What we know about the North Fair Oaks affordable housing development that went up in flames on June 3

Although fire not ‘total loss’ as initially believed, 104 of 179 housing units were destroyed

Pro-Palestine protesters occupy Stanford president’s office

Deputies enter building, make arrests

By Gennady Sheyner

A group of pro-Palestinian protesters on June 5 barricaded themselves inside the Stanford University building that houses the office of the president for about two hours, according to the university.

The students described themselves as an “autonomous group” that is “reclaiming our President’s office in the name of divestment and a Free Palestine,” according to an Instagram account associated with the occupation.

Stanford announced that all students who participated in the occupation will be immediately suspended. Seniors who are involved with the protest will not be allowed to graduate, according to the university.

The account from Liberate Stanford showed photos of a sheet unfurled on a balcony inside the building with the words, “Dr. Adnan’s Office,” an apparent reference to Palestinian surgeon Dr. Adnan al-Burs, who died in April while in an Israeli detention facility in the West Bank.

The student publication The Stanford Daily reported that about 10 protesters entered the Main Quad building at about 5:30 a.m. on June 5. At about 7:15 a.m., deputies from the Stanford Department of Public Safety broke a glass window and then used a crow bar to enter. They then proceeded to arrest the protesters, according to the student paper.

According to the university, one public safety officer was injured after being shoved by protesters who were interfering with a transport vehicle.

Videos from the Liberate Stanford account showed deputies trying to break through a pane on a building door while protesters chanted, “No Justice, No Peace” and “Free Palestine!”

Students associated with the protest also issued a statement early this morning stating that the decision to occupy President Richard Saller’s office comes “as the direct consequence of Stanford administration refusing to engage with peaceful protesters’ demands, including heeding its own policies, despite overwhelming support from the student body.”

“Stanford advertises itself as a beacon of progress, diversity and achievement, with a stated mission of promoting ‘public welfare,’ ” the statement reads. “Meanwhile, military industrial research thrives in Stanford laboratories, with defense firms openly recruiting on our campus as registered University affiliates.”

The Stanford Daily reported that the some of the protesters who remained outside the building spray-painted the ground, which was then power-washed by the university’s janitorial staff.

See PROTESTERS, page 19
Senior Living Innovation

Silicon Valley Location

In the heart of Palo Alto, discover a place where every day is an opportunity and the lifestyle never gets old.

Channing House is a retirement community with so much to offer, including Life Care – 3 levels of care that are available when needed. To learn more call 650-324-7587 or visit ChanningHouse.org
REDWOOD CITY
927 WHITEHALL LANE
3 BD 2 BA 1 HALF BA
OFFERED AT $2,775,000 | 927WHITEHALL.COM
Kentfield Commons’ Premier Home and Location
• Freshly painted inside and new hardwood floors on the main level
• Newly remodeled bathrooms
• Attached and finished 2-car garage
• Very private and spacious rear yard
• Approximately 4,950 square foot lot
• 2.5-acre community park with Jr. Olympic-size pool, bath, and playground

JUST LISTED | OPEN HOUSE: SUNDAY 06.09, 1:30-4:30 PM

ATHERTON
16 IRVING AVENUE
7 BD 7 BA 1 HALF BA
OFFERED AT $13,450,000 | 16IRVING.COM
• Newly constructed in 2019
• Pool and spa
• Two levels with 3 main-level suites and 4 upstairs suites
• 6,444 sq. ft. main home + 805 sq. ft. garage

ATHERTON
99 BELBROOK WAY
4 BD 5 BA 3 HALF BA
OFFERED AT $13,880,000 | 99BELBROOK.COM
• Estate home designed by renowned architect Cliff May
• Western hill views
• Pool house with kitchenette and bath
• 9,480 square feet of total living space

TOM LEMIEUX
650.465.7459
tom@lemieuxRE.com
DRE 01066910
lemieuxRE.com @lemieuxRE

A RealTrends Top-Producing Real Estate Agent, 2024
Over $3.5B in Sales since 1998, MLS

EXPERIENCE THE BEST IN REAL ESTATE SERVICES
Ravenswood City School District and Stanford Live developed a partnership that ensures district students, particularly black and brown students, have access to music that resonates with their heritage and culture.

"Seeing their faces 'wowed' – that's what I want when they come away from a performance," said teacher Kimberly Garzon, after the musicians played pieces from around the world designed to show off each instrument. SCAN TO READ THE SPOTLIGHT

PRESENTED BY Stanford University
San Mateo County homeless population rises 18% since 2022, new data shows

By Eleanor Raab

Every two years, San Mateo County conducts a "One Day Homeless Count" to count the number of people sleeping outside or using the county’s shelter services. This year’s count found 2,130 people experiencing homelessness in San Mateo County, an increase of 18% since the last count was conducted in 2022.

A county press release cites ongoing affordability challenges and income inequalities as continuing challenges contributing to the increase in homelessness in the county. Since the previous count in 2022, San Mateo County has been working toward reaching a “functional zero” of homelessness, where “every unhoused homeless person in the county who chooses assistance can be sheltered in an emergency shelter or in temporary or permanent housing.”

In the last two years, the county has created new shelter capacity, adding 240 units at its Navigation Center in Redwood City and 44 units at the El Camino House in San Mateo. This year’s count found that Redwood City has the highest number of people experiencing homelessness, followed closely by Pacifica and Menlo Park.

See HOMELESS, page 12

Garden Thyme program encourages children to eat healthy

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Children at Ormondale School are eating more vegetables, much to the surprise of their parents. This phenomenon is a result of the school’s Garden Thyme program, which teaches elementary school students about healthy foods, ecology and gardening.

Brook Coffee, parent and Garden Thyme teacher, is introducing students from as young as 4 years old the importance of eating healthy, how to grow their own food and plant biology. Coffee has been gardening since she was a kid, has a background in biology and has been teaching science since she was 19 years old.

“The most important aspect is making healthy food choices,” said Coffee. “We talk a lot about how food affects your mental health and physical health.”

The San Mateo County School Board Association recognized the program with a 2024 J. Russell Kent award in April. The award recognizes innovative and replicable programs in the county.

Coffee started as a volunteer in the school garden and was invited to teach gardening to second graders through a grant obtained by the school in 2014. With the success of the program, the director of curriculum increased grant funding in 2018 allowing her to teach transitional kindergarten through third grade.

With Coffee’s work, Ormondale’s garden is thriving with edible flowers, tomatoes, herbs, lettuce and more. Sweet

See GARDEN THYME, page 11

New renderings reveal scale of multi-use complex in Menlo Park

Mayor cautions project is ‘inconsistent’ with city rules

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Renderings for the proposed Willow Park development in Menlo Park have been revealed. They depict four high-rise buildings that are aimed to create more affordable housing but will likely do little to stem controversy over the project. The development proposed by N17 Developers would be built on the site of the former Sunset magazine headquarters at 80 Willow Road.

Willow Park is designed to be a 6.7-acre community that includes housing, commercial and office spaces, a Montessori school, hotel rooms and recreation areas, according to a press release distributed on May 31.

The design has been in the works since November 2023 with its tallest condominium and hotel building reaching 431 feet in height.

Out of 665 housing units, 133 would be reserved for affordable housing for low-income residents. That would increase Menlo Park’s “affordable housing by more than 24%,” according to the release. The affordable housing will be offered to those who make 80% less than the area median income.

N17 plans to utilize the “builder’s remedy,” which holds that California cities that have not adopted an approved housing element forfeit their authority to deny housing developments that meet certain criteria meant to serve low-income residents.

Although Menlo Park had its housing element approved by the state on March 21, N17’s application was filed in 2023 and is still valid. It “will undergo the city’s standard housing development review process,” said Mayor Cecilia Taylor in a statement to The Almanac. This process will include hearings brought before the Planning Commission and the City Council.

Community members have previously petitioned against the multi-use complex and have expressed their disapproval to city officials.

Taylor explained that the city of Menlo Park has taken community input into consideration as the city council “has adopted standards and development requirements that the council and community deemed appropriate for sites and neighborhoods within the city.”

“The current Willow Park proposal is not only inconsistent with these approved and vetted standards, but it is very out of scale with those standards,” said Taylor.

Willow Park would feature a 130-room hotel, 324,000 square
**County complains about $100M state grab**

‘This is county taxpayer money we’re talking about,’ county executive says

By Arden Margulis

The state of California is refusing to give San Mateo County more than $100 million in taxes that the county believes belongs with local governments.

“‘This is county taxpayer money that we’re talking about and the state is denying us funds that we are rightfully due,” said County Executive Mike Callagy. “The state claims that they have to get it from the state’s Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund, the state’s education fund, but that fund is not enough funds. If there are not enough funds, the county can take money from schools beyond the minimum contribution the state provides.”

**M-A administrators file motion to dismiss federal lawsuit**

Administrators say lawsuit fails to detail specific actions

By Arden Margulis

Menlo-Atherton High School Administrative Vice Principal Nick Myus and Sequoia Union High School District Wellness Programs Coordinator Stephen Emmi filed a motion to dismiss a lawsuit against them for negligence and battery earlier this month.

The May 10 motion argues that the plaintiff — a 16-year-old Black M-A student who the suit refers to as K.C. — did not provide facts that support their claims. Specifically, the motion argues the plaintiff failed to support their claim that Myus acted negligently and their claim against Emmi for assault and battery, intentional infliction of emotional distress and interfering with a person’s constitutional rights by force or threat of violence.

"Emmi forcibly grabbed the toy from my son’s hand," said Diane Christensen. "He said he was being bullied and that Emmi was bumping into him.” But the lawsuit failed to provide facts that support their claims.

The motion argues that Emmi forcibly grabbed the toy and physically pushed into K.C.’s body.

The motion for dismissal also contends that K.C.’s tort claim submitted to the district contradicts the lawsuit K.C. eventually filed. The claim describes the physical contact Emmi and K.C. made as “Emmi physically blocked K.C. from retrieving his ‘water toy’, causing K.C. to bump into him.”

But the lawsuit describes the same incident as “Emmi forcibly grabbed the toy and physically pushed into K.C.s body.”

Muys, who is represented by Bertrand, Fox, Elliot, Osman + Wenzel, states that the lawsuit failed to identify specific conduct by him and how said conduct caused injury to K.C., both of which are required to allege negligence. The complaint claimed that Myus denied K.C.’s request to continue the conversation in private and ordered him to leave the office. The complaint alleges that those actions breached Myus’s responsibility to avoid causing unnecessary physical harm and distress and to use reasonable measures to protect students from foreseeable injury at the hands of third parties, referring to the police department, acting negligently or intentionally.

Similarly, the motion argues that the lawsuit failed to provide facts that, if true, show Emmi committed assault and battery, intentionally inflicted emotional distress, and violated K.C.’s constitutional rights.

The motion argues that the claim against Emmi for intentional infliction of emotional distress should be dismissed since the complaint does not adequately show unreasonable conduct by Emmi. The complaint alleges that Emmi’s conduct in “confronting, demeaning, and physically pushing into K.C., despite being aware of K.C.’s disabilities, after K.C. asked to retrieve his property, was extreme, unreasonable, and outrageous.” The motion argues that this description does not meet the standard set by Christianity v. Superior Court which defined intentional infliction of emotional distress as “Conduct to be outrageous must be so extreme as to exceed all bounds of that normally tolerated in a civilized society.”

The motion will go before a judge on June 25. **See TAXPAYER MONEY, page 19**

**NEWSROOM**

**Staff Writers**

Ron Washakie, 223-6537
Jennifer Yoshikoshi, 223-6536
Embarcadero Media Foundation

**Home/Real Estate Editor**

Linda Taaffe, 223-6551, htaaffe@almanacnews.com

**Design and Production Editor**

Heather Zimmerman, 223-6515, hzimmerman@almanacnews.com

**Lifestyle Assistant Editor**

Karla Kane, 223-6539, kkane@almanacnews.com

**Advertising Services Manager**

Krisztin Brown, 223-6562

**Advertising**

**Sales & Production Coordinator**

Kevin Legarda, 223-6597

**The Almanac**

The Almanac (ISSN 1097-3095 and USPS 459370) is published every Friday by Embarcadero Media Foundation, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025. Periodicals Postage Paid at Menlo Park, CA and additional mailing offices. Accused by the U.S. Postmaster to send to:

Almanac Newsroom Fax: (650) 223-7525
Email news and photos with captions to:

Editor@almanacnews.com
Email letters to:

Letters@almanacnews.com
Email the Editor to:

TheAlmanac@almanacnews.com
Email sales to:

Sales@almanacnews.com
Email advertising to:

Advertising@almanacnews.com
Email local news to:

LocalNews@almanacnews.com
Email obituaries to:

Obituaries@almanacnews.com
Email legal notices to:

LegalNotices@almanacnews.com
Send all queries to:

Executive@almanacnews.com

Copyright © 2014 by Embarcadero Media Foundation. All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited.

The Almanac is published every Friday at 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

To request delivery, or stop delivery, of The Almanac in zip code 94025, 94027, 94028 and the Woodside portion of 94062, call 650-854-2626.

For The Almanac: 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025-6558.

Established 1965
Q&A: Maria Doerr reflects on her time on Menlo Park City Council

By Eleanor Raab

After a year and a half on the Menlo Park City Council, council member Maria Doerr announced in a May 28 blog post that she will not seek reelection due to a planned move out of Menlo Park.

She is the second City Council member to declare that she will not be on the ballot in the upcoming election; in March Jen Wolosin announced she will not be seeking reelection.

"After heartfelt reflection, I am announcing my decision not to seek re-election for the Menlo Park City Council," Doerr said in the blog post. "Next summer, following the conclusion of my current term, both professional commitments and personal circumstances will necessitate my relocation from our wonderful community."

In an interview with The Almanac on May 30, she elaborated on her reasons for leaving the city, her unique position as a young renter on council, the projects she is most proud of and her gratitude for her time in public service.

Doerr, 28, was originally appointed to the council in January 2023 to fill a vacancy left by Ray Mueller after he was elected to the county Board of Supervisors. She represents District 5, which includes Sharon Heights, Stanford Hills and parts of West Menlo Park.

In addition to her council duties, Doerr is a Program Officer at the Rural Climate Partnership. In her farewell blog post, Doerr said she will spend the remainder of her term working "diligently to ensure that ongoing projects are on solid footing and that the future incoming council member is well-prepared to take on the responsibilities of this position."

Doerr does not plan to disengage from public service once her term is over. She hopes to continue making public comments and being actively involved around the city.

"I have a candidate who is the last hat in the ring for the District 5 seat, which will be on the ballot in the upcoming Nov. 5 General Election."

"If you, or someone you know, is interested in running for District 5, please reach out," said Doerr. "I would be happy to offer my insights and questions to help determine if the role is right for you."

The following interview has been edited for length and clarity.

**The Almanac:** What accomplishments have you been most proud of during your tenure on City Council?

**Doerr:** There are so many things I am personally proud of. The things that especially come to mind are successfully passing our housing elements and increasing our zoning to increase the city's affordable housing stock. And housing density has been something I've been very proud of.

And another thing I'm really proud of is getting the city — because this is really the city's work — the $4.5 million that state Sen. Josh Becker, D-Menlo Park, helped us get. And the Menlo Spark program — starting to move that out to low-income homes (for electrification retrofit), especially in District 1. Supporting electrification is a big thing.

I'm also very excited about efforts we've made to advance protected bike lanes or ... buffered bike lanes, and to advance ordinances like the zero-emission landscape equipment ordinance.

A big priority for me, as I came in as a relatively new person to the City Council, was to make myself available to people. I am so grateful that the weekly public office hours that I hold at the (Woodside) Bakery are popular and well attended, and that folks have been comfortable reaching out to me directly. I've gotten to have many one on one conversations with residents and neighbors and that's something I'm also very proud of.

Q: What is your favorite memory from serving on council?

A: About two weeks ago, the Belle Haven Community [Campus] opened, and it was so powerful to be in that space with the other council members, Mayor Cecilia Taylor, city staff and residents who have been working tirelessly for years to see that project to fruition. Being in a shared space with so much joy and hope was very powerful and it showed me just how important it is for everyone to be working together to see change happen for our community.

Q: What challenges will Menlo Park continue to face after you leave the council?

A: Something that I learned in this role is that residents have different views and different perspectives on how the community should look moving forward. I think more of those conversations will continue to happen as we implement the housing element and build more affordable housing throughout our community.

I think that will require thoughtful engagement from city staff and the council to make sure residents are brought along in those conversations meaningfully. And I don't think that the challenge is unique to Menlo Park; I think that's a challenge that all cities throughout the state are going to have to deal with.

Q: Could you elaborate on why you are not pursuing reelection?

A: Happy to, but I'd also love to share a little bit more about my favorite parts of council. I adore listening to and actively engaging with my neighbors; I see that as being a cornerstone of good local governance.

My favorite moments on City Council have been hosting my office hours or visiting classes or attending community events like the Oak Knoll Halloween parade and talking to parents about priorities that they have for their community and their children. Those kinds of moments to connect with residents have been some of the most powerful and joyful moments for me.

It has been such an honor to serve on this council with such bright and caring fellow leaders. I've learned so much from every single council member and from city staff. It astounds me and inspires me daily.

I am not running because I will be moving next year, and I am moving in part because of where my work is taking me.

My work on rural democracy..."
Spectacular Views Overlooking San Francisco Bay and Atherton

1205 TRINITY DRIVE | MENLO PARK | OFFERED AT $10,250,000 | 1205TRINITY.COM

- Premier Sharon Heights location on the border of Atherton
- Rare oversized lot of approximately three-quarters of an acre
- Championship tennis court
- 5 bedrooms, each with en suite bath, plus half-bath
- Approximately 6,840 total square feet
  - Main residence: 6,200 square feet
  - Attached 2-car garage: 640 square feet
- Main rooms: foyer, living room with fireplace, library, formal dining room, customized wine cellar, sun room, kitchen, family room with fireplace, upstairs office with fireplace, formal powder room, laundry room
- Personal accommodations: main-level bedroom suite with dual-entry bath, upstairs primary bedroom suite with Bay view balcony, two upstairs bedroom suites, privately located upstairs bedroom suite
- Built-in dual barbecue centers and recessed spa
- Beautifully landscaped gardens all around with roses and specimen trees
- Excellent Las Lomitas schools

WWW.HUGHCORNISH.COM

Over $3.3 Billion in Sales
#1 Individual Agent SF/Peninsula
Coldwell Banker, RealTrends 2024
#2 Individual Agent USA
Coldwell Banker, RealTrends 2024

The property information herein is derived from various sources that may include, but not be limited to, county records and the Multiple Listing Service, and it may include approximations. Although this information is believed to be accurate, it is not warranted and you should not rely upon it without personal verification. Real estate agents affiliated with Coldwell Banker are independent contractor agents and are not employees of the Company. ©2024 Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act. Owned by a subsidiary of NRT LLC. Coldwell Banker and the Coldwell Banker Logo are registered service marks owned by Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC. CalRE#00912143.
3.2-Acre Private Retreat in Sought-After Westridge Area

298 ESCOBAR ROAD | PORTOLA VALLEY | OFFERED AT $5,649,000 | 298ESCOBAR.COM

- Premier Westridge location with views overlooking Stanford and the East Bay hills
- Move-in or an opportunity to renovate
- Extensive all-wood and glass interiors with a Spanish contemporary flair, circa 1977
- Lot size of approximately 3.2 acres (139,392 square feet)
- 3 bedrooms (or possible 4) and 3.5 baths on two levels
- Approximately 7,085 total square feet
  - Main residence: 4,995 sq. ft.
  - Main level: 3,265 sq. ft.
  - Lower level: 1,730 sq. ft.
  - 3-car garage: 795 sq. ft.
  - Storage/workshops: 1,295 sq. ft.
- Main level: foyer, living room, sunken conversation pit with fireplace, kitchen, large walk-in pantry, butler’s pantry, dining room, family room with fireplace, primary bedroom suite, powder room, laundry room
- Lower level: two bedrooms, two bathrooms, second family room/study with fireplace, recreation room (or possible bedroom), storage rooms
- Wood-paneled walls and all-wood cathedral ceiling in the main living areas
- Floors in Spanish tile or new carpet
- Spacious front courtyard terrace set back from the street plus expansive wraparound decks on both levels
- Attached 3-car garage with separate workshop
- Excellent Portola Valley schools

WWW.HUGHORNISH.COM
Over $3.3 Billion in Sales
#1 Individual Agent SF/Peninsula
Coldwell Banker, RealTrends 2024
#2 Individual Agent USA
Coldwell Banker, RealTrends 2024
Menlo Park City Council approves solar power for city buildings

By Eleanor Raab

Some of Menlo Park’s city buildings will soon be solar powered, after the Menlo Park City Council approved the installation of solar panels on four city-owned buildings at its May 21 meeting. The panels will be installed on the Belle Haven Child Development Center, Burgess Pool, City Hall and the Menlo Park Library. The new panels will be provided by Peninsula Clean Energy, a nonprofit provider of solar panels and solar storage, through their GovPV program.

Through the GovPV Program, PCE designs, installs, operates and maintains the solar panel arrays at no upfront cost to the city. Menlo Park will then pay for the energy produced by the panels via monthly electricity bills. The electricity is purchased at a fixed rate, which avoids future rate hikes.

City staff estimate that purchasing electricity through this power purchase agreement with PCE will result in big savings. “It’s hoped that this portfolio of solar will save the city $2.9 million in utilities over the lifetime of the agreements due to the fixed electricity costs, and the city’s foresight and signing up for net energy metering, which allows us to be grandfathered into a more favorable rate,” said Menlo Park Sustainability Manager Rachael Londer.

The agreement with PCE has a 20-year term. At the end of the agreement, there are opportunities for Menlo Park to buy out the system, extend the agreement or have the panels removed. The city would also have the opportunity to purchase the systems before the end of the term if desired.

Council member Maria Doerr said she appreciated the work that city staff did to find funding for the project. “It’s also really great to see all the different funding sources that have been pulled together by the City staff so this project can continue in partnership with PCE,” she said. “Love to see that leveraging of local dollars by going after state and federal money to make things happen.”

The roofs of Belle Haven Child Development Center, City Hall and Menlo Park Library will have to be replaced before solar panels can be installed. The council has already approved a budget to cover the cost of roof replacements.

The roof replacements will take place sometime between now and 2025. The solar panels will likely be installed and energized in 2025.

Atherton City Council plans to limit public comment time

By Arden Margulis

On Wednesday, June 5, the Atherton City Council will review a staff report that suggests limiting public comment for items that are not on the agenda to two minutes and adding a footnote telling speakers they may be cut off if they discuss items outside the council’s jurisdiction.

“The City Council and residents have found the comments to be antisemitic, racist and disruptive,” said Atherton Mayor Diana Hawkins-Manuelian.

City Manager George Rodericks told The Almanac that the issue is relatively new. “Recently, the public comment period has been utilized by members of the public to share information and opinion often unrelated to town subject-matter jurisdiction. In addition, some have loosely connected their public comments to the town by asking the council to adopt a resolution, ordinance, or proclamation in support of their opinion,” according to a staff report by Rodericks.

At multiple meetings, speakers spoke about attacks on white people and directed listeners to a site run by the Goyim Defense League, an antisemitic hate group, which has previously used other City Council’s meetings to spread their message. “Disruptive comments have only become an issue in the last couple of years,” he said. “There are online commenters that begin their comments benignly and tangentially related to the town. Once the council allows the commenter to continue, the comments divert to hate speech.”

At the council’s April 17 meeting, one online commenter, under the name Joseph G., claimed white people were under attack. “Just think about how white people feel seeing our people being abused but we’re calling Nazis for getting ‘it to end,’” he said. “I’ll take the label of Nazi if it means I love my people enough to stand against the genocide being perpetrated against us.”

He spoke for just over a minute before being cut off by City Attorney Mona Ebrahimi who asked him to relate his comment to city business. He then requested the council support a resolution that condemned the rise in hate against white people. He spoke for the full three minutes. The speakers after him, who said similar statements, were cut off sooner by city officials.

Hawkins-Manuelian said, “We are working on changes that focus on managing the public comment process while still protecting free speech rights.”

Although it is already council policy that public comment may only be used for topics within the council’s jurisdiction, the staff report suggests adding a footnote about enforcement. The suggested footnote says, “If comments do not relate to the subject-matter jurisdiction of the council or committee, the town reserves the right to stop the comment and a warning may be provided. If the comment continues to be outside of the subject-matter jurisdiction the speaker will be stopped, and we will move on to the next speaker.”

Rodericks said the policy change is not related to the Israel-Hamas war. Increasingly, in other cities, advocates have used public meetings to call for action on the Israel-Hamas war.

The Berkeley City Council faced months of disruption and the resignation of a council member due to harassment calling for a city resolution on the conflict.

More locally, a Sequoia Union High School District board meeting was interrupted by arguments over the conflict, leading a staff member to call the police.

New San Mateo County Sheriff HQ opens

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

On Monday, June 3, San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office opened its new state-of-the-art headquarters in downtown Redwood City to the community, according to a May 29 press release. The five-story facility located at 330 Bradford Street is built on the former site of the Old Maguire Jail.

The $50 million headquarters is stationed across the street from the Hall of Justice, which housed the Sheriff’s Office for more than 60 years. Signage at the Hall of Justice notifies visitors of its move.

The headquarters houses numerous bureaus, including the Corrections Administrative Classification Unit, Civil Bureau, Investigations Bureau, Fiscal Bureau, Records Bureau, Property and Evidence Bureau, Technical Services Bureau, and more.

An executive conference room has been dedicated in memory of Don Horsley, the late San Mateo County supervisor and sheriff who died in November 2023.

“As our profession and mission evolve, it’s important that our facilities do as well. Serving as the heart of our community-facing services, this modernized facility brings our major public facing bureaus under one roof, offers amenities that prioritize the well-being of our employees, and much more,” said San Mateo County Sheriff Christina Corpus in a statement. “We welcome San Mateo County to our new headquarters, and we look forward to serving the community from this location for the next 50 years and beyond.”

The Sheriff’s Office was responsible for half the facility costs. The remaining expenses were funded and supported by The Arrillaga Foundation and the late John Arrillaga Sr., after whom the building was named.

Plans for a ribbon-cutting ceremony will be announced at a later date.
Portola Valley discusses new staff and master fees

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Portola Valley’s town staff is slowly growing as two new faces were introduced during the town council meeting on May 22. A revised master fee schedule was also approved to reflect inflation rates.

Town Manager Sharif Etman introduced new staff members to the council: Tony McFarlane, the town’s new finance director and Terrence Grindall, interim planning and building director.

“I’m very excited to be a part of the Portola Valley management team and looking very forward to restoring the integrity of financial records for the city that are long overdue,” said McFarlane, who brings over 23 years of experience in state and local government.

Terrence Grindall will be serving as a temporary planning and building director and will be working in Town Hall from Monday through Thursday. Residents will be able to receive advice on their housing projects during his office hours from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Etman announced that the town staff will be expanding soon with a new finance technician, engineering technician and executive assistant as a permanent position. Hiring is still pending on a development review technician.

“With these new folks being permanent and being part of Portola Valley, I believe the residents will definitely feel the impact of having permanent staff that helps us provide the stability for the town,” said Etman.

The council approved a revised master fee schedule. Fees have increased to reflect the Bay Area’s inflation rates and 2.4% consumer price index increase.

Fees have increased for certain activities under administrative, planning, building and public works. The hourly fee for the town attorney, planning, and facility rentals have increased. The town attorney’s rate has increased from $375 to $390 per hour and the planning hourly fee has increased from $233 to $239 per hour.

Town staff plan to hold a Nexxus study and analysis in the next three to six months which will determine and accurately set fees appropriately to ensure complete cost recovery for services provided,” according to the staff report. A Nexxus study will review the financial needs and activities of the town.

Portola Valley resident Rita Comes called for the fee on picnic table rentals to be removed, to support the mental health of the community by allowing residents to freely use park amenities.

The amended fee schedule becomes effective on July 1.

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

GARDEN THYME

continued from page 5

sugar snap peas and lemony French sorrel are a favorite. Students are able to make their own choices in what they want to try. She believes that it’s important to give children exposure to new and healthy foods.

Coffee teaches students that vegetables are healthier when they’re fresher. It also allows kids to be involved in the process of growing a small seed into a sprouting plant. They learn to work as a team and practice patience and kindness as they work on projects in the garden.

Coffee enjoys witnessing “the intrinsic joy of being able to put something tiny into the ground and be able to grow magical things.” She feels a sense of hope and joy from seeing the magical process of seeds grow into edible plants — a process that she’s shocked by to this day.

Coffee teaches students that intrinsic joy of being able to put something tiny into the ground and be able to grow magical things.” She feels a sense of hope and joy from seeing the magical process of seeds grow into edible plants — a process that she’s shocked by to this day.

Students are also bringing their learning back home with them as they’re given a variety of seeds and plants to share with their families.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Coffee started a Tomato Tuesdays event where students would be able to take a tomato plant home. In this period of social isolation, the tomato plants served as a connection between students as they all worked on caring for their plants in different environments. Studies show gardening improves mental health and lowers stress levels.

“I’ve seen students that struggle in the classroom, thrive in the garden. It’s a sense of calm and happiness,” said Coffee, who advocates for every school to have its own garden program.

Within the Portola Valley School District, the gardening program is growing. In January, Coffee started a lunchtime garden club at Corte Madera School. She said she often catches students stuffing their pockets with sugar snap peas.

She explains that a garden is more affordable compared to new school developments and would also provide access to fresh and healthy foods. It can be run by parent volunteers and helps build a sense of community.

“If I was president I would want every school to have a garden,” said Coffee. She wishes to be able to find a way to fund all schools to have a gardening program.

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

It’s not too late.

Class of 2025!

Want a smoother, lower-stress college application process?

Avalon College Advising has services specifically designed for rising seniors.

Avalon College Advising

Phone: 650.293.0589
Email: hello@avaloncollegeadvising.com
and climate solutions is calling me to spend more time in rural places. I am currently Program Officer at the Rural Climate Partnership, a funding collaborative that supports rural-led, place-based climate solutions through grantmaking and capacity-building. My partner’s work is also calling him to move. We will be relocating in the summer of 2025.

Q: What are your next steps going to be? What are you most excited for in the coming year?
A: There’s so much work to do in the next six months on council. I’m really hopeful that we can pass our environmental justice element and our safety element. I am excited to see us move forward on the RFP process for the downtown parking lots as part of our housing element plan. There’s just so much to do and I’m very excited.

Then after I leave the council, I plan to still be an active citizen in the time I have left in the community. And so expect to see me making public comments at City Council meetings and still being very active around town and, you know, I’m still probably going to be spending a lot of time over the Woodsidel Bakery where I currently have my office hours.

Q: In your farewell blog post you mentioned that being the youngest City Council member in Menlo Park history and the first renter to represent District 5 gave you a unique perspective. What was that experience like for you?
A: I’m grateful that I felt welcomed with the different perspectives and identities that I bought to council. I’m grateful too that community members were open to me and to the different ways I might see them.

Because I am a 28-year-old renter and not a 75-year-old homeowner I am especially thinking about the needs and perspectives of younger families, as well as students and children in our community who will call Menlo Park home for years to come. Often in the decisions I’ve made on council, I am both thinking about needs of the present as well as thinking about potential needs of future generations in our community.

Q: How can Menlo Park continue to foster diverse perspectives on council?
A: I think additional outreach to folks who are curious about getting involved in public service would be helpful, whether that’s put on by local nonprofits or by the city itself. As I mentioned in my blog post, I’m very willing and able, and would love to talk to anyone who’s curious about what serving is like, in case they want to explore it either in this round or in the future rounds of City Council elections.

I think additional outreach to community groups and engaging with faith communities and local chapters of groups and school classrooms are all really important ways to help people feel included and assessed, which is what’s going on so they can get involved if they so choose.

Q: What advice do you have for anyone looking to run for the council in this upcoming election?
A: I would advise folks to talk to people who are currently serving different commissions to understand more about what it’s like. I encourage them to tune into city meetings to experience what the decision-making space is. And also to start getting involved now. That could mean providing public comments on different agenda items or coming down to community events to meet with council members.

Q: Do you have anything else you want to share about your time on council or your plans for the future?
A: I’m so grateful to District 5 and to the city for giving me this opportunity to serve.

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

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Atherton City Council will hold a public hearing to consider the proposed Fiscal Year 2024/25 Operating and Capital Improvement budget for adoption.

The meeting will be held by tele or video conferencing. The public may participate in the City Council Meeting via: Zoom Meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting:
https://zoom.us/j/506897786

Dial: 1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 506 897 786

Remote Public Comments:
Meeting participants are encouraged to submit public comments in writing in advance of the meeting.

Email: council@ci.atherton.ca.us

**Description:** The City Council is considering resolutions for the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2024/25 Operating and Capital Improvement Budget (CIP). This also includes resolutions for adopting salaries and benefits for unrepresented staff, approving the Fiscal Year 2024/25 Salary Schedules and Classifications, and the FY 2024/25 Appropriations Limit. The Council will discuss and provide feedback on the proposed Operations and CIP budget, revenues, expenditures, capital projects, salaries and benefits. There is a recommendation to the Council to adopt resolutions for FY 2024/25 Operating and Capital Budget, FY 2024/25 Salaries and Benefits Schedules, FY2024/25 Gann Limit Appropriations, and Town Master Fee Schedule. A copy of the meeting agenda, staff report and draft resolutions can be found online by Friday, June 14, 2024 here: https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/641/Agendas-Minutes

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that said Resolutions are set for hearing by the City Council at its meeting on June 19, 2024 at 6:00 PM via teleconference accessible through the above-described information and in person at 80 Fair Oaks Lane City Council Chambers, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the Resolutions should or should not be recommended for approval.

**IF YOU CHALLENGE** any actions taken to adopt the FY 2024/2025 Operations and Capital Improvement Budget and underlying Resolutions, 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 City Council at, or prior to, the public hearing addressed to FY 2024/25 Operating and Capital Improvement Budget, City Clerk, Town of Atherton, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027.

If you have any questions on the item, please contact Anthony Suber, Deputy City Manager, at asuber@ci.atherton.ca.us or 650-752-0529. 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.
Spacious & Bright Home in Wonderful Campus Location
915 Mears Court, Stanford*

6 BD | 3 BA | 3,490 SF | 13,504 SF LOT | $3,325,000

OPEN SAT & SUN, 1:30 - 4:30PM

SPACIOUS AND INVITING, this wonderful campus home offers comfortable formal and informal spaces, connected but with just the right amount of separation. The generously proportioned foyer welcomes you home, opening to the living room, dining room and staircase that has a beautiful custom-designed wrought iron and Brazilian cherry wood banister. The remodeled eat-in kitchen and adjacent family room accommodate casual gatherings that may spill over onto the marvelous rear sunporch. A bedroom, full bath and laundry room complete the first floor. The second floor includes the primary bedroom suite with a cozy office, a hall bath plus four additional bedrooms, one of which is oversized and could serve as a bonus room or a possible future ADU location due to separate outdoor access. A lovely large well-maintained and fenced backyard offers space to relax, play, and entertain. Ideally located on a non-through street, around the corner from Lucille Nixon Elementary School, close to SCRA, Kite Hill, the Dish, the shops of California Avenue and major commute routes, this home checks all the boxes. Don’t miss it!

915MearsCourt.com
*Available to qualified Stanford faculty and staff only.

COLLEEN
FORAKER
Realtor®  DRE#: 01349099
650.380.0085
colleen.foraker@compass.com

CAROLYN AARTS
KEDDINGTON
Realtor®  DRE#: 01490400
650.946.8122
carolyn.keddington@compass.com

Compass is the brand name used for services provided by one or more of the Compass group of subsidiary companies. Compass is a real estate broker licensed by the State of California and abide by Equal Housing Opportunity laws. License Number 01079009. All material presented herein is intended for informational purposes only and is compiled from sources deemed reliable but has not been verified. Changes in price, condition, sale or withdrawal may be made without notice. No statement is made as to accuracy of any description. All measurements and square footage are approximate.
Discover boundless potential in this stylish duplex, perfectly situated at the end of a cul-de-sac in Palo Alto’s Greenmeadow neighborhood. The two units offer a total of 7 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms, catering to both family living and investment potential. Both homes offer a centerpiece fireplace in the living room and peaceful backyard space to entertain and unwind. While 4147 boasts an updated kitchen with new appliances and an attached garage, 4145 offers additional amenities like a jetted tub, bonus space, balcony, and a built-in backyard grill. Situated within walking distance of Mitchell Park and the Cubberley Community Center, and a short drive from the shops, restaurants, and world-class movie theater in The Village at San Antonio Center, this home also grants easy access to US-101 and is served by sought-after schools Fairmeadow Elementary, JLS Middle, and Gunn High (buyer to verify eligibility).

**STYLISH DUPLEX WITH A GREAT LOCATION**

4145-4147 Byron Street
Palo Alto

**OPEN HOUSE**
SAT & SUN 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

4145-4147Byron.com
Listed at $3,988,000

**Notice to Buyers:**

Although a good buyer’s agent can add significant insight and value, you are not required to use one to purchase a DeLeon listing. If you would like to submit an offer to us directly, please contact the DeLeon Buyer’s Team at 650.543.8528 and we will waive 100% of the buyer’s-side commission.

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
177 TASSO STREET
PALO ALTO

In the heart of downtown Palo Alto resides this gorgeous modern Craftsman home that emanates warmth and hospitality from the moment you step inside. Nearly 1,800 total square feet of contemporary space enjoys stylish appointments and numerous upgrades, from gleaming hardwood floors and high-end appliances, to a new roof, updated kitchen, remodeled bathroom, and much more. A fireplace centers the expansive living room, the dining room opens outdoors for al fresco entertaining, and a seamless connection to the backyard provides an ideal venue to enjoy indoor/outdoor living, complemented by a detached studio guest house. And this incredible location offers tremendous walkability – beautiful parks, vibrant University Avenue, the Stanford Shopping Center, and Caltrain are all within a short stroll, while Stanford University and US-101 are both easy drives away. Plus, children may attend top-ranked schools Addison Elementary, Greene Middle, and Palo Alto High (buyer to verify eligibility).

OPEN HOUSE
SAT & SUN 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM
177Tasso.com
Listed at $3,388,000

Notice to Buyers:
Although a good buyer’s agent can add significant insight and value, you are not required to use one to purchase a DeLeon listing. If you would like to submit an offer to us directly, please contact the DeLeon Buyer’s Team at 650.543.8528 and we will waive 100% of the buyer’s-side commission.

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
Housing Accelerator Fund, which gave $78 million to the project, also contributed to its financing. This was the first development in the county to be financed by the fund.

The project received a $25.5 million grant from the California Strategic Growth Council. Additional funding was sourced through $30.5 million in loans from the County and Housing Authority of San Mateo County; $13 million from the American Rescue Plan Act and $6.78 from the Measure K half-cent sales tax.

Construction started on the project in June 2023 and would have been completed in March 2025. Once fully constructed, the site would have comprised two large affordable housing buildings, one with 75 units and a child care center and the other with 104 units.

“We are heartened that Building A, which will include 75 units as well as the child care center, was not impacted by the fire in Building B,” said Mercy Housing California.

Fire investigators are actively analyzing the scene, according to the statement from Mercy Housing. There was no information available about what caused the fire, as of The Almanac’s press deadline on Wednesday afternoon.

Approximately 130 construction workers were on site when the fire broke out at approximately 10:15 a.m. on June 3. There were no injuries to construction workers or fire personnel.

Roberts-Ohasy Corp, the construction company working on the Middlefield Junction site at the time of the fire, said in a statement that this fire was the “worst disaster” in the company’s 92-year history.

“We are devastated that Building B – which was destroyed by fire down to the podium slab. The fire started on the fifth floor and workers were on site when the fire broke out. We have launched a full investigation to determine the cause of the fire and prevent it from happening again. Our thoughts are with our families and our community as we work to recover and rebuild.”

The statement also confirmed that no “hot work” (cutting, welding, soldering or brazing) was being performed at the site when the fire broke out.

“As soon as it is safe for our teams, and following a thorough investigation, we will return to work at the Middlefield Junction site to assess the damage and make a plan to move forward with construction,” said Mercy Housing. “We hope residents and partners will trust in our resolve to deliver the affordable homes and child care spaces that San Mateo County communities deserve and need.”

As of June 4, firefighters were still dousing hot spots with water from a ladder truck. These remaining hot spots were identified by thermal imaging via an overhead drone.

Warren Slocum, the president of the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and the representative of District 4, said that once the investigation is complete, the county, state and developer will know more about how to recoup their finances.

“Talks are going on between lawyers and insurance companies and Mercy Housing...to figure out how much money the insurance is going to cover in the loss,” said Slocum in an interview with this news organization. “The intent is to rebuild. ... The money would come from that insurance money that I mentioned. I know that Mercy Housing is committed to rebuilding and so we are.”

Despite the staggering loss, Mercy Housing says that it remains “fully committed” to completing the development that was a result of nearly a decade of community involvement.

“We hope residents and partners will trust in our resolve to deliver the affordable homes and childcare spaces that San Mateo County communities deserve and need,” said Mercy Housing.

Local leaders respond

County and state officials also reacted to the loss of affordable housing in the county and praised the quick actions of first responders.

“The destruction of these affordable homes is an enormous loss that we must now work collectively to recover from,” said Assembly member Diane Papan, D-San Mateo. “I am extraordinarily grateful to our first responders who so gallantly protected the surrounding neighborhoods and prevented a potentially greater tragedy.”

State Sen. Josh Becker, D-Menlo Park, praised first responders, and reiterated the need for affordable housing in this part of San Mateo County.

“I am incredibly grateful to all the firefighters, law enforcement, and other first responders for their quick and effective response so that evacuation efforts could be more timely and directed, and ensuring that there were no injuries. My office is in direct communication with Redwood City and San Mateo County. This situation is still evolving, and investigations are still in their early stages. I will be visiting the site as soon as it is appropriate to do so to inspect the damage. This is a setback for our efforts to provide more high-quality affordable housing in the community. I am hopeful that this project will be completed and able to move forward. I will meet our housing goals and continue to lead the state in addressing homelessness.”

San Mateo County Sheriff Christina Corpus lamented the “tremendous loss” of affordable housing and praised the actions of the first responders in preventing injuries and the spread of the fire. “This loss could have been so much worse had it not been for the heroic actions of all of our Sheriff’s Office personnel who quickly evacuated nearby residents as well as the firefighters who amazingly contained the fire from spreading to nearby homes and buildings.”

The site for this project was selected due to its proximity to transit, to businesses in Redwood City and on Middlefield Road, and to the nearby North Fair Oaks Health Center, according to Slocum.

“Filoli Historic House and Garden is looking for new board members who will represent the community, serve as leaders and amplify the estate’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, according to a May 30 press release.

New and returning board members are required to attend an orientation and are expected to attend four two-hour meetings per year, an annual retreat, public events and fundraising events throughout the year.

Through a partnership with Potrero Group, a professional search firm, the board of directors is conducting an open call for nominations. For priority consideration, interested candidates should apply by June 4. For more information, about the board of directors and how to apply, visit potrergroup.com/executive-search/filoli-board.

Youth Cultural Ambassador concert
San Mateo County Youth Cultural Ambassador and Menlo-Atherton High School student Daniel Strebulava is hosting a classical concert on June 11 at 5 p.m. at PAC Theater, 555 Middlefield Road in Atherton. The concert is free and open to all.

The concert is presented through the support of the San Mateo County Office of Arts and Culture, the Goodaller Foundation and Peninsula Symphony.

For more information about the event visit youthmusiciancompetition.squarespace.com.

Bike & Roll to School Month
During May, Belle Haven Elementary School celebrated Bike & Roll to School Month with a BMX stunt show assembly. Perfection on Wheels, a bicycle stunt team, shared their talents and tricks while promoting bike safety and awareness. Students had a front row seat to the action packed event.

East Palo Alto students awarded during Senior Award Night
The East Palo Alto Academy Foundation honored the achievements of the Class of 2024 during Senior Award Night. Merit-Scholarship recipients were recognized as well as student athletes and this year’s valedictorian and salutatorian.

—Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Menlo Park Fire responds to the fire at 2700 Middlefield Road.

Email Staff Writer Eleanor Raab at eraab@almanacnews.com.
SPECTACULAR WEST ATHERTON ESTATE ON 1+ ACRE

This magnificent estate is the epitome of sophistication and refinement, seamlessly blending luxury with livability and opulence with allure, all while nestled on over an acre of land in prestigious West Atherton. Past the gated motor court awaits a 6-bedroom residence that has been meticulously upgraded and remodeled with top-of-the-line craftsmanship and materials, boasting nearly 7,400 total square feet of living space filled with lavish appointments and impeccable details. The gracious multi-level floorplan radiates style and convenience while offering expansive formal rooms, a chef-worthy kitchen with top-tier appliances, a full bar in the family room, an executive office, recreation room, and wine cellar. Each bedroom is en suite, with the palatial primary suite providing a fireplace and spa-inspired bathroom. Outside, the sprawling grounds offer a five-star resort experience, complete with an outdoor kitchen, pool, heated seating areas, and more, complemented by a pool house with a full bathroom and kitchen. Tucked away at the end of a cul-de-sac, this estate provides privacy while being conveniently located near everything the surrounding area has to offer, from downtown Menlo Park and Palo Alto, to Stanford University, Menlo Circus Club, top public and private schools, and two international airports.

OPEN HOUSE
SUN 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

8Brittany.com
Offered at $15,988,000

Notice to Buyers:
Although a good buyer’s agent can add significant insight and value, you are not required to use one to purchase a DeLeon listing. If you would like to submit an offer to us directly, please contact the DeLeon Buyer’s Team at 650.543.8528 and we will waive 100% of the buyer’s-side commission.
Menlo Park to enforce ban on gas-powered leaf blowers and weed trimmers starting July 1

By Eleanor Raab

Menlo Park will begin to enforce its Zero Emissions Landscaping Equipment Ordinance, which bans all gas-powered leaf blowers and string trimmers, also known as Weedwhackers or weed trimmers, starting July 1. All landscaping equipment used in Menlo Park will have to be electric, battery powered or manually operated.

Currently, the only non-electric landscaping equipment allowed in the city is hand tools, such as ladders, rakes, shovels and wheelbarrows. Manual equipment is not affected by the ban.

The ban on other gas-powered landscaping equipment such as walk-behind lawn mowers, hedge trimmers and chainsaws will come into effect Jan. 1, 2029.

With the passage of Assembly Bill 1346 in 2021, California’s legislature has already banned the sale of gas-powered landscaping equipment and other small off-road engines within the state. As of Jan. 1, 2024, manufacturers within the state are required to sell only zero-emission landscaping equipment.

Menlo Park isn’t the only city regulating gas landscaping equipment. Atherton’s gas-powered leaf blower ban, which was adopted in April 2023, will also go into effect July 1, 2024. The use of gas-powered leaf blowers has been banned in Portola Valley since January 2021.

The ordinance was adopted by the City Council in a 3-2 vote on July 11, 2023 in order to address noise, health and climate impacts from gas-powered landscaping equipment within the city.

“The city’s Climate Action Plan establishes a target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 in order to limit the harmful impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise and high heat, and to support a healthy community,” said Rachael Londer, Menlo Park’s sustainability manager, in an email to gardening businesses. “This requires reducing greenhouse gas emissions that are produced by the burning of fossil fuels, including gasoline, by at least 90%.

Despite their small size, the engines of gas-powered landscaping equipment generate huge volumes of smog-forming pollution. In fact, estimates from the California Air Resources Board show that using a commercial leaf blower for one hour generates approximately as many smog-producing emissions as driving 1,100 miles in a car.

Gas-powered landscaping equipment can also negatively impact the health of the operator. Beyond producing the greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change, gas powered landscaping equipment has a negative impact on air quality, worker health and safety, and contributes to noise pollution,” said Londer. “Air quality is of paramount concern in California and in our community as we address health concerns, including asthma, in our most vulnerable communities including children and older adults.”

The ordinance did not change the hours of allowed operation for gardening equipment from those currently permitted. Anyone can operate electric gardening equipment within the city from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, and residents may operate the equipment from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.

Residents found to be in violation of the ban will be subject to fines, ranging from $100 for a first violation to $500 for a third violation. Currently, fines run a 12-month period. Violations of the ban will not be enforced against the person or company using the gas-powered landscaping equipment, but the owner of the property where the gas-powered equipment is used.

In order to prepare residents and local gardeners for the upcoming requirements, the city, city staff engaged in bilingual outreach — in Spanish and English — throughout the winter and spring. Outreach included bilingual community meetings for landscapers and community members, a Q&A session with a business that transitioned to electric equipment and an electric gardening equipment voucher program.

The vouchers were distributed to eligible residents and businesses throughout the spring. Ten vouchers worth $100 each were distributed to gardening businesses, and 40 vouchers worth $250 each were distributed to individual residents or non-gardening businesses.

Citing the funding for the voucher program has been fully subscribed, but city staff plan to recommend that the city allocate additional funds to the program. Community members can email sustainability@menlopark.gov to express interest in the program.

“The popularity of the program demonstrates that the community is eager to go electric and that education, outreach, and incentives are critical components of meeting our climate goal,” said Londer. “City staff see this as a success and will be recommending the continuation of this program as part of our fiscal year 2024-25 budget which will be presented to City Council during the June 11 City Council meeting.”

Atherton has allocated 60 out of 100 available electric leaf blower rebates, which are worth $250 each and are available to residents until June 30, 2024.

Other voucher programs may become available through the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. You can sign up on its website to be notified when a new voucher program becomes available.

To further prepare for the upcoming changes, Londer also suggested that residents may want to provide electric leaf blowers and string trimmers or extra batteries for their landscapers to use.

Email Staff Writer Eleanor Raab at eraab@almanacnews.com.
The California Legislative Analyst’s Office warned legislators about this issue in 2012, when the shortfall was less than $1 million, yet it was not addressed. In other years, the state offset this shortfall. ‘Clearly, in the statute, all the counties and cities in the state are supposed to get this payment so the state would just add a specific appropriation [item in the budget] to cover us,’ Deputy County Executive Austin Mates said.

Now, as in 2004, California has a massive deficit, $56 billion, and local governments are taking the hit. Instead of covering the shortfall, Gov. Gavin Newsom’s budget uses the money to help reduce California’s deficit. The Governor’s Office directed the Almanac to the Department of Finance, which did not respond in time for publication.

County officials were not happy about the governor’s decision and said they thought the state reneged on its 2004 deal. Audrey Razza, a lobbyist on behalf of the county, told legislators in April, “Not reimbursing the shortfall would be contrary to the 2004 budget compromise in which these payments were guaranteed to us by law.”

However, the California Department of Finance thinks the state has met its obligations. “[The Department of Finance] keeps erroneously saying that they backfilled every last dollar of VLF revenue but it is just not true,” Callagy said.

The legislators’ budget counterproposal, released on May 29, includes the VLF funding, according to San Mateo County’s Chief Legislative Officer Connie Juarez-Dirol. However, the proposal differs significantly from Newsom’s and has not passed either house. Assemblymember Diane Papan’s district director, David Burruto, told the Almanac that getting VLF funding for San Mateo County is Papan’s main budget priority and discussions are ongoing for a per capita solution. VLF revenue accounts for 18% — or $41 million — of San Mateo County’s operating funds. “We can account for things like decreased property tax but catastrphic losses like this are just unsustainable,” Callagy said. “This is one of the most significant threats to our budget that we’ve ever experienced.”

San Mateo County was one of five counties that came under fire in 2020 for abusing “excess ERAF,” according to the Legislative Analyst’s Office. The office claimed the counties were incorrectly shifting funds out of ERAF, leading to the counties incorrectly taking a combined $350 million from schools. The California School Boards Association is currently suing the State Controller over this and the case has yet to be settled.

Email Editorial Intern Arden Margulis at amargulis@almanacnews.com.

**Newsroom Notes**
- Email Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@paweekly.com.
- **Town of Atherton**
  - Town Administrative Offices
  - 80 Fair Oaks Lane
  - Atherton, California 94027
  - 650-752-0500

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Atherton City Council will hold a public hearing to consider proposed changes to the Town of Atherton’s Master Fee Schedule concerning fees for general government, police, planning, development, engineering, and park services.

The meeting will be held by tele or video conferencing. The public may participate in the City Council Meeting via Zoom Meeting.

**Remote Public Comments:**
Meeting participants are encouraged to submit public comments in writing in advance of the meeting.

Email: council@ci.atherton.ca.us

Join Zoom Meeting: https://zoom.us/j/506897786
Dial: 1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
Meeting ID: 506 897 786

**Description:** The City Council is considering resolution for the adoption of proposed changes to the Town of Atherton’s Master Fee Schedule concerning fees for general government, police, planning, development, engineering, and park services. The Fee schedule follows a cost escalator based on local Consumer Price Index (CPI). Various fees on the Master Fee Schedule have a labor component and as such shall be adjusted by the Consumer Price Index All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for the San Francisco Bay Area. The CPI as of February 2024 is 2.4% The Master Fee Schedule sets the fees for Planning, Building, Engineering, Public Works, Administrative, Police, Parks and Facilities. There is a recommendation to the Council to adopt a resolution for FY 2024/2025 amending various fees and charges for areas described above on the Town Master Fee Schedule based on CPI cost escalator. A copy of the meeting agenda, staff report and draft resolutions can be found online by Friday, June 14, 2024 here: https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/641/Agendas-Minutes

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that said Resolutions are set for hearing by the City Council at its meeting on June 16, 2024 at 6:00 PM via teleconference accessible through the above-described information and in person at 80 Fair Oaks Lane City Council Chambers, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the Resolution should or should not be recommended for approval.

**IF YOU CHALLENGE** any actions taken to adopt the proposed changes to the Town of Atherton’s Master Fee Schedule by the CPI-U concerning fees for general government, police, planning, development, engineering, and park fees and rentals, 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 City Council at, or prior to, the public hearing addressed to FY 2024/2025 Town Master Fee Schedule City Clerk, The Town of Atherton, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA. 94027.

If you have any questions on the item, please contact Anthony Suber, Deputy City Manager at atherton@ci.atherton.ca.us or 650-752-0529. 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 CITY COUNCIL
/ Anthony Suber
Anthony Suber, Deputy City Manager

June 7, 2024  AlmanacNews.com  The Almanac  19
feet of office space and acres of open space for recreational use and amenities such as a fitness center, swimming pools, bakeries, restaurants and ice cream shop.

Designers of Willow Park have embraced "the natural beauty" of the San Francisco Creek that runs along the southern and eastern border of the property. The open space allows "residents and visitors to enjoy the lush green environment," according to the project communication director Tracey Craig.

"As a local resident, I have a vested interest in helping the community grow in a way that matches the needs of today's Californians," said N17 founder Oisin Heneghan in a statement. "While the magazine offices were an appropriate land use when it was constructed in 1951 and the population of California was one-half of what it is today, today people need and deserve housing in prime locations, not vacant office buildings or long commutes. California’s housing crisis requires all of us to embrace change."

The site was chosen by developers for its large size, accessibility to major routes and walkability to Menlo Park and downtown Palo Alto. Developers say the complex is designed to "deprioritize the need for cars" as it’s located near major employers, grocery stores, hospitals and is a 10-minute bike ride from Stanford University.

"Projects like Willow Park are a direct response to California’s dire need for housing," said Corey Smith, the executive director of the Housing Action Coalition. "We will be in the press release. "Frankly, we cannot push this off any longer. We need housing in Silicon Valley that incorporates the principles of urbanism. It’s important to start building structures that are designed for the public’s current needs while accounting for the needs of generations that will come after us."

Solomon Cordwell Buenz, an international architecture firm, has been chosen by N17 to design Willow Park. To learn more about the project’s development, visit wallowparklife.com.

Email Staff Writer Jennifer Yokohski at jyoshoshi@almanacnews.com.
The case for electrifying our buildings

By Robert Hogue

Use of fossil fuels like natural gas in buildings contributes significantly to carbon emissions. In fact, emissions from California’s buildings are greater than from our in-state power plants. That’s why one of the most effective ways you can reduce your own carbon footprint is by replacing your home space and water heaters with electric appliances when they wear out.

Technical advances for electric heat pumps have made them more affordable for space and water heating. Electric induction ranges for cooking cost about the same as open flame gas ranges but are gaining preference over gas ranges. At the same time, people are gaining preference over gas ranges. Meanwhile, cities are looking to air pollution restrictions as a way of eventually limiting natural gas usage in buildings. The California Air Resources Board and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District are considering changes to building codes that can be made to reduce carbon emissions, such as a movement is mostly a volunteer effort at present. Even with compelling justification and broad relative support, state laws, local building codes, and air pollution restrictions take time to be implemented. We are therefore dependent on volunteer actions to get the ball rolling.

There is a counter movement to electrification. Some organizations like the California Restaurant Association feel that it will impact their business negatively. Some homeowners may hesitate to electrify because of perceived hassle or costs. As a result, electrification may be seen as a sacrifice to be made in the cause of reducing climate change.

No, electrifying one’s home as appliances wear out and need to be replaced is not just a charitable gesture. It’s moving from old, outdated technologies to new, cleaner, more reliable, more energy efficient, more cost-effective technologies. This move will happen anyway over time, but doing it now accelerates our replacement of old for new, and at the same time moves faster to lower carbon emissions. Such moves keep America from being backward. The U.S. always has led the world in technology advancement. But now even China is moving more progressively than the U.S. in adopting some new technologies. Let’s not let the resistance and slowness to change foisted on us by vested interests to keep us from leading the advancement of mature technologies as a model for the rest of the world to follow. We start by making prudent decisions for our own homes.

Rob Hogue is a Menlo Park resident, retired mechanical engineer and active member of the Citizen’s Climate Lobby and the Peninsula Interfaith Climate Action group.

How can Republicans still support Trump?

I don’t understand how good Republicans can support for president a dishonest man whose clear purpose is retribution, vengeance and personal gain rather than the good of all Americans. Even the Republican Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson, has drunk the Kool-Aid and joined the dark side. The GOP, which used to be a party of high principle, has now become a Mafia that we must defeat at all costs if we are to preserve our democracy.

I urge all good-thinking Republicans (and there are many) to see what has happened to their party; bite the bullet; take the bitter pill; do whatever it takes to avoid the tragedy of a second Trump term.

Likewise, oppose the creeping far-right Christian nationalism that is infiltrating all levels of government from school boards to state legislatures to Washington, D.C. You will be true patriots if you do.

Don Barnby
Spruce Avenue, Menlo Park
Local news is about local voices.

When you support your local nonprofit news room, you can be sure the news and information you receive is about the people and issues you care about most in your community.

Let’s keep it that way.

The Almanac

Please consider a one-time tax deductible donation and help make sure our voices are always heard.

AlmanacNews.com/donate
Summer is almost here!

For the youngsters, it’s the time to get out and play, and probably to try out some awesome summer camps and programs. It also may be time to make plans for the next school year. But why should kids have all the fun? People of all ages can make the most of summer by picking up a new hobby, learning a new skill or refining an existing practice. Our summer education guide is here to offer some ideas while you soak up all that summer sunshine.

Let’s Educate is published quarterly by the Palo Alto Weekly and The Almanac.

**Business & Tech**

CareerGenerations

2100 Geng Road, Suite 210, Palo Alto

info@careergenerations.com / careergenerations.com

CareerGenerations offers career counseling and group workshops to meet the career needs of a variety of individuals, including college students looking for internships, and graduates and professionals exploring career options or looking for employment. Workshops are currently being held via Zoom.

ReBoot Accelerator

For Women

1856 Camino a los Cerros, Menlo Park / 650-387-3743
reboot@rebootaaccel.com / rebootaaccel.com

ReBoot Accelerator for Women keeps local women current, connected and confident about reentering the workforce through workshops taught by social media experts and instructors from companies such as LinkedIn, Google, Apple and Enjoy.

**Culture**

Joy Culture Foundation

934 Santa Cruz Ave., Suite A, Menlo Park / 650-272-6915
info@joyculturefoundation.org / thejoyculturefoundation.org

The nonprofit Joy Culture Foundation operates the Little Bookworm Library to provide families a place to immerse in Chinese culture and language. The center has children’s books in Mandarin and English available for check out, as well as bilingual language and culture classes and summer camp.

Dance and theater

Dance Connection

Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto / 650-322-7032
info@danceconnectionpaloalto.com / danceconnectionpaloalto.com

Dance Connection offers a variety of classes for children and adults. Summer camps are offered weekly. All ages are welcome to participate. For more information, please contact info@danceconnectionpaloalto.com.

Mannakin Theater and Dance

en Avant School of Dance, 1841 Bay Road, East Palo Alto

415-519-7171
info@mannakindance.org / mannakindance.org

Mannakin Theatre and Dance offers youth ballet and dance classes at three locations of Dance Studio in East Palo Alto, which opened in March 2022. Summer camp is available.

Poly Theatre Summer Camp

Palo Alto High School, 50 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto

aftermoon@polytheatre.org / polytheatre.com / camp

Poly Theatre’s summer camp offers rising sixth through ninth graders with five days of theater education. Student camp counselors will teach campers about movement, voice, character analysis and expression, improvisation and technical theater.

Victoria Ballet

370 California Ave., Palo Alto

650-720-2643

webmaster@victoriaballet.dance / victoria ballet.dance

At this ballet studio, students from age 4 to adult are learning the art of dance from instructor Victoria Lee. The classes include all levels — from beginners who have never stepped up to the barre to pre-professional dancers. Summer camps and summer intensives are offered.

Zohar School of Dance & Company

Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Road, Room L-4, Palo Alto

650-494-8221
zohardance@gmail.com / zohardancecompany.org

Zohar School of Dance and Company is going back to 1979. Zohar School of Dance holds a range of adult dance classes including modern, ballet, voice and tap. Registration for workshops and ongoing dance classes for adults of all skill levels is now open. Summer dance intensives will be held.

Disability services

Bay Area Friendship Circle

3921 Fabian Way, Suite A023, Palo Alto / 650-858-6990
info@bafcircle.org / bafcircle.org

Bay Area Friendship Circle offers programs inspired by Jewish values and traditions for children, teens and young adults with special needs of all ages and ability. Trained volunteer tutors provide friendship and support.

Health & fitness

Equinox

440 Portage Ave., Palo Alto

650-319-1700

equinox.com/clubs/northern-california/paloalto
Equinox’s Palo Alto location offers a variety of fitness and wellness activities including yoga, cycling and high-intensity interval training classes.

One Heart Yoga

Little House Activity Center, 800 Middlefield Ave., Menlo Park

oneheartyoga.com

One Heart Yoga offers weekly classes in Kundalini yoga and meditation, aimed at helping students increase flexibility and strength and learn breathing techniques to calm and focus and reduce anxiety and depression. Hybrid (in-person and online) classes are available.

SoulCycle

669 Stanford Shopping Center, Room C-12, Palo Alto

650-784-7510

soulpaloalto@soul-cycle.com / soul-cycle.com
SoulCycle offers high-energy music, indoor cycling, coaching, and a variety of wellness classes including yoga, cycling and high-intensity interval training classes.

Tajjuan Tutelage of Palo Alto

Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Road, Room U-7, Palo Alto / 650-327-9500
mtych@ttopa.com / ttopa.com

Tajjuan Tutelage of Palo Alto, established in 1973, students learn the classical Yang Style Tajjuan Slow Form style of Tai Chi. Outdoor classes take place at Cubberley and at Rinconada Park, 777 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto.

Music & visual arts

Community School of Music and Arts

Fine Center, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View

650-917-6800
info@artskilil.com / artsken.com

The Community School of Music and Arts offers year-round classes in music, visual and digital arts, with courses suited for adults and children as young as preschool-age. Students are encouraged to sign up for classes at least two weeks in advance. Summer camps are offered.

EPACenter

1950 Bay Road, East Palo Alto

650-308-3600

epacenter.org

The 25,000-square-foot space offers a wide range of creative disciplines for East Palo Alto youth ages 6-25. Students can participate in classes such as music, visual arts, dance and skateboarding. No one is turned away for lack of funds.

iSing Silicon Valley

600 Colorado Ave., Palo Alto

info@isingsv.com / isingsv.com

This year-round choral program brings together girls from diverse backgrounds to sing in harmony. Interested parties must request an audition through the next season, which begins in late August.

Music Together Menlo Park

75 Arbor Road, Suite N, Menlo Park

650-799-1624
admin@mt-mp.com / mt-mp.com

Music Together Menlo Park holds classes exploring music and movement for children from birth up to age 5 and their guardians at the Allied Arts Guild, as well as two locations in Palo Alto — Lucie Stern Community Center and Unity Church.

New Mozart School of Music

2000 El Camino Real, Suite C, Palo Alto / 650-324-2373
info@newmozartschool.com / newmozartschool.com

New Mozart School of Music offers music lessons year-round to students of all ages and abilities. Piano, violin, viola, cello, voice, guitar, flute and early childhood music classes are available.

Pacific Art League

688 Ramona St., Palo Alto

650-321-2626
info@pacificartleague.org / pacificartleague.org

The classes and workshops at the Pacific Art League are taught by qualified and experienced instructors for children and adults with varying experience. Teachers teach many media, including drawing, painting, watercolor, digital art and more. In-person and live online classes are offered year-round. Summer camps for kids are available.

Palo Alto Art Center

1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto / 650-329-2366
artcenter@paloaltoartcenter.org / cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Community-Services/Arts-Sciences / Palo-Alto-Art-Center

Palo Alto Art Center classes and workshops — teaching children, teens and adults — cover such areas as ceramics, painting, drawing, jewelry, sculpture, Adobe Photoshop and more.

**Older adults**

Avenidas

450 Edenvale St., Palo Alto / Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Road, Room H-5, Palo Alto / 650-289-5400
info@avenidas.org / avenidas.org

Avenidas offers many classes, as well as lectures and workshops, for Midpeninsula seniors focusing on topics such as general health, physical fitness, languages, humanities, computing, music and writing. Classes are held in person, online via Zoom or are a hybrid of both.

Little House Activity Center

800 Middlefield Ave., Menlo Park / 650-272-5000 / ljph鬏@littlehouse Little House Activity Center offers classes for adults of all ages on various topics and activities, including health and wellness for seniors, fitness exercises like line dancing and Pilates; ceramics, drawing and other art languages, history and culture, and computer skills.

**Parent education**

Children’s Health Council

650 Clark Way, Palo Alto / 650-326-5530 / parentcw@ chcoonline.org / chcoonline.org

Children’s Health Council holds a variety of classes focusing on child-behavior issues, dyslexia, anxiety and depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism and other topics related to encouraging all children’s success.

**Schools**

Amigos de Palo Alto

1611 Stanford Ave., Palo Alto / 650-493-4300

See LET’S EDUCATE, page 24

June 7, 2024 n AlmanacNews.com n The Almanac n 23
Let's educate! — Guide to Schools, Camps & Classes

WOODSIDE PARENTS' NURSERY SCHOOL

Because it takes a village, not an overcrowded institution, to nurture innovative thinkers.

www.woodsideparents.org

LET'S EDUCATE
continued from page 23

info@amigosdepaloalto.com / amisg@paloalto.com

Amigos de Palo Alto is a Spanish-immersion preschool for children 2 and older. Students are a mix of native and new Spanish speakers and the program combines reading, writing, art and play to develop a love of learning. Summer camp programs are available.

Athena Academy
525 San Antonio Ave., Palo Alto 650-543-4500 anne@athenacademy.org / athenacademy.org

Athena Academy educates dyslexic and twice-exceptional students in first through eighth grades. Summer academic skills programs are available.

Emerson School
2800 W. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto 650-424-1233 vbarberis@headsup.org / emersonsmontessori.com

Emerson School provides a year-round program for grades one to eight, teaching a personalized, Montessori curriculum. Lessons draw from classical subjects and other areas, including art, music, foreign language, physical education, communication, life skills and more. Emerson also offers an infant center and a preschool program. Summer writing camp is available.

Gideon Hauser Jewish Day School
450 San Antonio Road, Palo Alto 650-494-8200 info@hauerschoollc.org / hauerschoollc.org

Instructing children in kindergarten through eighth grade, Gideon Hauser Jewish Day School provides strong academics, instruction in Jewish studies and the Hebrew language, enrichment opportunities and after-school programs.

Kehillah Jewish High School
3900 Fabian Way, Palo Alto 650-213-9600 admissions@kehillah.org / kehillah.org

This college-preparatory high school (grades nine through 12) features modern science and computer labs, art and music studios, a drama program, a full range of academic courses with small class sizes, sports teams and more.

Learning Links
3864 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto / 650-618-3342 enrollplaid@linksonline.org / learninglinks.org

Learning Links, formerly Milestones Preschool, offers year-round programs for young children of all abilities to foster social, emotional, cognitive and physical development. Links is a program of AbilityPath, with additional locations in Mountain View and Burlingame.

Living Wisdom School of Palo Alto
456 College Ave., Palo Alto 650-462-8150 livingwisdomschool.org

Offering yoga, meditation and experiential, interdisciplinary learning, Living Wisdom School serves students in a multi-age, multi-ability kindergarten through eighth grade. It offers a low teacher-student ratio, an integrated arts program, a balanced approach to technology, and after-school care.

Lydian Academy
815 El Camino Real, Menlo Park 650-535-8751 staff@lydianlink.com / lydianacademy.com

Lydian Academy is a middle and high school offering year-round individualized instruction to prepare students for college. Lessons include a mix of distance learning and group sessions. It also offers tutoring and after-school programs. Both in-person and online instruction are available, as well as summer courses.

Mustard Seed Learning Center
650-494-7389 info@mustardseedlearningcenter.org / mustardseedlearningcenter.org

Mustard Seed Learning Center is an after-school tutoring and care program that teaches local youth to speak Mandarin Chinese, as well as emphasizing social development and excellence in academics. After-school programs are held at 3048 Price Court, Palo Alto, and Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. The center also offers a preschool program that takes place at the Price Court address. Summer camps are available.

Oshman Family JCC
Leslie Family Preschool
3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto 650-223-8788 earlychildhood@paloaltojcc.org / paloaltojcc.org/preschool

The Oshman Family JCC’s Leslie Family Preschool program provides various scheduling and program options for children 18 months to 5 years old, with an emphasis on experiential learning, family involvement and play. Registration and tours are available, as well as summer camp.

Peninsula School
920 Peninsula Way, Menlo Park 650-325-1584 info@peninsulaschool.org / peninsulaschool.org

Peninsula School is a progressive institution teaching students from nursery through eighth grade, with an emphasis on choice and experience. Classes cover core subjects as well as instruction in music, physical education, drama, ceramics, woodshop and more. Summer programs are available.

Sand Hill School
650 Clark Way, Palo Alto 650-688-3605 info@sandhillschool.org / sandhillschool.org

Located at the Children’s Health Council, Sand Hill School teaches children from second through eighth grade with language-based learning differences, school-based anxiety and ADHD. Summer program available.

Silicon Valley International School
151 Marina Lane, Palo Alto 475 Pape St., Menlo Park 650-231-8500 school@sivt.org / sivt.org

Silicon Valley International School offers bilingual immersion day school with two nursery-to-fifth-grade programs in French, German and Mandarin as well as middle and high school programs. Some programs include student international kindergarten through eighth grade. It offers a low teacher-student ratio, an integrated arts program, a balanced approach to technology, and after-school care.

JobTrain
1200 O’Brien Drive, Menlo Park 650-340-4439 info@jobtrainworks.org / jobtrainworks.org

JobTrain has a variety of training programs for adults — providing instruction in the culinary arts, business administration, health care and more — as well as programs specifically for young adults, to help with GED diploma preparation, job placement and vocational training. The center also offers onsite preschool with income-based fees. Open entry GED/high school equivalency classes run on weekdays.

Palo Alto Adult School
Palo Alto High School, 50 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto / 650-329-3752 adultschool@pausd.org / pausdadultschool.org

Classes on computer skills, language, cooking, art, and many others are available throughout the Palo Alto Adult School. Both online and in-person classes are available.

The Riekes Center
3455 Edisman Way, Menlo Park 650-364-2509 info@riekes.org / riekes.org

The Riekes Center offers year-round programming in fitness, arts and nature for individuals of all ages and abilities. The center also provides programs for home-schooled students. Summer camps are available.

Sequoia District Adult School
3247 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park 650-306-8866 / sequas.org

Sequoia District Adult Education holds classes in English as a second language and computer and business skills. Students can also earn a high school diploma or GED certificate. Counselors are available to help students transition to college programs.

Stanford Continuing Studies
Littlefield Center, 365 Lasuen St., Stanford, continuingstudies.stanford.edu / continuingstudies.stanford.edu

Stanford Continuing Studies organizes in-person and online classes in technology, arts and sciences, creative writing, and professional and personal development.

Sur La Table
Town & Country Village, 855 El Camino Real, Suite 57, Palo Alto / 650-289-0019 sb073@surlatable.com / surlatable.com

Sur La Table offers hands-on cooking classes, guiding students in making regional cuisines, themed meals and other baked goods. Summer cooking classes for kids are available.

Sports
Baylands Golf Links
1785 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto 650-856-0881 baylandsgolflinks.com

Private lessons and clinics teaching golf techniques, rules and etiquette are available for sign-up at any level of experience throughout the year. Junior golf camps are available.

Kim Grant Tennis Academy
3005 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto / 650-752-8061 kimgranttennis.com / kimgranttennis.com

The Kim Grant Tennis Academy organizes an array of tennis classes and programs for adults and children at several locations. Summer tennis camps are available.

Spring Down Equestrian Center
725 Portola Road, Portola Valley 650-851-1114 springdown@maynet.com / springdown.com

Spring Down Equestrian Center educates children (beginning at age 6) and adults on horses and horseback riding. Classes and camps held year-round.

Web Branch Inc.
272 Alpine Road, Portola Valley 650-854-7755 webbranchinc.com / webbranchinc.com

Instruction for beginning and intermediate riders in both group and private settings, including camps for kids age 7-18. Specialties include Western riding, dressage and hunt-seat riding.

Let’s Educate is published quarterly in the Palo Alto Weekly and the Almanac. Descriptions of classes and schools in Palo Alto, Stanford, Menlo Park, Mountain View, Atherton, East Palo Alto and Los Altos Hills, Portola Valley and Woodside are provided. Listings are free and subject to editing. Due to space constraints, classes and schools in the above cities are given priority.

To inquire about submitting a listing for the next Let’s Educate, email editor@pawekly.com. To place a paid advertisement in Let’s Educate, call the display advertising department at 650-326-4210.
Local author takes readers back to the ‘90s with ‘Lily Xiao Speaks Out’

Menlo Park’s Nicole Chen writes children’s books that celebrate multiculturalism and honor the Asian American experience

By Karla Kane

Lil y Xiao, the 12-year-old protagonist of local author Nicole Chen’s latest novel, “Lily Xiao Speaks Out,” is a model student, the favorite of every teacher for her hard work and always-perfect behavior (her peers call her the class robot). At home, she’s obedient to her Taiwanese immigrant parents and beloved grandmother, and her family pressures her to prioritize her studies ahead of everything else and never rock the boat when it comes to authority figures. The year is 1993, and shy Lily has a big dream — to sing and play guitar in a grunge band.

While she reconciles her love of rock with her anxiety about making herself heard and subverting expectations, she’s also working to help her best friend and cousin Vivian, who’s just moved from Taiwan and is struggling to keep up in her new, English-only school. When she realizes that her district is failing to meet the needs of other English language learners just like Vivian, Lily is challenged to face her fears, channel her hidden punk-rock spirit, gain greater insights into her family, and stand up for what she believes in.

“Lily feels a bit like me rewriting my history if I was 12 in the 1990s again,” Chen said. “I was basically Lily in the sense of, I was a straight A student, I kind of did what I was told.”

In Lily, she created a character that represents the middle schooler she’d like to have been, and that she hopes can inspire young readers.

“I wanted to showcase an Asian American girl who speaks up and stands up for what she wants. I wish I had taken some of that privilege I had and actually taken it out for a spin and made change happen, and challenged some rules, meaningful rules,” Chen said. “Turn that model minority stereotype on its head.”

In the book, Lily is met with microaggressions from classmates who assume someone like her would only listen to classical music and play the violin or piano.

“Lily Xiao Speaks Out” by local author Nicole Chen.

“I wanted to write Lily as breaking the stereotype,” Chen said. She also gives Lily a crucial role model in the form of Keiko, a Japanese American college student who leads a local all-female grunge band and shows Lily what’s possible. Characters like Keiko show “the importance of representation in media, and the profound impact it could have,” she said.

Growing up, “alternative rock was the music that I really gravitated toward; the bigness, the boldness, the angst,” she recalled. “Back then it was heavily dominated by white men. It didn’t occur to me that I could pick up a guitar and play one day.”

And while Chen may not have realized it at the time, a rock band made up of girls a grade ahead of her playing a gig at their Palo Alto middle school did make a lasting impression. That group went on to become well known as The Donnas, standing out in the male-dominated rock scene, and Chen pays tribute to the band by naming some of Keiko’s bandmates after them.

“Not only did that show me that I could have more of a purpose,” she said, “but I started to realize at the time how important representation is, and that can be in very subtle ways” — such as having her protagonist eat green onion pancakes for breakfast — “and there are obviously bigger ways, too.”

Before the pandemic, “I thought it would be fun to start writing a story,” she said. “When COVID happened I was like, ‘I think I need to write a story.’”


That book “very much harkens to my experience growing up,” she said. It follows a young Taiwanese American girl who, as she goes about her day, sees her family members expressing their love for one another through actions rather than words.

“My parents immigrated from Taiwan in the ‘80s,” Chen said. “I think they still haven’t said ‘I love you to me,’ but when this book came out they bought, like, 100 copies,” she said. “I know they do in fact love me,” and the book is an homage to that strong bond that’s shown rather than spoken aloud.

Though she still adores picture books, her literary agent suggested she consider trying middle grade novels as well. Despite never imagining herself as a novelist, “I fell in love with the genre and format,” she said. Books for middle grade readers (aimed at kids roughly ages 8-12) “are so lovely,” she said. “It’s such a formative time for kids trying to find out who they are.”

Her first middle grade novel, “It’s Boba Time For Pearl Li!” came out last year and tells the tale of entrepreneurial Pearl, who works to sell her favorite boba shop by selling her handmade amigurumi dolls while also struggling to fit in as a crafty kid in a tech-centric family.

There are aspects of Chen in Pearl, as there are in Lily.

“I’ve always been very crafty and yet I work in the tech field,” she noted. “It felt like just a passionate topic for me to write about.” And, like Pearl, “I love cute stuff, too!”

Boba Time, the shop in the book, is actually modeled after an old favorite tea shop in Cupertino, and its eccentric, loveable tea maker became the basis for the quirky Auntie Cha in the book. “She’d make drinks with a passion,” Chen said. In fact, while both novels take place in fictional California towns (“Pacific Park” and nearby “Sunnydale”), they’re definitely rooted in Chen’s Peninsula life. Pacific Park’s city motto will be awkwardly familiar to Redwood City residents, for example.

“I like to sneak in those little references,” she said. “A couple little local Easter eggs.”

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

More information is available at storiesbynicolechen.com.
From conservationist to novelist, Christina Holloway has tales to tell

Set in 19th-century Ireland, Holloway’s debut novel takes inspiration from her family history

By Kate Daly

A t 85, Christina Holloway calls herself “a really good example of it’s never too late to pick up an endeavor of whatever you want to do.”

In her case, she said, “I decided to give myself the time for it,” and after a decade of researching and writing, she has finally launched her first book, a historical novel based on her Anglo-Irish family in the late 1800s.

This spring, Holloway self-published the 464-page paperback, “Whispers Across a Sea: A Novel of Victorian Ireland,” with the assistance of Girl Friday Productions and guidance from Susan Lyn McComb, a writer and editor in Berkeley.

These days instead of writing, Holloway is busy at her Stanford campus house commandeering the publicity part of releasing a new book. She is giving interviews, including a recent one in the middle of the night so it could run live on air in Dublin, Ireland, and she’s booking discussions with local book clubs in person and long-distance groups on Zoom.

She smiles when she talks about the newfound celebrity status that has come with her late-in-life career as an author.

“I’m waiting to be discovered right here and now,” she said with a laugh.

But she’s serious when she speaks about her potential next step. Holloway sees her book as a right here and now,” she said, while working on this project Holloway was best known for being an environmental activist.

“I come from a lineage of very strong women,” she said, crediting her grandmother’s and great-aunts’ forthrightness and resiliency with playing a part in shaping her own drive and spirit.

Holloway co-founded Environmental Volunteers, served as first Co-Executive Director of the Trust for Hidden Villa, was a former Board member of Peninsula Open Space Trust and Yosemite Conservancy, and past President of the Junior League of Palo Alto. Aside from acting as editor of her high school newspaper, and writing for newsletters for some of the above organizations, Holloway has little training as a writer. Surrounded by heirloom portraits hanging on her walls, she started her book by writing short vignettes centered on the people she read about in her family’s materials and other historical accounts.

Holloway then turned the people into individual characters, and jokes about developing a split personality to flush them all out.

She also added fictional characters such as Norah Gossett, the cook’s daughter who landed in prison after protesting for Irish independence.

“I assumed their thoughts and placed them in history ... and just kept moving the arc of the story forward, constantly rewriting,” Holloway said, until she had about 60 pages.

Her editor then helped pare down the manuscript to 48 short chapters.

Holloway’s neighbor and friend, Sunny Scott, worked on the book’s photos, graphics, cover and website.

The book has ranked No. 1 on the book’s photos, graphics, cover and website. For more information, visit christinahollowayauthor.com.

The Almanac News is an independent, non-profit news organization. We rely on the generosity of our readers to support our work. Please consider making a donation today.

For more information, visit thealmanacnews.com/arts-culture.
A restaurant offering "consciousness altering" chicken is coming to Menlo Park.

Cafe Vivant will focus on California heritage breed chicken, farm-to-table cuisine and an extensive wine program featuring "hard to find, interesting (and) sought-after wines," co-owner Jason Jacobeit said. An attached retail component will offer tastings, seminars and educational events with world-class winemakers and a small grocery section with items produced in the kitchen. The restaurant and shop, replacing Le Boulanger along Santa Cruz Avenue, are expected to open in early 2025.

"We have high qualitative ambitions for the restaurant, but we want it to be capital F fun," Jacobeit said. Jacobeit and co-owner Daniel Jung noticed that restaurants in America often tout high-quality steaks, but few feature high-quality chicken. While traveling and eating around the world, the pair found themselves shocked by just how good chicken can be.

"It's so inspiring because I think there's something about looking in the most familiar of places, something you've been conditioned to expect a certain kind of experience from, and getting something that not just over delivers, but over delivers by like two standard deviations," Jacobeit said.

Most chicken, even those labeled "free range" or "organic," are typically from one breed that puts on weight quickly. Heritage breed is a selectively bred stock that matures slowly, developing a "far more complex and interesting flavor," Jacobeit said. Cafe Vivant's goal is to source chickens of the highest quality as close as possible to Menlo Park, so Jacobeit and Jung found a poultry farmer near Pescadero to partner with.

"We've developed a slow, multi-input technique that produces superbly flavorful birds," Jacobeit said.

The menu at Cafe Vivant will be more than just chicken — vegetable and fish dishes will also be featured.

Our experience in top New York restaurants has fueled our belief in 'fewer, better things': find the best possible ingredients, keep things simple and execute with relentless consistency," Jacobeit said.

Cafe Vivant will offer a by-the-glass program with about 20 wines, as well as a by-the-bottle program with wines from major growing regions in Europe and the United States. While there won't be a priced out wine pairing since the food menu is a la carte, staff will help guide guests through suggested pairings.

"I think it's very fair to say that people will be finding a lot of savvy, very sought-after wines that are...available at really reasonable prices," Jacobeit said.

Cafe Vivant will be Jacobeit and Jung's debut restaurant, but they're no strangers to the restaurant industry. The two met in New York City while working for Myriad Restaurant Group. Jung was the head sommelier at Tribeca Grill, and Jacobeit was the wine director at Michelin-starred and James Beard award-winning Bâtard, a restaurant that closed last year.

In 2020, the pair decided to open a retail shop called Somm Cells Wine & Spirits in New York City.

"We really are champions for French wine in particular, and we wanted to bring that specialization to a wider audience and in our world of e-commerce and email marketing etc., running a fine wine and spirits retailer allowed us to really bring our passion to just a larger platform," Jacobeit said.

Jacobeit and Jung share a passion for wines that come from Burgundy, one of the oldest wine regions in the world.

"There's a saying in wine, 'All roads lead to Burgundy,'" Jacobeit said. "It's just kind of a way of saying that people who really get into Burgundy wines... tend to stay there once they're there."

And while Jacobeit and Jung have loved the reach the retail shop allows them to have, they missed the interpersonality of the restaurant industry.

"I say this smilingly, but I still feel like a few years into retail, we kind of play at retail... and still think like hospitality professionals, and we always wanted a restaurant," Jacobeit said.

Jacobeit and Jung wanted to open a restaurant with an attached retail component, but New York state law doesn't allow for that type of hybrid business, so they set their sights out west. Jacobeit and Jung will be bi-coastal, running both Somm Cellars and Cafe Vivant, and Somm Cellars' general manager will be relocating permanently to East Palo Alto to oversee the new restaurant.

"I do think that we will have a Michelin star standard in terms of ingredients sourcing, but in terms of both price point and ambiance, accessibility and inclusivity is really at the heart of what we're doing," Jacobeit said.

The name Cafe Vivant is a nod to the phrase "bon vivant," referring to a person who lives life to the fullest, and to Romanée-Saint-Vivant, a famous vineyard in Burgundy, France.

"We both want it to be the name to convey just an informal social convivial space, a community-oriented space, a place where the good life is happening hopefully uninterrupted...for people who are wine interested, they'll recognize that it's also a nod to our favorite wine region," Jacobeit said.

Cafe Vivant will have a wine bar at the center of the restaurant and outdoor dining, and the retail component will have "a really interesting and dynamic roster of in-store events," Jacobeit said.

"Expect to see a lot of first-rate tastings and world-class wine makers from all over the world descending into Menlo Park sooner than later," Jacobeit said.

Email Food Editor Adrienne Mitchel at amitchel@embarcaderomedia.org.
180 Magnolia Drive, Atherton

Freshly Updated Timeless Grandeur in Lindenwood | 7 beds | 6.5 baths | Guest house | $11,495,000 | 180Magnolia.com

23 Flood Circle, Atherton

Superb Location in the Heart of Lindenwood | 6 beds | 2 offices | 5 full + 2 half baths | $13,988,000 | 23Flood.com