

The Almanac

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

JANUARY 12, 2024 | VOL. 59 NO. 18



WWW.ALMANACNEWS.COM

Artist pays homage to historic Bay salt ponds

By Ashwini Gangal

In troubled times, the job of art is to hold up a mirror to society. That's exactly what Oakland-based artist Favianna Rodriguez has been trying to achieve through her work for the last 24 years, including her recently created 3-by-3 foot piece that's displayed prominently in one of the indoor public spaces of the recently launched citizenM hotel at Meta's Menlo Park campus.

From concept to color palette, the artwork reflects the landscape around the hotel, particularly of the San Francisco Bay wetland that, after being used for salt production for over 150 years, is currently being restored to its natural state.

The prompt from citizenM was to create something about Menlo Park that captures the diversity of the community. "This is inclusive of that," said the 45-year-old artist over a

Zoom call with this publication. "The residents of Menlo Park are going to benefit from the restoration."

Rodriguez has a rather academic approach to her art. Before starting the assignment, she visited the construction site of the hotel and was struck by the presence of salt all over.

"As we were walking up the exterior, I saw that there was salt all over the stairs. ... It was everywhere," she said. "I did some research and it turns out that the region used to be owned by Cargill." The American food corporation has historically been in the business of producing salt, among other things.

"Those salt ponds destroyed like 80-90% of the wildlife and natural habitat," Rodriguez said. "But though they were damaged, they were beautiful. I felt it was important to acknowledge that history. The salt production led

See **SALT PONDS**, page 17



Courtesy Bobby Gordon

Favianna Rodriguez, an artist whose work appears at citizenM, a new hotel on Meta's Menlo Park campus. She is photographed in her East Bay studio.

Solar panels could power Woodside Town Hall and 19th century Independence Hall

By Neil Gonzales

Woodside's 140-year-old Independence Hall could see a high-tech element added.

Woodside leaders are revisiting the possibility of having solar panels installed on the roofs of the historic building and Town Hall next door, both on Whiskey Hill Road.

During a meeting last month, the Town Council voted 4-2 on a resolution to pursue the proposal in collaboration with local electricity provider Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE) should Woodside staff determine that the project will bring cost savings or other benefits to the community. Councilmembers

Brian Dombkowski and Dick Brown dissented.

The council indicated that the town will also have to gauge if there's enough community support for the project. The matter would return to the council for final approval.

"The council wanted to make sure that residents were aware of the proposal and wanted to see more details on the cost savings," Mayor Jenn Wall said in an email. "The council approved a resolution authorizing a letter of understanding with PCE. PCE will now select a contractor to construct a number of projects for public entities. The Woodside project is one of those proposed to be undertaken by PCE."

After PCE picks a contractor, she said, the proposal will come back to the council for further evaluation into "whether there is a sufficient public benefit to proceed."

During their deliberation of the project, council members raised concern that not many in the community knew the proposal — similar to what was studied but rejected four years ago — has come up for consideration.

The council should give "the public another opportunity to show up and lend their support or talk about why they may not support it," Wall said during the meeting.

"I think people would be surprised to understand this is back

on the agenda," Dombkowski said. "I think it'd behoove us to make sure the public is aware."

He added that "a lot of people would be very, very concerned about us doing this in town" given that the project would involve a structure listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Brown agreed strongly on that point. "I can't imagine putting solar panels on this building," he said. "I mean it was built in 1884. This is crazy. I don't mind looking at other alternatives and (suggest) looking for other areas in the town that maybe would not be so disruptive."

In a report to the council, staff

See **SOLAR PANELS**, page 9

'I can't imagine putting solar panels on this building. I mean it was built in 1884. This is crazy. I don't mind looking at other alternatives and (suggest) looking for other areas in the town that maybe would not be so disruptive.'

WOODSIDE COUNCIL MEMBER
DICK BROWN

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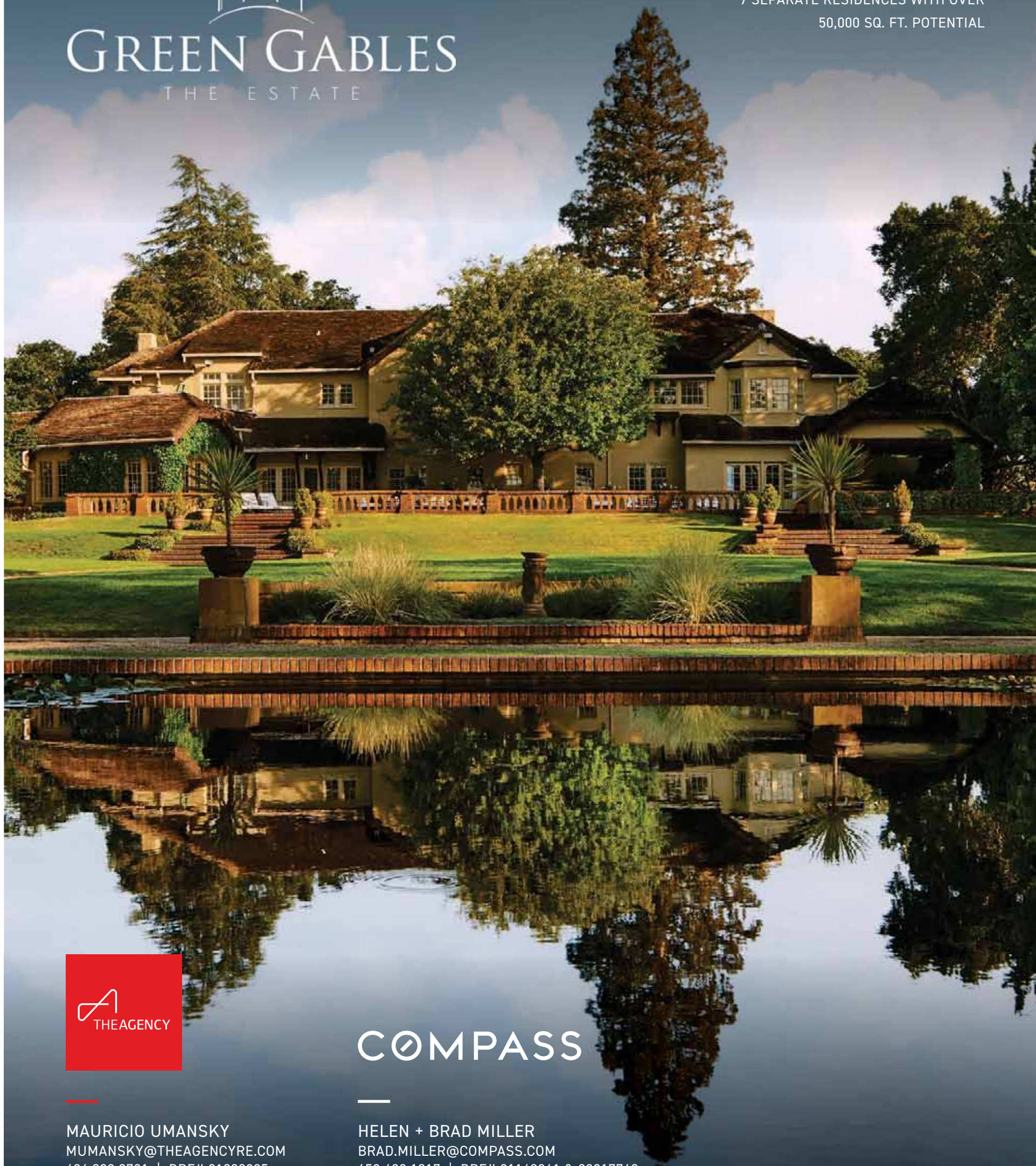




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Portola Valley



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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY

Remembering Marjorie Mader: Former longtime Almanac reporter dies

By Angela Swartz

Marjorie Mader, an Almanac education reporter for 40 years, died on Dec. 31 at her home in Ladera at the age of 93.

Born on Nov. 9, 1930 in Wausau, Wisconsin, Mader earned a bachelor's degree in journalism at Stanford University. She spent a year as a Coro Foundation fellow, studying public affairs, and then worked as a reporter for the Independent Journal in Marin County. She joined The Almanac five years after its inception in 1970, when it was known as The Country Almanac, according to The Almanac's archives.

During that time, she met George Mader, who would become Portola Valley's long-time and legendary town planner. They married and moved to the Menlo Park area in 1956, and then to their new Ladera home in 1965, The Almanac previously reported.

It was a school issue that brought her back into journalism in 1970. After working very hard on a curriculum problem in the Las Lomitas district, The Almanac failed to cover a key meeting. She called the editor at the time, Hedy Boissevain, to complain. Boissevain said the paper didn't have enough reporters and recruited Marjorie to cover Portola Valley.

When Marjorie started with the publication, the Historic Schoolhouse at the Portola Valley Town Center was still a



Courtesy Ann Stillman

Almanac education reporter Marjorie Mader in front of the Historic Schoolhouse in Portola Valley during her early days at the newspaper.

school (its schools, Ormondale and Corte Madera are now on two different sites in town). Today, the building is used for the Town Council and other community meetings.

Marjorie's daughter, Ann Stillman, remembers observing her mother on deadline.

"I knew my mom's work required her to attend night meetings and I understood that," Stillman said. "I saw how stressful the approaching deadlines

were and how some stories came easily for her to write while others were much more difficult to have come together in her mind and on paper."

As was the case for many families in the years before cellphones, there was only one home phone line at the Mader household. This meant that as a teenager Stillman recalled wanting to talk on the phone

See **MARJORIE MADER**, page 17

Portola Valley residents push for town to submit housing plan by January deadline

By Neil Gonzales

Portola Valley residents in support of affordable housing are urging the Town Council to approve sending a housing plan to the state to be certified before the fast-approaching deadline passes.

The council could do just that during its meeting Wednesday, Jan. 10, following the Planning Commission's recent recommendation after The Almanac's Wednesday afternoon press deadline.

About 50 residents signed a letter sent to the council last month that stated: "I support affordable housing. Please optimize efforts, finish the work and submit the housing plan for certification by the 1/31/24 deadline."

Those who signed the petition included Planning Commissioners Anne Kopf-Sill and Jon Goulden and former Mayors Maryann Moise, John Richards and Steve Toben.

The residents' petition followed the town's Dec. 1 release of the latest draft of a state-mandated plan called the housing element. This marks the town's fourth attempt to get its housing element passed after the state Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) sent back the previous drafts for further work with the most recent occurrence in July.

"I believe the petition put forward represents the majority of people in our community who want the housing element certified by Jan. 31," Mayor Sarah

Wernikoff said in an email. "Our staff has been working closely with our HCD reviewer over multiple meetings to ensure items have been addressed. I look forward to the review of these updates by our Planning Commission next week and certification by Jan. 31."

At that Dec. 20 meeting, the commission voted unanimously to recommend that the council adopt the revamped housing element to be filed with HCD.

When the town got word in July that its plan was still inadequate, "it seemed like we were going to have to make a whole bunch of changes," Commissioner Ronny Krashinsky said during the meeting, "but I think what we've arrived at is very minimal changes (and) very palatable, and I just wanted to thank staff — current staff and previous staff — for establishing that productive back-and-forth with HCD and getting to this point."

Kopf-Sill echoed those sentiments. "I'd gotten worried about the comments" from the HCD reviewer, she said, but in the end, "I was pleasantly surprised when I read this all together. It feels consistent with a lot of what the Housing Element Committee did and the work we've done up to now. There's no huge monkey wrench."

For more than a year, Portola Valley has been working on a plan that would satisfy state officials while trying to preserve the town's character to the extent possible.

See **HOUSING PLAN**, page 11

Officials attribute East Palo Alto's no homicides in 2023 to community-wide effort. Some residents say there's more to the picture.

By Emma Donnelly-Higgins

East Palo Alto reported zero homicides in 2023, a significant mark for a city that experienced the highest per capita murders in the nation in 1992.

But city leaders and community members, many of whom are behind the achievement, draw differing views over how the city achieved the widely celebrated statistic.

East Palo Alto Chief of Police

Jeff Liu and Mayor Antonio López attributed the drop to an increase in trust between the public and the police department following the adoption of community policing practices.

In the 1990s, when crime hit its peak, East Palo Alto residents feared and mistrusted their police department, whose rogue cops abused residents, sometimes harassing and beating them. Today, Liu is proud of the department he runs, which follows a community policing

model that includes holding monthly open meetings to discuss crime, giving back to the community through charity events and being a front-facing force, with many officers on a first-name basis with city residents.

"I think we have a great deal of community trust," Liu said. "I'm really proud of the relationships that we have with our community members at all levels."

Liu said residents willingly served as witnesses, shared

surveillance videos and offered police information about deaths, helping the department solve all five homicides that occurred in 2022. However, Liu said he could not comment on the status of specific cases since none have been adjudicated yet.

"With the return of what we consider community policing, it has brought about a trust factor where folks are not so fearful of the community police, but they work with them to try to eradicate crime," said the Rev.

Deborah Lewis-Virges of Saint Mark AME Zion Church in East Palo Alto.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recognizes community violence as a "critical public health problem" in the United States, suggests that involving community members in prevention efforts and addressing underlying issues that contribute to violence can improve safety.

See **EAST PALO ALTO**, page 19

TOWN OF WOODSIDE
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DISTRICTS 2, 4, AND 5
WILL HAVE TERMS OF FOUR YEARS.

DISTRICT MAP: <http://tinyurl.com/5n967ph4>

Meetings are held on
the first and third Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m.

The Planning Commission participates in the administration of the planning laws and policies of the Town. It is responsible for recommending to the Town Council ordinances and resolutions necessary to implement the General Plan and adopted development policy. The Commission also conducts necessary public hearings to administer the planning laws and policies of the Town and acts upon applications for zoning amendments, conditional use permits, variances, subdivisions, and other related functions as may be assigned by the Council.

Interested residents are encouraged to check residency requirements, request information, and submit applications to the Town Clerk, Jennifer Li, by emailing: jli@woodsidetown.org.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Friday, February 2, 2024, by 5:00 p.m.

INTERVIEW AND APPOINTMENT BY TOWN COUNCIL:
Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 7:00 p.m.



Town of Atherton
Planning Commission

January 24, 2024

REGULAR MEETING 6:00 P.M.

This meeting is held virtually and in-person at the Council Chambers
80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Atherton Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to consider a recommendation to the City Council to amend the "Heritage Tree Preservation Standards and Specifications" to align Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) standards in the R1-A and R1-B zoning districts.

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

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

Topic: Atherton Planning Commission Regular Meeting
Time: January 24, 2024, 06:00 PM
Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 841 5024 9099

One tap mobile:

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(Washington DC)

+13052241968, 84150249099# US

Find your local number:

<https://ci-atherton-ca.zoom.us/j/kgLcVN4cq>

Remote Public Comments:

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

Email:

planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us

bbendix@ci.atherton.ca.us

Description: The purpose of the amendments is to consider recommendations to the City Council on the alignment of Tree Protection Zone (TPZ) standards in the R1-A and R1-B Zoning Districts. A copy of the Planning Commission staff report and draft amendments to the Heritage Tree Preservation Standards and Specifications can be found online, by Friday, January 19, 2024, here: <https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/641/Agendas-Minutes>

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

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that said recommended amendments to the "Heritage Tree Preservation Standards and Specifications" is set for hearing by the Planning Commission at its meeting on **January 24, 2024 at 6:00 PM** via teleconference accessible through the above-described information, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the amendments should or should not be approved.

IF YOU CHALLENGE any amendments to the "Heritage Tree Preservation Standards and Specifications" in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission at, or prior to, the public hearing.

If you have any questions on the item please contact Brittany Bendix, Town Planner, at bbendix@ci.atherton.ca.us or (408) 688-2432. Any attendee who wishes accommodation for a disability should contact the Building Division at (650) 752-0542 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Date Published: January 12, 2024

ATHERTON PLANNING COMMISSION
/s/ Brittany Bendix
Brittany Bendix, Town Planner

Established 1965

The Almanac

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Atherton, Portola Valley,
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CRIME BRIEF

Fan who broke into Steph Curry's home to get an autograph turned himself in, Atherton police say

The man arrested for allegedly breaking into the Atherton home of Golden State Warriors star Steph Curry in October to ask for an autograph turned himself in on Dec. 19, according to Atherton police.

At around 7:40 p.m., Sheng Gao, 19, of Cupertino self-surrendered to the warrant at the Atherton Police Department, said Atherton police Cmdr. Dan Larsen in an email.

Police then issued Gao was a promise to appear with a new court date of Feb. 20. He was released on his signed promise to appear.

Curry was not home at the time of the break-in but the family nanny and his three children were, according to San Mateo County District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe.

Gao walked up to Curry's security gate at about 5:50 p.m. on Oct. 15, the DA's Office wrote in a case summary. He pressed the "Call" button and the "Ring" button and the gate opened. He then walked into the home after checking the unlocked front door.

Atherton police officers found Gao walking along El Camino Real. The nanny and surveillance footage helped confirm he was the man in the Curry home, Wagstaffe said.

— Angela Swartz

COMMUNITY BRIEFS



Courtesy Ravenswood City School District

Ravenswood City School District Superintendent Gina Sudaria celebrates the completion of Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Middle School on Jan. 9.

Ravenswood district celebrates grand opening of middle school project

After over three years of design work and construction, the Ravenswood City School District celebrated the grand opening of the new Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Middle School on Tuesday, Jan. 9.

"Today is a celebration of the future we are building together for our students, and all that is still to come," officials said in a district Instagram post.

Atherton gas-powered leaf blower \$250 rebate program

The town of Atherton is giving residents who purchase an electric or battery-powered leaf blower a \$250 rebate as it readies for its gas-powered leaf blower ban on July 1.

Atherton residents who purchase a qualifying electric or battery-powered leaf blower from a local retailer or online can submit a rebate application online at surveymonkey.com/r/LeafBlowerRebate or download application from tinyurl.com/athertonleafrebate to drop off/mail along with proof of purchase at 80 Fair Oaks Lane Atherton, CA 94027.

The rebate offer is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. There are 60 \$250 rebates remaining, a town staffer said on Tuesday, Jan. 9. The town had 100 to give out.

For more information and to apply, visit the town's website at ci.atherton.ca.us.

Becker takes over as leader of Bay Area lawmakers group

Menlo Park lawmaker to lead California Legislative Bay Area Caucus

By Gennady Sheyner

State Sen. Josh Becker, D-Menlo Park, won a plum assignment on Jan. 4 when the California Legislative Bay Area Caucus elected him as its chair for the coming year.

Becker, who is seeking his second term in the Senate, is succeeding Assemblymember Phil Ting, D-San Francisco, who has led the caucus for eight years. The vote occurred during the Bay Area Caucus' annual summit on Jan. 4. The Caucus, which consists of 27 lawmakers, also elected Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, D-Oakland, as its vice chair.

Becker told this publication that he is excited about having a larger role in addressing the Peninsula's biggest problems. As the leader of the group, he said he wants to look across the region for local solutions that work — whether it's on education, affordable housing or climate — and to scale them up.

He gave as an example his proposed legislature to encourage more interim modular housing, an approach that was pioneered in Mountain View and is now being implemented in Palo Alto to provide shelter and social services to unhoused individuals. Becker said he believes can similarly use developments of this sort in other regions to address their affordable housing



Magali Gauthier

Assembly member Marc Berman, left, listens to state Sen. Josh Becker, right, speak to attendees of a groundbreaking for Homekey Palo Alto in 2023.

problems. The legislation, Senate Bill 634, would create a streamlined approval process for developments of this sort.

"I'm excited because it gives me a regional platform to work on local issues that are really regional issues, including homelessness, transportation, affordable housing and even climate resilience and wildlife preparedness," Becker said.

Becker, who last year served as vice chair of the Bay Area Caucus, also issued a statement after the summit thanking Ting and other caucus members for electing him to the top position for the coming legislative session.

"I am grateful to my colleagues for entrusting me with this responsibility to lead our caucus and to take a greater role in working on solutions that impact our region," Becker said.

In a statement, Ting called Becker a "creative legislator who is always looking at new ideas and approaches to solve our many regional issues."

"Along with Assemblymember Wicks, he will fight to make sure we get our share of resources and pass legislation that helps our region," Ting said. ■

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

Work still ongoing on Highway 84 near Woodside

By Angela Swartz

Caltrans is still continuing work to fix Highway 84 near Woodside, which slid 250 feet after a storm last March, according to a Jan. 5 Caltrans newsletter. Crews worked during the holiday weeks and during rainy weather when possible, said Caltrans spokesperson Alejandro Lopez in an email.

The roadway, between Foxhill and Portola Valley roads, was completely shut down until July

when Caltrans reopened it for one-way traffic.

Ongoing work on the project includes permanent repairs on the lower slope, work on the drainage system, forming wailing beams, and culvert and vegetation control.

Upcoming work includes lower slope repair and landscaping the upper slope.

Background on the shutdown

The damaged area, also called La Honda Road, is east of

Highway 35, and traffic had to detour on Old La Honda and Kings Mountain roads during the full closure.

Two-way traffic isn't expected to be reopened until March of 2024 at the earliest, and could take until May, according to Caltrans.

To sign up for the newsletter with updates on the project, email SR84slideupdates@dot.ca.gov.

For updates on slide repairs, go to tinyurl.com/highway84updatesite. ■



Local Agency Formation Commission
455 County Center, 2nd Floor, Redwood City, CA 94063-1663
Phone (650) 363-4224 • Fax (650) 363-4849

NOTICE OF CANCELLATION OF PROTEST HEARING BY THE SAN MATEO LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN by the San Mateo Local Agency Formation Commission that the protest hearing for LAFCo File No. 22-09 scheduled for February 16, 2024 at 2:30pm has been cancelled.

The protest hearing for LAFCo File No. 22-09 – A proposal to establish the East Palo Alto Sanitary District (EPASD), an independent special district, as a subsidiary district of the City of East Palo Alto (City) will be set and noticed at a later date if required.

Please contact Rob Bartoli, Executive Officer, if you have any questions at (650) 363-4224 or via email at rbartoli@smcgo.org.

Dated: January 3, 2024



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Atherton mayor's primary focus in 2024 is housing plan

By Angela Swartz

Diana Hawkins-Manuelian joined the Atherton City Council during what was an atypical time. The world was locked down because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now she finds herself leading the town as it must complete its number one priority, like many other jurisdictions across the state, is to get its state-mandated housing plans across the finish line.

"You don't want to be the person who changes the whole nature of the town," she said. At the same time, Hawkins-Manuelian has emphasized the consequences of not submitting a compliant housing element, such as lawsuits and the "builder's remedy," a California provision that allows developers to bypass local land-use rules when cities fail to garner state approval for a long-range housing plan. The 2023-31 housing element plan requires the town to plan for 348 units over the next eight years.

Hawkins-Manuelian, who mentors startups outside of her council work, describes herself as shy so campaigning during the pandemic, in some ways, was easier for her. Candidates put up lawn signs, but there was no door-to-door meet and greets.

When she joined the council in 2020, meetings were on Zoom. Once they did return to in-person, just a few masked members of the community would attend. But flash forward to January 2023 and residents and camera crews crowded (about 250) the

town's new Council Chambers for the City Council's eleventh hour approval of its state-mandated housing. The state is calling on the town, and others, to include multifamily housing in the plan which is again due back to the state on Jan. 31.

"There was a lot of emotional stuff," she said, recalling the residents who attended the meeting wearing bright green and red T-shirts expressing their discontent with potential upzoning plots of land in their neighborhood from single to multifamily. She remembers residents holding hands as they awaited the council's vote on the housing plan. She got one call on her personal cellphone from an angry constituent.

"It's a heavy lift; a somewhat impossible task," she said during a Jan. 4 interview with *The Almanac* outside of the town's newest cafe, Mademoiselle Colette. This is her first time serving as the town's mayor, a one-year term that the council members typically rotate into. "Back then (last winter) we agreed less than we do now."

While other council members have been more hesitant to consider parts of town for multifamily housing, Hawkins-Manuelian has been more pragmatic in her approach. She and former council member Bob Polito advocated for repurposing the Gilmore House, currently occupied by Police Chief Steve McCulley, in Holbrook-Palmer Park with workforce housing. She said the site is still on the table and she likes it in particular because it could have its own entrance and exit.

She also initially supported upzoning lots along El Camino Real because they were along a major thoroughfare (before consultants discovered these

smaller lots were not ideally sized because you need at least half an acre for a site to be included in housing plans as affordable housing.

"The problem is the city owns no (very little) land," she said. "You can't develop (or buy land) because it's so expensive here." She said her support of designating lots for development along El Camino put her right in the butt of some of the most impassioned residents.

The site near Golden State Warriors' star Steph Curry's home, 23 Oakwood Blvd., is currently the only potential multifamily housing site still on the table, she noted.

The council will send its latest draft back to the state in the coming months, Hawkins-Manuelian said.

How she got involved in Atherton's government

Her civic engagement began as a member of the town's Environmental Programs Committee, which she ultimately chaired before leaving for the council.

Hawkins-Manuelian has lived in Atherton for over 30 years now. She was the newcomer in a four-way contested race who earned the endorsement of incumbent Rick DeGolia and unseated longtime council member Cary Wiest.

Refocus on emergency preparedness

Last winter the town saw a number of major power outages and road closures caused by high winds that loosened tree roots, knocking down trees and power lines.

"I'd like to refocus on emergency preparedness and resilience," Hawkins-Manuelian said. "We have been experiencing

more frequent and intense record breaking weather incidences, power outages, wide fire, smoke days and flooding, and the ever present threat of earthquakes. ... It's not an anomaly."

Last year, City Manager George Rodericks brought up the possibility of undergrounding power lines. He noticed an uptick in comments on Nextdoor of interest in moving utility lines from power poles to underground to reduce issues during storms. He suggested residents consider forming underground utility districts.

Underground power lines may not cause fires, but they can be damaged by lighting strikes, earthquakes, flooding and construction excavation, PG&E has said.

Since 1966, the town has required that utility services for any newly constructed dwelling unit be located underground from the utility pole to the structure, according to a 2023 newsletter from Rodericks. Though this requirement does not remove poles from the right-of-way, it does reduce the clutter of overhead wires.

Underground utility districts can take anywhere from three to five years (or more) to complete, Rodericks noted.

"In my experience, I have seen individual property owners' costs range from \$15,000 to \$50,000," he said at the time. "Costs can be assessed over a long-term funding horizon, such as 20-30 years."

Hawkins-Manuelian said a resident has been looking into Pebble Beach's undergrounding of its power lines.

The town doesn't qualify as a high fire zone, according to PG&E, so it can't get money from the utility company to pay for undergrounding, she noted.

She also noted that the new

Town Hall also came with an emergency operations center.

Since last summer, the Atherton Disaster and Preparedness Team (A.D.A.P.T.) began collecting information from elderly people in town so that neighbors can help them during an emergency. The group may be able to connect them with a resident who has backup battery power through a Tesla Powerwall.

Train museum

The town is in the midst of constructing the exterior of its new mini train museum at the former train depot.

The council will soon discuss how to outfit the interior of the 620-foot space.

Community involvement

Hawkins-Manuelian would like to conduct a townwide survey to gauge residents' priorities. The last time the town did such a survey was in 2014, she noted.

The town hasn't determined how the survey will be distributed.

The town also recently put together focus groups of senior citizens.

The deck in front of the library has become a community gathering place. The new cafe, which opened at the end of September, will have to contend with where its patrons will eat and sip on drinks given that there's no indoor seating. Hawkins-Manuelian said the town is considering if it can loan the cafe space in the former Council Chambers building for the cafe.

Town staff will present an Earth Day work plan to the council on Jan. 17 for their consideration and approval. The event, hosted annually in April, will return to its roots in the center of Atherton, the new mayor said.

See **ATHERTON**, page 9

Eshoo backs Simitian to succeed her in Congress

Santa Clara County supervisor picks up key endorsement in crowded race to represent Silicon Valley

By Gennady Sheyner

With the primary election for the coveted Silicon Valley congressional seat less than two months away, Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian has received a key endorsement in his bid for Congress: U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, who will be retiring at the end of this year.

Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, who has represented Silicon Valley for 31 years and who announced last November that she is stepping down at the end of her current term, said Wednesday, Jan. 10, that she is endorsing Simitian.

"This special place calls for a top-notch representative, and I believe that there is one person who has the ability to represent the people of this special place, and that is Joe Simitian," Eshoo said in a video statement.

She called Simitian a "seasoned and effective legislator" and pointed to the more than 150 locally elected officials who have endorsed his candidacy.

"Integrity, experience, determination — that's Joe Simitian, and I am so proud to endorse him for Congress," she said.

Eshoo's endorsement isn't particularly surprising. The two lawmakers are friends who have

each represented communities in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties for more than three decades. Before his current stint as a supervisor, Simitian served in the state Assembly and the state Senate, where his districts overlapped with Eshoo's.

The endorsement represents a boost for Simitian, who is one of the frontrunners in a crowded field that also includes former San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo, state Assemblyman Evan Low, Palo Alto City Council members Julie Lythcott-Haims and Greg Tanaka, former Saratoga City Council member Rishi Kumar, Marine veteran Peter Dixon,

former Menlo Park Mayor Peter Ohtaki, researcher Joby Bernstein and attorney Ahmed Mostafa.

"Congresswoman Anna Eshoo knows the people of our region," Simitian said in a statement. "She knows my work. And she knows what it takes to get the job done in Congress. That's what makes her endorsement solid gold! I'm enormously grateful."

Other contenders in the crowded race have also been picking up endorsements from federal elected officials over the past month. Peter Dixon, a Marine veteran who has made closer scrutiny of Pentagon spending a key component of his campaign,

earned the endorsement of six Congressional Democrats: Jason Crow, Mikie Sherrill, Pat Ryan, Jared Golden, Don Davis and Chris Deluzio.

Low's supporters include U.S. Rep. Ro Khanna and Sen. Laphonza Butler. Lythcott-Haims, meanwhile, has received an endorsement from U.S. Sen. Cory Booker, D-New Jersey.

The primary election will be held on March 5. The top two vote-getters will then move on to the general election on Nov. 5. ■

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SOLAR PANELS

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noted that PCE would make sure the installation at Independence Hall follows federal standards for work on buildings listed on the national register.

If those standards are met and the installation is as low profile as possible, Woodside History Committee Chairperson Thalia Lubin said her group supports the project.

“In concept, I don’t see a problem with it,” she told The Almanac. The project should “not detract from the historic integrity of the building.”

Otherwise, she said, “it seems a good thing for the town to set an example of installing solar panels as a community benefit.”

The project would reduce electricity costs and yield other advantages for Woodside, Wall



Magali Gauthier

Independence Hall, left, is one of two the Town Council is considering installing solar panels on.

said.

“Specifically, the solar PV (photovoltaic) system is expected to provide cost savings as the amount paid for both electricity generation as well as transmission

and distribution would be reduced,” she said. “Solar panels combined with storage systems could also help to harden Town Hall and make it less vulnerable to natural disasters.”

The town also benefits from teaming up with PCE because the agency would execute “all aspects of the procurement process, administration of the construction and maintenance of the solar PV system, and secure tax credits and delivery of installation and services at cost,” she said.

Moreover, Wall said, the project is in line with the town’s Climate Action Plan goal of bringing in renewable energy.

The project “would reduce the amount of energy the town pulls from the grid, potentially resulting in significant energy cost savings over the life of the system,” PCE spokesperson Darren Goode said. “In addition, the Town Hall’s daytime operations would be energized directly with a renewable power source.”

He acknowledged that the council wants further information before possibly

granting its approval.

“The council wants to review final energy savings estimates after Peninsula Clean Energy selects a vendor and establishes the build cost for the project,” he said. “They also want to review details within the agreement between the town of Woodside and Peninsula Clean Energy.”

A previous solar-panel proposal involving another company and a different financing structure came in 2020. The town considered self-funding the project costing more than \$300,000, but the council ultimately decided against it, citing concerns about the historic designation of Independence Hall, the return on investment and the fact there were no competitive bids. ■

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ATHERTON

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The day is primarily intended to educate residents on the importance of taking care of the planet and inspire individual

action, while also fostering community.

The town held the event in Holbrook-Palmer Park in 2022.

It then partnered with East Palo Alto and Menlo Park to host a much larger celebration at Menlo-Atherton High School in 2023.

This year’s event will take place on Sunday, April 21, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m., according to event organizer and town of Atherton staffer Rachael Londer.

Menlo Park and East Palo Alto

are also coordinating to host a Love Our Earth Festival, and they are aiming to host it on April 14, Londer said.

Plans for this year’s Atherton event include a demonstration of how to use a fire extinguisher, Hawkins-Manuelian said.

“I would like to see us continue to build community and community engagement through more

community events and activities at the park and new Town Center by the town and in collaboration with the library,” she told residents during the December council meeting when she was appointed mayor.

Office hours

Hawkins-Manuelian will host office hours on Mondays from

noon to 1 p.m. in the first floor administrative conference room at Town Hall, 80 Fair Oaks Lane. Appointments are not required.

Make an appointment with Hawkins-Manuelian at dhawkins-manuelian@ci.atherton.ca.us. ■

Email Editor Angela Swartz at
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NEWS

Antonio López voted East Palo Alto's mayor

Council concerns brew over López's attendance

By Nicholas Mazzoni

While there was some apprehension among the East Palo Alto council members to appoint the least experienced officials to take leadership roles, the council appointed Antonio López and Martha Barragan to the mayor and vice mayor roles, respectively.

Outgoing mayor Lisa Gauthier, said in previous years, the council has given newer council officials a chance to lead, and she feels city staff and the council will help support López and Barragan as they acclimate to their roles.

"I know, in other years, we gave people new to the council an opportunity to lead as well," Gauthier said.

Council members Ruben Abrica and Carlos Romero were hesitant to appoint Lopez to the mayor's seat, noting that his tardiness and absence from previous City Council meetings would need to improve for him to serve the leadership role effectively.

Romero noted López will have his work cut out for him as he tries to balance a full-time job

and the city's mayor position. López, whose term ends at the end of the year, is also campaigning for the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Supervisor Warren Slocum's District 4 seat.

Gauthier Romero's concerns about tardiness and attendance but added that she believes López is capable. Gauthier is also vying for the Board of Supervisors District 4 seat, representing Redwood City, East Palo Alto, unincorporated North Fair Oaks and a portion of Menlo Park east of El Camino Real.

"I know we must follow you and stay on top of you. You are both very new to the council, but I believe in you, and I hope my colleagues can support you," Gauthier said.

Leading into the Dec. 12 City Council meeting, it was assumed under previous, yet unofficial, mayor rotations that Council member Romero would be named vice mayor. However, Gauthier said it would be nice to have a woman and a man in the leadership roles, and most agreed, with Abrica abstaining from voting, noting that he wanted to stick to the unofficial protocol.

"The mayor that steps down goes to the end of the line. If someone new is elected, they go behind the mayor, who steps down because they are brand new. In this case, Barragan is the latest addition, so she goes to the end of the line," Abrica said. "But again, we never wrote it down."

Abrica said that he is a stickler for procedures, and when it is someone's time to serve, he believes they deserve that opportunity, even if he disagrees. He noted it was the same reason he supported López as the mayor.

"I possibly would not have supported you (López), but I feel that it is the order of business to do that," Abrica said.

Gauthier thanked the council for supporting her during her term as mayor. She said the council is like a family.

"We are not always going to agree on items, and we don't always have to agree, but it's what you learn through the process, and we can always be cordial and respectful of each other," Gauthier said. ■

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

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HOUSING PLAN

continued from page 5

Under the state Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) program, the town must plan for 253 new units during the current 2023-31 cycle — a significant jump from the 64 in the last eight-year period.

Like the mayor, town Interim Planning and Building Director Jon Biggs expressed confidence that the fourth iteration of the plan is the charm.

“We have been checking in with HCD while developing the amendments so the changes reflect their guidance,” Biggs said in an email. “Naturally, we have kept the unique characteristics of Portola Valley at the forefront as we have drafted the changes.”

He pointed out that among the issues the new draft addresses include providing “additional certainty with the timing/availability of pipeline projects” and giving a zoning-density range of 20-23 units per acre for multifamily housing.

The revised plan also calls for the town to boost efforts and reassess sites to encourage the production of accessory dwelling units, or ADUs, if numbers are falling below projections.

“If there is a shortfall in anticipated ADU production the reviewer (required) tweaks to the town’s existing ADU programs,” Biggs said.

If the plan still fails to get certified, Portola Valley would be open to financial penalties, legal action from the state and the so-called “builder’s remedy” — a state provision that allows developers to bypass local land-use regulations to build their projects.

“I think we do need a housing element to keep us out of the clutches of any developers and to set our own path,” said resident David Cardinal, who signed the letter and spoke at the Dec. 13 meeting. “I think we need to get our jobs done.”

Other residents, however, have raised concern over increased housing and upzoning. They have argued that building more homes would damage the town’s rural makeup and heighten fire hazards in a region already at risk for wildfires.

Funds for low-income housing efforts

In a related matter, the council on Dec. 13 approved a policy setting aside funds for low-income housing efforts.

According to a staff report, \$4.6 million in developer money in lieu of building affordable-housing units is currently available for that purpose. But funding sources can also include grants and money from other

kinds of agreements.

While the policy supports the use of money the town already has for affordable housing, Biggs said, the council removed language to clarify that it retains discretion over the expenditure of Portola Valley funds.

The slight revision worries Cardinal in that the present or a future council could repurpose affordable-housing funds for other than that objective.

Financial pressures on the town budget could prompt leaders not to “actually spend our affordable-housing money on encouraging affordable housing,” he said.

But Wernikoff assured that the funding program the policy speaks to is “for the sole purpose of affordable housing,” she said. ■

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OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include: **Trudy Lucy Bowman**, 95, a Palo Alto resident who came to the city via New Zealand, Israel and San Francisco, who loved caring for babies, feeding people and showing hospitality and who actively volunteered for countless causes and non-profits she believed in, including the Jewish Community Center, on Nov. 18, 2023.

Joseph Robert Meyers, 78, a resident of Palo Alto and career technical writer who as a Renaissance man possessed talents spanning from mathematics to photography to bicycling to math tutoring at Eastside College Preparatory, and whose family was always at the forefront of his joyous life, on Oct. 12, 2023.

Jean Elsa (Ganz) Sloss, 97, a former resident of Palo Alto and Portola Valley, who with her husband, Louis, was among the original 15 shareholders in Embarcadero Publishing Co., whose life was devoted to community and charity through co-founding Thomas Creek Ranch, an intentional

community in Sonoma County, and the county’s first hospice, and who was a loving mother and an accomplished tennis and pickleball player into her 90s, on Dec. 1, 2023.

Joan Trewhitt, 93, a Woodside resident who worked in the airline industry and was married to her beloved husband, Wayne D. Trewhitt III, for 50 years, who loved skiing and sailing with her grandsons at Lake Tahoe and spending Christmases in Maui, on Dec. 23, 2023.

Madelaine “Mad” Juri Vairora, 72, a former Menlo Park resident and Woodside High School graduate who kicked off her drama career at Canada College and later worked for the city of Fremont’s Community Development Department, on Sept. 22, 2023.

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

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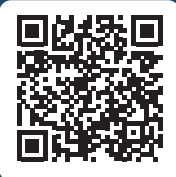
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Fair Oaks Community Center

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.

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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.

FINAL WEEK TO DONATE! Visit AlmanacNews.com/holiday_fund



The Almanac Holiday Fund 2023

THANK YOU FOR DONATING TO THE HOLIDAY FUND

Almanac Holiday Fund Donor List

As of January 10th, 153 donors have contributed
\$349,625 to the Holiday Fund.

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Dennis McBride.....	500
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Packard Foundation.....	15,000
Hewlett Foundation.....	8,750
Menlo Rotary Community Foundation.....	10,000

* Donor did not want to publish the amount of the gift.



Michelle Le

Patrons of St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room in Menlo Park pick up groceries.

St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room: A free meal in a safe, friendly place

By Ruth Gilroy

St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room was founded in 1974. We will celebrate our 50th anniversary in 2024. Our mission statement declares that we provide hot, nutritious meals 52 weeks per year. We charge no fees, ask no questions, and turn no one away. All guests are welcomed with dignity and respect and received in a spirit of hospitality. We serve meals six days a week and, on average, provide around 8,000 meals per month.

We seek to reduce the fear of food insecurity among the less fortunate of southern San Mateo County. We also lessen the fear of where one's next meal might come from for all members of the community because they know that we are a stable organization with a long successful record, and a place where anyone can get a free meal.

The dining room's service to the community has twice been publicly recognized by the Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce with a Golden Acorn Award. The accompanying Proclamations from the city of Menlo Park cited, among other contributions, over 5 million meals served to the community since the dining room opened in 1974. The dining room was also recognized by the Redwood City Council with a Welcoming Stars award for creating a welcoming environment for everyone in our community.

St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room is one of the beneficiaries of The Almanac's Holiday Fund. Donations are divided



equally among this year's 10 non-profit organizations and 100% of the funds raised go directly to the recipients. Donations to the Holiday Fund can be made at almanacnews.com/holiday_fund.

Appreciation from those we serve

Over the years several of our guests have shared stories of how they made it through rough times for their family when they moved to the area because of the food and clothing shared with them when they were in need. Several of these individuals have returned to volunteer in the dining room once they were able to support themselves to repay the kindness they received when they were going through difficult times.

Christmas for the Community

Thanksgiving and Christmas are our busiest days of the year, serving as many as 600 meals on these holidays.

In conjunction with the Menlo Park Fire Protection District, toys are collected during the Christmas season. As many as 2,000 children receive toys during an annual giveaway event held just before Christmas.

Since the pandemic, we have

been distributing the toys in a contactless way. Families register in advance and on our distribution day they drive through our parking lot and toys are placed into the trunks of their cars.

Our Services

St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room serves food daily (except Sunday) from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In addition to a hot meal, guests may take home a bag full of food items, including fresh produce.

We also have a clothing distribution center, which is adjacent to the dining room. It provides shoes, and clothing for men, women and children, blankets, sleeping bags, and baby and infant wear, and diapers.

How You Can Help

St. Anthony's is funded by donations and grants from many individuals, along with local businesses and foundations.

The cost of serving over 94,000 meals and take-home groceries each year is huge and additional donations are welcomed and needed.

We operate through the work of seven paid employees and a dedicated group of volunteers, many of whom have been with us for years.

St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room is located at 3500 Middlefield Road Menlo Park. Contact information: 650-365-9664, paduadiningroom@gmail.com. Website: paduadiningroom.com.

Ruth Gilroy is a Volunteer at St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room.

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)

PENINSULA FOOD SERVICES INC
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-296228
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) PENINSULA FOOF SERVICES INC., located at 120 Glenn Way, Unit 6, San Carlos, CA 94070, San Mateo.
Registered owner(s):
PENINSULA FOOD SERVICE INC.
120 Glenn Wau, Unit 6
San Carlos, CA 94070
State of Incorporation/Organization: California
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 January 03, 2024.
(ALM Jan 12, 19, 26 and Feb 2, 2024)

KYLTEN 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)

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)

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)

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF:
MARIA CLARA TOUYA
Case No.: 23PR000680
To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of MARIA CLARA TOUYA.
A Petition for Probate has been filed by: MARIA TOUYA MILLS in the Superior Court of California, County of SAN MATEO.
The Petition for Probate requests that: MARIA TOUYA MILLS be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.
THE PETITION requests the decedent's will and codicils, if any, be admitted to probate. The will and any codicils are available for examination in the file kept by the court. THE PETITION requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority. A HEARING on the petition will be held on March 27 2024 at 9:00 AM in Dept 1 of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.
If you object to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.
If you are a creditor or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58 (b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law. You may examine the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.
Petitioner in Pro Per:
Maria Touya Mills
17 Politzer Drive
Menlo Park, CA 94025
650-218-7269
(ALM Jan 12, 19 and 26, 2024)

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

COVID cases detected in wastewater hit new high as resources dwindle

By Nick Pasion

COVID-19 cases detected in Palo Alto hit an unprecedented high last week, according to wastewater monitoring from Santa Clara County.

County public health officials reported that COVID-19 levels began climbing in December, and in Palo Alto on Jan. 2, the amount of the virus detected in wastewater, the best method for tracking the virus, peaked at a (marginally) higher level than it ever has when compared to previous years.

Officials say the spike — driven by holiday travel, waning public health precautions and the new dominant JN.1 variant — coincides with a rise in other respiratory diseases like the flu and RSV, so officials are warning the public to take the proper precautions.

“This is the time, the beginning of January, where we kind of expect to see higher levels, and that’s exactly what we are seeing in our wastewater data, not only for COVID, but also for other respiratory viruses,” said Monika Roy, an assistant health officer and communicable disease controller for the County of Santa Clara Public Health Department.

While the number of cases detected in sewage has grown, the number of people going to the hospital to treat COVID has fallen. Nationally, about 30,000 were hospitalized the week after Christmas Day in 2023, compared to 97,000 the same week in 2022, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In California, that number for the same period was 3,516 in 2023 and 6,140 in 2022 (the CDC doesn’t track countywide hospitalizations year over year).

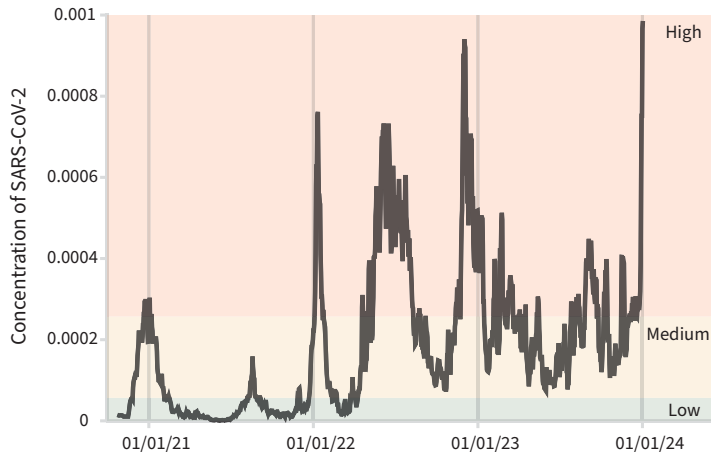


Courtesy Federica Armstrong

Nurse Laura Zimmerman receives her first injection of coronavirus vaccine at the VA Hospital when it was first released in 2020.

Concentrations of SARS-CoV-2 virus in local wastewater

Samples from Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant



Source: Santa Clara County Public Health • Graphic by Zoe Morgan.

But despite recorded cases hitting a new peak in Palo Alto, it may be more difficult to get your hands on resources like tests or vaccines. That’s largely because the federal government ended the COVID-19 federal emergency in May, leading to a drop in free and subsidized resources available to the public, which were once widely available during the height of the pandemic.

California shuttered many of its state-supported test centers last winter as it ended its emergency in May. Stanford, which handed out free PCR test kits to staff, faculty and students, ended its program in March (though at the time of its test sunseting, the school said it would still provide free antigen testing for university-affiliated people).

So, finding a test is tough. Many of the test sites have closed, with a few scattered across the Peninsula still open. Most pharmacies and drug stores sell COVID-19 tests, but those can put you back anywhere from \$5 to \$25. For free tests, the Better Health Pharmacy in San Jose hands out four take-home tests

per person and is open 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday.

To find a COVID-19 vaccination, the CDC has a database you can search for locations offering the most recent iteration of the booster. In Palo Alto, the Walgreens at 4170 El Camino Real and at 2605 Middlefield Road, as well as the CVS Pharmacies at 352 University Ave. and the CVS at 855 El Camino Real, all had vaccines in stock as of Friday, Jan. 5. The pharmacies recommend you book an appointment ahead of time.

If you don’t have insurance, in September, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launched the Bridge Access Program, which offers uninsured individuals free COVID-19 vaccines. To find a pharmacy that offers vaccines or one participating in the Bridge program, visit the CDC’s vaccine locator vaccines.gov.

For kids who are uninsured, the Vaccines for Children Program can show pharmacies where they can also get the jab for free.

For those who are at higher risk for serious infection, both Santa Clara County and the CDC recommend that individuals take Paxlovid, a Pfizer drug, within the first five days of COVID-19 symptoms. It has been show to be highly effective at quashing the virus. Officials approved the drug for those who are at high risk for severe COVID-19, who tend to be those over 65, or who have other conditions like obesity or asthma.

“The earlier they get Paxlovid, the better,” Roy said. “That reduces their chance of being severely ill, hospitalized and dying.” To get the drug, reach out to your health care provider. ■

SALT PONDS

continued from page 1

to a boom of that whole region.”

The effort to restore the area began around 2003. “The local community started buying back the land that Cargill had and began to rewild it,” she said.

Thanks to the South Bay Salt Pond Restoration Project, a lot of the flora and fauna of the region is returning to its original state. Her artwork captures this, down to the seaweeds and microorganisms.

Rodriguez recalls marveling at the salt ponds in the region while flying over that area. “From the plane you could see these beautiful blocks of color — bright pink, bright green,” she said.

The reason behind these extravagant colors is the presence of natural bacteria in the marshlands. “I love that!” she said. “The bacteria ended up in my art.” They include

dunaliella, halobacteria and synechococcus.

Also featured in the art are birds that have returned to the region, including the American avocet, marsh wren and long-billed curlew. “All these birds almost went extinct,” Rodriguez said, thrilled that the environment is now thriving with native species. The human figure in her art is shown tending to marsh plants like pickleweed and cordgrass.

Moreover, in their natural state, the marshes also serve as a flood protection barrier in the face of rising sea levels.

Rodriguez identifies as a cultural strategist who promotes the value of environmental stewardship through her art. “I really try to see what inspires me from the landscape. I like to understand the ecosystem that I work in. I want people to be aware,” she said. “I can give someone a research paper about the wetlands and they’ll just roll their eyes at me but

through art I can speak to people’s emotions.”

Her work is an amalgamation of art and activism. “(It’s about) the ability to leverage the catalytic power of culture towards social good,” she said.

She hopes the people staying at citizenM will engage with her artwork in a deep way. “I hope people will get curious, take a moment from their busy day and go visit the wetlands. It’s literally across the street.”

She’s keen to create a modified, scaled up version of this piece of art and work with the park service to display it outdoors, in the wetlands. The objective is to educate people about the importance of respecting nature. “I want to make sure this artwork has another life,” she said.

Rodriguez also hopes hotel officials will get more involved in spreading the word about restoration in the coming days and make it part of their corporate responsibility.



Courtesy Favianna Rodriguez

Favianna Rodriguez’s digitally created artwork, center, is displayed in citizenM’s Menlo Park property.

“I would love the hotel to sponsor cleanups or a weekly walk; have a little brochure (available at the hotel),” she said. “I would want the hotel, as well as the tech companies that are there, to be a liaison

to the wetlands project. There is so much power in that little region.” ■

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

MARJORIE MADER

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with friends, but couldn’t when her mom was on deadline and waiting for a source to call back.

“My mom worked for The Almanac for decades and she was able to balance family and work; to both my parents, family was very important,” Stillman said. “I have always been a working mom and I know my family fills my heart and my work is also important to me. Having the right balance is not easy, but good to strive for.”

Marjorie started the job during the days of typewriters and eventually worked on a Mac.

“I think my mom enjoyed journalism and being a reporter; capturing the stories or the information,” Stillman said. Her mother had a genuine interest in people and had the ability to ask probing questions, she said.

Stillman remembers her mother pulling out a notebook to take notes during phone calls with family members. Then she’d report out during dinner.

“She wouldn’t take a phone call without taking notes,” she said.

Former Almanac editor Richard Hine said in an email that Mader was part of a core group of Almanac staffers who were deeply embedded in the community and made the paper a distinctive and valued community asset during more than four decades, dating to the early years of the paper.

“After I arrived at The Almanac in 1988, I often encountered readers with an unusually strong and personal connection to the paper, saying they read it from ‘cover to cover’ and considered it

their paper,” he said. “That was due to staffers like Marjorie, who had a deep knowledge of the community, in particular, local school districts, which she covered tirelessly for years, sitting through countless hours of board meetings. Marjorie and her late husband, George Mader, who became an internationally recognized expert on urban planning in areas threatened by earthquakes and landslides, were community treasures.”

Marjorie covered Portola Valley schools, the Menlo Park City School District and the Sequoia Union High School District, as well as community colleges and regional educational issues. She also wrote profiles of impressive Midpeninsula residents.

She and George traveled across Europe while George completed his Fulbright Program in Holland. Marjorie loved the mountains and to visit her native Wisconsin. They also visited places prone to major earthquakes in places like Turkey and China through George’s disaster preparedness work.

“They did a lot together,” Stillman reflected. She’s also grateful that she was able to live so close to them (Stillman lives in unincorporated West Menlo Park) for many years. “They worked so well with decision making; picking the artwork they had. They evaluated, but always together.”

The town of Portola Valley recognized the couple for their work in the community in 2001.

Marjorie is preceded in death by her husband George, who died in 2022. She is survived

by her three children: Steve, Ann and Phil. Steve and Helen live in Santa Rosa. Phil and Alison live in Woodside and have three children — Caroline, Max and Gillian. Ann and

John Stillman have two children Cayla (who lives in Portland, Oregon) and Bradley (who lives in Sacramento). Steve is a local contractor, Ann is director of public for San Mateo County,

and Phil is an investment manager.

Memorial services have not yet been planned. ■

Email Editor Angela Swartz at
aswartz@almanacnews.com.

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The Almanac Mountain View Voice Palo Alto Weekly

Virginia ("Ginny") Arcuri Williams

(1927 – 2023)

Virginia ("Ginny") Arcuri Williams of Menlo Park, 96, died on December 11.

Ginny was the fourth of ten children, born in 1927 in the coal mining company town of Lorado, West Virginia – "Lorado" being a portmanteau of the name of the Lorain Coal and Dock Company. Her parents were among many others who emigrated to West Virginia from the village of San Giovanni in Fiori in Southern Italy. The family briefly moved back to Calabria in the early 1930s, but returned to West Virginia within the year.

She spent her childhood in Lorado and on a farm in Proctorville, Ohio. She attended Rome High School, where she was known as "Jinx" and graduated with honors; her Rome Senior yearbook superlative was "Never afraid to speak her mind" – and she wasn't. She went on Marshall College in West Virginia, double majoring in Art and History and finishing her collegiate studies in just two and a half years.

Upon graduating from Marshall in 1949, she moved to Kansas City, Missouri, with a dream of training to be a flight attendant and traveling the world. Among the requirements for flight attendants in the early 1950s was that they be short statured (she stood just 5'1" at her tallest) and single. In Kansas City she met Ernest (Ernie) Williams. After deciding to marry him, she dropped out of the program and became a teacher. She and Ernie eloped in August 1950 and later formally celebrated their wedding at her parents' home on New Year's Eve, which they considered their anniversary.

The couple had two daughters (Victoria and Angela) in Missouri, and moved to Menlo Park in 1956, where they had their third child, Christopher. Ernie and Virginia purchased their home in Menlo Park in 1962, which they lived in for over 50 years.

Virginia was a lifelong educator, teaching high school in Spring Valley, Illinois and at Wellington High School in Wellington, Mo. After moving to California, she received her California teaching credential from San Jose State. In Menlo Park, she served Ravenswood School District for over thirty years, which included sixteen years at Menlo Oaks and eleven at James Flood School, where she taught 4th and 6th grades and bilingual education. She retired from teaching in 1991.

She was a voracious reader and accomplished gardener, particularly proud of her yearly tomato crop and the tangerine tree she cultivated for decades. Her grandchildren who grew up in Menlo Park and San Carlos spent many hours at "Nana's," making crafts and eating junk food. She took them on cross-country train trips and taught them how to make bread and, of course, "never be afraid to speak their minds." She loved babies and children and was delighted to have met all six of her great grandchildren.

After Ernie's death, she moved to assisted living at the Elms in San Carlos in 2018, and her family would like to thank the Elms for their care of Ginny.

She is survived by her three children, Vicki Williams (Patrick) of San Carlos, Angela Williams Merlone (Steven) of Menlo Park, Chris Williams of Republic, Missouri; five grandchildren, Chiara Williams Portner of San Carlos, Gina Merlone Marek of San Carlos, Joe Merlone of Sacramento, Michael Merlone of San Francisco, and Aaron Williams of Republic, Missouri; six great-grandchildren; and dozens upon dozens of nieces and nephews and grand nieces and nephews.



PAID OBITUARY

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

continued from page 6

Sign up for art classes with Atherton Arts Foundation

The Atherton Arts Foundation has new course offerings for 2024. New classes include sewing for kids and adults, art on the go, and knitting.

Classes take place in the foundation's Evans Center for the Arts in Holbrook-Palmer Park, 150 Watkins Ave.

View the schedule and sign up for classes at athertonarts-foundation.org. Some classes are donated-based.

Atherton recruiting for town committees

The town of Atherton is seeking volunteers for the following committees. The City Council will make appointments:

■ Transportation, Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Committee — one vacancy for a term ending in June 2026. It meets on the fourth Tuesday of every other month at 4 p.m. Special meetings may be called as needed throughout the year.

■ Parks and Recreation Committee — one vacancy for a term expiring June 2026. It

meets on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Special meetings may be called as needed throughout the year.

Applications are on the town's website or at Town Hall and submitted in the Office of the City Clerk at: 80 Fair Oaks Lane Atherton, CA 94027.

The deadline to submit all applications is Friday, Feb. 16 by noon.

Town of Woodside recruiting for Planning Commission

The town of Woodside is seeking residents to join the Planning Commission.

The openings for District 1 and 3 are two-year terms, while Districts 2, 4 and 5 have four-year terms.

Determine your district at tinyurl.com/5n967ph4.

Meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m.

The Planning Commission is in charge of the administration of the planning laws and policies of the town. It recommends ordinances and resolutions necessary to implement the general plan and adopted development policy to the Town Council. The commission also holds public hearings to administer the planning laws and policies of the town and makes decisions on applications for zoning amendments, conditional use permits, variances and subdivisions.

Email Town Clerk Jennifer Li to ask questions about the openings and/or to submit your application.

The application is due by Friday, Feb. 2, at 5 p.m.

The Town Council will interview and make appointments to the Planning Commission at a Tuesday, Feb. 13, meeting.

Donate to Christian Sbragia Memorial Fund

Christian Sbragia, an educator in the East Palo Alto community who started the nonprofit CoolineKids, died on Jan. 5 at the age of 19 due to a suspected blood clot.

The East Palo Alto Academy Foundation, Sbragia's alma mater, is raising money to assist his family with funding for a memorial.

"Christian Sbragia was a passionate educator and leader, dedicated to serving the youth of East Palo Alto," the Christian Sbragia Memorial Fund page states.

The Almanac profiled Sbragia in 2022 as one of the area's promising high school graduates. Sbragia graduated from East Palo Alto Academy that year and had been studying ethnic studies at California State University, East Bay.

Donate at tinyurl.com/ChristianSbragiasfund.

A memorial is expected in the spring, according to his family.

— Angela Swartz

Jean Sloss

February 26, 1926 – December 1, 2023

With family at her bedside, Jean Elsa (Ganz) Sloss died peacefully on December 1, 2023 at her home in Forestville, CA at age 97. She was born in 1926 in San Francisco to Fred and Elsa (Meier) Ganz, both descendants of Jewish pioneer families.

Raised in San Francisco, Jean attended Burke's School, spent summers at her grandparents' retreat, Menucha, alongside the Columbia River Gorge and later graduated from Bennington College in Vermont. She met her lifelong partner, Louis Sloss Jr., at a dance party in SF. They married a year later and raised 5 children, starting out in Portland, OR then moving back to Palo Alto and eventually Portola Valley, CA.

A loving mother, Jean was also a talented homemaker, flower arranger, a black-belt shopper, and a gourmet chef and hostess. Her compassionate nature and dedication to helping others touched the lives of many. With Louis and friends, she was active in the human potential movement and a lay-counseling center. Separately, Jean led Parent Effectiveness Trainings, assisting many families with the challenges of raising children.

She and Louis enjoyed extensive travel during their 70 years together, strongly favoring Paris and the French countryside. Jean could feel at home in both a Michelin-star restaurant and a tent pitched in the Sierra wilderness or Alaska. She loved gardening and going on wildflower hikes at Lake Tahoe and elsewhere.

Jean grew up playing the piano and adored attending the Symphony and Opera. She was an accomplished tennis and pickleball player into her 90s and enjoyed watching the major competitions, especially if Roger Federer was involved.

In the early 1970s, with 5 other families, Jean and Louis started Thomas Creek Ranch, an intentional community in Sonoma County, where they shared common facilities and values, and lived out the rest of their lives. Along with others, they founded the first hospice in Sonoma County in the 1980s and thereafter, Jean volunteered at Memorial Hospital serving the terminally ill and their families.

Jean and Louis were among the original 15 shareholders in Embarcadero Publishing Co., the parent company of the Palo Alto Weekly, when it was founded in 1979, and Jean continued to own a small number of shares.

Jean is survived by her daughters, Karen Sloss and Elizabeth Sloss (Dahveed Rubin), and her sons, Louis Sloss III (Julie), Jeff Sloss (Susan), and Tony Sloss (Debra). She also leaves behind eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Jean was preceded in death by her beloved husband, her parents and her brother, Fredrick Ganz, Jr.

A celebration of Jean's life will be held in the Spring in Forestville. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Memorial Hospice of Santa Rosa or a charity of your choosing.



PAID OBITUARY

EAST PALO ALTO

continued from page 5

Liu also credits the drop in homicides to the city's retention of high-quality police officers — an issue the department has historically struggled with — that was partly aided by the addition of a competitive officer pay package in 2022. But despite the salary increase, Liu's officers, like many former East Palo Alto residents, still cannot afford to live in the area.

The 30-year-old city has faced numerous challenges over the decades, including racist real estate tactics, the crack cocaine epidemic, high rates of violent crime and gang activity and police corruption and misconduct, the San Mateo County website states. It was particularly susceptible to drug activity due to its proximity to U.S. Highway 101, Mayor López said. He described East Palo Alto in the 1980s as a "one stop shop" for illegal drug purchases.

The city earned its nickname as the "murder capital" of the nation when 42 homicides occurred in 1992. Since then, the number of homicides per year peaked at 16 and 15 in 1997 and 2005, respectively, but has otherwise stayed below 10, according to East Palo Alto Police Department data. The years 1996, 1999, 2017 and 2019 only saw one homicide each.

Today, residents fear displacement due to rising house prices, a symptom of gentrification. East Palo Alto, as some remaining residents are quick to point out, has undergone a vast transformation as its demographics have shifted, and its median household income has spiked over the past two decades from about \$29,000 in 1989 to about \$103,000 in 2022, according to U.S. Census data. The census also reported that about 60% of homes in East Palo Alto were valued at more than \$1 million in 2022.

Mildred McKean, a resident and activist whose family has been a pillar of the community for generations, said that with the loss of residents, violent crime has only moved beyond the borders of the city.

Last year, McKean's cousin, Michael "Mike Mike" McNack, died in a suspected murder in Union City. He had relocated to the area about seven years ago but was still present in the East Palo Alto community, McKean said. Police have not released any suspect information about his death, but McKean alleged that his killers were also former East Palo Alto residents.

McKean pointed to a lack of economic resources, including mental health services that people who have experienced trauma from violent crime



Veronica Weber

Traffic is lined up on University Avenue in East Palo Alto during rush hour. City officials are celebrating the fact there were zero homicides in 2023.

could benefit from, as a reason that the cycle of violence may continue.

"We just take our trauma with us; we pack it up like we pack up and move out of East Palo Alto," she said. "We take that everywhere we go, we never get to unpack that baggage because we never deal with it. We don't know how to deal with it. And we don't have the resources to deal with it."

Lifelong East Palo Alto resident Brownie Rogue constantly interacts with his community through his work with Tha Hood Squad, a nonprofit art collective dedicated to creating social change, particularly regarding public health and safety. Rogue said that it is too early to be celebrating the drop in homicides, noting that many families are still dealing with the ramifications of past deaths and that crime occurring outside the city also impacts residents.

Rogue, who said he has personally experienced harassment by East Palo Alto police officers, said that, for some, officers are often not present in their community and that some residents still fear them. For this reason, he does not believe that the police should be taking credit for the drop in homicides.

"I wouldn't say the police has anything to do with it," he said.

"I just feel like maybe the community is finally tired of all the violence that has been going on over the years and is just trying to stay away. A lot of people moved out of the city for that reason."

Still, officials said that educators, religious leaders and city staff have made a concerted effort to stifle crime with more prison reentry programs, homeless shelters and after-school

services that have all helped improve public safety.

Some community members are involved in crime prevention efforts in official capacities. Lewis-Virges is a member of the Community Safety Team, a group of concerned East Palo Alto residents who look at ways to improve safety in collaboration with government officials. The team is roughly two years

old and devotes itself to mitigating all threats, including violent crime, Lewis-Virges said.

Faith groups were particularly vital in solving the 2022 homicides and have continued to play a role in public safety, Mayor López said. In previous years, when homicides occurred, faith leaders created opportunities for community members to heal and bond, paving the way toward a safer city, he said.

"I don't personally take any credit for those statistics, but we have been engaged with a host of things that I think has contributed to unity in the community," she said.

Lewis-Virges, who is unofficially known as the "community pastor," said that providing youth with positive activities and programs, as well as the availability of city-sponsored job training and development programs, have contributed to a shift in the city that reinforces the safety of the community.

"Once we directed our energy to our youth and we provided them with more hopeful and optimistic choices, I sincerely believe that they took advantage of that," Lewis-Virges said. ■

Emma Donnelly-Higgins is a freelance writer and former editorial intern.



Town of Atherton

Planning Commission, January 24, 2024
REGULAR MEETING, 6:00 P.M.
This meeting is held virtually and
in-person at the Council Chambers
80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the **Atherton Planning Commission** will hold an informational presentation on the process to update the Town's Safety Element.

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

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

Topic: Atherton Planning Commission Regular Meeting Time: January 24, 2024, 06:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

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

Meeting ID: 841 5024 9099

One tap mobile:

+13017158592, 84150249099# US (Washington DC)
+13052241968, 84150249099# US

Find your local number:

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

Remote Public Comments:

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

Email: planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us
bbendix@ci.atherton.ca.us

Description: The purpose of the informational presentation is to introduce the Safety Element update process and provide a general overview of the scope and outreach that will be involved in this process over the next year. A copy of the Planning Commission staff report can be found online, by Friday, January 19, 2024, here: <https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/641/Agendas-Minutes>

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that said informational presentation is set for hearing by the Planning Commission at its meeting on **January 24, 2024 at 6:00 PM** via teleconference accessible through the above-described information, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the amendments should or should not be approved. If you have any questions on the item please contact Brittany Bendix, Town Planner, at bbendix@ci.atherton.ca.us or (408) 688-2432. Any attendee who wishes accommodation for a disability should contact the Building Division at (650) 752-0542 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

ATHERTON PLANNING COMMISSION
/s/ Brittany Bendix
Brittany Bendix, Town Planner

Date Published: January 12, 2024

LEHUA GREENMAN



*"Our lives
begin to end
the day we
become silent
about the
things that
matter."*

650.245.1845 COMPASS

Invest in better electric home appliances

By Robert A. Hogue

GUEST OPINION

As part of the increasing public discussion about climate change, many climate action groups are urging homeowners to replace their natural gas appliances with electric appliances. In the Bay Area, in particular, local action groups are working with municipalities to educate the public about electric appliance alternatives to gas cooking ranges, gas water heaters, and gas furnaces. Recent tabling events, newspaper articles, and editorials emphasize the benefits of electrification of homes including the much higher energy efficiencies of electric heat pumps for space

heating and water heating.

Author Sherry Listgarten has written extensively about changing from fossil fuels to renewables. Recently, her article on electrification of homes was published in the Mountain View Voice. She suggested that electrification might occur in stages as the natural gas utilities decommission their gas lines.

I expect the first electrification activities to be replacing old gas water heaters with heat pump water heaters among the homeowners who are aware of the heat pump alternative and find that it's affordable with rebates. This would be the

"unmanaged" approach in the Listgarten article and would be slow to drive decommissioning of the gas system. Faster decommissioning would require state or local mandates working with PG&E and other natural gas utilities.

But emphasizing appliance-level and house-level decarb would be a great start to get the ball rolling. In time, volume demand for heat pump water heaters will increase and prices will come down. More contractors will offer heat pumps to replace natural gas appliances. And the scenario Sherry Listgarten describes that would drive up gas prices may end up giving an additional boost to the

electrification of water heaters.

In general, replacing a gas furnace with an electric heat pump for space heating costs significantly more than replacing the old gas furnace with a new gas furnace. Rebates up to \$8,000 from the Inflation Reduction Act may be available in 2024 but they will likely be limited to lower income households. However, the households that install space heating heat pumps to lower future energy costs will increase the volume of installations and start to lower the installation cost for everyone. Heat pumps are a better technology than gas furnaces, but it's taken climate change to awaken the public to how they

can also help to reduce carbon emissions. I suspect eventually nearly everyone will heat their home with heat pumps.

The earliest electrification activities will be done by early adopters and climate conscious homeowners. But you can start the ball rolling by investing in better technologies for your home and at the same time help save the planet.

Robert A. Hogue is a resident of Menlo Park's Sharon Heights neighborhood. He is also a registered mechanical engineer in California and an active member of Citizen's Climate Lobby & Peninsula Interfaith Climate Action.

TOWN SQUARE

Visit our online discussion forum at AlmanacNews.com/square

In response to "Fan who broke into Steph Curry's home to get an autograph turned himself in, Atherton police say"

Posted Jan. 9 at 4:50 p.m. by Brian, a resident of Menlo Park's The Willows neighborhood:

"Fan who broke into Steph Curry's home" isn't this a little sensational and misleading? An earlier story said (he) buzzed the driveway gate and was let in. When he got to the door it was open and he entered. When he was asked to leave he left. Now that may amount to bad decisions, never enter a house unless invited

in, but it seems to fall far short of 'broke in.' Unless there is something not reported here or in the previous article then he should get a warning and move on. Curry should take a look at his security and talk to the nanny about locking the door and not buzzing in people."

In response to "Portola Valley residents push for town to submit housing plan by January deadline"

Posted Jan. 6 at 8:42 a.m. by Stuart, a resident of Woodside's Mountain Road:

"The deadline was 1/31/2023. PV is already a year late — but that is what happens when the entire professional staff quits. Which begs the question of why they left?"

In response to "Customers buy Country Sun, avert closure"

Posted Jan 3 at 10:13 p.m. by Jan Schachter, a resident of Portola Valley's Westridge neighborhood:

"I have been a big fan of Country Sun for years, and was disappointed to learn it was closing. It is wonderful to learn some of the details in the plan to keep it in business. Such a rare bright side to the current economy — where personal, on site retail is getting more and more rare."

LET'S DISCUSS:

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

TOWN OF WOODSIDE

2955 WOODSIDE ROAD, WOODSIDE, CA 94062
PLANNING COMMISSION JANUARY 24, 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.

Join Zoom Meeting:

Dial by your location

+1 669 900 9128

+1 346 248 7799

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. 127 Hillside Drive

VARI2023-0005

Daniel Vargas, AKD Homes

Project Planner: Sarah Filipe, Associate Planner

Presentation and approval, conditional approval, or denial of a proposal to construct a new Accessory Dwelling Unit located as close as 4 feet to the side property line and 10 feet to the rear property line as permitted by State law. The project requires approval of a Variance to height limits for the ADU to have plate heights exceeding the 11-foot plate height maximum and 17-foot overall height maximum allowed for accessory structures (VARI2023-0005).

The project is Categorically Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to §15303(a), which includes a second dwelling unit in a residential zone.

THE APPLICATION MATERIALS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW BY CONTACTING SARAH FILIPE AT SFILIFE@WOODSIDETOWN.ORG

TOWN OF WOODSIDE

2955 WOODSIDE ROAD
WOODSIDE, CA 94062

The Town is seeking a volunteer to fill an unexpired term until 2025.

The Architectural and Site Review Board (ASRB) reviews and makes recommendations to the Planning Director on certain residential and commercial projects as they relate to the community character, site planning, building design, and landscape elements outlined in the Municipal Code and Residential Design Guidelines.

Meetings are held on the first and third Monday of each month at 4:30 p.m.

Participation on the ASRB is a great way to assist the Town in upholding the values of the community. Please contact Planning Director, Sage Schaan, at sschaan@woodsidetown.org or (650) 530-3432 with any questions regarding the role of ASRB members. Please contact Town Clerk, Jennifer Li at jli@woodsidetown.org or (650) 851-6790 for more information regarding the application process.

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

Friday, February 2, 2024, by 5:00 p.m.

INTERVIEW AND APPOINTMENT BY TOWN COUNCIL:

Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

LISTEN LOCALLY

Miko Marks, Frank Thibeaux to perform as part of Guild Theatre's new Local Sound Series

By Karla Kane

Menlo Park's Guild Theatre has been livening up the Peninsula performing arts scene since opening as a concert venue in 2022. With its new Local Sound Series, the nonprofit will be shining its spotlight on Bay Area musicians in particular. The hope is that the community will be inspired to come out and support local musicians, even if they're not yet familiar with them.

Eventually, "the goal is to try all types of genres of local artists; to try something from each and every scene," said the Guild's talent buyer Molly Butera.

The theater has hosted sporadic local nights before but is making it more official with its new series, and on Jan. 18 will feature the acclaimed Americana artist Miko Marks

(based in Oakland) and the Belle Haven-raised bassist and blues vocalist Frank Thibeaux. Both acts are associated with East Palo Alto's Redtone Records, which founder Justin Phipps described as a nonprofit collective of Bay Area artists making "soulful music with a classic sound."

"We are committed to ensuring that great music and culture thrive throughout this region, and the Guild is a fantastic partner in that mission," Phipps told this news organization in an email.

Marks first worked with Phipps and musician/producer Steve Wyreman when she was starting her musical career, back in 2003.

"A few years ago, the timing just lined up with a dream I had one night that the three of us were making music together

again," she recalled in an email Q&A with this news organization. The team has written and produced her most recent three records for Redtone: "Our Country," "Race Records," and "Feel Like Going Home."

"The Redtone collective has been an amazing musical community to be a part of," Marks said.

Marks' music has evolved over the years. While she's best known as a country artist, she now feels more aligned with the Americana scene, "as that feels the most inclusive of the styles that make up my sound," including blues, gospel, rock and soul, she explained.

"I faced significant challenges in the early 2000s when I was trying to make it as a Black woman doing straight-ahead country in Nashville. Since that time, the country music scene has been eager to showcase its growing diversity, shining a light on more Black and female artists in particular, so much so that it has actually been difficult for me to successfully redefine myself as an Americana artist," she said. "I appreciate any support, and I am so thrilled to be looking ahead to my third Grand Ole Opry performance, and so grateful to have an exhibit in the Country Music Hall of Fame. But at the same time, when people keep hearing 'country music artist Miko Marks' and then come to my shows and get some Duane Allman-style guitar and some Little Walter-style harmonica and some Mavis Staples-style singing, I don't want them saying, 'Well, this isn't country' and thinking that I'm the one defining myself that way."

After all, "back in the early days, it was all the same music anyway, really. Black, white, Indigenous, Latinx, musicians and artists all hearing each other, all influencing each other, all just playing local music," she said. "Genres only came about for



Karen Santos

Miko Marks is best known as a country artist, but her sound has evolved to align more with the Americana scene.

marketing. 'Who are we gonna sell this to? If Jimmie Rodgers sings this 12-bar blues we'll call it country and sell it to white folks. If Robert Johnson sings it we'll call it a race record and sell it to Black folks.' Even though it might be literally the same song."

Marks' work with Redtone "has been focused on reaching back to all of my musical roots, not just country. I've tapped into another side of my voice, bringing in the sounds from my old church days, singing with more power, more spirit," she said.

At their Guild performance, Redtone house band The Resurrectors (including Phipps and Wyreman on keys and harmonica, and lead guitar, respectively) will be backing both Thibeaux and Marks.

"It's Resurrector night. We're going to be resurrecting the ancestors of the blues and country world," Thibeaux said.

A longtime member of the local music scene who currently lives in San Jose, Thibeaux reflected on how the area has changed over the course of his life and career.

"When I was growing up in Belle Haven and East Palo Alto, it was predominantly Black, and there was a singing group or a band almost on every corner," he said. "That's gone. There are hardly any Black people left in that community." As a child,

he said, being immersed in that music-rich environment inspired him.

"It was the competitiveness of it that made me really want to be better. There were so many great singers and musicians and players," he recalled. "Something was always going on. It kept me engaged."

He formed his first singing group, The Junior Temptations, around the third grade, performing at school lunch times. "We sucked but we thought we were great," he laughed, his voice distinctively deep and raspy. "By the fifth grade, my voice started to change. They basically kicked me out of the group because I sounded like I sound now!"

When a friend lent him a six-string guitar with two broken strings, that became his first bass guitar and the rest is history.

"The bass is an instrument where it requires you to listen to everybody and it requires you to hold everything down; you're the foundation," he said. "If your bass player sucks your band sucks. That really inspired me to take the lead. I've been a leader ever since I started." He also discovered a knack for songwriting, and musical interests that defy genre, incorporating blues, funk, R&B, rap, rock and beyond. His long musical career boasts many



Courtesy Frank Thibeaux

Musician Frank Thibeaux says audiences at The Guild can expect "good old funky blues."

See LISTEN LOCALLY, page 22



Courtesy Frank Thibaux

Frank Thibaux, also known as Tebo, grew up in the Belle Haven neighborhood and is now based in San Jose.

LISTEN LOCALLY

continued from page 21

highlights, including his band Precision's four months touring Japan in the 1980s — "Kids from Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, being in Osaka Japan; it was like a fairy tale," he said — and his working with all sorts of big names, from Herbie Hancock to MC Hammer.

More recently, at an East Palo Alto block party, Thibaux was performing on the sidewalk with his blues band when he caught the ear of Phipps.

"Maybe five years ago I got a call, 'I got this song for you.' I've been hanging out with Redtone ever since," he said.

He's released two Redtone singles and is currently working on a "strictly blues" album with the label (under the name Frank Thibaux, to distinguish it from his multi-genre work under the name Tebo). "To be affiliated with a record company that believes in me still at this age, I think that's awesome," he said.

The Jan. 18 show will be Thibaux's first performance at the Guild, a venue he's been hoping to be booked by since it opened, and especially meaningful because of the recent loss of a close friend, who, as he was battling cancer, repeatedly told

Thibaux "You've got to play the Guild!"

"I know he's smiling in heaven," he said of his late friend. "It should be an awesome show. I hope my people come out."

According to Marks, audiences can expect a high-energy and spirit-filled evening.

"We leave it all out on the stage. It'll be joyous, raucous, fun, but you also might see me fighting back the occasional tear on certain songs. Every time we've ever performed we've always had at least one person (and usually more) come up to me at the merch table with a tear in their eyes telling me how much they needed that experience, how uplifting and healing it was," she said. "That's the power of music. That's why we do this. This is where we uplift and heal ourselves and hope to pass that on to the audience in the process." ■

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

Miko Marks and Frank Thibaux, Jan. 18, 8 p.m., The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Tickets are \$28-\$66. All ages. guildtheatre.com.

Worth a Look



Courtesy Tricia Cronin

Members of The Living Earth Show collaborate with contemporary dance company Post:ballet in a performance of "Lyra," based on a classic Greek myth, at Stanford Live Jan. 18-20.

'Lyra'

"Lyra" a collaboration between experimental chamber music group The Living Earth Show and contemporary dance company Post:ballet, is a multidisciplinary (dance, film, and live music) performance rooted in the classic myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. According to Stanford Live, "Lyra" explores our shared human experiences of love, loss, and learning to let go." The performance incorporates music by composer Samuel Adams, choreography by Vanessa Thiessen and cinematography by Benjamin Tarquin and was created "both in quarantine and in person."

Jan. 18-20, 8 p.m., The Bing Concert Hall Studio, 327 Lasuen St., Stanford. \$50. live.stanford.edu.

'What They Say About Love'

Feldman's Books in downtown Menlo Park is perhaps best known as a treasure trove of used and vintage reading material, but it also offers events, including a monthly poetry open mic night and special performances featuring local artists. On Jan. 12, catch actor Steve Budd performing his award-winning, humorous solo show "What They Say About Love," for which he interviewed a variety of couples about how they fell — and stay — in love. According to Feldman's website, Budd performed the show at the shop in October and is back by popular demand. And if you like that one, stay tuned for next month, when he'll present "What They Said About Sex."

Jan. 12, 5:30 p.m., Feldman's Books, 1075 Curtis St., Menlo Park. Free. feldmansbooks.net.

Brian Simpson

Debut author Brian Simpson will read from his new novel "Alex Archer: Town Secrets," about a former military pilot who's looking forward to reconnecting with friends and family and relaxing into retirement, only to find his hometown of Patrician, Florida, is being corrupted by a sordid underworld and needs his help. The book, according to Books Inc., "pushes the reader to challenge their values, priorities they hold dear, and makes them ask themselves, 'How would I confront pure evil if it stared me in the face?'"

Jan. 18, 7 p.m., Books Inc. Mountain View, 317 Castro St., Mountain View. booksinc.net/Peninsula-Books-Inc.Events.

Band of Brothers Levin and La Barbera

If your new year's resolution was to catch more live shows, Earthwise Productions couldn't offer a better way to make a start on that, setting the musical bar high for 2024. The Band of Brothers double bill presented by Earthwise on Jan. 12 highlights two pairs of talented brothers who bring diverse credits and a wealth of musical experience to the stage. Bassist Tony Levin has shared the stage with everyone from Peter Dinklage to Lou Reed to Judy Collins, and he honed his jazz chops in performances with names like Buddy Rich and Chuck Mangione, while his brother, keyboardist Pete Levin, has recorded or performed with the likes of Miles Davis, Gil Evans and Dave Brubeck. (Read about Tony's experiences on the road at his longstanding blog: tonylevin.com). Meanwhile, the La Barbera brothers come with equally versatile and prestigious résumés: in addition to touring and recording under his own name, jazz tenor, alto and soprano saxophonist, clarinetist, and flautist Pat La Barbera has performed with Buddy Rich Big Band, Woody Herman and Carlos Santana. His drummer and composer brother, Joe La Barbera, has also performed with Herman, Mangione and Tony Bennett, while his work as a sideman has included stints with John Scofield, Rosemary Clooney, Michael Bublé and Rod Stewart.

Jan. 12, 8 p.m. at Palo Alto Art Center auditorium, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto. Tickets are \$4.25-\$18. eventbrite.com.

CORRECTION

In the Jan. 5 issue, "From Barbenheimer to small-budget indies" misidentified the role of J. Robert Oppenheimer as having "organized" the Manhattan Project. General Leslie Groves was the director of the Manhattan Project. Oppenheimer was director of the Los Alamos Laboratory, which was one part of the larger Manhattan Project. The Almanac regrets the error.

Food & Drink

The refill revolution

Meet two Peninsula refilleries making shopping more sustainable

By Karla Kane

When you're shopping, how much thought do you give to not only the products you buy, but also the packaging they come in and the waste they create, or to the overall environmental footprint of your consumption? Have you ever considered changing your habits but found the prospect daunting? Laura Porter and Emily Ting have thought about it a lot, and their Peninsula establishments are here to help, offering local customers the opportunity to make shopping for everyday essentials (and goodies) more sustainable in an accessible way.

Byrd's Filling Station in San Mateo and Right On! Refillery in Los Altos are both examples of "refilleries" — retailers that aim to reduce reliance on single-use plastic by offering items in bulk so customers can refill their containers and use them again and again.

Byrd's Filling Station

Byrd's Filling Station founder Porter's journey away from waste began about five years ago, when she was horrified by a San Francisco Chronicle article she read about plastic pollution.

As she learned more, she became concerned not only about the harmful effects of plastic waste in the environment, but also the pollution involved in manufacturing it. At the same time, the busy mom was learning about and inspired by the Plastic Free July movement and decided to change her family's consumption habits. It was trickier than she expected.

Over the next year, she set goals to avoid plastic at the grocery store, then worked on finding

plastic-free sources of staples like shampoo and deodorant. She found what she was looking for online, but feared the packing and shipping process ran contrary to her sustainability goals. Plus, ordering from so many different vendors was time-consuming and tedious. She began stocking up on deliveries from a shop in the East Bay and found other locals were interested in getting the goods as well.

"There needs to be a place to go to make it convenient," she remembers thinking, desiring a central spot in her own neck of the woods. In May 2022 she officially opened Byrd's Filling Station with the goal of providing a one-stop shop in San Mateo to meet basic grocery and household needs, including all sorts of food (both bulk and packaged), cleaning products, makeup and much more.

The community's response to the shop has been "very positive," she said. "From there, it is a change of habits (remembering to take bags or jars along to refill). It's thinking a little differently. It's doing a lot of education that I think most grocery stores don't have to do."

Top sellers include "a surprising amount" of fresh-ground peanut butter, made in-house, and whole-bean coffee, roasted in San Francisco.

Locals know that boba drinks are wildly popular. However, the disposable plastic cups, wrappers, and straws that often come with them are the opposite of eco-friendly. At Byrd's Filling Station, reusable glass boba tumblers and straws (with lid, silicon plug and cleaning brush) are available, so boba fans can get their treats

without the guilt. After all, bringing one's own reusable cups to coffee shops has become a fairly common sight, so why not boba?

"People do hesitate because of the willingness of some stores to accept them," she said. "What we have found is that many will if you just ask," including downtown San Mateo's Sweet Moment, Heere Tea and Urban Ritual. As long as the tumblers are clean, there's no hygienic reason for an establishment to refuse, she said.

Right On! Refillery

Green habits have long been a part of life for Right On! Refillery's Ting.

"I kind of grew up this way," she said. "My mother was like the original hippie." Eating local, organic food, belonging to a co-op and composting in their huge garden were the norms for her Massachusetts family. Ting always aimed for sustainability in adulthood, but as a parent of three young children living in Silicon Valley during the age of COVID, she found it had become increasingly difficult. As the family grew, the household was going through things like sunscreen and shampoo at accelerating rates, and during the heart of the pandemic, deliveries, complete with extraneous packaging, began to pile up. Ting recalled looking around her home and seeing how full her trash and recycling bins were getting.

"I just started getting kind of disgusted with all of it," she said. Like Porter, she did research and was dismayed to learn that just a tiny percentage of what gets put into household recycling bins actually ends up being recycled.

"It's kind of a weird myth," she



Devin Roberts

Right On! Refillery owner Emily Ting said she often recommends that customers looking to reduce waste start with items such as these Bay Area-made reusable "Not Paper Towels."

said. "People will ask, 'This is recyclable?' Well, yes, you can put it in your bin but what happens to it from there is a big question mark. Most of that waste is going to the landfills."

Right On! Refillery began as a pop-up on First Street in downtown Los Altos in April, then opened in its current location in June.

"Buying local is a huge part of the sustainability movement. We had a lot of interested people right away," she said.

Right On! specializes in mostly locally made goods, with bestsellers including refills of laundry and dish soaps, lotions and hair care products. And while she sells reusable receptacles, "steadily, more people are bringing in their own containers, which is the point, the ideal," Ting said. "People are getting the hang of that. We try to talk people through that not only are they saving the plastic container, but they're also purchasing a product that in most cases was made locally, that's had the supply chain checked, the labor practices checked."

For customers new to the low-waste lifestyle, Ting often recommends Not Paper Towels — a line of reusable, machine-washable cotton cleaning cloths, made in Santa Rosa and available in cute patterns — as a first step.

"It's nice to have good entry points for people who are interested in the concept but don't know where to start," she said.

"It's easy for people to understand what to do with it, and see, 'Oh, look I'm cutting down on all the paper towels I'm buying.'"

Right On! also offers customers a place to bring in waste that isn't accepted in their household bins, with boxes for hard-to-recycle items such as toothpaste tubes, kids' squeeze snack pouches, razors and lithium batteries.

Now equipped with a trailer, Ting hopes to "bring the refill concept mobile" and is considering doing Right On! pop-ups in nearby cities.

Think globally, shop locally

Porter and Ting said they and other Bay Area low-waste merchants often work together to maximize efficiency, as many vendors have ordering minimums, and to cut down on deliveries. They see their stores as part of a bigger movement, with the goal to bring low-waste shopping to the mainstream. As they noted, to really change consumer habits involves infrastructure and a wider reach so that shoppers can access these goods and services wherever they're based. They are also hopeful people can make a basic mindshift.

"I think what would make the biggest difference is, we're not in the habit of just looking at something at home and saying, 'I can refill this,'" Porter said. For generations, consumers have been conditioned to ignore packaging, thinking of things as disposable. "If we can change that mindset to, 'I need to go refill the dish soap' instead of, 'I need a new dish soap,' that's a powerful change of words and change of thought." ■

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Devin Roberts

Laura Porter opened Byrd's Filling Station in San Mateo to sell groceries and household items with less plastic waste.



Devin Roberts

Customers can fill glass bottles with olive oil at Byrd's Filling Station in San Mateo.

Byrd's Filling Station,
219 S. San Mateo Drive,
San Mateo; 650-242-1976,
Instagram: [@byrdsfillingstation](https://www.instagram.com/byrdsfillingstation),
[byrdsfillingstation.com](https://www.byrdsfillingstation.com).
Right On! Refillery,
300 State St., Los Altos;
408-458-5381,
Instagram: [@rightonrefillery](https://www.instagram.com/rightonrefillery),
[rightonrefillery.com](https://www.rightonrefillery.com).

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