

The Almanac

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

DECEMBER 8, 2023 | VOL. 59 NO. 14



WWW.ALMANACNEWS.COM



Devin Roberts

Aglow with holiday spirit at Menlo Park's tree-lighting

From left, Oak Knoll Elementary students Abbie and Amelia share a laugh at Menlo Park's annual tree lighting event in Fremont Park on Dec. 1. See highlights from the annual event in our photo story on page 14.

Dog trainer is charged in disappearance of Palo Alto German shepherd that's presumed dead

Palo Alto police obtain warrant for the arrest of Josephine Ragland

By Sue Dremann

A dog trainer who allegedly attempted to substitute a Palo Alto resident's German shepherd with another dog after failing to return the pet to its owner will face charges, the Palo Alto Police Department has confirmed.

A Santa Clara County Superior Court judge issued a felony warrant for Josephine Marie Ragland, 28, on Nov. 10 charging

grand theft of a companion animal and grand theft after the disappearance of Scott, a purebred German shepherd she had been hired to train.

Ragland, who currently resides in Connecticut, is also facing criminal charges in a Massachusetts case after a dog she took to train died in her care.

Scott's owner, Carolina Bruchilari, gave the dog to Ragland to train in December 2022 after seeing an ad for her

services on Thumbtack, a home services app.

After being interviewed by Bruchilari and her husband, Ragland took the dog on Dec. 18, 2022, saying she would bring him back on Jan. 2. Bruchilari received updates on Scott's progress along with photographs from Ragland.

But on Jan. 2, the trainer called to say she had a family emergency and would bring the dog back on Jan. 4 instead, Bruchilari

said during a January interview.

Ragland returned with an imposter instead, Bruchilari said. The substitute was wearing Scott's Apple tag tracker, but it didn't have the same coloring or body shape as Scott.

Ragland told police that Scott had been left with a person in Humboldt County while she was out of town. She claimed no responsibility for the dog. She

See **TRAINER**, page 13

Rare beaver found in local creek dies

Female was rescued from a concrete channel

By Sue Dremann

A beaver that was recolonizing the Matadero Creek in Palo Alto and was being treated for an unknown ailment has died, Ashley Kinney, hospital manager at the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley, said on Dec. 5.

The beaver, which was taken to the wildlife center on Nov. 29 after being spotted immobile in a pile of leaves, was making progress in her health before crashing and dying on Sunday night, Dec. 3, Kinney said.

The female beaver will be taken to a state laboratory for necropsy to determine her cause of death and underlying conditions. Kinney said the wildlife center was still waiting for diagnostic results before the beaver died. Staff found her deceased after arriving at the center on Monday morning, Dec. 4.

The beaver represented a hopeful sign for Matadero Creek's ecology. Beavers haven't been seen in the creek for more than 160 years. A pair were first captured on a trail camera in 2022. A beaver kit was also spotted in the summer.

Palo Alto Animal Control Supervisor Cody Macartney said a pedestrian found the adult female beaver in a concrete channel of lower Matadero Creek near the former Fry's Electronics site, and reported it to Palo Alto Animal Control. The animal, who likely made her way to the channel from the wetlands, wasn't moving and looked as though she didn't feel well, Macartney said.

Macartney took a photo of the beaver and sent it to the wildlife

See **BEAVER**, page 10

INSIDE

Help local families in need 12

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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 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 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.

800 MIDDLE AVENUE • MENLO PARK, CA 94025 • (650)326-2025 • TAX ID # 94-1294939 • WWW.1PVI.ORG



980 MONTE ROSA DRIVE
MENLO PARK



STUNNING NEW CONSTRUCTION IN SHARON HEIGHTS

High-end materials, exceptional craftsmanship, and a sought-after address in Sharon Heights are just a few of the countless standout features belonging to this impeccable home, newly constructed in 2023 and set on nearly a third of an acre. Harmonious design permeates more than 4,000 square feet of living space that has been tailored to meet the needs of a modern lifestyle. Glide through the open, light-filled floorplan brimming with luxurious finishes and offering spacious gathering areas, a gourmet kitchen, convenient office space, and 5 inviting en suite bedrooms. Folding La Cantina doors provide a seamless transition to the expansive backyard to enjoy a true California indoor/outdoor lifestyle. And an incredible location puts you close to everything the area has to offer: a gorgeous country club, scenic parks, great shopping and dining options, and convenience to downtown Menlo Park, Sand Hill Road, and top-ranked schools (buyer to verify eligibility). In one of Silicon Valley's most desirable neighborhoods, this brand-new home stands as an exceptional option for upscale living.

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a vibrant
community



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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Screenshot courtesy Woodside Elementary School District

Damaged caused by a leak at the Woodside Elementary School Design Lab in 2023.

Woodside Elementary to go out for \$36 million bond measure

Superintendent: 'Our school is in need of critical repairs'

By Angela Swartz

With a storm-damaged creek bank on its campus, aging infrastructure and new state requirements to expand its transitional kindergarten programming, Woodside Elementary School District voted 5-0 on Nov. 28 to put a \$36 million facilities bond measure on the March 5, 2024 ballot.

"Our school is in need of critical repairs that extend

beyond our everyday maintenance," Superintendent Steve Frank wrote in a Nov. 27 district newsletter.

Fixes on campus include repairs needed following a landslide into the creek during recent storms.

The measure, which will go to district voters during statewide primary election, would cost homeowners \$30 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation. For a home costing \$2 million, the annual cost to its

homeowners would be \$600 a year. The average home price in Woodside is \$3.6 million, according to Zillow.

The district last went out for a bond measure in 2014. Measure D passed and brought in \$13.5 million.

Watch a video of the board's approval of the measure at tinyurl.com/WESNOV2023. ■

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

Buena Vista man pleads guilty to trailer park murder

Isadore Christopher Diaz could spend up to 47 years to life in prison for 2019 slaying

By Sue Dremann

A man who stabbed a Buena Vista Mobile Home Park resident to death in 2019 has pleaded no contest to multiple violent felonies, including second-degree murder, a Santa Clara County prosecutor said last week.

Isadore Christopher Diaz, 35, entered the no contest plea, — the equivalent of a guilty plea in a criminal trial — in Santa Clara County Superior Court on Nov. 15, just as evidence in his Oct. 30 trial was to begin. A jury had already been selected, Deputy District Attorney Carolyn Malinsky told this publication Dec. 1.

Diaz was arrested on June 27, 2019, for the fatal stabbing of 63-year-old Timothy Wood, who was found by the slain man's roommate in his Palo Alto trailer home on June 24. Wood later died at a nearby hospital, police said at the time.

Diaz pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, assault with force likely to cause great bodily injury, causing great bodily injury and all felonies.

He also pleaded guilty to three misdemeanors: brandishing a knife, obstructing or delaying an investigation and battery.

He faces sentencing from 15 years to life to up to 47 years to life in prison, Malinsky said.

"It was a tragedy for the victim and his family and for the other victims in Buena Vista Mobile Home Park. I'm grateful the Palo Alto Police Department did a thorough investigation and I'm grateful for the victim's family that it is over. It's been many years for this to come to trial given COVID," Malinsky said.

Diaz was also a resident of the mobile home park at 3980 El Camino Real in Palo Alto. At the time of his arrest, he was already in Santa Clara County Jail for allegedly beating Buena Vista resident Alan Cochran on the same day as the slaying, Palo Alto police said in a press release at the time.

In July 2019, Superior Court Judge Charles E. Wilson deemed Diaz too dangerous to release on bail. The facts and substantial evidence showed "a presumption of great bodily harm" and releasing Diaz would present a "clear threat" of continued great bodily harm to others, the judge said at the time.

Court records showed that



Isadore Christopher Diaz

See **MURDER**, page 15

Community implores Menlo Park council to reconsider its naming decision for community campus

Council bucked recommendations with Belle Haven name, upsetting Onetta Harris supporters

By Neil Gonzales

Community members implored the Menlo Park City Council Tuesday night, Dec. 5, to reconsider naming the new community campus currently under construction after the late activist Onetta Harris.

"I wanted to ask that we reopen the vote or revote Onetta Harris Community Center for

the name," Greg Goodwin said during the public comments at the council meeting. "I think that we have enough quality representation here to reopen this thing and vote with some kind of integrity. ... I think that the voice of the people was thrown in the trash."

Several others expressed similar strong sentiments in reaction to the council's vote last month to name it the Belle Haven

Community Campus. That vote went against public outpouring and city Parks and Recreation and Library commissions' recommendation to name the entire campus after Harris, a pillar in the Belle Haven neighborhood and East Palo Alto until her death in 1982. The council instead opted to name one of the programs housed at the new campus — which will include a senior center and

aquatics facility, among other things — the Onetta Harris Community Center.

The new complex replaces the old one at 100 Terminal Ave. that was known as the Onetta Harris Community Center.

"Certain locations, whether it be your first summer camp, first anything, you'll never forget it, and that's what Onetta Harris was to me and that's what it was to the whole city of Menlo

Park," said Kenneth Harris Jr., her grandson. "When you think about the Statue of Liberty in New York, it's something that's a known landmark. ... When you come to the city of Menlo Park, that's the Harris community center."

He urged the council to reverse their previous decision. "I think that you guys should definitely

See **COMMUNITY CENTER**, page 15

Employment

The Almanac offers
employment advertising.

The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 pm.

Visit AlmanacNews.com/employment_ads/.

For assistance email LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com.

Public Notices

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)

TAO AUTO GROUP
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-295957

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

1.) TAO AUTO GROUP, located at 315
HABOR WAY, SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA
94080.

Registered owner(s):
LOTSO GLOBAL, INC.

315 HARBOR WAY
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94080

State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a
Corporation.

Registrant has begun to transact business
under the fictitious business name(s) listed
above on 11/01/2023.

This statement was filed with the County
Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on
November 28, 2023.

(ALM Dec 8, 15, 22, 2023 and Jan 5, 2024)

PACIFIC PLACE MEDIA
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-295908

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

1.) PACIFIC PLACE MEDIA, located at 2918
Fernwood St., San Mateo, CA 94403.

Registered owner(s):
DAVID LOUIE

2918 Fernwood St.
San Mateo, CA 94403

State of Incorporation/Organization:
California

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 20, 2023.

(ALM Dec 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2023)

DEVONSHIRE LITTLE STORE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-295903

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

1.) DEVONSHIRE LITTLE STORE, located at
20 Devonshire Blvd, San Carlos, CA 94070.

Registered owner(s):

SHEILA WANG, TRUSTEE, DAVID AND
SHANG LING HUANG IRREVOCABLE TRUST
125 Sheridan Way
Woodside, CA 94062

State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a Trust.

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 20, 2023.

(ALM Dec 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2023)

PARC AGENCY
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-295948

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

1.) PARC AGENCY, located at 704 Oak Grove
Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Registered owner(s):
PARC AGENCY CORPORATION

704 Oak Grove Ave
Menlo Park, CA 94025

State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a
Corporation.

Registrant has begun to transact business
under the fictitious business name(s) listed
above on 11/19/2018.

This statement was filed with the County
Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on
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(ALM Dec 8, 15, 22, 2023 and Jan 5, 2024)

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.

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**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.

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Established 1965

The Almanac

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94028 and the Woodside portion of
94062, call 854-2626.



COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Menlo Park district awarded Golden Bell for English Learner programming

The California School Board Association (CSBA) awarded the Menlo Park City School District (MPCSD) a Golden Bell award for its work serving English-language learner students at an awards ceremony in San Francisco on Nov. 30.

This year, MPCSD won for “Disrupting Predictable Outcomes,” its English fluency reclassification program (a process for designating an English-language learner as fluent English proficient), according to a district press release.

About 5% of MPCSD’s total enrollment is made up of English Learner (EL) students and too many of them were not being reclassified as English proficient in a timely manner or were being referred for Special Education services primarily on the basis of their EL status, the press release states. EL students who leave the district without reclassification enter high school with limited access to the high school courses needed to qualify for admission to public state universities. Program leaders adjusted eighth grade basic skills assessment thresholds, reduced the number of new EL evaluations for special education, and changed standards for identifying students who are able to access and demonstrate learning in the classroom comparable to English-proficient peers.

“The work we are being recognized for is some of the most important work we do as a public school district: equity work,” said Superintendent Kristen Gracia in a statement. “This award exemplifies the commitment our teams have made to remove barriers for our English Learners, ensuring that as a district we are continually examining and improving the systems and structures we have created to support the ongoing success of our students.”

The district also credits its leadership in the Stanford-Sequoia K-12 Research Collaborative, a research-practice partnership between the Stanford Graduate School of Education and the Sequoia Union High School District and its K-8 feeder districts to focus on equity issues, for its improved reclassification process.

Some 70% of its English Learners are reclassified within five years, according to state data.

For 44 years, statewide Golden Bells awards given annually to outstanding programs and governance practices of school boards in districts and county offices of education in California. These awards honor the hard work and dedication of governing boards and district staff in creating innovative programs that improve student achievement and well-being in pre-K-12 public schools.

Portola Valley releases latest housing element revision

Portola Valley town staff published an updated housing element document on Dec. 1. The draft incorporates changes recommended by the state Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) in July.

The Planning Commission will review the document during a Wednesday, Dec. 20, meeting. A date hasn’t yet been set for the Town Council to review the plan.

Feedback directed at HCD must be submitted by 5 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 11. Public comment will continue to be accepted and will be shared with the Planning Commission and Town Council past that date.

The document is due to the state on Jan. 31, 2024.

The public can submit comments on the draft by email to housing@portolavalley.net, by mail to 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028 with “Draft Housing Element Comments” in the address line, or online via the town’s housing element webpage at portolavalley.net/housingelement.

Grand Chanukah Festival in Portola Valley on Dec. 10

The Village Chabad in Portola Valley will host its annual Grand Chanukah Festival on Sunday, Dec. 10, at 3 p.m. on the Portola Valley Town Center field, 765 Portola Road.

The Grand Menorah lighting will take place at 4 p.m.

This year’s sponsors are Bianchini’s Market, Josh Rubin of Compass, Ladera Garden & Gifts, Lulu Jane Photography and The Village Doctor.

For more information, go to thevillagechabad.com/chanukahfestival23.

—Angela Swartz

As flu season takes hold, Bay Area health officials offer advice for staying healthy

By Bay City News Service

Public health officials in the Bay Area and surrounding counties are reminding people to stay safe this holiday season by following some basic medical advice.

As flu season settles in for the winter months and the spread of respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, increases, people are being urged to get vaccinated against COVID, the flu and RSV.

Health officials are recommending that everyone ages 6 months old and older get an updated COVID vaccine and kids 6 months to 4 years old, along with immunocompromised people who have never been vaccinated, are recommended to get additional doses.

People without insurance or whose insurance does not cover the vaccine can get one for free by visiting vaccines.gov.

Also, everyone 6 months old



Ray Saint Germain/Bay City News
A COVID-19 instant test on January 8, 2022. This test results were negative denoted by the red line at the C.

and older should get a flu shot every year, while people over 60 and people who are 32 to 36 months pregnant should get the RSV vaccine.

Health officials are also urging people who are sick to stay home from work and school and to test themselves for COVID.

Free COVID tests are available at covid.gov/tests.

If someone does test positive for COVID, treatments are available and people should consult their doctor or visit covid19.ca.gov/treatment.

Health officials are also reminding people that wearing a good mask, such as a KF94, KN95 or N95, while indoors in public places can prevent infection from COVID-19, flu, RSV and other respiratory viruses.

Also, virus spread can be reduced by improving ventilation, like for example by turning on HVAC systems, using a portable HEPA filter, pointing fans out open windows or by opening doors and windows.

The health reminders were sent out Nov. 30 by the public health officers from Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Solano and Sonoma counties and the city of Berkeley. ■

Julie Lythcott-Haims weighs run for Congress seat

Author and Palo Alto council member may join race to succeed U.S. Rep Anna Eshoo

By Gennady Sheyner

Author and Palo Alto City Council member Julie Lythcott-Haims is considering jumping into the race to succeed Rep. Anna Eshoo in the U.S. Congress, this news organization has learned.

Lythcott-Haims, who was elected to the Palo Alto City Council in November 2022, said she has been approached by people from across District 16, encouraging her to run.

"I'm honored by their support and desire for bold leadership that advocates for humans from all walks of life to thrive," she said in a statement. "I've not yet decided, but should I choose to run you can expect an announcement in the coming days."

If she opts to run, she would become the third Palo Alto resident to announce their bids to succeed Eshoo, who has been representing Silicon Valley in Washington, D.C., for the past three decades. Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian and Stanford University



Julie Lythcott-Haims

graduate student Joby Bernstein have also announced their intention to vie for the seat. Simitian, who announced his bid on Nov. 29, has already amassed more than \$680,000 in campaign contributions.

Former San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo also filed his paperwork to run for the seat earlier this week, according to the Federal Election Commission. So have former Menlo Park Mayor Peter Ohtaki and Karl Ryan, both Republicans.

State Assembly member Evan Low, a Democrat, has yet to file his papers but is widely expected to run. Assembly member Marc Berman, whose Peninsula

district makes up a large portion of the Eshoo's congressional district, told this publication that he does not plan to challenge for Eshoo's seat.

"I'm grateful for the outpouring of encouragement from throughout the district encouraging me to run for Congress, but I honestly believe I already have one of the best jobs in public service," Berman said. "I look forward to running for re-election to the Assembly and continuing to serve the residents of the 23rd district." ■

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

LEHUA GREENMAN



"Happy December! May this Month bring you Warmth, Love, Smiles and Everything that fills your Heart With Peace."

650.245.1845 COMPASS

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Down Payment for a 2-4 Unit Property

Dear Monica: I have been saving up to buy a multifamily property and heard that I may be able to put just 5% down now. Is that true?

- Amy S.

Dear Amy: Fannie Mae now allows 5% down payments for owner-occupied 2-4 unit properties! This is a great opportunity to "house hack" by living in one of the units and renting out the other units to help offset the cost of your mortgage payment or even completely offset your housing costs.

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



Open House and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the New Fire Station No. 4

3322 Alameda De Las Pulgas, Menlo Park



Sunday, December 17, 2023

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will begin at 10:15 AM

Come Celebrate with Us!

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Dorothy West Beachler, 102, a Portola Valley resident was the first woman in her family to attend college, served in The Ninety-Nines, female pilots who tested and ferried planes around the U.S. during World War II, had an aerial photography business with her husband in Southern California, volunteered with 4-H, made jewelry and enjoyed horseback riding, on Nov. 13.

Lynn Porter, 79, a long-time resident of Menlo Park who owned Home & Garden & Kids too! on Santa Cruz Avenue in downtown Menlo Park, and enjoyed gardening, breakfasts at Anne's Coffee Shop and cheering for the 49ers, on Nov. 13.

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

Lawsuit challenges county's decision that it's too risky to give inmates their mail

In civil case against San Mateo County, doctor rebuts argument that touching fentanyl can cause overdoses

By Nicholas Mazzone

In 2021, San Mateo County banned physical mail in its correctional facilities over concerns about fentanyl exposure, but a lawsuit filed in March alleges the county is violating the constitutional rights of incarcerated people who still have freedom of expression and freedom from unreasonable search and seizures.

Earlier this year, three free speech groups, Electronic Frontier Foundation, Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University and the Social Justice Legal Foundation, filed a lawsuit on behalf of five people incarcerated in San Mateo County. The lawsuit was also filed on behalf of a group of their friends and family members and A.B.O. Comix, an organization that sends and receives art and writing from incarcerated people.

At a court hearing before Judge V. Raymond Swope in Redwood City on Monday, Dec. 4, plaintiff

attorney Scott Wilkens spoke about an incarcerated individual who could not continue school work because of the mail ban.

Wilkens said the ban causes harm to the incarcerated, who have the right to receive information.

'By touching it, I can suffer severe physical complications, even death, or a drug-sniffing dog sniffing it can die.'

CHAD DEVEAUX,
SAN MATEO COUNTY ATTORNEY

"They have the right to receive information or listen, as it should be clear, it's a fundamental part of speaking," he said. "This has been understood under the federal constitution and California constitution and it should apply in prison when your only connection in the outside world, is mail."

In 2021, the county banned

the physical mail in its correctional facilities, replacing it with Smart Communications, a private-for-profit company, which scans and destroys physical copies and incarcerated individuals can access their mail through kiosks and shared tablets in public spaces within the jail.

San Mateo County Attorney Chad Deveaux, who also represents Sheriff Christina Corpus, emphasized the risk of the opioid crisis. He said that mail sent to the jail could be contaminated with fentanyl, presenting a significant health hazard to both the jail's personnel and inmates.

"By touching it, I can suffer severe physical complications, even death, or a drug-sniffing dog sniffing it can die," Deveaux said.

Dr. Frank Ruiz, Redwood City Kaiser Permanente's chief of emergency medicine, said the fentanyl is cheap and easy to make and is used to make powerful pain medicine in a

lab. Still, it's not easily absorbed across the skin.

"For first responders who encounter suspected fentanyl, I advise that they wear protective gear, such as nitrile gloves and even face masks. Skin exposures can be dealt with by hand-washing to remove any powder," Ruiz said. "An overdose can occur if you swallow, snort or inject fentanyl. You can't overdose just by touching fentanyl."

San Mateo County District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe told this news organization that there have been previous cases through his office where people attempted to send drugs to the jail through the mail.

"It has happened before, it's not a hypothetical," Wagstaffe said.

The civil matter didn't come to a resolution on Dec. 4. Instead, the hearing was continued to Jan. 31. ■

Email Staff Writer Nicholas Mazzone at nmazzone@rwcpulse.com.

TOWN OF WOODSIDE
2955 WOODSIDE ROAD
WOODSIDE, CA 94062

PLANNING COMMISSION
DECEMBER 13, 2023
6:00 PM

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

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Meeting ID: 860 6847 2736

Weblink: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86068472736>

Remote Public Comments:

Meeting participants are encouraged to submit public comments in writing in advance of the meeting. Members of the public participating remotely may comment on items during the hearing.

Email: sharper@woodsidesidetown.org

PUBLIC HEARING

1. 3111 Woodside Road

WCFP2023-0001

Eric Lentz, on Behalf of T-Mobile Planner: Keigo Yamamoto, Assistant Planner

Presentation and approval, conditional approval, or denial of Wireless Communication Facilities Permit (WCFP) for a proposal to install a new monopole, six antennas, six smaller antennas/remote radio units (RRUs), 200A meter main, ground mounted cabinets, PPC box, telco box, two hybrid cables, and associated minor equipment.

The project is Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15303(e), which includes accessory structures; and, Section 15303(d), which provides exemptions for utility extensions.

THE APPLICATION MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW BY CONTACTING KEIGO YAMAMOTO AT KYAMAMOTO@WOODSIDETOWN.ORG.



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY
NOTICE OF
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Planning Commission of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, December 20, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. via hybrid format at the Historic Schoolhouse, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley and Zoom.**

The Planning Commission will consider additional amendments made to the Draft Housing Element in response to comments issued by the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) in its July 25, 2023 letter that detailed the changes necessary to bring the Draft Housing Element into compliance with Article 10.6 of the California Government Code.

An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration has been adopted for the Draft Housing Element in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Information pertaining to these actions may be viewed by contacting Thomas Geisler, Development Review Technician, at tgeisler@portolavalley.net. The agenda and staff report will be published at <https://www.portolavalley.net/town-government/planning-commission/minutes-and-agendas> in advance of the meeting.

Public Hearings provide the general public and interested parties an opportunity to provide testimony on these items. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Planning Commission to be heard at the time and place mentioned above. If you challenge a proposed action(s) in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at a Public Hearing(s) described above, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission at, or prior to, the Public Hearing(s). Public Comments should be directed to housing@portolavalley.net.

Publication Date: December 8, 2023
Jon Biggs, Interim Planning & Building Director



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ATHERTON



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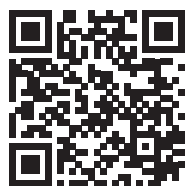
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Ken DeLeon's Insights:

Finding the right buyer's agent in
a changing real estate landscape

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William Ernest Critzer

Bill passed away peacefully after a long struggle with Parkinson's disease. He was born August 11, 1934 to Ernest Critzer and Gertrude Bell Critzer.

He is a graduate of the University of Miami (Florida) and served in the US Air Force from 1954 to 1958.

He and his wife, Pat, and young son arrived in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1960, and have lived in Cupertino, Los Altos, Portland, Oregon, Los Altos Hills and in Menlo Park since 1999.

He worked as V.P. of Finance at Consolidated Freightways in Menlo Park and was President and CEO of Freightliner Corporation in Portland, Oregon, then CFO at the National Federation of Independent Business while it was located in San Mateo.

Post retirement, in 1996, he became Director of Finance and Administration at Avenidas in Palo Alto.

He was the founding President of the Menlo Park Library Foundation and was a continuing volunteer for the Foundation until 2014.

He was a loving husband and father, devoted to his family and known for his sense of humor and generosity.

He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Patricia Critzer, and sons, Stephen Critzer and David Critzer.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, January 6 at 1:00 PM at the Los Altos Methodist Church, 655 Magdalena Ave., Los Altos, corner of Foothill Expressway.

Memorial donations may be made to Mission Hospice, 66 Bovet Road, Suite 100, San Mateo CA 94402



PAID OBITUARY

Alfred M. Dau

March 16, 1929 – July 23, 2023

Alfred M. Dau passed away peacefully at his home in Atherton on July 23, 2023, surrounded by friends and family. He was born on March 16, 1929 to Alfred Jensen Dau and Beatrice Schmitt Dau in Petoskey, Michigan. He attended Petoskey High School and then went on to graduate from the University of Michigan in 1950. He served 4 years in the United States Air Force, as a navigator and First Lieutenant where he was awarded three Air Medals and a Distinguished Flying Cross for missions over Korea. He finished his service while stationed at Mather Air Force base in Sacramento, and then moved to Redwood City and later built their home in Atherton in 1960. He began a long career as a stockbroker working in San Francisco with Hooker & Fay, and after many mergers and company name changes, retired at Shearson Lehman. He was a long time member of Sharon Heights Country Club in Menlo Park and the Fellowship Forum of Palo Alto. He is preceded in death by his wife Lee Ann of 68 years and is survived by his children, Susan Dau of Santa Barbara, Sally Carmichael of Atherton, John Dau of Los Angeles, Paul Dau of Redwood City, seven grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. Per his request, there will be no memorial service. Contributions in his name can be made to the Salvation Army or the Pacific Legal Foundation in Sacramento.



PAID OBITUARY

BEAVER

continued from page 1

center, which confirmed that its behavior wasn't normal.

"She was so unaware of my presence that it wasn't too hard to capture her," Macartney said, but he did have a little trouble getting the beaver into a carrier and into his truck — given that the animal weighed more than 60 pounds. He transported her to the wildlife center, where she was found to be extremely lethargic and hypothermic, Kinney, the wildlife center's hospital manager, said.

Kinney said the wildlife center kept the beaver warm in an insulated enclosure and gave her fluids, antibiotics and vitamins.

"As of this morning she is eating and walking around," Kinney said on Dec. 1.

Officials don't know the beaver's age, but did say she was a large animal, weighing 63 pounds.

"She's a big girl," Kinney said, a sign that the semi-aquatic animal was finding an adequate food source.

The wildlife center was working on getting a fecal sample from the beaver to check for internal parasites and get a better diagnosis of why she became ill. The beaver's coat, which is usually oily to help insulate her in the water, was also dry and might be a reason she became hypothermic in the chilly creek and wetlands, Kinney said.

Once she was stabilized, the beaver was to be transported to a specialized center in Sonoma where she would have continued her rehabilitation until she would eventually return to the channel and wetlands.



Courtesy Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley

A female beaver found in Matadero Creek in Palo Alto was being treated for hypothermia at the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley.

The beaver's presence is an exciting event for Palo Alto and wildlife experts. Beavers haven't been present in Palo Alto wetlands for more than 160 years, Dr. Rick Lanman, executive director of the Los Altos-based Institute for Historical Ecology, said.

Lanman and his co-authors published the first proof that beavers were native to local coastal watersheds based on a beaver skull he found in the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History that was collected from Saratoga Creek in 1855.

"Until our 2021 publication beavers were thought not to utilize coastal watersheds (the creeks that flow into SF Bay are considered coastal as the Bay is saltwater)," he said in an email to this publication.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife relocated local beavers to the Lexington

Reservoir and upper Los Gatos Creek in about 1980, and they have since expanded their range down Los Gatos Creek into Silicon Valley, reaching the Guadalupe River and into the South Bay. They have used the South Bay to find other tributaries, gradually moving north.

Baylands gray fox researcher Bill Leikam found the first evidence that beavers were returning to Matadero Creek in 2022 after recording a pair on a wildlife camera.

"The Palo Alto Baylands are a remarkable but narrow strip of protected habitat between Highway 101 and San Francisco Bay. Bill is the expert on gray fox thanks to his years of studying them in the Baylands. But they are barely hanging on to this narrow strip of habitat, as are the newly arrived beaver. We have to work hard to enable wildlife to move up our streams and these concrete channels are a dangerous road," he said.

The discovery was a hopeful sign that the beavers might have offspring and continue to colonize the area and perhaps spread into San Francisquito Creek and San Mateo County, Lanman told this publication in a previous interview.

"The concrete-channelized lower reaches of our streams, as is the case for Matadero Creek and Adobe Creek, designed for flood control, are deadly traps for animals. There is no cover for the baby beaver to hide predators from coyotes and puma to owls and hawks. I think the young beaver likely pulled leaves together for cover, and possibly as a small dam to raise the water level to hide within," he said.

Kinney said that she hopes the necropsy will help explain why the beaver was found in the concrete channel in such a bad state.

"I'm sad, but we do appreciate everyone's support," she said. ■

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

Lynn Porter

October 12, 1944 – November 13, 2023

Lynn Porter, a longtime resident of Menlo Park, passed away November 13th from heart complications. From an early start volunteering at Stanford Hospital she continued working in the medical field, shifting from Stanford's ER to paralegal work with a San Francisco law firm. In 1994 she changed course and became owner of Home & Garden & Kids too! on Santa Cruz Ave. Lynn enjoyed providing a personal touch for her customers, with many returning with their children and grandchildren.

Lynn enjoyed breakfast at Ann's Coffee Shop, rooting for the 49ers, playing in her garden and being in the company of her friends. It was her family and friends who brought her love, laughter and support.

She is survived by twin sisters Pat (Gary) Hedden and Joan (Peter) Carpenter and their families — Hilary Hedden (Claudio Martonffy), David (Laura) Hedden, Jill (Brian) Davidson and grand nephews and nieces James, Stella, Luca and Sierra Rose.

In memory of Lynn, donations may be made to a charity of your choice.



PAID OBITUARY

94027

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The Gullixson Team is ranked **#3 small team**
in the Bay Area and **#18 in the nation** in
RealTrends report of the Top Residential
Real Estate Professionals. (June 2023)

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Give back locally

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:
AlmanacNews.com/holiday_fund

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, college and career access, and mental health programs to more than 5,000 low-income youth at 29 locations from East Palo Alto to Daly 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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The Almanac Holiday Fund 2023

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TO THE HOLIDAY FUND**

Almanac Holiday Fund Donor List

As of December 6th, 55 donors have contributed \$66,842 to the Holiday Fund.

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Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula offers lessons in leadership

By Kathryn Yee

When Leslie H. heard the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula (BGCP) needed a new leadership director to join the Redwood City Clubhouse, she jumped at the opportunity.

A “Club kid” herself since the age of 5, Leslie personally experienced the positive impact of BGCP programs and mentors. Whether preparing to present at a BGCP conference, giving a speech as a Youth of the Year, or trailblazing her own path to college as a Future Grads student, Leslie gained leadership skills through BGCP. Now, as a BGCP staff member, Leslie inspires a new generation of high school students.

Redwood City Clubhouse Vice President Mike Jones was thrilled to have Leslie join the team.

“Leslie has always been a pillar of the BGCP community since she was a student,” he said. “As a Youth of the Year, she was recognized for her strength and determination, which enabled her to attend San Diego State University. Now a college graduate, Leslie has returned ‘home,’ bringing with her a sense of purpose, community-centric vision and advocacy for our members.”

The BGCP is one of the beneficiaries of The Almanac’s Holiday Fund. Donations are divided equally among this year’s 10 non-profit organizations and 100% of the funds raised go directly to the recipients. Donations to the Holiday Fund can be made at almanacnews.com/holiday_fund.

As a leadership director, Leslie teaches the financial literacy course Money Matters and oversees Keystone Club, a national



Courtesy Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula
Leslie H. (front) attended the 2023 national Keystone Club Conference in Texas.



Boys & Girls Club program that fosters youth leadership. This fall, she began working with the next cohort of Youth of the Year, students who are recognized for their outstanding leadership service, academic excellence and dedication to health and well-being.

Reflecting on her own time as a Youth of the Year, Leslie remembers fondly the safety she felt with BGCP staff and the close connection she formed with other students. She is now building the same culture at the Redwood City Clubhouse by helping to plan engaging activities like science experiments, karaoke, jeopardy, holiday festivities and more that keep students coming back

to “The Forest” (the students’ nickname for the clubhouse).

“I’m excited to work with our high schoolers and support them in their journeys,” she said. “My goal is to push them to pursue their interests and achieve things they didn’t think would be possible.”

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula serves more than 5,000 youth in San Mateo County at 29 sites from Daly City to East Palo Alto. Students benefit from academic support, engaging enrichment, and college and post-secondary support. BGCP also addresses critical health and wellness needs with daily hot meals, social and emotional learning integrated into all programs, family engagement, and on-site mental health services.

For more information, go to bgcp.org. ■

Kathryn Yee is head of development and marketing for the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula.

TRAINER

continued from page 1

also told Bruchilari that Scott had died.

“There’s no return to facilitate,” Ragland wrote in a text message to Bruchilari. “The dog is most definitely dead. Broke through a window screen in the middle of the night, and (the dog sitter) didn’t see until the morning.”

“It was during the big storm, he searched all over and found blood streaks and clumps of the dogs (sic) fur, as well as part of a paw/arm, so we can only imagine,” the text stated.

But as police continued their investigation, Ragland apparently moved out of California and set up another listing, again

on Thumbtack, allegedly using a false name and claiming to be a dog trainer.

A Massachusetts family gave their French bulldog, Charlie, to Ragland, paying her \$1,500, North Reading police Chief Mark Zimmerman said in a statement. The dog was not returned on the designated date, Sept. 16.

Ragland allegedly claimed the bulldog had been struck and killed by a car and that she had buried him in her backyard in Connecticut. Investigators found the dog’s remains more than 35 minutes from her home, in Norwich, Connecticut, according to documents obtained by Massachusetts news outlet WFSB 3.

A necropsy performed by

the University of Connecticut determined the bulldog was emaciated at the time of its death, Zimmerman said.

Ragland faces felonies in the Massachusetts case: larceny over \$1,200 by false pretense and intimidating a witness, according to court documents. She has pleaded not guilty.

Palo Alto police Capt. James Reifschneider said the warrant hasn’t yet been served since Ragland remains in custody on the East Coast facing multiple felony charges there.

“It is unlikely Ms. Ragland would return to California until the Massachusetts case resolves,” he said in an email. ■

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

Aglow with holiday spirit at Menlo Park's tree lighting

By Almanac staff / Photos by Devin Roberts

Holiday magic was in the air at Fremont Park on Friday, Dec. 1, as the community turned out for Menlo Park's annual tree lighting event.

The city-sponsored annual event featured craft-making and entertainment, hot drinks and a lot of photo opportunities for click-happy parents and their bundled-up kids, including a 360-degree photo booth.

Attendees could pick up free hot chocolate and apple cider, meet Anna and Elsa from Disney's "Frozen" and listen to songs performed by local children and Hillview Middle School's student orchestra.

Balloon artist Tama Zambol showed off her skills and, while Hannukah was nearly a week away, a fully lit menorah added to the evening's sparkle.

Dailey Combs, the daughter of Menlo Park City Council member Drew Combs, flipped a huge on/off switch to light the tree and flurries of artificial snow showered the delighted crowd. ■

Email Contributor Devin Roberts at devinroberts1981@gmail.com.



Menlo Park's annual tree lighting event in Fremont Park.



Artificial snow falls on attendees at Menlo Park's annual tree lighting event in Fremont Park.



Ria from Mountain View shows off her craft snowflake.



Jennifer Thompson, Dean Lee, and daughter Amelia attend Menlo Park's annual tree lighting event.



The Hillview Middle School students perform at Menlo Park's annual tree lighting event.



Local youth perform holiday songs at Menlo Park's annual tree lighting event.



Dailey Combs, Menlo Park City Council member Drew Combs' daughter, lights the tree.



The craft table at Menlo Park's annual tree lighting event.

COMMUNITY CENTER

continued from page 5

consider changing the name back to Onetta Harris," he said.

Victoria Fleming argued that the larger community not just the Harris family had given the council a mandate for the name.

"We're not just speaking about how the Harrises feel," she said, "but the public is feeling way stronger than how the Harrises feel. So with that being said, I think you all should reconsider the vote, and please look in your heart extremely deeply, and let's be extremely fair on this vote."

Siti Webster told the council that bringing back the Harris name for the campus appropriately honors her and recognizes local history.

"It is our responsibility to know and remember the value (and) history of honoring Onetta Harris," Webster said. "Onetta Harris' legacy promotes local awareness, cultural appreciation and cooperation within the Menlo Park community. She connected people from different backgrounds with lasting bonds to pass on to future generations."

She added: "Onetta Harris' name is a model of diligent work, integrity and dignity. She was and is an inspiration

for us all to honor our own mothers, grandmothers and ancestors whose shoulders we stand on."

Mayor Jen Wolosin expressed appreciation for the public comments but told the audience that the council could not respond to what was said.

'Onetta Harris' legacy promotes local awareness, cultural appreciation and cooperation within the Menlo Park community.'

SITI WEBSTER, RESIDENT

"Thank you again for our public comments this evening," the mayor said. "The council is not at liberty to comment on non-agendized items, so I just wanted to make that clear."

In a related matter, the council approved appropriating up to \$1 million to cover the new Belle Haven Community Campus operating expenses for the first year. The campus is expected to be ready in mid-2024. ■

*Email Contributing Writer
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MURDER

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Diaz previously served time in prison for assault and other charges stemming from cases in 2007, 2008 and 2012 in Merced County. He has two prior convictions for assault with a deadly weapon and three convictions for participating in a criminal street gang, among other charges. He was also once shot in the head, according to statements his grandmother gave to police.

On the evening of the murder, surveillance footage showed Diaz walking toward and later away from Wood's trailer, and then back again shortly after Wood had discarded his trash in a dumpster and returned to his home. Police also recovered bloody clothing and shoes belonging to Diaz.

While police were

investigating the incident, Diaz struck mobile home resident Alan Cochran. When Cochran fell down, Diaz kicked him in the face. Cochran required eight stitches, he later told this news organization.

For his assault on Cochran, Diaz was charged with felony battery with serious bodily injury, felony assault with a deadly weapon or force likely to produce great bodily injury, causing great bodily injury, misdemeanor battery on a person and five counts of having a prior conviction of a violent or serious felony.

Diaz also allegedly struck a third man in the face but that person declined to press charges, according to court documents. ■

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**The Almanac
Holiday Fund**

Donate online:
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Belle Haven librarian spreads love of reading with Literacy Partners - Menlo Park

Literacy Partners is one of 10 local nonprofits that benefit from contributions to The Almanac Holiday Fund

By Mike Goodkind

When 9-year-old Heriberto Madrigal, now a professional librarian and nonprofit board officer, asked his father for a book, his dad, whose literacy was minimal and only in Spanish, pulled out some loose change so his son could buy “The Secrets of Nim” from a Scholastic book order.

His parents’ love and the compelling cover art were inspiring, but Madrigal, currently the board secretary for Literacy Partners — Menlo Park, wasn’t quite sure what to do with “Mim.” He never read the book or anything else recreationally for years. But “Mim,” sitting unread yet ever present on an otherwise nearly bookless shelf in Madrigal’s Belle Haven home, may have known what to do with Madrigal.

“At the start of ninth grade, I returned to tutor Belle Haven students at the joint-use library. Then at age 15 and a half, while at Menlo Atherton High School, I got a job at the downtown



Menlo Park Library as a library page and won promotion to library assistant.”

In college, subsidized by the Starbucks College Achievement Plan, Madrigal considered a career in medicine. But that goal changed when in 2016, a young mom brought her baby to one of Madrigal’s story times. “She walked up to me and said, ‘I remember you read to my class and how much fun it was. I’m glad you’re still doing story times, now I can bring my daughter so she can see how much fun it is too.’”

“That one comment from that young mom put 16 years of working at a library into perspective,” Madrigal said. Ready to change more lives in the way he understood best, he went on to finish his master’s degree in

library information science and currently, at age 39, is a library supervisor on the Peninsula.

“I’m proud to be able to help level the playing field in sometimes forgotten patches of affluent Silicon Valley,” he said. “At 15 and a half I didn’t realize the entry-level library job would develop into a life-long passion to enrich people’s lives through literacy and life-long learning, especially for those from marginalized communities, like my family. Getting involved with organizations like Literacy Partners that support and help coordinate community literacy efforts is a natural next step,” said Madrigal.

Donations to The Almanac Holiday Fund benefit Literacy Partners - Menlo Park and nine other local nonprofits serving the community. For information, go to almanacnews.com/holiday_fund.

Madrigal is typical of his volunteer colleagues at Literacy Partners — Menlo Park, where team members combine past and current careers

and experience in many areas with hands-on experience with local literacy. Treasurer John Schniedwind spent almost 30 years as an investment executive and portfolio manager at American Century Investments and Benham Management before becoming a one-on-one literacy tutor and an LPMP board member. He works closely with other LPMP team members with varied skills to find fiscally responsible opportunities to bring literacy to adults and kids, sometimes simultaneously.

Current and recent LPMP recipients include: East Palo Alto Kids (epak.org); All Five (allfive.org); JobTrain (jobtrainworks.org); StreetCode (streetcode.org); Ravenswood Classroom Partners (ravenswoodclassroompartners.org); Menlo Park Public Library (menlopark.gov/library).

“The organizations we support are quite different from one another, but broadly there is a theme: help families get a childhood head start or a later-in-life

boost with education and services, the benefits so many people in tech- and income-rich Silicon Valley take for granted. When we level the playing field we help residents reap the rewards of their own efforts,” Madrigal explained.

As his career grows, Madrigal is glad that sometimes in his Belle Haven neighborhood, he is still greeted by former patrons with an enthusiastic, “Hey, Library Man.”

More information about LPMP is online at literacypartnersmenlopark.org. For questions or to discuss volunteer opportunities, contact info@literacypartnersmenlopark.org or Literacy Partners — Menlo Park, 1259 El Camino Real #176, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Since expanding its mission in July 2021, LPMP has contributed more than \$100,000 to thoughtfully selected local literacy programs. That mission will expand with community support. ■

Mike Goodkind is the president of Literacy Partners — Menlo Park.

COMING DEC. 22

Don't miss our special END OF YEAR DOUBLE EDITION!

Just like Santa, we're planning to deliver something special later this month.

We will wrap up the year with a special double edition combining the Dec. 22 and 29 issues.

The Dec. 22 edition of The Almanac will be the final newspaper delivered in 2023. We'll be back in print on Jan. 5.

Unlike Santa, though, our journalists will not rest for long after the big day. Just because there will be no paper delivered Dec. 29, our staff will still be working and you can **keep up with the local news on AlmanacNews.com.**



Happy Holidays!

The Almanac



An ideal 'Ordeal'

Storm Large brings her 'lounge-core' holiday show to Stanford Live

By Heather Zimmerman

With her holiday show, singer-songwriter Storm Large may mark the season in ways that are spicier than most, but she also makes plenty of room for miracles and a big helping of goodwill. Stanford Live presents Large and her "Holiday Ordeal" show Dec. 8-9 at the Bing Studio.

In music, Large has made a name as a powerful, versatile vocalist equally at home with everything from standards to classic rock, and as a witty, spirited songwriter with a feminist, frank and often funny take on life.

The Portland-based performer has taken center stage in performances with a variety of orchestras, including the Philly Pops, the Seattle Symphony and BBC Symphony.

Large is also an actor, playwright and author. She wrote candidly about mental health issues in her family in the memoir "Crazy Enough," which she adapted into a one-woman show. Other stage credits include Portland Center Stage's "Cabaret" and "Harps and Angels" at Los Angeles' Mark Taper Forum. She debuted at Carnegie Hall in 2013 singing Kurt Weill's "Seven Deadly Sins" with the Detroit Symphony.

Since 2011, Large has performed as guest vocalist with the band Pink Martini, a popular regular visitor to Stanford Live's stage. For "Holiday Ordeal," she performs with her own band, Le Bonheur.

The show is a mix of seasonal songs, tunes that weren't written for the holidays but suit the season, and Large's original music, along with storytelling. One of her best-known originals, the bawdy "Eight Miles Wide," isn't a holiday song, but features in the show nonetheless, along with the equally ribald "Christmas at the Hotel." "Stand Up For Me," written in support of an Oregon marriage equality measure, is also a regular in her set.

The Almanac spoke with Large about her career, her take on Christmas miracles and her

"Holiday Ordeal." This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

The Almanac: What drew you to music?

Storm Large: Not unlike most people, I had kind of a s---y home life. My mom was mentally ill and my dad was "perfect." I was the youngest and the only girl. ... So I was very lonely and I figured out I could imitate pretty much anything I heard like birds, dogs, things I heard on TV or the radio. And then I started singing songs. I liked something and imitated it: songs, jingles. And then it was the Beatles' "Abbey Road." I could sing all the songs, all the harmonies, all the guitar parts ... so it was just something I did. I was lonely and I was bored and I was just amusing myself. And then I noticed grownups noticing me when I would do this, and kind of championing what I could do. My dad would shut it down and my family would shut it down: "Oh, she just wants attention. Ignore her," you know, and a couple of them would be like, "she's actually very talented." ...

But I knew even in my little baby mind, "no I have something very cool that people like, so I'll just be careful with it. It makes me a bad person, obviously, but I want people to notice me and be happy when they see me."

The Almanac: At one point you had been planning to pursue a culinary career. Do you still cook?

Large: I cook like a m---r. I was gonna go to the Culinary Institute at the Cordon Bleu Institute in Portland when I moved there, but when I got there it was like, holy s---t, it's so expensive.

I had already been in different bands for 10 years. And then Sept. 11 happened and the whole world changed. ... I think differently, much differently, now about music and art. It's far more valuable now to me than to the world, I think. But I felt like it was a shallow pursuit, because back in the day, it was like, "Oh, you've got to get signed. You

gotta have a record label. You've gotta have a single on the radio. You've got to be skinny. You gotta be like five years old but somehow amazing.' ... So it was like, "you can make it if you're anything but who you are."

... When I was a kid, I was running away and living on the street a little bit now and then and I could get a place to stay in different scary ways, but also I could cook. I would make meals for everybody in the squat. So I wanted to maybe learn how to really cook, learn how to be a nutritionist or be a value in some way with food. And then, when I couldn't afford this school ... and they're like, "Well, let's talk about, you know, payment plans," or something like that, I was bartending at my friend's club. It was part burlesque club, part rock club. The guy who owned it was a huge fan of mine and he really wanted me to sing. Then after about almost a year of him asking me to do something, he got screwed over by a band that had a regular slot at his club ... and he's like, "could you just put something together to fill the slot? You'd be doing me a huge favor." ... And that was 20 years ago. I started singing and it just sort of clicked that what I did wasn't shallow. It wasn't. I just think maybe it was the old voice of "you just want attention. That's bad." ... You know, it's not just musicians. But it's what women are told, what girls are told. It's any vocation, really.

So I've just kind of spent my life sort of "clamsplaining" to the world: You can actually be a f---g awesome working musician and not be famous and not have a record label, and not have videos.

The Almanac: How did you get started doing cabaret?

Large: I just get called cabaret because I tell stories. I'm a singer. Obviously, I'm a singer and a storyteller, and I have friends who are comedians who are like, "Dude, you're a comedian" and I'm not a comedian. I do not have the skin for that. ... But I do a lot of storytelling and I use songs to sort of color the story.



Courtesy Opus 3 Artists

Singer-songwriter Storm Large celebrates the season in a show with holiday songs, originals and storytelling.

So that gets me called "cabaret." I call it "lounge-core." I mean, it's still rock 'n' roll stuff. I write with sort of a rock 'n' roll angle, not so much sound, but in sort of an attitude and from an empowered perspective, and sometimes a sarcastic perspective.

The Almanac: What inspired "Holiday Ordeal"?

Large: Even though I had a s---y childhood, there were enough moments around Christmas that made an impression on me as a child that Christmas time, solstice, is a magical time, where there is redemption, hope in a hopeless place; forgiveness, love, magic. And every year I pray for our Christmas miracle.

Now a Christmas miracle isn't like a Jesus-type miracle. I look for something that strikes me as amazing. I tell some stories on stage about Christmas miracles that I've encountered.

Two Christmases ago, half the band had COVID, and I can't play drums, but I ended up playing drums. I love playing drums. This is probably the Christmas miracle that happened. I didn't really realize it till just now. ... We're playing this gig, and I'm not kidding, in a church but it a venue (in Massachusetts). And I'm like, "I can't play drums. Everybody pray." And I tell the story: "So if you know the story of Jesus, you know, when he's walking around on that

dark night of the soul, and I heard this song and it's a Boston song." and I sat down to play drums. I played it perfectly, and sang at the same time and it was the song, "Dream On" by Aerosmith — "Every time that I look in the mirror/All these lines on my face getting clearer." — I played the drums perfectly, and that was a Christmas miracle.

The Almanac: What kinds of stories do you tell during "Holiday Ordeal"?

Large: This year, because things are so so divisive and scary and angry and rage-filled, I'm going to be really gentle — just remind everybody that right now in this space, we are safe. And with each other we are safe and to look around the room, take a breath, trust me. I'm going to show you a good time. And let's just rest our minds and our hearts and leave the darkness outside tonight. We can go out and fight again another day, but we need rest and we need togetherness right now. ■

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

Storm Large's "Holiday Ordeal" takes place Dec. 8, 7 and 9 p.m., Dec. 9, 7 p.m. at Bing Studio, Stanford. \$50-\$75. live.stanford.edu.

Meaningful melodies

Teen-led music group Carols for a Cause holds its fourth annual fundraiser for local nonprofits

By Ashwini Gangal

For Los Altos High School student Julia Fung, the holidays herald more than just good food, downtime with friends and relaxation with family. This enterprising 16-year-old is busy planning her annual concert that doubles up as a fundraiser for local nonprofits.

Aptly titled Carols for a Cause, this group of students, helmed by Fung, will perform at the Palo Alto Art Center auditorium on Dec. 10 at 2 p.m. Fung founded the group in 2020; this will be their fourth such fundraiser.

Fung's group of 16 Bay Area-based performers, aged 11-19, is part of a larger student-run bicoastal team; 32 members are in Hartford, Connecticut.

The group raises awareness for two different local nonprofits each year. For the San Francisco chapter this year, focus is on mental health and the environment; the nonprofits they're encouraging people to donate to are Katie's Save — created by the family of 22-year-old Katie Meyer who died by suicide in 2022 — and Kat Kid Adventure — an initiative that educates elementary school kids about climate change.

Since its inception, Fung's group has consistently raised around \$1,000 for each of the nonprofits highlighted every year. And the figure has nearly doubled over the last four years. "We're getting there," said Fung, over a Zoom call with this publication, happy about having raised around \$2,000 per nonprofit last year.

There is no ticket fee for the performance. Patrons are

encouraged to donate directly to the nonprofits.

This time, the concert is called "Love, Your World."

"The title is mostly based on the organizations that we fundraise for each year. This year, specifically, I didn't want to focus on arts-based beneficiaries," said Fung, who is keen to expand to other facets that are not directly correlated with the arts. "It's about human connection through music."

About the title, she said, "It kind of depends on where you put the punctuation, which I thought was a fun play on how someone might interpret it. For Katie's Save, it's 'Love, Your World' — it's always family first, loved ones first. They're doing this in her name. It really resonated with me."

Katie Meyer was the Stanford Women's Soccer goalkeeper. "I've played soccer since I was 4 and I actually trained with her. So, I know her, I know her family, a little bit," she said.

For Kat Kid Adventure, it's the same title without the comma. "It's simple — Love Your World. It's all about raising environmental awareness in young kids. To take care of your world, to love it, to try to maintain it, so that our generation in the future can live in a functional society," she explained. "I really like the way our title meant something different for each of our beneficiaries."

Fung was 12 when she started this initiative, "right in the thick of the pandemic." At the time the main goal was to support PYT (Peninsula Youth Theatre),



Courtesy Jim Fung

Members of Carols for a Cause, from left, Daphne Emmert, Caesar Coca, Julia Fung, Rose Madsen, Dommy Hernandez Beltran, Logan Kim, Isa Baratoff and Milovan Bogdanic perform at a concert at Palo Alto's Magical Bridge inclusive playground.

the theatre company she was part of. "I was seeing how big a toll the pandemic took on the arts, on their funding, on their ticket sales," she said. In fact, PYT is where she met most of the performers who now comprise Carols for a Cause.

"In the midst of the pandemic I saw how the arts were struggling because everything was online and everyone was so isolated. For me, the arts have always been a way to express myself, to connect with other people," Fung said.

Her love for the arts is largely inherited. "Both my parents work in the arts — my mom is the director of development at Palo Alto Art Center. She has always instilled in me the need to fund the arts. And I have obviously experienced that first hand," she said. "My dad does everything — he's at Peninsula Symphony right now. He does a lot of photography, he taught me everything I know about videography. He's always showing me the different facets of what art can bring you. Both my parents travel a lot for art and music."

Fung's passion for Carols for a Cause is shared by her team. 17-year-old Rose Madsen from Fremont High School said in an email, "I joined the organization because of the incredible

causes that Carols consistently fundraises for as well as Julia's passion and skillful organizational ability."

For Madsen, who will be singing at the show this year, the most challenging part is finding time to practice. "I'm a senior this year which means I'm in the middle of college applications and all the deadlines are quickly approaching. It's overwhelming but I couldn't imagine a better way to spend my time," she said. This is her third year with the group; she began in 2021 with the virtual cabaret "Countdown!"

On the other hand, Gunn High School student Evelyn Rodden, 14, will be singing for Carols for a Cause for the very first time. "Knowing that I get to perform, something I absolutely love to do, and spread joy while also raising money for important causes makes it worth my time. In fact, I can't think of a better way to spend my time," she said in an email.

She admires Fung's leadership skills too. "Julia is extremely flexible with everyone's other commitments, and is understanding about everyone's busy lives. She is also so committed to the cause and the show and wants to help everyone make it the best it can be!" said Rodden.

"The biggest challenge for me is definitely finding modes of

transportation, as I do live farther than most in CFC (Carols for a Cause), have busy parents, and have yet to be able to drive. Also juggling CFC with other commitments such as school honors classes, theater, singing, and cheerleading," she said.

In the years ahead, Fung is looking to put this collective passion to good use and scale Carols for a Cause.

"I am looking to expand," she said, keen to organize fundraisers more frequently — for instance, a summer event to start with — and eventually collaborate with musicians from different countries. "Connecting with different people, raising more money, pushing the boundaries of how far our impact can go," is how Fung sums up her ambition for her group, one she is very proud to lead. ■

Email Contributing Writer
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Courtesy Jim Fung

Logan Kim, left, and Rose Madsen sing during a previous year's performance.

Carols for a Cause takes place Dec. 10, 2 p.m. at the Palo Alto Art Center auditorium, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto. No admission fee, but direct donations to Katie's Save and Kat Kid Adventure are encouraged carolsforacause.com.

Worth a Look



Courtesy Vincent Louis Carrella

Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble performs their annual "Wintersongs" holiday concert Dec. 10 in Menlo Park.

Kitka's 'Wintersongs'

Kitka Women's Vocal Ensemble has been dazzling Bay Area audiences for years now with their harmony-rich interpretations of traditional Eastern Europe and Eurasian vocal stylings and songs, as well as new material for female voices. Each year, they perform a "Wintersongs" concert featuring seasonally themed music from Eastern European traditions, from folk carols to Orthodox choral pieces. This year, the theme is "sustenance," and explores "what sustains us in times of darkness, scarcity, uncertainty and hardship?" according to Kitka.

Dec. 10, 4 p.m., at St. Bede's, 2650 Sand Hill Road, Menlo Park. Tickets start at \$25. [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com).

The Christmas Ballet

Though it's become something of a tradition itself, Smuin Contemporary Ballet's annual holiday show is anything but traditional. "The Christmas Ballet" brings together classical ballet and high-spirited contemporary pieces, set to a variety of holiday-themed music. In addition to the return of favorite works such as "Santa Baby" and "Christmas in New Orleans," the 2023 edition features the world premieres of "Catalan Carol" by Smuin Associate Artistic Director Amy Seiwert and "Ring Ting Tlingling" by former Smuin artist Nicole Haskins.

Dec. 8, 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 9, 2 and 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 10, 2 p.m. at Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. Tickets are \$25-\$109. [smuinballet.org](https://www.smuinballet.org).

Rob Kapilow's 'What Makes It Great?'

You surely know the tunes, but how much do you know about the backstories behind yuletide classics such as "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "Silver Bells"? Conductor, composer and author Rob Kapilow brings another installment of his renowned 'What Makes It Great?' presentations (which were broadcast on National Public Radio for many years), this time with a holiday theme. Titled "Dreaming of a Jewish Christmas" and featuring The Choral Project, Kapilow explores well-known holiday songs and their Jewish composers. "The story of how this came to be is a remarkable tale of immigrant outsiders who wrote the soundtrack to America's dreams," according to Stanford Live's event listing.

Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m., at Bing Concert Hall, 327 Lasuen St., Stanford. Tickets start at \$32. live.stanford.edu.

The Terrapin Family Band

Attention Deadheads: The Terrapin Family Band, which was originally formed as part of Grateful Dead co-founder Phil Lesh's weekly shows at Terrapin

Crossroads in San Rafael, will perform a "Grateful Holiday Celebration" concert. According to the event poster, the line-up will feature Grahame Lesh, Ross James, Jason Crosby and Alex Koford, with Scott Law and Nicki Bluhm.

Dec. 10, 8 p.m., The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Tickets start at \$52. [guildtheatre.com](https://www.guildtheatre.com).

CSMA Holiday Concert

The Community School of Music and Arts audition-based Merit Scholars Program supports promising youth music students who have shown strong dedication to their musical studies, offering them additional performance and other opportunities. At their annual holiday concert, which is free for the community, members of the program (both ensembles and soloists) perform holiday favorites.

Dec. 9, 5 p.m., Tateuchi Hall, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. Free. [arts4all.org](https://www.arts4all.org).

Palo Alto Philharmonic

The orchestra takes audiences on an uplifting trip through Europe with "Paris to Prague," a program featuring Stravinsky's playful Suite No. 2 for Small Orchestra, Mozart's spirited Symphony No. 38, K. 504 ("Prague") and Jean Françaix's 1968 Clarinet Concerto, with soloist Steve Sánchez. Sánchez is the second clarinet for the San Francisco Symphony and a frequent guest with the San Francisco Opera and San Francisco Ballet orchestras, according to the philharmonic's website. But it's not only Bay Area audiences who have heard his work in area concert halls; Sánchez also performs with the Skywalker Symphony, which produces scores for games such as World of Warcraft and Disney film and TV projects. He is a professor of clarinet at San Jose State University.

Dec. 9, 8 p.m. (pre-concert talk at 7:30 p.m.) at Cubberley Theatre, 4120 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Tickets are \$10-\$20. [paphil.org](https://www.paphil.org).

WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE 2023-04

At its regular meeting on November 28, 2023, the Woodside Fire Protection District Board of Directors adopted the following ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT OF SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA ESTABLISHING A SCHEDULE OF FEES TO BE CHARGED BY THE FIRE DISTRICT

AYES: Directors Matt Miller, Randy Holthaus, and Patrick Cain

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

The Ordinance is also identified as Ordinance 2023-04.

SUMMARY OF THE ORDINANCE: The purpose of the ordinance is to establish fees, as defined in the California Constitution, that are no more than necessary to cover the reasonable costs of Fire District governmental activities, and that the manner in which those costs are allocated to a payor bear a fair or reasonable relationship to the payor's burdens on, or benefits received from, the Fire District's governmental activities. The fees established by the Ordinance are authorized pursuant to Health & Safety Code section 13916 and any other applicable provisions of California statutes and regulations.

A FULL AND COMPLETE COPY OF THE ORDINANCE IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WWW.WOODSIDEFIRE.ORG AND A CERTIFIED COPY OF THE FULL AND COMPLETE TEXT OF THE ORDINANCE IS AVAILABLE AT THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT OFFICE, 808 PORTOLA ROAD, PORTOLA VALLEY, CA 94028.

Run Date: December 8, 2023



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Great new reads for kids, teens and grown-ups by Bay Area authors (including some with local settings)

BY GRACE LANE



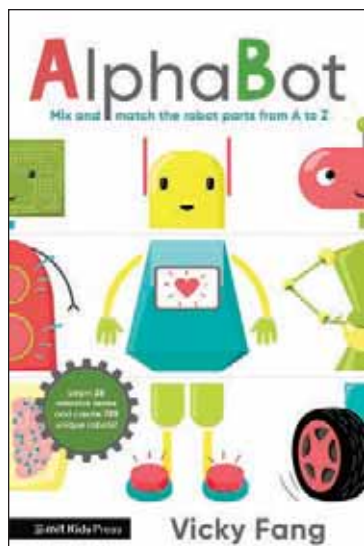
Courtesy Getty Images

Here on the Peninsula and in the Bay Area, we have some amazing local authors who are writing for all ages. So this holiday season, consider these gems — from interactive picture books to murder mysteries — from authors who might live just down the street.

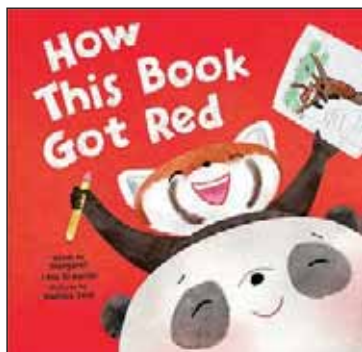
For the wee ones

“Alphabot” by Vicky Fang, MIT Kids Press, \$14.99.

This super fun and informative flip book allows kids — and adults! — to make their own robots while learning what all the different robotics terms mean.



Courtesy MIT Kids Press



Courtesy Sourcebooks

“How this Book Got Red” by Margaret Chiu Greanias, Sourcebooks, \$18.99.

A beautiful story about inclusion and visibility. A red panda notices that all the panda books don't have anyone who looks like her in them — and she decides she can't let that stand.

For the early readers

“The Apartment House on Poppy Hill” by Nina LaCour, Chronicle Books, \$14.99.

Absolutely delightful chapter book about Ella, who is the expert new tenant greeter of her apartment house in San Francisco, and all the shenanigans she and her neighbors get into. It's full of joy and heart, and shows us the world as it could be and sometimes even is. This one is for the kids who have just finished up “Mercy Watson” and “Tales of Deckawoo Drive”

and are ready for their next adventure.

“Reggie: Kid Penguin” by Jen de Oliveira, Little Brown Ink, \$7.99.

Super-fun early graphic novel about the trials and tribulations of being a young kid, as told through the eyes of Reggie. Children will see their experiences reflected back to them and adults will giggle their way through memories from their own childhood and their children's (I know I appreciated the story about Reggie cutting his own feathers before picture day a little bit more after my nephew's adventures with the scissors last month) This one is for the kids who are starting to read on their own.

For middle grade readers

“Hope in the Valley” by Mitali Perkins, Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR), \$17.99.

In National Book Award nominee Mitali Perkins' middle grade debut, we meet Pandita, who isn't quite ready to grow up and confront what that means. Set in what will become Silicon Valley in 1980, kids will see their own worries and wants in the pages of a book that is technically historical fiction as they walk with Pandita while she grapples with grief, hope, and the growing housing insecurity

of her town. This book is for the kid who loves realistic and/or historical fiction and anyone who wants to be reminded that there's always a hand to hold when you're standing up for what's right.

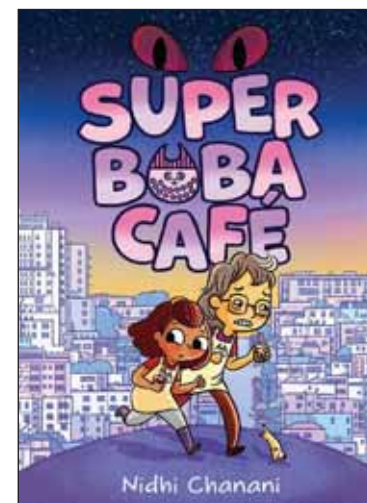
“Momo Arashima Steals the Sword of the Wind” by Misa Sugiura, Labyrinth Road, \$18.99.

Momo is having a totally normal day when suddenly she's attacked by a death hag and rescued by a talking fox. Things get less normal for poor Momo from there, especially when she learns that this is all happening because her mother is a banished Shinto goddess and now Momo and her ex-best friend and the talking fox need to save the world. This book is for the kid who loves mythology, fantastical adventures, and imperfect girls who are also heroes. And probably also foxes.

For the graphic novel fans

“Adventuregame Comics: The Beyond” by Jason Shiga, Amulet books, \$14.99.

This graphic novel features an innovative, choose-your-own-adventure afterlife. Set up like a game, this fun and interactive book draws readers of all ages right in. Perfect for the kids you've probably just dragged away from Minecraft.



Courtesy Amulet Paperbacks

“Super Boba Cafe” by Nidhi Chanani, Amulet Paperbacks, \$16.99.

Aria is staying in San Francisco for the summer with her Nainai, helping to run her boba shop and take care of her cat, Bao (and all of Bao's surprise kittens) when she discovers that her grandma and the prairie dogs in the backyard have been helping keep the city safe from a monster for decades. This one is perfect for kids who are a little serious but also love adventure. And cats. Must love cats.

For the teenagers

“Everyone Wants to Know” by Kelly Loy Gilbert, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, \$19.99.



Courtesy Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers

The latest from multi-award winning author Kelly Loy Gilbert is all about family, and growing up in the “reality” TV spotlight and what that means. Honor and her twin are the youngest in their family of five kids, and their much-older siblings had very different childhoods from hers. And now that their TV show is long over, her parents are getting divorced and she is moving from San Francisco to Los Gatos, everything is changing too much and too fast. Gilbert brilliantly and deftly crafts characters that make you feel like they’re right

there with you, talking straight to you. This one is for lovers of realistic fiction and family dramas.

“A Study in Drowning” by Ava Reid, HarperTeen, \$19.99.

Achingly atmospheric, this gothic fairy tale will draw you in immediately and keep you hooked until the last page. Effy has always had visions of the Fairy King and has only ever found solace in her favorite book, which is about his destruction. But now she’s at the estate of that book’s author, with a scholar determined to prove him a fraud, when dark forces start to conspire against them. This one is for the fantasy and romance fans, and for the people who want to root for the girls men like to sacrifice.

For the adults

“Deep as the Sky, Red as the Sea” by Rita Chang-Eppig, Bloomsbury Publishing, \$28.99.

Absolutely gorgeous fictionalized biography of one of the great pirate queens in history — and one of the greatest pirates ever. Shek Yeung must find the power and courage to marry her husband’s second-in-command and bear him a son, all while pursuing vengeance and being

as good a mother as she can be. The price women sometimes must pay can be ever-so high and history is riddled with these stories, as is the present, but this is a story that will remind you about how strong women can be in the face of terrible odds and how happiness can yet be found.

“Sorry, Bro” by Taleen Voskuni, Berkley, \$17.

Sometimes, you just need a really fun romance novel and this one is it. After not finding Mr. Right among the non-Armenians of the Silicon Valley tech bros, Nar agrees to



Courtesy Berkley

let her mom send her to meet Armenian men and meets ... Ms. Right? This one is a gorgeous queer romcom with a big cast that will keep you smiling.

“Mother-Daughter Murder Night” by Nina Simon, William Morrow, \$30.

Are you a mystery fan or do you know one? This is definitely the book for you. Lana is stuck in a coastal California town while convalescing when her grandson stumbles upon a body and she needs to step in and figure out what happened when the police decide he’s a suspect.

Holiday picks

And, because of course it is the holiday season, my favorite Hanukkah and Christmas books from local authors:

“Larry’s Latkes” by Jenna Waldman, Apples & Honey Press, \$17.95.

Big Larry wants to have some fun with his Hanukkah latkes this year. But nothing at the farmers market is working, so what’s a gator to do? (*Published in 2021*)

“How Does Santa Go Down the Chimney?” by Mac Barnett and Jon Klassen, Candlewick, \$18.99.

This iconic and always amazing duo tackles the perennial question: No really, how DOES Santa get down the chimney? This brand-new picture book aims to help you answer that query. ■

Grace Lane is the store manager of Linden Tree Books in Los Altos. She can be reached at grace@lindentreebooks.com.



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Meet the Winners

Check out the best places to eat, drink and play this holiday season

Soon holiday lights will be twinkling and friends and family will gather to celebrate, so this is the perfect time to shine a light on what our readers say are the best places to eat, drink, shop and spend time with family and friends in and around Menlo Park, Woodside, Portola Valley and Atherton.

SCAN THE CODE OR VISIT

AlmanacNews.com/readers_choice







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Food & Drink

SAN FRANCISCO STAPLE GOES gluten-free

Young Kobras sells its artisanal sourdough bread online and in Peninsula markets

By Sophia Markoulakis
Photos by Magali Gauthier

In 2015, when Geoff Kober was working at a San Francisco cafe, gluten-free bread was a staple on supermarket shelves. But even with a decade of sales and traction to perfect the recipe, the product was still subpar for Kober.

“At the time, gluten-free bread was inherently not user-friendly, and it was often underbaked and sticky,” he said. Working with these deficiencies was so frustrating for Kober that he realized he needed to create something better.

Young Kobras was born out of this frustration. The name is a play on his last name and where he falls amongst his siblings (last). The business got its footing at San Mateo’s food incubator space, Kitchentown, after spending the first couple of years working out of a shared commissary in San Francisco.

To Kober, it was irrelevant that he wasn’t gluten-intolerant. It was more important that his product worked like typical bread and that it tasted good and was healthy. “My mom is a dietitian, and I grew up with an understanding of healthy eating and clean labels, so that was indoctrinated in me from

‘Yes, my bread is gluten-free, but it’s also just really good, tasty bread. It’s artisanal sourdough, and we use the same techniques as any other artisanal bakery.’

GEOFF KOBER,
YOUNG KOBRAS OWNER

a young age,” explained Kober.

The first several months involved learning how to make traditional sourdough with wheat flour, so he could understand the science behind bread baking before substituting alternative flours that didn’t contain the gluten protein found in wheat, barley and rye.

In 2017, Kober brought in Juliana Lopker as a partner, who helped take the business to the next level. They created an online store, among other operational improvements. In 2020, a serendipitous opportunity presented itself that led to the company’s move to San Carlos.

“It was a really beautiful transitory

connection,” Kober said. “The bakery that was here before us was looking to move. At the same time, we were ready to leave Kitchentown and graduate to a larger facility. The space was already built out as a gluten-free facility, so it couldn’t have been a better match for us.”

Gluten-free breads and pastries have come a long way since the early 2000s, but it can still be hard to convince someone who isn’t gluten-allergic or intolerant to voluntarily opt for a sandwich made with gluten-free bread. Kober is hoping to bridge that divide. “Yes, my bread is gluten-free, but it’s also just really good, tasty bread,” he said. “It’s artisanal sourdough, and we use the same techniques as any other artisanal bakery.”

Besides being certified organic and vegan, the bread is free from preservatives, refined flours, oils and gums that are added to attempt to replicate the plushness that gluten creates when fermented. Young Kobras uses psyllium husk to bind the bread, and Kober notes that psyllium husk is a plant fiber that gels up similar to chia and doesn’t result in the bread crumbling like many gluten-free bread brands.

The San Carlos bakery is buzzing at night while bakers bake and prep the bread for shipping. Expedited delivery means it ends up in people’s pantries within two days. Kober recommends either eating it within a few days or popping it in the fridge or the freezer to extend its life. Besides their online shop, the bread can also be found on Good Eggs and in Bianchini’s Market in San Carlos and Portola Valley.

“We have a great connection with Bay Area customers, but we also have this nationwide connection that’s been really incredible,” said Kober. “Our accounts are split about 50-50 between direct-to-consumer and food service, with Project Juice being our largest commercial account.” The company’s next phase of growth will focus on obtaining more food service clients. “There’s a real need for good gluten-free sourdough bread in the commercial space,” he said.

One of the ways Kober is meeting this next phase is by working with other food businesses that are similarly ready for that



Above: Gluten-free loaves sit on the rack, ready to be packaged. Top: Geoff Kober pours sourdough starter into a mixer.



Above: Young Kobras owner Geoff Kober, left, and Yadhira Velazquez, right, weigh and shape batard loaves at the bakery in San Carlos. Top: Geoff Kober shapes a gluten-free batard loaf.

next stage. Kober is just wrapping up a 12-week intensive small business accelerator through Oakland’s ICA Fund, a funding, coaching and connections resource.

“I’ve been on this journey of owning a business, and when I first started, there was that ‘spark’ or energy you get from the hustle of R&D, obtaining customers and other stuff associated with a new business,” he said. “I now have seven employees, am doing payroll and invoicing, and I almost feel like the work has become stagnant. The ICA has been a really important space for me to re-perceive my business. It kind of feels like a condensed MBA program.”

“It’s also really inspiring that they are a nonprofit, and one of their primary missions is social impact,” he added. “I’m really inspired now to make bigger decisions that can have more impact as we grow the company over the next five to 10 years.”

Young Kobras, Instagram: @youngkobras. Order directly or find a store locator at youngkobras.com. ■

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Ken DeLeon's Insights: Finding the right buyer's agent in a changing real estate landscape

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