

# The Almanac

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

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## Community organizations turn to rain gardens to prevent flooding in East Palo Alto

By Abigail Neely

Last winter, residents experienced the second largest flood in East Palo Alto history. Now Bay Area nonprofits are installing gardens designed to soak up stormwater and mitigate future flooding.

On Nov. 11, Climate Resilient Communities (CRC), Fresh Approach, and Grassroots Ecology broke ground on the first of 25 rain garden systems to be installed for homeowners at no cost. CRC received nearly \$1 million in funding for the project from Coastal Communities, an organization working to reduce water pollution.

"To date, there isn't anything else like this in the county," said Reid Bogert, stormwater program director for the San Mateo Countywide Water Pollution Prevention program. He said he's excited to see it used as a

model elsewhere.

Efforts to curtail the effects of flooding are more important than ever as California heads into an 'El Nino' year, a period of cooler and wetter weather. Many older East Palo Alto residents still remember flooding in 1998 that resulted in \$40 million in damages.

"Rain gardens are an excellent nature-based solution to our changing climate that addresses multiple community priorities at once," Violet Wulf-Saena, founder and executive director of CRC, said in a press release.

### Why a rain garden

Rain gardens are shallow depressions filled with native flood-tolerant plants. They are designed to trap stormwater and send it underground faster. Rather than overflowing out of



Abigail Neely

Local nonprofits break ground on the first of 25 rain gardens to be installed in East Palo Alto on Nov. 11.

See **RAIN GARDENS**, page 11

## Silicon Valley congresswoman Anna Eshoo expected to retire

Eshoo to end her three-decade congressional career at the end of her term in 2024

By Ramona Giwargis / San Jose Spotlight

For the first time in two decades, a Silicon Valley congresswoman is retiring, a move that will shake up the South Bay's political landscape — with many local Democrats reportedly eyeing the seat.

Rep. Anna Eshoo announced on Nov. 21 that she is ending her three-decade congressional career at the end of her term in 2024. She shared her decision in a video.

Eshoo, who earned notoriety for spearheading cybersecurity, innovation and high-tech legislation, was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1992 after serving on the

San Mateo County Board of Supervisors for a decade.

Her retirement marks a monumental shift in Silicon Valley politics. Eshoo is a powerhouse politician who rose through the ranks as a senior member earning coveted committee assignments in Washington on health care, energy and commerce. As news spread about Eshoo's decision to call it quits late Monday, Nov. 20, speculation circled about who will run for the competitive seat to represent District 16.

The district includes a large swath of Santa Clara County, including parts of San Jose, and San Mateo County.

Candidates rumored for the seat include California Sen. Josh Becker, D-Menlo Park,

Assemblymember Evan Low, Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian and former San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo.

Becker said Silicon Valley should take a moment to appreciate Eshoo and her distinguished career before rushing to replace her. He is still weighing his options, sources told San Jose Spotlight. The first-term legislator would have to vacate his seat in Sacramento to make the leap.

Becker said late Monday he has "tremendous respect" for the veteran congresswoman.

"She is a combination we've never seen before of warmth, strength and effectiveness," the senator told San Jose Spotlight.



Courtesy Laura Hutcheson

U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo speaks at the Veterans Affairs 100-year celebration on Aug. 19 in Menlo Park.

See **ESHOO**, page 17

INSIDE

Help local families in need 4

ARTSCENE 18 | FOOD & DRINK 22





**Peninsula Volunteers, Inc.**



**Lily**

When Lily's caregiver daughter moved to Sacramento, Lily found herself relying on soup or costly microwave meals. She was afraid she might have to move from her home and her Redwood City community of 53 years. Now PVI's Meals on Wheels "is a true lifesaver"! Lily is so thankful for the healthy food and those who deliver the meals and talk with her. She can remain in her home and **"now I won't be lying to my daughter when I tell her I have something good for dinner!"**

**DAILY SENIOR IMPACT:**

- 1 in 6 seniors is facing hunger**
- 1 in 2 seniors living alone are without the finances for basic needs**
- 1 in 3 seniors dies with Alzheimer's**
- 1 in 4 seniors live alone and feel lonely**
- Nearly 1 in 5 spousal caregivers passes away before their loved one**

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

**Who is overlooked right here in our own community?**

We are living through extraordinary and uncertain times with many worthy concerns vying for your attention and support. One that is often overlooked and neglected: **The well-being of our senior adults and their essential daily needs**, even right here in our own community. They are your parents, grandparents, neighbors, and friends--the ones who have contributed so much to the communities we enjoy today. Where would we be without them?

**The growing challenges of aging intensify during the holiday season**

We hope you enjoy a wonderful holiday season with your family and friends. For many local seniors this will not be so. Older adults on fixed incomes are disproportionately **vulnerable to inflation** and **struggling to stay afloat** with rising costs--running out of funds for food each week and **facing impossible choices now** between paying for food, medications, transportation, or other critical needs. **Senior hunger**, widespread **loneliness**, and **social isolation now** reach more deeply into every corner of our diverse community putting more seniors at risk.

Now in our 76th year, PVI is here with meaningful programs for critical needs like these, **enabling seniors to age in place** with essential services that also help to reduce the use of costly health care services. And we cannot do it without you.

**Your generous impact matters!**

We live in a community that counts on each other and our most vulnerable are looking to you. Because you care, PVI can freshly prepare and home deliver over **179,000 life-changing nutritious meals** annually to seniors in need; re-open our Café for nominal cost **weekday lunches**; offer therapeutic **care to those with Alzheimer's** and Aging Life Solutions for **overwhelmed family caregivers**; provide daily **meaningful activities and social connections** for otherwise isolated older adults; and provide **10,500 essential transportation rides** for daily needs. PVI's fast-growing weekly **"Got Groceries"** program is providing over **450 seniors** per month with a vital **weekly lifeline** of over **6,000 pounds** of protein, dairy, fresh produce, and pantry staples. Please take a moment to visit [1pvi.org](http://1pvi.org) to learn more about those whose lives are changed because you care.

**Join us as we transform aging and reach more seniors in need**

PVI is changing the way seniors are cared for and treated as respected and vital members in our local communities. Together we can fill empty plates with nutritious food and provide Alzheimer's and caregiver support, stimulating wellness activities, and on-demand transportation to your neighbors who need us most. Help us **protect our local seniors and families** and create a future where no senior in our community is isolated or hungry. We are inspired by the community support that can make this possible.

**Yes, I want to make a difference today:** Your special year-end gift of an amount that is right for you\* means everything to the **thousands of local families relying on us** for their daily health and well-being. Please help us close our current Meals on Wheels waitlist and Got Groceries gap this holiday season. You may give securely online at [www.1pvi.org/donate](http://www.1pvi.org/donate) or by scanning the QR code. Give this message to friends who share your passion to help extend senior health and independence. We are so grateful for your support.

**\*\$500 funds** one month of PVI Meals on Wheels for two at-risk seniors; or a fitness membership for one year; or helps fund Aging Life Solutions; **\$700 funds** one week of Adult Day Services; **\*\$2,500 funds** an iPad and training for a senior; or Ride PVI transportation services for one month for five seniors.

With hope and gratitude,

**Peter Olson**  
 Chief Executive Officer

**Georgie Gleim**  
 Board President



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**Angel**

For over 75 years, Peninsula Volunteers, Inc. has enabled seniors to age in place, driven by a profound legacy of caring and our core values of respect, commitment, trust, dedication and compassion. Our four core programs serve over 6,000 households and address the most pressing issues of aging adults by offering critical services to sustain their daily physical, nutritional, emotional, and mental health while achieving dignity and independence in their lives. PVI's programs include Nutrition Services/Meals on Wheels; Adult Day Services and Aging Life Solutions at Rosener House; Health, Wellness and Lifetime Enrichment offerings at Little House; and RIDE PVI, our on-demand Transportation Service at Little House.

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**WITH A GIFT TO THE HOLIDAY FUND**

Contributions to the Holiday Fund go directly to programs that benefit Peninsula residents. Last year, Almanac readers and foundations contributed \$310,000 from more than 170 donors for the 10 agencies that feed the hungry, house the homeless and provide numerous other services to those in need.

Contributions to the Holiday Fund will be matched, to the extent possible, by generous community organizations, foundations and individuals, including the Rotary Club of Menlo Park Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. No administrative costs will be deducted from the gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law. All donations to the Holiday Fund will be shared equally among the 10 recipient agencies listed on this page.

**DONATE ONLINE:**  
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The organizations below provide major matching grants to the Holiday Fund.



Rotary Club of Menlo Park

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

### Boys & Girls Club of the Peninsula

Provides after-school academic support, enrichment, and mentoring for 1,800 low-income K-12 youth at nine locations across Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, and the North Fair Oaks neighborhood of Redwood City.

### Ecumenical Hunger Program

Provides emergency food, clothing, household essentials, and sometimes financial assistance to families in need, regardless of religious preference, including Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for more than 2,000 households.

### Fair Oaks Community Center

This multi-service facility, serving the broader Redwood City community, provides assistance with child care, senior programs, citizenship and immigration, housing and employment, and crisis intervention. Programs are available in Spanish and English.

### LifeMoves

Provides shelter/housing and supportive services across 18 sites in Silicon Valley and the Peninsula. Serves thousands of homeless families and individuals annually on their path back to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

### Literacy Partners

Supports literacy programs and projects through fundraising and community awareness. Helps community members enhance their reading, writing and related skills and education to improve their economic, professional and personal wellbeing.

### Ravenswood Family Health Center

Provides primary medical and preventive health care for all ages at its clinic in East Palo Alto. Of the more than 17,000 registered patients, most are low-income and uninsured and live in the ethnically diverse East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, and North Fair Oaks areas.

### Second Harvest Food Bank

The largest collector and distributor of food on the Peninsula, Second Harvest Food Bank distributed 52 million pounds of food last year. It gathers donations from individuals and businesses and distributes food to more than 250,000 people each month through more than 770 agencies and distribution sites in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

### St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room

Serves hundreds of hot meals six days a week to people in need who walk through the doors. Funded by voluntary contributions and community grants, St. Anthony's is the largest dining room for the needy between San Francisco and San Jose. It also offers take-home bags of food, as well as emergency food and clothing assistance.

### StarVista

Serves more than 32,000 people throughout San Mateo County, including children, young people and families, with counseling, prevention, early intervention, education, and residential programs. StarVista also provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services including a 24-hour suicide crisis hotline, an alcohol and drug helpline, and a parent support hotline.

### Upward Scholars

Upward Scholars empowers low-income adults by providing them with financial support, tutoring, and other assistance so they can continue their education, get higher-paying jobs, and serve as role models and advocates for their children.

Please consider donating online, which enables your gift to be processed immediately. The secure website is:  
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# Local News

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City of East Palo Alto

A rendering of the U.S. 101/University Avenue Interchange Improvements Project shows the arching pedestrian/bicycle bridge that will span the highway and connect both sides of East Palo Alto.

## Work begins on new University Avenue pedestrian and bike overcrossing

Lane closures, construction to last through summer 2024

By Sue Dremann

Construction for a long-awaited pedestrian and bicycle overcrossing at U.S. Highway 101 and University Avenue is underway and will include improvements to two highway ramps, the city of East Palo Alto has announced.

The U.S. 101/University Avenue Interchange Project

will build a new, sweeping overcrossing stretching from Donohoe Street on the east side of University Avenue to Woodland Avenue on the west side. The new overcrossing will be located just north of the existing University Avenue bridge over Highway 101.

The overcrossing will link the east and west sides of East Palo Alto, which the

highway has split for decades. Currently, pedestrians and bicyclists must cross a dangerous highway onramp on the University Avenue bridge using a narrow sidewalk.

The city has said the new overcrossing will help address access and equity issues and improve access to shopping,

See **OVERCROSSING**, page 16

## Man found guilty of first-degree murder in San Carlos beheading case

By Nicholas Mazzoni

Jose Rafael Solano Landaeta, 33, of Hayward, was found guilty on Monday, Nov. 20, of first-degree murder in the death of Karina Castro, a 27-year-old mother of two. Landaeta is the father of one of Castro's children.

A jury convicted Landaeta of first-degree murder by using a deadly weapon in the commission of the crime. On Sept. 8, 2022, Landaeta, after an argument with Castro, is said to have used a samurai sword to kill her in front of her San Carlos apartment. According to witnesses, Landaeta used the sword "slashing numerous times, causing the victim's head to be almost severed," according to authorities.

Castro's mother, Laura Engman, said the guilty verdict reading was relieving, but she is without her daughter.

"But now the world knows what he did and what he's like," Engman said.

During the hearing on Monday, Castro's father, Martin Castro, said Landaeta turned around in his charge glaringly and spoke to him, "You still think I did it?"

"I am glad he won't see the streets," Martin Castro said. "It's bittersweet; I am hoping to get some closure and normalcy back to life or at least try. It feels like weight was lifted from my shoulders."

While Martin Castro added that he is relieved the trial is over, he is worn out still and still in shock.

"It has been a rollercoaster of events through this whole trial, but even getting the verdict we are looking for still doesn't give me back my daughter," Martin Castro said.

Eyewitnesses said they saw Solano Landaeta and Karina Castro having an intense argument outside of Castro's San Carlos apartment before he went into his car and retrieved the sword used to kill Castro while the children were inside her home.

Martin Castro said his daughter is a hero because he and Karina Castro's grandmother, Danielle Gannon, believe that if Castro allowed Landaeta in the home, he probably would have killed the children, too.

"She is a hero, my angel, and saved those kids," Martin Castro said.

Landaeta then walked away from the scene and placed the bloody sword in his car, which was parked two blocks away, according to the district attorney's office. When San Mateo County Sheriff's Office deputies arrived, they found Castro dead on the street and arrested Landaeta, who surrendered himself to police.

Landaeta initially pleaded not

See **MURDER**, page 9

## Health clinic looks to return to Belle Haven after several years' absence

By Neil Gonzales

Following a yearslong absence, a highly valued community program looks to return to a Belle Haven neighborhood in the midst of a rejuvenation.

By the time it closed in 2015, a clinic run by the Ravenswood Family Health Network (RFHN) at the old Onetta Harris Community Center was serving about 4,000 clients each year. A new version of the clinic aims to pick things back up after it's expected to open on the Belle Haven Elementary campus in 2026.

That prospect has come about because the Ravenswood City School District board on Nov. 9 approved a long-term ground-lease agreement with RFHN to develop a 6,000-square-foot comprehensive health clinic along the northeast corner of the campus field.

"The community wanted this," RFHN CEO Luisa Buada said in an interview. "It will be co-located with the school, which is great. We will be able to provide preventive services for the students."

But the services would also extend to the rest of the largely

underserved neighborhood on the east side of Menlo Park.

"There will be access for seniors, the parents of the children, their siblings and people in the neighborhood," Buada said. "Anyone who wants to come to the clinic would have an opportunity to come. It just helps bring healthcare close to those who live in Belle Haven."

The clinic is projected to serve about 4,350 patients annually after operating for three years, she said. It would provide family medical care, preventative and restorative dental programs, vision and hearing screenings,

social services and various other health- and wellness-related offerings.

Buada also noted that RFHN is a federally qualified health center, meaning that the Belle Haven clinic would see patients regardless of their ability to pay or health-insurance status.

"So that's one of the advantages besides the convenience of being close by," she said. "We do accept health insurance, but we also have a sliding fee scale based on income and number of people in the family. We do provide a significant amount of discounts for people to make it affordable."

RFHN would build the clinic from modular construction costing about \$6 million, including equipment and technology, she said. The clinic could open in the spring of 2026.

The district pointed out that the modular design offers maximum flexibility for future uses of the site, in contrast to a permanent type of construction. In the event the lease agreement comes to an end, RFHN could easily take out the modular spaces, giving back the site as it looks today.

See **HEALTH CLINIC**, page 15

# Stanford outlines plans to combat anti-semitism and Islamophobia

Facing a student protest that's entering its third week, administrators pledge more support for community amid ongoing Israel-Hamas war

By Isha Trivedi

Stanford officials issued a statement Monday, Nov. 13, outlining their plans to combat anti-semitism and Islamophobia at the university, as a group of students reach the three-week mark of a sit-in on campus calling for more support for Palestinian students.

Stanford leaders said in their statement Nov. 13 that they plan to establish two groups aimed at combating hatred and providing community members with support: One is a new subcommittee within their Jewish advisory committee to combat anti-semitism at the university. The other is a newly established Muslim, Arab and Palestinian communities committee, which will similarly combat Islamophobia and enhance Muslim, Arab and Palestinian students' safety.

The announcement also comes on the heels of a hit-and-run that police are investigating as a hate crime, in which an Arab Muslim student at Stanford was targeted by an allegedly pro-Israel driver who yelled "F--- you and your people" after hitting the student.

The university's top administrators issued a statement after the incident condemning hate-based violence, stating they were "profoundly disturbed" to hear of the incident. But students involved



Veronica Weber

with the sit-in criticized the university for the timing of its response to the incident, which they said came several hours too late.

Both the subcommittee on combating anti-semitism and the new Muslim, Arab and Palestinian communities committee will consist of faculty, staff, students, and alumni. The latter group will also provide recommendations on how to educate the Stanford community on Islamophobia, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian bias. The former group will do the same type of education on anti-semitism.

The students involved with the sit-in issued several demands to university leaders, which

Stanford's latest statement only fulfills a portion of. They called for the university to provide resources for Palestinian students and commit to the boycott, divestment and sanction movement. They also called for the university to endorse an immediate ceasefire and form a committee to "correct the directives, faculty, and research initiatives contributing to subjugation of Palestinian people."

The statement from the university also outlined steps that officials have taken recently to support students and bolster public safety, including a third-party review of campus safety, expanded resources like mental

health services and reporting mechanisms for discrimination, and "informational resources" establishing the school's stance against discrimination.

Hana Spahia, a student involved with the sit-in, told this publication last month that student organizers met with administrators on Oct. 26 to discuss their demands, but officials told them it would be difficult to address most of them except the demand to provide resources for Palestinian students. ■

Email Assistant Digital News Editor Isha Trivedi at [itrivedi@paweekly.com](mailto:itrivedi@paweekly.com).

Stanford University officials are vowing to launch initiatives to fight anti-semitism, Islamophobia, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian bias. The announcement follows weeks of protests amid the Israel-Hamas war.

## San Mateo County Board of Supervisors disagreement about leadership rotation policy boils over

By Thomas Hughes / Bay City News

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors narrowly voted to delay adopting a policy for the rotation of leadership posts on the board after a debate Nov. 14, that grew contentious at times.

The current, informal policy has seen the five-member board elect the vice president to be the new board president and place the outgoing president at the back of the rotation. The longest-serving board member would then become the vice president, with newly elected members waiting to rotate in.

But if two or more new members are elected at the same time, as was the case this past year, it could prevent one of them from serving in leadership if they only serve one four-year term.

That would mean that if

the new policy was adopted, Supervisors Noelia Corzo and Ray Mueller, both elected in 2022, would draw straws in January to determine who becomes fourth in line, which could prevent that person from getting a turn serving as board president if they aren't reelected.

Mueller suggested adopting a style similar to what he said he experienced as a city council member in Menlo Park, which had newly elected members quickly escalated to the vice president role.

Supervisors David Canepa and Warren Slocum said they supported the policy being proposed Tuesday as one that took politics out of the process, but Slocum's comments drew a rebuke from Mueller.

"I think Mr. Canepa's right when he talks about taking the politics out of it, we've already seen it here this morning

with Mr. Mueller," Slocum said, before he was cut off.

"I take offense to that, Mr. Slocum," Mueller said, arguing that he was making a policy suggestion, not a political one.

"Thank you for your opinion, appreciate it," said Slocum sarcastically.

Shortly after the exchange, Mueller said he was done with the side comments that he felt were directed at him.

"I have to say, in my time on this board I've taken quite a bit of disparagement," said Mueller, who objected to accusations of caring more about ambition, or the politics of the decision, rather than the policy.

"And I'm going to start telling my colleagues, I'm not going to take disparagement like that anymore. I'm not going to take side comments. I don't do that to you, so please don't do it to me," he said.

Corzo likewise said she disagreed with a policy that could potentially make the board's first member who is a woman of color ineligible to serve as president in her first term.

Canepa was undeterred and offered the motion to approve the rotation policy anyway, saying he hoped "that collegiality and sanity prevail, and not one's ambitions."

"There's no need for disparagement like that, Supervisor Canepa," said Mueller.

"Let's all stay focused on the issues," said Supervisor Dave Pine.

Pine offered a replacement motion to work with Mueller to create an alternative policy that could be considered at a later meeting, which was agreed to by a vote of 3-2, thus delaying the implementation of any formal policy for now. ■

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# San Mateo County supervisors boost funding for rental assistance program

By Thomas Hughes / Bay City News

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors on Nov. 14, reallocated over \$2.5 million to shore up emergency financial assistance programs for people in need, and also called for reexamination of a county policy that restricts rental assistance to those who have lived in the county for at least 90-days.

Multiple supervisors said that the policy should be relaxed in

the face of more demand.

“The need has increased for emergency financial assistance,” said Claire Cunningham, the county’s Human Services Agency director, during her request to the board.

Cunningham asked the board to approve adding just over \$1 million from Measure K, the county’s half-cent sales tax increase approved in 2016, into the programs, which are administered through a group of eight nonprofit service providers referred to as the

county’s “core providers.”

Another \$1.5 million specifically for rental assistance was directed to the emergency program through an appropriations transfer request from Supervisor Noelia Corzo. The funding, also from Measure K, was allocated to the county administrator’s office. The rental assistance program is administered through the nonprofit organization Samaritan House for those who qualify.

But one of those qualifications, which requires 90 days

of residency in the county to be eligible for rental assistance, was called into question by board members.

“Maybe that’s something the board should really kind of look at. I’d like to study it a little more,” Supervisor David Canepa said.

He said he had been receiving increased calls in the last month about constituents struggling to secure housing.

Those who haven’t lived in the county for 90 days can request a bed in a congregate shelter. But, while there are beds regularly

available on the county’s bayside, shelters on the county’s coast side have a waitlist, according to County Executive Mike Callagy.

Corzo said she agreed that the policy should be re-examined and said she would discuss it at the next community action agency meeting, which connects the public with the county’s Human Services Agency. The next meeting is scheduled for Nov. 28, but the location has not been set.

Both expenditures were approved unanimously. ■

## Ravenswood weighs whether to use \$10M in bond funds to pay for relocated district office

By Angela Swartz

Following the decision to lease out land where the former district office was housed in much-needed funds, the Ravenswood City School District is exploring how it will pay for a new office that is estimated to cost \$10 million to construct. The district may use \$4 million in its remaining bond funds for the project.

During an Oct. 26 school board meeting, trustees opted to explore two options: paying for the facility itself or seeking outside funds. The school board nixed a third option to consider a 50-50 split between district funding and outside funding for the project.

The board also gave staff approval to begin working with an architect to design and scope the preferred site of the new district office.

District officials said they preferred to house the new office on a field off Bay Road, adjacent to the district’s planned Bay Road Community Hub, which

is still in the design process.

This location allows the district to piggyback on the community hub for parking, landscaping, utilities and more to save money on the project, according to a staff presentation for the Oct. 26 meeting.

The district office has been located at 2120 Euclid Ave. in East Palo Alto, but the school district signed an agreement with developer USA Properties to lease the space for 400 and 450 affordable housing units. The proposal retains district ownership of the land as well as a 50% profit sharing agreement. The base rent for the property will start at \$1.6 million.

Staff noted that constructing a new district office is will cost significantly less than the \$40 million (roughly \$60 million in 2023 dollars) previously contemplated in the 2015 Facilities Master Plan. Staff said the \$10 million project is a large dollar figure, but it’s only about 4% of the total investment being put into school facilities.

Other sources of funding

could come from redevelopment funds (\$4 million) and a \$1 million federal solar rebate, staff notes.

Measure I, a \$110 million facilities bond measure passed by voters in 2022, would be the source of the bond funds for the new district office.

### Financing options explored

Over the past year, staff explored a number of ways to pay for the new facility through partnerships and other leases, but these approaches have “largely been unsuccessful.” At this point, the best path may be to proceed with directly paying for the new office, according to staff.

The district considered partnering with the city of East Palo Alto to include the district office in its new library; working with an outside donor to donate to a district office; soliciting an outside donor to build a new community hub including the entire district office; developing a ground lease with a developer that would build both housing and the district office; or partnering with local nonprofits to explore shared office space (such as EPA Archives, the Black History Museum, Stanford University, etc.).

Chief Business Officer Will Eger told the board at the Oct. 26 meeting that he couldn’t find a developer interested in building housing and putting the district office on the first floor of such a project, noting that he doubted he would get buy in from trustees on such a plan anyway.

### Project timeline

District officials are still occupying the district office, which will eventually be

demolished. Officials plan to move out in about a year and a half, depending on the permitting process, Eger said on Monday, Nov. 20.

The district office is likely two or three times larger than what is currently needed, according to a January 2021 facilities update for the board.

The district plans to stay at the office as long as possible while it’s designing and constructing

the new space, Eger said.

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

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Veronica Weber

The Ravenswood School District’s administration offices, located on Euclid Avenue in East Palo Alto.

## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

### Should I Take My Home Off the Market for the Holidays?



**Dear Monica: My home has been on the market for about 3 months. As we’re headed into the holiday season, should I take my home off of the market and relist next year when there is likely more buyer activity?**

- Matthew N.

**Dear Matthew: If you need to sell the home in a timely manner, you can stay on the market as there are still buyers out there. If you can wait, it may be more beneficial to relist your home next year as there tends to be more buyers in the early Spring months.**

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# Convicted of murder in 2011, former Palo Alto hookah shop owner set for February retrial

Bulos Zumot to face new trial after being found guilty of killing Jennifer Schipsi, setting their shared cottage on fire

By Gennady Sheyner

**B**ulos Zumot, a former Palo Alto hookah shop owner who was convicted in 2011 of murdering his girlfriend, Jennifer Schipsi, and setting their shared Palo Alto cottage on fire, is heading for a new trial in February, more than three years after a federal court judge granted his appeal.

Zumot's defense attorneys and Santa Clara County prosecutors have been inching toward the trial since September 2020, when a federal judge handed Zumot a victory after a string of failed appeals at the state level. In granting Zumot's petition for a writ of habeas corpus, U.S. District Judge William Orrick cited flaws in the prosecution's case and ordered that Zumot be released from prison unless a new trial commences within 120 days.

Neither of those things happened. Zumot remains in California Men's Colony, a state prison near San Luis Obispo where he is serving his term of 33 years to life.

The trial, meanwhile, remains on the docket more than three years after the Orrick order. In October 2021, Zumot's team requested a delay, citing the need for more time to investigate the discovery documents and to receive commissioned opinions and reports from experts that they had consulted, according to court records. The prosecution did not object.

Records show that there have been nearly 20 court hearings relating to the new trial, including seven trial setting conferences. The next such conference is set for Dec. 27. The Zumot case will then be on the Santa Clara County Superior Court's master trial calendar on Feb. 13, when the status of the case will be evaluated and the timeline will be adjusted as needed.

Prosecutors have steadfastly disputed allegations that their case was flawed and the state Superior Court generally supported this argument, noting in its ruling that "totality of the relevant circumstances points overwhelmingly to the petitioner's guilt." During the 2011

trial, Deputy District Attorney Charles Gillingham presented to the jury evidence that included a heated text exchange between Schipsi and Zumot the night before her death, forensic evidence indicating that she was strangled, records from phone towers that suggested that Zumot had her phone in his possession.

The jury also heard testimony from a woman who said she was "100 percent" sure that she saw Zumot speeding through the neighborhood near the cottage shortly before the fire was reported. The jury also heard a detailed description of the fight that took place between Zumot and Schipsi on the day before her death, when they were on their way to his birthday party and he allegedly got jealous when she received a text from a male friend and Zumot reportedly threw a cell phone at her.

A key piece of evidence — and one that will likely take center stage at the upcoming trial — is surveillance footage from Da Hookah Shop, a hookah lounge on University Avenue

that he owned. Footage showed Zumot at the shop at 6:47 p.m., about 8 minutes after the Fire Department received a report of the fire at the Addison Avenue cottage.

Defense attorneys later found surveillance footage that showed Zumot at the hookah lounge at 6:45 p.m. They also cited a five-second clip showing a blurry image of someone walking into the hookah shop at 6:41 p.m. from the Ramona Street side.

Attorney Cliff Gardner, who represented Zumot during the appeals process, maintained that the person in that image is Zumot and that his presence at the hookah lounge at the earlier time makes him less likely to have been present at the cottage during the time of the fire. Prosecutors had claimed the blurry image was another employee and noted that the jury had access to the full surveillance video and thus had an opportunity to consider the identity of that individual even though the 6:41 p.m. footage was not debated during the trial.

The surveillance footage was a key reason for why Orrick granted Zumot's petition for a writ of habeas corpus. He pointed to the prosecution's open statement during the trial saying that Zumot had entered the café at about 6:47 p.m., notwithstanding the footage showing him at the café a few minutes earlier. The state court's ruling, Orrick argued, was "based on an unreasonable determination of the facts in light of the evidence."

Orrick suggested that the state court's decision "reflects no attempt to grapple with the evidence that is contrary to its ultimate conclusion that the prosecution did not present false evidence."

"Accurate video evidence would have forced the jury to grapple with the parties' respective timelines of events along with the credibility of various witnesses on both sides. In this case, the false suggestion of a definite entry point was critical; the prosecution framed it as lending certainty in spite of the inexact timeline," Orrick wrote in the Sept. 2, 2020, judgment.

The federal judge also took issue with the lower court's treatment of a phone call that Schipsi received from a blocked number on Aug. 24, 2009, as she was trying to get a restraining order against Zumot. The call, which she had attributed

to Zumot, was later determined to have come from Schipsi's friend. Orrick's order notes that the friend, Roy Endemann, had admitted in 2013 that he called he from a blocked number at her request in order to help her obtain a stay away order against Zumot.

While the state court concluded that the issue was immaterial, given all the other evidence of domestic abuse against Zumot, the federal judge argued that in making this determination the lower court had failed to address the question of whether the prosecution had presented false evidence. Orrick concluded that it did.

The federal judge also agreed with Zumot's assertion that his legal team, led during the trial by celebrity attorney Mark Garegos, fell below the acceptable standard of care because it had failed to fully review the surveillance footage or call out the false evidence about the Aug. 24, 2009, phone call.

"There was no sound tactical reason for failing to introduce Endemann's phone records into evidence," Orrick wrote. "The records would have done more than merely eliminate one threat from the record; they would have bolstered Zumot's credibility—which was critical for the jury's assessment of his testimony and alibi—and harmed the credibility of other reports that Schipsi made to third parties about her relationship with Zumot."

The counsel's performance, Orrick concluded, "fell below an objective standard of reasonableness."


In the years leading up to the new trial, Zumot's team has been reviewing the evidence and the prosecution's timeline, which suggests that the fire started sometime between 6:20 p.m. and 6:35 p.m. Last year, the attorneys made a request to interview a witness who reportedly walked past the cottage on his way to a party at the main house at about 6:20 p.m. and did not see anything unusual.

About 10 minutes later, after the group spotted the flames, the homeowner and another guest at the party reportedly went outside to fight the cottage fire with garden hoses. Firefighters arrived minutes later and found the burned body of Jennifer Schipsi inside. ■

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## Menlo Park Monthly Market Report

October 1, 2023 - October 31, 2023



TOP 10 SALES*			
1. \$7,300,000 575 Oak Knoll Lane	2. \$6,485,000 1055 Valparaiso Avenue	3. \$6,250,000 960 Lucky Avenue	4. \$5,250,000 559 Placitas Avenue
5. \$5,210,000 1200 Rosefield Way	6. \$5,200,000 840 San Mateo Drive	7. \$5,100,000 930 Colby Avenue	8. \$5,100,000 2031 Camino Al Lago
9. \$4,980,000 1055 Atkinson Lane	10. \$4,620,000 426 Bay Road		

**ACTIVE LISTING**

Oct: 66  
Sep: 69

↓ -4%

**AVERAGE SALES PRICE**

Oct: \$3,464,824  
Sep: \$3,389,444

↑ 2%

**AVERAGE SALES PRICE/SQ FT**

Oct: \$1,392  
Sep: \$1,428

↓ -3%

**PENDING LISTING**

Oct: 35  
Sep: 38

↓ -8%

**AVERAGE SOLD DAYS ON MARKET**

Oct: 29  
Sep: 19

↑ 53%

**MONTHS OF INVENTORY**

Oct: 1.90  
Sep: 2.60

↓ -27%

If no further home/condos were to come to market, the area would be SOLD OUT of residential real estate in the number of MONTHS shown.

**SOLD LISTING**

Oct: 34  
Sep: 27

↑ 26%

**SALE/LIST PRICE**

Oct: 102.20%  
Sep: 103.30%

↓ -1%

**30 YEAR MORTGAGE RATE**

Oct: 8.01%  
Sep: 7.55%


↑ 6%

Source: Bankrate

\*Source: MLS Listings for Single Family Properties | Townhomes | Condos

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Nicholas Mazzoni

Jose Rafael Solano Landaeta, 33, of Hayward, was found guilty on Monday, Nov. 20, of first-degree murder in the death of Karina Castro, a 27-year-old mother of two.

**MURDER**

*continued from page 5*

guilty by reason of insanity, meaning he was insane during the commission of the crime, but court-appointed doctors found Landaeta to be competent to stand trial. Landaeta eventually pleaded not guilty and claimed he acted in self-defense.

Defense Attorney Robert Cummings claimed Landaeta's mental illness triggered a psychotic episode fueled by over-the-phone arguments that led Landaeta to believe Castro was out to have him and his family killed. Landaeta claimed to have acted out of fear and alleged self-defense, saying that he thought Castro was trying to stab him in the heart.

Prosecutors said during the opening statements that the murder was about vengeance after Landaeta became infuriated that Castro posted on social media that Landaeta was a homosexual, rapist, and pedophile.

Landaeta repeatedly refused to appear in court, staying in his jail cell. He testified for nearly three hours last week, answering questions from his attorney

about the conversations he had with Castro hours before the killing.

But the cross-examination only lasted roughly 15 minutes, during which Landaeta said he didn't recognize Castro in a photo and claimed he didn't kill her. He then asked to take a break, but upon returning to the witness stand, he appeared to be asleep and didn't respond to the prosecutors.

"I am grateful that they (the jury) saw through the lines and his ridiculous behavior, and that's what Karina had to deal with every day," Gannon said.

For Castro's mother, Engman, she won't rest until Landaeta is in prison, she said.

"Justice is still not served until he is gone and in prison; once he's in prison, I will feel a lot better," Engman said.

The jury will return to deliberate on aggravating factors, including Solano using a sword to behead Castro. He faces 26 years to life in prison. ■

*Bay City contributed to this story.*

*Email Staff Writer Nicholas Mazzoni at nmazzoni@rwcpulse.com.*



Nicholas Mazzoni

A memorial for Karina Castro outside her San Carlos apartment on Nov. 14.

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# Study details missed opportunities and the ongoing cost of COVID on American students

By John Fensterwald / EdSource

Money is running low, and time is short to help America's students fully regain the learning they lost since the pandemic. Based on their continued academic struggles and mental health challenges, a report released Sept. 13 concluded that most probably won't.

The second yearly report by a national education research organization examining the impacts of COVID-19 on K-12 education offered that sobering outlook while highlighting some notable state and local efforts nationwide. It also called for a shift in the mission of high schools to make connections for students adrift in the wake of COVID. Colorado Gov. Jared Polis called it "blurring the lines between high school, higher education and the workforce" in an essay in the report.

"The State of the American Student: Fall 2023," produced by the Center on Reinventing Public Education, which is affiliated with Arizona State University, focused on older students — recent graduates or those nearing graduation from high school.

"We not only owe them restitution for extended school closures and missed proms — we owe them a special sense of urgency, given how little time they have left before transitioning to the next phase of their lives," wrote Robin Lake, the center's director.

Data on younger students has been easier to collect. By some indicators — higher graduation rates and higher grades overall — older students may appear to have rebounded from COVID. But those measures are deceiving, said Morgan Polikoff, an

associate professor of education at the USC Rossier School of Education.

Nationwide ACT college admission scores, which are the lowest in 30 years, point to grade inflation, and assessments by the company Renaissance Learning point to a steady decline in 10th grade math and reading scores since before the pandemic. Disparities in scores between Latino and Black students and white and Asian students underscore "staggering" inequalities.

Chronic absence rates are alarming, as are measures of mental health. The proportion of teenage girls reporting persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness rose from 36% to 57%; 30% seriously considered suicide, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2021 report on youth risk behavior.

"The older the student, the more lingering the impact," said Gene Kerns, chief academic officer of Renaissance. "The high school data is very alarming. If you're a junior in high school, you only have one more year. There's a time clock on this."

According to the assessment publisher NWEA, it will take the average eighth grader 7.4 months to catch up to pre-pandemic levels in reading and 9.1 months in math. In the hardest-hit communities like Richmond, Virginia, and New Haven, Connecticut, students fell 18 months behind in math. Schools would have had to teach 150% of a typical year's worth of material for three years in a row just to catch up. "It is magical thinking to expect they will make this happen without a major increase in instructional time," wrote researchers Thomas Kane of Harvard and Sean Reardon of Stanford.

## Tutoring's unfilled promise

For whatever reasons — pandemic fatigue, a lack of state guidance, a labor shortage, the unwillingness of teachers to do after-school tutoring or summer school — districts have not achieved efforts at scale. Despite a consensus among researchers that high-quality, intensive tutoring is the most effective intervention, USC researchers found, based on a survey of 1,600 households, that less than 2% of students are "receiving tutoring that even meets a fairly moderate definition of 'high-quality.'" And among those who likely need it most — students who receive grades C or lower — less than 4% are receiving high-quality tutoring.

The report credited Texas, Tennessee and Colorado for launching "admirable tutoring efforts." California piloted a tutoring and mentoring program, led by 3,200 college students reaching students in 33 districts through College Corps, a volunteer program, but mainly it's been every district for itself. Some, like Los Angeles Unified, relied on remote tutoring that was more like homework help, while Oakland turned to the nonprofit Children Rising and to Oakland REACH, a parent empowerment group, to train its own tutors.

Having not heard crisis warnings from state or local leaders, many parents haven't recognized the severity of the challenge, the report said. Good grades sent a contrary message; one USC survey found that only 23% of parents were interested in summer school, and 28% were interested in tutoring. Another survey cited in the report found that about 90% of parents, including those in Sacramento, believed their child was working at grade level or above.

At first, there was no "voice in the back of my head" to raise doubt, said Keri Rodrigues, president of the National Parents Union.

Rodrigues and others in the report called for states to show more transparency for parents, with report cards that are candid about their children's learning. It credited a half dozen states, such as Connecticut, for their candor.

## Money, labor troubles loom

Lake called tutoring "a massive missed opportunity" and added, "What also concerned us is that the wind seems to be going out of academic recovery efforts just at a time when we think things are about to get much harder for schools and for teachers."

Those headwinds include, according to the report:

- The Sept. 30, 2024, deadline to commit spending money from the American Rescue Plan, the final and largest chunk of nearly \$200 billion in federal COVID relief, about \$13.5 billion for California.

- That, combined with declining enrollments in most states, including the majority of districts in California, will result in a drop in state attendance-based funding. The impact of the expected "fiscal cliff" will vary by district. But some districts, such as San Francisco and West Contra Costa, are already feeling the pinch.

- A continued staff and teacher shortage in California. Last year was the first reduction in new credentials in eight years. The 16% drop — 3,130 fewer credentialed teachers — will compound the difficulty of meeting the demand for elementary and special education teachers.

In California, Gov. Gavin Newsom and the Legislature's allocation of \$8 billion has the potential to expand mental and physical health programs for students and address academic inequalities — if used effectively. The money is split between creating thousands of community schools, funding six weeks of summer school and extending the day by three hours for low-income schools.

Since school budgets for the year are already set, there's still time for districts to plan a major summer learning effort in 2024, Kane, the faculty director of the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard, wrote in his contribution to the report. The Biden administration could be persuaded to extend spending for one more year, although he and Lake agreed it should be

restricted to proven strategies, like tutoring, summer learning and salary increases for an extended year.

"Part of the challenge has been the absence of political leadership," Kane said. School district officials need the "political cover" to undertake significant reforms needed for students to catch up, he said.

States and districts need to provide high school students with hope and innovation, the report said. It's called for federal funds for a "gap year" as an immediate strategy for coming out of the pandemic. An idea usually associated with privileged students who take a year of enrichment before college, this would involve investing in community colleges "to help kids get back on track and help them prepare for their next steps in a really creative and positive way," the report said.

The report also recommended putting more emphasis on adult-student relationships, rethinking high school school-to-career pathways and investing in a "New American High School," which Lake argues "would connect students to meaningful work in their communities and expert knowledge around the globe."

It cited Purdue Polytech High School in Indiana, a public charter school network with higher ed and industry partnerships for careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math, and Seckinger High School, an artificial intelligence-themed high school in Gwinnett County, Georgia. It pointed to Colorado, where about 53% of high school graduates earn college credit or industry credentials through dual and concurrent enrollment; the vision is for every high school student to graduate with an associate degree and an industry-recognized credential.

None of the examples pointed to California, although in the last several years, the state has funded nearly \$1 billion in dual enrollment programs, apprenticeship opportunities and Golden State Pathways, for students to explore college and noncollegiate pathways by 10th grade. The executive order last month to establish a master plan for career education within 13 months should provide a wider vision pulling components together.

The aim moving forward, the report said, should be "a new definition of student success that focuses more on fulfillment and long-term happiness in careers than college as an end unto itself." ■

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



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# Menlo Park Farmer's Market staple fights to stay afloat

Heirloom Organic Gardens turns to community on GoFundMe

By Cameron Rebosio

Menlo Park Farmers Market staple Heirloom Organic Gardens is struggling to make it after the COVID pandemic, leading owner Grant Brians to start a GoFundMe asking the community to help.

"The last several years have finally taken their toll," Brians wrote. An accumulation of difficulties has led to the need for funds."

According to the GoFundMe, Brians began farming at only four years old, imitating his grandmother's victory garden, a wartime vegetable garden. He then began his first market garden in Los Altos at only 11 years old, and began commercial farming when he was only 14. According to Brians, the Heirloom Organic Gardens was the first organic farm in the Santa Clara Valley in 1976.

Today, Brians and Heirloom Organic Gardens are in a rough spot and are reaching out for help, and not just because COVID cut down on business. He wrote that 105 acres of the farm flooded this year, there have been issues with farm machinery and vehicles, and several restaurant closures have affected their primary customer base, leading to the decision to ask for help from the community.

Those who donate have a

space to leave comments of support for Brians and his farm, and the messages have a consistent theme of support from farmer's market patrons who see the stand as a valuable presence for patrons. Donors have raised over \$46,000 of Brians' \$100,000 goal as of Tuesday.

"Farms like yours are vital, and your farmers market stand is uniquely great," Teddy Framhein wrote.

Heirloom Organic Gardens grows about 80% of its own

seeds, according to Brians on GoFundMe, and many of the vegetables he sells are not widely available. This includes edible flowers, Spigariello and Mandurian cucumbers, among others.

The GoFundMe for Heirloom Organic Gardens can be found at [tinyurl.com/heirloom-gofundme](https://tinyurl.com/heirloom-gofundme). ■

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## RAIN GARDENS

*continued from page 1*

rain barrels, pooling around the house, or running off into the bay, stormwater accumulates in the gardens, where it's filtered by the soil and returned to the groundwater supply.

In this way, the gardens contribute to a healthy ecosystem. According to CalRecycle, 70% of pollution in surface water comes from stormwater. Traditional stormwater systems don't have a method for filtering this polluted runoff.

At a household level, rain gardens make a difference by preventing costly consequences of flooding, like leaks and rotting walls. The visually-appealing protection they offer can also increase property values. This is especially valuable to East Palo Alto residents who have expressed a fear of displacement in what is seen as the last affordable neighborhood in the Bay Area, said Cade Cannedy, CRC's director of programs.

### A community approach

Through a community-driven process led by CRC, local residents identified rain gardens as a way to address their concerns about flooding and gentrification in the neighborhood. CRC

held six workshops attended by over 150 community members to spread the word about the initiative.

Quynh Pham never considered a rain garden until she attended a community fair. At the time, her yard was a stretch of dirt covered with tarp. Pham knew she didn't want a lawn — it would require too much water — and was searching for an alternative. But as a single mother and homeowner, there were always priorities besides landscaping to worry about. When she learned she could have a garden installed for her, she jumped at it.

On the day of the groundbreaking, Pham's home fills with a dozen gardeners from the partner organizations. A trail of signs announcing "snacks this way!" and "snacks here!" leads them to a bustling kitchen wrapped in the smell of sauteed onions and sweet potatoes.

Ethan, Pham's eight-year-old son, is sous chef. He offers the gardeners green apples picked from the tree Fresh Approach helped him plant and directs guests to a spread of figs and cheese he has labeled. Pham, a nurse passionate about nutrition, re-assembles a table outside where her guests can eat. Afterward, she composts their



Abigail Neely

Homeowner Quynh Pham welcomes gardeners to her kitchen in East Palo Alto on Nov. 11.

scraps. Pham said that becoming a mother helped her realize her responsibility to help preserve the environment for her son.

A fence separates Pham's property from an open field bordering the San Francisco Bay. While Pham said she hasn't experienced intense flooding yet, she's been shown maps that predict up to half of her front yard could be submerged.

As an East Palo Alto resident for the last 15 years, Pham said she feels lucky to be a part of a warm community that serves each other. She praised community organizations for helping people learn about environmental solutions and access resources.

"Having that community outreach introduces you to things that you wouldn't really necessarily think about or can afford. (It) informs a community that normally wouldn't be informed," Pham said.

Many of the people working on Pham's garden had a connection to the neighborhood.

Debbie Nunez, a curious neighbor and friend of Pham, was at the groundbreaking to learn how to conserve water in her own yard. Volunteer Sydney Taylor was in the yard digging, just blocks away from her childhood home.

### Modeling the future

Models by HighTide Intelligence have shown that East Palo Alto would need over 1,000 rain gardens to prevent wide-scale flooding, Cannedy said. While this is CRC's ultimate goal, it doesn't currently have funding for such an expansion.

David Freyberg, a water resources specialist and professor at Stanford University, described East Palo Alto as a "tough location" for water management. The area is exposed to rising sea levels, flooding from nearby creeks, and internal stormwater flooding. Although rain gardens have not been studied intensively as a management tool, Freyberg said they are worth exploring.

Still, Freyberg cautioned that rain gardens present challenges. This is especially true in California, where rain falls for short, intense time periods. Homeowners will need to be okay with brown vegetation in the summer. Upkeep will be needed to prevent trash found in runoff from building up in the gardens. Responding to that demand, a five-person garden ambassador workforce is being trained to install and maintain the gardens and rain barrel systems.

Ultimately, Cannedy hopes the project will demonstrate that rain gardens are cost effective and garner more government support. Often, Cannedy said, the rebates available for rain barrels and gardens aren't enough.

"These types of solutions are, fundamentally, an opportunity to pay reparations for the years of environmental burden that have been concentrated in these communities and build a world and a society that are much more just and better for everyone," Cannedy said. ■



Abigail Neely

Community members learn to install rain barrels in East Palo Alto on Nov. 11.

# Bringing farming back

Meet the company planting crops in private yards, at tech campuses and on stadium rooftops

By Karla Kane

What's known as Silicon Valley today was once called the "Valley of Heart's Delight" for its blossoming orchards and bountiful farmland. While the land has been built up over the years, with many folks likely out of touch with the area's agricultural heritage, one company is working to maintain a connection to that tradition.

Farmscape, a company with branches (no pun intended) in both northern and southern California is on a mission to establish gardens and farms in just about every imaginable space in Silicon Valley — think residential backyards, tech campuses, sports stadium rooftops and multi-family complexes.

According to co-founder Lara Hermanson, Farmscape is the largest urban farming company in the state, supporting around 50 full-time green jobs, growing (actual) tons of food, and transforming land that may otherwise be paved over or used for water-guzzling lawns.

Hermanson founded the company in Los Angeles with partner Dan Allen in 2008, when they were inspired to combine their agricultural background with a desire to live and work in an urban environment. Farmscape's northern California headquarters was developed about a decade ago.

The company works everywhere from residential yards to multi-family housing developments and major commercial spaces with the goal to reconnect communities with where their food comes from and cultivate crops and landscape designs that suit California's climate and native habitats.

In addition to design and installation, Farmscape farmers regularly visit and maintain their

sites, providing ongoing support.

## Senior living amid 1.7 acres of farmland

Among the company's recent projects is Agrihood Santa Clara, a new public-private partnership housing development that opened in September and includes more than 100 below-market-rate units reserved for Santa Clara County seniors age 55+ and senior veterans. The project boasts 1.7 acres of farmland and open space, cultivated on the former site of the University of California, Davis' Bay Area Research and Extension Center.

"Agrihood is so special," Hermanson said of the project for which Farmscape has been the farm consultant. Stone-fruit trees dot the perimeter, while a second-story patio adjoining the senior housing offers its own private raised planter beds and fruit trees. At the time of this interview, she said Agrihood's main farm complex on Winchester Boulevard was transitioning from its summer bounty of tomatoes, peppers, herbs, eggplants and squash into preparations for the upcoming cooler seasons.

"We are in the process of ripping everything that's there out in the annual beds, changing it out for fall crops," she said.

"To be able to have that access to the agriculture and have the therapeutic time to go work in the garden, or eat produce from the garden, I think that really adds, just, a vibrancy to a community," said Julie Mahowald, chief financial officer and head of partnerships and strategy at Housing Trust Silicon Valley (an early-stage funder of the Agrihood project). The project, she noted, also ties back nicely to the region's agricultural roots.

While residents, community volunteers and students will be able to participate, Farmscape



Caitlin Atkinson, courtesy Farmscape

Farmscape works on residential projects, including this home in Atherton.

provides the professional expertise to handle the tougher jobs.

"We'll be there in perpetuity running that farm," Hermanson said of Agrihood. "It's a lot of work and we want the residents and the wider community to be able to show up and enjoy the farm and learn things about farming and leave the heavier parts of the farming to us."

Currently, the produce grown and harvested is being distributed amongst residents, but by next year, the plan is also to offer an honor-system farmstand about once a week, she said.

## A rooftop farm at Levi's Stadium

Local sports fans may already be familiar with some of Farmscape's work. The company has for years cultivated a rooftop farm at Levi's Stadium, home of the San Francisco 49ers, in collaboration with the stadium's

chefs and various food programs.

"We grow literal tons of food each year for the stadium, used in everything from pickles for their burgers to salsas, garnishes on pastries, to floral arrangements," she said. "That place is like a little village that's nine stories high in the sky."

Called Faithful Farm, the rooftop garden produces an average of 150 pounds of produce per week, or 7,500 pounds of produce a year, according to Levi's Stadium.

Up in San Francisco at Oracle Park (home to the Giants baseball team), a Farmscape vegetable garden located in right-center field grows food for Bon Appétit Management Company's vendors as well as offering an education program using the garden as a living classroom.

Other clients include schools, restaurants, tech campuses and apartment complexes all over the Peninsula, in addition to single-family homes.

Among the company's backyard projects is an edible garden in San Mateo maintained with rainwater that produces crops used in traditional Spanish and Jewish dishes. In Atherton, there's a growing area that replaced a too-big lawn for a family that loves cooking, entertaining and sharing what they grow.

Sustainability is at the heart of Farmscape's mission, and woven into all of its projects, Hermanson said. Replacing hardscape with soil slows down stormwater runoff, drip irrigation prevents water wastage, compost reduces the need for harmful, nitrogen-based fertilizers, and native and pollinator-friendly plants are

incorporated into designs to provide healthful habitat.

"There are not a lot of things better for the environment than an organic farm," she said.

## How to get your own backyard farm

For those interested in hiring Farmscape for their own projects, Hermanson said there can be some space and sun conditions.

"We need you to commit about 100 square feet (of growing space) for it to be worth it," she noted. "The other big constraint is full sun" (growing food crops in some oak-shaded Peninsula yards may prove a bit trickier than sunnier locales), she said. However, when asked for tips on edible crops even the greenest (OK, pun intended) newbie with limited space and experience might try, she did offer a few suggestions.

Woody herbs — including sage, rosemary and thyme — are easy to grow and require little water.

"If you put them in your backyard in your ground, they'll take off without a lot of attention," she said. And with a starter from the grocery store, farmers market or nursery, lettuce is another easy one to grow at home.

"If you've got a raised bed, lettuce is a quick crop," she said. "It only takes about a month to get a great head of lettuce."

After all, every farm's got to start somewhere.

More information is available at FarmscapeGardens.com. ■

Email Assistant Lifestyle Editor Karla Kane at [kkane@almanacnews.com](mailto:kkane@almanacnews.com).

## OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

**Armond Bigler**, 93, A Los Altos resident who started his own medical practice near El Camino Hospital in Mountain View in the 1960s, built cabins around Henry's Lake in Idaho for recreation during vacations, and was an avid golfer and bridge club member, on Sept. 7.

**Maria Allo**, 77, a Los Altos resident whose career included teaching, doing research and leading surgery at numerous medical centers including Stanford, Johns Hopkins and Santa Clara Valley Medical

Center, on Nov. 9.

**Frances Dias**, 100, the first woman mayor of Palo Alto in 1966, who was an active member in regional governance before shifting gears to work for FEMA, and who later served on Santa Rosa's planning commission, on Nov. 9.

**Patricia Douglas**, 86, a Palo Alto resident who worked for Hewlett Packard in the 1950s, and would go on to work as a designer and instructor in the world of interior decorating at Studio D, and who would volunteer at Filoli making Christmas wreaths, garlands and ornaments, on Aug. 17.

**Eleanor Eisner**, 86, who moved to Palo Alto from Chicago in 1965 and would go on to work at Stanford University, later serving as a committees and PTAs in the Palo Alto Unified School District, and who in the 1970s helped the recently unemployed get back into the workforce under a program run by the city of Sunnyvale, on Oct. 26.

To read full obituaries, leave remembrances and post photos, go to Lasting Memories at [AlmanacNews.com/obituaries](http://AlmanacNews.com/obituaries). ■

# How AI is changing the way houses are bought and sold

Millennial homebuyers turn to virtual agents

By David Goll

Artificial intelligence (AI) has entered the realm of residential real estate on the Midpeninsula.

AI, computer systems developed to handle tasks that normally require human intelligence, are taking over real-time valuations for homes, data mining homes with specific characteristics, answering homebuyers' questions, creating marketing copy, connecting homebuyers with local real estate agents, and a whole lot more.

Officials from one company that has entered the local market making full use of the new technology say they hope to turn tears of frustration that often accompany real estate transactions into tears of joy.

Though anyone can use them, the target audience for AI online homebuying services are those in the millennial generation — 66 million Americans born between 1981 and 1996 — who now represent the largest homeowner majority. In 2022, millennials made up more than half of all homebuyers, according to a recent report from Rent Café.

Most of them grew up online and feel comfortable conducting many life experiences in virtual spaces, said Josh Ades, marketing director for DwellWell — a Los Angeles-based real estate tech start-up that uses AI software to assist clients with the homebuying process. DwellWell, which is among the AI services being used in real estate transactions on the Peninsula, provides online

answers to basic homebuying questions, new homebuyer educational programs, pre-approval for mortgage loans and connections with three “best match” real estate agents working in the areas where buyers are seeking homes.

“We sincerely want to help home buyers, and what Realtors don’t especially love is having to answer repetitive questions,” said Ades, while explaining the many ways AI can be utilized in the homebuying process.

DwellWell’s online resources for a “guided” homebuying experience — which provide step-by-step guides on everything from homebuying basics to choosing an agent to how to close the deal — are especially attractive to younger, tech-savvy buyers, Ades said, noting they tend to be more comfortable with conducting research and gaining access to educational resources online.

Once there, they can chat with “Dwelly,” the website’s mascot and navigator, to familiarize themselves with the homebuying process, determine their eligibility to qualify for mortgage



Courtesy DwellWell

Sam Carow and Matt Canzoneri are the co-founders of DwellWell, a tech real estate company using artificial intelligence to help people navigate the homebuying process.

loans and find a selection of suitable real estate.

## What do real estate professionals think?

AI works for Realtors, too, some say. AI can definitely be employed as a useful tool to assist agents, in the view of Dave Wetzel, CEO of

Sunnyvale-based MLSListings Inc., the regional property listing service.

“I absolutely feel there is value in AI for my customers,” Wetzel said, referring to the nearly 17,000 real estate agents who use his service in San Mateo, Santa

See **HOUSES**, page 14

‘I absolutely feel there is value in AI for my customers. Whether it is social media posts or a 750-word blog, for example, AI can be used to handle writing tasks ... (so) agents can spend more time with clients.’

DAVE WETZEL, MLSLISTINGS INC., CEO

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**HOUSES**

*continued from page 13*

Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey counties. “There are many products and services out there today that can assist my customers.”

Wetzel touted the usefulness of AI: Realtors are saving time and money using AI programs to make tasks, such as loading property photos onto their websites, less labor intensive.

Room descriptions can be handled by AI software instead of agents having to do this type of relatively mundane task, he explained.

“Agents can spend more time with clients,” he said.

Wetzel took issue with one of Ades’s contentions that Realtors appreciate being spared repetitive questions from potential homebuyers about individual properties and the home buying process.

“They love being asked those questions,” he said. “It gives them the opportunity to get to know the buyers and to display their knowledge and expertise.”

AI is a rapidly developing technology with great potential in the real estate industry, Wetzel said.

In the near future, Wetzel said his organization’s website

**‘Buying a home is the largest purchase most people ever make in their lives. Clients need to know someone is truly in their corner. ... An agent can turn a client on to a property they might not consider otherwise.’**

BRIAN CHANCELLOR, SERENO GROUP, REALTOR

will employ AI to help agents upload property photos, descriptions and community details.

He also envisions future classes to educate agents on further uses of AI to help them handle the myriad daily tasks in their individual businesses

“Whether it is social media posts or a 750-word blog, for example, AI can be used to handle writing tasks,” Wetzel said.

Not everyone in the industry is quite as AI-enthusiastic. Some believe that AI-generated services and tools will never be as effective as developing in-person relationships with a human real estate agent.

“Buying a home is the largest purchase most people ever make in their lives,” Brian Chancellor, Realtor in the Palo Alto office of the Sereno Group, said. “Clients need to know someone is truly in their

corner.”

Chancellor said he doesn’t want to come across as a technology “naysayer”. He said real estate agents don’t always do the best job explaining their purpose and role in effectively executing real estate transactions.

He said he can see AI as being a potentially valuable tool for Realtor newcomers building up their businesses.

“But, pictures can’t tell you everything about a property,” Chancellor said. “And an agent can turn a client on to a property they might not consider otherwise.”

Nicholas French, broker associate in the Los Altos office of Christie’s International Real Estate, said he doesn’t view AI-related real estate services as competition for his own business.

He related an anecdote where a client he worked with years

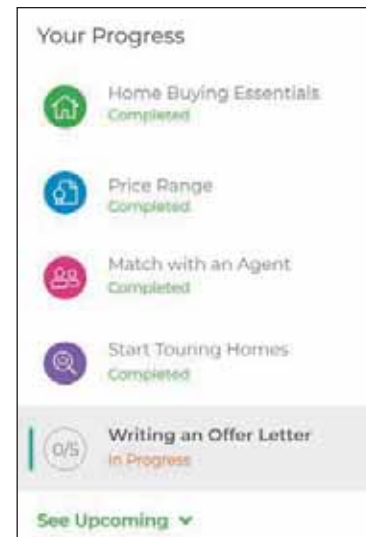
ago who worked in the high-tech industry became impatient with the uncertainty and sometimes slow pace of searching for a suitable house.

The client decided to strike out on his own, doing most of his searching online. He bought a house within a month. Not long after, the housing market slipped into a downturn.

“He later admitted to me he made a mistake,” by hastily buying his house, French said. “Now, we are working together again.”

Far more favorable toward using AI assistance is Wajiha Tareen, a Realtor with San Jose-based NextHome Lifestyles. Tareen — a Mountain View resident and veteran agent who spent a decade selling homes overseas in Dubai — works today in a territory ranging from San Jose to Redwood City.

Tareen decided to partner with DwellWell and utilize its AI services to help connect with potential clients. Several months after paying what she described as a “small fee” and posting a profile on the DwellWell site, Tareen had an online meeting with a family from Berkeley looking to relocate closer to the father’s job at Netflix in Los Gatos. They decided to work together.



Screenshot courtesy DwellWell

Homebuyers can use DwellWell’s virtual assistant to help guide them through everything from homebuying basics to how to close the deal.

In a few weeks, Tareen helped the family find a new home in San Jose’s Almaden Valley neighborhood, which they moved into last fall.

“It all worked very smoothly for me and the family,” Tareen said. “I’m super positive about the experience.” ■

*Email Contributing Writer David Goll at david.w.goll@gmail.com.*

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**HEALTH CLINIC**

*continued from page 5*

That scenario would make room for additional classrooms or other educational purposes for the school if needed, the district said.

According to the district, the lease would generate either \$100,000 in rent, or that dollar amount in direct services to students, or a combination of the two annually.

“As long as those direct services to Ravenswood students exceeded the rent, (RFHN) wouldn’t pay rent in that year,” district Chief Business Officer William Eger said during a presentation at the Oct. 26 board meeting. “Should rent not exceed, they would then pay the differential in terms of their rent.”

According to results of a district survey about possible uses for the site, 51% of Belle Haven respondents favored a health clinic compared to 25% for a picnic area with parking space and 24% for tennis courts.

“The Ravenswood City School District is always looking for ways to use our spaces to benefit the whole community,” board President Jenny Varghese Bloom said in an email to this publication. “So when we had an opportunity to use our land at Belle Haven Elementary to benefit the community of Menlo Park, we were excited to welcome back (RFHN). We want to continue to champion and serve Menlo Park and partner with RFHN to continue the work to meet the health needs of the Belle Haven community.”

The clinic’s return would come as Belle Haven is experiencing a revival. A major renovation of Belle Haven Elementary is about to begin while the newly named Belle Haven Community Campus is nearing completion in the same location as the former Onetta Harris Community Center at 100 Terminal Ave.

A history of a clinic in the

neighborhood goes back to the mid-1990s when San Mateo County started one at Onetta Harris.

“The Belle Haven clinic was originally operated by San Mateo County for adult patients only, mainly seniors,” Buada said. When RFHN took over in 2006, “we opened it as a family-medicine site, serving pediatrics, women’s health, prenatal care, adults with chronic diseases and health coaching.”

But in 2015, she said, RFHN closed the clinic, bringing staff and patients to a newly opened health center at 1885 Bay Road in East Palo Alto.

In the long run, the clinic — then at about 2,000 square feet — faced challenges with demand, she said. But the planned clinic, at three times the size, should meet the community’s needs well.

“We appreciate the school board’s trust in us,” Buada said, “and we definitely will step up to meet their expectations. We definitely are committed to the children and the families of the school district and hope that the clinic being co-located there at the school will make a difference in the health of the children’s lives that are there and that we can make an important contribution to their long-term health.” ■

*Email Contributing Writer  
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ngonzales92@yahoo.com.*

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**WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the District Board of the West Bay Sanitary District will conduct a Public Hearing on Wednesday evening, December 13, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Conference Room located at 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park or attend by Zoom or telephone.

Please refer to: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86725615742?pwd=8VwBabZqwsDIlvBwmQKyBw0bVcP72b.1> Meeting ID: 867 2561 5742 Passcode: 183235

Dial by your location: 1 669 444 9171 Meeting ID: 867 2561 5742 Passcode: 183235

The purpose of the Public Hearing will be to consider a proposed increase in some of the customer rates for year 2024 effective January 1, 2024 and for year 2025 effective January 1, 2025 for the collection of waste and recyclable materials in the West Bay Sanitary District for 2024 and 2025.

The need for this increase was discussed by the District Board at the October 11, 2023 Board meeting. The staff report for this matter is available at the District Office located at 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park or online at [www.westbaysanitary.org](http://www.westbaysanitary.org).

**PROPOSED NEW RATES:**

Approximately fifty-seven percent (57%) of residential service containers are a 32 gallon size. The new rate for 2024 for a 32 gallon container would increase from \$56.00 per month to \$61.00 per month and for 2025 to \$63.75 per month. The new rate for 2024 for a 20 gallon container would increase from \$50.00 per month to \$54.00 per month and for 2025 to \$56.43 per month. 20 gallon containers are grandfathered to current users and are no longer available to new customers or to customers wishing to migrate down to a 20 gallon container. As further detailed in the Rate Study, the purpose of these increases is to align the Solid Waste Rates with the actual proportionate cost of providing the service to customers in each Customer Service Level.

The District’s proposed rates are designed to transition the “per can” rate to an actual “cost of service” rate. For comparison purposes, the maximum typical residential rates for 32 gallon containers for SBWMA Cities including Burlingame, Belmont, Hillsborough, Menlo Park, Redwood City, San Carlos, and San Mateo, range from a low of \$27.52 (Foster City) to a high of \$64.60 (Hillsborough), based upon 2023 rates.

The following table shows the current rates and the proposed monthly rates for West Bay Sanitary District Franchised Customers to be effective beginning January 1, 2024 and January 1, 2025.

**Proposed Maximum Solid Waste Rates for 2024 and 2025**

Customer Service Level	MONTHLY RATES			QUARTERLY RATES		
	Current Monthly Rate	Proposed Monthly Rate (2024)	Proposed Monthly Rate (2025)	Current Quarterly Rate	Proposed Quarterly Rate (2024)	Proposed Quarterly Rate (2025)
<b>Residential:</b>						
20 gallon can	\$50.00	\$54.00	\$56.43	\$150.00	\$162.00	\$169.29
32 gallon can	\$56.00	\$61.00	\$63.75	\$168.00	\$183.00	\$191.24
64 gallon can	\$72.75	\$78.75	\$82.29	\$218.25	\$236.25	\$246.88
96 gallon can	\$105.00	\$105.00	\$109.73	\$315.00	\$315.00	\$329.18
<b>Commercial:(Per Pick Up)</b>						
	Current Rate	Proposed Rate (2024)	Proposed Rate (2025)	Current Quarterly Rate	Proposed Quarterly Rate (2024)	Proposed Quarterly Rate (2025)
1 yard bin	\$176.27	\$179.80	\$187.89	\$528.81	\$539.40	\$563.66
2 yard bin	\$334.54	\$341.23	\$356.59	\$1,003.62	\$1,023.69	\$1,069.76
3 yard bin	\$372.53	\$379.98	\$397.08	\$1,117.59	\$1,139.94	\$1,191.24
4 yard bin	\$496.70	\$506.63	\$529.43	\$1,490.10	\$1,519.89	\$1,588.30
6 yard bin	\$615.76	\$628.08	\$656.34	\$1,847.28	\$1,884.24	\$1,969.02
32-Gallon Cart	\$56.00	\$61.00	\$63.75	\$168.00	\$183.00	\$191.24
64-Gallon Cart	\$72.75	\$78.75	\$82.29	\$218.25	\$236.25	\$246.88
96-Gallon Cart	\$105.00	\$105.00	\$109.73	\$315.00	\$315.00	\$329.18

\*Commercial bin rates reflect collection charge for one pick up per week; to calculate charge for more than one collection per week, multiply rate by number of collections per week. For example, 1-Cubic Yard Bin (at proposed rate) collected 3 times per week = \$539.40 (\$179.80 x 3 collections/wk)

At this hearing, the Board of Directors will consider public comment as well as written protests by ratepayers regarding the proposed increase in monthly collection rates. If you would like additional information on the proposed rates, please call the District at 650-321-0384.

Any person interested, including all solid waste/recycling collection customers of the West Bay Sanitary District, may appear at the public hearing and be heard on any matter related to the proposed increase in monthly rates or attend by Zoom or telephone to encourage social distancing. Again, please refer to: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86725615742?pwd=8VwBabZqwsDIlvBwmQKyBw0bVcP72b.1> Meeting ID: 867 2561 5742 Passcode: 183235

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West Bay Sanitary District  
Board of Directors  
San Mateo County, California

/s/ Sergio Ramirez  
General Manager  
Dated: October 11, 2023

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# RESOLUTION NO. 2393 (2023)

## RESOLUTION OF INTENTION TO ANNEX CERTAIN TERRITORY TO THE WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT ON-SITE WASTEWATER DISPOSAL ZONE

Lands of Michael William Poutre and Janeen Michelle Poutre, as Trustees of the Poutre Living Trust dated November 11, 2021

The District Board of West Bay Sanitary District finds and determines as follows:

- A. This Resolution of Intention is adopted pursuant to the District's "Zone Master Annexation Resolution" ("ZOMAR"), which was adopted by the District Board August 12, 1996. The provisions of ZOMAR are incorporated by reference into this Resolution of Intention.
- B. The District has received an application to annex a parcel of real property (the "Parcel") to the District's On-Site Wastewater Disposal Zone (the "Zone"). The Parcel is described in Exhibit "A" attached to this Resolution of Intention and the description contained in the Exhibits are incorporated by reference. The name and address of the applicants and the number, type, volume and location of on-site wastewater disposal systems which are proposed to operate on the parcels to be annexed are described in Exhibit "B" attached to this Resolution of Intention and the information contained in the Exhibit are incorporated by reference.
- C. The applicants have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the District Board that the Parcel constitutes "real property" for the purposes of Section 2(b) of ZOMAR in that:
  - X All of the conditions described in Subsections i., ii., iii., iv. and v. of ZOMAR Section 2(b) are satisfied; or
  - Other conditions exist which demonstrate that the Parcel will benefit directly or indirectly from the activities of the Zone. If applicable, those conditions are also set forth in Exhibit "B" and are incorporated by reference.
- D. All of the conditions and requirements of ZOMAR Sections 2(a), 2(c), 2(d) and 2(e) have been fully satisfied.

In consideration of the foregoing findings and determinations,

**IT IS RESOLVED** by the District Board as follows:

1. It is the intention of the District Board to annex the Parcel to the Zone pursuant to the provisions of ZOMAR and applicable provisions of law.
2. In conjunction with a meeting of the District Board to be duly and regularly called and conducted, the Board will conduct a Public Hearing for the purpose of considering all matters pertaining to this Resolution of Intention.

The time, date and place of the Public Hearing are:

Date: December 13, 2023

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: West Bay Sanitary District Offices  
500 Laurel Street  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
& via Zoom

At the Public Hearing, all interested persons will be heard.

1. This Resolution of Intention shall be published and copies shall be delivered to the persons and entities as specified in ZOMAR Section 2(e)(i.).
2. A true copy of this Resolution of Intention shall promptly be filed for record in the office of the County Recorder of the County of San Mateo.
3. The General Manager shall cause the matters set forth in Sections 3 and 4 of this Resolution of Intention to be completed as directed.

\*\*\*\*\*

Passed and adopted by the District Board of the West Bay Sanitary District at a regular meeting thereof held on the 11th day of October, 2023 by the following vote:

### Exhibit A

**"EXHIBIT A"**

DATE: 2-9-2022  
ANNEXED TO: WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT  
NAME OF ANNEXATION: WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT

**GEOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION**  
LANDS OF POUTRE  
AND A PORTION OF GROVE DRIVE  
PROPOSED WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT ANNEXATION  
1.52 ACRE +/- PARCEL

ALL THAT REAL PROPERTY IN THE TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

BEING ALL OF LOT 2, AND PORTIONS OF GROVE DRIVE, AS DESIGNATED ON THE MAP ENTITLED "STONEGATE MEADOWS", SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE RECORDER OF THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA ON JUNE 21, 1966 IN BOOK 65 OF MAPS AT PAGES 4 AND 5, AS SHOWN ON EXHIBIT "B" ATTACHED HERETO, MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

BEGINNING AT THE MOST NORTHWESTERLY CORNER OF LOT 3 AS SHOWN ON SAID MAP, THENCE SOUTH 38°17'39" WEST 121.40 FEET (1);  
THENCE SOUTH 25°29'42" WEST 185.06 FEET (2) TO A POINT IN THE CENTERLINE OF GROVE DRIVE, 50 FEET IN WIDTH;  
THENCE ALONG THE CENTERLINE OF SAID GROVE DRIVE, NORTH 65°50'00" WEST 41.82 FEET (3) TO THE BEGINNING OF A CURVE TO THE RIGHT WITH A RADIUS OF 1000.00 FEET;  
THENCE ALONG SAID CURVE THROUGH A CENTRAL ANGLE OF 2°34'00", AN ARC LENGTH OF 44.80 FEET (4);  
THENCE SOUTH 63°16'00" EAST 30.89 FEET (5);  
THENCE LEAVING SAID CENTERLINE, NORTH 21°16'29" EAST 339.65 FEET (6);  
THENCE NORTH 65°39'00" EAST 73.04 FEET (7);  
THENCE NORTH 40°02'00" EAST 48.20 FEET (8);  
THENCE SOUTH 72°29'00" EAST 91.52 FEET (9);  
THENCE SOUTH 45°13'30" EAST 124.41 FEET (10);  
THENCE SOUTH 69°39'00" WEST 106.61 FEET (11);  
THENCE SOUTH 23°09'00" EAST 68.07 FEET (12) TO POINT OF BEGINNING.

CONTAINING 1.52 ACRES +/-

FOR ASSESSMENT PURPOSES ONLY. THIS DESCRIPTION OF LAND IS NOT A LEGAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION AS DEFINED IN THE SUBDIVISION MAP ACT AND MAY NOT BE USED AS THE BASIS FOR AN OFFER FOR SALE OF THE LAND DESCRIBED.

APPROVED  
SAN MATEO LOCAL AGENCY  
FORMATION COMMISSION  
455 COUNTY CENTER  
REDWOOD CITY, CA 94083

EXHIBIT A PAGE 1 OF 2

LICENSED LAND SURVEYOR  
Richard F. Melner  
8341  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
08-14-2022

N:\projects\2021\_1089221\2080\_SULAF\COM\Bills A ANNEXATION.doc

PAGE 1 OF 2

### Exhibit B

WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT  
EXHIBIT "B"  
SITE LOCATION  
315 GROVE DRIVE  
PORTOLA VALLEY, CA  
GRINDER PUMP SYSTEM

APN: 079-020-090  
315 Grove Dr  
Portola Valley, CA  
Connect to existing  
sewer force main on Grove Dr

© OpenStreetMap (and) contributors, CC-BY-SA

### OVERCROSSING

continued from page 5

parks and other amenities for residents on the city's isolated westside. Residents living on the eastside of Highway 101 will also have improved access to downtown Palo Alto.

The California Department of Transportation will also make improvements to Highway 101 as part of this effort. The northbound highway off-ramp to University Avenue will be realigned. The southbound off-ramp will be widened at University Avenue to create two dedicated right-turn lanes and two dedicated left-turn lanes. Construction is scheduled to last until summer 2024, the city said.

Motorists will encounter lane closures both east and west on University Avenue near Woodland Avenue and on Woodland near the University Avenue intersection.

The project's \$14 million funding comes from the San Mateo County Transportation Authority Measure A and Measure W, a Stanford Recreation Mitigation Grant, state SB1 / LLP funds, and federal HPP funds, the city said. ■

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

### CRIME BRIEFS

#### Burglary on Reservoir Road in Atherton

Someone broke into a home on Reservoir Road in Atherton on the evening of Nov. 15.

Around 7:39 p.m., Atherton police officers responded to a residential alarm and reported finding a smashed back glass door and an open front door at a home in the first block of Reservoir Road, according to a news bulletin.

The homeowners were out of town during the burglary Cmdr. Dan Larsen said in a Nov. 21 email. The officers did a video walkthrough of the home with the homeowner and nothing of value appears to have been taken, he said.

This is the 18th residential burglary in Atherton this year. Prior to this latest incident, the last burglary reported in town was on Oct. 25 when three people broke a front glass door and entered a home on Ridgeview Drive.

Police didn't provide any additional information on the incident.

Anyone living around Reservoir Road is asked to check their surveillance video and report any possible leads to the Atherton Police Department at 650-688-6500.

—Angela Swartz

**ESHOO**

*continued from page 1*

“She’s so hard working, and with the utmost integrity and love of America and our institutions. Let’s take a moment to celebrate her years of service before we rush to find her successor.”

Simitian also praised Eshoo’s accomplishments. He has not been shy about his intentions to run for Congress.

“We ought to take some time to say thank you to Anna Eshoo for tremendous service throughout the course of her career,”

Simitian said. “The attention ought to be on Anna and her contributions to the region.”

Simitian said a “formal announcement” about his candidacy is coming soon. San Jose Spotlight reported the longtime supervisor had launched a campaign committee to explore a congressional run more than a decade ago and raised about \$600,000 as of December.

Former Congressman Mike Honda told San Jose Spotlight he heard about Eshoo’s planned retirement late Monday. The news caught

him by surprise, he said.

“She’s been successful at the local and state level as Zoe and myself had been,” Honda said. “It was a situation where she wants to figure out if she wants to spend another two years in Congress with the crazy leadership.”

Eshoo, 80, is of Assyrian and Armenian heritage. She joined other congressional leaders this month to call on Israel to implement a temporary humanitarian pause in the ongoing Israel-Hamas war. The pause would minimize harm and enable aid to reach

civilians, she said.

“We share Secretary Blinken’s view that a humanitarian pause is a ‘critical mechanism for protecting civilians while enabling Israel to achieve its objective of defeating Hamas,’” Eshoo and her colleagues said in a statement.

Among other accomplishments, Eshoo has championed efforts to defend consumers, promote clean energy technology and protect the environment.

U.S. Rep. Kevin Mullin, whose district in San Mateo County is adjacent to Eshoo’s, was among those who

expressed her appreciation for Eshoo. In a statement that he posted on X, Mullin called her a “living legend for the Peninsula & Silicon Valley.”

“For 3+ decades, she had set the standard for constituent service & delivering for CA-18,” Mullin wrote. “I’ve been blessed to spend my 1st term in the House learning from her.” ■

*Palo Alto Weekly reporter Gennady Sheyner contributed to this story.*

*The original version of this story was published by San Jose Spotlight.*

**Public Notices**

**KAHLILA MAE LIVERPOOL, LLC  
KAHLILA MAE VENTURES, LLC  
KML VENTURES, LLC  
KAHLILA MAE LIVERPOOL VENTURES, LLC  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: M-295508**  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) Kahlila Mae Liverpool, LLC, 2.) Kahlila Mae Ventures, LLC, 3.) KML Ventures, LLC, 4.) Kahlila Mae Liverpool Ventures, LLC, located at 870 Campus Drive, Apt. 301, Daly City, CA 94015.  
Registered owner(s):  
KAHLILA MAE VENTURES LLC  
870 Campus Drive, Apt. 301  
Daly City, CA 94015  
California  
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 03 2023.  
(ALM Nov 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2023)

**METROPOLITAN HOTEL  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-295773**  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) METROPOLITAN HOTEL , located at 220 Linden Ave, South San Francisco, CA 94080.  
Registered owner(s):  
SF10, LLC  
1252 Mission Rd  
South San Francisco, CA 94080  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on November 01, 2023.  
(ALM Nov 24, Dec 1, 8 and 15, 2023)

**AMIKERS  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-295836**  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) AMIKERS , located at 350 Sharon Park Dr. APT H302, Menlo Park, CA 94025.  
Registered owner(s):  
JIN SOO DAVID KIM  
350 Sharon Park Dr. APT H302  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on November 09, 2023.  
(ALM Nov 17, 24, Dec 1 and 8, 2023)

**MIGHTY TRANSPORT  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: M-295626**  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) Mighty Transport, located at 50 North San Mateo Dr. Unit 112 San Mateo, CA 94401.  
Registered owner(s):  
BENDITU INC.  
50 North San Mateo Dr. Unit 112

San Mateo, CA 94401  
California  
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.  
Registrant has not yet commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 17 2023.  
(ALM Nov 10, 17, 24 and Dec 1, 2023)

**ON SQUARE CONSTRUCTION  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: M-295622**  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) On Square Construction, located at 6748 Mission St #308, Daly City, CA 94104.  
Registered owner(s):  
TWE CORPORATION  
683 Templeton Ave  
Daly City, CA 94014  
CA  
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.  
Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 09/12/23.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 17 2023.  
(ALM Nov 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2023)

**OLLIN REMEDIES HEALING CENTER  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-295802**  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) OLLIN REMEDIES HEALING CENTER , located at 915 Oak Lane, Apt 2, Menlo Park, CA 94025, San Mateo County.  
Registered owner(s):  
OLLIN REMEDIES LLC  
2710 Crown Canyon Rd, 1180  
San Ramon, CA 94583  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on November 03, 2023.  
(ALM Nov 10, 17, 24 and Dec 1, 2023)

**OLLIN REMEDIES BODEGA AND BOTANICA  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-295801**  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) OLLIN REMEDIES BODEGA AND BOTANICA , located at 915 Oak Lane, Apt 2, Menlo Park, CA 94025.  
Registered owner(s):  
OLLIN REMEDIES LLC  
2710 Crown Canyon 1180  
San Ramon, CA 94583  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on November 03, 2023.  
(ALM Nov 10, 17, 24 and Dec 1, 2023)

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON  
  
FOR JACKSON COUNTY  
  
Juvenile Department  
  
In the Matter of  
  
XADRIEN BALCITA-LOPEZ,  
  
A Child.  
  
Case No. 22JU03899  
  
PUBLISHED SUMMONS  
  
TO: Ivar Lopez

IN THE NAME OF THE STATE OF OREGON:  
A petition has been filed asking the court to terminate your parental rights to the above-named child under ORS 419B.500, 419B.502, 419B.504, 419B.506 and/or 419B.508 for the purpose of placing the child for adoption. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO PERSONALLY APPEAR before the Jackson County Court 100 S Oakdale Ave, Medford, OR 97501, on the **12 th day of January 2024 at 1:00 P.M.** for a hearing on the allegations of the petition and to personally appear at any subsequent court-ordered hearing. YOU MUST APPEAR PERSONALLY in the courtroom on the date and at the time listed above. AN ATTORNEY MAY NOT ATTEND THE HEARING IN YOUR PLACE. THEREFORE, YOU MUST APPEAR EVEN IF YOUR ATTORNEY ALSO APPEARS. This summons is published pursuant to the order of the circuit court judge of the above-entitled court, dated 11/03/2023. The order directs that this summons be published once each week for three consecutive weeks, making three publications in all, in a published newspaper of general circulation in San Mateo County.  
**NOTICE READ THESE PAPERS CAREFULLY IF YOU DO NOT APPEAR PERSONALLY BEFORE THE COURT OR DO NOT APPEAR AT ANY SUBSEQUENT COURT-ORDERED HEARING, the court may proceed in your absence without further notice and TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS (1) YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE REPRESENTED BY AN ATTORNEY IN THIS MATTER. If you are currently represented by an attorney, CONTACT YOUR ATTORNEY IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIVING THIS NOTICE. Your previous attorney may not be representing you in this matter. IF YOU WISH TO HIRE AN ATTORNEY, please retain one as soon as possible to represent you in this proceeding. If you need help finding an attorney, you may call the Oregon State Bar’s Lawyer Referral Service at (503) 684-3763 or toll free in Oregon at (800) 452-7636. IF YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO HIRE AN ATTORNEY and you meet the state’s financial guidelines, you are entitled to have an attorney appointed for you at state expense. TO REQUEST APPOINTMENT OF AN ATTORNEY TO REPRESENT YOU AT STATE EXPENSE, YOU MUST IMMEDIATELY CONTACT the Jackson County Circuit Court at 609 W 10th Street, Medford, OR 97501, phone number 541-776-7171, extension 585, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. for further information.. IF YOU ARE REPRESENTED BY AN ATTORNEY, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH YOUR ATTORNEY AND TO KEEP YOUR ATTORNEY ADVISED OF YOUR WHEREABOUTS. (2) If you contest the petition, the court will**

schedule a hearing on the allegations of the petition and order you to appear personally and may schedule other hearings related to the petition and order you to appear personally. IF YOU ARE ORDERED TO APPEAR, YOU MUST APPEAR PERSONALLY IN THE COURTROOM, UNLESS THE COURT HAS GRANTED YOU AN EXCEPTION IN ADVANCE under ORS 419B.918 to appear by other means including, but not limited to, telephonic or other electronic means. An attorney may not attend the hearing(s) in your place. **PETITIONER’S ATTORNEY**  
Kimberly S.T. Bolen  
Sr. Assistant Attorney General  
Oregon Department of Justice  
1555 E. McAndrews Rd, Suite 200  
Medford, OR 97504  
Phone: (541) 414-1030  
ISSUED this 8th day of November 2023.

Issued by: /s/ Kimberly S.T. Bolen, OSB # 964420  
Senior Assistant Attorney General  
(ALM Nov 17, 24 and Dec 1, 2023)

**SUMMONS Case No. 21STCV37482 (CITACION JUDICIAL)**

**NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:** Jessica Schatz, an individual; (A VISO AL DEMANDADO): Joel Cameron Buchsdrucker, an individual, and DOES 1 to 20, Inclusive  
YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: Fatemeh Beikzadeh, an (LO ESTÁ DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE): individual

**NOTICE!** You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond Within 30 days. Read the information below.  
You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form If you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.oa.gov/selfhelp) your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court. There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service, if you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.caegov/selfhelp) or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award Of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court’s lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case. IAVISOL Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede dectd/r en su contra s/n escuchar su verslón. Lea la Información a continuación Tiene 30 DIAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citacfn y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta code y hacer que se entregue una copla a/ demandante. Una carta o

una llamada te/efánica no 10 protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la cone. Es posib/e que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más informacln en e/ Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, plda al secretario de la cone que le dé un formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder e/ caso por Incumplimfento y la corte le podrá qultar su suefdo dinero y bienes sin más advertencia.

Hay otros requisitos iega/es. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado Inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remlsln a abogados. S/ no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servlcios legales sin fines de lucra Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services, (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cones de California, (www.sucorte.ca.gov) o ponléndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. A VISO: Por ley, la corte liene derecho a recfamar las cuotas y los costos exentos por imponer un gravamen sobre cua/quier recuperacln de \$10,000 más de valor rebclda medlante un acuerdo o una conceslñ de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagarel gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar e/ casa e name an a resso e cou s: (El nombre y direcclñ de la corte es);

CALIFORNIA SUPERIOR COURT  
312 N. SPRING STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff’s attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is:  
(El nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):  
Michael H. Moghtader, Esq., (SBN 206421) (818) 996-9600 (818) 996-1700 Christine Ava kian, Esq. (SBN 319921)  
MHM LAW GROUP, APLC, 16530 Ventura Blvd., Suite 606  
Encino, California 91436  
DATE: 1 212021 Clerk, by H. Flores-Hernandez , Deputy (Fecha) (Secretario) (Ad/unto)  
NOTICE TO THE PERSON SERVED: You are served as an Individual defendant.

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

**The Almanac is adjudicated to publish in San Mateo County.**

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

**The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 pm. Visit AlmanacNews.com/legal\_notices/** For assistance email LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com.



Josh Lin, Nathan Tokunaga, William Knox, Kaiya Brooks and Nicholas Oey at a past performance at Old Skool Cafe by Nathan's Fearless Five. Courtesy Nathan Tokunaga.

## Meet the Palo Alto Library's first musicians in residence: jazz band Nathan's Fearless Five, fronted by high school junior Nathan Tokunaga

By Karla Kane

**A**s a high school junior, Nathan Tokunaga is already an experienced musician and bandleader with an impressive list of accomplishments to his name. In addition to his musical accolades and expertise, the Carlmont High School student is also community-minded, and, along with some talented friends, frequently performs around the Peninsula and beyond.

Their jazz and swing group Nathan's Fearless Five was founded in 2021, with the goal of raising funds for New Orleans Musicians Clinic and Assistance Foundation, a nonprofit that benefits musicians lacking adequate health care access, at that

time providing relief after the devastation of Hurricane Ida. The organization "really spoke to me in particular," Tokunaga said, considering his deep appreciation for New Orleans' culture and its importance to the history of jazz, and he and his bandmates were determined to help. The group held a "jazz for Ida" concert at Carlmont, and ended up raising around \$1,800 through its GoFundMe campaign.

Since its founding, the group has played regular gigs at the Old Skool Cafe in San Francisco, a youth-run, jazz-themed supper club.

"It's a really great cause because it benefits at-risk

youth," Tokunaga said of the unique venue. The band has also played at senior living facilities and for various events and organizations around the Bay Area.

It was at a performance at another favorite venue close to home — The Tavern in Belmont — that Palo Alto librarian Cynthia McCarthy caught the young ensemble's act and was surprised and impressed. She was out with friends, she told this news organization in an email, and at first had her back to the musicians.

"My friend said, 'Those kids are so cute!' I thought, what 'kids' is she talking about?" she recalled. Upon turning around, "I was stunned that such sophisticated

sounds were coming from these high school kids!"

She reached out to them the next day, which led to their current regular gig at the Rinconada Library, where they perform in the Embarcadero Room about every fourth Saturday (back again this fall after a summer break).

"They were an immediate hit," McCarthy said about their first performance last December. "All ages and stages come to hear them play. We're thrilled to have them as our Musicians in Residence."

For Tokunaga and his bandmates, it's been a great fit.

"Libraries in general have played a big part in my life," he

said fondly. "It makes us happy to see the diverse audience there ... everyone from little kids to more elderly people," he said. "We love playing for the community, connecting on a more personal level with the audience."

The teens are busy, but Tokunaga said the band doesn't require much rehearsal time. When Nathan's Fearless Five was first forming, the group had a coaching session with one of Tokunaga's mentors, jazz musician Clint Baker, then took off from there.

"The nice part about jazz is, people have a large repertoire of tunes so it's easy to go to a gig and play things," Tokunaga said.

“Usually we kind of stay within jazz and swing from the 1920s to ‘40s.” And while they focus on that era and genre, song selection “definitely is a democratic process,” Tokunaga said. “If a band member really wants to play a tune, we can play it.”

The band’s regular roster, in addition to Tokunaga on reeds, includes pianist Ivo Maringouin, bassist Nicholas Oey, guitarist William Knox and drummer Josh Lin, but the lineup is a bit flexible, depending on availability (and some former members have graduated). Most are fellow Carlmont students, but Knox attends Menlo-Atherton High School, and Maringouin is from Berkeley. Many, like Tokunaga, have participated in programs such as the Stanford Jazz Workshop and the California Jazz Conservatory funk ensemble.

According to the group’s website, the band was recently invited to perform at the Jazzfair Festival in Three Rivers, Calif., in April, and is the first youth band to be included in the festival’s nearly 50-year history.

Tokunaga has long been enamored with jazz, and takes inspiration from the “king of swing,” legendary clarinetist and bandleader Benny Goodman. It



was a video of Goodman playing “Sweet Georgia Brown” that “really captivated me and made me want to pursue jazz” years ago, he recalled. While music is definitely one of his primary interests, he’s also interested in science, and biotechnology in particular.

Though he’s best known for his clarinet skills, it wasn’t his first choice of instrument.

“I originally wanted to play the saxophone, but my hands



Above: Nathan’s Fearless Five (William Knox, Nicholas Oey, Nathan Tokunaga, Josh Lin and Ivo Maringouin) often play at Old Skool Cafe, a youth-run, jazz-themed venue in San Francisco. Left: Nathan Tokunaga is a reeds player and bandleader with a love for jazz. Courtesy Nathan Tokunaga

were too small so I ended up on clarinet,” he said, remembering back to elementary school, when he started playing. Though he eventually went on to pick up the saxophone as well, “I’ve really grown to love the clarinet and its unique sound,” Tokunaga said.

Nathan’s Fearless Five’s next Rinconada Library gig is Nov.

25. Tokunaga, wise beyond his years, is full of gratitude for the opportunity to share his talent and passion for jazz with local listeners.

“Live music is such a precious thing,” he said. “We really appreciate everyone who comes out to the Rinconada Library. It makes a world of difference.” ■

*Email Assistant Lifestyle Editor Karla Kane at [kkane@almanacnews.com](mailto:kkane@almanacnews.com).*

Nathan’s Fearless Five performs Saturday, Nov. 25, at 4 p.m. at Rinconada Library, 1213 Newell Road, Palo Alto. [paloalto.bibliocommons.com](http://paloalto.bibliocommons.com).

**THE LADERA COUNTRY SHOPPERS  
MERCHANT**

# Holiday Fair

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9TH  
11:00AM - 12:30PM**



- **KONDI TOREI:** PHOTO WITH SANTA, 20 GIFT CARDS FOR THE FIRST 20 CUSTOMERS AND GOODY BAGS.
- **UPS STORE:** FIRST 5 PEOPLE GET A GIFT CARD FOR 100 COPIES
- **ALPINE OPTOMETRY:** SNOW GLOBE ORNAMENTS
- **LADERA GARDEN & GIFTS:** HOLIDAY PLANTING
- **CHASE BANK:** COOKIES, DRINKS, & GIFTS
- **AMIGOS GRILL:** PINATA

● **LADERA CLEANERS & DIANE’S BEAUTY:**  
HOLIDAY CANDY

● **ALPINE PHYSICAL THERAPY:**  
PROTEIN COOKIES

# New space, new possibilities

## Qualia Contemporary Art moves to former Pace Gallery site

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

Dacia Xu, owner of Qualia Contemporary Art in Palo Alto, is clearly a risk taker. She left a successful career in high tech to open the gallery, located on University Avenue, in 2020, just at the start of the pandemic. After three years of continuously offering solo and group exhibitions in that space, Xu decided it was time for a change. In October, Qualia moved into the venue formerly rented by Pace Gallery on Hamilton Street and its inaugural show, “The Edge of Days,” opened on Nov. 7.

Xu described how she had often visited Pace and admired the high ceilings and large exhibition area. When she approached the landlord, she didn’t really think she had much chance in securing the lease because she heard there was a lot of interest in the space. “They actually said that they chose me because I had run a local business,” she said. Although the former gallery had the advantage of lots of foot traffic, since it was on a main street and next-door to the always-busy Apple store, Xu said it was quite narrow and often not the best size for viewing large-scale works of art.

More important than location is the intention and direction of the gallery, explained Xu.

“I believe in time and effort,” she said adding, “in Silicon Valley people are very busy but they want to know more about contemporary art.” She sees the gallery as not only a commercial space for collectors to buy art but also a place where the public can be educated about art. “I want to show people that art can broaden your vision and that it can be a vehicle to understand humanity.”

Recognizing the importance of finding a niche in the gallery scene, Qualia has become the place to see both Asian and Western art presented together. Xu said that this has evolved over time for two reasons: “I want to create a platform for a dialogue between different cultures and styles,” she said, “and I want it to reflect the composition of the population of Silicon Valley.”

A case in point is the current exhibition, “The Edge of Days,” which features the work of two women artists, Chu Chu and Gail Skudera. “I think they form a great dialogue: one artist from Maine and the other from China, but they both use photography as their base. They are so different but they talk to each other.”

Xu offered to explain the work of Chu, who resides in Hangzhou, China, and does not speak English. Chu has degrees in oil painting, new media and a PhD in calligraphy. “Calligraphy is very important in Chinese culture but it is very traditional,” said Xu.

“Chu is much more progressive and does it in a very different way.”

This might be because the artist has first taken a photograph which is then overlaid with thousands of tiny calligraphic characters. In “City:Bergamo,” the artist has captured the cityscape in dark gray at the bottom of the print. Above it, the characters rain down from the top of the canvas in long, vertical streaks. “Dream of the West Lake” is a diptych that consists of a photograph of the reflection of light on ripples of water and a corresponding print covered with very fine, light strokes of calligraphic characters. Xu said prints like this reference the



Courtesy Qualia Contemporary Art

Photography is at the base of works by artist Gail Skudera, who evokes the passage of time and obfuscation of memories through the use of weaving techniques.

passage of time and seasons, and that the ink paintings are the artist’s response to these changes.

There are numerous, large-scale prints of tree branches that might look like brush paintings from afar but are photographs of tree branches the artist found near her home. They are pleasing, light and delicate on their own, but when the viewer looks closely, it is apparent that the artist has added her own touch. In the shadow of the branches are almost minuscule characters that compose ancient Chinese poems.

Xu pointed out that Chu’s technique is extremely slow and laborious and that she can only work for short durations because of the strain on her eyesight.

Also presented are the collages of Gail Skudera. While she also employs photography as her base, Skudera evokes the passage of time and obfuscation of memories through the use of weaving techniques. In order to do this, Skudera must first deconstruct the photograph by cutting it into thin strips to create a new work.

In an email interview, she described her process: “While weaving, some of the threads pass over the top of the photographic strips and others pass beneath them to form a matrix of intersecting lines. The woven matrix is basic to the language of weaving.”

Skudera uses personal photographs of family and also appropriates images of famous artists and writers. “All are chosen based on my connection with the subject on a personal level or from having an emotional response to the photograph,” she explained.

Georgia O’Keeffe, who Skudera said is “particularly inspiring,” is portrayed thanks to the iconic image taken in 1937 by Ansel Adams. Skudera has reproduced the image of the smiling O’Keeffe, cut it in half, and then woven mixed media elements over it. “Weaving creates patterns on the surface and below the surface as the cloth is constructed. I use pattern to evoke memory and I want the viewer to connect with their own personal histories and intuition.”

In “Reverie,” ghostly figures hover in the background, obscured by the weaving like the mists of time. Skudera noted that, “Reweaving a photograph both abstracts and restores attributes of the original image.”

Some of the weaving is quite intricate, as in “Lady Slippers,” and quite a few of them incorporate vintage-looking buttons into the warp. It is a very tactile effect that also references the idea of “women’s work,” a subject that is close to the artist’s heart because “I am interested in telling their stories.”

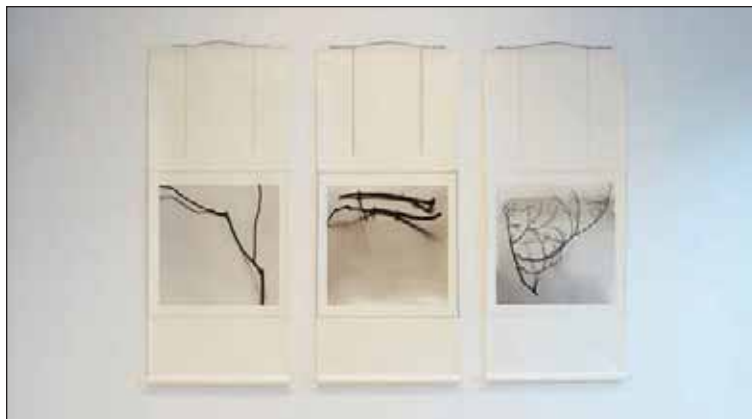
When asked if her art had commonalities with that of Chu,

Skudera pointed out that both employ “fast and slow” methodologies. “The nature of photography as being a fast medium and calligraphy being a very slow process imbues her work with hidden elements.” In her own work, weaving takes a great deal of time. “The process of bringing something forward from behind while leaving some elements hidden is very much in dialogue with Chu’s work.”

In addition to the two artists in the main gallery, Xu has used the rear space for a group show of work by Asian Pacific artists. These works are done in a variety of media from painting to inkjet prints to daguerreotypes. The exhibition is a nod to APEC, recently hosted by the city of San Francisco.

Xu said that the gallery is programmed for the next year and, thanks to the new space, she hopes to branch into sculpture and more immersive installations. She is clearly in it for the long haul. “I think it takes 10 years to really establish a business.” ■

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Courtesy Qualia Contemporary Art

Works by Chu Chu, from left, “Camphor-The Universe in a Nutshell,” “Pine-Book of Odes” and “Tea-Book of Odes” combine photographs of tree branches found near the artist’s home with tiny characters in Chinese calligraphy hidden in the shadows that make up ancient Chinese poems.

The Edge of Days is on view through Dec. 12 at Qualia Gallery, 229 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto. [qualiacontemporaryart.com](http://qualiacontemporaryart.com).

# How to outsource your holiday decorating

## Meet two companies helping residents deck their halls with lights and all the trimmings

By Karla Kane

Looking to up your game on the festive front this year? Dreaming of a dazzling light display but just don't have the time (or, perhaps, the desire to risk life and limb climbing up a ladder) to make it happen? Need to add some style to your season?

Well, there's help.

A growing number of Peninsula households are leaving the design and installation of their twinkling holiday lights displays and holiday decor to the experts.

Meet two local businesses available to help spread holiday cheer — from customized Christmas trees and festive indoor decorations to large-scale outdoor light installations.

### Caitlyn Cuadra spruces rooms up with holiday spirit

Designer and event planner Caitlyn Cuadra runs The Spruce Edit and, after years of helping folks deck their halls on an ad hoc basis, she has officially added holiday decorating to her list of services this year. Clients come to her to save time and energy that could be instead spent on enjoying the holiday season with their families, she said. They also appreciate her flexibility in styles.

"A lot of my clients are looking for something new and fresh because they've used their same old holiday decor for years," she said.

Often, her approach is to design around a chosen theme or color scheme, both when working with clients and in her own holiday plans.

"I personally have a different Christmas theme throughout my house every year," she said.

"Sometimes my themes kind of revolve around the wrapping paper that I choose, and I'm thinking of what it's going to look like around the Christmas tree, and then I think about the rest of the home and how it's going to feel."

This year, she's chosen the "Gnome Home" wrapping paper made by LINNA (Bay Area artist Lisel Ashlock), which features a woodland design in rich verdant hues, giving off enchanted forest vibes.

Cuadra also owns the Pacifica boutique Malt & Stone, which features a rotating collective of local women artisans selling a variety of homegoods, gifts and accessories, such as the aforementioned LINNA designs, and prefers to work with fellow small businesses and artists on design elements when possible (she also

said she's a big fan of gift tags by CalligraBREE).

Her holiday-decorating services this year come in standard (for small jobs or spaces under 500 square feet), premium (500-700 square feet) and deluxe (700-900 square feet), and she also can create custom packages. Prices vary depending on each client's budget and material needs, with the standard package starting at \$400, the premium at \$650 and the deluxe at \$900.

While each job differs, Cuadra's services could include decorating customized Christmas trees, designing table settings and mantels, and coordinating holiday decor throughout the house.

Cuadra starts with a questionnaire to find out what potential clients are looking for. She'll then help them select a theme, or, as is commonly the case, they'll come to her with ideas from Pinterest.

"I'll usually take that and make my own twist on it, unless they're really adamant," she said. "I'm not trying to copy and paste; that's not what interior design is; that's not why you hire anyone."

One past holiday design client was seeking a festive scheme with pieces that could be reused each year. In keeping with the client's general style, she utilized plentiful greenery, twinkling lights and knit stockings to achieve the desired "minimalist white Christmas" look.

"I don't really do a ton of traditional decorating but I'm always happy to," she said. "Throw the reds and greens at me; I can make it happen for you."

To Cuadra, for those who celebrate Christmas, the most essential item for feeling festive is the tree, be it big or tiny, real or artificial.

"You must always have a Christmas tree, if we're talking about traditional Christmas," she said. She recalled growing up with her own family's annual tree-decorating ritual, with each member recruited to meticulously hang each ornament.

"I always was like, 'Can we do something fun for once? I'd love to put some bows in here, the ribbons, the tinsel,'" she laughed. "I'm looking forward to doing it with my kids."

Cuadra is a new mom this year, and while her own little one is too young yet to get up to mischief, decorating with kids in mind can certainly be part of the equation, as can curious pets.

"A Christmas tree with a cat, that is very eventful, to say the least," she said, noting that one year, she used a chic citrus theme



Courtesy Holiday Lights Inc.

This home in Hillsborough is among the residences that Holiday Lights Inc. decorated. The company does all the heavy lifting — installs, maintains and takes down the lights.

and the scent of the delicate orange slices decking the boughs proved a successful kitty deterrent.

She gets her own tree each year from Santa's Tree Farm and Village in Half Moon Bay, and what she chooses varies, from lush and stately Douglas firs to the scrappier, quirky charmers.

"I really love the Charlie Brown trees," she noted.

Find more information at [thespruceedit.com](http://thespruceedit.com)

### Scott Basilotta makes front yards merry and bright

Growing up, Scott Basilotta loved helping his dad put up holiday decorations. Now, as a professional, seeing children's glee over watching his company's holiday light displays go up is one of his favorite parts of his job.

"The kids are always out there watching us. They get excited," he said. "We always say we work for Santa Claus."

Basilotta was a San Jose State University student when he started helping folks put up holiday lights as a side hustle back in 2005. Nearly 20 years later, that little college gig has become a career, as his Campbell-based business Holiday Lights, Inc. illuminates more than 500 homes each year, plus numerous high-profile commercial and municipal installations, from San Francisco down to Monterey.

Clients hire companies like Holiday Lights to save time and, quite often, because of concerns over safety, he said. Going up on ladders, traversing slippery rooftops and fussing with electrical

wires can be hazardous, especially in bad weather, and some prefer to leave it to the pros.

The installation crew covers the entire Bay Area, often completing multiple area jobs and maintenance work each day. The company does all the heavy lifting so residents can simply enjoy their lights, he said.

Holiday Lights works within a range of budgets, with most clients spending around \$750-\$2,000 and others pulling out all the stops for their seasonal light displays, spending in the tens of thousands and up, he said.

"We provide everything as a rental. We come, we put everything up, we maintain it, then we come back and take it down," he said. "We have a big warehouse with tubs of lights with everyone's name on them."

Holiday Lights prides itself not only on its elegant, tidy work but also on sourcing the best material. The company uses only high-quality commercial-grade lighting, which shines brighter and lasts longer. The business has evolved along with changes in technology.

"In the beginning, we used a lot of incandescent lights. Now we're only LED," he said. This shift saves a lot of energy and is better for the environment.

"LED uses about 90% less power," he said. "That's been the biggest change over the course of the business."

Some clients stick to the same style each year while others switch it up, trying multicolored twinkling lights, perhaps,

or a red-and-white candy cane look. Others go with the classics. "Some just like their simple white lights," he said. "We listen to what the homeowner or commercial person wants but we'll also give design ideas. We do lots of rooflines, trees, bushes, garlands and wreaths; all kinds of stuff."

Commercially, one of Basilotta's favorite projects in past years was providing the outdoor holiday lighting at the historic Filoli estate in Woodside.

"It was really cool, just how elegant and beautiful Filoli is," he said.

Stanford Hospital is a frequent local client, and the company also works at shopping plazas, churches and civic areas.

"When the Warriors were still in Oakland, we worked at the Oracle Arena," he noted. "That was a really fun one."

Alongside partner Mike Matsis, with whom Basilotta been buddies since middle school, the company employs around 25 installers, plus office staff, for the season (about four months, starting in early October with Halloween displays), and keeps a smaller crew for the rest of the year, when they work on lighting for weddings and other special events.

"We have a great team, which is the most important part of any business, or family, or life," he said.

Find more information at [holidaylightsbayarea.com](http://holidaylightsbayarea.com) ■

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# Food & Drink



By Julia Brown

From special sales and makers markets to cookie-decorating workshops, there are food festivities fit for everyone's wish list



**W**ant to celebrate the holidays while supporting your favorite local eateries? From special food sales and makers markets to cookie-decorating workshops, there are food festivities fit for everyone's wish list. Here's a running roundup of food-centric holiday happenings around the Peninsula.

**NOV. 26**

## Ludwig's Makers Market

Enjoy brunch and drink specials all day and shop from a variety of local vendors selling candles, plants, artwork and more.

Ludwig's Makers Market Nov. 26 from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Ludwig's Biergarten, 383 Castro St., Mountain View; 650-230-4575, [instagram.com/ludwigsmv](https://www.instagram.com/ludwigsmv).

**NOV. 28**

## Domenico Winery Holiday Boutique

Sip wine and support small businesses at the San Carlos winery's annual event. Shop from a curated collection of gifts crafted by local artisans, and sip on wine from the no-host bar. The on-site restaurant Osteria will also be open for the event.

Domenico Winery Holiday Boutique, Nov. 28 from 5:30-9 p.m. at Domenico Winery, 1697 Industrial Road, San Carlos. Admission is free,

but Domenico is collecting optional donations for entry that will be matched and donated to Second Harvest Food Bank of Silicon Valley. [domenicowinery.com](https://www.domenicowinery.com).

**DEC. 2**

## Wild Onion Bistro & Bar Holiday Market Brunch

The Palo Alto eatery located at Hotel Citrine is hosting a special market brunch Dec. 2, offering unique hotel amenities for sale such as scented candles created exclusively for Hotel Citrine and holiday sweets from Wild Onion chef Julie Cablay. Local artisans and makers will also be featured in the market. Brunch offerings include lobster eggs Benedict, custard-dipped challah French toast and pasta carbonara.

Wild Onion Bistro & Bar Holiday Market Brunch, Dec. 2 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Hotel Citrine, 750 San Antonio Road, Palo Alto. Make brunch reservations on [OpenTable](https://www.opentable.com) at

[opentable.com/r/wild-onion-bistro-and-bar-palo-alto](https://opentable.com/r/wild-onion-bistro-and-bar-palo-alto) or by calling 650-999-7092.

**DEC. 2** *Taplands Makers Market*

Grab a beer and shop Taplands Taproom & Brewery's annual Makers Market featuring locally crafted jewelry, home goods and other products. Participating artisans are listed on Taplands' Instagram page and include Gnosh Confections, O'Shea's Closet and Laughing Chipmunk Designs.

Taplands Makers Market, Dec. 2 from 2-5 p.m. at Taplands Taproom & Brewery, 1171 Homestead Road, Santa Clara; 408-709-2990. Admission is free. [instagram.com/taplandssantaclara](https://instagram.com/taplandssantaclara).

**DEC. 3** *Gourmet Haus Staudt Christmas Market*

Sip glühwein (mulled German wine) and shop for holiday gifts and goodies from local artists and vendors at Gourmet Haus Staudt's annual Christmas Market.

Gourmet Haus Staudt Christmas Market, Dec. 3 from noon to 5 p.m. at Gourmet Haus Staudt, 2615 Broadway, Redwood City; 650-364-9232. Admission is free. [instagram.com/gourmethausstaudt](https://instagram.com/gourmethausstaudt).

**DEC. 12&15** *Jiaren Cafe Christmas Cookie Decorating Workshops*

Learn how to decorate and customize ugly sweater cookies at this family-friendly workshop. All materials are provided, and all skill levels are welcome.

Jiaren Cafe Christmas Cookie Decorating Workshops, Dec. 12 from 6-8 p.m. and Dec. 15 from 4-6 p.m. at Jiaren Cafe, 1171 Homestead Road Suite 140B, Santa Clara; 408-780-5199. Tickets are \$40 per person, \$50 for a parent and child between the ages of 3-7. More information at [instagram.com/melanies\\_cookies\\_56](https://instagram.com/melanies_cookies_56). Reserve your spot at [bit.ly/jiarencookies](https://bit.ly/jiarencookies). ■


Email the Peninsula Foodist at [peninsulafoodist@paweekly.com](mailto:peninsulafoodist@paweekly.com)



Top right: Guests at Wild Onion Bistro's Dec. 2 Holiday Market Brunch can supplement offerings such as lobster eggs Benedict and pasta carbonara with craft cocktails. Courtesy Michelle Chou. Below: Ludwig's Biergarten, seen here during Oktoberfest, hosts a Makers Market on Nov. 26 where guests can shop for gifts and enjoy brunch and drink specials. Photo by Devin Roberts.




**The local's guide to the Bay Area food scene.**

**Peninsula Foodist** 

**Read about hot spots, restaurant trends and the lifestyles of those who love everything about food.**

**See you at the table.**

*Julia*  
Editor, Peninsula Foodist

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\$2,188,000 | 3 Bd | 2.5 Bth  
694SandHill.com

261 ORCHARD AVENUE  
MOUNTAIN VIEW



\$1,998,000 | 3 Bd | 2 Bth  
261OrchardAve.com

195 N CALIFORNIA AVENUE  
PALO ALTO



\$4,700,000 | 5 Bd | 3.5 Bth  
195NCaliforniaAve.com

6 SARGENT LANE  
ATHERTON



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

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MENLO PARK



\$7,988,000 | 5 Bd | 5.5 Bth  
980MonteRosa.com

12989 VISTA DEL VALLE CT  
LOS ALTOS HILLS



\$3,988,000 | 3 Bd | 2 Bth  
12989VistaDelValle.com

440 SAN DOMINGO WAY  
LOS ALTOS



\$4,988,000 | 4 Bd | 3.5 Bth  
440SanDomingo.com

64 FAIRVIEW AVENUE  
ATHERTON



\$7,488,000 | 4 Bd | 2.5 Bth  
64Fairview.com

76 MELANIE LANE  
ATHERTON



\$6,488,000 | 4 Bd | 3.5 Bth  
76Melanie.com

121 PARK AVENUE  
PALO ALTO



\$4,188,000 | 5 Bd | 4.5 Bth  
121ParkAve.com

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Happy  
Thanksgiving

FROM THE  
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During this special holiday, we are so  
incredibly thankful for all of our wonderful  
clients – current, past, and future. Happy  
Thanksgiving from all of us at DeLeon Realty!



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