Stargazers catch sight of the Northern Lights at Windy Hill

By Eleanor Raab

At Windy Hill in Portola Valley, nearly 100 stargazers gathered for the rare chance to see the northern lights in the Bay Area on Friday and Saturday nights, May 10 and May 11. Though the lights were faint to the naked eye, they were very visible through camera lenses.

‘I’ve probably seen the Northern Lights 50 times now, but it’s so special every time, and even more special at home.’

EUGENE BEH, MENLO PARK RESIDENT

“It’s kind of surreal, I never thought I would be able to see them at home,” said Kyra Niyogi, a Mountain View resident who ventured to the top of Windy Hill to see the aurora borealis. “It’s definitely something that I’ve wanted to see for a long time.”

“It’s just amazing,” said another local resident, Kiana Zah. “Last February we had the snow up on Skyline which was crazy, and now this year we have the aurora! It’s so cool that we had

President Biden is met with protesters in Portola Valley, Palo Alto ahead of fundraisers

By Eleanor Raab

President Joe Biden’s trip to the Bay Area to attend fundraisers with wealthy donors for his reelection campaign on Friday, May 10, spurred pro-Palestinian protests in Portola Valley and Palo Alto.

A group of about 50 protesters met in advance of Biden’s arrival at a fundraiser held at the Portola Valley home of Vinod Khosla, a tech entrepreneur. Khosla has given approximately $1.4 million to Democratic campaigns and organizations over the course of this election cycle, according to Federal Election Commission records.

The protesters gathered at Rosotti Field on Alpine Road at 11 a.m. to march to the intersection of Alpine Road and Los Trancos Road. The fundraiser was held on Los Trancos Road.

“While Israel imposes a famine on top of its bombing of Gaza, Bay Area billionaires are having a party,” said a post announcing the protest from @BayResistance on Instagram. “Come tell them what you think!”

“The idea is to let them know that this is not OK, to be a visible signal that this is not OK,” said Michelle, an organizer of the protest.

“The protest remained peaceful, with attendees holding up signs and playing music as they walked along Alpine Road. “We are out here because we are protesting Biden who is actively participating in and attending multiple fundraisers in the area,’ said another attendee named Nadine, who identified herself as Palestinian.

“This is an individual who is actively aiding and abetting a genocide.”

Alpine Road was closed to traffic as Biden’s motorcade drove through the town. Around 80 people were in attendance at the Portola Valley
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The district also claims that terminating Woodland’s lease would cut off a portion of annual funds that the district relies on.

Attorney Susanna L. Chenette filed the suit on behalf of the Ladera residents. Resident Trevor Oliver, who has been outspoken about his concerns about access to the field, signed the court filing. The suit names LLESD, district governing board and Superintendent Beth Polito as defendants.

The district declined to comment on the suit for this story, but the district argues in legal documents in response to the Ladera community’s complaint, that residents erroneously make a case against the district rather than Woodland School, the entity that filed the conditional use permit application.

Through an investigation, Ladera residents found that there had been multiple cases of “illegal gifts to Woodland” which were allowed by the LLESD school board and Polito, according to the suit. In addition to the free license for the play areas and the two separate gifts of additional leased area, LLESD then made a gift in executing Woodland’s CUP application, according to the court filing.

The suit alleges that “a
Notice of Public Hearings
The Las Lomitas Elementary School District will hold two separate public hearings on the proposed Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), with the Budget Overview for Parents cover page, and the proposed Budget for fiscal year 2024-25 on June 6, 2024, at 7:00 pm, at La Entrada Middle School Atrium, 2200 Sharon Road, Menlo Park, 94025. Copies of the LCAP and Budget are available for review at the District office, 1011 Altstschul Avenue, Menlo Park, from June 3 to June 6, 2024 between 10:00 am and 1:00 pm and posted on the District website, www.llesd.org. Contact Mei Chan, mchan@llesd.org, 650 854-6311 to request a printed or electronic copy. Public members or stakeholders may request to comment at the public hearing on the LCAP and proposed budget or any item therein, by following the instructions for public comment found on the District website 5/17/24 CNS-3802353# THE ALMANAC

Meet horses at the Portola Valley Horse Fair on May 18
Portola Valley’s annual Horse Fair will be held on Saturday, May 18, at the Portola Valley Town Center, 765 Portola Road, between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. The event is free and open to all ages.

“Meet local horses, ride a pony, or take a loop on a carriage pulled by majestic Clydesdale horses,” says a flyer for the event. There will also be food trucks, horse-themed crafts and information about local horse activities and lessons. Dogs will not be allowed at the event to prevent the horses from being scared by them.

Atherton ADU workshop on May 20
Join Atherton’s Planning Department for an ADU workshop on May 20 from 6-7:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at 80 Fair Oaks Lane.

“Learn how to utilize existing structures on your property and explore waived application fees for compliant projects,” says an event listing on Atherton’s website. “Join us to uncover the town’s strategies for meeting housing mandates while preserving our community’s character.”

The event can also be attended virtually via Zoom at atherton.news/ADU-Workshop.

Youth poetry readings at Menlo Park City Council on May 21
Join the Menlo Park City Council on Tuesday, May 21, from 6-6:15 p.m. to hear poetry readings from young Menlo Park poets. There will be a brief ceremony honoring the young poets in addition to the reading.

Readings will be from students in grades 1-12 who submitted their original works during Menlo Park’s Annual Youth Poetry Voices event in honor of National Poetry Month in April.

Join in person at the Menlo Park City Council Chambers at 751 Laurel Street.

Music from Afroholix at the Belle Haven Community Center on May 25
Join Afroholix, a jazz quartet hailing from Oakland, for a free concert at the Belle Haven Community Campus, 100 Terminal Ave. in Menlo Park, on Saturday, May 25, from 1-1:45 p.m. “Afroholix promises a blend of funk, soul, and jazz improv from deep outer space,” says an event listing from Menlo Park. “Afroholix combines many different genres of Black music to make something beautiful, funky and fresh. Every show is a unique event, with the band dropping soul, funk, hip-hop and jazz with love and soulful improvisation.”

The band consists of Tony Peebles on saxophone, Steve Hogan on bass, Ronnie Smith on drums and Graal Swartz on guitar.

No registration is required for this free event.
HOLIDAY FUNDS GRANT OVER $1M TO LOCAL NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

By Almanac staff

With a record-breaking amount of money raised over the holiday season from readers, businesses and foundations this year, The Almanac has made grants of $35,000 each to 10 local nonprofit organizations serving families and children.

Just over $1 million was the combined giving totals to the holiday funds of The Almanac ($350,000), the Palo Alto Weekly ($646,000) and the Mountain View Voice ($53,000). The Almanac Holiday Fund began more than 25 years ago and each year selects 10 nonprofits providing needed services to residents of Menlo Park, Redwood City, North Fair Oaks or East Palo Alto to share equally of the funds raised. This year, The Almanac and its readers supported the Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula, Ecumenical Hunger Program, Fair Oaks Community Center, LifeMoves, Literacy Partners Menlo Park, Ravenswood Family Health Center, Second Harvest, Star Vista, St. Anthony’s Padua Dining Room and Upward Scholars. "These organizations are leaders in consistently providing critical services to the community," said Embarcadero Media Foundation president Adam Dawes. "Highlighting the work of nonprofits on the Midpeninsula is one of The Almanac’s important missions and we are gratified for the outpouring of support of our readers to provide each holiday season for these local agencies," he said.

The nonprofit Embarcadero Media Foundation, which publishes The Almanac and Palo Alto Weekly as well as the Mountain View Voice and Redwood City Pulse community news websites, raised more than $1 million for the holiday fund program across all its communities. The foundation covers all the expenses of the campaign, so all the money raised goes to the recipient organizations. The Packard, Hewlett and Menlo Park Rotary foundations all provide support, as do several family foundations that prefer to give anonymously.

State Sen. Josh Becker names Lutticken’s Deli & After 5 Restaurant Small Business of the Year

By Eleanor Raab

On Friday, May 3, State Sen. Josh Becker, D-Menlo Park, recognized Lutticken’s Deli & After 5 Restaurant as Senate District 13’s 2024 Small Business of the Year. As Becker presented a framed placard to the Menlo Park deli owner Bob Lutticken, he applauded Lutticken’s community spirit and long history of service to the community.

“I am pleased to recognize Lutticken’s Deli & After 5 Restaurant as Senate District 13’s 2024 Small Business of the Year,” said Becker. "Luttickeens has been a fixture of Menlo Park for over 40 years and has distinguished itself with a long history of supporting the community, whether it is donating food to sports teams, feeding homeless or supporting the community, as do several family foundations that prefer to give anonymously.

The text of the resolution specifically acknowledges Luttickeens’s efforts in “donating food to Street Life Ministries and St. Francis Center in support of their efforts to feed homeless and hungry people” and Luttickeens’s campaign to raise “more than $6,000 to provide additional support to local people in need of assistance” during the COVID-19 pandemic. Luttickeens first opened its doors in 1981, and has been located on the corner of Alameda de las Pulgas and Gordon Avenue ever since.

Email Staff Writer Eleanor Raab at eraab@almanacnews.com.

Real Estate Q&A

The Spring Market Moves Into Summer

Dear Monica: I want to buy a house but have not been successful so far. Should I keep actively looking in the summer? Rose G.

Dear Rose: The real estate market has been strong this spring with more inventory than we saw last year. The pace generally slows down though in the summer because buyers and sellers go on vacation. But even if you have missed out on properties this year you should stay in the market. There will still be properties available and there will be fewer buyers to compete with. Summer can be a good time to buy.

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May 17, 2024

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The Almanac
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PAUL N. “PETE” McCLOSKEY, JR.
Former Congressman, environmental champion, decorated Marine veteran, Stanford and Stanford Law alumni and partner in the law firm of Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy, died peacefully at his home in Winters, California, in the care of his wife of forty-two years, Helen, and their five dogs.

“He stood for everyone without a voice, and was especially passionate about our environment -- he was afraid of nothing or anyone who sought to take advantage of another. He was the epitome of a leader, as demonstrated throughout his entire life.”
- Joe Cotchett, Law partner

“For him to give me one of his Purple Hearts, it took my breath away. That’s an extraordinary gift, a gesture that makes me smile about humanity. He’s a war hero, but incredibly humble about it. He’s one of America’s giants in public life.”
- Lennie Roberts, Green Foothills

“Pete was a true American hero -- a man of profound courage and integrity who always followed his conscience to reach the right and just result.”
- Frank Pitre, Law partner

“The bravest man I have ever known, both in war and politics.”
- Lew Butler, Former law partner
Menlo Park council makes Middle Avenue parking ban permanent, approves pilot for new parking design outside Nealon Park

By Eleanor Raab

At a meeting on May 7, the Menlo Park City Council voted to make the no parking zones and buffered bike lanes along Middle Avenue permanent in a 4-1 vote with Vice Mayor Drew Combs opposed. The council also opted to pilot a back-in parking design outside Nealon Park, at 800 Middle Ave., to respond to concerns about diminished parking. Menlo Park will also continue with the temporary closure of Blake Street to vehicular traffic at Middle Avenue.

The city will begin to design the new back-in parking stalls at Nealon Park over the summer, with construction starting in the fall or winter. The parking design will be piloted until summer 2025, when staff will return to the council with a final recommendation for parking design.

The buffered bike lane and parking ban along Middle Avenue was originally approved as a six-month pilot program by the council in February 2023, and installed in October 2023.

According to a staff report, the pilot program showed that over the six months it was installed, there were no significant changes in vehicle speeds, or vehicle, pedestrian and bike volumes. Parking surveys also showed that nearby cross streets were not overburdened with parking as parking demand shifted from Middle Ave.

In a public survey, 89% of drivers indicated no change to their driving patterns, and 60% of bikers felt safer.

However 38% of respondents said that they had difficulty finding parking, and attendees of stakeholder meetings indicated that they would like the town to work to alleviate parking demands along Middle Avenue, especially near Nealon Park.

Mayor Cecilia Taylor and Council members Maria Doerr, Jen Wolosin and Betsy Nash voted in favor of keeping the bike lane and parking ban.

“This is about our youth, and it’s about everyone, and it’s about the future vision for our community. So that’s why I’m supportive of this,” said Doerr.

“I live on Santa Cruz Avenue, where our parking was used for bike lanes and it actually has been a wonderful change,” said Nash. “It’s not a unique hardship for the people on that street.”

Fifteen community members, many of whom are parents of children who bike to school, commented in support of making the buffered bike lanes permanent. Residents cited increased biking safety for school-aged children, easier commuter biking, decreased car traffic and Vision Zero goals as reasons to make the buffered bike lane permanent.

“As Menlo Park grows, we have people … complaining and worrying about traffic, parking and congestion. We’re never going to get rid of cars, nor would we ever want to. The long-term solution is to advocate for more people around town to walk, bike and take public transportation as a way to reduce some of these concerns,” said Menlo Park resident Ross Silverstein.

Resident Emily Bailard said her 8-year-old transitioned to being able to bike to Oak Knoll School without an adult this year, in large part, because of changes made from the bike lane pilot.

Katherine, an Oak Knoll student, said “the new bike lane is very spacious and very helpful when I am getting to school.”

Many commenters also acknowledged that the changes will be inconvenient for other residents, but said that increased safety for bikers and pedestrians outweighs those problems.

“I do agree there was a loss of convenience for some of our neighbors, myself included,” said Sandy Napel, a resident of the Allied Arts neighborhood.

“I would just ask that this loss of convenience be weighed against the improvement and safety for school without an adult this school year,” said oak Knoll student Ross Silverstein.

The Middle Avenue buffered bike lane on May 13.

May 17, 2024  The Almanac

See MIDDLE AVENUE, page 20

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Our news organization was a nonprofit a long time before our official transition to a 501(c)3 foundation in January. We haven’t turned a profit in five years and it is likely that without government support during the pandemic, we would have joined the ranks of newspapers that have shuttered across the nation at the rate of almost three per week.

It’s important to remember what is at stake for the health of our communities and local democracy. Without us, it would be much harder for citizens to know how to vote. People would not understand how our police departments investigate misconduct or the rates they stop people by race. Parents would have little visibility into student absenteeism or how math should be taught in our schools. We would struggle to understand how effective our efforts are at helping the homeless off the streets or engagement in the housing debate as our cities struggle to meet state mandates. When storms hit and streets are flooded and the power is out, we help people navigate their daily lives and focus city resources.

All this work enables residents to participate in our local democracy and engage in the issues that drive our collective quality of life.

Unfortunately, this work is becoming harder and harder to sustain. Our print advertising revenue has been cut in half since the onset of the pandemic. Local retail has been subsumed by e-commerce and national chains while real estate listings have shrunk due to high interest rates. We have been working feverishly to rebuild our business model with reader revenue (up to nearly $1M in 2023) and digital advertising (also nearly $1M) while also making painful cuts to close the shortfall (over $800K). Unfortunately, this is not going to be enough to sustain us as we move forward. That’s why we converted to a nonprofit in January so that we could tap into the resources of our community and why we need help from people like you to keep our mission alive.

Our goal is to build a new philanthropic revenue stream to stabilize our business and provide a platform for growth. With this new philanthropic funding, less than half of our budget will come from print advertising. While we hope this work advertising won’t decline further, it becomes less of an existential concern for our company when it is one of many revenue streams. This is a remarkable diversification in the eight years since we launched our reader revenue program when our print advertising was 94% of total revenue. We believe we can serve as a powerful and much-needed example into the resources of our community and why we need help from people like you to keep our mission alive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Adam Dawes
Peninsula Publisher
CEO Embarcadero Media

The Almanac

Checking out the best recommendations at Peninsula libraries

By Devin Roberts

These aren’t your parents’ libraries. Gone are the days of pin-drop silence and borrowing cards stamped inside the front covers of tattered tomes.

While the voracious readers amongst us can still find an abundance of books ranging endless topics and decades of publication, the libraries of the Peninsula have been diversifying and expanding their scope over the past few years.

There are numerous libraries in the 650, and each one boasts unique and interesting offerings. There are now a myriad of items to check out, free weekly events and access to the latest technology.

The Peninsula and California have an interesting library history. On the Peninsula, there are city libraries and county libraries. According to Redwood City Public Library Director Derek Wolfgram, “Many of the city libraries are quite old. In 1913, California passed a county free library law establishing that each county would have a library system to serve all the residents not already served by city libraries,” which created the county libraries.

“In the 1970s, the Peninsula Library System was formed and is a cooperative of the city libraries and the county libraries, including a shared library catalog, some shared technology infrastructure and a delivery system to move books across jurisdictions so every resident of San Mateo County would have access to every public library in San Mateo County regardless of city residence,” Wolfgram added.

Of the many libraries to choose from, here are nine of the most interesting. Some are city libraries, some are county libraries (marked with *) and all are unique libraries!

South San Francisco

Last fall, the South San Francisco Main Library moved to a new, state-of-the-art building shared with the city Parks and Recreation Department. The library houses the Discovery Center, Teen Zone and meeting rooms, alongside the Parks and Recreation Department’s fitness studios, classrooms, teaching kitchen and spacious event spaces. There is also a large park and playground outside the building.

The impressive Discovery Center is a highlight at this library and offers a variety of STEM tools and games, including 3D printers, Raspberry Pi kits, iPads and more. According to Supervising Librarian Specialist Monty Gordon, the library now wants to circulate nontraditional items that are tech-driven and more hands-on in order to reach kids through technology and help supplement education.

Events at the South San Francisco Library include Lego club, bilingual storytime, Tech Tuesday classes and more.

901 Civic Campus Way, South San Francisco.

Millbrae*

The Millbrae Library serves a diverse clientele from all over the world and is part of the San Mateo County Library system. The hand-painted murals in the children’s areas and high ceilings “create an airy, inviting environment that is different from other libraries we are known for,” according to Carine Risley, deputy director of library services for San Mateo County Libraries. On the horizon, construction is underway for a makerspace that will open this year.

As for interesting offerings, Risley shared, “We have an ever-growing library of things we call Try it Out to give people the chance to explore new activities and hobbies. Items in our collection beyond books include San Mateo County Parks and California State Parks passes, bikes (with helmets and bike locks), energy kits, ukuleles, sewing machines, hiking poles, GoPro, Discovery Skills backpack (and karaoke machine) that are tech-driven and more.” That’s all in addition to more typical fare like CDs, DVDs, magazines and newspapers and streaming services like eBooks, movies, music, online classes and more.

Events at the Millbrae Library include sewing class, Super Smash Bros. tournaments, martial arts demonstrations and more.

1 Library Ave., Millbrae.

Burlingame

Nicknamed “the jewel of Burlingame” by the American Library Journal, Burlingame Library is known for its Italian Renaissance architecture. The front facade of the building and front rooms are still the original design built from the 1920s. The rest of the library was updated in the 1990s, but with the same aesthetic as the original design by Burlingame architect Col. E. L. Norberg.

In addition to a beautiful space, the library is filled with interesting offerings such as digitizing kits, high-speed photo scanners and a “repair cafe” run by volunteers. Unique among many of the libraries I visited is a cafe on-site serving food and drinks. Cafe Fika is an independent restaurant owned and operated by Ghana Albaghah and serving Mediterranean food and decent coffee.

Events at Burlingame Library include a sound-healing class, “Star Wars” bingo and speaker series events put on by the Burlingame Library Foundation that have brought in well-known guests like Ira Glass and Michael McFall.

480 Primrose Road, Burlingame.

San Mateo

The San Mateo Main Library is an airly three-story facility in downtown San Mateo. It stands as one of the largest libraries on the Peninsula and boasts a comprehensive collection of resources and services for the San Mateo community.

The items available to borrow here are vast. There are tech-focused items such as Chromebooks and robots, along with musical instruments like ukuleles and keyboards. As a photographer, my personal favorite is that the library offers a portable photo studio! The California State Park passes are among the most popular items, according to Senior Library Assistant Reggie Mallorca. The passes can be checked out for three weeks and can be used to gain entry to over 200 participating state parks.

Events at San Mateo Library include teen movie nights, trivia nights, afternoon sewing group and more.

55 W 3rd Ave., San Mateo.

Foster City*

The Foster City Library is conveniently located across the street from Leo J. Ryan Park and is part of the San Mateo County Libraries system. The library opened in 1997 and was renovated in 2010, making it one of the most modern on this list.

This location truly feels like a community hub for children and adults. There is a spacious children’s area complete with a large, comfortable seating area named “The Holy Reader.” Risley shared that all of the San Mateo County libraries including Foster City “regularly host storytimes for little ones and Power Up Afternoons, a

See LIBRARIES, page 18

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Midpen ecologists work to ensure endangered butterfly isn’t adversely impacted by new trail opening

By Ashwini Gangal

A few weeks ago, a new 630-foot-long trail was opened up near the northwest section of the Pulgas Ridge Open Space Preserve. The unnamed trail provides a new public access point of entry into the preserve, at the end of Los Vientos Way in the city of San Carlos.

Before the trail was created, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District ecologists worked hard to ensure the Bay checkerspot butterfly, an endangered species, would not be adversely impacted in the process. Their work involved a thorough search for this type of butterfly along the length of what is now the completed trail. To this end, two surveys were conducted this spring, one in March and another in April.

“Before we did any sort of work, we wanted to see what natural resources we have at the site that we want to protect,” said Coty Sifuentes-Winter, supervisory vegetation ecologist for the district, in an interview with The Almanac. “Part of our mission at Midpen is to protect and restore the natural environment.”

Factors that endanger the Bay checkerspot butterfly include a combination of habitat fragmentation, which occurs when roads and freeways are built in the middle of their natural habitat, and car pollutants.

To thrive, the Bay checkerspot butterfly requires a certain type of environment — serpentine grassland, which comprises a special kind of rock that tends to store nutrients. This type of grassland, which comprises a special kind of rock that tends to store nutrients, is rich in heavy metals and low in nutrients.

“A search in wet, windy weather that does not yield any butterflies does not necessarily mean they aren’t there; it could simply mean they’re hiding. That’s why an important tool in their search mission is a hand-held weather station that reads the wind, temperature and humidity. They also did a review of the host plant to check whether the butterfly had laid eggs and was eating it. The dwarf plantain is really small — it could be anywhere from 1-inch tall up to 2 or 3 inches tall, so you’re down on your belly looking for tell-tale signs that it is being eaten,” he said.

Sifuentes-Winter, who grew up in rural Idaho, has been in the Bay Area for 25 years. He was inspired to get into this line of work since he first beheld a park ranger at the age of 5. His ambition was cemented a few years later when he watched “Never Cry Wolf,” a Disney movie about a biologist’s adventures in the Arctic. Before coming to Midpen he worked for the National Park Service for several years.

“I get paid to play in the mud and count flowers,” he said.

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

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Kathleen Wilson | DRE 00902501

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Arti Miglani | DRE 01150085

1360 Emerson St, Palo Alto
$3,588,000  |  3 Bed  |  2 Bath
650.224.9539
Jennifer Buenrostro | DRE 01733750

278 Monroe Dr, Mountain View
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LOS ALTOS HILLS

BEAUTIFULLY RENOVATED ESTATE WITH PALO ALTO SCHOOLS

Nestled amidst the picturesque landscapes of Los Altos Hills, this exquisite estate, set on over an acre of land, has been skillfully renovated with a modern lifestyle in mind. Past the gated driveway resides a multi-level home showcasing gorgeous contemporary Mediterranean aesthetics and more than 4,300 square feet of space. High-end appointments and tremendous natural light define expansive formal rooms that provide great space for entertaining and everyday living, while the chef’s kitchen is equipped with top-of-the-line appliances. A convenient office complements the spacious primary suite, multiple fireplaces provide cozy gathering areas, and the peaceful grounds provide a pool, spa, and sports court for seamless indoor/outdoor living. Spectacular nature preserves and trailheads are nearby, the Rancho Shopping Center and downtown Los Altos are both short drives away, and easy access to Interstate 280 puts the entire Bay Area within reach. Plus, this home is mapped to top-ranked Palo Alto schools Nixon Elementary, Fletcher Middle, and Gunn High (buyer to verify eligibility).

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Listed by Michael Repka of the DeLeon Team
Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | 650.488.7325 | michael@deleonrealty.com | Equal Housing Opportunity
中文諮詢請聯繫Audrey Sun, DRE #01933274 電話: 650.785.5822 | DELEONREALTY.COM | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224
Step into the rich history of Palo Alto with this stunning estate, meticulously crafted by the renowned Birge Clark. Known as the Dunker House, this estate stands as a testament to the indelible mark left by Clark on California architecture, embodying his signature Spanish Colonial Revival style throughout nearly 6,700 square feet of living space. Resting on over six-tenths of an acre with a heritage dating back almost a century, it has been thoughtfully updated to cater to modern living. Lavish spaces boast expansive gathering areas, a gourmet kitchen, office, indoor and outdoor fireplaces, and luxurious en suite bedrooms. The sprawling grounds, reminiscent of a lush hacienda, provide a west coast oasis filled with idyllic venues for outdoor enjoyment, complemented by a guest house and temperature-controlled wine cellar. Nestled at the end of a cul-de-sac, this gated estate provides serenity and seclusion while being conveniently close to University Avenue, Stanford University, beautiful parks, commuting options, and esteemed schools. Experience the epitome of Palo Alto living in this exceptional estate, a true architectural masterpiece in Crescent Park.

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The Almanac

The Almanac

May 17, 2024

fundraising event, with several people wearing pins with United States and Israel flags or holding small Israel flags, according to White House press pool reporters.

Later in the day at 1 p.m., more than 50 people gathered at the corner of El Camino Real and Embarcadero Road in Palo Alto in protest.

People dressed in keffiyehs and shirts reading “Not in our name, Jews say ceasefire now,” gathered at the corner that advocacy group Vigil4Gaza meets every Sunday.

As cars honked in support, young children and adults alike carried signs reading “Babies are not collateral damage” and “Prez Biden, use tax $ for peace.”

The group marched toward the corner of Addison Avenue and Webster Street, where President Biden was attending a re-election fundraiser in Palo Alto.

At the corner of Addison Avenue and Middlefield Road, the march came to a stop, when the streets were barricaded by police — some wearing riot gear.

They were met with counter protestors on the other side of barricades, holding American and Israeli flags and signs reading “Thank you, Joe.”

“He [Biden is green-lighting genocide,” said Michelle Higgins. “We’re sending a message that fundraising millions of dollars during this time is not okay.”

Palo Alto resident Jeanine Savello tried to get a glimpse of the president from the cordoned off intersection of Waverley and Addison streets on Friday afternoon. She had a small child in a stroller with her.” He’s the president and I’m glad to see him in town, no matter what you think of him. It’s one of the great things about living here,” she said, adding that she also tried to get a glimpse of then-President George W. Bush when he visited the area.

Addison Elementary, Hays Elementary and Green Middle School closed around noon in anticipation of the president’s arrival in the neighborhood. The last-minute closure caused stress for some parents, as the schools only received notice about the presidential event in recent days.

Biden then attended a reception at the Palo Alto home of former Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer and her husband DCVC Co-founder Zack Bogue.

At the fundraiser, he was introduced by Mayer and made short remarks to a small crowd of around 30 people, including Mayer and Jennifer Siebel Newsom, Gov. Gavin Newsom’s wife, who he praised as women leaders.

“It’s important that people have someone to look to,” Biden said, looking toward them, “You could be governor and you could be president. I’m not joking. I’m being deadly earnest. A lot’s changing.”

Biden focused his remarks on the momentum of his campaign, which he says is in his favor with 1.6 million people having donated, 97% in amounts under $200.

He said his campaign has opened 150 offices in battleground states “and Trump has opened zero offices. And it’s not just because he’s on trial,” Biden said.

Biden, who was in San Francisco in the Fairmont Hotel earlier in the day, landed in a field at SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory around 12:30 p.m.

Biden arrived in the Bay Area Thursday evening, touching down at Mountain View’s Moffett Field Air Base around 8 p.m. He left for Seattle Friday afternoon.

Email Staff Writer Eleanor Raab at eraab@almanacnews.com.

HISTORY CORNER

Actress Shirley Temple Black at her home in Woodside, California, where she lived from 1961 until her death in 2014, according to The Almanac’s archives.

Temple Black was considered the most popular child movie star of all time.

In the late 1970s, she was grand marshal of the Woodside Play Day parade.

In the photo, she drinks from a teacup while reading the local newspaper of the day, the San Mateo Times, a special edition for the 101st anniversary of San Mateo County.

Temple Black could be seen shopping at Roberts Market in Woodside and was “a very down-to-earth person, not like a celebrity,” owner George Roberts told The Almanac. In the late 1970s, she was grand marshal of the Woodside Play Day parade.

Shirley Temple Black by Norton Pearl in 1957 in Woodside.

LEHUA GREENMAN

“How important it is for us to recognize and celebrate our heroes and she-ros!” Armed Forces Day

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The Almanac

June 9

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Caltrain showcases its new electrified trains in San Carlos

By Lisa Moreno

As California assembly-member Diane Papan, D-San Mateo, praised the brand-new electrified Caltrain model gleaming in fresh red and white on the tracks behind her, an old train, covered in black soot, sped by, drowning out her speech. A crowd of nearly 100 people at the San Carlos event unveiling the new rounded electric trains erupted in laughter, admiring the differences between the two. After over 20 years of reimagining its design, Caltrain showcased on Saturday, May 11, its new electric train, which will begin operating from San Francisco to San Jose in September.

The event welcomed various politicians like U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, who has advocated for the train upgrades for years.

Woodland representative bragged in a publicly posted video about Woodland paying below-market-rate rent to LLESD and about how no one at LLESD is paying attention, allowing Woodland to do whatever it wants with LLESD's property.

Ladera residents brought up the possibility of a suit in November 2023. They expressed their disapproval for how the property will be covered in vinyl rather than cloth.

According to Woodland's Head of School Jennifer Warren, the school pays about $80,000 a month under the terms of the 2012 lease, amounting to almost $1 million per year. The lease also holds Woodland responsible for maintenance of the play area and field to which it has additionally invested another $1 million toward.

In December 2017, the lease was amended to extend school hours to 7:30 a.m.-5 p.m., closing off the area to the public after school. The current lease expires in 2038.

The LLESD governing board discussed the lease with Woodland School during a Wednesday, May 8, closed session meeting. No action was reported out of closed session. Before the session began, Ladera residents spoke during public comment about their concerns about access to the property.

LAS LOMITAS continued from page 5

LIBRARIES continued from page 11
Indulge in the epitome of contemporary living in this pristine, brand-new home nestled in sought-after Old Palo Alto. Completed in 2024, this 4-bedroom residence showcases nearly 1,900 square feet of bright and airy interiors. The living room features a cozy fireplace and seamlessly connects to a generous front patio, blurring the lines between indoor and outdoor spaces. The chef's kitchen, equipped with top-of-the-line Thermador appliances, flows seamlessly into the family room, while all bedrooms offer en suite bathrooms ensuring comfort and privacy for family and guests. Additional amenities include air conditioning, and an attached garage for added convenience. Everything Palo Alto has to offer is within easy reach from this outstanding location – walk to beautiful parks, enjoy vibrant shopping and dining experiences along California Avenue, appreciate easy access to Caltrain and Highway 101, and be just minutes away from Stanford University. Plus, acclaimed schools Walter Hays Elementary, Greene Middle, and Palo Alto High are all within approximately 1 mile or less of your front door (buyer to verify eligibility).

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“We’ve been together for 45 years or more,” Cotchett said on May 9. “When he was in Congress he had a small little law office in Woodside and we would do business together. The things he would do pleased me — and my dear friends. He was one of the most passionate people about other people and the environment you have ever met. He would speak for anyone who had no voice.”

Cotchett recalls a time about a decade ago when his firm entertained lawyers and judges from China in its Burlingame office. He said the visitors were so tired they were on the verge of falling asleep after their journey. Until, that is, McCloskey spoke to them and harkened back to China’s involvement on the opposite side of McCloskey’s Marines during the Korean War.

“I introduced Pete and here’s what he said to them, ‘I am so proud of you. I am so proud of your fathers. Tell them they were the toughest warriors I ever knew.’”

“Every one of them wanted a photo with Pete afterward,” Cotchett remembered.

McCloskey was first elected to Congress in 1967. Many long- time Peninsula residents well remember his heady days.

“He asked me if I would do Palo Alto for him,” recalled Jeanne Ware. “By that he meant serve as precinct chairman for two of his elections. I found all the people to walk the district for him. Politicking is so different now.”

Ware recalls an interesting and intelligent cadre of McCloskey supporters in those days.

“All those people who worked for Pete were highly intelligent — and humorous — people, she remembered. She said her late husband Leonard Ware might have had political aspirations at one time — until he realized how much energy it took to run a campaign the way McCloskey did.

“He had more energy than anyone,” Ware said.

McCloskey served in Congress until 1983 and had one unsuccessful bid for Senate and president each.

A vocal opponent of the Vietnam War, McCloskey was the first member of Congress to call for President Richard Nixon’s impeachment following Watergate and visited Cambodia in 1975 to witness the effects of U.S. military action.

After leaving Congress, he practiced law in Redwood City while living in Woodside and Portola Valley and continued lecturing at local universities.

He later settled in rural Yolo County and continued his legal and public service, including work as a trustee for the Monterey Institute of International Studies, according to The New York Times.

“When you look at the arc of what his life has been and for him to have a moral compass that allowed him to buck the system and still keep friends,” Roberts said. “You want to hear a wonderful story? Pete was in his 80s and he goes over to Martin’s Beach (on the San Mateo County coast, where there is an ongoing battle over beach access) and he gets out of the car and the gate is closed and the sheriff is there. Pete climbs over the gate and says to the deputy, ‘Are you gonna arrest me?’”

They did not. Instead, McCloskey was able to capture the attention of the public once more in a lifetime of standing up for what he thought was right.

“He had a great sense of fun as well as a seriousness about principles and policy,” Roberts said. “If all of us could just take a little bit of Pete McCloskey and make something good happen that would be wonderful.”

Pete is survived by his wife Helen, four children — Nancy, Peter, John, and Kathleen McCloskey — and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and nieces and nephews.

Bay City News Service contributed to this report.

Email Editor Sarah Wright at swright@paweb.com.

In Sharon Hills Park, goats may be even more effective at cutting grass than lawn mowers. The debate about the goats at Sharon Hills Park is that it’s on a steep slope. So if we were to use a traditional mower, there’s a potential for a spark or fire hazard, said Helen Gable.

After the goats finish their job at Sharon Hills Park, they will move to graze the undeveloped section of Sharon Park Drive.

Visitors are welcome to stop by and watch the goats do their work, as long as dogs are leashed and under control.

26 people parking at whatever amount of times per day on a busy street, trying to get into an angled parking spot. ‘I’m just saying. I don’t believe that everybody has the same parking skills.’

She ended up supporting the pilot with the condition that staff explore widening the parking spaces to make backing in easier for cars.

This type of parking, though not very common, has been employed successfully nearby at the Allied Arts Guild and Stanford Avenue near The Dish.

The permanent parking ban along Middle Avenue as well as the buffered bike lane and changes to Nealon Park parking were approved alongside a change to the speed limit along Middle Avenue. All of these changes were initiated as part of Menlo Park’s Vision Zero initiative to eliminate traffic fatalities and reduce traffic injuries in the city.

Email Staff Writer Eleanor Raab at eraub@almanacnews.com.

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Email Staff Writer Eleanor Raab at eraub@almanacnews.com.
Reimagine your commute

By Isobel Readdie

The big, blue expanse of the Bay stretches out for miles as we cut across it, making our way to the San Mateo County shoreline. From my seat on the upper deck of the San Francisco Bay Ferry, I open my laptop and get a head start on the workday. Seabirds fly alongside us as the morning sunshine slowly breaks through the fog. About 40 minutes pass while helping the environment.

The benefits I get from taking public transportation and bicycling far outweigh the often inconvenient drive. For one, the combined expenses of the Bay Bridge toll, gas, and car maintenance are greater than the cost of my ferry ticket and bicycle upkeep. On the ferry, I can also maximize my commute time by getting a head start on my workday or catching up on social media, rather than sitting frustrated and stuck in traffic. Riding my bike to and from the ferry also helps me exercise and boosts my energy levels throughout the day.

Beyond the personal advantages, there is also a significant environmental benefit to ditching your car. As a fellow commuter, I am learning about just how important sustainable transportation is in mitigating climate change — particularly in reducing carbon emissions. In fact, the transportation industry is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the State of California and made up to 40% of the total emissions in the Bay Area, according to a report from the Bay Area Council Economic Institute. Decreasing your dependency on driving alone can be a positive habit for both you and the planet.

Don’t just take my word for it — many others have shared the personal, economic, and environmental reasons why they choose to make non-drive-alone trips. Each year, Commute.org hosts the Commuter Challenge in the county, offering a $250 raffle to those who pledge to commute sustainably from April to May. Many pledgers regularly call 650-223-6537.

Driving alone may feel like the only option to commute. Sometimes, driving is the most feasible option, depending on where you are traveling to and other responsibilities you have. However, I challenge you to explore commuting habits beyond this, and all the advantages that come with trying new ways of getting around.

Isobel Readdie is an Oakland resident and an AmeriCorps fellow with Commute.org.
Public Notices

Exemption from School Parcel Tax

An exemption from the Portola Valley School District parcel tax (PVSDB) is available for the following types of properties:

- Property owned by a senior citizen (age 65 or older)
- Property owned by a disabled veteran
- Property owned by a disabled person with a Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) award

Applicants must meet certain criteria and live within the boundary of the School District. The exemption application is available and applications must be postmarked by October 17, 2024. Application and supporting documents must be submitted by November 10, 2024. (ALM May 10 and 17, 2024)

Published Business Names

The following notices have been published for business names:

- **NO LIE STONE'S MARKET**
  - Business Name Statement File No. M-297311
  - Filed by: JOSHUA CHIA-SHUO CHANG
  - Registered with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on May 14, 2024

- **WEATHER OR NOT LLC**
  - Business Name Statement File No. M-297310
  - Filed by: SIMON PO
  - Registered with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on May 14, 2024

Additional information and details for these notices can be found in the legal notices section of the AlmanacNews.com website.
Cantabile Youth Singers of Silicon Valley perform their spring concert, “What Happens When a Woman Takes Power,” on May 18 in Palo Alto.

The genre-agnostic concert is organized by Cantabile Youth Singers, which is a 30-year-old community nonprofit helmed by choral conductor Elena Sharkova, who has served as artistic director of the organization since 2004.

“When Happens That A Woman Takes Power?” is the title of the central piece that the choir will perform. “It’s a piece with very strong lyrics,” said Sharkova, during an interview over Zoom, about the interrogative song, written by her students several professional choirs. After completing her studies in St. Petersburg, she moved to the United States and has worked as director of choral ensemble Seraphic Fire, was also based along similar lines.

At Cantabile, Sharkova integrates her knowledge of the energetic arts, like qi gong, tai chi and yoga, to bring in aspects of the Way.

“I wanted the families to know about each other,” she said. “It’s my constant wish, desire, passion to make our families understand that this is not just a choir. This is a community where we enrich each other.”

Her effort to push the cause goes beyond her work at Cantabile. Her recent concert titled “In Her Own Voice” with Florida-based vocal ensemble Seraphic Fire, was also

A t C a n t a b i l e , S h a r k o v a i n t e-

“Bridge Over Troubled Water”

“We Have Overcome,” “Imagining the streets; it doesn’t necessarily have to be political.”

This concert’s theme is close to Sharkova’s heart. “As a performer, as a leader, being an interview over Zoom, about the interrogative song, written by her students several professional choirs. After completing her studies in St. Petersburg, she moved to the United States and has worked as director of choral ensemble Seraphic Fire, was also based along similar lines. Sharkova is a role model for her students. “She’s really an inspiring female figure,” said Asha Aggarwal, junior at Woodside High School, who is performing in the choir. “Her emphasis on precision is something I haven’t seen in a lot of other conductors.”

Besides Cantabile, Sharkova also works as director of choral music at Symphony San Jose for many years. “It’s not only about the music; it’s about the process of being in a choir, of being a part of something bigger than yourself.”

Cantabile Youth Singers of Silicon Valley perform their spring concert, “What Happens When a Woman Takes Power,” on May 18 in Palo Alto.

Conductor Elena Sharkova discusses Cantabile Youth Singers’ upcoming concert in Palo Alto

Cantabile Youth Singers of Silicon Valley perform their spring concert, “What Happens When a Woman Takes Power,” on May 18 in Palo Alto.
Portola Valley music festival highlights hyperlocal lineup

Now in its third year, PV Palooza features four stages of bands with ties to Portola Valley, Woodside or La Honda

By Kate Daly

This year PV Palooza, the all-day music festival, is back bigger than ever in Portola Valley on Saturday, June 1. Now in its third year, the event will feature 30 bands playing on four outdoor stages at Portola Valley Town Center from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The brainchild of Portola Valley resident and music lover John Badger, PV Palooza has one caveat: each band must have at least one member who is a native and/or living in Portola Valley, Woodside or La Honda.

As for the genres, Badger described the range as “pretty wide,” appealing to all ages with a lot of “classic rock covers and dad bands,” but also some indie folk, Afro-funk-Cuban, jazz, original work, and a dozen “kids’ bands.”

The music festival has grown quite a bit since he founded it in 2022 when he chaired the Portola Valley Cultural Arts Committee.

What motivated him? “I certainly love music; I don’t play or sing, I’m not a musician,” he said, but when he became an empty nester, he missed something. He remembered how he “found myself in my happy place” when he was acting as manager, booking agent and roadie for his son Christopher’s Woodside High School band, Indygo Rhythm Section.

Getting involved in a music festival felt like a natural step to take. Christopher plays with two bands and performed at the first PV Palooza. He is now graduating from Berklee College of Music in Boston and will be performing at this next PV Palooza.

Badger’s vision is “we want to provide a way for musical talent in our community to have a place to perform music in front of fans they know well. It’s a real way to connect people.”

This year he expects a crowd of as many as 1,200 to attend, and suggests audiences bringing blankets and chairs to set up on the lawns next to the library and on the soccer field. Two bands will be performing at any given time, with main stage acts running for 50 minutes, and side stage acts running for 20.

The schedule can be found at pvpalooza.com. A promotional poster lists the following lineup: Dr. Sig & The Supernaturals, Alec Lytle & Them Rounders, Ginger + Bandits, Christopher Normann, Patetic Honey, Whiskey Hill Billies, The Bubbles, Up & to the Right, Windy Hill, Squirrels of Wisdom, Slush, Los Trancolizers, Tehaya, Salty Licks, Zanzibar and Greg Barth.

In addition to the musical acts, refreshments will be available for purchase and local art vendors will set up booths for face painting, jewelry, floral creations and other wares. Devil’s Canyon Brewery Co. will sell drinks and Lord of the Ribs, Melina’s Kitchen and Mister Softee will provide food options.

Badger emphasizes the focus is on local — as in local vendors, business sponsors and individuals participating in and supporting the local community, but he could see replicating “this little festival as a model for this elsewhere.”

“This year the event will cost about $45,000, and we have raised that much money,” Badger said.

Each musician is getting paid $250 to perform. Licensing fees for songs are another line item, as well as expenses to hire an audio engineer and rent sound and stage equipment.

As the festival grew in size and scope over the past two years, Badger said the town asked him to set up the PV Palooza Foundation to run the event. He started the 501(c)(3) nonprofit in January along with a group of locals who are “mostly musicians,” some of whom are performing on June 1.

Badger serves as Executive Director of the Board and is joined by a volunteer team which includes Ivy Margolis as Corporate Secretary, Sherri Schmidt, Ryan Breen, Dan Newitt, Wesley Barrow, Steve Dunne, Phil Barth, Jerrie Welch, Susan Lauer, Fallon Falore and Renata Dionello.

Kate Daly is a Contributing Writer.

PV Palooza takes place June 1, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. at Portola Valley Town Center, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley. Admission is free. For more information, visit pvpalooza.com.

6 Questions with PACO Music Director Scott Krijnen

The musician and educator reflects on his first season at the helm of Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra

By Heather Zimmerman

Cellist and educator Scott Krijnen is only the third person to serve as the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra music director in the organization’s 60-year history. Krijnen stepped into the role at the start of the 2023-24 season, taking up the mantle from Ben Simon, who was in the role for 20 years.

The orchestra, called PACO for short, is made up of five ensembles of young musicians, who range in age from elementary school through high school.

Krijnen is a lifelong musician who grew up with music. He was born in Belgium, where he lived for the first six years of his life before moving to the Bay Area with his mother, a Californian and herself a violinist who had been traveling through Europe for work.

This season isn’t Krijnen’s first outing with PACO by any means — he knows Simon well and has been active for many years with the organization. The Almanac caught up with Krijnen to get his thoughts as he winds up his first season of working as the group’s music director, ahead of a May 18 concert by PACO’s senior ensemble.

Almanac: How did you get into teaching?

Scott Krijnen: We moved quite a bit. There were some predictable struggles with going from one country to another. Every time we moved, my mother would usually start a new program. So if you go to a school, there was no music there, she would start a music program or an after-school club or whatever it might be.

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Scott Krijnen is finishing up his first season as music director of the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra.

Almanac: So down to the basics here: What is a chamber orchestra?

Scott Krijnen: A chamber ensemble, per definition, is one to a part. So it’s going to be a much smaller ensemble than, say, the San Francisco Symphony. If you go to the symphony, you’ll have 16 first violins, 16 second violins; 10 to 14 violas; 10 to 14 cellos; six to eight basses. In string quartets, it’s one on a part. It’s all small.

See 6 QUESTIONS, page 25

were as much as $12,000, and we have raised that much money,” Badger said.

Each musician is getting paid $250 to perform. Licensing fees for songs are another line item, as well as expenses to hire an audio engineer and rent sound and stage equipment.

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For chamber orchestra, therefore, it’s just a smaller section: So maybe two to a part or four to a part will be sounded. Since we’re in this educational field with the Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra, what we’re trying to do is have as many students as we can without sacrificing that small nature. We usually have between six and eight as a maximum per section. So we might have six first violins; six second violins; four to six violas; four to six cellos and one bass player. Our ensembles are on average, somewhere between 25 and 30. That means that we have access to music that was written specifically for that ensemble. With composers, their most special music is usually their chamber work because it’s the most intimate; it’s for individual voices, they can really work with their craft.

Almanac: What does that experience of playing in a chamber orchestra bring to students?

Scott Krijnen: Communication and listening are key to anything. With chamber music, if two people are playing an F sharp, and one of them is sure they are right and the other person is too, and neither one will adjust, then you just have something that’s out of tune, dissonant and unpleasant for everyone involved. But if both people are willing to accept that by playing together and in tune is better for the individuals involved and for everybody listening, then right away, you’re doing something together for a common good.

It just allows for this sort of mindset of flexibility and awareness. The listening skills that come with chamber music, the communication skills, the more verbal communication skills — you learn how to exchange ideas and concepts live while playing through.

Also you just have to be incredibly diligent and responsible in learning and rehearsing your part and then be willing to be flexible after you’ve spent all this time learning in a certain way.

Almanac: What is a typical day like for you as a music director?

Scott Krijnen: A lot of emails. I knew that going in of course. I mean, when you’re running an organization, there’s a lot of needs: there’s of course, just managing the space and making sure this space is meeting the needs of the students.

There’s the fundraising component where you’re always trying to make sure that you’re solvent to be able to support all these programs and make sure that the students that have less access still have access to PACO.

We have five really dynamic faculty, so (I’m) making sure that their needs are met, they have the resources necessary, and that they’re able to communicate as they wish with all their students. There’s working with the office manager and making sure our facilities are set for rehearsals and for concerts. We’re always also looking to the future. So I’m reaching out and getting people from master classes.

There’s making sure that we’re being really inclusive, so, setting programs that make sure we have a variety of leadership, a variety in master classes and a variety of composers in choosing repertoire. So all those things are sort of sprinkled in throughout the day.

Almanac: What have some of the highlights of your first year?

Scott Krijnen: Well, it’s been nothing but highlights. Even the board meetings — I leave the board meetings feeling good, which is something not too many people will say about board meetings. There’s just so many caring, thoughtful, capable people that want to see PACO do well.

What I find is that the best parts of my day involve the success of students, because there’s just nothing like seeing a kid go from not understanding to understanding and that happens all the time, which is really special.

All the highlights are involved with just connecting with the people that you’re working with. And I’m just very fortunate to work with a lot of great people.

Almanac: What are you most looking forward to in your work with the orchestra?

Scott Krijnen: I’m always most looking forward to the next rehearsal. I leave rehearsal with so much energy and excitement and joy, and drive home and I do all my blogs, then I do some score study and I still have energy. It’s so incredible the amount that the students are willing to put into those rehearsals.

Then of course, it’s really nice to work towards those concerts. It’s because it’s a moment to share.

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

The Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra’s senior ensemble performs May 18, 7:30 p.m., at Cubberley Theatre, 4120 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. pacomusic.org.
Here are the stories behind two new wine bars along the Peninsula that aim to foster conversations and introduce you to your new favorite wines.

Elleary Wine

Take a trip to Napa in a new downtown Los Altos wine bar so small, it only seats eight (10 if you count outdoor seating).

Replacing jewelry shop Judy’s Collection along 2nd Street, Los Altos Hills residents Shawn and Vivien Karimi opened the tasting room for their Napa winery Elleary Wine on April 5. The wine bar is open only on Friday and Saturday evenings, but Shawn said he plans to eventually expand the hours. Passersby will notice a vibrant mural along the side of the building depicting lush green vineyards, sprawling hills and a blue sky accented with purple clouds.

"Napa’s landscape is beautiful, and it takes you away from normal things that go on in your life," Shawn said. "When I go to Napa, I’m in a different world immediately, the minute I see the wineries. So the idea was to look at it and say, ‘This thing is taking me two hours away from here to Napa.’"

And while the size of the tasting room is quite small, it’s the perfect size for the Karimis, who are busy operating their own non-wine-related businesses (Shawn is in medical imaging and Vivien is a partner at Deloitte) as well as raising two kids.

“We've been wanting to open up a tasting room for a while, and we wanted to open a smaller tasting room that doesn’t require 60 hours a week of attention,” Shawn said. "We can display the wine, interested parties can come sit down, have a tasting and some cheese, and we can talk about wine.”

Shawn, originally from Iran, and Vivien, originally from China, met at Shawn’s Persian New Year party in Los Altos Hills in 2006. (Some Elleary wine labels mistakenly say the couple met in 2007, but Vivien says “it’s men’s memory versus reality.”)

“I happened to have a friend in town from Asia staying with me,” Vivien said. “I thought, ‘What a wonderful opportunity to show her this different culture.’ So I said yes to the invitation (from my dentist)...and we showed up at this Persian New Year party. And that's the house we’re living in right now.”

When Shawn and Vivien first met, neither of them knew much about wine. Four years later on Father’s Day, they had their first child, Elle. The following year on Christmas Eve, they had their second child, Ary. After years of tasting wines all over California and Shawn studying winemaking at UC Davis, they decided to open Elleary and Karimi Family Vineyards in Napa, which had its first harvest in 2016.

“I remember my daughter was 30 days old when she was on her first trip to Napa,” Vivien said. “Within the first three months, she went there at least four or five times. Both my kids know all the wineries that we have visited. They can name when we visited and what’s the uniqueness of that winery.”

‘(Our goal) is to really connect with the community and share our unique product, which is a very family-collaborated product.'

VIVIEN KARIMI
Co-Owner, Elleary Wine

‘Learn about two new wine bars: family-run Elleary Wine and AAPI women-owned a²’

Above: A few of the wines offered at the new Elleary Wines Tasting Room in downtown Los Altos. Photo by Anna Hoch-Kenney.

Bottom left: Elleary Wine owners Shawn Karimi, left, and Vivien Karimi, right, at their tasting room in downtown Los Altos. Photo by Adrienne Mitchel.

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Shawn has a slightly different version (“the correct version,” he said) of how they met. Two weeks prior to hosting his New Year party, he ran into an old clergy friend at a Persian store in Sunnyvale who asked why Shawn wasn’t married.

“He said, 'Have you asked God to give you the right person? ’ Shawn said. ‘I said, ‘No, I have not.’ He said, ‘We’ll do this together right now. We’ll raise our hands to the sky and ask God to give you the right woman in two weeks.’ So we asked God. Two weeks later, we had the Persian New Year. Guess who walks in through the door?’”

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The Los Altos tasting room offers seven cabernets, one merlot and one chardonnay, all made with grapes harvested from the Elleary Napa vineyard or in Los Altos Hills from 2016 to 2021. In addition to buying bottles previously only available online ($52-$95), customers can purchase pours by the glass ($12-$23) or tasting flights ($30-$45) and snack on cheese, olives and crackers.

The Karimis are more than happy to answer any questions about their wines, but if you want to know Shawn's favorite wine, he'll tell you “there's no such thing as a favorite wine.”

"Each one represents a year that the grape is grown in and every year is different," he said. "It takes nine months from the time the bud breaks on the vines until it gets harvested in September or October. There's lots of elements involved that make the grape change, and that represents that year. It will have its own elements and you're going to appreciate it for that.”

The Karimis are proud to share their wines with their community and welcome feedback from guests.

"(Our goal) is to really connect with the community and share our unique product, which is a community and welcome feedback from,” Vivien said. "I think we made it very well in terms of the quality of the wine. We've spent a lot of effort to get the best quality for the price that is reasonable for the community here.”

"I want a² to be a place where people come and have a great time, just relax, you can chit-chat with your friends, you can enjoy a glass of wine, enjoy some music, have some conversations with other people," Su said.

"We're two lazy ladies. a² is simple; it's easy to remember." Su and Zhao curate the wine list together and plan to rotate the menu every four months. The menu includes a selection of sparkling wine, white wine, rosé, new world red, Bordeaux red and organic wine.

"My partner and I are so lazy: My name is Annie. My partner's name is Asia," said a² co-owner Asia Su. "Whether you're a musician or artist, you can come to us, and we will try our best to help you — let you perform or have your paintings on our walls.

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"I want a² to be a place where people come and have a great time, just relax, you can chit-chat with your friends, you can enjoy a glass of wine, enjoy some music,” Su said. "OK, let's do this." Su and Zhao curate the wine list together and plan to rotate the menu every four months. The menu includes a selection of sparkling wine, white wine, rosé, new world red, Bordeaux red and organic wine.

Email Food Editor Adrienne Mitchel at amitchel@almanacnews.org

Elleary Wine, 188 2nd St., Los Altos. Open Friday and Saturday 5-8:30 p.m.

a², 117 S B St., Suite A, San Mateo. Open Wednesday through Sunday 5-10 p.m.

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