

# The Almanac

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

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## Woodside native part of silver medal performance

Cook stepped up when team needed him most

By Embarcadero Media staff

The U.S. Olympic Jumping Team — with a last-minute assist from a Woodside native — finished on the podium in Aug. 2's Olympic Jumping Team Final. Karl Cook didn't expect to compete, but he was among the three U.S. riders when they accepted their silver medal at Versailles, France.

Cook, who now lives in Southern California but grew up in Woodside, was an alternate — the fourth rider on a team that sends only three into the ring. That is until hours before the Aug. 1 Olympic qualifier. That is when U.S. Equestrian's Chef d'Equipe Robert Ridland informed him that he and his horse Caracole de la Roque would be replacing Kent Farrington and his horse Greya.

"There is a small question mark with Greya, which is allergy related, and erring on the side of extreme caution and with the no drop score in the

format, we have made the decision to bring in Karl Cook and Caracole de la Roque," Ridland said in a statement before the qualifying event.

The U.S. team qualified for Friday's final and finished second to Great Britain in a title event. It was the team's ninth Olympic medal and third consecutive silver since 2016. The team finished on a total of four faults between the three team combinations.

"From the moment we notified Karl, he was honored and excited to be on this team," Ridland said in a release following the final. "The first thing he did when we talked about (it), he says, 'I'm here to do whatever I need to do to help the other three, to do whatever I need to do to support.'"

"Well guess what he did?" said Ridland. "Because that is one of the hardest things to do — to get a last-minute, two hours before

See **KARL COOK**, page 20



Courtesy Devyn Trethewey / US Equestrian

The U.S. Olympic Jumping Team, from left to right, Woodside native Karl Cook, Laura Kraut and McLain Ward, pose with their silver medals after their performance in the finals on Aug. 2.

## Menlo Park celebrates National Night Out

By Eleanor Raab

Menlo Park community members and police showed up to National Night Out events across the city on Tuesday, Aug. 6. National Night Out is an annual campaign meant to promote police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie

"We at MPPD are thrilled with the public turnout," said Menlo Park Police Chief Dave Norris in an email to this news organization. "We are incredibly grateful for our connection with our community, and cherish it!"

There was face painting, food, music, dancing, a bouncy house and more at the National Night Out event at Kelly Park, behind the new Belle Haven Community Campus. Residents were able to meet their local police officers. Kids also got the chance to ride in an ambulance and learn how to use the radio from San Mateo County EMTs.

Neighbors also held other local block parties at Cafe Zoe in The Willows neighborhood, and on University Drive near downtown Menlo Park.

The Menlo Park Police Department estimates that about 700 people turned up

to National Night Out events across the city.

"National Night Out is my favorite event of the year, as it represents a time for our team to make pure, unencumbered connections with our public, outside of our usual calls for service," said Norris. "We were thrilled to send multiple teams of (Police Department) representatives across all our sworn and professional staff positions and met and connected with so many of our amazing community members."

The Atherton Police Department also held a National Night Out event at Holbrook-Palmer Park, which featured food, face painting, music, a petting zoo and the chance to meet local police officers. ■

Email Staff Writer Eleanor Raab at [eraab@almanacnews.com](mailto:eraab@almanacnews.com).



Devin Roberts

Israel from East Palo Alto uses the radio inside an AMR Ambulance at National Night Out at the Belle Haven Community Campus in Menlo Park on Aug. 6.

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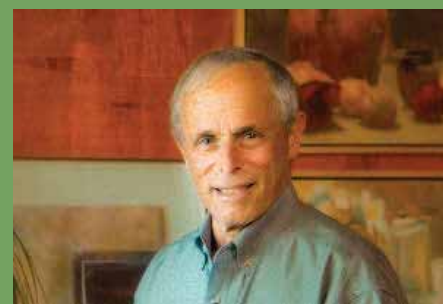
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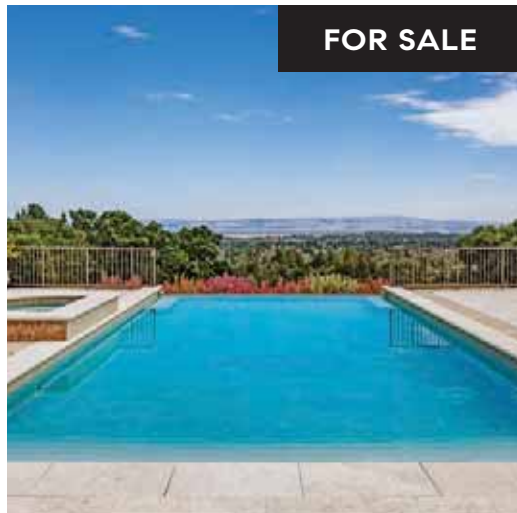
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# Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Courtesy CalFire

Fire crews are dealing with hot weather and steep terrain as they try to contain the Park Fire in Northern California.

## Menlo Park Fire Protection District joins the fight against the Park Fire

Menlo Park sends two fire engines, two strike team leader battalion chiefs and paramedics to the fourth largest fire in state history

By Eleanor Raab

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District has sent resources to aid in fighting the Park Fire that ignited in Northern California on July 24, after being asked to send mutual aid on Aug. 1.

In total, the district sent two four-person fire engines, two strike team leader battalion chiefs, and several paramedics, according to Dan Coyle,

Menlo Park Fire's deputy chief. According to Coyle, sending mutual aid to large fires in other areas of the state also helps to prepare local fire departments for the possibility of a large wildfire closer to home.

The fire, which ignited in a park just north of Chico, has grown to 425,724 acres across four counties in Northern California as of the morning of Wednesday, Aug. 7, according to an incident update from

CalFire. This makes it the fourth largest fire in the state's history. The fire was 34% contained as of Tuesday morning.

Mutual aid requests in the state of California are dictated by the California Office of Emergency Services.

"The Governor's OES runs, in my opinion, the most functional, efficient and robust mutual aid system in the

See **FIRE**, page 20

## COVID levels on the rise in San Mateo County

Numbers increased 32% from July 16 to Aug. 2 locally

By Eleanor Raab

Ten-day rolling average COVID-19 levels in the Silicon Valley Clean Water sewershed, which encompasses Belmont, San Carlos, Redwood City, Woodside, Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and parts of East Palo Alto, have risen 32% in the last two weeks of available data from July 16 to Aug. 2.

In San Mateo County overall, wastewater data is showing that COVID is circulating locally at a high level. California is among the eight states where COVID is circulating at a "very high" level, which is the highest defined level of wastewater viral activity according to the CDC.

"Levels of COVID-19 infection are higher now in San Mateo County than they were earlier this summer," said Preston Merchant, a spokesperson for San Mateo County Health. "We know this based on a variety of data including wastewater surveillance, emergency department visits and hospitalizations."

The levels of COVID circulating in the Silicon Valley Clean Water sewershed have jumped 1000% since April 30, when the viral levels were at their lowest so far this year.

Though hospitalizations in the county remain higher than the spring, they have come down slightly from a high in late June.

"While COVID hospitalizations are lower than they were in late June, they are going up and are higher now than they were in the spring," said Merchant. "The 7-day rolling average is greater than 20 hospitalizations now, and it was less than 10 during the spring."

The current predominant variant that is circulating in wastewater throughout the country is KP.3, according to CDC data. The CDC's Nowcast projections as of Tuesday, Aug. 6, estimate that over the next few weeks approximately 48% of new covid infections in the country will be due to variants KP.3 and KP.3.1.1. COVID variants are not tracked on a local level.

San Mateo County Health recommends that residents stay up to date with current vaccines, stay home if sick, test if symptoms are present and consider wearing a mask.

"Our health officers say that when COVID infections are high or increasing in a community, prevention strategies can reduce the likelihood of getting infected with any respiratory infection," said Merchant. "If a person develops symptoms of a respiratory infection such as a cough and fever, it's likely that it's COVID."

San Mateo County Health's other advice for residents is to get help with your COVID

See **COVID**, page 18

## Portola Valley Council member Jeff Aalfs reflects on 16 years in local government

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

After 13 years on Portola Valley's Town Council, Jeff Aalfs will not be seeking reelection in November. As his term comes to an end, his decision comes from his wish to spend more time with his family.

For over a decade, Aalfs has balanced his day job in energy and green building consulting while serving as a council member, father and husband. He and his wife Sally moved to Portola

Valley in 2006 and raised two children in their home.

Aalfs served on the Architecture and Site Control Commission from 2008 to 2011, was elected onto the council in December 2011 and served as mayor for three terms. He also said his greatest accomplishment is the work he's done while serving on Peninsula Clean Energy's board of directors since 2015 — an opportunity that was offered to him as a council member.

He said that he would like to

continue working with PCE, but when it comes to the Town Council, he's ready to step away.

In a conversation with The Almanac, Aalfs discusses why he chose not to seek reelection, reflects on some of his memorable times on the council and responds to the contentious topics that Portola Valley currently faces.

The following has been edited for length and clarity.

**The Almanac:** Out of the many memories you have from serving on the council, what are

some that stand out to you as your term is coming to an end?

**Aalfs:** The summer of 2011, I was meeting with Ted Driscoll, who was my colleague for two years on the council and he told me that Steve Tobin was stepping down. He was there to sort of ask me to take the time to file papers and run for Steve's seat. Ted was very thoughtful and deliberate. I have a very vivid memory of the first day somebody approached me about



Magali Gauthier

See **JEFF AALFS**, page 18

Jeff Aalfs

# Two residents pull papers to run for Woodside and Portola Valley councils

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The fields are getting crowded for upcoming council races in Portola Valley and Woodside, as two new candidates pulled nomination papers in the last week to run for open seats on the Nov. 5 ballot.

So far, four people have pulled papers to run for Portola Valley's Town Council. Incumbents Jeff Aalfs and Sarah Wernikoff are not seeking reelection, they told this news organization. Rebecca Flynn, Helen Wolter, Carter Warr and Ellen Vernazza have all pulled papers but none have filed them.

In Woodside, three candidates have thrown their hats in the ring for three openings on the council. Incumbents Jenn Wall and Paul Goeld have qualified for the ballot, while newcomer Hassan Aburish pulled nomination papers on Aug. 1 but had not yet filed them as of The Almanac's Wednesday afternoon press deadline.

If an incumbent does not file by Friday, Aug. 9, the deadline for non-incumbents to file will be extended to Aug. 14 at 5 p.m.

Find out about the two new candidates below.

## Portola Valley

Portola Valley resident Ellen Vernazza pulled papers to run for



Ellen Vernazza

council, making her the fourth non-incumbent to pull papers.

Vernazza grew up in the Peninsula and has lived in Portola Valley for 37 years. Her two children attended Ormondale and Corte Madera schools in Portola Valley. She's also served on the Trails and Paths Committee and volunteered with the local schools.

Now retired, Vernazza has worked as a realtor in Portola Valley for 20 years and also ran an auto repair company for 30 years. She is also a former member of a town Political Action Committee aimed at unseating council members in 2022.

"I've seen Portola Valley changing over the years and I want to help slow down the looming organization of the town," said Vernazza. "I want to better represent town residents and how they wish the town to be managed and protected."

As a potential candidate, she's hoping to address the town finances, fire safety and create more transparency and healthy communication between the Town Council and community.

Vernazza said her skills in communication and listening will ensure residents are heard and responded to. With her experience running a company, she holds a strong understanding of

balanced budgets and bookkeeping to work on the town's finances, she said. Her prior career as a realtor has also given her the skills for working with people of different backgrounds and ideas.

## Woodside

Woodside resident Hassan Aburish pulled papers to run for the District 5 on Woodside's Town Council. Aburish has lived in town for almost four years with his wife and two kids and is hoping to be more involved with the town.

He was born in Florida, grew up in Georgia and Santa Rosa, California, and has lived in the Bay Area since college. He got his bachelor's degree from San Francisco State University and graduated with a law degree from the University of California, San Francisco. Aburish an employment attorney for SV Employment Law Firm in San Mateo.

"I worked hard to get to this point to be able to move to a place like Woodside where we have good schools for my kids," said Aburish. "I just want to be involved and help to keep Woodside to where it feels like of my neighbors."

If he were elected onto the council, Aburish is hoping to work to find solutions to

Woodside's housing challenges, as well as encourage proactive road maintenance.

As a resident of District 5, which includes the western hills of Woodside, Hassan is aware that living farther up in the mountains comes with more concerns for fire issues and road maintenance. "I think if you go down the hill, there's different issues and different priorities. I just want to make sure that our (District 5) perspective would be represented," he said.



Hassan Aburish

Although he has no prior experience in local government, his decade long experience in law has given him the skills to facilitate fair conversations, analyze laws and meticulously review contracts, he said.

"I'm committed and I'll be there consistently having reviewed everything and really thinking through the issues. I believe I can do a good job and I hope that I will get an opportunity to do it," Aburish said.

Prior to pulling papers, Aburish found it difficult to find time to volunteer with the town while he and his wife both worked full-time and cared for their kids. His wife Jennie Aburish however, has stepped

See **COUNCILS**, page 20

# East Palo Alto Target and CVS to close, leaving residents with few local pharmacies, grocery stores

Target cited underperformance as the reason for closure

By Lisa Moreno

East Palo Alto's Target on East Bayshore Road is set to close its doors Sept. 28 due to "underperformance," said a company spokesperson — leaving few options to buy groceries and essentials in the area.

"After much consideration, we have decided to close our East Palo Alto store due to prolonged underperformance," said Target spokesperson Joe Unger in a statement on Aug. 1. He did not elaborate further on sales data or performance issues. SFGATE first reported the news on July 30.

Aside from the Cardenas grocery store next door to Target, East Palo Alto, which has been called a "food desert" for its lack of access to fresh produce, will now have even fewer options for groceries within walking distance of residents.

The CVS inside the Target is set to close over a month earlier, on Aug. 22, said CVS spokesperson Amy Thibault, and "eligible" employees will be transferred to other stores. When asked by this publication, employees said they were unable to speak about the matter.

All prescriptions will be transferred to the CVS at 352 University Ave., according to Thibault, and some customers will be eligible for home delivery.

"We have three CVS Pharmacy locations in Palo Alto and will continue to provide the community with outstanding service at these locations," Thibault said in a statement.

After its closure, only a couple of other pharmacies will remain in East Palo Alto.

Around seven years ago, the Target location was the first



Lisa Moreno

Shoppers walk into East Palo Alto's Target on Aug. 1.

to open up in the city, and the CVS was its only commercial pharmacy.

"It's been a convenient resource," said Jerry Brown, who lives close by.

Now, he plans to head to the Target in Redwood City, over

six miles away, for his essentials.

Longtime local customers also lamented the loss of the store on Facebook, calling for more transparency into the reasons behind the closure. ■

Email Staff Writer Lisa Moreno at [lmoreno@almanacnews.com](mailto:lmoreno@almanacnews.com).

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# Tenants in three East Palo Alto apartment buildings rally for better living conditions

By Lisa Moreno

Longtime residents of three neighboring apartment buildings on East Okeefe Street in East Palo Alto marched on Aug. 1 at the Mayfield Soccer Complex in Palo Alto to protest “habitability issues” that have been met with “tepid” responses from property owner Sand Hill Property Company.

Nearly 50 people showed out to protest “delayed” and “ignored” complaints regarding water leaks, sudden water shut offs, poor ventilation, mold and broken appliances in their apartments.

Two residents led the crowd to the main offices of Sand Hill, which owns all three buildings. Once inside, they read their letters of demands and handed a worker a bright yellow envelope labeled, “Mr. Peter Pau,” who is the principal and co-founder of the company.

In Spanish and English, they read the letter that included a list of demands like bilingual

communication and fumigation for buildings with rat and cockroach infestations.

As company employees slowly poured out of their offices, they listened to residents’ demands.

Chief Operating Officer Jason Villarreal said the company would evaluate the group’s letter and demands and then respond accordingly.

“It’s important we address this,” he said. “Thank you for sharing your thoughts.”

Raquel Rodriguez, who has lived in 301 East Okeefe St. for 19 years, said the living conditions have worsened over time as property owners come and go.

“One day, my husband was showering and the water suddenly cut off,” Rodriguez said. “It took hours to turn back on and it happened multiple times, but we never get answers.”

Residents say they learned this summer that three apartment buildings at 201, 245 and 301 East Okeefe St. were listed for sale, which they say was

not properly communicated. Residents were given legal forms in English to verify the current state of their apartments, but as a largely Spanish-speaking community, many documents went unnoticed.

That’s when they decided to organize.

With the help of East Palo Alto-based organization Youth United for Community Action and the Regional Tenant Organizing Network, the residents formed the E. Okeefe Tenant Association, then delivered a letter to Greystar on July 17 — which it forwarded to property owner Sand Hill.

Greystar, the property management company who is in charge of repairs, did not respond to requests for comment.

In response to the letter, a Sand Hill spokesperson Pabel Zumarraga said that all work orders for units in 201 and 245 have been resolved, though there are a handful of maintenance



Lisa Moreno

Residents of three neighboring apartment buildings on East Okeefe Street in East Palo Alto march to protest “habitability issues” at Sand Hill Property Company offices on Aug. 1.

orders that still need to be addressed at 301.

“Greystar is committed to ensuring that all of the Woodland Park Apartments are safe and habitable at all times,” Zumarraga wrote.

Sand Hill will continue to “look further” into complaints and set up a meeting at a later date, he wrote.

Rodriguez, who was uneasy about taking action at first, said previously, management only agreed to meet with tenants

individually concerning living conditions.

“When we came as a group, they felt intimidated,” Rodriguez said. “I was so nervous, but now I feel empowered.”

As the East Okeefe residents left the Sand Hill building, they cheered and congratulated each other.

“Aquí estamos, y no nos vamos,” they chanted. “We are here, and we’re not leaving.” ■

Email Staff Writer Lisa Moreno at [lmoreno@almanacnews.com](mailto:lmoreno@almanacnews.com).

## San Mateo County hosts 20th annual Disaster Preparedness Day

Many take opportunity to learn hands-only CPR

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

On Aug. 3, San Mateo County hosted its 20th annual Disaster Preparedness Day event at the San Mateo Event Center. From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. community members gathered to learn how to prepare for and to survive and recover from an emergency.

“San Mateo County is a Disneyland of disasters, so we have anything from wildfires

to earthquakes to flooding,” said Dr. Shruti Dhapodkar, county director of emergency management.

Over 60 local agencies including law enforcement, public health, first responders, energy providers and others were represented. Workshops were held throughout the venue teaching hands-only CPR, how to stop bleeding, pet preparedness, wildfire resilience and how to pack a go-bag.

For the first time, the event featured workshops in English, Spanish and Mandarin. Dhapodkar emphasized the importance for the county to connect with the entire community in spreading awareness of emergency preparedness.

Guests could participate in a scavenger hunt to collect stamps from booths to redeem for prizes, including an emergency meal that lasts five years and an emergency radio. Stamps could be gathered by attending workshops, talking to exhibitors

and learning about different agencies.

“I absolutely think it’s very important to know that these are the people that will be serving the communities during disasters and these faces

are ubiquitous and they come from all diverse backgrounds,” Dhapodkar said.

Workshops for children included “Storytime with a firefighter”

See **PREPAREDNESS**, page 17



Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Children get a chance to sit in the driver’s seat of a Cal Fire fire truck as parents take photos.

### REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

#### Buying a Property Before It’s Built



**Dear Monica: I’m interested in a property that won’t be built for at least a year. What are your thoughts on this?**  
Helen T.

Dear Helen: Buying a property before it is built allows you to secure a home now and if the timing works for you, it can be very convenient. If you like the location, style, finishes and price, you can stop your search and move in next year.

Some of the negatives of this are that if another property comes on the market that you like, you cannot consider it. You will also begin paying for financing which adds to the cost of the home. You also risk that the market may go down during that time. Make sure this is a good property for you, with a good builder, and all should be well.

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## District contractor, Sheryl Sandberg fund Menlo Park school district bond measure

By Arden Margulis

Former Meta chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg and Cumming Management Group, a district contractor working on the bond, are the largest donors to the Committee for MPCSD Student Safety, a committee that is backing Menlo Park City School District's \$124 million infrastructure bond for the Nov. 5 election.

Cumming Group is a project management company that has worked with school districts around the Bay Area, including MPCSD on infrastructure

projects. Cumming Group subsidiary, RGM Kramer, has worked with the district multiple times. The district has already signed contracts with a total budget not to exceed \$241,290 with RGM Kramer for facilities planning and grant applications for this facilities bond.

"We've been reaching out to people in the community and people who want to see work done to our schools, like Cumming Group, to get support for the bond," said Katherine Bicer, principal officer of MPCSD Student Safety and Hillview PTO vice

president.

The bond is aimed at paying for improvements in four areas in the district, which has schools in Menlo Park and Atherton: school safety and security upgrades, replacing outdated construction, climate resilience and modern technology.

"Most of the people donating are in the community," she added.

According to California Fair Political Practices Commission records, Cumming Group donated \$15,000 to support the bond, and Rich Kramer, the managing principal at Cumming, donated an additional \$10,000.



Magali Gauthier

Menlo Park City School District office.

Sandberg, a Menlo Park resident, donated \$25,000.

Of the 22 contributors who donated more than \$100 on or before June 30, Kramer was the only one who does not live in Menlo Park or Atherton.

MPCSD Student Safety is not

required to report contributions made after June 30 that are below \$5,000, or those under \$1,000 made after Aug. 7, until Sept. 26. ■

Email Editorial Intern  
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## Despite public outcry, Woodside Town Council concludes housing element public hearing

Town is one step closer to reaching housing element compliance

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

On July 30, Woodside's Town Council continued to face community dissatisfaction with its housing plans as it voted to approve to adopt resolutions on the housing element. The chosen sites for multifamily housing are on High Road, Raymundo Drive, 773 Cañada Road and at Cañada College.

The housing element is required by the state for all local

governments to develop a plan to meet housing demands across California every eight years. The town of Woodside has been out of state compliance since Jan. 31, 2023 and is required to develop 328 new housing units between 2023-31.

This special meeting was a continuation of a July 23 meeting.

The council approved all housing element-related items including changing designations from open space to residential on High Road and

Raymundo Drive, adopting the resolution to the Emerald Lake Specific Plan with multi-family zoning on 773 Cañada Road and adopting objective design standards and rezoning on all parcels.

Although residents at the meeting spoke out against the four sites, the council clarified that sites will not be changed and are set. Council member Ned Fluet explained that the sites have been chosen over dozens of meetings and years of discussion.

Many of the complaints were about how developments would affect property value, wastewater, destruct open space and the town's rural characteristics and fire risks.

Town Manager Kevin Bryant announced that the state Department of Housing and Community Development acknowledged that the adopted housing element met the requirements of the state housing element law. The town will need to complete necessary

rezoning before getting their housing element approved.

### High Road

The site on High Road, previously designated as an open space, was voted by the council to be designated as residential allowing for the planned multi-housing development. Many residents are against losing an environmentally sensitive area to a high density housing development and called the council to reconsider.

Concerns from residents included the future traffic congestion that would develop on Woodside Road, safety of gas lines, decrease in property value

See **HOUSING**, page 15

## Atherton moves forward with project to reline the upper portions of channel

By Eleanor Raab

Atherton is taking a first step toward repairing the upper portions of the eroded Atherton Channel, which caused major flooding issues during the winter storms of 2022-23. At its July 17 meeting, the Atherton City Council approved a \$750,000 contract with Tetra Tech, an environmental engineering consulting firm, to assess the condition of the upper portion of the Atherton Channel, and prepare a design to reline the channel.

Following a 2015 drainage study, repairing and relining the side slopes and bottom of the deteriorated portions of the channel in the areas west of Alameda de las Pulgas (the

"upper" portion of the channel), was designated as a top priority for the town.

"There are areas of the Atherton Channel up and down that are significantly deteriorated, where concrete is pulled off," said Robert Ovadia, Atherton's public works director during the meeting. "The erosion of the channel is starting to creep outside or near the edges of the existing easement, and has the potential for risking life and property."

Throughout the upper portion of the channel, which stretches from Highway 280 to Alameda de las Pulgas, tree roots are intruding into the channel, downed trees are blocking portions of the channel and the channel is at risk of overtopping and causing property damage

during heavy rains, according to a project proposal that Tetra Tech provided to the town.

According to Ovadia, the heavy winter storms over the past few years have led to additional deterioration of the channel. "So we are ready to get moving and start doing repairs on the channel," he said.

Before any actual construction work can be completed, the town must first survey the channel and identify the specific locations most in need of improvement.

"The initial phase of work will include an assessment and topographic survey to develop potential solutions," said George Rodericks, Atherton's

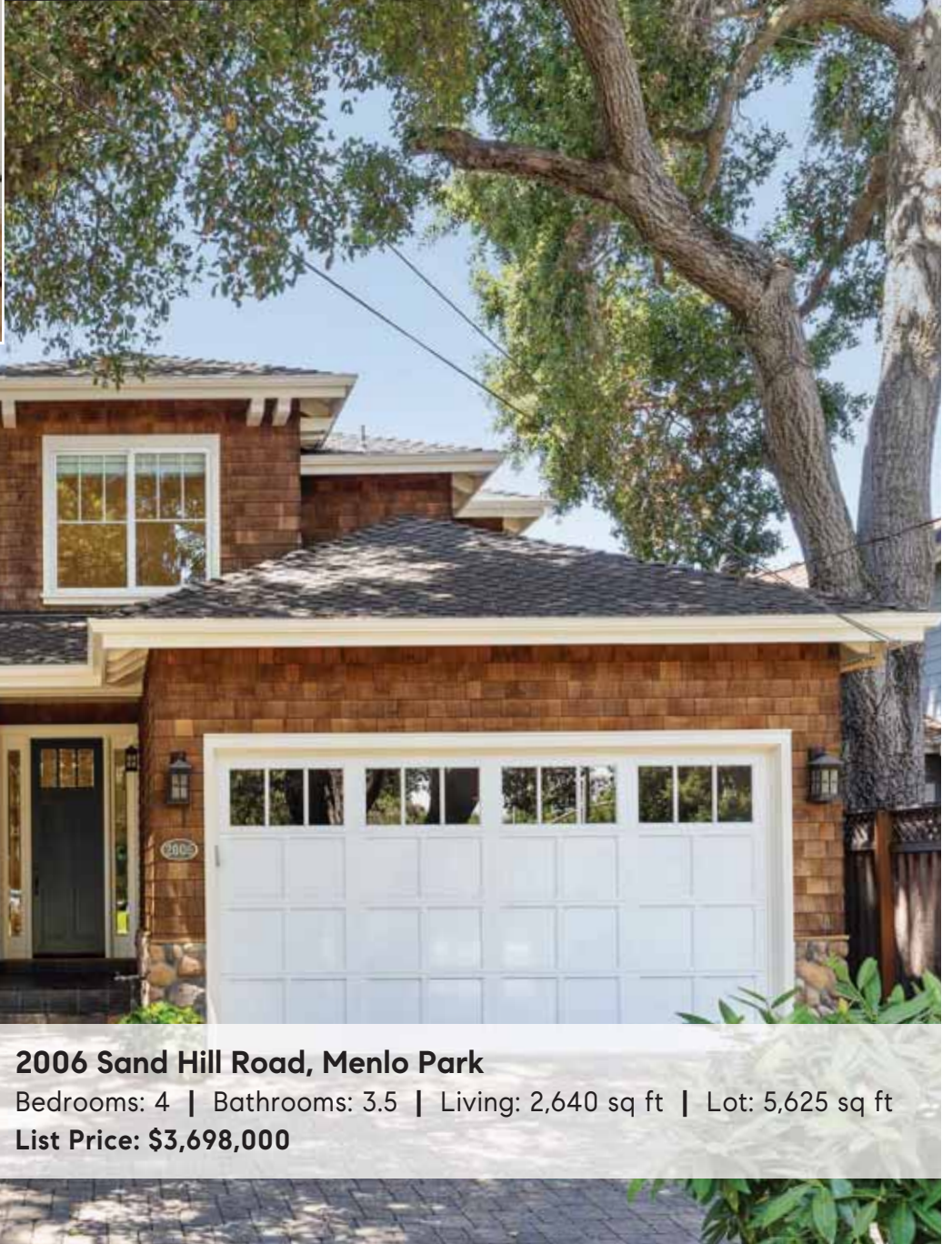
See **ATHERTON CHANNEL**, page 18



Andrea Gemmet

Stormwater rushed through the Atherton Channel at the intersection of Middlefield and Marsh roads in Atherton on Dec. 31, 2022.

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# SMC Coroner says Maguire Correctional Facility inmate died by suicide in March

By Bay City News Service

The San Mateo County Coroner's Office determined that an inmate who died at Maguire Correctional Facility in March died by suicide.

Findings by the Coroner's Office and county's District Attorney's Office confirmed the manner of death of 46-year-old inmate Hunter Bergner.

The sheriff's office said that on March 15, around 3:15 p.m.,

correctional officers found Bergner unresponsive in his cell following a routine check conducted at the General Population pod where he was housed.

"Correctional Officers immediately began administering CPR and lifesaving measures until paramedics arrived a short time later. Despite their efforts, Bergner died at the facility," the Sheriff's Office said.

Maguire Correctional Facility is in Redwood City.

"Suicide has a profound

impact on us all and we extend our deepest sympathies to Mr. Bergner's loved ones during this time," Sheriff Christina Corpus said in a statement Monday. "While it is difficult for us to share these deeply personal findings, it is because of our commitment to transparency that we share them with the community. Our commitment to the well-being and safety of those in our custody continues to be one of our highest priorities." ■



Anna Hoch-Kenney

The exterior of the new San Mateo County Sheriff's Office at 330 Bradford St. in downtown Redwood City, next to the Maguire Correctional Facility, on May 31.

# Former Portola Valley public works director lands job in Newark

By Angela Swartz

Portola Valley's former longtime public works director, Howard Young, started a new role as director of public works for the city of Newark on July 15, according to a July 2 announcement from the city.

Young was one of a long list of Portola Valley staffers who left the town in the last two years. Young worked for the town for over 22 years before leaving at the end of June. The town did not provide a reason for his departure.

"We are excited to welcome Howard to the city of Newark family where his knowledge, experience, and leadership will benefit Newark," said Newark City Manager David Benoun in a statement. "Mr. Young served as a Public Works Director for over 20 years, and we are excited about the wealth of experience he will bring to us."

Young replaces Soren Fajeau who worked for the city of Newark for 27 years, starting as an engineering technician.

Young, a Bay Area native who graduated from San Jose State University with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, began his career in local government with the city of San Mateo Public Works Department as an engineering



Courtesy city of Newark

Howard Young.

technician, according to the city of Newark announcement. He then worked for two public companies where he led construction of a fiber optic telecommunications system throughout the entire Bay Area for high-speed internet from San Rafael to San Jose, on BART. He also constructed networks within cities.

In Portola Valley, Young oversaw engineering, maintenance, and the town's Capital Improvement Program, which included overseeing the construction of the new LEED Platinum Town Center in 2008. ■

Email Editor Angela Swartz at [aswartz@almanacnews.com](mailto:aswartz@almanacnews.com).

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**CORRECTION**

"Student and teacher pair up to host summer pottery workshops" published in print on Aug. 2 included an incorrect spelling of Peter Koren's last name. The online version of the article has been corrected.

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A SCREENING OF

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# Airport plans ruffle feathers in the Baylands

Critics slam upgrade alternatives to Palo Alto Airport expansion that would fill in duck pond, infringe on marshland

By Gennady Sheyner

For Avroh Shah, the Palo Alto Baylands offers the perfect recreational respite — a scenic place to take hikes with family and friends during the summer months.

Like thousands of Palo Alto residents and visitors, he is well familiar with the nature preserve's trail network and treasured amenities like the duck pond, which the city created more than 80 years ago and which remains a popular hub for birdwatchers and casual strollers.

As a climate activist and a member of the group Palo Alto Student Climate Coalition, he also knows not to take the existence of the Baylands for granted. While Palo Alto enjoys its bit of marshland, the vast majority of the Bay Area isn't so lucky. In most of the San Francisco Bay Area, the marshland has been taken over by developments, he said.

"Palo Alto has done a pretty decent job with the small bit of the Baylands that's left," Shah, a rising sophomore at Palo Alto High School, told this publication. "At this point, we're fighting for every inch we can get."

So like many others, Shah became concerned when he heard about the city's plan to craft a new vision for the Palo Alto Airport, which is located right next to the nature preserve. The planning exercise, which is designed to make the small but bustling airport compatible with Federal Aviation Administration safety guidelines, examines five alternatives, four of which would expand the airport's lone runway (the fifth is basically keeping the status quo).

Two of the options are particularly ambitious and contentious. Known as Alternative 3 and Alternative 4, each would expand the runway from its current length of 2,443 feet to 3,500 feet, the length recommended by the FAA. The main difference is that Alternative 3 would cut into the municipal golf course while Alternative 4 would shift the runway toward the duck pond, which is located just southeast of the runway. According to officials from the Public Works Department, this would require significant filling of the duck pond.

For airport officials, Alternative 4 offers numerous advantages over the other options: a longer

taxilane, space for vertiports and a longer runway. Unlike another alternative that extends the runway length, it would not require the raising of runway elevation to integrate it into a newly constructed levee system. Rather, it shifts the runway southwest and away from the proposed levees, according to the city.

Yet Shah and many other environmentalists, including members of the Sierra Club and the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, believe the destruction that this option would wreak on sensitive Baylands habitat would far outweigh these benefits. They believe that any plan that would infringe on the duck pond should be taken off the table.

"When they say, 'We're going to fill in this area and expand the airport in this area,' they're setting a precedent for future expansion and saying that it's OK to harm this area of Palo Alto and East Palo Alto," Shah said. "I think the airport needs to minimize its footprint."

He is hardly alone. In recent public hearings, phone interviews and letters submitted to the City Council, local residents have voiced strong objections about the prospect of filling in the duck pond, which the city created in the 1930s to use as a swimming pool. Birds had other ideas and, in a Hitchcockian plot twist, wrested control of the pool from the humans and turned into a pond that is now one of the most iconic spots in the 1,900-acre preserve.

The issue hits particularly close to home for Diane McCoy, a retired Palo Alto Unified School teacher who lives a few blocks from the Baylands and who has been leading nature excursions and birdwatching trips in the area for more than 30 years. McCoy, who now volunteers with the nonprofits Environmental Volunteers and the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, can easily rattle off the many species that frequent the area, a roster that includes regulars like black-neck stilts (lanky shorebirds with pointy beaks and tall pink legs), gadwall ducks and mallard ducks as well as seasonal visitors like the northern shoveler ducks, which migrate to the pond around September to escape the cold winter and then head back north around March.

Then there are the species that don't live in the pond but depend on it for nourishment



Anna Hoch-Kenney

A plane lands at the Palo Alto airport just beyond the duck pond on July 26.

— birds like the great blue heron, the snowy egret, the double-crested cormorant and the black-crowned night heron. There are the swallows that feast on the flies and gnats. And near the duck pond is the marshy area filled with pickleweed, the preferred snack of the nature preserve's most famous endangered species: the salt-marsh harvest mouse. For this reason, the marshy area between the pond and the airport is just about as valuable as the pond itself, McCoy said.

This marshy area would be threatened by three of the five alternatives, all of which move the runway northeast, toward the pond. Alternative 5 in the city's plans calls for a shorter runway than Alternatives 3 and 4 — 3,000 feet instead 3,500 feet — but it also relocates the runway in such a fashion that it would infringe on the area next to the pond. The runway in Alternative 2 is shorter still — 2,600 feet — and it would be located further from the pond. Yet this option, like the others, also comes with a levee that would encroach on to the marshland that currently separates the airport from the pond.

McCoy said she supports the airport's mission to make its operations more efficient and sustainable, including its efforts to install solar panels, wean local pilots off leaded fuel and create infrastructure to support the emergence of electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft. But rather than expand its facilities to accommodate larger planes like the Pilatus PC-12, the city should focus on smaller aircraft and work with other airports in the region to accommodate the bulkier aircraft, she said in an interview.

"It's inconceivable to me that anybody, much less the City of Palo Alto, would even consider filling up more marsh and wetland in the San Francisco Bay Area, which is already over 98% filled," McCoy said. "Especially in this day and age, where we need these places to offset emissions from fuels and cars and planes and everything else."

Airport officials have emphasized in interviews and public hearings that the five alternatives are not exactly proposals. The city, they note, is required by the FAA to explore the airport's needs for next 20 years, a period that according to city projections will include gradual growth in takeoffs and landings. The FAA's guidelines also require the airport to plan for the "critical aircraft" — the most impactful aircraft that makes at least 500 takeoffs and landings in the airport in a year. In the case of Palo Alto Airport, that is the Pilatus PC-12.

Andrew Swanson, manager of Palo Alto Airport, said in a May interview that staff is not recommending any of the five alternatives — it is merely presenting them to the community for feedback before it finalizes the master plan.

"We're just looking at all the options," Swanson said.

Staff from the Department of Public Works, which oversees the airport, have already held five public hearings on the alternatives. The most recent of these, which took place on June 20, attracted a crowd of about 60 people, including environmental activists, elected officials and dozens of residents from Palo Alto and East Palo Alto.

Some speakers supported plans to expand and upgrade the

airport, a facility that they note provides life-saving benefits. But over the course of the tense meeting, many objected to the prospect of aving more planes flying over their homes and took issue with the airport's noise and air quality impacts. Some urged the city to avoid doing anything that would harm the pristine and rich ecosystem of the Baylands.

Shani Kleinhaus, a legislative advocate for the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, was among those who argued for a minimalist approach. She said after the meeting that she would like Palo Alto to limit the goals of the airport project to "only what you absolutely have to do for safety and maintenance."

"I think that they should absolutely minimize any encroachment — don't extend the runway and don't allow more planes," Kleinhaus said. "Keep it to a minimum possible to maintain the airport and to address any safety issues."

It will ultimately be up to the Palo Alto City Council to decide how ambitious the city should be when it comes to airport upgrades. Public Works staff and consultants plan to bring the five alternatives to the City Council for a study session — a meeting in which no decisions are made — some time in September, according to Brad Eggleston, director of the Department of Public Works. Airport officials will then use that feedback to create a master plan for the airport.

But while Palo Alto's current vision for the airport remains hazy, it will likely include some growth. During a June 20 public

See AIRPORT, page 17

# Palo Alto Hills home initially listed with a record-breaking \$100M price tag sells for \$35M

Even at lower price, sale of Sun Microsystems co-founder's 13.35-acre estate ranks among biggest Bay Area deals in 2024

By Linda Taaffe

The 32,000-square-foot Palo Alto Hills home that made headlines in 2018 with its record-breaking price tag of nearly \$100 million, has finally sold — at a \$65 million discount.

The home, which had been on and off the market for more than five years, sold for \$35 million on July 18 after most recently being re-listed for \$53.9 million in July 2023, according to data from Zillow.

The sale reportedly ranks as one of the biggest residential deals in the Bay Area so far this year.

The buyer was Zenith Path LCC, according to the Real Deal, which reported that the transaction appears to have been an off-market sale. The address listed for the LLC is the same as Youhe Invest, a multi-family

office and business management company based in New York City, the Real Deal reported.

Tech entrepreneur Scott McNealy, who co-founded Sun Microsystems in 1982, initially listed his custom-built home on the market for \$96.8 million — or \$3,025 a square foot — in June 2018. At the time, the listing was \$66.8 million more than the most expensive home sale recorded in city history. In June 2017, a 7,550-square-foot Professorville home on Cowper Street sold for a record-breaking \$30 million.

Located on 13.35 acres off Los Trancos Road, the four-story, 20-room home includes a pizza room, a poker room, a spa with a sauna and massage table, a disco, a full gym with a climbing wall; an indoor basketball court, a wine cellar, a billiards room, a theater and a 110 yard golf practice area with two

putting greens. There's also a 7,000-square-foot multi-purpose indoor ice rink/tennis court with its own locker room. And for overnight visitors, there's a one-bedroom detached guest house.

McNealy and his wife, Susan, lived on the property with their four sons for more a decade.

The couple reportedly spent almost \$11 million on the two lots that the estate sits on. Construction of the house, including a two-year process to secure the permits, took seven years and was completed in 2008.

The home made local headlines in 2010 when neighbors complained about a gold dome McNealy built to enclose the property's ice rink where he liked to play with his sons. They said the sound of hockey pucks hitting the walls were loud and the dome reflected too much sunlight.



Courtesy Rex

This indoor hockey rink is among the amenities that come with this Palo Alto property on Los Trancos Road.

"We have four boys. ... I plead guilty they are kind of noisy. They have buddies over and they do noisy things that boys do," McNealy explained to the Palo Alto City Council. He later replaced the dome with a sound-proof roof that was more visually pleasing.

McNealy told the Wall Street Journal in 2018 that he and

Susan decided to sell their Palo Alto home because they were going to be empty nesters soon.

According to the Santa Clara County assessor's office, the home was assessed at \$18,848,348 on June 30. ■

Email Home/Real Estate Editor Linda Taaffe at [ltaaffe@almanacnews.com](mailto:ltaaffe@almanacnews.com).

## HOUSING

continued from page 8

and the destruction of natural land.

"In terms of the residents that live around High Road and especially on Todo El Mundo, you are going to change the quality of their life and the property values. The way that this whole area is there will be no open space at all," said High Road resident Toni Donaldson.

Resident Donna Howe voiced that the location of the sites do not allow access to schools, transit, jobs, healthcare and grocery stores for low income residents despite these criteria being required for building affordable housing. Bryant responded that the HCD has reviewed the housing element and found it to be compliant with state law.

The council voted 4-1 on revising the general plan designation for sites on High Road from open space and environmentally sensitive to residential. Council member Goeld opposed and Council member Dick Brown recused himself for being a resident on High Road.

### 773 Cañada Road

The council also deliberated on the privately owned property on 773 Cañada Road which will be a 1-acre high density housing development with 16 units on a sloping site. The developer has

decreased the acreage from 1.6 acres to 1-acre.

On the 773 Cañada Road site, public commenters are worried about the average amount of wastewater that will be produced and the height of the developments.

"According to the general plan, buildings should be subservient to the landscape, keeping buildings from overwhelming the trees that survive construction is a critical factor," said resident Steve Lubin. He suggested the council limit building heights to 28 feet at the 30-foot setback and an 18 feet height limit at the 20-foot setback.

The council voted 6-0 to approve the resolution to revise the Emerald Lake Hill Specific Plan with multi-family zoning on 773 Cañada Road with sewer expansion, the adoption of a 30-foot height limit and reshaping of the property on the rezoning map.

### Raymundo Drive

Raymundo Drive's property is another town owned site that is designated as open space with a single access road. Residents are concerned that a development on this site will be a fire safety risk and how a development on the highway would affect the future occupants safety.

"Are you aware that the fire code limits the number of dwellings to 30 on a single

access road. ...The fire code states where there is a number of dwelling units exceeding 30 shall be provided with two separate fire access roads," said resident Sue Poletti.

The Raymundo site is currently only accessible through Runnymede Road and sits along the side of Highway 280.

Kim Hansen called for the council to consider the level of sound and pollution that residents who will live along the highway will face. "Building next to (Highway) 280 requires mitigation to keep occupants safe," she said.

Council member Brown agreed on adding soundproofing materials to the development and the council agreed that they must comply with the fire code which will be addressed during the planning building phase, according to Mayor Jenn Wall.

The council voted 5-1 on the general designation for Raymundo Drive to change from open space to residential. Goeld voted against the item.

### Cañada College and rezoning ordinance

The Cañada College site will build 75 units for students and families on the college campus on which a portion of its land shares a property line with Woodside residents on Godetia Drive. Residents are worried about the

multi-family residential zone "lot 1" on Cañada College which lies next to the Godetia and Somerset neighborhoods.

"The college intends to build student multi-family housing and child daycare on this site. Please imagine a facility of this character within 20 feet of your backyard," said Dan Stoddard who lives on Godetia Drive.

He also explains that the site sits at the same or above the elevation of Godetia homes which will cause shadows over the existing houses in Woodside. Stoddard asked the council to relocate or remove the multi-family residential zone on the campus in the zoning map and ordinance.

Town Manager Bryant explained that Cañada College is under the College District Board, which has already approved the Facilities Master Plan which is part of the town's housing element. "Their process to develop a master plan is also not something that can easily be changed," he added.

For objective design standards, Planning Director Sage Schaan clarifies that the town is able to create setbacks and set height limits to the MFRZ "lot 1" development on the campus. Council member Shaw suggested that they reduce the height limit and develop a 120 feet setback from the town property line on "lot 1" and increase the height limit on "lot 2" by five feet.

Through deliberation, the council agreed on a setback of 110 feet from the town's property line for all properties adjacent to Godetia Drive and a height limit of 30 feet on Cañada College's "lot 1."

The council voted 5-1 to approve a resolution to establish new objective design standards for multi-family zones on Raymundo Drive, a portion of 773 Cañada with height limit changes to 30 feet and portions of Cañada College with changes to setback and height limits.

An additional item was approved with a vote of 5-1 to introduce and schedule a second reading and adoption of ordinances to rezone all parcels to multi-family zones. Council member Goeld opposed both items. ■

Email Staff Writer Jennifer Yoshikoshi at [jyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com](mailto:jyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com).

**LEHUA GREENMAN**



"Never underestimate the power of dreams and the influence of the human spirit."



650.245.1845 COMPASS

Coming to the Palo Alto Baylands on

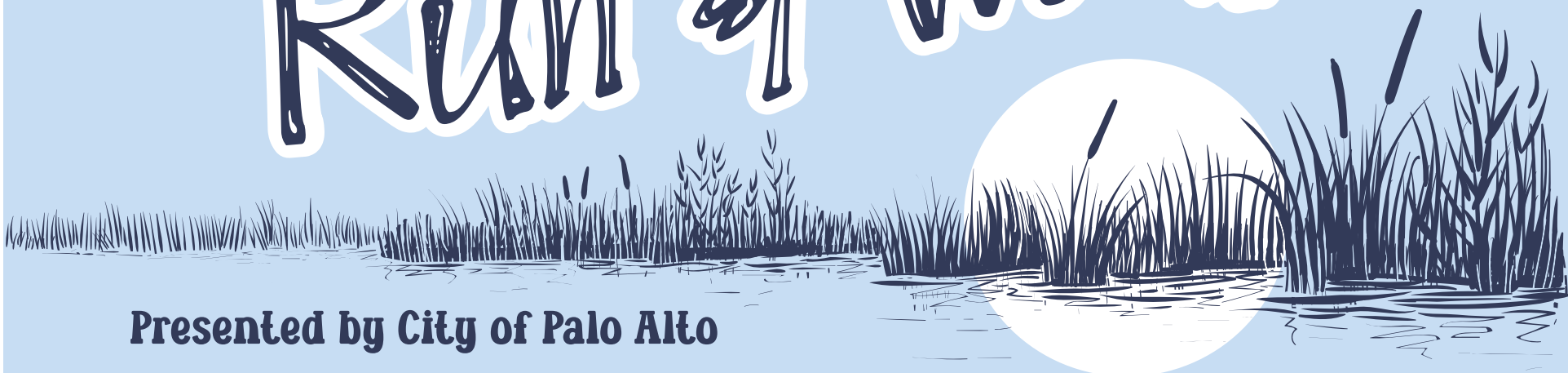
# SEPTEMBER 20<sup>th</sup>

## Half Marathon 5K & 10K RUN 5K Walk



### Palo Alto Weekly

# Moonlight Run & Walk



Presented by City of Palo Alto



WealthArchitects



Lakin Spears



A benefit event supporting local nonprofits for children and families

REGISTER [PaloAltoOnline.com/moonlight-run/](https://PaloAltoOnline.com/moonlight-run/)

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

**Caltrain reduces youth fares to boost ridership**

Starting Sept. 1, youth can hop on Caltrain for just \$1 one-way or \$2 for an all-zone day pass after the Caltrain Board of Directors approved the new fare structure to make travel more affordable for riders aged 18 and under.

This fare reduction follows a promotion launched in September 2023, where youth ridership on Clipper increased by 43% year over year during the promotion period.

"It's now easier than ever for young riders to take advantage of Caltrain, embracing freedom and flexibility rather than traffic and gridlock. Now young people can get up and down the peninsula with ease for less than the cost of a boba tea," said Caltrain Executive Director Michelle Bouchard.

The Clipper transit card system is set to undergo a significant upgrade with the introduction of Clipper Next Generation. This update will transition from a "closed-payment system" to an "open-payment system," allowing riders to use major credit and debit cards for fare transactions.

In addition to the reduced fares, a \$24 All Zone Monthly pass will be introduced in 2025 with the launch of the Clipper Next Generation system for those holding a Youth Clipper Card.

Caltrain officials say the agency's strategy to increase youth ridership aligns with its broader goal to enhance overall ridership. The system saw a 19% increase in average weekday ridership in June 2024 compared to the previous year, reflecting a rebound in travel as people return to using public transportation for work and leisure.

— Bay City News Service

**SMC's Civics 101 Academy now accepting applications for fall course**

If you'd like to learn about how the government operates, how tax dollars are being spent or peek inside San Mateo County programs and services, the jail and the workings of more than 20 unique county departments, sign up for Civics 101.

The free annual academy hosted by the county is currently accepting applications for its fall 2024 class. Last year, for example, the class enjoyed a weekend hike in Edgewood Park, watched a K-9 demonstration and witnessed a mock trial.

Civics 101 meets for nine consecutive Wednesday evenings, Sept. 4 through Oct. 30, from 6-8:30 p.m. at County Center in Redwood City.

To be eligible, an applicant must be 18 years old as of Sept. 4, 2024, live or work in San Mateo County and commit to the one night per week attendance.

Apply at [smcgov.org/ceo/civics-101-academy](https://smcgov.org/ceo/civics-101-academy).

Contact program host Eric Forgaard at [eforgaard@smcgov.org](mailto:eforgaard@smcgov.org) with questions.

— Angela Swartz

**NAMIWalks raises awareness, funds for mental health services**

For the third year in a row, NAMI San Mateo County is organizing NAMIWalks to raise awareness and funds for their free mental health services.

NAMI SMC, the local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Health, conducts free programs and advocacy efforts to ensure easy access to services like support groups for family members, caregivers and individuals living with mental illness, as well as educational courses to facilitate a better understanding of mental health conditions.

The nonprofit primarily raises funds through NAMIWalks proceeds. The charity event invites people to come together and support a mental health cause close to their hearts. Last year, 630 participants formed 52 teams and raised over \$247,000.

This year's walk will be held on Oct. 5. Participants can register to walk a 1K or 5K route along the bay at Seal Point Park in San Mateo.

Register for the event at [namiwalks.org](https://namiwalks.org).

— Simmerdeep Kaur

**Fall styrofoam collection event in Portola Valley**

Valley Presbyterian Church at 945 Portola Rd. is hosting a fall styrofoam collection event on Aug. 18 from 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m. and on Aug. 19 and 20 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., according to the town's monthly newsletter.

The church will be collecting styrofoam blocks and delivering them to the Newby Island recycling plant in Milpitas to be compressed and reused. No peanuts and squishy foam will be accepted. All styrofoam will need to be clean, white, block and rigid.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

## PREPAREDNESS

continued from page 7

in English, Spanish and Mandarin and "Prepare with Pedro," a youth preparedness program hosted by the Red Cross. Dhapodkar hopes that these workshops will inspire young children to become first responders.

In addition to workshops, the pathways of the event center were lined with fire trucks, police mobile command centers and booths showcasing gear and robots. Kids had the opportunity to sit in the fire trucks while parents were snapping pictures. Guests could also walk onto the mobile command centers to tour the interior.

The CPR workshop was popular with over 30 attendees within the first hour, according to Red Cross volunteer Carol Masterson. She explained that it's important that the community knows how to perform hands-only CPR to help save lives during a medical emergency before an ambulance arrives.

Booths such as the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office Explorer Post was interacting with guests

to give more exposure to their services and youth volunteer programs. The Explorer Program offers 14- to 20-year-olds the opportunity to work with Search and Rescue and law enforcement units on various duties, said veteran Explorer Ellis Wong.

Volunteers at the Explorer Post also walked through the various gear that the Search and Rescue unit carries during rescue operations as well as taught people about earthquake liquefaction zones. Wong warns that a disaster by the San Andreas fault is long overdue, so it's important to increase awareness and prepare residents for emergencies.

"If the community can take even one thing away today, I would say pack your go-bag," said Dhapodkar.

The county advises residents to sign up for SMC Alerts and to log onto Genasys Protect, an emergency communication platform, to stay updated during emergencies. For more information on disaster preparedness visit [smcgov.org/dem](https://smcgov.org/dem). ■

Email Staff Writer Jennifer Yoshikoshi at [jyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com](mailto:jyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com).

## AIRPORT

continued from page 14

hearing, Kim Fabend, a consultant with C&S Companies, noted that the airport today accommodates about 160,000 takeoffs and landings per year. With just one runway, the airfield is "almost at capacity," she said.

The master plan will also look at ways to make sure that the airport's apron (the sprawling area where aircraft are parked and maintained) and taxiways are efficient and safe, Fabend said. And it will consider ways to protect the airport from sea level rise. Hence the new levee.

City staff and consultants have emphasized throughout the process that they are taking the environmental concerns very seriously. This includes following the policy in the city's Comprehensive Plan that explicitly limits the airport to one runway and that states: "minor expansion shall only be allowed in order to meet federal and State airport design and safety standards."

"If the FAA process was followed 100%, we would be looking at a second runway," Michael Luetgens, manager of airport operations, told this publication during a May airport tour. "But we know it's not something that's going to be done here."

In recognition of growing community interest, Palo Alto staff had also posted on the city's website a survey that summarizes the five alternatives and gauges public opinions. The

online survey is available on the city's website and it will remain open until Aug. 10. As of July 30, it had 1,259 responses.

But even if the plans are tentative, environmentalists like Shah, McCoy and hundreds of others see them as alarming. On July 23, Shah crafted an online petition that urges "protection of the Baylands, the Duck Pond, and all relevant creeks and trails from airport expansion." More aircraft, he argued in the petition, means increased noise, higher emissions from aircraft that still use leaded fuel and loss of habitat and recreation space. Within a week, it had 610 signatures."The Baylands and Duck Pond serve as a vital recreational space for our community and escape from urban life," Shah wrote. "This area prompts a healthier lifestyle offering opportunities for hiking, biking, birdwatching, and simply enjoying nature."

Shah said he wants to see the airport "minimize its footprint." Even though airport officials sometimes boast about their sustainability initiatives, they often fail to demonstrate how they can achieve their goals without developing into the Baylands. While some residents in Palo Alto and East Palo Alto are becoming aware of the airport master plan and are making their voices heard, Shah believes most don't even know about the planning effort. And those who do are being asked to opine on "big maps and small print."

"Many people don't understand what's happening, which

## OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

**Albert F. Knorp**, 88, a Menlo Park man who served in the U.S. Air Force before starting a law career in San Francisco and on the Peninsula, was a member of the Menlo Country Club and who supported disadvantaged youth including pro bono legal work, raising money and spending time as an instructor, on July 19, 2024.

**Jo Ann Matter Burchard**, 94, a Stanford graduate who had a passion for geology and would go on to work for the U.S. Geological Survey until retiring in 1994, continuing for decades to work on the Peninsula Gem and Geology Society's newsletter, on May 13, 2024.

**Annette Patti Schaumann**, 93, who took up fashion design in high school while living in New York, later moving to Palo Alto and receiving a real estate license and working with Midtown Realty and later Cornish & Carey, and who volunteered and delivered groceries through a program at co-op market for shut ins, on May 15, 2024.

To read full obituaries, leave remembrances and post photos, go to Lasting Memories at [AlmanacNews.com/obituaries](https://AlmanacNews.com/obituaries). ■

led me to write the petition," Shah said. "It's just because I know that many Palo Alto and East Palo Alto residents really treasure the Baylands. They see it as a place to escape in the outdoors."

Other residents raised similar concerns over the past two weeks in letters to the City Council. Palo Alto resident Sarah Vaughan contended in a letter earlier this month that filling in the pond "would be a continuation of the destruction of so many things that made our town a special place to live and raise a family." Another resident, Jeannette Harrison, argued that the duck pond needs to be saved from any airport expansion.

"The Baylands and the area around the duck pond is a source for many people to get out and get exercise in a tranquil setting," Harrison wrote. "This area was a live-saver for so many residents during COVID restrictions. This sanctuary needs to be preserved for the good of all and not the benefit of very few Palo Alto residents." ■

Email Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner at [gsheyner@almanacnews.com](mailto:gsheyner@almanacnews.com).

**JEFF AALFS***continued from page 5*

being a council member. That's one that stands out.

My proudest achievement has probably been (the work I've done for) Peninsula Clean Energy. I've rarely missed a PCE board meeting in nine years. It's my biggest achievement both as an elected official and probably even in my day job.

COVID obviously just changed so many things in so many ways and it was difficult. I tell people that 2020 was the year I became a real politician. It felt like I was really doing my job.

Then in just the last few years, it's gotten more contentious especially around the housing element. At the same time, I'm proud of the work we've done and the people I work closely with on it.

**Q:** Are there any challenges that the town is facing that you're hoping will be resolved soon?

**A:** The biggest one right now is the finances. I have to take some responsibility for that. I mean, 13 years ago we were a sleepy little town. We were doing our books by hand and that was not going to be sustainable. We're being asked to do much more

administratively than we were 13 years ago.

But the crisis we're facing is not a bookkeeping crisis or accounting crisis, it's structural. It's going to be a combination of things that have to happen. We are going to have to look at some expense cutting but we're also going to have to look at other sources of revenue. There are some very hard decisions that will need to be made. ... It's going to be difficult and people aren't going to like it.

The housing situation is not going to go away. I do think it will change. I think Sacramento is realizing that the one size does not fit all in terms of housing element solutions. There's a realization that this cycle placed a lot of burden on smaller towns that needs to be looked at in future cycles.

**Q:** Residents have expressed some disappointment with the reorganization of the town. Is there anything you wanted to say about that?

**A:** We are kind of a mess right now and Town Manager Sharif Etman will be the first to tell you 'yeah, the house is kind of a mess.' We're doing everything we can to get it back in order. It's difficult.

We have always struggled to recruit people. People didn't notice it because we had people stay for so long. I mean, we just lost two employees (Development Review Technicians Carol Borck and Cheyenne Brown) who have been around for 20 years and it's hard to lose employees that long but it's also really unusual to have people stay for that long. It covered up the fact that it's hard to get newer people coming into the field.

Getting our house in order requires people. People have been difficult to come by for us and it's going to take time. People have to recognize that I can't fix this. My colleagues and the council can't fix it. These are jobs for the staff to do. We need to let the staff work and we need to support them and then work.

**Q:** What thoughts went into your decision to not seek reelection?

**A:** It's been long enough, honestly. I like to think I'm good at it but the truth is, we need new people to look at situations and I'm not about to pretend I'm different in that way.

I have two children. They're 17 and 14. They don't remember a time when I wasn't working with the town. My wife has spent

a lot of time covering for me when I'm away on meetings and things. She needs a break from that. The biggest reason is that it's time for me to take a little more time for my family.

I'm past my prime. I'm a little burnt out. I'm not quite as focused on it anymore and I think I'm just ready to kind of hand it off and think about something else for a while.

**Q:** Do you have any plans to still be involved with the town, committees or other volunteer positions?

**A:** I think I'm going to not be involved for a little while, at least not formally. I'm going to step away and I don't even know if I want to listen to meetings for a while. I would actually like to kind of purge myself and not be too close to it.

I'm thinking about what I can do with Peninsula Clean Energy — that I actually would like to keep in touch with.

**Q:** Is there anything that you wish you could have done while you were on the council?

**A:** There were lots of things. My passion is sustainability and energy efficiency. We talked about building a microgrid at the Town Center and making a potentially self-contained power system in case of emergencies.

I would still like to do that. It would be expensive but there's ways to do it.

We have been trying to modernize operations for several years. We did actually buy a new financial software in 2018 that has been kind of a train wreck. ... I've really tried to give staff the resources they need to address it and I'm hoping it'll get resolved but again, it's not gonna happen overnight.

**Q:** Is there anything else you want to share?

**A:** I remain optimistic about Portola Valley's future. We are in a set of challenges but I think they are resolvable and I think when they are resolved, the town will be different. Everyone is nostalgic for their hometown when they moved there. I moved there in the 2000s. I probably think it should be like that again but it's never going to be and it changes.

I've become more excited and embracing change as I get older. I look forward to what the future of Portola Valley will look like because it's not going to be what any of us imagined, but I think it's going to be something really exciting. ■

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

**ATHERTON CHANNEL***continued from page 8*

city manager, in an email to this news organization. "This would be followed by design of the improvements, environmental review and regulatory permitting, then construction of the repairs."

There is no definitive timeline for the channel assessment and design project, but Rodericks said he estimates it will take nine-12 months to complete. According to Ovadia, the timelines of previous projects in this area of the channel have been impacted by the need to ensure that the work is not disturbing the habitat of sensitive native

species, such as the endangered California red-legged frog.

"We're going to be doing what we can to expeditiously move through the design process," said Ovadia. "However, there are certain things that we can't really put a hard timeline on, and that really is related to the environmental portion."

The funding for this project comes from the town's Capital Improvement Fund. \$2.8 million in funding was already set aside to assess and repair the damage to the upper reaches of the Atherton Channel over multiple fiscal years — \$400,000 in fiscal year 2022-23 and \$2.4 million in fiscal year 2023-24, according to the most

recent Capital Improvement Program.

A parallel flood mitigation project is occurring at Las Lomas Elementary School, in conjunction with the town of Atherton, to increase storm-water drainage in the culverts underneath Alameda de las Pulgas and the school.

**Collecting water for drinking, other uses?**

One Atherton resident, Valerie Gardner, said at the meeting that she would like the redesign of the Atherton Channel to include some way to retain water or recharge aquifers, so that the town might be more prepared for the possibility of future droughts or water shortages.

"I encourage you to think not as we used to think about dealing with water the way we did, treating it as a nuisance and trying to just send it out to the Bay, but to invest in more sustainable solutions," said Gardner. "Nobody wants flooding, but people do like to have healthy aquifers where their wells can

access water, and they also like to have water to drink, if for example, something happened to Hetch Hetchy."

She suggested that the council consider diverting the water to the town's Bear Gulch Reservoir, or find other ways to use water in the channel to recharge aquifers.

Atherton Mayor Diana Hawkins-Manuelian said that though she agrees that water storage should be a priority, the more urgent priority is protecting the properties that border the channel from flooding.

"I totally agree with what you're (Gardner) saying, but where the quandary is, is that we're at a risk factor for these people's houses," Hawkins-Manuelian said. "I don't want to hold it up because it involves safety, so I want to find something in between."

Council members briefly considered amending the contract with Tetra Tech to explore water retention designs before Atherton City Attorney Mona Ebrahimi reminded them that if they significantly amended

the contract, they would have to send the project out to bid again.

Rodericks said that the channel does not necessarily have to be relined in the way that it was lined previously, with concrete bottoms and sides.

"Environmental agencies are going to push toward more sustainable solutions, and Tetra Tech will be responding to those comments as part of the permitting process," he said. "We can certainly bring back something that might lend itself to a more environmental solution."

"We should inform them (Tetra Tech) that we have a particular interest in softer, more sustainable solutions," said Council member Rick DeGolia.

Ultimately, the council decided to approve the contract as presented, but to inform the consultants that the town has a particular interest in solutions that are geared toward aquifer recharge and environmental sustainability. ■

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

# Employment

The Almanac offers employment advertising.

The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 pm.

Visit [AlmanacNews.com/employment\\_ads/](https://AlmanacNews.com/employment_ads/).

For assistance email [LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com](mailto:LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com).

**COVID***continued from page 5*

infection if you need it.

"Testing for COVID can help (residents) decide what to do next," said Merchant. "Which

may include avoiding infecting people who are at risk for severe illness and/or taking antiviral medications, like Paxlovid, if they themselves are at risk."

San Mateo County residents who need help finding or paying

for healthcare coverage can contact the county's Health Coverage Unit at [smchealth.org/health-insurance](https://smchealth.org/health-insurance). ■

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

# WE'RE PROUD TO BRING OUR READERS SOME OF THE BEST JOURNALISM IN THE STATE.

The annual **California Journalism Awards** competition, which celebrates excellence in reporting, design, photography and multimedia recognized our Peninsula team with **24 awards** in the following categories:

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- Environment Reporting
- Feature Photo
- General Excellence
- Housing and Land-Use Reporting
- Investigative Reporting
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- Open - Investigative Reporting
- Photo Story/Essay
- Sports Feature Story
- Technology Reporting
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HERE'S WHAT SOME OF THE JUDGES OF THE 2023 CALIFORNIA JOURNALISM AWARDS ARE SAYING ABOUT OUR WORK —

“

The somber faces of the mother and daughter tell the story of concern and support for Israel. The photo is subtle and powerful.

— Third Place, News Photo

Nicely written series on how a homeless service doesn't appear to be delivering as promised and as promoted. Solid reporting bolstered by numerous interviews with all parties make for reports that readers can understand.

— First Place, Investigative Reporting

The reporters captured a wealth of detail in their story and took the time to include people's voices too. This is truly helpful coverage that stood to benefit the community.

— Second Place, Breaking News

”

Please help support the local journalism and the award-winning team that is driven by the desire to bring you fresh, original reporting.

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The Almanac

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# Public Notices

PHYKOS PRODUCTIONS  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-298055

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

1.) PHYKOS PRODUCTIONS, located at 116 Roble Place, LA HONDA, CA 94020. Mailing Address: PO BOX 314, CA 94020.

Registered owner(s):  
KATHLEEN DICKEY  
116 Roble Place  
La Honda, CA 94020

This business is conducted by: an Individual. Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 06/24/2014.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 25, 2024.

(ALM Aug 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2024)

FULLER COACHING  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-298003

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

1.) FULLER COACHING, located at 735 Southview Way, Woodside, CA 94062.

Registered owner(s):  
JEAN LYON FULLER  
735 Southview Way  
Woodside, CA 94062

This business is conducted by: an Individual. Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 12/1/2001.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 22, 2024.

(ALM Aug 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2024)

ETALON DIAGNOSTICS  
ETALON EQUINE GENETICS  
ETALON, INC.

ALPHADOG  
ALPHADOG DNA  
ALPHADOG GENETICS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-297962

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

1.) ETALON DIAGNOSTICS, 2.) ETALON EQUINE GENETICS, 3.) ETALON, INC., 4.) ALPHADOG, 5.) ALPHADOG DNA, 6.) ALPHADOG GENETICS, located at 405 El Camino Real 234, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Registered owner(s):  
ETALON  
509 Seaport Ct.  
Redwood City, CA 94063

State of Incorporation/Organization:  
California

This business is conducted by: a Corporation. Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 07/15/2024.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 15, 2024.

(ALM Jul 26, Aug 2, 9 and 16, 2024)

MCCLARY, SWIFT & COMPANY, INC.  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-298036

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

1.) MCCLARY, SWIFT & COMPANY, INC., located at 360 SWIFT AVE., SUITE 29, SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94080.

Registered owner(s):  
C. J. SWIFT & CO., INC.  
360 SWIFT AVE., SUITE 29

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94080

State of Incorporation/Organization: CA

This business is conducted by: a Corporation. Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on MAY 1, 1999.

This statement was filed with the County

Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 23, 2024.

(ALM Aug 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2024)

LMIGUEL LESCANO HANDYMAN SERVICES  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-297950

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

1.) LMIGUEL LESCANO HANDYMAN SERVICES, located at 1232 MAPLE ST, SAN MATEO, CA 94402.

Registered owner(s):  
LUIS MIGUEL LESCANO LEON  
1232 MAPLE ST  
SAN MATEO, CA 94402

This business is conducted by: an Individual. Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.

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

(ALM Jul 26, Aug 2, 9 and 16, 2024)

INDEPENDENT OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS  
HEALTHY INSIDE & OUT  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-298054

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

1.) INDEPENDENT OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS, 2.) HEALTHY INSIDE & OUT, located at 519 Maple Street, San Mateo, CA 94402.

Registered owner(s):  
AILEEN ANN REISMAN  
519 Maple Street  
San Mateo, CA 94402

This business is conducted by: an Individual. Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 25, 2024.

(ALM Aug 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2024)

AMQOR  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-298081

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

1.) AMQOR, located at 1310 Rollins Road, Burlingame, CA 94010.

Registered owner(s):  
AMQOR CA, INC.  
1310 Rollins Road  
Burlingame, CA 94010

State of Incorporation/Organization:  
California

This business is conducted by: a Corporation. Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 30, 2024.

(ALM Aug 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2024)

PRACTICAL PHOTOGRAPHY  
PRACTICAL PROCUREMENT  
PRACTICAL WOODWORKING  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-298076

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

1.) PRACTICAL PHOTOGRAPHY, 2.) PRACTICAL PROCUREMENT, 3.) PRACTICAL WOODWORKING, located at 400 Paloma Ave, Pacifica, CA 94044, San Mateo County. Mailing Address: PO BOX 1781 Pacifica, CA 94044.

Registered owner(s):  
PRACTICAL PSYCHOLOGY INC  
PO BOX 1781  
Pacifica, CA 94044

State of Incorporation/Organization: CA

This business is conducted by: a Corporation. Registrant has not yet begun to transact

business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 29, 2024.

(ALM Aug 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2024)

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

Case No.: 24-CIV-04233

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: JAMES DOTSON filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:

JAMES ERNEST DOTSON to JAMES EARNEST DOTSON KHALIFIA

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING: 9/10/2024, 9:00, CIVIL BRANCH of the Superior Court of California, County of SAN MATEO located at 400 COUNTY CENTER, REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063.

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

ALMANAC

Date: 7/12/2024

JUDGE LEE

JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

(ALM Aug 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2024)

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

Case No.: 24-CIV-04234

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: Laura Herrera filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:

LAURA HERRERA to LAURA HERRERA KHALIFIA

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.

NOTICE OF HEARING: 09/10/2024, 9:00am, Civil Department of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.

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

ALMANAC

Date: 07/12/2024

Judge Lee

JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

(ALM Aug 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2024)

## KARL COOK

*continued from page 1*

the event (call), and say, ‘Oh, can you bring your white breeches? You’re on.’ And then duplicate it the next day. Hats off to Karl — truly.”

Cook’s horse, Caracole de la Roque, is a 2012 Selle Français mare owned by Woodside resident Signe Ostby and cared for by Tessa Falanga.

## FIRE

*continued from page 5*

world,” Coyle said. “The folks running these large incidents forecast the needs of the incident, and put in the request to OES, which then filters down to various regions in the state and then down to the local government level.”

Coyle explained that Menlo Park Fire only sends resources to help on these large incidents if they have enough staffing to maintain fire protection at home.

“We never drop our staffing here,” he said. “We always consider the fire protection here at home to be our primary focus, but we do help out whenever we can.”

The Menlo Park Fire crews, along with all of the other fire crews fighting the Park Fire are dealing with hot temperatures, and difficult terrain as they try to contain the fire.

“I’ve been to a number of fires in that same area over my career ... they are dealing with steep terrain, narrow roads, poor water supply,” said Coyle in an interview with this news organization. “All the water, for the most part, has to be trucked in with water tenders. There’s very few hydrant systems in those remote areas.”

Coyle said that resources from Menlo Park have been deployed to the eastern flank of the fire, near Highway 32, as well as the northern edge of the fire. The resources sent to the northern edge of the fire were mostly the smaller type 6 fire engines, which, as Coyle explained, are more nimble.

“They can get into some areas that the big fire engine can’t,” he said. “They’ve had a pretty active fire fight for the last five or six days.”

Coyle explained that one of the benefits of sending resources

“This course requires you to ride on the track that suits the stride you have and the horse you have,” said Cook through US Equestrian. “So, if you hit that track then things are so much easier. It was just really focusing on the track, the stride and all that, and I’m just so grateful for Caracole. She’s such an amazing horse. She’s stuck with me the whole time, and I couldn’t be happier.” ■

to a large wildland fire like the Park Fire, is that the Menlo Park fire crews gain experience fighting wildfires.

“We get invaluable experience and training for a large fire if it were to occur here, such as the CZU Complex a few years ago,” he said. “And to bring back here, should we have a similar event, then it’s not like a new thing for them. They’ve already got a lot of experience.”

All firefighters in Menlo Park have some level of wildland fire training, according to Coyle.

“Essentially all of our firefighters and captains have the training required because we could have those same fires here someday, though hopefully not,” he said.

Menlo Park Fire found that those real world wildfire experiences, in addition to the required training, were crucial while fighting the CZU fire in 2020.

“We sent a bunch of our fire engines over the hill to protect the flank of the (CZU) fire that was facing San Mateo County,” said Coyle. “A lot of those folks drew on their experiences from going to the (Camp) fire in Paradise or the fire in (Lake) Tahoe a few years ago.”

Another benefit of sending local firefighters to aid on these large fires is that the experience and training they gain fighting these large fires is paid for by the state, rather than the smaller fire district.

“The cost of (sending firefighters) is covered by the incident, whether that’s the Forest Service or Cal Fire, or the (Office of Emergency Services) itself, so the fire district doesn’t lose any money on it,” said Coyle. “All the expenses are covered.” ■

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

## COUNCILS

*continued from page 6*

away from a tech job and has started her own Woodside inspired T-shirt company, Side of the Woods. Hassan said his wife’s more flexible work schedule will give him more free time to potentially work evenings while serving on the council.

Hassan told The Almanac that he plans to live in town for the rest of his life and really loves Woodside. He acknowledges that changes in the town will happen but is hoping to help preserve the aspects of town that make it uniquely its own. ■

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

### The Almanac is adjudicated to publish in San Mateo County.

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

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

For assistance email [LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com](mailto:LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com).

# Artscene

PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## The Pear Theatre and The Breath Project bring 'THE BLACK EXPERIENCE' to stage

### Three plays depict very different aspects of being Black in America

By Ashwini Gangal

For centuries, art has mirrored reality, and what audiences will see on The Pear Theatre's stage this month is no different. Titled "The Black Experience Festival," the program comprises three plays that will take the audience through the multi-hued realities of Black life in the United States.

The shows include "Crawfish: We the Invisible" by Gamal Abdel Chasten, "Pass Over" by Antoinette Nwandu and a free presentation of "The Civil Reparations Mock Trial."

Of these, "Crawfish: We the Invisible" and "The Civil Reparations Mock Trial" are co-produced by The Breath Project, a theatrical initiative that supports artists of color; it was co-founded by Chasten and Marieke Gaboury in response to racial injustice.

"Crawfish" is the story of a man who migrates from New Orleans to the Bay Area after tragedy befalls him in the form of Hurricane Katrina. Subsequently, his money runs out and he becomes homeless.

"It's really looking at the fragility of our systems and how many of us could have that same experience because so many of us are living paycheck to paycheck, or if you get sick and all your money goes, then what happens?" said Chasten about the genesis of his play, which is essentially a piece of political theater that he wrote in 2020. "After COVID, there were many more people on the streets ... it has kind of been developing since then." He is also part of the cast.

"The character's been 'living with me' since 2007 — it was a play that I wrote with my company Universes," Chasten said about his protagonist. "I had written a monologue for this character but over time I realized he, the character, had a lot more to say. Originally it was a solo show and then I added another character — his mother Aretha — and there's a live drummer involved, so



Courtesy Sinjin Jones

Actor Gamal Abdel Chasten wrote and stars in "Crawfish: We the Invisible" as part of the Black Experience Festival. Chasten co-founded theatrical initiative The Breath Project, which is teaming with The Pear Theatre to present the festival.

it's a three-person play in that regard."

Despite the seriousness of the subject, he has woven some comic relief into the story. "It is a very serious piece but I'm always trying to balance comedy with drama because it's nice to have some levity as well," he said.

Chasten hopes the play will help sensitize viewers, especially those who tend to be dismissive of people who are unhoused. "People who blame the homeless for their situation ... the ones who blame the victims," he said.

Unlike a lot of his previous work, this piece is not centered around race. "The actors are African American, and there are moments in the show where he alludes to it, but race is not a prominent part of the piece, and

I'm actually glad about that," he said. "I chose not to focus on that in this story." That's because, according to Chasten, while it's true that people of color experience homelessness more frequently than white people, there are also other populations that face homelessness at similarly higher rates, such as members of the LGBTQ community, single mothers and veterans.

On the other hand, "The Mock Trial" is a story about racial inequity that unfolds through a fictional lawsuit between two families. "Basically the trial is wrapped around two fictional families — the descendants of slave owners and the descendants of slaves," Chasten said. "When we look at African American reparations, we talk

about the idea of how we're the ones that developed the wealth for other people's benefit by going through servitude and manual labor, and we get none of it."

For this play, the team collaborated with a Chicago-based civil litigation attorney, John Ray, who helped out with the legalese. "We created a fictional story based on some factual information around land rights and equity," he said.

The team also created an abridged version of the play in the hope of increasing its reach. "Originally, we were going to be working with universities," he said. "People were excited about it, but as we found out over time, it's hard for teachers and professors to bring new things into curriculum."

As is evident, Chasten's art is deeply embedded in his personal brand of activism.

How does he reconcile such serious subjects with a medium like theater? "The activism comes through the truth of the story you're telling and the art comes in through the entertainment," he said.

This line of work brings other challenges too. "As a playwright, the biggest challenge is getting your work produced," he said. On the creative front, he admits it can get lonely. "It's one of those things you do by yourself in the initial stages of the process and sometimes that can feel daunting."

According to Sinjin Jones, The Pear Theatre's executive artistic director, plays like "Crawfish" and "Pass Over" — which is a dramatic, politically provocative riff on "Waiting for Godot" — continue to be timely. He referenced recent headlines such as the tragic shooting of Sonya Massey and news of upcoming sweeps of homeless camps across California to illustrate his point.

"Both themes are tackled by the Black Experience Festival," Jones said. "When we started to ideate this festival, the questions were clear: how do we create an experience that brings to the forefront the experiences of Black Americans? How do we take a step further in fulfilling the statements that so many of us made after the killing of George Floyd in 2020? We hope that audiences come into the three events of this festival with an open heart and leave with a greater feeling of understanding of what Black people, and people of color more generally, live with."

All three stories are intense and belong to different genres. "We do that purposely in theater to make the point loud and clear," Jones said.

He describes "Pass Over" as an unequivocal drama that is all at once modern and timeless.

See 'BLACK EXPERIENCE', page 22



Courtesy Sinjin Jones

Above: Actor Gamal Abdel Chasten, left, stars as Cristofer “Crawfish” Cruz, with Jim Bove, right, on drums in “Crawfish: We the Invisible.” Although the play about a man becoming homeless after Hurricane Katrina is part of the Black Experience Festival, Chasten said “race is not a prominent part of the piece,” as experiencing homelessness affects other populations at similarly high rates to people of color. Top: Actors Gamal Abdel Chasten and Awele Makeba share a moment in “Crawfish: We the Invisible.”

## ‘BLACK EXPERIENCE’

continued from page 21

“This is the story of what, for many, it feels like to be Black in the United States,” he said. “For some it will feel amplified, for some it will feel muted. And there is true terror and true pain in this story. On the other hand, it is also a story of brotherhood. It’s the story where we see two Black men who are best friends and who love each other wholeheartedly. At moments it is an incredibly funny piece. At moments it is tragic. I think that if we do our jobs right, both laughter and tears will be plentiful.”

Ultimately, he hopes the festival will help move the needle on goodness and empathy. “There are so many stories on the volume spectrum of Black experience that go unheard,” Jones said. “We just hope that we can help our audience listen more closely so that we can all work together to make this country a better place.” ■

Email Contributing Writer  
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Courtesy Sinjin Jones

Actor Awele Makeba stars in “Crawfish: We the Invisible.”

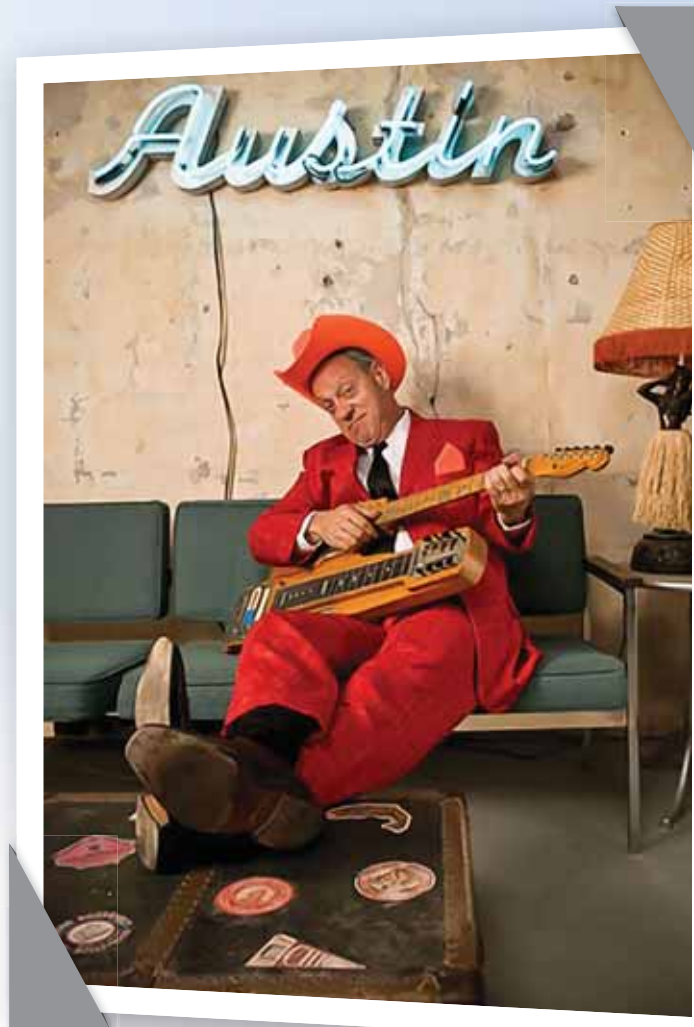
The Black Experience Festival takes place Aug. 9-25, featuring “Crawfish: We the Invisible” on Aug. 9, 16, 23 at 8 p.m. and Aug. 10, 17, 24 at 2 p.m.; “Pass Over” on Aug. 10, 17, 24 at 8 p.m. and Aug. 11 and 25 at 2 p.m. and “The Civil Reparations Mock Trial” on Aug. 18 at 7 p.m. at The Pear Theatre, 1110 La Avenida St., Suite A, Mountain View. Tickets for “Crawfish” and “Pass Over” are \$10-\$25 each show/tickets for “The Civil Reparations Mock Trial” are free. thepear.org.

# Worth a Look

## Junior Brown

This country legend sticks his neck out creatively, in more ways than one. Credited with the creation of a double-necked “guit-steel” that combines a traditional six-string guitar with a full-size steel guitar, Brown employs the instrument to great effect in his unique sound. His witty lyrics, delivered via wryly casual vocals, meld with old-school twangy guitar for a lively take on OG country music that sounds like a 1950s musical cowpoke transported to the 21st century. His most recent album, “The American Original,” brings together 22 favorite original songs from previous releases.

Aug. 15, 8 p.m., at  
The Guild, 949 El Camino  
Real, Menlo Park, \$52.15-  
\$121.67, [guildtheatre.com](http://guildtheatre.com).



Courtesy Junior Brown

Junior Brown performs at The Guild on Aug. 15.

## Shakespeare in the Park

No summer is really complete without outdoor music and theater and the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival is here to make sure audiences have a chance to enjoy the latter of those summertime entertainment essentials. The company tours the Bay Area each summer, staging one of the Bard’s plays. This year features one of Shakespeare’s later plays, “The Tempest,” which comes to Redwood City’s Red Morton Park for three weekends. The play tells of a father and daughter, Prospero and Miranda, set adrift to sea by Prospero’s jealous brother. They find their way to an island full of magical creatures, but then eventually, after a massive storm, Prospero’s brother and a crew of other unique characters also come to be shipwrecked on the island — and a reckoning ensues.

Saturdays and Sundays, Aug. 10-25, 6 p.m., at Red Morton Park, Valota Road side, 1455 Madison Ave, Redwood City, free, [redwoodcity.org](http://redwoodcity.org).

## Bay Area Aloha Festival

Pacific Islanders Cultural Association hosts two days of live entertainment, workshops and arts and crafts and food vendors celebrating all things aloha. This fun family-friendly event also has plenty for kids, with a “Ohana Keiki Korner” that will be buzzing with activities that range from candy lei-making and special Hawaiian crafts to ukulele lessons.

Aug. 10-11, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., San Mateo County Event Center, 1346 Saratoga Drive, San Mateo, \$5 suggested admission/\$20 parking, [pica-org.org](http://pica-org.org).

## Los Altos Fine Art in the Park

Los Altos Rotary holds its annual art festival, Fine Art in the Park, with the chance to meet over 150 juried artists who will be displaying and selling work in a variety of media, including paintings and sculpture, glass, wood, textiles, jewelry and other wearable art. The event also features live music and entertainment throughout the day. Visitors can also enjoy a variety of food and drink, such as bruschetta, falafel and shawarma, plus dishes from local favorites Chef Chu’s and Armadillo Willy’s, along with beer and wine.

Aug. 10-11, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m., at Lincoln Park, Los Altos, [rotaryartshow.com](http://rotaryartshow.com).

# Food & Drink

## A PERUVIAN DEBUT IN LOS ALTOS

### 3 FRIENDS OPEN A RESTAURANT SERVING THE FLAVORS OF CALLAO

Clockwise from the top: Ceviche, lomo saltado and a pisco sour. Co-owner Juan Carlos Sosaya Carrera prepares a pisco sour at his new Peruvian restaurant.

By Adrienne Mitchell  
Photos by Anna Hoch-Kenney

Five years ago, Arturo Bazan immigrated from Peru to California for a fresh start after enduring taxing working conditions at the restaurant he cooked at.

“We worked maybe from 9 a.m. until 2 a.m.,” he said. “I was tired of this style of life.”

Now he is the head chef and co-owner of Callao, a full-service Peruvian restaurant named after the city Bazan grew up in. Callao Peruvian Cuisine opened its doors for dinner service July 15 in Los Altos, replacing Italian restaurant Cafe La Scala. It’s an elevated sister restaurant to Jora, a casual restaurant Bazan and co-founder Juan Carlos Sosaya Carrera opened in December 2019 in San Pedro Square Market in San Jose.

“This is my big dream here in the USA,” Bazan said. “I never think I’d have a restaurant here in Los Altos, California, so I am happy for that.”

Callao will introduce lunch service beginning Thursday and offers classic Peruvian dishes with elevated plating, focusing on high-quality local ingredients. Select produce is sourced from Luna Vez Farm in Los Altos Hills, seafood is from Allen Brothers in San Francisco and chicken is sourced from Mary’s Free Range Chicken.

Find bar snacks like beef empanadas and shrimp tartare, six varieties of ceviche (including a vegetarian option), mains like lomo saltado (a traditional beef stir-fry dish) and arroz con pato (a traditional duck and rice dish), wood-oven rotisserie chicken, and desserts like alfajores de dulce de leche (cookies with caramel) and pionono (Peruvian sponge cake with caramel). Appetizers are priced from \$8-\$20, ceviche is \$19-\$28 and mains are \$20-\$37.

“There’s a lot of passion for the food,” Bazan said. “It’s the passion to try to prepare one good plate for the people. I leave one part of me in each plate.”

The bar program is headed by Andrew Ward, a Los Altos native, and features classics like pisco sours as well as imported Peruvian beers.

Bazan and Sosaya Carrera met in 2019 through a mutual friend, and when Sosaya Carrera was looking for a chef partner for Jora, he reached out to Bazan, who decided to leave Peru to work on the project. The pair had been looking for a location for Callao for a year and a half, with deals falling through in Sunnyvale and Saratoga.

“And this one came out of the blue, and we were like, ‘Los Altos, really?’” Sosaya Carrera said. “If you’re in Sunnyvale and you have money, you wanna go to Mountain View. If you are in Mountain View and you have money, you want to go to Palo Alto. If you are in Palo Alto and you have more money, you want to go to Los Altos. We’re

shortcutting the whole process. Amazing!”

Renovations were completed in just over a month, and the restaurant has five distinct dining experiences: the lounge, the dining room, the front patio, the covered back patio and the private dining room/wine room hybrid. The walls of the covered back patio are now painted in a variety of bright colors, paying homage to the colorful walls of Monumental Callao. The renovations were spearheaded by Pablo Delgado, the third co-owner of Callao and Jora who joined the team a couple of years back and who also owns a construction company.

“We put a lot of love and passion (into Callao),” Delgado said. “It’s not only time. You can spend all day 24 hours here, but if you don’t put passion in what you do, it’s not going to happen the way you want it.”

The owner of the property, Jan Unlu, previously told the Los Altos Town Crier that he intended to transform Cafe La Scala into a four-story, 15-unit condo complex by 2024, but Sosaya Carrera said Callao

negotiated a five-year lease with the option to renew or to purchase.

Like Bazan, Sosaya Carrera also grew up in Peru, moving to the Bay Area at 18 years old for college and graduating from San Jose State University with a degree in business administration and finance. When he moved to the U.S., he didn’t have plans to ever open a restaurant.

“I wanted to be an accountant, which I am, but I think my passion for culinary is because I like to eat,” he said.

Sosaya Carrera’s introduction to the restaurant industry began when he took a job at The Four Seasons, starting in expo and working his way up to the accounting department.

“What motivates me about the restaurant industry is the one moment that we get when somebody is trying something new,” he said. “They go and they have the first bite and they go ‘Mmm.’ It reminds them of some childhood memories, or a sense of a (comforting) taste.”

Sosaya Carrera met Delgado, who is originally from Argentina and has a background in tech and construction, almost 20 years ago while playing soccer with mutual friends.

“(Sosaya Carrera) introduced us to Peruvian food, and I said, ‘Wow, there’s just a lot of flavor,’” Delgado said.

Sosaya Carrera said Peruvian food takes influence from Japanese, Chinese, Spanish and Italian food, and he wants to show the local community flavors they’ve never tasted before.

“We want to introduce a new culture, Peruvian culture,” he said. “(Peruvian food) is like a melting pot in food. Something colorful, delicious, but also new to them.” ■



Chef-owner Arturo Bazan and sous chef Juan Poicon in the kitchen of new Peruvian restaurant Callao in Los Altos.

**Callao Peruvian Cuisine,**  
376 1st St., Los Altos; 650-917-0300,  
Instagram: @callao\_peruviancuisine.  
Open daily 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and 5-10 p.m.

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