

The Almanac

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

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‘Surreal and horrific.’ Thousands gather in Palo Alto to support Israel after Hamas attacks

Religious leaders, politicians join crowd for a demonstration of solidarity

By Gennady Sheyner

Nirit Hazan grew up in Nahal Oz, an Israeli kibbutz about 700 yards from the Gaza Strip border, and when she first got word last Friday night that Hamas militants had infiltrated the Gaza border, she felt sick to her stomach and thought that her worst childhood nightmare was coming to life.

Hazan now works at Stanford University and lives in Cupertino but she thought of her 86-year-old mother, Tami Halevy, who still lives at Nahal Oz. In what she called “the most surreal and horrific day” of her life, Hazan urged her mother to go into her mamad, a secured room akin to a bomb shelter. When Halevy got there, she remained in touch with Hazan and her four siblings over WhatsApp, reporting about the gunshots close to her home and asking for news. She also learned that her mother is unable to lock the mamad.

“The thought of her sheltering in place all by herself in an unlocked mamad while

terrorists are roaming her beautiful kibbutz, going from house to house, looking to murder innocent civilians and taking others, including children and women as prisoners of war, was something beyond our darkest and wildest imagination,” Hazan said at an Oct. 10 event at the Oshman JCC in Palo Alto.

Over the coming hours, the nightmare unfolded along the border as other kibbutzim were targeted with rockets or excursions. Finally, about 17 hours after the attack began, a group of Israeli commandos arrived to evacuate Halevy, allowing her to get to a bus that took her to another daughter’s house in Jerusalem, Hazan said.

“The trauma that she endured is unimaginable and yet we feel blessed that she is alive,” Hazan said, before listing the names of various friends and neighbors and who lost their lives or were abducted.

Hazan was one of hundreds of people in the JCC who were personally touched by the broiling conflict, which began on Oct. 7 when Hamas crossed the Gaza



Magali Gauthier

A person wears the Israeli flag at a pro-Israel solidarity event at the Oshman Family JCC in Palo Alto on Oct. 10.

Strip border and targeted Israeli villages in a sweeping and shocking strike that resulted in more than 1,000 people getting killed and dozens kidnapped, according to the Associated Press. The

suffering has since grown more widespread as the Israeli military reacted by pummeling the Gaza Strip with airstrikes that have killed about 800 people and wounded thousands more,

according to the AP.

“No one is untouched by this,” said Zack Bodner, president and CEO of the Oshman Family JCC.

See **ISRAEL**, page 17

Ladera residents lobby school district for more access to Woodland School campus play areas

Neighbors say they want to be able to use field and playground after school gets out, not to wait until 6 p.m.

By Neil Gonzales

The Ladera community is seeking assurances of fair access to play areas on public school property long leased by the private Woodland School.

On Wednesday night, Oct. 4, Laderans turned out in full force to what became a lively meeting of the Las Lomitas Elementary School District board as they

contended that Woodland has restricted community use of the field and other recreational space on the property at 360 La Cuesta Dr.

“I can’t tell you how much I support the field being used by the community,” Diane Schrader, who has lived in Ladera for 20 years, told the board. “I don’t think that we ever as a community thought that we were going to give up rights — our

rights to play, our rights to come together.”

Woodland leaders also participated in the discussion, citing safety as a key reason for trying to keep general neighborhood use of the recreational areas to outside school hours. But they also expressed appreciation for and willingness to work with community members on their concerns.

“School safety and security

is our top priority,” said Ramzi Ramsey, a board member at Woodland, an independent preschool-to-eighth-grade institution that also offers enrichment, extended-day and other programs.

However, Ramsey said, “we will do everything in our power to ensure Ladera has access to school facilities outside of operating hours. For the Ladera parents, who also share security and

safety concerns for their children and grandchildren, I hope you can appreciate where the Woodland community is coming from.”

In all, 52 people spoke on the community-access issues during the meeting’s public-comment segment — 48 in person and four via Zoom, according to district spokesperson Kelli Twomey.

See **WOODLAND SCHOOL**, page 12

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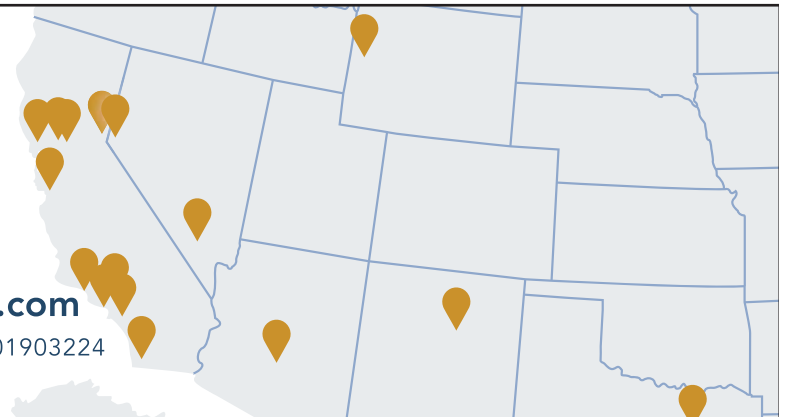
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Local News

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Courtesy The Price is Right

Menlo Park resident Andreas Judas with The Price is Right host Drew Carey during filming of the long-running game show.

A hospital pledge takes Menlo Park fan to The Price is Right studio audience

By Cameron Rebosio

Sitting in The Price is Right studio, Menlo Park resident Andreas Judas told the person sitting next to him that he was nervous. Before he knew it, he was on the stage.

Judas, 56, went to The Price is Right's set in Glendale for the taping this August, after years of watching the long-running game show that pulls contestants at random from

the studio audience. As a child, he'd watch it on sick days, and when he was in the hospital as an adult in 2001, he got back into the habit. Being able to watch the show live in the studio audience was a sign that his health finally had turned a corner, he said.

On his last stay in the hospital, as Judas was watching the show, he said that he and his wife Jennifer made a promise to each other.

"My wife was always saying

to me, 'When you get better, we're gonna go down there and do it,'" Judas said. "And so when they opened the new studio, and I started feeling better, I said, 'Okay, let's do it.'"

After recovering from complications following his second heart transplant in July 2022, Judas said that getting to go to the show felt like a milestone.

Sitting in the studio, Judas struggled to hear the audience

See **PLEDGE**, page 7

Menlo Park takes a fourth swing at the housing element

The city has been trying to get state approval for over a year

By Cameron Rebosio

The Menlo Park City Council approved the fourth iteration of the housing element, hoping to finally get state approval, at a lengthy Oct. 10 meeting.

"I feel like I get a lot of questions and feedback from residents (saying) 'What is wrong with our housing element? Why can't you guys get over the finish line?'" Mayor Jen Wolosin said. "So I think our priority is really to get this thing done."

The housing element update

is a state-mandated process that occurs once every eight years — and this time, the state is strongly enforcing the regulations. Menlo Park's deadline for getting approval from the California Department of Housing and Community Development was Jan. 31, and its failure to do so has left the city open to so-called builder's remedy projects — like the high-rise proposal at the old Sunset Magazine headquarters on Willow Road — that can bypass the city's development rules.

Menlo Park first submitted its housing element to the HCD over a year ago, in July 2022, but state housing officials sent it back, asking for revisions. A second attempt was shot down by the state in April. The third and most recent iteration of the housing element was submitted in June and rejected in August.

The state identified several problems with the latest housing element, including a lack of analysis of housing development sites and programs, inadequate

See **HOUSING ELEMENT**, page 16

Native American graves found at Elco Yards development in downtown Redwood City

By Sue Dremann

Redwood City's vast Elco Yards development is the site of an ancient Native American burial ground, and for at least a year, an undisclosed number of skeletal remains — some perhaps hundreds or thousands of years old — were uncovered while excavating for the underground parking structure.

The burial grounds, which were uncovered between 2022 and 2023, shed light on a potentially significant ancient site that is a long-forgotten part of Redwood City's history and one that seemed to be largely discounted and thought to have been destroyed long ago.

The South Main Mixed-Use Project, or Elco Yards, 1601 El Camino Real, is a nearly \$600 million multiple-use development covering 8.3 acres and six blocks on multiple parcels.

A consultant's evaluation of the site, which is located in the 1300 block of Main Street, found the soil was thoroughly disturbed from previous earth moving and construction over the years. AECOM, the consultant for the developer, IQHQ, determined the Elco Yards development didn't have significant historical or pre-conquest value because it

was so disturbed.

But with the discovery of the skeletal remains, whether that evaluation still stands remains an open question. Neither the developer, IQHQ, nor the City of Redwood City would discuss the findings.

The city and the developer have kept the discovery under wraps, with the city stating state law protects details of archaeological findings, such as what was found and the location.

Jennifer Yamaguma, deputy city manager, said that aside from information that is protected and exempt from disclosure under state law, the landowner is required to consider the most likely descendant's recommendations for treatment of the remains in accordance with Public Resources law.

"Therefore, the city is not at liberty to share information without the most likely descendant's consent. The city underscores that this is an exceptionally sensitive issue and we hold the highest respect for those concerned," Yamaguma said in an Oct. 5 email.

"The city can confirm that the remains were discovered between the summers of 2022 and 2023. The

See **ELCO YARDS**, page 8



Sue Dremann

The South Main Mixed-Use Project, or Elco Yards, 1601 El Camino Real, is a nearly \$600 million multiple-use development covering 8.3 acres and six blocks.

Palo Alto residents reminisce about 'black mamba' scare that gripped city 30 years ago

In October 1993, the city was obsessed with a rumored snake-on-the-loose

By Ashwini Gangal

There are archives and then there are archives. The first kind comprises dusty cabinets and digital drawers. The second kind comprises living memory. This is a story about the latter kind.

On Oct. 12, 1993, Palo Alto's Animal Services Department got a call about a missing 7-foot-long black mamba — a venomous snake of sub-Saharan origin — that was spotted somewhere around Ross Road. Jean McCown, mayor at the time, interrupted a city council meeting to deliver a talk, televised on local cable, to tell residents to exercise caution.

Wagging tongues fanned the fire and mayhem ensued. Door-to-door police check-ins followed. Anti-venom professionals were mobilized. Posters were made. The police created a special task force to find the snake and fielded over 1,000 phone calls from people claiming to have information about it.

So-called snake hunters and snake bite experts came forward. School was canceled. Social events were postponed. Locals tiptoed for days, anxious they might encounter the gigantic reptile.

"Mambaphobia" became a word. In the weeks that followed, a youth soccer team was named after the black mamba and T-shirts with slogans about surviving the snake were sported. The snake was never found and the authorities were divided about whether it was a hoax after all.

Cut to the present: This week marks the 30th anniversary of this outlandish incident. Stories about it live on — part urban



Courtesy Getty Images, Marie Holding

A report of a giant venomous snake on the loose paralyzed Palo Alto 30 years ago, but the escaped black mamba was never found.

legend, part transgenerational folklore, part myth — in the collective memory of Palo Altans. Surely there've been dozens of prank calls since. Yet the black mamba episode holds a special place in the city's aging consciousness.

Fond recollections

Vernon Schabert, who was a 24-year-old Stanford graduate student at the time, covering Palo Alto City Council meetings for KZSU, recalls the incident vividly. Back then, he was responsible for monitoring the remote broadcast equipment, recapping the proceedings and providing public announcements during meeting breaks. His commentary was simulcast on the local access cable station.

"That night, information about a possible snake on the loose worked its way to council chambers and I was asked to announce the little we knew during the break," Schabert said.

"This wasn't interrupt-

news. I doubt that we routinely had a large audience, but our broadcast was one of the few ways that people could get any real-time updates that night," he opined. "The story seemed to capture unusual interest among the council members, or at least the staff who were passing along new information.

"But as the developing story interrupted the usual citizen complaints about noise from Shoreline Amphitheater and zoning variances on Professorville remodels, I kept thinking to myself about the snake's oddly specific breed," he said. "If the news was real — we had no way of knowing at the time — wasn't it exponentially rarer to lose a black mamba than a more popular exotic pet like a python or a baby tiger? If this were a hoax, why choose such an obscure variety of snake that would require people to look up the breed to know whether it was even dangerous?"

Kobe Bryant, who later

popularized this snake as his nickname, hadn't even been drafted yet, Schabert pointed out.

Carol Rogers, who was about 34 years old in 1993, with an almost-5-year-old daughter, remembers it too.

"At the time of the scare, my daughter was in kindergarten at Palo Verde school. The back of the school opens onto Rorke Way, and at that time the school buses used Rorke for dropping off and picking up students, which scared the school," she wrote in an email.

With the kindergarten classrooms and playground at that end of school, along with lots of trees and bushes, the kindergartners were not allowed to play outside at recess and lunchtime, she said.

That's not all Rogers recalls. "Also, there was caution tape put around the shady playground area and none of the older children were allowed to play under the trees," she said.

As the days rolled by, the school started letting children play in those areas again.

"As for the caution tape, I can remember it flapping in the wind, broken and not removed for a couple of weeks," she said.

Sylvia Gartner, who was around 50 at the time, said, "I don't know if this is correct, but I think the mamba was 'seen' on Louis Road. That's a wild guess on my part. There was local news coverage about it. I also think there might have been one or two local herpetologists looking for our venomous friend.

"I was not at all worried about it. I think I sort of knew that this serpent was not a very large creature, despite punching over its weight in the venom category. I thought that looking around would be a waste of time, and I'd be better served spending my time ignoring the whole thing. It was funny though."

William Warrior weighs in

In 1993, William Warrior was in his 14th year serving as field officer for Palo Alto's Police Department Animal Control Division. Recently retired, he recalled that an office volunteer fielded the phone call about the missing snake.

In the days and weeks that followed, Warrior responded to multiple calls reporting mamba

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The **Almanac**

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Berman's election bills advance with governor's signature

Legislation would reform ballot design, criminalize 'double voting' and allow voters to 'cure' their ballots more easily

By Gennady Sheyner

On Oct. 10, Governor Gavin Newsom signed a package of election bills authored by Assembly member Marc Berman, including legislation that aims to improve ballot design and that explicitly bans people from voting in two elections in different states on the same day.

The two bills, known respectively as bills AB 1219 and AB 1539, aim to address election accessibility and security, Berman said in a statement.

In addition, Newsom signed Berman's AB 1037, which allows election officials to offer voters the option of curing their vote-by-mail ballot electronically if there are problems with the signature on the ballot envelope.

Berman lauded Newsom's decision to enact his bills, which he argued demonstrate California's "unwavering commitment" to expanding ballot access and strengthening democracy.

"We've taken steps to send a vote-by-mail ballot to every active registered voter, create a system to track your ballot and increase transparency, make registration simpler, make ballot language more accessible, strengthen our elections cybersecurity and increase access to ballot drop boxes," Berman said in a statement. "I want to thank Governor Newsom for signing this new package of elections bills to continue this critically important work to advance election security and accessibility."

AB 1219, which is supported by Secretary of State Shirley Weber, will allow the state to follow up on the recommendations of the Ballot Design

Advisory Committee, a group of election experts and stakeholders that was formed in 2019 through another Berman bill. The committee issued a report in August 2022 with a series of recommendations for improving the ballot. These include providing ballot instructions in plain language, updating font size requirements, offering flexibility for jurisdictions to provide ballots in multiple languages and creating provisions to make sure that ballots would not be invalidated through administrative errors.

Berman called Newsom's decision to sign AB 1037 "tremendously heartening" and said ballot design "plays a critical role in ensuring that every voter properly understands how to participate in their democracy and have their voice heard."

Weber also lauded the effort to make ballots more user-friendly. The easier the state makes its ballots to read and understand the more likely voters will be able to participate in elections, she said in a statement.

"The design advancements in this bill will go a long way towards making it easier for voters to participate in our democracy," Weber said.

AB 1539, on the other hand, targets the rare situations where someone votes twice in different states on the same day. It would make such an act a misdemeanor or under state law.

The bill was proposed by the Santa Clara District Attorney's Office in Santa Clara County, according to Berman. Though he noted that voter fraud is "extremely rare" in California, three residents in the county had been involved in double voting

and the Santa Clara County district attorney was forced to defer prosecution to the other state, which unlike California has a law that explicitly outlaws multi-state voting, according to Berman's news release.

"One person, one vote. It's our Democracy and we have to take care of it," Santa Clara County District Attorney Jeff Rosen said in a statement about AB 1539.

The third bill, AB 1037, aims to expand voter access by giving voters more options for addressing signature discrepancies on the ballots. Berman said many voters opt not to "cure" their ballots upon receiving notifications about the signature issue. Others return a signature verification statement but still have their ballot challenged because the handwritten signatures on their ballot envelope do not match the electronic signatures that they have provided to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The bill would give voters additional options to verify their signatures through electronic means that would be provided by the election officials, Berman said in a statement.

"Far too many ballots go uncured due to uncorrected mismatches or missing signatures," Berman said. "Text to cure' has been successfully utilized in Nevada and Colorado, allowing those voters the option to cure their ballot signature issues easier and faster. AB 1037 will give California's voters more flexibility and provide greater efficiency." ■

Email Staff Writer
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PLEDGE

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member's names being called over the enthusiastic cheers of the crowd. Instead, he saw a cue card go up with his name on it, and barely heard the show's iconic invitation to "Come on down!" from host Drew Carey.

"It's kind of surreal," Judas said. "Everything happens so quickly. On TV, everything is so clear, but you know, when you're sitting there, there's like three cameras between the audience and the actual stage."

Judas looked back to his wife and could hardly see her past

the slew of cameras.

The show, spanning 52 seasons, centers around contestants guessing the prices of various items in order to win prizes. He played a game called Swap Meet, where a contestant is shown a prize, then three others, and have to match one of the three to the unknown price of the first one.

After months of keeping quiet about the show with his friends and family, Judas's episode is finally airing on Monday, Oct. 16, at 10 a.m. on CBS.

"It's definitely an experience," Judas said. "You're so excited and everything for so long. It's actually a little exhausting. But

also, you know, in a good way." ■

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

LEHUA GREENMAN



"The trees of Autumn are about to show us how beautiful it is to let go."

650.245.1845 COMPASS

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Sellers Buying Down a Loan Rate

Dear Monica: To spur activity on my home which is for sale, should I offer to buy down a buyer's loan rate by paying extra points on their behalf? - Daniel M.

Dear Daniel: Buying down loan rates is a great way to entice buyers and can be good for both sellers and buyers.

Also it can be cheaper for you to buy down a loan rate than to reduce the purchase price of your home. Buyers too may save more money on mortgage payments than if they negotiated a lower purchase price.

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

October 27, 2023
3rd Quarter 2023

AN IMPORTANT NOTICE REQUIRED BY CALIFORNIA DIVISION OF DRINKING WATER

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

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

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

We routinely monitor for the presence of drinking water contaminants. Average results for water samples for the last four quarters have manganese levels of 51 ppb in well #1 and 138 ppb in well #2 (ppb=parts per billion). This is above the secondary drinking water standard, or secondary maximum contaminant level of 50 ppb.

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

What should I do?

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

What happened? What is being done?

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

The Company has been working with State agencies and the City of Menlo Park to complete the planning of a manganese treatment facility and construction is well along at the Company's property.

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

For further information contact:
Secretary-Treasurer Telephone 650-321-2723
Email: oconnorwater@gmail.com
O'Connor Tract Co-Operative Water Co., System 4110019
P.O. Box 1375, Palo Alto, California 94302-1375

ELCO YARDS*continued from page 5*

project's qualified archeologist contacted the San Mateo County Coroner when the remains were encountered. It is unknown how unusual it is to find Native American remains during construction and excavation projects in Redwood City," she said.

The discovery might have remained quiet except for observant business owners whose establishments are adjacent to the site. They saw a flurry of activity, then a tent over the area where archaeologists were brushing off remains in a deep pit dug by a backhoe, first in June 2022 and later in the summer of 2023. Work at the massive development ceased near the location during that time, they said.

"I asked what they found, and they said, 'Oh, just some rocks,'" the owner of a nearby establishment, who didn't want his name published, said. He later saw a photograph a worker had taken of a skull and an elbow right across from his door. They dug below the burial mound and found multiple skeletons, he said.

"They dug and put in new lines and fiber optic cables.

The (native) elders came and blessed the remains and they were to be taken where they could properly be buried," he said.

This news organization hasn't been able to confirm how many skeletons were found. The city and the developer have not provided any details.

The business owner said the remains were likely not previously discovered because no one had dug that deeply before. Now they are digging underground parking garages for Elco Yards, he said.

But the area is known to have had an ancient shell mound. Shell mounds, or shell middens, are deposits of mollusks and organic material built up over time by native peoples. They are also often burial sites, with remains buried underneath and shells and other materials added on top over time. Some can be as tall as a three-story building, such as a large mound in Emeryville on Shellmound Road.

The Main Street shell mound was significant enough in the mid-1800s to also have earned the name of a street.

"From the intersection of Maple Street to Woodside Road, Main Street was once called Mound Street because

it traversed the top of an old Indian mound," according to a 2014 Historic Resources Advisory Committee report, "Main Street Historic District Expansion."

An 1861 map of Hancock's Addition, a subdivision in Redwood City, shows the location of Mound Street, where it would have crossed the shell mound near the present site.

In recent times, this archaeological site was identified during utility installation in 2001 and described as having prehistoric and historic-era components, according to the Final Draft EIR by consultants AECOM.

But researchers also theorized that the area "could be the result of grading and redeposition," (a secondary deposit) since the entire site was described as being "disturbed by historic and modern construction activities possibly as early as the 1850s," according to the EIR.

However, a 2010 archaeological study cited in the EIR expanded the site boundaries despite the disturbed soils.

The site was recommended as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion D — likely to yield information

regarding important questions in prehistory and history.

For the Elco Yards project, AECOM conducted a drill-and-excavated-trenches survey in July and September 2019, boring five holes as deep as 38 feet and digging four trenches as deep as five feet below the surface. While they identified small pieces of flaked rock and some mollusk shells associated with native inhabitants, "no clearly prehistoric cultural materials were recovered from the other trenches or bores," AECOM found. The report concluded that the portion of the archaeological site in the project area "was not a historical resource or a unique archaeological resource for the purposes of CEQA (the California Environmental Quality Act)."

In a separate development at an adjacent site, Stantec, consultants for 1180 Main St., requested a Sacred Lands File search and a Native American contact list for the project site in 2018 from the California Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). The NAHC responded that "no culturally sensitive properties were located within or near the project site," according to Stantec's 1180 Main Street Project, Cultural Resources Inventory and Evaluation Report in 2019.

Yet both Stantec's and AECOM's reports determined that "the potential exists for the cumulative projects to encounter previously unidentified cultural resources," including archeological resources, during ground-disturbing activities. Disturbance of these resources during the construction of the proposed project or other cumulative projects could result in "significant cumulative impacts" on archeological resources. "The contribution of the proposed project could be cumulatively considerable," AECOM wrote.

In the event of finding human remains or significant artifacts, a mitigation plan identified in the environmental impact report would reduce the impacts to "less than significant," the EIR found.

The mitigation measures included worker training to reduce damage to the remains and artifacts, stopping work within the area and in a surrounding buffer zone, bringing in an archaeologist to evaluate the finds, and notifying the nearest tribal descendants.

For significant finds, a data recovery plan must be filed with the California Office of Historic Preservation's Northwest Information Center. The center and the city didn't

confirm whether a data recovery plan had been submitted. Construction projects where significant archaeological finds are found are required to stop their work until the data recovery plan is approved.

The public isn't likely to find out if — or how — significant the findings are. The number of individuals found, their genders and ages, their condition and the depth at which they were found aren't being divulged by the city.

Yamaguma said — and California law states — the city isn't required to disclose records relating to archaeological site information, including reports held by the Department of Parks and Recreation, the State Historical Resources Commission, the State Lands Commission, the Native American Heritage Commission, or another state or local agency, or records the agency obtains through consultation between a California Native American tribe and a state or local agency.

Requests for comment from the Amah-Mutsun Tribal Band of Mission San Juan Bautista regarding whether the city and developer followed their recommendations weren't returned.

State legislation Assembly Bill 52, Native American Consultation, requires the lead agency in a development to begin consultation with any California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project — if the tribe requests the lead agency — in writing, to be informed through a formal notification of proposed projects in areas traditionally and culturally affiliated with the tribe. The tribe must also respond in writing within 30 days of receipt of the formal notification and request the consultation.

No California Native American tribes requested consultation from the lead agency, Redwood City, according to AECOM. Letters to six representatives of potentially affected Native American tribes were sent by certified mail in July 2019. The letters summarized the proposed project, described the potentially affected cultural resources, and solicited feedback from the tribes. They were sent a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR, but the consultants said they didn't receive any input at the time of the final EIR in October 2020. ■

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

TECHNOLOGY

Tragedy or Transcendence?



"We are both spectators and actors in the great drama of existence."
-Neils Bohr

Boundaries of Humanity
Public Symposium
October 27-28, 2023
STANFORD UNIVERSITY



Woodside Day of the Horse

Let it Be in 2023

THE 60'S & 70'S

Friday, Oct. 13

**KICK-OFF RECEPTION
AND YOUTH ART SHOW**

5:00 - 7:00 pm

Golden Gate Sotheby's
International Realty

Saturday, Oct. 14

**TRAIL RIDE,
COSTUME CONTEST,
AND AFTER PARTY**

The Town of Woodside and
The Horse Park at Woodside

Sunday, Oct. 15

**FAMILY FUN HORSE FAIR
AND PONY RIDES**

10:30 am - 1:30 pm

Woodside Town Hall and
Woodside Road locations

RECEPTION

Live! Beatles cover band
"Nigel and Clive &
the British Invasion"

Delicious nibbles, and summer
beverages

YOUTH ART SHOW

Equestrian art by artists age 18 and
younger

TRAIL RIDE 11:00 am - 3:00 pm

Registration required: online til Oct 11
or in person at The Horse Park at
Woodside on the 14th. Costume
contest for registered riders.

AFTER PARTY 3:00 - 6:00 pm

The Horse Park at Woodside

Announcing costume contest winners,
Food Court

Live! Beatles cover band
"Nigel and Clive & the British Invasion"

Woodside Vaulters demonstration
Horse Park Polo Club match

HORSE FAIR

Free! Equestrian exhibits and
demonstrations, face painting,
equine crafts, live music

Free! Plush ponies to first 300 kids
Woodside Community Museum

PONY RIDES

3117 Woodside Road

Offered by Chaparral Ranch

Free pony rides, petting party mini
horses & donkeys, art play

RELAX & REFUEL

The Village Hub

@ Woodside Village Church

Jumping castles, food, beverages,
great coffee

DETAILS



SCAN ME

www.whoa94062.org

Organized by the Woodside-area Horse Owners Association

Endorsed and supported by the Town of Woodside and the Woodside Community Foundation



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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Menlo Park fire's annual pancake breakfast returns

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District is celebrating Fire Prevention Week this week with the return of the annual pancake breakfast for the first time since 2019.

The 23rd annual MPFPD pancake breakfast will be held at the main fire station, 300 Middlefield Road in Menlo Park, from 7:30 to 11 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 14.

The pancake breakfast celebrates its in-person return following virtual fundraisers for the last three years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event is sponsored by the Menlo Park Firefighters Association, the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, the Stanford Park Hotel and the Junior League of Palo Alto-Mid Peninsula.

Proceeds from the pancake breakfast go to support burn victims in California through the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation.

"The Pancake Breakfast and open house at the fire station is a family favorite every year," MPFPD Fire Marshal Jon Johnston said. "It's a pleasure to partner with the Junior League and other local community organizations to raise money for this worthy cause."

The event includes pancakes cooked by firefighters, coffee cake from Meta and activities for children. The breakfast will also include a silent auction for a one-night weekend stay at the Stanford Park Hotel with breakfast included.

The Schapelhouman Museum, named for former Menlo Park Fire Protection District Chief Harold Schapelhouman, will be open for public tours. The museum, at Menlo Park Fire Station 6, at 700 Oak Grove Ave., houses old fire trucks and MPFPD memorabilia. It will be open for public tours Saturday, Oct. 14, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

—Cameron Rebosio

Woodside celebrates Day of the Horse

Woodside's annual Day of the Horse event starts with a reception and youth art show Friday evening, Oct. 13. On Saturday, Oct. 14, there's a progressive trail ride from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., followed by an afterparty.

The main event is the family-friendly Horse Fair from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 15, featuring free activities ranging from pony rides and face-painting to live music, crafts and demonstrations celebrating all things equine.

The fair takes place at Woodside Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road. More information is on the Woodside Area Horse Owners (WHOA!) website at whoa94062.org.

—Andrea Gemmet

Weekend Caltrain service suspended

Caltrain will be suspending its service between San Francisco and Millbrae stations on the weekend of Oct. 14 to 15 to give way to the rail line's electrification project, agency officials said.

Passengers are advised to use alternative transit options, such as the bus bridge service.

According to the transit agency, these service suspensions will be the 20th and 21st of approximately 30 weekends in 2023 in which operations will be adjusted to make way to construction and testing for electrified service.

The electrified service is expected to launch passenger service in the fall of 2024.

County gets grant to make 101 crossings bike- and pedestrian-friendly

Crossing U.S. Highway 101 in San Mateo County will be more user-friendly for pedestrians and bicyclists after a Caltrans grant was approved to be used for highway improvement projects, county officials said.

San Mateo County Transportation Authority officials said in a statement Monday that their Board of Directors recently authorized the receipt of a \$400,156 funding from Caltrans for sustainable transportation planning.

County officials plan to use the funding for the Active 101 project aimed to improve crossings and intersections for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders within a quarter-mile of Highway 101.

Besides the grant, \$51,844 in Measure A funds will help county officials identify and prioritize mobility projects, such as sidewalk construction, intersection improvements, and closure of bikeway gaps.

Measure A is a half-cent general sales tax approved by voters to support essential services and maintain or replace facilities in San Mateo County.

—Bay City News Service



Town of Atherton

Planning Commission

October 25

REGULAR MEETING, 6:00 P.M.

This meeting is held virtually and in-person at the Council Chambers
80 Fair Oaks Lane

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the **Atherton Planning Commission** will hold a public hearing to consider the projects as listed below during their regular meeting.

This meeting will be held in-person and via teleconference pursuant to Government Code section 54953(e) to provide the safest environment for staff and the public while allowing for public participation. The public may participate in the Planning Commission Meeting via Zoom Meeting or by attending in-person in the Council Chambers at 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027.

Town of Atherton is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom Meeting.

Topic: Atherton Planning Commission Regular Meeting Time: **October 25, 2023, 06:00 PM** Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://ci-atherton-ca.zoom.us/j/84150249099>

Meeting ID: 841 5024 9099

One tap mobile

+13017158592,84150249099# US (Washington DC)

+13052241968,84150249099# US

Find your local number: <https://ci-atherton-ca.zoom.us/j/84150249099>

Remote Public Comments:

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

Email: planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us

ADU ordinance comments to Town Planner Brittany Bendix
bbendix@ci.atherton.ca.us

Projects under Public Hearing:

A. Description: Lot Line Adjustment, Two-lot Subdivision Tentative Map review and Lot Line Redesignation of the parcels on 170 and 178 Atherton Avenue (APN 070-070-110 / 280), zoned R1-A— The Tentative Map includes the Lot Line Adjustment and subdivision of parcels. The Lot Line Redesignation will be a zoning requirement for development purposes.

CEQA: The proposal has been determined to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to CEQA Section 15315. Minor Land Divisions.

B. Description: Tree Protection Zone Exception for five heritage trees at 6x the trees diameter for a JADU and Garage at 97 Holbrook Lane, zoned R1-A (APN 060-171-010 / Permit PTPZ23-00009)

CEQA: This proposal has been determined to be categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to: CEQA Section 15304, Minor Alterations to Land

C. Description: ADU ordinance amendment The purpose of the amendments is to ensure consistency with state mandated requirements which define the maximum standards a local jurisdiction can apply to **Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)**.

CEQA: The proposal has been determined to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to CEQA Section 15305, Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations.

A copy of the Planning Commission staff report and application materials can be found online, by **Friday, October 20, 2023**, here: <https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/641/Agendas-Minutes>

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that said application is set for hearing by the Planning Commission at its meeting on **October 25, 2023, at 6:00 PM** in-person and via teleconference accessible through the above-described information, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the projects listed in the public hearing section should or should not be approved.

IF YOU CHALLENGE the listed projects in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission at, or prior to, the public hearing.

Planning Commission decisions are appealable by any aggrieved person to the City Council within 10 days of the date of the decision. If you have any questions on the item please contact If you have any questions on the item please contact Radha Hayagreev, Senior Planner, (408)796-4370 at rhayagreev@ci.atherton.ca.us or directly to the Planning Commission at planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us. For the ADU ordinance update, kindly contact Town Planner Brittany Bendix at bbendix@ci.atherton.ca.us (408) 688-2432

Any attendee who wishes accommodation for a disability should contact the Building Division at (650) 752-0542 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Date Posted: October 6, 2023.

ATHERTON PLANNING COMMISSION

/s/ Radha Hayagreev

Radha Hayagreev, Consulting Senior Planner

A look at the educational rights for youth in the child welfare system

Over 70,000 children and youth in California have an open case in the child welfare system

By Betty Marquez Rosales / EdSource

Over 70,000 children and youth in California have an open case in the child welfare system, according to the most recent point-in-time count, with over 51,000 of them also in foster care.

Many come under supervision of their county Department of Children and Family Services after a reported allegation of child neglect or maltreatment, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation or emotional abuse; for others, it happens when a parent voluntarily requests support, often due to a child's behavioral challenges.

Children in an out-of-home placement in the child welfare system have access to particular educational rights. This is meant to ensure stability for them during a time of uncertainty.

A child under the supervision of the Department of Children and Family Services often comes into contact with multiple individuals. Depending on the details of their case, this could include social workers,

child advocates, police officers, detectives, attorneys, judges and others. If they are removed from their home, they might be placed in foster care. While not all youth in the child welfare system are in foster care, all foster youth are in the child welfare system.

"When these rights were established, the purpose was to keep children in some kind of consistency, some kind of security, or something that felt just familiar to them," said Jessica Gonzalez, youth justice program manager at CASA/LA, a national organization of court-appointed special advocates for youth in the child welfare system. CASA volunteers are sometimes appointed as educational rights holders for children. Even when they are not, they often advocate for education rights to be enforced, Gonzalez said.

A child's case might also enter the juvenile dependency court. While the primary goal for youth in dependency court is to "preserve the family" by keeping a child either in the home of their parent or a

relative, they might be placed in foster care or adopted.

Child welfare cases are complex, and outcomes depend on a multitude of factors, including the caretaking ability of a parent, whether a relative is able to take in the child, if an appeal is filed, and more.

This story includes information on whom the educational rights apply to as well as general insight into some of these rights. Many were implemented with the enactment of AB 490 in 2003 yet remain difficult to understand for many families due to the complexity of the child welfare system.

How many children are in the child welfare system?

There were 51,339 children and youth with an open case and in foster care as of April 1. The count was published by the California Child Welfare Indicators Project, a data and technical assistance collaboration between the University of California at Berkeley and the California Department of Social Services.

This point-in-time count

includes those who are under the age of 1 up to age 21 and who have "an open child welfare or probation supervised placement episode" in California's Child Welfare Services/Case Management System. The count peaked in 2016, with nearly 63,000 open cases. The lowest number of open cases occurred this year.

Allegations of child maltreatment are much higher, however; between April 2022 and April 2023, there were more than 442,000 reported allegations.

Which children have access to particular educational rights?

Youth in the child welfare system and in an out-of-home placement have access to specific educational rights. An out-of-home placement can include foster homes, group homes, shelters and hotels through the Department of Children and Family Services, and other similar placements.

The purpose of these rights is to accommodate the child's education as much as possible during a time of instability.

What are some of the educational rights for those in the child welfare system?

A child in the welfare system and in an out-of-home placement has access to the following rights, among others:

School stability. This includes the right to remain enrolled at their school of origin, which is the school they were enrolled in at the time their child welfare case began, and the right to be transported to that school.

Enrichment access. Youth have the right to access the same type of enrichment activities as their peers. This can include academic resources and extra-curricular activities.

Placement in the least restrictive setting. Students have the right to be placed in the academic setting that's least restrictive, or least strictly controlled, for them to be able to achieve academic progress and success.

Immediate enrollment. Regardless of whether a student has all the enrollment

See **CHILD WELFARE**, page 14

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WOODLAND SCHOOL

continued from page 1

At one point, board President Jason Morimoto pleaded for calm as emotions rose during the public testimony.

"I should not have to remind my own community here to please be respectful," Morimoto said, "and I ask for no jeering, no applauding, no clapping. I hope that all of us here can be able to do that. It's not that big of an ask, and I thank you again for your cooperation."

Much of the contentiousness and confusion involve conflicting information from different but related documents about the operating hours at Woodland, which has a lease agreement with the district for the former Ladera School campus going back to the early 1980s.

Woodland's student and family programs run from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., according to Head of School Jennifer Warren.

But a 2017 lease amendment twice states Woodland's school hours being 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. yet in another section indicates 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Warren told The Almanac in an email that "the intended lease term" was 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

However, she said Woodland's existing conditional use permit

(CUP) with the county goes to 5:30 p.m.

What Woodland should have done following the amendment approval was ask the county to align the CUP hours with the lease, said Warren, who was not head of school at the time. While Woodland has a Portola Valley mailing address, it's located in unincorporated San Mateo County.

"This would have extended the hours from 5:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. by the County of San Mateo," she said. "We now are requesting this amendment in the current CUP renewal process."

Ladera residents, though, said they find those ending hours too late to be allowed to use the field and other areas of the campus. They feel access should be more in line with the regular hours at the district's Las Lomitas and La Entrada schools, which typically let out at about 3 p.m.

A letter to the board individually sent by about 30 residents argues that the play areas had been available to neighbors outside district regular school hours but "are now severely restricted from the local community they were originally intended to serve."

The letter also complains that Woodland's intentions came "without any public notice or

any input from the community."

In addition, the letter points out that the site provides "the only public field accessible within walking distance of the Ladera community."

It also has basketball courts, is next to the sports-related Ladera Recreation District and is "surrounded by pedestrian-friendly pathways that encourage social interaction and foster a close-knit community," the letter says. "These adjoined spaces have served as a vital gathering and recreational area for generations of Laderans. Limiting community access is detrimental for all Laderans, especially Ladera public-school students, who are geographically isolated from Las Lomitas and La Entrada school campuses and no longer have sufficient access to outdoor play areas."

At the meeting, resident Trevor Oliver told the board that his two young children love to run around and play soccer. But "they don't have any place to play after school when they get home," he said. He argued that the district "is failing approximately 15% of its students by giving them no open space that they can play."

Some residents sounded a cooperative or conciliatory tone.

"Ladera is important to me," Josh Rubin said, his voice trailing

at times. "I grew up in Ladera. I moved away. I went to college. I lived in Palo Alto. I lived in Menlo Park. But where did I come back to raise my two kids? Ladera. Because it's a special community, and that's why Woodland chose Ladera to create a program, to grow their children. And we're together. We're so together. We are the same community, and we need to be that."

Warren also addressed the board that night. "I take the concerns and perspectives expressed tonight very seriously," she said. "I connect with anyone from the Ladera community who has had issues ranging from street parking to campus access. I strive to respond to all of the emails and notices on the Listserv in a timely manner. And with as much transparency as possible, I approve as many facilities-use requests as I can to share the campus with the broader community."

She works with the homeowners' group Ladera Community Association and recreation center "to do our part as a neighbor in Ladera and provide as much access as we can outside of our full hours of operation," Warren added. "But the most important role that I have every day is to ensure the safety of Woodland student, staff, families and our guests."

District board members believe a resolution to the community's concerns needs to balance safety considerations with providing places for residents, particularly children in the area, to recreate.

However, they said, the matter warrants much further study, including the effort to clarify details in the lease.

"I think we all have our students' best interests in mind both in terms of their wellness and access to spaces as well as their safety," board member Laura Moon said. "I think what's become clear to me is that there are various points of confusion within the lease in terms of conflicting points of information as well as terms that may not be very clear."

The district's legal counsel, Gina Beltramo, advised that seeking any clarification in a contract likely requires another lease amendment.

Because of the multitude of factors that the board feels it has to delve into more, including legal-related issues, the trustees plan to meet at a future date in closed session.

"I think what is apparent is that there's going to be a need to be several more conversations here to really kind of get to a place that is thoughtful and the right outcome," Morimoto said. ■



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Melinda Fitch

August 18, 1939 – September 30, 2023

Melinda Bishop Fitch, a longtime resident of Woodside, died September 30th, 2023 after a long illness. She was born in Long Beach, CA on August 18, 1939, to Walter and Doris Haggerty Bishop. She graduated from Burlingame High School and attended San Jose State. She has a son Greg Garrett from her first marriage. Her grandchildren are Emily, Scott and Nicholas Garrett. Melinda moved to Woodside and lived in the same house on Raymundo Drive for over 50 years.



Melinda married Alan Fitch in 1984 and they enjoyed traveling the world together. She was a stepmother to his children Margaret (Peg), Katherine (Kathy) and Alan Jr. For many years, Melinda ran the Filoli Garden Shop where she took a small operation into a very profitable and large business. She also managed the Easter and Christmas programs there.

Melinda was very active in the Woodside community where she was head of the Recreation Committee. She was also very active in the Woodside PTA where she organized the teachers' lunch and was instrumental in persuading merchants to donate merchandise. She helped manage the Woodside Senior Invitational Tennis Tournament. She helped in the promotion and ticket sales of many plays produced by the Woodside Village Players.

Melinda loved collecting antiques and hosted many great dinner parties where her cooking extravagance was greatly appreciated.

In addition to her son and grandchildren, she is survived by her sister, Harrie Lydon of Denver.

PAID OBITUARY

CHILD WELFARE

continued from page 11

documents ready, or has had contact with the juvenile justice system, or has any outstanding fees — they have the right to be immediately enrolled in school.

Each of the rights above are nuanced and dependent on each child's case and the decisions of their educational rights holder.

Additional information for families and children can be found by contacting the county Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (each county's contact can be found here) or at the California Foster Youth Education Task Force.

What is the 'least restrictive' academic setting?

While a least restrictive academic setting depends on age and whether a student has disabilities, it's often considered the academic environment that's least strictly controlled.

For a high school student, the least restrictive setting might be a traditional public school where students walk from one classroom to another on their own, with sports and special events such as prom and field trips. A more restrictive academic setting is often a nonpublic school that provides a more strictly controlled environment in an effort to assist students who have specific behavioral, emotional or academic needs.

As Gonzalez described, students are often pushed out to a more restrictive setting if they exhibit ongoing behavioral challenges — which, she says, are often a result of trauma in that child's life.

But students "have the right to be in a setting they feel safe in, they feel comfortable in, and they're able to learn in," Gonzalez said. "And so, if the child has demonstrated that they're able to do this in a very restrictive setting, we have to give that student the opportunity to then be able to practice those skills in a less restrictive setting."

Who holds the educational rights for youth in the child welfare system?

Every child has an educational rights holder with decision-making authority regarding their education. A parent often continues having the right to make educational and developmental decisions for their child even if they lose physical custody. Biological parents lose educational decision-making power only if they are explicitly limited or restricted by the juvenile court, if parental rights have been terminated

(i.e., the child is up for adoption), or if the child is in a legal guardianship.

Parents "are not always encouraged to continue to be a part of their child's educational journey, so a lot of times what we do as CASA when we're appointed to a case is facilitate that engagement with a parent to preserve their involvement in the child's education," Gonzalez said.

Most often, organizations like CASA encourage relatives to hold educational rights. This is because once a child welfare case is closed, CASA is no longer the rights holder. Advocating for the biological parents or other relatives to remain as educational rights holders helps provide continuity in the child's life, according to Gonzalez.

In the absence of parents or relatives, the educational rights holder role is often filled by a court-appointed special advocate, which is where CASA's name comes from.

The person assigned as the educational rights holder is entitled to have "all of the educational decision-making rights normally held by a parent or guardian," according to a recent fact sheet compiled by the California Foster Youth Education Task Force.

How are educational decisions made?

All educational decisions should be made with the child's best interest in mind.

For example, a child can remain in their school of origin if they prefer to. But if they've been placed far from that school and they would need to spend hours on the road to reach it, then it may be in their best interest to be enrolled in a new school.

The educational rights holder can request a best-interest determination meeting that would include school district personnel, such as the school psychologist, before finalizing any educational decisions.

How can an educational rights holder avoid roadblocks in advocating for a child?

While educational rights are outlined, the rights holder may experience roadblocks in enforcing them.

For example, information about a child, like academic assessments and individualized education programs, might not have yet been finalized at their school of origin and a new educational rights holder might face pushback from the new school.

In such cases, children, their families and educational rights

holders can contact an education attorney through the Educational Advocacy Unit at the Children's Law Center. If the child is also in the juvenile justice system, they can contact a juvenile resource attorney through the public defender's office.

A significant barrier is that while foster youth liaisons at schools are designated staff members who support students in the child welfare system, they are often overwhelmed by the number of students they serve.

Gonzalez said, "It's a lot of just constantly showing up to the school, advocating, contacting, emailing, you know, all of those follow-ups to make sure that we're getting the right support for each child that we serve." ■

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

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

George Roberts, 89, who founded Roberts Market, a community hub in Woodside, and later opened a second store in Portola Valley, was an Army veteran serving in Germany during the Cold War, and who grew up working in the family grocery business in San Francisco, on Sept. 26.

Mary McCall, 89, a Woodside resident of 56 years who did freelance work as a court reporter and studied several languages, leading her to translate Russian novels as part of an internet group, on Sept. 30.

Melinda Fitch, 84, a Woodside resident who was active in the community as a member of the town's Recreation Committee and organizer for the Woodside PTA, and who played a key role in managing the Woodside Senior Invitational Tennis Tournament, on Sept. 30.

James Fuller, 77, a Los Altos Hills resident who served in the Marines during the Vietnam War as a helicopter pilot before embarking on an aerospace career with Lockheed Martin for 27 years, later shifting to a retirement focused on marine biology, on Dec. 9, 2022.

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

Mary McCall

September 24, 1934 – September 30, 2023

September 24, 1934–September 30, 2023

Longtime Woodside resident Mary McCall passed away on September 30 after a brief illness.

Mary was born in Irvington, New Jersey to Anne and Alfred Gregory. She graduated from the Madeira School and attended Columbia and Wellesley. After her marriage she completed her BA in English Literature at Whitman College in Washington.



She married Richard McCall in 1956, a marriage that lasted until her death. They lived in Richland, Washington; Lund, Sweden; and Boston, Massachusetts before moving to California in 1964. She lived in Woodside for the last 56 years. After her children were mostly grown, she worked as a freelance court reporter until her retirement.

Mary was a lifelong student of languages. She studied Latin, French, Russian, and Hebrew. She belonged for years to an internet group that translated Russian novels. Mary was a lover of classical music. She played the piano and enjoyed opera and concerts, especially Bach. Mary also loved dogs and had a succession of much-loved standard poodles throughout her life.

She is survived by her husband Richard, her three children: Anne Kincaid, James, and Margaret Ginty, her sister Rowan Shipman, seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Services are private.

PAID OBITUARY

A 'company town'? Stanford housing plan raises concerns in Palo Alto

City urges county to limit Stanford's future housing growth largely to campus

By Gennady Sheyner

As Santa Clara County prepares to approve new policies for governing Stanford University's growth, a key goal is to ensure that Stanford supplies enough housing on its campus to accommodate the demand of a growing workforce.

But as the county Board of Supervisors looks to adopt the new Stanford Community Plan next week, one question remains unanswered: To what extent should Stanford be allowed to lean on surrounding cities, most notably Palo Alto, for housing sites?

The question has been at the center of recent discussions at the county level about the new Stanford Community Plan, the biggest update of the university's growth policies since the current plan was adopted in 2000. It is also prompting difficult conversations in Palo Alto, where city leaders are increasingly concerned about Stanford gobbling up residential properties and then limiting them to its own affiliates, which is what happened last year when

Stanford purchased Oak Creek Apartments on Sand Hill Road.

On the one hand, both the city and the county agree that most of Stanford's new housing should be limited to the university's campus. On Sept. 28, the county's Planning Commission approved a recommendation from the planning staff that Stanford be required to provide at least 70% of new housing on its campus and at most 30% in surrounding communities near the campus, which mostly means Palo Alto.

For Palo Alto's elected leaders, however, this creates a quandary. While they support Stanford's need to build housing, they have also argued in recent public hearings that the current plan may exacerbate the city's own housing challenges by taking sites that would otherwise be available to the general public and designating them exclusively for Stanford faculty and staff.

A similar concern emerged last week, when the City Council considered upzoning three Stanford University-owned sites so that they could accommodate

hundreds of housing units. This includes a site on Pasteur Drive and Sand Hill Road that could accommodate about 450 apartments, according to the city's recently adopted Housing Element.

City planners noted, however, that Stanford would limit this site to its affiliates, a restriction that Council member Pat Burt said he found problematic. While this would help Stanford meet its requirements under the proposed housing plan, Burt suggested that this "diminishes the availability of housing for people who work in this community."

He also noted that as a non-profit, Stanford would not have to pay property taxes, a key revenue source for the Palo Alto Unified School District.

"We have the obligation — our school district does — to educate those students and they don't receive any property tax despite being a basic aid district," Burt said. "Yes, it does diminish demand that those Stanford employees might otherwise have in our community but those other concerns outweigh that."

Burt isn't the only person concerned about Stanford turning Palo Alto into a "company town," as he put it. At the Sept. 28 meeting of the county Planning Commission, resident Nancy Krop used similar logic as she urged the commission to concentrate more new housing on Stanford's campus and less in surrounding communities, which are already struggling to build enough residences for their own workforces.

"If they do not mitigate and put those homes in our community of Palo Alto they are grossly magnifying our already severe jobs-housing imbalance that we face today in Palo Alto," Krop said. "We cannot house our police, our (firefighters) our teachers, our workers. All our emergency workers are commuting hours. We just don't have the land to house our workforce."

City Manager Ed Shikada also addressed the county commission and suggested that allowing Stanford to build housing in surrounding communities to meet its requirement for academic growth would have three

impacts: traffic, constrained housing supply in these communities and potential loss of tax revenues.

"The city certainly supports maximizing the provision of housing for employees and students on campus, certainly in excess of 70% if possible," Shikada said.

Stanford, for its part, is making the exact opposite argument. The county's proposed 70-30 split isn't too expansive, the university is arguing, but rather too limiting. And rather than requiring the university to concentrate future housing in or around its campus, the county should allow it to construct new residential developments anywhere within the 6-mile radius and within half a mile of a transit stop, Stanford wrote in a letter.

Stanford also objected to a proposal by the county staff to eliminate a provision in the existing community plan that gives the university the option of paying an in-lieu fee rather than constructing new housing.

See **STANFORD HOUSING**, page 18

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HOUSING ELEMENT

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displacement protections for residents and unequal housing opportunities on the east and west sides of the city.

California requires cities to plan for future development with an eye toward balancing jobs and housing. Menlo Park's housing target, also known as the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA), says the city must plan for close to 3,800 net new housing units by 2031, and show how it will accomplish it in its a housing element.

Rezoning parts of the city to allow for denser housing development has been an ongoing source of contention in the city. This time, Council members Cecilia Taylor and Betsy Nash sought to rezone areas of District 1, which includes the Belle Haven neighborhood and the Bayfront area. Taylor said that the district will have over 2,000 apartments, with many ready to occupy at the end of this year and early next year, without adequate services nearby like transit options, retail and grocery stores.

Taylor suggested looking at

changing zoning to improve new residents' quality of life, including rezoning some of the sites identified for future housing to retail uses. Under no-net-loss laws, the council would then have to increase housing density at other sites to make up for it.

"We are going to have 3,000 apartments in an area that has zero services, and we have the opportunity to change it and we're not willing to," Taylor said.

The council majority did not support changing the zoning of Belle Haven while

on a tight deadline. Since Menlo Park's housing element was not approved by the Jan. 31 deadline earlier this year, the city needs to pass zoning modifications by Jan. 31, 2024 in order to not face penalties from the state. The zoning changes still need to go through the Planning Commission before returning to the City Council.

"It's something that I will continue to ask for, whether it's downzoning, rezoning, spot zoning," Taylor said. "Some kind of changes so that we enhance that area for folks who are going to be living there sometime in the new year."

The council directed staff to make other modifications to the housing element, including the mid-cycle review, which the city is required to perform in order to prove it

isn't unnecessarily restricting housing development.

Council member Maria Doerr suggested that the council not only have a productive mid-cycle review, but also conduct annual progress reports to make sure that the city is encouraging housing.

Wolosin suggested that the city keep an eye on any restrictions that cause several developers to ask the city for waivers or concessions, as those could be considered a governmental constraint.

Menlo Park's fourth version of its housing element will enter a seven-day public viewing period after city staff makes the requested changes. Following that, it will be sent to the state in hopes of approval. ■

Email Staff Writer

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George Schafer Roberts

January 8, 1933 – September 26, 2023

George Schafer Roberts passed away peacefully at his home in Woodside, CA on Tuesday, September 26th, with his family by his side. He was 89 years old. He is survived by his wife of 35 years, Kathie Roberts, by his three children and son-in-law, Christine Roberts, Suzanne and Robert Vandenberg, and Brian Roberts, his stepson, Braxton Zink, along with six grandchildren, Kyle Strasburg (25) Thomas Vandenberg (20), Reid Vandenberg (17), Charlotte Vandenberg (15), Harrison Roberts (9), and Peter Roberts (9).

George was born in San Francisco on January 8, 1934, to Cora Schafer and William F. Roberts II, the youngest of three siblings, Lorraine Mielke and William F. Roberts III, both deceased. George was a San Francisco native. Born and raised in the city, he grew up working in the family grocery business on California Street in San Francisco. He graduated from George Washington HS in 1952 and earned a degree in Geography from Stanford University in 1956.

Hard work was ingrained in his family culture, with his father and uncles involved in the business, teaching him the ropes from a young age. As he grew into a teenager, he had many adventures delivering groceries around San Francisco in a box truck - often resulting in a few dings and scratches. The softer side of his upbringing came from the loving support of his Aunt Blanche, who lived with the family during his childhood. George enjoyed vacationing at their summer home in Ross, escaping the fog of the city during summer months.

George enlisted in the Army and served in Germany during the cold war as a Private First Class. Aside from the ten-day sea passage across the Atlantic, he spoke fondly about his experience in the Army. He taught high school to infantrymen in Germany where they manufactured ball bearings for the war. After the war, he bought an Alfa Romeo and drove it cross-country back to San Francisco with his brother Bill.

Living in San Francisco, he quickly returned to his life of groceries and football. An avid football fan and Stanford season ticket holder for 40 years, he frequently ventured to Palo Alto to cheer on his alma mater. On a fall afternoon

circa 1960, on the way home from a game, he found a store for sale on a dirt road in Woodside, called Caldwell's General Store. He took over operations, renamed it Roberts Market, and the rest is history. His vision was more than just being a business owner in Woodside, but to create a town center with a mix of services offered by fellow community members where neighbors would gather. That vision became a reality when he acquired Canada Corners.



George excelled at business. When it came to the grocery business, George was one of the best. It was in his blood, every detail, and he loved it. Roberts Market became an institution, beloved in the community of Woodside for over 60 years. He cared deeply about his employees, the heart and soul of his business, and was proud to have many that stayed with him for decades. There would hardly be a day you wouldn't run into George, greeting customers, and watching over operations. In 2009, he opened a

second store in Portola Valley. His daughter, Christine, who has worked by his side for many years and will continue the operations of the business.

George was active and loved the outdoors. After work, you could find him in the garden pruning, planting, and watering his expansive garden. He was an avid tennis player, a great doubles partner, and continued playing well into his 80s. He also enjoyed spending time in the Sierra Nevada mountains, hiking, biking, and skiing.

George was blessed with a long and happy life. He loved to have family and friends around his dinner table. A casual night of pizza and wine was his favorite. Wine tastings were a frequent event as he was always on the hunt for an everyday wine he could put his label on. We will miss his wry humor and the many stories, strong opinions, and extensive football knowledge he shared.

He will be remembered as a great businessman, loyal friend, and devoted family man. Memorials can be directed to his favorite charities, Towers for Tunnels and Wounded Warriors.

<https://t2t.org/>

<https://www.woundedwarriorproject.org>

PAID OBITUARY

BLACK MAMBA

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sightings: "The mamba in the median strip of Highway 101" — this turned out to be tire retreads in the roadway. "The mamba rearing its head from the playing fields at Greer Park" — this was the park's automated sprinkler system. "The mamba in a neighborhood backyard" — this was a black garden hose. "In the midst of this series of events the animal shelter received a second call from the alleged owner of the mamba. The caller expressed remorse for the escape of his pet snake and the ensuing hysteria caused," Warrior said.

"The last mamba call I received came from a gentleman on the East Coast requesting that animal control pay a visit to his father's home on a dead-end street in Midtown. The caller said that for some weeks his father was convinced the mamba had entered his home because it was the last house at the bottom of his street and that the mamba would have been unable to navigate its way out of his residence," he said.

When Warrior arrived at the house to make an interior perimeter search, he was met by "an otherwise sane person of refined sensibilities with two Rolls Royce Silver Shadows in the garage sharing space with a life-size cardboard cutout of Marilyn Monroe."

About the bizarre event, he said, "During the room-to-room search I noticed the homeowner had set up camp in his living room, using his Ottoman sofa for a bed. Towels were stuffed beneath every bedroom, closet and bathroom door frame to prevent the snake from entering the living room.

"At the conclusion of the search the resident was relieved by my official report that reconnaissance of his dwelling for the vagabond snake was with negative result. The resident lifted the self-imposed blockade of his rooms and resumed living a normal life," he said.

That the Monroe cutout was part of his normal life is a whole different story.

What makes the black mamba episode special?

The episode took place 30 years ago, but the mythical black mamba is still with Palo Altans in spirit — and from the looks of it will continue to live on through the generations. Why so?

Warrior has a simple theory: "1993 was a simpler time of limited social media technology, few network-connected home computers and no smartphones. Community sharing of news was by and large the newspapers, radio, cable television and word-of-mouth gossip fences," he said.

He added, "It was a pre-9/11 world spent living in the extended era of peace and prosperity that some folks called the 'Pax Palo Alto,' or the 'Palo Alto Bubble,' born out of the dreams and desires of mid to late 1980s young urban professionals — 'YUPPIES' — with their MBAs and BMWs.

"That a non-indigenous snake would, in a desperate attempt to break free of its confines and return to its sub-Saharan African slithering grounds, become the cause of the bursting of that bubble will forever mark the end of that halcyon era in the history of our fair city," he said. ■

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ISRAEL

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“No one in our community is untouched by this tragedy.”

When he heard about the attack on Saturday morning, Bodner felt terrified, then enraged, then dumbfounded and then heartbroken, he said. As he saw videos of the attack play over and over again on the news, his emotions ran like a rollercoaster. He reached out to his cousin in Israel and held his breath waiting for response, he said.

“When they finally responded, I exhaled and immediately afterward I felt this sense of guilt because I knew that others can’t exhale,” Bodner told an estimated crowd of about 2,000 people who came to the JCC.

He listed the names of people he knows: the 16-year-old student in the local community whose Israeli soccer coach was killed in the attack; the man whose two daughters were called up to serve in the attack’s aftermath; the Israeli tour guide whose building was hit and destroyed by a missile early in the attack.

“He feels lucky to be a war refugee because he knows a couple that was killed and others who were taken,” he said.

An estimated 2,000 people, including religious leaders, politicians and residents from throughout the Peninsula, came to the solidarity event in the JCC’s Freidenrich Community Park. They waved flags, sang songs, held memorial candles and prayed for Israel and for the victims of the Oct. 7 attack.

Though they were thousands of miles away from the conflict, for many the event hit close to home. Hundreds of hands went up when attendees were asked if they have friends or family members who were called up by the Israeli army.

Assembly member Marc Berman, who took trips to Israel with a group of Sacramento colleagues in 2018 and 2019, recalled the meetings he held with Israeli



Photos by Magali Gauthier

Clockwise from above: Tsahala David, left, and her daughter Shenhav David, right, sing songs at a pro-Israel solidarity event; Attendees pray; Rabbis of local congregations sing songs.

and Palestinian residents in places like Nahal Oz and the West Bank. Berman, D-Menlo Park, said his mother’s cousin currently lives in Israel. Three of her four sons were called up to serve in the military along with 300,000 other reservists after the Saturday attack, he said. On Sunday, the cousin attended a funeral for a friend’s son, who was killed while rescuing families on the Gaza border. During the funeral, sirens rang out, indicating another rocket attack, and guests were forced to lie on the ground and wait, their bodies overlapping and their hands covering their heads.

Berman said seeing the atrocities that have been occurring in Israel since Oct. 7 both made him sad and filled him with rage. But even amidst the chaos, his cousin said the entire country is volunteering and looking for ways to help.

“As she put it, ‘The solidarity is palpable — a balm after all the contentious political rifts,’” Berman said, alluding to recent

tensions between Israeli political factions over a contentious plan by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to overhaul the nation’s judicial system.

Berman said he has taken solace in the high number of colleagues, both liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans, who have reached out and made statements in support of Israel. Berman said his conversations in Israel residents during the two trips have taught him about the complicated political dynamics in the region.

“But what is not complicated and what all of these colleagues have expressed to me personally is that they stand in strong solidarity with Israel and that they know the responsibility for these atrocities lies solely with Hamas,” Berman said.

There have been times in the past when others have tried to destroy the Jewish community, he said.

“We have gotten stronger and we have thrived,” Berman said. “This time will be no different.”

Like Berman, State Sen. Josh Becker said he had spent Saturday morning trying to come to terms with the “horror and brutality” of the Hamas attack. Becker, who has cousins, nieces and nephews in Israel, currently serves as vice chair of the 14-member California Legislative Jewish Caucus. He said he was heartened by the support he has received from his colleagues in the Latino, African-American, the Asian-American and LGBTQ caucuses since the Oct. 7 attack on Israel.

“They all stand with us right now in this fight,” Becker said.

The struggle in Israel will be long and difficult, Becker said. He encouraged attendees to do their part by using their voices, networks and social media accounts to fight disinformation and hate and to support Israel.

“It’s OK to grieve. It’s OK to feel pain. It’s OK to shed tears. I’ve done all of the above in the last few days,” Becker said. “But what is not OK is to stay in that pain. We must persist, we must

‘When they finally responded, I exhaled and immediately afterward I felt this sense of guilt because I knew that others can’t exhale.’

ZACK BODNER,
OSHMAN FAMILY JCC
PRESIDENT AND CEO

lean on our collective strength, the strength of our community, to be here for our local Israeli community and to take action.”

The Oct. 7 attacks have drawn a mix of responses in local communities, with some residents using the occasion of Hamas strikes on Israeli civilians as an opportunity to voice their support for Palestine and their opposition to Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights. On Oct. 8, hundreds marched in downtown San Francisco and chanted, “Palestine will be free!” according to NBC News footage. At one point, the demonstrators took their protest to the Israeli Consul General’s office, according to the news report.

In Palo Alto, however, the sentiment on Oct. 10 was entirely pro-Israel. Marco Sermoneto, consul general of Israel to the Pacific Northwest, drew cheers when he talked about the need to support Israel and defeat Hamas, a militant group that has been in power in Gaza since 2006.

“Hamas will soon understand that by attacking us they have made a mistake of historic proportions,” Sermoneto said. “We may have paid a heavy price but the price they will pay will be unbearable and it will be remembered by all of Israel’s enemies for a long time.” ■

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STANFORD HOUSING

continued from page 15

These policies, Stanford posited, “create unnecessary barriers to building the required housing, especially in nearby jurisdictions.”

Erin Efner, Stanford’s associate vice president for land use and environmental planning, argued that the proposed addition of so much new housing on Stanford’s campus fails to consider the actual living patterns of existing employees.

“This is not where the overwhelming majority of Stanford

affiliates live,” Efner said. “To further construct it doesn’t represent the actual demand.

“It also stymies Stanford’s ability to go into other nearby communities and attempt to make positive contributions to the housing crisis that we are still in.”

County staff note, however, that nothing in the new community plan precludes Stanford from pursuing other housing projects in cities close to its campus, as it has been doing in recent years. These projects, however, would have to be pursued in addition to — rather

than instead of — the campus housing, which would be linked to any future proposal for academic expansion.

Geoff Bradley, a consultant with M-Group who has been leading the county’s update of the Stanford Community Plan, noted that the goal of the new policies is to restore some balance after a period in which almost the entirety of Stanford’s housing projects for staff and faculty has been built outside its campus.

Bradley noted that since the current plan was adopted in 2000, Stanford had built fewer than 70 housing units for employees on its campus (this does not include the hundreds of units it had built for students, including the recent Escondido Village complex for graduate students). At the same time, it had bought or built 1,991 units for its faculty and staff at nearby properties in Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Los Altos. This includes the 628 dwellings in the Stanford West complex on Sand Hill Road; 180 at the University Terrace housing complex in Stanford Research Park; 215 in the Middle Plaza development in Menlo Park; and the recent purchase of 760 apartments in the Oak Creek complex.

Stanford’s campus currently has a total of 942 units for its faculty and staff, he said, and about 67% of employees live off campus. The new strategy aims to create more balance, he said.

“This policy flips it and says, ‘To get this more in balance, 70% of the new stuff ... would need to be built on campus,’” Bradley said.

The Planning Commission unanimously endorsed the county recommendation and the 70-30 split for on- and off-campus housing. Commissioners also suggested, however, that Stanford continue to rely on in-lieu fees to meet some of its housing requirements (they were agnostic on the topic of how high these fees should be).

Commissioner Marc Rauser was particularly sympathetic to Stanford’s argument and suggested that banning fees would represent a significant policy change. It would also be a risky one, he suggested, given the difficulty of predicting demand among staff and faculty for having housing on campus.

“I kind of have the feeling we’re moving the goalposts,” Rauser said.

The commission’s recommendation, which the county Board of Supervisors plans to consider on Oct. 17, could have significant ramifications for both Palo Alto and Stanford. It will ultimately be up to the Palo Alto City Council to determine whether it wants to upzone the Stanford-owned property on Pasteur Drive, which is near the Stanford University Medical Center. And whether it does so could hinge on whether council members believe the project will meet the city’s broader housing goals — most notably, a state mandate to add 6,086 new housing units between 2023 and 2031.

This Pasteur site is one of three Stanford-owned properties that the council is considering rezoning to allow more height and density and the only one that is

not located on El Camino Real. Under the current proposal, the height limit at all three would be raised from 50 feet to 85 feet and density restrictions would be relaxed to allow more units to be constructed within the new buildings.

But last week, while the council generally supported moving ahead with the zone changes, Burt and others wondered if the new Pasteur building could be made available — at least in part — to the general public. The county’s Planning Commission briefly considered the idea at its Sept. 28 meeting and Bradley suggested that having some housing available for both Stanford affiliates and the general public can provide “a shock absorber between supply and demand issues.”

In other words, if Stanford affiliates don’t want to live in the projects next to the campus, these units wouldn’t have to remain vacant.

Efner, however, strongly objected to the idea of mixing Stanford affiliates with the general public. Allowing such a mix would be “a big policy shift that we’re not even remotely prepared to commit to.”

“This would be pretty much a seismic shift from how we’re currently operating our housing program,” Efner said. “Stanford has built housing specifically for the community but ... mixing students and the community would be very problematic.” ■

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File No.: M-295368

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

1.) WELCOME MOVERS, located at 445 Madison Ave. Redwood City, CA 94061, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s): SANTOS MARTINEZ
445 Madison Ave.
Redwood City, CA 94061
JESUS GONZALEZ
445 Madison Ave.
Redwood City, CA 94061

This business is conducted by: a General Partnership.
Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 09/15/2023.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 15 2023.
(ALM Oct 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2023)

THE TESS FOUNDATION

TESS RESEARCH FOUNDATION
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-295438

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

1.) The TESS Foundation, 2.) TESS Research Foundation, located at 430 Claremont Way, Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.
Mailing Address: 655 Oak Grove Ave #53, Menlo Park, CA 94026.
Registered owner(s): TREATMENTS FOR EPILEPSY AND SYMPTOMS OF SLC13A5 FOUNDATION
430 Claremont Way,
Menlo Park, CA 94025
CA

This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 02/03/2015

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 25 2023.
(ALM Oct 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2023)

BAG TO BASICS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-295413

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

1.) Bag to Basics, located at 46 Greenoaks Drive, Atherton, CA 94027.
Registered owner(s): SAMIRA NAWAS
46 Greenoaks Drive, Atherton, CA 94027
This business is conducted by: an Individual.

Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 10/27/2006

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 22 2023.
(ALM Oct 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2023)

PREI CAPITAL GROUP

DIVORCE MORTGAGE ADVISORS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: M-295265

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

1.) PREI Capital Group, 2.) Divorce Mortgage Advisors, located at 840 Hinckley Road #150, Burlingame, CA 94010.
Registered owner(s): ROSS GARCIA
825 Alameda De Las Pulgas
Belmont, CA 94002

This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 03/02/2017.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 07 2023.
(ALM Oct 13, 20, 27 and Nov 3, 2023)

To place a legal notice visit
AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/
The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 pm.
For assistance email LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com.

Gov. Newsom vetoes bill to allow Amsterdam-style cannabis cafes in California

By Bay City News Service

A bill to allow Amsterdam-style cannabis cafes in California has been vetoed by Gov. Gavin Newsom, according to Assemblymember Matt Haney, who authored the legislation.

Assembly Bill 374 passed the Assembly with a 66-9 vote last month after previously being approved by the state Senate.

The legislation would have allowed local jurisdictions to authorize cannabis retailers to

prepare and serve non-cannabis food and beverages and to sell tickets to live performances.

Newsom said he vetoed the bill out of concern that the bill as written could undermine the state’s smoke-free workplace protections but that he did “appreciate” that cannabis business owners need to create more revenue streams.

Haney, D-San Francisco, has said the bill was meant to allow struggling cannabis businesses to diversify away from the marijuana-only “dispensary” model and “bring much-needed tourist

dollars into empty downtowns.”

In a statement released Sunday, Haney said, “Californians are proud of our state’s wine culture, and we do everything we can to make sure that our winemakers receive the support they need — we need to be doing the exact same thing for cannabis.

“If we don’t start better supporting these businesses we are going to lose decades of being at the forefront of the cannabis movement and other states will be ready to swoop in and take it from us.” ■



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PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT



A mystery author unraveled

'MRS. CHRISTIE' SPECULATES ON A FAMED NOVELIST'S UNSOLVED DISAPPEARANCE

BY HEATHER ZIMMERMAN

Agatha Christie created clever sleuths who never met a complicated plot that they couldn't untangle. But real life presented the famed mystery writer with a few unsolvable puzzles, which may have spurred her to vanish for a shocking, headline-making week-and-a-half in December 1926.

The actual reason behind Christie's disappearance remains a mystery, but playwright Heidi Armbruster pursues a pretty solid theory with "Mrs. Christie," which opens TheatreWorks Silicon Valley's 53rd season, running through Oct. 29 at the Mountain View Center for Performing Arts. TheatreWorks' new artistic director, Giovanna Sardelli, helms the show.

"Mrs. Christie" is a thoughtful comedy that uses the mystery author's vanishing as a jumping-off point for a

THEATER REVIEW

tale where past and present, and truth and fiction, all converge. The show is set both in 1926, capturing Agatha's life before, during and after her disappearance, as well as in the present day, where avid Christie reader Lucy (Nicole Javier) seizes upon what might be newly uncovered evidence from the 1926 vanishing. Javier is appealing as the rudderless Lucy, who's taking things as they come, sometimes literally, while attending a Christie convention at the writer's former estate.

By contrast, when we meet Agatha, she's as far from her cool, composed detective characters as one could imagine. She's harried and nearly incoherent, screaming over an accident that she believes has occurred. It's a deliberately

jarring introduction to such a famous figure.

We learn fast that she can be entitled, capricious, casually cruel — and prone to occasional spectacularly bad lapses in judgment. At times, it feels as if the audience is immersed in Agatha's turbulent mental state, and while it's not always a pleasant place to be, it's instructive.

As Agatha, Jennifer Le Blanc captures the pain, brilliance and determination of a groundbreaking woman facing a series of personal struggles: not long after her mother's death, she learns of her husband's infidelity. Aldo Billingslea is chilly and commanding as Colonel Christie, who makes no apologies for his affair, though he's content to place all the blame on Agatha and her burgeoning career.

Given Agatha's frayed mental state, the emotionally traumatic situation seems



Photos courtesy Kevin Berne

Above: Jane (Lucinda Hitchcock Cone) helps Lucy (Nicole Javier) sort through clues about Agatha's 1926 disappearance. Top: Members of the Christie household, from left, Charlotte (Elissa Beth Stebbins), Nancy (Kina Kantor), Archie (Aldo Billingslea) and Agatha (Jennifer Le Blanc) celebrate the reappearance of Agatha's dog, Peter (Anubis), who was believed to be missing.

enough to lead her to flee, and Armbruster more or less leaves it at that. The disappearance is the mechanism around which the play is built, but once we've met all the players, the event itself proves to be not all that compelling; Armbruster is much more interested in how Agatha and Lucy grapple with troubles and how that affects other characters.

"Mrs. Christie" feels like a drawing room comedy melded with a kind of "Eat, Pray,

Love"-style journey of self-discovery — a reference Lucy herself alludes to.

Both Agatha and Lucy are grappling with life-changing circumstances and they balance each other out nicely, even when their characters don't interact. That said, Agatha's manic moments and the chaos they can spur occasionally overwhelm the action. There are several

See **UNRAVELED**, page 20

Worth a Look



Courtesy Ron Jones

Mads Tolling and his group plays a show for Earthwise Productions on Oct. 15.

Mads Tolling Group

Multi-Grammy Award-winning violinist and composer Mads Tolling has performed at prestigious venues across the United States — including in front of Danish royalty — and on Oct. 15 he and his group will perform a free afternoon, outdoor concert at Palo Alto's Mitchell Park Bowl. Originally from Copenhagen, trained at the Berklee College of Music and now Bay Area-based, Tolling is a favorite of local promoter Earthwise Productions, which is presenting the concert. Over the course of his career thus far, Tolling's been known for his fresh takes on jazz classics and his original compositions, including some inspired by Norse mythology. Cait Gjerdrum opens the Palo Alto performance.

Oct. 15, 2-4 p.m., Mitchell Park Bowl, 600 East Meadow Drive, Palo Alto. Free. tinyurl.com/MadsTollingGroup.

Michelle Branch

Singer-songwriter-guitarist Michelle Branch rose to fame as a teen with her major-label debut album, 2001's pop-rock record "The Spirit Room," which spawned several successful singles (some millennials may feel awash in nostalgia when revisiting songs like "Everywhere" and "All You Wanted"), and nabbed a Grammy Award for her 2002 collaboration with Carlos Santana. In the decades since then, she's remained active on the music scene, including a stint as co-leader of the country duo The Wreckers, and released her latest album, "The Trouble with Fever," last year. On tour in support of that project, she'll perform a concert at the Guild on Sunday, Oct. 15. Opening the show will be indie rockers Bad Bad Hats.

Oct. 15, 8 p.m., The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Tickets are \$53 general admission; tinyurl.com/GuildTheater-MichelleBranch.

Silicon Valley Jewish Film Festival

The Silicon Valley Jewish Film Festival, with its mission of supporting films that showcase "Jewish spirit,

culture, traditions and humor," is back, running Oct. 15-29. The festival will hold several screenings in person this year in Mountain View and Palo Alto, and many more virtually. On opening night, Sunday, Oct. 15, at the ShowPlace ICON Theatre & Kitchen (2575 California St., Mountain View), attendees can catch the documentary "Remembering Gene Wilder" — about the beloved comedian, actor and writer who played such memorable roles as Willy Wonka and Dr. Frederick Frankenstein — followed by a Q&A with the film's producers and director. Other offerings over the course of the festival include a love story set in 1960s Poland ("March '68"), an Israeli comedy about a suburban couple drawn to a charismatic neighbor ("Karaoke"), a documentary about musician Leonard Cohen and his most famous composition ("Hallelujah: Leonard Cohen, A Journey, A Song"), a French comedy classic ("The Mad Adventures of Rabbi Jacob"), and a film about Holocaust survivor Eva Libitzky ("The Assembly") from the multi-talented TheatreWorks' favorite Hershey Felder, among many others.

Oct. 15-29; screenings held in multiple locations and virtually; svjff.org.

UNRAVELED

continued from page 19

messy moments, including the opening scene, that are a little hard to follow, due to frenetic yelling and overlapping dialogue. Though the tumult seems more realistic, perhaps, it's hard not to wish sometimes for a little artistic license to make all the events in a scene easier to catch.

One of the most striking elements of the play is its seamless melding of past and present. Sardelli deftly navigates Armbruster's unusual portrayal of time. Instead of flashbacks or flash-forwards, "Mrs. Christie" presents scenes from the past and present as co-existing, with characters from the past drifting through scenes from the present, and vice versa. It's also a situation where double-casting works unusually well, with some actors in the ensemble taking on complementary roles in past and present.

Present-day characters move with a casualness that's at odds with the restrained bearing of characters from 1926, but they easily blend together in scenes, with help from Wen-Ling Liao's lighting, which subtly helps shift the focus to the action. The effect is a kind of ever-present ghostliness, where everyone always seems to belong in each scene, regardless of when it's set, reflecting, as several characters note that, "Time is a circle."

It's not only time but the divide between life and fiction that Armbruster plays with. Prodding the consciousness of both Agatha and Lucy are familiar Christie characters: Le detective (William Thomas Hodgson), who visits Agatha, and Jane (Lucinda Hitchcock Cone), who helps guide Lucy on her quest. Though the program doesn't divulge their real names, these characters are two of Christie's most famed creations and both Hodgson and

Cone are delightful to watch as they make these unusual iterations of such well-known characters their own.

A lesser known character in Agatha's orbit is her beloved dog, Peter, for whom TheatreWorks held a canine casting call last month. That role is double cast as well, and Peter was played with great spirit by the charming pooch Anubis the night I attended,

Cathleen Edwards has created some beautiful vintage costumes that make the past look especially striking, and with some characters dressed in a way helps further draw together past and present.

Christopher Fitzer's scenic design makes a masterpiece of expanding upon the mystery novel device of the secret bookcase that opens to reveal hidden rooms.

The set uses two large, stately walls decorated to suggest a country manor and transforms them by using bookcases, revolving paintings, trap doors and more into scenes that represent different rooms at the Christies' manor and a handful of other locations as well — even, for a moment, a convincing glimpse of a train station.

Elements of the set become more fragmented in the second act, as the characters of Agatha and Lucy begin to unravel — but it also becomes subtly, beautifully transparent in some places, with sheer panels suggesting almost phantom walls as the characters find ways to put themselves back together. ■

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

"Mrs. Christie" runs through Oct. 29 at the Mountain View Center for Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. Tickets start at \$27. For more information, visit theatreworks.org.



Courtesy Kevin Berne

Agatha (Jennifer Le Blanc) tries to flee from her problems, but she can't get away from one of her most famous characters, a mustachioed Belgian detective played by William Thomas Hodgson.

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Food & Drink

Not your average joe

Serving everything from Greek frappés to butterscotch lattes, four coffee shops with global influences seek to build community

By Sophia Markoulakis

Coffee waves have become as nubilous as the sediment at the bottom of my demitasse cup, and that obscurity has spawned new coffee shop iterations that are more about expressing a culture and fostering a community than a proper pour over. Granted, the Peninsula coffee scene is still influenced by tech concepts like the Coffee Lab, which offers a space for coffee aficionados to geek out over roast times and flavor profiles, but this new batch of coffee shop entrepreneurs want their customers to be transported somewhere undiscovered or to a place that is as familiar as a warm hug. Visit these new coffee spots and you might just experience both.

Cloud9 Coffee, Palo Alto

Palo Alto's small airport finally has a place to grab an espresso or flat white thanks to Cloud9 Coffee. Last year, Hanna Joo noticed that the former deli had vacated the space, which sits at the end of a small strip mall next to the airport and the Baylands Golf Links. Before long, she and her partner Elizabeth Kim had signed a lease and planned a remodel. Joo, an interior

designer, enlisted her architect husband to help with the interior changes. Kim, a ceramist and flower enthusiast, set out to create custom dishware while they waited for the work to finish. Other custom touches to the Zen-like space include cedar live-edge tables crafted in Oakland.

The Baylands Nature Preserve is within walking distance of the coffee shop, and there's an expansive outdoor patio filled with flowers thanks to Kim. You can take your coffee to go and wind your way through the marshes, but if you do you'll miss out on enjoying your coffee or Americano in a handmade ceramic mug. The cold butterscotch latte is a must with housemade butterscotch, and bakery items are sourced from Mountain View's Midwife and the Baker. The menu includes seasonal croffles (croissant waffles), salads and tartines (open-face sandwiches).

With a beer and wine license, Joo and Kim are excited to host private parties and crafting events. "We bonded over our love of creative endeavors, and we are excited for people to use the space for flower-arranging parties, birthdays and showers," Joo said.

While Cloud9 has only been open for a few weeks, Joo has been pleased with the flow of people. "We had no idea what a tight-knit and welcoming aviation community we have here. In Korea, my dad flies, so it's nice to be reminded of him here."

Cloud9 Coffee, 1901 Embarcadero Road #103, Palo Alto; 650-847-1278, Instagram: @cloud9_coffee. Open Monday-Saturday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. cloud9coffee.net.

Sama Coffee Shop, San Mateo

On the corner of South B Street and 9th Avenue is a new Arabic coffee shop that invites people to gather, socialize, play a game of backgammon and enjoy a specialty coffee drink. Partner Manar Elder is the creative mind behind all of the innovative drinks. Her partner, Ghassan Al Saeedi, who designed many of the Yemeni coffee shops in the Bay Area, created the space to reflect the Baghdad coffee shops of the past that he grew up visiting. Elder, who is from Palestine, wanted a coffee menu that is Middle Eastern with global influences.

Elder took a break from nursing to pursue her passion for coffee and spent some time working at Nordstrom's espresso bar. Not only did she pick up barista skills, but she also had the chance to experiment. She crafted new drinks at the San Mateo outpost, though admittedly, not all of them were approved.

"I created a crème brûlée coffee drink, but they turned it down because it required a torch," she said.

She made a point to add it to Sama's menu, and yes, it does use a torch to toast the marshmallow cream topping. Other exclusive coffee drinks include Heat Wave and Sweet Breeze. "I wanted Heat Wave to have the spice of chile without the heat; the addition of honey achieves that. For Sweet Breeze,



Courtesy Sama Coffee Shop

Sama serves up a variety of coffee drinks, including one that incorporates chile and honey to give a sweet, mild spiciness while another features mint jelly to lend a peppermint kick.

I use mint jelly to get that minty flavor," she said, "because you shouldn't have to wait for the holidays to enjoy a peppermint coffee drink."

With its upholstered, lounge-like seating, pendant lighting and textured ceiling, Sama Coffee Shop is a place to linger late into the night, noshing on Middle Eastern savory and sweet bites and sipping coffee and tea. In the Middle East, coffee isn't just for the morning, and Elder admits she enjoys an evening coffee.

"It's a good feeling looking at the evening crowd, listening to people talking with music in the background," she said.

Sama Coffee Shop, 225 9th Ave. San Mateo; Instagram: @sama.coffeeshop. Open Sunday-Thursday from

7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. samacoffeeshop.com.

Groovy Goose, San Carlos

Nathan and Siera Conte opened Groovy Goose in August after an extensive remodel to the former clothing store space. The airy, welcoming spot was designed for the San Carlos community, the place where Nathan grew up and is now raising his young family.

The name of the business comes from their 2-year-old son's nickname, Goose. "We wanted a fun, whimsical name. We also liked the double G. The logo, created by a local artist, just makes us smile, and we hope it makes others smile, too," he said.



Courtesy The Groovy Goose

Groovy Goose owners Nathan and Siera Conte took inspiration for the cafe's whimsical name from their 2-year-old son's nickname, Goose.

The curved built-in wooden bench seating was designed for conversation, not remote work. “I’m a big believer in interacting with people and building community,” he said.

This is the couple’s first business, but both have experience in the coffee space. They are so passionate about coffee that they spent a bit of time in Maui so that Nathan could learn the art of roasting. The small coffee menu includes some seasonal drinks like pumpkin spice and pecan oat lattes, and they have plans to slowly roll out more drinks as well as fruit smoothies and paninis. At some point, they hope to stay open late into the evening and serve beer, wine and small bites.

While Siera handles barista training, Nathan’s building out the bean side of things. He’s got a small roastery in the back of the space and is currently offering a house blend for customers to enjoy in their drink or to take home and brew. “I want people to enjoy our coffee in any format,” he said. Nathan’s brother Christian owns Drake’s restaurant down the street, and, as you can guess, the coffee he serves is Groovy Goose House Blend.

Groovy Goose,
1221 San Carlos Ave.,
San Carlos; Instagram:
@groovygoosecoffee.

Open Monday-Sunday from
6 a.m. to 6 p.m. groovygoose.
coffee.

Bagel Box & Coffee, San Mateo

Partners Stavros Kanavos, Elvis Zeinati and George Petroutsas opened Bagel Box & Coffee in August. The location, a kiosk that sits in the middle of a small strip mall parking lot across the street from Laurelwood Shopping Center in San Mateo, took months to update. Kanavos and Zeinati came to the Bay Area from New York where they both worked in coffee. They landed at Petroutsas’ Nick the Greek in the shopping center where Kanavos works and Zeinati manages.

They were anxious to bring Greece’s popular cold coffee drinks, the freddo cappuccino and the freddo espresso, to the Peninsula. The drinks, made with espresso, ice and sugar, are blended to produce a foamy top layer. The addition of foamy milk creates the cappuccino version. Their concept for Greek specialty coffee drinks and bagels materialized after Sonoma Bagels closed in 2022. “We had been looking for locations in San Mateo, and when the shopping center’s bagel shop closed, we knew we had to open nearby so that we could

fill that hole,” Zeinati said. “We call this the Greek triangle with Nick the Greek and Greek-owned Brothers Cafe across the street.”

They also offer the OG of cold Greek coffee, the frappé, a vigorous blend of instant Nescafé coffee, water, sugar and evaporated milk. The team wants people to revisit their summer trips to Greece when they order a freddo or frappé. Zeinati found the perfect blend of beans from Ethiopia, Columbia and Brazil that complement these drinks that have become ubiquitous all over Greece. Bagels come from House of Bagels, and offerings include a Mediterranean bagel breakfast sandwich with kalamata olives, egg, tomatoes and feta. A Greek version of a bagel called a koulouri is in the works. Street vendors all over Athens and Thessaloniki offer these sesame-coated bread rings that are enjoyed at breakfast.

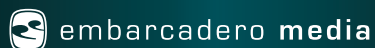
Bagel Box & Coffee,
3174 Campus Drive,
San Mateo; 650-770-6607,
Instagram: @bagelboxandcoffee.
Open Monday-Sunday from
8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
bagelboxandcoffee.com. ■

Email the Peninsula Foodist
at peninsulafoodist@almanacnews.com.



Courtesy Cloud9 Coffee

Croffles and coffee are among the offerings at Cloud9 Coffee in Palo Alto.



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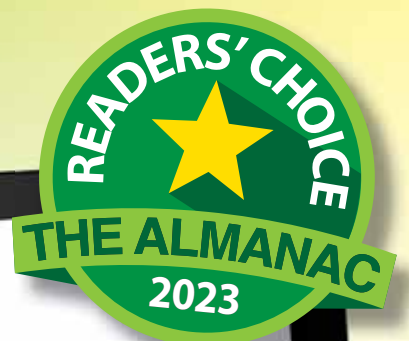
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