

# The Almanac

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

AUGUST 23, 2024 | VOL. 59 NO. 50



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## School year begins with new programs, upgraded facilities

Many students will benefit from ongoing projects

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Students across Menlo Park, Woodside, Portola Valley and East Palo Alto started their school year this week. Students include some entering their educational journey as transitional kindergartners and others who are about to embark on their last year of high school.

Students at Costaño Elementary School walked through a balloon arch holding their parents' hands with either joyful smiles or tears of sadness. Teacher Salvatore Germano said he's looking forward to the journey.

"I just really like to connect with the kids and make them feel safe when they come to school. I think that giving them the space to be themselves, to grow, to have a voice and just be a sponge and learn everything they can is important," said Germano. "It helps them with the foundations for the rest of their school life."

With a new class of students joining at the start of every school year, local school districts are always updating their goals and initiatives to meet the needs of every new class. School districts are adding

new courses, programs and updating mission statements. Some local schools are building new classrooms and installing upgraded heating and air units. Here's a look at what's new.

### Sequoia Union High School District

#### Woodside High School

Woodside High School is implementing an updated cell-phone policy to improve academic engagement and student mental health for the 2024-25 school year, according to the school's newsletter. Students have to keep their phones in assigned pockets during class and when leaving to use the restroom. Phones are allowed during eating periods and at the discretion of teachers.

Within the selection of courses, Woodside High has added Advanced Placement Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism, in addition to AP Physics C: Mechanics, which has been offered for several years, according to Woodside Principal Karen Van Putten.

The school is also seeing a record number of freshman students enrolled in AP Computer Science Principles and full enrollment for Advancement Via Individual Determination

classes and the Graphics and Technology Academy. Administrators say enrollment in these courses reflects pre-COVID numbers and higher.

### TIDE Academy

Enrollment has increased at TIDE with an incoming ninth grade class of 65 students including junior and senior transfer students. TIDE Principal Simone Rick-Kennel said the goal is for each grade class to have 75 students. Rick-Kennel is also proud to see a 100 percent graduation rate in its first two graduating classes since its inception in 2019.

The school is introducing four new classes: Multimedia Design, Journalism II, Psychology and Intro to College, a dual credit course with Foothill College. Students are also taking part in a multi-school agreement with Menlo-Atherton High School allowing TIDE students to get involved in fall sports.

Over the summer, 27 students continued their learning by completing a summer internship focused on collaboration, technology and professional skills while working at local

See **SCHOOLS**, page 17



Courtesy David McClister Photography

## Fall Arts Preview

Rootsy Texan singer-songwriter **Hayes Carll** and his band (The Band of Heathens) will entertain local audiences with a performance at **The Guild Theatre**. He's released numerous country and Americana albums since his 2002 debut, "Flowers & Liquor," including 2011's "KMAG YOYO & Other American Stories" and 2021's "You Get It All," with songs acclaimed for storytelling, humor and heart. Sept. 22, 7 p.m., The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park; \$46.35-\$121.67; guildtheatre.com.

—Karla Kane

See what's in the lineup this fall for music, stage, museums and galleries and author events in our **Fall Arts preview on page 20**.

## Suspected bomb in Atherton was a mosquito monitoring device

Bomb squad called "as a precaution," said Atherton Police Chief

By Eleanor Raab

Middlefield Road in Atherton was closed Wednesday afternoon, Aug. 14, due to a report of a device suspected of being a bomb. That device turned out to be a mosquito monitoring device placed in the vicinity by

the San Mateo County Vector and Mosquito Control District, said Atherton Police Chief Steve McCulley.

It is likely that the mosquito monitoring device was placed in the vicinity due to the detection of West Nile virus in a dead bird from Atherton. Data from the California Department of Public

Health's Vector-Borne Disease section shows that the dead bird was found about a block away from where the closure for the suspicious device took place.

"In response to finding West Nile virus, we do an extra check of all potential mosquito breeding sources in the immediate area," said Rachel Curtis-Robles,

San Mateo County Vector Control District's public health education and outreach officer. "We also set extra mosquito surveillance traps in the days after the initial finding. The mosquitoes in those traps are tested for West Nile virus."

Curtis-Robles explained that the traps are designed by the

Vector Control district to attract mosquitoes to collect for testing.

"We use mosquito traps in our everyday work for detecting mosquitoes ... they have a cooler holding dry ice (carbon dioxide) to attract mosquitoes, and they have a small, battery-powered

See **SUSPECTED BOMB**, page 18

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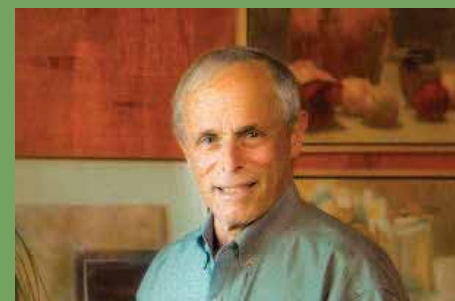
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# Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Anna Hoch-Kenney

EPASD General Manager and District Engineer Akin Okupe gives community members insight into the EPASD's new O'Connor Street Pump Station on Aug. 8.

## Battle for the Sewer: East Palo Alto Sanitary District fights potential city takeover

Facing prospect of dissolution, East Palo Alto's sanitary district is fighting to stay alive

By Gennady Sheyner

When Jeff Poetsch became head of the Ravenswood Shores Business District about 12 years ago, change was in the air.

The East Palo Alto City Council was in the final phases of approving a new vision for the 350-acre Ravenswood area in the northeast section of

the city, between University Avenue and the Palo Alto Baylands. The plan, which was adopted in 2013, called for transforming this underdeveloped area into the city's new downtown, with well-designed buildings, neighborhood parks, bike lanes and jobs, a key amenity for a city whose unemployment rate was about 19% at the time of the plan's adoption.

Poetsch was eager to help facilitate that vision. His group includes Ravenswood-area businesses like Catered Too and Knotty Hole Cabinet and nonprofits like EPACENTER Art and Ravenswood Family Health Center, landowners who he said make up about 75% of the district. The group worked with East Palo Alto

See **SANITARY DISTRICT**, page 11

## West Nile virus detected in a dead bird found in Atherton

By Eleanor Raab

A dead bird collected in Atherton has tested positive for West Nile virus, according to a town news alert.

This is the 12th dead bird that has tested positive for West Nile virus in San Mateo County this year, according to the San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District. Seven of those birds were collected in Menlo Park, two were collected in Foster City, one was collected in San Carlos and one was collected in San Mateo.

Nearby Palo Alto, which is in Santa Clara County, has had 31 dead birds test positive for the virus, according to data from the California Department of Public Health's Vector-Borne Disease section.

"The District is currently collecting and will be testing mosquitoes in the area for West Nile virus," said Rachel Curtis-Robles, the Vector Control District's public health education and outreach officer. "At this time, risk is still considered low; if we find West Nile virus in mosquitoes in the area, we will alert the public."

The bird that was collected in Atherton was an American crow, according to the Vector Control District. Corvids like crows and ravens are particularly vulnerable to the effects of West Nile virus.

California Public Health Department data shows there

have been no positive human cases, horse cases, or cases detected in mosquitoes in San Mateo County.

"If mosquitoes are positive for West Nile virus, this indicates a local threat to public health, and additional mosquito control actions would be pursued," said Curtis-Robles. "Our staff have been setting extra mosquito traps in the area the past few days and will be testing mosquitoes collected in those traps for West Nile virus."

The Vector Control District urges residents to report dead birds, dump standing water on their properties, use an EPA-registered insect repellent, and report biting mosquitoes in the area.

"We'd like to remind everyone to check their property for standing water where mosquitoes can breed," said Curtis-Robles. "Dumping standing water is a key action for residents to take to reduce mosquitoes in their area. In cases where the water is unable to be dumped or drained, we would like people to report standing water so that our staff can assess the situation and determine how best to control mosquito breeding."

Dead birds can be reported at 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473). Learn more about West Nile virus activity in California at [westnile.ca.gov](http://westnile.ca.gov). ■

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

## Candidates set for local races this fall

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

On Aug. 14, San Mateo County finalized the list of candidates running for local office on Nov. 5.

Here's a rundown of the candidates, along with information on which races are uncontested and which are contested.

In uncontested races, the town or city could choose not to cancel the election. In that case, nomination papers for write-in candidates will be accepted from Sept. 9 to Oct. 22.

### Woodside candidates will run uncontested

Local candidates for Woodside's Town Council are running uncontested to fill three open seats for District 1, 4 and 5 for the upcoming election in November. The race includes two incumbents Jenn Wall and Paul Goeld and one non-incumbent Hassan Aburish. The nomination period was extended due to no incumbents filing from District 5. Council member Ned Fluett will not be seeking reelection in the fall. Planning Commissioner Matthew Apfel

pulled papers on Aug. 13 but did not file in time for the Aug. 14 deadline at 5 p.m. to enter the race.

The Town Council passed an ordinance to switch from a "from district" method of electing members to a "by-district" system in 2022, moving from seven members on the council to five.

The Town Council will hold a special meeting at 10 a.m. on Thursday, Aug. 22, to vote to appoint the qualified candidates to office or to hold the election. If the council does not take

action by 5 p.m. on Aug. 22, the election will be held.

### Four new candidates for Portola Valley's Town Council

Portola Valley's race for Town Council has two open seats and no incumbents seeking reelection in the fall. Four non-incumbent candidates have officially qualified for the race including Rebecca Flynn, Helen Wolter, Carter Warr and Ellen Vernazza. Incumbents Sarah Wernikoff and Jeff Aalfs will not be running for another term.

### Two candidates are vying for Menlo Park's District 5 seat, the race for District 3 is uncontested

There are two open Menlo Park City Council seats that will be on the ballot in the Nov. 5 election, District 3 and District 5. Jeff Schmidt is running unopposed for the District 3 seat. Jennifer Wise and Greg Conlon are the two candidates who have filed papers to run for the District 5 seat. Former Menlo

See **LOCAL ELECTION**, page 7

# East Palo Alto mayor calls for collaboration with cities in plan to clear homeless encampments

By Alise Maripuu /  
Bay City News Service

East Palo Alto Mayor Antonio López on Wednesday, Aug. 14, stood outside Redwood City Hall and announced his plan to tackle homelessness while calling for other city leaders on the Peninsula to also adopt a strategic approach.

The ordinance would give unhoused individuals in encampments at least two written warnings and two offers of shelter before being cleared, López said.

The move to prioritize addressing homelessness comes after the U.S. Supreme Court's June decision in *Grants Pass v. Johnson* that gives cities greater authority to evict people from homeless encampments before offering shelter.

Some cities, like San Francisco, have used the decision as an opportunity to ramp up their homeless encampment sweeps. But homeless rights advocates have been critical of the decision.

"It is going to make homelessness worse if cities take the Supreme Court up on its invitation to criminalize homelessness," said Nisha Kashyap, an attorney and program director for one of the law firms representing the Coalition on Homelessness.

The organization originally sued San Francisco in 2022 for its treatment of unhoused individuals.

López's plan instead offers shelter first as a solution in an effort to take a more compassionate approach.

"I'm not interested in crimi-

nizing homelessness. I don't think that's the right solution," he said. "I think what we ought to do is provide a humane response."

Because reasons for homelessness vary, each unhoused person will be evaluated individually to determine the appropriate course of action, López said. A medical and mental health screening would be provided by clinicians on the first warning.

"People are homeless for a myriad of reasons like domestic violence, unaffordability, and addiction," López said. "We don't want to do a 'one size fits all' solution."

A point-in-time count conducted in January 2024 across the county revealed that there were 81 people living on the streets in East Palo Alto compared to 169 counted in 2022. Redwood City's unhoused population decreased from 245 to 169 between 2022 and 2024. Point-in-time counts are conducted in the county every two years in which volunteers go out on one day searching for unhoused individuals in every corner of the county and tally them up.

While East Palo Alto and Redwood City saw reductions in people living on the streets, nearly every other city in the county saw an increase. Overall, the total amount of people experiencing homelessness in the county grew by 18% from 2022 to 2024. López is calling for cities in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties to take a similar approach because the plan won't be effective unless there is a collaboration. If unhoused people who refuse services or shelter are

pushed out of one city, they will simply move to another nearby.

"It's a balloon problem. If you push the problem on one side of the balloon, it'll go somewhere else," López said. "This needs to be a collective regional response."

The press conference was held in Redwood City because it has the highest unhoused population in San Mateo County.

Maggie Cornejo, a Redwood City native and planning commissioner, also spoke to show her support for López's plan and encourage the Redwood City mayor to assume a similar strategy. She currently lives in downtown Redwood City near homeless encampments.

"I stand with Mayor López because the perspectives of the youth need to be heard while my heart aches for the unhoused," Cornejo said. "Not long ago, I witnessed a young person from our unhoused community being beaten with blood covered all over his face. Is this a dignity and safety we deserve? Is this the future we want for our cities?"

Just across the street from Redwood City Hall, several unhoused people sat under the sun smoking cigarettes, playing instruments and sharing food.

Jack Danczak, who has been experiencing homelessness for a little over a year, played a tune on his guitar he called "Homeless Blues."

Danczak lost his job during the COVID-19 pandemic and lived with his father for many years as his primary caregiver. He became homeless after his father died and couldn't afford to pay rent, he said in an interview.

"I would accept shelter if I was offered," he said. "But then they also tend to have very rigid rules like a prison."

Robin Vaka, an outreach peer support specialist with Redwood City Downtown Streets Team, agreed that some shelters have too many rules that deter people from wanting to stay.

The Redwood City Downtown Streets Team provides support for unhoused people by connecting them with team members who have experienced homelessness themselves.

"They put up gates and they put up security guards. You've got to sign in and you've got to sign out. You've got to do this and you've got to do that," she said. "That's a little miniature prison."

Vaka also believes that a comprehensive approach needs to be taken instead solely giving people a place to sleep.

"People have mental health issues. People have substance abuse issues. People have PTSD," she said. "It's not going to all be taken care of right away."

Part of López' plan includes giving unhoused people the opportunity to be connected to housing, mental health and substance use treatment services in the county such as Star Vista, the Samaritan House, WeHOPE and LifeMoves.

WeHOPE is an organization that provides various services to help unhoused people get back on their feet, including emergency food and shelter, job training and life skills.

They have an emergency shelter in East Palo Alto, which López says has helped reduce the

city's the unhoused population.

López did not specify what course of action East Palo Alto would take if unhoused people refused both services and shelter.

His plan is modeled after an ordinance enacted by the county earlier this year called the "Hopeful Horizons: Empowering Lives Initiative." The ordinance makes it a misdemeanor for people to live in an encampment on public property after receiving at least two written warnings and two offers of shelter. However it's only enforceable in unincorporated parts of the county.

López's ordinance needs to be passed by the East Palo Alto city council before being implemented.

"It's not going to be solved overnight," Vaka said. "It's going to take everybody to be on the same page." ■

## The Almanac

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## Menlo Park and Atherton to install new buffered bike lanes on Valparaiso Avenue

By Eleanor Raab

Menlo Park and Atherton have teamed up to install new buffered bike lanes on the stretch of Valparaiso that runs from El Camino Real to Elena Avenue. The new bike lanes will be installed throughout fall 2024.

These changes are being implemented as part of Menlo Park's Vision Zero initiative to eliminate traffic fatalities and reduce traffic injuries in the city, according to a city news item about the new bike lanes.

On the south side of Valparaiso Avenue, the buffer zone will be placed between the bicycle lane and parked vehicles. "That extra

space will also serve as the door zone separation by encouraging bicycle and parked vehicles to stay within their lanes," according to Kevin Chen, senior transportation engineer for Menlo Park.

On the north side of the street, where only limited street parking is available, the buffer will be placed between the bicycle lane and the vehicular lane to separate bicyclists from traffic.

In addition to the new, two-foot buffers, the redesign of the street will help protect bicyclists and pedestrians from traffic by narrowing the vehicular lanes to slow traffic and by designating "no parking" zones at certain intersections.

"(The 'no parking zones') are in response to Assembly Bill 413, also known as 'daylighting,'" said Chen. "Which is the practice of removing parking spaces near crosswalks and intersections to improve safety by increasing the visibility of pedestrians and bicyclists for drivers."

Though the possibility of installing physical barriers to protect the bike lane was considered, staff ultimately opted to forgo the physical barriers as they would possibly hinder emergency vehicles, street cleaning and garbage pickup.

"We are also hopeful that these improvements would attract new bicyclists and reduce vehicles on the road," said Chen. "Adding

the buffer zones is not expected to reduce the overall capacity of Valparaiso Avenue. Even so, we hope the narrower vehicular lanes can encourage slower speed and more careful driving."

This stretch of Valparaiso Avenue, which is home to both Sacred Heart Schools and Menlo School, was identified as one of Menlo Park's high-collision corridors, said Chen.

"One of the goals of our Vision Zero Action Plan is to constantly look for opportunities to implement safety enhancements on our transportation infrastructure," said Chen. ■

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

# Three new candidates file for Sequoia board just before deadline

Candidates include professor, educator, former PayPal executive

By Arden Margulis

Two candidates filed for the Area E seat of the Sequoia Union High School District Board on Aug. 12, while one other joined the race for the Area B seat by the Aug. 14 deadline, according to the San Mateo County Office of Elections.

The deadline was extended to Aug. 14 after incumbent trustees Shawneece Stevenson and Carrie Du Bois decided not to run for reelection.

San Jose State University professor Maria Cruz and educator Jon Bryant entered the race alongside community organizer Tonga Victoria, vying to replace Stevenson.

Former PayPal executive Daniel Torunian filed to run for Area B, joining former Student Trustee Jacob Yuryev and charter school principal Mary Beth Thompson.

Area B, which includes parts of San Carlos and Belmont, is represented by Du Bois, who has been on the board for 13 years. Du Bois decided not to run for reelection in order to “pass the baton to the next generation of parents in the district.”

Former Sequoia district spokesperson and former Ravenswood City School District trustee Ana Pulido filed to run for the Area E seat on Aug. 13 but did not qualify by the Aug. 14 deadline.

Stevenson and Du Bois have yet to publicly endorse any candidate.

“When I ran ... I reached out to many voters who didn’t know our district and I often heard ‘no one has come to our community,’” Stevenson said in a statement to

this news organization. “It’s an exciting time to partner with our district and I wish everyone well.”

## Area E

### Maria Cruz

Cruz is a professor at San Jose State University where she teaches in the Chicana/o Studies Department. She also directs the university’s McNair and Aspire Scholars Programs. She is running to represent Area E.

The McNair program seeks to encourage low-income first generation students or those who are underrepresented in graduate programs to pursue doctoral studies.

Aspire is a federally funded program that aims to increase graduation rates of underrepresented students.

“I wanted to be proactive in the community and I wanted to run for city council but my son is going into high school and I really want to be part of the policies that affect high schoolers,” said Cruz.

Cruz’s son was in the Tinsley Voluntary Transfer program, which allows kids living in East Palo Alto to attend some Peninsula districts as a result of a lawsuit filed in 1976 by parents. Her son attended elementary and middle school in the Las Lomitas district. He is now a freshman at M-A.

“I am green to the political scene but I am not green to education policy, student advocacy, and community building,” said Cruz.

Cruz said her top priority is advocating for people of color

and people whose first language is not English.

“They need support,” Cruz said, on Wednesday, Aug. 14. “I went to M-A’s orientation yesterday and yes they had a translator but a lot gets lost.”

Cruz said she did not know what detracking is but wants to learn more about the issues facing the Sequoia district.

“I stand for all students to have a fair chance at exceeding and learning in the classroom and have the chance for exposure to high level classwork vs segregation,” Cruz said.

“I haven’t been following [Sequoia] so closely but I want to now,” she said.

“My intentions are good and I am here to serve,” Cruz added.

### Jon Bryant

Bryant, who is running for the Area E seat, listed his ballot designation as “educator.”

According to publicly available records, Bryant is the CEO of Build Play Learn Labs, a nonprofit whose purpose is to “educate young minds about technology.”

According to a blog post on the organization’s website, Build Play Learn Labs ran its first STEM course in the Makerspace at the Onetta Harris Center in April 2023.

Their website says they offer “a range of innovative educational services designed to empower youth and communities.”

Bryant is also on the board of the East Palo Alto Community Archive.

According to his LinkedIn, he was a sixth grade teacher in the

Ravenswood district for one year.

Bryant told this news organization in a statement, “I am committed to ensuring that every student, regardless of their ZIP code, has access to an exceptional education. The disparities in test scores between East Palo Alto and other areas of the district highlight the need for focused action. I am dedicated to advocating for equitable resources, supporting our educators, and expanding college and career readiness programs so that every student can thrive.”

### Tonga Victoria

Victoria filed to run for the Area E seat earlier in the period. This news organization reported on her background and positions in the Aug. 16 newspaper.

## Area B

### Daniel Torunian

Torunian was a PayPal executive for over 10 years, leaving in June 2022. He is currently the vice chair of the San Mateo County Republican Party. He filed and qualified to run for the Area B seat on Aug. 14, the last day of the extended deadline.

He has written guest opinions for the San Mateo Daily Journal. In an opinion column, Torunian argued local governments need to reduce tax burden on citizens.

“When times are difficult as these are and families are struggling to make ends meet, local governments would be wise to act in a more empathic manner and look for ways to reduce the financial

burden that we all bear rather than looking at options to increase it. It would also be wise to practice a more pragmatic and disciplined approach to financial planning and management,” he wrote in an article titled “Hard times call for light(er) government.”

He also criticized San Mateo Union High School District’s Ethnic Studies curriculum. He wrote that they were “Framing the discussion in this manner clearly implies a desired outcome, removes critical thinking and inquiry from the discussion and does nothing to further cultural awareness. We should be lifting up everyone and creating common awareness for all ethnicities and cultures.”

“The things we are seeing with trying to alter history and especially with gender studies and maybe influencing things at too early of an age. ... I think that things have gone too far and the pendulum needs to swing back to center,” he said on the conservative AJ Steel Show.

Torunian also said he and his wife entered politics because “we could just not sit still and watch these issues play out.”

Torunian is on the Redwood City Police Advisory Commission.

This news organization published information on the two other candidates for Area B, Yuryev and Thompson, in July. ■

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## LOCAL ELECTION

continued from page 5

Park Mayor Cat Carlton pulled papers to possibly run for the seat, but ultimately did not end up filing them.

Current District 3 Council member Jen Wolosin and current District 5 Council member Maria Doerr both announced that they would not be seeking reelection before the candidate filing period opened.

Wolosin, who joined the council in 2020, said in a March interview with The Almanac that she was stepping away from the council to see to “familial and personal considerations.” Doerr, who was appointed to the District 5 seat in January 2023 to fill a vacancy left by Ray Mueller, announced in May that she would not be seeking reelection due to a planned move out of the area.

## Incumbents Lewis and Hawkins-Manuelian are unopposed for seats on the Atherton City Council, Atherton to cancel council election

Incumbent Atherton City Council members Elizabeth Lewis and Diana Hawkins-Manuelian are running unopposed for the two council seats on this year’s ballot, according to Atherton’s elections website.

Atherton’s City Council held a special meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 20 to officially cancel the town’s Nov. 5 City Council election by appointing incumbents Diana Hawkins-Manuelian and Elizabeth Lewis to the two open council seats.

If candidates are running unopposed for seats, the California Elections Code states that municipalities may choose to either appoint the qualified candidates to the positions, or

hold the election.

Cancelling the election will save the town the cost of the election, which is about \$12,000, according to Atherton City Manager George Rodericks.

Atherton previously canceled council elections in 2016 and 2018 due to candidates running unopposed. ■

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## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

### Some Questions About Termite Work



**Dear Monica: I am making an offer on a property that reports show needs termite repairs. If seller cannot make the repairs before closing date, can I ask for sellers to credit me for these repairs?**  
**Allen S.**

Dear Allen: There are a few issues that you should know in order for this to work. If you are getting a loan, your lender will allow a credit for “non-recurring” closing costs such as title and escrow costs, points, inspections, etc. If the cost of repairs does not exceed this amount, your lender should be fine with it. If repair costs are higher, the lender will want to see the price reduced to reflect the cost of repairs above non-recurring closing costs. If you intend to pay cash and there is no lender, it makes sense to reduce your offer by the amount for repairs.

Contact me at monica@monicacorman.com: Office: 650-465-5971, COMPASS. WSJ Nationally Ranked. Real Trends Bay Area Top 100 Agents

# Atherton residents support permanent pickleball facilities

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The pickleball trial at Holbrook-Palmer Park has been ongoing since January and the town is preparing to discuss how the sport will be integrated into the park. A survey on pickleball usage and feedback was opened to the public in June and closed at the end of July.

The survey was open to all park visitors including tennis and pickleball players, park guests and neighbors.

Currently, one of the tennis courts has been striped to accommodate two pickleball courts, big enough for a maximum of eight players to play on at once. Reservations are open to keyholders every day from 9 a.m.-noon and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5-7 p.m.

During Atherton's City Council meeting on July 17, Public Works Director Robert Ovadia presented interim results of the survey to the council. Based on the reservation system, reservations for pickleball courts steadily increased from January to June. Over the first six months



Magali Gauthier

A pickleball and racket at the courts at Holbrook-Palmer Park in Atherton on April 25.

reservations climbed from eight in January to 124 in June.

In April The Almanac spoke to Holbrook-Palmer Park pickleball players on what they wanted to see after the trial. Players said they wanted a drop-in system and extended hours. The survey results show that most residents support always required reservations as well as reservations with limited drop-in play.

Pickleball is growing in popularity across the nation and many locals are asking the town to consider permanent pickleball facilities at Holbrook-Palmer Park, according to survey results. As of July 31, 73% of survey takers responded in support of a permanent pickleball court.

When survey takers were asked "On average, how many hours do you play pickleball at Holbrook-Palmer Park?" most

players responded with 2-5 hours per week and 1-2 hours per week.

Ovadia also reviewed free response comments left on the survey, some of which note that there are very few open spaces to reserve for tennis due to Player Capital reservations for summer camps and private lessons as well as the blocked off evening and morning reservations for pickleball.

Council member Bill Widmer commented that oftentimes courts are reserved online but courts are found empty during its reserved time. There are other cases where multiple courts are under a reservation but only two courts are actually utilized. He recommends that there be a check-in system to verify who is using the courts and when.

Over 50% of survey respondents are current keyholders at the park. During the Atherton council meeting, Ovadia said that there are currently 135 keyholders. The survey found that although the majority already had keys, 27% purchased them to participate in the pickleball trial, showing growing interest in using the courts for pickleball.

Public opinions toward pickleball are generally positive, according to survey results but some residents have complaints about the loud noise levels from the sound of the pickleballs being hit and the players talking, despite the town installing sound baffling material in between the courts to reduce noise.

When survey takers were asked about where a permanent court should be located, the majority of responses were divided between converting an existing tennis court to a full-time pickleball court or building a separate court elsewhere in the park. Out of 138 responses, 42% wanted to convert an existing court and 41% wanted a separate court.

The Park and Recreation Committee will review the final survey responses and discuss the future of the pickleball courts in their September meeting. They will be developing a full report to present to the council at a later date, said Ovadia. ■

*Email Staff Writer  
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## Stanford students commit to service

Stanford's Community Impact Fellows program places graduating seniors in Bay Area nonprofits, allowing them to gain valuable experience while serving the community. The program selects Stanford applicants with a deep commitment to public service, and provides them career guidance

and support so they can make even greater contributions to the charitable organizations where they are placed. **SCAN TO READ THE SPOTLIGHT** →



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# Atherton will have no city council election this year

Incumbents Hawkins-Manuelian and Lewis appointed to new four-year terms

By Eleanor Raab

Atherton's City Council held a special meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 20, to officially cancel the town's Nov. 5 City Council election by appointing incumbents Diana Hawkins-Manuelian and Elizabeth Lewis to the two open council seats. Hawkins-Manuelian and Lewis were the only two candidates to file for the seats.

The council members voted unanimously to appoint Hawkins-Manuelian and Lewis to start new, four-year terms beginning in December of this year, and to pass a resolution canceling the election.

"I am really honored that you all are supporting me, and I promise that I will do my best to uphold the standards of the City Council that we've been setting for ourselves for the next four years," said Lewis during the meeting.

Hawkins-Manuelian said that she feels similarly.

City Manager George Rodericks said in an email to this news organization that canceling the election will save the town

\$12,000, which was originally budgeted to manage the election.

Atherton has previously canceled council elections in 2016 and 2018 due to uncontested races.

## New planning commissioner appointed

At the special meeting, the council also voted to appoint a new planning commissioner, Sandy Levison, for a four-year term ending June 30, 2028. Levison is replacing incumbent Nancy Learner, who reached her term limit on the commission.

The City Council had previously appointed a different applicant to the open planning commission seat during its June 19 meeting. However, that appointment was voided due to address verification challenges,

according to a town staff report.

The office of the city clerk launched a new recruitment for the open commission seat, and only one new applicant threw her hat in the ring for the position.

"We cast a pretty wide net, but as usual, I believe that our one candidate (Levison) came through based on a referral," said City Clerk Anthony Suber.

Prior to her application for the Planning Commission seat, Levison has volunteered for several foundations and nonprofits around town. According to her application, she was the co-chair of the Atherton Now foundation from 2015-2019, which helped raise funds for the new Town Center. She also worked with the Atherton Police Foundation for several years and is on the Oakwood Retirement Center

Board at Sacred Heart Schools, among other affiliations.

"I believe the Planning Commission has a responsibility to incorporate both the short- and long-term needs of the residents through a balanced approach to adhering to state regulations while maintaining the unique character of Atherton," she said in her application.

Levison's first Atherton Planning Commission meeting will be the Aug. 28 meeting, where commissioners will review the town's updated housing element. It will likely make recommendations to the City Council on whether to adopt it.

"I hope that you're ready for the upcoming meeting, because it's an important meeting," said Councilmember Bill Widmer.

Levison, who attended the meeting, said that she is excited to serve on the commission.

"I know we have some challenging times ahead, but I love living here," she said. "I know I need to learn from my fellow commission members ... but I look forward to investing myself into learning more and hopefully benefitting the town."

Other council members expressed their gratitude that Levison applied for the position during such a demanding time for the town's Planning Commission.

"I'm so glad to have a fresh voice on the Planning Commission," said Councilmember Stacy Miles Holland. "There's a lot of people who have a lot of feelings about what the Planning Commission does, but not many people are willing to sit behind the dais and do the actual work." ■

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

## OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

**Monajo Lee Ellsworth**, an avid artist, pilot and "people person," died at the age of 90 on May 15, 2024. Her last days were spent peacefully with her children near.

**Rochelle Ann Gibbons**, a beloved immigration attorney who enjoyed her dogs, cat and scuba diving, died at the age of 77 on June 25, 2024, from cancer.

**Patricia Jean Hayes**, a dedicated mother, artist and businesswoman with a youthful spirit, died at the age of 98 on Aug. 6, 2024, while sleeping.

**Milda Jasons**, a skilled programmer, project manager, athlete and friend to many died at the age of 88 on July 20, 2024, to complications of Alzheimer's and Multiple Myeloma.

**Howard Berger**, a family and service man who taught science and math in Menlo Park, died at the age of 96 on Aug. 6, 2024.

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

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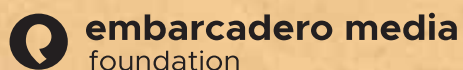
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## SANITARY DISTRICT

continued from page 5

officials on issues of common interest, including flood protection from the San Francisquito Creek and infrastructure upgrades that would be required to facilitate the kind of growth that the council was imagining.

“We have a pretty diverse group, and we were really looking at the entire area from an infrastructure perspective,” Poetsch said in an interview.

Before long, however, Poetsch and other Ravenswood stakeholders found themselves on the frontlines of East Palo Alto’s most complex and politically charged conflict: the battle over the city’s aged sewer lines. Built in the early 1940s as part of the Federal Works Progress Administration (WPA), the sewer system has been serving the vast majority of East Palo Alto and a small portion of Menlo Park since 1942. Throughout that whole time, it has been managed by the East Palo Alto Sanitary District, an agency that was formed in 1939 and that is charged with maintaining and, when needed, expanding a system that includes 160,000 linear feet of sewer lines.

Poetsch believes that the district has grossly failed this mission. Again and again, he said, the Sanitary District would require developers both in the Ravenswood area and elsewhere to pay what he deemed to be astronomical fees before it would provide a “will serve” letter, an agreement to hook up new buildings to its sewage network. Local developers and members of the East Palo Alto City Council had been flagging these problems for years, though the conflict escalated in 2022, when the city formally requested that the district be dissolved and become a subsidiary of the city.

Now, the city is on the cusp of realizing its goal.

Last month, the city received a key vote of support from a county commission that is charged with resolving jurisdictional disputes, a decision that could have ramifications for both East Palo Alto’s ratepayers and developers. The East Palo Alto Sanitary District is preparing to go to court to reverse this decision, with a hearing set for Aug. 16.

The two sides disagree on almost everything, though each believes that the stakes are high. The City Council believes that control of the sewer system is necessary to achieve its vision of promoting economic development, building housing and creating jobs. Once it takes control, it would contract out the maintenance of the system to the West Bay Sanitary District, which currently serves most of Menlo Park and portions of Atherton,



Courtesy Eden Housing

The expanded Light Tree Apartments at 1805 E. Bayshore Road in East Palo Alto is made up of 185 apartments and townhomes of which 128 are new, and 57 are renovated.

East Palo Alto, Portola Valley, Redwood City and Woodside.

The District counters that the city doesn’t have the expertise to run the system and that its planned “takeover” would hurt the ratepayers and force them to subsidize new developments. The battle is expected to only escalate as election season heats up, with several candidates who are affiliated with the District recently declaring their intention to join the City Council.

For the district’s critics, the most infamous and commonly cited example of the agency’s intransigence is the Light Tree development at 1895 East Bayshore Road. Spearheaded by the nonprofit EPACANDO and Eden Housing, the project refurbished 94 affordable apartments and added 91 new ones. The City Council approved it in 2019 but the developers almost saw the funding collapse because of lengthy negotiations with the Sanitary District over hookup fees.

“It was literally an extortion,” Poetsch said in an interview.

According to numerous people familiar with the negotiations, the Sanitary District had initially demanded that the developers of Light Tree pay \$5 million to upgrade the trunk line, the 24-inch pipe that collects sewage from smaller pipelines throughout the system and ferries it to the Regional Water Quality Control Plant in the Baylands. With political pressure mounting and just days to go until the grant deadline, the district and the developer settled for a \$2.5 million fee.

While Light Tree survived, other projects went down the drain. There was The Primary School that the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative was preparing to construct in 2019 on a vacant site at 1200 Weeks St. After getting a \$4 million quote for sewage hookup fees from the Sanitary District, the foundation opted to instead rent the former Brentwood

Academy building at 2086 Clarke Ave from the Ravenswood City School District.

There was also the nonprofit resource center that the Sobrato Organization was preparing to build at 2519 Pulgas Ave., a building that would have provided space for nonprofits like the Ravenswood Family Health Network, which is headquartered on Bay Road. The project fizzled after the Sanitary District demanded \$6.6 million for a sewer connection. Luisa Buada, former CEO of the Ravenswood Family Health Network, lamented the demise of the project at a November public hearing.

“We specifically, along with a lot of the nonprofits in the city, lost the opportunity to have a nonprofit resources center right on Pulgas Avenue that would have been lease-free for many nonprofits,” Buada said. “We would have been able to get out of buildings that could collapse in 7.1 earthquakes because of potential liquefaction. At this point, the nonprofits are stuck in this situation because that opportunity was lost.”

Buada delivered her comments at a November 2023 meeting of the San Mateo County Local Agency Formation Commission, a normally obscure bureaucratic entity that concerns itself with issues of boundaries and jurisdictions. In 2022, the commission received a study that evaluated the capacity and operations of the sanitary district. Funded by area developers, including the Sobrato Organization and EPACANDO, the Municipal Services Review echoed the concerns of city officials and builders that the sewer system’s lack of capacity is an “impediment to development in the city” and cited concerns that the costs to connect are “prohibitively expensive” for many.

According to the study, East Palo Alto had about 20 unconstructed development projects in the pipeline as of the end of 2021, consisting of 1,469 housing

units and 4.6 million square feet of nonresidential development, with most of the growth in the Ravenswood and 4 Corners area. These include the East Palo Alto Waterfront, which comprises 260 housing units and 1.39 million square feet of commercial and community space; the Four Corners proposal by Sand Hill Property Company that includes 180 housing units, 500,000 square feet of laboratory space, 30,000 square feet of commercial space and a new community building; and The Landing, which would feature 90 apartments and 922,000 square feet of office space.

This publication has spoken to numerous developers who declined to be named because of ongoing negotiations with the district over pending projects. They expressed common frustrations about the Sanitary District presenting them with quotes for sewer hookups that were exponentially higher than expected. In some cases, this led to prolonged negotiations. In others, projects simply died.

It wasn’t just the large mixed-use projects that were getting clogged up in the system. The development pipeline included about 12 accessory dwelling units that, according to the report, were stalled because they had been unable to get approval for connection to the Sanitary District’s system, according to the 2022 report.

### ‘It was literally an extortion.’

JEFF POETSCH,  
HEAD OF THE RAVENSWOOD SHORES  
BUSINESS DISTRICT

Over the course of the November 2023 hearing, the board heard from numerous elected leaders who effectively accused the Sanitary District of usurping their land use powers and compromising the city’s growth plans.

“The City Council has tried to work with the Sanitary District to find a path forward for nearly three years with no result,” City Council member Lisa Gauthier, who at the time was serving as mayor, told the LAFCo board. “Within those three years, the council and the community have approved projects, including projects that could serve nonprofits, that have either been stalled or abandoned because the Sanitary District could not serve the projects for a fair cost.”

Like others on the council, she argued that it’s time for the city of East Palo Alto to take control of the sewer system operations. The city filed a formal application to LAFCo to change the governance structure. After commissioning

a study, surveying the property owners and hearing from the various stakeholders, the LAFCo board voted at the Nov. 15, 2023, meeting to grant East Palo Alto’s request to effectively strip away the district’s independence and make it a subsidiary of the city.

Council member Ruben Abrica, a longtime supporter of consolidation, said in an interview that he has been struck over the years by the district’s failure to provide justification for its exorbitant fees. He said he has heard from developers who complained about the Sanitary District just “throwing out numbers left and right about what they’re supposed to pay.”

Sand Hill Properties, which proposed to build 605 apartments in the Woodland Park neighborhood on the west side of the city, was quoted about \$8 million for hookups fees, Abrica said, which was roughly four times the amount that Sand Hill’s experts said would actually be required to fund the needed upgrades.

“They refused to do that because they felt the numbers aren’t based on any factual financial analysis,” Abrica said. “That’s a sign to me of unprofessional and irresponsible erratic behavior and stopping a development that is providing additional low-income and market-rate housing.”

Other developers and nonprofit leaders expressed similar concerns. Among them is Duane Bay, executive director of EPACANDO, a local nonprofit that teamed up with Eden Housing to build the Light Tree project. Bay, who at various points of his long political career had served on both the East Palo Alto City Council and the East Palo Alto Sanitary District, has lobbied for consolidation. He claimed in a May 2022 letter to LAFCo that the Sanitary District has been demanding that developers pay not only the standard connection charges but also a “developer’s share” for upgrades to the collection system. In some cases, it has been quoting “duplicative charges” to different developers, a practice that he called “patently unfair, and arguably illegal.”

In one instance, Bay wrote, the district quoted developers of three different projects add-on fees to pay 100% of the cost of upsizing the system’s trunk line. In another instance, the district “unapologetically quoted add-on connection fees at \$14 million for a four-house subdivision,” Bay wrote.

Bay suggested that the Municipal Services Report that was commissioned by LAFCo actually understates the extent

See **SANITARY DISTRICT**, page 12

## SANITARY DISTRICT

continued from page 11

to which the district hampers East Palo Alto's development. He asserted that the district has been "overstepping its approved powers" and proposed that the report include the following language:

"By not actively addressing the capacity issues that are impeding proposed and approved development within the City, and by neither publishing standard fee schedules and calculation methods nor negotiating ad hoc fees in good faith, EPASD has in effect imposed a moratorium on all development."

According to the city, even the projects that advance only do so after extensive negotiations that take months if not years to complete. John Lê, East Palo Alto's city attorney, rattled off numerous projects that took more than six months to get the green light during the LAFCo hearing. These include the affordable-housing complex at 965 Weeks St., which entailed more than seven months of negotiations; the commercial development that Emerson Collective and JobTrain are developing at 2435 Pulgas Ave., which he said took eight months; and the office building at 1788 East Bayshore Road, which was proposed four years ago and which remains in negotiations.

Earlier this month, Lê asserted in a legal filing that the District's failure to provide will-serve letters is undermining the city's development plans.

"The District's connection fees for those developments are often not predictable or reasonable, defeating many vital projects approved by the City," Lê wrote.

## The District fights back

Kelly Fergusson, a former Menlo Park City Council member who in June joined the East Palo Alto Sanitary District Board of Directors, firmly rejects the notion that East Palo Alto has anything resembling a moratorium on new development.

Far from hindering East Palo Alto's growth, the district has been working hard to update aged infrastructure and prepare for new developments, Fergusson said. During an Aug. 8 tour, she pointed to two recent projects that the Sanitary District had recently completed: an extension of a feeder line that runs under O'Connor street between Pulgas Avenue and the Baylands and replacement of sewer lines along Beech Street, Clarke Avenue and Green Street.

On Aug. 8, Fergusson helped lead a tour of the O'Connor project, which district officials say was designed to accommodate the Light Tree development. Critics of the district may point to the



Anna Hoch-Kenney

EPASD General Manager and District Engineer Akin Okupe goes over pipeines with community members on Aug. 8.

housing project as an example of the District's intransigence, but to Fergusson and her colleagues on the board, it's an example of "creative problem-solving."

Extending the O'Connor line between Pulgas and the Baylands wasn't easy, said Dennis Scherzer, chair of the district's Board of Directors. The Sanitary District had to obtain permits from regulatory agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and it had to navigate a narrow construction window to avoid disturbing sensitive habitat.

Scherzer also highlighted the district's efforts to upgrade lines in the area along and around Beech Street, which required working around existing water lines and avoiding underground electric cables.

"We managed to do it, and it's been installed," Scherzer said.

Fergusson and her colleagues do not mince words when asked about the movement to dissolve the district. The consolidation, in her view, is nothing less than a "takeover" by the city that will strip many customers of representation.

She believes the LAFCo decision was unfair because the agency had failed to consider the various studies that the district has been using to justify its rates or its record of maintaining a system that does not overflow even during major storms.

"The decision was purely political — they didn't rely on facts or evidence," Fergusson said in an interview.

Because of the nature of the work, such projects are all too easy to miss. Unlike the projects they serve, the pipelines that are being upgraded by the Sanitary Districts are underground. To a

passerby, the only indicator that the pipeline on O'Connor has been replaced is a strip of land that runs through an otherwise grassy section of the nature preserve. The pipe is under this strip.

"We removed the existing pipe and put in a new pipe that will be here for another 100 years," said Akin Okupe, general manager of the Sanitary District, as he pointed out the area where the new collector line is buried. The large pipe connects to the trunk line, which is located across San Francisquito Creek and which brings the sewage to the treatment plant.

"Everything is done, the developers are happy and everyone is happy," Okupe said. "This project was completed on time and on schedule."

The recently completed pipeline project in the east end of the city is the first of two phases that the district hopes to construct in this area. The second phase, which would involve installing a new trunk line between the O'Connor area and the Ravenswood district, would bring the system to a level where it could accommodate all development in the city's plans, Okupe said. He said the \$13 million job would take about a year to construct.

The fate of the project, however, is far from certain. The LAFCo decision didn't just create an existential threat for the district; it has also frozen the district's \$25 million reserve. Once the consolidation is completed, these assets will belong to the city.

District officials flatly deny assertions that they are interfering with the city's growth plans. The problem, they say, is that the aged system simply isn't able to accommodate the level of development that the city of East

Palo Alto is planning for without significant investments from the builders.

"The district is not stopping any development project. We've just been cautious and professional in the way we do it to minimize the cost impact on existing residents," Okupe said.

Fergusson made the same point at last month's LAFCo meeting, shortly before the board reaffirmed its November 2023 decision and supported consolidation by a 6-0 vote. She pointed to the high number of new developments that East Palo Alto has been seeing over the past few years.

"You walk around East Palo Alto today — it's booming with new housing developments," Fergusson said at the July 17 LAFCo meeting. "It's only a handful of snowflake developers asking for special treatment and for the City of East Palo Alto to do this takeover."

The district takes particular pride in holding its rates steady for residents. Fergusson noted that the district's sewage fees had stayed flat at \$600 per year for the past five years, though it recently voted to raise them to \$660. Prior to that, the rates held steady at \$575 per year for four consecutive years.

In fighting consolidation, district officials have been invoking the specter of rates doubling once the city takes over, an idea that city leaders firmly reject.

"That means a lot to residents who are on a fixed income," Fergusson said.

Fergusson pushed back against assertions that the fees that the district charges developers are excessive or arbitrary. The district, she noted, has undertaken numerous studies to gauge the system's capacity, survey

the condition of the pipes and explore the improvements that would need to be made to accommodate future growth. It was these studies that prompted the Sanitary District to increase the one-time sewer connection fee for all new developments from \$6,096 to \$14,464 for each new dwelling unit, a 138% hike. The increase was based on a study by Hildebrand Consulting, which analyzed the cost of expanding the sewer system.

Some developers see these fees as excessive. Fergusson sees them as fair.

"These are billionaire developers and residents should not be made to subsidize their profits," Fergusson said.

But from the county's perspective, the district's commitment to keeping yearly rates low has its downside. A LAFCo study concluded in 2022 found that the district is in a "strong financial position," thanks in large part to property tax revenues that it collects (which supplement its service charges) and a relatively low-cost structure. This financial position, according to the Municipal Service Review, enables the district to maintain low annual charges to ratepayers when compared to other jurisdictions.

The study also concluded, however, that the district's commitment to keep the rates low hampers its ability to upgrade its infrastructure and can hurt ratepayers in other ways, namely by depriving them of development projects that improve the community and enhance the local economy.

"Low rates that do not account for the need to address projected surcharging and potential sewer overflows can adversely affect ratepayers financially in the long run," the Municipal Service Review states. "Lack of staff resources contributes to an inability to provide clear, up-to-date, and transparent information to ratepayers, the City of East Palo Alto, property owners and developers, and other stakeholders; and produces insufficient financial planning to establish cost-effective and equitable infrastructure financing to facilitate plans adopted by the City of EPA which represents a majority of EPASD residents."

The study also noted that the lack of future development capacity "indirectly affects ratepayers who are also residents of the City of East Palo Alto, as the inability to serve new development reduces growth in City revenues for services and financial resiliency, provides fewer affordable housing opportunities, and constrains the community's commercial base and job growth."

See **SANITARY DISTRICT**, page 13

## SANITARY DISTRICT

continued from page 12

While everyone agrees that the system needs some upgrades and repairs, Fergusson challenged the notion that the district does a poor job maintaining its lines. She and others noted that the district has not been experiencing customer complaints and that its system has not had overflows even during major storms.

“Without a doubt, the East Palo Alto Sanitary District is a very well-run district, with a well-reasoned capital improvement plan supported by extensive pipe condition reports and implementation plans,” Fergusson said at the July 17 meeting.

City leaders aren’t so sure. In arguing for consolidation, they point to what they say is the district’s history of consistent failure to maintain its aged system. Both sides agree that some pipelines need urgent repairs, though the extent of the work and its cost remain under dispute.

**‘This is the sneakiest and most secretive process I’ve seen in 16 years of public service.’**

KELLY FERGUSSON,  
EAST PALO ALTO SANITARY  
DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

In October 2022, the district hired the firm Sierra West Consultants to conduct a CCTV survey to evaluate the condition of more than 500 pipelines in three sections of the sewer system (the consultant subsequently did a separate survey for another area and for the trunk line). The camera survey found many segments of the system in disrepair, with some pipelines sagging, others showing grease build up and others cracked or broken in numerous places. One pipeline, which is under Daisy Lane, had a “few locations with chunks of pipe missing,” according to the survey. Another, under Garden Street, was shown to be broken in five sections.

The Sierra West study concluded that it would cost \$53 million to perform structural upgrades on the roughly 76,000 linear feet of pipeline that showed signs of damage. If the district were to focus only on those pipes that most urgently need replacing, the cost would be about \$20.9 million, the report states.

Okupe conceded at the Aug. 8 meeting that some of the pipes in the system are in “deplorable” condition but pegged the cost of improving the structural integrity of the system at \$12 million, which does not include an

expansion to accommodate new developments. He also said that it would cost about \$40 million to increase the capacity of the system such that it could accommodate the type of growth that the City Council wants to see.

City Manager Melvin Gaines was among those who attended the Aug. 8 meeting, and he questioned the district’s assumptions on capital repairs, which he suggested understate the extent of the work that needs to be done. He said the district needs to do a better job explaining how it arrived at the \$12 million figure for necessary repairs.

“This appears to be another attempt to mislead the public and cast the City in a negative light, suggesting that the City wants to raise sanitary sewer rates solely to accommodate new development,” Gaines said in an email after the meeting. “In reality, EPASD’s own study shows that the existing system requires \$53 million in repairs, independent of any new development.”

**What comes next?**

Proponents of consolidation scored a critical victory on June 17, with LAFCo voting 6-0 to support the city’s application to take over the Sewer District. Before the vote, the county agency surveyed the 9,672 registered voters in the district area about the potential consolidation, which would be terminated if more than 50% of the respondents were to oppose and which would go to an election if the protest level hits the 25% threshold. The district received letters of protest from 1,012 voters, or 10.46% of registered voters.

The survey also showed that 936 of the 6,567 landowners in the area, or 14.25%, have registered their opposition. While the number is not insignificant, it was also well below the 25% threshold.

Some residents and District supporters slammed the process. Webster Lincoln, a former candidate for the East Palo Alto City Council who is once again seeking a council seat, argued in a letter to LAFCo that the notice for the protest hearing was insufficiently publicized and that the agency gave only “minimal time” for collecting written protests, which he argued “could be seen as limiting community engagement in a decision of considerable consequence.”

Fergusson was even more blunt.

“This is the sneakiest and most secretive process I’ve seen in 16 years of public service,” LAFCo board member Kati Martin was not impressed.

“This is not a new issue,” Martin said after Fergusson made her comments. “This has been on our agenda for four years

and I think we need to move on.”

“The takeover being forced on EPASD deserves full and due consideration, and we will clearly articulate the flaws of the City’s attempted action and harm to ratepayers and voters during the hearing,” Scherzer said in a statement. “We seek justice for our community, and we will have our day in court.”

But even after losing the battle, the Sanitary District hopes it can win the war. Just after the LAFCo vote, the district celebrated a decision by a San Mateo County Superior Court judge to hold a hearing on the merits of the LAFCo decision. On Aug. 16, the court will consider a legal challenge that the Sanitary District has filed against LAFCo, which contends that the agency acted illegally and in a biased manner when it voted to support the city’s consolidation attempt.

The lawsuit from the District argues that LAFCo had failed to consider the district’s “unique ability” to provide sanitary services and that it failed to consider new information such as the district’s recently approved capital improvement plan and its decision to lower development fees. The suit also pushes back against arguments that the District has been hindering the city’s development.

“Despite the City’s failure to consult the District when approving significant growth in its service area, the District tirelessly worked to accurately project the costs of the new demand so,” the suit states. “It retained numerous consultants and repeatedly attempted to collaborate with the City and developers directly so it could set a fair and equitable connection fee. But, because paying their fair share cut into their profits, developers successfully lobbied the City to pursue the pending reorganization.”

The city, meanwhile, is asking the court to allow the consolidation without any further delays. In its opposition brief, the city’s attorneys contend that the District continues to fail

in its duties to maintain the sewer system, even as it wastes an increasing amount of public funds for legal fees. Any delay would harm the public and the ratepayers because it will “give the lame-duck Board months to spend District funds and delay progress toward a better-funded, better-managed utility.”

“The Legislature had good reason to set short timelines for reorganizations—to avoid incompetence or misconduct by lame-duck boards. LAFCo’s decision that the City would best serve ratepayers is amply supported by the record and worthy of deference. And finally, that same record demonstrates the urgent need for more capable leadership of this ailing utility,” the city’s opposition brief states.

In addition to the legal challenge, the Sanitary District is mounting a political one. Fergusson has formed a political group called Residents for an Independent Sanitary District to oppose consolidation. The group is raising money from residents to support its “STOP THE TAKEOVER!” campaign, according to the committee’s website.

Opponents of consolidation are arguing that the move will, among other things, rob Menlo Park residents of the ability to choose their representatives. Chuck Bernstein, who lives in Menlo Park, testified at the November meeting of LAFCo that East Palo Alto’s proposal to take control of the district would “disenfranchise” him. The City Council tried to address this concern by creating a five-person advisory body with two seats for Menlo Park residents, one appointed by the Menlo Park City Council and another by the East Palo Alto City Council. But the move, which the East Palo Alto council unanimously approved on July 16, has not swayed the critics.

“I’d like to say there is a difference between being able to vote for someone and being on an advisory commission. They

aren’t the same thing,” Bernstein told the LAFCo board.

Fergusson agreed and called the proposal to give Menlo Park residents seats on the advisory board “just insulting.”

District supporters aren’t just seeking to defeat the City Council in the consolidation battle. They are also hoping to join the council. Scherzer, who is now in his ninth term on the district’s Board of Directors, has filed papers to run for council, which will have two vacancies this year. Lincoln, who was narrowly edged out for a seat four years ago, and Gail Wilkerson, a former council candidate who opposes the consolidation, are also running.

On the other side of the debate is incumbent City Council member Carlos Romero, a longtime critic of the district, and Mark Dinan, who had also run in the past and who, like Romero, strongly supports the consolidation.

Even as LAFCo’s recent survey suggests that the community has a diversity of opinions about consolidation, the current council appears to be in lockstep on the topic. Council member Ruben Abrica noted that in the past numerous council members had been skeptical about consolidating the district and had tried to work with district officials to address their differences. Once that effort failed, they became supportive of the consolidation.

Among them was Larry Moody, a former mayor who served on a committee that tried to negotiate with the district. During the LAFCo hearing in November, Moody was among those who argued in favor of consolidation.

“We want to put shovels in the ground,” Moody said. “We want to build our capacity. We want cranes in the air. We want job creations in our local community. We can’t do that if all of our projects that go forward are denied by the Sanitary District.”

Abrica said in an interview that the council’s recent votes to support consolidation have been unanimous, which would not have been the case in the past. Doomed projects like The Primary School and Sobrato’s proposed nonprofit resource center have chipped away at the District’s long-held narrative about “big evil developers, an incompetent City Council and a city government that is gaining up on ratepayers.

“The Sanitary District board is just an entrenched little power group with some support in the community,” Abrica said. “But they’ve been losing that support, I feel.” ■

Email Staff Writer  
Gennady Sheyner at  
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Anna Hoch-Kenny

EPASD’s new O’Connor Street Pump Station on Aug. 8.



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# Public Notices

T.S. No.: 123-019705 Title Order No. 91230355 APN: 072-230-080 Property Address: 1 REIDS ROOST ROAD, WOODSIDE, CA 94062 NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 5/6/2014. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER. A public auction sale of the Trustor's interest will be made to the highest bidder for lawful money of the United States, payable at the time of sale in cash, cashier's check drawn on a state or national bank, cashier's check drawn by a state or federal credit union, or a cashier's check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, or savings bank specified in Section 5102 of the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state will be held by the duly appointed trustee as shown below, of all right, title, and interest conveyed to and now held by the trustee in the hereinafter described property under and pursuant to a Deed of Trust described below. The sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by the Deed of Trust, with interest and late charges thereon, as provided in the note(s), advances, under the terms of the Deed of Trust, interest thereon, fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee for the total amount (at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale) reasonably estimated to be set forth below. The amount may be greater on the day of sale. Trustor: WOODSIDE CAPITAL HOLDINGS, LLC, A CALIFORNIA LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY Duly Appointed Trustee: PLM LOAN MANAGEMENT SERVICES, INC. Recorded 5/14/2014, as Instrument No. 2014-041881, of Official Records in the office of the Recorder of San Mateo County, California, Date of Sale: 9/11/2024 at 1:00 PM Place of Sale: Outside the Marshall Street entrance to the Hall of Justice and Records, 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063 Amount of unpaid balance and other charges: \$304,139.32 (estimated as of the first publication date) Street Address or other common designation of real property: 1 REIDS ROOST ROAD WOODSIDE, CA 94062 A.P.N.: 072-230-080 THE LAND REFERRED TO HEREIN IS SITUATED IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, AND IS DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: PARCEL A: PARCEL 1 AS SHOWN ON THAT CERTAIN MAP ENTITLED "PARCEL MAP OF A RESUBDIVISION OF A PORTION OF RANCHO CANADA DE RAYMUNDO, SHOWN AS PARCELS A AND B ON THAT CERTAIN MAP FILED IN VOLUME 35 OF PARCEL MAPS AT PAGE 10 AND DESCRIBED IN 7099 O.R. 103, 7626 O.R. 390 AND 7691 O.R. 22 RECORDS OF SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA"; FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAN MATEO COUNTY, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, ON OCTOBER 11, 1979 IN VOLUME 48 OF PARCEL MAPS AT PAGES 23 AND 24. EXCEPTING FROM THAT PORTION OF SAID PARCEL 1 LYING WITHIN LOT 1 AS SHOWN ON THAT CERTAIN MAP ENTITLED "MAP OF DIVISION OF ARATA RANCHO, FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAN MATEO COUNTY, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, ON MARCH 4, 1899 IN BOOK "B" OF MAPS AT PAGE 10 AND COPIED INTO BOOK 2 OF MAPS AT PAGE 99, AN UNDIVIDED ONE-HALF INTEREST IN AND TO ALL MINERAL AND OIL RIGHTS AS RESERVED BY ADAM BIANCHI AND SONS, A CO-PARTNERSHIP, IN THAT CERTAIN DEED RECORDED SEPTEMBER 28, 1951 IN BOOK 2135 OF OFFICIAL RECORDS AT PAGE 605 (FILE NO. 62489-J), RECORDS OF SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA. PARCEL B: A NON-EXCLUSIVE EASEMENT FOR INGRESS AND EGRESS WITHIN SO MUCH OF THAT CERTAIN 25 FOOT STRIP LYING WITHIN PARCEL 2 AS SHOWN ON THAT CERTAIN MAP ENTITLED "PARCEL MAP OF A RESUBDIVISION OF A PORTION OF RANCHO CANADA DE RAYMUNDO, SHOWN AS PARCELS A AND B ON THAT CERTAIN MAP FILED IN VOLUME 35 OF PARCEL MAPS AT PAGE 10 AND DESCRIBED IN 7099 O.R. 103, 7626 O.R. 390 AND 7691 O.R. 22 RECORDS OF SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA, SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA"; FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE COUNTY RECORDER OF SAN MATEO COUNTY, STATE OF CALIFORNIA, ON OCTOBER 11, 1979 IN VOLUME 48 OF PARCEL MAPS AT PAGES 23 AND 24, THE CENTERLINE OF WHICH STRIP IS DESIGNATED "C PROPOSED 25' WIDE INGRESS AND EGRESS EASE. APPURTENANT OF PCLS. 1 AND 2"; AS SHOWN ON SAID MAP. SAID EASEMENT IS APPURTENANT TO AND FOR THE BENEFIT OF PARCEL A HEREIN AND WAS CREATED BY RESERVATION IN DEED RECORDED DECEMBER 4, 1979 IN REEL 7919 OF OFFICIAL RECORDS AT IMAGE 2074 (FILE NO. 93906A0),

RECORDS OF SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the street address or other common designation, if any, shown above. The property heretofore described is being sold "as is". If the Trustee is unable to convey title for any reason, the successful bidder's sole and exclusive remedy shall be the return of monies paid to the Trustee, and the successful bidder shall have no further recourse. If no street address or other common designation is shown, directions to the location of the property may be obtained by sending a written request to the beneficiary within 10 days of the date of first publication of this Notice of Sale. The following statements; NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS and NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER are statutory notices for all one to four single family residences and a courtesy notice for all other types of properties. NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS: If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a trustee auction. You will be bidding on a lien, not on the property itself. Placing the highest bid at a trustee auction does not automatically entitle you to free and clear ownership of the property. You should also be aware that the lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien. If you are the highest bidder at the auction, you are or may be responsible for paying off all liens senior to the lien being auctioned off, before you can receive clear title to the property. You are encouraged to investigate the existence, priority, and size of outstanding liens that may exist on this property by contacting the county recorder's office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge you a fee for this information. If you consult either of these resources, you should be aware that the same lender may hold more than one mortgage or deed of trust on the property. NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER: The sale date shown on this notice of sale may be postponed one or more times by the mortgagee, beneficiary, trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about trustee sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and, if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, you may call (844)477-7869 or visit this Internet Website [www.stoxposting.com](http://www.stoxposting.com), using the file number assigned to this case 123-019705. Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on the Internet Website. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale. NOTICE TO TENANT: You may have a right to purchase this property after the trustee auction pursuant to Section 2924m of the California Civil Code. If you are an "eligible tenant buyer," you can purchase the property if you match the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. If you are an "eligible bidder," you may be able to purchase the property if you exceed the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. There are three steps to exercising this right of purchase. First, 48 hours after the date of the trustee sale, you can call (844)477-7869, or visit this internet website [www.stoxposting.com](http://www.stoxposting.com), using the file number assigned to this case 123-019705 to find the date on which the trustee's sale was held, the amount of the last and highest bid, and the address of the trustee. Second, you must send a written notice of intent to place a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 15 days after the trustee's sale. Third, you must submit a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 45 days after the trustee's sale. If you think you may qualify as an "eligible tenant buyer" or "eligible bidder," you should consider contacting an attorney or appropriate real estate professional immediately for advice regarding this potential right to purchase. Date: 8/6/2024 PLM LOAN MANAGEMENT SERVICES, INC., as Trustee Phone: 408-370-4030 5446 Thornwood Drive, Second Floor San Jose, California 95123 Elizabeth Godbey, Vice President (ALM Aug 16, 23 and 30, 2024)

ECUMENICAL HUNGER PROGRAM EHP EHPCARES FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO.: M-298001 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: 1.) ECUMENICAL HUNGER PROGRAM, 2.) EHP, 3.) EHPCARES, located at 2411 PULGAS AVE,

EAST PALO ALTO, CA 94303. Registered owner(s): ECUMENICAL HUNGER PROGRAM 2411 PULGAS AVE EAST PALO ALTO, CA 94303 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 19, 2024. (ALM Aug 16, 23, 30 and Sep 6, 2024)

FRESHLY FOLDED FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO.: M-298204 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: 1.) FRESHLY FOLDED, located at 342 Rutherford Ave., Redwood City, CA 94061. Registered owner(s): FRESHLY FOLDED, LLC. 342 Rutherford Ave. Redwood City, CA 94061 State of Incorporation/Organization: California This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company. 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 August 09, 2024. (ALM Aug 23, 30, Sep 6 and 13, 2024)

OVERCOME PRESS FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO.: M-298119 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: 1.) OVERCOME PRESS, located at 3707 HAMILTON WAY, EMERALD HILLS, CA 94062. Registered owner(s): PHILIP ARTHUR MARCH 3707 HAMILTON WAY EMERALD HILLS, CA 94062 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 August 05, 2024. (ALM Aug 16, 23, 30 and Sep 6, 2024)

MCGARVEY HOME FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO.: M-298087 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: 1.) MCGARVEY HOME, located at 551 PARK WAY, SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94080. Registered owner(s): CARECO INC. 200 SOUTH SPRUCE AVENUE, STE. 1 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 10/16/2014. This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 31, 2024. (ALM Aug 16, 23, 30 and Sep 6, 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)

OMNI DESIGN & RESOURCES FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO.: M-298141 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: 1.) OMNI DESIGN & RESOURCES, located at 11 COWELL LANE, ATHERTON, CA 94027. Registered owner(s): OMNI DESIGN & RESOURCES INC 11 COWELL LANE ATHERTON, CA 94027 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 August 06, 2024. (ALM Aug 16, 23, 30 and Sep 6, 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)

PROLIFIC GARDEN FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO.: M-298189 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: 1.) PROLIFIC GARDEN, located at 229 SANTA CLARA AVE, REDWOOD CITY, CA 94061. Registered owner(s): PENINSULA PRO, INC 229 SANTA CLARA AVE REDWOOD CITY, CA 94061 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 August 09, 2024. (ALM Aug 23, 30, Sep 6 and 13, 2024)

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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)

**To place a legal notice visit [AlmanacNews.com/legal\\_notices/](https://www.almanacnews.com/legal_notices/)**

The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 pm. For assistance email [LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com](mailto:LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com).

# Police say automated license plate cameras helped nab person suspected of stealing a car

By Eleanor Raab

The Atherton Police Department arrested a person suspected of stealing a car on Monday morning, Aug. 19, after the stolen car was detected by the town's network of automated license plate reader cameras.

"This morning ... our (ALPR) camera system detected a vehicle that had been reported as stolen yesterday out of the City of San Mateo," said Atherton Police Chief Steve McCulley in a

town news alert. "Thanks to the swift response of our officers, the suspect driving the stolen car was apprehended shortly after the alert was received."

Atherton police say the person was booked into the San Mateo County Jail on charges of auto theft. According to the news alert, the person was also wanted for several other outstanding felony charges, such as burglary, grand theft and assault.

There are currently 51 ALPRs placed throughout the town of Atherton,

30 of which are privately funded by Atherton residents. Atherton police first proposed installing ALPRs in the town after a string of residential burglaries that took place from November 2018 to February 2019.

Police have previously credited the town's ALPR program for helping to reduce property crime in the town. State crime data shows that there were 125 property crimes (burglary, motor vehicle theft and larceny-theft) in Atherton in 2021, while there were only

77 in 2022 and 88 in 2023.

McCulley said in an email to this news organization that there have been 31 hits on Atherton's ALPR system this year, six of which led to arrests or further investigation.

"The ALPR camera system is an important tool in helping to ensure the security of our Town and our residents," said McCulley in the news alert.

McCulley said in his email that the Atherton Police Department is not currently requesting any additional cameras in town. ■

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

## SCHOOLS

*continued from page 1*

businesses. Students earned a \$1,500 stipend upon completing the program.

### Menlo Park City School District

MPCSD is launching a new vision, mission, core values and strategic directions for this school year, according to the school's Public Information Officer Parke Treadway. The latest strategic directions for 2024-30 outlines three milestones: grow student belonging, strengthen academic excellence and create inspiring environments.

The district also continues to focus on facilities needs as it prepares for a bond measure to be voted on in the November election. Over the summer, fences were added and moved at Hillview Middle School and Encinal Elementary School to enhance safety. If the bond measure passes, the district will continue with improvements to facilities with electric HVAC units with air conditioning on every campus and larger-scale projects like new buildings at Laurel Lower Campus.

### Woodside Elementary School District

Woodside Elementary completed multiple facilities projects including temporary repairs to mitigate creek erosion and installing safety fences on the kindergarten field. According to the school's Aug.

19 newsletter, two bond projects will begin during this school year to build a tech center on campus. The project will start in January 2025 and will be completed by July 2025.

More information will be posted by the district as projects unfold.

### Portola Valley School District

This school year, the Portola Valley School District will be implementing new science and language arts instructional material at Corte Madera and Ormondale Elementary schools. Superintendent Roberta Zarea looks forward to seeing their newly renovated buildings on both campuses continue to be utilized for science, art, music and outdoor learning.

The district is also committed to prioritizing student and staff safety by actively partnering with Woodside Fire Protection District, San Mateo County Sheriff's Office and utilizing the San Mateo County Office of Education's Big 5 emergency response protocols.

Mental health of students and staff will also be a primary focus for the district.

### Ravenswood City School District

In preparation for the new school year, the Ravenswood City School District met with families, community members and faculty to gain feedback for the district-wide project, Ravenswood Promise.

With the help of that feedback, the

district will be focusing on developing language and literacy skills, improving attendance to allow students to build relationships and engage in learning and continuing efforts to find, recruit and retain the best faculty and staff.

Ravenswood Superintendent Gina Sudaria is also proud to announce that every certificated position within the district is filled with a credentialed educator. Over the past years, the number of teacher credentials have decreased across school districts in California leading to major teacher shortages.

### Las Lomas Elementary School District

During the summer, 119 students, transitional kindergarteners through

seventh graders, participated in a four-week summer school program engaging with reading, writing and math lessons. Sixty-eight students were also welcomed to Las Lomas Elementary School in an ocean-themed orientation.

The district's facilities updates are nearly complete after years of construction. Las Lomas and La Entrada Middle School will be opening new classrooms, and upgrading roofs and HVAC units, enhancing outdoor spaces and expanding parking lots. In addition to these modernization efforts, Las Lomas has a new administrative building and La Entrada has renovated its school's Jensen Hall. ■

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



Lizzy Myers

New and returning students enter campus on the first day of school at Costano Elementary in East Palo Alto on Aug. 14.



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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

**Soul 4Kidz will hold free concert on Aug. 25**

Join children's soul band Soul 4Kidz at the Belle Haven Community Campus to hear family friendly soul music. The concert will take place at the campus located at 100 Terminal Ave. from 11 to 11:45 a.m. on Sunday, Aug. 25.

Soul 4Kidz is a musical trio that hails from Mill Valley, and performs classic children's songs such as "Baby Shark," "Wheels on the Bus" and "Three Little Birds" with a "soulful twist."

The event is free to attend.

**Menlo Park pilots free mulch and compost program**

Menlo Park is piloting a new program to provide city residents with free compost and mulch for their gardens and yards.

The mulch and compost can be picked up from self-serve piles located in Bedwell Bayfront Park at 1600 Marsh Road. Appointments are not required. The mulch and compost will be located just inside the front gate, near the

entrance to the park, according to Assistant Public Works Director Brian Henry.

Since the piles of mulch and compost are self-serve, residents are asked to bring their own shovels, gloves and containers to fill. Residents are limited to 64 gallons of compost per resident per week.

"The city partnered with Recology to provide this resource for residents," said Henry. "If it is popular, the giveaway program can be expanded to include additional sites and dates."

The first piles of mulch and compost were set out in the park on Aug. 9, and city staff will continue replenishing the mulch and compost stocks every other week until the end of the pilot program in November. The next mulch and compost piles will be set out in the park on Aug. 23 and Sept. 6.

Residents who need more compost than is available at Bedwell Bayfront Park can visit Recology's Shoreway Environmental Center in San Carlos, where they can grab up to two 50-pound bags of compost each week.

—Eleanor Raab

**SUSPECTED BOMB**

*continued from page 1*

fan to pull mosquitoes into a mesh bag, where they are held until our staff collect the trap the next day," she said. "Traps are typically set in the afternoon and collected the following morning."

She also said that the Vector Control district is currently making sure to provide extra information about the traps throughout their networks.

"The traps are all labeled with our logo and contact information," said Curtis-Robles. "People can always call with any questions. Every few years we receive a call about one of our traps, but it is very infrequent that they receive attention from the public."

McCulley said in an email to this news organization that the Atherton Police Department was first alerted to the presence

of the device by a person who was walking on the street.

San Mateo County Sheriff's officers and what appeared to be a county bomb squad truck appeared on the scene around 1:30 p.m.

"It was reported as a possible suspicious device," McCulley said on Wednesday afternoon, Aug. 14. "We are having the bomb squad respond as a precaution."

The road closure began around 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 14, and was back open by 2:20 p.m., according to a town news alert. ■

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



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**Milda Jasins**

December 30, 1935 – July 20, 2024

On Saturday, July 20, 2024, Milda Frances Jasins of Menlo Park, California, peacefully passed away at the age of 88.

Milda was born and raised in Athol, Massachusetts. She was of Lithuanian heritage and maintained a strong relationship with her relatives there. She attended Regis College, a private Roman Catholic university in Weston, Massachusetts. When Milda studied there, it was a women's college, and she graduated with a B.A. degree in Mathematics, rare for a woman at that time.



Milda's professional life began at Bell Labs in New Jersey where she worked as a programmer. Then she went on to a long career at IBM, joining as a programmer in Manhattan at the Time/Life building. Later she transferred within IBM to Palo Alto, California, eventually becoming a project manager. She was admired for her technical, professional, and interpersonal skills.

After retiring, Milda taught low impact aerobics at the Palo Alto YMCA for many years. Her volunteer work included assisting those in need to file their income tax returns. Milda maintained her connection with her religion and was a member of St. Denis Roman Catholic Church.

Milda was fun-loving and participated in many sports, including tennis and skiing. She enjoyed the arts, attending the ballet, classical music performances, and TheatreWorks in Mountain View. She also loved traveling around the world and had friends in many countries. Later in life, Milda loved walking the hills of Sharon Heights.

Her many friends describe her as the nicest, sweetest person they knew. She was always jovial, inquisitive, enthusiastic, smart, and active. She will be missed terribly by her friends and family.

Milda died of complications of Alzheimer's and Multiple Myeloma. She is survived by her brother John Jasins of Massachusetts, nephew Fred Jasins of Washington, D.C., and nephew John Jasins currently residing in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

A family service is planned in Massachusetts. If you wish to make a donation in Milda's memory, please consider Doctors Without Borders or St. Denis Catholic Church in Menlo Park, California.

PAID OBITUARY

# Viewpoint

IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES

## Rethinking Portola Valley

By John Richards

### GUEST OPINION

We have a new town manager in Portola Valley who is engaged in a monumental task: rebuilding the town's staff with qualified professionals who can guide us into the future. For a bit of context, in 2023, almost three quarters of the staff left, an unprecedented number in Portola Valley where retaining staff had never been an issue. Acknowledging the real reasons for this tectonic shift might help our new town manager navigate the re-build. Most importantly, we need to recognize that this upheaval was generated by us,

the town residents.

It seems to have begun with the Stanford (University) proposal to build a number of faculty housing and affordable units on Stanford property along Alpine Road. A small group of self-appointed resident experts, including some of those associated with Portola Valley Neighbors United, were not happy with the way the Town Council responded to this project and later to the state's demands for more housing. With an assist from the internet and virtual anonymity, these "experts" subjected

staff to a constant barrage of increasingly personal criticism for doing their jobs.

And by most accounts, staff had done their jobs very well. Regional experts called our draft housing element "the best in San Mateo County, if not the state" before it was set aside for yet another pointless review. The new Town Council majority that took over in 2023, while seeming to favor appeasement in the face of the growing controversy, sent the housing element back time after time for more tweaks, longer meetings, and pointless re-litigation of the same material. This of course emboldened those who wanted to prevent all changes and stall adoption of the document, and resulted in increased attacks on the staff for trying to meet state mandates and deadlines.

Between March of 2023 and early this year, Portola Valley lost its town attorney, town

manager, town clerk, assistant to the town manager, planning technician, town planning and building director, administrative assistant, and building technician. More than a few of these valued employees saw working for the town of Portola Valley as their "retirement job," but the attacks and lack of support made it impossible to stay. Overall, the town saw the departure of nearly 75% of its staff during that time. Many of us who have observed or participated in local government for decades believe this was due to the unfair and unrelenting attacks from a small group of people who simply did not want to face facts.

Now we have a new town manager, who has the difficult task of rebuilding an entire town administration. Experienced staffers are always tough to come by in a region that suffers from such a high cost of living. And worse, the

tight-knit community of municipal employees has learned that you might want to think twice about taking a job in a town that treats its employees with little or no respect.

We live in a place of amazing natural beauty, with a wonderfully supportive community of very able folks. But we also live in a time when the demands of the state, the pressures of an ever growing population of unhoused residents (leaving us with the well known housing crisis), along with all the other unwelcome complexities of the 21st century, make running a town far more difficult than ever before. We need those smart planners and managers and attorneys more than ever. Let's not drive them away again. ■

*John Richards is a former Portola Valley council member. He served on the council from 2009 to 2022.*



## Employment

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The Almanac

Springing  
into

fall

The 2024-25 arts season looks to be the busiest since 2020. Here's what's on tap this autumn.

By Heather Zimmerman and Karla Kane

Though spring is traditionally the season when everything comes back to life, it's hard to beat the fall for seeing the Peninsula's many arts groups come back into blossom. And this fall, the arts are once again in full bloom everywhere.

Read on for a preview of what's coming up this fall in music, on the stage, in visual arts and author events.

## Concerts

**California Pops Orchestra:** Variety show, featuring a mix of music from the movies, Broadway, jazz, Latin and more. (Sept. 29); Christmas show (Dec. 22). [californiapopsorchestra.com](http://californiapopsorchestra.com).

**Community School of Music and Arts:** Ben Rosenblum: Jazz Around the World (Sept. 14); Alexis Lombre (Oct. 12); Juanito Pascal and friends: An Evening of Flamenco Music and Dance (Nov. 2); Chrysi Nanou: The Known World - Music For Piano and Mixed Media For and From a Changing Climate (Nov. 22). [arts4all.org](http://arts4all.org).

**Earthwise Productions:** Maryna Krut (Aug. 30); Carmen Staaf and friends (Sept. 6). [bit.ly/EarthwisePaloAlto](http://bit.ly/EarthwisePaloAlto).

**Feldman's Books:** Jerry Garcia in the Lower Mission, a collaboration with Magic Theatre and Culture Clash, with music by Steve Wyreman, Joshua Raoul Brody, and David Gans and selected scenes from Richard Montoya's upcoming jukebox musical, "Jerry Garcia in the Lower Mission" (Oct. 5); ann annie trio (Oct. 8). [feldmansbooks.net](http://feldmansbooks.net).

**Filoli:** Bluesy Rock Night with Wreckless Strangers (Aug. 25); Latin Jazz Night with Trio Paz (Aug. 26). [filoli.org/summer-stage](http://filoli.org/summer-stage).

**The Fox Theatre:** Lasso (Sept. 11); Alvaro Torres (Sept. 13); Las Leyendas del Mariachi (Sept. 14); Grupo Niche (Sept. 20); The Sweet Caroline Tour starring Jay White (Oct. 12); Beatles vs. Stones - A Musical Showdown (Oct. 18); Rocky Mountain High Experience: A John Denver Christmas (Dec. 8). [foxrwc.com/event-schedule](http://foxrwc.com/event-schedule).



Courtesy Anna Sidana

**ANNA SIDANA - 'ENLIGHTENED'** Bay Area painter Anna Sidana pivoted from a tech career of several decades to a new career in art, and her work has been well-received. Her colorful, large-scale, botanically inspired oil paintings have proved themselves equally at home at Burning Man as at the London Biennale. Last fall, she was featured in the de Young Museum's prestigious open exhibition. The Pamela Walsh Gallery is featuring Sidana in her second solo exhibition at the gallery, titled "Entanglements." Sept. 7-Oct. 12 at Pamela Walsh Gallery, 540 Ramona St., Palo Alto, [pamelawalshgallery.com](http://pamelawalshgallery.com). (HZ)

**The Guild Theatre:** Local Sound Series with Marty O'Reilly and R.O. Shapiro (Aug. 24); Riekestra fundraiser for the Riekes Center (Aug. 25); The Verve Pipe (Aug. 29); Funk Fatale (Aug. 30); Local Sound Series with La Sombra, Mommy Mommy, and StrateJacket (Sept. 6); Fleetwood Macrame (Sept. 14); The Love Handles '70s and '80s dance party (Sept. 20); Hayes Carll & the Band of Heathens (Sept. 22); Melvin Seals & JGB with Mads Tolling (Sept. 27-28); The Lettermen (Oct. 5); Haley Heynderickx (Oct. 6); Local Sound Series with RIVVRS and The False

Bottoms Band (Oct. 10); Modern English (Oct. 18); Hiss Golden Messenger solo (Oct. 19); Palo Alto Jazz Alliance presents Sarah McKenzie Quartet (Oct. 20); John 5 (Oct. 23); Particle Kid (Oct. 24); The Mother Hips (Oct. 26); Steely Dead (Oct. 27); Jeff Tweedy (Oct. 28-30); Taylorween with Let's Sing Taylor (Oct. 31); Rebirth Brass Band (Nov. 1); Joanne Shaw Taylor (Nov. 6); Roddy Radiation (of The Specials) (Nov. 7); Pink Talking Fish (Nov. 9); Big Head Todd and the Monsters (Nov. 15); Kathleen Edwards (Nov. 16); Lucero (Nov. 17); Mat Kearney (Nov. 19); ZZ Ward (Nov. 21);

Tainted Love (Nov. 22); Better Than Ezra (Dec. 5); Shovels & Rope (Dec. 7). [guildtheatre.com](http://guildtheatre.com).

**Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts:** Beijing Guitar Duo (Sept. 21); Flying High: A Tribute to Female Jazz Vocalists (Sept. 28). [mvcpa.com/events](http://mvcpa.com/events).

**Oshman Family JCC:** Kommuna Lux in concert (Sept. 26); Huu Bac Quintet (Sept. 28); Six13 Hanukkah Special (Dec. 15). [paloaltojcc.org](http://paloaltojcc.org).

**Shoreline Amphitheatre:** Slightly Stoopid and Dirty Heads (Aug. 23); Santana and Counting Crows (Aug. 27); Five Finger Death Punch (Sept. 3);

Thirty Seconds to Mars (Sept. 4); Train, with REO Speedwagon (Sept. 7); Hozier (Sept. 10); Glass Animals (Sept. 11); Dan + Shay (Sept. 14); Anderson .Paak & The Free Nationals (Sept. 21); Kidz Bop Live 2024 (Sept. 22); Jon Pardi (Sept. 27); Korn (Oct. 6); Meghan Trainor (Oct. 18); Imagine Dragons (Oct. 20); Porter Robinson (Oct. 25). [livenation.com](http://livenation.com).

**Sound Union:** David Luning (Sept. 6); David Hobbes album release (Sept. 15); John Batdorf (Sept. 21); Luke Winslow-King (Oct. 6). [eventbrite.com/o/sound-union-77566711633](http://eventbrite.com/o/sound-union-77566711633).

**Stanford Live:** Fiesta Sonora (Sept. 29); New Latin Voices: Alejandro Brittes (Oct. 4); Debashish Bhattacharya Trio (Oct. 10); New Latin Voices: Luciane Dom (Oct. 11); Rob Kapilow's What Makes It Great: Swing! The Great Big Bands of the Swing Era (Oct. 13); The Dynamic Miss Faye Carol (Oct. 20); Broadway singer Kelli O'Hara (Oct. 23); singer-songwriter Stephen Henderson (Oct. 26); Danilo Pérez, John Patitucci, Brian Blade (Oct. 30); Katherine Goforth: Cabaret Songs (Nov. 8); Nobuntu (Nov. 13); Jazz Mafia (Dec. 11); A Chanticleer Christmas (Dec. 12); post-modern diva Meow Meow's Feline Festive Holiday (Dec. 13); Boleros de Navidad featuring Tres Souls (Dec. 14). [live.stanford.edu](http://live.stanford.edu).

## Classical

**Bay Choral Guild:** "Christmas Spectacular," including selections from "Messiah." (Dec. 14-15). [baychoralguild.org](http://baychoralguild.org).

**California Bach Society:** "Tesori Dorati, Italian Baroque Treasures" (Oct. 25-27); "Gaudete, A Christmas Dialogue Across Centuries" (Dec. 13-15). [calbach.org](http://calbach.org).

**Community School of Music and Arts:** Von Bringham: If Music Be the Food of Love (Oct. 4); Ráyo Furuta and Laura Ward (Dec. 7); Merit Scholars Winter Concert (Dec. 14). [arts4all.org](http://arts4all.org).

**Ives Collective:** Fall Salon Series: Bohuslav Martinů Piano Quartet No.1, H.287 (Oct. 6);

## FALL ARTS PREVIEW

Fall Collective: Works by Martinů, Fauré and Dvořák (Oct. 8). [ivescollective.org](http://ivescollective.org).

**Music at Kohl Mansion:** Borromeo String Quartet (Oct. 20); Gryphon Trio (Nov. 24); San Francisco Girls Chorus (Dec. 15). [musicatkohl.org](http://musicatkohl.org).

**Music@Menlo:** The Miró Quartet performs Haydn's String Quartet op. 77, no. 1, Debussy's String Quartet and a new composition written for the quartet by Kevin Puts (Oct. 5). [musicatmenlo.org](http://musicatmenlo.org).

**Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra:** This chamber orchestra for youth presents concerts from its five ensembles. Senior PACO (Nov. 2); Debut Orchestra (Nov. 9, 2 p.m.); Sinfonia Orchestra (Nov. 9, 7:30 p.m.); Holiday Extravaganza (Dec. 8). [pacomusic.org](http://pacomusic.org).

**Palo Alto Philharmonic:** Baroque concert featuring performances by small ensembles and soloists (Sept. 7); "A Journey Toward Redemption," with works by Farrenc, Strauss and Grieg (Oct. 19); Fall chamber concert (Nov. 9); "Transcending Fate" featuring works by Frank, Uebayashi and Beethoven (Dec. 14); [paphil.org](http://paphil.org).

**Peninsula Women's Chorus:** "Cultivating Hope" (Dec. 13-14). [pwchorus.org](http://pwchorus.org).

**Redwood Symphony:** "Heard, Holler and Hallelujah," works by Wynton Marsalis, Rachmaninoff and Sibelius (Sept. 21); "Halloween Concert: Musical Pictures," with a world premiere by Kirke Mechem and Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" (Oct. 27);

"Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony," with works by Shostakovich and Mozart (Nov. 23). [redwoodsymphony.org](http://redwoodsymphony.org).

**Schola Cantorum:** Carmina Burana (Oct. 27); "The Heart of the Season!" (Dec. 15); Messiah Sing (Dec. 16) [scholacantorum.org](http://scholacantorum.org). **Silicon Valley Boychoir:** "Under One Roof" (Dec. 14). [svboychoir.org](http://svboychoir.org).

**Stanford Live:** Sundays with the St. Lawrence Quartet, with Korngold String Sextet (Oct. 6); pianist Hélène Grimaud, works by Beethoven, Brahms and Bach (Nov. 3); Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale, "Vivaldi, Venice and the Four Seasons" (Nov. 8); harpist Xavier de Maistre, works by De Falla, Debussy, Smetana and others (Nov. 10); cellist Alisa Weilerstein and pianist Inon Barnatan, works by Shostakovich and Brahms (Nov. 20); Isidore String Quartet, works by Ravel, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Bartók and others (Dec. 8); Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale, "A Bach Christmas" (Dec. 11). [live.stanford.edu](http://live.stanford.edu).



Courtesy Noelle Garnier

**HUU BAC QUINTET** Montreal-based musician Huu Bac Quach brings a global twist to jazz, incorporating Asian, North and South American elements through his mastery of instruments that highlight his own Vietnamese and Chinese heritage — the dan bau (Vietnamese monochord), the erhu (Chinese fiddle) — as well as the quena (Andean flute) and the jazz guitar. He founded the ensemble that bears his name a little over a decade ago, assembling a group of some of Montreal's other top jazz musicians. The quintet performs original works that spotlight the unique voices of the dan bau, erhu and quena, expertly melding with violin, drums and piano in tight melodies that still leave plenty of room for improvisation. Sept. 28, 7 p.m., at Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. Tickets start at \$39.19. [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com). (HZ)

### Stage

**Fuse Theatre:** Bay Area Pride community cabaret (Aug. 24); [fusetheatre.org](http://fusetheatre.org).

**Hillbarn Theatre:** "Always ... Patsy Cline" (Aug. 23-Sept. 15); "Wait Until Dark" (Oct. 17-Nov. 3); "Anastasia" (Dec. 5-Dec. 29). [hillbarntheatre.org](http://hillbarntheatre.org).

**Los Altos Stage Company:** "Waiting for Godot" (Sept.

5-29); "A Christmas Story: The Musical" (Nov. 29-Dec. 22); [losaltosstage.org](http://losaltosstage.org).

**Palo Alto Players:** "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory"

(Sept. 6-22); "Fiddler on the Roof" (Nov. 6-24). [paplayers.org](http://paplayers.org).

**Palo Alto Children's Theatre:** "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown" (Sept. 11-29); "Jack and the Beanstalk" (Oct. 5-6); "Sleeping Beauty" (Oct. 26-27); "Chang'e and the Moon," an original fairytale by Playhouse Participants Sarina Shah, Pearl Yeh-Lee and Agastya Goel (Nov. 16-17); "The Gingerbread Man" (Dec. 21-23). [bit.ly/3MfZIm1](http://bit.ly/3MfZIm1).

**The Pear Theatre:** "The Black Experience Festival" (through Aug. 25); "Once on This Island" (Sept. 13-Oct. 13); "The Agitators" (Nov. 22-Dec. 15). [thepear.org/season23](http://thepear.org/season23).

**Peninsula Youth Theatre:** "Mary Poppins" (Nov. 16-24). [pyt.net](http://pyt.net).

**Stanford Live:** UnHoly Sunday with Peaches Christ (Oct. 27). [live.stanford.edu](http://live.stanford.edu).

**Sunnyvale Community Players:** "In the Heights" (Sept. 7-29); "The Sound of Music" (Oct. 26-Nov. 10). [sunnyvaleplayers.org](http://sunnyvaleplayers.org).

**TheatreWorks Silicon Valley:** "King James" (Oct. 9-Nov. 3); "Miss Bennet" (Dec. 4-29); [theatreworks.org](http://theatreworks.org).

**West Bay Opera:** "La sonnambula" (Oct. 11-20). [wbopera.org](http://wbopera.org).

**Upstage Theatre:** "Alice By Heart" (Oct. 25-27). [upstagetheater.net](http://upstagetheater.net).

### Dance

**Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts:** Smuin's Dance Series 1 (Sept. 13-15); Smuin's Christmas Ballet (Dec. 5-8). [mvcpa.com/events](http://mvcpa.com/events).

**Peninsula Lively Arts:** "Ghost Dances: A Día De Los Muertos Tale Of Two Worlds" (Oct. 27-28); "Hip-Hop Halloween" (Oct. 28-29); "Nutcracker Sweet" (Dec. 2-3); "Hip-Hop Nutcracker Sweet" (Dec. 9-10); "Nutcracker" (Dec. 15-16); "Hip-Hop Nutcracker" (Dec. 16-17). [peninsulalivelyarts.org](http://peninsulalivelyarts.org).

**Stanford Live:** "Carnival of the Animals," a work of dance, poetry and music written and conceived by Marc Bamuthi Joseph (Oct. 27); "Rite of Spring;" Yang Liping and Peacock Contemporary Dance (Dec 6-8). [live.stanford.edu](http://live.stanford.edu).

### Comedy

**The Guild Theatre:** San Francisco Stand-Up Comedy Competition Round 1 (Aug. 31); San Francisco Stand-Up Comedy Competition Round 2 (Sept. 7). [guildtheatre.com](http://guildtheatre.com).

**Stanford Live:** Roy Wood Jr. (Oct. 3); Mike E. Winfield (Nov. 9). [live.stanford.edu](http://live.stanford.edu).



Courtesy Scott Lasky

**'CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY'** Palo Alto Players open their season with a world of pure imagination, in a musical based on the Roald Dahl children's book of the same name and the 1971 film adapted from it. The show tells of humble Charlie Bucket, who becomes one of five lucky children to win a visit behind the scenes at the fabulous factory run by innovative candymaker Willy Wonka. Brattiness, greed and other sins lead the other children to some surprising fates, but Mr. Wonka might have a nicer plan for Charlie (Russell Nakagawa, pictured above left) and his chaperone, Grandpa Joe (Steven Guire Knight, above right). The show features music by songwriters Scott Wittman and Marc Shaiman ("Hairspray") and songs from the movie by Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newl. Sept. 6-22 at the Lucie Stern Theater, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. \$20-\$63. [paplayers.org](http://paplayers.org). (HZ)

See **SPRINGING INTO FALL**, page 22



Veronica Weber

**ANDERSON COLLECTION 10TH ANNIVERSARY** A decade ago, the Anderson Collection at Stanford University welcomed visitors for the first time to view the impressive collection of contemporary art amassed by Bay Area family of Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson and Mary Patricia Anderson Pence. To kick off two exhibitions celebrating the museum's 10th anniversary, the Anderson hosts a community day of art-making, gallery talks and performances taking place throughout the museum. Seen here, a visitor to the Anderson Collection descends the museum's grand staircase on Sept. 15, 2014. The Anderson's Community Day takes place Sept. 22, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., at the Anderson Collection, 314 Lomita Drive, Stanford. [anderson.stanford.edu](http://anderson.stanford.edu). (HZ)

Kings Mountain  
**Art Fair**  
Fine arts under the redwoods



**LABOR DAY WEEKEND**

Aug 31, Sept 1 & 2  
10 am – 5 pm

Kids' activities  
Food & beverages

13889 Skyline Blvd.  
Woodside, CA

[kingsmountainartfair.org](http://kingsmountainartfair.org)

**SPRINGING INTO FALL**

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*Film*

**Silicon Valley Jewish Film Festival:** Most screenings held online, with select special screenings and events held in Palo Alto and Saratoga. (Oct. 26-Nov. 10) [svjff.org](http://svjff.org). **United Nations Association Film Festival:** Various venues in Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Stanford and San Francisco. (Oct. 17-27). [unaff.org](http://unaff.org).

*Museum & Galleries*

**Anderson Collection:** "Bringing It Home," a celebration of the relationships between artists and the Anderson family (Sept. 15-Feb. 16); "An Expanded Lens," pairing works from the collection with contemporary pieces on loan from the Anderson family

(Sept. 22-Aug. 17). [anderson.stanford.edu/programs-exhibitions](http://anderson.stanford.edu/programs-exhibitions).

**Bryant Street Gallery:** Mixed-media works by Heidi Jung (through Sept. 14). [bryantstreet.com](http://bryantstreet.com).

**Cantor Arts Center:** "Archive Rooms: Selections from Special Collections at Stanford Libraries" (ongoing); "Livien Yen: Thirsty" solo exhibition (through Feb. 2); "Spirit House" (Sept. 4-Jan. 26). [museum.stanford.edu](http://museum.stanford.edu).

**Community School of Music and Arts Mohr Gallery:** "Magical Monarchs," paintings by Pedro Rivas Lopez (through Sept. 6). [arts4all.org](http://arts4all.org).

**Djerassi Resident Artists Program:** Fall sculpture hikes (Sept. 8 and 29; Nov. 3 and 24); Artful Harvest gala (Oct. 20) [djerassi.org](http://djerassi.org).

**The Foster Museum:** Selected works by watercolor painter Tony Foster; [thefoster.org](http://thefoster.org).

**Gallery House:** "Echoed Emotions," a group show in a variety of media by the

cooperative gallery's member artists. [galleryhouse.art](http://galleryhouse.art).

**Gallery 9 Los Altos:** Photography by Bill Moy and Dave Massolo (through August); paintings and mixed-media works by Naomi Mindelzun (September); ceramic works by Shigemi Sanders and Kiyoko Michot (October); paintings by Joyce Savre (November); Holiday group show (December). [gallery9losaltos.com](http://gallery9losaltos.com).

**Los Altos History Museum:** Expressions: Multicultural Artist Showcase" (through Sept. 15); plus a variety of permanent exhibits exploring the history and culture of the Los Altos and Silicon Valley region. [losaltos.history.org](http://losaltos.history.org).

**The Main Gallery:** "Together," a group show highlighting works by the gallery's member artists in a variety of media. (through Sept. 10); [themaingallery.org](http://themaingallery.org).

**Museum of American Heritage:** "Threading the Past: History of Clothing Technology"



Courtesy Cantor Arts Center

**'SPIRIT HOUSE'** For the upcoming exhibition Spirit House, Stanford University's Cantor Arts Center considers ghosts, haunted spaces, reincarnation and more, inspired by spirit houses – the small devotional structures of Thailand that provide shelter for supernatural beings. As part of the museum's Asian American Art Initiative, Spirit House includes work by 33 Asian American and Asian diasporic contemporary artists, examining the concept of ghosts and hauntings through visual culture and exploring how art can be a bridge between worlds. Shown here is "The Crone," a mixed-media work on canvas by artist Lien Truong. Sept. 4-Jan. 26 at the Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Way; free; [museum.stanford.edu/visit](http://museum.stanford.edu/visit). (KK)



Courtesy Walter Kolm Entertainment

**LASSO** Grammy-winning Venezuelan pop musician and singer-songwriter Lasso, according to his website, holds the record for the most No. 1 singles (18) on the charts in his country and more than a billion streams on Spotify. The superstar kicks off his U.S. tour (titled "Quedarse Solo Para Siempre") at the Fox Theatre in Redwood City this autumn, with a performance sure to showcase his many hits. Sept. 11, 7 p.m., Fox Theatre, 2221 Broadway St., Redwood City; \$89-\$100; [foxrwc.showare.com/orderticketsvenue.asp?p=767](http://foxrwc.showare.com/orderticketsvenue.asp?p=767). (KK)

(through Sept. 15); "From Shot to Print: Cameras and Tools" (through fall 2024); "Finding Your Way: Navigation Tools Large and Small" (through 2024). [moah.org](http://moah.org).

**Pacific Art League:** Summer Camp Artist Showcase (through August); solo exhibition by abstract artist Helen Kim (Sept. 6-24); Memory Lane group exhibition (Sept. 6-24); solo exhibition by painter Darren Kerr (Oct. 4-22); Palo Alto Camera Club group exhibition (Oct. 4-22); 103rd anniversary exhibition (Nov. 9-Jan. 14). [pacificartleague.org](http://pacificartleague.org).

**Palo Alto Art Center:** GROW!, a group exhibition that explores history, sustainability and climate adaptation, and our connections with the natural world. (Sept. 21-Dec. 15); Great Glass Pumpkin Patch (Sept. 28-29). [cityofpaloalto.org](http://cityofpaloalto.org).

**Pamela Walsh Gallery:** Summer group exhibition (through Aug. 31); "Entanglements," paintings by Anna Sidana (Sept. 7-Oct. 12); "Echoes," works by Larry Horowitz (Oct. 19-Nov. 27). [pamelawalshgallery.com](http://pamelawalshgallery.com).

**Portola Gallery:** Works in a variety of media by local artists. "Vintage Trucks and Tractors," paintings by Jerry Peters (through Aug. 31). [portolaartgallery.com](http://portolaartgallery.com).

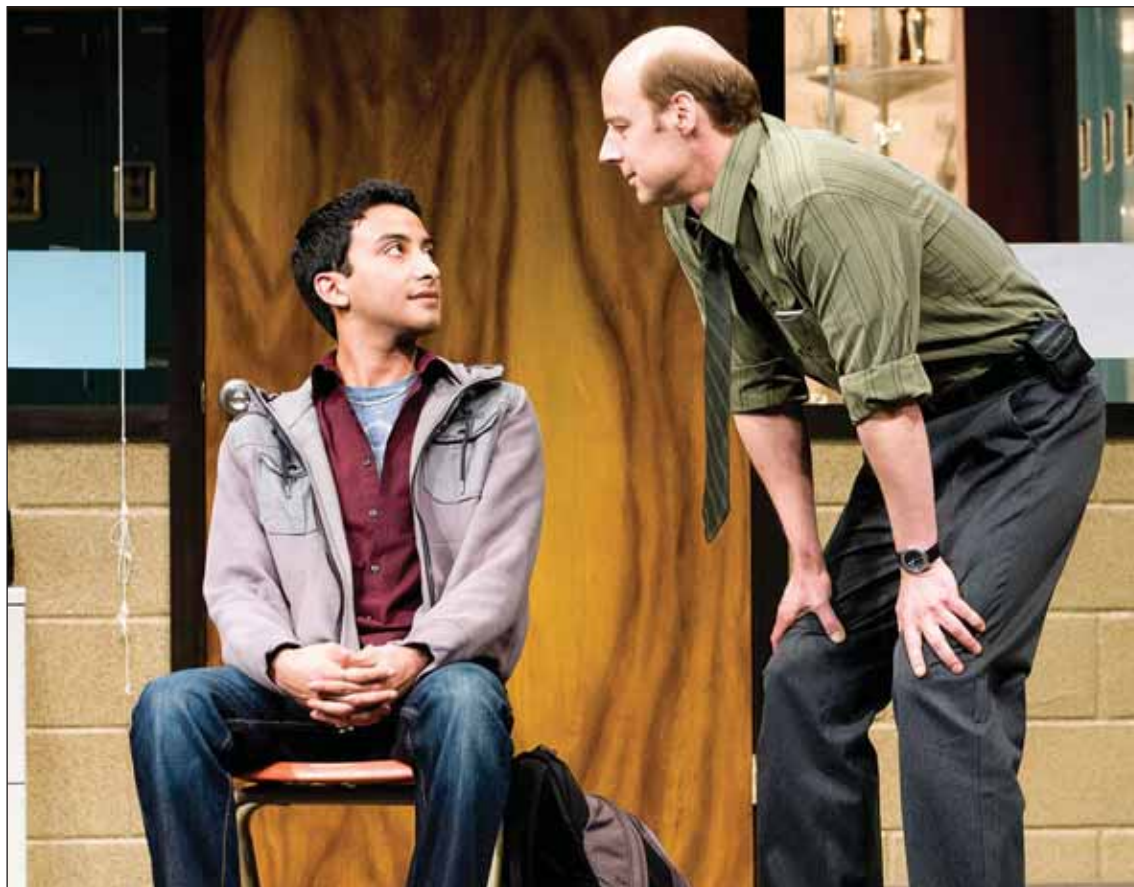
**QD Gallery:** Works in a variety of media by 35 local artists. [qdgallery.com](http://qdgallery.com).

**Qualia Contemporary Art Gallery:** "LYU Peng: Beautiful Pictures" (through Sept. 7). [qualiacontemporaryart.com](http://qualiacontemporaryart.com).

**Redwood City Art Kiosk:** "Kiku no hana" by Lisa Solomon, with curation by Jennifer Easton. The installation explores the fate of area chrysanthemum farms after Japanese-American farmers were incarcerated during World War II (through September); "Reflections of My Being," an interactive installation by Casa Circulo Cultural with community help, in conjunction with Redwood City's annual Day of the Dead celebration (Oct. 4-5); "Frida's Kitchen on a Day of the Dead," an installation by Casa Circulo Cultural (October); an installation by Oakland-based artist John Roloff closes out the year (dates TBA). [fungcollaboratives.org](http://fungcollaboratives.org).

**Viewpoints Gallery:** "Into the Woods," landscapes by plein-air painter Julia Munger Seelos (through Aug. 31); watercolor and gouache works highlighting natural themes by Annie Haines (September); modern landscape and nature paintings by Karen White (October); watercolor

See **SPRINGING INTO FALL**, page 24



Courtesy Mark Kitaoka

**'KING JAMES'** Acclaimed playwright Rajiv Joseph and TheatreWorks Artistic Director Giovanna Sardelli have a long, productive history together and their latest collaboration is the regional premiere of Joseph's "King James," which Sardelli is directing. The buddy comedy follows the years-spanning friendship of Matt and Shawn, two basketball fans who love the Cleveland Cavaliers and superstar LeBron James (the titular king). Covering the years (and basketball seasons) from 2004 to 2016, the show explores the highs and lows on and off the court. Pictured is TheatreWorks' world premiere of Joseph's "The North Pool," directed by Giovanna Sardelli, which featured, from left, Adam Poss and Remi Sandri. Oct. 12-Nov. 3 (previews Oct. 9-11), Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View; \$34-\$115; [theatreworks.org/mainstage/season-54/](http://theatreworks.org/mainstage/season-54/). (KK)



Courtesy The Joy Harris Literary Agency

**SEINA WEDLICK** Experience a visit to a Nigerian night market through the eyes of a young girl in the latest work by Bay Area-based children's author Seina Wedlick. Her newest picture book "Night Market," which also features colorful illustrations by Nigerian artist Briana Mukodiri Uchendu, tells a story celebrating curiosity about a young girl discovering everything from tasty treats to magic tricks as she meets various market vendors. Wedlick's debut picture book, "Naming Ceremony," published last year. She appears at Books Inc. Palo Alto in a special storytime appearance, reading from "Night Market." Sept. 15, noon-1 p.m., at Books Inc. Palo Alto, 855 El Camino Real #74, Palo Alto, booksinc.net. (HZ)



Courtesy Riot Artists

**MARYNA KRUT** Singer-songwriter Maryna Krut is a virtuoso of the 64-stringed bandura, an instrument unique to her homeland of Ukraine. The large-scale instrument, which takes two hands to play, offers a sound similar to a harpsichord. Though Ukrainian folk serves as the foundation for her music, her songs draw heavily on pop, rock, soul and jazz influences — and her dreamy, soaring vocals tie it all together. Krut performs in a concert presented by Earthwise Productions. Aug. 30, 8 p.m., at the Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Road, \$20, bit.ly/MKEarthwise. (HZ)

**SPRINGING INTO FALL**

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and acrylic portraits of birds by Floy Zittin (November); city scenes and landscapes on wooden panels by painter Caroline McClintic (December). [viewpointsgallery.com](http://viewpointsgallery.com).

**Art Festivals**

**Palo Alto Festival of the Arts:** Aug. 24-25. [paloaltochamber.com/festival-of-the-arts](http://paloaltochamber.com/festival-of-the-arts)

**Kings Mountain Art Fair:** Aug. 31-Sept. 2. [kingsmountainartfair.org](http://kingsmountainartfair.org).

**Mountain View Art & Wine Festival:** Sept. 7-8. [mountainview.miramarevents.com](http://mountainview.miramarevents.com).

**Portola Valley Arts Fest:** Sept. 14. [sites.google.com/view/portolavalleyartsfest/home](http://sites.google.com/view/portolavalleyartsfest/home).

**Author Events**

**Books Inc. Palo Alto:** Kara H.L. Chen, "Asking for a Friend" (Aug. 25); Charlotte Cheng, "I Miss You the Most" and "Roar-choo!" (Sept. 1); Seina Wedlick, "The Night Market" (Sept. 15); Alison Owings and Del Seymour, "The Mayor of the Tenderloin," (Sept. 17); Adrian Daub, "The Cancel Culture Panic" (Sept. 24); Ginny Kubitz Moyer, "A Golden Life!" (Sept. 26); Christy Holloway, "Whispers Across A Sea" (Oct. 15); Mike Chen, "What

If ... Marc Spector was Host to Venom?" (part of the Marvel What If ...? series) (Oct. 22); Carole Bumpus, "Adventures on Land and Sea: Searching for Culinary Pleasures in Provence and the Cote d'Azur" (Nov. 14) [booksinc.net](http://booksinc.net).

**Books Inc. Mountain View:** Ellie Yang Camp, "Louder Than The Lies" (Oct. 23). [booksinc.net](http://booksinc.net).

**Feldman's Books:** The Literature of War & Peace: A Symposium Part I (Oct. 11) and The Literature of War & Peace: A Symposium Part II (Oct. 18). [feldmansbooks.net](http://feldmansbooks.net).

**Kepler's Books:** Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, "The Art of Power" (Aug. 26); Jesmyn Ward with Kai Harris, "Let Us Descend" (Sept. 5); Jamil Zaki with Charles Duhigg, "Hope for Cynics" (Sept. 6); Liane Moriarty, "Here One Moment" (Sept. 9); Connie Chung with Angie Coiro, "Connie: A Memoir" (Sept. 26); Rumaan Alam, "Entitlement" (Sept. 27); Oliver Radclyffe with Julie Lythcott-Haims, "Frighten the Horses" (Oct. 2). [keplers.org](http://keplers.org).

**Linden Tree:** Amanda Glaze in conversation with Nina LaCour, "The Lies of Alma Blackwell" (Aug. 29); Aiden Thomas in conversation with Charlie Jane Anders, "Celestial Monsters" (Sept. 5); Sabaa Tahir, "Heir" (Oct. 10). [lindentreebooks.com](http://lindentreebooks.com).

**Oshman Family Jewish Community Center:** An Evening with Food Icon and

Author Ruth Reichl (Sept. 14). [paloaltojcc.org](http://paloaltojcc.org).

**Mountain View Library:** Author talks are virtual unless otherwise noted. Martha Wells, "The Murderbot Diaries" series (Sept. 5); "Capturing the Human Drama Through History" with Garrett Graff (Sept. 10); "Bringing Computing to the People: The History of Personal Computers, Handheld Computers, and the Internet" an in-person talk with Computer History Museum co-founder Len Shustek (Sept. 11); Sara Wolf, "Heavenbreaker" (Sept. 12); Jack Campbell, "In Our Stars" (Sept. 19); "A Deep Dive in Character Development with Liane Moriarty" (Sept. 21); "Hispanic History in Mountain View" with Nick Perry (Sept. 26); "Liberating Latin American Genre Fiction: In Conversation with Bestselling Author Silvia Moreno-Garcia (Oct. 9); Kyla Zhao, "Valley Verified" (Oct. 9); Lori Gottlieb, "Maybe You Should Talk to Someone" (Oct. 22); Kathleen DuVal, "Native Nations: A Millennium in North America" (Nov. 16). [mountainview.libcal.com](http://mountainview.libcal.com).

**Palo Alto Library:** Kimberley Lovato, "Pisa Loves Bella: A Towering Tale of Kindness" (Sept. 11); Simi Monheit, "The Goldie Standard" (Sept. 29). [paloalto.bibliocommons.com](http://paloalto.bibliocommons.com). ■

*Email Arts & Entertainment Editor Heather Zimmerman at [hzimmerman@almanacnews.com](mailto:hzimmerman@almanacnews.com).*



Courtesy Connie Aramaki/Coco Foto

**CONNIE CHUNG** Groundbreaking reporter Connie Chung made history as both the first woman to co-anchor the CBS Evening News and the first Asian person to anchor any national news show in the United States. Her career has spanned everything from covering the Watergate scandal to interviews with major figures such as Magic Johnson, Bill Gates and Martina Navratilova. Chung comes to Kepler's to share her new book, "Connie: A Memoir," which reflects on many milestones in her career as well as the long, challenging journey of breaking into what had for so long been the overwhelmingly white male sphere of broadcast journalism. Sept. 26, 7 p.m., at Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park, \$16.74-\$27.24 in person or virtual admission/\$53.49 in-person or virtual admission with book. [keplers.org](http://keplers.org). (HZ)

# Food & Drink

## Ethical eats

A plant-based convenience store and barbecue food truck are fueling the Peninsula with vegan eats

Story By Edwina Dueñas | Photos by Anna Hoch-Kenney

At a busy intersection across Tanforan Mall in San Bruno sits Hangry Planet gas station and car wash at 1199 El Camino Real. While some drivers stop by to fuel their vehicles, other customers are drawn in by oddities abound — life-sized merman statues on the roof, assertive posters with phrases like “no animals terrorized here,” and the smell of plant-based barbecue slung out by the green Vegan Mob food truck sitting in the lot. Step inside the store and you’ll find rows of plant-based snacks, beverages, sandwiches and grab-and-go items stocking the shelves.

Hangry Planet is no ordinary gas station and convenience store (c-store). That’s exactly how founder and Peninsula native Bobak Bakhtiari designed it after taking over his father’s role as owner of the business in 2013, when it was operating as a Shell gas station. Touted as the world’s first plant-based convenience store, the Hangry Planet brand launched and the station made the switch to vegan products in 2021. Two years later, the business separated from Shell after Bakhtiari’s 10-year supply agreement ended in November 2023.

Bakhtiari’s own journey to veganism was spurred by watching animal rights organization Animal Recovery Mission’s

undercover investigation into the sources of Coca Cola-owned Fairlife, including farms accused of abusing their dairy cows.

“It was as if my soul got tased by a deeply hidden truth: that for all my life, I was unknowingly sponsoring animal terror by consuming dairy products,” Bakhtiari said. “(The documentary) was an eye-opener that triggered my transition to plant-based living and soon after my c-store’s transition.”

Open 24 hours a day, customers will find an array of plant-based items for sale. Think Laird Superfood coffee and dairy-free hot cocoa, and baked goods from local vegan vendors, such as Oakland’s Donut Farm and Santa Cruz’s Black China Bakery. On a milk run? You’ll only find dairy-free brands such as Daiya, Eclipse, Forager and Wicked here.

Healthier alternatives to salty snacks, such as Siete Foods grain-free chips and Simply 7 lentil chips, are also available. An Oatly soft serve machine is on hand for those wanting a cool treat. The “Hangry Bliss” breakfast sandwiches are also a customer favorite, consisting of spices, Just Egg, Beyond Meat and Follow Your Heart cheese and prepared in-house by head chef Joss Montiel. The product offerings evolve constantly thanks to a rigorous Producer Session, where staff weigh in on the taste and

sustainability practices of the brands stocked in store.

### Barbecue, but make it vegan

Eager to provide customers with more meal options, Bakhtiari recently partnered with Toriano Gordon, founder and CEO of Vegan Mob, a plant-based barbecue and soul food truck. Two weeks after Bakhtiari learned about the eatery, a partnership was formed and the first franchise location of Vegan Mob opened in February. The food truck is now permanently parked at Hangry Planet and open Tuesday through Sunday.

Gordon grew up eating Texas-style barbecue since his grandmother was from Houston. When Gordon switched to a vegan diet for health reasons and later decided to open his own restaurant, his goal was to reimagine his favorite barbecue dishes as plant-based recipes.

While Vegan Mob’s first brick-and-mortar location in Oakland closed in 2023 after a successful four-year run, Gordon has expanded to the greater Bay Area, with a Vallejo restaurant on the horizon in addition to operations in Santa Rosa and at Hangry Planet. So far, the response from the Peninsula community has been welcoming and positive.

“The people are showing up and enjoying the location,”



The exterior of the Hangry Planet gas station and plant-based food mart in San Bruno is decorated with self-promoting ads and eccentric decorations.

Gordon said. “Bobak is an awesome franchise partner with a great concept in Hangry Planet. It’s a great fit.”

Vegan Mob’s menu features saucy plant-based barbecue meats like brisket, hot links, barbecued fried shrimp and Louisiana fried chicken, hearty Southern-inspired side dishes, tacos, sandwiches and combo plates. Gordon recommends first-time visitors try the spicy fried chicken plate or the soul rolls, a sweet and savory deep-fried spring roll filled with candied yams and “Smackaronni” (macaroni and cheese). His personal favorite is the lumpia and the garlic noodles combo, all of

which are available for pickup and delivery. Parking at Hangry Planet is limited, but customers can also find parking along El Camino Real.

### ‘A devout weirdo’

Alongside food offerings, Hangry Planet brings in interactive elements to draw visitors. T-Rex, Poseidon, dragon and giant mushroom statues decorate the lot. It is not unusual to hear music blasting from the station speakers and see visitors posing with a statue of the dinosaur gobbling a statue of a world leader. A

See **ETHICAL EATS**, page 26



Plant-based treats fill the shelves of the Hangry Planet gas station and plant-based food mart in San Bruno.



A Vegan Mob food truck parked outside the Hangry Planet gas station and plant-based food mart in San Bruno.



The coffee bar at the Hangry Planet gas station and plant-based food mart in San Bruno includes teas, vegan sweets, and decorated with a Buddha statue and philanthropic articles and posters.



A customer pays at Hangry Planet gas station and plant-based food mart in San Bruno as an ad for the gas station's car wash plays overhead.

**ETHICAL EATS**

*continued from page 25*

dollar-operated fortune teller sits next to the ice freezer, and bright posters with positive messaging hang at the entrance, such as “feel beautiful, not junky.” At one point, Bakhtiari hoped to install a decorative whale’s mouth at the end of the car wash lane (the local planning department put a halt to this idea.)

These whimsical touches are not by accident, Bakhtiari said, and it’s a tone that also carries through in Hangry Planet’s branding and his own online presence. An actor with credits on TV shows including “Silicon Valley,” “Scandal,” “NCIS” and “Homeland,” Bakhtiari calls himself a “rustic cherub in human form” with an “Unusually Hairy Chest” in his IMDb profile.

“At Hangry Planet, we’re all about providing cruelty-free

foods that wrap your taste buds in an intergalactic quilt, while making our planet feel as loved as a puppy at a belly rub festival,” the store’s website reads.

“(The brand) is rooted in a colorful playfulness and a desire to share appreciation of pushing creative boundaries,” said Bakhtiari. “I feel honored to have been called a devout weirdo, an offbeat clown and a wild lunatic of play.”

*Creating change*

This penchant for playfulness is grounded in a desire to create real change and educate the public on the environmental value of plant-based living. Hangry Planet gives back 11% of net proceeds to a variety of humanitarian organizations, including Moms Against Poverty, which builds schools and orphanages, Food & Water Watch, Animal Equality and

Animal Recovery Mission. All profits from merch purchases also support animal protection organizations. In 2023, Hangry Planet raised over \$33,000 for humanitarian efforts.

Convenience store staples such as lottery tickets, tobacco products and select non-vegan products are also available for the time being. Looking to the future, Bakhtiari is dedicated to building the Hangry Planet brand as an ethically responsible model for c-stores, car washes and gas stations. Bakhtiari makes a point of supporting fellow vegan businesses and counts Sky Cafe in South San Francisco and Phono Bar and Shizen in San Francisco as favorites. Core to Hangry Planet’s mission is to expand healthy, whole foods and plant-based options on the Peninsula and beyond.

“We have been approached by investors to expand in California and in Michigan,

but have no solidified plans for expansion yet,” Bakhtiari said. “I am excited about blooming our educational arm around sustainability and continuing to build public awareness of how our food choices impact animals and the environment.” ■

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Hangry Planet, 1199 El Camino Real, San Bruno; 415-752-7488, Instagram: @thehangryplanet. Open 24 hours a day seven days a week. Vegan Mob, 1199 El Camino Real, San Bruno; Instagram: @officialveganmob. Open Tuesday to Sunday 7:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.



The exterior of the Hangry Planet gas station and plant-based food mart in San Bruno is decorated with self-promoting ads and eccentric decorations on Aug. 9.



Vegan ice creams fill a freezer with a one-of-a-kind ad at the Hangry Planet food mart in San Bruno on Aug. 9.

Coming to the Palo Alto Baylands on

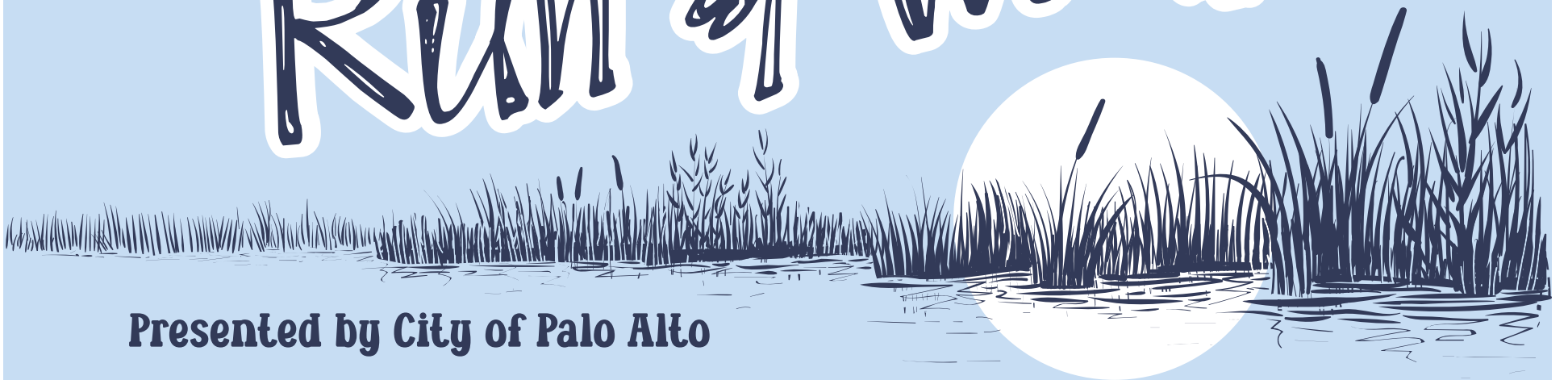
# SEPTEMBER 20<sup>th</sup>

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



Palo Alto Weekly

# Moonlight Run & Walk



Presented by City of Palo Alto



A benefit event supporting local nonprofits for children and families

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

# Relax to Dramatic Western Hill Sunsets

Unbelievable privacy | Minutes to shopping and Highway 280 | Dramatic views | Rebuilt main home  
Upgraded guest house | Two-story detached studio | Vast patio, huge pool, fire pit, and orchard | Approx. 2.7 acres



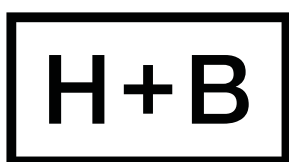
567 Cresta Vista Lane, Portola Valley | \$15,450,000 | [www.567CrestaVista.com](http://www.567CrestaVista.com)

## Build Your Dream Home! *Flat Half-Acre in Central Woodside*

Just blocks from Woodside Town Center & Woodside School | Lot of 20,125+/- SF | Utility connections & sewer in place  
Buyers to confirm allowable home specs with Town of Woodside | Rendering by SDG Architecture; plans not approved



128 Toyon Court, Woodside | \$3,250,000 | [www.128Toyon.com](http://www.128Toyon.com)



Among Top Teams  
in SF Bay Area

(per RealTrends rankings)



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