

The Almanac

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Caltrain releases new, more frequent service schedule

Trains will run every 15-20 minutes during rush hour starting Sept. 21

By Lisa Moreno

Caltrain released its new electric train service schedule on Monday, Aug. 26, introducing a new numbering system and more frequent train stops that will begin on Sept. 21.

The electric trains, which have been in the works for decades, went public on Aug. 10 and Caltrain has since begun incorporating more and more into rotation until they slowly replace the old trains.

In the new schedule, trains are set to arrive every 15 to 20 minutes during weekday rush hours and every 30 minutes in the middle of day, during evenings and throughout the weekends.

Currently, trains headed northbound from Palo Alto arrive every hour on the weekends and every 15 to 20 minutes during weekday rush hours.

Palo Alto riders who take the express train northbound during the week will stop at additional stations in San Mateo and South San Francisco, but the ride will still be faster



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Guests disembark from Caltrain's inaugural electric train ride at San Francisco station on Aug. 10.

overall, said Dan Lieberman, Caltrain spokesperson.

Service times for the slower "local" train that makes every stop between San Jose and San

Francisco will also be reduced from 100 minutes to 77, according to a Caltrain statement.

While the new trains aren't faster, they can accelerate and

decelerate faster, which will cut down on service times and make the express trip from San Jose to San Francisco in less than an hour, according to the

statement.

Service patterns will also be "simplified" by having trains arrive at regular intervals, allowing passengers to more easily remember the schedule, according to the statement.

In its new numbering system, northbound trains will continue to be odd-numbered and southbound trains even-numbered, but figures will now represent different service patterns:

- 100s — Weekday Local
- 400s — Weekday Limited
- 500s — Weekday Express
- 600s — Weekend Local
- 800s — South County Connector
- 900s — Special

South of San Jose, riders can take diesel trains up to the San Jose Diridon Station, then transfer to the new electric trains, shaving off 20 minutes of their commute, according to the statement.

Caltrain says South Bay riders will now "ride more, wait less," thanks to the new electric fleet. ■

Email Staff Writer Lisa Moreno at lmoreno@almanacnews.com.

Menlo Park plans to construct low-income housing on city-owned parking lots downtown

345 or more units of housing are likely coming to lots off of Santa Cruz Avenue

By Eleanor Raab

Several city-owned parking lots in downtown Menlo Park are slated to become affordable housing developments. At its Tuesday, Aug. 27, meeting, the Menlo Park City Council discussed a study looking at the feasibility of constructing housing on eight parking lots in downtown Menlo Park, and gave staff the go ahead to continue the process of converting

them to housing developments.

The feasibility study highlighted three of the eight city-owned lots located between Santa Cruz and Oak Grove avenues as being the most suitable for housing development. The city could build 483 or more units using various density bonuses, and they are targeting the lowest income brackets for these future projects.

Residents and council members alike expressed their

excitement for the opportunity to construct low-income housing in the city's downtown, though they also conveyed concerns about loss of parking and impacts to downtown businesses.

One resident expressed concern regarding the presence of low-income housing in downtown.

"We should remove the low-income housing," said one local resident, Ernesto Reyes, during public comment. "This is

derogatory, and in the same way is discriminatory. ... when they are in this housing, they are not allowed personal (growth) by earning the minimum salaries, otherwise (they) lose the right to live on the premises."

Many public commenters also stated that they hope the city moves forward with building affordable housing as quickly as possible.

"This is an example of a project that intersects housing,

transportation and climate, and so I think the level of urgency and speed with which we need to continue to move is really important," said Environmental Quality Commission Chair Jeff Schmidt, who is currently running for the City Council's District 3 seat. "I would encourage accelerating the process ... and not turning it into a nine or 10 year project."

See **LOW-INCOME HOUSING**, page 14

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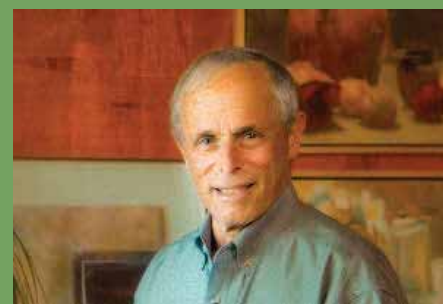
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Join us for a special screening of this award-winning documentary, and a conversation afterwards on the future of journalism with filmmaker and director Rick Goldsmith, CalMatters CEO Neil Chase and Embarcadero Media Foundation CEO Adam Dawes.

Local journalism throughout America is facing a financial crisis due to the collapse of its ad-supported business model. And while local newspapers seek grassroots public support to survive, a sinister and cynical force on Wall Street has quietly seized the opportunity to buy up news organizations across the country, decimate their staffs, destroy their independence and deprive local readers of a critical tool supporting democracy. The Mercury News and many California newspapers are among the approximately 200 newspapers nationwide now owned by Alden Global Capital, a New York-based hedge fund and a major subject of the film.

“**Stripped for Parts: American Journalism on the Brink**” exposes the battle between hedge funds and local community leaders for control over their local news and the future of journalism.

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Local News

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Lisa Moreno

East Palo Alto Mayor Antonio López announces new plan to address homelessness on Aug. 21.

East Palo Alto mayor pitches 'compassionate' multi-city plan to address homelessness

After Gov. Gavin Newsom announced statewide crackdown, EPA plans encampment warnings

By Lisa Moreno

In the wake of a statewide call to clear homeless encampments, East Palo Alto Mayor Antonio López on Wednesday proposed a plan to form a “regional partnership” with neighboring cities to share resources like shelters and permanent supportive housing.

“This agreement will establish a mutual aid partnership,

whereby cities will each put a share of their own money in a collective fund,” he said at an Aug. 21 press conference in East Palo Alto’s Martin Luther King Jr. Park. “This will be done in order to leverage our resources collectively and minimize the migration of the unhoused from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.”

In the plan, cities would pay a membership fee based on various factors like city budget

and the size of their unhoused population, then those cities would have equal access to mutual aid funds. So far, López said he has reached out to leaders in Palo Alto, Redwood City, Menlo Park, Mountain View and Burlingame, among other cities, but no official partnerships have been made. Leaders from Menlo Park and Redwood City did not immediately

See **HOMELESSNESS**, page 11

Despite uncontested races, Woodside Town Council plans for fall election

Three candidates are seeking three open seats but write-in candidates have until Oct. 22 to run

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

During a special meeting on Aug. 22, the Woodside Town Council did not vote to appoint the uncontested council candidates to office. The town will move forward with the election on Nov. 5 to fill three seats on the council for District 1, 4 and 5, with council members citing the need for voters to know the

candidates and to elect them.

Candidates for Town Council include Mayor Jenn Wall for District 1, Council member Paul Goeld for District 4 and Woodside resident Hassan Aburish for District 5.

After deliberation, the council did not make a motion to appoint candidates and therefore, a vote was not taken. Continuing with the election will allow for write-in candidates. Woodside has

had two write-in candidates elected onto the council. These include incumbent Chris Shaw of District 3 in 2015 and former Council member John Blake of District 2 in 1997.

The window for write-in candidates opens on Sept. 9 and closes on Oct. 22. Based on the cost of the 2022 midterm election, Town Manager Kevin

See **WOODSIDE ELECTION**, page 15

Las Lomitas educators rally for better pay

Union members are entering a second year without a teaching contract

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

On Aug. 21, Las Lomitas Elementary School District teachers and supporters rallied on the corner of Alameda de las Pulgas and Sharon Road in Menlo Park an hour before a school board meeting, calling for the district to approve salary raises for educators. Signs read “honk to support LLESD teachers” and “investing in educators is investing in children’s futures.”

Certified staff at Las Lomitas Elementary School and La Entrada Middle School are entering their second year without a teaching contract since July 1, 2023. Educators are asking the district for fair compensation and benefits that reflect their hard work. In the 2022-23 school year, the district gave teachers a 5% raise.

“After two unproductive summer meetings in impasse, the state mediator has released Las Lomitas Education Association from mediation, allowing us to proceed to a state fact-finding hearing with the school district,” said LLEA co-president Jennifer Montalvo, a school counselor at La Entrada.

A fact-finding period involves three panelists, one representative from each party and one neutral party. The 30-day hearing began on Aug. 14 to investigate and evaluate any evidence, arguments and witness testimonies related to the contracts. After the hearing, the neutral

party will prepare a report with recommendations on how to resolve the dispute.

In the negotiation for a contract, the LLEA will be addressing the cost of salary increases, salary comparisons to neighboring districts, teacher recruitment and retention and the district’s reserves.

The union is asking for a 10% salary increase, which they argue will not “create a budget shortfall” but rather prioritize teachers instead of creating new administrative roles, increase administrative salaries and fund luxury retreats for administrators.

The district is offering the union a 5% salary increase which it argues will put LLESD pay at \$78,181 which is “at or near the top of the payscale compared to similar local elementary school districts.”

“LLESD has the money. The district would only need to trim \$850,000 from their \$40 million budget to pay for LLEA’s ask,” said Whitney Thwaite, a science teacher at La Entrada, during the board meeting.

The union states that the district’s 2023 report to the state shows that LLESD has more than 49% of its annual budget in reserves. The district has also received \$7 million in property tax revenue over the last three years.

LLESD’s current contract sets starting salaries at \$71,320 with a maximum salary of \$146,634

See **LAS LOMITAS**, page 18



Eleanor Raab

Las Lomitas Elementary School District certified staff members rally on the corner of Alameda de las Pulgas and Sharon Road on Aug. 21.

Ex-PayPal executive running for Sequoia district school board

Candidate became more interested in politics after career in tech

By Arden Margulis

Former PayPal vice president and San Mateo County Republican Party Vice-Chair Daniel Torunian is one of three hoping to replace Trustee Carrie Du Bois on the Sequoia Union High School District governing board.

Torunian, a Redwood City resident, is running against former Carlmont High School student Jacob Yuryev and charter school principal Mary Beth Thompson.

Torunian managed information technology at PayPal for 11 years before retiring in 2022. After 40 years in corporate America, he became active in politics.

"I was starting to feel a bit uncomfortable that we were moving into kind of almost one party rule and I think that that's never healthy," Torunian said. "In the end, I don't think that schooling and education, safety, homelessness, are necessarily Republican or Democrat issues, and many of them are just common sense issues."

Detracking

Torunian became interested in the Sequoia district because he aims to help high schoolers prepare for their future.

"As this next generation starts to become young adults — they go into the workforce, they get married, maybe some of them become our future leaders. How do we prepare them for all the challenges that the world is sort of throwing at them, and how complex things are?" he said.

"I think that these questions have a direct correlation to the curriculum," he said. "There's this ongoing debate right now that I've been watching from a distance about: do you modify this kind of the merit hierarchy that we see in many of these schools?"

The Sequoia Union High School District has cut many freshman and some sophomore honors classes. The district has said that grouping students together increased socioeconomically disadvantaged students' graduation and A-G completion rates and did not hurt non-socioeconomically disadvantaged students. The district has yet to remove an AP class due to detracking, but parent groups were concerned the district may be planning to in the future.

"I feel like [detracking] could be a slippery slope, if not dealt with in the appropriate way," Torunian said. "The problem

we're trying to solve is we want to lift more students up. We want to see higher graduation rates. We want to see more success. I don't

know if I'm completely there that [detracking] is the right strategy to achieve that outcome."

He says he wants to speak more with parents, educators and students about detracking to inform himself more on the issue.

"I'm in that phase of just absorbing and taking it all in," he said. "My instincts tell me that I am not in favor of [detracking]. I would like to support those instincts with more data and more information, but I don't feel like that is a tactic that is going to lift up other students. I really want to lift everybody up and find the appropriate way to do that, as opposed to maybe penalizing those who are in AP classes or other merit based classes."

Transgender athletes

Currently the Sequoia district follows California's Interscholastic Federation's rules that allow transgender athletes to play in sports as the gender with which they identify without requiring surgery or medication. Other states have restricted transgender women from competing in female leagues due to a potential unfair biological advantage.

Torunian cites a study of transgender people in the U.S. Air Force that found after two years of taking feminizing hormones, even though transgender women no longer have an advantage when doing pushups or situps, they are still on average 9% faster than biological women.

"That led me to the belief of look: we don't know a lot about this just yet, and maybe time will help shape our perspective differently. But right now, girls and young women's sports should stay girls and young women's," Torunian said. "And if we do have students who are transitioning and want to be active in athletics, let's create a safe and appropriate space for them to compete, but against other transgender athletes."

State law currently prevents districts from creating such policies, though local districts can advocate for the CIF to revise its policies.

Teachers' curriculum

In October 2023, a Menlo Atherton High School teacher



Daniel Torunian

taught a controversial lesson on the Israel-Palestine conflict, prompting some groups to call for increased oversight of teachers' curriculum. Torunian thinks that teachers should be able to share their perspective, but that there needs to be a separation of opinion from facts.

"Every teacher is a human being and has their own perspectives and their own experiences," he said. "I would never want to stifle a teacher from being able to share: 'this is what history has shown us, but this is how I experience or see that issue.' I don't think there's anything wrong with that, as long as it's done in a thoughtful and balanced manner, and that doesn't become the overarching, presiding view of that class."

"I actually would encourage teachers to take their students and say, 'I want you to research this group's perspective' and then ask them, 'How would you resolve this? How would you go about resolving this conflict?'" said Torunian. "I think it varies but teaching our students and young adults how to solve complex problems, or how to think about solving complex problems, is very important. Do I have a book that I can point to? No, but I would love for that critical thinking aspect to be part of different classes."

School safety

Torunian has concerns about safety in district schools.

For example, two guns were found on M-A's campus in 2022. Additionally, an M-A student allegedly got into an altercation with an administrator and was then tackled and arrested by police at a bus stop near campus.

"There is no room in our educational system for violence," said Torunian. "It feels like a very different dynamic these days. It feels like things are much more impassioned, much more influenced and driven by what people are seeing on social media. So I'm a firm believer that we just can't tolerate violence in schools."

Restorative justice

When asked how schools should approach misconduct by students, Torunian said, "I'm not a big fan of only taking one approach and making something be very binary, but there needs to be an understanding that students have to be accountable to a particular code of conduct."

He said that if it's an egregious offense, then administrators may

have to look at some kind of disciplinary action, whether that's an expulsion or a suspension.

"If it is a non-egregious offense, maybe the parents have to be informed, maybe you assign that student to do some kind of civic activity or something. ... But in the end, it's less to me about the punishment. It's more about teaching accountability."

Fiscal responsibility

With the district's large operating budget of around \$230 million, the community has the opportunity to at least ask questions.

"I want to bring the wealth of my business experience and knowledge to how we make sure that we're optimizing that number, and if that number needs to grow or be redistributed, how do we make that happen as well?" said Torunian.

Torunian also wants to introduce business leaders from the local area to students to help prepare them for their future careers.

"I think there is so much that can be learned from people who are in business, and I'm not thinking of them as a replacement to, you know, our wonderful teachers, but just to bring in the real world experience to help balance out what they are learning in the classroom, so that they have a better sense of if I went to work for one of these midsize or large companies, what it would be like," he said.

Teacher pay

Torunian said that if we "truly want the best of the best for our kids," then the pay scale for teachers has to represent that.

"But I would put the caveat next to it, that teachers need to be looked at from a performance lens," he said. "We are paying a premium because we want premium results, but if we're not getting premium results, then there needs to be a conversation there."

Torunian would also like there to be a subsidy for teachers to live in the community where they're teaching.

"I think there is a much better connective tissue to the community if you're able to provide a path for that teacher to be a homeowner or at least a viable renter in the community that he or she teaches in," he said.

Some counties have provided teachers with subsidized apartments and district-owned housing.

Torunian said, "I'm very supportive of that philosophically. Of course, the devil is always in the details as to how that plan would be executed." ■

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Q&A with outgoing Woodside Council member Ned Fluet

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Woodside Council member Ned Fluet was the only incumbent to not seek reelection in the November election. Fluet, who has been on the council since 2018, will be stepping away from local government as he pursues a master's degree in liberal arts at Stanford University.

Fluet has been a Woodside resident since 2014 and served as the former chair of the Environment and Open Space Committee. After nearly six years on the council, Fluet shares the challenges he faced, how his goals as a council member have changed and how he feels about the town's state-mandated housing element (every eight years, jurisdictions across California are required to update their plan under the state's Regional Housing Needs Allocation program).

The following has been edited for length and clarity.

The Almanac: How do you feel about the last six years you've served on the council?



Courtesy Ned Fluet

Woodside Council member Ned Fluet will not seek reelection in November. Fluet, who has been on the council since 2018, will be stepping away from local government as he pursues a master's degree in liberal arts at Stanford University.

Ned Fluet: I feel very proud of the work that I've done, proud of the work that the whole Town Council and all the staff has done. The town, like a lot of towns in this area, has gone through a lot over the last six years, so to have been part of

the team that carried the town through a lot of challenges is really gratifying.

Q: What were some of your goals coming onto the council? Do you feel you've achieved them?

A: The goals from when I was elected in 2018 have changed. When I came on, the most common thing I heard from residents was that we needed to improve our building and planning department regulations to make it easier for people to remodel homes and improve streets — so things that were rather simple and things that we actually were able to fix.

I did not know that come 2020, we would have COVID. That same year, we had wildfires, all the issues with the housing element. The goals and ideas that brought me into 2018 have kind of gone by the wayside and things kind of got more complicated, more difficult and more interesting as the years went on.

Q: What were some of the challenges that you faced that you weren't expecting when you

came onto the council?

A: I was the mayor of Woodside in 2020, so that was when COVID initially hit. In no world that I expected that I would be working with county and state health officials and deciding when to close and open our town and really being involved in really large major public health decisions.

The same year as mayor, we also had the CZU (Lightning Complex) fires which was another massive incident for this area. Although only a few residents of Woodside were evacuated, it affected our community deeply. These were definitely unforeseen challenges when I was elected.

Most recently, in my area (District 5), Highway 84 collapsed, which cut off most of the residents' ability to come in and out of their neighborhoods effectively. Unfortunately a lot of the stuff I've done has been marked by disaster, not in my making but that was unexpected that we'd have that kind of major infrastructure.

Q: What thoughts went

into your decision to not seek reelection?

A: I'm starting graduate school in the fall and it was kind of a matter of balancing all the different things going on in my life. I knew with graduate school, a fulltime job, spouse and kids that I could not give my best attention to all those things.

Over the next two to four years, I knew if I wanted to do something, I wanted to do it very well and I want to be able to give my attention to my family, to school and work. In order to be the best elected representative, I knew I needed to step down this year. I'm definitely looking forward to having more time with my family and kids.

Also the other thing is even if I was running for reelection I knew the next term I'd be done. I just really do believe in term limits and we don't have term limits in Woodside. This is my self-imposed way of having them. I know that with a new person comes new energy, comes new ideas and I think

See **FLUET**, page 10

Union workers at Stanford vote to authorize strike

Union seeks wage increases, better health benefits and other contract improvements from Stanford

By Eleanor Raab

Union workers at Stanford University voted on Aug. 21 and 22 to authorize a possible strike after being locked in contract negotiations with the university for several months. The union's strike authorization vote comes amid efforts to secure wage increases, better health benefits and other contract improvements from Stanford.

The workers are members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 2007, which represents approximately 1,360 employees at Stanford, including people working as custodians, maintenance workers, groundskeepers, life sciences technicians and accelerator technologists. In addition to employees at the university itself, the union represents workers at the Stanford National Accelerator Laboratory (SLAC) in Menlo Park and the Stanford School of Medicine.

"From the beginning of negotiation ... we've been unhappy with the way (Stanford) has approached the negotiations and the things they've offered," said Richard Patrone, SEIU Local 2007's co-chief negotiator.

According to Patrone, 95% of the SEIU members who voted,

voted in favor of the strike.

SEIU Local 2007 and Stanford began negotiations on May 28, according to a statement on the negotiations from Stanford. As of Aug. 20, the two parties had reached 26 tentative agreements.

The term of the union's current collective bargaining agreement, which has been in place since 2019, ends on Aug. 31.

With just nine days to go until the contract expires, the union alleges that Stanford has not been engaging in good faith negotiations.

"We felt in the beginning ... that they just were not meeting often enough," said Patrone. "We kept asking them for more dates, and they kept refusing."

According to a statement from Stanford, the two negotiation teams had met 21 times as of Aug. 16, but Patrone says that "it's not as much as we thought was necessary."

"The university is disappointed to learn that the union has decided to take a strike authorization vote 10 days before the contract expires while both the university and the union continue to negotiate," said a spokesperson for Stanford in an email to this news organization.

"We are disappointed in Stanford's disappointment," said Patrone. "We feel that they

have not been forthcoming in solving the labor issues here."

In addition to calling for a strike authorization vote, the SEIU Local 2007 has filed unfair labor practices charges against Stanford with the National Labor Relations Board, according to Patrone.

The union and the university are far apart on wage increases, health benefits and other issues. Patrone says that when the union's previous five-year contract was negotiated, inflation was at an "historic low," but that current inflation rates have union members "falling so far behind."

"They want a five-year contract, we want a three-year contract," said Patrone. "But their (first proposal for a) five-year contract started at a 3% (raise) for five years, which would not even catch us up to what we experienced due to inflation for the last three years. We're underwater right from the beginning, and we're not going to get out from being underwater."

Stanford's most recent package proposal that it presented to union negotiators as of Aug. 20 would give union members a 4% wage increase in the first year of the contract, 3% increases for the two subsequent years and 3.25% increases for the two

years after that. It would also give members a signing bonus of \$1,000 if an agreement is reached by the Aug. 31 contract expiration date, and increase the minimum household income to qualify for the university's Medical Contribution Assistance Program from \$100,000 to \$120,000.

"We believe the university's latest package proposal represents a fair offer, however, we will continue working with the union to reach agreement on a new contract by August 31," said Stanford in a statement on Aug. 20.

Both the union and the university say they intend to negotiate right up until the end of the contract.

"We are very open to negotiating as long as Stanford is giving us something that we feel is reasonable, and we will continue to negotiate in good faith right through the end of the contract," said Patrone.

A spokesperson for Stanford said in an email to this news organization that the university remains "committed to the bargaining process and will continue to work with the Union to reach a full agreement prior to the contract expiration."

Health benefits are another sticking point for the union, said Patrone.

"Their benefit plan is completely unaffordable for our members. The only realistic choice that people have is Kaiser, and Kaiser went up 10% this year and is expected to go up 11% next year, and we just can't afford it anymore," he said.

He also said that the high cost of health insurance has prevented several union members from retiring. "I know several people who would like to retire, or were already retired and had to cancel their retirement because they couldn't afford health insurance."

Ironically, Stanford's own health care is unaffordable for many of the SEIU members, including those who work at the medical school, as it is "more

See **STANFORD STRIKE**, page 10

LEHUA GREENMAN



"No work is insignificant. All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence."

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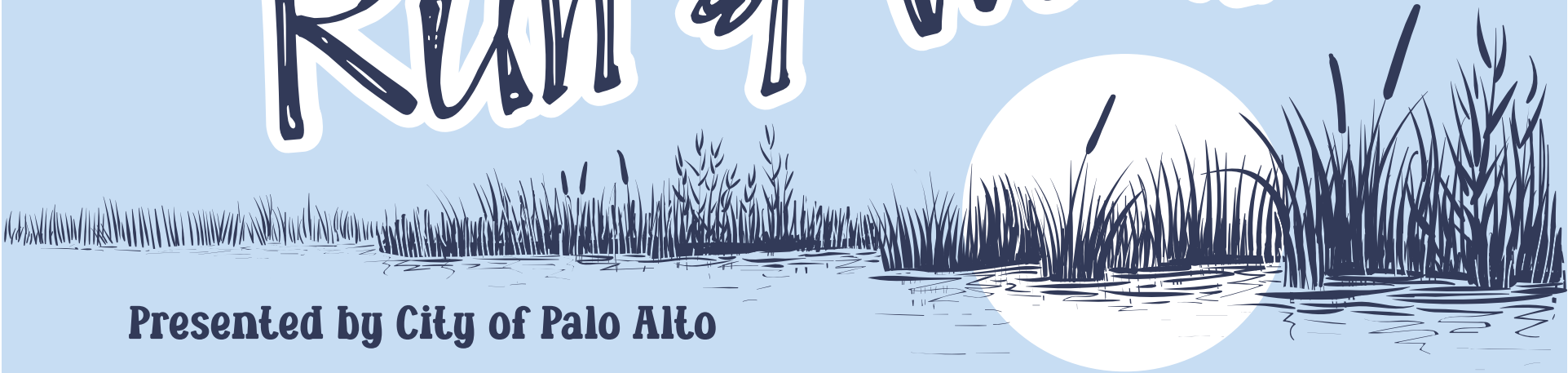
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Palo Alto Weekly

Moonlight Run & Walk



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Atherton rolls out gas-powered leaf blower ban

By Emily Conn

A month into Atherton's ban on the use of all gas-powered leaf blowers, the town's main focus has been on educating the public on the new ordinance, rather than punishing violators.

On July 1, Atherton joined Menlo Park, Palo Alto and other Peninsula cities in banning gas-powered leaf blowers due to concerns about excessive noise as well as the release of harmful pollutants such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds. The ban follows the enactment of California Assembly Bill 1346, which took effect on Jan. 1 of this year and bans the sale of gas-powered leaf blowers, lawn mowers and other small off-road engines across the state.

"At this point, the town's contacts (with people violating the code) have largely been education and warning," said City Manager George Rodericks. "To my knowledge there has been a positive response and more applications for rebates."

Should a violation persist, citations start at \$100 for the first offense, \$200 for the second

offense, and up to \$500 for the third offense/per instance, per day thereafter that the violation occurs, according to the ordinance.

To facilitate the transition to electric leaf blowers, the town is offering a \$250 rebate for residents who purchase an electric leaf blower and any associated batteries and chargers.

Atherton resident Stephen Nachtsheim said he is aware of the rebate program but wouldn't be taking advantage of it because he had already transitioned to an electric leaf blower.

Nachtsheim said he thinks "the ban was a good idea, especially since California law dictated it ultimately happen. Electric equipment is here to stay and it's what we are going to be using in the future. The implementation seems to have been positive since Atherton created the rebate program."

Nachtsheim did express one reservation, however.

"What I don't know is what effect it's had on the people who operate small business lawn care companies in Atherton," he said. "For example, how many battery packs do you need throughout a workday, and how do you afford

the transition to a new kind of equipment?"

Michael Oteiza, owner of M. Oteiza Landscaping, has many clients in Atherton. He said that some clients still do not know about the July 1 local ban.

Oteiza also noted that while most clients have not bought their own electric leaf blowers, he had anticipated the change in California and local laws regarding gas-powered lawn equipment and budgeted for his business accordingly. He also took advantage of the California CORE program which provided voucher and incentive funding for California small businesses and sole proprietors to purchase zero-emission landscaping equipment.

"California's CORE program was extremely helpful in making the transition to electric lawn equipment. In the end, it paid for two-thirds the cost of each unit I replaced," Oteiza said.

The CORE rebate for lawn equipment closed on Oct. 2, 2023, after allocating \$27 million in voucher incentive funding. Announcements for future funding for professional landscaping equipment have not been made. Other funding for small business owners looking to make

the transition to cleaner equipment is available through local air districts. The California Air Resources Board details more zero emission landscaping equipment incentive programs.

Oteiza is already noticing positive impacts from the transition to electric leaf blowers for his employees.

"The noise decibel for operators of the leaf blowers has come down considerably. The hearing health of our employees will improve from being exposed to less noise pollution."

Oteiza feels that there needs to be better enforcement of the ban, but anticipates that will improve as people become more familiar with the new ordinance.

The roll out of the gas-powered leaf blower ban is progressing well, according to Rodericks. He said the town continues its education campaign regarding the changes and continues posting information in town publications and across town social media.

The town's Code Enforcement team has been in the field and interacting with residents and lawn care professionals, he noted. "The first contact is usually continuing education about the change in law and information

regarding the town's rebate program. The second contact is usually a warning and the third contact can involve a citation for violation."


Atherton Code Enforcement Officer Lisa-Marie Daley said that during the month of July there were 15 cases of gas-powered leaf blowers reported. Nine cases were reactive to resident complaints, six were cases where staff observed someone using a gas-powered leaf blower and provided educational materials to them.

"Police officers are trained to provide information to the residents and landscapers about the ban and the rebate program when the code enforcement officer is not available," she said. "Our goal is always voluntary compliance, with enforcement as a last resort."

While the state banned the sale of gas-powered lawn equipment in January, and neighboring jurisdictions have begun bans on other forms of gas-powered lawn equipment, Roderick said that "at this time there are no plans to do the same in Atherton."

Atherton has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 49% below 2005 levels by 2030 (or, 40% below 1990 levels) and achieving carbon neutrality

See LEAF BLOWER, page 11



The local's guide to the Bay Area food scene.

Peninsula Foodist 

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Adrienne
Editor, Peninsula Foodist

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FLUET

continued from page 7

it'd be disingenuous to say that I would be the right man for this job for the next two decades.

Q: How do you feel about how the council has worked through the housing element?

A: I think as a council, we've worked extremely cooperatively. We've had our disagreements and we've had arguments but I think for this council, we always knew that we had to get this job done and our goal was always to do it in a way that kept Woodside's character as much as possible.

This process has not been perfect, but I know we did our absolute best to honor our obligations to the state, while at the same time trying to limit the impact on Woodside residents as much as possible.

Unfortunately residents are going to be impacted and specific neighborhoods are being impacted. ... But again, as a Town

Council, our goal was always to limit that impact as much as we could. I think the plan that we voted on does that. We still have a second reading, so it's not done yet, but I do think we found the least harmful way to honor our obligations to the state.

Q: There was a lot of community backlash on the council's decisions for the housing element. Is there anything you'd like to say in response to the residents comments?

A: Sometimes it's hard to say this in meetings. We did not take any of the decisions lightly. We're talking about choosing the areas for housing and it was a very long multi-year decision-making process. There's nothing we can do to make a resident feel better other than to say that we heard those concerns and this was the best way to honor our obligations while inflicting the least amount of harm on Woodside.

I know that is not the most

comfort I can give for residents whose neighborhoods are affected but as I've said in public meetings, this is also not the end of the process.

One of my ideas was to have a community committee made up of residents as well as elected officials that look at and decide who's going to be our development partners and what the developments are going to look like.

I would say to those residents, we are not done and getting through the housing element was the best way to get some local control over this process. If we didn't approve this housing element, the state could come in and essentially take over our Planning Department and we could have builder's remedy (a state provision that allows developers to streamline building application processes and bypass local land-use regulations if a city does not have a compliant housing element) projects come up.

Q: As a District 5 representative living farther up in the hills of Woodside, was there anything that you felt was important to have represented on the council?

A: I think my district has very unique needs because we are up in the hills. Like a lot of the town, we're on septic, but unlike a lot of the town, we

have propane tanks and have unique problems with ingress and egress.

What the council has done over the last few years is be very wildfire-focused. We've expanded the defensible space program considerably since I was elected by increasing the funding of what people can get from the town to create defensible spaces around their house. We have a robust system for alerting people if there is a wildfire. I applaud the other Town Council members who don't live in this area, for how seriously they took the wildfire issue. I don't think we have ever had an argument or voted down any initiatives that concerned improving our wildfire safety in town.

Q: Do you have plans to be involved in town government in other ways?

A: I hope to. I haven't figured out what that means for me. Unfortunately, for the next Town Council, I will probably be someone who continues to come to the microphone as a member of the public. I'm looking forward to a bit of time off in the immediate future but do hope to get back into a volunteer committee in the next year or two. ■

*Email Staff Writer
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STANFORD STRIKE

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than twice as expensive as Kaiser," according to Patrone.

"I think virtually none, maybe 1% of our membership can afford Stanford's healthcare," he said. "Stanford Health Care Alliance, which is the Stanford Hospital and doctors, has been priced out of our members' reach. ... We can't even use Stanford doctors."

According to Stanford's 2024 comparison of available medical plans, an employee would have to pay \$510 monthly for a Kaiser plan that covers the employee and their family, or \$1,040 for a Stanford Health Care Alliance plan that covers them and their family.

An individual employee wouldn't have to pay anything monthly for a Kaiser plan, but would have to pay \$125 monthly for the Stanford Health Care Alliance plan.

Patrone says that SEIU is not the only union that is having difficulties bargaining with Stanford. There's another union on campus, the Grad Students Union (SGWU), who are also negotiating with Stanford, and Stanford is also offering that group "very low wage increase and very high health insurance costs."

The union's current contract with Stanford has a no strike provision, saying "neither the union nor any of the workers will engage in or participate, directly or indirectly, in any strike, picketing, slow-down, sick-in, stoppage or any other interference with or interruption of work or operations during the term of this agreement."

However, if no agreement is reached before the contract lapses, the union will be able to strike.

"It could be the day after the contract runs out," said Patrone.

SEIU Local 2007's strike authorization vote does not necessarily mean that the union will strike, but it gives negotiators the option to call a strike if they deem it necessary. According to Patrone, the union would prefer not to strike.

"We certainly don't want to strike — a strike is not good for either party," he said. "But at this point, we're just not making any significant progress. I mean, there's been some movement on Stanford's part, but not enough for people to make a living and to pay their rent and to pay for food and to pay for their exorbitantly high medical expenses." ■

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

Theofana Vasilakos Hegis

September 1, 1929 – July 24, 2024

Theofana "Theo" Hegis passed away peacefully at her home on July 24, 2024, after a life filled with family, faith, celebration and community.



Theo's parents, Spiros Vasilakos and Sotiria Fouyas, emigrated to the United States from Greece in the early 1900s. They established a farm in rural West Menlo Park, where they raised Theo and her siblings Maria, Panayiotis and Haralambos. Theo attended Las Lomitas School when it was a one-room schoolhouse, and Sequoia High School in Redwood City.

While attending a dinner dance at the Greek Orthodox Annunciation Cathedral in 1953, Theo met her future husband John Hegis, recently arrived from Athens, Greece. Theo and John shared 35 wonderful years together until his passing in 1989, building a family, traveling and establishing their home in Atherton. They enjoyed a rich social life, and were renowned for their annual double Name Day feast, the family home overflowing with friends, music, dancing and wonderful Greek cuisine.

Theo worked at Stanford University for nearly 40 years, both in the Math Department and the School of Engineering. She cherished spending time with the students, and frequently brought them home for a Greek dinner.

A devoted member of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross, Theo was an active member of the Philoptochos Society and the Daughters of Penelope, and chaired the pastry booth at their annual Greek Festival. She loved her church and the lasting relationships made through the years.

Later in life, Theo met Ted Theodore, a dear friend with whom she shared 14 treasured years. They enjoyed family and traveling, visiting Russia and Greece among many other destinations.

While Theo played a number of roles in her life, her favorite by far was that of YaYa to her grandsons Tasso and John. Theo and the boys shared vacations, soccer games, shopping sprees at Toys R Us and countless hours of late-night storytelling.

Theo is survived by her daughter Evangeline Koch (James), brother Pete Vasilakos (Synthia), sister Mary Belich, sister-in-law Diane Vasilakos, and grandsons Tasso (Abby) and John Koch. She was preceded in death by her husband John Hegis, brother Harry Vasilakos and brother-in-law Steve 'Bud' Belich.

PAID OBITUARY

Martha Merz

December 18, 1945 – July 23, 2024

Martha Feil Merz, a beacon of warmth and love, was called home on July 23, 2024, surrounded by family members. Born to Anna and Adolf Feil on December 18, 1945, Martha's life was a tapestry of love, service, and caring to those around her. Martha's journey began in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where she grew up with her siblings, Annie, and the late John, Carl and Gus. It was also where Martha met Dennis Merz, her childhood sweetheart and the love of her life. They were married in 1964 and began their life in California, settling in Atherton. Together they raised five children and were an example of love, faith in God, hard work, and devotion.



In 1988, Martha and family opened Martha's Pastries in Menlo Park. For 26 years she used her passion for baking to touch lives in the Menlo Park community. After her retirement, she moved to Granite Bay, CA.

She was predeceased by her parents, her husband, her granddaughter, Josie, and her brothers. Martha's memory is honored by her children, Mariann, Margo, Samuel and his wife Yolanda, Vicky, and Debbie and her husband Brad; and her grandchildren, Samantha, Melanie and her husband Justin, Katrina, Joshua, Nicolas, C.J. and his wife Emily, Justin, Izzy, Ali, and Logan; and her great-grandchildren Hayden and Stevie. Her sister Annie, along with Martha's nieces and nephews, and a multitude of friends also survive her.

Services and a reception to celebrate Martha's life will be held on September 7, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. at Journey Presbyterian Church of Folsom, 450 Blue Ravine Rd, Folsom, CA 95630.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to the following in her name: Journey Church of Folsom Meditation Garden, or Mercy Chefs-Feeding Body and Soul.

PAID OBITUARY

HOMELESSNESS

continued from page 5

respond to requests for comment on the plan.

“I firmly believe, as someone who grew up in this community, that there’s always resources available,” he said. “It’s simply a matter of tracking them down.”

López’s plan comes on the heels of Gov. Gavin Newsom’s executive order on July 25 that urged local governments to “address dangerous encampments” and help the people living in them.

Newsom’s action followed an early July U.S. Supreme Court ruling that lifted state restrictions on clearing encampments. On Aug. 8, Newsom said that if California cities don’t reduce homelessness now, he would reduce their state funding later.

Since then, Bay Area cities like San Francisco have taken action on Newsom’s request, which is not legally mandated, and begun clearing encampments.

López plans to begin with two formal warnings as part of an emergency ordinance on Sept. 3 to clear out encampments across East Palo Alto.

The process is similar to an approach taken by San Mateo’s Hopeful Horizon, an initiative passed on Jan. 23 that allows the program to issue someone a misdemeanor after declining shelter twice. But East Palo Alto will not issue citations to people who do not accept shelter, López said. Instead, the city plans to rely on local outreach services to further work with people who are homeless.

López emphasized that the city

would not relocate people who are homeless outside of the region, like neighboring San Francisco, which is taking an “aggressive” approach to encampment sweeps, he said.

“To pass an encampment clearing ordinance would amount to effectively legislating the shuffling around of the unhoused,” López said at the press conference.

East Palo Alto aims to tackle the housing crisis in a compassionate and humane manner, he said, later calling San Francisco Mayor London Breed’s actions to clear homeless encampments “temporary.”

This year, the county reported approximately 84 people who are homeless living in East Palo Alto, which is significantly lower than previous years. The data comes from San Mateo County’s 2024 One Day Homeless count, which tallies the number of people experiencing homelessness — both those sheltered in temporary housing and unsheltered — on a single day.

López attributes that figure, which is down from 169 in 2022, to local services like a safe parking program that has allowed people to park their RVs for four years, he said.

While community members say that some families are still on shelter waiting lists, López said that local partnerships could help create larger “safety nets” for people experiencing homelessness, as well as long-term solutions.

Some of those safety measures could look like more comprehensive domestic violence outreach or rental aid programs.

“I also want to be clear that partnerships like these actually aren’t unprecedented,” he said, citing a 2006 partnership between Fairfield, Vacaville, Vallejo and other nearby cities, which formed the Community

Action Partnership to distribute resources throughout the county. López said the program has been lauded by the state for its collaborative effort to address homelessness.

In the coming weeks, López said he will continue pushing for the partnership with neighboring cities.

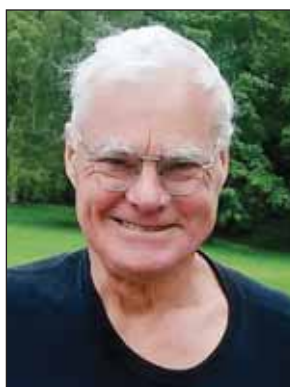
“It’s not for me, it’s not for the cities, it’s for the unhoused individuals who are stuck in circumstances that we have just tolerated as a society, as an inconvenient truth,” he said. ■

Email Staff Writer Lisa Moreno at lmoreno@almanacnews.com.

John Roy MacMillan

June 25, 1949 – June 11, 2024

John Roy MacMillan passed away at home June 11th, 2024 from lymphoma. Born in Maryland on June 25, 1949 to Virginia (an OR head scrub nurse with the Army Nurses) and Oscar (a career Navy Officer), John liked to say both his parents held the rank of Captain. What he didn’t like about growing up in a military family was moving frequently, staying for a year or so in Virginia, Hawaii, Pennsylvania among others.



So, when he came to Stanford in 1967 on a National Merit Scholarship from IBM, he fell in love with the Bay Area and never left. A brilliant student with a passion for Mathematics, he nonetheless had a few moments of “tuning in, turning on, and dropping out” like many in the late sixties, such as “taking a semester off” and bartering his cooking skills to live in a parachute-tent on the lawn of the “Hippie Fraternity” Beta Chi. Some allege he once drove his motorcycle down the dorm hallway; none deny it.

Regarding careers, he used to say “people are not ants – we can have more than one role in our lifetimes” and he proved this. After majoring in math (like his lovely wife Marilyn) and minoring in Computer Science (before there was a major) he was a software engineer in the early days of Silicon Valley at new companies he found interesting, such as Apple and Adobe, and co-authored Deluxe Music Construction Set, an early music notation to .midi file program. He later worked in startups in the automotive, medical, hardware, and construction industries. He held six patents, in the distinct areas of computer typography and concrete machinery.

An avid reader and thinker, he valued education, in particular for women and girls. Though he was agnostic, he had a lingering Presbyterian drive to “do something useful” at all times. He claimed to value science above “the Arts” but loved music, almost as much as he loved holding babies and shooting off fireworks (usually not at the same time). He was an excellent cook who made a healthy and delicious dinner for his family every night, and appreciated the outdoors, especially the majesty of California. A dependable creature of habit, he went to the same gym every other day for 30 years, only changing when the Googleplex enveloped his beloved Gold’s Gym.

John will be remembered for his intelligence, curiosity, dedication to his family, and sense of humor. A true individual, he did not suffer fools gladly nor follow trends but did enjoy learning how the world works and finding out what was coming next. He fought his yearlong cancer battle with courage, tenacity, humor, and only occasional profanity. He will be dearly missed by his wife of 48 years, Marilyn; daughters Jeannette, Leslie and Laura; brother David; sons-in-law Sam and Henry; grandchildren Malcolm and Nora; and anyone who’s had a long conversation with him.

A celebration of John’s life will take place in October; please email JRMinMemoriam@gmail.com for details.

In lieu of flowers please send donations to www.newschoolberkeley.org/donate.

PAID OBITUARY

Forrest Anderson

October 7, 1931 – August 16, 2024

Forrest Anderson died peacefully at his home on Friday, August 16 at the age of 92. A fourth-generation San Francisco native, he attended Town School, Lowell High School, Dartmouth College, and the UC Berkeley College of Engineering.



After graduating from Officer Candidate School in the Army Corps of Engineers in 1954, Forrest married Alice Charleston, also a native San Franciscan. The young couple’s honeymoon was a road trip to Fort Bragg, North Carolina where Forrest was first stationed. Six months later they were transferred to Stuttgart, Germany, where their first son was born.

Following the Army, Forrest returned to Cal to study Civil Engineering. After working for several years, he started his own engineering construction company in 1963, focusing on unique or unusual projects. Anderson Pacific reinforced the foundations supporting the incline section of the Bay Bridge after the 1989 earthquake, participated in the Golden Gate Bridge conversion from concrete decks and girders to steel sections, and tightened 12,000 bolts 155 feet above ground in the hangars at Moffett Field. Forrest worked hard, loved what he did, and was extremely proud that the company he founded is now a third-generation family business.

Forrest enjoyed nature, especially time at Lake Tahoe with family and friends—hiking, water-skiing, and snow-skiing. His love for the outdoors brought him to many summits around Lake Tahoe as well as the Matterhorn in Switzerland which he climbed with his daughter in 1998.

Forrest served on the boards of Castilleja and Phillips Brooks Schools and the UC Berkeley School of Engineering Alumni Society. In his retirement, Forrest enjoyed traveling the world with Alice, playing golf, tennis, and bridge and attending the activities and sporting events of their grandchildren. This took the duo to football stadiums across the country. Being loyal grandparents, they even converted to Stanford fans for a few years (Go Bears)!

Remembered for his wit and sense of humor, a friend recently said, “You always knew when he got a twinkle in his eye that something, probably very dry and enormously amusing, was forthcoming.” The love and enjoyment of family and friends was always paramount and is a great legacy. These memories sustain all who knew and loved him.

Always enjoying a new project and a challenge, Forrest took up the sport of rowing at 90 and was sculling on the bay weekly until just before he passed.

Forrest is survived by Alice, his wife of 70 years, and their three children, Tim (Suzette), Peter (Anne), and Lisa (Daniel), and seven grandchildren who knew him as Pa—Forrest, Brooke, Michael, Kevin (Katie), and Jack Anderson, and Alice and Charlotte Hill.

In remembrance of Forrest, the family kindly requests donations be made in his name to Christ Church Portola Valley & Woodside, 815 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028 or to a charity of your choice. A private family service was held.

PAID OBITUARY

LEAF BLOWER

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by 2025. Besides the electrification of lawn equipment, the town is working on multiple initiatives including the electrification of buildings and vehicles to achieve this goal.

More information

Details for the reimbursement can be found on the town’s website, ci.atherton.ca.us.

Reimbursements can be expected within four to six weeks of submission. Residents with questions can contact Christabel Soria Mendoza at 650-752-0577.

Residents who wish to report the use of a gas-powered leaf blower are asked to call the Atherton Police’s non-emergency number at 650-688-6500, as response to violations that are time-sensitive, but are not considered emergencies. Daley explained that calls to this number regarding gas leaf-blowers will be treated the same as other town ordinance concerns and complaints. ■

Chongme Lee

April 28, 1947 – August 8, 2024



Mea and Peter, celebrating 50 years of bliss in December 2015, at The French Laundry with Christina and Maya

On August 8, 2024, we lost our mother, grandmother and dear friend, Chongme Lee. We all knew and loved her as Mea. She was 77 years old.

Mea is now with her beloved husband and hero**, Peter Lee. Mea and Peter eloped after only knowing each other for two months and shared nearly 55 “years of bliss”. If there were ever two soulmates on this earth, it was Peter and Mea. Together, they raised their daughters, Christina Vo and Maya Watts, and loved with all their hearts their four grandchildren, Eleanor Vo, Jordan Vo, Mea Watts and Meilani Watts. We would be remiss not to include their first loves, their dogs: Spooky, Cinnamon, Spunky (x2), Pebbles and Bogey (who is still going strong at 14-years old).

Mea was the strongest person we know. The tiniest yet the strongest. For 45 years, she fought Lupus with infallible grace, determination and positivity. At every turn, she defied the odds and inspired us all. No matter the diagnosis or number of close calls or how sick she felt, she never complained. She pushed through and fought to be there—for every gymnastics and swim meet, baseball and softball game, dance and musical performance. Mea didn’t want to miss a single moment with her family, especially her grandchildren—so, she didn’t.

Mea was brilliant. But quietly so. Many did not know that she graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) with a BS in Biology and worked as a computer scientist before getting sick. Her friends were always surprised to learn that she didn’t speak a single word of English when she moved to the US at age 14 from Daegu, South Korea, because she had mastered the language and her American accent. She would never tell you, but Mea could solve any puzzle, do calculus with an abacus and scored a perfect 800 on her Math SAT.

Mea could do anything... At less than 100 pounds, she could eat any one of us under the table (she loved to eat!), including her two sons-in-law, Tan Vo and Keith Watts. Mea was also an incredible artist. Our homes and walls are bright with her beautiful pillows, quilts, rugs, Christmas stockings, ornaments—even furniture—that Mea crafted over the years. She taught herself calligraphy and hand-printed both Christina and Maya’s wedding invitations. She designed our beloved Tahoe cabin that still stands in its original form, nearly 50 years after she and Peter

built it. And she hand-drew, to exact architectural standards, blueprints for the kitchen remodel for her and Peter’s home in Menlo Park (where Maya and her family reside today).

The list goes on because Mea did it all. In her last moments, she spoke of Peter and how much he loved life. She continually repeated: “He loved life. He lived life like he loved life. He always said yes.” And that’s how Mea lived. She always, always said yes. To trying new things, to relentless practice and patience to master a new skill—to just going for it—no matter how insurmountable the challenges before her.

We will remember Mea for her sheer bravery and grit—and daily optimism. For her elegance and beauty. But, mostly we will remember her for her love. She loved unconditionally and selflessly. She radiated warmth and always shared empathy.

Mea’s instincts to love, protect and hold her grandchildren and children were so strong. Even in her last moments (when it was a struggle just to breathe), whenever she heard our voices or felt our presence, her arms would automatically reach out to embrace us—and she’d open her eyes, smile and say, “I love you.”

Mea was smiling until the end. Her eyes bright and her mind clear, she said she had no regrets. She lived her life fully because she loved life. She treated every day as a gift, because it was.

***Hero Note: The proudest day of Peter’s life was the day Mea told him that he was her hero.*

- Family History Notes: Mea was born on April 28, 1947 in Daegu, South Korea, to Kyu Taik (KT) Lee and Sook Kyung (SK) Lee, both of whom were medical doctors. SK was one of the first women in Korea to complete medical school and become a pediatrician. KT attended medical school in Seoul and became an army doctor during Japanese occupation. He then earned his PhD in pathology at Washington University, St. Louis, and became world-renowned for his research in atherosclerosis at Albany Medical School. His move to the US to conduct his research was what brought Mea and her family to upstate New York, where she met Peter at RPI only four years later. Mea always said that her life began when she met Peter.

Lupus Walk in honor of Mea: Join Team Mea and walk with us on Sunday, October 13th on the 2024 Walk to End Lupus Now in San Francisco. Please contact the family directly for details.

PAID OBITUARY

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Ravenswood Family Health Network baby wrap drive

The Ravenswood Family Health Network is asking the community to donate infant wraps to support mothers. Infant wraps support mothers in breastfeeding which provide developmental benefits for mothers and their babies, according to the RFHN.

Support Ravenswood mothers by donating a wrap through the RFHN infant wrap registry on tinyurl.com/Infantwrap.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Learn about fall crops at Menlo Park’s Sept. 4 Garden Talk

Join Menlo Park Library staff and expert gardeners on Sept. 4 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. to learn more about what crops are easy to grow in the fall. The talk will take place virtually, on a Zoom webinar.

The expert gardeners will cover what varieties of crops grow well in our area, and when and how to get them started in your garden.

Garden Talks take place monthly, and cover a new topic each month. The next Garden Talk will take place on Oct. 2.

Learn more and register for the webinar on Menlo Park’s website, menlopark.gov.

Recycle your electronic waste on Sept. 7

The city of Menlo Park is joining forces with Recology San Mateo County and RethinkWaste to encourage residents to recycle their old electronics at a free electronic waste recycling event.

Menlo Park residents are welcome to drive their electronic waste to the City Corporation Yard at 333 Burgess Drive between 9 a.m. and noon on Sept. 7. No appointments are required, though proof of residency may be required.

Residents are asked to load their electronic waste into the trunk of their car and remove all personal items from the trunk. The vendors will pick up the electronic waste from the car trunks while residents remain in the car.

Accepted items include TVs, computers, printers, monitors, cables and cords, cell phones, MP3 players, DVD players laptops, and similar items.

Items that will not be accepted at this event include fans, space heaters, smoke detectors, vacuum cleaners, microwaves or household hazardous waste. Large appliances like cooktops, stoves, dishwashers, ovens, refrigerators or freezers will also not be accepted.

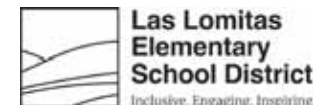
Free yoga class at Springline in Menlo Park on Sept. 8

The Springline development in Menlo Park is hosting a series of free, public workout classes throughout September. The first free workout class in September will be hosted by CorePower Yoga at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 8, in the courtyard of the development at 1300 El Camino Real.

Participants are asked to bring their own yoga mats and water bottles, and RSVP to the event on Springline’s Eventbrite page.

Barre3 will be hosting a strength and cardio class at the same place at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Sept. 22.

— Eleanor Raab



LAS LOMITAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing will be part of the agenda for the Regular Board Meeting to be held on Wednesday, September 11, 2024 at 7:00 PM

La Entrada Middle School Atrium |
2200 Sharon Road, Menlo Park, CA 94025

SUBJECT: Assurance of Compliance:
Pupil Textbook and Instructional Materials

The public will have an opportunity to comment on the availability of textbooks and instructional materials to students in the Las Lomitas Elementary School District. The Governing Board will be asked to adopt a Resolution (later in the meeting) stating that the LLESD has complied with the requirements of Education Code.

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LOW-INCOME HOUSING

continued from page 1

Building housing on city-owned parking plazas is one of the strategies for meeting state housing goals that was laid out in the city's 2023-31 housing element. This plan is a roadmap for how the city will meet state housing quotas. Menlo Park is required to build 2,946 units of housing, 740 of which have to be affordable to very low-income residents, by 2031.

Menlo Park projects that the city-owned parking lots will provide at least 345 units that are affordable to households at the very low-income level. The very low-income designation includes residents who make 30 to 50% of the area median income — individuals making less than \$65,250 or families of four making less than \$93,200.

The housing element also states that the city will prioritize “difficult-to-achieve housing priorities” for the development of downtown parking lots, such as very low-income housing and preferential units for people with special needs such as developmental disabilities.

Council members were supportive of heavily prioritizing very low- and extremely low-income housing for these projects.

“I am supportive of going as low as we can,” said Vice Mayor Drew Combs. “I know on the other end of that, the developers have to get financing. ... But what you hear time and time again from developers, specifically affordable housing developers in this area, is that land acquisition ... is a barrier to entry. But in this case you are getting the land for free.”

Council member Maria Doerr agreed. “Given that (some) city staff ... they make \$44,000 to \$60,000, or our child care workers make even less,” she said. “Making sure that even our city staff can afford to live here is a big priority for me.”

Where could housing be constructed?

The feasibility study highlights parking lots 1, 2 and 3, which all sit between Santa Cruz and Oak Grove avenues, as the most feasible sites to construct affordable housing. Lots 5 and 8, which sit between Santa Cruz and Menlo avenues, have been identified as spaces where even more homes could be built in future phases of housing development.

The lots were chosen based on their consistency with other city plans for the downtown area, large size and lack of other constraints like easements or leases. Lots 1, 2 and 3 are fully owned by the city, with minimal interference from utility easements. Additionally, lots 1 and 3 are the largest of the city-owned parking



Courtesy city of Menlo Park

A map showing the city-owned parking lots in downtown Menlo Park.

plazas, at about two acres each.

According to a presentation by Menlo Park Principal Planner Tom Smith, staff plan to present all three lots as a package so that a potential developer would be able to use all three lots in whatever way they see fit to accomplish both housing development goals and parking replacement goals.

These three highlighted parking plazas, which cover just under five acres of downtown land, currently provide 556 parking spaces between them.

If a developer uses the city's current residential development standards in the downtown district, they would be able to construct up to 483 units on lots 1, 2 and 3, which would exceed the 345-unit goal laid out in the housing element.

However, all eight parking plazas fall within a half mile of a major transit stop (Menlo Park's Caltrain station), which triggers the state's density bonus law. This bonus could allow developers to construct even more than 483 units on these sites, and allows for unlimited density and additional height bonuses.

Parking impacts

City staff and council members stressed that they are considering the parking needs of downtown visitors, residents and businesses while planning for these new developments. The exact number of parking spaces to maintain or rebuild will depend on a parking management study that the

city will complete over the next 18 months in conjunction with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

Though the city will leave the specifics of parking redevelopment planning to the developer, possibilities include the construction of a parking structure on one of the city-owned lots or the inclusion of parking as part of the housing developments.

A previous study of parking in the downtown area found that building a parking garage could cost as much as \$30,000 to \$50,000 per parking space.

“Any redevelopment should balance the city's housing goals in the housing element with current downtown parking needs,” said Smith. “So the study recommends including some level of replacement parking as part of any new development to make up for lost public parking spaces on the plazas.”

Doerr said that she hopes the city remembers that there are additional lots on the other side of Santa Cruz Avenue that can provide parking. “I hope that we can be creative in how we think about it. Are you walking a block to get to different places?”

Mayor Cecilia Taylor said that she thinks that centralized parking in a single area of downtown will not meet parking needs, as people will not want to walk to the businesses that are farther from that parking structure. Stores will see their business decrease, she said.

“Each of those plazas will still

have to retain some retail parking that will serve the businesses that front Santa Cruz (Avenue).”

Anna Chow, who owns Cheeky Monkey Toys in downtown Menlo Park, said that the city should make sure to involve the downtown business community in any decisions made. She also asked that staff consider the impacts to businesses beyond loss of parking.

“We also have operations that happen in parking plaza 1 — we have 40-foot trucks that come through making deliveries of toys,” she said. “So we need to make sure that we have a safe loading zone behind the stores, as well as trash receptacles.”

Next steps

In order to move forward with developing housing on the parking plazas, the city first has to dispose of the properties through a process governed by the state's Surplus Land Act. The city has to declare the land “surplus land” or “exempt surplus land.”

For nonexempt surplus land, the city could be required to seriously consider developer proposals that provide as little as 25% affordable housing, which would not achieve the affordable housing goals set out in the city's housing element. The city would also not be able to require specific components for the developments, such as replacement parking or community amenities.

City council directed staff to move forward with the surplus land exemption process to allow

the city more control over the future housing developments. The city can find the land to be “exempt” if the land is to be used for affordable housing with specific affordability requirements. This would allow the city to ask potential developers for replacement parking and other amenities.

Doerr said she is interested in going above and beyond the requirements for exemption, and also asked that staff emphasize in a request for proposals that they want the development to focus on “as many affordable units as possible,” using the state density bonus law and the city's affordable housing overlay.

Following council guidance, city staff will move forward with soliciting proposals and ideas for the sites from developers, and with the process to declare the three lots as exempt surplus land.

Smith said that if the city declares the properties to be exempt surplus land, they would need to receive exemption approval from the California Department of Housing and Community Development before the city could sell or lease the land for affordable housing.

The housing element outlines an ambitious timeline for conversion of the parking lots to affordable housing. The city aims to have a request for proposals sent out to developers by the end of this year, transfer rights to developers by the end of 2025 and build at least 345 units of affordable housing by the end of 2027. ■

Menlo Park puts its Community Funding Grant program on hold

The program will be delayed until spring 2025 as staff works to improve it

By Eleanor Raab

At its meeting on Aug. 13, the Menlo Park City Council directed city staff to put the city's Community Funding Grant program on hold until spring 2025 to provide time to rework and improve the program.

Council members debated whether to continue funding the 28-year-old program due to the large amounts of staff time that are required to fulfill relatively small grants, and a lack of rigor for assessing grant applicants, but ultimately decided that the community would be better served by putting the program on hold to give city staff time to revamp it.

The Community Funding Grant program was established in 1996 to help support local nonprofits whose programs respond to the needs of Menlo Park residents. Community needs that are supported by this community grant include programs for people with disabilities, programs that provide emergency assistance and low income support, programs for seniors and programs for youth.

During the 2023-24 grant cycle, Menlo Park awarded grants that ranged from \$1,000 to \$22,500 to a total of 40 grantee organizations. The 40 grants cost the city a total of \$350,000, according to a city staff report.

Mental health counseling organization and crisis line

StarVista received the largest grant, at \$22,500. The organization's grant application says that the funds were used to support mental health services for students at Menlo-Atherton High School.

Other notable fiscal year 2023-24 grantees include Acknowledge Alliance (\$16,000), All Five (\$13,000), Boys and Girls Clubs of the Peninsula (\$10,000), Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse (\$10,000), HIP Housing (\$12,000), JobTrain (\$10,000), LifeMoves (\$15,000), Live in Peace, Inc. (\$10,000), Nuestra Casa (\$10,000), Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (\$20,000), Peninsula Volunteers, Inc. (\$15,000), WeHOPE (\$10,000), Ravenswood Classroom Partners (\$15,000), Samaritan House (\$18,000), Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (\$15,000) and Youth Community Service (\$10,000).

The full list of grantees can be found in the city's staff report.

Grants are funded by the city's general fund, but no more than 1.7% of the general fund property tax can be allocated to the program, according to the program guidelines established in 1996.

Though several organizations have received these grants for at least five years in a row, according to city data, no program in the last year of funding received a grant that funded more than 10% of its operating budget.

Should the Community Funding Grant exist?

"We are re-looking at this program specifically because a council member suggested that it shouldn't exist," said Vice Mayor Drew Combs, who sits on the City Council Community Funding Grant subcommittee. "The question (is) should the city do this or not ... because I think the program is what it is. It's not going to, I think, ever have the rigor that ... is necessary to validate that these are organizations deserving of the funds that they're asking for."

Mayor Cecilia Taylor, who also sits on the Community Funding Grant subcommittee said that taking away the grant program would disproportionately impact the most vulnerable people in Menlo Park.

"I am very interested in the grant program continuing. I just look at the social health determinants and who is disproportionately impacted, and I think taking this (program) away would definitely have a negative impact," she said.

Combs said that the program is ultimately "done as a side" by the city, and is mainly aimed at

targeting smaller organizations. "(They) may be less aware of the grant funding process," he said.

Council member Maria Doerr, who works in grantmaking in her day job, suggested that one way to improve the program would be to have a defined floor and ceiling for grant amounts, as it may help make the program more efficient if staff focus on smaller numbers of larger grants. There is currently no minimum or maximum grant amount defined in the city's Community Funding Grant policy. City Manager Justin Murphy said that he has rarely seen the city turn down an applicant to this grant program.

"Would it help the juice to be worth the squeeze if grants were a little bigger, say between \$2,000-\$5,000 as a minimum," said Doerr. "I would love to have us reduce the total number of grants that we're giving to maybe 20 to 30 grants in a year. That will help reduce staff time on this."

City Clerk Judi Herren said that one staff member spent 260 hours in the previous year reviewing grant applications and preparing to present those

grants to the City Council.

Council member Betsy Nash said she agreed that the minimum grant amount should be higher. "It seems like that is a lot of work for the applicants and the city for a thousand dollars."

Nash also said that she is concerned about the amount of money that is spent on this program at a time when the council is going to be "asking taxpayers to support (new) taxes." Menlo Park voters will be voting on an increased Transient Occupancy Tax during the Nov. 5 election.

"I also recognize that these are nonprofits that are supporting our community members," she said. "I'm not sure how to balance that."

Combs said given the way the program is set up, he would actually prefer that the city focus on smaller grants and smaller organizations, rather than focusing on efficiency and giving larger grants to a smaller number of organizations.

"In my experience on the subcommittee, those smaller organizations in the city who may be new, who maybe don't

See **GRANT PROGRAM**, page 17

WOODSIDE ELECTION

continued from page 5

Bryant estimates the November election will cost about \$15,000.

As the only non-incumbent candidate, Aburish spoke during public comment to voice his support for an election despite having initial thoughts against the town spending \$15,000 to hold one.

"I believe I would make a good Town Council member, but not everyone knows me," said Aburish. "And so to the extent people get to know me and they decide that they don't believe I would be, I think it's important that they have the option to be able to find another candidate and to have a write-in."

Council members Goeld and Dick Brown saw merit in Hassan's willingness to continue with an election. Council member Ned Fluet also supported giving voters the choice to elect their council members and said that holding an election might encourage candidates to connect with the public

during their campaigns.

Council member Brian Dombkowski felt more concerned about the town's budget and shared his dissenting opinion toward an election. He emphasized the gamble in spending \$15,000 for there not to be a write-in candidate, pointing to the statistics of the town holding over 100 elections and only having two write-in candidacies throughout its 68-year history.

After deliberation, the council decided not to make a motion on the resolutions to appoint the uncontested candidates, therefore continuing with an election. Wall was absent from the meeting.

The Atherton City Council voted last week to cancel its uncontested council race.

For more information on Woodside's election visit woodsidedca.gov. ■

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

Get ready to meet the 2024 Almanac Readers' Choice gold-medal winners as you check out the restaurants, retail shops, service providers and other businesses that rose to the top of the annual contest.

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The Almanac

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 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, 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, 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)

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)

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF: JOHN PETER NELSON Case No.: 24-PRO-01052 To All heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of JOHN PETER NELSON. A Petition for Probate has been filed by: Tanya Marie Jaspering and Joshua J. Nelson in the Superior Court of California, County of SAN MATEO. The Petition for Probate requests that: Tanya Marie Jaspering and Joshua J. Nelson be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent. THE PETITION requests the decedent's will and codicils, if any, be admitted to probate. The will and any codicils are available for examination in the file kept by the court. THE PETITION requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A HEARING on the petition will be held on September 30 2024 at 9:00 a.m. in Dept. 1 of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063. If you object to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney. If you are a creditor or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58 (b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law. You may examine the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk. Attorney for Petitioner: Paul R. Kraft Law Office of Paul R. Kraft 5170 Golden Foothill Parkway El Dorado Hills, CA 95762 530-344-0204 (ALM Aug 30, Sep 6 and 13, 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)

FIELDING BROWNSTONE FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO.: M-298310 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: 1.) FIELDING BROWNSTONE, located at 225 Portola Rd, Portola Valley, CA 92120. Mailing Address: 7230 Decanture CV, San Diego, CA 92120. Registered owner(s): MICHAEL CHRISTIAN PERO 7230 Decanture CV San Diego, CA 92120 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 21, 2024. (ALM Aug 30, Sep 6, 13 and 20, 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)

MEDINA CLEANING SERVICE FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO.: M-298161 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as: 1.) MEDINA CLEANING SERVICE, located at 1138 Sevier Ave, Menlo Park CA 94025. Registered owner(s): ADALBERTA MEDINA ASTORGA 1138 Sevier Ave Menlo Park, CA 94025 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 07, 2024. (ALM Aug 30, Sep 6, 13 and 20, 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)

Continued on next page

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

The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 pm. Visit AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/

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Public Notices

Continued from previous page

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)

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

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

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

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

This business is conducted by: an Individual.

Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 06/24/2014.

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

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

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)

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)

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Menlo Park Police patrol vehicle pilot finds that Teslas don't appear to be 'patrol cars of the future'

Menlo Park Police will continue to pursue transition to zero-emissions patrol fleet

By Eleanor Raab

On Tuesday, Aug. 27, the Menlo Park City Council received an update on the Menlo Park Police Department's Tesla pilot program, which aims to see whether Teslas, or other electric vehicles, could be used as patrol vehicles.

Over the course of the program, police staff found that while "Teslas are useful within the department for patrol and non-patrol operations, (they) do not appear to be the 'patrol cars of the future,'" due to officer safety concerns, lack of off-road-ability and limited space for gear, personnel and prisoners.

In 2021, the City Council voted 3-2 to implement the Tesla patrol car pilot program as part of the city's effort to be carbon neutral by 2030. As part of the city's Climate Action Plan, Menlo Park has vowed to eliminate fossil fuel use in all city operations by 2030.

Because Tesla does not manufacture any purpose-built police vehicles, the police department had to outfit and modify the vehicles to be used as patrol vehicles. Modifications included the addition of lights, sirens, plastic seats and specialized seatbelts in the rear of the car, communications equipment, a gun rack, window guards and ballistic door panels.

According to a city staff report on the pilot, at the time that the program was initiated, there were no zero-emission patrol vehicles available direct from a manufacturer.

While purpose-built police vehicles can be upfitted by the manufacturer to include upgrades such as the ballistic door panels, the Teslas had to be sent to an additional outfitter located in southern California,



Courtesy city of Menlo Park

One of Menlo Park's Tesla Model Y patrol vehicles.

which proved to be more expensive, according to the staff report.

The base price of the Tesla Model Y was \$64,270 and upgrades and outfitting cost the city \$38,482 per car, which made for a total cost of \$102,752 per car. The hybrid Ford Explorers that police otherwise use cost \$51,620 for the base price of the car and \$21,224 for upgrades and outfitting, for a total cost of \$72,844 per car.

Despite concerns over vehicle driving range due to the added weight of the outfitting and ballistic panels, the pilot found that the vehicles had sufficient range at 80% charge to complete all shifts.

Officer safety concerns

According to the staff report, a majority of the challenges that police staff faced were due to the outfitting of the Tesla, and the "smart" features of the car.

Officers reported that their weapon access was restricted by the center console height, that the car's lights would time out at night, that the cars locked themselves without a key inside and that autopilot would occasionally interfere with the types of driving necessary during the course of police patrol.

Officers relayed in the staff report that "on occasion, the Teslas automatically stop when an officer attempts to pull off to the side of the road to approach vehicles or people."

Officers also said that they experienced issues with lighting controls, as Tesla does not allow direct access to the lighting system, and they were required to go through a "multi-step touchscreen process" just to dim their lights. According to the staff report, it was also difficult for officers to keep car lights on during traffic stops when they stepped away from their cars.

The smart locking functions of the cars also posed a challenge to officers, as the car would automatically lock when the key was out of range, and automatically lock when the key was in range.

City staff looked into modifying some aspects of these smart features to make the vehicles more appropriate for patrol use, but "the outfitter relayed that they attempted to reach out to Tesla but were not able to access or modify the central operating system," according to the staff report.

Police department staff provided a list of recommendations that Tesla could address

to support patrol use of Tesla vehicles, including a "public safety mode" that disables some autopilot steering corrections, a customizable sleep mode that would keep car lights on and unlimited digital keys for police accounts.

Staff also found that future outfitting of Teslas for police patrol should include a checklist to ensure that voice commands are turned off and that the rear doors do not open from the interior, as well as wider seats and lower consoles to accommodate officers wearing patrol gear.

"I am very proud that we tried the Teslas, and not everything works," said Council member Betsy Nash. "I appreciate all the work that the police department did with working through all the bumps."

Despite the space constraints and challenges with outfitting, officers reported that they did appreciate the acceleration, steering and vehicle speed compared to the hybrids and gasoline-only patrol vehicles.

Climate action plan

The Tesla pilot program was implemented as part of the city's climate action plan, which aims

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GRANT PROGRAM

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know of any other sort of grant funding processes ... it ends up being a small grant of \$1,000 or \$2,000," he said. "If you look at that from a dollar value perspective versus a \$20,000 (grant), it may seem as though the impact is less, but this is a population that wouldn't get funding from any other source."

Combs said that focusing on these smaller organizations may go against the idea of adding rigor to the Community Funding Grant program, because smaller

organizations may not have the infrastructure to provide thorough accounting for the funding. However he is ultimately supportive of the program continuing despite concerns from other council members regarding the rigor of the process to award grants.

"I'm not necessarily interested in continuing (with) this overarching goal of like, 'what's the most efficient way to do this?'" said Combs. "I didn't understand efficiency to be part of the problem we were attempting to solve. ... If that's how we're approaching (the grant program), then

I would say that my position would be that the city should just get out of this business."

Nash said she believes that the city should not be in the business of funding community grants at all at this moment in time.

"Put it on hold until a time when we could actually put the energy into looking at the program. ... I'm concerned that we are ... actually addressing community needs, that we are helping our residents and that we are spending our money wisely and are working wisely with our staff resources, which right now are very limited."

As this was a study session, the council did not vote on any outcome. However they did direct city staff to put the program on hold for six months, and to do a review of the program. Menlo Park staff will ask previous grant recipients for feedback on the program.

Organizations that have previously received funding are encouraged to fill out Menlo Park's survey to help improve the program for future funding rounds. ■

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

Legendary Portola Valley resident lives on through town's history

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Robert (Bob) Katz, Portola Valley's last surviving member of the town's first Planning Commission died at the age of 98 on June 30, 2024. He was known as one of the founding fathers of the town and is remembered for his proactivity in leading the organizing committee during the incorporation of Portola Valley in 1964.

Katz was born on Jan. 8, 1926 in San Francisco and attended the University of California, Berkeley, Stanford and Harvard universities. He was a World War II veteran, Harvard business professor and conservationist. Katz moved to Portola Valley in 1962 with his wife Susan where they raised their three sons Andrew, Peter and Jeffrey.

Back in 1962, Bob paid \$19,250 for the lot to build his house, which is still in the Katz family to this day.

Bob served a crucial role in

going door to door to talk to town residents about why they needed to come out and vote for the incorporation of Portola Valley. After the incorporation, Bob served on the Planning Commission to develop a general plan to prevent development on the town's hillside and determine how to manage the community.

Andrew remembers attending the first few Planning Commission meetings which were held in the Mangini Roadhouse, now Alpine Hills Tennis and Swimming Club.

His sons Andrew and Peter describe him as supportive, determined, wise and fair.

"He just really wanted to have conversations with people and get them engaged," said Peter. He said his dad used to call himself an "old school teacher," always wanting to talk to and learn from others. Bob found the act of sharing wisdom important, Peter said.

Outside of his work in Portola

Valley, Bob taught business at Dartmouth College, Harvard University, Stanford University and wrote several business textbooks and articles. As a conservationist and businessman, he served as the president and CEO of the U.S. Natural Resources Inc. working with Yosemite National Park. Bob was also a board member for the Sempervirens Fund, an organization aimed at protecting redwood forests and wildlife in the Santa Cruz mountains.

According to Peter, his father was always working. He would tell them "if your job is doing what you love, then it's not really work."

Bob was also a nature lover and would take his kids backpacking, horseback riding and fly fishing. As a grandfather, he wanted to share the joys of learning through travel and created a tradition to take his grandchildren anywhere they wanted when they turned 10. The one exception was that they needed

to research the destination, write a report before they left and keep a diary of their trip.

His nine grandchildren were able to travel to places like Scotland, Alaska, the Galapagos Islands, Africa and Antarctica.

"Each of them will say what an amazing bonding experience it was to get to know Papa (Bob) in a whole different way," said Peter. "He was committed that every grandkid when they turned 10 would have this amazing, memorable experience."

Bob's oldest son Andrew continues to live in the town that his father strongly impacted. Andrew also took part in the town's government as the chairman of the Parks and Recreation Committee, president of the Alpine Hills Tennis and Swim Club and chairman of the Westridge Architectural Supervising Committee.

Andrew appreciates the smallness of Portola Valley, volunteerism, the community and the natural beauty — all of which

still strongly reflect the town's philosophy since its incorporation 60 years ago.

"I think the reason I have volunteered so much and the reason I've stayed here, been here and raised my family here is because of his legacy," said Andrew.

The Katz name continues to live on in Portola Valley through the history of Bob and now his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

"Everyone is going to remember him in their own way and he would love that. He wanted everyone to be their own person," said Peter, who remembers his father as a caring patriarch who wanted to make a difference in the world and had an incredible love for his family.

Bob is survived by his three sons Andrew, Peter and Jeffrey, nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. ■

Email Staff Writer

Jennifer Yoshikoshi at

jyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com.

New, lower speed limits coming to many Menlo Park streets

By Eleanor Raab

Drivers will need to start slowing down a little more as they make their way through Menlo Park, as the city is installing new, lower speed limits on many streets. At a meeting in May, the Menlo Park City Council passed a new speed limit ordinance to help improve traffic safety.

Though the ordinance was passed in May, the new speed limits haven't been implemented until now. City crews began replacing existing speed limit signs as well as adding new posts and signs at some locations on Aug. 5, according to Kevin Chen, Menlo Park's senior traffic engineer.

Since work began, new speed

limits have officially been implemented on two roads: on Bay Road from Marsh Road to Van Buren Road, where the speed has been reduced from 30 to 25 mph, and on Ravenswood Avenue from Laurel Street to Middlefield Road, where the speed has also been reduced from 30 to 25 mph.

Chen says that the city hopes to complete the signage changes for all streets where a lower speed limit was approved by the council by early fall of this year.

In addition to the two streets that have already been completed, the speed limits will also be lowered from 30 to 25 miles per hour on Santa Cruz Avenue from city limits near Sand Hill Road, to Avey Avenue, on Middle Avenue from Olive Street to University

Drive and on Valparaiso from Cotton Street to El Camino Real.

The speed limits will be lowered from 35 to 30 miles per hour on Alpine Road from Santa Cruz Avenue to the city limits, on Middlefield Road from Atherton city limits to Palo Alto city limits and on Sand Hill Road from Sharon Park Drive to Palo Alto city limits.

Speed limits on the section of Sand Hill Road from Highway 280 to Sharon Park Drive will be lowered from 40 to 30 mph.

In Menlo Park's "business activity district," speed limits will be lowered from 25 to 20 mph. This includes Santa Cruz Avenue from University Drive to Merrill Street, and Menlo Avenue from University Drive to

El Camino Real.

The city will continue to notify residents of newly implemented speed limits through the its newsletter and through social media platforms, says Chen.

A state law, Assembly Bill 43, passed in 2021 gave California cities more flexibility to reduce speed limits 5 mph beyond the limit that has been determined in prior traffic studies in designated "safety corridors" that have higher rates of collisions, and in "business activity districts" such as downtowns.

According to the text of this bill, drivers who violate the new speed limits are subject to a warning citation for the first 30 days after the new, reduced limits are implemented.

A city news item on the new limits says that the reduced speeds through the city are being implemented as part of Menlo Park's Vision Zero goal to eliminate all traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2040.

"When collisions occur at higher speeds, injuries are more severe," said Chen. "Lower speeds therefore play a critical role in safety. When vehicles travel at lower speeds, drivers have a wider field of vision ... allowing them to notice potential hazards. At lower speeds, drivers have the ability to react quickly, avoiding collisions or minimizing the severity of a collision." ■

Email Staff Writer Eleanor Raab

at eraab@almanacnews.com.

LAS LOMITAS

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without a master's degree. The median household income in San Mateo County is about \$149,000.

In comparison, Portola Valley School District pays a starting salary of \$82,130 and a maximum salary of \$153,886 and Menlo Park City School District pays a starting salary of \$78,645 and a maximum of \$151,926. LLESD pays the least in both starting and maximum salaries compared to neighboring school districts.

Teachers are asking for higher salaries that will alleviate rising health care and housing costs that will support educators to provide a thriving learning

environment for their students.

According to the union, the district had a record number of open positions this year with four teachers leaving the district over the summer. During public comment, LLEA co-president and La Entrada teacher Daniella Lefer pointed out that without feedback, the district is unable to understand and address the reasons behind these departures.

Board Clerk Gautum Nadella responded to public commenters by promising that he will push for more financial responsibility from the district and encourage support toward teachers, paraprofessionals, librarians and more.

"I will push for more clarity and oversight of our overall expenses

going forward but it is about spending all we can responsibly for the largest and most important asset that we have here, which is our people, our staff and our teachers," Nadella said.

Board members Jason Morimoto and Laura Moon echoed Nadella's comments and expressed their support and appreciation of district staff. For more information on the LLEA's negotiations visit the union's informational page on the process at tinyurl.com/LLEAinfo.

The district did not comment on the negotiations by The Almanac's Wednesday afternoon press deadline, but shared a fact sheet on the collective bargaining impasse. ■

PATROL CARS

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for the city to be carbon neutral by 2030.

When Menlo Park last completed a greenhouse gas inventory for city operations in 2019, emissions from the city's car fleet contributed nearly half of the city's overall carbon emissions. Among city departments, the police department generates the most vehicle miles traveled, and within the police department, patrol vehicles specifically generate the most vehicle miles traveled.

According to fleet mileage data gathered from February 2022 to February 2023, police

department patrol vehicles accounted for 58% of emissions and 38% of vehicle miles traveled. This made patrol vehicles an easy target for lowering the city's carbon emissions.

According to the staff report, the Menlo Park Police Department will continue to use the Tesla vehicles that they have already purchased. Staff will also continue to monitor the market for all-electric patrol vehicles as they emerge.

In 2023, the City Council approved the purchase of a Chevrolet Blazer electric vehicle that is rated for police pursuit, and staff are hoping to deploy the Blazer as the next stage of the pilot by early 2025. ■

Artscene

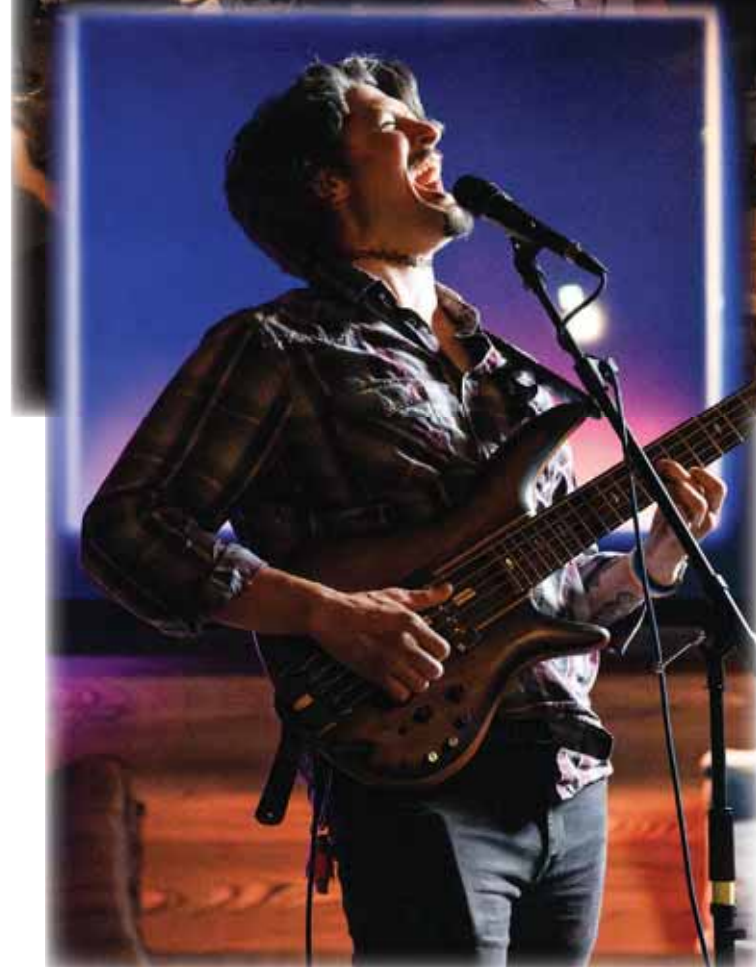
PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

The Showcase

in Mountain View gives local musicians a chance to shine

Curated monthly event at The Ameswell Hotel supports artists' songs and stories

By Karla Kane



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Musicians performing at the Aug. 2 edition of The Showcase at Roger Bar included R. Vega (above), Stevie McQuay (left) and Henri (top).

Playing at open mic nights has long been a way for fledgling musicians to try out new material and get comfortable performing in front of an audience. But what about when they're ready to take it up a notch? A monthly concert series, The Showcase, at Roger Bar and Restaurant at the Ameswell Hotel in Mountain View aims to offer an elevated experience for up-and-coming musicians and audiences alike.

The Showcase, held the first Friday of each month, is led by Maleli Raiyawa and Rafael de Ausen (aka Rafael Unplugged, whose brands include Clique SF and Sets in the City). The series, Raiyawa said, is meant to be a step up from typical open mic nights,

designed for artists who are gaining confidence and experience as they progress in their music careers. As such, it's a curated concert, with Raiyawa booking four to five featured artists for 20-minute sets per evening and interviewing them each after their performance slots.

"There are lots of different open mics in the South Bay. Our idea for (The Showcase) was to create a next-level sort of thing," Raiyawa said. "There are not a lot of places for people to play more than five minutes, or for the local singer-songwriters to showcase." The concerts at the Ameswell, he said, are a way to offer "a pipeline from the open mic proper to us, which is a little more of a showcase invitational."

The very start of the evening does still have an open-mic element. Folks can sign up in advance to book short sets as part of the soundcheck, starting at 6 p.m., as the equipment — including a high-quality sound system and lights — is getting dialed in for the main event.

Raiyawa and de Ausen are musicians and friends who have both been very active in the local music scene, including at open

mic nights, such as Red Rock Coffee's long-running event.

"I've volunteered and hosted a few open mics in the area. I've done quite a bit of music community building in Mountain View in terms of throwing these kinds of events," Raiyawa said. "I feel like that's the thing that everything stems from," he said of Red Rock's open mic, which is an institution of sorts for many locals.

De Ausen originally hails from Guam, where he owned a photo studio, and his technical and artistic expertise is part of what makes his events especially desirable for musicians, as he strives to support up-and-comers with getting good photos, videos, live streaming and electronic press-kit materials so they can take their careers to the next level.

See **THE SHOWCASE**, page 20



THE SHOWCASE

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“We kind of help set them up for success after the show,” he said.

De Ausen began his association with the Ameswell when they booked him as a performer. Eventually, the Showcase idea evolved and he brought Raiyawa on board to curate and host. The hotel has been enthusiastic and supportive, he said, and de Ausen is now responsible for booking all the Ameswell’s Friday night entertainment.

“The Showcase was just this great success project ... ‘OK, since First Fridays is going well, let’s do music every Friday,’” he said of the Ameswell management’s response. Those shows are now billed as “Fresh Friday,” and feature various line-ups (including, sometimes, de Ausen and Raiyawa themselves).

Mona Dena is a songwriter, performer and music educator who hosts local open-mic and songwriter sessions in the area. She’s also performed as part of The Showcase and found the experience rewarding.

“(De Ausen) really knows what he’s doing,” she said, of the sound quality and organization. She also appreciates the post-set interview sections and the care taken with helping promote the artists.

“I always want to know more about songwriters; What’s their process? What’s their experience? It’s so varied,” she said. “Maleli is so great at being an amazing emcee and announcing people and making them feel really special, and (Raiyawa and de Ausen) are really great at promoting afterwards. I’ve just been very impressed with who they are and how much care they put in.”

Dena is currently hosting two open mics herself, both in downtown Redwood City. One, open to all ages, is held on the fourth Sunday of each month at Coffeebar. She’s also begun hosting the open-mic night at The Hub on the second Monday



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Above: Host Maleli Raiyawa, left, chats with R. Vega after her set during The Showcase at Roger Bar on Aug. 2. Top: Jack Matyas plays guitar outside the entrance to Roger Bar as the monthly event The Showcase goes on inside.

of each month (the event is held weekly with rotating hosts). She said she’s been inspired by the quality of the events at Ameswell and hopes to encourage some of that showcase vibe at other events.

“When I host I am really trying to encourage songwriters, to make it feel like a place where people feel like they can really share,” she said.

Musician Melinda Kausek has been active on the local music scene since 2023, has recently begun recording and releasing singles, and has participated in a number of events at the Ameswell. She got to know Raiyawa and de Ausen through attending open mics including at Red Rock and Mama Kin (in San Jose) and, like Dena, has been a Showcase artist.

“I really appreciate how Rafael, Maleli and the rest of their team, they are creating opportunities to help emerging artists break out of the regular weekly mics. Everything from the venue to the sound system to the videography puts these events well above the typical open mic, but they are also more accessible than getting this kind of gig on your own,” Kausek told this news organization in an email. “I have also found them to be super supportive, which honestly boosts my confidence and makes it easier to put myself out there even more.”

Kausek “is the type of artist we

really want to showcase because she’s putting in the work of getting her music out there,” Raiyawa said. “We want to help promote that in any way we can.”

He said that the lineup for the Sept. 6 edition of The Showcase would feature Amour de Seine, David Hobbes, Hannah McDonald and Redemption Breaking.

For Raiyawa and de Ausen, it’s all about supporting the local musical community and harnessing their respective skills and interests to do so.

“The Showcase has become Rafael and I’s passion project. I really wanted a podcast or interview type show, Rafael had the showcase idea and we just kind of merged the two,” Raiyawa explained. “So many people in general have phenomenal wild stories. If people have a story to tell, we want to be the stage so that people can share that.” ■

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

The Showcase takes place the first Friday of the month, 6-10 p.m., at Roger Bar and Restaurant, The Ameswell Hotel, 800 Moffett Blvd., Mountain View; rogerbarandrestaurant.com/event/friday-night-live.

Worth a Look

Kings Mountain Art Fair

A longtime Labor Day weekend tradition (since 1963), Kings Mountain Art Fair showcases the work of many artists in a redwood forest setting. The volunteer-run event offers breakfast (from 8-10:30 a.m.), lunch (11:30-4:30 p.m.), kids’ art activities, and artists’ booths with a range of wares, including some from local makers. Local artists participating in this year’s fair include Xuan My Ho, Sheena Mawson, Vibeke Christensen and many others. Proceeds go to the Kings Mountain Volunteer Fire Brigade and Kings Mountain Elementary School. The fair, according to its website, also boasts the “world’s largest cookies” for sale.

Aug. 31-Sept. 2, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; 13889 Skyline Blvd., Woodside; kingsmountainartfair.org.



Vivian Cromwell

The Kings Mountain Art Fair takes place over Labor Day weekend in Woodside.

Thirty Seconds to Mars

Jared Leto is an Oscar-winning actor and he’s also the longtime frontman of alt-rock band Thirty Seconds to Mars (which also counts his brother Shannon among its members). The band is hitting the road for its first headlining tour in five years, in support of its most recent record “It’s The End of The World But It’s a Beautiful Day!” California rock band AFI, singer-songwriter/YouTuber Poppy, and singer-songwriter KennyHoopla will perform as supporting acts at the Live 105-presented show at the Shoreline.

Sept. 4, 6 p.m., Shoreline Amphitheatre, One Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View; ticket prices vary. livenation.com.

John Fogerty

Rock icon John Fogerty, founder of the band Creedence Clearwater Revival, is known for classics like “Proud Mary” and “Bad Moon Rising” and has been hailed as one of the greatest songwriters, singers and guitarists by Rolling Stone. He’s on tour with his two sons in celebration of gaining ownership of his song catalog, performing many of his hits. George Thorogood, rocker of “Bad to the Bone” fame, and rock band Hearty Har are also joining Fogerty for his “Celebration Tour.”

Aug. 31, 6 p.m., Frost Amphitheater, 351 Lasuen St., Stanford; \$79-\$173; live.stanford.edu.

Charlotte Cheng

Local author Charlotte Cheng comes to Books Inc, where she will read from her picture book “Roar-Choo!” about a feisty dragon and a gentle phoenix coping with a nasty cold. It’s a tale about friendship, empathy, respecting differences and the importance of taking a break. Some of Cheng’s other books for children include “Night Market Rescue,” “BoBo Loves Dumplings” and the brand-new “I Miss You Most,” a comforting tale about memories of a beloved grandpa and dealing with grief, which will also be featured at the event.

Sept. 1, 11 a.m., Books Inc, 855 El Camino Real #74, Palo Alto; booksinc.net.

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— Second Place, Breaking News

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

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Food & Drink



Owner Georgette Nelson stands next to the Kitchen Table Travel cheese truck “Large Marge” at its homebase in Redwood City on Aug. 22.



Owner Georgette Nelson slices goat cheese from the Kitchen Table Travel cheese truck “Large Marge” at its homebase in Redwood City.

Say cheese!

A Redwood City resident’s cheese truck is popping up on the Peninsula

Story by Adrienne Mitchel | Photos by Anna Hoch-Kenney

Cheese lovers, meet Large Marge. She’s a modified Piaggio Ape (an adapted Vespa scooter) with a fridge, shelving and lots of cheese. And soon, you’ll see her at various pop-ups along the Peninsula.

Large Marge — a name borrowed from the movie “Pee-wee’s Big Adventure” — is the brainchild of Redwood City resident Georgette Nelson, a full-time cheese buyer who also runs tourism company Kitchen Table Travel. Georgette hopes

to make Large Marge the cheese equivalent of the ubiquitous ice cream truck and to introduce the Peninsula to local, historic and unusual cheeses through catering and pop-ups. Large Marge will offer retail-style blocks of cheese as well as pre-made charcuterie boards and sandwiches.

“I love how cheese tells a story,” Georgette said. “It tells a story of who made it, where it came from, the type of milk, the landscape, everything.”

Large Marge is the

newest member of Kitchen Table Travel, which Georgette and her sister-in-law Cat Nelson created in 2020 to arrange small group culinary and real estate tours to Italy. Georgette attended culinary school and cooked at the Google campus before landing her current job of working with cheese importers to source cheese for restaurants and hotels. She views the cheese truck as a culmination of her hospitality experience, her cheese-purchasing job and



Cheeses, jams, olives and snacks are spread through the Kitchen Table Travel cheese truck "Large Marge."



Owner Georgette Nelson slices goat cheese from the Kitchen Table Travel cheese truck "Large Marge."

the global cheese knowledge she gained through her tourism company.

"Cheese is fun," she said. "Cheese is science. You just take one little thing, like a bacteria in the air, and you add it, or it's a mistake, and somehow you end up with something totally different."

The idea for Large Marge came about after Georgette and Cat returned from a trip to Sicily with Kitchen Table Travel.

"In Italy, (Piaggio Apes) are everywhere, but in Sicily, these are especially used for vending to sell fruits and vegetables and cheese," Georgette said. "In the morning, a guy will pull up with (a Piaggio Ape), and he'll start yelling, 'Pomodoro!' and like all the old ladies come down and start buying their fruits and vegetables."

Determined to bring the concept back home to the Peninsula, she placed an order for a custom Piaggio Ape in November, and Large Marge arrived in February. Over the next few months, Georgette worked on getting the Vespa a license plate and health permits, as well as arranging custom detailing with the Kitchen Table Travel logo on the doors.

"(I was getting the doors) painted at SS Customs in Redwood City...and all the cool young dudes there thought that Marge was the coolest truck ever, so they invited me to their Tesla Cybertruck show, which was to raise money for the LEMO Foundation (in Redwood City)," Georgette said. "She did not match all the Teslas there, but she stood out in her own way."

It was through that car show that Georgette met the LEMO Foundation, which hosted her first pop-up in July. The Vespa

is parked at the foundation's headquarters when not in use.

"The LEMO Foundation are my cheerleaders and supporters," Georgette said. "This place is amazing. Everyone here is super nice and really supportive."

Georgette said her ultimate goal is "to get more good cheese out into the community."

"I'd like to make cheese more accessible to everybody, and also to make it fun, not so serious," she said. "Remember wine was so serious for so long? Cheese is also kind of serious, and people love cheese so much, it should be more of a celebration."

Large Marge's second pop-up will be Italian themed and held on Sept. 14 at The BottleShop in Redwood City from 1-4 p.m. Expect cheese sold in blocks, crackers, jarred vegetables, cured meats, candies and cookies.

"All the kinds of things that you would expect to find in Italy when you're on vacation," Georgette said.

Georgette hopes to eventually have a fleet of Piaggio Apes selling a variety of goods along the Peninsula.

"I could even do a bookmobile Marge, I can do a coffee Marge, I can do a gelato Marge," she said. "I want a whole fleet of

these, just bringing joy to the Peninsula, because she is so cute."

For those looking to expand their cheese palate, Georgette recommends shopping for cheese at Sigona's in Redwood City and Palo Alto and Bianchini's Market in San Carlos and Portola Valley. Local cheese brands she recommends are Laura Chenel, Cypress Grove, Valley Ford Cheese, Marin French, Stepladder Creamery and Central Coast Creamery. Laura Chenel and Cypress Grove "were the original goat cheese makers who started a whole movement in the proper way

to make cheese and humane treatment of animals and fair pay of workers," Georgette said, and Marin French is "the oldest continuously operating cheese maker in America. They used to make cheese back in the Gold Rush days and send it down river to San Francisco because there was an egg shortage, and that's how they would make cheese there." ■

Email Food Editor Adrienne Mitchel at amitchel@almanacnews.com.

Kitchen Table Travel,
415-964-0361, Instagram:
[@kitchentabletravelco](https://www.instagram.com/kitchentabletravelco).



Owner Georgette Nelson stands next to the Kitchen Table Travel cheese truck "Large Marge" at its homebase in Redwood City.



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