

The Almanac

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

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Meet Menlo Park's birding guru, Rick Morris

By Eleanor Raab

Rick Morris can show you where the barn owls hang out, where the screech owls find their dinner and where the great horned owls nest. He can also show you hummingbirds, waterfowl, woodpeckers and more.

Morris is a local father and freelance tech worker who has a passion for birdwatching and nature photography, and he wants to share that passion with his neighbors. Morris leads local birding tours where he shows Peninsula residents the wonderful winged nature that can be found flying, chirping and nesting in their backyards.

The Almanac caught up with him for a morning birding walk at the Stanford Dish.

"This is a great place (for birds)," he said. "Though to get the good stuff you have to come pretty early in the morning or pretty late in the evening."

Morris hasn't always been a birder. "First I was a photographer before becoming a birder," he said. "In 2009 I decided to get my first digital camera. Before that I was working with all film, which is very different."

After being laid off from his

corporate tech job during the COVID-19 pandemic, Morris stayed at home with his two kids. However, when his kids went back to school he would pick up his camera.

"I started going out and looking for hummingbirds," he said. "They were kind of my first birding love. ... They migrate here from April to June, and people go crazy over them because they're so colorful — they're gorgeous."

Morris said one of his most memorable pictures that he has taken was of a mother hummingbird feeding her babies in a tiny nest. He scrolled through several up-close shots of hummingbirds on his phone, inviting us to share his delight in the small moments that he captured.

"I got a couple of shots of her with her mouth open, look at her tongue!" he exclaimed. "Those are always kind of rare to get, so I was really excited about that picture."

The beginning of the bird tours

Having taken thousands of pictures of local birds, Morris wanted to share his love of winged creatures with his neighbors. He started making



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Local bird photographer Rick Morris points out a pair of acorn woodpeckers to two hikers at the Stanford Dish on Aug. 29.

calendars and greeting cards out of the pictures that he took, and selling them online and at local coffee shops. He also began posting his bird pictures on social media, including Nextdoor.

Morris said that after his bird photos started gaining a

following online, he had people approach him to lead local birding tours.

"When I would go to local gardens, or even at church, people would say 'are you Rick? I saw your pictures on Nextdoor,' or 'I follow you on Instagram.' ...

And people started asking me 'well why don't you lead birding tours?'"

He took their advice to heart, and led his very first birding tour in January of this year.

See **BIRDING**, page 11

Trump supporters rally in Palo Alto, Woodside

Attendees gather ahead of Trump's expected arrival at a fundraiser in Woodside

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

On Sept. 13, over 50 supporters of former President Donald Trump gathered along El Camino Park near Stanford Shopping Center to rally in support for his 2024 campaign. Attendees waved their flags and banners as some drivers honked and cheered in support. On the other side of

the road was a smaller group of six supporters for Vice President Kamala Harris who got together after hearing about the Trump rally on Sept. 12.

Trump supporters rallied ahead of an afternoon fundraiser hosted by tech entrepreneur Tom Siebel in Woodside. Another rally was being held at

See **TRUMP**, page 19



Anna Hoch-Kenney

A Tesla drives past a gathering of Trump supporters along Palo Alto's El Camino Real on Sept. 13.

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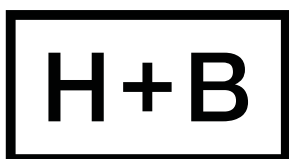
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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Magali Gauthier

Recology driver Charles Esler picks up trash in a hydrogen fuel cell-powered garbage truck in Redwood Shores on the morning of Sept. 5.

North America's first hydrogen-powered garbage truck debuts in Redwood Shores: cleaner, but costly

By Simmerdeep Kaur

The landfill collection began in Redwood Shores like any other day Thursday. But this time, the truck was quiet and fueled by hydrogen.

After its San Francisco debut, Recology is testing this truck in San Mateo County to evaluate its performance on different terrains and reduce carbon emissions during waste collection.

Charles Esler, the driver testing the truck in Redwood Shores, noted that the hydrogen truck is significantly more comfortable to drive, and he no longer needs to wear noise-canceling headphones.

"It allows us to efficiently pick up the route in an adequate amount of time," said Esler.

Yet, challenges remain before hydrogen-powered garbage trucks can achieve widespread adoption.

While the truck uses a hydrogen fuel cell that produces zero tailpipe emissions, experts said the hydrogen production itself may still result in some carbon life-cycle emissions. The hydrogen truck eliminates the harmful particulates and nitrogen oxides associated with diesel trucks, but it is nearly twice as expensive to build and must

See **RECOLOGY**, page 16

Police arrest Ravenswood staffer for alleged lewd acts

District statement says man was placed on leave earlier this month

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

On Monday, Sept. 16, Ravenswood City School District employee James Fitch was arrested for three felony counts of lewd acts with a minor and one felony count of enticing a minor for lewd acts, according to an East Palo Alto Police Department news release.

The 54-year-old Stockton resident was arrested on Sept. 16 in coordination with the U.S. Marshal's Fugitive Apprehension

Team and served a \$500,000 arrest and search warrant at his residence, according to police. They say he will be booked into the San Mateo County Jail.

The school district sent out a public statement on Monday noting it was aware of the ongoing investigation and providing families with further information on Fitch. This news organization obtained an email the district sent to parents on Sept. 11 notifying them that "law enforcement was investigating

allegations of inappropriate misconduct by one of our employees involving a student."

According to the district's statement, Fitch, who had worked with the district for more than 10 years, passed all background checks prior to being hired. Upon law enforcement identifying Fitch as the suspect on Sept. 5, the district says it placed him on administrative leave, barring him from any

See **STAFFER**, page 18

Sheriff's unions address vote of no confidence against chief of staff

By Eleanor Raab

In a press conference on Tuesday, Sept. 17, addressing a vote of no confidence against San Mateo County Sheriff's Office Chief of Staff Victor Aenlle, union representatives said they took this vote against Aenlle because he "(rules) through intimidation," union busting and has cultivated a working environment where Sheriff's Office staff "fear retaliation."

They alleged that Sheriff's Office administration engaged in unfair labor practices such as imposing a policy that required deputies to work 24 hours of overtime each pay period.

"Today we gather in a time of deep uncertainty — our office is gripped by an atmosphere of unease and retaliation, largely due to the conduct of Chief of Staff Victor Aenlle," said DSA Board President Carlos Tapia at the press conference. "His behavior toward employees has been nothing short of reprehensible, leading to emotional distress among both sworn officers and civilian staff."

The unions, the Deputy Sheriff's Association and Organization of Sheriff's Sergeants, took a vote of no confidence against the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office Chief of Staff Victor Aenlle on Sept. 11, with 96% of members approving the vote.

"The vote came about after extensively documented misbehavior and misdeeds by Aenlle, including overstepping his role as civilian chief of staff and interfering with protected union activities," wrote the DSA and OSS boards in a press release. "In addition, Aenlle (along with the Sheriff's Office administration) were named in two (California Public Employment Relations Board) PERB complaints."

The PERB is a quasi-judicial state agency that has the authority to hold a hearing on the charges and, depending on the outcome, order the Sheriff's Office to pay financial remedies to employees including, back pay and front pay.

Sheriff Christina Corpus responded to the union's remarks and vote of no confidence in a statement on Sept. 12, calling the vote of no confidence

"political theater" and stating that she refused to consider removing Aenlle from his position. She alleged in the statement that "special interests" are seeking to undermine her leadership and "bully" her with a vote of no confidence against Aenlle.

"Let me make it crystal clear: no one will intimidate me into making personnel changes," Corpus said in the Sept. 12 statement. "This vote is nothing more than a political stunt led by a few insiders seeking to divide this office. It has no legal bearing and changes nothing. I appointed my chief of staff and he will remain in that position."

Following the press conference, Gretchen Spiker, director of communications for the Sheriff's Office, wrote in a statement that Corpus' position has not changed since her Sept. 12 statement. "She will not be intimidated into making personnel changes."

Spiker said that Corpus has received support from elected officials and community leaders including Half Moon Bay Mayor Joaquin Jimenez and San Bruno City Council members Tom Hamilton and Marty Medina.

Tapia said that the unions have traditionally had a good working relationship with the Sheriff's Office, and that this is the first time a vote of no confidence, or anything like it, has been undertaken by the DSA and OSS.

Tapia also said that Sheriff Corpus has been actively downplaying the allegations that have been brought to her about Aenlle's conduct.

"The sheriff had a choice, and instead of launching a thorough investigation or taking appropriate action, she chose to dismiss our concerns," he said. "She has accused us of being a small, disruptive group, and even gone as far as alleging we are engaging in character assassination.... The situation cannot continue."

Who is Aenlle?

Before being hired as the Sheriff's Office chief of staff, Aenlle worked on Corpus' campaign.

See **SHERIFF**, page 21

Stanford Medicine is once again in-network for Blue Shield insurance holders

The new agreement went into effect Sept. 1

By Lisa Moreno

After more than two months of negotiations, Stanford Medicine and Blue Shield of California reached a new agreement, making Stanford Hospital, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, Tri-Valley Hospital, Stanford Medicine Partners and Packard Children's Health Alliance in-network for its HMO and PPO member recipients.

Blue Shield announced last

Friday that the agreement went into effect on Sept. 1.

Blue Shield announced in July that Stanford Medicine would be dropped from its medical coverage following contract disagreements, and only patients with terminal illnesses, in need of surgery or using pregnancy and postpartum services would qualify for its Continuity of Care program, which allows patients to continue treatment through-out network disruptions.

But after the announcement, Stanford Health Care said it would continue to honor Blue Shield's in-network expenses for all services throughout the negotiations, according to Lisa Kim, Stanford Medicine media representative.

Now, all coverage has been reinstated between the two groups following the new agreement.

Blue Shield of California and Stanford Health have a history of disagreements, having also

terminated their contract in 2014.

"We look forward to continuing our longstanding collaboration for the benefit of our members and patients," the two parties wrote in a joint statement.

Blue Shield of California and Stanford Health did not respond to requests for comment by The Almanac's Wednesday afternoon press deadline. ■

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

Dead crow in Portola Valley tests positive for West Nile virus

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

A dead crow found and collected in Portola Valley has tested positive for West Nile virus, according to the San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District. The Portola Valley resident who reported on the dead crow on Sept. 9 received a call about the positive case on Sept. 11.

"Our staff are setting additional mosquito traps in nearby areas to check mosquito population abundance and will test trapped mosquitoes for West Nile virus," said Rachel Curtis-Robles, the Vector Control District's public health education and outreach officer.

In San Mateo County, a total of 27 dead birds have tested positive for West Nile virus as of Sept. 18. The Vector Control District reports that no mosquitoes in the county have tested positive for the virus in 2024.

Outside of the county, mosquitoes have tested positive for the West Nile virus in parts of San Jose, Sunnyvale and Santa Clara, according to the Santa Clara County Vector Control District.

Curtis-Robles advises the public to take precautions when traveling out of San Mateo County by using EPA-registered insect repellent.

"About 1 in 5 people who become infected with West Nile virus will have symptoms like fever, headache, body aches, nausea, and vomiting in the days after being bitten by a mosquito," said Curtis-Robles.

The virus is transmitted through the bite of an infected mosquito. Older adults and people with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of severe illness if infected.

The San Mateo County Vector Control District asks community members to dump standing

water to prevent mosquito breeding, report biting mosquitoes to the district and to use EPA-registered insect repellent when outdoors in the evening and early morning.

Dead birds should be reported to the West Nile virus dead bird hotline at 877-968-2473.

For more information on West Nile virus activity in San Mateo County, visit smcmvcd.org. For information on all reported cases in California visit westnile.gov. ■

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



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Recently hatched mosquitoes wait for a feeding at the San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District offices, where they are bred for testing, educational and observational purposes, on June 20.

Atherton Police Department warns of email scams that use photos of residents' homes

By Eleanor Raab

The Atherton Police Department sent out a news bulletin on Monday, Sept. 16, warning of a new email scam that has been reported by several Atherton residents.

According to Atherton police, residents have reported receiving emails claiming that malware has been downloaded onto their computers, allowing the sender of the email to access personal files and sensitive private information.

The scammers then threaten to release private information if

the recipient does not pay them in Bitcoin.

Police say that some emails even include photos taken of residents' homes in order to make the threats appear more credible.

The Atherton Police Department is warning residents that any emails like this are a scam, and said that the public should not reply to these emails under any circumstances. Recipients of emails like this should also never provide any personal information to the senders of the email, make any payments or respond to any

threats made in the email.

"If you receive such an email, (you should) delete it immediately," according to the bulletin.

Scams like these, which extort people by claiming that the scammers have access to sensitive pictures of the victims in addition to their personal information and pictures of the victims' homes, have been proliferating throughout the United States according to a report by Forbes.

Cooper Quintin, a computer privacy and security researcher with the Electronic Freedom Foundation, says that scams like these are common, but that

this newest version is even more alarming because it includes images of the scam victims' homes.

"This is a super common scam — almost everybody gets it," he said. The newest version of it is even more alarming than in the past. The past version would have your name and then some claim about how they had seen you through your webcam. ... Now, the scam has evolved to have your address and a picture of your house. But it's not true, and do not fall for it."

See **SCAMS**, page 18

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The Almanac

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NEWSROOM

Editor Angela Swartz, 223-6529, aswartz@almanacnews.com

Staff Writers
Eleanor Raab, 223-6537
Jennifer Yoshikoshi, 223-6536

Audience Engagement Editor
Jamey Padojino, 223-6524, jpadojino@almanacnews.com

Home/Real Estate Editor Linda Taaffe, 223-6511, ltaaffe@almanacnews.com

Arts & Entertainment Editor
Heather Zimmerman, 223-6515, hzimmerman@almanacnews.com

Features Editor Julia Brown, 223-6531, jbrown@almanacnews.com

Food Editor Adrienne Mitchel, 223-6539, amitchel@almanacnews.com

Audience Engagement Assistant Editor
Zoe Morgan, 223-6519, zmorgan@almanacnews.com

Audience Engagement Assistant Editor/ Visual Journalist Anna Hoch-Kenney, 223-6530, ahochkenney@almanacnews.com

Lifestyle Assistant Editor Karla Kane, 223-6521, kkane@almanacnews.com

Embarcadero Media Foundation Staff Writers

Simmerdeep Kaur, 223-6533
Emily Margaretten, 223-6517
Lisa Moreno, 223-6526
Zoe Morgan, 223-6519
Gennady Sheyner, 223-6513

Contributors Kate Daly, Ashwini Gangal, Neil Gonzales, Maggie Mah, Arden Margulis

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Design and Production Manager
Kristin Brown, 223-6562

ADVERTISING

Vice President of Sales
Gina Channell Wilcox, 925-621-1171

Major Accounts Sales Manager
Connie Cotton, 223-6571

Multimedia Advertising Sales
Elaine Ogden, 223-6572

Real Estate Manager Neal Fine, 223-6583

ADVERTISING SERVICES

Advertising Services Manager
Kevin Legarda, 223-6597

Sales & Production Coordinator
Diane Martin, 223-6584

The Almanac is published every Friday at
**3525 Alameda De Las Pulgas,
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■ **Newsroom:** (650) 223-6525
Newsroom Fax: (650) 223-7525

■ **Email news** and photos with captions to: Editor@AlmanacNews.com

■ **Email letters to:**
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East Palo Alto festival celebrates 2023, a year of no homicides

Festival event unites faith leaders, community

By Lisa Moreno

Lisa Patton grew up in East Palo Alto in the '90s when it was labeled the "murder capital of the world."

She moved away years ago, but came back to attend Ignite Peace Pray EPA, a free festival at Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Middle School on Saturday.

It was important to her that her children learn about the community she grew up in, she said, waiting outside of a pirate ship carnival ride with her sister.

"We never had anything like this when I was a kid," she said, smiling. "It's a breath of fresh air."

Over a thousand people attended the second-ever Ignite Peace Pray EPA, a free festival hosted by the East Palo Alto faith community on Saturday to promote togetherness and violence prevention.

From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. families, church leaders and neighbors

gathered at the middle school to eat, dance and learn about local organizations. Jumpers, carnival rides and face painting booths dotted the field and local artists performed music on a stage.

The event also included multiple raffles, giving away multiple bikes, massage guns, blow-up mattresses and other gifts to community members for free.

The East Palo Alto faith community, which is a group of local churches from different denominations that banded together to make positive change in the city, began hosting the event in 2022 in an effort to unite the community.

"It's about bringing people together and expressing love, expressing peace, so that others can see and have hope that our community does not have to tolerate gun violence," said Paul Bains, a pastor at Saint Samuel Church, who helped organize the event.

But this year's event was particularly special because it celebrated 2023, a year in East Palo Alto with zero homicides.

"The chief of police called me one minute past midnight this year, and he said 'We did, we had zero homicides for 2023, the whole year,'" Bains said. "And I just fell back in my chair. I actually started crying."

For years, Bains and the rest of the East Palo Alto faith community have worked with the police department to connect people with job opportunities and resources in an effort to prevent violence. Moving forward, Bains said he hopes to focus more on celebration and helping children live without fear.

"It's not a police department accomplishment, it's a community accomplishment," said East Palo Alto Chief of Police Jeff Liu.

This year, there have been two homicides in the city, and Liu says the police department



Juliana Yamada

Ishaan Prasad, 4, gets his face painted by Katlyn Leonardich, right, during Ignite Peace Pray EPA at Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Middle School on Sept. 14 in East Palo Alto.

is looking for new ways to communicate with the public and collaborate with local organizations.

Jenn Greely, director of operations for Hope Horizons, a non-profit that sets out to empower local youth through spirituality, was representing one of the many organizations tabling at the festival.

She was born the year East Palo Alto was deemed a murder capital, and Hope Horizons,

under its former name Bayshore Christian Ministries, played a crucial role in her wellbeing, she said.

It was a safe space for her, so when she grew up, she came back to work there.

"Being able to see our kids in a safe space at the festival today just makes my soul feel very fulfilled," she said. ■

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

Woodside approves rebate program for electric leaf blowers

Town stops short of gas-powered leaf blower ban

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

During a Town Council meeting on Sept. 10, the town of Woodside passed an ordinance to move forward with a rebate program for electric leaf blowers and tools with Palo Alto-based environmental nonprofit Acterra. The town will also be applying for a grant with Peninsula Clean Energy for extra funds. All council members voted in favor. Council member Chris Shaw was absent.

The council decided to not vote on an ordinance to ban gas-powered leaf blowers and referred the ordinance back to town staff for considerations on exceptions and different approaches to the ban. Neighboring cities and towns including Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Hillsborough have already banned gas-powered leaf blowers.

In July 2020, the Woodside Town Council held a study session on leaf blower regulations and directed town staff to prepare an ordinance that aligned hours of commercial leaf blowing with construction hours. This ordinance was adopted in September 2020 restricting commercial leaf blowing to

development and building construction hours but did not limit use to residents.

The state passed legislation that bans the sale of gas-powered leaf blowers, lawn mowers, chainsaws and small off-road engines (SOREs), effective Jan. 1, 2024. This legislation passed after the state determined that SOREs emitted high levels of pollutants that impact air quality and health.

The town's partnership with Acterra will cost a total of \$50,000, which will cover advertising, administration, data systems, mileage and vouchers for residents and businesses. The rebate program will grant town residents and non-gardening businesses up to \$250 to purchase new electric gardening equipment. Professional gardeners in Woodside can receive up to \$1,000 for new electric equipment.

Town staff also identified a grant through Peninsula Clean Energy which would provide additional funding for the rebate program and to develop education and outreach materials for the community. According to the presentation by Senior Management Analyst Brandi deGarmeaux, the grant will cover all costs associated with its

partnership with Acterra and more.

The council voted to spend \$112,000 of the grant on the rebate program and outreach efforts which will exhaust the town's available funds from Peninsula Clean Energy. This would ensure more residents and businesses can partake in the rebate.

Town Attorney Jean Savaree clarified that a penalty for violating the ban would be similar to a ticket and a fine.

Council member Dick Brown said he felt his gardener's electric leaf blowers sounded louder than a gas-powered blower. DeGarmeaux stated that through research, the general decibel levels of electric blowers are lower but some districts have placed limits on decibel use, typically 65 decibels at 50 feet.

Christin New, a resident of the Western Hills, expressed her dissatisfaction with a ban of gas-powered devices. She told the council that when several redwood trees fell on her property in the winter, blocking a road, she used her gas-powered chainsaw to clear the area. She also added that the private road that she leaf blows is almost half a mile long, which she says an electric leaf blower would need

to be recharged before reaching the end of the road.

"This really infringes upon my ability to maintain my land, to reduce leaf litter, to buck fallen trees and to clear brush. It would reduce my ability to reduce fire hazard on our property," said New. "You're diminishing my ability to keep my property and our family and neighbors safer."

Hassan Aburish, Woodside's

District 5 candidate, said that gas tools are stronger. He suggested that the town wait to pass the ordinance until "electric tools have caught up to gas powered in strength, power and usefulness."

Council member Paul Goeld said when his landscaper had switched to electric leaf blowers,

See **LEAF BLOWERS**, page 16

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Can I Split My Lot?

Dear Monica: I have a large lot zoned R-3 and I would like to split it into two lots. Would I be allowed to do this?
Shelly B.

Dear Shelly: Senate Bill 9, passed in 2021, would allow an owner to split their lot provided it fits the city's lot size and setback rules. It is non-discretionary, meaning neighbors cannot object to your doing this if you meet all requirements. The intent of the Bill is to allow higher density and thus more housing to be built. A recent court case in southern California would allow charter cities to be exempt from this but this is being appealed.

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

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Sequoia district hires new spokesperson

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The Sequoia Union High School District has hired a new public information officer. According to a post on LinkedIn, Naomi Sigler Hunter will be stepping into the role on Sept. 16 following the resignation of Arthur Wilkie, the district's former spokesperson, in July.

consulting school districts across the nation. Sigler Hunter also served as a professor of public relations at Santa Clara University.



Naomi Sigler Hunter

Sigler Hunter worked as the director of communications for the Redwood City School District from 2007 to 2017. Her most recent position was as a communication audit surveys manager for the National School Public Relations Association,

She holds a bachelor's degree in English from Northwestern University and a master's degree in interdisciplinary studies from Stanford University.

Sigler Hunter's annual salary is \$175,457, according to her contract that was the district's school board approved on Aug. 20.

Sigler Hunter can be reached at nhunter@seq.org.

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

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

RethinkWaste hosts student at contest to promote proper waste sorting

Students from third through eighth grade are invited to submit a poster to RethinkWaste's 2024 poster contest. Students can submit posters until 11:59 p.m. on Oct. 11.

The theme of this year's contest is "my green routine." RethinkWaste's contest announcement says the poster should show "what daily actions you take to make the Earth a better place every day."

Students are asked to submit a poster drawn on 8.5 by 11 inch white paper in a landscape orientation.

Students who submit posters must live in the RethinkWaste service area, which includes Menlo Park, Ladera, East Palo Alto, North Fair Oaks and Redwood City.

Prizes will be awarded to the first- and second-place winners from each age category. First-place winners will have their poster displayed on a local Recology truck and a choice of a gift card, "green routine" item or fun local activity. Second-place winners will get their choice of a gift card, "green routine" item or fun local activity. All winners will be recognized on social media and at a celebratory community event.

Learn more and see full contest and submission requirements at rethinkwaste.org/poster-contest.

— Eleanor Raab

Portola Valley celebrates 60th anniversary with town events

On Sept. 21, Portola Valley will be celebrating the town's 60th anniversary with a series of events including the Town Picnic, Zotts to Tots Fun Run and a historical exhibit that highlights significant events and the release of the documentary "Portola Valley at 60."

The annual Town Picnic will be from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Town Center and will feature live music, food, inflatables, a petting zoo, face painting and games. The Woodside Fire Protection District will bring its fire truck and the Woodside Robotics Club will be giving live demonstrations.

The Historical Resources Committee will be hosting a "Walk down memory lane" exhibit with photos, maps, memorabilia and articles from The Almanac over the last six decades.

The Zotts to Tots run will start at 10 a.m. at the Alpine Inn and end at Town Center. The roads will be closed along the race route on Alpine Road and Portola Road. Sections of the road will open up as the last runner passes through each intersection. Westridge Drive will stay open as a detour to the other side of town.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Menlo Park Monthly Market Report

August 1, 2024 - August 31, 2024

TOP 10 SALES*					
1. \$7,450,000	2. \$5,575,000	3. \$5,400,000	4. \$4,752,000	5. \$4,500,000	6. \$4,201,000
19 Montana Lane	3130 Barney Avenue	120 Gloria Circle	325 Olive Street	1060 Colby Avenue	795 San Mateo Drive
7. \$3,897,500	8. \$3,850,000	9. \$3,620,000	10. \$3,459,000		
2058 Menalto Avenue	2182 Clayton Drive	3115 Alameda De Las Pulgas	1339 Hillview Dr		

ACTIVE LISTING Aug: 34 Jul: 44 -23%	AVERAGE SALES PRICE Aug: \$3,015,809 Jul: \$3,497,294 -14%	AVERAGE SALES PRICE/SQ FT Aug: \$1,507 Jul: \$1,542 -2%
PENDING LISTING Aug: 30 Jul: 39 -23%	AVERAGE SOLD DAYS ON MARKET Aug: 21 Jul: 26 -19%	MONTHS OF INVENTORY Aug: 1.00 Jul: 1.40 -29%
SOLD LISTING Aug: 34 Jul: 31 +10%	SALE/LIST PRICE Aug: 104.40% Jul: 103.70% +1%	30 YEAR MORTGAGE RATE Aug: 6.48% Jul: 6.86% -6%

*August 2024 compared to July 2024

*Source: MLS Listings for Single Family Properties | Townhomes | Condos

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County accepts \$490K grant for equity initiatives

By Joshua Picazo

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors accepted a \$490,000 grant for resources related to equity would be coming to San Mateo County during its Sept. 11, meeting, according to a press release.

The Silicon Valley Community

Foundation, supplied the funds. The grant will assist the county's newly formed Office of Racial and Social Justice, which the board unanimously approved earlier this year, to better allocate resources, the board said. It will also help the county build an equity data portal.

"A big thank you to the Silicon

Valley Community Foundation for giving us a very generous grant. Obviously, it was very competitive," board President Warren Slocum said in a statement.

Shireen Malekafzali, the county's chief equity officer, said the grant will have a large impact across the county in understanding how to meet the needs

and concerns of the population.

"We need data to understand how the county's decisions about funding and program planning impact our communities so that we know if we are reaching our goals of equity for the diverse populations of our county," Malekafzali said. "This grant will help the county shore up our

data tools so that we can better understand the needs, concerns, and priorities for those most impacted by inequities and then make better-informed decisions."

She said the funding would allow the county to answer questions about whether certain geographic or demographic communities are in higher need or facing added barriers.

See **GRANT**, page 18

BIRDING

continued from page 1

Since then, he has led over 40 tours for over 100 people, and is excited to lead more.

"When someone reaches out for a bird tour, I'll ask them 'what kind of birds do you like?'" he said. "Based on that, I will choose a location ... and I'll see what birds will be out at that time of year."

One perk of going birding with Morris is that you don't have to bring your own camera to get lasting memories of the birds you see on the tour. "I always give people the pictures that I take on their tours," he said.

The Almanac was able to get a taste of Morris' birding tours as we interviewed him. As we walked around the Dish trail, he

pointed out all of the birds we were seeing — acorn woodpeckers, hawks, kestrels, swallows and more.

As he stopped and pointed at a red-shouldered hawk that had landed in a eucalyptus tree in the distance, a passerby noticed Morris and his camera.

"Are you guys seeing something I don't see?" the passerby asked.

"Yes! It's a red-shouldered hawk just right in that tree. It's hard to see without the camera zoom," said Morris. "I love red-shouldered hawks, they are beautiful against the sun."

Owl tours

Though hummingbirds are his first love, Morris' current obsession is owls. Morris told The Almanac that his most

popular offerings are his evening owl tours. "Twenty-six of my 42-plus tours have been owl tours," he said.

Morris began leading owl tours following a tour request from a Stanford professor.

"He said 'can you take me out to see owls?' ... So I took him out, and we saw all three (local species of) owls ... I know where a barn owl is, a family of great-horned owls and a western screech owl.

He posted pictures from his first owl tour online, and was soon inundated with owl tour requests.

Morris says he continues to be awed by owls. He described one moment where his tour group was watching one barn owl sitting in a tree, when out of nowhere another barn owl flew up, interacted with the first owl,

and then the two owls sped off into the night together.

"I was spending so much time with this one barn owl ... and all of a sudden I'm like 'oh my God, there's two of them!'" he said. "That was one of those things where I'm going to bed at night thinking about it, I wake up thinking about it," he said. "I mean just pure fascination, right?"

Since owls often return to the same place, and can be sensitive to too much activity, Morris said that he emphasizes respect for the animals on his tours. "I tell the people (on the tours) to not post the location of the owls (online), because they can get overwhelmed by too many people."

Though he keeps most of his specific birding spots secret for the sake of the animals, Morris

had some general suggestions for hotspots where budding birders can find cool birds.

"The Arizona Cactus Garden (at Stanford University) has been a great place — tons of hummingbirds and hawks there. ... Filoli has nice hummingbirds too."

Shoreline Park in Mountain View and Byxbee Park in Palo Alto are his other suggestions. Morris also said that the Stanford Dish, where The Almanac met up with him, is one of his other favorite local spots to pop out to for a quick birding excursion. ■

Morris' Instagram: @Inthewildwithrick; find his bird calendars or book his birding tours: IntheWildwithRick.com.

Email Staff Writer

Eleanor Raab at

eraab@almanacnews.com.

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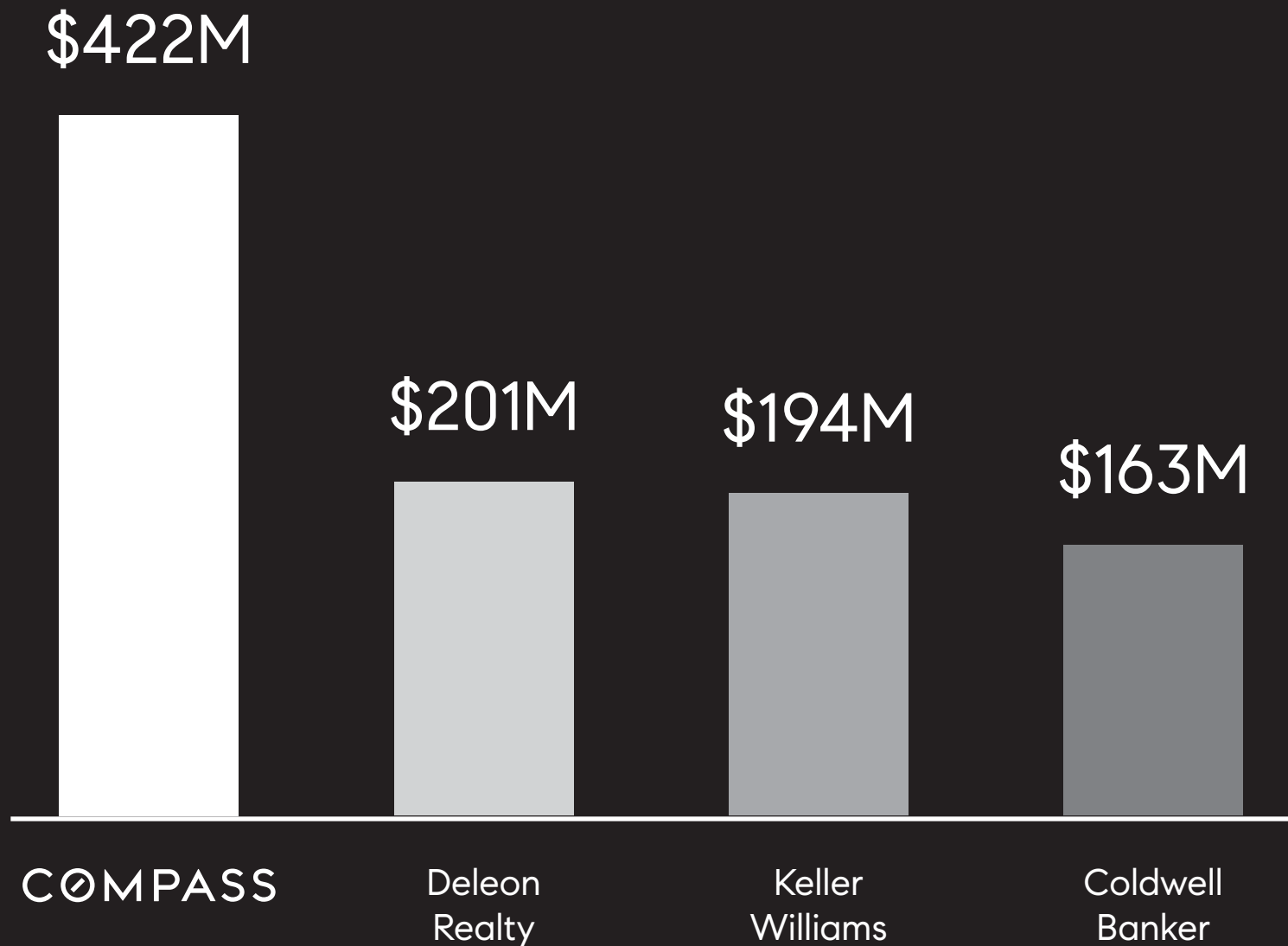


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*Trendgraphix, 1/1/2024-6/3/2024, Palo Alto. All property types. Top Broker - Marketshare, Total Sales, All Brokers. Published June 2024. Analysis made in good faith but may contain errors and subject to revision.

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COMPASS

RECOLOGY

continued from page 5

navigate the limited hydrogen-fueling infrastructure in North America.

The vehicle was built in partnership between New Way Trucks, which built the truck's body, and Hyzon, which developed the hydrogen fuel cell. It was tested by Recology, a 100% employee-owned company in the waste recovery industry. According to Esler, unlike diesel trucks, the new hydrogen-powered vehicle operates quietly during waste collection. It also features regenerative braking that allows the driver to slow down without applying brakes.

According to Recology's CEO, Sal Coniglio, the truck has so far been able to perform all tasks that a diesel truck can.

The truck has performed as expected across different terrains, including the steep hills of San Francisco and the residential neighborhoods in Redwood Shores, without any lag in power, Coniglio said. In San Mateo County, the truck completed approximately 1,100 waste collection lifts per day and

maintained consistent power for up to 125 miles, after which it required refueling.

"We wanted to be the first to pilot this technology because I believed in its potential," said Coniglio.

Recology had previously tested a fully electric truck that could not last the entire day without additional batteries. However, due to weight limits, adding more batteries reduced the truck's ability to carry waste. With the hydrogen fuel cell, fewer batteries are needed, allowing the truck to operate all day while maintaining its full payload capacity.

A hydrogen fuel cell operates using a membrane that divides two sides. On one side, there is hydrogen, and on the other side, there is air with oxygen. The hydrogen moves through the membrane and reacts with the oxygen, creating electricity. This electricity is used to power the vehicle. So, the only thing that comes out of the fuel cell is water vapor, which produces zero tailpipe emissions.

But zero tailpipe emissions do not equate to zero emissions. The production of hydrogen, much like any other source of energy, can lead to carbon emissions known as life-cycle emissions.

According to Adam Weber, a senior scientist and leader of the Energy-Conversion at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the life-cycle emissions could be anywhere between negative to nine kilograms of carbon dioxide per kilogram of hydrogen, depending on how the hydrogen is produced and whether the process involves carbon capture or not.

A spokesperson for Hyzon noted that the hydrogen used in the Recology pilot is produced from natural gas. However, they declined to say which method was used for the hydrogen production.

In the energy industry, hydrogen is categorized using a color spectrum to indicate how it is produced. These color codes are essentially nicknames for various production methods and may indicate how clean the hydrogen is.

"We're hydrogen agnostic. We can use any color hydrogen as long as it has the purity needed for a fuel cell," said Justin Yee, VP of Global Systems Engineering at Hyzon.

When asked about the comparison between the life-cycle emissions of a hydrogen truck and a diesel truck, Weber said the diesel trucks have more emissions. However, an even bigger issue is that diesel trucks produce other harmful emissions, such as particulates and nitrogen oxides (NOx), which can worsen local air quality.

While carbon dioxide contributes to global warming, these other pollutants have a more immediate impact on the environment and human health. In contrast, hydrogen fuel cells don't produce these harmful emissions, making them a cleaner option.

If the pilot proves successful, Recology would like to purchase such hydrogen trucks to comply with California's Advanced Clean Fleets law, which mandates a transition to zero-emission trucks by 2042. However, no purchases have been made yet, and Coniglio acknowledged

that the high price of the hydrogen truck will make the cost of doing business very expensive.

A spokesperson for New Way said the difference between manufacturing a hydrogen vs a diesel truck is a few hundred thousand dollars. While a diesel side loader would cost around 300,000, a hydrogen side loader would cost approximately 700,000 and could extend up to a million dollars. The cost for both could also be higher or lower depending on the model, type of truck, and systems installed.

Another obstacle in the widespread use of hydrogen trucks in North America is the lack of infrastructure to support their fueling.

"We have a long way to go with that infrastructure, but it's not impossible," said Coniglio.

As of 2023, there are 59 open retail hydrogen stations in the United States, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Fifty more stations are under planning or construction. Most hydrogen stations are in California, with one in Hawaii and five planned for the northeastern states.

In July, California became the first state to launch a clean and renewable hydrogen hub. A \$12.6 billion agreement, including up to \$1.2 billion in federal funding, was signed with the Alliance for Renewable Clean Hydrogen Energy Systems (ARCHES). This is the first of the seven hubs nationwide to sign their agreement with the Department of Energy officially. Their goal is to advance hydrogen technology and infrastructure. The Biden-Harris administration also awarded California \$12 million for three hydrogen projects.

As for the test drives in Redwood Shores and other cities, Esler said he thinks the residents are satisfied that they will no longer wake up to the noise of the garbage collection truck in the morning. ■

*Email Staff Writer
Simmerdeep Kaur at
skaur@almanacnews.com.*

LEAF BLOWERS

continued from page 7

he was surprised by how quiet they were. His landscaper however had informed him that they didn't work as well and needed frequent battery changes.

As a response to New's comments, Goeld suggested a permit program that would allow residents in certain neighborhoods that require high-powered gas equipment for emergencies to apply for a permit to use gas-powered tools on their properties.

Despite resident frustrations and council members' support for flexible approaches, Mayor Jenn Wall said she thinks the town needs to make tough trade-offs.

"The frustration that I think a small subset of the community might feel in not being able to use that equipment is outweighed by the fact that these are really harmful to the environment," she said.

Wall notes that she received emails from residents in support of the ban who explained the impact of gas fumes and chemicals on at-risk groups including children, elders and/or people with asthma.

"We talk a lot about how Woodside is bucolic, quiet, peaceful and in my mind, there is nothing less rural feeling than a noisy, polluting, gas-powered leaf blower," said Wall.

Wall noted that towns similar to Woodside, like Hillsborough and Portola Valley, have already banned gas-powered leaf blowers. Wall noted that Woodside should be able to manage the ban. She also expressed her willingness to explore exceptions for emergencies.

The council referred town staff to explore the possibility of exceptions on gas-powered tools in emergencies and for residents with larger properties and a permit program for gas-powered tools. ■

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

LEHUA GREENMAN



*"Autumn,
the season
that teaches
us that
change can be
beautiful."*



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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 Decature CV, San Diego, CA 92120.
Registered owner(s):
MICHAEL CHRISTIAN PERO
7230 Decature 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)

ANKUR CHOPRA ENGINEERING FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-298280
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) ANKUR CHOPRA ENGINEERING, located at 1585 Harbor Blvd, Belmont, CA, 94002, San Mateo County.
Registered owner(s):
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1585 Harbor Blvd
Belmont, CA, 94002
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 19, 2024.
(ALM Sep 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2024)

WALL STREET PROPERTIES FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-298448
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) WALL STREET PROPERTIES, located at 925 Palm Avenue, San Mateo, CA 94401.
Registered owner(s):
CHEG INCORPORATED
925 Palm Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94401
State of Incorporation/Organization: California
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 07/27/1976.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 06, 2024.
(ALM Sep 20, 27, Oct 4 and 11, 2024)

DOLYS CLEANING SERVICES FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-298360
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) DOLYS CLEANING SERVICES, located at 161 Oak Avenue Apt 3, Redwood City, CA 94061.
Registered owner(s):
DOLY HAYNE CHACON
161 Oak Avenue Apt 3
Redwood City, CA 94061
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 27, 2024.
(ALM Sep 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2024)

NOTARY BY AG FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-298504
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) NOTARY BY AG, located at 842 COLEMAN AVENUE, APT. 10, MENLO PARK, CA 94025.
Registered owner(s):
ALICIA GONZALEZ
842 COLEMAN AVENUE, APT. 10
MENLO PARK, CA 94025
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/01/24.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 12, 2024.
(ALM Sep 20, 27, Oct 4 and 11, 2024)

CHAIN REACTION FITNESS & NUTRITION FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-298409
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) CHAIN REACTION FITNESS & NUTRITION, located at 588 San Mateo Avenue, San Bruno, CA 94066.
Registered owner(s):
CHAIN REACTION FITNESS & NUTRITION, LLC
588 San Mateo Avenue
San Bruno, CA 94066
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
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 30, 2024.
(ALM Sep 13, 20, 27 and Oct 4, 2024)

APRENDE JUGANDO CHILDCARE FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-298392
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) APRENDE JUGANDO CHILDCARE, located at 200 Santa Inez Ave, San Bruno, CA 94066.
Registered owner(s):
GIOVANNA ROMAN
200 Santa Inez Ave
San Bruno, CA. 94066
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 30, 2024.
(ALM Sep 20, 27, Oct 4 and 11, 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)

GG FOOT MESSAGE FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-298359
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) GG FOOT MESSAGE, located at 595 SAN MATEO AVE, SAN BRUNO, CA 94066.
Registered owner(s):
GG777, LLC
595 SAN MATEO AVE
SAN BRUNO, CA 94066
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
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 27, 2024.
(ALM Sep 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2024)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 24CIV05388
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Karen Ann Breslin filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
KAREN ANN BRESLIN to KAREN ANN KENDALL
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: 11/04/2024, 9:00 am, Civil 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: Sep 5, 2024
Elizabeth K. Lee
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Sep 20, 27, Oct 4 and 11, 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-05315
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: HANK HSIN HAN HUANG filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
HANK HSIN HAN HUANG to HANK HUANG
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: 10/30/2024, 9:00 a.m., Dept. MC, Southern 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: August 30, 2024
Elizabeth K. Lee
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Sep 20, 27, Oct 4 and 11, 2024)

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF:
CHENG-WEI WILLIAM CHEN, AKA C. WILLIAM CHEN, AKA WILLIAM CHEN
Case No.: 24-PRO-01082
To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of CHENG-WEI WILLIAM CHEN, AKA C. WILLIAM CHEN, AKA WILLIAM CHEN.
A Petition for Probate has been filed by: Lily Sit Chen in the Superior Court of California, County of SAN MATEO.
The Petition for Probate requests that: Lily Siu Chen 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 October 04 2024 at 9:00am in Dept 1 of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 800 North Humboldt Street, San Mateo, CA 94401
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:
Janet L. Dobrovolsky, Esq. and Teresa L. Peng, Esq.
Law Offices of Janet L. Dobrovolsky
2000 Powell Street, Suite. 1605
Emeryville, CA 94608
510-653-3878
(ALM Sep 6, 13 and 20, 2024)

GRANT
continued from page 11

SPECIAL EVENT NOTICE
Tour de Cure: Northern California American Diabetes Association will take place on Sunday, September 29th
Tour de Cure is the premier cycling fundraising event of the American Diabetes Association® (ADA) that creates a sense of unity and shared purpose in the fight to end diabetes.
The Tour de Cure begins at 7:15 a.m. and is scheduled to conclude at 4:00 p.m.
In Atherton our route follows Alameda de las Pulgas. Our start and finish host location is at **HP, Inc. (1501 Page Mill Road, Palo Alto).**
Contact: Tom Hall, 703-253-4893 Ext: 7460
(ALM Sep 20, 2024)

STAFFER

continued from page 5

district campus and restricting his access to contact students. In the Sept. 11 communication to parents, the district noted that “because of the sensitive nature of the ongoing investigation and because the employee had been removed from campus, the district did not at that time make an initial public statement regarding the allegations.”

Fitch worked as a campus relations coordinator at Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Middle School, assisting with student supervision and a wide range of other activities. The statement clarifies that his name could not be released in the public statement issued to parents on Sept. 11 due to the “sensitive nature of the ongoing investigation.” The district said it was cooperating

with law enforcement as the investigation proceeded.

“The district is thankful for the efforts of the EPA PD in investigating this matter and for working closely with us to ensure student safety is a top priority. We are deeply saddened for the involved students and their family,” said Superintendent Gina Sudaria in the statement.

The district also states it will continue to offer support services and counseling to Ravenswood families and students along with providing any assistance to the police as the case moves forward.

The district encourages anyone with information on the case to contact Detective Sergeant Jose Luaorozco at (650) 629-4538. ■

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

SCAMS

continued from page 6

Quintin says that scammers don’t even need to be physically present at your home to include a picture of it in threatening emails. “The unfortunate fact is that pictures of all our houses are on the internet. They’re on Google Maps, they’re on Apple Maps, real estate websites — they’re all over the place.”

Scammers can easily find your name, email addresses and physical address because that kind of data has been listed in so many data breaches over the years, according to Quintin.

“(The scammers) write a program that goes through these data breaches, gets the email, gets the name, gets the address, goes and downloads a picture of the house, puts it all together in an email and sends it to you,” he

said. “And then, if they do enough of these, and they’re scary enough — which they are — it makes money, because people pay the money because they’re worried that they’ll be exposed.”

Quintin says the only real way one can protect themselves from a scam like this is to learn what the scam looks like, and to not fall for it.

“I want to hammer on the point of, do not pay them,” he said. “A) your information hasn’t been leaked. B) paying them only encourages them to continue this scam.” ■

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

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Bo Crane, a lifelong Palo Altan who contributed in his many roles to the local community, died at the age of 74 after a 6-year struggle with ocular melanoma.

Peter Sturrock, distinguished physicist and emeritus professor at Stanford University, died at the age of 100.

Stanley Scott, remembered for being kind, wise and generous, died at the age of 96 in Menlo Park, his home of 64 years.

Nancy Rossen, a local teacher, lifelong learner and devoted community member, died at the age of 92 surrounded by family.

Sandra Cooperman, a community and political activist, died at the age of 89 after a brief illness.

To read full obituaries, leave remembrances and post photos, go to Lasting Memories at AlmanacNews.com/obituaries.■

TRUMP

continued from page 1

the Pioneer Saloon in Woodside at 1 p.m. Many drivers honked in support of Trump or Harris.

At one particularly contentious point of the rally, a UPS driver stopped in the parking lot behind the Harris supporters to shout out at them. He later turned around to show his support to the Trump rally on the other side of the road.

Moms for America, a national organization advocating against gender dysphoria, sexualization of school curriculum and child trafficking, organized a walkathon for the rally. Nancy Githoitho, the San Francisco group leader for Moms for America, said she wants to encourage mothers to register and vote for Trump.

“We’re all about empowering moms, bringing moms together, educating them to raise patriots in America,” said Githoitho, who immigrated to the United States from Kenya 25 years ago.

Moms for America members and supporters sported purple T-shirts that said “Moms Walkathon” as they stood alongside Trump supporters. The walkathon occurred an hour into the rally along the sidewalk of the park.

Harris rally organizer David Page held a sign that read “Trump ate my cat.” He said he thinks Republicans should be pressuring Trump to drop out of the race the same way Democrats did to President Joe Biden back in June, especially given Trump’s performance during the Sept. 10 presidential debate.

Page and Stephanie, a Harris supporter, both expressed concerns about Trump’s cognitive abilities and his age. “Why would you want to support someone who is emotionally disturbed to be the president?” he questioned.

“I’m a teacher and I believe that a democracy is completely based on having civil conversations with different perspectives,” Stephanie said. Stephanie, who asked to only be identified by her first name, is married to a registered Republican, who was invited to the Trump rally but joined her side of the road with a sign supporting Harris.

“It’s important for us to have a mature civil conversation with differences,” she added.

Some Trump supporters traveled from outside the area. One supporter, Raymond, drove from Fremont to wave his flag in support of Trump. He asked this news publication to identify him by first name only. He said



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Counter-protesters waved to cars on Palo Alto’s El Camino Real opposite a group of supporters of him who had gathered to welcome former President Donald Trump to the area on Sept. 13.

he didn’t plan on attending the rally but when he heard about it the day before he decided to take the opportunity to show his support in place of his friend who couldn’t make it.

“It’s not about politics. I stand for America,” said Raymond, who describes himself as an American with a Mexican heritage. “I’m always an American first and I support Trump because his policy has proven to put America and its 50 states above all a priority.”

Members of the Vietnamese American community also

voiced their support for Trump while waving the flag of South Vietnam and a banner that said “Vietnamese Americans for Trump.” Van, a member of the group, said they believe Trump’s politics will stop the United States from becoming a communist nation. They asked to only be identified by their first name.

“The Vietnamese community, we are different from other communities. We came here, we ran away from communism. I don’t want America to follow the communist and

destroy the country,” said Van, a Vietnamese Marine who immigrated to the United States 40 years ago.

Winnie M., who immigrated from China in 1990, stated that she’s seen what a communist nation looks like and doesn’t want the same thing to happen in the United States. “Only Trump can take our country back,” said Winnie, who asked to only be identified by her first name and first initial of her last name.

Patricia Verity, a Palo Alto native from Santa Clara County, expressed her appreciation in seeing all the “different people, different nationalities and different walks of life” showing up for the rally.

She adds that “unity” is what brought her out to the rally. Verity views the upcoming election as not a divide between the left versus the right but rather as the people versus the government.

The Harris supporters were originally planning to hold their rally at the park, but after consulting with local law enforcement, they were advised to stand on the other side of the street to prevent any chaos. ■

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



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COMPASS

SHERIFF

continued from page 5

“Mr. Aenlle worked on Sheriff Corpus’s campaign and turned chief of staff for the San Mateo County Sheriff’s (Office), a position which never existed previously,” said Sean Currin, a lawyer at Mastagni Holstedt helping to represent the DSA and OSS in their complaints to the the PERB. “As the newly crowned chief of staff, Aenlle has now inserted himself into just about every facet of the Sheriff’s Department.”

At the press conference, representatives from the unions alleged that Aenlle had engaged in anti-union activities and violations of labor laws that have only added to the staffing challenges that the Sheriff’s Office already faces.

“It’s a violation of labor laws at a time when the Sheriff’s Office faces challenges similar to other law enforcement agencies,” said Tapia. “Victor Aenlle represents a problem that is unique. ... His behavior is actively harming this agency.”

Currin said that the PERB complaints against the Sheriff’s Office and Aenlle allege that the Sheriff’s Office administration engaged in unfair labor practices by failing to meet and confer with the unions in good faith. They also imposed a policy that requires deputies to work 24 hours of overtime each pay period, by changing the maximum staffing numbers in county jails without consulting the unions, according to Currin.

Hector Acosta, president of the OSS board, said that these changes to staffing in County jail, which require deputies to spend additional time in the correctional facility, has led to a decrease in the number of deputies who are able to patrol the streets.

“What the public doesn’t realize is their safety is being compromised as we struggle to fill patrol spots because deputies are required to work 24 hours of overtime every two weeks, with 18 of those hours being in the jail,” he said. “The jails absolutely need to be safe for inmates and staff alike, but the general public also deserves to be safe.”

Union complaints about Aenlle also allege that he is misrepresenting his position as a civilian employee of the county by wearing a deputy’s uniform and a badge that says “Chief of Staff.”

“Some of the statements that (Aenlle) made say he is a level one reserve (deputy), which is true, but he’s no longer employed as a level one reserve,” said Tapia. “His position here at the county is a civilian position. In fact, if you look at the organizational



Eleanor Raab

Carlos Tapia, president of the board of the Deputy Sheriff’s Association, speaks at a press conference on Tuesday, Sept. 17.

chart, he’s listed as a civilian in charge of the civilian staff.”

Tapia said that Aenlle has even been seen carrying a gun while wearing a badge at public events. Tapia says that he doesn’t know whether the gun was issued to Aenlle by the Sheriff’s Office. The Sheriff’s Office has not yet responded to this news organization’s inquiry about whether the Sheriff’s Office issued the gun to Aenlle.

Aenlle is pictured in a San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office Instagram reel wearing a badge and gun.

The Board of Supervisors responds

Though the unions’ vote of no confidence holds no legal weight over Corpus and her staffing decisions, the vote seemed to spur the County’s Board of Supervisors to address the allegations coming from the Sheriff’s Office.

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors announced on Sept. 12 that it would be launching an investigation into allegations against personnel at the Sheriff’s Office. The board hired former Judge LaDoris Cordell, a former superior court judge and Independent Police Auditor for the city of San Jose, to investigate the “numerous complaints” brought forth by Sheriff’s Office employees.

This investigation is separate from the unfair labor practice complaints that the unions filed with PERB.

San Mateo County supervisors Noelia Corzo and Ray Mueller were appointed by the board to serve as spokespeople on the issue.

“We take these allegations seriously,” said the statement from the board. “We want to ensure an impartial investigation and assessment of these allegations, to afford all parties fairness and due process.”

The statement from the Board of Supervisors said that they “expect the ongoing investigation to be completed soon.” The county has not yet responded to inquiries regarding specifics of the investigation timeline.

Board of Supervisors Vice President David Canepa, who spoke at Tuesday’s press conference, alongside the unions after press conference said that he would not address Cordell’s investigation of the matter, but believes that San Mateo County “needs a Sheriff that we can trust.”

“Trust only emanates from our employees,” said Canepa. “I can’t stand idle and see our employees being treated the way they’re being treated.”

Canepa said that he wants Corpus to take the allegations and issues in her office seriously, and to sit down with the unions to fix them.

“What the sheriff is doing now is not working,” he said. “My ask today for Sheriff Corpus is to have a concrete conversation, and whether that means locking them up in a room for hours upon hours, to really figure out these problems.”

Corzo was also in attendance at the press conference.

Fixin’ San Mateo County, a community organization dedicated to independent civilian oversight of the Sheriff’s Office, released a statement applauding the board’s decision to

investigate the dispute between the Sheriff’s Office and the unions. They also called for the installation of a permanent inspector general to provide oversight and ensure law enforcement accountability.

The Board of Supervisors

approved the formation of a civilian advisory board to oversee the Sheriff’s Office in Dec. 2023, though did not hire an inspector general. ■

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

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CONDUCTOR KIM VENAAS

Parkline's office development would add to Menlo Park's housing crunch

By Steve Schmidt

GUEST OPINION

As a former mayor of Menlo Park who has both denied and approved residential and office projects, I notice that the theme never changes. Traffic and noise continue to be the top concerns as our city grows. At the same time, we say we care about the high rents and minimal opportunities for current and new residents. We want to be the kind of people who look for fair and humane solutions for the city's lack of affordable housing.

Parkline development on the SRI campus is definitely a traffic nightmare, but the bigger problem is that the project is fundamentally an office development and it adds to the city's housing crunch. The number of office workers in the million square foot office component could range between 4,000 and 7,000 depending on who the tenants are. A law office with corner offices and plush conference rooms requires 250+ square feet per employee and a tech company with an open floor plan squeezes employees in at 150 square feet per employee? The developer says it doesn't

know who its tenant target is and needs flexibility. However, the city needs certainty to plan for traffic control, road design and fire protection for the office workers.

Years ago, Menlo Park attracted large tech companies with thousands of office workers. In 2011, Facebook predicted 20,000 employees and soon that number grew to 35,000. Even with the remote work practice, housing became scarce. Desperate for affordable housing are low-paid workers such as nannies, gardeners, dog walkers, housekeepers, janitors, restaurant workers, journalists, auto mechanics, retail clerks, food delivery drivers and teacher's aides, all who enhance the lives of our well-paid residents. Demand for homes excites landlords who see a financial opportunity, to raise rents and serve eviction notices. Displacement is real.

This is a 1 million square foot office development that includes housing, but 800 units can't meet the housing needed for 4,000 to 7,000 Parkline office workers in the five office

buildings. The proposed 800 residential units could house 1,600 people, but where will the remaining Parkline office workers find homes? This deficit will increase our state housing requirement and the endless treadmill rolls on.

Does this housing project even meet the city's targeted demographic? The market and below market units are pricey. If your annual income is \$149,760 you will qualify for a \$3,600 studio and if your annual income is \$182,360, you can rent a one-bedroom unit for \$4,400. The required annual income goes up for the two- and three-bedroom units with the 16 plush townhouse requiring an annual income of \$415,000 to meet the \$10,000 monthly rent. The low-income units will rent for not much less. These high rents eliminate the very people who have been squeezed out of housing opportunities since Menlo Park opened its doors to office developers.

The city could have begun the Parkline approval process by using the existing agreement that SRI signed many years ago limiting the number of employees on the campus to 3,308.

This cap would assure a smaller office complex and less pressure on the housing demand. Why not use this long standing cap of employees; approve a smaller office park, increase the housing; make the project a jobs/housing neutral project?

Housing advocates and the City Council have worked tirelessly to meet the state's housing requirement. The next step is up to the council to make Parkline a balanced development. The city should not approve any project that is ill defined. Reduce the office by half; make SRI commit to business, tech or lab

office; identify and bring to the table the mixed-income housing developer; reconfirm the long-standing employee cap.

Times have changed. Housing is needed; office is not. One is good; the other bad. Get the state of California off our backs by creating more housing. We can be the people we want to be, but our council must use its authority and deny this project. Why settle for an office development when people need homes? ■

Steve Schmidt,
Former Mayor of Menlo Park

LETTERS

Our readers write

The importance of a free and robust press

A free and robust press is vital to democracy. The latest example? How about the story broken by ProPublica alleging that large institutional landlords collude to fix rents nationwide, in California, San Mateo County and Redwood City through an algorithm called Real Page. As a result of this investigative reporting, both California and the U.S. Justice Departments filed antitrust lawsuits against the alleged colluding landlords last week. (Allegations of Rent Hike Collusion Aug. 27, 2024 Bay Area News Group, Kate Talerico). ProPublica is a non-profit created in 2007 when large internet companies were just beginning to post the content created by major news organizations without compensating them. This year, as in years past, the California Legislature and the Governor's Office grappled with making internet companies pay for the content they take from news organizations. Unfortunately, the internet companies are just too big and powerful to be held to account. The deal cut between Google and California last week will reimburse news organizations \$250 million over 10 years. This may sound like a lot, but it was described by the Media Guild of the West

as, "a total rout." (San Jose Mercury News internal affairs Aug. 25, 2024). Legislators respond to political will. Let's all make sure we let them know how much we value robust investigative reporting. It does not come for free. Large internet companies should pay for the news content they feature on their platforms, or it will disappear.

Kaia Eakin,
Redwood City

Telephone wait time

Think about how many people in the U.S. are on telephone-hold at any moment during working hours. It is not unusual nowadays for corporations to keep callers on hold for well over an hour. Think of the man hours of time wasted. I would bet at any give time there are well over one million people holding, and in many cases, they are trying to buy something, i.e., transfer their money to the pockets of the corporations that are wasting their time and running up their phone bills.

The solution is genuine cut-throat competition and that means vigorous antitrust action by our federal government. Let's face it, free-market capitalism can accomplish much but ONLY if it is truly competitive. Even the conservative economist Frederich Hyak made that crystal clear in his book, "The Road to Serfdom."

Don Barnby,
Spruce Avenue, Menlo Park



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CELEBRATING A DECADE OF ART

STANFORD'S ANDERSON COLLECTION MARKS A MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY WITH NEW EXHIBITIONS, COMMUNITY DAY

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

In 2014 the Anderson Collection at Stanford opened its doors and was hailed as one of the most significant gifts of art from private donors to a university. The museum, a small bespoke gem located next to the Cantor Arts Center, will mark its 10th anniversary on Sunday, Sept. 22, with two new exhibitions and a community day of celebration that will include music, art-making activities and art talks by Stanford University graduate students. The events take place from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and are free to the public.

The museum began with a gift of 121 works of postwar American art that Harry W. (“Hunk”) and Mary Margaret (“Moo”) Anderson had collected, along with their daughter Mary

Patricia, over several decades. Major art movements like abstract expressionism, pop art and Bay Area figurative are reflected in the core gift, which has been added to over the years by important gifts from the Anderson Family Collection. The original collection was housed at the Saga Company headquarters (now Quadrus) on Sand Hill Road and in the Andersons’ home. Following the death of her parents, Mary Patricia Anderson Pence now oversees the Family Collection.

The challenge for a permanent collection museum like the Anderson Collection is to find ways to keep the exhibitions fresh and interesting, which has been achieved by numerous changes in the installations and special programming. While the permanent works can be found on the second

‘We want the visitor to think of this place as welcoming, comforting. It’s a place for respite, meditation, reflection, contemplation and inspiration’

ANDERSON COLLECTION DIRECTOR JASON LINETZKY

floor, a small temporary gallery in the entry level has allowed for a continuous schedule of non-Anderson works to be displayed.

For this anniversary celebration, the museum looks back in time with “Bringing it Home,” a nostalgic look at how the Andersons lived with art in every room of their home — including the kitchen. This exhibition, installed in the Wisch Family Gallery, includes the actual kitchen table and chairs where the Andersons ate meals while gazing at small-scale works by artists like Wayne Thiebaud

and Phillip Guston. Do you have prints by Frank Stella over your refrigerator? The Andersons did, along with others by California artist Ed Ruscha.

“We wanted to celebrate the way the Andersons lived with art at home and the way they made art and artists part of their everyday life,” said Anderson Collection Director Jason Linetzky.

Integral to the exhibition are photo montages that show the couple entertaining artists in their home, as well as replicas of notes, letters and holiday cards they received over the years. Unlike contemporary art collectors who can now buy art via online auctions, the Andersons had to go to the art in order to build their collection. They made yearly trips to New York City where they visited artists’ studios and established relationships with gallerists.

“I think the Andersons fell in love with the artworks first, then if they were lucky enough to meet the artists, then those relationships were formed. It added a special element,” Linetzky said.

Quite often these relationships were mutually beneficial in that the Andersons were able to acquire some of the best examples of an artist’s work, and inclusion in the family’s prestigious collection often resulted in

major museum exhibitions for the artist.

The second-floor galleries continue to examine how the Andersons lived with art with recreations of key rooms like the dining room, where Jackson Pollock’s “Lucifer” hung over a sideboard, and in the living room where “Red in Red” by Sam Francis was installed over the fireplace (a mock version here). A small room called the Gallery is replicated with paneling, brick walls and a large Persian carpet. This was how the Andersons melded their art collection with the other elements of their life; their expansive art library and Moo’s collection of English antique furniture. It was a far cry from the white walls and sterile coolness of most art installations.

“It was an intimate setting and experience,” explained Linetzky. “We want the visitor to think of this place as welcoming, comforting. It’s a place for respite, meditation, reflection, contemplation and inspiration.”

See **ANDERSON**, page 25



Courtesy Anderson Collection

Above: Harry W. Anderson, left, Mary Patricia Anderson Pence and Mary Margaret Anderson donated their private collection of 20th-century art to Stanford University. Top: Anderson Collection Director Jason Linetzky poses with works featured in one of two new exhibitions highlighting the collection’s pieces in new ways. Photo by Vivian Cromwell.

The Anderson Collection Community Day takes place Sept. 22, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Anderson Collection, 314 Lomita Drive, Stanford. Admission is free. More information is available at events.stanford.edu. “Bringing it Home” is on display through Feb. 16, 2025 and “An Expanded Lens” is on display through Aug. 17, 2025. Visit anderson.stanford.edu.

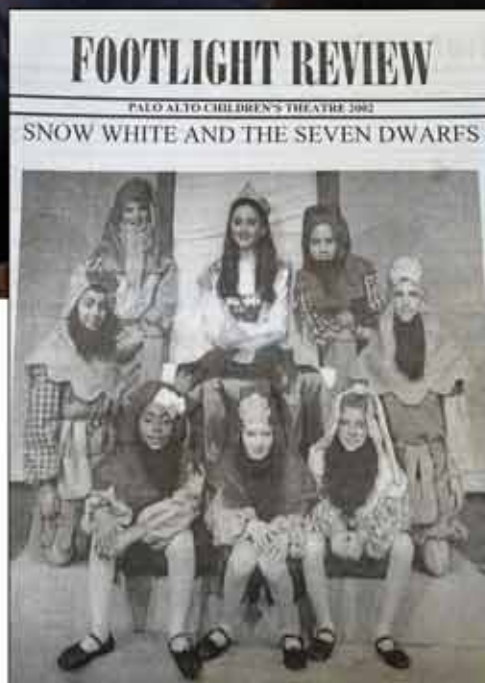
TONY AWARD-WINNING DIRECTOR DANYA TAYMOR LOOKS BACK ON GROWING UP IN PALO ALTO



Taymor, who won a 2024 Tony for directing the musical 'The Outsiders,' reflects on her youth in Peninsula theater

Courtesy Danya Taymor

Above: Director Danya Taymor and cast members are seen during a rehearsal for "The Outsiders," for which she won a Tony Award for Best Direction of a Musical. Taymor is seated at right and wearing an orange shirt. Right: A Palo Alto Children's Theatre program from 2002 shows Danya Taymor as Snow White in the company's production of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." Taymor is in the middle of the back row.



By Ashwini Gangal

Often, the seeds of professional glory are sowed during childhood. That's true in the case of Danya Taymor, who reaped a huge accolade this year in the form of a Tony Award for Best Direction of a Musical for "The Outsiders," an adaptation of Susan Hinton's novel first published in the 1960s.

"A musical is perhaps the most collaborative art form I've ever been a part of, so what was really

meaningful was how many nominations the show got," said the Brooklyn-based Taymor in an interview with this publication. The show got 12 nominations across disciplines including acting, design, writing, composing and choreography — and won four Tonys. "As the director, it's my job to unite all these different aspects toward one shared vision ... it was beyond my wildest dreams to actually win."

In addition to Taymor's directing nod, the show also won the

Tony for Best Musical as well as awards for Lighting Design and Sound Design.

Taymor grew up in Palo Alto till she moved in 2006 for college. Her love story with theater began early; the first time she auditioned was at 6, for Palo Alto Children's Theatre.

"I was in the chorus and experienced being with all kinds of kids of different ages — when you're 6, 15-year-olds are grown up! — that intergenerational aspect of theater has always been

something that feels very special," she said, tying it back to her present-day experiences. "The lighting designer who worked on 'The Outsiders' is in his 60s and the costume designer is in her early 30s and many of the actors are in their early 20s, so there's this incredible mix of people who are at different moments in their life all working toward making something together ... when I think back to those first experiences of walking downtown in-between shows at the Children's Theatre, it was that same feeling of community."

In large part she attributes her being in professional theater to the early influence of Kristen Lo, her theater teacher at Palo Alto High School, where she continued discovering different aspects of the stage. Lo now teaches at Gunn High School.

Among other things it was Lo's respect for all the different elements of theater that struck Taymor as special.

"She created these festivals for us to not just act in but to write, direct, stage manage, build the sets — she had a real ethos that every single person who puts their hands on something in the theater is as important and necessary as

the other. She is somebody who really inspired me and helped me find my love for directing," she said.

Taymor fondly recalls the time Lo let her and her friends put on Patrick Marber's "Closer," a play about love and deceit, despite its clearly grown-up theme.

"She let us take risks," she said, recounting the way Lo let her students have a real say in the work. "It caused a stir but I remember feeling really empowered that Kristen let us do something like that. It was a big deal."

The first time she directed a play was on the Paly stage, during a festival called "Speed Limit 25," in which all the plays had to be created by people under the age of 25.

"I remember I directed a one-act from a book that she'd given us. I loved the feeling of directing ... it was a two-person play about teenagers on a roof falling in love ..." she said. "It was really



Courtesy Matthew Murphy

"The Outsiders" musical features a dramatic fight scene between young people from the poorer side of town known as Greasers and privileged, wealthy teens known as Socs.

See **TAYMOR**, page 25

ANDERSON*continued from page 23*

The second installation, “An Expanded Lens,” takes a more contemporary look by comparing and contrasting works from the permanent collection with art from the current Anderson Family Collection. Linetzky said that Pence invited selected graduate art history students to her home to see the collection and have a conversation. The students were then allowed to borrow art from that collection that would be installed in groupings with the permanent collection works. The students were also given the opportunity to explain their choices via written wall statements.

Linetzky pointed out how the pairing of Robert Irwin’s “Untitled,” an iconic example of the light and space movement, with a large-scale monochromatic painting by minimalist Mary Corse allowed the museum to “bring new insight, new experience to the works.” There are interesting juxtapositions like this in four of the galleries and the result is that even oft-seen and familiar pieces take on a whole new light.

In another gallery, a Soundsuit by sculptor Nick Cave, constructed of discarded materials, faces off against Robert Hudson’s funky “Plumb Bob,” also a standing figure constructed from found materials. On the wall in this space is Deborah Oropallo’s painting, “Three Man Patrol” which was inspired by the Rodney King riots. “Nick Cave has said that he considers the Soundsuits to be like a suit of armor for the Black male body,” Linetzky said. “There

are just many interesting visual experiences that can happen between these works.”

Linetzky said that the weekend activities are just the beginning of how the museum intends to mark this landmark event. “We hope to invite some of the artists whose work is in the show to speak to students and engage with the public. The celebration and programs will continue through the academic year.”

Linetzky, who is an art historian, worked for the Anderson Family Collection for a number of years before taking the role of museum director. He noted that the museum must straddle two distinct audiences, the students and faculty of Stanford University as well as the general public.

“It is, by design, a small unit (museum) on campus but very collaborative in nature,” Linetzky said, adding, “The museum will soon partner with the faculty in creative writing as well as the school of medicine, whose students will participate in close looking at works of art.”

“Since we opened, we have had hundreds of thousands of visitors, presented 37 exhibitions and hundreds of public programs,” he said. “We are grateful for the outpouring of support from the community and are always striving to do more and in a more successful way.”

When the Anderson Collection at Stanford opened 10 years ago, Hunk Anderson stood in the lobby and proclaimed that the museum was “A gift that keeps on giving.” It appears that he was correct. ■

Email Contributing Writer Sheryl Nonnenberg at nonnenberg@aol.com.

TAYMOR*continued from page 24*

an inspiring time and an amazing community of people.”

It was through experiences like these that Taymor discovered that she was more comfortable directing than acting. “I think those environments at the Children’s Theatre and doing theater at Paly with Kristen were really formative in making me want to do this,” she said.

Among people who’ve inspired her is her aunt and Broadway director Julie Taymor, best known for directing the stage musical “The Lion King.”

“One thing that she taught me that really stayed with me is to not allow people to put you in a box; she started out as a designer and was also directing,” she said. “People want you to do the thing that you’ve done right before. The best advice she gave was to continue to follow your passion. She has so many different talents inside of theater and inside of film and that’s been really inspiring to watch.”

Taymor’s parents are doctors in Palo Alto — her father’s a pediatrician and her mother’s a psychiatrist. That’s probably why she harbors a strong interest in public health.

“I do feel like theater can be a tool for public health; there’s healing involved in doing and seeing certain types of theater,” she said.

Understandably, her family is elated about her recent achievements.

“Danya made us very proud of her and very happy for her success and creativity,

she brought honor to herself and to our family not only for winning the Tony for Best Director of an Original Musical but for being who she is,” said her mother Rosalinda Taymor in an email, adding that her daughter’s artistic inclinations were evident early on and that she displayed an affinity for different forms of art, like performance and singing, during childhood. “From a very young age she was identified by teachers and peers as a team player and someone you can count on ... She has always been an inspiration to me.”

For Taymor, the days following the heady experience of directing an award-winning musical are all about resting, recuperating and staying creatively inspired. She’s doing this by going to plays, listening to music and reading. Among her recent favorites are fiction novels “Matrix” by Lauren Groff and “East of Eden” by John Steinbeck; “Shining City,” a play by Conor McPherson; and June Jordan’s poetry.

“I love words; I think words and language drive me the most as a director,” she said. “Which is why I think I’m so impressed with the book ‘The Outsiders.’ It was written by a teenager. The way those sentences are structured is raw and real and true ...”

In the coming months, the production will tour the country and eventually a high school version of the show will become available.

“I hope Paly will do it, that’ll be like a dream come true,” she said. ■

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

Worth a Look*Courtesy Sophie Zhai*

Beijing Guitar Duo performs Sept. 21 at the Mountain View Center for Performing Arts.

Beijing Guitar Duo

Looking for a musical way to celebrate autumn equinox weekend? Catch virtuoso guitarists Meng Su and Yameng Wang, who form Beijing Guitar Duo, in their “Mid-Autumn Melodies” concert in Mountain View. The performance, sponsored by Bay Area Chinese Musician Association, will feature the duo’s classical guitar-playing prowess and chemistry, which has earned them international acclaim (in addition to their successful solo careers). Originally hailing from Qingdao, China, and now based in the U.S., the duo launched its international career with performances including a 2010 concert at Carnegie Hall and received a Latin Grammy Award nomination for its debut record, “Maracaípe.”

Sept. 21, 2 p.m., Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View; \$26-\$68; tickets.mvcpa.com.

Train Days

All aboard! Los Altos History Museum hosts a weekend dedicated to model railroads, with participation from a number of Bay Area model train groups on hand to show off their trains and intricate layouts, answer questions and offer info. There will also be food and drink for sale, train-themed merchandise and family portrait sessions by live portrait artist Domenica Maloney.

Sept. 21-22, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Los Altos History Museum, 51 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos; \$10 (free for kids under 12 and museum members); losaltoshistory.org/events/train-days-2024.

Grupo Niche

Long-running, Grammy Award-winning Colombian salsa orchestra Grupo Niche (founded by the late Jairo Varela) comes to Redwood City’s Fox Theatre as part of its Pachanguero Tour. Founded more than 40 years ago, the group has earned acclaim and a devoted fan base over the decades and continues to tour widely. In 2023, Grupo Niche won the Latin Grammy Award for Best Salsa Album for the LP “Niche Sinfónico,” recorded with the Colombian Symphony Orchestra.

Sept. 20, 8:30 p.m.; Fox Theatre, 2221 Broadway St., Redwood City; \$98-\$184; foxrwc.showare.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=338.

Kyla Zhao

Writer Kyla Zhao moved from Singapore to the U.S. to attend Stanford University and has settled into local life ever since, working in the tech industry as well as launching a blossoming career as a novelist. Her third book (following “The Fraud Squad” and “Valley Verified”) is also her first for younger readers. The middle-grade novel “May The Best Player Win” tells the story of May Li, a middle-school chess ace who finds herself feeling the weight of expectations as she competes to be chosen as team captain for the national championships. Zhao will celebrate the book launch and appear in conversation with fellow local-author Nicole Chen at Linden Tree Books.

Sept. 21, 11 a.m.; Linden Tree Books, 265 State St., Los Altos; lindentreebooks.com/events-calendar.

Hayes Carll

Rootsy Texan singer-songwriter Hayes Carll and his band (The Band of Heathens) will entertain local audiences with a performance at the Guild. He’s released numerous country and Americana albums since his 2002 debut, “Flowers & Liquor,” including 2011’s “KMAG YOYO & Other American Stories” and 2021’s “You Get It All,” with songs acclaimed for storytelling, humor and heart.

Sept. 22, 7 p.m., The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park; \$46.35-\$121.67; guildtheatre.com. ■

Food & Drink

Gardenia takes root

A new restaurant opens in a historic mansion, offering French Asian fusion cuisine and specialty coffee



Courtesy Gardenia
Ora king salmon poke salad with sea beans, kukui nuts, Monterey Bay ogo, sweet onion, scallions, ginger tamari dressing and taro root chips at Gardenia in Los Gatos. Above: From left clockwise, Gardenia's bloom mocktail (guava, pineapple, coconut, coconut water and lime), barely buzzed mocktail (cucumber, mint, lime, Botanicals zero proof spirit and ginger beer) and tidal wave mocktail (mint, cucumber, lime, spirulina and sparkling water).

By Adrienne Mitchel

A former funeral parlor is now home to a French Asian fusion restaurant with a coffee program developed in part by celebrity barista Morgan Eckroth.

While the funeral parlor closed in 1971 and the Queen Anne Victorian mansion has housed a slew of restaurants since 1976 (most recently The Palms restaurant), some still believe the Los Gatos property is haunted — something Gardenia owner Carol Wang has seen no indication of.

“Every time when I step in here, I’m so happy,” she said. “I love this place.”

In fact, it was the historic property itself that inspired Wang to open not just a coffee shop, but a restaurant as well. Wang, a mother of two with a passion for coffee, had been searching for the perfect coffee shop location for the past two years, she said.

“With this beautiful Victorian-style historical beauty, no one could resist,” Wang said. “And because this building is huge, I thought ... ‘I don’t want to waste this beautiful place ... I definitely need to start a restaurant.’”

The nine-room Queen Anne Victorian mansion was built in 1891 for Mary Barry Coggeshall and her two children. Barry Coggeshall was born in Valparaiso, Chile, to Irish immigrants in 1840, according

to the Los Gatan. When Barry Coggeshall was 9 years old, she and her parents moved to San Francisco for the gold rush but didn’t strike it rich. She married into money in 1871, but the marriage didn’t work out. Instead of a divorce, the couple came to an agreement to live separately and maintain they were each widowed, according to the Los Gatan. Barry Coggeshall moved from San Francisco to the newly incorporated town of Los Gatos, building the home that still stands today.

With no prior experience in the food and beverage industry (she previously worked in the medical field), Wang enlisted David Intonato, who worked as an executive chef in New York, Hawaii, Colorado and Costa Rica, to develop a culinary program.

“Chinese food is so good, and I love Japanese food and all the other Asian food, and I’ve always loved French food as well,” Wang said. “I always think France is such a romantic country, so if we try to get French Asian together, that would be really nice.”

Gardenia currently offers brunch and happy hour menus, with a dinner menu launching Thursday. Find brunch starters like lobster deviled eggs with wasabi flying fish roe or grilled tako (octopus) “escargot” with bone marrow; brunch entrees like pan bagnat (a French sandwich) with togarashi-seared ahi

or smoked wagyu brisket French dip; and happy hour offerings like takoyaki (battered balls of grilled octopus) or duck confit spring rolls.

For drinks, Gardenia has an extensive wine cocktail menu (using ingredients like chai, lychee, kumquat, Calpico and matcha) plus mocktails with ingredients like spirulina, rosemary and guava; draft, bottled and nonalcoholic beer; wine by the glass and bottle; and a cafe program featuring espresso beverages, pour-overs and tea.

Wang’s love for coffee began long before she had her first sip.

“Even though I didn’t drink coffee, I loved that aroma and smell when you step into the coffee shop and also the ambiance of the unique coffee shops,” she said. “Most of them just make me feel so relaxing, so comfortable, I would like to stay for hours.”

Then five years ago, her curiosity led her to try coffee for the first time.

“I started with one sip, one cup occasionally, and then eventually got to drink a little bit more often, and then couldn’t stop drinking coffee,” she said.

While in Panama visiting the Lamastus Family Estates, a family-owned coffee producer since 1918 whose coffee Gardenia now uses, Wang found inspiration for the name of her coffee shop and restaurant.

“That was the first time I saw the coffee flower,” she said.

Small and white and similar in appearance to the gardenia flower, she decided to name her business Gardenia. The coffee shop and restaurant has two gardenia topiaries by the stairs.

To help develop the coffee program, Wang enlisted World Barista Championship second-place winner and U.S. Barista champion Morgan Eckroth and U.S. Brewers Cup champion Weihong Zhang as consultants.

“There is a lot of intentionality in showcasing a wide range of coffee flavor in both the pour-over menu and on espresso, along with several seasonal signature drinks,” Eckroth wrote in an email.

With millions of followers on social media, Eckroth is known for making recipe videos of intricate coffee drinks and clips of her in a coffee shop setting playing the role of a benevolent barista and a regular customer. She recently began taking on independent consulting and training projects, and Gardenia is one of the first cafes she’s worked with and the only one so far in the Bay Area, she said. Based out of Portland, Oregon, Eckroth said she’ll be traveling to Los Gatos “several more times in the upcoming year” and will likely host a meet-and-greet at Gardenia in the future.

“The goal is to continue building community through excellent coffee,” Eckroth wrote in an email. “Gardenia is located

in such a historic location that already acts as a community hub and their coffee program reflects that.”

Wang, who’s lived in the Bay Area for the last 30 years, hopes to make Gardenia a community spot.

“We cannot live without community,” she said. “This coffee house and restaurant, it’s part of the community, it’s part of (the) city of Los Gatos. So we’re here not to compete with other people: We just want to be part of it and to get community together and also to bring more people to town.”

Dig into food news. Follow the Peninsula Foodist on Instagram and subscribe to the newsletter to get insights on the latest openings and closings, learn what the Foodist is excited about eating, read exclusive interviews and keep up on the trends affecting local restaurants. ■

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

Gardenia, 115 N Santa Cruz Ave., Los Gatos; 669-294-4498, Instagram: @gardenialosgatos. Coffee service daily 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Brunch is offered Tuesday to Friday 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and weekends from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Happy hour is Tuesday to Friday 3:30-5 p.m. Dinner is Thursday to Sunday 5-9 p.m.



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