editor Dympna Ugwu-Oju. Read the Spanish translation of this series on AlmanacNews.com or at tinyurl.com/ausente-spanish.

area report strikingly high rates of chronically absent students, which are out of line with neighboring, wealthier schools, and higher than state averages. The first part of The Almanac's investigation into chronic absenteeism, when students miss 10% or more of class in a school year, explores its causes

and consequences. Research has shown that being chronically absent can have serious negative long-term impacts on children's academic performance and their future prospects.

Zamora said that absent parents may be part of the problem. Some kids live with grandparents in East Palo Alto

during the week because their parents can't afford to live in the Bay Area and they work in the Central Valley, he said.

"Not having your mom and dad around, kids that age are going to get away with everything," Zamora said. "Grandma is going to spoil the kids. To have a better chance, you need to have both parents there for you."

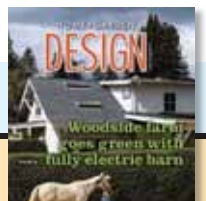
"At the end of the day, if you run all of that stuff together, it's like a recipe for depression," he said. "If you're depressed, you're not going to be motivated to be at school. You rather stay home and be in (your) room."

See **ABSENTEEISM**, page 16

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WE'RE PROUD TO BRING OUR READERS SOME OF THE BEST JOURNALISM IN THE STATE.

The annual **California Journalism Awards** competition, which celebrates excellence in reporting, design, photography and multimedia recognized our Peninsula team with **17 awards** in the following categories:

- Arts & Entertainment Coverage
- Coverage of 2022 Elections
- Coverage of Business and the Economy
- Coverage of Youth and Education
- Editorial Comment
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HERE'S WHAT SOME OF THE JUDGES OF THE 2022 CALIFORNIA JOURNALISM AWARDS ARE SAYING ABOUT OUR WORK —

An inquiry into the accidental death of an electrical worker, finding significant culpability on the part of Palo Alto. The level of well-documented detail was exceptional, especially given the lack of cooperation from a range of rejected sources. Meticulous work.

— First Place, Investigative Reporting

Comprehensive. Balanced and readable article that fully explains, with well-chosen quotes, the reasons for the city's and the business owners' views on a development of interest to residents.

— Second Place, Coverage of Business and The Economy

Great story, well told. This piece had RHNA numbers explained, NIMBYism on parade, attorneys and former elected official behaving badly — just great work.

— First Place, Coverage of Local Government

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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Magali Gauthier

Andrew Irvine, left, uses his paddle to defend the goal against Yousef Arab, right, during a scrimmage at Shoreline Lake in Mountain View on July 19.

Kayak polo makes a splash at Shoreline Lake

Playing water polo in kayaks is fast-paced, intense and kind of complicated, players say

By Samantha Stevens

Andrew Irvine first played kayak polo at Shoreline Lake a decade ago. Five minutes in, he told himself that it would be his first and last time trying out the vicious sport.

“I was like, ‘This is crazy. These people are insane. They’re trying to drown me,’” Irvine said.

A week later, Irvine was back in the saddle (well, the kayak).

He returned weekly for team

practices, eventually earning the nickname shipwreck, “because I got pushed over so much,” Irvine said with a laugh. Now, Irvine is a member of the U.S. men’s national team and has played the sport locally and internationally.

Kayak polo, known as canoe polo internationally, is, quite simply, water polo played in kayaks. But it’s a bit more complicated and intense than that.

Kayak polo is played by two teams of five athletes, outfitted

with helmets, in open water or a pool within a rectangular enclosure called the pitch. The fast-paced games are split into two halves of 10 minutes each. The objective is to score in the opponent’s goal, which is suspended above the water at each end of the pitch. The ball used is the same as in water polo and can be controlled by hand or by paddle.

Polo kayaks are faster and

See **KAYAK POLO**, page 20

Woodside fires back at civil grand jury over ADU report

By Malea Martin

The Town of Woodside is pushing back on conclusions made by the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury in a recent report that claims Woodside and other local jurisdictions are relying too heavily on accessory dwelling units, or ADUs, to meet the requirements of state housing law.

The Woodside Town Council voted to approve the response to the jury’s findings with little discussion at a July 25 meeting. While town staff agreed with some of the jury’s assessments, they disagreed with the assertion that the town relies on ADUs to meet their affordable housing commitments.

Woodside and all other jurisdictions in San Mateo County are required to formally respond to the Civil Grand Jury report’s findings.

“I think in general, the Grand Jury painted with a very broad brush,” Mayor Chris Shaw told this news organization. “... The assertion by the Grand Jury that somehow Woodside is trying to duck or avoid its responsibilities, I think is more of an editorial comment rather than something that’s grounded in fact.”

Staff said that while ADUs account for a chunk of Woodside’s projected affordable housing development, “the remainder of the affordable housing units are projected to be achieved through additional affordable housing to be created at Cañada College and through the rezoning and development of multifamily housing on three specific sites, two of which are owned by the town,”

staff’s response stated.

Staff added that Woodside’s current draft housing element projects that the town will allow for more than 120% of the affordable units in its current state quota.

“We’re a town. We’re not a city,” Shaw said. “We don’t have the types of infrastructure coming to or running through the town, we don’t have a commercial district, we don’t have the kinds of things that would normally and naturally lead toward the development of higher density, multi-stories.”

Every eight years, the state Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) conducts a study to determine how much new housing California needs to meet the ever-growing demand.

Each region is then assigned a number of housing units that need to be built over the next eight years, called the Regional Housing Needs Allocation, or RHNA. Individual jurisdictions are required to show where and how those units will get built in their housing elements, a document that must be certified by HCD in order to be in compliance with state law.

So far, Woodside’s housing element submissions to HCD have fallen short of state standards and were not certified. Woodside staff are “currently working with HCD representatives to finalize a draft Housing Element and RHNA plan that can be certified by HCD, to then be adopted by the town,” a July 25 council report stated.

Woodside is required to plan for 328 new units in its

See **GRAND JURY REPORT**, page 11

Caltrans says Highway 84 will reopen with one-way traffic controls on July 31

The landslide-damaged stretch of Woodside Road is expected to be fully repaired by October

By Malea Martin

The section of State Route 84 near Woodside that’s been closed since March is slated to reopen with one-way traffic beginning July 31, Caltrans announced Friday.

The two-lane highway between Foxhill and Portola roads was closed on March 9 when a landslide damaged

around 250 feet of roadway.

Woodside residents have urged Caltrans to reopen the road in the months since its closure, and have criticized the transit authority for its initial lack of communication about the road’s repair. In early June, Caltrans started offering weekly updates on the work to repair the slide-damaged stretch, which is a key route between Coastside communities

and the Midpeninsula.

Now, residents have a hard date of Monday, July 31, that they can expect to resume use of the two-lane road — although only one lane of traffic will reopen initially. The highway is expected to reopen both lanes in October, Caltrans said.

Caltrans said that the remaining work to repair the damage includes constructing a retaining

wall, reconstructing the roadway and repairing drainage systems.

Currently, crews are preparing the site for one-way traffic, installing one-way traffic control loops, paving and marking the roadway and installing new drainage across the east end of the project, according to Caltrans.

“Our crews have been working tirelessly each day, repairing the

slope and constructing a retaining structure on State Route 84 near Woodside,” Caltrans wrote on the project’s webpage. “A temporary one-way traffic control will start by July 2023, with the full reopening of SR-84 by October 2023.” ■

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

Notice to Customers Regarding Recovery of Drought Expenses (6/14/21-12/31/22)

Bear Gulch District

On July 28, 2023, California Water Service (Cal Water) filed Advice Letter 2490 with the California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) regarding expenses incurred from June 14, 2021 to December 31, 2022 for compliance with and implementation of State-mandated conservation measures that began in 2021. The Commission will take several months to review this request. If approved, a usage-based surcharge (\$/Ccf) to recover these expenses would start no sooner than January 1, 2024.

In a Drought Memorandum Account 2 (DRMA2) approved by the Commission, Cal Water tracked expenses directly associated with complying with and implementing the conservation measures set by the State, which include expenses for conservation education and outreach, operations, and labor. Expenses already being recovered through current rates are not included in the DRMA2.

In the Bear Gulch District, Cal Water is requesting recovery of \$60,783 through a \$0.0118 per Ccf surcharge for 12 months. For a residential customer with a 5/8" x 3/4" meter who uses 10 Ccf of water (which is 1,000 cubic feet, or approximately 7,480 gallons) per month, this would result in an estimated temporary bill increase of \$0.12, or 0.11%. After 12 months, the DRMA2 surcharge would stop.

A copy of Advice Letter 2490 will be available online at www.calwater.com/rates-advice-letters (select Bear Gulch from the drop-down menu) or may be obtained from the utility's local office by calling (650) 561-9709.

Cal Water offers many programs to help customers manage their water bills, including a Customer Assistance Program (CAP), water-conserving device rebates, and other conservation and support programs. Please visit www.calwater.com to take advantage of these opportunities.

Responses and Protests. Anyone may respond to or protest this filing. A response supports the filing and may contain information that proves useful to the Commission in its evaluation. A protest objects to the filing in whole or in part and must set forth the specific grounds on which it is based, and shall provide citations or proof where available to allow Commission staff to properly consider the protest. The grounds for protests are:

1. The utility did not properly serve or give notice of the filing.
2. The relief requested in the filing would violate statute or Commission order, or is not authorized by statute or Commission order on which the utility relies.
3. The analysis, calculations, or data in the filing contains material error or omissions.
4. The relief requested in the filing is pending before the Commission in a formal proceeding.
5. The relief requested in the filing requires consideration in a formal hearing, or is otherwise inappropriate for the filing process.
6. The relief requested in the filing is unjust, unreasonable, or discriminatory (provided that such a protest may not be made where it would require relitigating a prior order of the Commission).

A response or protest must be made in writing and received by the Commission's Water Division by August 17, 2023, the end of the comment period. The response or protest should be sent to the Commission (by email to water.division@cpuc.ca.gov, or by mail to the Tariff Unit, Water Division, 3rd Floor, CPUC, 505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102) and to Cal Water (by email to cwsrates@calwater.com, or by mail to the Rates Department, California Water Service, 1720 North First St., San Jose, CA 95112).

The advice letter process provides for any responses or protests only within the comment period, except for the utility's reply afterward. If you submit a protest or response and do not receive a reply within 10 business days after the end of the comment period, contact Cal Water at (408) 367-8200 and ask for the Rates Department.

Note: Cities and counties that need Board of Supervisors or Board of Commissioners approval to protest should inform the Water Division within the comment period so that a late-filed protest can be considered, and should include an estimated date on which the proposed protest may be voted.

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To request delivery, or stop delivery, of The Almanac in zip code 94025, 94027, 94028 and the Woodside portion of 94062, call 854-2626.



CRIME BRIEFS

Man charged in assault against police officers

A 30-year-old man has been charged with two counts of assault for allegedly releasing his aggressive dog to charge at police officers outside of a home in East Palo Alto last weekend, prompting them to open fire at the dog, San Mateo County prosecutors said Wednesday, July 26.

Antonio Sotelo-Lozano was arrested after the interaction that started around 8 p.m. Saturday when his mother called 911 after Sotelo-Lozano was allegedly drunk and fell at his home, resulting in bleeding and bruising on his face, according to the county District Attorney's Office.

When officers responded to the home, Sotelo-Lozano allegedly screamed at them to get off his property and called for his large pit bull named Raider to come from the back of the house. The dog came to the side yard and the two officers warned him not to release the dog, but he opened the side gate to allow the dog to charge at them, prosecutors said.

The officers fired at the dog twice to cause it to retreat. The gunfire did not strike the animal or any people, and Sotelo-Lozano was arrested after a struggle, prosecutors said.

East Palo Alto Police Cmdr. Dave Carson said the dog was impounded after the arrest.

Sotelo-Lozano made his initial appearance in court Tuesday to face the assault charges but did not enter a plea and the county's Private Defender Program was assigned to represent him, according to the District Attorney's Office.

He has five prior convictions, including three for robberies, and was on parole at the time of his arrest. He remains in custody on no bail status and is set to return to court next week, prosecutors said.

—Bay City News Service

Two arrested for brandishing a rifle outside Middlefield Road bar

Two men were arrested in North Fair Oaks in the early morning hours of Sunday, July 23, for allegedly brandishing a rifle and making threats after being thrown out of the Atherton Club San Luis on Middlefield Road.

The two suspects, a 32-year-old man and a 34-year-old man, both from Redwood City, were ejected at 2:40 a.m. from the Atherton Club San Luis, a bar and restaurant on Middlefield Road in the North Fair Oaks neighborhood of unincorporated Menlo Park, according to the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. The two reportedly left but returned later with a rifle.

San Mateo County Sheriff's deputies responded to the scene following reports of a fight on the premises. Witnesses gave deputies a description of the car and license plate, and they found the two suspects in the vehicle nearby with a BB gun rifle. The two were taken into custody on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon, conspiracy, threats and brandishing a firearm replica, and are being held on \$50,000 bail.

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office is investigating this case and encourages anyone with information to call the anonymous tip line at 1-800-547-2700.

—Cameron Rebosio

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Stanford 'Dish' trail to close temporarily

The popular Stanford 'Dish' trail will close on Saturday, July 29, and remain closed through Saturday, Aug. 12, Stanford University announced on its website.

Crews will be conducting summer maintenance during those days. The trail is scheduled to reopen on Sunday, Aug. 13.

Coyotes have also recently been active in the area, so visitors should be mindful of their surroundings, the university stated.

According to the National Park Service, if a coyote approaches you or if you feel threatened, "act big and loud, wave your arms, yell, and clap your hands until the animal retreats. Maintain eye contact." In addition, draw small children toward you.

Any sightings of coyotes should be reported to the Stanford University Public Safety Office at 650-724-7441.

Public access to the trail is from 6 a.m.-7:30 p.m.

—Embarcadero Media staff

See **COMMUNITY BRIEFS**, page 11

Cyclists raise concerns about near-miss incidents on Kings Mountain Road in Woodside

Girls Scouts mobilized against town's big bus ban, saying it cuts off access to Huddart Park

By Malea Martin

With the future of the ban on big buses on Kings Mountain Road still uncertain, members of the cycling community are sharing videos and stories of near-misses to show how perilous the narrow, winding Woodside street can be for bikes riders.

Woodside's recent ban on buses longer than 35 feet impacts a key entrance to Huddart County Park, the site of group activities including Peninsula Day Camp, an two-week summer camp run by the Peninsula Girl Scouts. The group, which hires buses to transport hundreds of children and volunteers to camp from all over the Peninsula, got into a high-profile dispute with the town over the ban.

Those in favor of allowing buses on Kings Mountain Road — which weaves through both Woodside and unincorporated areas of San Mateo County — argue that passenger vehicles, not buses, are the real problem, and that bus drivers' professional training makes them safer than other drivers.

Members of the cycling community counter that no matter how careful a bus driver is, vehicles that big cannot drive safely on a road as narrow and twisting as Kings Mountain Road.

Woodside Mayor Chris Shaw believes it's unlikely the town will reverse its vehicle length ordinance for Kings Mountain Road, which was passed last year in an effort to improve safety. However, he's hopeful the town will be able to come to a longterm solution with the Peninsula Girl Scouts and other groups that rely on buses to get children to organized activities at Huddart Park.

Near misses and collisions on Kings Mountain Road

Craig Davis is the founder of Cyclist Video Evidence, an online platform where cyclists can submit video footage of near-miss or collision incidents that they experience while riding. On July 11, Davis penned an article in which he shared multiple videos of near-miss incidents between a local cyclist and cars that have occurred on Kings Mountain Road over the past couple months.

"Each of these five extremely dangerous incidents were caused by relatively small vehicles, illegally passing on blind curves, even when a highly visible yellow cyclists' turn out sign was visible a few feet ahead," Davis wrote. "... If relatively small vehicles regularly cause these egregiously dangerous threats to cyclists' lives, imagine the devastation 40-foot buses could wreak."

Davis said there haven't just been near misses on Kings Mountain Road, but also collisions resulting in major injury and death. In August 2020, cyclist Frank Masterson was killed in a collision with a Prius as it passed another cyclist around a blind curve on Kings Mountain Road.

Earlier this year, cyclist George Burkhard was riding on Kings Mountain Road when a school bus going in the opposite direction came around a blind corner, Davis added. In video footage captured by Burkhard, the middle of the bus can be seen crossing the double yellow lines on the road as it comes around the corner, due to its length. This causes a Mazda driving in front of Burkhard to come to a grinding halt to avoid hitting the bus. The sudden stop doesn't leave enough

time for Burkhard to brake and he collides with the car, causing him to fall off his bike. He was injured in the incident.

Davis said there's a severe lack of enforcement when it comes to laws that protect cyclists, such as laws against reckless driving, assault on cyclists and crossing the double yellow lines on the road. Drivers crossing the double yellow lines to get around cyclists is an issue that's particularly prevalent on Kings Mountain Road, Davis said.

"Law enforcement could change dangerous drivers' behavior before collisions occur by enforcing existing laws," he told this news organization.

But Davis also believes that

no matter how safely drivers are behaving, some roads are just not meant for vehicles over a certain size. From his perspective, Kings Mountain Road is a prime example.

"(Burkhard's) video irrefutably shows a bus trying to navigate the narrow roads and how the midsection of the bus went into the other lane," Davis said.

Bus ban

The Woodside Town Council agrees that buses present a safety hazard. Last October, it adopted an ordinance banning vehicles longer than 35 feet on Kings Mountain Road. Mayor Shaw told the Almanac that this

wasn't the first time the town has adopted rules regarding long vehicles on tight, winding roads.

"We addressed Old La Honda Road several years ago, when the town manager came to Town Council and said, 'Look, we're having a lot of reports of near-misses,'" Shaw said. "Our proposal to this (was), we want to shorten the vehicle lengths that are allowed on Old La Honda Road. At that time, the residents came out with nothing but praise and hallelujahs for it."

Shaw said passing the ordinance for Kings Mountain Road was "just a natural outgrowth" from the rules that already existed for streets like Old La Honda. When it first passed, he said, the new rule didn't cause much of a stir.

But in late May, the Peninsula Girl Scouts learned that the ordinance would prohibit their day

See **KINGS MOUNTAIN**, page 18

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY, JULY 29, 2023

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Courtesy Peninsula Girl Scout Day Camp

Peninsula Girl Scouts campers at Huddart Park in Woodside.

Atherton City Council to study several single-family properties for future multifamily development

Following environmental review, council will decide whether to add the parcels to housing element

By Malea Martin

The majority of seats in Atherton's council chambers were filled as residents packed the July 19 meeting to make their voices heard about the future of affordable housing in the town.

Atherton City Council was set to discuss which properties in town would be most suitable for multifamily housing developments, and vote on sites that could eventually be added to the city's housing element, which has yet to be approved by state officials.

One resident, whose property appeared on the list that council was considering, said he was "perplexed" to see his address up for discussion, and that the parcels chosen felt "arbitrary."

"I'm not opposed to multifamily housing," the Selby Lane resident said. "What I am opposed to is the selected inclusion of my home and my neighbors' to meet the housing element. ... We previously have stated that we're not interested in selling."

The housing element is a process jurisdictions must undergo every eight years to prove how they'll meet housing standards set by the state. Each town or city must list properties that could reasonably be redeveloped into housing in the next eight years, in order to meet their Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), the number of net new housing units that each jurisdiction must accommodate. Atherton, which regularly tops lists of the priciest zip codes in the country, has a RHNA of 348 units, and more than half of those are required to be affordable.

After the Atherton City Council adopted a draft housing element just shy of the Jan. 31 deadline and sent it off to the state, the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) sent the town back to the drawing board in early April.

In an April 4 letter from HCD, officials wrote that while the town's housing element addresses many of the

state's requirements, it still falls short of affordable housing requirements.

The state requires that jurisdictions "affirmatively further fair housing," which means they must create programs that proactively increase affordable housing and their residents' access to it.

HCD's letter called Atherton "a concentrated area of affluence (that) predominantly consists of households with the highest median income, a stark contrast to the rest of the region."

"These conditions and circumstances warrant significant and robust actions (not limited to the RHNA) to promote housing mobility and increasing housing choices and affordability throughout and beyond the town, including in lower-density neighborhoods," the letter stated.

As it stands, Atherton's housing element relies heavily on homeowners building backyard accessory dwelling units, or ADUs, to meet its housing quota. But according to a July 19



Screenshot courtesy Town of Atherton

An Atherton resident who lives on Selby Lane speaks out against his property being considered for the town's housing element sites inventory at a July 19 meeting.

staff report, reliance on ADUs could present an issue because they're "limited in size and generally not as accessible to rent as multifamily rental properties."

"Therefore, ADUs as the town's primary low-income housing program may not provide adequate fair housing choices for low-income households, Black households, and other people of color, and large families, which consists of five or more individuals," the staff report added.

During a public meeting last month, most community members were opposed to any type of multifamily housing, with the exception of developing housing on local private school campuses like Menlo College and Menlo School. The current version of Atherton's housing element relies heavily on this idea to fulfill its affordable housing requirements.

But because such housing would be limited to faculty, staff or students of these schools, "the program is not a fair housing choice," staff wrote in the July 19 report.

Atherton's planning staffers, who are contracted through the company M-Group, recommended that the City Council review and vote on 10 properties to include as potential multifamily housing sites in the housing element project description. This step is required as part of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process, and staff emphasized that just because a site is added to the project description does not mean it will necessarily be included in the housing element the town resubmits to the state.

"The goal is to include enough

properties in the review to have some options and then to narrow down the list to two to three properties, if needed, to include in the Housing Element," staff wrote in a July 12 update ahead of the council meeting.

The 10 sites identified by staff included two on Selby Lane, both along the El Camino corridor; two on Victoria Drive, also along the El Camino corridor; one on Santiago Avenue, along the Valparaiso Avenue corridor; one on Polhemus Avenue, along Alameda de Las Pulgas; and finally, one on Ringwood Avenue and three on Bay Road, all along the Bay Road corridor. The parcels range from as small as 0.3 acres to as large as 1.7 acres.

All of these properties are currently zoned for single family homes, so the town would have to rezone them before they could be included as multifamily sites in the housing element — a concept that residents present at the meeting did not favor.

"We oppose the rezoning of any private properties which are currently zoned (for single family homes)," said Atherton Housing Coalition member Jeff Morris. The coalition was formed to make sure the town "fulfills its RHNA obligations in a thoughtful manner to maintain the character" of Atherton.

Morris argued that these properties are unlikely to be redeveloped into multifamily or affordable housing because the cost of land in Atherton is too high for such a project to be financially feasible for developers.

"The state mandates are that

See **DEVELOPMENT**, page 14

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Melvin Gaines' path to city manager started with heartbreaking loss

East Palo Alto native left Portola Valley to head city hall in his home town

By Chris Lee

When Melvin Gaines was 14 years old, his mother was murdered — a victim of domestic violence.

In an instant, Gaines lost the pillar of his life, the person who taught him values that formed the core of his character.

“If someone came in my mom’s restaurant and couldn’t afford a meal, she’d give them food anyway,” he said. “If someone came into my mom’s restaurant and needed money, she would provide them with an opportunity to work.”

These instilled values of generosity and community service were formative for Gaines in terms of his learning to care about and communicate with people from different walks of life. Consequently, instead of solely condemning his mother’s murderer, he also aimed to understand the systemic factors that influenced the



Courtesy Melvin Gaines

Melvin Gaines left role as Portola Valley’s assistant town manager to become city manager in his hometown of East Palo Alto.

individual’s actions.

“The man who murdered my mother experienced childhood trauma through involvement in the criminal justice system as a juvenile,” he wrote in an email. “Similar to other

young men of color exposed to violence and crime and less exposed to quality and relevant education and access to livable wage-earning jobs, his early exposure to trauma likely contributed to him making other life choices that led to further incarceration in his adulthood as well as substance abuse. He struggled to live a productive life after being incarcerated.”

This experience, however, wasn’t the first time Gaines noticed environmental influences on people’s lives: After moving to Palo Alto in sixth grade and attending Greene — then Jordan — Middle School, he observed the school’s wealth of resources compared to his alma mater, James Flood Elementary School, and the socioeconomic differences between the two communities.

“Jordan Middle School was probably closer to my East Palo Alto home than Flood was, but they were just completely different worlds, and they’re five minutes away from

each other,” he said. “But then also just East Palo Alto being primarily a community of color and working class to low-income — in Palo Alto, those demographics were different.”

The culmination of Gaines’ attempt to reconcile the two communities’ differences and his mother’s principles led him to join Youth United for Community Action, or YUCA. According to the East Palo Alto-based nonprofit’s website, the organization has the mission of providing a place “for young people to empower ourselves and work on environmental and social justice issues to establish positive systemic change through grassroots community organizing.”

“Working with YUCA as a teenager provided me with a safe space to collaborate with other young people and to explore injustices in our community and work to combat them,” he wrote in an email.

“We often found ourselves trying to influence policy makers, whether that be city councilmembers, state legislators or environmental regulatory agencies.”

Gaines’ trajectory to public service

While attending Santa Clara University — where he earned a bachelor’s in political science and environmental studies — one of his professors encouraged him to explore public policy. Instead of working to shape policies from outside the system, he learned to change policies from within it.

Though Gaines’ initial plan was to become a lawyer focused on environmental justice, he gained a greater appreciation for policy making and analysis as a Public Policy and International Affairs fellow at

See **GAINES**, page 15

Mixed-use development proposed at site of Jeffrey’s Hamburgers in Menlo Park

Four-story building plans call for residential units and office space

By Cameron Rebosio

A four-story, mixed-use development with 16 residential units and office space is proposed for the site of Jeffrey’s Hamburgers in Menlo Park.

The plans for the development at 888 El Camino Real call for a 29,808-square-foot building that includes 16 residential units, two of which are designated as below market rate housing. The

plans use public benefit offers to increase the allowable floor area for the proposed building.

The plans describe the building as a contemporary design with private and common open spaces. The ground floor would include a lobby and four residential units.

The second floor of the building is designated for office space with the two floors of housing above comprising 12 residential units. The building plans call

for terraces and outdoor space for both residents and commercial tenants, including a rooftop terrace.

Jeffrey’s Hamburgers in Menlo Park opened in 2007. The first Jeffrey’s location is in downtown San Mateo.

The Almanac reached out to the management of Jeffrey’s Menlo Park for comment but did not receive a response by The Almanac’s Wednesday press deadline. ■



Courtesy City of Menlo Park

A rendering of the proposed mixed-use development at 888 El Camino Real.

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

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Menlo School adds 49ers star-power to its new girls flag football coaching staff

By Michaela Seah

This fall will be the first-ever girls flag football season at Bay Area high schools, and Menlo School in Atherton is bringing some star power to its sidelines.

The head coach of Menlo's new girls flag football team is John Paye, the former 49ers quarterback and Menlo alum.

He'll be joined by Steve Young, Hall of Famer and former 49ers quarterback, who will act as assistant coach.

"We are excited to add girls flag football to our sport offerings and provide an opportunity for our female students to play a popular, fast-growing sport," said Earl Koberlein, Menlo's director of athletics.

Nearly 40 student athletes

have shown interest in joining the team this fall, with many having been introduced to flag football in middle school, according to a press release from Menlo School.

Paye has coached both Menlo's tackle football team and its girls basketball team, which includes one of Young's daughters. Both of Young's daughters are lined up to play on the flag football

team this fall as stated in the press release.

"There's certainly a good amount of excitement in the Menlo community," Paye said in the press release. "I've been getting photos and videos of some of the basketball players out with their friends practicing and training on their own for the season."

"Football is a great team game that teaches tremendous life lessons," Young said in the press release. "I want to help build womens flag football."

Flag football was officially

approved earlier this year to become a girls sport by the California Interscholastic Federation, with many schools in Southern California joining Menlo in launching new girls flag football teams.

The season will start on Aug. 21 and will end on Nov. 4, but the number of games is yet to be determined, according to the statement from Menlo School. ■

*Email Editorial Intern
Michaela Seah at mseah@almanacnews.com.*

Sheriff's Office steps up enforcement near Four Corners in Woodside following reckless driving complaints

By Malea Martin

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office is reminding drivers to obey traffic laws near the Four Corners area of Woodside after getting complaints from the community about an increase in speeding and reckless driving.

As the weather warms up, it's typical for traffic to increase in the area where highways 84 and 35 intersect, especially on

weekends, said Sheriff's Office public information officer Javier Acosta. After hearing from the community that more drivers were speeding and disobeying traffic laws, the Sheriff's Office sent out some motorcycle deputies to monitor the area. Acosta said speeding is the No. 1 violation getting citations.

"We listen to the community's concerns. In this situation, the community was complaining about dangerous traffic

conditions out there," Acosta said. "We responded by sending a motor unit team out there."

Woodside Mayor Chris Shaw said reckless driving behavior is nothing new for this part of town.

"Traffic on Highway 35 and the Four Corners area in particular has been a long-time issue," Shaw said. "Speeding, noise, traffic — that's not new."

Shaw said using motorcycle deputies to help enforce the laws

will work for now, but "we're going to eventually have to come to sort of a solution."

"We're talking about a state highway that butts up against the town of Woodside and unincorporated San Mateo County," Shaw said. "So you've got the CHP, the Sheriff, a whole bunch

of people involved. I would love nothing more than to see either a stop light up there, or some way of controlling the speed and the noise." ■

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



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GRAND JURY REPORT

continued from page 5

housing element for this cycle, 194 of which must be affordable to low and moderate income residents according to its RHNA number set by the state.

According to the San Mateo County Civil Grand Jury report released July 12, “four San Mateo County municipalities — Atherton, Hillsborough, Portola Valley and Woodside — rely heavily on ADUs to meet low-income housing requirements” in their housing element drafts.

ADUs, also known as granny flats, in-law units or backyard cottages, are secondary housing units that can be built on a single family lot. In recent years, an increasing number of local jurisdictions in California have added ordinances allowing and encouraging homeowners to build ADUs as a way to increase affordable housing.

But the Civil Grand Jury asserts in its report that Woodside and other small towns are banking too much on ADUs to meet their RHNA targets and comply with state law.

“ADUs can, indeed, provide affordable housing. And to many citizens of affluent communities, they are an appealing alternative to multifamily, deed-restricted affordable housing projects,” the Civil Grand Jury report states. “However, just because the law makes it possible to count ADUs as affordable housing, it does not exempt cities and towns from credibly planning for badly needed affordable housing.”

The report asserts that jurisdictions in San Mateo County must implement “effective ADU monitoring and verification” in order to ensure they’re meeting the state requirements for affordable housing, and ultimately in compliance with state law. Woodside town staffers believe they’re taking the right steps toward doing so.

According to staff’s response, Woodside “tentatively plans to support a regional ADU monitoring effort through ABAG (Association of Bay Area Governments) or 21 Elements, a long-standing collaboration among the 21 jurisdictions within San Mateo County.” The response adds that San Mateo County jurisdictions met on June 20 to discuss possible strategies for monitoring ADUs.

However, the grand jury also recommended that Woodside and other San Mateo County cities and towns should remove ADUs from their housing elements “until they have also proposed an effective monitoring system that verifies how newly developed ADUs will be used” — an ask that Woodside staff said is “not reasonable, nor warranted.”

Staff wrote that removing ADUs from Woodside’s housing element draft “would require the

town to effectively reinstate the process of developing its housing element; a process that began over a year and a half ago.”

Town staff said that making “a fundamental change” to its draft plan this late in the game would cause “a significant delay to the adoption of its housing element, which would have the detrimental effect of delaying the implementation of programs designed to encourage new affordable housing.”

At its July 25 meeting, Woodside Town Council briefly discussed the Grand Jury Report before voting unanimously to approve town staff’s response.

“We continue to work very closely with HCD, as they are the authority that needs to be satisfied,” Mayor Shaw said. “That’s where you see us disagreeing with some of the things the Grand Jury was reporting on, the findings they’re making: That’s not what the state is telling us, and we will work to comply with the state.” ■

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

continued from page 6

Water main break closes traffic on Willow Road

Menlo Park police asked the public to avoid Willow and Bay roads near the U.S. Highway 101 interchange after a water main break caused the closure of Willow Road in both directions early Thursday morning, July 20.

Police in Menlo Park announced at 5:48 a.m. that traffic on southbound Bay and Van Buren roads would be rerouted northbound.

City Clerk Judi Herren told *The Almanac* on July 25 that a contractor crew accidentally struck the water main while doing excavation work, and that city crews finalized repairs and cleaned up the area the same day that the break occurred.

—Cameron Rebosio

West Nile virus detected in Stanford, Palo Alto

Santa Clara County Vector Control District was set to spray parts of Palo Alto and Stanford with mosquito treatment to suppress West Nile virus activity after some mosquitoes tested positive, according to a district advisory.

Mosquitoes infected with West Nile virus have been detected in a small area within these cities. Spraying to reduce adult mosquito populations was set for Thursday, July 27 starting at about 10 p.m. using truck-mounted equipment in ZIP codes 94301, 94304, 94305, and 94306.

All of the treatment materials are approved by the Environmental Protection Agency for use in public areas and are widely used by vector control agencies throughout California, the district stated. The product, Merus 2.0, has

pyrethrins, a botanical insecticide, as the active ingredient and contains petroleum distillate, which can cause vomiting if swallowed.

Merus 2.0 is known to be toxic to aquatic organisms, including fish and aquatic invertebrates and they can be affected if droplets enter ponds or from runoff. It is also highly toxic to bees exposed to treatment on blooming crops or weeds, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

More information on the products used for this mosquito control treatment can be found at www.sccvector.org. Additional information is available at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s website www.cdc.gov.


—Sue Dremann



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DEVELOPMENT

continued from page 8

we plan for 204 low-income housing units,” Morris said. “To achieve this, we must use ADUs, new housing at the schools and city-owned land, as these options to not require the purchase of land at \$12 million per acre.”

Council member Rick DeGolia agreed that developers don’t want to pay “Atherton prices” to build affordable housing, which he believes is evidenced by the fact that no builder’s remedy projects have yet come forward in Atherton.

“Builder’s remedy” is just one of a slew of penalties that jurisdictions like Atherton face for failing to adopt a compliant housing element by the Jan. 31 deadline. This state law allows developers to skirt around local land use rules in jurisdictions that are out of housing element compliance.

“Believe me, I’m not trying to avoid complying with the requirements that the state has set for us. I believe that we are 100% committed to complying with this. But we have to do it in the context of the town that we have,” DeGolia said. “... How can we obtain real affordable housing in this town? I don’t see it from a developer coming in and building it.”

The council voted against adding the Selby Lane, Victoria Drive, Santiago Avenue and Polhemus Avenue properties to the town’s housing element, citing residents’ strong opposition and concerns that the chances of these properties actually being redeveloped are slim.

However, the majority of council did support adding a handful of larger single-family properties along the Bay Road corridor, emphasizing that this wasn’t a final decision to



Magali Gauthier

Council member Rick DeGolia discusses the town’s housing plan at an Atherton City Council meeting on Jan. 31.

add these parcels to the housing element, but rather, simply allowing them to be included in the CEQA review process and potentially added down the road.

“They’re larger lots and I think we could create more setback requirements,” opined Council

member Elizabeth Lewis.

Lewis said that while “no one wants Atherton to change,” it’s something that’s inevitable.

“Change is going to happen. Change has happened in Atherton,” Lewis said. “... We can either do nothing and let things come at us that we

cannot control, or with design criteria, we can kind of take some control in a rational and thoughtful way.” ■

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

Robert F. Sawyer

1926 – July 14, 2023

Robert F. Sawyer, aged 97, died peacefully in Palo Alto on Friday, July 14th. Bob lived with great intellect, love for family and friends, a fierce drive to overcome any adversity and a deep and abiding faith. He was a native of Southern California and a graduate of Stanford University for his AB and his MBA. Bob always credited the U.S. Army with providing the option to attend Stanford in the ROTC and later, under the GI Bill. His Stanford education fostered a conviction that education can provide a pathway for opportunity.



After graduating from Stanford Graduate School of Business, Bob began his first entrepreneurial endeavor by selling insurance in San Francisco and later founded Woodruff-Sawyer & Co. During his tenure as President from 1959 To 1995, Woodruff-Sawyer became a respected firm which has grown into one of the largest independent brokers in the country.

Bob married Ellen Aldag in 1953, his beloved wife of 47 years, and they settled in San Mateo where they raised their son, Stephen, and daughter, Wende. Bob and Ellen shared a love of nature at their cabin in Bucks Lake where they spent every summer. He was devoted to philanthropy and volunteer activities to give back to his community through the First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame, Stanford University, and local healthcare organizations. He served on the board of the Mills-Peninsula Hospital for 30 years and Mission Hospice’s Board for 9 years.

After being widowed 23 years ago, Bob moved into the Vi Palo Alto where he enjoyed a new community of friends, including his long-term companion, Ann Marie Mix.

Bob was a remarkable father to Steve (Meritt) and Wende (Tom) and a dedicated grandfather to Ryan Sawyer, Kendra Sawyer Varnell (Matt), and Clary Sawyer, and Cameron Hutton (fiancé Katie) and Rachel Hutton (fiancé Dustin).

In lieu of flowers, the family prefers memorial gifts to two of Bob’s favorite causes, Mission Hospice, 66 Bovet Ave, Suite 100, San Mateo, 94402 or ReSurge International, 756 N Pastoria Ave, Sunnyvale, CA 94085.

<https://www.missionhospice.org//donate>

<https://resurge.org//donate>

PAID OBITUARY

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Odile de La Beaujardiere, 81, a former resident of Palo Alto who enjoyed a happy marriage and family life, worked at Stanford Research Institute (now SRI International) studying the aurora borealis and later as a section chief for two Air Force Research Labs, hosted enormous dinner parties and led famously strenuous hikes, on June 21.

Jane W. Fox, 96, a former resident of Menlo Park, who worked in the medical library at the Palo Alto Veterans Affairs Medical Center until her retirement, was a lifelong volunteer through Bay Area hospitals, the San Francisco Council of Camp Fire Girls, Holy Trinity Church in Menlo Park and Filoli, and enjoyed cooking, gardening, sewing and knitting for herself and her family, on June 3.

Jack T. Holloway, 77, a resident of Atherton who pioneered artificial intelligence research, co-founded the computer networking company Epigram, led the creation of 54 Mbps 802.11g WiFi at Broadcom, and enjoyed sailing and photographing magical moments of travels with his family and friends, on July 9.

Cordell W. Hull, 89, a resident of Atherton who received his law degree from Harvard Law School, worked as president of the newly

formed American Express International Development Company and at Bechtel for many decades in numerous executive positions, retiring as executive vice president, served on numerous boards, including the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, and was an avid traveler, self-taught sailor and devoted grandfather, on Dec. 26, 2022.

Norman V. Manoogian, 91, a resident of Palo Alto who played football at Stanford University and was later inducted into the Stanford Athletics Hall of Fame, taught and coached at Ravenswood High School in East Palo Alto and then Foothill Community College, was an outstanding craftsman, enjoyed backpacking and is remembered as a family man who did his utmost to bring out the best in others, on Nov. 30, 2022.

Anne G. Moser, 95, a resident of Menlo Park, who worked at the Children’s Health Council in Palo Alto as a social worker, taught at Trinity Parish and tutored full-time from her home, served on the Menlo Park Board of Education and the Menlo Park Planning Commission, and enjoyed bird-watching, family time, her longtime book Tea Group, her dog and her dear chickens, on April 12.

James and Lucille O’Malley, 95 and 96, residents of Mountain View who (James)

worked as postmaster in Mountain View for the U.S. Postal Service and volunteered with the Knights of Columbus, Little League, Babe Ruth League, Bobby Sox softball and all things related to St. Joseph’s Parish, and together enjoyed hosting BBQs and social get-togethers with family and friends, on June 1, 2020 and March 6, 2023.

Robert F. Sawyer, 97, a resident of Palo Alto who founded Woodruff-Sawyer & Co., one of the largest independent insurance brokers in the country under his leadership, devoted himself to philanthropy and volunteer activities through First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame, Stanford University and Mills-Peninsula Hospital, and lived with great intellect, love for family and friends, and a deep and abiding faith, on July 14.

Dennis G. Wagstaffe, 69, a resident of Pescadero and former resident of Menlo Park who practiced general civil law, enjoyed socializing with neighbors and developing tight knit friendships, pursued farming and gardening, and is remembered as an exemplar of kindness and a testament to the strength of family bonds, on July 16.

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

GAINES

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the University of Michigan. There, he earned two master's degrees, one in public policy and another in urban planning, equipping him for a career in local government.

Since Jan. 30, Gaines has worked as the East Palo Alto city manager. At 39 years old, he's married to Chantal Cotton Gaines, who serves as Palo Alto's deputy city manager, and has two children — one 3-year-old and one 5-year-old — who like to play "make-believe" and pretend that they also work in city hall.

While Gaines' career has taken him to New Orleans, Mountain View and Portola Valley, where he served as the assistant city manager until January, his current role isn't the first time he's leaving a mark on his hometown: Aside from his community-organizing efforts, Gaines has worked in various roles within East Palo Alto. As grants and special projects manager for the police department, he spearheaded an anti-violence initiative that utilized innovative approaches.

"Instead of putting more law enforcement officers in a high violence community and doing 'stop and frisk,' we had officers on bicycles, leading youth around, playing volleyball and basketball with community members," Gaines said. "Having greater visibility, but not in a way that made the community feel like they were being policed."

Regardless of the community, title or project, Gaines' objective in local government has been the same: "to help organizations operate efficiently, equitably and effectively while engaging and empowering all community members."

Gaines made the decision to return to East Palo Alto so that he could pair his comprehensive understanding of the community with the leadership and technical skills acquired from other roles. As city manager, Gaines is focused on shaping the municipal government into a well-run organization that can then take care of the community.

"That's not me coming in and being directive, but me being engaging and collaborative with a team and involving them in that process," he said. "I like to say it's our organization, not my organization."

Ultimately, Gaines hopes to move East Palo Alto past its negative reputation and focus on the city's highlights. In 1992, the city acquired its

notorious reputation as the "murder capital" of the U.S. after it reported 42 murders in a city of just 23,731 people. In 2017, despite its population increasing to 29,659 people, East Palo Alto recorded one murder. In 2022, there were five.

"It is a wonderful, multi-cultural community that has a rich, complex history," he wrote in an email. "The negative stories about East Palo Alto receive a lot of attention, but there is a lot more good than bad going on."

In the 40 years since East Palo Alto's incorporation on July 1, 1983, the city has witnessed a wave of development: The Ravenswood 101 Retail Center was built on the site of the closed Ravenswood High School in 1998, and a Four Seasons Hotel and an office complex in University Circle replaced Whiskey Gulch — a strip of retail buildings nestled

between the Palo Alto border and the University Avenue exit off of U.S. Highway 101 — in the early 2000s.

'The negative stories about East Palo Alto receive a lot of attention, but there is a lot more good than bad going on.'

MELVIN GAINES, CITY MANAGER, EAST PALO ALTO

Looking ahead, Gaines views continuing to promote economic development as an important issue, a sentiment that echoes last summer's annual comprehensive financial report, which cited East Palo Alto's "unique challenges," including flattening revenues and extended periods between development-project proposals

and their completion.

"I don't think it's a coincidence that 2.5-square-mile East Palo Alto, one of the few Bay Area communities that people of color could live and purchase properties in the 1950s and '60s, was an under-resourced community with high poverty, low educational attainment levels and lack of access to quality employment," Gaines wrote in an email. "Though our community has lots of spirit and commitment, it was never well-resourced."

While Gaines acknowledges that economic development is key in ameliorating this issue, he also understands the importance of striking a delicate balance.

"You also have the priority of housing and trying to ensure that people who have been in East Palo Alto don't get displaced because of this development," he said.

Gaines, however, primarily

views his role as implementing the city council's vision and considers his personal priorities for these policy areas as "largely irrelevant." Though he doesn't have all of the answers, Gaines plans on actively engaging the community and ensuring that all stakeholders are on the same page.

"Having spent the majority of my life as an East Palo Alto resident, I not only understand the community's history, but I'm truly vested in working with my neighbors to design and shape the community's future," he wrote. "City manager is definitely a demanding role, but I wake up each day excited to do the work in partnership with my city team, city council and community members." ■

Email Editorial Intern Chris Lee at clee@paweekly.com.

Public Notices

ARTFUL WALLS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-294773
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) Artful Walls, located at 3 Grove Court, Portola Valley, CA 94028, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
CRYSTAL LINN CIANCUTTI
3 Grove Court
Portola Valley, CA 94028
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
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 July 13 2023.
(ALM Jul 21, 28, Aug 4 and 11, 2023)

CTG SALON
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-294698
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) CTG Salon, located at 1176 Valota Road, Redwood City, CA 94061.
Registered owner(s):
DAMN YOUR EYES LLC
1176 Valota Road
Redwood City, CA 94061
CA
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 10/15/2013
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on June 29 2023.
(ALM Jul 14, 21, 28 and Aug 4, 2023)

THE SAAVY TRAVELER
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-294830
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) The Saavy Traveler, located at 238 Carmel Ave El Granada, CA 94018, San Mateo County. Mailing Address: PO BOX 2632, El Granada, CA 94018
Registered owner(s):
NICOLE LOURENCO
238 Carmel Ave
El Granada, Ca 94018
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
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 July 19 2023.
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HYPATIA'S CUISINE
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File No.: M-294660
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) Hypatia's Cuisine, located at 2561 El Camino Real Redwood City, CA 94063.
Registered owner(s):
MILENE HYPATIA HANNER
655 Oak Grove Ave 668
Menlo Park, CA 94026
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has not yet begun 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 June 26 2023.
(ALM Jul 7, 14, 21 and 28, 2023)

LRFA, LLC
NOSTERRA INVESTMENTS, LLC
4-GOOD VENTURES, LLC
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-294657
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) LRFA, LLC, 2.) NosTerra Investments, LLC, 3.) 4-Good Ventures, LLC, located at 217 Camino Al Lago, Atherton, CA 94027, San Mateo County
Registered owner(s):
WFI INVESTMENTS, LLC
217 Camino Al Lago
Atherton, CA 94027
Delaware
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.
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 June 26 2023.
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SOLIVANA WELLNESS SPA
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-294752
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) SoliVana Wellness Spa, located at 1922 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA, 94063. San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
INNER LIGHT WELLNESS LLC
1401 21ST STREET SUITE R
SACRAMENTO, CA 95811-5226
CA
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This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 10 2023.
(ALM Jul 21, 28, Aug 4 and 11, 2023)

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ABSENTEEISM

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He was surprised when one student-athlete expressed a suicidal thought.

“This year was a wake-up call,” Zamora said. “This is bigger than you being a coach or role model. You are dealing with kids that are just dealing with stuff, where you need to dig down and try to help them out.”

Zamora knows of some district students who had traumatic experiences coming to the U.S. He said there are students who were detained and locked in cages on the U.S.-Mexico border in 2018.

“A 12-year-old described their experience that broke my heart,” Zamora said. “Somebody who was away from their mother for a year or two at 8 years old, it’s tough.”

Superintendent Gina Sudaria said that the district knows that there were students who were separated from their families, but could not confirm details about their experiences.

Zamora said he uses sports and animals from his East Palo Alto farm, Camp Doza, to connect with students, something that helped him open up as a kid. At his summer camp, kids are taught how to work as a team, and to be respectful to themselves and to the world around them.



Magali Gauthier

‘At the end of the day, if you run all of that stuff together, it’s like a recipe for depression. If you’re depressed, you’re not going to be motivated to be at school.’

MARIO ZAMORA, CESAR CHAVEZ MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

“I tell kids, ‘It’s OK to describe your feelings,’” he said. “They just have this wall where they don’t feel comfortable, especially to somebody who doesn’t look like them.”

He said that when he moved to East Palo Alto in the early 1990s, the city was known as the murder capital of America. “We were one of the first Mexican families in our part of the neighborhood,” he said.

Zamora sees the impacts of students’ personal struggles on their grades and social interactions.

Christian Sbragia, a substitute teacher at The Primary School in East Palo Alto — a tuition-free school that strives to integrate education and health care

to better serve low-income children and families — has seen more students struggle with anxiety this school year. Sbragia, founder of Cooline Kids, which offers after school programs and summer camps, is also a 2022 graduate of East Palo Alto Academy, a small public charter high school.

Sbragia recalls pulling an anxious student out of their parent’s car at The Primary School to get them to come to class.

“There are mental health challenges that are still really striking our community, even as COVID is slowly fading,” he said.

He said that because of a lack of socialization during the pandemic, many students do not know how to interact with their peers and misunderstand social cues. This was especially apparent this school year, the first year students were back on campuses full time without masks or mandatory quarantines.

The transition has improved for students after coming back to school every day after a year and a half confined to their homes, said Marco Calderon, who has been the director of student wellness at East Palo Alto Academy for five years.

“Some of the outcomes didn’t really show right away because everybody was eager to come back,” he said. “We encourage more kids to seek support.”

In the final part of this three part series, learn about what’s being done to tackle the problem. ■

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

Any person who is feeling depressed, troubled or suicidal can call 800-784-2433 to speak with a crisis counselor. People in San Mateo County can call 650-579-0350. Spanish speakers can call 888-628-9454. People can reach trained counselors at Crisis Text Line by texting 741741.



Courtesy Ravenswood City School District

Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Middle School girls volleyball players in September 2022.



Courtesy Mario Zamora

Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Middle School basketball players huddle in February.



Courtesy Christian Sbragia

Cooline Kids founder Christian Sbragia.



Veronica Weber

John Bachner, former assistant principal and lower elementary lead teacher at The Primary School in East Palo Alto, helps a preschooler find his class following recess on Dec. 12, 2018.

Are major changes coming to your electric bill? 5 things you should know

Regulators debate new plan to charge customers based on their income level

By Wendy Fry

California's electric bills — already some of the highest in the nation — are rising, but regulators are debating a new plan to charge customers based on their income level.

Typically what you pay for electricity depends on how much you use. But the state's three largest electric utilities — Southern California Edison Company, Pacific Gas and Electric Company and San Diego Gas & Electric Company — have proposed a plan to charge customers not just for how much energy they use, but also based on their household income. Their proposal is one of several state regulators received designed to accommodate a new law to make energy less costly for California's lowest-income customers.

Some state Republican lawmakers are warning the changes could produce unintended results, such as weakening incentives to conserve electricity or raising costs for customers using solar energy.

But the utility companies say the measure would reduce electricity bills for the lowest income customers. Those residents would save about \$300 per year, utilities estimate.

California households earning more than \$180,000 a year would end up paying an average of \$500 more a year on their electricity bills, according to the proposal from utility companies.

The California Public Utilities Commission's deadline for deciding on the suggested changes is July 1, 2024. The proposals come at a time when many moderate and low-income families are being priced out of California by rising housing costs.

Who wants to change the fee structure?

Lawmakers passed and Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a comprehensive energy bill last summer that mandates restructuring electricity pricing.

The Legislature passed the measure in a "trailer-bill" process that limited deliberation. Included in the 21,000-word law are a few sentences requiring the public utilities commission to establish a "fixed monthly fee" based on each customer's household income.

A similar idea was first

proposed in 2021 by researchers at UC Berkeley and the nonprofit thinktank Next 10. Their main recommendation was to split utility costs into two buckets. Fixed charges, which everyone has to pay just to be connected to the energy grid, would be based on income levels. Variable charges would depend on how much electricity you use.

Utilities say that part of customers' bills still will be based on usage, but the other portion will reduce costs for lower- and middle-income customers, who "pay a greater percentage of their income toward their electricity bill relative to higher income customers," the utilities argued in a recent filing.

They said the current billing system is unjust, regressive and fails to recognize differences in energy usage among households.

"When we were putting together the reform proposal, front and center in our mind were customers who live paycheck to paycheck, who struggle to pay for essentials such as energy, housing and food," Caroline Winn, CEO of San Diego Gas & Electric said in a statement.

The utilities say in their proposal that the changes likely would not reduce or increase their revenues.

James Sallee, an associate professor at UC Berkeley, said the utilities' prior system of billing customers mostly by measuring their electric use to pay for what are essentially fixed costs for power is inefficient and regressive.

The proposed changes "will shift the burden, on average, to a more progressive system that recovers more from higher income households and less from lower-income households," he said.

What would the proposed fixed-charge fees pay for?

Revenues from the fixed charges would help cover utilities' costs to provide customer service, including meters, poles, wildfire preparedness, operations and maintenance, according to the Public Utilities Commission, which regulates private utilities.

The fixed charge would not be the only portion of a customer's bill. Customers would still be able to lower the portion of their energy bills that is based on usage by doing such

things as investing in solar panels or strategically running appliances during non-peak times.

Why is this proposal controversial?

Supporters say it will help lower costs for low-income customers, but critics counter it is unfair to those who have been trying to conserve energy.

Some state Senate Republicans say the proposed utility billing changes would make living in California less affordable and could discourage energy conservation. If energy bills are based on someone's income and not on how much electricity they use, customers would little incentive to turn off the air conditioner during peak hours, they argue.

Homeowner Rosanna Alvarado Martin said she and her husband are both budget and environmentally conscious, so they recently signed contracts to install solar panels on the two residential properties they own.

Now Martin worries her electricity bills will go up no matter how much energy she saves with solar.

"This was really a kick in the gut. The whole thing is just really frustrating," she said. "We're looking to retire soon. So we're looking to have some control over what our expenses are going to be in retirement, and this solar, to me, was one way we could do that."

On the other hand, Leah Jacobson, a sociology grad student at UCLA, said she's in favor of the proposed changes because they might bring stability to her monthly bills. A few times her bill has shot up to more than \$400 a month, she said.

"There have been a couple times in the last year where our bill has jumped up a couple hundred dollars, and we haven't been able to figure out why," Jacobson said. "Thankfully, we were in a position where the amount is usually affordable when it doesn't jump up like that. But I would hate to think about people who are not using their air conditioning or fans during the summer because they can't afford it. That's no way to live."

Another major issue: data collection. To implement the changes, the state will have to categorize approximately 14 million households into income brackets, and a third-party administrator probably will have to verify their incomes, state and utilities officials say.

Because California's Employment Development Department and the state's long-time debit card contractor Bank of America have been plagued by cases of fraud, some critics worry the state won't be able to keep people's financial information confidential.

"The proposed fixed charges, without clarity on how Californians' income will be verified, are not only questionable but also raise concerns about data privacy," Senate Minority Leader Brian Jones, a Republican from El Cajon, told CalMatters. The utilities "are not set up to do income verification, nor should they be, as this is a major privacy concern."

So far Democrats, who passed the bill with the fee-structure changes, have not spoken in a unified way about the proposed changes.

Why are California energy rates so high in the first place?

California's average retail electricity price is nearly double the national average.

While the state has been at the tip of the spear of the green energy movement with early adoption of wind and solar, it lags behind other states in replacing aging and failing power lines, according to a 2022 audit report to the California Legislature.

And because the state is so spread out geographically, it costs more to build and connect its infrastructure for energy generation, maintenance, distribution and wildfire mitigation. Those costs don't vary by how much electricity customers use, but they are driven up by climate change as California becomes hotter and drier.

Nevertheless, all three utility companies showed gross profit gains last year. PG&E reported a 3% bump to \$16.8 billion in gross profits, which subtract the costs of production from revenues. Similarly, Edison's \$10.9 billion in gross profits was 15% better than the prior year, and SDG&E parent Sempra's profit, at \$9.9 billion, was a 3% improvement. Once all other expenses are accounted for, including such things as lawsuits, depreciation and taxes, both PG&E's and Edison's net incomes shrank for 2021.

As more Californians replace their gas-powered vehicles with electric ones, consumption of electricity is expected to increase. Under new state regulations, 35% of new 2026 car models must be zero-emissions, ramping up to 100% in 2035. State officials say the 12.5 million electric vehicles expected on California's roads in 2035 will not strain the grid.

See **ELECTRIC BILL**, page 19

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JUL 24 JAIMEO BROWN TRANSCENDENCE

JUL 25 NEW STANDARDS: HOSTED BY NAOMI MOON SIEGEL AND CARMEN STAFF

JUL 26 AN EVENING WITH VICTOR LIN

JUL 27 LYN SPEAKMAN: REMEMBERING ANDREW SPEIGHT

JUL 29 ANAT COHEN & ROMERO LUBAMBO / HAROLD LÓPEZ-NUSSA DUO & MIKE RODRIGUEZ

JUL 31 GEORGE CABLES TRIO WITH ERIC REVIS, CAROLINE DAVIS & TEREILL STAFFORD

AUG 1 TAYLOR EIGSTI GROUP

AUG 2 TEREILL STAFFORD QUINTET FEATURING RALPH MOORE, NASHEET WAITS & TAYLOR EIGSTI

AUG 3



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DENA DEROOSE TRIO FEAT. RALPH MOORE



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Caltrain demands force Menlo Park to switch to a costlier design for Middle Avenue pedestrian tunnel

By Cameron Rebosio

Caltrain has instituted new requirements on a planned bike and pedestrian tunnel under train tracks at Middle Avenue in Menlo Park, which could increase the cost of the project by as much as \$6.6 million.

The cost has increased for nearly every element of the project, city staff said at the July 11 Menlo Park City Council meeting. The original estimate for the project was \$21.5 million, and the city has set aside

\$21.8 million in funding for the project, mostly from grants. The new cost estimates range from \$24.4 million to \$28.1 million, which represents a \$6.6 million increase.

The differences in possible costs come from the contingency and construction budget estimates, both of which are subject to change based on Caltrain's review of the plans and the selection of a construction method.

Residents who spoke at the meeting were overwhelmingly supportive of the project but were largely concerned about the

cost increase. Jerry Jones, who said he's been a resident of Menlo Park for 50 years and "anxiously waiting" for this undercrossing for 30 years, asked the City Council what differentiated Menlo Park's project from the Homer Avenue crossing built in 2005 in Palo Alto, which cost \$5 million at the time, according to Jones.

Mayor Jen Wolosin reiterated the question to city staff, asking why a project's cost would change by \$20 million in 20 years. City staff said that inflation was not the only cause,

pointing out that the crossing under Middle Avenue required the city to purchase property and was significantly longer than Palo Alto's project.

The original plans for the Middle Avenue pedestrian crossing were for a shallower and shorter 60-foot tunnel that could take advantage of natural light. However, building it would have forced Caltrain service to stop for construction, so the city had to switch to a deeper tunnel. City staff also said that the cost increase comes from the project requiring expensive

materials and construction methods.

"I know a lot of time and a lot of energy has gone into it to create connectivity for our community across both sides of Caltrain, and so (I'm) really excited to see that move forward," Council member Maria Doerr said.

City staffers said that they aim to begin construction on the underpass by 2025. ■

Email Staff Writer

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KINGS MOUNTAIN

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camp buses from reaching the entrance of Huddart Park, which is accessed via Kings Mountain Road. The Scouts quickly mobilized against the rule, which Day Camp Director Monica Curtis said would "severely impact" the 500 children and volunteers taking part in the mid-July camp.

After a meeting between camp directors, Woodside town staff and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office on June 21, Woodside granted the Peninsula Girl Scouts a temporary bus permit on June 26, allowing them to use their hired buses this summer. The town also used signs to notify drivers that buses would be coming up and down the road, and the San Mateo County Parks Department and Sheriff's Office placed staff members at the entrance of Huddart Park to alert drivers.

Camp Director Curtis said this temporary solution went smoothly and allowed camp to

proceed as planned, buses and all. But the Girl Scouts are still going to fight for a long-term solution to allow buses on Kings Mountain Road. Curtis said there are plans for another meeting with the county and other stakeholders in August.

"It's literally limiting access for youth to the park," Curtis said of Woodside's bus law. "Our permits were originally denied until we were screaming out to the community for help."

Debate over safety of buses

Mayor Shaw said that while he can't speak for the entire Town Council, "it's unlikely that we are going to modify or remove the vehicle length ordinance controlling Woodside's portion of Kings Mountain Road." However, he said he is hopeful that the town can work with the Girls Scouts to find a solution so they can continue to access Huddart Park.

"Whether the solution that was deployed this year can go

forward, I don't know," Shaw said, referring to the temporary permits for their July summer camp. "That's a lot of resources to have the sheriffs and the rangers involved with doing that."

Another possible solution Shaw suggested is that the Girl Scouts use shorter buses that comply with the town's rule. But Camp Director Curtis said that this idea is financially infeasible.

"The next bus size down is 30 feet. That is significantly smaller," Curtis said. "We would have to more than double, probably, our transportation costs, which we are already paying nearly \$100,000 for. We're a nonprofit. So in order to make up that money I would have to charge my campers twice as much to even attend, and that is just not something we're comfortable doing."

And from Curtis' perspective, replacing the current buses with smaller ones only adds more vehicles on the road.

"Thirty-foot buses still would have to swing wide on a hairpin turn," she said. "They drive very similarly to a 40-foot bus."

Curtis agrees that Kings Mountain Road is a treacherous place for cyclists. But she believes it's passenger vehicles that present the greatest danger.

"While I do agree there is a safety issue, we personally think it is speed and driver attitude," Curtis said. "If everybody slowed down, everybody could share the road safely. ... I don't think limiting access to a county park was the appropriate action to jump to when they haven't even explored other options (that) truly address the concern of safety and speed."

From cyclist Burkhard's perspective, the collision he experienced while riding on Kings Mountain Road wasn't caused by poor driver behavior — it was the mere presence of a bus that created a dangerous situation.

"No one thought anyone else was personally at fault," Burkhard



Devin Roberts

A cyclist arrives for the council meeting at Woodside's Independence Hall on June 27.

told NBC Bay Area in a June interview. "The driver in front had to slam on his brakes and go off the road. The bus driver, his cab was on the right side of the road — I don't think he could have done any better, other than not being on the road."

Finding a solution

This year's summer camp at Huddart Park finished last week, but the group is still eager to reach a long-term solution ahead of next year's Peninsula Day Camp.

Mayor Shaw is hopeful that the meeting slated for mid-August will do just that. He said the Peninsula Girl Scouts, Woodside's town manager and engineers, representatives from Huddart Park, the San Mateo County Parks Department, the Sheriff's Office and county Supervisor Ray Mueller are all slated to attend.

"There's been no decisions about the next season whatsoever," Shaw said. "I know that Supervisor Mueller is interested in finding a solution. ... That's where things stand currently."

San Mateo County Parks Director Nicholas Calderon said that while it's been "a very rocky

start to the process," he's confident the various stakeholders will find a solution.

"I think there needs to be a lot of coordination between the county and the town of Woodside and users to make sure that we are able to balance public safety with public access to public lands," Calderon said.

He added that it's unlikely there will be a "one-size-fits-all solution."

"Every group's circumstances are going to be different," Calderon said. "Not every organization is going to have the financial resources to rent two smaller buses, they may only have the financial resources to rent one large bus."

Calderon said his goal is to ensure that no one is denied access to Huddart Park.

"We want to make sure that no one ever has their request (for a bus permit) denied, and people don't get charged a fee for that permit," he said. "If this is truly about public safety, then we should be able to come up with a process that ensures everyone can access Huddart Park." ■

Email Staff Writer Malea

Martin at mmartin@mv-voice.com.



Courtesy town of Woodside

A sign points to Huddart Park from the intersection of Kings Mountain Road and Entrance Way in Woodside.



Cameron Rebosio

The former headquarters of Sunset Magazine at 80 Willow Road in Menlo Park on July 24.

LINFIELD OAKS

continued from page 1

According to his LinkedIn, Heneghan is licensed by the California State Bar and has worked as both an engineer and an executive at real estate development company Trammell Crow. Architectural company Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, whose architects designed One World Trade Center, is also currently attached to the project.

Under builder's remedy, cities and towns without a housing element accepted by the state could be required to approve any project that has 20% of its units designated as affordable for low-income households or 100% for moderate-income households, even if the project exceeds the zoning and general plan density requirements, according to a Nov. 10 staff presentation to Portola Valley's Ad Hoc Housing Element Committee.

The Menlo Park City Council has so far failed to get its housing element approved by state housing officials. The council on June 27 approved the third iteration of the document, a plan showing how its quota of new housing could be developed over the next eight years, to be sent to the state. Compliant housing elements had

to be submitted to the state by Jan. 31 to avoid repercussions such as builder's remedy.

A 28-story residential building planned for the property would sit at the corner of Middlefield Road and Willow Road, near the San Francisquito Creek and the Palo Alto border, with 320 residential units and 535 parking stalls. It would be a towering 328 feet high, taller than the 305-foot Statue of Liberty. The development plans also include a 90,000-square-foot hotel with 150 keys, a designation based on the number of beds, as well as about 4,200 square feet of retail.

Another, 22-story building fronting on Willow Road would rise to 259 feet. It would contain 480 residential units and 4,200 square feet for retail. A 15-story building along Middlefield Road would be designated for office space, labs, and research and development at 226 feet high, with 280,000 square feet of office space. The fourth building, a one-story structure on Willow Road, would rise 30 feet and is designated for residential building amenities.

Sunset Magazine's parent company sold the property to Embarcadero Capital Partners in 2015 and moved the storied magazine's offices to Oakland. The Wall

Street Journal reported in 2019 that the building had sold to Vitaly Yusuf, a Russian financier and son of former energy minister Igor Yusuf, following an investigation by the U.S. Justice Department.

The iconic Menlo Park campus was designed by residential architect Cliff May and was his first commercial building, created to resemble an early Spanish ranch home. Set on 7 acres adjacent to San Francisquito Creek, the adobe building with the patios and test kitchens was surrounded by spacious gardens designed by Thomas Church.

It had been headquartered in Menlo Park since 1951, when Sunset moved out of San Francisco. The following year Mel and Bill Lane took over company operations from their father, Laurence W. Lane, who had bought the publication for \$65,000 in 1928 when it was a fledgling travel magazine. The Lane brothers later sold the company to Time Warner in 1990 for \$225 million. In late 2017, it changed hands again, sold to Regent L.P., a Los Angeles-based private equity firm. ■

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ELECTRIC BILL

continued from page 17

Are there other proposals?

Among several alternatives, one comes from the Utility Reform Network (TURN), a nonprofit consumer advocacy organization headquartered in San Francisco.

Its proposal, filed with the regulatory agency, also calls for an income-based fixed charge, but at fixed fees much lower than what the utilities want.

The group says the utilities already profit enough from customer fees.

"The (utility commission) has to work out all those details and the devil is in the details," said TURN's Executive Director Mark Toney.

The public will have a chance to weigh-in on the proposals by submitting comments online or attending a commission meeting.

Though the state set a 2024 deadline for the commission to establish fixed monthly fees based on customers' incomes, an administrative judge in the proceedings wrote in a recent filing that the earliest the change could be implemented is the end of 2026.

How much would customers pay?

In the power companies' joint submission to the California Public Utilities Commission, they suggest these fixed fees for each

customer's income range.

Households with incomes earning less than \$28,000 a year would pay a \$15 monthly fee in the Edison and PG&E service territories and a \$24 monthly fee in SDG&E service territory.

Households earning \$28,000 to \$69,000 a year would pay \$20 to Edison, \$30 to PG&E or \$34 to SDG&E each month.

Households earning \$69,000 to \$180,000 would pay \$51 to Edison or PG&E, or \$73 to SDG&E.

Households earning more than \$180,000 would pay \$85 to Edison, \$92 to PG&E or \$128 to SDG&E. ■

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Right: Svetlana Platonova, a U.S. Women's National Kayak Polo Team player, passes the ball during recreational drills at Shoreline Lake in Mountain View on July 19. Far right: Svetlana Platonov, left, passes behind Yousef Arab, after scoring. Bottom: Sergey Finkelstein passes the ball with his paddle. Photos by Magali Gauthier.



KAYAK POLO
continued from page 5

lighter than typical kayaks, giving players greater maneuverability. “You can’t just use any boat,” Irvine said.

One of the sport’s primary strategies involves shoving a player’s shoulder — but not their chest, Irvine said that’s not allowed — so that their entire vessel capsizes and they have to “Eskimo roll” back up to the surface, which involves using core strength to hoist yourself back up to sit vertically on the surface in your kayak.

“If someone pushes you, and you don’t stabilize or prepare for it or get your center of gravity lower, you’ll tip right over. At that point, you’re still in play,” Irvine

said. “My dexterity, balance and hand-eye coordination have just accelerated exponentially because you have to manage all these things and the boat.”

Irvine, a chemistry teacher at Harker School, competed at the World Games in July 2022, and he currently plays with the Bay Area Kayak Polo club.

The World Games event is held every four years, in the year following each Summer Olympics. Described by Irvine, it’s when players from across the world compete in more than 30 “niche” sports including bowling, artistic roller skating, waterskiing and wakeboarding and the less-niche sports like lacrosse.

“It was amazing to be a part of that,” Irvine said of the

World Games.

Many kayak polo players, like Irvine, grew up playing other organized sports and use tactics from sports like basketball, hockey and lacrosse to their advantage.

“(The sport) helped me continue to use the skill set I learned as an athlete growing up playing lacrosse and water polo. It was just this kind of hodgepodge, and one of the best lessons that it has taught me was that I wasn’t going to give up on that first day,” Irvine said.

Early magazines record that a variety of canoe polo games were played in Great Britain in the late 19th century and in the U.S. since the first half of the 20th century. By 1990, rules for the relatively new sport were finalized by the International Canoe Federation.

“Europe is the epicenter,” Irvine said. During the International Federation of Canoe’s World Championships in France, Irvine recalled playing against a French 20-year-old who had “probably been kayaking before he could speak.”

Irvine said many players on the Bay Area Kayak Polo team are from Europe or other regions where the sport is commonly played, like New Zealand or China.

“(The team) is a very international community,” Irvine said.

While the sport is much more popular abroad, other U.S. cities near lakes or ocean fronts are also riding the polo wave, including Austin, New York City, Boston and San Francisco.

The local team that Irvine belongs to, Bay Area Kayak Polo, currently draws nearly 25 players weekly for practice, Irvine said. They typically practice on Sundays at Berkeley Marina or Shoreline Lake.

Irvine said he hopes to see the sport grow locally, especially among youth and college-aged players.


“Because I have two daughters and my life is more complicated, I stepped away from the U.S. men’s

team to try out for the next World Championship (in 2024). And my then hope is to put some of that energy back into getting some new people out to kayak polo,” Irvine said.

Irvine said that he and other members of the Bay Area Kayak Polo club want to organize a few youth teams nearby so beginners can play each other locally, rather than travel long distances to compete.

“I’m hoping to get my own daughters involved in the sport as well,” Irvine said. ■

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Artscene

PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Annual 'Starry Nights' show at Frost Amphitheater features highlights from San Francisco Ballet's 90th anniversary celebration

Star power

BY HEATHER ZIMMERMAN



San Francisco Ballet dancers will perform works from a festival marking the company's 90th anniversary and from past galas. Above: Dancers Sasha Mukhamedov and Tiit Helimets; at right, Joshua Jack Price and top, WanTing Zhao and Aaron Robison. Photos courtesy Chris Hardy.

For a person or an organization, 90 years is an impressive milestone to reach, and one Bay Area arts group is particularly spry for a nonagenarian. San Francisco Ballet marks its 90th anniversary this year, and celebrated the big occasion with a festival of new works. The company presented its next@90 festival earlier this year, highlighting nine world-premiere works by nine international choreographers. With Starry Nights at Stanford Live Arts Festival, audiences at Frost Amphitheater on Aug. 3-4 will get a chance to enjoy two unique works from the next@90 festival, plus some selections from the company's recent opening night galas — all on a summer evening under the stars.

The Starry Nights show is the third such annual outing at Stanford's Frost Amphitheatre, presented in collaboration with Stanford Live. The program kicks off with "Violin Concerto," by the company's resident choreographer Yuri Possokhov, set to Stravinsky's Violin Concerto in D. The classically steeped piece, which debuted in the next@90 festival, showcases the company's technical ability. Selections from previous

galas include a mix of works, such as "Swan Lake Act III Pas de Deux" by San Francisco Ballet's former artistic director and principal choreographer Helgi Tomasson, who retired last year after 35 years helping the company, and "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux" by legendary choreographer George Balanchine.

Closing out the program is Danielle Rowe's "MADCAP," another work from next@90, which draws on an unusual subject more commonly seen in circuses and carnivals (save for one hair-raising opera): clowns. Peeking into the circus after dark, Rowe's piece leans more into the creepy than comic side of clowning, with help from an otherworldly score by Swedish indie rocker Pär Hågström, and enlists the dancers' voices in recitations, singing and other vocalizations. ■

Email Arts & Entertainment Editor Heather Zimmerman at hzimmerman@almanacnews.com.

Starry Nights takes place Aug. 3-4, 7:30 p.m. at Frost Amphitheater, Stanford. Tickets start at \$40. For more information, visit live.stanford.edu.

'Stranger' things

Local author revisits childhood memories in fictionalized memoir that aims to raise funds for young cancer patients

By Heather Zimmerman

From the arts to golf, Peninsula writer Frank Criscenti has covered many topics in his work for a number of local publications, including *The Almanac* when it was still known as *The Country Almanac*. He explored subjects as diverse as antiques and low-flow toilets for a lifestyle magazine called *Bay Area Homestyle* and he also worked for *Bay Area Parent*.

But some of the most surprising stories he would write about ended up being inspired by his own youth. Criscenti, who lives in Emerald Hills, recently published "Stranger on the Shore," a fictionalized memoir that blends memories from his childhood growing up in Southern California and Las Vegas in the 1950s and '60s with



Frank Criscenti

fictional events. The book, which came out in June, plays out in a series of vignettes, reflecting the stream-of-consciousness, image-rich impressions and flashes of insight that a child might have.

"Stealing from yourself is always the best thing to do," Criscenti said. "Some are stories that I've either told or had in my brain for many years and other ones that actually were written before and published in literary journals."

Some vignettes are harrowing, made more so by the carelessness of the adults around the main character. For instance, most 6-year-olds don't know the rules to blackjack, let alone feel comfortable fleecing their babysitters at the game — and most children that age aren't left on their own to fix a meal of raw carrots with only a razor blade to cut them up.

In another vignette, Criscenti describes a sort of "driving lesson" out in the desert with his stepfather, who was drunk at the time, and a friend who had driven

on his family's farm. Once behind the wheel, he initially began heading straight for a telephone pole because he knew so little about driving.

"This was back in the days of V8 engines and we went tearing across the desert. It was quite fun and finally (my stepfather) had to take the wheel because I didn't even know how to brake. All I knew how to do is step down on the gas," he recalled.

Criscenti said he was always drawn to writing throughout his life, and penned stories and, as he put it, "bad poetry" as a child.

He decided to write "Stranger on the Shore" in 2019 while taking a Stanford University class for National Novel Writing Month that called on students to produce a 50,000-word first draft in just one month.

"That, to me, was like a god-send because I just would start questioning what I had there and start editing before I put out an actual story. The Stanford class has worked great, plus



there were some great teachers there," he said.

Criscenti did leave class with a first draft, which he worked on as the pandemic hit — and later, as he navigated a cancer diagnosis and treatment at the end of 2021. After radiation and chemotherapy, he said the cancer is now gone, but the experience inspired him to donate 50% of the proceeds from sales of the book to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. It also led him, after working with a publisher for a time, to decide to self-publish.

Calling on some of the more challenging memories proved "embarrassing," Criscenti said, realizing now how he feels about some of his own behavior as a child.

But he also used a child's imagination as a device to give way to some more fanciful storytelling, such as a cellar haunted by what he describes as the mummy from the Hitchcock thriller "Psycho" and a possible murder in the family.

But overall, the many stories — based in reality or with a touch or more of fiction — highlight the lack of control that most children have over their environments, and their understanding of what "normal" is, he said.

"There is a common theme that kids don't really have a say in what's going on in their life — especially back then they didn't, I think maybe more so now. And so we didn't really know. I didn't really know my life was different until later. It just was just the way it happened," Criscenti said.

"Stranger on the Shore" is available on Amazon as an ebook or in paperback form. ■

Email Arts & Entertainment Editor Heather Zimmerman at hzimmerman@almanacnews.com.

Worth a Look

Dafnis Prieto with Luciana Souza

Stanford's Dinkelspiel Auditorium will come alive with the complex rhythms of Latin America this Sunday. Afro-Cuban percussionist and jazz superstar Dafnis Prieto will team up with Brazilian-born singer Luciana Souza for a celebration of their cultures and diverse musical backgrounds. "Cantar," the duo's recent album, is an ode to Prieto's childhood musical influences, ranging from Cuban boleros to Stevie Wonder's ballads. The duo will be accompanied by an all-star cast of musicians, including Peter Apfelbaum on woodwinds, Matt Brewer on bass and Martin Bejerano on piano and vocals. Presented by the Stanford Jazz Festival.

July 30, 8 p.m. at Dinkelspiel Auditorium, 471 Lagunita Drive, Stanford. Tickets are \$20-\$62. stanfordjazz.org. (AJ)



Courtesy Ebru Yildiz

Luciana Souza and Dafnis Prieto play the Stanford Jazz Festival on July 30.

Bob Schneider

Bob Schneider brings an energetic, sharp take to the singer-songwriter genre in songs that draw on many influences, from a pronounced country twang to tender '70s-folk musings, with playful touches of pop and a bit of funk. The former frontman for Ugly Americans plays *The Guild* on July 28. His 2021 album, "In a Roomful of Blood with a Sleeping Tiger," offers a collection of spirited songs that showcase thoughtful lyrics full of imagery and highlight the versatility of his guitar, whether it's getting a lift from a bluesy harmonica or underpinned by the groovy trill of an organ. Many of the songs are edged by a certain

country dolefulness — but as if the singer were swilling a nitro coldbrew to quell the headache instead of the requisite beer.

July 28, 8 p.m. at *The Guild*, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Tickets are \$45. guildtheatre.com. (HZ)

Chuck Prophet and the Mission Express

Local presenter Earthwise Productions will host classic rock collective Chuck Prophet and the Mission Express at Mitchell Park this Sunday afternoon, the first in a series of four free concerts at the Mitchell Park Bowl. Get

ready to enjoy the beautiful summer sun while grooving along to the band's twangy, retro-inspired sounds. Bluegrass superstar Sam Reider and Venezuelan multi-instrumentalist Jorge Glem will open, as well as Emma Catherine.

July 30, 2-4 p.m. at Mitchell Park, 600 E. Meadow Drive, Palo Alto. Tickets are free. eventbrite.com. (AJ)

Matilda - The Musical

Peninsula Youth Theater will bring new life to a classic tale in their presentation of "Matilda - The Musical" this coming weekend. This adaptation of Roald Dahl's novel about a young girl with telekinetic abilities promises

emotional performances and nuanced storytelling, as well as energetic song and dance numbers in a child-friendly evening of entertainment. This adaptation's music and lyrics have been penned by Tim Minchin ("Groundhog Day") and will be directed by Karen Simpson.

Thursday, July 27-Friday, July 28 at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, July 29 at 7:30 p.m., Sunday, July 30 at 11 a.m and 3 p.m. at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. Tickets are \$24. tickets.mvcpa.com. (AJ)

—Briefs by Akhil Joondeph and Heather Zimmerman

Food & Drink

How a homebrewing hobby launched Sunnyvale's ShaKa Brewing



Hidden in a Silicon Valley industrial park, the microbrewery maintains a small but diverse tap list of approachable beers

By Zack Fernandes

The city of Sunnyvale is not known for its breweries. And so it comes as a surprise to find ShaKa Brewing, tucked away in an industrial park, appearing like an oasis in a desert. Nestled unsuspectingly between auto body shops, a medical device company and a firearms dealer, ShaKa Brewing is serving up a small, highly focused menu of brews across a swath of beer styles.

ShaKa had its conceptual genesis at Google in 2012, not in the form of some sort of high-tech revolution, but when two co-workers bonded over their shared love of brewing beer. Shawn Ellis and Karl Townsend (ShaKa is a portmanteau of their first names) had both been experimenting with homebrewing for many years, and thought it might be fun to collaborate.

The joint venture between the two friends matured with age, eventually evolving to monthly tasting events, dubbed Speakeasy Fridays, where they would turn their homes into taprooms for sharing their creations with friends and family. With those events serving as a preliminary form of market research — early tasters helped select beers that would later make it onto ShaKa's taps — Ellis and Townsend decided to make the jump from hobbyists to professionals.

ShaKa Brewing opened its doors in 2020 as not much more than a small brewing space.

"We knew we wanted to ease into it," Ellis said, describing the production brewery that was ShaKa's first iteration. It was important for the duo to open ShaKa in their own community of Silicon Valley. In fact, ShaKa's assistant brewer, Andrew Vazquez, is a Sunnyvale native himself. Describing the surrounding industrial area as a bit of a "cultural desert," ShaKa hopes they might be able to contribute something positive to the culture of a community whose residents are still in need of good beer.

Even with its relatively modest beginnings and low cost of operation, the timing of ShaKa's opening was less than ideal.

"The pandemic hit, and we were like, 'Oh s—t, we just signed the lease,'" Ellis said when recounting ShaKa's early days, before any brewing equipment was even

purchased. With businesses closing as an unfortunate backdrop to their new journey, the pair had a difficult decision to make. After running some numbers, Ellis and Townsend bet that they could survive selling cans of beer directly to customers and decided to push ahead.

This ended up being a wise decision. ShaKa's luck turned in March 2020, when the state of California permitted sales of to-go alcohol from restaurants. As local restaurants' draft beer taps ran dry, they became eager to boost their sales with canned offerings that could travel well with takeout orders. ShaKa's microbrews found a home in a handful of local restaurants, and the company's wholesale business grew steadily.

As the pandemic eased, ShaKa moved closer to its vision of being a community hub for beer lovers. Customers who might not otherwise linger after picking up their cans began to sit and stay awhile, going as far as to bring camping chairs.

"We started throwing out picnic tables," Ellis said, describing the ad-hoc taproom that they pieced together in their old location.

In December 2022, a larger space became available just three doors down and ShaKa relocated, adding a bar, some tables, and plenty of seating to enjoy a snack. ShaKa plays host to a wide rotating selection of local food trucks — like yakitori from Kikuchi to empanadas from Cali Caracas.

Though small, ShaKa Brewing's taproom — designed by Ellis' wife Rika — feels open, airy and inviting, a design aesthetic that reflects ShaKa's brewing philosophy.

"It's about approachability," Ellis said. This philosophy manifests itself in a selection of beers that is broad in terms of the variety of styles that appear on the menu while remaining focused.

"You don't have to work hard to drink our beers," Ellis added, noting that the beers ShaKa serves are meant to be well-crafted and easy to drink. "There's clearly a market for 13% barrel-aged stouts made with Count Chocula cereal," Ellis said, "but we're not doing that."

At ShaKa, no beer style is repeated, either. Bucking the West Coast's regional affinity for IPAs, ShaKa serves just one; it's the same one they've been brewing



Devin Roberts

ShaKa Brewing owners Karl Townsend, left, and Shawn Ellis, right.

since the beginning. "I try to create space around each beer," Ellis said. The end result is just nine beers — four that were developed and rubber-stamped during the days of Speakeasy Fridays, and five that represent the more experimental and seasonal side of ShaKa.

One of ShaKa's flagship beers (and its bestseller) is the Sunnyvale Lager. The pale lager is German-inspired, brewed with the classic trio of floor malted barley, German hops and even a yeast strain derived from the fabled German brewing institute at the Technical University of Munich. The end result is a crisp, refreshing beer perfect for sipping in the midday heat of the city that gave this beer its name.

A boozier but no less refreshing brew is ShaKa's Yardbird Golden Ale. The Belgian-inspired ale has a streak of Californian influence in it through the addition of native purple sage. The sage, which Ellis jokingly refers to as "estate-grown," is plucked from his own yard, and joins juniper berries and Centennial hops in producing delicate citrus notes and a floral aroma to balance what is, at just over 8% ABV, a relatively strong and heady beer.

ShaKa is also keen to showcase its creativity through beers like the Gemini

Summer Ale, a tart ale that's not quite a sour beer. "I wanted to do something that hinted towards tartness," Ellis said, mentioning that he wanted to avoid the intense sourness popular in American craft sour beers. Rather than producing the beer the classic way, by introducing specific strains of bacteria to produce lactic acid, ShaKa has elected to use an acidifying blend often employed by winemakers.

When it comes to the future of ShaKa Brewing, its owners are planning on taking it slow and steady. They're keen to continue increasing their brewing capacity, and recently expanded the taproom's hours to stay open from 2-9 pm. on Saturdays. ■

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ShaKa Brewing,
170 N. Wolfe Road Unit 220, Sunnyvale;
408-475-7233,
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