

The Almanac

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

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Menlo Park apartment fire kills 1 person, 2 dogs

Second person injured in early Christmas Eve morning blaze in home without a smoke detector

By Tony Hicks / Bay City News Service / Sue Dremann / Palo Alto Weekly

One person was killed, one was injured and two dogs were killed by an apartment fire in Menlo Park early on Christmas Eve morning, Dec. 24.

The Menlo Park Fire District said it responded to a reported structure fire with possible occupants inside at 3:17 a.m. at 1017 Madera Ave. Responding units found a light haze of smoke coming from two broken living room windows from the two-bedroom unit.

Local residents had used extinguishers and a garden hose to try extinguishing the fire from outside. Firefighting crews forced entry through the front door and extinguished a small smoldering fire in the living room while two other crews performed search and rescue operations.

Through heavy smoke, firefighters found two victims on the floor in the back bedroom. One victim, a woman in her 60s, died from burns and smoke inhalation. Another female

victim in her 60s was transported to Stanford University Medical Center in critical condition. Two pet dogs also died in the fire, Fire Marshall Jon Johnston said.

The San Mateo County Coroner's Office on Dec. 27 identified the deceased woman as Teresa Alkire, 66.

"The fire started in the living room and was accidental," Johnston said, noting it appeared to be electrical in nature.

"There was minimal damage. It was a slow, smoldering fire that consumed part of a chair and a cat tower. The smoke and heat trapped them," he said. The woman who died appeared to have opened her bedroom door and was overcome by the heat and smoke.

Johnston said it was apparent that the women were smokers and smoked in all of the rooms. They had removed the smoke detectors in every room in the unit.

Firefighters want to remind people to install and test their smoke alarms in all bedrooms, hallways and each floor of their home. ■



Damage from the fire at 1017 Madera Ave. in Menlo Park on Dec. 24, 2023.

Courtesy Jon Johnston

The campaign for Congress

U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo's retirement offers rare opportunity for District 16 voters to elect new Congressional representative

By Gennady Sheyner

When U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo announced on Nov. 21 that she would not seek another term, she sent ripples through Silicon Valley's political establishment. Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, has been in Congress for more than 30 years, and her decision to step down in 2024 created a rare opportunity for Peninsula's active and aspiring politicians and activists.

By Dec. 13, a dozen people filed paperwork to run in the March 5 primary, which will winnow down the list of potential successors to two.

Some of the candidates have been in the political limelight for years and believe they have the experience needed to represent the influential district, which includes a large section of the Peninsula and portions of the South Bay. This includes former San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo,

state Assembly member Evan Low and Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian.

Others have only served on the local level but believe their ideas, values and understanding of local issues make them well qualified to represent in Congress. This group includes Palo Alto City Council members Julie Lythcott-Haims and Greg Tanaka, former Menlo Park Mayor Peter Ohtaki and former Saratoga City Council member Rishi Kumar, who also ran

against Eshoo in 2020 and 2022.

Then there are those who have not held any elected office but point to their life experiences as evidence that they would be successful in Congress. This group includes Joby Bernstein, a Stanford University graduate student whose research, investment and activism focus on curbing climate change; Peter Dixon, a Marine veteran who worked as an adviser in the State Department and co-founded a cybersecurity

company; and Ahmed Mostafa, an attorney who until recently worked for Google and whose campaign is themed around "human dignity."

In addition to these candidates, one additional person has qualified to run for the office: Republican Karl Ryan of Los Gatos. He could not be reached by press deadline and his profile is not included in this voting guide.

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The Almanac



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Manager's Corner



by Sergio Ramirez
General Manager

As we close out 2023 and look in our rearview mirror, I reflect on all of our accomplishments. During the past year the district has been working on a new master plan. The master plan sets a road map to rehabilitate or reconstruct our infrastructure over the next 10 years. As part of the master plan study the district conducted an inflow and infiltration study to analyze the districts wastewater capacity. We managed to capture a 100-year storm event on Christmas Eve of 2022. A 100-year storm event is significant because they don't occur too often, and they bring an enormous amount of rain in a short period. At the time, we had over 30 flow meters monitoring the system. Fortunately, we fared well even though we were battered by atmospheric rivers all season long. In preparation for this winter season storms, we performed manhole lid repairs in the Bell Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park and a new pipeline installation, looping the wastewater collection system, in East Palo Alto near Newbridge Street and Laurel Avenue. This was to prevent near-miss issues in the system. What the new master plan demonstrated was the need to continue an aggressive infrastructure replacement schedule. In the past we have been able to spend approximately \$5 million to \$6 million in pipeline replacement but do to escalating construction cost we will need to fund our pipeline construction budget to roughly \$10 million in order to maintain our Capital Improvement Program.

In looking to the future, I'm excited about the progress we have made in obtaining environmental and construction permits for the levee project at our off-site facility behind Bedwell Bayfront Park. The project will raise the existing levee and will create a living shoreline in anticipation of sea level rise. The living shoreline is funded in part by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation through a \$4.8 million matching grant received by the district. Another exciting project is the Bayfront Recycled Water Facility that will bring six hundred thousand to one million gallons of recycled water to the Bayfront area to be used for irrigation, water cooling towers, and toilet flushing. This project will off-set the use of potable drinking water for such needs. The district is actively working with developers in Menlo Park and the surrounding areas to help fund the district's recycled water program to ensure the sustainability of our community.

Lastly, we have been working diligently to upgrade our hardware and software systems to Software as a Service platform(s). Including moving to an on-line construction bidding process and an on-line permitting process to assist property owners and contractors while gaining efficiencies. I'd like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and remember to "Call Us First" with your sewer related issues.



PROJECT MANAGER: FARIBORZ HEYDARI, P.E.



West Bay Sanitary District welcomes Fariborz Heydari, P.E. as the new Project Manager. Fariborz brings over 25 years of municipal expertise in utilities and Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) – executing a wide range of professional services for the public sector. He joined the district in January 2023. As the team's Project Manager, he will lead the design and construction of capital improvement projects to rehabilitate or replace the district's infrastructure as authorized by the District Board of Directors. Fariborz will provide capital planning support, including supporting the implementation of the 2023 Master Plan, developing annual capital improvement budgets, optimizing the capital improvement program, approving construction drawings, reviewing deliverables prepared by outside engineering consultants, and providing overall project management. Fariborz will assist in managing grant funding support efforts, including identifying potential grants, federal earmarks, and state loans.

ASSOCIATE ENGINEER: YUTIAN LEI



Associate Engineer, Yutian Lei joined the district in June 2023. Prior to West Bay Sanitary District, she worked for an engineering consulting company as a project manager for over 3 years and has more than 5 years of engineering experience in the water/wastewater and the environmental remediation industry. Yutian received her bachelor's degree in environmental science and holds a PhD degree in Civil/Environmental Engineering. Yutian is an engineer in training (EIT) and is pursuing her Professional Engineering (PE) license.

UTILITY WORKER: DOMINIC NANNI



Utility Worker, Dominic Nanni joined the district in December 2022. He comes to the district with 5 years of experience in the wastewater industry. While working for the City of Pacifica he gained knowledge in Construction, CCTV, Power Rodding, and Hydro Jetting. Dominic also spent time maintaining the Calera Creek Water Recycling Treatment Plant, recycling 4 million gallons of wastewater per day. He received technical certification through the California Water Environment Association and holds a Grade 4 Certificate in Collection System Maintenance and a Grade 2 in Mechanical Technology. Dominic spent the last year working with the district's pump crew and at the West Bay- Sharon Heights Recycled Water Facility with the Chief Plant Operator. He is West Bay's first Operator-In-Training. Dominic has shown his skills in diagnosing and repairing the district's pump stations and treatment plant. He is a great addition to the West Bay Team.

MAINTENANCE WORKER: ANDRES GARCIA



Maintenance Worker, Andres Garcia joined the district as a regular full-time employee in March 2023. In his short time with the district, he completed the Operation and Maintenance of Wastewater Collection Systems, Volume 1 and 2 through the Office of Water Programs through California State University, Sacramento and obtained his California Commercial Class A driver's license permit. He obtained technical certification through the California Water Environment Association and holds a Grade 1 Certificate in Collection System Maintenance. Andres has displayed a great work ethic and dedication as a team player. If you have called the district about a sewer related issue in the past few months, you may have had the pleasure of meeting Andres. He is trained in the district's emergency response vehicle and is solving residential sewer related issues.

MAINTENANCE WORKER: D'ANDRE WHITE



Maintenance Worker, D'Andre White joined the district in June 2023. He transitioned from a part-time temporary worker to a regular full-time employee. D'Andre completed the Operation and Maintenance of Wastewater Collection Systems, Volume 1 and 2 through the Office of Water Programs through California State University, Sacramento and has obtained his California Commercial Class A driver's license permit. D'Andre is excited to be the newest member of the West Bay Team and is ready to do his part in keeping our sewer collection system clean and flowing as it should at all times.

DISTRICT LEVEL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Construction has begun to protect the district's Flow Equalization and Resource Recovery Facility (FERRF) against the FEMA floodplain and sea level rise. The FERRF is a district multi-use facility that provides temporary storage of wastewater during wet weather events, storage of district vehicles and equipment, and serves as an off-site Operation, Maintenance, and Construction corporation yard for the district. Work to the levee includes the installation of sheet pile walls, raising the levee crest, construction of a living shoreline and the installation of oyster reef structures. Construction is expected to conclude in 2026.

TRANSPARENCY CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE AWARDED TO WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT

Menlo Park, CA. - West Bay Sanitary District received the District Transparency Certificate of Excellence by the Special District Leadership Foundation (SDLF) in recognition of its outstanding efforts to promote transparency and good governance.

"This award is a testament to West Bay Sanitary District's commitment to open government," said, Sergio Ramirez, General Manager. "Our staff is to be commended for the level of service they provide and their contributions that empower the public with information which facilitates engagement and oversight." To receive the award, West Bay Sanitary District demonstrated the completion of essential governance transparency requirements, including conducting ethics training for all board members, properly conducting open and public meetings, and filing financial transactions and compensation reports to the State Controller in a timely manner.



District Transparency Certificate of Excellence

SDLF is an independent, non-profit organization formed to promote good governance and best practices among California's special districts through certification, accreditation, and other recognition programs.

Special districts are independent public agencies that deliver core local services to communities, such as utility, wastewater treatment, fire protection, parks and recreation, healthcare, sanitation, mosquito abatement, ports, libraries, public cemeteries and more. Districts are established by voters and their funding is approved by voters to meet specific needs through focused service. They can be specially molded to serve large regions or small neighborhoods depending on the need.

For a sewer emergency or sewer-related problems, please call us first! You can reach us day or night at (650) 321-0384. If the main public sewer line is blocked, only West Bay has the authority to clear the system. If the public sewer main line is clear, we may advise you to contact a plumbing contractor to resolve the issue on your property.

Happy New Year!



From all of us at

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Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

First hotel on Meta's Menlo Park campus boasts local artwork

By Ashwini Gangal

When architect Frank Gehry finished expanding Meta's Menlo Park campus in 2018, he famously said the design would belong to the neighborhood.

On Nov. 27, hotel brand citizenM launched a new property — its 32nd in the world, 14th in the country and second in the Bay Area — on Meta's Menlo Park campus. In keeping with the spirit of Gehry's words, the décor of the hotel features artwork by several local artists.

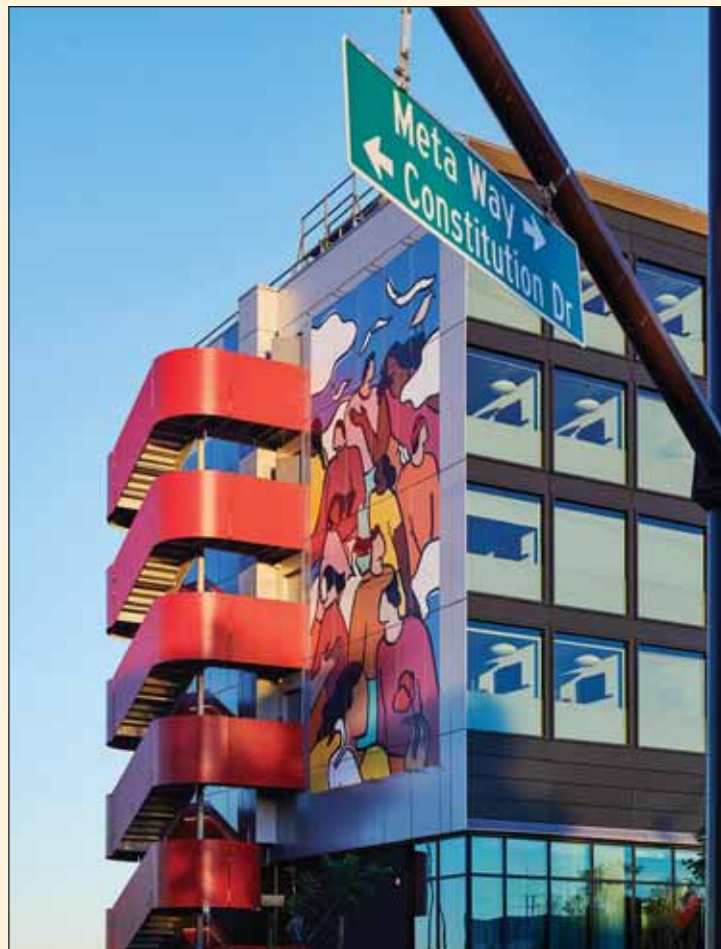
To get a sense of the way citizenM merged hospitality and art to create a special vibe for the property, this publication interviewed Oakland-based painter and muralist Alexandra Bowman, whose gigantic 60-by-40-foot artwork adorns the façade of the building.

It all began about a year ago, when Bowman responded to citizenM's open call for art.

"They wanted a lively piece that referenced community," said the 33-year-old artist during a Zoom call, talking about what prompted her to create an image that represents abstract notions like togetherness and human connection.

She also wove in aspects that characterize the city, like diversity and technological innovation.

"After reading what they were looking for, I started to brainstorm different ways to incorporate the culture of Menlo Park," she said. "You see smart, intellectual people from all over the world



Courtesy citizenM

Alexandra Bowman's artwork adorns the side of citizenM's new Menlo Park hotel.

gravitating towards working in these spaces."

However, technology can sometimes widen the chasm between the very people it is built to connect. And that's the gap Bowman was looking to acknowledge through her art, which hinges on concepts like travel, freedom of movement and empathy.

"I feel what Menlo Park (Meta) really needed was a

space outside of the workplace, which is why the hotel is a great addition," she said. "It reinforces the fact that we need physical human reaction."

Bowman's artwork is also an ode to the natural beauty of the city.

"Every time I drive to Menlo Park, I always pull off (to) the side of the road and just look

See **HOTEL**, page 8

Diana Hawkins-Manuelian is Atherton's 2024 mayor

By Joshua Picazo

Atherton completed its traditional City Council rotation during its final meeting of the year, with a new mayor and vice mayor elected.

During a Dec. 20 meeting, the council unanimously appointed Diana Hawkins-Manuelian to serve as the town's mayor heading into 2024. Outgoing mayor Bill Widmer nominated her for the position.

This is Hawkins-Manuelian's first term as mayor, having served as vice mayor since December 2022. She was first elected to the City Council in 2020 with 25.77% of the vote in a tight four-way race for two council slots.

Hawkins-Manuelian has lived in Atherton for 30 years and prior to running for City Council worked in media development and as a consultant.

She holds a doctorate from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education and a postdoctoral degree from Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"I'd like to thank all my council members for allowing me to serve," Hawkins-Manuelian said.

The new mayor outlined her priorities shortly after being officially sworn in, which include crafting housing solutions for Atherton and getting mandated housing element plans authorized by the state.

Other priorities include focusing on emergency preparedness as well as creating the first community survey since 2013

to better understand residents' needs.

For the position of vice mayor, the council unanimously voted to appoint Elizabeth Lewis, who has served the town since 2008 in various positions including three terms as mayor.

Lewis served as a member of the General Plan Committee for Atherton prior to joining the council.

Widmer thanked his wife and fellow council members as well as the residents of Atherton for "the honor and the confidence you placed in me," adding it had been a pleasure working with other local mayors and public servants.

"My statement is 'Goodbye, goodbye,'" Widmer joked during his remarks at the meeting. "It's been a pleasure doing this. I think every council mayor loves to be the mayor."

Widmer listed what he viewed as successes during the year under his term, including awarding a contract to construct a "mini" train museum and banning of gas-powered leaf blowers starting in June. However, he noted that he wished the housing element had been approved by the state.

The town has grappled with the challenge of addressing its housing element. During last year's meeting, then outgoing council member Bob Polito acknowledged the difficulty in meeting the requirement of constructing 348 housing units to fulfill the state's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) program for the 2023-31 cycle. ■



Courtesy Gino Manuelian

Left to right: Diana Hawkins-Manuelian and Elizabeth Lewis are sworn in as mayor and vice mayor, respectively.

Person fatally stuck by Caltrain near Menlo Park station on Dec. 29

By Bay City News Service

A northbound Caltrain struck someone on the tracks near the Menlo Park Station on Dec. 29, a spokesman for the transit system said.

There were 31 passengers on Train 711 and no injuries were reported aboard, said

Dan Lieberman, a Caltrain spokesman.

The collision occurred about 6:20 p.m. Trains were reduced to using a single track through the area as a result, Caltrain said.

Northbound and southbound trains were reported running about 40 minutes late approaching Menlo Park about 8:20 p.m., according to Caltrain Alerts on

social media.

On Jan. 3, the San Mateo County Coroner's Office identified the victim as Jeffrey Staudinger, 61, of Menlo Park.

This incident is the 15th fatality in 2023, Lieberman told The Almanac. ■

Almanac Editor Angela Swartz contributed to this story.



RESOLUTION NO. 2395 (2023)

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

Lands of Michael C. Trigg and Leslie L. Trigg, Trustees of The Trigg 2002 Revocable Trust dated December 30, 2022

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

- A. This Resolution of Intention is adopted pursuant to the District's "Zone Master Annexation Resolution" ("ZOMAR")...
B. The District has received an application to annex a parcel of real property (the "Parcel") to the District's On-Site Wastewater Disposal Zone...
C. The applicants have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the District Board that the Parcel constitutes "real property" for the purposes of Section 2(b) of ZOMAR in that:
X All of the conditions described in Subsections i., ii., iii., iv. and v. of ZOMAR Section 2(b) are satisfied; or
Other conditions exist which demonstrate that the Parcel will benefit directly or indirectly from the activities of the Zone...
D. All of the conditions and requirements of ZOMAR Sections 2(a), 2(c), 2(d) and 2(e) have been fully satisfied.

In consideration of the foregoing findings and determinations,

IT IS RESOLVED by the District Board as follows:

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

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

Date: January 10, 2024

Time: 7:00 PM

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

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

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

Exhibit A

RECEIVED SEP 06 2023 EXHIBIT "A" SAN MATEO LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION 455 COUNTY CENTER REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063
Date: August 9, 2023
Annexed to: West Bay Sanitary District
Name of Annexation: West Bay Sanitary
Geographic Description: Lands of Trigg
EXHIBIT A PAGE 1 OF 3
All that certain real property, situate in the Town of Portola Valley, County of San Mateo, State of California, being all of Lot 113 and a portion of the right of way of Westridge Drive (70 feet wide), as shown on that certain map entitled "Tract No. 687, Westridge Subdivision No. 5", Town of Portola Valley, San Mateo County, California" filed in the office of the County Recorder of San Mateo County on April 7, 1954 in Book 38 of Maps at Pages 30 through 37, more particularly described as follows:
Beginning at the North corner of said lot;
Course 1.) Along the Northeast line of said lot, South 53°00'00" East, 452.22 feet to the East corner of said lot, thence,
Course 2.) Leaving last said line, South 37°36'54" East, 35.00 feet to the centerline of said Westridge Drive, thence,
Course 3.) Along said centerline, along a non-tangent curve to the right with a radius of 400.00 feet, from which a radial bears South 37°36'54" East, through a central angle of 4°28'53", an arc length of 31.29 feet, thence,
Course 4.) Continuing along said centerline, South 56°52'00" West, 54.45 feet, thence,
Course 5.) Continuing along said centerline, along a curve to the left with a radius of 200.00 feet, through a central angle of 41°18'09", an arc length of 144.17 feet, thence,
Course 6.) Leaving last said centerline, North 75°38'00" West, 34.21 feet to the extension of the general Southwesterly line of said lot, thence,
Course 7.) Along last said extension line, along a curve to the right with a radius 270.00 feet, through a central angle of 6°47'41", an arc length of 32.02 feet to the most Southwesterly corner of said lot, thence,
Course 8.) Along said general southwesterly line coincident with the Northeasterly Right of Way line of Mapache Drive (60 feet wide), along the continuation of last said curve to the right with a radius of 270.00 feet, through a central angle of 18°52'19", an arc length of 88.93 feet, thence,
Course 9.) Continuing along last said general southwesterly line coincident with said northeasterly right of way line, North 49°58'00" West, 150.04 feet, thence,
Course 10.) Continuing along last said general southwesterly line coincident with said northeasterly right of way line, along a curve to the left with a radius of 330.00 feet, through a central angle of 18°59'57", an arc length of 109.43 feet, thence,
Course 11.) Continuing along last said general southwesterly line coincident with said northeasterly right of way line, along a curve to the right with a radius of 30.00 feet, through a central angle of 89°40'59", an arc length of 46.96 feet to the general Northwesterly line of said lot, said point also being on the Southeasterly Right of Way line of Larguita Lane (50 feet wide), thence,
Course 12.) Along said general northwesterly line coincident with said southeasterly right of way line, along a curve to the right with a radius of 375.00 feet, through a central angle of 16°16'58", an arc length of 106.57 feet, thence,
Course 13.) Continuing along last said general northwesterly line coincident with said southeasterly right of way line, North 37°00'00" East, 143.70 feet to the Point of Beginning containing 2.71 acres, more or less.
For assessment purposes only. The description is not a legal property description as defined in the Subdivision Map Act and may not be used as the basis for an offer for sale of the land described.
APPROVED SAN MATEO LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION 455 COUNTY CENTER REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063
EXHIBIT A PAGE 2 OF 3

Exhibit B

WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT EXHIBIT "B" SITE LOCATION 118 MAPACHE DRIVE PORTOLA VALLEY, CA STEP SYSTEM
Legend: Main_Extension, OWDZ Force Main
APN: 077-021-200
118 Mapache Dr
Portola Valley, CA
Main Line Extension from 118 Mapache Dr
WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT
118 MAPACHE DRIVE
PORTOLA VALLEY, CA
STEP SYSTEM
Larguita Lane
Westridge Drive
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Established 1965

The Almanac

Serving Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley, and Woodside for over 50 years

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





Courtesy Menlo Park City School District

Patti Colver, far left, with some of her Oak Knoll colleagues. The day of this photo, Colver had been helping students practice their graduation speeches.

Family, friends and colleagues mourn the loss of Menlo Park paraeducator

By Ashwini Gangal

On Dec. 7, 57-year-old Patricia Marren Colver, longtime paraeducator at Oak Knoll School, died in her sleep.

Patti, as she was fondly known, joined the Menlo Park City School District (MPCSD) in 2003 and spent most of her career at Oak Knoll in Menlo Park, with a year at Laurel's Lower Campus in Atherton in 2016. She completed a certificate of training in Foundations in Autism Spectrum Disorder in 2011.

Colver will be dearly missed by her family, friends and colleagues, some of whom this publication spoke to about a couple of weeks after her passing.

"We will miss her sweet smile, her gentle ways, her never-ending patience and her kindness to all," said her parents, Marian and Bernie Marren. "We will miss her wonderful stories about her students, always shared with love in her eyes. We will miss her short phone calls just to say hi and to check in on us."

Colver was always worried about her parents, especially her father, who has Alzheimer's disease, Marian said.

"She taught the family that each day should be a life lesson just as each day with her wonderful students was a lesson for her. Our cherished memories will be her love of family, her love of her students and her kind spirit no matter the situation," said Marian, who said Patti would like to be remembered for being a loving wife, caring daughter and sister and friend to all.

"Her gentle demeanor endeared her to all she met. Most of all I think she would like to be remembered for making an impact on many students in a loving, caring way," she added.

At MPCSD's Learning Centers, Colver worked closely with the

most vulnerable students, who have special needs.

Oak Knoll Principal Alicia Payton-Miyazaki said Colver was "a quiet hero" who will never be forgotten by the students she helped.

"Her students will always remember her remarkable kindness, steadfast support, and commitment to them," she said. "I know it seems small but watching her greet students in the morning in our car line, and often being the first face that students see welcoming them to our campus, is how I will always picture Patti."

Jennifer Kaufman, learning and inclusion specialist at Oak Knoll, who has also been a dear friend of Colver's for the last 12 years, said, "Patti had a way with her students — mostly younger ones who required a lot of patience."

For a paraeducator, a large part of the job is about building trust and making connections with students. Kaufman particularly appreciates these qualities because she herself is mother to a student with special needs.

"With our students with unique needs, Patti was able to patiently plan out a lesson plan only to have to pivot and attempt a different plan," she said. "There are days when students are on their game and compliant and eager to complete their work. Then there are those days where you just know that today is going to be one of taking the student's lead." By the latter, she means either turning to a different curriculum or just sitting on a chair, snuggling and reading a book while trying to have the student read sight words.

Kaufman fondly recalled an anecdote that highlights Colver's professional skills as well as her generosity of time: "Patti spent an entire day walking with her student. It was going to be a day where little 'academics' would be done, but the student, thinking holistically, needed to just 'chill,

and Patti, all 5 feet of her, would swing with her student, walk around and just 'be.' She was good at that."

Before the two worked together at the Oak Knoll, they were both paraeducators at Laurel School. To Kaufman, Colver was the ultimate team player.

"(She was) willing to come in and take any student or teach any of the students on my caseload," Kaufman said. "Never once did Patti balk at my sometimes difficult requests; she just did it. In all the years that I have been in education, I never had a person so willing to do anything to help out a colleague."

Kaufman fondly recalls some of Colver's adorable quirks, like her startle reflex.

"A startle reflex is often seen in babies — when they are sound asleep or calm and a loud noise startles them and they raise their hands in a startled, protective motion," she said. "I would laugh and remind her that she worked in an environment that had 700 students — all coming and going, loud and not, big and small."

That wasn't the only running joke the two shared. "Another funny thing about Colver was that she was always cold. She would be layered even in hot weather," she said.

Outside of work, Colver was a fan of college basketball, an enthusiastic cook and a woman of faith.

Patti Colver is survived by her husband, Jeff Colver, her parents, Marian and Bernie Marren, her brother John (Lynda) Marren and their four children, brother Robert Marren (Amy) and their three children, sister-in-law Carla Marren and her three children. She was predeceased by her oldest brother, Thomas Marren. ■

Email Contributing Writer
Ashwini Gangal at
ashwinigangal@gmail.com.

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

Getting Ready for Rain



Dear Monica: What are the best things to do to prepare for rain? **Ann G.**

Dear Ann: The rainy season is here and there are still preparations you should make to protect yourself and your property from what lies ahead. Make sure your gutters are cleared of leaves. Check sump pumps to be sure that they are operating well. If your fence is weak and a strong wind might topple it, either brace it or even replace it with a new fence. Have sufficient battery powered lights and a radio, and emergency provisions in case the power fails. Let family or friends know how you are.

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

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Peninsula Clean Energy details \$68M reinvestment project

Funds will go toward energy efficiency grants, battery loans and more

By Angela Swartz

Peninsula Clean Energy's board of directors has approved returning \$68 million to the community through a reinvestment plan.

The includes a \$300 income-qualified bill credit, financing for residential energy battery storage, loans for local government and school electrification, and funding for energy storage at public buildings and other efforts to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions, according to a Dec. 28 press release.

Peninsula Clean Energy automatically applied a one-time \$300 rebate on electricity bills in December for its roughly 41,000 customers who receive discounted rates through the California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) or Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) programs. Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE) is a community choice energy program that San Mateo County formed in February 2016. It serves county residents and the city of Los Banos.

Reinvestment plan details

PCE will offer \$31.5 million in grants and other assistance to support member agency energy projects, initiatives to fund local microgrids or advanced energy projects and installing energy storage at local government buildings.

The plan also includes \$10 million in residential battery loans to provide outage backup and grid support. Another \$4.5 million will go toward revolving loans to expand a program to allow an estimated 15 additional local government electrification projects over 10 years.

Peninsula Clean Energy will also finance \$5 million each for:

- Several projects over five years to provide local schools upgraded clean, electric space and water heating systems, air conditioning and battery storage. (Participating schools are to be determined. There will be a solicitation to invite participation, said Darren Goode, PCE media contact, in an email.)

- Supporting customers who need emergency water heater replacements

"As a result of extremely efficient financial management, I am proud that Peninsula Clean Energy is able to return \$68 million to our customers and community," said Rick DeGolia, Atherton council member and chair of PCE's board of directors, in a statement. "Our entire region will benefit from significant resources that will go toward increasing the resiliency of our electric grid and the decline in heat-trapping greenhouse gases by shifting away from methane gas and providing more affordable and reliable clean power."

PCE also continues to offer all of its customers a discount of more than 5% below PG&E's baseline electric generation rate. As PG&E rates increase in January, PCE's board of directors have pledged to hold the agency's electric generation rates steady until at least March, and potentially longer, according to PCE.

"One of our core principles — and that of all community-choice energy providers — is a commitment to lower energy rates and reinvestment in our communities for the benefit of our residents, businesses, the local environment

and economy," said PCE CEO Shawn Marshall in a statement.

PCE recently published analysis with Silicon Valley Clean Energy (SVCE) that found single-family homeowners save roughly \$380 annually (\$32 monthly) when they switch from gas appliances to standard electric equipment.

Those savings increased to \$495 annually (\$41 monthly) when switching to high-efficiency electric equipment, according to a press release.

For information about PCE's programs, visit PenCleanEnergy.com/lowerbill.

Woodside's solar plans

The town of Woodside has been working with PCE to install a solar photovoltaic system on the roofs of Town Hall and Independence Hall. In 2020, the town had considered self-funding the project for a cost of \$304,768, but the Town Council didn't pass a resolution for the purchase of the panels, according to a town staff report. At the time, council concerns expressed during deliberation included the historic designation of Independence Hall, the return

on investment and not receiving any competitive bid.

"Town participation in this collaborative procurement (with PCE) would address the issues of cost, return on investment, and lack of competitive bids identified by the council when evaluating the Sandbar Solar proposal in 2020," according to a staff report. "In addition, Peninsula Clean Energy will ensure that installation on Independence Hall would meet Secretary of Interior standards for buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places and not jeopardize its historic designation."

Former council member Daniel Yost wrote to the Town Council on Dec. 7 to encourage it to adopt the draft resolution to partner with PCE to install solar panels.

"It is long past due!" he said.

Others are less enthusiastic about installing the panels.

In a letter to the editor, another resident, Ed Kahl, said the project would "deface" the historic Town Hall. ■

Email Editor Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com.

HOTEL

continued from page 5

out onto the nature reserve. You see so many cool birds that you don't normally see in an urban cityscape," she said, about the different elements that made it into her mural.

"There's a slight reference to wind as well; the hair of some of the figures is flying. ... I wanted to incorporate the feeling of being in that place, right at the edge of the bay, which wouldn't necessarily be the same if you were more inland or in a different city."

Packed with all these symbols, the mural that hugs the hotel's flank today was originally an

8-by-11-inch piece of art, which was later scaled up digitally using Adobe Illustrator.

"Initially I drew out the artwork by hand but then rendered it using technology so that it could become bigger without pixelating," she said.

This kind of work is called vector art.

"I've heard that the term vector in mathematics means infinity. To see my drawing on a small scale and then to all of a sudden see it as a huge part of the landscape is mind-blowing," she said. "My drawing turned to infinity."

This is the first time Bowman has dabbled in this kind of work. Usually, she paints large murals by hand, using a scissor lift that

affords elevation of up to 50 feet.

"This was different because I had to really envision the end result before I even got to that point," she said.

The process involved collaborating with the team at citizenM. People who work for the city and the hotel occasionally weighed in on her art.

"I had to work with a larger team to make sure everybody was happy," she said. "There was some back and forth with the printers but all in all the project went smoothly."

The biggest challenge with public murals is ensuring the art fits in with the surroundings and doesn't look intrusive.

"I wanted to incorporate the colors that existed on the side of the building," she said. "There's that red staircase, so I color-mapped that red and added it into the piece."

Her approach to her work has a beautiful philosophical touch.

"It's important for people to be able to see themselves in public art. I've left enough ambiguity in this piece for that," she said.

"Somebody who might be coming into town and staying at the hotel may pick out one of the figures in my work and say — 'Oh that kind of reminds me of myself.'"

The citizenM brand aims to be "affordable luxury" (a room costs about \$130 per night). Earlier this year, citizenM launched

a property in Miami. Other properties across the country are located at Boston, New York, Seattle, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Washington D.C. and Chicago.

The Menlo Park property is a five-story, 79,400-square-foot hotel with 240 guest rooms, designed by citizenM's architecture partner Baskervill. It also includes the canteenM bar.

The hotel is located at 2 Meta Way, Menlo Park.

For more information on the hotel, go to citizenm.com. ■

Email Contributing Writer Ashwini Gangal at ashwinigangal@gmail.com.



Courtesy Alexandra Bowman

Artist Alexandra Bowman's mural graces the façade of the building.



Courtesy citizenM

The buffet and dining area at the new citizenM hotel on the Menlo Park Meta campus.

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.

A pediatric RSV vaccine remains in short supply

Monoclonal antibody-based immunizations for infants and toddlers limited throughout the local health providers

By Sue Dremann

A pediatric vaccine to help prevent respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), which was introduced for the first time this year, is in short supply.

Nirsevimab, trade name Beyfortus, is unlikely to be fully available for the rest of the current 2023-24 season, according to the manufacturer and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The virus is most common from October through March.

Locally, multiple health care providers, including Stanford Health Care, Kaiser Permanente, Sutter/Palo Alto Medical Foundation, Santa Clara Department of Public Health and San Mateo County Health and others have said they are following CDC guidelines for distributing the vaccine, which may leave some children without the protection.

The nationwide shortage is due to an unexpectedly high demand, manufacturer Sanofi said in late October. Nirsevimab is a monoclonal antibody that protects infants and toddlers against severe RSV disease. The existing supply is currently being prioritized for infants at highest risk of severe RSV disease.

Other types of RSV vaccines for people who are pregnant and adults 60 years and older are not in short supply, the CDC noted.

RSV is a common respiratory virus that usually causes mild symptoms, but infants, toddlers, older adults and people with compromised immune systems are at risk for severe infection and may need hospitalization.

But Nirsevimab reduces the risk of severe RSV disease by about 80%, according to the CDC.

RSV-related vaccinations were only approved by the Food and Drug Administration this last fall. The different vaccines are approved for three

demographic groups: pregnant people during gestation so that protection is passed to their baby; infants under eight months old, and toddlers and infants eight to 19 months old who are at high risk and adults ages 60 and older.

Dr. Monika Roy, Santa Clara County Public Health Department assistant health officer and communicable disease controller, said the vaccines represent a substantial development in RSV prevention.

"We didn't have the tools at all last year, and then the products were launched right before the winter virus season. So I think definitely in terms of availability and the implementation of a brand-new product, those are some of the realities that are being faced across the nation right now," she said of the shortage.

For the first time ever, this year there are three different groups of people that are recommended to get the RSV vaccine, Roy said. For adults aged 60 or older, there are two vaccines approved by the FDA. The second group is pregnant people during the 30 to 36 weeks of gestation. One of those FDA-approved vaccines is specifically recommended or approved for pregnant people. The third group includes infants less than eight months of age or those children who are immunocompromised, up to 18 months of age.

"But both the vaccine for pregnant women as well as immunization for infants are designed to protect the infant. We are seeing that there is a shortage of supplies from the manufacturer of the immunization for infants. The good news is that there's no such shortage for the vaccine for pregnant women," Roy said.

Roy said that the county and local medical providers are seeing a considerable number of cases of RSV.

"Our wastewater data indicates, definitely, a substantial

rise in our community in the county of Santa Clara. And in speaking with our hospital colleagues, they are seeing a fair number of RSV admissions, so they have noted that these appear to be similar to the number that we've seen at this time last year," she said.

Most healthcare providers and systems are trying to prioritize the limited supply to infants who are under six months old and immunocompromised patients, she said.

Kaiser Permanente Northern California said that it is following the CDC's recommended guidelines of reserving the use of Nirsevimab doses for infants at highest risk for severe RSV. "Our pharmacy partners are also working with the vendors on a timeline for additional doses," Kaiser said.

In a statement, Sutter Health/Palo Alto Medical Foundation said in general, it has been able to meet patient demand for preventative treatments against RSV.

"However, Sutter Health, like other health systems across the country, has experienced

challenges accessing a consistent supply of the new monoclonal antibody nirsevimab that helps protect newborns against RSV. In response, Sutter and the Palo Alto Medical Foundation continue to follow the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's drug administration guidelines that prioritize specific pediatric patients who are at greatest risk of RSV," the medical provider said.

Sutter/PAMF is also providing alternative products to eligible pediatric patients (palivizumab) and pregnant patients (Abrysvo, Pfizer), it said.

"We encourage new parents to ask their doctors about how to best protect their newborn against RSV, flu and COVID-19, before they are discharged from the hospital where they deliver," Sutter/PAMF said.

On Dec. 14, San Mateo County Health issued a CDC Health Alert Network advisory urging the public to receive all current vaccinations due to a rise in RSV, COVID-19 and influenza cases throughout the country. In addition,

there's been an increase in cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome in U.S. children following SARS-CoV-2 infection, the CDC said.

Public uptake of the vaccines for all of the viruses has been low, however, according to the CDC. Roy urged parents to update their vaccinations for themselves and their children.

"Getting that vaccine will protect your infant through the winter virus season, so that's the first thing. The second is that there is a lot that everybody can do to protect themselves, their families and their infants. That includes things like having good cough etiquette, covering your coughs and sneezes, proper hand washing, and the third is wearing a mask when you're in indoor, crowded space. And then the last is staying home if you're sick. Those things are going to be protective and helpful not just for RSV, but also for flu COVID and any other respiratory viruses circulating," Roy said. ■

Email editor@almanacnews.com.

TOWN OF WOODSIDE
2955 WOODSIDE ROAD, WOODSIDE, CA 94062

PLANNING COMMISSION
JANUARY 10, 2024 6:00 PM

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC THAT WISH TO ATTEND AND/OR PARTICIPATE IN A MEETING MAY DO SO IN PERSON OR BY JOINING THE ZOOM MEETING <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86068472736> PUBLIC COMMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED BOTH IN PERSON AND VIA ZOOM MEETING. ANY EMAILS SENT TO SHARPER@WOODSIDETOWN.ORG PRIOR TO 5:00 P.M. ON THE DATE OF THE HEARING WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION PRIOR TO THE MEETING.

IN THE EVENT THAT ANY MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION PARTICIPATES IN A MEETING BY TELECONFERENCE OR VIDEO CONFERENCE, PURSUANT TO THE RALPH M. BROWN ACT, GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 54953, ALL VOTES OF THE COMMISSION SHALL BE BY ROLL CALL.

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Note: Callers dial *9 to "raise hand" and dial *6 to mute/unmute.

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@woodsidetown.org

PUBLIC HEARING

1. 125 Northridge Lane

Leo Li, LeL Design

ASRB2023-0008; XMAX2023-0003; X2DR2023-0001

Planner: Sarah Filipe, Associate Planner

Presentation and approval, conditional approval, or denial of an application for Formal Design Review (**ASRB2023-0008**), to demolish an existing single-family residence, detached garage, swimming pool, and accessory structures; and, construct a new multi-level single-family residence with a partial basement, attached Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), detached garage, swimming pool, tennis court, shed, and associated site improvements; a Maximum Residence Size Exception (**XMAX2023-0003**) to exceed 4,000 square feet; and, a Second Driveway Exception (**X2DR2023-0001**) to relocate an existing second driveway.

The project is Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15303(a), which includes construction of a single-family residence, and Section 15303(e), which includes construction of accessory structures.

THE APPLICATION MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW BY CONTACTING SAGE SCHAAN AT SSCHAAN@WOODSIDETOWN.ORG

CRIME BRIEF

Residential burglary reported in Atherton

Suspects broke into a house in the unit block of Barry Lane in a residential burglary that occurred sometime between Dec. 29 and Jan. 1, according to an Atherton Police Department press release Jan. 1.

The suspects entered the home through a sliding door near the basement, according to police. The incident is under investigation and no additional information is currently available.

Residents who live in the area of Barry Lane are being asked to check their surveillance video and report any possible leads to the Atherton Police Department at 650-688-6500.

—Julia Brown



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

NOTICE OF TOWN COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing on **Wednesday, January 10, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. via hybrid format at the Historic Schoolhouse, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley and Zoom.**

The Town Council will hold a Public Hearing to review the following:

- **Adoption of Revised Housing Element Update (2023-2031)**
- **Adoption of Conforming General Plan Amendments**
The Land Use Element, the General Plan Land Use Map and the Nathhorst Triangle Plan Diagram would be revised for conformance with the revised Housing Element

Action by Portola Valley Planning Commission:

The Portola Valley Planning Commission, at a public hearing held on Wednesday, December 20, 2023, following a motion by Commissioner Targ and seconded by Commissioner Brothers, voted 5-0 to recommend adoption of the revised Housing Element and General Plan Amendments to the Portola Valley Town Council.

Information pertaining to these items may be viewed online at www.portolavalley.net/housing or 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/town-council/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. Remote participation is provided as a supplemental way to provide public comment, but this method does not always work. The public is encouraged to attend in person to ensure full participation. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Town Council 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 Town Council at, or prior to, the Public Hearing(s). Public Comments should be directed to housing@portolavalley.net.

Publication Date: December 29, 2023

Jon Biggs, Interim Planning & Building Director

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

2023 Adelante Selby Lane Toy Drive

The Atherton Police Activities League and Police Officers' Association distributed toys and bikes to over 100 families of Adelante Selby Lane Spanish Immersion School in Atherton.

The donations that lined up the toy drive included 10 bikes this year.

Atherton Police Department School Resource Officer Dimitri Andruha works closely with the immersion school and gathers participation for this very popular event, according to the town.

Toys that were not picked up went to the school for distribution to families who were unable to attend.

Former 49er player to attend film screening on mental health

The Menlo Park City School District (MPCSD) Speaker Series will return on Jan. 31 at 7 p.m. with a special screening of the short film "Be A Man." The screening will be followed by a panel discussion on mental health, which will include former Stanford University and San Francisco 49ers football player John Paye, who is also a Menlo School alumnus.

The film was made by SafeSpace, a local mental health organization, and addresses pressures that young men and boys may feel regarding the stigma surrounding mental health discussions.

The screening will take place at Hillview Middle School, 1100 Elder Ave. in Menlo Park. Organizers will also provide free childcare.

More information can be found at the Speaker Series website at district.mpcsd.org.

Local girls fundraise for grandmother battling dementia

Two girls from Menlo Park have started a fundraiser in honor of their grandmother who is battling dementia.

Charlotte, a high school sophomore, and her sister, Alexandra, who is in the seventh grade, created "Once Upon a Bottle" in an effort to raise at least \$2,000 for the Alzheimer's Foundation of America during the holiday season.

The funds will go toward programs and services for others impacted by Alzheimer's disease. The project consists of the girls collecting empty wine bottles, cutting them on one side, and upcycling them to create succulent planters. With a donation of \$50 or more, donors can receive one of these planters.

Their grandmother, Oma, who resides in Germany, lives with dementia.

You can donate at tinyurl.com/Alzheimersfundraiser2023.

Senator Becker launches 'There Oughta Be a Law' contest

If you have ever thought to yourself "there oughta be a law," you have a chance to convince others. People living in Senate District 13 can now enter a contest where their ideas could lead to a new law.

"Well-researched ideas that come with plenty of information about the problem, the proposed solution, and why current law is insufficient are highly encouraged," the announcement of the contest reads.

The district includes the San Mateo coastline from Pacifica to the Ano Nuevo State Reserve and Peninsula cities from South San Francisco to Sunnyvale together.

All entries must be submitted using a form

that can be found at inmenlo.com by Monday, Jan. 8, at 5 p.m. state Sen. Josh Becker, D-Menlo Park, will then select the winning entry, which will be introduced as a Senate bill by March 2024.

Submit your entry at tinyurl.com/oughtabealaw2024.

Menlo Oaks resident Melina Gehring honored by YMCA

Melina Gehring, a Menlo Oaks resident, was among the 12 volunteers recognized at the Silicon Valley YMCA's Red Triangle Dinner this winter. The award acknowledges adults who have positively impacted the lives of young people, adults, and families through their volunteer efforts at local YMCA locations.

According to a statement from the Silicon Valley chapter of the YMCA, Gehring has successfully fostered collaboration between Stanford University and the Palo Alto Family YMCA.

Reflecting on her experience with the YMCA, Gehring stated, "I was able to enroll my two young boys in camps and after-school programs, which meant the world to me as a working mom."

She also expressed gratitude for the Y's Parents' Night Out program before the pandemic, noting that it allowed her and her husband, Peter, to enjoy a night out while ensuring their sons, David and Daniel, were well cared for.

Gehring shared her enthusiasm for giving back to the Palo Alto YMCA.

During the pandemic, Gehring initiated a partnership between the YMCA and "Beyond the Book," a Palo Alto-based, teen-run non-profit providing free one-to-one virtual tutoring to elementary school-aged children. With support from the YMCA, the program expanded to include children of essential workers.

Highlighting Gehring's unique contribution, the statement emphasized her influence in building bridges within the local community alongside the YMCA.

— Joshua Picazo

New cash-for-bottles rules take effect Jan. 1

Starting Jan. 1, Californians can redeem empty wine and liquor bottles, as well as empty boxed wine, for cash.

At the beginning of the New Year, people will start paying 5, 10 or 25 cent California Redemption Value deposits on wine and liquor containers, including boxed wine and certain kinds of large juice containers, according to CalRecycle.

The newly added redemption system is expected to add more than 1 billion wine and liquor containers to the state's recycling program every year.

Containers are not required to have CRV labeling until July 1, 2025 and bag-in-box containers must be intact to be redeemed for cash.

For more information visit RecycleCRV.com.

— Bay City News Service

Learn how to prepare for an earthquake

Atherton's disaster preparedness group (A.D.A.P.T.) will host a community meeting with a seismologist to teach residents about earthquake preparedness on Saturday, Jan. 6, at 9 a.m. in Council Chambers, 90 Fair Oaks Lane.

— Angela Swartz



Join our team!

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Embarcadero Media Foundation is an independent multimedia news organization with over 50 years of providing award-winning local news, community information and entertainment to the Midpeninsula.

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- **News Editor** — A sharp and highly skilled editor with a passion for hyperlocal news, a dedication to serving the community and a talent for managing a team of journalists

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LET'S DISCUSS:

Read the latest local news headlines and talk about the issues
on Town Square at AlmanacNews.com

Customers buy Country Sun, avert closure

California Avenue store was on the verge of shutting down before December purchase

By Gennady Sheyner

For Country Sun, the venerable organic produce store on California Avenue in Palo Alto, the holiday season felt particularly festive this year.

In late October, the owners of the market at 440 California Ave. were on the verge of closing down the market, citing slumping sales and shifts in consumers' shopping habits. Customers learned at that time that the store would be closing in late December, and its shelves gradually began to grow sparser.

Country Sun customers mourned the impending loss of a treasured, longtime community business, while area merchants and city leaders lamented the prospect of yet a gaping vacancy in Palo Alto's "second downtown."

"The news of us closing was very sad, and it definitely caught us by surprise," said Kevin Wright, a longtime vitamin buyer for Country Sun. "We had a few weeks in November when we thought it was the end and were bracing for that."

Many shoppers came in to thank staff and to express their dismay at the closure. But two of them went a step further: They bought Country Sun.

The two individuals, who live in Palo Alto, have opted to stay anonymous, but they confirmed with the Weekly their purchase of the business. They completed the deal in mid-December, shortly after Country Sun put out a message on its social media channels indicating that it was "back in business."

The deal wasn't yet sealed at the time of the Dec. 11 posting, and most store employees didn't know what was going on. The



Magali Gauthier

Country Sun Natural Foods on California Avenue in Palo Alto.

following week, however, the buyers finalized the purchase, ensuring Country Sun would remain on California Avenue.

"Someone from the community came through and saved the day in the last hour," Wright said. "It was really special and amazing to see it happen."

Wright said the market's new owners are frequent customers who are well-known to Country Sun staff.

"They were so moved by the news of us closing that they wanted to do something about it," he said.

To save Country Sun, the community members pooled their resources, created a business plan and solicited advice from other small business owners, including Dandelion Chocolates and Bumblebee, according to the new owners. They also reached out to Radiate Hospitality, which recently purchased the building.

The company agreed to reduce Country Sun's rent, particularly in the first year of the lease, said John Searby, senior vice president at Radiate Hospitality. He declined to discuss the specifics

of the rent reduction.

"We're a local company. We're based in Palo Alto ourselves and we want to support local business and the community whenever we can," Searby told this publication. "We worked together and we came up with a deal that still met our needs while helping the team go ahead with the acquisition."

Searby said that in offering a reduced rent, Radiate was encouraged by the fact both the employees and the customers of Country Sun all strongly supported the new ownership.

"We were happy to see the business preserved and continuing," Searby said. "It's an important part of California Avenue and the Palo Alto community."

As a result, instead of winding down its inventory, Country Sun is planning for the future. Its former CEO Scott Otte has departed, the Weekly has learned, and employees are now in talks about the next phase of leadership. Wright is part of a group of store managers who are now considering what the new leadership structure will look

like, he said.

The store has occupied its prominent location on California Avenue since 1980, having moved there from a smaller building at 364 California Ave. Originally called Earth Sign Natural Foods, the store launched in Menlo Park in the 1970s before relocating to Palo Alto.

Wright said the goal is to retain all the qualities that customers have come to love about Country Sun, which has been specializing in natural and organic food since its inception.

"As far as identity, we're not going to change at all. I think we're going to be Country Sun more than ever."

This means putting more emphasis on the things that make the store a standout in the area: organic produce, gluten-free and

grain-free options and a large section for vitamins and dietary supplements.

"Country Sun has deep roots in the area," Wright said. "We want it to stay the same as it's always been."

At the same time, Wright said he wants to see Country Sun increase its community engagement and be a more prominent member of the California Avenue business landscape. Its recent experience of being on the verge of closure and then getting saved by customers has made store employees excited and motivated for the store's next phase.

"We want to reconnect with the community and become a bigger part of California Avenue and we want the community to know, 'We need you now more than ever,'" Wright said. ■

Email Staff Writer
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Annamaria (Quattrin) Kusber

September 12, 1933 – December 17, 2023

Annamaria (Quattrin) Kusber, age 90, of Woodside, CA, beloved wife, mother and grandmother, quietly passed away surrounded by family in her home, Sunday, December 17, 2023.

Annamaria was born September 12, 1933 in Udine, Italy. She came to the United States in 1958 as a foreign student with the intention of returning to her beloved homeland. Attending San Francisco State University, she resided in the San Francisco Bay Area near her mother

and uncles who were already settled in this area. One door closed and another opened as a series of unique events occurred and, in exactly 6 months after meeting, Annamaria married Leo Kusber.

Over the next number of years, they had 4 children, 2nd of which has just greeted her mother, and 3 of which they raised in a number of different homes settling in their current home of 49 years in Woodside, CA. Leo and Annamaria celebrated their 62nd wedding anniversary on November 11, 2023.

Annamaria was preceded in death by twin sister, Angela; by daughter, Lea; granddaughter, Therese; mother, Palmira (Quattrin) Zuffi; and step-father, Michael Zuffi. Annamaria is survived by her husband, Leo Joseph Kusber; son Angelo Joseph Kusber (Amy): daughter, Lietta Maria (Kusber) Viscioso (Alejandro) and son Paul Anthony Kusber (Mary) Annamaria is also survived by grandchildren, Katrina, Christopher (Katie), Justine (Brett), Victoria (fiancée John), Benjamin, Dane, and Nora.

Annamaria was gifted with a brilliance of intellect. Annamaria's vision of the true, the beautiful and the good took many forms. Her pursuit of education with focus on language, culture, music and tradition was infused into her children, her friends and her community. Her curiosity and talent led her to fluency in numerous languages eventually leading her to be a volunteer at Stanford Hospital interpreting for many international patients needing health care. She loved and promoted her native Italy which included foundation and service as first President of the School of Italian Language and Culture. Her artistic endeavors included painting, ceramics, and participation in local choirs and opera companies. Her dedication to her husband and children is rivaled by few. Her love of God and family transcends time and timelessness.

The memory of Annamaria will live on forever in those whose lives she touched.

Our gratitude to Kaiser Hospice, Redwood City, for their loving compassion and care.

PAID OBITUARY

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Annamaria (Quattrin) Kusber, 90, a Woodside resident who was originally from Italy, whose fluency in numerous languages eventually led her to volunteer at Stanford Hospital interpreting for many international patients needing health care, who served as the first President of the School of Italian Language and Culture, and whose dedication to her husband and children was rivaled by few, on Dec. 17.

Lora F. Laine, 85, a former Redwood City resident, an executive assistant to the vice president of Stanford Research Institute, an avid quilter, loving mother, clever joker and an

active volunteer, on Dec. 18.

Gloria Elaine Anderson Manglee, 92, who moved to Palo Alto in 2003 to be close to her grandchildren, who was a gardener, avid tennis and bridge player, and an enthusiastic manager of a fantasy football team with her daughter, on Oct. 4.

Christina Shaner, 79, who worked as a high school English teacher before moving to California and working in human resources at tech companies, and would go on to volunteer for Recordings for the Blind and at the Stanford Medical Library, on Sept. 12.

Akram Piracha, 87, a Palo Alto resident with a long 35-year career with UNICEF

working in countries including Indonesia, Laos, Thailand, China and the Philippines, and more recently became an active member of the Palo Alto Rotary Club and Avenidas, on Oct. 12.

Ami Jaqua, 89, a champion for the environment who took on a stewardship role of a stretch of South Skyline Blvd. and endeavored to keep it litter-free, and who took in and cared for retired horses and volunteered for the National Center For Equine Facilitated Therapy (NCEFT), on Nov. 30.

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



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.

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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.

DONATE ONLINE: AlmanacNews.com/holiday_fund



The Almanac
Holiday Fund
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Sequoia district teachers reflect on 7.7% raise

Some frustrated contract is not two years long

By Celeste Zucker and Lindsay Park / M-A Chronicle

In the past few months, the Sequoia District Teachers Association (SDTA) protested at the Sequoia Union High School District (SUHSD) board meetings for a pay raise. The protests had a high teacher turnout — over 140 members spread across two meetings — that reflected their dissatisfaction with the slow bargaining process.

From March to October, the SDTA bargained with the board. The SDTA's proposal was a two-year agreement with raises of 8% in 2023-24 school year and 7% in 2024-25. The board counteroffered 4.75% in 2023-24 and 2.5% in 2024-25.

Ultimately, they settled on a one-year agreement with a 7.75% raise along with other benefits regarding leave, healthcare and more. The SDTA held an online ratification election that ratified the agreement with a 97% vote on Nov. 7 to 9, and the Board of Trustees approved the agreement with a 4-0 vote on Nov. 27.

One month after the agreement, The M-A Chronicle spoke to teachers and board members about the implications of the new contract.

Reflecting

Regarding the raise, Menlo-Atherton High School biology teacher Rachel Richards said: "I'm happy they did it, but I wish that it hadn't been such a struggle to get this. I'm relieved, is the best way to say it, and worried about how much of a fight it's going to be in the future to continue getting what we want because this should not have been such a big deal."

However, M-A social sciences teacher Stephanie Cuff-Alvarado noted how inflation makes the raise feel smaller than it looks.



Courtesy Lindsay Park

Teachers hold protest signs in the Sequoia Union High School District board room in October 2023.

"I feel as though I can take a small breath as this will allow me to keep up, but this raise really just brings my salary back to its value from a few years ago," Cuff-Alvarado said. "It doesn't entirely feel like a raise so much as maintaining the original value of my wage. While the number itself looks quite large compared to previous years, inflation and the post-COVID economy have been brutal on a lot of folks, so I want to be very clear that I am quite thankful for this financial support."

Woodside High School art teacher Julie Marten agreed.

"The deal is acceptable, but quite disappointing," she said. "It is far better than the previous district offer of 4.75% this year and 2.5% next year, which was insulting at best, because it was asking us to take a massive reduction in real wages given that 2022 saw the greatest inflation rates in California in 40 years. This raise is better but does not meet the losses from inflation, and we have no guarantee that we will see improvement when we settle next year. The raise is more of a cost of living adjustment (COLA), but one that falls short of inflation."

Todd Beal, a member of the district's bargaining team and the assistant superintendent for SUHSD's Human Resources department, is confident the agreement addresses the negotiated items in a fair manner and will assist staff, as well as the recruitment and retention of district employees.

"One of the most important factors to consider in reaching an agreement is the fiscal solvency of the district," he said. "The district must consider current expenditures associated with the daily operations of the schools, department, and district. We must also consider projected expenditures for the following years."

"Districts don't know the actual amount they will receive for a given year until around September of that year. Salary increase proposals, such as the 7.75% agreed upon in negotiations, take in consideration the district's ability to offer the same percent to other labor groups (classified employees and management), and maintain fiscal solvency and legal requirements."

These factors also explain why

See **TEACHERS**, page 20

San Mateo County Supervisors approve incentive funds for sheriff's deputies

By Bay City News Service

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors earlier this month approved the financial incentives for the county's deputies amid efforts to maintain staffing levels in the Sheriff's Office.

The board on Dec. 12 voted unanimously to pass a six-month temporary funding agreement to financially support

the deputies this holiday season, Supervisor Ray Mueller's office said Dec. 18.

For the next six months, the county will be paying double time to officers who are working over nine hours of overtime a week.

According to Mueller's office, San Mateo County deputies have been working long periods of mandatory overtime.

"While help is on the way, as

new hire and lateral candidates are currently moving through the hiring process, ensuring public safety is maintained is a first priority. This investment is a message to our sheriff's deputies that our community values them and honors their personal sacrifice, as they work long hours away from their families, to protect the community," Mueller said in a statement. ■

THE HEAVYWEIGHTS

continued from page 1

SAM LICCARDO

'Responsive and accountable'

Sam Liccardo has wrestled with problems big and small, regional and local: from paving roads and adding bike lanes to preserving open spaces and building affordable housing.

During a budget crisis in 2015, he negotiated with the city of San Jose's labor unions a deal to save about \$3 billion in health care costs over 30 years. He considers that negotiation — as well as the successful effort he led in 2018 to preserve Coyote Valley as an open space preserve — as his proudest accomplishments.

More recently, he worked to advance Measure RR, a sales tax increase that voters in San Mateo, San Francisco and Santa Clara counties approved in 2020 to support Caltrain operations.

Liccardo completed last year his eight-year stint as San Jose mayor, having won a close runoff in 2014 before cruising to re-election in 2018. Now, he is one of the frontrunners to succeed Anna Eshoo in Congress. He enjoys the name recognition that comes with having led one of the nation's 50 largest cities and as of this week he has amassed a campaign chest of more than \$1 million.

He also understands — and leans into — the fact that elected leaders don't always get the credit (or blame) they merit.

"As the mayor of a city of 1 million residents, I'm sure I got plenty of credit for things I didn't deserve," Liccardo said in an interview. "But I knew I was going to be responsible for problems I didn't create as well. That level of accountability — that expectation of accountability — is what I bring to this role."

Liccardo wants to bring the same attitude to Congress — a polarized and often dysfunctional body that is often seen as out of touch with local needs. He wants to give local issues the national prominence that he believes they deserve.

"I've spent hundreds of hours walking the halls of Congress as mayor and advocating for our region, and I routinely heard from Congress members that 'those are local problems,'" Liccardo said. "We need a Congress that recognizes these are national problems."

Take homelessness, an issue on which Liccardo spent considerable time as mayor. He noted that of the 48 largest cities in the nation, 44 have homeless populations in excess of 1,000 people. It's a national crisis, he argued, and it requires a national response.

Same with affordable housing. He is proud of his record as mayor in developing new models for adding housing at a time when the cost of building a single unit has risen to between \$900,000 and \$1 million. He is proud of San Jose's innovation, including its effort in 2015 to convert hotels into housing; its support for construction of prefabricated "tiny homes"; and its decision to use land owned by Caltrans, VTA and the city for apartment buildings.



Courtesy Sam Liccardo

Sam Liccardo



Courtesy Evan Low

Evan Low



Courtesy Joe Simitian

Joe Simitian

There is, however, a problem. The Section 8 vouchers that many low-income residents rely on cannot be used on the new projects, Liccardo said. As a result, there are hundreds of homeless people in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties who have Section 8 vouchers but who cannot avail themselves of the new housing. Liccardo would like to change that by creating more flexibility in the voucher program.

"Cities understand the needs and respond quickly," he said.

Mayors, he said, "recognize the importance of being responsive and accountable because that's how we are viewed by those we serve." Congress needs to be equally responsive, he said.

Accountability also means being able to take the heat. Liccardo's strong connections with Silicon Valley tech titans have made him an easy target for those who hate Google buses and who blame the tech boom for the region's housing affordability crisis. Liccardo, who made a cameo in "Silicon Valley," HBO's satirical expose of the region's many absurdities, does not shrink from these criticisms. If anything he invited them in February 2021, when he penned an opinion piece in San Francisco Chronicle with the headline that encouraged readers to "stop blaming tech."

"The departure of a few cranky billionaires won't doom the Bay Area, but our region's declining appeal to early-stage companies — and entrepreneurs that drive them — will," Liccardo wrote. "Innovators came to the Silicon Valley because we presented low barriers to entry — an egalitarian, open-source ethos that welcomed and celebrated immigrants, geeks and eccentrics. Increasingly, we've erected barriers — financial, regulatory and even cultural — to the new and the ambitious."

If elected to Congress, he aims to continue to support the Silicon Valley tech industry on a national level. The Congressional district, he said, needs to have "a champion of the innovation economy."

"Amid all the tech-bashing that's popular in both parties, this district needs to have a representative that would advocate for the needs of the innovation economy, which are critical to our nation's success."

EVAN LOW

'Run toward the challenge'

Evan Low is proud of all the barriers he broke through on his way to Sacramento.

Even before he was sworn into the state Assembly a decade ago — becoming the youngest Asian American legislator in

the history of that august body — he had been racking up "firsts." His campaign biography notes that he was the first openly gay person to get elected to the Campbell City Council (2006) and then the youngest Asian American lawmaker and LGBTQ mayor in the nation (2009).

Now, he is seeking another first. He noted in an interview that there has never been an openly gay person or an Asian American elected to Congress from the Bay Area.

"The Republican party has become the party of Trump, and we have one of the most homophobic speakers of the House in generations," Low said. "The best way to combat that is to send more gays to Congress."

Low, 40, believes his experiences as an Asian American, an openly gay politician and a millennial, give him a unique perspective in the crowded race to succeed Anna Eshoo in Congress. So does his experience as a tech-savvy legislator whose bills helped shape state regulations around everything from ride-sharing companies and child abuse to health screenings for underserved communities and the posting of mugshots by police departments on social media (a 2021 bill authored by Low outlaws this practice for nonviolent suspects).

The Sacramento Bee in 2018 dubbed him the state's most prolific lawmaker (he had 34 bills move to the governor's desk that year, more than any other Assembly member).

For Low, whose Assembly district includes Cupertino, Sunnyvale and a portion of San Jose, there is a clear link between his personal story and his policy priorities. In June, he was part of a group of lawmakers who proposed a constitutional amendment that would enshrine the right to same-sex marriage — a change that will appear on the November 2024 ballot. In a June hearing on the Assembly Constitutional Amendment 5, he called the proposal "very personal" and recalled 2008, when 52% of the voters approved Proposition 8, which rejected same-sex marriage.

"As a 20-something-year-old at the time, I remember the painful experience it caused not just to me but to countless Californians who were left wondering: What did we do wrong? Why would our rights be eliminated? Why would the majority of Californians vote to eliminate a fundamental basic human right?" Low said. "This proposal helps ensure that marriage is a fundamental human right."

His campaign, somewhat paradoxically, embraces both continuity and change. He credits Eshoo with demonstrating "the importance of tenure and

seniority in Congress to delivering to our district" and for helping to maintain the global competitiveness of Silicon Valley when it comes to technology and innovation. But as someone who has worked to combat xenophobia, he wants to do more to defend the nation's LGBTQ+ residents against the recent onslaught of Republican legislation.

"We know that there's been over 475 pieces of anti-LGBT legislation introduced, targeting members of my community just for trying to survive being authentic to ourselves. That's why it's important to have representation," Low said.

Similarly, he believes the U.S. Congress could use more millennial voices. Many people in his generation are concerned about issues like high housing costs. Low can relate, he said. Along with public safety, his campaign priorities include addressing climate change and lowering the cost of living for middle-class families, topics that resonate acutely with young voters.

"I cannot afford to purchase a single-family home in the Congressional district that I hope to represent. ... When we talk about the lived experience, that will be the key core issue for this generation," Low said.

Low believes his legislative record, as well as his background, make him well-suited to finding compromise even in a deeply divided Congress.

"I've always run toward the challenge," Low said. "No one ever said governing is supposed to be easy."

JOE SIMITIAN

'A steady hand for shaky times'

The crowded race to succeed Anna Eshoo includes an attorney, a former mayor, a veteran Sacramento legislator and a county supervisor.

His name is Joe Simitian.

For the past 40 years, Simitian has been a visible presence on the Peninsula's political scene, first in Palo Alto, where he served on the school board and on the City Council (including a stint as mayor in 1995); then in Sacramento, where he served in the state Assembly and the state Senate; and now in San Jose, where he represents north county on the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.

As a lawmaker, he has championed bills that raised California's goals for renewable energy, established regulations for use of red-light cameras, and protected seniors from financial elder abuse. He authored legislation that required drivers to use hands-free devices while talking on their cellphones and that established transitional kindergarten in California — the first time in more than a century that the state effectively created a new grade level, Simitian said in a recent interview.

As a county supervisor, he has been an influential voice in limiting Stanford University's expansion plans (or, rather, demanding "full mitigation" for any growth) and obtaining funds to create new housing developments for Palo Alto educators and for adults with disabilities (both projects are now being constructed).

He also led the effort to preserve Buena Vista Mobile Home Park, which was on the verge of being demolished and redeveloped before Simitian helped arrange the park's purchase by the Santa Clara County Housing Authority.

He is most proud, however, of his local connections. At some point or other, he has represented 15 of the 16 communities that make up Congressional District 16. And he enjoys a long list of endorsements from mayors and council members up and down the district. This includes backing from four Palo Alto council members — no mean feat considering that two Palo Alto council members are also running

for Eshoo's seat.

In every position, Simitian said, he has had the same goal: trying to improve the lives of the people he represents. That is also the reason he is now running to succeed Eshoo, he said.

"That's the reason to go to public service. That's the reason to go to Congress.

"It's healthy that there's 11 candidates stepping up, and I think that's a good thing for our democracy. That being said, I think uniquely among candidates I have a track record of accomplishments that indicate I can and will get big things done in Washington."

Simitian is undaunted by the political

polarization in Washington and points to his history of reaching across the aisle. Democrats may enjoy a supermajority in Sacramento today, he notes, but his stint coincided with a period of narrow margins and a Republican governor. The transitional kindergarten bill, for example, passed on a narrow vote that required Republican support.

Simitian said he has always worked hard to bring other people along on major legislation, an approach that he found engenders the most successful results for the people he represents. He believes this style will help him in Congress, where he plans to prioritize

climate change, protection of reproductive rights and the housing crisis. Because of his long history as a legislator, he believes he is the candidate best suited for delivering for his constituents from day one. This is particularly key at a time when the Congress is in disarray and the nation is divided, he said.

"We have to be genuinely concerned about the growing authoritarianism we see in the political arena," Simitian said. "That's all the more reason why you need a steady hand during shaky times. You need someone with a fresh perspective, which I bring, but also a seasoned approach to managing issues."

THE CHALLENGERS

RISHI KUMAR

'Corrective course'

When Rishi Kumar ran against Anna Eshoo in 2020 — and again in 2022 — he made doing away with "tainted money" and political corruption the theme of his campaign.

Kumar, a former Saratoga City Council member, strongly supports Medicare for All and he argued that Eshoo didn't go far enough as a representative in supporting universal health care, a position that he suggests was influenced by money from the pharmaceutical industry.

Kumar's long-shot campaigns against the powerful incumbent did not prevail, but his showing in the 2022 election has given him reason to be more hopeful this time around. He finished second to Eshoo in the seven-candidate primary — which also included current contenders Greg Tanaka, Peter Ohtaki and Richard Fox. And while he lost to her in the November showdown, Kumar picked up 42.2% of the vote — a showing that his campaign now touts as the "best performance by a challenger in three decades."

With Eshoo not in the race, Kumar believes he can do even better. In a recent interview, he alluded to a recent public-opinion poll that was released by the campaign of Sam Liccardo, which showed Liccardo and Santa Clara County Joe Simitian as currently first and second respectively (Kumar was fourth in the poll, right behind state Assemblymember Evan Low).

He dismissed those results and cited the 42.2% number from 2022.

"There are lots of polls released, but the only poll that matters is the last election where I was on the ballot," Kumar said.

The issues that he is most passionate about in the current campaign — housing, traffic and crime — are the same ones that he dealt with in Saratoga, where he was elected to the city council in 2014 and served two terms.

And as in his last campaign, Kumar is vowing to fight for the people against deep-pocketed "special interests." He cites his experiences as a local leader in battling proposed rate hikes from the San Jose Water Company, pushing back against PG&E's attempts to diminish California's solar programs and opposing the state Department of Housing and Community Development's (HCD) housing mandates. This includes pushing for an audit of the state's Regional Needs Housing Allocation process, which gives



Courtesy Rishi Kumar

Rishi Kumar



Courtesy Julie Lythcott-Haims

Julie Lythcott-Haims



Embarcadero Media file photo

Peter Ohtaki



Courtesy Greg Tanaka

Greg Tanaka

each city a housing quota and requires each to adopt plans for meeting its housing allocation.

The system, he argues on his campaign website, has "been rigged for cities to fail and for developers to make money." This opposition to Sacramento housing mandates — as well as to recent legislation like Senate Bill 9 (which allows construction of up to four housing units on a single-family lot) and Senate Bill 35 (which creates a streamlined approval process for housing projects in areas that do not have a state-compliant housing plan) has earned Kumar support from like-minded champions of "local control."

Palo Alto Mayor Lydia Kou, who is very much in this category, is among those endorsing Kumar's campaign, favoring the Saratoga tech executive over her own two council colleagues who are in the race.

Kumar, an engineer and tech executive in software sales and marketing, moved to Saratoga from Michigan in 2000. He said in an interview that he remains struck by the lack of strategic planning he has seen in Silicon Valley over the past 23 years to address problems like traffic. Over the past two decades of living here, he has not seen any serious effort to curb this problem, something he intends to fix. He also criticized some of the region's existing transportation services, including light rail programs that he described as "completely dysfunctional."

"I'm a big proponent of public transportation — if done right and people use it. ... But it's been a failure in the Bay Area," he said.

Kumar is critical of California's high-speed rail project, which his website calls "ill-conceived." His proposed solution aims even higher (as well as lower): a "cutting-edge, tunnel-enclosed high-speed transportation system" with average speeds of 600 mph, operating in 21 counties in and around northern California.

And just like in past elections, he is favoring political reforms such as term limits for federal officeholders. In 2021, he signed a term-limit pledge that supported a cap of three terms for members of the House of Representatives and two terms for members of the Senate. He has also pledged to not accept money from political action committees, a position that he believes makes him distinct from the rest of the candidate field.

"I believe the culture in Washington is completely on the wrong path and that there is some corrective course that is needed," Kumar said.

JULIE LYTHCOTT-HAIMS

'Representation matters'

Julie Lythcott-Haims recently recalled a drive from Syracuse to Binghamton, N.Y., where she was scheduled to do a book talk.

The best-selling author and former Stanford University dean of students — whose work takes on issues on race, education, parenting and identities — said she was in the backseat when the driver, a man named Tony, mentioned that his sister in Florida just experienced flooding because of a hurricane.

Lythcott-Haims responded with a comment about climate change, lamenting that there's too much water in Florida and not enough in California. Tony, a white Italian man, disagreed and said he doesn't believe in climate change.

"I looked at him and said, 'I think if we don't insult each other we're gonna be fine,'" she said.

After that initial awkwardness, they spent the next hour and a half talking about everything from national politics to race. By the time they arrived, she said, they had forged a bond and were having a meaningful discussion about racism and bullying while valets were wondering why she was not getting out of the vehicle.

"In that moment, because we've been trapped in a car, we went from absolute politically polarized individuals with viewpoints to human beings who can share compassion with each other about hardships we had both experienced as children," Lythcott-Haims said.

Now, she wants to bring the same approach to Congress, a deeply polarized and often dysfunctional body that she wants to infuse with empathy and kindness.

"I believe that most humans have the capacity to listen and connect, if you first treat them with dignity and kindness," she said. "I know so many of our sitting impasses result from feeling, 'I'm not respected by this person.'"

While Lythcott-Haims has a long history of serving on nonprofit boards, holding workshops and giving TED talks that draw millions of views, she is a relative newcomer to politics, having just completed her first year on the Palo Alto City Council. During this time, she learned that she loved policymaking. Whereas some might find approving zone changes and utility policies tedious and prosaic, she described it as an "exquisite combination of head and heart" that allows her to apply both her legal mind and her compassionate way of dealing with people.

So why is she seeking higher office before her first council term is up?

For one thing, opportunities to go to Congress don't come too often. Anna Eshoo, who is stepping down next year, has been in office for more than 30 years. For another, the Bay Area's once robust cohort of female representatives has been on the wane in recent years, with the recent retirement of U.S. Rep. Jackie Speier, the death of Sen. Diane Feinstein and Eshoo's decision to step down when her term expires next year. Seeing no other women entering the race,

CONGRESS

continued from page 15

Lythcott-Haims decided to jump in.

“I looked left and I looked right and then I looked in the mirror,” Lythcott-Haims said in an interview.

As the only woman in the race, Lythcott-Haims believes this distinction matters. With the Supreme Court recently dismantling *Roe v. Wade*, she feels it’s particularly important now to have a representative who understands what it’s like to be a woman in the United States; to be a mother; to be someone who has had difficult conversations with an OB-GYN and who also knows that she doesn’t want the government anywhere near that conversation.

“Representation matters. I am the embodiment of that buzz phrase. I’m the only woman in the field, the only African American in the field, the only mother in the field,” Lythcott-Haims said. “And I think in this American moment, having a woman who is also a mother and is a member of a marginalized community makes me the right ambassador to represent the needs of Silicon Valley in Congress at a time of such polarization and deep inequities.”

She also strongly believes the candidates in the race don’t spend enough time talking about the needs of youth, which she said she will prioritize. This includes building more housing — a topic that she has been passionate about as a council member and that she said would champion if elected to Congress. It also includes climate change, a topic on which she said she has been inspired by Palo Alto’s passionate youth activists.

“Our youth are facing the potential for a planet that is literally unlivable,” Lythcott-Haims said. “It isn’t their fault, and they are leaders on this issue.”

PETER OHTAKI

‘The sensible middle’

In his years as a Menlo Park council member, Peter Ohtaki honed a reputation as the numbers guy — a reasonable moderate better known for budget wonkiness than political flair.

As one of just two Republicans in the race to succeed Anna Eshoo in Congress, he believes that’s a strength. Partisan politics have gotten out of control in Washington, D.C., hindering the ability of elected leaders to advance important priorities like reducing crime, lowering inflation and increasing national security. He is running to turn down the temperature.

“The parties are in gridlock,” Ohtaki

told this publication. “It’s a zero sum game between the two parties.

“In the meantime, most Americans, including in this district, are in the sensible middle and they have no voice in Congress.”

Though Ohtaki is himself a former elected official, he is quick to distance himself from the “career politicians” in the candidate field, people who he said would “toe the party line” and not dare to risk reaching out to the other side.

He has no such qualms. His somewhat modest ambition, if elected, is to join the Problem Solvers Caucus, a group of 64 lawmakers that is evenly divided between the two parties.

“I believe in a Congress that is split pretty evenly, those 64 can make a big difference to get legislation passed,” Ohtaki said. “I’d want to not only join those 64 but work my way to chair it, to try to expedite solutions.”

Not surprisingly for someone with a background in finance, Ohtaki is particularly concerned about the national budget and the tendency of lawmakers to pass “continuing resolutions” without actually addressing the rising national deficit or inflation. His recent trip to pick up a Christmas tree, which cost him \$260, underscored that point.

Ohtaki believes it’s time to change the “trajectory of the budget” and reduce the nation’s \$83-trillion deficit by actually going through all the programs being funded and getting rid of those that don’t work. He believes his background in parsing city budgets and working in finance will help with this endeavor.

While Republicans face an inherent challenge in winning an election in the heavily Democratic district, Ohtaki has some reasons for optimism. Two years ago, he ran against Eshoo and finished third in the seven-candidate race. He was 5,000 votes away from getting to second, which would have placed him in a race against Eshoo. He finished well above Richard Fox, who is also a Republican, and Democrat Greg Tanaka, both of whom are once again running for Congress. It’s not infeasible that the large number of Democratic candidates will splinter the vote, creating a path for him through the primary.

Ohtaki’s tone and proposed policies are markedly different from some of the more mainstream voices of the Republican establishment. He does not support the Supreme Court’s recent overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, which he said creates a “hodgepodge of standards” from one state to another. Nor does he support the nascent effort to impeach

President Joe Biden.

Rather, he would prefer to talk about clean energy, which he wants to expand through incentives (not mandates, he says). He believes it’s critical to convert the electric grid to solar, wind and other renewable sources before residents are asked to get rid of their natural gas appliances and switch to electricity.

He also wants to increase funding through grants for programs that aim to reduce shoplifting and to address the fentanyl crisis in San Francisco and other cities. He cited his experiences in Menlo Park, which used federal COPS (Community Oriented Policing Services) grants to provide officers with non-lethal and investigative tools to address crime.

Above all, he wants to change the tenor of the nation’s political conversation and allow pragmatism to triumph over ideology.

“Growing up here, I fervently believe that Silicon Valley thrives because we reinvent ourselves,” Ohtaki said. “We reinvent and we don’t let ideology prevent innovative solutions.”

GREG TANAKA

‘Grow the pie’

Ever since Greg Tanaka joined the Palo Alto City Council seven years ago, he has been defined as much by what he is against as for what he is for.

A fiscal hawk, he routinely casts the lone vote of dissent when confronted with the city budget or a proposal to raise employees’ salaries. He has been a steadfast critic of new programs with costs that, in his opinion, outweigh benefits.

Just in the past few months, he was the sole council member who voted against creation of the city’s rental registry; the lease of city land to enable construction of transitional housing for homeless individuals; the purchase of insurance to protect the city against a winter spike in gas prices; and the approval of a new five-year deal with the nonprofit Pets In Need to provide animal services; and an increase in council members’ salaries.

“We’re not doing it for the money,” Tanaka said during the council’s Dec. 8 discussion of the salary hike. “We do it because we care.”

Tanaka also discovered in recent years that many of the issues that his constituents care about cannot be solved on the local level. These include lowering the volume on airplane noise, enhancing local creeks’ flood protection and redesigning the rail corridor so that roads and

tracks no longer intersect.

He said in an interview that he would pursue, if elected, the construction of a tunnel for Caltrain through the Peninsula, ideally between San Francisco and San Jose. This would reduce road congestion around the rail corridor, reduce noise and address safety issues on the tracks, he said in an interview. It would also open up land above the tunnel for other uses.

“We’re one of the most expensive areas in the world, if we look at dollars per square foot. We have this upgrade of mass transit happening. Anywhere else in the world, it would be underground already,” Tanaka said.

Tanaka was the last Congressional candidate who filed his papers, submitting them just before the Dec. 13 deadline. He had also run in 2022, finishing sixth in an eight-member primary — and he said he wasn’t sure he wanted to do it again. What swayed him was his realization, he said, that none of the other candidates are talking about the issues that his constituents care about. His experiences a year ago, when record storms caused flooding in Crescent Park and other neighborhoods, further underscored his belief that the city needs federal help to speed up long deferred projects like the replacement of the Pope-Chaucer Bridge.

“We had folks who had water in their house,” Tanaka said. “For a community as wealthy as ours, for as much as people pay in taxes, they deserve better.”

Tanaka believes his background in founding tech startups make him well-suited to representing Silicon Valley in Washington, D.C. He had founded two startups, one that provides marketing assistance to retailers and, more recently, another that helps to automate day trading, according to his campaign website.

He is bullish on technology, whether it’s Bitcoin or artificial intelligence, and believes that common fears about intelligent machines threatening humanity are overblown.

Artificial intelligence, in fact, appears to be one of few issues on which he is not a fiscal hawk. He believes the United States needs to remain ahead of other nations when it comes to advancing artificial intelligence, technology that he believes can significantly benefit humanity.

“With technology like AI, I really believe this is the way to grow the pie,” Tanaka said. “It could be a win-win for everyone. ... If you look at where China and Russia (are), it’s a real competition and it’s very important that we stay number one and invest in research and development.”

THE HOPEFULS

JOBY BERNSTEIN

‘Change the game’

Joby Bernstein is not a seasoned politician, but the Palo Alto resident believes his energy, enthusiasm and passion for investing and tackling climate change will serve him well in his next venture: running for the Congressional seat currently occupied by Anna Eshoo.

Even before Eshoo announced in November that she would not seek another term, triggering a cascade of speculation as to who would vie to succeed her,

Bernstein was preparing to run for her District 16 seat. He has talked to people around the Silicon Valley district and raised about \$30,000 for the campaign, he said in a recent interview.

As a 28-year-old student at Stanford University, he doesn’t have the name recognition enjoyed by veteran policymakers who have entered the field. But Bernstein doesn’t see this as a problem. An avid outdoorsman who likes to bike, backpack and run the trails, he said he has been alarmed by the damage that climate change has wrought, including



Joby Bernstein



Peter Dixon



Ahmed Mostafa

fires, floods and droughts. The problem needs to be addressed urgently, within the next five to 10 years. As such, he is not inclined to spend years in local and state politics before making his bid for Washington, D.C.

After stints at several climate funds, where he was mainly involved in research, he now wants to bring his enthusiasm for innovation to the political realm.

“Climate change is an issue that I was naïve enough for a while to think that I could address on the investing and advising side,” Bernstein told this publication. “But it won’t scale enough when compared to what policy can do.”

Bernstein, who is currently pursuing master’s degrees in business and in environmental resources, said his campaign priorities will be climate change, education and immigration. This includes enhancing America’s primary education and vocational schools. It also includes working on comprehensive immigration reform to make it easier for foreign-born workers to pursue the American Dream while contributing to Silicon Valley companies, he said.

A native of Westchester County in New York, Bernstein moved to California six years ago. He highlighted his prior work in public policy, including conducting research for Republican politicians in Utah and Ohio and working as an intern for the recently retired Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio.

While Bernstein is himself a Democrat, he said he believes there are people across the political aisle with whom he could find common ground on topics like energy efficiency and grid resilience, which are central to his climate-change platform.

He also said that he wants to bring Silicon Valley’s innovation culture to Washington, D.C. The district has seen a significant transformation since Eshoo came into office three decades ago.

“It is unreal what has taken place in Silicon Valley over those 30 years,” Bernstein said. “It is unmatched in the history of the world the amount of technology innovation and wealth created here.”

“We need someone who will innovate. I want to be as innovative and willing to change the game in D.C. as young people have been in this district,” Bernstein said.

PETER DIXON

‘Lived experience’

Peter Dixon may be new to politics, but the U.S. Marine Corps veteran is no stranger to big pressure and high stakes.

In 2008, he was in Afghanistan, leading a platoon that battled the Taliban in a deserted village of Now Zad. In a conversation with *The Almanac* the following year, Dixon recounted his experiences in traveling to towns and cities to train village elders to defend their communities.

He described the Taliban at the time as an association of crooks and mercenaries using violence to rule the 98% of the population that do not agree with their ideology.

Dixon, who is running to succeed Anna Eshoo in Congress, sees some

parallel between those days and what’s happening with abortion access in the United States in the aftermath of the Supreme Court striking down *Roe v. Wade*.

“I served in Afghanistan and saw firsthand what happens when you have a bunch of religiously driven old men making decisions for their population. ... Having a bunch of old male politicians here at home making decisions on reproductive health care is leading to terrible outcomes for many parts of the country for reproductive rights,” Dixon said in an interview.

His proposed remedy — codifying *Roe v. Wade* — does not set him apart from the largely progressive candidate field in the heavily Democratic district. What does, however, is his background. As a Marine veteran who went on to co-found a cybersecurity company, Second Front Systems, Dixon believes he is particularly well-suited to parsing the Pentagon budget, improving efficiency and reducing waste in defense spending.

Silicon Valley can play a central role in this mission, Dixon said. He would like to see the country move away from the existing system in which the vast majority of security contracts go to five giant defense companies and open it up to more competition in the private sector. The results today are often dismal, he said, with high failure rates and long delivery cycles.

Military spending may not be the top priority for many voters, but Dixon sees it as directly related to issues that are closer to their homes and their hearts. America spends about \$900 billion on defense spending annually, he said, and about \$700 billion on everything else. Saving money in the former category would free up more for the latter.

“If we bring American capitalism and competition to defense spending, it can actually create much better outcomes for the folks in uniform and free up more than \$100 billion that can go into domestic priorities,” Dixon said.

Though Dixon has not held an elected office, he believes his experiences on the world stage distinguish him from the rest of the candidate field. He worked with the State Department and the Pentagon during the Obama administration and focused on countering corruption and improving policing efforts in Africa and in Mexico. As a special adviser on innovation and tech, Dixon worked with government officials in the Democratic Republic of Congo to curb gender-based violence.

His job in Congo, he said, was to leverage global money to professionalize local national security forces in Africa and get them to start protecting local populations. In Juarez, he also worked with Mexican nonprofit groups and federal police to improve response times and community engagement as they took on drug cartels, Dixon said in an interview.

Little surprise then that his campaign has resonated with other sitting lawmakers with military backgrounds. This week, he announced that his bid for Congress has been endorsed by six Congress members: Rep Jason Crow, D-Colorado, Rep. Mikie Sherrill,

D-New Jersey, Rep. Pat Ryan, D-New York, Rep. Jared Golden, D-Maine, Rep. Don Davis, D-North Carolina, and Rep. Chris Delusion, D-Pennsylvania.

He was also pleased to receive \$350,000 in donations within the first 24 hours of announcing his candidacy. This outpouring of support, he said, reflects his track record of achieving change at the federal level.

“I’m particularly excited about giving to the voters of this district the chance to have somebody who has practical problem-solving experience and a deep understanding of technology — and what it can do for us but also harm it can provide,” he said.

“I have lived experience in that regard, and that’s something that distinguishes me from the rest of the field.”

AHMED MOSTAFA

‘For human dignity’

Palo Alto resident Ahmed Mostafa is not a regular presence at City Council meetings but he made an exception this week when he joined about two dozen people urging the city to adopt a resolution supporting a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

For a political newcomer, wading into the debate on one of the world’s most polarizing, emotional and complex geopolitical topics may seem like a bold strategy. It is also, however, completely consistent with Mostafa’s history and his philosophy. At 35, he is one of the youngest candidates in the race for the District 16 seat in Congress. But he is not shy about taking on complex and contentious topics, whether at Google, when he led a unit on election integrity, or at Stanford University, where he provided pro bono work to help victims of sexual assault.

If his campaign can be boiled down to two words, they are “human dignity.” He believes local communities, much like the national government, need to ensure everyone feels safe and respected — a position that has taken on more resonance since the Oct. 7 terrorist attack by Hamas on Israel and the ensuing uptick in both antisemitism and Islamophobic sentiment.

In his comments to the council, Mostafa said that, both as a child and more recently, he heard himself being described by other people as “one of the good ones.” He rejected the implication in such comments that somehow his “roots are rotten” and that some people are “lesser than” others, he said.

“When we say ceasefire, we mean human dignity for everybody and that nobody is ‘lesser than,’” Mostafa told the council. “When we say ceasefire, we mean to say that nobody should be treated as a ‘lesser than’ in any capacity. We mean that Palestinian children should live. But we also know that ‘ceasefire’ means a safe return of Israeli hostages.”

Mostafa became involved in human rights as a student, first at Foothill College, where he served as student body president, and then at University of California at Santa Barbara, where he served as student body vice president. Among his proudest accomplishments at UCSB was brokering a joint

agreement between Hillel (a Jewish campus organization), American Students for Israel, and Students for Justice in Palestine to condemn hate speech.

After completing law school, Mostafa worked as a clerk at the Santa Clara County Public Defender Office and as director of the Stanford Survivors’ Pro Bono Clinic, where he served survivors of sexual assault. More recently, he was employed by Google, where he drafted policies on election integrity, misinformation and hate speech, he said in an interview. (He recently quit the Google job so that he can spend time campaigning.)

Mostafa’s local experiences are central to his campaign, which is distinct for its global flavor. He doesn’t just want to push for peace in the Middle East; he also wants to see an international treaty to govern how artificial intelligence is used, a topic that he became well familiar with during his stint at Google and through his interactions with technologists in the nascent but quickly accelerating field.

He hopes to see “smart tech legislation” that balances support for Silicon Valley innovation with protections against deep fakes and other nefarious uses. This would include things like a “hash database” to help identify bad actors and “digital fingerprinting” that would allow people to distinguish people from machines.

“If you’re hearing my voice now, your phone should be able to tell you if it’s me or AI,” Mostafa said in an interview.

These issues, he noted, will require national and global cooperation. That’s why he is foregoing the common route to Congress (through local and state offices) and setting his sights on Washington, D.C. But even as he is thinking globally, Mostafa pointed to his recent history on the local level in fighting for human rights. This included meeting with Muslim students on Stanford University campus to hear their concerns about the rise of hate crimes and calling out antisemitism in Oakland, where a menorah near Lake Merritt was desecrated earlier this month.

His focus on human dignity extends to domestic policies. He shares the progressive position that health care is a “human right,” and he decries the housing situation in his community, where even people with six-digit salaries find it difficult to afford a living. He lists making housing more affordable as one of his priorities.

Mostafa is also hoping to change the tone of the community conversation to increase support for victims of crime, whether it’s sexual assault on campus (he believes Title IX needs to be strengthened) or discrimination based on ethnic or religious grounds.

“Nobody is actually calling it out when it happens,” Mostafa said. “Nobody says the people’s names. It’s really disheartening.”

“I don’t want to be the only one. Even though it might distinguish me, I don’t want to be the only one.” ■

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

Public Notices

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME
File No. M-280316

The following person(s)/registrant(s) has/ have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name(s). The information given below is as it appeared on the fictitious business statement that was filed at the County Clerk-Recorder's Office. FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME(S):

ART MY HEART
741 Manzanita Road
Woodside, CA 94062
FILED IN SAN MATEO COUNTY ON:
02/07/2019

REGISTRANT'S NAME(S):
JEANNE A. GOLDMAN

741 Manzanita Road
Woodside, CA 94062
THIS BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED BY An Individual.

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

(ALM Dec 15, 22, 2023, Jan 5 and 12, 2024)

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME
File No. M-293711

The following person(s)/registrant(s) has/ have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name(s). The information given below is as it appeared on the fictitious business statement that was filed at the County Clerk-Recorder's Office. FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME(S):

WESTSIDE CHIROPRACTIC
190W 25TH AVE STE 4
SAN MATEO, CA 94403
FILED IN SAN MATEO COUNTY ON:
03/16/2023

REGISTRANT'S NAME(S):
MICHAEL LUDOVICO CHIROPRACTIC, INC.

190 W 25TH AVE STE 4
SAN MATEO, CA 94403
THIS BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED BY A Corporation.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk Recorder of San Mateo County on December 07 2023.

(ALM Jan 5, 12, 19 and 26, 2024)

KYLLEN ENTERPRISES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-295988

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) KYLTEN ENTERPRISES, located at 140 FLYING CLOUD ISLE, FOSTER CITY, CA 94404, San Mateo County.

Registered owner(s):

HERMAN WAN
140 FLYING CLOUD ISLE
FOSTER CITY, CA 94404
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 December 01, 2023.

(ALM Dec 15, 22, 2023, Jan 5 and 12, 2024)

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 HARBOR 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)

BAY 1 DRIVING SCHOOL INC
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-296005

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) BAY 1 DRIVING SCHOOL INC, located at

795 4th Ave Suite 204, Redwood City CA 94063.

Registered owner(s):
BAY 1 DRIVING SCHOOL INC
795 4th Avenue #204

Redwood City, CA 94063
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.

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 December 05, 2023.

(ALM Dec 15, 22, 2023, Jan 5 and 12, 2024)

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 November 28, 2023.

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

OCG SERVICES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-295991

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

1.) OCG SERVICES, located at 140 FLYING CLOUD ISLE, FOSTER CITY CA 94404.

Registered owner(s):

OCG SERVICES
140 FLYING CLOUD ISLE
FOSTER CITY CA 94404

State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.

Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 5/05/2017.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 01, 2023.

(ALM Dec 15, 22, 2023, Jan 5 and 12, 2024)

JUAN CARLOS PAINTING MTB
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-295912

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

1.) JUAN CARLOS PAINTING MTB, located at 533 DOUGLAS AVE, REDWOOD CITY CA. 94063.

Registered owner(s):

JUAN CARLOS GUZMAN PRADO
533 DOUGLAS AVE
REDWOOD CITY CA. 94063

State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: an Individual.

Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 11/21/2023.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on November 21, 2023.

(ALM Dec 15, 22, 2023, Jan 5 and 12, 2024)

The Almanac is adjudicated to publish in San Mateo County.

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

The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 pm. Visit [AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/](https://www.almanacnews.com/legal_notices/)

For assistance email LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com.

Stanford sit-in persists

The students don't seem to have plans to slow things down any time soon

By Isha Trivedi

At Stanford's White Plaza, change and movement abounds. Leaves change color, cyclists ride past and students walk to class.

But one element of the campus's "designated free speech area" has remained: A student sit-in. The students have been camping out in White Plaza since Oct. 20, and are demanding that the university, among other things, endorse a ceasefire in Gaza, commit to the boycott, divestment and sanction movement and provide resources for Palestinian and Arab students who have been personally affected by the war between Israel and Hamas.

The university has responded to parts of their demands on Nov. 13, outlining the formation of a committee to combat Islamophobia and enhance Muslim, Arab and Palestinian students' safety. But the students involved with the sit-in have said that they will not leave White Plaza until every single one of their demands are met — though the university does not yet seem to have plans to do so.

College campuses across the country have become the landscape upon which public opinion on the war between Israel and Hamas has played out, and Stanford is no exception. But unlike other issues that campus activists typically advocate for, this is one that, at least in recent memory at Stanford, has large contingents on both sides of the issue.

So what's next for the student activists as movement from university leaders seems to have stalled? And what happens if university leaders continue to ignore their demands?

A spokesperson for the university said Stanford's president and provost have met in recent weeks with students involved with the sit-in but did not comment specifically on whether they plan to address the students' exact demands.

"The university is continuing to work to support the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our community as the Israel-Hamas war continues," the statement reads.

As Stanford's winter quarter has come to a close and Stanford housing recently closed for break on Dec. 16, students involved with the sit-in have plans to maintain the sit-in's presence despite many heading home for the

holidays and the onset of colder temperatures.

"We've committed to doing this as long as it takes," Alisha Service, a student involved with the sit-in, told this publication in an interview.

The future of the sit-in

Amy Binder, a professor of sociology at Johns Hopkins University who has written a book about activism on college campuses, said campus administrators often wait for students to change their focus and slowly lose interest when it comes to issues like this one.

"Students turn over every four years, that's very predictable," she said. "Final exams may come and students have to turn their attention there," she said.

She said it's possible that things at Stanford may fizzle out in the coming weeks and months, as maintaining the sit-in despite little progress towards achieving their demands may become frustrating for students. On the other hand, she said it's also possible that the students may make progress towards achieving some of their demands and could reconsider which demands they'd be open to conceding in favor of others.

Binder said left-leaning student activists tend to make local leaders, such as campus administrators, the target of their activism on global issues. As such, the demands that many campus activists direct to local leaders are sometimes beyond the scope of their responsibilities, she said.

"Some would argue, and I would be one of them, that Stanford campus leaders actually have no power whatsoever to change world historical events and create the conditions for a ceasefire," Binder said.

A history of student sit-ins at Stanford

Stanford's campus has been no stranger to student activism over the years, as students have advocated for divestment of the school's endowment from fossil fuels, South African apartheid, and more.

The students involved with the ongoing sit-in have referenced the 1985 calls for divestment from apartheid in South Africa saying they are following a tradition of campus activism.

Binder, who is herself a Stanford alumna from the class

of 1986, was an undergraduate student during the university's second round of protests in 1985 calling for the university to divest its endowment from South African apartheid. She said she herself was an ally to the demonstrators at the time, and even wore a sash that read "stop investment in apartheid" at her graduation.

Binder said the South Africa divestment sit-in involved more concise demands that essentially boiled down to a call to divest the university's endowment from South African apartheid. But she said the current sit-ins' multifaceted list of demands may hinder their ability to see progress sooner, which could play a role in how long the sit-in may last.

"One of the things that differentiates the situation that we're in now with Israel and Hamas or Israel and Gaza versus South Africa is that there were really no students on campus who took exception to the calls for disinvestment," she said.

Though the calls to divest from South African apartheid were not fully addressed, students did achieve a key element of their demands: an agreement from Stanford's board of trustees to sell its thousands of shares in Motorola if it continued sales to South African military and police.

Part of a national movement

On the macro level, the sit-in at Stanford comes as administrators at several private colleges around the country have reprimanded students who are organizing and protesting for some of the same issues that the students involved with Stanford's sit-in have been advocating for.

Drawing national attention, Columbia University suspended two pro-Palestine student groups in early November for violating unspecified campus event policies, and just days later George Washington University made a similar move.

Echoing sentiments at college campuses across the country, the students involved with Stanford's sit-in have argued that university leaders have been more accepting of students' demands for more support for Jewish than Palestinian students.

But the students at Stanford aren't concerned about being

SIT-IN

continued from page 18

similarly reprimanded, and evidence indicates that they would be right to feel that way — opening the door for the sit-in to last even longer than just a few months.

Stanford’s guidelines and policies for posting in White Plaza outline specific dimensions for banners allowed in the area and a five-day limit to leave them up, and the sit-in has long since passed this deadline.

Binder said while it’s hard to predict the outcome, it’s unlikely that Stanford officials will make a move to reprimand the sit-in this late into their demonstrations because of the perception that they would be encroaching on students’ freedom of speech.

“I think Stanford would be wise not to reprimand them,” she told this publication in an interview.

Students involved with the sit-in have said that even the university’s lack of enthusiasm to make a statement to the sit-in and continue to meet with them directly is in itself a statement, especially given that they feel university leaders have been much quicker to stand behind Jewish students since the Oct. 7 attack from Hamas.

An allegedly pro-Israel student struck an Arab Muslim student on Stanford’s campus early last month, a hit-and-run that police are investigating as a hate crime. Students involved with the sit-in also criticized Stanford officials at the time for their delay in alerting students of the incident, when they had been much quicker to respond to other instances of anti-semitism.

Service said the students involved with the sit-in aren’t as concerned about facing disciplinary action because if the school was planning to reprimand them, they likely would have done so already.

“The fact of the matter is that the school has made it so that it can take disciplinary action on a lot of things, and it chooses not to,” Service said. ■

LEHUA GREENMAN



“May the New Year bring you happiness, peace and prosperity. Wishing you a joyous 2024!”

650.245.1845 COMPASS



RESOLUTION NO. 2396 (2023)

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

Lands of Jonathan L. Eng and Joanna Y. Kim, as Co-Trustees of the Kim-Eng 2020 Revocable Trust dated October 20, 2020

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

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

In consideration of the foregoing findings and determinations,

IT IS RESOLVED by the District Board as follows:

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

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

Date: January 10, 2024
 Time: 7:00 PM
 Place: West Bay Sanitary District Offices
 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025
 & via Zoom

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

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

Exhibit A

APPROVED
 SAN MATEO LOCAL AGENCY
 FORMATION COMMISSION
 455 COUNTY CENTER
 REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063

EXHIBIT “A”

Date: August 19, 2022
 Annexed to: West Bay Sanitary District
 Name of Annexation: West Bay Sanitary

EXHIBIT A PAGE 1 OF 3

Geographic Description
 Lands of Eng and Kim

All that certain real property, situate in the Town of Portola Valley, County of San Mateo, State of California, being all of Lot 9 and a portion of the right of way of Grove Way (50 feet wide), as shown on that certain map entitled “Stonegate Meadows, Town of Portola Valley, San Mateo County, California”, filed in the office of the County Recorder of San Mateo County on June 21, 1966 in Book 65 of Maps at Pages 4 and 5, more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the East corner of West Bay Sanitary District Resolution No. 1894, said corner also being on the Westerly line said lot;

Course 1.) Along the Easterly line of said resolution coincident with said westerly line North 12°02’00” West, 33.11 feet, thence,
Course 2.) Continuing along last said line, North 04°48’00” West, 52.79 feet, thence,
Course 3.) Leaving last said line North 85°12’00” East, 25.00 feet to the centerline of said Grove Way, thence,
Course 4.) Along said centerline, along a non-tangent curve to the left with a radius of 100.00 feet, from which a radial bears North 85°12’00” West, through a central angle of 56°37’38”, an arc length of 98.83 feet, thence,
Course 5.) Leaving last said centerline, South 28°46’00” West, 25.00 feet to the general Easterly line of said lot, thence,
Course 6.) Along last said line, along a non-tangent curve to the left with a radius of 15.00 feet, from which a radial bears North 28°46’00” East, through a central angle of 130°48’00”, an arc length of 34.24 feet, thence,
Course 7.) Continuing along last said line, South 12°02’00” East, 50.03 feet, thence,
Course 8.) Continuing along last said line, South 20°15’00” East, 112.51 feet, thence,
Course 9.) Continuing along last said line, along a curve to the left with a radius of 10.00 feet, through a central angle of 35°03’13”, an arc length of 6.12 feet, thence,
Course 10.) Continuing along last said line, South 55°18’13” East, 96.84 feet, thence,
Course 11.) Continuing along last said line, South 78°20’50” East, 32.77 feet, thence,
Course 12.) Continuing along last said line, South 27°02’46” East, 20.00 feet, thence,
Course 13.) Continuing along last said line, South 03°46’57” East, 21.68 feet, thence,
Course 14.) Continuing along last said line, South 65°59’38” East, 92.31 feet, thence,
Course 15.) Continuing along last said line, South 19°45’08” East, 46.38 feet, thence,
Course 16.) Continuing along last said line, South 15°07’00” East, 58.30 feet, thence,
Course 17.) Continuing along last said line, South 72°47’00” East, 113.16 feet, thence,
Course 18.) Continuing along last said line, South 29°34’00” West, 113.04 feet, thence,
Course 19.) Continuing along last said line, South 68°04’30” West, 106.30 feet, thence,
Course 20.) Continuing along last said line, South 43°51’30” East, 71.81 feet, thence,
Course 21.) Continuing along last said line, South 15°10’30” West, 59.29 feet to the Southerly line of said lot, thence,
Course 22.) Along said southerly line, South 72°13’30” West, 76.94 feet to the general Westerly line of said lot, thence,
Course 23.) Along said general westerly line, North 24°06’30” West, 105.71 feet, thence,
Course 24.) Continuing along last said line, North 06°12’00” East, 48.93 feet, thence,
Course 25.) Continuing along last said line, North 33°47’00” West, 204.35 feet, thence,
Course 26.) Continuing along last said line, North 12°02’00” West, 420.35 feet to the Point of Beginning containing 2.30 acres, more or less.

For assessment purposes only. The description is not a legal property description as defined in the Subdivision Map Act and may not be used as the basis for an offer for sale of the land described.

APPROVED
 SAN MATEO LOCAL AGENCY
 FORMATION COMMISSION
 455 COUNTY CENTER
 REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063

EXHIBIT A PAGE 2 OF 3

Exhibit B

WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT
 EXHIBIT “B”
 SITE LOCATION
 350 GROVE DRIVE
 PORTOLA VALLEY, CA
 GRINDER PUMP SYSTEM

APN: 079-021-020
 350 Grove Dr
 Portola Valley, CA
 Main Line Extension to connect
 to existing force main on Grove Dr

Legend
 — Main_Extension
 — OWDZ Force Main

© OpenStreetMap

Year's first snow measure is below average, but El Nino year may boost water supply

By Bay City News Service

California's statewide snowpack is 25% of average for this date, according to a Tuesday, Jan. 2, snow survey by the state's Department of Water Resources.

State reservoirs are still above average for this time of year due to a wet season last year, and strong El Nino conditions are present in the Pacific Ocean and are expected to bring more snow.

"Although El Nino does not guarantee an above average water year, California is preparing for the possibility of more extreme storms while increasing our climate resilience for the next

drought," DWR director Karla Nemeth said in a statement.

Jan. 2's manual measurement was done by the team of Sean de Guzman, the unit manager at the Phillips Station snow course in the Sierra Nevada, where snow measurements have been taken since 1941. It is one of 260 different snow courses measured statewide.

The test involves going to the exact same locations on the site and stabbing the snow-covered ground with a pole for a cookie cutter sample. That sample is then analyzed for its water content and compared to data collected at other times and locations.

At the Phillips station, the snow depth was 7.5 inches with a snow water content of 3 inches. Those findings are 30% of average to date for the same site. April 1 is when snowpack is typically at its peak, and Tuesday's measurement is 12% of that average high mark.

That's in line with DWR's 130 automated sensors throughout the state, which are finding snowfall at 25% of average for this date. Last year's unusually heavy precipitation resulted in a reading of 185% of average on the same date.

"Here at Phillips last year, we were standing on 5 feet of snow," Guzman said as he stood on a

patchy field of snow and brown grasses. "Today's result tells us it's really too early to determine what kind of year we'll have in terms of wet or dry. Luckily our statewide reservoirs are still about 116% of average right now."

"According to our measurements from 1978 to 2019, we are seeing an increase in rain and a decrease in the amount of snowfall," said Andrew Schwartz of University of California at Berkeley's Central Sierra Snow Lab, a field research station located in Soda Springs.

"The conclusion that we see from that research is that our snow season is shortening. October and November used

to be dominantly snowfall at the snow lab. And we've seen October switch to rainfall as well as May. So, we're seeing a shortening of the season from either end, and there is a lot more rain even in the middle of the winter," Schwartz said.

In preparation for a potentially rainy winter, DWR is advising all Californians to stay aware of local flood conditions through their county water districts. In a statement, the department says the State-Federal Flood Operations Center has pre-positioned extra flood-fighting materials, including 2.2 million more sandbags, at locations across the state. ■

Tesla Cybertruck accident on Skyline Boulevard draws attention

Incident is thought to be the first reported involving a Cybertruck on a public road

By Palo Alto Weekly staff

Automotive enthusiasts are a-twitter about a car accident that occurred on Skyline Boulevard in Palo Alto on Dec. 28. The reason? It's believed to be the first accident on a public road involving a Tesla Cybertruck, which rolled off the assembly lines in late November four years after the concept was announced.

Car fans are discussing the incident on online boards like reddit, and a YouTube video

from the dashcam of a passerby garnered nearly 175,000 views in 16 hours. In part, people are curious to know what kind of damage the Tesla, made of stainless steel, suffered.

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) reported that it dispatched units at 2:05 p.m. to a two-vehicle crash on Skyline, also known as State Route 35, south of Page Mill Road. There, they discovered a Toyota Corolla with a smashed-in front end in the bushes on one side of the road and, farther up, a Tesla

Cybertruck halfway off the road, with its rear blocking one lane.

The Toyota Corolla was traveling south Skyline when the driver, for unknown reasons, turned to the right and subsequently struck a dirt embankment on the right shoulder, the CHP stated in a press release. The Toyota then re-entered the roadway, crossed over the double yellow lines into the northbound lane and crashed into a Tesla Cybertruck traveling north.

The Tesla driver complained



Courtesy Lcaa9/Wikimedia Commons

A production Cybertruck sits at the Tesla Fremont Factory parking lot.

of pain but declined medical transportation. There were two passengers in the Tesla, but neither they nor the 17-year-old Toyota driver reported any injuries, according to the CHP.

"It does not appear that the Tesla Cybertruck was being operated in autonomous mode," the CHP press release stated.

An investigation into this incident is ongoing. ■

TEACHERS

continued from page 13

the agreement only outlined a one-year contract rather than a two-year contract the union was hoping for.

"As SDTA members stated, the district is not a bank," said SUHSD board member Richard Ginn. "That is, the goal of a school district is not to build up the largest reserve that it can. Instead, the district aims to spend all of its revenues each year while maintaining a reserve for received and unexpected expenses can arise. The balancing act for the school board is to spend as much as we can each year without jeopardizing the financial health of the district."

This year, the district had \$40 million in reserves and \$160 million in its total budget. According to previous Almanac reporting, the contract reached

'(Teacher) turnover negatively impacts the whole community. These aren't just my colleagues — they're my friends, my community, my family. It's so heartbreaking when teachers leave.'

RACHEL RICHARDS, M-A BIOLOGY TEACHER

will cost \$10 million.

Ginn elaborated that the COVID-19 pandemic created an unusually large reserve of state and federal government funds. The board aims to spend more than they receive this year to "burn through some of the reserve." However, the balancing act continues as too high of a burn rate could create losses if revenue does not catch up in time.

Still, teachers expressed frustration that only a one-year contract was negotiated.

Menlo-Atherton High School

History department head Candace Bolles said: "We like to do a two-year deal because it gives us the freedom to just take a breath and not have to worry about it next year. But the district was not willing to guarantee anything for next year because they don't know what their financial numbers will be. So we have to go to a reopener next year on the salary and other decisions."

M-A English teacher Cary Milia, a member of the union's bargaining team, said the teachers were hoping to get a

salary increase settled for the second year so that its members would be able to make more informed decisions regarding their finances.

Woodside's Marten said she is frustrated that two years of salary increases were not negotiated.

"I understand the union had to make a hard choice, but we need to have at least the same increase in the next round to come close to the union's initial proposals or to offset the massive cut in real wages we have taken the last two years," she said. "Even if inflation slows down, that does not change the increases of the past two years, and we are still reeling from those."

Looking forward

Richards hopes the negotiation helps increase teacher recruitment and retention.

"(Teacher) turnover negatively impacts the whole community,"

she said. "These aren't just my colleagues — they're my friends, my community, my family. It's so heartbreaking when teachers leave."

M-A English teacher Erin Walsh said, "After this agreement, I think that we can all breathe a bit easier. I know that I'm definitely more comfortable, especially going into the holiday season."

On next year's and future agreements, Ginn said, "The revenues for next year are currently very uncertain which limits the amount that the board can commit to at this time."

The district and the SDTA plan to wait until this academic year's expenses are finalized and the revenues for next year are more certain to discuss raises for the 2024-25 school year.

This story originally appeared in the M-A Chronicle on Dec. 12, 2023. ■

'BARBENHEIMER' AND BEYOND

The best, the worst and the most memorable movies of 2023

By Peter Canavese

In another rough year for the film industry, one which saw both writers and actors on strike for fairer terms in an increasingly streaming world, Hollywood needed some good news. It came this summer, summed up by one portmanteau: Barbenheimer. The opening-day confluence of two very different blockbusters, Greta Gerwig's smash-hit "Barbie" and Christopher Nolan's historical epic "Oppenheimer," gave studios and theater owners hope that there was still life to be found in movie theaters, thanks in no small part to an ingenious viral marketing campaign, a rising tide that lifted both boats. Both films delivered as art and commerce in another year that spread cinema across theaters and home theaters.

2023 saw some intelligent and finely crafted franchise films, like "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny," by which director James Mangold gave the titular archeologist a surprisingly effective sendoff; trilogy-capper "Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3;" the reinvigorating kaiju picture "Godzilla Minus One;" animated sequels "Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse" and "Chicken Run: Dawn of the Nugget;" Kenneth Branagh's best-yet Poirot mystery "A Haunting in Venice;" and the darkly antiheroic "The Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds & Snakes," as well as the latest "Mission: Impossible" and "John Wick" pictures, and the superior reboots "Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves" and "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem."

"M3GAN" and "Cocaine Bear" were anointed new stars, and Michael Keaton returned

to the role of Batman in "The Flash," while Marvel took a big loss with "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania" and "The Marvels."

Beyond these attention grabbers, micro-budgeted independent films continued to find ways to flourish. It's not too late to seek out uncut gems like the gender-bending comedy "Biosphere," the artful meditation "All Dirt Roads Taste of Salt," the outrageously explicit Hitchcockian comedy "Rotting in the Sun," domestic opioid drama "Stay Awake," and the soon-to-expand culinary romance "The Taste of Things."

Cupertino-based AppleTV+ backed Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon" and Ridley Scott's "Napoleon" while Los Gatos-based Netflix posted what could be its best-yet crop of originals, including David Fincher's "The Killer," Disney animation castoff "Nimona," wild-ride race-based comedy "They Cloned Tyrone," civil rights drama "Rustin," and the fascinating, fact-based "Nyad." In short, cinema is alive and well.

The top ten films of 2023 (in alphabetical order)

'About Dry Grasses' (in area theaters February 2024)

Taking a leisurely pace, "About Dry Grasses" establishes harsh, meager eastern Anatolia; introduces us a cast of characters managing "the weariness of hope;" then ambles toward poetic, painful profundity about the impacts of our choices. Along the way, director/co-writer Nuri Bilge Ceylan and leading man Deniz Celiloglu finely etch the character of an arrogant, depressed cynic who teaches at a rural elementary



Courtesy Warner Bros. Pictures

Margot Robbie stars in the title role of "Barbie," director Greta Gerwig's summer smash hit that, along with "Oppenheimer," gave hope that there was still life to be found in movie theaters.



Yorgos Lanthimos/Courtesy Searchlight Pictures

Felicity (Margaret Qualley, left), is the latest creation of a Dr. Frankenstein-like mad scientist (Willem Dafoe, center) and his assistant (Ramy Youssef) in the steampunk science-fiction satire "Poor Things."

school but idly insists he plans to escape to Istanbul at first opportunity. Ceylan's thoughtfully composed character study organizes banter (with men, women, and children) to challenge and reform its protagonist's sense of self and meaning.

'American Fiction' (in theaters)

Cord Jefferson makes a confident feature filmmaking debut with this adaptation of Percival Everett's 2001 novel "Erasure." Finding a cinematic analog for Everett's meta narrative, Jefferson satirizes the stranglehold "Black trauma porn" has on Black excellence in storytelling and the ability to market Black stories through channels of prestige. Through the character of frustrated novelist Thelonious "Monk" Ellison (Jeffrey Wright, never more natural), "American Fiction" contrasts the clichéd images of Black life audiences have prevalently been fed (depicted here in parody) to a satisfying dramedy of Black humanity often too quotidian to make it past cultural gatekeepers.

'Killers of the Flower Moon' (on AppleTV+ & VOD)

American master Martin Scorsese offers a commanding take on author David Grann's true crime account of 1920s white elites re-colonizing the Osage people by means of marriage, murder and plunder. Lily Gladstone warily holds the quiet eye of the storm as Mollie, while Scorsese regulars Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert

De Niro skulk. Beyond the disturbing and still-relevant story of cultural and fiscal domination, there's great pleasure to be had in the film's impeccable craft: the editing of Thelma Schoonmaker, the production design of Jack Fisk, and the final musical score of Robbie Robertson.

'May December' (on Netflix)

The great Todd Haynes takes an unconventional approach to a notorious, button-pushing true-crime story in this film à clef meditation on Mary Kay Letourneau and Vili Fualaau. Julianne Moore and Charles Melton play the roles of a middle-aged woman and the child with whom she had an extra-marital affair-turned-20-year marriage, while Natalie Portman plays an actor researching her starring role in an upcoming film about the scandal. Deliberately awkward and unsettling, the astonishingly performed "May December" considers the psychological particulars of the central relationships but also crafts a funny and disturbing meta-narrative about the ethics and approach to docudrama.

'Monica' (on VOD)

Andrea Pallaro's unassuming drama tenderly explores paired domestic tragedies — aggressive dementia and an LGBTQ child's loyalty to the parent who betrayed her — through the deceptively simple premise of a transgender woman (Trace Lysette, in one of

the year's most deeply felt performances) returning home for the first time since her now-ailing mother (pitch-perfect Patricia Clarkson) rejected her in her teens. Beautifully photographed and attuned to the subtle ironies of real life, "Monica" gets under the skin to explore resilient identity and spiritual transcendence.

'Oppenheimer' (in theaters & on VOD, 4K Blu-ray, Blu-ray, DVD, & Digital)

Christopher Nolan's epic reconstruction and deconstruction of the Manhattan Project and the man who organized it. In concert with the film's historical verisimilitude, Cillian Murphy's innate ability to project brooding intellect and raw, wounded feeling keeps us fascinated by Oppenheimer's brilliance, his arrogant capacity to be his own worst enemy, and ultimately his guilt-wracked devastation at opening the scariest Pandora's Box science has yet known.

'Poor Things' (in theaters)

Prime surrealist Yorgos Lanthimos creeps into the territory of Jean-Pierre Jeunet ("The City of Lost Children," "Delicatessen") with this steampunk adaptation (scripted by Tony McNamara) of Alasdair Gray's 1992 novel. Drs. Frankenstein and Moreau come to mind in the Victorian home laboratory of Willem Dafoe's mad scientist "God," where

See **BARBENHEIMER**, page 22

BARBENHEIMER*continued from page 21*

resurrection and creation meet in the stitched-together Bella Baxter (Emma Stone, in an oddball tour de force). Unethical science is just the tip of the iceberg in this fish-out-of-water science-fiction satire about discovering life after death in the bad company of humanity.

'Showing Up' (on Paramount+, Showtime, & VOD)

Co-scripting with novelist Jon Raymond, writer-director Kelly Reichardt delicately fashions a bone-dry comedy from low stakes microdramas: whether a hot water heater will ever be fixed, the recovery of an injured pigeon, the perhaps unnecessary but somehow unavoidable maintenance of one's family members, and the daily preoccupations of the art life. In her fourth team-up with Reichardt, Michelle Williams plays grumpy hangdog to Hong Chau's annoyingly serene, good-natured foil for a buddy comedy whose action moves at the slow motion of daily drudgery.

'20 Days in Mariupol' (PBS & free on YouTube)

Pulitzer Prize-winning Ukrainian journalist Mstyslav Chernov assembles a feature documentary from his war photography captured from within the Russian invasion of Mariupol, adding his own first-person narration to round out our understanding of life under siege and the obstacles and mortal risks facing journalists who dare to dispatch the truth. The material takes on added resonance since the siege of Gaza; Chernov's imagery of obliterated hospitals, dead and severely injured children, and other civilian horrors sadly finds in the specifics of Mariupol a universality of war crime.

'The Zone of Interest' (in theaters)

With global fascism conspicuously howling at our doors, Jonathan Glazer's adaptation of the 2014 Martin Amis novel chillingly depicts the compartmentalization that allows genocide to occur — if not in our own backyards, as is near-literally the case for Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höss and his happy-homemaker wife (Christian Friedel and Sandra Hüller), still uncomfortably close. How can we enjoy creature comforts while others suffer and have their lives cut short? In the absence of moral responsibility and courage, only through willful ignorance.

The bottom five films of 2023

'Expend4bles'

A whole lotta shootouts, exploding heads, throat-slittings, car chases and explosions, all

rendered in horrible special effects. Dumb, cheap and larded up with macho banter from characters that might as well be G.I. Joe action figures.

'Pet Sematary: Bloodlines'

This origin-story prequel to the 2019 remake of the 1989 film of Stephen King's novel meanders through its intellectual property, grasping for franchise potential but succeeding only in wasting a capable ensemble.

'The Retirement Plan'

Nicolas Cage makes two kinds of movies: good ones and really, really bad ones. Guess which kind this action "romp" is. Cheap-looking, with horrendous writing and interminably slack direction.

'Retribution'

Action movies with limited settings can be ingenious (think "Speed" or "Phone Booth"). Sadly, "Retribution" which sticks Liam Neeson behind the wheel of his car for 95% of the run time, ain't. A thrill-less thriller.

'The Secret Kingdom'

This feckless family fantasy shoots for "The Chronicles of Narnia" or "His Dark Materials" but lands closer to "The Room" in its acting, and script, which makes for a seemingly endless string of talking animal encounters.

The best heroes

Bayard Rustin in "Rustin"
Bella Baxter (Emma Stone) in "Poor Things"

Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) in "Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny"

Monica (Trace Lysette) in "Monica"

Priscilla Presley (Cailee Spaeny) in "Priscilla"

The worst villains

The Devil (various) in "The Exorcist: Believer," "The Pope's Exorcist," "The Devil Conspiracy," etc.

Dracula (Nicolas Cage/Javier Botet) in "Renfield"/"The Last Voyage of the Demeter"

Forge Fitzwilliam (Hugh Grant) in "Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves"

William King Hale (Robert De Niro) in "Killers of the Flower Moon"

M3GAN (Amie Donald/Jenna Davis) in "M3GAN"

See more of our critic's picks for the best and worst of 2023 films at almanacnews.com/arts. ■

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Worth a Look



Courtesy Valentina Sadiul

Happy Dog Duo, featuring Nathan Cheung, left, and Eric Tran, performs Jan. 6 at the Mountain View Center for Performing Arts.

Happy Dog Duo

Pianists Eric Tran and Nathan Cheung, who perform as Happy Dog Duo, have toured internationally, played with numerous orchestras (including the Stanford Symphony Orchestra), and won many awards over the course of their two-decade career. The duo will present a concert of favorites, suitable for all ages, including Leonard Bernstein's "Overture to Candide," Maurice Ravel's "Rapsodie Espagnole," Paul Dukas' "Sorcerer's Apprentice," and Edvard Grieg's Peer Gynt Suite, ending with "In the Hall of the Mountain King." The duo is known for bringing humor and joy to the classical music world. Friends and collaborators since middle school, both pianists are graduates of Stanford University. According to their website, "They enjoy performing memorized concerts, premiering original works, and amusing audiences with their improvisatory, notoriously ridiculous concert interruptus talks." And according to their site, despite their duo's name, "Neither Nathan nor Eric has any dogs."

Jan. 6, 7:30 p.m., Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts (MVCPA SecondStage), 500 Castro St., Mountain View. Tickets are \$16-\$30. tickets.mvcpa.com.

A visit with Nikola Tesla

Actor, director and educator Duffy Hudson embodies the visionary scientist, electrical engineer and inventor Nikola Tesla in a one-person show, followed by a chance for the audience to talk with Tesla — and then Hudson as himself. Hudson, a Broadway and film veteran, presents solo shows in which he brings to life figures such as Edgar Allan Poe, Albert Einstein, George Burns, Dr. Seuss, and Audie Murphy, and even a one-man production of "A Christmas Carol."

Jan. 6, noon, Menlo Park Library, 800 Alma St., Menlo Park. Free. menlopark.gov.

Local Sound Series

Kick off the first week of 2024 with original Bay Area music at The Guild. The venue launches its Local Sound Series on Jan. 5 with an Americana-inflected double bill of The Live Oaks and Alex Lucero Band. Oakland folk 'n' rollers The Live Oaks draw on roots and soul for their sound, while Santa Cruz-based Alex Lucero Band looks to '60s and '70s soul and blues in their songs.

Jan. 5, 8 p.m. at The Guild, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Tickets are \$28-\$68. guildtheatre.com.

Food & Drink

12 Peninsula spots to visit for a Filipino food crawl

Get a taste of the Philippines one bite at a time by visiting these eateries with signature offerings

By Edwina Dueñas

Go on a Filipino food crawl by visiting these 12 spots throughout the Peninsula, with an emphasis on eateries that provide a signature offering or singular focus on a specific dish. From baked goods and modern takes on traditional desserts to comforting classic dishes, eateries throughout the region are contributing to the Filipino food scene in distinctive ways. Dig in below.

Bakeries

The Bread Basket Bakery, Daly City: Pandesal

Grab warm, fresh-baked pandesal from The Bread Basket Bakery for your next breakfast. A fixture along Top of the Hill, this family-owned business has been baking the golden brown bread rolls, which are crunchy on the outside with a soft interior, in its corner shop since 1977. Tracing its roots to the arrival of Spanish colonists who brought wheat flour to the Philippines, pandesal can be served in a variety of ways. Whether dipped in your morning coffee, layered with cheesy scrambled eggs or paired with a sweet spread, these rolls are perfect any time of day.

The Bread Basket Bakery, 7099 Mission St., Daly City; 650-994-7741, Instagram: @breadbasketdalycity, breadbasketdalycity.com.

Valerio's Tropical Bakeshop, South San Francisco: Chicken empanadas

Located inside the Seafood City Supermarket in South San Francisco, Valerio's Tropical Bakeshop sells an array of Filipino baked goods, appetizers and desserts. Their chicken empanadas are one of their most popular items. A Spanish-inspired dish, Valerio's chicken empanadas feature a savory filling of shredded chicken and vegetables in a flaky crust. Valerio's has seven Bay Area locations, which include Daly City, Milpitas and Hayward, along with other locations in Southern California and around the United States.

Valerio's Tropical Bakeshop, 3535 Callan Blvd., South San Francisco; 650-878-1611, Instagram: @valeriotropicalbakeshop, valeriotropicalbakeshop.com.

Starbread, Daly City and Pacifica: Señorita bread

For a sweeter baked confection, Starbread rolls out its signature señorita bread to communities throughout the Bay Area. Founded in 1988 in Vallejo, Starbread has Peninsula locations in Daly City and Pacifica. Señorita bread (known as Spanish bread in the Philippines), are oblong-shaped rolls slathered with butter, sugar and bread crumbs. Customers order boxes of señorita bread by the dozen, which are served hot and fresh — an ideal snack to warm up with when the fog rolls in.

Starbread, 980 King Drive, Daly City, 650-878-9524; 1261 Linda Mar Shopping Center, Pacifica, 650-733-7750. Instagram: @starbread_bakery, starbreadca.com.

Desserts

House of Silvanas, Daly City: Silvanas cookies

Stop by House of Silvanas for a unique sandwich cookie that comes in several Filipino-inspired flavors. Silvanas are cashew meringue cookies filled with buttercream and served frozen to preserve their crunchy texture. The first House of Silvanas shop opened in 1995 in Manila before opening stateside a decade later. Silvanas are available in seven flavors including ube, buko-pandan and mango.

House of Silvanas, 2055 Gellert Blvd., Daly City; 650-878-8700. houseofsilvanas.com.

Binka Bites, Millbrae and South San Francisco: Bibingka

A popular Christmastime treat in the Philippines, bibingka is a rice cake made with a base of ground rice and water. Modern recipes also incorporate milk, butter and eggs for a more cake-like texture. Binka Bites, operated by siblings Jo Ongsiako and Jas Ongsiako, offer flavorful flourishes to traditional

bibingka in a bite-sized format. Customers can choose from a dozen different varieties, including classic salted egg and cheese, mango cream, s'mores and ube macapuno.

Binka Bites, 304 Alida Way, South San Francisco, 650-787-9010; 979 Broadway #106, Millbrae; 650-296-8215; Instagram: @binkabites, binkabites.com.

Cafe 86, Mountain View: Ube-flavored drinks, baked goods and desserts

Cafe 86 is a rapidly expanding dessert chain with locations in Southern California, the Bay Area and Las Vegas. Go there for all things ube, be it baked goods, milk tea and lattes or traditional Filipino desserts like halo halo. Their first Peninsula location opened in Mountain View and has been whipping up treats like ube truffle bites, ube pop tarts and ube lattes from their cafe just off Castro Street on Villa Street.

Cafe 86, 738 Villa St., Mountain View; 650-448-3893, Instagram: @cafe_86, cafe-86.com.

Cake Queen & Coffee Bar, South San Francisco: Ube tres leches

Cake Queen & Coffee Bar is a woman-owned business in South San Francisco offering a triple threat of custom cakes and baked goods, savory pastries and beverages. One of the eatery's most popular items is its ube tres leches, incorporating Filipino ube with the Mexican dessert. The result is a sweet combination of cultures and flavors in a milky, deep purple-hued dessert that's available by the slice or trayful.

Cake Queen & Coffee Bar, 132 Brentwood Drive, South San Francisco; 650-593-2253, Instagram: @bayareacakequeen, bayareacakequeen.com.

Restaurants

Tapsilog Bistro, Campbell: Silog breakfast

Garlic fried rice, eggs and marinated Filipino beef tapa comprise the main elements of Tapsilog Bistro's namesake



Devin Roberts

At Daly City's Fil Am Cuisine, Filipino-style barbecue skewers are a signature dish.

dish, tapsilog. A hearty breakfast staple in the Philippines, Filipino eateries throughout the Bay Area offer this signature dish, which is often served with diced cucumbers or tomato on the side. At Tapsilog Bistro in Campbell, diners can choose from 20 varieties of silog breakfasts. Order a classic such as tapsilog (beef), longsilog (sweet pork sausage) and bangsilog (milkfish), or try one of the restaurant's offerings with an American flair, including bacon silog or fried chicken silog.

Tapsilog Bistro, 819 W Hamilton Ave., Campbell; 408-412-8926, Instagram: @tapsilog_bistro_cantina, tapsilogbistro.com.

Isla, San Bruno: Sulit bilao

Step inside Isla in San Bruno and you'll see the space filled with large wooden tables throughout, perfect for gatherings with friends and loved ones. They also provide much needed surface area for Isla's sulit bilao, shareable banana leaf meal platters to be enjoyed by hand. Grilled meats, seafood, lumpia egg rolls and sides of diced tomato and shrimp paste to accompany the entrees are just some of the items you'll find in a sulit bilao. Isla offers four combinations of sulit bilao platters to choose from, and unlimited bucketfuls of rice are served alongside the platters to help diners polish off their meal.

Isla, 448 San Mateo Ave., San Bruno; 650-872-5008, Instagram: @islafilipinorestaurant, dinfo.me/myislarestaurant.com.

Fil Am Cuisine: Barbecue skewers

Filipino-style barbecue skewers are the main draw at Fil Am Cuisine in Daly City, which has been located along School Street since 2002. Filipino barbecue can be distinguished from the American style by their wet marinade often consisting of soy sauce, calamansi and banana ketchup, resulting in a tangy, sweet and savory sauce. Their signature grilled pork and chicken

barbecue skewers can be purchased a la carte or with steamed rice for under \$10 a plate.

Fil Am Cuisine, 66 School St., Daly City, 650-992-6191; 321 Grand Ave., South San Francisco, 650-871-5010; Instagram: @filambbq, filamcuisine.com.

Pamilya, Redwood City: Filipino comfort food bowls

Pamilya is currently a ghost kitchen operation out of Redwood City. Customers can choose from pickup or delivery for their fill of Filipino food, which Pamilya serves in a convenient bowl format for diners on the go. Their El Nido Shrimps bowl features island-inspired garlic shrimp alongside pickled veggies. For plant-based eaters, Pamilya has crafted the Gising Gising bowl, which includes sautéed green beans with Impossible meat simmered in coconut milk. Boneless chicken adobo and pork belly sisig bowls are also on offer for meat eaters.

Pamilya, 426 MacArthur Ave., Redwood City; 650-374-9332, Instagram: @pamilya_sf, pamilyakitchen.com.

Rene Rose Island Cuisine, Sunnyvale: Turo turo-style dining

A family-run business, owners Rene and Rose Nepomuceno, alongside their daughter Natalie, prepare platefuls of Filipino classics for the Sunnyvale community in their cozy eatery. Served in the "turo turo" format, meaning "point point" in Tagalog, diners will be greeted with a selection of entrees kept warm on a steam table. Rene Rose offers combination plates that come with rice and a cup of tamarind-based sinigang soup. Popular entrees include lechon kawali (crispy deep-fried pork belly), pork adobo and pinakbet (vegetable medley cooked with pork and shrimp paste).

Rene Rose Island Cuisine, 621 Caliente Drive, Sunnyvale; 408-733-3691. ■

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SATURDAY 1/6

SATURDAY
1/6
1:30 – 4:30 PM



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