Drawing life: A fundamental skill of an artist

This week, The Almanac highlights Darren Kerr’s figure drawing class, one of the most popular and enduring courses offered by the venerable Palo Alto-based Pacific Art League. Kerr explains why figure drawing is considered one of the most fundamental skills for any artist.

In the above photo, Eric Eagle, center, works on a quick drawing of a model in the class on March 7.

Read the full story on Page 20.

Local law enforcement agencies address cluster of residential burglaries

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Over the last weekend of February, Atherton police reported five residential burglaries during a two-day span in town.

Incidents like this sparked the town to announce a “bait house program” in which police will put decoy devices with surveillance technology into houses that participate in the program.

The start of 2024 saw a spike in residential burglaries across Menlo Park, Atherton and Portola Valley. Through the months of January to March, local law enforcement have been holding public safety meetings and taking new initiatives as they continue their investigations into the burglaries.

Atherton Police Commander Dan Larsen told this news organization that connections between burglaries are “possible, but no solid connections have been made yet.”

Break-ins in Menlo Park

The Menlo Park Police Department has documented 17 residential burglaries from Jan. 1 to March 5, according to police spokesperson Nicole Acker. This increase in crime in residential areas has brought a higher demand from the community for the city to install more automatic license plate readers (ALPRs).

During Menlo Park’s City Council meeting on Feb. 27, multiple public commenters came up to voice their concerns on the rise in crime and encouraged the council to reconsider funding to more license plate readers.

In September 2023, the council expressed hesitation about Flock ALPRs due to privacy concerns. The Menlo Park Police Department currently has three mobile mounted license plate readers. From October—December 2023 they have been able to capture 84 license plates registered in an active law enforcement database or wanted list, as written in their quarterly update.

See BURGLARIES, page 14

Portola Valley mainstay closes after 20 years

Portola Kitchen shuttered this week

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Portola Kitchen, an Italian restaurant that lived at 3130 Alpine Road in Ladera Country Shopper — formerly Mike’s Cafe, closed its doors on March 4, after 20 years of business, owner Mike Wallau announced the same day.

Wallau and his family made the decision to not renew the lease for the Portola Valley eatery and instead focus his energy on his other business, Mike’s Diner Bar in Palo Alto. He stated in a press release that he hopes to “focus all his culinary and creative efforts” and bring menu and operational changes to Mike’s.

“I really love it in Portola Valley and it was a bittersweet decision,” said Wallau, who only made the difficult decision to close his business recently. “I didn’t know until right at the end. My heart was telling me to stay but logic was telling me otherwise.”

At 66 years old, he is paving his way to semi-retire after selling a location in Menlo Park in 2012 and now closing Portola Kitchen. For the past 29 years, Wallau has been busy managing multiple restaurants, seven days a week and felt that it was time for a break.

“I wish to thank all my loyal Portola Kitchen customers for their support over the last 20 years, and I invite everyone to come to Mike’s in Palo Alto for a fine meal and a hearty hello,” wrote Wallau in the press release.

Wallau expressed gratitude toward his staff, the customers, tenants at Ladera Shopping Center and the property owners.

As a Palo Alto native, Wallau is making a full circle journey back to his first location at 2680 Middlefield Road in Palo Alto, which was renovated in 2019 and has expanded to twice the size after taking over an adjacent space in 2017. Last year, he faced eviction at the Middlefield location after being one day late for his rent payment, but received an event-hour reprieve.

Email Staff Writer Jennifer Yoshikoshi at jjyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com.
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Menlo Park’s annual goals: climate action, housing, street safety and emergency preparedness

By Joshua Picazo

Improving street safety, tackling climate change at a local level, creating more housing and emergency preparedness are priorities for Menlo Park in the year to come.

During a Tuesday, Feb. 12, goal setting workshop, the City Council whittled down a long list before voting on its goals.

Before the meeting, the city posted an online survey asking residents which topics were important to them to address during the 2024-25 fiscal year. A total of 53 people responded to the survey.

Sixty-three percent of respondents named climate action as one of their priorities, while safe streets came in second with 52%. Respondents also named emergency preparedness and improving the downtown area as goals.

Ten respondents advocated for establishing a “quiet zone” along Caltrain in the city.

Council members also raised issues they want to be addressed, including staff shortages, high staff turnover rates, revenue loss, lack of affordable housing and housing discrimination.

Reflecting on last year’s goals, the city announced 22 of 61 projects were completed, with others ongoing. Council members cited other accomplishments such as approving the housing element, completing several park projects and completing protected bike lanes.

Over 20 members of the public spoke during the goal setting meeting.

Resident Noami Goodman asked the council to develop more goals related to climate change.

“We are already experiencing more heatwaves,” she said. “We can develop strategies here at the local level.”

Among them was Lynn de las Pulgas and Sharon Road. Among the reasons residents have offered for pursuing annexation are interest in voting in Menlo Park elections and engaging in civic matters; to more easily secure services and infrastructure such as safe routes to school and sidewalks; and to have more regulation of residential development through the city’s zoning and heritage tree ordinances.

Resident Dorothy Dickey said public safety is her top priority due to break-ins and burglaries in her area, a view echoed by other public commenters. A resident from the Sharon Heights neighborhood said residents from that area had a meeting to discuss a rise in burglaries.

The next step is to craft a workshop report with the goals discussed, which City Manager Justin Murphy will use to help guide the council.

Email Contributing Writer Joshua Picazo at joshuapicazo@gmail.com.

Late Portola Valley resident lives on through music

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

At the age of 99, Marjorie (Marge) Cassingham, a talented classical pianist, mother of four and long-time Portola Valley resident passed away on Jan. 24, six weeks short of her 100th birthday.

Born in Los Angeles on March 9, 1924, Marjorie began playing the piano at 4 years old and continued to play on for more than 90 years. Although Marjorie was never a professional pianist, she used her musical talents to play at the Two Piano Club and Fortnightly Music Club in Palo Alto.

Her children remember her playing musical pieces by Chopin and Mozart but her favorite was the classical piece, “Clair de Lune” by Claude Debussy. Dedicated to her faith, she was also an active member at the Valley Presbyterian Church in Portola Valley, singing in the choir, playing in the handbell choir and sharing her love for music through church.

As a 55-year resident of Ladera, her large living room was known to house her two Steinway grand pianos, a unique aspect of her home. Her children recall local musicians coming into the San Mateo County jail.

Marjorie Cassingham playing piano for other residents at The Sequoias retirement home in Portola Valley in 2015. She died on Jan. 24, 2024.

Man arrested for shooting into a Menlo Park home

By Angela Swartz

In the early morning hours of Wednesday, March 13, police arrested a man who allegedly shot into a residence on the 200 block of Terminal Avenue in the Belle Haven neighborhood in Menlo Park. There were people in the home during the shooting, but no injuries were reported, police said in a press release.

Police also received a report of a gunshot nearby on the 1300 block of Modoc Avenue around 1:20 a.m. and the suspect was described similarly to the one on Terminal Avenue: a male wearing a red and black zip up shirt, according to the press release.

Police officers arrived in the area and found a man matching the description. They said they arrested him after a “brief struggle.”

The man had two firearms in his possession, one of which was loaded, according to police. Several rounds of used ammunition were located near the Terminal residence, according to police.

The suspect was booked into the San Mateo County jail. He faces charges of shooting into an inhabited dwelling, unlawful carry of a loaded firearm, felon in possession of a firearm, willful discharge of a firearm in a grossly negligent manner and resisting arrest.

Anyone with information regarding the incident is asked to call the Menlo Park Police Department at 650-330-6300.

Editor’s Note: It is The Almanac’s policy to withhold the names of those arrested for most crimes until those arrested for most crimes until the District Attorney’s Office has determined that there is sufficient evidence to file charges in the case.

Email Editor Angela Swartz at aswartz@almanacnews.com.
I f Gallery House was a person, she would probably be an elegant Palo Alto native in her mid-60s, with exquisite taste in art, busy packing her prized paintings, preparing to shift to her new place in Menlo Park. Having moved several times in the past — most memorably, to Ramona Street in downtown Palo Alto early in life and to the present California Avenue location where she spent the last 23 years — the hassle of moving would likely be eclipsed by the excitement of embracing a whole new community of like-minded people. And of course, she’d be grateful for the generous helping hand of her talented friend Peter Koltai, during this challenging time.

Cooperative fine art establishment Gallery House, which has been in Palo Alto for 65 years, is all set to move from Palo Alto’s California Avenue to Menlo Park’s Santa Cruz Avenue by March 1.

Koltai, who is a retired pediatric surgeon and emeritus professor at Stanford University, has been a member of the gallery for about a year now. He took over as chair recently, a title that brought with it the responsibility of finding a new location for it, after the gallery lost its lease following the closure of the building it’s housed in.

“I spent time looking at real estate, sampling various downtowns of the Peninsula,” said Koltai, who landed the current location on Santa Cruz Avenue, Menlo Park a few weeks ago.

He started looking for places on Castro Street in Mountain View, then on Main Street and State Street in Los Altos, then on University Avenue and California Avenue in Palo Alto, then down Broadway in Redwood City and Laurel Street in San Carlos.

“We faced an existential dead-end,” he said about the bittersweet process. “The mood in the gallery was very down. We didn’t see a possibility.”

Finally, through one of the members of the gallery, he got in touch with the owner of a store on Santa Cruz Avenue in Menlo Park.

“He seemed very congenial to having us in his space,” he said. “We were fortunate enough to find something we could afford.”

The new space, which is a little smaller than the current one, is being renovated, ahead of the shift. The current space will be vacated by Easter Sunday, March 31.

While looking for a space, Koltai was clear about the main criterion. “The must-have was having a storefront,” he said. Currently, the gallery is behind Printer’s Cafe. “So having a storefront in the most prominent downtown in the area is huge for us.”

The logical outcome was to sell the work that had started to accumulate in his house. “There’s only so many walls to hang them on,” he said. And that’s when he decided to submit his work to Gallery House, a place that went on to become his post-retirement passion.

Koltai, an artist himself, is cognizant of the gallery’s rich history that goes back to a time when mimeograph paper was still in use. Gallery House was co-founded in 1958 by the late Edith Sommer and the late Estelle Grunewald. The gallery’s first location was inside the home of Mary Field on Staunton Court in Palo Alto; the art was displayed in her living room and on her porch. That’s why it’s called Gallery House. Subsequently, the gallery moved to University Avenue and Cowper Street in Palo Alto, then to the Ladera Country Shopper Center in Portola Valley, then to Ramona Street in Palo Alto and finally to California Avenue.

It has survived many a lean phase, most recently, during the COVID-19 pandemic. “It’s been through several crises, where they had to figure out the next step,” he said. “When looking for a space, Koltai was clear about the main criterion. “The must-have was having a storefront,” he said. Currently, the gallery is behind Printer’s Cafe. “So having a storefront in the most prominent downtown in the area is huge for us.”

The new space, which is a little smaller than the current one, is being renovated, ahead of the shift. The current space will be vacated by Easter Sunday, March 31. A farewell reception was held at the gallery on March 8.

While Koltai dealt with the commercial and legal formalities of finalizing a new space, Karen Cox, the artist from whom he took over his current responsibilities, held fort at the gallery. “She’s been enormously helpful,” he said.

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The new location at Santa Cruz Avenue is across the street from Main Gallery. “This is a huge benefit poten- tially,” he said. “We’ve also been in touch with the Menlo Park Design District; we’re going to get the gallery listed.”

Presently, 22 artists comprise the membership of Gallery House. The work on display is primarily two-dimensional, including paintings, prints and photography. Some sculpture and jewelry is in the mix as well.

In the coming days, Koltai hopes to take the total number of members to about 32 and include more three-dimen- sional artwork, like sculptures. He’s also looking to get more international membership from Zimbabwe, a region he has deep ties to, thanks to his past medical work.

He’s also looking to collabo- rate with local high schools and colleges in Menlo Park and maybe display art by young promising students.

“One of our goals is to bring in younger artists and a diverse group who might have a broader view of what art is,” he said.

It’s particularly appreci- ative of Menlo Park’s existing art culture, evidenced by the presence of several art galleries, rug galleries and furniture galleries in the city. “Menlo Park has valued art for many years,” he said. “The opportu- nity to show art and have people coming to look for art is terrific.”

Koltai has been making art since he was a little boy. While he pursued a career as a pediatric surgeon and teach- er — and published several medical illustrations along the way — he nurtured his passion for painting on the side and finally started taking formal art lessons in 2016. The logical outcome was to sell the work that had started to accumulate in his house. “There’s only so many walls to hang them on,” he said. And that’s when he decided to submit his work to Gallery House, a place that went on to become his post-retirement passion.

Koltai’s plans for the gallery are simple. “Make art, sell art, be part of the community and not be worried about paying the rent,” he said, acutely aware that this is something he doesn’t have to worry about just through a change in address. “The potential to enhance the exist- ing layer of culture, to become part of it and to learn from Menlo Park is the goal.”

Email Contributing Writer Ashwini Gangal at ashwini@gangalmail.com.
Atherton proposes revised ADU ordinance as it continues to pursue state housing plan certification

By Neil Gonzales

S purred by state requirements, Atherton is looking to update an ordinance for backyard housing units to encourage further development of such structures and help in the town’s efforts to finally get its long-range housing plan certified.

During its Feb. 21 meeting, the Town Council introduced a proposed update to its accessory dwelling unit (ADU) ordinance while noting that a key reason to ultimately adopt it would be to avoid losing local land-use control to the state.

The council is expected to consider approving the ordinance on March 20.

“I think it’s an important part of our HCD (state Department of Housing and Community Development) approval process,” said Council member Bill Widmer during the meeting. “They want to see it.”

Council member Rick DeGolia concurred, saying, “We need to get approved by them and give up as little of our town’s character as we can, and if we don’t, they’ll take over our zoning.”

DeGolia sees such a scenario as posing a serious threat to a town famously known for its large, multimillion-dollar single-family properties.

“If they take over our zoning, there’s going to be multifamily districts all over Atherton,” he said.

A studio manufactured by Abodu and displayed in the company’s Redwood City showroom is an example of the type of backyard housing units that the city is now trying to encourage residents to build.

In a report to the council, town staff pointed out that failure to revise the ordinance would permit ADU construction under “more permissive state regulations.”

But updating the ordinance to conform with state law “will allow the town to process applications with more clarity and compliance,” staff said. Currently, the town is reviewing several ADU applications.

The revised ordinance would allow ADUs to be built above detached garages. But such cases would require sufficient screening in the form of an eight-foot, solid and opaque fence or similarly compliant landscaping, City Manager George Rodericks said in his monthly newsletter.

The ordinance would also establish the Bonus ADU Program to incentivize the development and documentation of ADUs targeting low-income households.

Under this program, Rodericks said, ADUs with a minimum of two acres would apply, be subject to a limited-term deed restriction and need to comply with all setback requirements.

Although he understands the town has to proceed with the ordinance, Widmer is wary that lots in Atherton could just turn into big rental properties.

“I prefer not to see a bunch of ADUs on properties,” he said. But DeGolia doesn’t believe an explosion of rental units will result.

“I could be dead wrong about this, but I’m not worried about having all these rental communities in Atherton,” he said. “There’s plenty of ADUs that exist in Atherton right now, and almost all of them don’t get rented. So our challenge is to find those that do get rented and be able to catalog those and show HCD that in fact we’re meeting the housing requirement that they forced on us.”

The council has also been reviewing adjusting service fees pertaining to ADUs as another way to motivate property owners to pursue those kinds of units.

Road to certification

The town seeks 35 new ADUs a year under the state Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) program for the 2023-31 period.

That rate would significantly cover the town’s goal in its housing element document of accommodating the 348 residential units mandated by the state for the current period — up from the 93 called for during the previous eight-year span.

Since 2022, Atherton has been working on updating its housing element, but earning HCD’s approval remains elusive.

“There is no ‘deadline’ per se at this point as we’ve already missed the two statutory deadlines,” Rodericks said in an email to this news organization.

The town failed to submit a state-compliant housing element by a January 2023 deadline, he said. Atherton also fell short on adopting needed land-use changes by this year’s Jan. 31, 2024 cutoff.

“If they take over our zoning, there’s going to be multifamily districts all over Atherton.”

ATHERTON COUNCIL MEMBER RICK DEGOLIA

“Now it’s just a matter of getting across the finish line,” Rodericks said. “The town is simply just ‘not in compliance.’ We are working toward completion of our housing element and are in contact with and in collaboration with the state as we continue to move forward one step at a time.”

The town is expected to send the next revised version of its housing element to HCD by the end of June.

According to HCD, six out of 21 jurisdictions in San Mateo County are in full compliance with their housing element — Brisbane, Burlingame, Millbrae, Portola Valley, Redwood City and South San Francisco.

Others such as Hillsborough and Menlo Park have garnered conditional approval.

Email Contributing Writer Neil Gonzales at ngonzales92@yahoo.com.

Low gains ground on Simitian in race for Congress

State Assembly member trails by just 162 votes in Congressional race as of March 12

By Gennady Sheyner

The race to represent Silicon Valley in Congress tightened Tuesday afternoon, March 12, as the latest batch of election results showed State Assembly member Evan Low picking up ground and nearly eliminating the gap between himself and Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian.

Both Simitian and Low trail former San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo, who held a commanding lead with 21.5% of the votes in the 16th Congressional District as of 4:30 p.m. on March 12. But Simitian, who enjoyed a lead of 17.9% to 15.9% over Low on the night of the primary election, saw his edge all but evaporate a week later. Simitian had received 27,384 votes as of the evening of March 12, or 16.8% of the total. Low had received 27,222 votes, or 16.7%.

Most of the Low’s momentum came from Santa Clara County, which includes Low’s hometown of Campbell, where he served as mayor. Low also received significant support from nearby cities of Saratoga and Los Gatos, while Simitian did particularly well in Palo Alto, Mountain View and Menlo Park.

While Simitian led in both Santa Clara and San Mateo counties on election day, Low had since pulled ahead in Santa Clara with 23,542 votes, compared to Simitian’s 22,504 votes. Simitian, meanwhile, leads Low in San Mateo County by a vote count of 4,880 to 3,680.

And even though Simitian has been in second place since March 5, his advantage has steadily gone down, dropping to 739 votes as of early Tuesday morning and to 162 as of late afternoon, making the race a virtual tossup.

According to the San Jose Spotlight, Low has received a boost from ballots that were

See LOW, page 8

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The Request for Proposals may be obtained at http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/bids.aspx at no cost. The vendor shall be responsible for any addendums that may be posted on the Town’s website.

PROPOSALS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, California 94027, until 2:00 p.m., Pacific Standard Time on Tuesday, May 7, 2024.
Hometown advantage boosted frontrunners in Congress race

By Gennady Sheyner

W hen Sam Liccardo and Joe Simitian launched their bids for the U.S. Congress last year, both touted their long history in elected office and their track records of getting things done.

But while their experience and name recognition undoubtedly played a role in the March 5 primary election, a breakdown of precincts also underscores the hometown advantage that both enjoyed in Santa Clara County, which dominates the Congressional district.

Even though other candidates did better in some portions of San Mateo County, including Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside, these areas simply didn’t have enough voters to move the needle when it comes to districtwide vote.

Altogether, the 11 candidates received a total of 22,327 votes in San Mateo County as of March 5. In Santa Clara County, they received a combined 87,924 votes.

The geographic composition of the district favored the candidates in the more populous portion of the district, with those in the north part of Santa Clara County leaning toward Simitian and those in the south favoring Liccardo and Assembly member Evan Low, a former Campbell mayor who dominated in his hometown.

Liccardo racked up votes in his hometown of Saratoga, in Los Gatos and in San Jose, where he served as mayor for two terms. In one San Jose precinct in the Willow Glen area, he received 324 votes, while Low got 185 and Simitian got 69. A district in the Briarwood area showed Liccardo picking up 275 votes and Low getting 132. Simitian received just 73 votes there, fewer than Peter Ohtaki (92) and Karl Ryan (84).

Low, who as of Friday trailed Simitian by fewer than 1,000 votes, saw an outpouring of support from Campbell. One of the city’s largest precincts, just east of San Tomas Aquino Park, showed Low picking up 258 votes, while Liccardo and Ohtaki finished second and third with 117 and 102 votes, respectively.

Simitian received 47, just east of downtown Campbell, another precinct gave Low 201 votes, compared to 165 for Liccardo, 106 for Ohtaki. Simitian finished a distant fourth with 69 votes.

But Simitian, a former Palo Alto mayor who served in the state Assembly and the state Senate before he left in December, did more than make up ground in his power base: north Santa Clara County. Palo Alto came out in full force to support Simitian, with the affluent and populous precincts around downtown lifting Simitian to his current position in second place.

The precinct that includes the Crescent Park neighborhood provided Simitian with a whopping 487 votes, or 53.3% of the total cast in the 11-candidate race. Liccardo finished second with 105 votes. Just west, in the University South and Community Center neighborhoods, 568 voters chose Simitian, compared to 158 who chose Liccardo. And in the precinct just south of Embarcadero Road that includes the Leland Manor neighborhood, Simitian received 338 votes, compared to 78 and 38 that went to Liccardo and Low, respectively.

South Palo Alto also chose Simitian by a healthy margin. One Barron Park district showed 395 voters choosing Simitian, while 120 voted Liccardo and 90 for Low.

These Palo Alto precincts are hardly an anomaly. A precinct map of Santa Clara County showed Simitian winning nearly every precinct in Palo Alto and Mountain View. The only exception was the precinct on the border of the two cities, around San Antonio Center, where Liccardo edged Simitian votes 117 to 113.

Simitian also did well in Menlo Park, a city that he had represented in Sacramento. In one downtown precinct near Santa Cruz Avenue, Simitian pick up 243 votes, compared to 122 for Liccardo and 124 for Ohtaki. Low finished in sixth place here with 73 votes, behind Palo Alto council member Julie Lythcott-Haims and Peter Dixon, who received 98 and 77, respectively.

Another precinct, in West Menlo Park, gave Simitian 120 votes, while Liccardo received 95. Ohtaki and Peter Dixon each enjoyed some success close to their respective homes. Ohtaki won a precinct in Atherton just south of Bay Road with 111 votes, while Simitian and Dixon finished second and third with 93 and 85, respectively.

Dixon, meanwhile, won a precinct in the southern part of Atherton, just north of the intersection of Almeda de las Pulgas and Polhemus Avenue. He picked up 125 votes here, compared to 84 for Liccardo, 71 for Ohtaki, 58 for Simitian and 31 for Low.

The precinct results in some ways reflect the challenge that all 11 candidates faced in the primary, which kicked off in late November when U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo announced her intention to retire at the end of this year. With just three months to campaign, the frontrunners struggled to gain traction in geographic areas beyond their historic power bases.

Both Liccardo and Simitian said just after the initial results were released that they look forward to doing far more campaigning in other parts of the district between now and November 5.

“Our residents can expect that I’ll be reaching many more neighborhoods in the months ahead,” Liccardo said in an interview the day after the March 5 primary.

While his campaign was still assessing the results, he said it will continue to engage in a grassroots effort to reach the district’s diverse communities and “connect directly in the living rooms and at the doorsteps of our residents.”

Simitian also said he looks forward to going to different parts of the district over the next phase of the campaign. The primary election wasn’t just short, but it overlapped with the holiday season and Simitian observed that not too many people want to get engaged in politics during Thanksgiving, Christmas or, for that matter, Valentine’s Day.

“I think we will have the ability to make this a campaign a people-to-people campaign in a way that we just couldn’t do in three months,” Simitian said.

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

Woodside bond measure headed for approval

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Measure E for Woodside Elementary School passed with 64.5% voter approval as of March 11 post-Election Day results. The $36 million bond measure, which was on last week’s Almanac News.

Almanac News.

Post-Election Day results will continue to be released every Monday, Wednesday and Friday until March 22 on the following days:

Friday, March 15

Monday, March 18

Wednesday, March 20

Monday, March 22

Results will be certified on April 4. Measure E needs 55% voter approval to pass.

Email Staff Writer Jennifer Yoshikoshi at jyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com.

“Low continued from page 7

mailed or dropped off on pri-

mary election day in Santa Clara County. These voters tend to be younger, more progressive and people of color — voters more likely to choose a young Asian American like Low, Brian Parvizshahi, founder of political consulting firm Axial Media and Communications, told the Spotlight.

“There is a world where Evan can come back,” Parvizshahi told San Jose Spotlight. “It came down to the moderate candi-

dates cannibalizing each other, like Liccardo, Simitian, Peter Dixon and Peter Ohtaki, which allows Evan, who’s much more progressive, to close the gap.”

The top two vote-getters will advance to the Nov. 5 general election for a chance to succeed U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, who has represented the Silicon Valley district for the past three decades.

Both counties have until April 12 to have their results certified. Candidates will also have the opportunity to request a recount if the final results prove to be very close.

San Jose Spotlight contributed to this report.

Email Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@paweekly.com.
ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
TOWN OF ATHERTON
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Notice: The Town of Atherton (Town) hereby gives notice that it will accept bids for construction of the following public work:

2024 OVERLAY PROJECT
Project Number: 56089

1. Scope of Work: Milling and replacement of 2 inches of asphalt concrete pavement on Various Streets. Once roadway is ground down, the contractor and the Town’s project engineer shall identify any pavement failures for repairs. Grind and replace (digout) asphalt to a 4-inch depth from the milled surface; then contractor shall perform crack sealing (per specification). Some hand work around utility access-hole covers will be necessary. Repave the entire street with a self-propelled paver & finish per Town Standard Specifications. Temporary striping and pavement marking installation is also included in this project.

2. Plans & Specifications: Plans & Specifications may be obtained at the Town of Atherton’s website at: http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/bids.aspx at no cost. Additional information is contained in Town of Atherton Standard Specifications, which are available at: http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/285. Contractor shall be responsible for any addenda that may be posted on the Town’s website. No Planholders list will be made available.

3. Project Schedule: The work shall be completed within SEVENTY-FIVE (75) working days from the First Day of Construction as defined in the Notice to Proceed.

4. Bid Submission: SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, California 94027, until 1:30 p.m. Pacific Standard Time March 26, 2024, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. All proposals must be submitted not later than the date and time prescribed. The Bidder is wholly responsible to ensure its Bid is submitted on the date and at the time and place designated for the opening of bids. Any Bid received after the time and date specified shall not be considered. Any Bid may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for opening bids.

5. Engineer’s Estimate for the project is: $740,000.

6. Bid Requirements: Bids must be for the entire work and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked: “Bid of (Contractor) for 2024 OVERLAY PROJECT, Project No: 56089”, along with date and time of bid opening.

7. Required Contractor’s License: Bidder must possess a current California Class “A” General Engineering or a “C-12” Earthwork and Paving contractor’s license issued by the State of California, at the time the Bid is submitted. The Contractor and all subcontractors shall be licensed by the State of California in the class appropriate for the work contemplated. Failure of Contractor or his/her subcontractors to possess such current license at the time of bidding may be deemed sufficient cause for rejection of the bid.

8. Portion of Work to be Performed by the Contractor: The General Contractor shall perform, with his own organization, work of a value amounting to not less than 50% of the total contract, excluding specialty items as may be indicated on the bid schedule.

9. Department of Industrial Relations Registration: A Contractor or Subcontractor shall be qualified to bid on, be listed in a bid proposal, subject to the requirements of Public Contract Code 4104, or engage in the performance of any contract for public work, as that term is defined in Division 2, Part 7, Chapter 1 of the Labor Code, unless currently registered and qualified to perform public work pursuant to Labor Code Section 1725.5. (http://www.dir.ca.gov/Public-Works/PublicWorks.html)

10. Reservation of Rights: The Town reserves the right to reject any or all bids; to make any awards or any rejections in what it alone considers to be the best interest of the Town, and waive any informalities or irregularities in the bids. If there is a reason to believe that collusion exists among any bidders, none of the bids of the participants in such collusion will be considered and the Town may likewise elect to reject all bids received.

11. Substitution of Securities: The successful bidder may substitute securities for retention monies withheld pursuant to law and under the terms of this contract to ensure performance of the contract, in accordance with California Public Contract Code, Section 29300.

12. Prevailing Wage Rates: Bidders are hereby notified that provisions of California Labor Code regarding prevailing wages and apprentices are applicable to the work to be performed under this contract. Pursuant to Section 1773 et seq., the general prevailing wage rates have been determined by the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations and appear in the California Prevailing Wage Rates. Copies are on file at the office of the City Engineer and are available to interested parties upon request. The successful bidder shall post a copy of the wage rates at the job site.

13. Bid Preparation Cost: Bidders are solely responsible for the cost of plan and specification printing and preparing their Bids.

14. Town Contact: Questions regarding the project should be directed to Robert Ovadia, P.E., City Engineer

15. Understanding: By submitting a bid in response to this advertisement for bids, the bidder shall be conclusively deemed to have read, understood and agreed with all of the information and materials contained in the bid documents, including but not limited to the standard specifications, the special provisions, the required nature and amount of insurance and the documentation evidencing said insurance.

16. Bid Protests: The lack of a prompt procedure to resolve disputes regarding the bidding process would impair the Town’s ability to carry out its purpose of constructing this project in a timely manner. Therefore, to the maximum extent authorized by law and notwithstanding any other procedures specified in documents referenced herein, all disputes and/or protests regarding the bidding process shall be subject to the following procedure. In submitting a Bid to the Town for this project, the Bidder agrees to comply with and to be bound by this procedure.

Any Bid protest must be submitted in writing to the Office of the City Clerk, Atherton Town Hall 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027, before 5:00 p.m. on the fifth (5th) working day following Bid opening.

The initial protest document must contain a complete statement of the basis for the protest, and all supporting documentation.

The party filing the protest must have actually submitted a Bid for the Work. A Subcontractor of a party submitting a Bid for the Work may not submit a Bid protest. A party may not rely on the Bid protest submitted by another Bidder, but must timely pursue its own protest.

The protest must refer to the specific portion of the Contract Documents which forms the basis for the protest.

The protest must include the name, address and telephone number of the person representing the protesting party.

The party filing the protest must concurrently transmit a copy of the initial protest document and any attached documentation to all other parties with a direct financial interest which may be adversely affected by the outcome of the protest. Such parties shall include all other Bidders who appear to have a reasonable prospect of receiving an award depending upon the outcome of the protest.

The Town will give the protested Bidder five (5) working days after the receipt of the protest to submit a written response. The responding Bidder shall transmit the response to the protesting Bidder concurrent with delivery to the Town.

The procedure and time limits set forth in this paragraph are mandatory and are the Bidder’s sole and exclusive remedy in the event of Bid protest. The Bidder’s failure to comply with these procedures shall constitute a waiver of any right to further pursue the Bid protest, including filing a Government Code Claim or legal proceedings.

If the Town determines that a protest is frivolous, the protesting Bidder may be determined to be non-responsible, and that Bidder may be determined to be ineligible for future contract awards.

17. List of Subcontractors: Each Bidder shall set forth in its Bid (on the form provided herewith) the following information in accordance with the provisions of Public Contract Code sections 4100-4113: The name, Contractor’s license number, public works Contractor registration number and the location of the place of business of each Subcontractor who will perform work or labor or render service to the prime Contractor in or about the construction of the work or improvement, or a Subcontractor licensed by the State of California who, under subcontract to the prime Contractor, specifically fabricates and installs a portion of the work or improvement according to the Contract Documents, in any amount in excess of one-half of one percent (0.5%) of the prime Contractor’s total Bid, or ten thousand dollars ($10,000.00), whichever is greater.

The portion of the work which will be done by each such Subcontractor. Only one Subcontractor shall be listed for each such portion of the work as defined in the Bid.

The Bidder is considered the Prime Contractor and shall perform at least fifty percent (50%) of the work, as determined by a percentage of the value of the work.

If the Bidder fails to specify a Subcontractor for any portion of the work to be performed under the Contract, the Bidder agrees to perform that portion of the work itself.

By: Robert Ovadia, P.E., City Engineer

Date: ____________________________

March 15, 2024  AlmanacNews.com  The Almanac  9
CA primary turnout not record low, but vote count still slow

By CalMatters

The latest official tally from the Secretary of State’s office shows that 4.8 million ballots have been counted from California’s primary, with 2.5 million still to go.

Based on the late Friday, March 8, numbers, the total of nearly 7.3 million votes means a turnout of about 33%, well below the norm for presidential primaries, but not the record low that some analysts projected based on early numbers.

It also means that it’s going to be a while before some results are finalized, likely amplifying complaints that it takes too long to count votes in California. While voting by mail has been happening for a month, as long as ballots were postmarked by last Tuesday and they arrive at elections offices by this Tuesday, they will be counted. As expected, the votes being counted after primary day are trending more Democratic and younger.

While the U.S. Senate and other races have been called by media organizations, and candidates have declared victory or conceded in others, many other closer contests and the only statewide ballot measure, Proposition 1, still hang in the balance. The Secretary of State has until April 12 to certify the results.

At the same time, the state has been trying to increase voter registration: The rate among all eligible voters is now at 83%, up from 68% in 2008. But those new voters are less likely to regularly cast ballots, which leads to a lower percentage turnout.

A new Public Policy Institute of California brief points out that automatic registration through the Department of Motor Vehicles has increased the registration rate by four percentage points since 2018.

But while the changes were designed to make the electorate more representative of California’s diversity, there have been only small increases for historically underrepresented groups, the report says.

And new registrants tend to be less familiar with elections and are less likely to actually vote. In 2020, the turnout gap between them and voters overall was similar to the existing gap between voters older than 65 and those younger than 25, who are also less likely to vote.

Spring planting: How to select the right tree for your backyard

By George Reno

With longer days, warmer weather and wildflowers coming into bloom, spring is typically the time of year when people start thinking about their gardens, including adding trees to their landscape.

Since many trees live well past 100 years, planting one can be a long-term commitment.

That’s why it’s important to do plenty of research and preparation: Spring planting is all about picking the right trees, planting them carefully and sticking to a good maintenance routine. To help you get started, here are some important tips to remember when considering planting in the spring months.

Select native or well-adapted species

Tree species that are native to a region or well-adapted to its climate are more likely to thrive and require less maintenance. The greater San Francisco Bay Area has a Mediterranean climate, characterized by mild, wet winters and warm, dry summers.

Some suitable native tree species include coast live oak, California buckeye and California sycamore.

Most plant tags and gardening guides include “hardiness zones” about specific tree species that can help you know which plants will grow where you live based on the average temperature your area is expected to receive during the winter.

To find the hardness zone of your neighborhood, type your ZIP code into the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map.

Select the right location

Before selecting a location for your new tree, consider the tree’s size, sunlight and soil needs and how it will fit into your landscape.

In addition to climate, trees have specific sunlight and soil requirements. If you select a tree that needs full sun, make sure you plant it in an area that receives at least 6 hours of direct sunlight each day. If your tree requires shade, pick a location that receives two or less hours of full sun each day.

Make sure the soil also meets the tree’s requirements: A tree that needs dry soil, for example, might die if you plant it in a wet spot.

Select a site that is far enough from buildings (typically 15 feet), overhead power lines, sidewalks and your neighbor's property to ensure there's adequate space for your tree's roots and branches as it grows.

For more planting tips, check out the Arbor Day Foundation’s “The Right Tree in the Right Place” checklist.

Plant before temperatures get too hot

Spring is generally a good time for tree planting, but it’s crucial to consider weather conditions specific to your area. Aim to plant trees early in the spring before warmer weather sets in.

In accordance with Sec. 106 of the Programmatic Agreement, T-Mobile West, LLC proposes to install a new antenna structure at 3111 Woodside Road, Woodside, CA 94062. Please direct comments to Gavin L. at 818-898-4866 regarding site SF03130A.

3/8, 3/15/24

CNS-3789025#

THE ALMANAC

PUBLIC NOTICE

Tree seedlings sit ready for sale at a nursery. Courtesy Getty Images

This allows the trees to establish their root systems before facing the stress of higher temperatures.

Prepare the soil

Before planting anything, knowing your soil’s current state and making proper adjustments can be the difference between a tree that survives and a tree that thrives. A soil test will tell you about the amount of nutrients in your soil, whether your soil is acidic or alkaline and how much fertilizer you’ll need.

Ensure good drainage by amending the soil with organic matter. Compost can improve soil structure and water retention.

Practice proper watering and mulching

Watering is critical, especially during the establishment phase. Provide consistent and deep watering to encourage deep root growth. Mulching around the base of the tree helps retain soil moisture, suppress weeds, and regulate soil temperature. Be mindful not to pile mulch against the trunk to prevent rot — no volcano mulching!

George Reno is a local arborist at The Davey Tree Expert Company in Menlo Park. If you have a tree-related question, email lifestyle@EmbarcaderoMedia.org.
ACADEMICS

7EDU Impact Academy  Cupertino
Join 7EDU for an unforgettable volunteer abroad summer camp experience in Costa Rica (G5-12), where you’ll travel overseas, explore the world, make lifelong friendships, and make a meaningful impact in local communities. Alternatively, join our Youth Entrepreneurship Summer Camp (G6-12) to learn startup & business fundamentals, industry research, problem-solving skills, public speaking skills, and explore business college majors. For younger grades, 7EDU offers Design Life Simulation Camp (G4-7) and All Day Art Camp (G2-5). On-campus in Cupertino. Mention Camp Connection to receive a $50 discount.
7edu.org  (408) 876-2144

Early Learning Institute  Palo Alto, Pleasanton
AN AMAZING SUMMER WRITING PROGRAM. Every year, Emerson Montessori School offers its three Write Now! courses — camp-like sessions designed to improve students’ writing and public presentation skills. Each one-week course features a different genre: Expository Writing (prose forms used in school assignments), Creative Writing (stories, plays, poems), and Presentation Skills (“Debate” this year). Parents are welcome at the afternoon “Authors’ Workshops” and “Speakers’ Forums.”
EmersonMontessori.com  Emerson: (650) 424-1267  Hacienda: (925) 485-3750

Harker Summer Programs  San Jose
Harker summer programs for preschool - grade 12 children include opportunities for academics, arts, athletics and activities. Taught by exceptional, experienced faculty and staff, our programs offer something for everyone in a safe and supportive environment. Register as soon as possible.
Harker.org/Summer  (408) 553-5737

Lydian Academy  Menlo Park, Burlingame
Lydian invites 6-12th Neurodiverse learners, 2E students, and those in need of credit remediation or advancement to complete UC-approved courses in our personalized 1:1 setting in as few as 2.5 weeks. Executive Functioning, Personal Finance, and Life Skills electives are popular, in addition to our Design Thinking and Engineering (STEAM) camps and Middle School day camps.
LydianAcademy.com/Admissions/  Summer-at-Lydian/  (650) 405-1312

Pinewood School  Summer Festival of Learning  Los Altos
Pinewood’s two- or four-week program offers half-day or full-day options in both academic and enrichment classes designed to meet the needs of a variety of students. Specialized teachers and small academic classes maximize the summer school experience for grades K-8. Our curriculum emphasizes academic achievement as well as participation in the arts, technology and athletics.
Pinewood.edu/SummerPrograms

ACADEMICS

STANFORD EXPLORERE: A Lecture Series on Biomedical Research  Stanford
Explore biomedical science at Stanford through lectures from Stanford professors and graduate students about diverse topics in biomedical science including bioengineering, neuroscience, immunology and other topics. July 8-26 Registration begins March 1st. The program is virtual.
Explore.Stanford.edu  explore-series@stanford.edu

Summer@Stratford  Palo Alto/Bay Area
Stratford infuses its STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) curriculum into an innovative and enriching summer camp experience. Younger campers engage in hands-on learning projects, while elementary-age students collaborate to tackle real-world problems. At the middle school level, individual subject-based enrichment classes are offered and tailored for each grade level.
StratfordSchools.com/Summer  (650) 493-1151

ARTS, CULTURE & ENRICHMENT

Camp Integer  Palo Alto & Cupertino
#1 Al-HR STEM & Art. Camp for Ages 5-18. Dive into AI, Holochronic AR, coding, Robotics, 3D, game design, STEM, art, animation, Space/Nature Exploration and more. ACS WASC Accredited & NVIDIA-partnered camp. Great instructors, small classes! Since 2018, thousands of students have joined the camp. Use the code PAW24 to save.
Camp=Integer.com  (408) 459-0657

Captivating Dance Summer Program  Menlo Park
Join us for 5 fun-filled weeks of dance! CDBN’s summer camps are designed for dancers ages 4-12. Email for 12+ intensives. Campers will learn dance techniques in ballet, jazz, tumbling, lyrical, hip-hop, and musical theater. Camps are filled with excitement, games, arts & crafts, weekly performances, and more! CaptivatingDanceByNona.com/  Summer-2024  (650) 339-0034

Castilleja Summer Camp for Girls  Palo Alto
Casti Camp offers girls entering grades 2-6 a range of age-appropriate activities including athletics, art, science, writing, crafts, cooking, drama and music. Leadership program available for girls entering grades 7-9.
Castilleja.org/SummerCamp  (650) 470-7833

City of Sunnyvale
Sunnyvale
Offering 100+ camps for ages 2-17 featuring traditional, visual arts, performing arts, theater, sport and STEM camps. Full and half day options run June 10 - Aug. 9. Check out swim lessons for all levels also starting in June and enjoy recreation swim at our aquatic facilities.
Sunnyvale.ca.gov/Activities  (408) 730-7350

Community School of Music and Arts  Mountain View
40+ creative camps for ages 5-15! Drawing, Painting, Ceramics, Wearable Art, Digital Art, Musical Theater and more! One and two-week sessions; full and half-day enrollment. Financial aid offered. After Camp available.
Arts4All.org  (650) 917-6800 ext. 0

Hidden Villa  Los Altos Hills
Hidden Villa is a 1,600 acre refuge in Los Altos Hills and home to an organic farm, gardens, beautiful hiking trails, and farm animals. Our Summer Camp program blends nature, farming and social justice, while encouraging a diverse, compassionate, and eco-conscious youth community in a fun and age-appropriate environment.
HiddenVilla.org/SummerCamp  (650) 949-8650

ATHLETICS

Bald Eagle  Bay Area
The first camp ever approved by The Positive Coaching Alliance for message and Development Zone programming. We offer 4 camps: Non-Traditional MultiSports (TK-5th), Sports Leadership & Field Trips (6th-8th), Basketball Camp (3rd-8th) and Coach In Training (9th-10th). Extended Care 7:30 am – 6 pm.
BaldEagleCamps.com  (888) 505-BALD

Maccabi Sports Camp  Atherton
Maccabi Sports Camp is an overnight Jewish sports camp. We welcome campers entering grades 3-11 with programs dedicated to building strong character and Jewish community through sports.
MaccabiSportsCamp.org/wp  (415) 997-8844

Spartans Sports Camp  Mountain View
Spartans Sports Camp offers a wide variety of sports and academic enrichment camps for kids entering grades 1-9. Experienced staff ensures everyone has fun. Daily on-site swimming is offered for all camps. Camps run weekly from June 10 – August 2 at Mountain View High School. The camp is run by MVHS coaches and student-athletes and all proceeds benefit the MVHS Athletic Department. Lunch and extended care are available.
SpartansSportsCamp.com  (650) 479-5906

Stanford Water Polo Camps  Stanford
New to water polo or have experience, we have a camp for you. Half day or full day options for boys and girls ages 7 and up. All camps provide fundamental skills, scrimmages and games. Session 1 – June 10-13, 2024. Session 2 – June 17-20, 2024.
StanfordWaterPoloCamps.com  (650) 725-9016

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... At being the partner you can trust


43% 13% 9%
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35 Isabella Ave, Atherton
$15,500,000  |  5 Bed  |  6.5 Bath
650.704.5308
Steve Lessard  |  DRE 01183468
By Appointment

1855 Oakdell Dr, Menlo Park
$7,880,000  |  5 Bed  |  Office  |  4.5 Bath
650.281.8368
Carol Li  |  DRE 01227755
By Appointment

1690 Edgewood Dr, Palo Alto
$4,998,000  |  4 Bed  |  3 Bath
650.387.2716
Lori Buecheler  |  DRE 01859485
Olivia Maggi  |  DRE 02180306
Pending*

325 Channing Ave, #118, Palo Alto
$3,980,000  |  2 Bed  |  2.5 Bath
650.380.3588
Estela Estrada Freeman  |  DRE 00994614
Open Sat & Sun 1:30pm–4:30pm

252 Ramona St, Palo Alto
$2,750,000  |  2 Bed  |  2 Bath
650.333.3833
Tim Trailer  |  DRE 00426209
Sold

640 Forest Ave, #D, Palo Alto
$998,000  |  2 Bed  |  2 Bath
650.687.7388
Sophie Tsang  |  DRE 01399145
Sold

43% 13% 9%
COMPASS DELEON COLDWELL BANKER

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BURGLARIES
continued from page 1
“I am concerned that Menlo Park not be one of the last ones standing not having a license plate reader, so that anyone who wants to break into a house and doesn’t want their license plates read know they can come to Menlo Park,” said Menlo Park resident Dee Dee Dickey during the meeting.

Members of the Sharon Heights Community Association wrote a letter to the council on Feb. 13 stating their concerns for the surge of break-ins and suggested that installing ALPRs might help with combating crime.

Sharon Heights residents Maya Sewald commented during the city council meeting encouraging more funding towards the police department. “Our detective unit is working on the investigations of the residential burglaries as well as working with neighboring agencies,” Acker told this news organization.

In addition to the standard burglary prevention advice, the Atherton Police Department has announced a new initiative it calls the Burglary Prevention Bait House Program. While still in the initial stages, bait houses will be located in areas with higher burglary rates. To capture evidence, the bait houses will be equipped with surveillance equipment that will help police identify and arrest suspects.

The program is intended to ensure faster response times from the police department and increase the likelihood of apprehending burglars while they are in the act.

“The investigations are ongoing and the detectives are actively following up on leads,” said Atherton Police Commander Dan Larsen, in an email to this news organization. “The ALPR cameras have been useful in identifying possible associated vehicles.”

In addition to the bait house program, Police Chief Steve McCulley announced that the police department will be hosting a Burglary Prevention Workshop at Town Center, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, on March 28 at 7 p.m.

Portola Valley sees increase in burglaries, Woodside’s count remains low

Portola Valley has reported six residential break-ins, five of which occurred in January. The town of Woodside has reported a total of three burglaries in which all have occurred in the month of January. Within Woodside, the Sheriff’s Office explained that the community is on the low end of burglaries with zero incidents reported throughout February after identifying some groups that were actively burglarizing. No burglaries have been reported for early March.

“We arrested some individuals, we had collaboration with other agencies, we’ve identified a pretty good chunk of individuals involved and we started to see this slow decrease,” said Capt. Matthew Fox with the Sheriff’s Office during a Woodside town hall meeting.

The San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office held community meetings in Woodside and Portola Valley to inform the community about what their police officers are doing to keep the area safe and to provide tips on what homeowners can do to prevent burglaries.

Fox explained that the majority of the break-ins recorded annually happen during the holiday season when residents are not home. “When people go on vacation and people leave their house vacant, it’s a prime opportunity for a small amount of people that are involved in criminal activity to really target homes,” said Fox during the Woodside meeting.

District 3 Supervisor Ray Mueller joined the meeting and encouraged individuals to reach out to local legislators to show support in the rollback of criminal justice reforms that actually led to these increasing property crimes that we’re seeing right now.

Portola Valley hosted a discussion on public safety with its town manager on Feb. 28, inviting Capt. Fox to answer community questions.

“I will be taking a look at the feasibility of purchasing more cameras for the town, and other areas such as the cost of enhancing our Sheriff’s contact in the future — or seeing if private security may be an option to help with surveillance,” said Portola Valley Town Manager Sharif Etman in a statement to this news organization.

Etman clarified that no decisions or promises were made during the meeting and that the town’s budget and funding will have to be considered for these increased security measures.

Law enforcement tips on burglary prevention, MOs

Across the Midpeninsula, local law enforcement have offered similar advice to communities facing high rates of burglaries.

County Sheriff’s Office’s Capt. Mark Myers told Woodside residents that the primary entry point they are finding is the rear sliding door. Myers encourages residents to buy security film that protects the glass from immediately breaking.

County Assistant Sheriff Ryan Monaghan said that the “two minutes is about the standard” amount of time for a burglary to occur.

Larsen advises that Atherton residents schedule a Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) review of their home by calling 650-924-7293.

The Sheriff’s Office similarly offers residents in the county to receive an assessment from a deputy on their home’s security. Homeowners will be able to receive suggestions on what they can do to their home to prevent a burglary.

With break-ins commonly occurring when residents are out of town, police officers advise community members to leave their lights, TV or radio on while they’re away.

Other common tips provided across police agencies include: locking doors, windows and gates, installing outdoor motion-sensored floodlights and installing alarm and security systems.

The Sheriff’s Office also encourages talking to neighbors and letting them know about any vacations or trips out of town. When neighbors know that another neighbor is out of town, any identification of a suspicious vehicle or person around the property can be reported to the police.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE WARNS RESIDENTS OF PHISHING SCAM

By Bay City News Service

The San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office warned the public against a phony scam that victimized an elderly woman on Wednesday, March 7.

According to the Sheriff’s Office, its deputies responded on Wednesday to the 800 block of Sonora Avenue in El Granada after a senior woman reported she had been the victim of a phishing scheme.

Based on the victim’s report, she received a fraudulent email link impersonating a popular online money exchange company. The sender told the victim to remove cash from her bank account and meet with a courier in person.

At the meeting, the elderly woman gave her money to the courier, who walked away and left the area. The courier is described as an Asian man, approximately 6 feet tall and weighing around 200 pounds. He was last seen wearing a blue sweatshirt and dark pants.

Anyone with relevant information is asked to contact the Sheriff’s Office at 650-363-4911. Anonymous tips can be also given via its anonymous tip line at 800-547-2700.

Residents are urged to use caution and avoid sharing personal banking information with people who ask for such details online or over the phone, especially if they ask for money.

Email Staff Writer Jennifer Yoshikoshi at jjyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com.

The Almanac 14  AlmanacNews.com  March 15, 2024
to the house and using her living room as a practice space.

She received a bachelor’s degree in music from Occidental College in Los Angeles. Her eldest child, Carol Swanson, would follow in her footsteps and study music there as well.

“Music was always her world and it became my world in a different way,” said Swanson, who learned the piano at the age of 5 and later on became active as a barbershop singer.

Hearing Marjorie’s music during days and nights was a norm for her children who also grew up playing music and gained their mother’s musical talents in varying forms.

“It was ubiquitous. I went to sleep with live music,” said her son Randy Cassingham, who inherited her perfect pitch. “It was always there and I always have music playing in my head.”

After years of growing up hearing music throughout the house, her son Brian didn’t realize how unique his childhood experiences were until he moved away.

“When I went to college, I realized that something was missing,” said Brian. “It was hearing your mother. I didn’t realize until I was older how special that was.”

Her eldest son Curt Cassingham started playing the flute around the age of 8 and still plays it to this day. He says, “Music came from God through my mother and through me.”

In 2005, Marjorie moved into The Sequoias in Portola Valley, a retirement community bordering the Windy Hill Open Space Preserve. Moving out of her Ladera home didn’t stop her from playing music, or keeping her grand piano. At The Sequoias, she had one Steinway piano. Others in the community would open up their windows to hear the sound of her music when she played.

She frequently held concerts for her community members at the retirement home. Although music was a large aspect of her life, and is often how her friends and family remember her, she was also known for her Wittness, appreciation for beauty and intellect. Her wit carries on through her children, especially Randy, now a columnist, who says he got his wit and humor from her.

Kirsten Kingdon, a close friend of Marjorie during her years at The Sequoias, recalls a moment where her wit truly shined.

“Last summer when [Marjorie] was 99 years old, I told her ‘It’s my birthday today I’m turning 82,’” said Kingdon. Marjorie replied: “Am I supposed to be impressed by that?” In October 2023, Marjorie moved into a memory care facility at The Sequoias but Randy said that she was 100% there when it came to her humor.

“She loved everybody, was open to everybody and enjoyed playing music for people,” recalls Curt, who remembers her kindness and feels grateful to carry his mother through music beyond her life.

“She adored the things that were beautiful. When she looked, she was always looking out for beauty whether it was in music or visual beauty,” recalls Kingdon who often enjoyed the regular walks in the outdoors with Marjorie.

On March 9, family and friends gathered for her memorial service at Valley Presbyterian Church. The service featured her music in celebration of her life.

Email Staff Writer Jennifer Yookoshi at jjyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com.

Town of Atherton Planning Commission, March 27, 2024
REGULAR MEETING, 6:00 P.M.
This meeting is held virtually and in-person at the Council Chambers, 80 Fair Oaks Lane

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

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

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

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

Projects under Public Hearing:
A. Description: Conditional Use Permit request to increase combined enrollment for Menlo School from 795 to 835 students over a period of four years beginning in the 2024-25 school year, at 50 Valparaiso Avenue, zoned PFS (APN 070-360-080 / Permit CUP23-00005).

CEQA: The proposal has been determined to be categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Class 14 CEQA 15314 Minor Additions to Existing Structures.

A copy of the Planning Commission staff report and application materials can be found online, by Friday, March 22, 2024, here: https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/641/Agendas-Minutes

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that said application is set for hearing by the Planning Commission at its meeting on March 27, 2024, at 6:00 PM in-person and via teleconference accessible through the above-described information, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the projects listed in the public hearing section should or should not be approved.

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

Planning Commission decisions are appealable by any aggrieved person to the City Council within 10 days of the date of the decision. If you have any questions on the item please contact Radha Hayagreev, Senior Planner, (408) 796-4370 at hayagreev@ci.atherton.ca.us or the Planning Commission at planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us.

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/ Radha Hayagreev
Radha Hayagreev, Consulting Senior Planner

March 15, 2024  AlmanacNews.com  The Almanac  15
**Public Notices**

**NOTICE OF LIEN SALE** is hereby given pursuant to Sections 21700-21716 of the California Business & Professions Code, Section 780 of the UCC, and Section 535 of the Penal Code. The undersigned, Menlo-Atherton Storage Storage ("MAS") in Menlo Park, CA, will sell via online public sale by competitive bidding the personal property of Nancy G. Kerry, Hector Gonzalez Ortiz, Jerry Wellson and Sione Fetuu. Property to be sold: small men's personal effects, shelving units, bed, Madtack battery charger, children's bike, small rolling chair, bicycle, artwork, misc household goods, boxes of unknown contents & more.

The auction will be held online at www.storagetreasures.com. The sale will begin March 13, 2024 at 9am and end on March 26, 2024 at 9am. Goods must be paid for in CASH at MAS and removed at completion of the sale. Sale is subject to cancellation in the event of settlement between MAS and obligated party. Menlo-Atherton Storage, 3773 Haven Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025 650.366.3757. Please refer to www.storagetreasures.com for all other terms and conditions governing the bidding and auction process.

(ALM Mar 8 and 15, 2024)

**EMPIRE SAW SAWE**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. M-296750

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: 1.) EMPIRE SAW, 2.) SAWE.

Registered owner(s): IMELDA ALMOS

206 PULGAS AVE

EAST PALO ALTO, CA 94303

This business is conducted by: an Individual. Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 09/01/1987.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on February 23, 2024.

(ALM Mar 1, 8, 15, and 22, 2024)

**MONDAY BEAUTY CO.**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. M-296641

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: 1.) MONDAY BEAUTY CO. 2.) MONDAY BEAUTY.

FILE NO.: M-296674

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 February 16, 2024.

(ALM Mar 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2024)

**BILL COMMA**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. M-296691

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: 1.) BILL COMMA

FILE NO.: M-296683

This business is conducted by: a Corporation. Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 12/01/2023.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on February 12, 2024.

(ALM Mar 23, 3, 8, and 15, 2024)

**RLL STOGIX**

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. M-296642

The following person(s) is (are) doing business as: 1.) RLL STOGIX

FILE NO.: M-296692

This business is conducted by: a Corporation. Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 02/23/2024.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on February 13, 2024.

(ALM Feb 23, Mar 1, 8, and 15, 2024)

**ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**

Case No: 24CV00947

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: SHELLEY KNOWLTON & ADAM MILLER filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: ZOE MAAE MILLER to SCOTTY MAAE MILLER

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: 1.) ELLIE MENTAL HEALTH

FILE NO.: M-296641

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 February 16, 2024.

(ALM Mar 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2024)

**ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**

Case No: 24CV01007

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: Nao Mastrangelo filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: SORAYA AIYANA MASTRANDELLO to SORAYA FUSILUA MASTRANDELLO

The COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted.

Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING: 04/23/2024, 9:00am, Southern Branch of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.

A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:

**ALMANAC**

Date: 02/23/2024

Elizabeth Lee

JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

ALMANAC (Mar 15, 22, 29 and Apr 5, 2024)

**ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**

Case No: 24-CIV-00761

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: Elizabeth Mills Berry filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: ELLIE MENTAL HEALTH to BIRDE KET NGUYEN SHARIFI

FILE NO.: M-296691

This business is conducted by: a Corporation. Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 09/01/1987.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on February 13, 2024.

(ALM Feb 23, Mar 1, 8, and 15, 2024)

**ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**

Case No: 24CV01007

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: Nao Mastrangelo filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: SORAYA AIYANA MASTRANDELLO to SORAYA FUSILUA MASTRANDELLO

The COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted.

Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING: 04/23/2024, 9:00am, Southern Branch of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.

A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:

ALMANAC

Date: 02/28/2024

Helen B. Lee

JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

ALMANAC (Mar 15, 22, 29 and Apr 5, 2024)

Continued on next page

The Almanac is adjudicated to publish in San Mateo County. • Fictitious Business Name • Abandonment of Fictitious Business Name • Name Change • Partnership Withdrawal or Dissolution • Probate - Administration • Probate - Probate • Notice of Bulk Sale • Legal Public Notice • Trustee Sale

Homes have been selling as much as 20% over asking price in these 3 Peninsula cities

By Silicon Valley Association of Realtors

More homes have been coming on the market and selling above asking price in Silicon Valley since January: Both indicators that 2024 could be a strong year for the local housing market, according Dave Walsh, broker manager of the Compass Los Altos and San Jose offices and past president of the California Association of Realtors. Walsh, who has been tracking market stats in Silicon Valley over two-week periods and comparing them to the previous month as well as to the same time last year, said he’s optimistic about the 2024 housing market based on what he’s been seeing.

Walsh said the market began to heat up around the third week of January and hasn’t slowed down: Open houses are busy in Silicon Valley, and many homes are receiving multiple offers. The number of homes selling above list price also has been trending upward. According to Walsh, Sunnyvale, Cupertino and Mountain View are cities that are “hot” in Santa Clara County. Homes in these cities have sold as much as 20% over their asking price.

“Properties around the Apple campus in Cupertino are the fastest-moving properties in the country,” he said.

Walsh expects more inventory to come on the market; and when it does, he predicts that Silicon Valley will become an “ultra-competitive marketplace.”

“We’re going to blow past last year’s numbers,” with the historically busy spring season extending into July, Walsh said.

More houses on the market

It appears buyers are adapting to the current mortgage rate environment, Walsh said. During the week of Feb. 22, Walsh indicated in Santa Clara County there were 1,034 properties available for sale (666 single-family homes and 368 townhomes) in Santa Clara County. That is, an increase of 139 properties from the prior two weeks, and up 18% from the last 30 days.

There were 187 pending homes sales, up 66 from two weeks ago and 65% higher than a month ago. Listings are rising across Silicon Valley. Palo Alto has 50 reported listings, up from 37 two weeks ago.

He also noted that the number of days a home stays on the market has dropped as homes are starting to sell more quickly. This is another primary sign indicating that the market is beginning to be more competitive even before the historically busy spring homebuying season has gotten underway, according to Walsh.

Typically, the median time a home stays on the market increases in January and falls as the market ramps up for the busy spring season. The median days on market in Santa Clara County in January was 11 days, compared with 12 days in December and 22 days a year ago.

High-end homes see multiple offers

More high-end homes are getting buyers’ attention. Walsh noted there were a reported 21 multiple offers on a $5 million property.

“We’ve never seen this pressure on $3 million to $5 million properties,” he said.

Walsh indicated less than 1% of sales that are pending have contingencies. This is reflective of the pressure on the housing market.

The economy is looking good, and there’s a lot of optimism because of stock market highs, Walsh said.

Once rates start to soften, Walsh predicts the market will get tougher for buyers as demand outpaces the housing supply. First-time buyers who were priced out by market competition last year will likely give it another shot. Economists predict as the Federal Reserve starts lowering rates later this year that repeat buyers who have hesitated moving because they’ve felt locked-in with their existing low-mortgage interest rates also will return to the market. Additionally, young adults who are starting to leave their parents’ homes can be viewed as potential buyers down the road.

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**Public Notices**

**ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**

Case No.: 24-CIV-00406

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: Duncan Anderson King filed a petition with this court to change their name. The court, in its sound judgment, granted the petition.

The name and address of the court is (El nombre y dirección de la corte es):


case courthouse, Redwood City, CA 94063.

A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation printed in this county: ALMANAC

Date: 02/13/2024

Jonathan K. Whitworth

JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

(ALM Feb 23, Mar 1, 8 and 15, 2024)

(Almanac News)

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**CITY ADVISORY BODY CURRENT VACANCIES**

The City has openings on several commissions and committees! Help examine issues of community concern and provide guidance to the City Council.

**CURRENT ADVISORY BODY VACANCIES**

- Complete Streets – 3
- Environmental Quality – 3
- Finance and Audit – 2
- Housing – 1
- Parks and Recreation – 2
- Planning – 2

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

- Apply by 5 p.m., Wed., March 27
- Menlo Park resident
- Over 18 years of age
- Committed to attending scheduled meetings

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Visit menlopark.gov/commissions
Email jahierson@menlopark.gov
Call 650-330-6620

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**El Cerrito**

The median time a home stays on the market increases in January and falls as the market ramps up for the busy spring season. The median days on market in Santa Clara County in January was 11 days, compared with 12 days in December and 22 days a year ago.
ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
TOWN OF ATHERTON
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Notice: The Town of Atherton (Town) hereby gives notice that it will accept bids for construction of the following public work:

2024 SPRING PATCHING PROJECT
Project Number: 56086

1. Scope of Work: Grind and replace approximately 28,565 square feet of asphalt to a six-inch depth. This work to include all necessary traffic control and will involve grinding, sweeping, tack coating, replacing asphalt to appropriate depth in an appropriate number of lifts, replacing any damaged pavement markings, delineation and/or markings, and finish rolling per Town of Atherton Standard specifications and special provisions. Some hand work around utility access-hole covers will be necessary (special provision #107). Some root trimming at digout locations may be required.

2. Plans & Specifications: Plans & Specifications may be obtained at the Town of Atherton’s website at: http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/Bids.aspx at no cost. Additional information is contained in Town of Atherton Standard Specifications, which are available at: http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/285. Contractor shall be responsible for any addendums that may be posted on the Town’s website. No Planholders list will be made available.

3. Project Schedule: The work shall be completed within THIRTY-FIVE (35) working days from the First Day of Construction as defined in the Notice to Proceed.

4. Bid Submission: SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, California 94027, until 1:30 p.m. Pacific Standard Time March 26, 2024, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. All bids must be submitted no later than the date and time prescribed. The Bidder is wholly responsible to ensure its Bid is submitted on the date and at the time and place designated for the opening of bids. Any Bid received after the time and date specified shall not be considered. Any Bid may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for opening bids.

5. Engineer’s Estimate for the project is: $240,000.

6. Bid Requirements: Bids must be for the entire work and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked: “Bid of (Contractor) for 2024 SPRING PATCHING PROJECT, Project No: 56086”, along with date and time of bid opening.

7. Required Contractor’s License: Bidder must possess a current California Class “A” General Engineering or a “C-12” Earthwork and Paving contractor’s license issued by the State of California, at the time the Bid is submitted. The Contractor and all subcontractors shall be licensed by the State of California in the class appropriate for the work contemplated. Failure of Contractor or his/her subcontractors to possess such current license at the time of bidding may be deemed sufficient cause for rejection of the bid.

8. Portion of Work to be Performed by the Contractor: The General Contractor shall perform, with his own organization, work of a value amounting to not less than 50% of the total contract, excluding specialty items as may be indicated on the bid schedule.

9. Department of Industrial Relations Registration: A Contractor or Subcontractor shall not be qualified to bid on, be listed in a bid proposal, subject to the requirements of Public Contract Code 4104, or engage in the performance of any contract for public work, as that term is defined in Division 2, Part 7, Chapter 1 of the Labor Code, unless currently registered and qualified to perform public work pursuant to Labor Code Section 1725.5. (http://www.dir.ca.gov/Public-Works/PublicWorks.html)

10. Reservation of Rights: The Town reserves the right to reject any or all bids; to make any awards or any rejections in what it alone considers to be in the best interest of the Town and waive any irregularities or irregularities in the bids. If there is a reason to believe that collusion exists among any bidders, none of the bids of the participants in such collusion will be considered and the Town may likewise elect to reject all bids received.

11. Substitution of Securities: The successful bidder may substitute securities for retention monies withheld to ensure performance of the contract, in accordance with California Public Contract Code, Section 22300.

12. Prevailing Wage Rates: Bidders are hereby notified that provisions of California Labor Code regarding prevailing wages and apprentices are applicable to the work to be performed under this contract. Pursuant to Section 1773 et seq., the general prevailing wage rates have been determined by the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations and appear in the California Prevailing Wage Rates. Copies are on file at the office of the City Engineer and are available to interested parties upon request. The successful bidder shall post a copy of the wage rates at the job site.

13. Bid Preparation Cost: Bidders are solely responsible for the cost of plan and specification printing and preparing their Bids.

14. Town Contact: Questions regarding the project should be directed to:

Ovadia, P.E., City Engineer

By: ____________________________

Date: ____________________________
Local basketball team wins National Championship Title

The Redwood National Junior Basketball seventh grade All Net team won the National Title in Garden Grove. The team qualified for the championship after reaching the finals in the Silicon Valley Sectional playoffs in February. For the National Title, players face Corona Norco from Riverside County and won their game with a score of 48–40.

The team of players from Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Woodside, Atherton, Emerald Hills and Redwood City was coached by Phillip Trinidad and Ken Morgan, who collected their second title in three years.

Teaching positions open

The Portola Valley School District is hiring educators for the 2024-25 school year. Certified positions are open for kindergarten, first grade, fourth grade, fifth grade, sixth through eighth grade science, social studies and English language arts for sixth through eighth grade. TK-8 substitute teacher and employment for the summer program.

More information on staffing can be found at psd.net/staff/employment-opportunities. Applications can be found on edjoin.org/psd.

Ravenswood School District has opened its early hiring window for teaching positions ranging from science, math and drama as well as custodian and bus driver roles. Interested applicants can visit edjoin.org/ravenswoodschools.

Design a playground at Flood County Park

San Mateo County Parks invites community members to share their ideas for a new design of the playground at Menlo Park’s Flood County Park on March 16 from 2-4 p.m. near the Manzanita picnic area.

The design team is looking for ideas and preferences on equipment, color schemes, playground themes and more. Children are also welcome to share their ideas with materials provided. The community event will also have a food truck selling popcorn, drinks, popsicles, hot dogs and cotton candy.

Currently, the Flood Park playground does not meet safety standards and is closed to the public. The design and construction of a new playground is part of the Realize Flood Park improvement plans, an initiative to rebuild the park with community input.

Webinar on gender, love and family in early childhood

Community Equity Collaborative is hosting a 90-minute webinar on gender, love and family for Spanish-speaking childcare workers, parents, educators, community members and child-supporting professionals.

At 4 p.m. on March 21, April 17 and April 24, the webinar will offer information, strategies and resources for adults to support young children as they explore their identity, who they can love and navigate their understanding around these concepts.

The webinar will discuss topics around LGBTQ+ identities, pronouns and inclusive language, the power of affirmation and managing messages about gender, love and family.

Register for a webinar on communityequitycollaborative.org.

San Mateo County Office of Education honored for joint youth climate program

The Youth Climate Ambassadors (YCA) Leadership Program was honored by a Sustainable San Mateo County Sustainability Award, according to a San Mateo County Office of Education March 6 press release.

The program is joint with the county’s Sustainability Department and Office of Education that works to empower high school students to become leaders in climate action and sustainability. The award was presented in acknowledgement of the county’s unique approach to get students involved in sustainability.

The program has been active for over five years and has had a total of 273 students participate since its inception. Students in the program learn about research methods, environmental justice and participate in community building activities while gaining skills in public speaking and event organizing.

Students also design and implement community projects by collaborating with local organizations such as Peninsula Clean Energy.

The YCA Leadership Program is currently hosting a cohort of 49 students representing more than 20 local high schools in the county.

Former Portola Valley town manager joins library board

On March 7, the Foundations for San Mateo County Libraries welcomed Jeremy Dennis, former Portola Valley Town Manager, to the board of directors in an Instagram post. The Foundations board works to enhance awareness of county libraries, expand equitable access and encourage San Mateo County Libraries to better serve the community.

The post writes, “Jeremy loves to read non-fiction history and science books. His favorite book, ‘The Discoverers’ inspired him to always be learning and absorbing. You can often find Jeremy at both the downtown and Schaber Redwood City Libraries.”

Sequoia district receives highest bond rating

On March 6, the Sequoia Union High School District, SUHSD, began issuing its first series of Measure W bonds and also received an upgrade to the highest bond rating, Aaa, from credit rating agency Moody’s, according to a press release by the school district.

Measure W passed with 63% voter approval in November 2022, authorizing a $591 million bond to repair and upgrade SUHSD classrooms and infrastructure.

The district’s bond rating upgrade was received due to its strong economic base, sound reserves and liquidity and community-funded status, according to the release. The Aaa rating is judged to be of “highest quality with minimal risk,” according to Moody’s rating scale and definitions chart. This will allow the district to borrow money at a lower interest rate, saving tax-payer dollars.

SUHSD states that it received more than $605 million in orders, which is over four times the amount of bonds the district was offering. The high demand of both bonds allowed Superintendent Crystal Leach and Assistant Superintendent of Business Services Christine Gong to negotiate lower borrowing rates.

The initial rate of 4.37% for the 2022 Series 2024 Bonds is now at just under an interest cost of 4%. The district was also able to secure $5,395,087 in taxpayer savings for the 2024 Refunding Bonds over time, which exceeds the initial minimum saving threshold of $2,000,000.

SUHSD is one of nine K-12 school districts in the state to receive the Aaa bond rating from Moody’s.

Currently, the district is looking for applicants to serve on the Measure W Citizens’ Bond Oversight Committee. Applications are due on Wednesday, March 15, and more information can be found at seq.org/cho/s. Updates on Measure W projects will be regularly posted through the district website, newsletters and on social media.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Caltrain says electric train tests between Redwood City, Mountain View successful

Caltrain successfully tested its electric trains and overhead wires between Redwood City and Mountain View for the first time over the weekend of March 9, the agency’s officials said.

According to Caltrain, live run tests of the electric trains began at 5 mph to ensure the overhead wire and train are properly connected. The trains then were tested using the corridor’s 79 mph maximum limit, finishing 25 such test runs over the weekend.

“With this live run, testing can now take place from San Jose to Redwood City, further accelerating the process and keeping the corridor on schedule for fall 2024,” Caltrain officials said.

The rail line aims to complete 1,000 miles of testing before each electric train set is allowed to carry passengers. Caltrain officials said initial tests were conducted between the Santa Clara and College Park stations on the Santa Clara Drill Track.

— Bay City News Service
The human body is the ideal teaching tool in Darren Kerr’s classes at the Pacific Art League

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

On a recent evening at the Pacific Art League, the drawing studio was warm and quiet as students set up their easels and gathered their supplies while, in the middle of the room, a nude model prepared to take her first pose. The occasion? Darren Kerr’s figure drawing class, one of the most popular and enduring courses offered by the venerable art school, located in downtown Palo Alto.

Life drawing is considered one of the most fundamental skills for any artist and the study of the human form has been a subject for artists since prehistoric times. During the Renaissance in Italy, artists were expected to master figure drawing before going anywhere near a canvas to master figure drawing before. Kerr usually has a focus for each class and on this night wanted students to put down their charcoal sticks and try to add some color, via watercolor paints, to their drawings. After a short demonstration of the possible materials (which he had displayed on tables at the back of the room) students began mixing colors and taking them back to their easels. Kerr was a low-key presence in the room, spending some time creating his own drawings, which were shown on a large screen next to the model. He later walked around, looking at students’ work and offering suggestions and positive reinforcement such as “nice lines” or “that’s such a good color.”

Kerr acknowledged that life drawing is challenging. “I would say it is the most challenging of drawing subjects, not because a human being is inherently more difficult to draw than a vase of flowers, but because our expectations are higher — we are so much better at recognizing any minute discrepancies in a drawing of a person than of any other subject,” he said.

Kerr pointed out that drawing the human body is challenging. “I would say it is the most challenging of drawing subjects, not because a human being is inherently more difficult to draw than a vase of flowers, but because our expectations are higher — we are so much better at recognizing any minute discrepancies in a drawing of a person than of any other subject,” he said.

It was clear from the level of quiet intensity and focus on the faces of the students that this is not an easy undertaking. Student Lisa Norman shared that she is returning to art after a 20-year break but that, “for me drawing and painting hone and develops visual skills, problem solving and creative thinking.” She credited Kerr for his “open, generous and approachable style.” Another student, Mary Ida Compton, said, “Darren is open to helping students of all levels of artistic expression and provides meaningful feedback during and after my drawing. He is also able to select models who have the features he is trying to get us to understand and represent on paper. And the music is good!”

Sierra lives in Santa Cruz and is a rock climber — a perfect subject for a short session about the anatomy of the shoulder.

Using an app called “Complete Anatomy,” Kerr pointed out the musculature of this part of the body and what it takes to make an arm move. He asked Sierra to hold the climbing ropes and move slowly so that he could point out the scapula, rhomboid, latissimus dorsi, etc. Actually identifying these body parts and seeing them move is more instructive than any diagram in a book.

Kerr said, with tongue in cheek, that drawing the body is a skill that takes time and practice to perfect. “For a beginning art student to have a chance to be really good at life drawing, maybe spend a couple hundred hours copying a variety of master figure drawings, another couple of hundred hours drawing from classical sculptures, 50 to 100 hours of anatomy study and drawings, another couple hundred hours drawing the figure from life and you should be pretty good.”

During a break, Sierra (who is, by profession, a mental health therapist) said that she has been modeling for many years and really enjoys working for Kerr. In fact, she only works for his classes because “it is a very respectful environment and Darren really cares about art.”

“The life drawing studio is a respectful and collaborative environment. Artists and models give each other space and encouragement and we are all there because we want to be there,” said Kerr. “Art is foremost. The participants come from all backgrounds and skill levels and there is no judgment.”

When asked why, in an age of technological advancements like artificial intelligence and computer-generated imagery, there is still a need to study from the human figure, Kerr was very forthright. “Back in the day, there used to be a saying in the software industry: ‘garbage in, garbage out.’ I am not a fan of AI in the artistic realm — it is inauthentic. You may be able to fool people some of the time, but you will not bring anything new to the table,” he said. “For art students doing character development, the ability to draw gesture and form with movement and balance can only help your growth.”

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Instructor Darren Kerr talks to Sabina Grogan about the proportions of the human face during a life drawing class at the Pacific Art League in Palo Alto.

Students work on portraits of a model in a life drawing class at the Pacific Art League in Palo Alto on March 7.
At their upcoming “Celebrating Women in Music: Exploring Works for Piano Duet” concert in Mount View, musicians Gabriela Calderón Cornejo and Astrid Morales Torres will lend each other a hand — both hands, actually — when they join forces in a piano four hands recital. The program features works by classical female composers, past and present, from several continents.

Piano four hands is a type of duet in which two pianists play at the same time, on the same piano, with one taking the upper, right-side part (primo) and the second taking the lower, left-side part (secondo).

“Please have to decide, how are we going to position ourselves to not clash with each other,” Calderón Cornejo said, with some pieces requiring both pianists to share the middle register, with no small degree of physical “coordinating and choreographing.” The duo will be alternating who takes the primo part and who takes the secundo from piece to piece, she said.

Calderón Cornejo, who’s originally from Costa Rica, came to the U.S. to earn masters and doctorate degrees in piano performance and has since made it her home. She is a faculty member of the Community School of Music and Arts (CSMA), where the March 16 concert will be held, and has extensive experience as both a solo and ensemble performer. In recent years, she’s developed a particular interest in exploring and promoting lesser-known works by Latin American female composers, including via her first studio album, “Musas.”

“They didn’t have a platform to bring exposure to their music,” she reflected on the under-heralded composers that she champions. The concert’s program expands this interest to include other regions, featuring six works by women composers from different countries, including Mel Bonis (France), Inah Machado Sandoval (Brazil), Karalyn Schubring (United States), Ruth Schonthal (Germany), Beatriz Lockhart (Uruguay) and Eleanor Alberga (Jamaica, now based in the United Kingdom) representing a range of styles. Sandoval’s “very cute” piece “Branca de Neve e os Sete Anões,” for example, is based on “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,” including a movement for each and every dwarf, from Doc to Dopey, and incorporating Brazilian folk traits. Schubring’s “Wide Open” and Schonthal’s “Bouquets for Margaret: Five Duets for Piano Four-Hands” both celebrate elements of nature.

Calderón Cornejo said she and Morales Torres chose to include Schubring in particular because they felt it was important to include a young, current American composer trying to “make a path for herself” in the music world. Her composition evokes “the experience of being outside in the summer with some thunder and some rain... like when you play as a kid outside,” she said. Bonis’ “Les Gitans Valse Espagnole for piano four hands” is written in a Spanish style, while the Uruguayan Lockhart’s “Joropo” is Venezuelan in influence and style.

“Joropo” is Venezuelan in influence and style. “No matter where they come from, no matter where they live, they need to be able to access this,” she added.

“Musical female composers from diverse cultural backgrounds are a lot of Zoom meetings in preparation for the concert and planned an intense bout of in-person rehearsal before their run of Bay Area performances.

Calderón Cornejo has been with CSMA for two years, teaching there four days a week, and has international piano conference last year and quickly recognized her as a kindred spirit. “We just clicked. We have similar personalities and the way we approach music is very similar, very active,” she said. “We have similar views of our musical path.” Their plan for collaboration took off from there.

“We’re very excited for people to join us,” she said, of their three Bay Area performances (in addition to Mountain View, they also booked shows in Morgan Hill and San Francisco). While Calderón Cornejo lives locally, Morales Torres is based in Texas, which means they’ve had a lot of Zoom meetings in preparation for the concert and planned an intense bout of in-person rehearsal before their run of Bay Area performances.

Calderón Cornejo has been with CSMA for two years, teaching there four days a week, and has performed in past CSMA community concerts as well. She said CSMA’s mission of offering arts for all resonates strongly with her.

“It’s especially for me very important because I’m Latina; you don’t see Latinas kind of in these spaces. It’s a systemic thing. It’s hard to find people who look like me and sound like me in these spaces,” she said.

“I think it’s very important they give us the platform to be there.”

In that spirit, she said, it was also important to her and Morales Torres that all three of their Bay Area performances be offered to the community at no cost, bringing exposure to these lesser-known classical female composers from diverse cultural backgrounds and making the experience an accessible opportunity for as many folks as possible.

“We need to bring this to people for free,” she said.

“No matter where they come from, no matter where they live, they need to be able to access this.”

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Visit almanacnews.com/arts-culture to see our roundup of things to do for St. Patrick’s Day.
By Sophia Markoulakis

With more than 750,000 people of Irish descent living on the Peninsula, it’s no surprise that there are quite a few Irish pubs to stop by for a pint of guinness. For 33 years, Millbrae’s Fiddler’s Green has been a favored spot for Irish expats and fans of Irish lore and customs. Molly O’s, also founded by the McElhones, opened in San Carlos in 2023.

For 33 years, Millbrae’s Fiddler’s Green has been a favored spot for Irish expats and fans of Irish lore and customs. Molly O’s, also founded by the McElhones, opened in San Carlos in 2023.

The McElhones’ three children, Ollie, Sinéad and Trea, grew up helping with the family business, and Oliver admits that his son, Ollie, talked him into opening Molly O’s in San Carlos. “I was ready to enjoy my golden years, but I love my kids and was happy to help,” he said. “It’s his place and I told him, when he gets the keys, the headaches are his. Still, we have our weekly family meetings where we discuss both places.”

In the summer of 2023, Ollie McElhone opened Molly O’s with chef-partner Juan Angulo. The team wanted to create a similar welcoming atmosphere but also have a place to enjoy music late into the night. Ollie expanded on the old school versus new school concept of pubs and said, “I am hoping to create the same sense of community that my parents built but with more events and live music.”

Molly O’s is named after the popular Irish song and is a tribute to Ollie’s grandmother. Ollie’s sister, Sinéad McElhone, was in charge of Molly O’s design. Her time spent studying and working in England helped her hone in on key Irish pub accents like the mirrored bar and wainscoting. The space’s mezzanine is where live bands perform most Saturday nights until 2 a.m. The snug at the front of the pub operate more like table service at a club, a far cry from their original use. According to Oliver, in Ireland, pub owners would take former church confessionals and place them inside.

“There would be a different entrance for the snug because women couldn’t drink in public. Each snug would have a sliding door for them to receive their drinks. The men would then sneak in so they could drink together,” he explained.

Businesses like the Irish Pub Company export a complete pub kit anywhere in the world, and many offer add-ons like confessionals and church pews. Oliver confessed that there’s a San Jose Irish pub that was created from a kit but he wouldn’t divulge its name.

“This historical overlap between the church and pub goes back hundreds of years, and one of the most noteworthy is the role of the publican, a pub staff member who would not only pour your pint but also coordinate the funeral for your beloved. Oliver remembers having cousins in Ireland who served that role but disputed the notion that the cooler that kept the Guinness cold was an ideal location to store the deceased before the wake.

Life and death and every celebration in between land squarely within the confines of a pub. It’s probably why Rose’s mother and family matriarch, Molly Mitchell, pops by Fiddler’s a couple of times a week. At 91, she’s shared enough life experiences with her family and fellow pub patrons that Fiddler’s feels more like a second home. The staff confirm her celebrity status and always have her pot of Barry’s Irish tea and boiled cabbage on hand. She often arrives with friends, and her posse includes at least one or two Catholic priests.

St. Patrick’s Day to the Mitchell and McEhone family is a day to celebrate in many ways since it’s the busiest day of the year. Oliver isn’t bothered by the stereotypical notion that St. Patrick’s Day is all about drinking. When asked about its exploitation, he quipped, “Thank God!” He went on to explain that pubs used to be closed so that folks could honor Ireland’s patron saint who died on March 17. “It’s only been the last 20 years or so that the pubs stay open. It was a holy day of obligation, but where I grew up in Northern Ireland, people used to sneak into a closed pub through the back door.”

When Ollie and his siblings were young, they balanced attending the San Francisco Irish Parade with working at Fiddler’s, a common practice for a family business. And it’s those memories of sharing Irish pride with family and patrons and enjoying Irish music and dance that Ollie hopes to extend to his customers during Molly O’s first St. Patrick’s Day. This St. Patrick’s Day and weekend, the McElhone and Mitchell family will be celebrating the legacy of their family businesses with proper pours of Guinness and Tullamore D.E.W.-spiked Irish coffee, among other special drinks and food. Bagpipers and Irish dancers will be dropping by both locations.

Behan’s, now run by Rose’s brother, Gerard Mitchell, will also participate in the family’s festivities with the Holy Trinity Pub Crawl. It kicks off on Friday, March 15, at 3:30 p.m. at Fiddler’s Green. Matriarch Molly Mitchell, Molly O’s namesake, will be joining in. Participants will receive a passport and stamp with each purchase of food or drink. With her posse, Mitchell will then make her way to Behan’s and Molly O’s. Prizes will be awarded after the third stamp. Ollie said this will be an ongoing event, though Mitchell won’t always participate. “She’s not much of a drinker, but she does enjoy the occasional pint or lemon drop,” he said.

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Fiddler’s Green, 333 El Camino Real, Millbrae; 650-697-3419, Instagram: @fiddlersgreenmillbrae.
Open Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-11 p.m., Sunday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m.
Molly O’s, 1163 San Carlos Ave., San Carlos; 650-486-1370, Instagram: @mollyos_sancarlos.
Open Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-11 p.m., Friday, 10 a.m.-2 a.m., Saturday, 9 a.m.-2 a.m. and Sunday, 9 a.m.-10 p.m.
Behan’s Irish Pub, 1327 Broadway, Burlingame.
Open Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m.-11 p.m., Friday, 10 a.m.-2 a.m., Saturday, 9 a.m.-2 a.m. and Sunday, 9 a.m.-10 p.m.
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