

The Almanac

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

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Menlo Circus Club leaders 'dismayed' to find its property on Atherton's list of potential housing sites

By Neil Gonzales

Atherton is eyeing additional properties, including that of an exclusive social club, for potential new multifamily and workforce dwellings to help meet a state requirement for cities to plan for future housing.

Menlo Circus Club leaders expressed dismay that their property at 190 Park Lane has come up for consideration in an environmental study that's part of the town's ongoing effort to craft a Housing Element conforming to what the state wants.

"We were surprised to learn" that Atherton would view the club's grounds as a site for possible housing, the organization's leaders said in a July 26 letter to the City Council. "As we are sure you are all aware, the Menlo Circus Club is a private, member-owned, family social club."

During its meeting Wednesday night, Sept. 20, the council heard other objections to sites being

studied for residential development as the town continues to grapple with how to comply with its state Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) for the current 2023-31 cycle.

In their letter, Menlo Circus Club leaders contended that their property can't be developed for new housing for various reasons.

The club doesn't "have the ability to build additional structures as we can no longer add impermeable surfaces due to maximum hardscape limits within our existing footprint," they said. "With nearly 450 member-owners, it is also safe to say that there would never be a consensus to agree to subdivide any portion of our property for a potential sale to a developer, even in the unlikely event that a developer would be prepared to pay fair market value for the property."

Like the town itself, the club is

See **ATHERTON CLUB**, page 10



Magali Gauthier

A rider and horse compete at the Menlo Charity Show at the Menlo Circus Club in Atherton on Aug. 12, 2022.

Massachusetts police arrest woman connected to Palo Alto dog's death

East Coast case bears similarities to disappearance of German shepherd entrusted to trainer Josephine Ragland

By Sue Dremann

A woman who was under investigation for the disappearance and death of a Palo Alto family's beloved German shepherd in January has been arrested and charged in another state after another dog died, North Reading, Massachusetts police Chief Mark Zimmerman said in a press release on Sept. 26.

Josephine Marie Ragland, 27, who took a Palo Alto dog named Scott, purportedly to train him, now resides in Haddam,

Connecticut. She faces charges related to allegedly running an animal-training scam. She also now faces potential charges in the case of Scott, who disappeared while in her care, Palo Alto police said.

A North Reading resident reported their 3-year-old French bulldog, Charlie, had not been returned by Ragland on Sept. 16 following a two-week training period for which they paid her \$1,500.

An initial investigation determined the dog died on or about Sept. 4, though Ragland sent the

owner photos of what was purported to be training after that date. Police allege that Ragland made numerous false or misleading statements to officers during interviews to hinder the investigation, Zimmerman said.

A necropsy performed by the University of Connecticut determined the bulldog was emaciated at the time of its death, he said.

Police contacted the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals regarding the case. With the help of law

enforcement in Connecticut, four other dogs were recovered and safely returned to their owners in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Connecticut, he said.

Ragland was using the name Lily through the Thumbtack app, an online services site, to solicit customers, according to documents obtained by Massachusetts news outlet WFSB 3.

She allegedly claimed the bulldog had been struck and killed by a car and that she had buried him in her backyard in

Connecticut. Investigators, however, found the dog's remains more than 35 minutes from her home, in Norwich, Connecticut.

Ragland faces two felonies: larceny over \$1,200 by false pretense and obstruction of misleading a police officer, according to court documents.

She also now faces possible charges in Palo Alto, Capt. James Reifschneider said on Tuesday night, Sept. 26.

Reifschneider confirmed the Palo Alto Police Department has

See **TRAINER**, page 10

INSIDE

ARTSCENE 19 | FOOD & DRINK 22

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1810Walnut.com

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\$9,988,000 | 7 Bd | 7 Bth
6Sargent.com

74 MONTE VISTA AVENUE
ATHERTON



\$12,988,000 | 6 Bd | 7 Bth
74MonteVista.com

585 CHERRY AVENUE
LOS ALTOS



\$4,288,000 | 6 Bd | 3 Bth
585Cherry.com

1932 EMERSON STREET
PALO ALTO



\$11,650,000 | 6 Bd | 6 Bth
1932EmersonStreet.com

94 WISTERIA WAY
ATHERTON



\$5,988,000 | 4 Bd | 3 Bth
94Wisteria.com

646 DISTEL DRIVE
LOS ALTOS



\$4,488,000 | 4 Bd | 2.5 Bth
646Distel.com

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\$2,988,000 | 3 Bd | 2.5 Bth
750Wildwood.com

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MOUNTAIN VIEW



\$1,799,000 | 4 Bd | 3 Bth
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303 ATHERTON AVENUE
ATHERTON



\$14,988,000 | 7 Bd | 8.5 Bth
303AthertonAve.com

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LOS ALTOS



\$6,488,000 | 5 Bd | 4.5 Bth
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121 PARK AVENUE
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\$2,988,000 | 3 Bd | 2.5 Bth
881LyttonAve.com

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3OliverCt.com

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ATHERTON



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64Fairview.com

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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Courtesy Michelle Kraus

Michelle Kraus and Joe Rodriguez of Americans for Afghans speak at the Pink Triangle Memorial in San Francisco in June 2023.

How a Palo Altan and a Silicon Valley network are rescuing LGBTQ+ Afghans

The lives of LGBTQ+ Afghans are at risk from the Taliban. A humanitarian startup has sprung up to get them to safety.

By Sue Dremann

Mohammad's arm bore a long scar, an emblem of the struggle the 21-year-old has been through as a gay man living in Afghanistan.

"Always — I see this now and it makes me stronger," he said of one of his attempted suicides.

A refugee who still fears for his life and that of his family, Mohammad is pulling his life together in the San Francisco Bay Area, putting in long hours in a restaurant. Besides working for his own survival, he is

sending money to his family to purchase passports and documents so they can flee to a safe country.

Under Sharia law, persons who aren't gender conforming are to be stoned to death. Since the Taliban returned to power on Aug. 6, 2021, many LGBTQ+ people have been arrested, tortured and murdered. The Taliban also try to force family members to purge loved ones who are LGBTQ+ by "honor killing," refugee advocates said.

Refugees have reported horrific abuse suffered by LGBTQ+ Afghans. Here are

some examples based on refugees' reports given to Americans for Afghans: Two men spent five months on the run after their father tried to hunt them down to kill them. A civil engineer had a death warrant issued against him because of his sexual orientation; family members were imprisoned or tortured because they didn't execute their own son or brother. Families are starving because the only male breadwinner was taken to prison — women and gays aren't allowed to earn a living.

See **LGBTQ+ AFGHANS**, page 16

Ravenswood School District board voting on 400-unit teacher housing project

By Cameron Rebosio

The Ravenswood City School District board is set to vote an agreement with a developer that would bring between 400 and 450 affordable housing units to its district office site at 2120 Euclid Ave. in East Palo Alto.

The agreement, which the school board reviewed at its Sept. 14 meeting, lays out a vision in which a five-story, all-affordable housing project would be built at the district-owned property. The units would give preference for Ravenswood City School District (RCSD) teachers and staff, according to the terms of the agreement, granting a 99-year ground lease with developer USA Properties.

The proposal retains district ownership of the land as well as a 50% profit sharing agreement. The base rent for the property will start at \$1.6 million.

The plan is similar to the agreement for housing on the site of the James Flood Magnet School in Menlo Park, which is smaller in scale and envisions 80 to 90 affordable units for the site. The Flood School proposal was wracked with political controversy, with many neighbors at odds with the school district over the number of units and concerns about potential traffic impacts.

The debate led to the controversial Measure V ballot initiative in Menlo Park last

year, which sought to put all rezoning of single-family lots, including the Flood School site, to a citywide vote.

William Eger, RCSD's chief business officer, said that the district will keep a close watch on the housing needs of its teachers and staff, possibly by conducting a survey, in order to tailor options for them to live closer to where they work.

The district office was originally under an agreement with a New York-based company that sought to build a seven- or eight-story life science lab and office project, but after the two parted ways, the RCSD decided to use the property for housing.

In order to make room for the affordable housing project, the district is planning to construct a new office building on Bay Road, next to the district's Bay Road Community Hub. The community hub is planned to be completed this December.

"It's also important for us to really hone in on the fact that housing is a desperate need in our region and in our community, and this district is taking initiative to address some of these needs that we see directly from our constituents," Board President Jenny Varghese Bloom said.

The RCSD board was set to vote on the proposed agreement on Thursday, Sept. 28, after The Almanac's press deadline. ■

Email Staff Writer
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Hateful speech via Zoom jars Atherton council meeting

By Neil Gonzales

Hate-laden remarks bombarded the Atherton City Council meeting Wednesday night, Sept. 20, in what apparently is part of a trolling effort by extremists targeting public forums across the country.

The objectionable rhetoric jarred the beginning portion of the Atherton meeting as the council took public comments on a variety of topics.

The ambush through the video-conferencing platform Zoom started when an antisemitic profile image popped up on the screen. The image was taken down once town administrators noticed it.

But soon after, several commenters, one by one, got on Zoom to try to further disrupt the meeting.

They would introduce themselves as residents, even citing fake street addresses, and begin their comments cordially

enough before their talk quickly veered into the start of a racist or other bigoted rant. Some of those callers also used profanities.

They were booted from Zoom once their words turned noxious.

"I've never seen this before," Vice Mayor Diana Hawkins-Manuelian said.

But she pointed out that the council has an obligation to allow the public to address the town. "You never know if there's

going to be a real person out there that actually has a real comment or question," she said.

Still, Hawkins-Manuelian said before the public-comment session closed, "Those calls got me rattled."

Town Manager George Rodericks later told The Almanac that continuing with the public comments despite the hurtful language was difficult.

"You don't know what people are going say until they say it," Rodericks said, "but the minute

they spew off offensive remarks, we remove them."

The antisemitic views heard and seen during the public commentary were "particularly painful" given major Jewish celebrations this month - Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, he added.

He believed that the offending speakers timed their appearance because of those important dates in the Jewish calendar.

See **HATEFUL SPEECH**, page 7

CRIME BRIEFS

Unknown substance in Menlo Park triggers hazmat response

A Menlo Park home that drew police and hazmat crews Thursday evening, Sept. 21, was deemed safe, authorities said.

Emergency crews worked in a home in the 1300 block of Henderson Avenue, where a homeowner found an unknown substance while cleaning a rental unit.

An initial advisory for residents to avoid the 1300 block of Henderson Avenue was sent out at 6 p.m. by Menlo Park police.

Four hours later, the road reopened and the department advised that the substance wasn't hazardous, but didn't identify it or release any other details.

"Menlo Park Fire Protection District's Hazard Mitigation team determined that the substance found in the residence was non hazardous and is being disposed of by law enforcement," according to an advisory sent shortly after 10 p.m. from the city's police department.

The home is located in the city's Belle Haven neighborhood.

Man arrested after car set on fire in North Fair Oaks

A man is in custody after he allegedly set a car on fire Sunday night, Sept. 24, in an unincorporated area of San Mateo County, authorities said.

The fire was reported shortly after 8 p.m. in the 2900 block of Flood Avenue, in the North Fair Oaks neighborhood.

The suspect, later identified as a 41-year-old Redwood City resident, was reportedly at the scene when the car caught fire, according to the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

The fire caused major damage to the vehicle. The suspect fled but was later found hiding in the area.

Authorities said the man also allegedly went onto the property without permission and used spray paint to vandalize the property.

He was taken into custody without incident and booked on suspicion of arson, commercial burglary and vandalism into the Maguire Correctional Facility, where he was being held on \$25,000 bail.

—Bay City News Service

Large vegetation fire at University Avenue/Highway 101 interchange

Firefighters responded to a large fire that burned shrubs and trees at University Avenue and the U.S. Highway 101 interchange on Tuesday night, Sept. 26.

The blaze, which shot sparks and flames more than 20 feet high, was first reported at 8:14 p.m. It was confined to the landscaped interchange, which is located at University and Donohoe Street across from the Chevron gas station in East Palo Alto.

Westbound University Avenue at Donohoe was blocked off as of 8:37 p.m. as firefighters worked on the blaze, according to dispatchers.

The cause of the fire was not immediately known.

—Sue Dremann

Driver hits parked cars, flips vehicle

Emergency vehicles swarmed a downtown Palo Alto block on Tuesday afternoon, Sept. 26, after a driver sideswiped two parked cars and flipped his vehicle on Emerson Street.

Police received a call about the collision on the 600 block of Emerson Street at about 2 p.m., with the caller reporting that a car was on its side, smoking and that someone was trapped inside. They were also informed that the drivers hit two parked cars.

Emergency responders arrived at the scene, but the man was able to get out of the vehicle with no visible injuries, police said. He complained about pain in his thigh and a finger but did not require transport to a hospital, police said.

Police said the driver, a man in his 20s, was driving a black 2023 Nissan Armada southbound on Emerson Street when he sideswiped two unoccupied parked cars, a 2015 Honda Civic and a 2011 BMW 5-series. The collision caused the Armada to flip to the side and come to rest on the driver's side, police said.

Police are investigating the cause of the crash but said drugs and alcohol were not a factor.

—Gennady Sheyner

Serial killer who strangled women on Stanford land dies in prison

By Sue Dremann

John Arthur Getreu, the serial killer who was sentenced to life in prison for the strangulation murders of two women in the 1970s on Stanford University land, has died in state prison, San Mateo County District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe confirmed.

Getreu, 79, who was convicted of first-degree murder in the 1974 death of Janet Ann Taylor in San Mateo County and who pleaded guilty to first-degree murder for the 1973 death of Leslie Marie Perlov in Santa Clara County, died in state prison just five months after his sentence for Perlov's murder.

He died on Sept. 22, of natural causes, Wagstaffe said.

"A truly evil human being who was not held accountable until the end of his life. But at least we could bring some peace to the families of the two victims," Wagstaffe said in an email statement.

Santa Clara County District Attorney Jeff Rosen, whose office first pursued Getreu and later prosecuted him for Perlov's death, was even more succinct regarding the serial killer's death: "Good," Rosen said.

Getreu's earliest known violent crime occurred when he was just 18 years old. He was living in Germany with his family where his father was stationed in the military. He was convicted of the strangulation murder and rape of 15-year-old Margaret Williams, a student whose father was an Army chaplain, in 1964.

Getreu murdered Williams after she left a dance. He spent six years of a 10-year sentence in a German prison and was released early in part because he was still a minor under German law. He was deported to the United States and resided with his parents, first in Florida and then in the Bay Area after they retired.

He spent most of the 1970s in Palo Alto and surrounding cities and worked for Stanford and Mills hospitals as a cardiac technician during the time of the murders. In 1975, one year after Taylor's death, he was charged with sexual perversion and rape by threat of great bodily harm of a 17-year-old Palo Alto girl. She was a member of his Explorer Scouts troop.

After a plea deal, he received a six-month sentence in county jail, a \$200 fine and two years of probation. The court suspended five months of his sentence and allowed him to serve the remaining 30 days in jail on weekends, according to court documents.

His stepdaughter from his first marriage and his first wife said, when on the witness stand, that he sexually assaulted the girl for years during her childhood.

He moved to Newark, Ohio, his hometown, with his second wife, where he was also involved in the Scouts, and then returned to the Bay Area, living in the East Bay. He had two children. He also became the "exalted ruler" of the Fremont Elks Lodge and was married a third time.

The Stanford cases stayed cold until advances in DNA technology linked him as a probable suspect. Detectives confirmed a match from a coffee cup he discarded near his home in Hayward to DNA samples taken from Taylor's clothing and from under Perlov's fingernails.

He was arrested and charged in Perlov's murder in November 2018 and in May 2019 for Taylor's killing.

He often sat without expression in the proceedings during his preliminary hearing and trial, except when prosecutors showed images of the slain woman on the projector screen. Then, he would lean over to observe the exhibit photos or look up with interest.

Diane Perlov, Leslie's sister, had confronted Getreu in court and spoke about the impact of her sister's death on her and her family. Regarding his death, Perlov said: "I'm so glad the case was solved while he was still alive so that I could face him in court. It brings me more peace that he died in prison and is now gone forever from this world. I hope people realize if it weren't for DNA analysis, we might never have captured him. Science in law enforcement should be supported; it is absolutely critical."

Leslie and Diane Perlov were always a team, she said. She noted that Getreu was first identified as the killer from DNA taken from scrapings under her sister's fingernails after she had fought her attacker.

"She fought for her life! When she was killed, it was my turn to pick up the baton and fight for her. In the end it was Leslie who nailed him. It took us 50 years to decode the data she left us, but we finally got him," she said.

Getreu had multiple health issues, including kidney problems and had suffered a brain aneurysm during the long years prior to his trial. He was convicted in Taylor's murder on Sept. 14, 2021 and was sentenced to life in prison on Nov. 5, 2021. He pleaded guilty on Jan. 10, 2023, for Perlov's murder. He received a life sentence on April 27, 2023. ■

Established 1965

The Almanac

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Saying they want a seat at the table, Almanac journalists join effort to form a new, company-wide union

Proposed Embarcadero Community News Guild to represent journalists and designers on Peninsula and in East Bay

By Embarcadero Media staff

Newsroom employees at Embarcadero Media announced that they are forming a union on Tuesday, Sept. 26. The proposed Embarcadero Community News Guild includes reporters, editors, visual journalists and designers across the company's Peninsula and East Bay publications.

The aim of the new union is "to ensure that every newsroom employee has a say in the future of our various newspapers and outlets across the Bay Area," the Embarcadero Community News Guild's organizing committee said in an email to the company. "In that future, our union wants to fight for a seat on the bargaining table — we

want input into our jobs, workload, benefits, time off and pay."

Headquartered in Palo Alto, Embarcadero Media publishes three weekly newspapers — the Palo Alto Weekly, The Almanac and Pleasanton Weekly — as well as online outlets Mountain View Voice, Redwood City Pulse, Livermore Vine, The Six Fifty, DanvilleSanRamon.com and Peninsula Foodist.

Adam Dawes, CEO of Embarcadero Media, said Tuesday that management needs to familiarize themselves with their role, responsibilities and legal obligations, so he could offer only a limited response.

"Throughout our history we have always valued our employees and think of their well being

as an essential part of how we do business," said Dawes in a company-wide email responding to the unionization announcement. "We look forward to working collaboratively with you to get to a resolution that is positive for everyone involved and supports the continued mission of our organization going forward."

Nearly 90% of non-management newsroom employees signed union authorization cards, according to Embarcadero Community News Guild organizers. The guild published its mission statement on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, Tuesday morning.

"Through our range of work, from breaking news to features

to investigative pieces, readers across four Bay Area counties turn to us to get to know the places they live and rely on us to hold local municipalities accountable. And we're really proud of this work!" the guild posted on X. "But the last few years at Embarcadero, we've experienced layoffs, reductions in hours and jobs, limited resources and an exodus of talented employees. These conditions threaten our ability to keep you, the public, informed."

From Hollywood actors and screenwriters to autoworkers, high profile strikes have highlighted the growing clout of organized labor after a decades-long decline in the ranks of American workers who belong

to a union. The Washington Post reported in June that media union membership has grown rapidly over the past decade, with recent unionization efforts at news organizations including ProPublica, CalMatters and CNET.

"While this notice comes as an immediate surprise, we do recognize that this is a trend in the industry," Dawes said.

The Embarcadero Community News Guild said it will negotiate a contract as a unit of the Pacific Media Workers Guild, TNG-CWA Local 39521, which represents other Bay Area news publications including the San Francisco Chronicle, the Mercury News, the Press Democrat and the East Bay Times. ■

County forms domestic violence task force after 5 women killed

Domestic Violence Council estimates that 10,000 people in San Mateo County are impacted by domestic violence annually

By Katie St. Clair/Bay City News Service

Their names were Grace, Yesenia, Claribel, Maria and Frances, and they all shared the same sad fate: They were killed this year in San Mateo County, allegedly by their partners.

Now the county is putting together a task force to address the problem. The Domestic Violence Task Force brings together advocates, survivors and county officials to save lives by identifying gaps in

services and strengthening response and support systems, the county said in an announcement Sept. 21.

Apart from a mass shooting in Half Moon Bay in January, the county said that the deaths of Grace Kelly, 49, Yesenia Lopez-Hernandez, 41, Claribel Estrella, 41, Maria Romero-Molina, 30 and Frances Lucero, 27, have been the only homicides in San Mateo County this year, and they were all the result of domestic violence.

Kelly was shot and killed in her Daly City garage. The

stabbing death of Lopez-Hernandez in Redwood City left children ages 17 and 5 without a mom and they had to set up a GoFundMe account to pay for her funeral and other expenses. Estrella's brutal stabbing in San Mateo was recorded and posted to Facebook by her alleged killer. Romero-Molina was strangled to death in South San Francisco. Lucero was shot and killed in Daly City in front of her two young children, ages 3 and 4.

"These victims deserved

safety," said Supervisor Noelia Corzo in a statement released by the county. "Their children deserve their mothers and freedom from violence."

Corzo is the chair of the county's Domestic Violence Council and a member of the task force, along with Sheriff Christina Corpus. It also includes officials from the courts, legal aid, board of education, District Attorney's Office, and the nonprofit

Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse or CORA.

The Domestic Violence Council estimates that 10,000 people in San Mateo County are impacted by domestic violence each year.

According to the county, the idea for the task force came up at Monday's meeting of the Domestic Violence Council. The task force is going to report back to the council with an action plan. ■

HATEFUL SPEECH

continued from page 5

"That's probably why it's happening," he said.

In his 13 years on the council, Mayor Bill Widmer said, he had never encountered something like it.

"I thought someone hacked my phone," Widmer said. "It was a little bit embarrassing."

But the town will remain vigilant to block questionable callers and keep them from dialing back in, he said. That could mean two staff members monitoring the Zoom system to better filter out suspicious commenters, instead of just one.

Widmer added that the town "absolutely" does not condone any hateful behavior and language. "Anyone doing inappropriate things need to be silenced or asked to leave," he said.

A rash of such cases has

exploded recently nationwide, including two incidents elsewhere in California. On Monday, Sept. 18, the San Diego council was taken aback by a number of people phoning in racist, antisemitic and homophobic sentiments during the public comment period of its meeting. A similar episode hit Monterey's council meeting the next day.

Over the past several weeks during their meetings, several city councils in Maine had to contend with Zoom callers spouting hate against various groups.

The anti-hate organization Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has been monitoring such incidents.

"The ADL Center on Extremism is tracking an increase in antisemitic speech and trolling efforts at public forums such as city council,

county board and state house committee meetings," the organization wrote in a blog post last month. "Extremists and bigots are using the public comment portion of these events, especially those with the option to call in virtually, to push antisemitic, white supremacist and anti-LGBTQ+ narratives." ■

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by Monica Corman

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Dear Tony: Buying a home with unpermitted work carries some risks. Without permits, you don't know if the work was done to code. If you buy the property, and then apply for a permit to do additional work, you may be required to retroactively obtain permits for work that the previous owners did without permits, which could be costly. Depending on the scope of the unpermitted work, you can decide whether to assume the risk or not.

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

New contract for Menlo Park pools floats past City Council's renewed scrutiny

Mayor brought back new five-year contract with Team Sheeper for more debate on Tuesday

By Cameron Rebosio

After reconsidering its new contract with Team Sheeper to operate swimming pools at both Burgess Park and the Menlo Park Community Campus, the Menlo Park City Council decided against making changes at a Sept. 26 meeting.

After lengthy and occasionally tense negotiations, the City Council approved a new five-year contract with Team Sheeper on Sept. 12 to continue running Burgess Pool and take over operations at the new Menlo Park Community Campus (MPCC) pools when they open.

The contract included a change, made at the request of competing bidder Solo Aquatics, putting access for its aquatics programs at Burgess Pool into writing. The new contract was approved in a 3-2 vote, with Vice Mayor Cecilia Taylor and Council member Betsy Nash dissenting.

Mayor Jen Wolosin brought the contract back before the council this week, saying that she felt "uneasy" since voting yes. Wolosin said her concerns stemmed from the council and Sheeper's commitment to offer equivalent services at Burgess Pool and the new MPCC in the Belle Haven neighborhood,

which she didn't feel was being met by only committing in writing to Solo Aquatics' services at Burgess.

"I didn't fully take the time to digest Vice Mayor Taylor's comments about how she ... wanted to see the wonderful programs that were described, not just at Burgess, but citywide, including in Belle Haven at the new Menlo Park Community Campus," Wolosin said. "Especially considering the horrible history of racial segregation of pools in our country."

Wolosin said that she had heard from both Solo Aquatics and Team Sheeper that they had an "interest and desire" in

providing equal services at both locations.

Taylor said that even if the contract was changed to include Solo's services at the MPCC, she would still vote no on the contract.

Council member Drew Combs said that he wanted to see Solo's services at the MPCC, but he didn't believe that the burden should be on the aquatics club. Combs said that the existing language of the new contract with Team Sheeper, which specified that equal services should be provided at both pools, offered enough protection.

"While I appreciate that, yes, when it comes to access

to pools across the country, there is a really disappointing history of discrimination," Combs said, "I think that it is a lot to put that at the foot of a very small non-profit in our community, and say that you then have to rectify that in some way. If anything, we have to rectify it, we are the more powerful entity, the obligation should be on us."

No new vote was taken, as the council decided that the current contract's language protected equal services across all the city's pools, and decided not to change the language. ■

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

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Marlene Cummings Arnold, 91, a Portola Valley resident who taught nursing, was an academic counselor at the College of San Mateo for 29 years, was an active member of the Thomas Merton Center of Palo Alto and loved flowers and traveling, on Sept. 16.

Manuel Santos Avila, 81, a Santa Clara resident who served in the U.S. Navy and was a social worker with the County of Santa Clara Children's Protective Services for 29 years, on Sept. 9.

Kevin George Bohannon, 32, a former Palo Alto resident who served for five years in the U.S. Navy, earning the Sailor of the Year award in 2016, worked as a project manager for Landscape Development Inc. in Fresno and had a passion for duck hunting, on Aug. 26.

Susan J. Levy, 82, a Portola Valley resident who was an accomplished skier, backpacker and teacher and who served as a leader in organizations for Palo Alto youth baseball, animals, women's rights, care for single mothers, elders and community colleges, on Sept. 23.

Cyrena Nelson Wilson, 102, a Menlo Park resident whose varied career included work as a crime reporter, a teacher of Creative Dance and decades as a Palo Alto Unified elementary school teacher, and who loved artistic endeavors, psychology and sailing, on Aug. 10.

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

Employment

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President Biden arrives on Peninsula for Atherton campaign events

By Bay City News Service

President Joe Biden arrived in the Bay Area via Air Force One on Tuesday afternoon.

Biden landed at Moffett Federal Airfield in Mountain View at 3:17 p.m. on Sept. 26 after a visit earlier in the day with striking autoworkers in Detroit, according to pool media reports.

The president was scheduled to attend a reelection campaign reception in Atherton on Tuesday evening.

On Wednesday morning, Biden planned to meet with the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology in San Francisco, which the White House describes as "the sole body of advisors from outside the federal government charged with making science, technology, and innovation policy recommendations to the President and the White House."



Courtesy NASA/Dominic Hart

President Joe Biden, left, was greeted by Acting Deputy Center Director David Korsmeyer, right, and Santa Clara County supervisor Susan Ellenberg, center, before departing for a series of events in the region.

Biden had two more campaign receptions on Wednesday afternoon and evening before departing via San Francisco International

Airport to head to Arizona later in the day.

The president last visited the region in June for a three-day trip. ■

Pedestrian struck, killed by California Highway Patrol officer on Highway 92

By Sue Dremann

A California Highway Patrol officer struck and killed a man who was running across State Highway 92 on Wednesday night, Sept. 20, CHP Capt. Jason Cavett, who commands the Redwood City office, said during a press conference on Thursday.

The officer was transporting another man in custody for suspicion of driving under the influence and was driving east on Highway 92 in San Mateo at about 10 p.m. According to Cavett, a male adult pedestrian emerged from the shoulder just south of the Delaware Street off ramp and ran north across the highway lanes. The officer, who was driving a CHP patrol car, had little or no time to avoid hitting the man, who had already crossed the slow lane and was headed into the fast lane where the officer was driving. The pedestrian was nearly right in front of the patrol car, according to CHP. The pedestrian

was struck by the front and left driver's side of the patrol car and landed in the grassy portion of the median, Cavett said.

The officer pulled over to the right-hand shoulder of the highway, but he did not exit his patrol car to render aid because the officer had a suspect in custody in his vehicle, according to Cavett. Cavett said it was also too risky to cross the highway due to fast-moving traffic, but the officer radioed for help. Paramedics who arrived on scene were unable to revive the pedestrian, he said. The officer and his passenger were not injured.

"This is a tragic incident," Cavett said. "The officer is taking it hard even if he may have done nothing wrong. He's coping with it."

He added that the officer is not on paid leave, but the department is assessing his well-being after the crash. He would be given any time off that he needs.

See **PEDESTRIAN**, page 15

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ATHERTON CLUB

continued from page 1

celebrating its centennial this year. The organization “is proud to be regarded as an iconic Atherton institution,” club leaders also said.

Other than the Menlo Circus Club property, a town staff report listed 175 Ravenswood Ave., 185 Ravenswood Ave., 197 Ravenswood Ave., Bear Gulch Reservoir, and the Gilmore House and Knox Playschool sites at Holbrook-Palmer Park as areas to explore for housing developments of up to 20 units per acre.

The council, however, decided to have staff reduce the density threshold at those sites to 10 units per acre, citing height and other concerns.

The council also favored taking Knox Playschool off the list while the Gilmore House has previously been in and out of deliberation as a housing option.

Previously, the council agreed to consider 999 Ringwood Ave.,

352 Bay Road, 318 Bay Road and 296 Bay Road as places where new units could go. At the meeting, the council instructed staff to lower the density of the Bay Road properties from 20 to 10 units per acre as well.

“I’m not going to support anything more than 10 units an acre on this Bay Road and Ravenswood property,” Councilmember Rick DeGolia said.

Mayor Bill Widmer said he agreed.

Town Manager George Rodericks later told The Almanac that the Menlo Circus Club and Bear Gulch sites could be potential spots for new workforce housing. But staff told the council that the club and CalWater, which runs the reservoir, expressed no interest at this point in building any new housing on their properties.

The Ravenswood and Bay properties could have market-rate development with affordable units, Rodericks said. The

Gilmore House site could be home to senior or workforce housing, or market-rate development with affordable units.

The lower density that the council wanted went against the advice of staff. Going with 10 units per acre “might make it more challenging” for the town’s housing element to ultimately garner approval from the state, Rodericks said.

He noted that the state puts San Mateo County’s density threshold for affordable housing at 20 units an acre.

However, the town would argue that it’s hard to develop affordable housing in Atherton because of the high land values, he said.

In order for a project to pencil out, he said, the threshold would need to go up to 40 or 50 units per acre. “But that changes the total character of the town,” he said.

Raising such concerns, residents told the council that they didn’t want any new housing near where they live.

“It’s going to damage the character of our neighborhood and the safety for pedestrians,” said Pamela Riddle, whose Fredrick Avenue residence is surrounded by the Ringwood Avenue and Bay Road properties being studied for increased density.

Development would also hurt bicycle traffic and bring “noise

that’s going to be from so many families living right behind me,” she said.

Gary George, who lives on Rebecca Lane, lambasted the state for forcing Atherton to change its very nature.

“The one house per acre residential housing has contributed to making this community one of the most sought-after in America,” George said. “I mean, it is just fantastic, and we love it.”

For the state to impinge on what residents have grown used to, he said, “I find that objectionable.”

DeGolia echoed similar sentiments but said Atherton has to figure out a way to comply with the state or face dire consequences.

“I mean, it is outrageous that we are being told by the state how to change our land use without any consideration for the impacts of traffic and a whole assortment of different issues that we have a responsibility to consider,” DeGolia said. “The risk is that if we don’t find a solution where we get qualified by the state, theoretically the state could take over our zoning, and they could change things that we wouldn’t have any control over.”

He was referring to the so-called builder’s-remedy, a state provision that allows

affordable-housing builders to go around local land-use regulations.

Cities with noncompliant housing plans could also face financial penalties and legal action from the state.

The state in April sent back Atherton’s second attempt at a compliant housing element, after rejecting the first iteration in October 2022. The town has until Jan. 31 to submit a revision.

Atherton must plan for building 348 new housing units for the current cycle — a significant increase from the 93 dwellings its RHNA allotment called for during the previous eight-year period.

The state is pushing cities to plan for increased numbers of units as a way to combat California’s long-running housing crisis. ■

TRAINER

continued from page 1

been working with law enforcement in Massachusetts and shared details of their investigation with the detectives.

“Our investigation has been completed and will be submitted to the District Attorney’s Office on Thursday for review and a determination of whether criminal charges are merited. We are awaiting that determination. Beyond that, we have no additional information available for release at this time,” he said.

The case of the missing shepherd, Scott, had multiple similarities to the Massachusetts incident, including that the owners had hired Ragland through an app, she had taken the dog for training and the dog was not returned.

In the Palo Alto case, Ragland returned a German shepherd to Scott’s owner, Carolina Bruchilari, but the dog was not Scott, nor did it look anything like Scott, his owner said.

Ragland eventually claimed that Scott had escaped from a residence in Humboldt County, where she had placed the dog while attending a funeral. Only small parts of Scott’s fur were reportedly found by the person who was caring for the dog. Ragland said the person responsible for the dog believed it was killed by a predator such as a coyote.

Palo Alto police have said in the past that the case was complicated and had many angles they were pursuing, which is why the referral to the DA’s office took so long. This news organization didn’t previously name Ragland in its coverage because she was not charged with a crime. But per company policy, Ragland is being named now since she faces charges in the similar Massachusetts case. ■

Kevin George Bohannon

April 4, 1991 – August 26, 2023

Kevin George Bohannon unexpectedly passed away on August 26th, 2023 at the age of 32. Kevin is survived by his wife, Jordan Bohannon (Stone); his parents: David Bohannon and Carol Stewart and his 4 siblings: Abigail (Bohannon) Dunckel, Madeline (Bohannon) Johnson, Ryan Bohannon, and Stewart Silverberg (recently deceased). Also, many in laws, and nieces and nephews.

Kevin was born April 4th, 1991 in Palo Alto, where he spent his childhood. He joined the Navy in 2015 and was stationed in Lemoore, California for the 5 years that he spent in the Navy. Kevin was very hardworking in the Navy, and received the award of Sailor of the Year in 2016. He retired from the Navy in June of 2020. In 2016, Kevin met his wife, Jordan Stone, and from that moment they both knew they had met their best friend. On May 22nd, 2021 they got married in Paso Robles, California. Together, they had their 3 puppies (Howie, Hannah, and Hank) and lived in Coalinga, California for 5 years, until 2021 when they moved to Fresno, California for Kevin’s work. Kevin was currently a project manager for Landscape Development Inc. in Fresno, California.

Everyone that knew Kevin, knew his passion in life was duck hunting. He was an active member of the California Waterfowl Association. He spent many weekends at his family’s duck club (The Can-Can) and loved to be able to share those weekends with all his friends and family. If Kevin wasn’t at the duck club for the weekend you most likely would find him on a golf course. He was dedicated to his family and creating the best life he could for the ones he loved the most. His passionate personality for everything in his life is something we all are going to miss the most.



Private services will be held in memory of Kevin.

PAID OBITUARY

Marlene Cummings Arnold

August 15, 1932 – September 16, 2023

Marlene Cummings Arnold, 91, of Portola Valley, passed away on September 16, 2023.

Marlene was born in Brainerd, Minnesota, to Francis and Oveline Cummings on August 15, 1932. She attended St. Francis Elementary School and Brainerd High School. Following high school, she attended the College of Saint Scholastica in Duluth, Minnesota, where she received her BS in Nursing in 1954.

After graduation, Marlene worked as a nurse in Brainerd, Denver, California, and at the Palo Alto Medical Clinic. She earned her Master’s Degree in nursing from UCSF in 1968. Marlene then taught nursing and was an academic counselor at the College of San Mateo for 29 years.

She met her husband John Arnold on a backpacking trip in the Sierras; and they were married on August 3, 1974. She and John lived in Menlo Park until moving to The Sequoias in Portola Valley in 2019.

In addition to teaching nursing, Marlene was a member of the Thomas Merton Center of Palo Alto and active in its ministry. She also volunteered cuddling infants at Packard Children’s Hospital and volunteered as a school nurse at St. Elizabeth Seton School.

Marlene loved flowers and greatly enjoyed gardening and making floral arrangements. She also continued back-packing in summers and travelling to Cedar Lake in Aitkin, Minnesota. After retirement, she and John enjoyed traveling to various countries.

She is survived by her husband John, niece Andrea (Richard), nephew Steve (Bill), and niece Carmen (Bobby), three great-nephews, a great-niece, and several cousins.

Memorial mass will be offered at St. Thomas Aquinas in Palo Alto on Saturday Oct. 7 at 10 a.m. Burial will be at Santa Clara Mission Cemetery. Arrangements by Spangler Mortuaries in Los Altos.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to Concern America, Doctors Without Borders, or a charity of your choice.



PAID OBITUARY

Citing privacy concerns, Menlo Park council says no to automated license plate readers

By Cameron Rebosio

While other local towns, aiming to reduce crime, have opted to install automatic license plate readers and gunshot detection services, the Menlo Park City Council veered in a different direction at its Sept. 26 meeting.

Menlo Park Police Department Chief David Norris said the devices have proved useful in

solving crimes from homicides to thefts, and to locate vulnerable missing people, such as elderly dementia sufferers.

Four community members spoke at the meeting of their concerns about data collection practices and oversight with Flock Safety automatic license plate readers (ALPRs). They mentioned problems that ranged from identifying information to the collection of data

that could harm someone, such as a visitor coming to California for reproductive care that could result in prosecution in their home state.

Mayor Jen Wolosin said that she hadn't seen the city do enough outreach to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a watchdog organization, and communities of concerned residents.

Norris said that the data was

widely not used. Flock ALPRs only use one-tenth of 1% of data collected, and the rest is deleted, he said.

"I'm also thinking about the cost to civil liberties and privacy that have been expressed by members of our community and the ACLU," Wolosin said. "If it's such a needle in a haystack, how are we then showing the need for this? (How are we showing) the benefit of this, given the cost

to privacy, leaving ourselves more vulnerable to data hacking and whatnot."

Other local towns, such as Atherton and Woodside, have elected to install Flock ALPRs largely due to concerns about burglaries and thefts.

The Menlo Park council cited the price of deploying Flock cameras, which is not currently in the city budget. The system would cost an initial \$284,900 for installation of 36 cameras and then \$251,000 annually to lease them. The ongoing cost

See **PLATE READERS**, page 18

San Mateo County Supervisors OK contracts for mental health services, unlocking federal funding

By Thomas Hughes

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors finalized two of four contracts Tuesday, Sept. 26, for mental health care providers that will operate smaller, more specialized facilities. Doing so will allow the county to obtain federal reimbursements through the state for those services.

The county is replacing the 117-bed Cordilleras Mental

Health Center near Redwood City with four smaller facilities that will treat different types of mental and behavioral issues in more focused settings. That will allow providers to be reimbursed by federal funding, through California's Medi-Cal program, which only pays for mental health or substance abuse treatment in facilities with fewer than 17 beds.

The new entity, at the same site, will be called the Cordilleras

Health and Healing Campus.

The first contract, for \$12.9 million, was given to Caminar Inc., a health care provider that serves individuals and families who have complex mental health and substance abuse issues, according to the county's health department.

The other contract, for \$11.8 million, was awarded to STARS, which operates as Stars Community Services. That organization will treat

patients with sexual behavioral problems.

The mental health rehabilitation centers will each provide 16 full-time residential beds, case management support, medication management, crisis management and stabilization services. Both contracts run from October through June 2026.

Agreements with the other two health care providers, Telecare Corporation and Crestwood Behavioral Health,

will be considered at a later meeting.

Telecare is the current provider at Cordilleras and serves people with severe mental illness who also have an intellectual disability. Crestwood Behavioral Health serves those with severe mental health illnesses who also have medical complexities.

Services at the new campus are expected to be offered starting in spring. ■



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Clockwise from left: People attend the Atherton Centennial Celebration on Sept. 24 at Atherton Town Center; children gather around a table of fall-inspired crafts; a room was dedicated to the history of trains in Atherton; a resident of Lloyden Park shares information on the history of the neighborhood, which started as a large estate owned by San Francisco businessman and philanthropist Abraham Hecht.

Living history: Atherton turns out to celebrate the town's centennial

By Almanac staff | Photos by Federica Armstrong

With activities, live music and educational displays, Atherton residents celebrated the town's first 100 years on Sunday, Sept. 24.

The centennial event at Atherton Town Center featured local politicians, local history experts and Menlo-Atherton High School's jazz band.

Attendees collected "historic

passport" stamps as they traced the evolution of opulent estates into educational institutions like Menlo School, Holbrook-Palmer Park and subdivided to become neighborhoods like Lindenwood and Lloyden Park. Children flocked to a room dedicated to the history of Atherton's train station — soon to become a small museum — to play with toy trains. ■





Clockwise from left: The Menlo Atherton High School Jazz Ensemble, conducted by director William Flaherty, performs; Laura Daschbach Pitchford, right, shows visitors the history of the Menlo Circus Club, which is also celebrating its centennial; Chris Abramson showcases his display on Atherton educational institutions; Lindenwood neighborhood resident Patty Leugers, right, discusses its history with Sarah Willburn, left; a detail of Linden Towers' needlepoint work made by Maud Flood.



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— First Place, Investigative Reporting

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— 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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Peninsula Building Materials celebrates 100 years as a family business

Company has helped build Peninsula's roads, homes and businesses

By Emily Margaretten

Not many family businesses can say they have been around for 100 years, but Peninsula Building Materials (PBM) recently reached that milestone, celebrating its centennial anniversary this past spring.

For four generations, PBM has supplied building materials to contractors and homeowners in the Bay Area, its headquarters located on Charleston Road in Mountain View. It got its start in 1923 when Harry Morey established a supply yard in Menlo Park, stocking road base that paved the way for the automobile industry.

Newspapers from the time period show the company advertising products like sand, rock, gravel, cement, plaster, lime and sewer pipe.

But even before then, the Morey family was a big part of the Peninsula's construction scene. Harry Morey and his two sons, Harry Jr. and John, assisted in the building of several prominent institutions: Stanford University in Palo Alto, St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park and Sacred Heart Convent in Atherton.

"I think they saw a need, and they stepped in and filled it. And they really landed in a great spot," said Nancy Wallace, who manages PBM's marketing and the Mountain View showroom.

"Who knew that decades later, Silicon Valley and the need for buildings and building materials would be so great," she added.

As orchards increasingly turned into neighborhoods and business parks in the region, PBM extended its operations southward, according to the company's website. It established a second supply yard in Sunnyvale in 1968 and another one in San Martin in 1989. It also relocated its Menlo Park site to a larger yard in Redwood



Courtesy Peninsula Building Materials

Established in 1923, the first Peninsula Building Materials supply yard was located on El Camino Real in Menlo Park.

City in 1981.

For Luke Morey, who manages PBM operations, the company's building materials reflects historical trends in home and hardscape preferences. When he started working for the family business as a 12-year-old in 1993, about 90% of its offerings were bricks. Now it is about 75% stone, sourced locally and internationally, he said.

But while its materials have changed over time, the company's values have largely stayed the same, according to Wallace, with an eye towards competitive pricing and dependable service.

Patrick Morey, who works as PBM's head of sales, emphasized that the business functions like an extended family with its 80 employees, several of whom have been with the company for 30 years, and many more sticking around for decades.

"We're a family outside of family," he said.

The close-knit community extends to outside vendors too, who pulled through for the company when demand for materials surged during the pandemic, Wallace said.

"We really depended and leaned a lot on the long-term relationships we had with our suppliers and were able to schedule out materials that weren't readily available," she said, adding that the pandemic put a particular strain on quarry

production as many workers were out sick for prolonged periods of time.

Despite these challenges, PBM has managed to stay afloat over the years, which Adam Morey, PBM chief financial officer, attributed to the company's work ethos. Similar to his brother Luke, Adam Morey started helping out with the family business at a young age, waking up early and sweeping the floors, he said.

"They instilled a hard work ethic; be here early and stay late. Even the retired folks are still waking up early," he laughed, referring to the third-generation Moreys.

The hope is that a next generation will take an interest in keeping the family business alive. Until then, it continues to grow; its largest supply yard opened in Livermore in 2008 and the Sunnyvale yard relocated to Santa Clara in 2019; a satellite showroom also recently opened in Walnut Creek with another one planned for Pacific Grove later in the year, according to Wallace.

"A hundred years doesn't come around for many family businesses, so we're honored we made it and excited for the future," she said. ■

Email Staff Writer Emily Margaretten at mmargaretten@mv-voice.com.

PEDESTRIAN

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There were no cars parked in the area, which would have given the officer an indication of any possible pedestrian who might be present. The area was closed for investigation for six hours and reopened at 4 a.m.

Investigators are looking into why the man was running across the road and other circumstances and conditions that

led to the incident. The patrol car's camera was active at the time of the incident because the officer was transporting a person, Cavett said.

Cavett has seen the patrol car video of the collision.

"It's never an easy thing to see. We are taking steps to treat this with the respect it deserves," he said.

There have not been any other similar crashes involving a pedestrian and a CHP vehicle

in at least the three years that Cavett has been with the CHP office, he said. The area where the incident occurred is not well lit, but there are signs prohibiting pedestrians on the highway.

"We ask people to stay off the highway," he said, adding that traffic may seem light, but one is likely to misjudge how fast it is going. ■

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

Public Notices

WAVY TROPICAL FOOD
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-295186
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) Wavy Tropical Food, located at 2025 AVY AVE UNIT A MENLO PARK, CA 94025.
Registered owner(s):
ETUSZN MEDIA GROUP INC
2025 AVY AVE UNIT A
MENLO PARK, CA 94025
California
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 07/01/2023
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 25 2023.
(ALM Sep 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2023)

RESSA.
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-295195
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) ressa, located at 851 Cherry Ave, Ste 27 #1041, San Bruno, CA 94066.
Registered owner(s):
HSUAN-TING YU
111 Broadway APT 3
Millbrae, CA 94030
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 August 28 2023.
(ALM Sep 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2023)

MI TIERRA LINDA SUPERMERCADO
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-295277
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) Mi Tierra Linda Supermercado, located at 1209 Willow Pass Rd. Menlo Park, CA 94025.
Registered owner(s):
QUALITY MARKET CORPORATION
1209 Willow Pass Rd.
Menlo Park, CA 94025
California
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 04/06/2006
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 07 2023.
(ALM Sep 15, 22, 29 and Oct 6, 2023)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 23-CIV-03999
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Chrispus Alexander Easley filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
CHRISPUX ALEXANDER EASLEY to JACE ALEXANDER WILLIAMS

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING: 10/24/2023, 9:00 a.m., Southern Branch: Hall of Justice and Records of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: 08/30/2023
Lee, Elizabeth K
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Sep 15, 22, 29 and Oct 6, 2023)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 23CIV03945
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Gloria Anne Falcinelli filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
GLORIA ANNE FALCINELLI to GLORIA FALCINELLI ELDREDGE

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 23CIV03781
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Blake Andrew William Binkley filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
BLAKE ANDREW WILLIAM BINKLEY to BLAKE ANDREW ROSE

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING: 10/11/2023, 9am, MC of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: 08/16/2023
Elizabeth Lee
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Sep 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2023)

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING: 10/18/2023, 9:00 AM, Civil - Dept MC, Room MC of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.

A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: 08/28/2023
Marie S. Weiner
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Sep 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2023)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 23CIV03781
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Blake Andrew William Binkley filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
BLAKE ANDREW WILLIAM BINKLEY to BLAKE ANDREW ROSE

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING: 10/11/2023, 9am, MC of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: 08/16/2023
Elizabeth Lee
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Sep 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2023)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 23-CIV-03799
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Jintao Feng filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
VINCENT ZHONGXU TANG to VINCENT XU FENG

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING: 10/09/2023, 9:00 a.m., Master Calendar of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: 08/14/2023
Judge Elizabeth Lee
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Sep 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2023)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 23CIV03945
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Gloria Anne Falcinelli filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
GLORIA ANNE FALCINELLI to GLORIA FALCINELLI ELDREDGE

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING: 10/09/2023, 9:00 a.m., Master Calendar of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: 08/14/2023
Judge Elizabeth Lee
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Sep 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2023)

To place a legal notice visit AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/

Newsom signs bill seeking to protect LGBTQ+ youth from hostile foster homes

By Toby Roca/Bay City News Service

A bill seeking to amend the foster care vetting process to ensure LGBTQ+ youth are not placed in homes that could become hostile towards them is set to become California law.

Gov. Gavin Newsom on Saturday, Sept. 23, signed Senate Bill 407, proposed by Sen. Scott Wiener, D-San Francisco, which directs the Department of Social Services to amend the foster care vetting process to ensure

LGBTQ+ youth are not placed in hostile foster homes.

“LGBTQ+ youth deserve a supportive and affirming home the same as any other child,” Wiener said in a statement on Saturday. “I’m proud that California is taking this step to expand support for LGBTQ+ youth at a time when elected leaders in other states are targeting them with cruel restrictions and hate.”

According to the senator’s office, SB 407 will strengthen the resource family approval process for LGBTQ+ foster youth by requiring assessment

of a family’s ability and willingness to meet the needs of a child, regardless of the child’s sexual orientation or gender identity.

SB 407 also requires that, should difficulty around these issues arise, resource family applicants demonstrate a willingness to obtain resources offered by the county or foster family agency or other available resources to meet those needs, the office added.

Data from the University of California at Berkeley and the California Department of Social Services indicate that there are

more than 51,300 foster youth statewide as of April 2023, more than 30% of which identify as LGBTQ+, Wiener’s office estimates.

The lawmaker said that anxiety, depression and suicidal ideation, which already affects LGBTQ+ youth disproportionately, are on the rise amid a nationwide onslaught of attacks on LGBTQ+ youth’s rights.

“Over 400 anti-LGBTQ+ bills have been filed in states across the country this year alone, and LGBTQ+ youth are exposed to the bigotry behind them via

social media,” Wiener’s office said on Saturday.

It also added that the degree of support for their identity that LGBTQ+ youth receive at home is a strong predictor of their mental health outcomes. According to data from the Trevor Project, teens who perceived parental support regarding gender identity were 93% less likely to attempt suicide than youth who did not perceive parents as supportive.

SB 407 is one of nine bills that Gov. Newsom signed over the weekend, all seeking to expand protection and recognition for LGBTQ+ people.

SB 407 is sponsored by Equality California and the California Alliance of Child and Family Services. ■

LGBTQ+ AFGHANS

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Americans for Afghans, a humanitarian startup co-founded by Palo Alto Human Relations Commissioner Michelle Kraus and San Francisco tech executive Joe Rodriguez, is on a mission to help to save their lives. Kraus and Rodriguez provide grant funding directly to LGBTQ+ refugees for paperwork, travel documents and travel out of Kabul to safe countries. The refugees await rescue by other nonprofit humanitarian organizations that help evacuate them to a new home country.

Americans for Afghans has directly aided nearly 50 people in the past two years, but now they are scaling up their efforts. Kraus and Rodriguez are trying to raise \$5 million or more in the next year to help get 100 LGBTQ+ people and their families out of Afghanistan per month to a safer country. They would most likely be evacuated to Germany, the country taking in the most Afghan LGBTQ refugees in the world, Kraus and Rodriguez said.

Every step of the refugees’ journey is perilous, and safety isn’t guaranteed even after they arrive in a new home country. With death warrants on their heads, many fear being tracked down and executed or that their families will be harmed. Harassment, arrest and a push for families to hunt down the so-called perpetrators of the “crime” of gender nonconformity — wherever they might be — remain constant threats, some refugees said.

For this article, the refugees’ names have been changed and their faces are obscured in photographs to ensure their safety. The names of some network participants and some details about the network have also been omitted as conditions for interviews, to guarantee security.

Hope amid trauma — Mohammad’s story

Mohammad sat at a Palo Alto coffeehouse taking in his surroundings. At nearby tables, carefree conversations flowed among friends meeting for breakfast, and Silicon Valley entrepreneurs discussed their

photo, Mohammad stared into the darkness at the lights of Kabul for the last time.

The grainy computer printouts are all he has preserved since he lost his phone, he said.

“Behind these smiles, there’s something hidden,” he said as he flipped through the pictures.

Mohammad was about 15 or 16 years old when he was horrifically betrayed by one of his closest friends. He was raped by the friend and another man because he is gay. After the assault, Mohammad plunged into a very bad mental state, he said.

“I couldn’t share it with anyone. If I go to the police, they will abuse me again. I couldn’t tell my family. They would blame me,” he said.

His father later described his son’s harrowing circumstances in a statement requesting asylum for the family.

“He was assaulted by two men who wanted to make him a boy prostitute. He refused, but they continued to pursue him. They later went to prison for killing another boy they raped when he also refused to be a boy prostitute, but after they were freed by the Taliban they again went looking for my son,” his father wrote.

The family faced additional peril. Mohammad and his father had worked for Western governments while the Americans occupied Afghanistan. When the Taliban returned, the authorities would seek to capture and execute them, his father said.

The Taliban came back to Kabul in 2021, putting his family at extreme risk, he said. They received multiple threats and were marked for death. Mohammad’s sexuality added to the family’s danger. When the two men who raped Mohammad couldn’t find him, they reported to the Taliban that he is gay.

“Not only will the Taliban kill anyone in Afghanistan who is gay, they will also kill everybody

in a gay person’s family because they say it brings shame to them and everybody in their community,” his father said in his asylum application.

Escape, he said, is imperative.

Mohammad recalled the day he left Afghanistan. Kabul had just fallen to the Taliban in August 2021 after the U.S. withdrawal. He was at work when his cell phone rang.

“Get out of Afghanistan as quickly as possible,” his father said.

He fled on the first plane out.

“I was shocked and crying,” Mohammad recalled.

For more than a week he stayed in a hotel in a nearby country. But Mohammad wasn’t free. He was surrounded by military guards because he and others had entered without a visa. On the eighth day, he was forced to return to Afghanistan, landing to an uncertain fate at the Kabul airport.

Safe — the most powerful word

Mohammad deplaned to chaos at the airport. Taliban forces were moving in. At first Mohammad didn’t know what he would do. U.S. military personnel were evacuating people when he arrived. Mohammad sought their help. A military officer informed him he would be evacuating with others to another Middle Eastern country.

“You’re safe,” the officer said. Mohammad and the officer hugged, crying.

Safe.

“This word never gets old for me. It will forever be the most important word to me,” he said.

But Mohammad’s ordeal would still not be over for many months. When the aircraft landed, the passengers were taken to a jail that was converted to a refugee “safe home.” It housed 13,000 people. Three to four people lived in each room, he recalled.

“We were not allowed out of the facility. I lost 10 to 11 kilograms (22 to 24 pounds). Every day, people were in the hospital because the food was so bad,” he said.

Gay refugees weren’t treated well and were often harassed by members of the Afghan military, who had also left Kabul and were now guarding the jail, he said. Mohammad was afraid to speak to strangers out of concern they would take notice of his mannerisms or speech.

“A lot of feminine guys were treated badly. People who were different were persecuted” by the guards, he said.

Those nine months began to take a toll on his mental health.

“I was very depressed and I couldn’t sleep. The hospital doctor gave me one sleeping pill a night,” he said.

But finally, a Seattle-based philanthropist privately sponsored Mohammad. He arrived in the U.S. in May 2022. Then Michael Failla, vice president for LGBTQ refugee affairs with SCM Medical Missions, took Mohammad in to live with him.

Two months later, in July 2022, Mohammad moved to the Bay Area, where he met Rodriguez. He introduced Mohammad to a new apartment mate.

Kraus, meanwhile, looked for resources to help Mohammad have a better, more stable life. She located Afghan-American car dealers who wouldn’t take advantage of him when he needed to buy a car. She is trying to get Mohammad into hotel management, which will pay better than his current waitstaff position at a restaurant.

Also helping him is a tutor, a Filipina immigrant who was in the same situation 30 years ago, Kraus said.

Mohammad is grateful for the help he has received.

See **LGBTQ+ AFGHANS**, page 17

‘You cannot turn your head away when people are being persecuted. That’s the responsibility of our time — to not turn away.’

MICHELLE KRAUS, AMERICANS FOR AFGHANS CO-FOUNDER

“It’s an opportunity for people in the Valley who are committed to human rights to do something like Oscar Schindler did. This is an opportunity for someone to save lives and to change lives,” Rodriguez said.

Kraus and Rodriguez are part of a vast underground network spanning multiple countries and continents. Largely supported by technology, the encrypted network connects the underground partners to each other and to the refugees.

latest business plans.

Slender and handsome with short, dark hair and a gentle smile, Mohammad was impeccably polite and gracious. He held a precious stack of photographs from his time in Afghanistan. Mohammad is smiling in the photographs; playfully hugging his workmates, sharing a meal with friends, celebrating milestones with his family, waiting for his evacuation at the airport; refugees and soldiers swarmed the tarmac. In one

LGBTQ+ AFGHANS

continued from page 16

“It’s hard being an immigrant in this country. Starting from zero is really hard with no family and no friends. If I don’t have the support of these people, I’m lost, I’m homeless, I’m ... everything,” he said.

Mohammad’s family went into hiding in August 2021 and finally left Afghanistan in February 2022, he said. Americans for Afghans is assisting the family with grants for their travel documentation and expenses.

The family is waiting for approval to emigrate to a country in the northern European Union, but policy changes there have limited the intake of refugees. Now they are searching for another country for his family to enter, Kraus said.

“Even when you set things up, a change in regime upends everything,” she said.

Mohammad works seven days a week as a restaurant server. He’s sending \$1,500 a month to his family so they can stay alive. It will cost an additional \$3,000 per family member to obtain visas and passports, he said.

He worries about whether he can find another nation for his family before their current visas expire. His father has kidney problems and his mother isn’t eating. The family’s unity is at stake, he said.

Mohammad became tearful and anxious.

“My family is in really bad mental condition. Have you seen a father who is crying in front of his son? I tell him we have not forgotten. Every night we are talking over WhatsApp (an encrypted, private network owned by Meta).

“Seeing your father, your brothers — I feel shame because I’m not going to be able to do anything for them. Next year, my brother is going to be 21 and then he can’t come with the family because he will be an adult,” he said.

Kraus said that’s the paradox. To stay means persecution, torture, imprisonment or death. Yet, conditions can deteriorate even if one is able to escape. Two years in hiding and uncertainty have exacted a toll.

“They’re alive, but they are crumbling under the pressure,” she said.

The new ‘underground railroad’

But Kraus doesn’t hear the word “no,” according to Rodriguez. Where others despair, she maintains her cheerful disposition, always questioning, even-handedly searching for answers.

As a child, her father ran a delicatessen in her hometown of Kearny, New Jersey,

a working-class community of Scots and Irish. People of influence gathered at the shop.

“I thought it was normal to know the mayor, the city council and judges. Everybody came to our front lawn. I used to discuss the issues I heard with whoever was at home. I was walking around the neighborhood at 7 years old: ‘The judge told me blah, blah, blah,’ so I had to find out what people thought,” she recalled.

Kraus became highly experienced in government affairs and understood how things in the government functioned, she said. She has decades of experience financing political campaigns. Kraus has worked to help multiple Democratic presidential candidates, including for President Joe Biden. She was the first female finance co-chair for John Kerry’s presidential campaign.

There are pictures of Kraus with Biden and other political luminaries such as the U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren and presidential candidate and former Sen. Hillary Clinton; there’s also a picture of Kraus getting a warm hug from President Barack Obama.

In the Bay Area, as a tech executive, she spent 25 years working with major donors and merged her expertise in tech and politics. She was head of government and regulatory affairs for one of the Hyperloop companies and is currently CEO of Technology & Politics, a global technology and government affairs advisory firm.

Many people want her help. When her phone rang two years ago in August 2021, she wasn’t considering taking on another project, even from a Silicon Valley tech executive and gay rights activist she’s known for 20 years.

“I told him, ‘Go away — I have to make a living,’” she recalled.

Although she had many contacts in D.C., she didn’t know anything about Afghanistan or its politics, she said. But after a bit of persistence, the tech executive

introduced her to Joe Rogriguez, a tech entrepreneur who worked on three startups and is co-founder of San Francisco-based strategy and social impact firm Gardner Rodriguez.

Rodriguez recalled his own introduction into the world of LGBTQ+ Afghan refugees. He was sitting in a Tucson, Arizona emergency room in 2021 while his father was being treated for a heart attack. Scrolling on his cell phone, he learned of the plight of LGBTQ+ Afghans through a Twitter account.

He volunteered to help; then he and a gaggle of tech friends began trying to get LGBTQ+ people out of Afghanistan. But he didn’t have any congressional connections.

Kraus did, and she was all in, learning of the immediate dangers the LGBTQ+ Afghans faced. She studied all that she could about immigration in the United States. Then-U.S. Congressman Tom Malinowski (D-New Jersey), who also served as assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor in the Obama administration, became her mentor on immigration, a complex issue to navigate, she said.

“I had the right lawyers to tutor me,” she added, noting that they also needed to steer clear of violating the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, a federal law prohibiting payments and gifts to foreign officials to secure any improper advantage. “I want to be clear that we Silicon Valley techies became very wise in forming this humanitarian startup.”

Getting people into the U.S. in 2021 was difficult, she said. Instead, Americans for Afghans partnered with nongovernmental organizations such as Rainbow Railroad for access to Canada and with Seattle-based Michael Failla and his SCM Medical Missions for his knowledge.

Americans for Afghans doesn’t supply these organizations with funding. Independently, the

organization issues grants for paperwork and travel directly to the refugees.

Kraus and Rodriguez screen for refugees; Rodriguez then develops profiles to document the atrocities against and plight of each individual refugee. The profile becomes the basis of acceptance or nonacceptance by organizations for possible evacuation.

Americans for Afghans finds the LGBTQ+ refugees by word of mouth, online through encrypted sites and through people who are known in certain circles, Kraus said. Realizing that the situation is fluid, they are now directing more people to Canada and Germany, and the numbers are quickly rising, she said.

Fatima’s escape from execution and sexual slavery

One of the most sensitive operations Kraus and Rodriguez engaged in was aiding Fatima, a mother and her five daughters, ages 7 to 19. Fatima legally divorced her husband, and she had legal custody of the five children. She also came out as lesbian. When the Taliban returned to power, her ex-husband wanted to sell the daughters for profit and turn in Fatima to be executed.

“We moved the girls around to hide them in Afghanistan and got humanitarian asylum granted for the six of them — a modern miracle,” Kraus said.

Trying to move women who were unaccompanied by a man was dangerous and nearly impossible. Still, she didn’t give up.

The family received travel grants from Americans for Afghans for their visas and passports. They were put into a safe house and given room and board.

The mother and daughters arrived at a Canadian airport two months ago on July 11 for a reunion with their uncle. For minutes, the mother and her brother clung tightly, a mix of smiles and tears in a video they shared with Kraus.

Kraus wiped her eyes.

“I have tears in my eyes all the time. As a Jew, this is heart-wrenching. People don’t deserve to be persecuted for who they are or what religion they practice,” she said.

At the Pink Triangle Memorial installation in San Francisco in June, Kraus and Rodriguez spoke about the plight of the Afghan LGBTQ+ community, surrounded by an arch of pink balloons. A nearly acre-sized, giant pink canvas triangle loomed above from the viewpoint of Twin Peaks.

Used by Nazis during the Holocaust to identify gay concentration camp prisoners, the pink triangle has been changed by gay-rights advocates into a symbol representing solidarity and positive identity. It’s an emblem

that resonates deeply with Kraus. Nazis used different colored triangles to identify Jews and other groups of people they held captive and persecuted.

Kraus reflected on the dangerous times she sees unfolding again and her commitment to preventing a repeat of such persecution.

“I know all about triangles — particularly yellow ones,” Kraus said of the concentration camp emblems used to form a Star of David to mark Jewish prisoners.

“You cannot turn your head away when people are being persecuted. That’s the responsibility of our time — to not turn away. I connect our time to the Holocaust. And now we’re faced with huge state-sponsored murder,” Kraus said. “How can you turn your head away?”

The effort to save people takes an emotional toll. The long, arduous wait, the years of persecution, the guilt over families left behind — all wear people down, including those in the rescue community.

Rodriguez said the intense effort has taken a toll on his health. Five men he’s worked with were at risk for suicide. A young cobbler they call “the old man” has been waiting nearly two years to be evacuated. He finally reached a crisis state.

Kraus and Rodriguez went into high gear trying to get him out as quickly as possible, letting the rescue organizations know he had to be a priority. He was finally evacuated to Canada on July 19.

“This is the hardest thing I’ve ever done in my life, but it’s the most rewarding,” Rodriguez said.

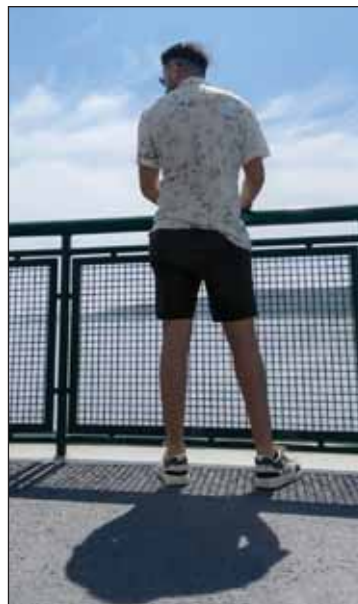
For all of their hard work, Kraus and Rodriguez have never met the people they have helped. To Rodriguez, meeting those people face to face is an important part of his personal health.

In the week of Sept. 11, his wish was finally fulfilled with the support of his aging parents. They said they wanted to be part of the legacy to save lives, so they paid for a trip to Canada for Rodriguez and his brother. The brothers are now touring to meet the refugees he and Kraus have helped save. ■

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

‘Not only will the Taliban kill anyone in Afghanistan who is gay, they will also kill everybody in a gay person’s family because they say it brings shame to them and everybody in their community.’

“MOHAMMAD,” AN AFGHAN REFUGEE



Courtesy “Mohammad”

Anyone seeking details on Americans for Afghans and information on how to donate can contact michellekraus@yahoo.com or visit a special fundraising page by Rainbow Fund Network at tinyurl.com/AfghanLGBTQ. Silicon Valley can also help by donating tech — cell phones or laptops and pads. Individuals are also needed to act as sponsors to help move more refugees.

Former Congresswoman Jackie Speier announces for San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

Hopefuls Emily Beach and Gina Papan suspended their campaigns

By Bay City News Service

Jackie Speier, who spent more than three decades as a state legislator and member of Congress, announced last week she is running for a position on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, where she started her career as an elected official in 1980.

Speier spent six years on the county board before serving in both houses of the state Legislature, then was elected to Congress in 2008. She announced she would not run for re-election in 2022,



Jackie Speier

expressing a desire to spend more time with her family.

On Tuesday, she announced her bid to represent District 1 on the Board of Supervisors in the March 2024 election. District 1, currently represented by board

president Dave Pine, includes Burlingame, Hillsborough, Millbrae, parts of San Bruno and South San Francisco and other areas, including San Francisco International Airport.

"I will use the skills I've honed, the relationships I've built, and the experiences I've earned to fix problems our community confronts," Speier said in her announcement. "I know from experience that local action can make a huge difference for us all, and I'm concerned that our quality of life in San Mateo County faces big challenges."

She cited income inequality, a

lack of affordable housing and childcare, and the environment as issues she wanted to tackle on the local level.

"When I announced that I was not running for re-election to Congress, I made clear that I was not done and not retiring. I was simply coming home to be with my family and my constituents. I believe I have found the path where I can make the greatest contribution to those I have represented for so many years," Speier said.

Following Speier's announcement, Burlingame City Councilmember Emily

Beach and Millbrae City Councilmember Gina Papan both announced Tuesday, Sept. 19, that they were suspending their campaigns for the supervisor seat.

Jorge Quezada Flores was the only person on the county elections department's list of candidates for the seat as of Sept. 20. Pine, the current supervisor, is being termed out of office.

Kevin Mullin, in November 2022, was elected to the Congress seat previously filled by Speier to represent a district that includes much of the Peninsula and part of San Francisco. ■

PLATE READERS

continued from page 11

was hard to stomach when the city is already in a deficit-spending situation.

"This technology, specifically in our community, is so ubiquitous that every day our own license plates are probably read dozens of times," Council member Drew Combs said.

Combs added that he did not see the value in a large-scale rollout given the ongoing monthly cost of about \$20,000.

The idea was floated to install ALPRs and the accompanying gunshot detection only in areas that experience higher crime rates, but that brought up issues of equity.

Council member Maria Doerr said that she was

concerned that focusing cameras and gunshot detection devices on communities that have historically seen higher crime rates could highlight inequity in Menlo Park's neighborhoods. Doing so "doesn't lend itself to being more effective and to being equitable for our community."

Several council members brought up last year's

incident of a gunfire exchange on Windermere Avenue in Belle Haven, where a security camera captured footage of the shooting.

Vice Mayor Cecilia Taylor offered the idea of only installing gunshot detection citywide, as gunshots don't just occur in only one area of the city, an idea that the council wanted to explore further.

The council decided not to consider installing ALPRs unless new data proves their efficacy in deterring crime. There was no support for deploying gunshot detection on its own, but city staff will continue to assess the devices and explore CCTV as an option for resident safety. ■

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PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

LOST AND FOUND

Cantor Arts Center presents first retrospective of forgotten 1940s artist Morris Hirshfield

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

Morris Hirshfield's life seems, at first glance, to be the stuff that inspires biopics: Polish immigrant starts out in the garment industry of New York City, later owns his own tailoring business then shoe store, earns patents for his footwear designs only to lose it all in bankruptcy. But, in true cinematic style, he then finds success in retirement as an artist whose very first paintings are featured in an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Seems improbable, maybe even impossible? It is a fascinating story that is well told and illustrated in the exhibition, "Morris Hirshfield/Rediscovered," on view through Jan. 21, 2024 at the Cantor Arts Center.

The reason you may have never heard of Hirshfield (and why he has been "rediscovered") is that, after that initial success, he was completely excised out of American art history, even though his paintings are in the holdings of such prestigious institutions as the Metropolitan

Museum of Art in New York City. That is where Dr. Richard Meyer, professor of art history at Stanford University, had his first encounter with a Hirshfield painting. It would lead to a 10-year journey of research and discovery that resulted in a book and then an exhibition.

"I had heard of Hirshfield before, but I had never seen one of his paintings in the flesh," said Meyer. His reaction was immediate: "This man's work deserves to be seen." Meyer also shared that it was the first time he was motivated by a work of art, rather than a movement or theory. He and colleague Susan Davidson set out to find as many paintings by the artist as possible, in order to fully tell the story of a self-taught artist who enjoyed a brief period of acclaim, only to fall into obscurity.

The exhibition, the only full-career retrospective of Hirshfield's work, begins with two paintings of houses ("Landscape with House I" and "Landscape with House II"). From afar, they might appear to

be examples of Early American embroidered samplers. A closer look, however, reveals that the artist created the appearance and texture of woven materials in paint. Meyer refers to this as the "textile imaginings" that are a hallmark of all of Hirshfield's work. Not surprising, noted Meyer, because, "He taught himself how to cut patterns, to sew and tailor. He is bringing his creativity from other sources."

Fanciful creativity abounds in all of Hirshfield's work, whether the subject is portraits, animals or nudes. What is absent in his work is the technical polish of an academically trained artist. There is no attempt at anatomical correctness or proportion; space is flattened and there is no effort at spatial perspective. Hirshfield's figures seem to float against backgrounds of colorful patterns and textures

"This is the world he saw in his mind's eye; the world he wanted to get down on canvas. It was an internal reality, not an external one," Meyer said.

Hirshfield, who never used



Courtesy Robert and Gail Rentzer for Estate of Morris Hirshfield

Morris Hirshfield's 1945 oil painting "Harp Girl II (Girl with Harp)" shows a simply rendered figure but meticulously drawn patterns and decoration.

live models and worked from his home in Queens, expressed this reality in paintings like "Harp Girl II." A woman stands inside a golden harp, which is richly embellished with designs in contrasting red and black, against a blue background dotted with golden stitch-like strokes. She is rendered in the most simplistic manner, facial features not clearly delineated, but her blue and yellow checked skirt has been meticulously drawn

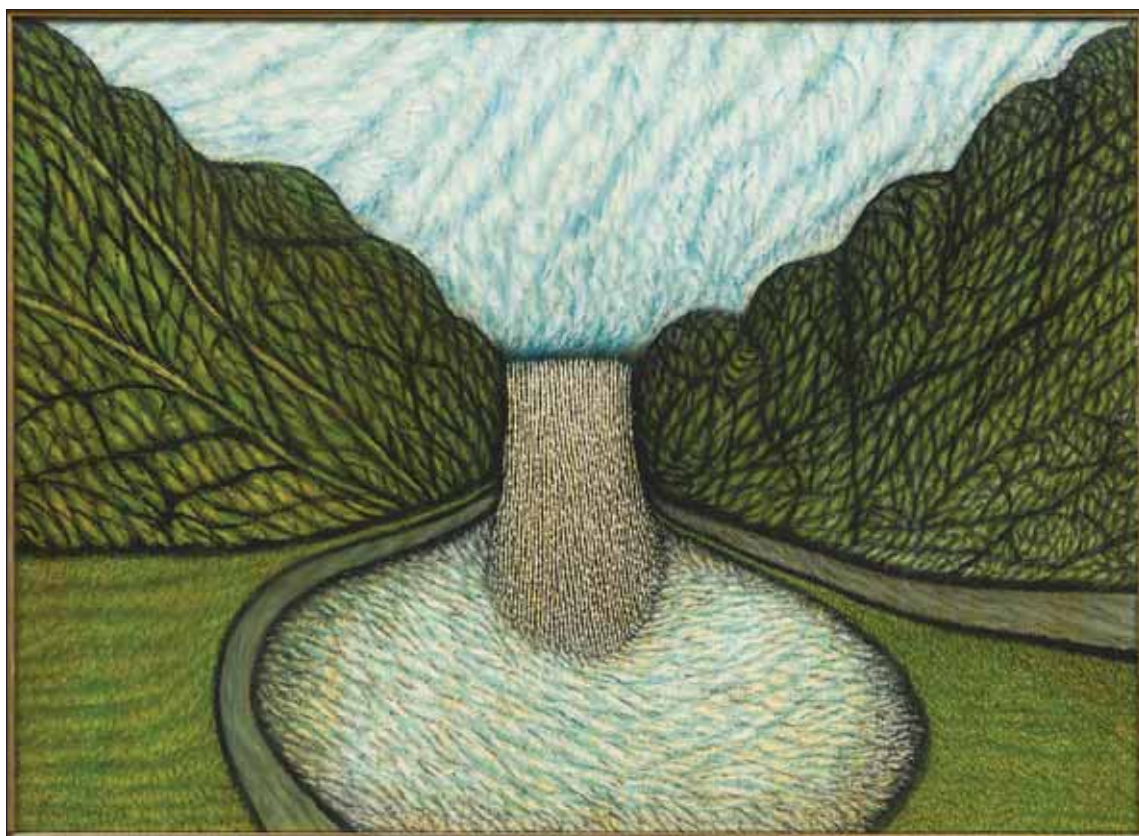
In "The Artist and His Model," there is a distinct dream-like quality to the scene. Hirshfield portrays himself as a young man with dark hair and mustache, standing beside his red-haired model who is posed on a colorful platform. Her body is drawn in a generalized manner and both of her feet turn to the left, a quirk of Hirshfield's that caused critics to dismissively refer to him as "the master of two left feet." (This is also the title of Meyer's book, an accessibly written and well-illustrated tome that fully details Hirshfield's life).

It was this naïve yet uniquely stylized approach that captured the attention of Sidney Janis, a well-known gallerist in New York. He was mainly responsible for Hirshfield's acceptance and rise to fame in the art world and most of the paintings in this exhibition are on loan from the Janis estate. Because Hirshfield gave no interviews (Meyer theorized that, "The art world was not a comfortable place for Morris Hirshfield") Janis was

able to create a persona that, for a while, appealed to museums and to avant garde artists like the Surrealists

One section of the exhibition is devoted to "The First Papers of Surrealism," a 1942 exhibition curated by Andre Breton that boasted such luminaries of the movement as Miro, Mondrian and Tanguy. Hirshfield, the only self-taught artist in the group, was included because of his original and unspoiled approach. In "Girl With Pigeons," the Surrealist penchant for dream-like narratives that juxtapose unlikely objects in an effort to explore the unconscious mind is apparent. A woman lies across a richly patterned sofa set against a background of green palm fronds that completely surround her. Six colorful pigeons pause in stillness above and below her, while one appears to inexplicably peck at a treat she holds between her lips. This is just the sort of other-worldly incongruity that the Surrealists loved and pursued in their work.

"You can't understand self-taught art as completely separate from modern art," Meyer said. Hirshfield, he believes, serves as a bridge between the self-taught and the Surrealist artists. He points out that Hirshfield was never referred to as a "folk artist" (there is a small section in the show devoted to this group) like Grandma Moses because "he worked in complete



Robert and Gail Rentzer for Estate of Morris Hirshfield

"It was an internal reality, not an external one," Dr. Richard Meyer, Stanford professor of art history, said of the worlds that Morris Hirshfield captured on canvas, such as his 1940 oil painting "Waterfall."

See **MORRIS HIRSHFIELD**, page 20

Worth a Look



Courtesy Sierra Hull

Sierra Hull performs at The Guild Theatre on Sept. 30.

Sierra Hull

The mandolin has a bit of a reputation as a tricky instrument to master, but mesmerizingly fleet-fingered virtuoso mandolinist Sierra Hull can coax many moods from this slightly cantankerous cousin to a lute. Her folk-bluegrass-infused music can sound doleful, jubilant and whimsical by turn, and paired with her heartfelt vocal style, it's no wonder she has made such a stir so early in her career. Before even reaching 30, she released four albums including "Weighted Mind," produced by Béla Fleck and nominated for Best Folk Album at the 2017 Grammy Awards. Her most recent release, 2020's "25 Trips," delves into themes of getting older, but it's clear that Hull is just getting started.

Sept. 30, 8 p.m. at The Guild, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Tickets are \$35-\$65. guildtheatre.com.

Great Glass Pumpkin Patch

A beautiful harbinger of fall, the Great Glass Pumpkin Patch is sprouting up in its usual spot on the lawn of the Palo Alto Art Center, but with some new additions this year. Guests can browse among more than 10,000 sparkling glass gourds and other objets d'art hand-blown by local artists, but this year's patch also includes an exhibition centered on Día de Los Muertos and highlighting other works by some of the patch's participating artists. The Día de Los Muertos display pays tribute to the holiday that honors the memory of loved ones who have died. Visitors can also enjoy the opportunity to check out the art center's recently opened show, "Boom Oaxaca."

Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto. Admission is free. For more information, visit greatglasspumpkinpatch.org.

LADAMA

Musicians, composers and educators Lara Klaus, Daniela Serna, Mafer Bandola and Sara Lucas

have built a kind of international supergroup with LADAMA. The band's lineup hails from Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela and the United States, and joined by bassist Pat Swoboda, the group blends the sounds from their countries, such as cumbia, maracatu, onda nueva and joropo, with influences from pop, soul and R&B into a unique Latin alternative sound. The band brings traditional and non-traditional instruments into the mix, creating songs underscored by irresistible high-energy rhythms, with vocals that stand out whether they are blending beautifully in a chorus or singing out powerfully on their own. LADAMA plays The Studio at Stanford Live on Sept. 29 and also performs Sept. 30 at EPACenter in a concert celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month.

Sept. 29, 7 p.m. at The Studio, 327 Lasuen St., Stanford. Tickets are \$35-\$45. Sept. 30, 4 p.m. at EPACenter, 1950 Bay Road, East Palo Alto. Admission is free, but donations of \$10 are encouraged to support EPACenter and its programs. live.stanford.edu.



Photograph by Melissa Goodwin, courtesy Pace Gallery

Morris Hirshfield was self-taught and his works aren't necessarily concerned with anatomical correctness or proportion, with figures floating on colorful backgrounds, as seen in the painting "Birds on the Grass II."

MORRIS HIRSHFIELD

continued from page 19

isolation and his art did not reflect his community."

Perhaps it was because of this independence and the fact that he could not be easily categorized that Hirshfield enjoyed a brief five-year period of success and acclaim. Janis showed his work in his gallery and succeeded in securing Hirshfield a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in 1943. That show, which included 30 paintings created from 1939 to 1943 (the crux of his career), was critically received.

So why has the artist been largely forgotten? "In art history everything is a progression toward abstraction," explained Meyer. "Morris Hirshfield doesn't fit."

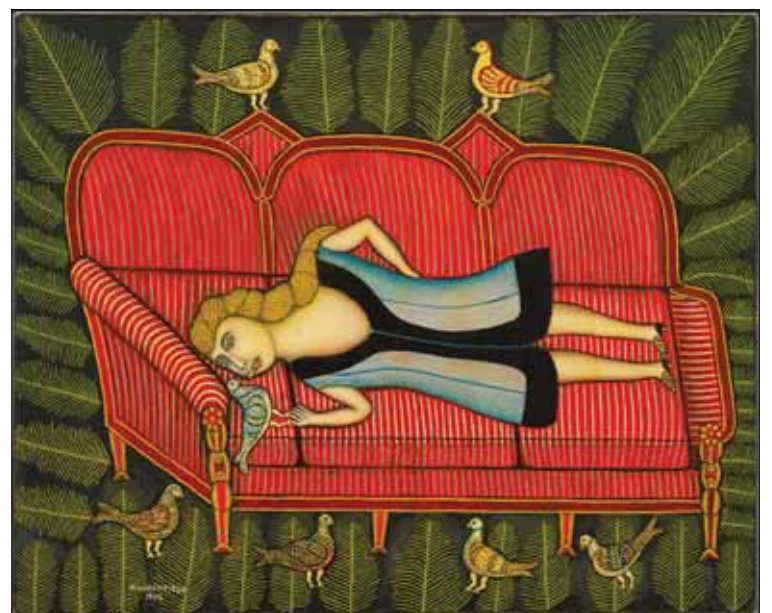
Morris Hirshfield died in 1946 and most of his life's work (an estimated 78 paintings) was relegated to museum storage or collector's living rooms — until Richard Meyer became

"captivated by his story and his art works." This exhibition was presented last year at the American Museum of Folk Art in New York City and Meyer's book was recognized with the 2023 Dedalus Foundation Exhibition Catalog Award

"I hope that this exhibition will be a spark to discover other stories," said Meyer. "Morris Hirshfield's life is a complicated and unique story but the aspirations to advance in American culture are universal and relevant today." ■

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"Morris Hirshfield/Rediscovered" is on view through Jan. 21 at the Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive, Stanford. Admission is free; reservations required. For more information, visit museum.stanford.edu.



Robert and Gail Rentzer for Estate of Morris Hirshfield

Morris Hirshfield's "Girl with Pigeons" reflects the other-worldly incongruity that Surrealist painters pursued in their work.

Peninsula pooches audition for a shot at the spotlight

TheatreWorks recently held open auditions for local dogs to take on the role of Agatha Christie's dog Peter in production of 'Mrs. Christie'

By Karla Kane

TheatreWorks Silicon Valley recently auditioned canine candidates for the role of mystery author Agatha Christie's beloved pooch Peter

in its West Coast premiere of Heidi Armbruster's "Mrs. Christie," opening early in October at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts.

According to a press release from the theater company,

director Giovanna Sardelli sought "a well-behaved, well-trained dog" to portray Peter (in real life a wirehaired terrier) in two scenes in the production, which chronicles a modern-day Christie fan's attempt to figure out the truth behind Christie's unexplained 11-day disappearance in 1926.

"Although charisma and energy are great traits for our future doggo cast member, we also need a cast member who knows how to bottle their energy and stay on script during the show — even when the audience inevitably lets out a collection of 'awws' at their presence," TheatreWorks Associate Producer of Casting and Literary Management Jeffrey Lo told this publication in an email interview. This is Lo's first time working with a canine performer. According to him, the last two TheatreWorks productions involving a dog were "Of Mice and Men" in



Courtesy Reed Flores/TheatreWorks

Actor William Thomas Hodgson with Zorro at auditions for Agatha Christie's dog, Peter, in TheatreWorks' "Mrs. Christie."

2012 and 2011's "A Christmas Memory."

"We've had a pretty good response from our community of dogs who would like to be in a play for the first time!" Lo said of the casting process. "I've had a great time scanning through the fun photos and watching the adorable videos of the Bay Area's dog community!"

The final casting decision had not been made as of press

time, but audiences can see the new canine star on stage soon when "Mrs. Christie" opens next week, on Oct. 4, at the Mountain View Center for Performing Arts. The play runs through Oct. 29.

More information on "Mrs. Christie" is available at theatreworks.org.

Email Assistant Lifestyle Editor Karla Kane at kkane@almanacnews.com.



Courtesy Reed Flores/TheatreWorks

Actor Jennifer Le Blanc, who stars as Agatha Christie, gets to know Anubis in auditions to play Agatha Christie's dog, Peter, in "Mrs. Christie."

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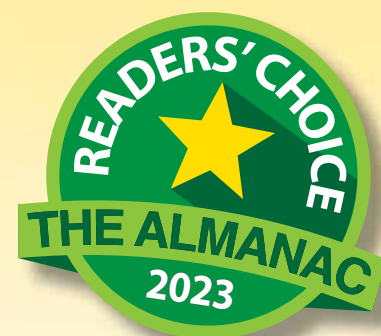


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Food & Drink

High-end sushi to go

Chef Jui Nguyen offers unconventional takeout from The Backhouse

By Ross Rosenthal

While the exterior of The Backhouse is nondescript and unassuming, its creator, story and food are anything but. Behind the veil of a ghost kitchen, chef Jui Nguyen is the woman behind the curtain serving up high-end sushi takeout.

The Backhouse is just one of many restaurants housed in the San Mateo Food Hall offering takeaway meals out of a shared space. What makes The Backhouse unusual is its takeout offerings, serving omakase to go. While omakase, a meal in which the chef chooses the courses, is often served in an exclusive setting, Nguyen brings this experience to the comfort of customers' kitchen tables. Omakase dining is often an event reserved for a special occasion at a fine-dining establishment; Nguyen realized, however, that this option is not available for every family.

"The ones that have kids that can't really go to those high-end restaurants," she explained. In contrast, her restaurant offers omakase to go "so they can enjoy it with their families. I think the one thing that everyone sees right now is that they can get that omakase experience at home," she said, "giving them that sit-down experience."

It wasn't always this way for

Nguyen. She's relatively new to the landscape of Japanese food, with little formal training. But this lends to an interpretation of Japanese food that is wholly her own. After a three-year stint at a Japanese restaurant in San Francisco, Nguyen created her own concept of the modern sushi eatery.

"I did work at a restaurant for three years — that's where I learned the techniques," she said, "(but when) I started The Backhouse, it was just me testing out recipes."

Nguyen experiments with dry-aging her fish and adding nontraditional garnishes. Unique toppings for her dishes include squid furikake on scallop sushi, Parmesan cheese on fatty tuna, garlic pesto on salmon and peach-ginger jam on shima aji and kamasu, as well as red pepper jelly and Korean melon oroshi on kinmedai. Nguyen also incorporates seasonal truffles into her repertoire — currently, the black burgundy variety.

"I get to create my own way of presenting sushi (other) than the whole traditional Edomae style," she said, referring to the strict, customary way of preparing sushi that originated in Tokyo during the 19th century. While Nguyen trained in the Edomae style while working at



Courtesy Jui Nguyen

The bara chirashi bowl is one of The Backhouse's specialties, offering a variety of flavors mixed together.

her previous job, she has quickly learned to uncover flavors outside the norm.

Once a family has its sights set on takeout, it has several unique creations of Nguyen's to choose from based on group size and tastes.

In addition to a 10-piece chef's-choice omakase bento box (\$75), Nguyen's sushi takeout offerings include nine to 13 pieces of salmon, tuna and mixed bentos, as well as a sashimi omakase and bara chirashi (an assorted sashimi bowl). While her most popular omakase dishes include salmon, uni (eel) and toro (fatty tuna), she prides herself on two of The Backhouse's specialties, the bara chirashi and scallop sushi.

"The chirashi has a lot of flavors in one bite," she said. "It's a lot of fun stuff put together." And to her, the scallops, which often come as part of the omakase bento, are truly one-of-a-kind. "The topping that we use

for it is different and it really brings out the scallop paste," she explained.

Larger groups can choose the party platter, which serves two to eight people and comes with a variety of different fish. As a colorful array of seafood arranged in a neat, circular box, this can serve as an alternative to the individual bento box and allow different family members to choose their favorite types of fish. Additionally, Nguyen offers a do-it-yourself hand roll kit. The kit comes with negi king salmon, spicy mayo scallop, California roll-style filling, tuna, rice, nori, cucumber, takuan (daikon radish), ginger, wasabi and house soy sauce. At a price of \$75, the kit makes roughly 15-20 rolls.

Nguyen occasionally makes deliveries to other locations in the Bay Area, such as San Francisco, San Jose and Hayward. In addition to sushi and sashimi takeout, diners can

also inquire about dine-in pop-ups (\$165 per person) or private events (\$235 per person) with Nguyen serving as private chef in the latter option. However, Nguyen notes that these services are currently limited.

For now, she is focused on her omakase and bento boxes and is currently exploring a standalone brick-and-mortar location for The Backhouse, the next chapter in the restaurant's story. ■

Email the Peninsula Foodist at peninsulafoodist@almanacnews.com.

The Backhouse, 66 21st Ave., San Mateo (inside the San Mateo Food Hall); 650-260-3961, Instagram: @thebackhousesm. For same-day orders, Nguyen suggests texting to verify that she can accommodate the order. linktr.ee/thebackhousesm.



Courtesy Jui Nguyen

Jui Nguyen, the chef behind The Backhouse, has learned to thrive on the Peninsula's sushi scene with her own unique creations.

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