

# The Almanac

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## Demand for food assistance has skyrocketed, food distribution services say they need more help heading into holidays

'We've had to make some tough choices'  
says Second Harvest CEO Leslie Bacho

By Eleanor Raab

A hidden food crisis is brewing as we head into the holiday season, say the CEOs and executive directors of food programs up and down the Peninsula. Second Harvest of Silicon Valley, the largest food bank in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, has had to stop purchasing meat for its food distribution clients after demand for food distribution services skyrocketed, donations have flagged and food prices have risen, said Second Harvest's CEO Leslie Bacho.

Second Harvest is currently serving an average of 500,000 people each month, a number which first surged during the pandemic and then never dropped. Just prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization was serving only 250,000 people monthly.

Other food distribution services across the Peninsula, many of which partner with Second Harvest, say they have seen a similar increase

in demand over the last few months, which many attribute to the rising cost of goods and the high cost of living in the area, as well as the sunsetting of many of the pandemic-era benefits for individuals.

"We have a crisis right now where people cannot afford their basic needs," Bacho told this news organization.

Bacho said that the number of people that use Second Harvest's food distribution services has climbed so high, her team now estimates that 1 in 6 people in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties is making use of Second Harvest.

"That number seems startling in our affluent community, but it's just that we have a huge swath of our community that is working in these low wage jobs and can't afford to make it here," she said. "That's the reason we're not providing meat right now. That's the reason our budget is so constrained."

Lesia Preston, executive director of Ecumenical Hunger Program in East Palo Alto, said she wants people to understand



Erik Castro

A farmers market-style food distribution at Cañada College in Woodside.

that "this (crisis) is real." Food distribution services like Ecumenical Hunger Program, which is supplied by Second Harvest, say that the lack of meat has been a struggle, especially heading into the holidays

when their clients want turkeys, ham and other meat options for their holiday dinners.

"When Second Harvest Food Bank, this large provider is saying they don't have meat... People depend on that," she

said. "And when (clients) don't have money to buy food at all, and we can only give out canned goods and stuff, that's very difficult."

See **SECOND HARVEST**, page 10

## San Mateo County Supes vote to hold special election to grant them power to remove Sheriff Corpus

Special election to take place on March 4, 2025 after second vote by supervisors

By Eleanor Raab

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously Tuesday, Nov. 19, to hold a special election in March to ask voters to approve a temporary amendment to the county charter that would give the board the power to remove Sheriff Christina Corpus, who has come under fire

in recent months on claims of racism, homophobia and abuse of power.

The decision was made at the board's Nov. 19 meeting, just one day after federal and state legislators joined the board to ask Corpus to resign. This organization has also asked Corpus to resign.

"It does not benefit our community to have the type of

chaos we see happening right now at the Sheriff's Office," said District 1 Supervisor Noelia Corzo. "Right now, what's happening at our Sheriff's Office is negatively impacting public safety."

The board has been calling on Corpus to resign following the release of a report from a county-commissioned independent investigation by Judge LaDoris

Cordell that details alleged retaliation and abuse of power in her office, an alleged multi-year affair between Corpus and her chief of staff, Victor Aenlle and possible illegal activity.

"Today's vote by the Board of Supervisors was wrongheaded and anti-democratic," said Corpus in a press release on Tuesday afternoon. "If you want a sheriff out, you hold a recall.

This is a shameful attempt at a takeover of this office so they can pick and choose who will serve as sheriff now and into the future."

Corpus has said in multiple press conferences that she will

See **SHERIFF CORPUS**, page 16

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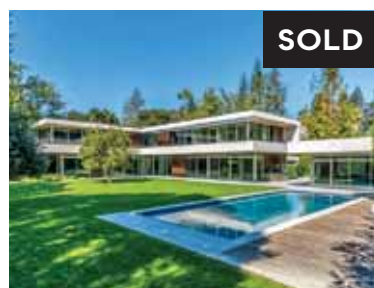
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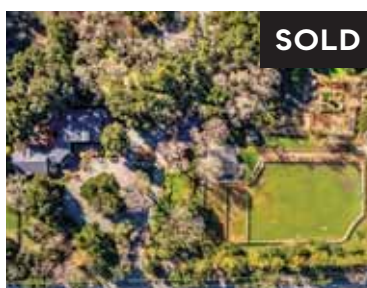
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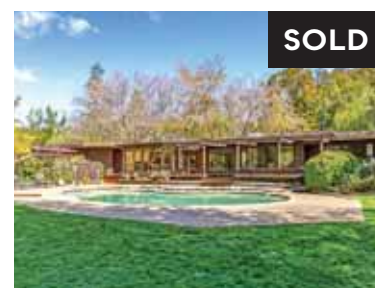
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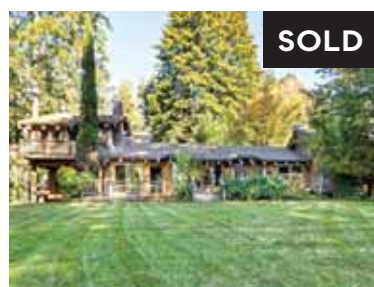
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# Local News

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Courtesy Gabriel Anguiano

Ravenswood City School District students walk down Fordham Street in East Palo Alto to honor Civil Rights activist Ruby Bridges on Nov. 14.

## Ravenswood students and families honor Civil Rights activist in symbolic walk to school

Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day began in 2018

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Ravenswood City School District hosted its third Annual Ruby Bridges Walks to School Day event on Thursday morning, Nov. 14. Over 60 community members gathered at Jack Farrell Park in East Palo Alto before heading off on a symbolic walk to

Costaño Elementary School of the Arts before school bells rang.

The event is celebrated nationwide in honor of Bridges, a civil rights activist who was one of the first African American students to attend an all-white public school in Louisiana in 1960 — a historic moment during the

Civil Rights Movement.

The famous photo of Bridges being escorted by federal marshals lives in textbooks today.

In honor of Bridges, the Ravenswood community dressed in purple shirts, beanies, and backpacks as they marched down Fordham Street

See **RUBY BRIDGES**, page 6

## Smoke shop's opening averted in West Menlo Park amid concerns

By Neil Gonzales

A smoke shop will no longer open up in West Menlo Park as previously planned following a neighborhood outcry that drew the involvement of the San Mateo County supervisor who lives in and represents the area.

The unlicensed smoke shop had taken over a vacant storefront at 3536 Alameda de las Pulgas in an unincorporated part of the county with a large sign being installed late October. Residents quickly learned about what turned out to be an unlicensed smoke shop and urged local officials to prohibit it from moving forward.

Supervisor Ray Mueller, whose District 3 covers the community and who lives there, took up his neighbors' call.

The county determined that its tobacco retailer ordinance "made it impossible for the shop to open at that location," Mueller told this news organization on Thursday, Nov. 14. "We confirmed that they cannot sell tobacco, cannabis or paraphernalia. The shop owner said he understood and took the sign down. They were voluntarily compliant."

The shop was registered as "SmokesRUs Inc" and owned by Ahmed Omar of Oakland. It was first registered Sept. 24. Omar, who also owns Grizzlys Smokeshop in San Jose, could not immediately be reached for comment.

Among the neighborhood's concerns was the fact that the shop would have opened close to schools and other sites where children learn or play.

The shop would have been within 300 feet of the University Heights Montessori Children's Center preschool and next door to Studio 650, a dance company that offers classes for both youth and adults.

The shop would have also been within 1,000 feet of Phillips Brooks School and the La Entrada Middle School field, Mueller said.

Attempts to get comments from the neighborhood were not immediately successful.

The county's ordinance prohibits

new tobacco retailer permits from being issued to any new location within 1,000 feet of a youth-populated space. The ordinance applies to unincorporated county areas.

Apparently, Mueller said, Omar mistakenly went to the city of Menlo Park to check if there was any restriction on opening up a smoke shop at 3536 Alameda de las Pulgas, formerly Axiom Learning, a private after-school tutoring and exam-preparation service.

"The shop owner just relied on information that wasn't accurate," Mueller said. "The shop owner told the county that the city didn't identify any problem. But the problem was that it wasn't in the city's jurisdiction."

Mueller noted that he has reached out to Menlo Park City Manager Justin Murphy on all that has transpired and asked that information on the county's ordinance be shared with the city's planning department in case such a situation arises again.

The city is already doing its part, Menlo Park spokesperson Kendra Calvert said in an email.

"The city of Menlo Park is in regular communication with the county," Calvert said. "Supervisor Mueller and City Manager Justin Murphy recently discussed this issue. The city has adopted the same tobacco retailer ordinance as the county and is working to increase awareness about this ordinance."

The space that the smoke shop had targeted will house another kind of retail store — possibly a gift shop, Mueller said.

"I'm grateful and proud of the work of the county to protect our youth and the support of residents as we worked on this issue," he said.

Meanwhile, Mueller is still pursuing a proposed new ordinance to prohibit new tobacco retailers along well-traveled school routes.

"County counsel is still researching" the proposal, he said, and it would go before the county Board of Supervisors not at its Tuesday, Nov. 19, meeting as previously expected but at a later date. ■

## 1st diagnosis in U.S. of type of mpox is made in San Mateo County

By Bay City News Service

A San Mateo County resident was diagnosed with the first known case in the United States of a certain variation of mpox, known as clade I mpox, the county's health department and California Department of Public Health said on Nov. 16.

The CDPH and San Mateo County Health said in dual press releases that the person was isolating at home with mild illness and recovering. It said health officials did not believe clade I

mpox was spreading in the community and close contacts were being notified with help from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The person is believed to have acquired clade I mpox based on their travel history to Eastern Africa, according to San Mateo County Health and the CDC. There is currently an outbreak of the viral disease in Central and Eastern Africa that was declared an emergency by the World Health Organization in 2022.

The genetic strain is different

than clade II mpox, which the county has already had cases of since the global outbreak in 2022. While 108 cases of clade II mpox have been diagnosed in San Mateo County, this is the first case of clade I mpox. Clade I mpox can cause more severe illness and deaths, according to the CDC and county health department.

But the CDC also said the most recent outbreak of clade I mpox has been less severe than previous outbreaks. While

See **MPOX**, page 7

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# Lawsuits charge antisemitism, civil rights violations at California charter school and Sequoia district

By John Fensterwald / EdSource

The parents of a former student of a San Jose charter school and six families in the Sequoia Union High School District have filed separate lawsuits charging “rampant” civil rights violations resulting from bullying, taunting, ostracism and other forms of antisemitic conduct. In the lawsuit brought against the Sequoia district, the families claim school officials ignored and showed “a deliberate indifference to the problem.”

Both lawsuits, which were filed in the U.S. District Court of Northern California, say the discrimination escalated following the October 2023 attack on Israeli settlements by Hamas and the Israeli retaliation and invasion of Gaza.

The lawsuit against the Sequoia Union High School District also reflects tension over how the ongoing conflict in Gaza has been taught in two Sequoia Union high schools as well as other districts engulfed in investigations and litigation.

In their lawsuit, filed Friday, the six Sequoia Union High School District families named Woodside High Principal Karen Van Putten and three administrators of Woodside High, where five of the students attend, as well as Menlo-Atherton High School Principal Karl Losekoot, Sequoia Union Superintendent Crystal Leach, two district administrators, all five district board members, and Gregory Gruszynski, a history teacher at Woodside High.

Placing the lawsuit in a wider context, lawyers for the Sequoia Union lawsuit said “leftist academics” have spread an ideology that “falsely portrays Jews as oppressors, engaged in ‘exploitive capitalism’ in the West and or ‘colonialism’ in the Middle East.”

“The result is not only a reprehensible failure of pedagogy but a hostile learning environment for Jewish students” — including in some Sequoia Union classes where the ideology is

taught, the Sequoia lawsuit said.

It cites as a relevant party but not a defendant the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Consortium, whose member groups are selling curriculum and training teachers in dozens of California districts.

## Did history teacher show bias?

Allegations of prejudiced classroom instruction that included antisemitic materials are a central element of the lawsuit against Woodside and Menlo-Atherton, two of four high schools in Sequoia Union, a demographically diverse, 10,000-student high school district.

Of Woodside High’s 1,646 students, 50% are Hispanic, 42% are white, 4% are Asian and 1% are Black. Only 28% were identified as low-income. Its students include low-income sections of Redwood City, and Woodside and Atherton, which are among the wealthiest ZIP codes in the United States.

The lawsuit claimed that Gruszynski, a Woodside High history teacher who currently chairs the bargaining committee for the Sequoia District Teachers Association, “singled out and harassed L.K. (all plaintiff students are identified with initials), the only openly Jewish student” in his 10th grade world history class.” Gruszynski displayed a “Free Palestine” bumper sticker on his classroom wall. The lawsuit stated that he “mocked her beliefs, undermined her attempts to provide factual information to classmates, and coerced her into endorsing his biased and ahistorical views to achieve satisfactory grades on exams.”

On a multiple-choice test, for example, the correct answer to the definition of Hamas, which the United States government has designated a terrorist organization, was a “Palestinian political party which is continuing to fight against Israel.”

“In this way,” the lawsuit said, “Gruszynski forced a Jewish

student to condemn Israel and disavow her beliefs in order to receive a passing grade.” The lawsuit said that L.K. returned home in tears after Gruszynski’s classes and decided she could not participate in any further classroom discussions “without inviting further harassment.”

L.K.’s father, Sam Kasle, filed a complaint against Gruszynski, who refused to meet with him. Kasle requested to see Gruszynski’s course materials, which he, like other parents, had a right to review, but the district rejected that request. In response to the complaint, the vice principal disputed that Gruszynski made L.K. feel “uncomfortable” or “brow-beaten,” and considered the case closed without reporting any action taken.

## Long-standing ‘antisemitic sentiment’

The lawsuit by the Sequoia Union families also cited “deliberate indifference to anti-Jewish harassment,” which it said started well before the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack. In one incident, according to the lawsuit, a long-term substitute teacher, who continues to teach at Menlo-Atherton High, asked plaintiff W.K. about his background. Told that his family is Jewish, the teacher allegedly shared jokes about the Holocaust with a group of students: “How do you fit 10,000 Jews in a Volkswagen?” she asked. “In the ashtray.”

After the start of the Israeli-Hamas conflict on Oct 7, however, antisemitic incidents “surged,” the lawsuit said, citing several examples.

A group of Woodside students yelled, “Go back to where you came from!” to another Jewish student at Woodside High. No disciplinary action followed, the lawsuit said.

About that same time, a group of Menlo-Atherton students taunted plaintiff W.K. on the way to class, calling him a “kike” and said, “All Jews should die.”

On Nov. 1, two swastikas were

etched into the pavement in Woodside High. (Swastikas had been drawn on bathroom walls in Menlo-Atherton high a year earlier.) Two days later, Woodside High Principal Karen van Putten emailed the Woodside community that an extensive investigation by school administrators and the San Mateo Sheriff’s Department confirmed that the swastikas were actually “spiritual symbol[s] from Japanese Buddhism known as Manji popularized by anime.”

The lawsuit called the investigation a “sham” that, in fact, did not involve the sheriff’s department. Citing administrators’ dismissal of the swastika incident, other derogatory remarks, and the failure of van Putten and the Sequoia school board to address incidents, Scott and Lori Lyle, parents of a 12th grader at Woodside High, filed a detailed formal complaint.

With no answer and no action taken in response for more than 200 days, the Jewish families filed their lawsuit, citing violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, the U.S. Constitution’s Fourteenth Amendment’s guarantee of equal protection under the law, the First Amendment’s right to free exercise of religion and freedom of speech, as well as protections under California education laws and the state constitution.

Filing a lawsuit is a huge step for families, said Lori Lowenthal Marcus, legal director for The Deborah Project. “Students don’t want to embarrass teachers, risk ridicule and humiliation. All of the families went through internal procedures. They tried to speak with principals; they filed complaints to see if they could rectify their situations, but all felt let down. A lawsuit was the next option.”

The families are seeking the court to order a dozen remedies. They include:

- Prohibiting discrimination and harassment of their children;
- Prohibiting the district from

engaging in any antisemitic conduct;

- Ordering the district to implement a comprehensive policy addressing antisemitism;
- Providing training for all teachers, administrators and staff in strategies to promote empathy and respect for Jewish individuals and their connection to Israel;
- Terminating any teachers found to have engaged in antisemitic discrimination; and
- Creating transparent requirements for disclosing course materials to the

See **LAWSUITS**, page 14

## The Almanac

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## RUBY BRIDGES

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waving Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day flags.

“The symbolic walk is intended to commemorate the journey of Ruby Bridges and her dedication to education and equality,” said Gabriel Anguiano, coordinator of family and community engagement at RCSD. “That’s what Ravenswood stands for and that is our Ravenswood

Promise.”

In 2018, a group of fifth graders in South San Francisco, inspired by Ruby’s courage, advocated to make Nov. 14 Ruby Bridges Day, according to the San Mateo County Office of Education website. In September 2021, state Sen. Josh Becker, D-Menlo Park, helped shepherd legislation that proclaimed Nov. 14 as Ruby Bridges Walk to School Day.

Ravenswood hosted the

walk in partnership with the San Mateo County Office of Education Safe Routes to School and the cities of East Palo Alto and Belle Haven. Across from Jack Farrell Park is a Black Lives Matter mural painted on Fordham Street, which Anguiano said is symbolic of the community and the causes they support.

At the event, Costaña Principal Ronda White gave a speech on the significance

of Ruby Bridges and what the day stood for. Superintendent Gina Sudaria also spoke on how important it is for students, families and community members to come together.

After the walk, students and community members enjoyed hot cocoa and pastries provided by local partner organizations. ■

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# Atherton eyes adding sidewalks, bike lanes on El Camino Real

By Neil Gonzales

Atherton is eyeing sidewalks, bike lanes and other improvements along a stretch of El Camino Real that lacks such features and poses various safety concerns.

During a study session Nov. 6, the City Council reviewed potential configurations to improve the 1.5-mile stretch between Selby Lane and Valparaiso Avenue.

The goal as part of a larger regional effort is to “make El Camino Real a complete street where we are accommodating users of all ages and abilities and the various modes of transportation, including walking, biking, vehicles, transit, people with assisted mobility, etc.,” town Public Works Director Robert Ovadia said during the session.

Currently, the span has six lanes — three each northbound and southbound — with no sidewalk on either side but just a planting strip or vegetation running along the shoulders of the thoroughfare.

The corridor sees about 36,000 vehicles a day on average, according to a town staff report. From 2018 to 2022, 73 injury crashes occurred there.

“Notably, two pedestrian fatalities were recorded, highlighting the need for safety interventions particularly for non-motorized users,” the report said. The area also experiences seasonal flooding.

The report recommended four

scenarios for the council to consider:

- Sidewalk and on-street bike lane: This would install a six-foot-wide sidewalk and five-foot-wide bike lane on both sides of El Camino Real. It would keep the total number of traffic lanes to six.
- Sidewalk, landscaping and protected bike lane: This has landscaping between an eight-foot-wide sidewalk and six-foot-wide bike lane on both sides of El Camino Real. Also, raised posts would shield the bike lanes from vehicle traffic. This design, however, would reduce the total number of traffic lanes to four.
- Sidewalk, landscaping and separated bike lane: This has landscaping between an eight-foot-wide sidewalk and seven-foot-wide bike lane on both sides of El Camino Real. It would also have landscaping separating the bike lanes from traffic. This configuration has four traffic lanes total.
- Sidewalk and single-side bike lane: This has a six-foot-wide sidewalk on both sides of the thoroughfare but a two-way bike lane only on one side. This option would have a total of five traffic lanes — three in one direction while two going the other way. Also, landscaping would separate the sidewalk or bike lane from traffic. During their discussion, council

members, with Mayor Diana Hawkins-Manuelian absent, generally seemed to lean toward the “sidewalk, landscaping and separated bike lane” design.

“I think having a buffer between the bike lane and El Camino makes a lot of sense,” Council member Stacy Holland said, “and I think having a full sidewalk makes a lot of sense.”

Council member Bill Widmer would also be OK with that look “if we’re agreeing to reduce a lane on each side,” he said.

Like his colleagues, Council member Rick DeGolia favored having a bike lane on both sides of El Camino Real. “I think you can’t have the bike lanes on one side,” he said.

But he acknowledged that reducing the number of traffic lanes could meet stiff resistance.

“If you want to reduce El Camino to four lanes,” DeGolia said, “you better let the residents know.”

Gary Bloom, an Atherton resident who serves on the Menlo Park Fire Protection District board, applauded the town for exploring safety improvements along the route.

“It’s a concern. It’s definitely dangerous,” Bloom said during the meeting’s public-comment period. “The way we look at El Camino Real (is) it might as well be a brick wall going all the way across, and the only reason you cross it is because you need to turn onto it or turn off of it.”

But he urged careful consideration on the lane reduction, saying gridlock could get worse.

“I would really encourage you to make sure that we’re not going to so horribly impact the flow that the residents of Atherton cannot get onto that road,” he said. “What I see when I’m driving down the road is residents get very impatient trying to make the turn, and eventually, they gun it and they go for it at the most inopportune time, and that’s when we end up with the accidents.”

Right now, Atherton is in the initial planning stages of pursuing improvements along that section of El Camino Real in conjunction with other jurisdictions.

The beginning work has involved a \$755,000 study funded mostly by the San Mateo County Transportation Authority, according to Carolyn

Mamaradlo, senior project manager at the agency. Atherton pitched in \$75,000 while Menlo Park chipped in \$30,000 and SamTrans contributed \$100,000.

The cost of the actual improvement project and when that could start remain to be seen.

“As part of the final plan, our team will develop a high-level conceptual cost estimate for the preferred alternative,” Mamaradlo said in an email to The Almanac. “The final plan is anticipated in spring/summer 2025.”

Atherton’s report noted that because the roadway segment is under the state’s purview and flanks other communities such as Menlo Park and Redwood City “it is not a project that the town can address or fund on its own.” ■

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## MPOX

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previous global death rates from clade I mpox have been between 3-11%, the more recent outbreak has death rates of about 1%, which could be less in countries with strong healthcare systems.

San Mateo County Health said 108 people have previously been diagnosed with clade II mpox in the county and that experience would guide its response to the new genetic strain.

“While clade I may be new to the United States, we and other counties have been responding to mpox since 2022 with contact tracing, guidance and vaccine support,” said San Mateo County Health Officer Dr. Kismet Baldwin-Santana.

“Our work continues, with the support of our state and federal partners,” Baldwin-Santana said.

Transmission of mpox, formerly called monkeypox, comes through close, intimate skin-to-skin contact, according to the CDPH. It is unlikely to spread through casual contact such as classroom, work or travel

settings. It presents as a rash.

The CDPH recommended anyone at risk get vaccinated and avoid intimate contact with anyone who might have been exposed. The department also advised monitoring for symptoms and isolating if exposure is suspected.

More information about mpox can be found at the CDPH website: [cdph.ca.gov](http://cdph.ca.gov). ■

## LEHUA GREENMAN



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### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public hearing will be held before the Board of Directors of the West Bay Sanitary District at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at the District Offices, located at 500 Laurel Street, Menlo Park, California. To consider amending the Code of General Regulations to add Recycled Water Charges.

#### WEST BAY SANITARY DISTRICT

By: /s/ Sergio Ramirez  
Sergio Ramirez  
General Manager

## FIRE MARSHAL'S SAFETY CORNER THANKSGIVING SAFETY



### KITCHEN SAFETY

- Stay in the kitchen while cooking on the stove top to watch the food.
- Be cautious of hot steam or splashes from vegetables, gravy, or coffee, which can cause burns.
- Follow instructions closely when using a deep fryer and monitor it carefully.

### PREVENTION TIPS

- Make sure smoke alarms are functioning properly.
- Keep a household fire extinguisher nearby.
- Keep the floor clear to avoid tripping over children, toys, or bags.

### HOME HEATING SAFETY

- Have your home heating system inspected by a professional to ensure its working properly.
- If using wood stoves, fireplaces, or space heaters, keep them at a safe distance from flammable materials and never leave them unattended.
- Clean and inspect heating equipment and chimneys annually before use.



# Belle Haven townhouses become first multifamily buildings in San Mateo County to be retrofitted with fully electric appliances

By Eleanor Raab

In the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park, three organizations — nonprofit affordable housing developer MidPen Housing, local climate nonprofit Menlo Spark and the Association for Energy Affordability, a nonprofit specializing in energy efficient multifamily properties — teamed up to retrofit Willow Court, an affordable, multifamily housing building, with fully electric appliances. This retrofit is the first of its kind in San Mateo County, according to a draft case study of the project prepared by Menlo Spark.

In all six housing units within the Willow Court complex, which were originally constructed in 1992, all gas appliances, including water heaters, furnaces, washers, dryers and ranges were replaced with electric appliances and heat pumps to manage water heating and home heating. New, more efficient electric appliances, along with efficient LED lighting, were installed in the complex as part

of this project as well.

Additionally, the building is supplied with power by Peninsula Clean Energy, which offers “100% clean energy,” that is either carbon-free, renewable or both from sources such as wind and solar.

Menlo Park’s director of sustainability, Rachael Londer, said that 43% of Menlo Park’s greenhouse gas emissions come from burning natural gas to power space heating, water heating and cooking appliances in local buildings.

“We don’t always have the ability to remove natural gas from the buildings we live and work in to take advantage of the 100% greenhouse gas free electricity provided by Peninsula Clean Energy,” she said. “The Willow Court project provides an example for how the community can come together to transform existing multifamily buildings across the city from gas guzzlers to clean energy homes for the health of our residents.”

Menlo Spark, in partnership with the Hewlett Foundation,

provided MidPen housing with a \$150,000 grant to cover a large portion of the upfront capital costs of retrofitting the building and removing all gas appliances.

“MidPen Housing is grateful to Menlo Spark and the Association for Energy Affordability for their collaboration on the full electrification of Willow Court,” said Nigel Felix, MidPen Housing’s associate asset manager of real estate transactions. “We hope that Willow Court’s retrofit will inspire similar work at affordable housing properties up and down the state.”

State Sen. Josh Becker, D-Menlo Park, called the electrification project “groundbreaking,” as it is the first existing multifamily property in the county to “provide a full suite of climate pollution reductions via healthy, clean, more efficient electric appliances.”

“Willow Court residents will benefit greatly from the significant air pollution reductions achieved by removing gas combustion from the property,” he said in a press release.

Menlo Spark is an independent environmental nonprofit focused on helping the city of Menlo Park reach carbon neutrality by 2030.

The draft case study prepared about the project by Menlo Spark states that once a building like Willow Court is fully electrified, it then becomes a good candidate for the installation of solar panels. Solar panels can further reduce utility bills for residents, increase the amount of power that comes from renewable sources and allow the building to “go off the grid” during power outages if energy storage is stalled.

In the draft case study, Menlo Spark’s director of electrification, Angela Evans, also wrote that one of the most important findings from undertaking this electric retrofit was that the electrical panels on the home do not necessarily need to be upgraded to electrify the building.

“Despite the conventional wisdom of prior decades linking home electrification to costly, time consuming electrical panel upgrades, the ‘panel upgrade

myth’ has now been successfully debunked,” Evans wrote in the draft case study. “With all new electric appliances, Willow Court’s electrical load calculations demonstrate a per housing unit load of 50 Amps.”

This would still leave room in the electrical panel’s capacity to install EV chargers and large solar arrays in the future, said Energy Engineer Tom Kabat in the draft case study.

## Environmental justice

Evans said that the Belle Haven location for the nonprofit’s first electric retrofit project was chosen with environmental justice and equity goals in mind. Belle Haven was designated as an “underserved community” in the city’s recently adopted environmental justice element due to higher poverty rates, higher indoor air pollution, higher incidences of asthma and other diseases and the disproportionate burden of flooding and other climate hazards that residents of Belle Haven experience.

See **BELLE HAVEN**, page 14

## Immersive technology calms kids’ fears of shots

The Stanford Chariot Program uses VR and other immersive technologies, such as the Space Burgers game, to distract children from pain and anxiety during medical procedures. Tools like Buddy Base and Buddy Guard offer engaging VR experiences, calming needle fears and reducing discomfort.

In one instance, these tools helped ease children’s anxiety during a flu clinic, with apps keeping kids engaged and still. Pharmacists noted reduced fidgeting and tears, and parents praised the program’s positive impact. **SCAN TO READ THE SPOTLIGHT**



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**SECOND HARVEST***continued from page 1***The increasing demand for food**

Second Harvest of Silicon Valley collects data on the number of people that make use of its food distribution services. Bacho said the number of people it served waned to 400,000 as people started to go back to work after the pandemic, up until inflation hit and the numbers started to climb back up to where they are now.

Bacho also said that low unemployment numbers in the two counties are obscuring just how many people are struggling with food insecurity in Silicon Valley. For many people, working full time isn't enough, in an area where cost of living and rent is so high, she said.

"People don't really understand the crisis that is happening in our community. People feel like 'oh, unemployment is low, so people are back to work,'" explained Bacho. "But what they don't understand is that so many of the people that we are serving are working — they may even be working two jobs — but they are not able to meet their basic needs."

Participation in California's CalFresh food stamp program tells a similar story, as levels of participation in CalFresh in both San Mateo and Santa Clara counties are currently the highest they have been in the last decade. According to state CalFresh data from September 2024, there are currently 82,806 households in Santa Clara County and 21,573 households in San Mateo County that receive food stamps.

"As soon as inflation hit, especially the prices of food and fuel ... we saw the numbers tick up," said Bacho in regard to the number of people on food stamps.

**Lines 'wrapped around the corner daily,' declining support**

Other local food distribution services say they are facing similar challenges. Preston said that lines for the grocery distribution at Ecumenical Hunger Program are "wrapped around the corner daily." Preston said that they are seeing more working families in their food line, who are "employed, but not enough to cover the cost of living."

Orlando Cardona, the pastor of Verbo Church, which runs a food distribution service in North Fair Oaks, said that his organization has seen the number of people needing food assistance from their program dramatically increase, even since the summer.

Despite the high demand for food, both Preston and Bacho say that monetary support for

food assistance has flagged for their food banks since the pandemic, both due to declining government support and slowing donations from individuals. Second Harvest is also receiving "significantly" fewer food donations from the U.S. Department of Agriculture compared to the height of the pandemic, said Bacho.

"The challenge we're facing right now is we are serving almost the same number of people we served at the height of the pandemic but with dramatically fewer resources," Bacho said. "We're receiving about 40% less funding than we were receiving at the height of the pandemic, and yet we're providing almost the same amount of food."

Both Preston and Bacho say that the attention paid to hunger during the pandemic meant that many more people were motivated to donate, but with less attention paid to the issue in recent years, it's not top of mind for most potential donors.

"During the pandemic, our issue was really front and center; people saw long lines of cars lining up for food ... and that's when we saw a dramatic increase in support," said Bacho. "We're still receiving more funding than we received before the pandemic, but it's just not at the scale that we need."

In a press release, Samaritan House, a food distribution program in San Mateo, said that they have seen a drastic dip in donations this fall, which they attribute to economic conditions.

At the same time, individual households facing food insecurity are also receiving less support than they were during the pandemic. In response to the pandemic, California raised every household's monthly food stamp allotment to the maximum amount allowed based on household size. However in February 2023, food stamp benefits were reduced back to regular amounts.

"When that went away, suddenly we have some households that lost like \$150 a month," said Bacho. "The lowest benefit you could receive now is like \$39, which doesn't really go anywhere here."

There are numerous other pandemic-era federal and state supports that have since expired, including various tax credits, expanded unemployment insurance, stipends to cover internet costs, emergency rental assistance and more.

**A lack of protein, organizations seeking donations**

With demand so high, Bacho says that Second Harvest has had to make some "tough choices" about their budget to try to best

meet the needs of the 500,000 people that they serve. One of those tough choices has been to forgo purchasing meat, and to instead focus their limited resources on high-demand foods that they cannot consistently receive through donations, such as eggs.

"In July, at the start of our fiscal year, we saw (wholesale) egg prices were doubling versus what we had budgeted due to the avian flu," explained Bacho. "We survey our clients and partners to see which items are most desired, and eggs are always at the top of that list. And so we said in order to provide eggs, we're going to put a pause on providing meat."

Though the organization is still receiving some meat through donations, Bacho said that Second Harvest is prioritizing that meat for hot meal programs.

Patti Brewer, a Redwood City resident who has volunteered at Second Harvest's San Mateo Event Center distribution site since the pandemic, said that she has noticed that Second Harvest has not been able to provide as much protein for their clients.

"There's less variety in proteins," she said. "There's more starches, vegetables and staples, where before we would get some more food items that are a treat for people. When I first started, we were able to give out meat, eggs and milk every week ... and now it's like they only get meat or only get eggs or milk."

Second Harvest provides a large portion of groceries for many of the other food distribution centers around San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. Representatives from these organizations, such as Ecumenical Hunger Program and Samaritan House, said that their operating budget and clientele have been noticeably affected by the lack of meat that Second Harvest is able to provide.

"With the protein shortage, we're receiving less and less protein, it impacts our operating funds," said Laura Bent, CEO of Samaritan House at its Tuesday, Nov. 19, Thanksgiving food distribution event. "(We're using) our donated funds, which we're grateful for, but we're using that to purchase protein, where in the past we wouldn't have had to do that."

Preston said that Ecumenical Hunger Program has pretty much stopped receiving meat from Second Harvest all together, and that she doesn't know how her organization will provide meat for the holidays. Preston also said that meat at the holidays is a "special treat" for families that have little else.

"(Second Harvest) was our number one source (of meat) for the holidays, so that's going to hit big right there," said Preston. "We can't tell people, 'hey, become a

vegetarian,' because people eat meat."

Both Ecumenical Hunger Program and Samaritan House are asking for donations of turkey, poultry and hams leading up to Thanksgiving and Christmas.

"Samaritan House is facing a significant shortage of protein items needed for ... Thanksgiving and December holiday distributions," wrote Samaritan House in the press release. "Samaritan House is turning to its community network to help recover the protein loss to provide holiday meals to the most food insecure families in our community."

Bacho said that Second Harvest was already moving away from purchasing turkeys at the holidays, as many of their clients hail from cultures where a Thanksgiving or winter holiday turkey is not the norm, and many people who are food insecure have trouble storing a large turkey at home. Second Harvest is not asking for donations of turkeys at this time, however she said that the fact that the food bank has had to forgo buying turkeys entirely is symbolic of just how dire the situation is for the many food insecure residents of Silicon Valley.

Second Harvest will prioritize giving turkeys donated by community members to hot meal programs or soup kitchens that have already promised a hot holiday meal to clients. Bacho said that though holiday meals are important, she feels it is more important that community members facing food insecurity are fed and healthy every day of the year.

"Yes, we all think of the holidays and we all think about turkeys as being really important," she said. "But what we should really be focused on is, how are we ensuring that everyone can

meet their basic needs day to day? ... What's important is that everybody is able to sit down for a meal with their families or loved ones or themselves every day of the year."

She also hopes that people will consider volunteering for and donating to food assistance programs year-round, not just during the holidays.

"We're very dependent on volunteers, but during the holidays we are full with volunteers," she said. "We need volunteers year-round."

Ecumenical Hunger Program is asking for monetary donations to help with purchasing meat for the holidays, and to help pay for the new warehouse that the organization recently purchased to store food donations. Preston said they are also looking for donations of gift cards so that families can purchase meat themselves.

Samaritan House is currently accepting monetary donations to its Food & Nutrition Program. The organization is also accepting donations of frozen meats such as turkeys, chickens, hams and roast beef at its headquarters located at 4031 Pacific Blvd., San Mateo.

Verbo Church is seeking monetary donations to its food distribution program to help the program remain in the community following a large rent hike.

Second Harvest is calling for more monetary donations to help them purchase more essentials such as eggs, milk and meat for the families they serve. Bacho says that for every dollar donated, Second Harvest is able to provide enough food for two meals, as most of their food is donated at the cost of shipping and handling. ■

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

**San Mateo County workers win 15% wage boost****By Bay City News Service**

The union representing about 2,000 San Mateo county workers will vote on a tentative contract calling for a 15% wage increase, a new paid holiday and increased county contributions to health care premiums.

The proposed three-year contract between the County Board of Supervisors and Service Employees International Union Local 521, announced Friday, Nov. 15, covers health care administrators, information technology, assessors, libraries, and

call center staff, among others.

The union said members will vote to ratify the tentative agreement starting Monday, Nov. 18.

The wage increase is the largest in more than 20 years, the union said, with 14% over three years and an additional 1% increase in the final year, contingent upon an adjustment in the Vehicle License Fee.

The agreement adds Cesar Chavez Day (March 31) as a new paid holiday beginning in March 2025. In addition, the county will increase contributions to health care insurance. ■

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Laure Woods at LymeAid, held at 1240 Westridge Drive

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– Sally Phillips, Portola Valley Pony Club

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# What Journalism means to me ...and why it should matter to you



“Journalism.” Such a simple word, but with complex interpretations. To me, journalism is about storytelling. So let me tell you a story.”

## Kort Van Bronkhorst

Rusty Van Bronkhorst, Kort's mother, was an original investor and board member of Embarcadero Media Corp. upon its founding in 1979. Kort was honored to take her seat on the board upon her passing in 2012.

My mother was born in Palo Alto in 1932 and lived on Fulton Street. As a child she helped out in the family business at the Golden Crescent Bakery on University Avenue. She went on to attend Palo Alto High School, and then worked on Page Mill Road at H-P, where she met and married my father. In 1958, I was born in Palo Alto, soon followed by two brothers, at which time we moved from Menlo Park to Portola Valley.

As a student at Woodside High School, I was recruited by the school paper to be its business manager, but I quickly found my writing voice and did double duty. The power and importance of the written word made an impression on me, so much that I pursued this path in college. At the University of Oregon, I obtained my B.S. in Journalism, albeit with an emphasis on advertising – a different kind of storytelling. Yet the J-School curriculum instilled in me all the principles and best practices of good journalism, no matter the implementation.

Upon graduation in 1980 I returned home and took up residence in Palo Alto, directly across the street from the flailing Peninsula Times Tribune. I worked for an ad agency downtown, just as my mother was investing in a new newspaper called The Palo Alto Weekly. She believed fervently that Palo Alto, and indeed the entire southern peninsula area, needed a stronger and more focused voice to inform its citizens.

As the Weekly grew, so did its staff. My wife (also a journalism major) even joined the ad sales team for several years, before creating and penning her own column, “Shoptalk.” The company became the Embarcadero Media Corporation, and it garnered numerous prizes from the CNPA for editorial excellence, which it has continued to do.

Cut to today: my two children, born in Palo Alto and schooled in Mountain View, both went to college at Oregon, where one was a Journalism major and the other minored in it. My mother served on the board of Embarcadero until her passing in 2012, at which time I took her seat. As everyone knows, the media landscape and the revenue models have all changed dramatically, imperiling news organizations of all types and sizes. The fact that Embarcadero Media is still going is a testament to the dedication of our staff and our management, who have found creative ways to continue producing compelling journalism with integrity, even in the face of this change.

My story above is littered with mentions of Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Portola Valley, Woodside, Mountain View. This is where my family is from, where we have roots. This is one of the most remarkable places in America in terms of opportunity and prosperity. Even though I now live in the Napa Valley, I remain dedicated to doing all that I can to help keep this enterprise flourishing. Too many things happen in your local communities that you need to know about. You need to hear these stories. And without local media you can trust, how will you hear about them?

My mother had the foresight to invest in the vision that the Palo Alto Weekly represented. I have recently donated to the (now) Embarcadero Media Foundation because I want to see it continue to serve my hometowns. I'm not usually one to quote song lyrics, but Joni Mitchell comes to mind today:

“Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you got 'til it's gone?”

If you share my vision and my fear, then I hope you will join me in contributing. There are so many stories yet to tell.

*Bio: Kort was born in Palo Alto and lived 52 years on the peninsula before eventually moving to the Napa Valley. A graduate of the University of Oregon Journalism School, Kort built a 35-year career in advertising and marketing for several Silicon Valley companies. He also managed his own agency for 14 years. He is now president of the Napa Chapter of the California Civil Grand Jury Association.*



## Support Local Journalism BECOME A MEMBER OR DONATE TODAY!

# Former clients of LifeMoves make impact as staff members

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

LifeMoves, a nonprofit organization that is working to serve communities experiencing homelessness, is also helping its former clients join its team of staff. Marissa Carino, lead case manager at LifeMoves, was once a former client of the nonprofit and is using her lived experiences to help others.

According to LifeMoves, 34% of its staff are individuals with personal experiences of homelessness and substance use.

“My inspiration comes from having something very special that you can’t pay for,” said Carino. “You have this certain

type of lived experience that not very many people have and have the ability to meet people where they’re at from this perspective.”

Hiring individuals with lived experience helps bring in expertise and insight to the organization, allowing LifeMoves to grow and improve with a greater understanding of what their clients need, according to Isabella Karabed, director of diversity, equity and inclusion and lived experience, at LiveMoves.

“There’s a level of empathy and compassion that comes from someone that knows what our clients have been through,” Karabed said. “They know

exactly what they have experienced and that compassion serves us really well when delivering services.”

Carino said that most clients who are living through traumatic experiences of substance use and mental health struggles often don’t want to talk to social workers or receive help. In these moments, sharing their own experiences and being the “hope shot” lets clients know that “this isn’t the end of your story,” said Carino.

LifeMoves has always brought former clients onto its team, but recently have reduced the barriers for clients to apply and be hired onto staff, said Karabed, who also has lived experiences of substance use.

The organization has started a hiring process called the Lived Experience Recruitment Project where former clients receive more guidance through the hiring journey with a separate application and info sessions.

“Homelessness or substance use is not a barrier coming into work. It’s a qualification. It’s a positive thing,” said Karabed.

LifeMoves continues to provide support to staff with lived experiences through its Employee Advisory Board and

Lived Experience Employee Resource Group.

The Employee Advisory Board is a leadership group of staff who have lived experiences and collaborate monthly with other teams within LifeMoves. The Lived Experience Employee Resource Group is a support and advocacy team that allows for staff with lived experiences to voice their opinions on how services can improve.

The San Mateo County Navigation Center in Redwood City is a 240-unit noncongregate temporary shelter that was designed with the help of former clients, said Karabed. Clients provided ideas for private bathrooms, living spaces, pet parks and more.

LifeMoves continues to improve its organizational efforts by implementing the voices of its clients, according to Karabed.

Before working at LifeMoves, Carino worked at four different nonprofits but she said “LifeMoves is by far the best nonprofit that I’ve ever worked for.” She is proud to be working at an organization where everyone cares about their work and wants to make an impact.

“I’ve had a lot more successes than I have had clients,”



Carino said.

This year, LifeMoves has served more than 7,400 people with interim supportive housing.

Over her four years at LifeMoves, Carino has developed strong relationships with her clients and still receives phone calls from former clients letting her know how they’re doing, she said.

“Even when somebody doesn’t want to continue services because they want to continue with substance use or they’re more comfortable in an encampment, that’s not my place to judge,” said Carino. “It’s my place to continue to be available for them when they want to receive services again.”

LifeMoves is one of the beneficiaries of The Almanac’s Holiday Fund. Donations are divided equally among this year’s 10 nonprofit organizations and 100% of the funds raised go directly to the recipients. Donations to the Holiday Fund can be made at [almanacnews.com/holiday\\_fund](http://almanacnews.com/holiday_fund).

For more information on LiveMoves, go to [lifemoves.org](http://lifemoves.org). ■

## LAWSUITS

continued from page 6

public.

The families also call for appointing a special master to monitor compliance with the court’s orders for three years.

The Deborah Project, a public interest law firm that defends the civil rights of Jews in educational settings, with pro bono assistance of California attorneys in the global law firm

Ropes and Gray, are representing the families. The case is Kastle, et al. v. Van Putten, et al.

Naomi Hunter, public information officer for Sequoia Union, said the district has not yet been served with the lawsuit. “We support a safe environment for all students, and we are very concerned any time we receive a complaint about a hostile environment, but we cannot respond further until we have more information,” she said. ■

## BELLE HAVEN

continued from page 8

“Willow Court’s completion demonstrates Menlo Spark’s commitment to solving the climate crisis while prioritizing social justice,” said Evans. “Instead of leaving people behind, we want our Belle Haven community to be amongst the first to reap the benefits of a cleaner, healthier, more comfortable home.”

Surveys taken in support of the creation of the environmental justice element show that the Belle Haven neighborhood faces a much higher burden of heat-related illnesses compared to the rest of the city. While 51% of Belle Haven residents reported dealing with extreme indoor heat in their homes, 34% of respondents in the rest of Menlo Park said that extreme indoor temperatures were an issue.

The electric retrofit of Willow Court also included the installation of heat pumps, which provide both heating and air conditioning. The HVAC system retrofit also includes an air filtration system that will help to improve the indoor air quality at the complex.

“This air conditioning will enable crucial resilience (and air filtration for particulate matter) during increasingly frequent heat

waves and poor air quality days due to wildfire smoke emergencies,” wrote Evans in the draft case study.

According to the draft case study, one challenge going forward for other affordable housing electrification projects is that there are “split incentives” between tenants and building owners.

“The split incentive, in which the building owner pays for energy efficiency and other upgrades while tenants pay the utility bills and reap the health and safety gains from gas removal, can decrease motivation for energy retrofits in tenant-occupied buildings,” wrote Evans in the draft case study.

Willow Court’s electrification was achieved through public subsidy and grant funds, which covered “almost all” upfront capital costs, according to Menlo Spark. Evans says that the Willow Court electrification is not a “one off thing” that cannot be replicated, as there are many other public funding opportunities coming up for other nonprofits and affordable housing owners to do something similar.

“There are two programs coming up that will also likely cover all or most if not all ... upfront capital costs of low income/affordable multifamily housing electrification retrofits,” said Evans in an

email to this news organization. “In other words, multifamily building owners aren’t likely to ... need a Menlo Spark equivalent to do what we did for them, but we wished to get the ball moving and do this to create a meaningful precedent.”

Those two programs are California’s upcoming Equitable Building Decarbonization program, which is designed to create no- or low-upfront electrification retrofit costs for buildings occupied by low- and moderate-income residents, and the Silicon Valley Clean Energy Multifamily Retrofit program, which helps owners of deed-restricted affordable housing replace gas equipment with clean electric equipment.

For individual homeowners on the Peninsula, there are many other subsidy and incentive programs that exist to help aid the transition to electric appliances.

The city of Menlo Park, in collaboration with Peninsula Clean Energy, is offering free air conditioners and electric appliances to income-qualified Menlo Park homeowners. Several other rebates and zero-interest loans for electric appliances are available through Peninsula Clean Energy. ■

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

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## SHERIFF CORPUS

continued from page 1

not resign, and as she is an elected official, the board of supervisors currently has no power to remove her from office.

However, the charter amendment proposed by the board of supervisors, if passed by San Mateo County voters, would grant them that power under certain circumstances. As written, the charter amendment would allow the board to remove a sheriff by a four-fifths vote after the sheriff has been provided with a reasonable opportunity to defend herself to the board.

Under this charter amendment, the board could only vote to remove a sheriff under certain circumstances, including violation of any law related to the performance of a sheriff's duties, "flagrant or repeated neglect" of a sheriff's duties, misappropriation of public funds or property, willful falsification of a relevant official statement of document or obstruction of any investigation into the conduct of a sheriff as defined by applicable federal, state and local laws.

District 3 Supervisor Ray Mueller said during Tuesday's board meeting that the grant of power to the board would be specific to "this immediate crisis," rather than a permanent change to the county charter. If passed by voters on March 4, 2025, the amendment to the county charter would sunset at the time of the next general election in 2028.

"Given the short schedule for debate of this charter amendment — and it's an incredibly abbreviated schedule — ... it seems most reasonable to fashion the amendment in a way best characterized as a temporary grant of power to protect the public safety, rather than a more permanent change to the charter that some would allege was using this instance as a power grab," said Mueller.

For Corpus to be removed from office, she herself would have to resign or be forced to vacate her position by a voter-initiated recall election, she would need to be indicted and removed by a civil grand jury, or the voters would have to opt to give the board the power to remove her. Corpus' current term will end in 2028.

Special elections for both a recall or the county's ballot measure would cost the county a couple of million dollars to stage. Jim Irizarry, San Mateo County's assistant chief elections officer, said in an email to this news organization that exact cost estimates for special elections like this are



Anna Hoch-Kenney

San Mateo County Sheriff Christina Corpus takes questions from the press during a last-minute conference at the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office in Redwood City on Nov. 12.

challenging to estimate as there is little historical precedent. However, it is important to note that the two types of elections are governed by different sections of the state Elections Code, and costs would likely vary between them.

Irizarry said that the closest example of a similar special election would be the Sept. 14, 2021, California gubernatorial Recall election, which cost the county \$3,722,113 with 440,817 registered voters. This comes out to \$8.44 per voter. As of Oct. 21, 2024, San Mateo County has 443,350 registered voters.

Los Angeles County's Board of Supervisors put a similar ballot measure on the county's Nov. 8, 2022, ballot to give them the power to remove their sheriff. The sheriff that LA County's ballot measure was designed to address lost in the same 2022 election, but the county's supervisors retain the power to remove any sitting sheriff for cause.

The California State Sheriffs' Association wrote a letter to the board opposing the proposed ballot measure, arguing that giving the board the ability to remove a sheriff would "unnecessarily inject further political considerations into the work done by the sheriff and county supervisors."

"Placing this power into the hands of the individual board members, coupled with the subjectivity of 'cause' (for removal), disenfranchises your constituents' votes and undermines confidence in the electoral process," the group wrote. "Further lending to the concern about this ordinance is the fact that it only applies to the sheriff, but no other elected county officials."

Tuesday's vote was the first reading of the ordinance needed to place the charter amendment

on the ballot in March. The board of supervisors will hold a second vote at its regular meeting on Dec. 3. Once the ordinance is approved, it will be up to the San Mateo County Elections Office to organize the special election.

Corzo and Mueller authored the ballot measure to respond to the findings in the 408-page report prepared by Cordell, which sustained 12 of the 15 allegations that were made against the sheriff and Aenlle. Last week, the board of supervisors unanimously voted to call on the sheriff to resign. They also voted to remove Aenlle's position as chief of staff, but Corpus defiantly appeared at the meeting to announce a surprise promotion of Aenlle, her alleged boyfriend, to assistant sheriff.

"We have a sheriff that does not hesitate to lie to the media, lie to our community, to divide the latino community ... so this charter amendment is something that I think the voters should have a right to vote on," said Corzo. "Our sheriff was elected by the people, and the people will make the ultimate decision here."

As of January 2023, 106 sworn staff members have left the sheriff's office for various reasons, according to a statement by Corzo at the Nov. 13 special meeting to call on Corpus to resign. Most recently, Acting Assistant Sheriff Matthew Fox left his post just days after the report was released. Corpus also arrested sheriff's union president Carlos Tapia the morning that the report was released for felony timecard fraud. The union says the timing of the arrest suggests "whistleblower retaliation," as Tapia was one of the people leading the charge against Corpus and Aenlle.

After the meeting, Corpus said that she "will not be distracted" and that she intends to continue to change the culture of the Sheriff's Office.

"My priority is public safety and that will not change," she said in her press release. "I am undeterred. Our work will continue. The 'Good Ol' Boy' system has met its match in me. I will not back down."

At the Nov. 19 meeting, Mueller said that even since the report was released, the board of supervisors has continued to corroborate the findings made by Cordell.

"Unfortunately, the case against the sheriff continues to get stronger," he said. "I don't know if I am supposed to share this, but ... the homophobic slurs text that she went to great lengths to deny ... we have the phone now and we verified she sent that text."

Previously, Corpus had expressly denied sending that text at a press conference on the day that the report was released, calling the screenshot "fabricated." She has called the entire report a "hatchet job," "biased," and a "witch hunt," and alleges that the investigation into her office was a "politically motivated coup."

Corzo said that based on the allegations made and sustained in the report, it is important that the county remove Corpus from office quickly to prevent the county from being on the hook for more retaliation lawsuits.

"It is this county and this board of supervisors who will have to clean her mess," said Corzo. "Whoever steps in after she is removed, they will have to clean her mess, and it will take millions of dollars. ... Because when you actually have people being harmed, and it will eventually be proven in a court of law, the county is on the hook to pay out for all of those lawsuits."

### Support for the sheriff

At the meeting, several commenters expressed their support for Corpus and urged the board of supervisors to vote against holding the special election to give themselves the power to oust her. Several commenters also alleged that the report was biased against Corpus.

Joaquin Jimenez, mayor of Half Moon Bay, said that Corpus has improved community relations with police on the coast and alleged that the investigation into her was motivated by white supremacy.

"I want to congratulate you for using the smoke and mirrors; I want to congratulate you for using Supervisor Corzo, a woman of color, to remove the highest elected official in the Sheriff's Department," said Jimenez. "Yes, I am saying this. I am claiming (it is) white supremacy."

Around 10 commenters from the North Fair Oaks community described how much their community had improved since Corpus took office and expressed their desire for her to remain in office.

Corzo and Mueller urged those who support her to read the full report and to "look at the facts."

"You may have a good history with her in the past, I did too," said Corzo. "I supported her. I believed her. I believed in her. She also, at one point, restored my faith in law enforcement, but when you are given new information and new facts you have to analyze that."

Commenters also mentioned that the board of supervisors did not vote to remove former

sheriffs Carlos Bolanos and Greg Munks when they were detained in a raid of a brothel in Las Vegas or when Bolanos sent San Mateo County sheriff's deputies to raid a business that makes batmobiles in Indiana.

However, both Corzo and Mueller said that past board decisions were not up to them and have no bearing on any alleged wrongdoings in the present day.

"I have been in office on this board, and so has Supervisor Mueller, for almost two years — exactly the same amount of time as Sheriff Corpus," said Corzo. "Ray Mueller and I were not there for (Bolanos or Munks), we don't know all of the facts that led to the board at those times making those decisions. I was one of Sheriff Bolanos' biggest critics, and I would have stood against him as I have to stand against Sheriff Corpus."

### Could she be recalled?

Some commenters at the meeting said that a citizen-initiated recall election would be a more appropriate way to remove the elected sheriff and that the board should let the county residents have a voice instead of interfering in the process of removing an elected official.

"The recall is your mechanism to take out an elected official — by the voters, not by you guys," Kris Perez, a San Bruno resident, told the board.

Other voters expressed concern that even with the sunset clause, the board seeking the power to remove this sheriff would set a worrying precedent for future sheriffs and could impact how they go about their jobs for fear of removal by the board.

In response, Corzo said that the board of supervisors is doing this to give the voters a voice. Corzo said that a recall would take too long, and that the county's ballot measure is a more expedient way to remove her from office that "meets the urgency of the facts that we are presented with right now." A voter-initiated recall likely wouldn't make it on the ballot until at least November 2025.

"A recall effort by the community, by our voters, would take nearly 45,000 signatures just to place on the ballot," said Corzo. "If that is what has to happen, then I would support that, but right now, I see it clearly as it being our duty as a board of supervisors to offer solutions to our community."

"And honestly, March is not soon enough for what's happening right now," she added. ■

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

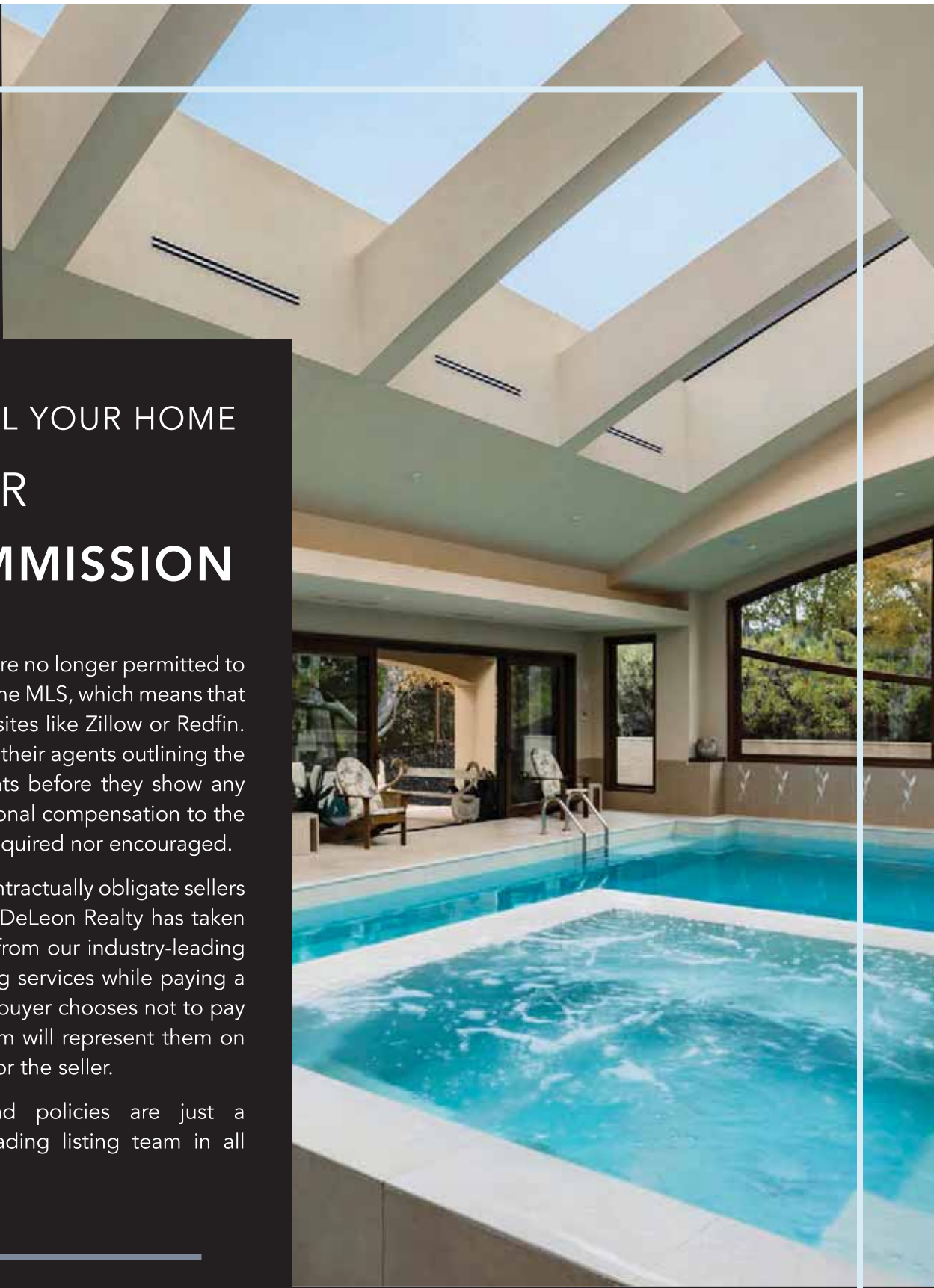


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## For the good of San Mateo County, Sheriff Corpus should step down

By Michelle Iracheta and Angela Swartz

### EDITORIAL

The opinion of The Almanac

San Mateo County believed in Christina Corpus. The county's first Latina sheriff promised to be "a sheriff you can trust," inspiring hope for a new era in county law enforcement. But a recent 400-plus-page independent investigation has painted a troubling picture of her leadership.

The report's findings — detailing alleged abuses of power, homophobic and racist statements, retaliation against those who disagree with her, and an inappropriate relationship with her then-chief of staff — are not the actions of a leader who fosters public trust. To salvage the community's faith in its institutions, we encourage Sheriff Corpus to step aside.

One might try to give her the benefit of the doubt, but it's hard knowing that she refused to speak to the investigator, respected former Judge LaDoris Cordell, over the months-long inquiry. Many of the same political allies who once backed Corpus now call for her resignation, apparently acknowledging that the office needs an opportunity to heal, restore trust and put transparency first.

San Mateo County residents had high hopes that Sheriff Corpus would bring integrity and accountability to an office scarred by past scandals. Her two predecessors left a troubling legacy — Sheriff Greg Munks was entangled in a brothel scandal that tarnished

the department's reputation, and his successor, Carlos Bolanos, became infamous for the "Batmobile saga," in which deputy sheriffs, allegedly at his direction, crossed state lines to raid an Indiana business over a disputed car sale. Has Corpus proven herself any better?

If she remains in office, there could be a significant impact on public safety. For example, more deputies may quit or become demoralized and make mistakes in their work.

Her actions open the county up to millions of dollars worth of lawsuits based on alleged retaliation against employees. Her mismanagement is sucking time and energy from the Board of Supervisors that should be spent on other important efforts.

Supervisors crafted a charter amendment that would allow them to remove her from office. Sheriff Corpus, please save us all time and money by doing the right thing. Step aside and make way for professional management of our Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Corpus — it's time to step down—for the good of your office and the future of our county. ■

Email Editor Michelle Iracheta at [miracheta@almanacnews.com](mailto:miracheta@almanacnews.com).

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

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Questions? Email [editor@AlmanacNews.com](mailto:editor@AlmanacNews.com), or call 650-223-6529.

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FILE NO.: M-298925

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) WELCH ROAD APARTMENTS, located at 3603 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Registered owner(s):  
ROBINSON FINANCIAL CORPORATION  
3603 Alameda de las Pulgas  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 28, 2024.  
(ALM Nov 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2024)

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF:  
DARRELL BROOKS

Case No.: 24-PRO-01336  
To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of DARRELL BROOKS.

A Petition for Probate has been filed by: Suzanne Nourmand in the Superior Court of California, County of SAN MATEO.

The Petition for Probate requests that: Suzanne Nourmand be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.

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 December 04 2024 at 9:00 AM in Dept. 1 of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at Southern Branch 400 County Center Redwood City, CA 94063. If you object to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

If you are a creditor or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58 (b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law. You may examine the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.

Attorney for Petitioner:  
Marty J. Nicholson, Esquire  
P. O. Box 891593  
Temecula, CA 92589  
951-219-5230  
(ALM Nov 8, 15 and 22, 2024)

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

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

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

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

Below: Actors Adam C. Torrian, left, and Krista Joy Serpa play activists and friends Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony, respectively, in "The Agitators." Photos courtesy The Pear Theatre.



## NEW PLAY AT THE PEAR AIMS TO BRING TOGETHER HISTORY WITH HUMANITY

IN 'THE AGITATORS,' THE WORK AND FRIENDSHIP OF POLITICAL ACTIVISTS SUSAN B. ANTHONY AND FREDERICK DOUGLASS TAKE CENTER STAGE

By Ashwini Gangal

In 19th-century America, a couple of passionate political revolutionists, Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass, shaped the country's Constitution. But though these two young abolitionists were on the right side of history, they managed to get in one another's way when they prioritized different aspects of their fight.

While Anthony chose to fight for universal suffrage — that is, voting rights for everyone, all at once — Douglass chose to make the enfranchisement of Black men the focus of his work. To complicate matters further, the two were also great friends.

The story of their frayed friendship will be brought to life on stage in "The Agitators," a historical drama that traverses around 45 years of their lives, from 1849 to 1895.

Produced by The Pear Theatre, the play will run from Nov. 22 through Dec. 15, in Mountain View.

For Kerry Gudjohnsen, director of this two-character play, one of the most compelling aspects of the piece is the way it balances the "historical" with the "human."

"A lot of the interactions between these two friends probably were not documented," she said, reasoning that (playwright) Mat Smart took some creative liberty to flesh out their relationship. "I think he did a lovely job filling in the holes with the humanity."

Though it's about two public figures who shaped the course of America's

history, it is nevertheless very relatable, she finds. "Anybody who has had a dear friend can identify with so many aspects of this play," said Gudjohnsen, who likens the process of directing this play to the gilding of the proverbial lily.

While the team has worked to re-create the 19th century through theatrical elements like costuming, sound and set design, Gudjohnsen cautions against letting aesthetic embellishments take away from the "intimacy" of the piece and prefers to keep the spotlight on the relationship between the protagonists and the impossible choices facing them.

Much like their characters, actors Adam C. Torrian and Krista Joy Serpa, who play Douglass and Anthony, respectively, are good friends off-stage.

"It's a reminder of how many stories and nuances are erased from history when it comes to minority groups, when it comes to people of color, when it comes to women," said Serpa. "What I think this play does well and what I hope we embody in it is showing the whole person and making sure the blame lies where it belongs, which is the society that put these people in situations where they had to make decisions they never should have had to make."

In her book, when activists are compelled to choose between two equally noble causes — in this case, universal suffrage versus suffrage for Black men — the fault lies entirely with "unjust and cruel systems."

Playing real — as opposed to fictional

— characters, is very challenging, the actors said.

"I was always intimidated by the idea of playing somebody that was real," admitted Torrian. That there are no recordings of Douglass did take some of the pressure off because he can't be critiqued for his portrayal of the man. To prepare, he looked up other people's accounts of Douglass' voice and demeanor to piece together a faithful portrayal. "You can only go off of like his speeches and a couple things people have said that got picked up by history; you do get a lot of creative freedom there."

Years ago, Torrian was offered to play Douglass in a short film. "I turned it down, purely because I was intimidated," he said. "Funny enough, when this show came up, I was like 'Well, I think I'm ready now.'"

Also challenging for him is playing an older person — his character ages on stage from his 30s to his 70s. Making sure he doesn't stereotype or parody older people is something he's being mindful of.

Serpa's research involved reading Susan B. Anthony's personal letters, material she is grateful to have had access to. She finds that knowing "secrets" about her character, even of the kind that don't come up in the plot at all, help her create an accurate portrait on stage.

"One of my favorite things about this play is how much of the script, even in the fictionalized, dramatized scenes

between them, the text is taken from their quotes or their personal writings," Serpa said. "When you're playing a real person, the more that you know about their real life, the more you can use that as the building blocks to create that character."

Another difficult aspect of non-fiction storytelling is making peace with the actions of the characters, especially the ones that don't age well. As Serpa puts it, the challenge lies in resisting the urge to over-correct history.

"It's not our job to make them look more like how we wish they had looked or how we would do it now," she said. "It's our job to tell the story."

It's noteworthy that the story of these activists who fought for the voting rights of women and the Black community is being told so close on the heels of an election in which both gender and race were front and center. The serendipity is not lost on the team.

"One of the most compelling questions this play brings up is that we see in hyper-relevant fashion right now the idea of gradualism, of incrementalism," said Serpa. "Justice should never be incremental but that's the tale of human history." ■

"The Agitators" runs Nov. 22 through Dec. 15, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m. and select Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., at The Pear Theatre, 1110 La Avenida St., Suite A, Mountain View. Tickets are \$20 - \$42. For more information, visit [thepear.org](http://thepear.org)



Courtesy Rick Rockz

Musician Rick Rockz wrote a song about a car found buried in an Atherton yard in 2022, a story that was broken by The Almanac.

## Almanac news story inspires musician to write ‘underground’ song

Illinois-based singer/songwriter Rick Rockz wrote a song based on a 2022 story about a car found buried in an Atherton yard

By Heather Zimmerman

Political headlines tend to offer fertile ground for musical parodies, from “SNL” to Randy Rainbow, but few other news stories get commemorated in any kind of song, humorous or otherwise.

But then most other stories don’t have the mystery and overall strangeness that inspired the song “Car in My Yard.” After all, it’s not every day that homeowners unearth a Mercedes Benz convertible buried, complete with bags of cement inside, in their yard.

When The Almanac’s Angela Swartz broke the story of a car found buried in the yard of an Atherton residence in October 2022, the bizarre discovery made the national news. That’s where it caught the imagination of a musician who goes by the stage name Rick Rockz, who lives in the suburbs of Chicago.

“It was on the news that day when it broke. This was on Oct. 20, 2022, and I saw it on the news, and I was just totally enraptured by the story about this car buried in the yard. It had this mysterious true crime element to the case — it kind of fascinated me and consumed my thoughts in the coming days,” Rockz said in an interview with this publication.

The unusual story led Rockz to write lyrics for an existing melody he’d been working on, he said. The foundation of “Car in My Yard” is an ambling, minor-key guitar riff that conveys mystery but could also play as slightly sinister — fitting for a news story that took several twists, including an investigation into the suspected criminal activities of Johnny Bocktune Lew, the deceased former homeowner who is thought to have

buried the vehicle.

“I’d already come up with the music for this song, but I didn’t have any lyrics. So then the story came up, and it just totally consumed me. And then the next day, I was playing this little guitar riff I had come up with and I thought, ‘you need to write a song about this,’” Rockz said.

“Car in My Yard” is the title track of a four-song EP, which Rockz released this summer. He is a professional recording engineer, and the album, which he worked on in his spare time, took a while for him to complete, he said.

Rockz also made a short documentary about the news story and his song, which he’s posted on his YouTube channel, where listeners can also find a music video for “Car in My Yard.” He created the documentary to highlight the unusual circumstances behind the song.

“It was just a very different song from what I normally write. (I thought) it would really fascinate people with this true crime element to hear the story of what the song is about,” he said of the short documentary.

Rockz, who has released two full-length albums and several other EPs and singles, draws on a variety of inspirations for his songwriting, including personal experience and current events — one song from 2020 is called “Stay Home (Coronavirus Song)” and he also has a holiday single called “Santa Claus Is on His Way.” His music is available on his website.

“A lot of times there’ll be maybe a love song, or something that just kind of got me mad, or some sort of political thing. Something in politics might get me upset, and I’ll write something, or (I’ll write about) things

in my personal life,” he said.

Rockz did write another song taken from the news, an unhoused man he saw interviewed who was lamenting how drug use had cost him his family and job, but he said that the Atherton car in the yard story was an unusual source for him. He also credited Swartz’s reporting in spurring him to write the song. Swartz, who is now the editor of The Almanac, was a reporter for the publication at the time she wrote the story.

“As far as I was concerned, hers was the most definitive and detailed investigative coverage about this case. Every day I was getting up and I was reading her stories about this, because it was fascinating. I think all the other news stories, they got the general flavor of the story, but nobody got into as much detail as Angela did,” he said.

A local news story is actually not the only way that the Peninsula has influenced Rockz’ work. He counts Fleetwood Mac among his favorite bands and musical inspirations. As he noted, the area was an early home to band members Stevie Nicks and Lindsey Buckingham, who attended Menlo-Atherton High School.

Rockz doesn’t know whether the owners of the Atherton home that had the car in the yard have heard his song. He hasn’t played it for a live audience, but Rockz has played it for a few people and “they’ve been very fascinated by the story,” he said. ■

The “Car in My Yard” EP is available for download or streaming on Amazon Music, Apple Music, YouTube and Pandora. For more information, visit [rickrockz.com](http://rickrockz.com).

# Worth a Look



Bernstein courtesy Royal Artists; Horvitz courtesy Wayne Horvitz; Singleton courtesy James Singleton

Musicians Steve Bernstein, left, Wayne Horvitz, top right, and James Singleton, lower right, team up for a three-day residency at the Palo Alto Art Center, presented by Earthwise Productions.

## Bernstein, Horvitz and Singleton’s Tricoastal Consortium

Three jazz luminaries come together for a trio of performances in Palo Alto, presented by Earthwise Productions. Composer and slide trumpet player Steven Bernstein, composer and pianist Wayne Horvitz and composer and upright bass player James Singleton together form the new group Tricoastal Consortium. Bernstein wrote on Instagram that he was excited for the project, collaborating with two “musicians who share love for the same things I do ... groove, melody and mystery.”

Nov. 21-23, 8 p.m., Mitchell Park Community Center, 3700 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto; \$23.18; [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com).

## Soji Odukogbe

Funky Nigerian musician Soji Odukogbe and his West African highlife band return to Feldman’s for a lively, joyful concert that the books store and event space calls “the equivalent of our Thanksgiving celebration.” Odukogbe is the former guitarist for the legendary Afrobeat star Fela Kuti and is now based in the Bay Area, where he’s been associated with East Palo Alto’s Redtone Records.

Nov. 23, 6-8 p.m., Feldman’s Books, 1075 Curtis St., Menlo Park; \$33.85; [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com).

## Cuban Jazz Quartet

Cuban Jazz Quartet, including Einar “Tito” Leliebre Nuñez on percussion, Ernesto Mazar Kindelán on bass, guitarist Kai Lyons and Larry Vuckovich on piano, will perform for two nights (two shows each evening) at Meyhouse Palo Alto, which continues to serve as a local jazz hotspot. The first night will feature Charlie McCarthy on sax and flute, while the second includes John Calloway on flute, according to Meyhouse’s event listings.

Nov. 22 and 23, performances at 6:30 and 8:30 p.m., Meyhouse Palo Alto 640 Emerson St., Palo Alto; \$55; [meyhouserestaurant.com/calendar](http://meyhouserestaurant.com/calendar).

## Habitat Restoration at Cooley Landing

Local environmental nonprofits Grassroots Ecology and Peninsula Open Space Trust host a volunteer opportunity to install native plants and support biodiversity in tidal salt marsh habitat at the Bay, home to many wildlife species including the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse and Ridgway’s rail. The planting and watering will be followed by a short guided walk. Gloves, tools and snacks will be provided. Bring a reusable water bottle, and dress suitably for outdoor work.

Nov. 23, from 9 a.m. to noon, Cooley Landing, 2100 Bay Road, East Palo Alto; volunteers must register and approve a waiver; [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com). ■

# Food & Drink

## Turkey time!

From dine-in feasts to take-home turkey dinners and treats, here are some Thanksgiving options on the Peninsula

By Karla Kane

**W**e're always thankful for good food, in all its many varieties. In case you're still trying to decide on your holiday dining plans, here are some of the local eateries offering Thanksgiving specials, including baked goods and feasts to bring home, spots open for dining in and even a class to help you make your own festive goodies.

### Take-home treats

**The Midwife and the Baker, Mountain View:** This year's Thanksgiving treat options available for pickup include a special holiday Danish (pumpkin puree topped with whipped cream and candied pepitas), ginger molasses cookies, pumpkin muffins with pepitas, brioche and everything pull-apart rolls, croissants, sticky buns and scones.

**The Midwife and the Baker, 846 Independence Ave., Mountain View; 650-336-7697, Instagram: @themidwifeandthebaker. Prices vary; order by Nov. 25. Pick up Nov. 27-28.**

**Manresa Bread, Campbell, Los Gatos, Los Altos and Palo Alto:** Need more desserts? Preorder baked goods such as chocolate babka, pumpkin tart, caramel apple gateau, bourbon pecan pie, XL Breton-style kouign amann, chocolate cherry bread and brioche buns. *Manresa Bread, locations*

*in Campbell, Los Gatos, Los Altos and Palo Alto; Instagram: @manresabread. Prices vary; check website for pricing and ordering. Pick up Nov. 26-27.*

**Little Sky Bakery, Menlo Park:** Order 9-inch pecan tarts and apple tarts for your Thanksgiving dessert table from Little Sky Bakery, available alongside its regular plethora of baked goods.

*Little Sky Bakery, 506 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park; 609-906-1241, Instagram: @littleskybakery. Tarts are \$46 for pecan, \$42 for apple, and are available for pickup Nov. 26-28.*

### Take-home meals

**Twelvemonth, Burlingame:** Burlingame's vegan restaurant and bakery is offering a take-home Thanksgiving dinner kit with autumn chop salad, twice-baked potatoes, creamed kale and vegan ham. à la carte items include pumpkin whoopie pies, apple crumb cake, Twelvemonth rolls and focaccia. Take-and-bake offerings include turnovers, sourdough chocolate chip cookies and cinnamon rolls. Also available is the Concord punch, a take-home cocktail for three.

*Twelvemonth, 330 Lorton Ave., Burlingame; 650-443-7111, Instagram: @twelvemonthburlingame. Dinner kit is \$120 and serves four, side prices vary; check website for complete pricing and ordering. Pick up Nov. 27.*

**Fattoria e Mare, Half Moon Bay:** The Coastside eatery is offering a take-home family feast including turkey, potatoes, stuffing, Brussels sprouts, roasted squash, yam salad and focaccia.

*Fattoria e Mare, 315 Main St., Half Moon Bay; 650-342-4922, Instagram: @fattoriaemare. Four people, \$150; whole turkey for eight people, \$280; family-style buffet for 12, \$420. Orders accepted through 5 p.m. on Nov. 27.*

**Pausa Bar & Cookery, San Mateo:** Pausa's take-home meal includes free-range turkey with wild mushroom gravy and cranberry sauce, endive salad, roasted Brussels sprouts, truffled mashed potatoes, focaccia and pistachio Nutella travel cake.

*Pausa Bar & Cookery, 223 E. 4th Ave., San Mateo; 650-375-0818, Instagram: @pausasanmateo. Dinner is \$280 and serves four. Pick up Nov. 27 from 12:30-3 p.m.*

**Il Mercato di Che Fico, Menlo Park:** Choose complete dinners or à la carte items from Il Mercato di Che Fico's take-home Thanksgiving menu. The turkey dinner includes turkey breast, turkey lasagna, Brussels sprout casserole, sweet potato mash, braised carrots, stuffing and turkey gravy, with a choice of Ruby Blanca Barbera wine or a nonalcoholic beverage. The vegetarian meal option replaces the turkey dishes with butternut squash lasagna and mushroom gravy.



Courtesy The Sea by Alexander's Steakhouse

The Sea by Alexander's Steakhouse is offering a take-home prime rib Thanksgiving feast.

**Il Mercato di Che Fico, 1300 El Camino Real, Suite A, Menlo Park; 650-999-0491, Instagram: @mercatoridichefico. Dinner packages (serves four) are \$325 (vegetarian) or \$350 (turkey), with à la carte prices depending on selection. Orders must be placed by the night of Nov. 24 for Nov. 27 pickup or local delivery.**

**Redwood Grill, Redwood City:** A full take-home dinner package includes turkey, rustic vegetable stuffing, whipped potatoes, glazed carrots, gravy, cranberry sauce, rolls and pumpkin pie with chocolate ganache.

*Redwood Grill, 356 Woodside Plaza, Redwood City; 650-363-9343, Instagram: @redwoodgrill\_redwoodcity. Packages are \$300 and serve four to six. Items are also available à la carte. Pick up Nov. 27 from noon to 4 p.m.*

**The Sea by Alexander's Steakhouse, Palo Alto:** The Sea by Alexander's Steakhouse in Palo Alto (and Alexander's Steakhouse in Cupertino) is offering a Thanksgiving prime rib feast for pickup and delivery, including seasoned and par-cooked 7-pound prime rib to serve six to eight, 1 quart of au jus, horseradish, Caesar salad, mashed potatoes, mac and cheese, and creamed spinach or sautéed mushrooms.

*The Sea by Alexander's Steakhouse, 4269 West El Camino Real, Palo Alto; 650-213-1111, Instagram: @theseabyash. \$495. Orders must be placed by Nov. 22.*

**Giorgio's Italian Grill & Pizzeria, Mountain View:** Giorgio's holiday stuffing, featuring New York-style sausage, is available as a to-go order (sold by the tray).



Courtesy Che Fico

Il Mercato di Che Fico is offering a take-home turkey feast.



Courtesy Manresa Bread

Pumpkin tarts are among Manresa Bread's Thanksgiving offerings.

Giorgio's, 939 West El Camino Real, Mountain View; 650-963-4142; Instagram: @giorgiosmountainview. \$36 per tray. Orders must be placed by Nov. 24.

**Dine-in feasts**

**MacArthur Park, Palo Alto:** The longtime restaurant's "Buffet at the Park" Thanksgiving meal includes a carving station with prime rib, turkey and salmon; salads and appetizers; entrees including barbecued chicken, ribs and sausage, butternut squash ravioli, lentil pasta and grilled chicken breast; side dishes including mashed potatoes, mac and cheese, stuffing and fresh vegetables; a fruit and cheese board; and multiple dessert options by Faz Bakery.

MacArthur Park, 27 University Ave., Palo Alto; 650-321-9990, Instagram: @macarthurpark\_ca. Nov. 28 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. \$65 per adult, \$45 for kids 12 and under; kids under 3 free.

**Quattro, East Palo Alto:** Quattro at Four Seasons Hotel Silicon Valley will be open on Thanksgiving, serving slow-roasted turkey, chestnut stuffing and pumpkin pie, along with a Pom Citrus Sparkler cocktail and a Champagne station.

Quattro, 2050 University Ave.,

East Palo Alto; 650-566-1200, Instagram: @fourseasons. Nov. 28 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. \$185 per adult (\$250 with cocktail and wine pairing), \$60 per child.

**Harry's Hofbrau, Redwood City:** On Thanksgiving Day, Harry's Hofbrau is offering a set meal with hand-carved turkey or ham, mashed potatoes, stuffing, vegetables, gravy, a roll, cranberry sauce and a carvery salad, with a slice of pie for dessert (offered in house and to go).

Harry's Hofbrau, 1909 El Camino Real, Redwood City; 650-366-3733. Thanksgiving meal is \$30.95 per person. Thanksgiving hours are noon to 8 p.m.

**Scratch, Mountain View:** Scratch's Thanksgiving prix fixe menu includes a choice of a first course, entree and dessert. Options for starters include chicory pear salad, roasted chestnut soup, chicken liver mousse and deviled eggs; entrees include roasted turkey, filet mignon, salmon mojo, five-spice duck breast, roasted cauliflower or squash and barley stew; for dessert, a choice of pumpkin pie, warm apple quince crisp or caramel pecan cheesecake. Optional add-ons include oysters, Brussels sprouts, green bean casserole and pureed sweet potatoes.

Scratch, 401 Castro St., Mountain View; 650-237-3132, Instagram: @scratchmntview. Prices vary depending on choices.

**Iberia Restaurant, Belmont:** Iberia's family-style Thanksgiving dine-in menu includes a selection of tapas, brandied mushroom and ham broth bisque, mixed lettuces with cornbread croutons and burnt orange vinaigrette, turkey cooked two ways (oven roasted and Cava braised), chorizo, sage and onion stuffing, gravy, cranberry relish, sweet potato and celery root gratin, mushroom and wild rice pilaf, green beans and choice of bread pudding with chocolate, pumpkin strudel or baked custard.

Iberia, 740 El Camino Real, Belmont; 650-325-8981. \$82 per person, \$28 for children under 12, kids under 5 free. Iberia also offers a take-home Thanksgiving meal.

**Lelé Kitchen, Los Gatos:** Lelé Kitchen's chef Ulad Skoblia offers a curated holiday menu that mixes Thanksgiving classics with Eastern European flair, paired with wines selected by sommelier Fedar Kamkou.

Lelé Kitchen, 14178 Blossom Hill Road, Los Gatos; Instagram: @lele.kitchen.ca. Nov. 28 from noon to 6 p.m. \$49-\$158 per person.



Courtesy Twelvemonth

Twelvemonth is offering a full take-home vegan Thanksgiving feast, including autumn chop salad.

**Holiday cooking class**

**La Toque De Cindy, Palo Alto:** Students (all ages welcome) will make and take home their own whole pumpkin pie, mashed potatoes and cranberry sauce.

La Toque De Cindy, 904 Cowper St., Palo Alto; latuquedecindy@gmail.com. Class is Nov. 27 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; \$79 per person. ■

Email Assistant Lifestyle Editor Karla Kane at [kkane@almanacnews.com](mailto:kkane@almanacnews.com).

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