

# The Almanac

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

JANUARY 17, 2025 | VOL. 60 NO. 19



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Magali Gauthier

## New form of sudden oak death in San Mateo County

Debbie Mendelson examines a bay laurel for possible symptoms of sudden oak death along Todo El Mundo in Woodside on Dec. 13, 2024. New research shows an aggressive new lineage of the pathogen that causes sudden oak death on the Peninsula. Magali Gauthier spoke with experts on how scientists are tackling the problem and how it spreads. Read the story on Page 14.

## County to launch 'extraordinary audit' into Las Lomitas district's credit card spending

By Arden Margulis

The San Mateo County Office of Education has determined an external audit of the Las Lomitas Elementary School District is warranted. Assembly Bill 169 "extraordinary audits" occur when the county superintendent believes "fraud, misappropriation of funds, or other illegal fiscal practices have occurred that merit examination," according to Education Code.

The Office of Education conducted a preliminary audit of credit card usage from 2022 to 2024 by 16 employees assigned U.S. Bank cards, reviewing statements and related documentation, but did not evaluate whether the charges were appropriate.

The Office of Education will

hire a "Subject Matter Expert" to conduct the audit, according to a Friday, Jan. 10, letter sent to Las Lomitas officials.

County Deputy Superintendent of Business Services Kevin Bultema, who wrote the letter, was not immediately available for comment. The county has declined multiple interviews.

Board President Paige Winikoff told this news organization that Las Lomitas will "cooperate fully" with the extraordinary audit and the District Attorney's investigation.

The extraordinary audit comes after the District Attorney's Office launched its own investigation into Las Lomitas' credit card usage. District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe confirmed to

See **LAS LOMITAS**, page 11

## Hundreds pack Council Chambers for housing vote

Menlo Park council gives go-ahead to seek developer input on downtown parking lots

By Eleanor Raab

It was standing room only in the Menlo Park City Council Chambers on the evening of Tuesday, Jan. 14, as about 250 people turned out to listen to and comment on the council's discussion of the city's plans to place affordable housing on downtown parking lots, with another 200 or so attending on Zoom.

Following four hours of public comment from 104 commenters, and two hours of council discussion, the council opted for a compromise: its members voted unanimously to proceed with releasing a request for

developer qualifications, but to hold off on declaring the three city-owned parking lots just off Santa Cruz Avenue as exempt surplus land. Council members said that by not declaring the parking lots as surplus land, the residents and business owners who have concerns about the project could feel heard by the council. However, moving forward with the RFQ would still advance the project on the city's promised timeline.

"I think I can speak for all of us when I say we deeply care about our downtown businesses," said Vice Mayor Betsy Nash. Nash said that she sees delaying declaring the lots as

surplus land as a way to "ease anxiety" for business owners and "demonstrate to them that (the council is) taking this very seriously."

The atmosphere in the room was tense, as attendees heckled and groaned at public commenters that they disagreed with. At one point, Mayor Drew Combs had to give a commenter extra time after he had been interrupted several times during his remarks. The topic that drew so much attention from residents was the city's plan to convert three city-owned lots located between Santa Cruz and

See **PARKING LOTS**, page 10



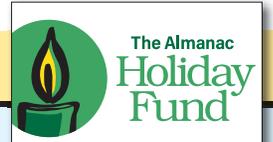
Anna Hoch-Kenney

The Menlo Park City Council Chambers were packed for a meeting where council members listened to comments on the plans to build high density housing on three public parking lots in downtown Menlo Park on Jan. 14.

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## A creative approach to extracting precious resources from wastewater

Stanford chemical engineering professor William Tarpeh and his lab are developing innovative methods to recover valuable resources from wastewater. Their research focuses on converting nitrate pollutants into ammonia, which can be used in fertilizers, helping to address environmental and agricultural challenges. Tarpeh's work involves creating electrocatalytic processes that turn wastewater contaminants into high-purity products. By restoring balance to the nitrogen cycle, his team aims to decentralize ammonia production, reduce emissions, and provide more accessible fertilizers, especially in underserved areas. Tarpeh's broader vision is a world where wastewater is no longer seen as waste, but as a resource for various industries. **SCAN TO READ THE SPOTLIGHT** 



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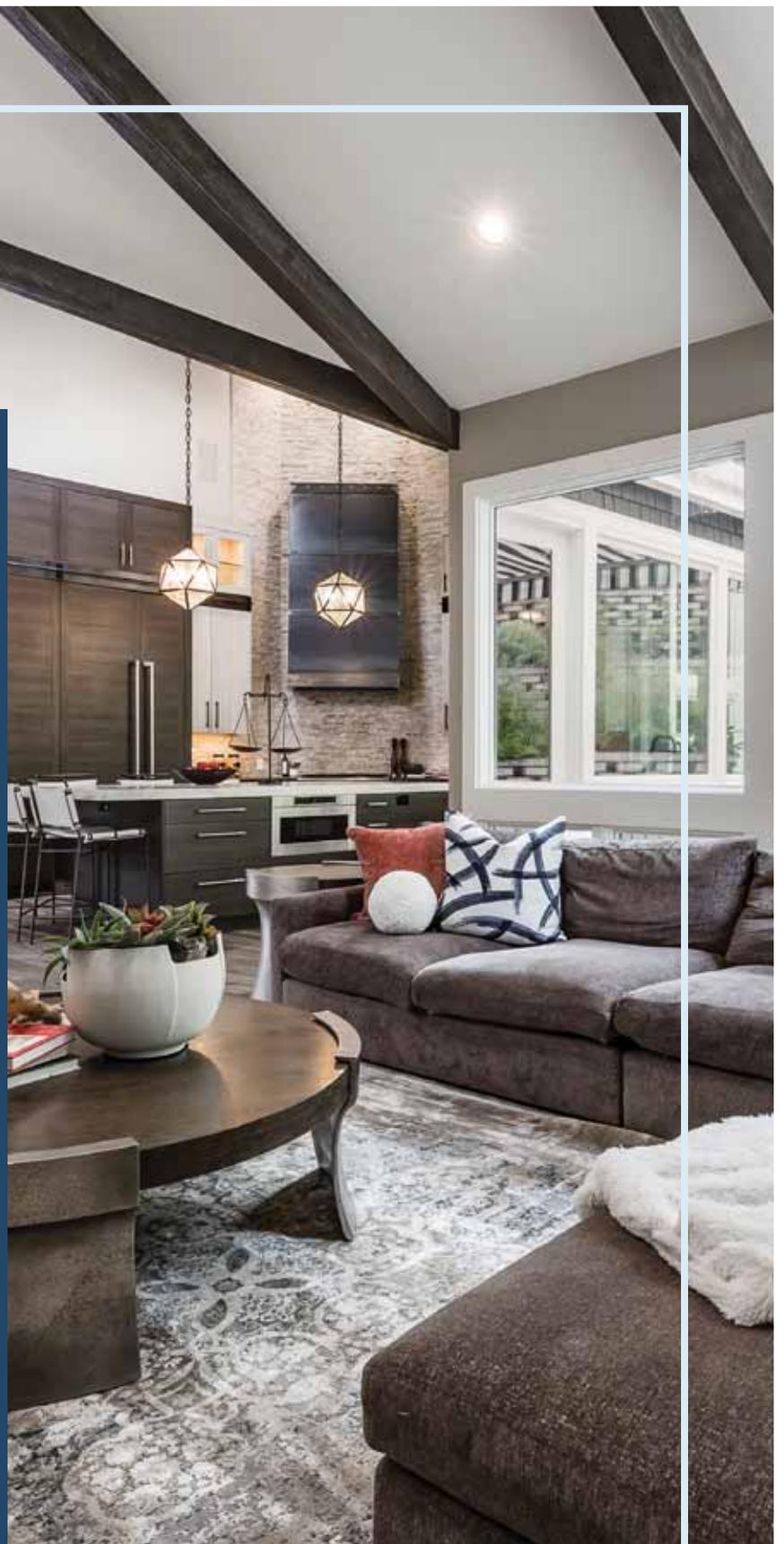
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Anna Hoch-Kenney

## Spiffy Pottery Studio opens its doors in Menlo Park this February

Owner Jeffrey Liang stands for a photo in front of Spiffy Pottery Studio in Menlo Park on Jan. 7. The studio will be offering classes and memberships starting in February. Read more on Page 8.

## County Sheriff Christina Corpus files complaint to halt special election that could oust her

By Hannah Bensen

County Sheriff Christina Corpus has filed a complaint against the San Mateo Board of Supervisors and other county officials seeking to halt the March 4 special ballot election that, if passed by voters, would grant the board power to remove Corpus from her position.

The complaint was filed in San Mateo County Superior Court on Jan. 10 against the board, Chief Elections Officer Mark Church, and 10 unidentified county employees. It questions the legality of an ordinance passed by the board on Dec. 3, which initiated the special ballot election that would amend the county charter and grant the board power to remove Corpus.



Christina Corpus

The complaint alleges that the special election on March 4 is illegal because it violates the election code that determines the timing a special election can be held. It also alleges that two board members, Supervisors Noelia Corzo and Ray Mueller, should have been disqualified from voting on the ordinance because they are biased against Corpus.

The complaint seeks “injunctive relief,” or a halt of the special election by the Superior Court of California. County Attorney John Nibbelin said that the county will vigorously defend the board’s action and he hopes the complaint will be “expeditiously dealt with” by the court.

“The petition lacks merit, both as to the law, which it misapplies, and to the facts, which it misconstrues,” said Nibbelin in an email. “We expect that the court will deny relief in this matter and that the election will proceed.”

Corpus’ lawyer did not respond

to a request for comment.

The complaint is the latest in a saga of political and legal unrest in the Sheriff’s Office which began last year.

Early signs of turmoil emerged in April, when a former County sheriff sued Corpus for alleged retaliation. After 96% of union members in the San Mateo County Sheriff Office voted no confidence in former Chief of Staff Victor Aenlle, the board initiated an investigation into her office.

The results of the 408-page report revealed abuses of power in the Sheriff’s Office and detailed a multi-year affair between Corpus and Aenlle. Corpus has repeatedly stated that she will not step down from her post even as the Board of Supervisors and congressional and state officials have called on Corpus to resign. ■

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## Watching L.A. fires from afar, Peninsula residents fearful of wildfire risk in their own backyards

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Thousands of residents in Los Angeles County have lost their homes to the multiple fires that sparked as early as Tuesday, Jan. 7. While hundreds of miles away from the blaze, local residents of the Peninsula are seeing the news and feel concerned about what would happen if a fire were to burn in their own neighborhoods. Questions are swirling in their minds like: Are there enough evacuation routes? What will new development mean for fire risk in their town?

According to the Western Fire Chiefs Association, California’s fire season has historically been between May and October, but with climate change has come rising temperatures and less rainfall. The fire season is starting earlier and ending later.

“We used to think of fire as a season, but what we’re really finding it’s a year-round issue,” said Seth Schalet, CEO of Santa Clara County FireSafe Council.

It’s widely known that California is prone to wildfires, but the risk is even higher in wildland urban interface communities such as Woodside, West Menlo Park, Portola Valley and Los Altos Hills. WUIs are areas where nature and human development meet and when more people move into these zones, wildfire risks increase.

“It is devastating to watch the news on the L.A. fire,” said Portola Valley Mayor Judith Hasko during a Jan. 8 Town Council meeting. “This further underscores the importance of continuing our focus as a WUI community on fire safety matters.”

While fire can strike from natural causes such as lightning, the Congressional Research Service reports that nearly 90% of wildfires from 2018 to 2022 were human-caused.

The fires in Los Angeles were fueled by a catastrophic mix of 80 to 100 mph winds, an ongoing drought and dry vegetation, said Schalet. It’s still unknown the exact cause of each fire, but

investigations are underway.

There is a lot to learn from the tragedies of the L.A. fires, but locally, fire officials and city administrators are continually exploring different fire mitigation strategies, evacuation routes and evaluating emergency response, he added.

### Local residents’ fears for own evacuation

The Pacific Palisades fire has caught the attention of Portola Valley residents, who are questioning whether their own town, nestled in the hills, would be safe to evacuate in case of a fire.

As towns and cities face pressures to develop more housing under the state-mandated housing element, evacuation and fire safety have been a key concern for many residents as town officials continue to approve housing plans.

The Southern California neighborhood, which has lost over 20,000 acres to fire as of Tuesday, Jan. 14, is also a WUI nestled in the Santa Monica Mountains. It has similar topography as Portola Valley and Woodside.

“In light of the situation in Southern California, I would like to remind the Town Council that we have an evacuation problem here in Portola Valley,” said town resident Dale Pfau, during a council meeting on Jan. 8.

Pfau, who served as the chair of the town’s Emergency Preparedness Committee and is currently the chair of the Evacuation Subcommittee, said Portola Valley’s evacuation plan was updated in June 2024, providing guidance on traffic management, notifying residents, evacuation procedures, identifying refuge areas and more.

In 2022, the town commissioned Fehr & Peers, a San Francisco-based transportation planning consultant, to produce a Traffic Capacity Study. The town’s Emergency Preparedness Committee continues to use the F&P report to improve

See **FIRES**, page 15

# Menlo Park entitles affordable-housing project targeting teachers

By Neil Gonzales

Menlo Park has granted entitlements to a project that plans to turn a long-vacant parcel previously serving young students into new affordable housing catering to local teachers.

On Monday night, Jan. 13, the city Planning Commission voted 5-1 to approve use and architectural-control permits and a below-market-rate (BMR) housing agreement for the construction of three multifamily buildings at 320 Sheridan Dr., the site of the former James Flood Magnet School.

Commissioner Katie Ferrick dissented, citing arguments over adequate space for bicycle parking, identifying a second ingress/egress location and other concerns.

Commissioner Linh Dan Do was absent for the voting, having mentioned that she needed to leave the meeting early.

The three-story project by Calabasas-based developer Alliant Communities would total 88 units, according to a city staff report. All but the manager's unit would be offered at below-market rents for very-low-income to low-income households.

The approximately 2.5-acre plot in the Suburban Park neighborhood has sat vacant for years after the Flood campus closed in 2011, but the Ravenswood City School District still owns the land.

The housing project with a modern-farmhouse architectural style would give educators and other employees from the district first dibs on the units, the staff report said. But other eligible households from the larger community could get their turn afterward.

"One of the most significant barriers we face is housing affordability," district Superintendent Gina Sudaria told commissioners before

their vote. "A recent analysis revealed that Ravenswood staff experienced the largest gap in the state between their salaries and the cost of a typical-priced home."

Many of the district's teachers and staff commute long distances because they can't afford to live in the area, Sudaria said. "This challenge directly affects our ability to retain talented team members and build the strong, stable school communities that our students need to thrive."

According to an Alliant presentation, more than 40% of Ravenswood teachers and staff are considering leaving the district because of high housing costs or the length of their commute.

So the apartment project provides "an extraordinary opportunity for our district," Sudaria said. "Over 85% of our staff have expressed interest in living in this development (because it would enable) our teachers and staff to live within the community they serve. This project would foster deeper relationships, enhance staff retention and build a stronger sense of belonging for both students and staff."

Practically all the other public commenters expressed similar strong support for the project.

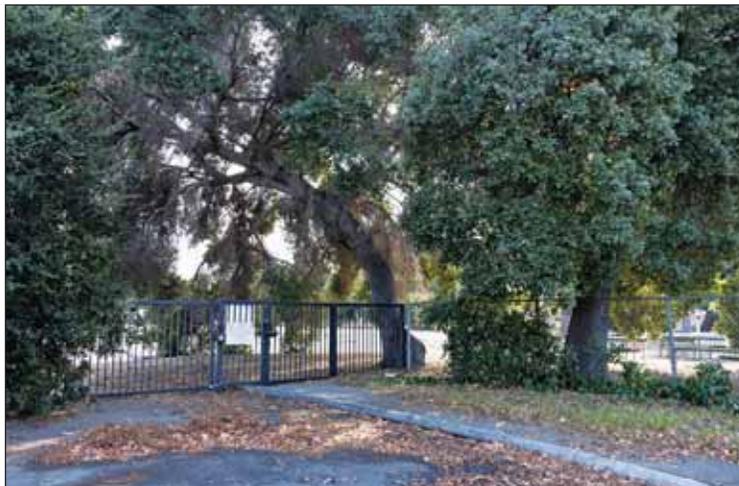
"The statistics about the teachers and staff ... speak to the desperate need for these affordable homes," Linfield Oaks resident Katherine Dumont said, addressing the commission. "I think this project is a real step forward toward a brighter future for everyone."

However, residents and commissioners have also raised issues about the development, particularly regarding expanding bike-parking space and finding another access point in and out of the property.

Tenants are not going to bike if there's insufficient parking for that, The Willows resident Kevin Rennie said. "I understand the costs, but I fully encourage a secondary review to add more protected bike parking to encourage people to ride."

An official with the project's architect believes that the design of the development has been responsive to residents' thoughts on bike parking.

"The bike facilities, this is something that we had taken to heart," Lance Crannell, principal for Brentwood-based SDG



Magali Gauthier

The entrance of the now closed James Flood Magnet School at 321 Sheridan Drive in Menlo Park in 2021.

Architects Inc., said before the commission. "We've heard from the community in terms of their preference for bike parking, and so we responded to that in providing a portfolio of ways of bike parking both short term (and) long term and in a variety of places throughout the site."

Crannell noted, for instance, that the design took out a dog park in favor of additional bike parking following conversations with the community.

Causing some rift among residents has been the issue involving a second access point in addition to the primary one on Sheridan Drive.

A petition signed by about 350 residents proposes this other access via Van Buren Road on the project's east side to provide an alternative route to escape a fire and help shorten travel times by automobile, bike and walking, among other reasons.

But another petition signed by 120 residents of the Flood Park Triangle neighborhood opposes such an entrance/exit point, citing disruption of the Haven Family House shelter there, traffic safety and congestion, and other matters.

"I fully intended to come here tonight and get to yes, but I can't get to yes tonight," Ferrick said as the project came to the commission's vote. "I don't feel the commission has been able to sufficiently do its job so that we can ensure the project is planned well and future (elements) can be accommodated."

Ferrick was also frustrated with "the inability to require a pursuit of some of the things that we've mentioned, including a second ingress-egress," she said.

Commissioner Ross Silverstein expressed similar

disappointments about the project, but he said those "don't rise to the point of actually trying to block the housing."

While the project is not perfect, Commissioner Misha Silin said, "the most important thing by far is that we have people (who) work in our community, especially with our children, commuting from very far away, and they want to be able to live here."

The project is still subject to an appeal period, which runs through Jan. 28. If appealed, the project would go before the City Council.

"If no appeal is received, the entitlements would become active on 1/29," city Senior Planner Chris Turner told The Almanac in an email.

The total project cost is estimated at \$66 million, according to Steven Spielberg, senior vice president of affordable housing for Alliant.

In November, the council narrowly voted to commit \$1 million of Menlo Park's BMR Housing Fund to help in the project's construction. Work could start in December with completion and unit leasing expected to happen in 2027.

The project would aid the city's efforts to meet a state housing mandate to plan for nearly 3,000 new residences in the 2023-31 cycle.

The project — a brainchild of Ravenswood — found itself in the center of controversy over affordable-housing efforts in the city. It became the catalyst for the citizen-sponsored Measure V in 2022, which would have limited the council's ability to upzone city lots if the initiative had passed. ■

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# Shiok! Singapore Kitchen must leave location by end of January

Eatery has been in Menlo Park for over two decades

By Eleanor Raab

After 25 years of serving authentic Singaporean cuisine in downtown Menlo Park, Shiok! Singapore Kitchen is facing an uncertain future. Co-owner Dennis Lim confirmed that the restaurant will have to vacate its current location at 1137 Chestnut St. by the end of January, following the sale of the building, as the new owner requested that the building be empty. The new owner of the building could not be reached for comment.

Lim and his family learned that the building had been sold around Christmas, and received formal notice to vacate on New Year's Day. Shiok has until the end of the month to find a new location or shut down. The two other businesses in the building — Gerry's Cakes and Ela Lingerie — have also been given notice to vacate, according to Lim. Signs posted at Gerry's Cakes and Ela Lingerie confirmed these businesses will be leaving as well.

Lim is worried that if the restaurant cannot find a new



Dennis Lim, co-owner of Shiok! Singapore Kitchen, stands behind the bar at the restaurant on Jan. 9.

location in time, that he will have to lay off his business' eight employees.

"They're saying 'oh, you can leave in 30 days,' but have you considered I have my staff that is depending on this business to raise a family?" he said. "Myself as well; I have a family that depends on this business. By telling me to leave in 30 days, it

is effectively cutting off a source of income for myself and all my staff."

Lim and his family have explored several options, but said that he is finding it difficult to secure a location in the time they have been given. He said that moving a restaurant is essentially like starting a brand new business, and usually takes

several months to complete.

"Thirty days is just brutal," he said. "I'm happy to move into an empty restaurant or even an existing restaurant ... I can assume their lease if they want to."

For Lim, leaving the Menlo Park location is particularly emotional after two and half decades of building relationships with the community. He says that in an ideal world, he would like to find a new location for Shiok that is still close to downtown.

"I've seen people get married. I've seen their children grow up, all their happy occasions. And I've also seen many of my customers pass away as well," he said. "We fed our family through this place, and now we just have to move."

The Lim family has also considered finding commercial kitchen space and converting Shiok into a ghost kitchen for delivery apps, but Lim says it wouldn't be the same restaurant that they love without the customers.

Lim also credits the Menlo Park community for keeping the

restaurant afloat through the COVID-19 pandemic, when it had to shut its doors for almost two years.

"For two years we could only do takeout," he said. "I have to credit the Menlo Park community who continued to order takeout from us. Even if they can't eat out, they'll come and support us."

Shiok was founded by Lim's mother, Rosalind Tan, and his sister, Maggie Lim, because they enjoyed entertaining people with their food. The restaurant originally opened in a small space in San Carlos in 1999, but quickly moved into a bigger space in Menlo Park in 2000 when demand outstripped the space available in its original location, and Shiok has remained in the Chestnut Street space ever since.

Lim said at the time the restaurant opened, ethnic restaurants on the Peninsula were much rarer, and there wasn't anything else like it around. He explained that Singaporean food is unique because it is "the

See **SHIOK**, page 9

## Menlo Park student wins RethinkWaste poster contest

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

As an art and nature lover, Arielle H., a sixth grader at La Entrada Middle School, created a poster depicting ways people can be more "green." Arielle's poster, titled, "What can YOU do to help the environment?" won first place in the middle school category of ReThinkWaste's 2024 poster contest.

The theme of the contest was "My Green Routine," encouraging students to create posters that illustrate their daily practices in helping the environment. RethinkWaste received 90 submissions representing 24 schools across San Mateo County.

Arielle's detailed poster shows people to avoid gas-powered vehicles, conserve electricity and water, and dispose of trash in the correct bins. Arielle said she loves animals and is aware that environmental harms also impact living creatures. That inspired her to come up with ideas on how to help the Earth. She also drew inspiration from



Courtesy Meredith Hoffer

Arielle with her poster "What can YOU do to help the environment?"

her parents' routines at home as well as habits she's learned on her own, including recycling and composting.

Living in California, a state prone to droughts, Arielle said her parents have taught her the importance of conserving water and it's become a practice she's

See **POSTER CONTEST**, page 11

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# Spiffy Pottery Studio opens its doors in Menlo Park this February

New studio offers community space for clay artists and ceramics classes on the Peninsula

By Eleanor Raab

Pottery enthusiasts on the Peninsula have something new to get fired up about: Spiffy Pottery Studio, located in the Willows neighborhood of Menlo Park, is a community pottery studio and ceramics teaching space that is set to open its doors in February. Jeffrey Liang, the 29-year-old founder of Spiffy, is hoping that the space will function not only as a pottery studio, but also as a place for a local ceramics community to bloom.

While the studio's initial offerings include wheel throwing and handbuilding classes, studio memberships and workshops, Liang says he is eager to expand his offerings based on community feedback. In particular, he hopes to roll out additional youth classes and specialized workshops as demand grows.

One of the driving forces behind Spiffy Pottery Studio is Liang's desire to develop a strong, friendly ceramics community on the Peninsula.

"I want people to (enjoy) being here because they feel the feeling of belonging," said Liang, a Mountain View resident. "Through this collective ceramic environment, we can create something that's original and really cool."

Located just steps from Palo Alto, Liang describes the spot as a "magical corner." Spiffy is located just next door to Cafe Zoe, La Hacienda Market and other local businesses along Menalto Avenue; Liang says that foot traffic and close-knit atmosphere in the area is great.



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Owner Jeffrey Liang unpacks a bowl he made at Spiffy Pottery Studio in Menlo Park on Jan. 7. The studio will be offering classes and memberships starting in February.

"(This location) is extra special because it is located in a dense residential area," he said. "Unlike a lot of studios, we are just next door to our customers."

After talking with neighbors and Menlo Park residents, Liang says he has discovered that there is clearly very high demand for ceramics studios on the Peninsula, as there are not many other pottery studios nearby. He has already sold out of almost all of his classes before the studio has even officially opened its doors.

"Due to the demand in this location, we are already looking to launch additional workshops for adults or kids," he said.

Liang, who has been teaching ceramics for half a decade, first threw himself into the ceramics world after taking a ceramics class at City College of San Francisco. He previously worked as an industrial designer, but says he quickly realized that ceramics was a path he wanted to pursue once he got his hands on the clay.

Within a semester of taking his first ceramics class, Liang was working in local pottery shops as an instructor and studio manager. A few years ago, he also began selling his own line of handmade ceramics. He says this experience has prepared him well to run his own pottery studio, and he is excited to have a space where he

can teach and share his love of ceramics with the community.

"I've always wanted to do my own thing," he said. "I believe I can improve some aspects of what I see on the current market. But most importantly, I am hooked on inspiring people. As a teacher, I really like the feeling of people getting inspired by ceramics. ... So that's my motivation for all of this."

Opening Spiffy Potter Studio has been a labor of love for Liang, who has done most of the renovations himself. Luckily, the space already had the electrical hookups required to run kilns, but Liang needed to repaint the walls and move all of the heavy

ceramics equipment into the studio on his own. However, the studio is truly a community endeavor, and Liang says he has received a lot of help from his family, especially his wife Joanne, to get the business going.

Liang said he is going to have to put his personal ceramics projects on hold while he works to get the studio up and running, but that he is excited to be able to continue making ceramics in the space he has built.

"For the next one or two years, I want to establish this physical space to a really efficient working condition," he said. "But eventually I will still need my own time to make pottery, because that is, to me, therapeutic."

Liang's ceramics practice is informed by his prior work as an industrial designer.

"I really care about the functionality and the comfort of the users. I like to design my pieces in a way that the users can be very comfortable and enjoy it," he said. He hopes to pass off this philosophy to his students.

Liang says if the launch of Spiffy goes well, he hopes to expand to other locations on the Peninsula.

Learn more about the studio and view class and membership offerings at [thespiffystudio.info](http://thespiffystudio.info). ■

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

Spiffy Pottery Studio: 1919 Menalto Ave; will be open seven days a week, from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.

## CRIME BRIEFS

### Burglary, attempted burglary reported in Atherton

The Atherton Police Department is investigating after two related incidents, a burglary and attempted burglary, took place on Stevick Drive on Saturday evening, Jan. 11.

At about 7:42 p.m. on Jan. 11, a person broke into a home on the 300 block of Stevick Drive by smashing a rear window, according to a police news bulletin. Shortly after, a person smashed the window of another residence on the same block, but was chased out of the home by the resident.

The individual fled the scene, and according to police, both the vehicle used to flee and the individuals involved have not been identified, and investigations are ongoing.

Police are asking Atherton residents who live near Stevick Drive to check their surveillance video and report any

possible leads to the police department.

### Arrest made in attempted burglary at SLAC

Authorities made an arrest after a break-in at the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory campus on the evening of Jan. 5, according to a press release from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

The Sheriff's Office reported that deputies were dispatched to the campus on Sand Hill Road in unincorporated San Mateo County around 8:30 p.m., after receiving a report of a suspicious person seen carrying bolt cutters on the property.

According to the Sheriff's Office, as deputies checked the property, they located a person matching the description of the person with bolt cutters. That person proceeded to run toward Interstate Highway 280, according to the release.

With the help of a search dog, deputies located the person hiding in heavy shrubbery. Deputies also found "numerous burglary tools" and a damaged security fence in the area. The person was arrested on charges of attempted burglary, vandalism, possession of burglary tools and resisting arrest.

The Sheriff's Office is asking anyone with information about the case to contact Deputy Thomas Collins at [tcollins1@smcgov.org](mailto:tcollins1@smcgov.org) or 650-363-4911. Anonymous tips can be provided via the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office anonymous tip line at 800-547-2700.

— Eleanor Raab

### SWAT team arrests suspect of Sunnyvale murder in EPA

The Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety SWAT team descended on East Palo Alto in the early morning of Jan. 9 to arrest suspect Vicente Aguilera-Chavez in relation to a cold case murder

that occurred in Sunnyvale in 2017.

Another suspect, Agustin Sandoval, was arrested in Escalon the next day.

On June 8, 2017, Sunnyvale police responded to a shooting in the 900 block of E. Duane Ave., Sunnyvale, where they discovered two male victims who had been shot, according to a press release. One victim died and the other was transported to a local hospital, where he survived.

Despite an "extensive investigation," the case went cold, according to the press release.

Community Nextdoor posts suspected Sunnyvale's police activity was connected to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, but authorities confirmed that the arrest was unrelated to any ICE activity.

The investigation is ongoing and anyone with information can contact detective Matt Hutchison at 408-730-7110.

— Lisa Moreno

**SHIOK**

*continued from page 7*

original fusion food,” which represents a blend of Indian, Chinese and Malay cuisine. Menu items include Roti prata with curry sauce, Singapore chicken rice, beef rendang and Tahu goreng.

“If you eat at our restaurant, you’ll find that if you order five dishes, they will have five different tastes,” he said. The recipes at ShioK are family heirlooms, passed down from Tan’s mother to her, and now to Lim and his sister.

“It’s very personal when you are feeding somebody from your kitchen, and this is the food you ate as a kid,” he said.

Lim said he can’t count the number of memories that he cherishes at ShioK, but recalled a time when the Singaporean prime minister visited in 2016 as one of his favorite moments at the restaurant. He proudly displays a picture of him and his family with the prime minister in the restaurant.

Lim doesn’t know what will come next for the restaurant, but says he is taking it one day at a time. There is no definitive

closing date planned for the restaurant, but Lim says he will try to keep ShioK open as long as he can so he can continue to pay his staff.

Despite the uncertainty, Lim expressed deep gratitude for the support he and his family have received for the 25 years that they have been in Menlo Park.

“We wouldn’t have survived for 25 years without the community,” he said. “Our customers are like family to us.” ■

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



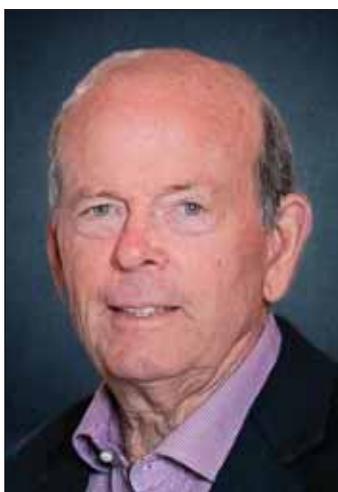
Eleanor Raab

ShioK co-owner Dennis Lim shows off a picture taken of his family with the Singaporean prime minister at the restaurant in 2016.

## William F. Berry

April 12, 1941 – January 2, 2025

William F. Berry, affectionately known as “Bill,” passed away on January 2, 2025, in Stanford, California, at the age of 83. A devoted husband, father, grandfather, uncle and cherished friend, Bill will be remembered for his unwavering love, adventurous spirit, and generous heart.



Born on April 12, 1941, in San Francisco, California, Bill grew up in Palo Alto and later in Portola Valley. A proud graduate of Menlo-Atherton High School, he went on to earn his degree from San Jose State University. Bill began a distinguished career in investment banking with Crocker Bank, later continuing his work with Wells Fargo, where he earned the respect and admiration of colleagues and clients alike.

Bill embraced his retirement with the same passion and drive that defined his professional life. He pursued his love of exploration, spending time mining for gold in California, Alaska, and the Yukon. A dedicated philanthropist, Bill served on various boards and actively supported projects close to his heart, including the preservation of California’s wetlands. His efforts earned him a well-deserved place in the California Waterfowl Hall of Fame.

A man of many talents and interests, Bill loved traveling with his beloved wife, Nella, and found joy in their time spent together in Mount Shasta, Indian Wells, Western Canada, and their longtime home in Portola Valley. He was an avid golfer and a wicked pickleball player. Bill enjoyed playing Bridge with Nella and friends from around the country online. He especially enjoyed spending hours in his gardens and much to Nella’s chagrin, he wore good clothes that didn’t stay nice for long!

Bill is survived by his devoted wife, Nella; his children, Koryne Smith (Taylor) and Derek Berry (Joanne); and his cherished grandchildren, Emily, Lindsey, Liam, Nathan, Jordyn, and Jessie. He is also survived by his sisters, Wanlyn Bejach, Winifred Lowell and Carol Berg. He was preceded in death by his parents, Othmar and Velda Berry.

In the final months of his life, Bill faced a fast-moving leukemia diagnosis with extraordinary courage and grace, inspiring those around him.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Bill’s memory may be made to myBlueDots, a cause that reflects his enduring commitment to helping others. Donations can be made at [mybludots.org](http://mybludots.org)

Bill’s life was a testament to the power of love, perseverance, and generosity. He will be deeply missed but fondly remembered by all who knew him.

Service To Be Held

Trinity Episcopal Church

330 Ravenswood Ave, Menlo Park, CA, 94025

Friday January 24th 2025 at 2 PM

Reception to Follow

PAID OBITUARY

## Carol Kay Conrad

November 7, 1961 – November 28, 2024

Carol K. Conrad, MD, amazing sister, aunt, and pediatric pulmonologist at Stanford Medicine Children’s Health, passed away on November 28, 2024 at her home in Menlo Park, Calif., following a long battle with a neurodegenerative disease.

Carol was born in Denver and grew up in southern California with her older brothers Jamie and David and her younger sister Libby, who were raised in a famously clever family by their mother, Kay, and their father, Paul, a three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist. Carol graduated from Rolling Hills High School in 1979 and went on to college at the University of California, Berkeley. After graduating from Cal in 1983, Carol received her medical degree from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1989 and trained in pediatrics at Children’s Hospital Los Angeles. She then chose to specialize in pediatric pulmonary medicine, completing fellowship training at The Johns Hopkins University in 1995 and playing a central role in demonstrating proof-of-concept for gene therapy in cystic fibrosis.

In 1995, Carol began work at Stanford’s Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital and worked diligently to build renowned pulmonary medicine programs. “Carol contributed in every way possible, whether it was treating patients with bronchopulmonary dysplasia or childhood interstitial lung diseases,” said David Cornfield, MD, Chief of Pulmonary, Asthma, and Sleep Medicine at Stanford Children’s and a longtime colleague of Carol’s. “Her research on cystic fibrosis (CF) has contributed to the development of therapeutic interventions designed to specifically treat lung disease in children and adults with CF.”

As the pulmonary division grew, Carol’s role expanded. She served as the director of the Pulmonary Function Lab, which brought state-of-the-art equipment that specialists could use to diagnose and treat young children and teens with many different lung or breathing conditions. Starting in 2004 she served as Medical

Director of Stanford Children’s Pediatric Lung and Heart-lung Transplant Program up until 2023.

Carol will be remembered by her patients and her colleagues as an intellectually nimble, energetic, honest, and fierce patient advocate.

Both as a professor of pediatrics at Stanford School of Medicine and a physician treating young lung patients, she touched the lives of countless patients, families, trainees, and colleagues with clarity of thought and careful attention to each person.

In her personal life, Carol was a devoted aunt and sister, adventurer, traveler, early Burning Man participant as a fire dancer and house doctor, and physical fitness advocate. Her travels took her to exotic locations throughout the world, including New Zealand, Central and South America, Europe, and southeast Asia, and she was planning to go to

Antarctica in early 2025. Her interest in sports began at a young age, and she became a lifelong skier and softball and soccer devotee, managing the co-ed softball team “Cha Cha Lucys” in the Stanford rec league, and helping her brother Jamie coach her niece Taylor’s soccer teams.

Beginning with her adoption of an abandoned kitten she named Shermie while still an undergraduate at Cal, she became a lifelong cat owner, later making a home for her rescued kitties Julie, Toughie, and Teddy over the years. Though proud of her Stanford affiliation, she remained an ardent Cal Bear football fan all her life, sometimes taking joy in being the only Cal fan, and a vocal one at that, in the Stanford rooting section during Big Games.

Carol will be remembered for her passion, her energy, her disgust for hypocrisy and injustice, as well as for her warmth and sense of humor. As a longtime friend said, “She was fierce, decisive, brilliant, and fearless. She was a force to be reckoned with her whole life, and certainly made her mark!”

A memorial service will be held Tuesday, Jan. 21, at 4:30 p.m. at the Stanford Memorial Church, 450 Jane Stanford Way, Stanford.



PAID OBITUARY

**PARKING LOTS**

*continued from page 1*

Oak Grove avenues into 345 to 483 units of affordable housing, along with other amenities.

Many commenters opposing the city's plan said that they do not oppose affordable housing in principle, but that downtown is the wrong place for it.

"We're all for affordable housing, but don't destroy the fabric of downtown Menlo Park to satisfy a quota," said a downtown property owner named Loren Dakin, who suggested that the city consider Civic Center land as an alternative location for the affordable housing units. Many other commenters echoed Dakin's sentiments, and asked council to place housing on other city-owned land.

Several housing advocates that commented said that delaying projects such as this while claiming to support affordable housing is one of the most common tactics to prevent such housing from being built.

**'We're all for affordable housing, but don't destroy the fabric of downtown Menlo Park to satisfy a quota.'**

LOREN DAKIN,  
MENLO PARK RESIDENT AND  
DOWNTOWN PROPERTY OWNER

"During the housing element update process we delayed — we listened to those people who wanted to slow things down, to explore more options, to add more studies and to build less housing in general," said Willows neighborhood resident Ross Silverstein. "As a result, we ended up in non-compliance with our housing element, and we got (the) 80 Willow (Road



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Menlo Park resident Karen Grove, cofounder of the Menlo Park Together organization, displays a list of signatures of people who support building housing on the public parking lots in downtown Menlo Park during a city council meeting on Jan. 14.

'builder's remedy' project). If the City Council delays taking our housing requirements seriously, we will end up with more Willow tower proposals."

Many commenters in favor of the plans also mentioned that Menlo Park is a deeply unaffordable place to live, and expressed excitement about the prospect of more affordable housing coming to the city. Representatives from local climate groups, such as Brian Schmidt from Menlo Spark and Cade Cannedy from Climate Resilient Communities, praised the project for its environmentalism, as it is situated close to transit and could reduce the number of car trips required for residents of the new developments.

The one thing that most commenters agreed on, whether in favor or against the downtown housing plan, was that

downtown Menlo Park needs improvement. Commenters on both sides of the debate mentioned the high vacancy rate downtown, and how many businesses are struggling to survive with the current number of patrons in the area.

Those in favor of the plan see new housing and new residents downtown as a way to revitalize businesses that require foot traffic.

"It's unfortunate how many empty storefronts there are on Santa Cruz Ave. when you walk downtown, but imagine how much more lively it could be with many new residents out and about, rather than parking lots that sadly sit empty much of the time," said Central Menlo Park resident Peter Nance.

Kevin Cunningham, who co-owns the building that houses Coffeebar, which sits directly in

front of one of the lots slated for development sees it differently. He is especially worried about the impact that construction will have on businesses.

"When we talk about replacement parking, you need to understand that a two, two and a half year-long build is the oxygen for businesses," he said. "When you take that away, thinking you're going to then get it back, give it back, you're going to be dealing with a skeleton. It's dead."

Community Development Director Deanna Chow said that the city can consider additional concurrent downtown revitalization steps as part of its capital improvement program.

The proposal to build housing on city-owned lots downtown had been adopted by the previous City Council as one of the programs in its most recent state-mandated housing element

plans. The city is required by the state to plan to build 2,946 units of housing between 2023 and 2031, with at least 740 of those units designated for very low-income housing.

In November 2024, the council had been slated to vote on whether or not to take the next two procedural steps to move the project forward: releasing an RFQ to begin soliciting ideas from developers for the lots, and declaring the lots exempt surplus land — a legal step that must be taken before the lots can be used for any purpose other than parking. After hearing from dozens of residents and business owners who expressed concerns about the proposal and told the council that they had not been properly notified about the plans for the downtown lots, they opted to postpone the vote to Jan. 14.

Ahead of Tuesday night's meeting, the city stepped up their outreach efforts by placing electronic signboards in the parking lots slated for development, holding virtual meetings with the business community, sending a postcard about the project citywide, posting A-frame signs with a link to a project information page and creating an FAQ about the project. Groups both in support of and opposing the project also stepped up their efforts to inform residents about the plans for the downtown lots.

"The first time I was alerted to this was three days before the November meeting," said Keri Nicholas, a downtown property owner and business owner who opposes the project. "Once we did find out — we have spent our own money on ad space in the papers, signs, we started a petition and everything to show the residents of Menlo Park

See **PARKING LOTS**, page 11

**COMMUNITY BRIEFS**

**Ride plus' new app aims to improve on-demand transit service**

A new app for Ride Plus, the on-demand transit service operated by SamTrans, became available for download on Jan. 13.

The app is intended to ease booking for riders in Half Moon Bay, El Granada, East Palo Alto, and the Belle Haven neighborhood of Menlo Park, according to the San Mateo County Transit District.

Current customers are asked to continue using the existing app until Jan. 19. New users are advised to call customer service at 650-238-5880 or book online until Jan. 19.

Existing customers will need a new account by Jan. 20, the transit district said in a press release.

Ride Plus, introduced in June 2023, offers on-demand transportation within

two service zones: Half Moon Bay/El Granada and East Palo Alto/Belle Haven.

The service gives riders access to local destinations within the zones and connects them to regular SamTrans buses, the transit district said.

— Bay City News Service

**Menlo Park seeks local residents to fill seats on commissions**

The city of Menlo Park is seeking applications for two vacant seats on city commissions: one on the Library Commission, and one on the Environmental Quality Commission. The two seats were left vacant after Jennifer Wise, a Library Commission member, and Jeff Schmidt, an Environmental Quality Commission member, were elected to the Menlo Park City Council in the 2024 general election.

Advisory bodies such as commissions are tasked with examining issues of community interest and making recommendations to the city council based on the commission's discussion.

The Environmental Quality Commission is charged with advising the City Council on subjects involving climate change, environmental protection and sustainability, and meets every third Wednesday of the month. The Library Commission is charged with advising the council on matters related to the maintenance and operation of Menlo Park's library system, and meets every third Monday of the month.

All applicants to the empty seats must be 18 or older, a resident of Menlo Park and willing to attend monthly commission meetings. The term for the Library Commission seat will expire on April 30, 2027, and the term for the

Environmental Quality Commission will expire April 30, 2026.

Qualified and interested residents must apply by Friday, Feb. 14.

**Menlo Park hosts Family Math Festival**

The city of Menlo Park is hosting a family math festival from on Sunday, Jan. 26, at the Belle Haven Library, located at 100 Terminal Ave from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The festival is aimed at kids ages 5-12 and their families.

Activities will include math art activities, a Rubik's cube station, logic puzzles, board games, math books for kids and demonstrations from math educators. The event is supported by Mathitude, a Bay Area math engagement and tutoring company. The math festival is free to all participants.

— Eleanor Raab

**PARKING LOTS**

*continued from page 10*

what this proposal means.”

Save Downtown Menlo, a group formed by several downtown business owners, posted signs and banners opposing the project on businesses downtown, placed flyers on car windshields, took out ads about the project and created a petition against the project that collected approximately 2,900 signatures. Menlo Together, a local community advocacy group, canvassed the downtown area, placed signs in support of the project downtown and created their own petition in favor of the project that collected approximately 350 signatures.

Both groups also held gathering events for supporters in advance of the Jan. 14 meeting.

**What does the RFQ ask for?**

The RFQ outlines Menlo Park’s requirements and vision for the lots, and asks developers to summarize their experience building similar projects, provide a concept for the development of the lots, lay out a timeline for how and when the company expects to be able to complete the project, describe a plan for community engagement and describe a financing strategy for the project.

Specifically, the RFQ states that the city’s priorities include maximizing the number of affordable units that can be built on the site, a large proportion of deeply affordable housing, sustainable building design such as



Anna Hoch-Kenney

From left to right, City Council members Betsy Nash, Drew Combs, Jeff Schmidt, and Cecilia Taylor listen to community members express their opinions about the plan to build housing on the public parking lots in downtown Menlo Park during a meeting on Jan. 14.

100% electric construction and EV charging stations and the ability to complete the project by the city’s 2027 goal.

The RFQ also outlines the city’s vision for public parking replacement. It asks developers to provide innovative parking management strategies that replace a minimum of 506 public spots, and to indicate how that replacement public parking would remain available for public use, and not be utilized by residents of the development. It specifically asks developers to consider how parking enforcement might occur.

Menlo Park Principal Planner Tom Smith clarified at the meeting that the council has the opportunity to work with a developer to refine or add to the city’s parking request throughout the RFQ process, and as the city finalizes data from its downtown parking

management study.

After Combs asked whether the city could limit the RFQ to just one of the three city-owned parking plazas, Smith also clarified that the city had opted to present all three lots to potential developers in order to “provide a certain level of flexibility” to developers, and to solicit creative solutions that address all of the city’s needs.

Nash also asked city staff to add a request to the RFQ to phase project construction to minimize disruption to business operations.

Several council members also asked Smith if the city could study affordable housing on the Civic Center property concurrently with the downtown parking lots. Smith responded that to study such a project at this point in the process, when the city already has an adopted and certified housing element

with specific programs like the downtown parking redevelopment that it has already agreed to, would require going back to state officials and reopening housing element conversations with them.

Smith said that such an action would also involve general plan amendments, zoning changes and a lengthy environmental review process, which are not feasible with the amount of time left in the current state housing element cycle. The city will likely be asked to produce additional affordable housing after 2031, and Smith said the city can explore other locations at that time.

Combs also clarified that locating housing on Civic Center property does not fulfill the city’s state requirement to “affirmatively further fair housing” as well as the lots downtown, because the downtown lots are on the west side of El Camino Real, where fewer affordable housing developments have been planned.

**What comes next?**

The next step for the city is to release the RFQ to solicit developer ideas for the three lots. According to Smith, city staff anticipate releasing the RFQ by the end of the month. Once the RFQ is released to the public, developers will have two months to submit their qualifications and ideas for the lots.

The council will review developer qualifications and experience at an upcoming meeting in the spring. At that time, the council could choose to include additional steps before a developer is selected for the lots, such

**‘During the housing element update process we delayed — we listened to those people who wanted to slow things down. ... We ended up in non-compliance with our housing element, and we got (the) 80 Willow (Road ‘builder’s remedy’ project). If the City Council delays taking our housing requirements seriously, we will end up with more Willow tower proposals.’**

ROSS SILVERSTEIN,  
WILLOWS NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENT

as issuing a request for proposals from a shortlist of developers. A request for proposals would ask for more detailed plans

The council can opt to declare the lots as exempt surplus land at any point in this process, but the declaration must take place before the city enters into an agreement with any developer, or any other contract that formalizes the use of the parking lots for housing. ■

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

**POSTER CONTEST**

*continued from page 7*

adopted as well. To avoid air pollution, Arielle walks to school and says her parents drive electric vehicles.

“I realized that gas was polluting the environment, it’s

heating the environment and it’s generally a bad source of energy,” she said.

Arielle was excited to enter RethinkWaste’s poster contest particularly because the theme invited the idea of helping the Earth. In just two weeks, she created a rough draft of her

poster idea, drew, colored and submitted it for the contest.

“[Art] is something I’m naturally good at and it’s meditative for me because it calms me down and it helps me express my feelings, like how I expressed my feelings toward helping the Earth with this poster,” Arielle said.

Arielle owns two guinea pigs and uses her creativity and conservation skills by repurposing boxes from online shipments as hideaways for her pets. She gives the boxes “another life” for her guinea pigs to enjoy before they get recycled, she said.

On Dec. 17, Arielle was recognized by the Menlo Park City Council for her first place award. Her artwork will also be featured on the side of Recology collection trucks, one of which will be coming to La Entrada on Jan. 21.

Arielle said she looks forward to entering more art contests in the near future. ■

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

**LAS LOMITAS**

*continued from page 1*

this news organization.

“[The investigation] relates to expenditures on a district credit card and whether there was any improper use of the credit card to pay for non-district business,” Wagstaffe said. He was unable to say which officials were under investigation.

Wagstaffe is hopeful that the public will have answers shortly.

“I would hope our investigation would be done in one or two months at most,” he said. “We just need to get the appropriate records and review them.”

He also added that the investigation was initiated due to a report from a citizen.

Winikoff declined to comment on the DA’s investigation and Superintendent Beth Polito has yet to respond to multiple requests for comment.

An Almanac investigation found that Las Lomitas district officials stayed at the Four

Seasons and spent more than \$39,000 on food through catering and delivery services in under a year.

Bultema was set to present at the board’s next meeting at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 15, at the La Entrada Middle School Atrium, 2200 Sharon Road in Menlo Park, after The Almanac’s Wednesday afternoon press deadline.

Despite The Almanac reporting that the board may be violating the Brown Act by limiting public comment, the public agenda suggests the board has not made any changes. ■

*Email Contributing Writer Arden Margulis at amargulis@almanacnews.com.*



Courtesy RethinkWaste

“What can YOU do to help the environment?” by Arielle H., a sixth grader at La Entrada Middle School.

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# Thank you for supporting the Holiday Fund

Contributions to the Holiday Fund go directly to programs that benefit Peninsula residents. Last year, Almanac readers and foundations contributed \$310,000 from more than 170 donors for the 10 agencies that feed the hungry, house the homeless and provide numerous other services to those in need.

Contributions to the Holiday Fund will be matched, to the extent possible, by generous community organizations, foundations and individuals, including the Rotary Club of Menlo Park Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. No administrative costs will be deducted from the gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law. All donations to the Holiday Fund will be shared equally among the 10 recipient agencies listed on this page.

## Almanac Holiday Fund Donor List

As of January 14th, 158 donors have contributed \$360,916 to the Holiday Fund.

39 Anonymous . . . . . \$204,431	Dave & Diane Toole . . . . . 100	Karen Perloth . . . . . 300	Linda Keegan . . . . . 1,000
Ken Ashford . . . . . 229	Kenneth Turkowski . . . . . 100	Judy and Doug Adams . . . . . 300	Lucy Reid-Krensky . . . . . 100
Barry Goldblatt . . . . . 300	Mary and Bob Dodge . . . . . 200	Mary Pless . . . . . 100	Don & Catherine Coluzzi . . . . . *
Gloria Stivers . . . . . 1,000	Tom Kilduff & Debby Bolding . . . . . 1,000	Michael & Leslie Crisp . . . . . *	Roger Witte and Patricia Bredehoft . . . . . 100
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B J Meissner . . . . . 250	Bob & Marna Page . . . . . *	Dorothy Saxe . . . . . 100	Jane Paulson . . . . . 4,000
Robert Ells . . . . . 5,000	Erika Crowley . . . . . 1,000	Kayleen Miller . . . . . 100	Melanie Austin . . . . . *
Kurt & Sue Jagers . . . . . 10,434	Donna MacKowski . . . . . 200	Lori & Dennis McBride . . . . . 500	Barbara & Carl Jacobson . . . . . 150
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Lynne Fovinci . . . . . 100	Douglas Keare and Jill Morgan . . . . . 1,000	Stephen Martin . . . . . 400	Betsy & Frank Stockdale . . . . . 200
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**All donations to the Holiday Fund will be shared equally among the 10 recipient agencies listed below.**

**Boys & Girls Club of the Peninsula**

Provides after-school academic support, enrichment, college and career access, and mental health programs to more than 5,000 low-income youth at 29 locations from East Palo Alto to Daly City.

**Ecumenical Hunger Program**

Provides emergency food, clothing, household essentials, and sometimes financial assistance to families in need, regardless of religious preference, including Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for more than 2,000 households.

**Health Connected**

Serves over 5,000 students and their families each year through comprehensive sexual health education programs. Students learn to have ongoing communication with parents and to make informed decisions that will apply to their lives, now and in the future.

**LifeMoves**

Provides shelter/housing and supportive services across 26 sites in Silicon Valley and the Peninsula. Serves thousands of homeless families and individuals annually on their path back to permanent housing and self-sufficiency.

**Literacy Partners**

Supports literacy programs and projects through fundraising and community awareness. Helps community members enhance their reading, writing and related skills and education to improve their economic, professional and personal wellbeing.

**Ravenswood Family Health Center**

Provides primary medical and preventive health care for all ages at its clinic in East Palo Alto. Of the more than 17,000 registered patients, most are low-income and uninsured and live in the ethnically diverse East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, and North Fair Oaks areas.

**St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room**

Serves hundreds of hot meals six days a week to people in need who walk through the doors. Funded by voluntary contributions and community grants, St. Anthony's is the largest dining room for the needy between San Francisco and San Jose. It also offers take-home bags of food, as well as emergency food and clothing assistance.

**St. Francis Center**

Helps low-income, working families become self-supporting members of the community by providing long-term solutions through educational programs for children and parents, as well as after-school programming at Siena Youth Centers. St. Francis Center also provides housing, food and clothing services to address short-term needs.

**StarVista**

Serves more than 32,000 people throughout San Mateo County, including children, young people and families, with counseling, prevention, early intervention, education, and residential programs. StarVista also provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services including a 24-hour suicide crisis hotline, an alcohol and drug helpline, and a parent support hotline.

**Upward Scholars**

Upward Scholars empowers low-income adults by providing them with financial support, tutoring, and other assistance so they can continue their education, get higher-paying jobs, and serve as role models and advocates for their children.

**The organizations below provide major matching grants to the Holiday Fund.**

*The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation*

*The David and Lucile Packard Foundation*



**Rotary Club of Menlo Park**



Courtesy Miriam Yupanqui

Executive Director of Nuestra Casa Miriam Yupanqui stands in front of the organization's team.

# Holiday Fund: East Palo Alto nonprofit evolves to support Latino needs

Nuestra Casa aims to shift to address community issues over the last two decades

By Lisa Moreno

In 2002, East Palo Alto community members began noticing the city's changing demographics, with an influx of immigrant families from Mexico, Central America and South America, said Miriam Yunpanqui, executive director of nonprofit Nuestra Casa.

Nuestra Casa's founding board members partnered with other local organizations and the city to obtain a grant and eventually create the nonprofit to support the emerging Latino community. "Our mission was to really support new community members and also provide them with support in civic engagement," Yunpanqui said.

What started as a grassroots organization, serving East Palo Alto Latinos through English-learning programs and Ravenswood parent engagement, evolved to serve over 9,000 Latinos across the Peninsula through various new avenues.

Over more than two decades, Nuestra Casa, a nonprofit based in East Palo Alto, has set out to uplift Latinos through education, workforce and leadership development and civic engagement, while shifting to address emerging issues like environmental justice.

When Nuestra Casa was first founded, community members were very interested in English language courses. The nonprofit partnered with East Palo Alto school district Ravenswood to use three classrooms for those services, Yunpanqui said.

Parents also wanted to learn

how to become more engaged with the school system — so a Nuestra Casa staff member worked as a liaison between parents and the schools and teachers. Years later, the organization created its Parent Academy in an effort to provide parents the resources to navigate the school system and to help them connect with their students more.

Yunpanqui, executive director of Nuestra Casa, grew up in East Palo Alto and joined the organization's board in 2010.

"It's been amazing being part of an organization that has really supported the community, and it's just also been amazing for me to see the transformation of the organization and how it has evolved over these past 23 years," she said.

In the past decade, Nuestra Casa made a shift toward civil engagement, housing, professional development and environmental justice, among other efforts, Yunpanqui said.

Nuestra Casa partnered with the city of East Palo Alto to create an anti-displacement project to provide information on tenant rights, referrals when families are facing eviction, case management assistance and applications for affordable housing units.

The organization has also expanded to work with people outside of East Palo Alto to Redwood City, North Fair Oaks and Belle Haven, attending community fairs, school and library events in an effort to assist as many people as possible.

See **NUESTRA CASA**, page 14

# The Almanac

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\* Donor did not want to publish the amount of the gift.

# A new form of sudden oak death takes root in San Mateo County

Experts say limiting the spread is imperative

By Magali Gauthier

This November, researchers discovered an aggressive new lineage of the pathogen that causes sudden oak death in Woodside and Burlingame.

The previously discovered form of the disease, which has killed about 50 million trees in California since the 1990s, typically emerged at low temperatures and during wet winters. The spread slowed during droughts.

However, this new genetic lineage thrives in dry, warmer weather. Experts worry that with the warming climate, the two forms can work in tandem, and even more trees could die across the state.

Matteo Garbelotto, a University of California, Berkeley adjunct professor and the forest pathologist specialist for the entire UC system, led the team that discovered the new lineage, also known as NA2. He's not surprised they found it in San Mateo County.

"San Mateo County is a whammy," he said. "We've got both high use of ornamentals and the weather is very favorable."

The pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum*, which causes sudden oak death, is believed to have first arrived in Santa Cruz County on "ornamentals" — plants grown and displayed for decoration — coming from Asia. The disease was then observed in local wildlands before Garbelotto identified it in 2000. The new lineage was also found in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

"We caught it pretty early, so now is the time to do something about it," said Garbelotto. "We can't get rid of it, but we can slow it down."

Tanoaks, California black oaks, Shreve's oaks and coast live oaks, among others, are all susceptible to sudden oak death, but it's other local plants that



Magali Gauthier

Debbie Mendelson examines a bay laurel leaf showing symptoms of sudden oak death along Todo El Mundo in Woodside on Dec. 13, 2024. This is the kind of leaf she would collect and send back for testing during the "SOD Blitz," she said.

carry and pass on the disease to the trees — notably the bay laurel.

To diminish the likelihood that oaks catch the disease from bay laurel trees, experts recommend trimming the latter. Bay laurels should be cut back to no closer than 30 feet from oaks. That distance increases if the oak is larger.

San Mateo County's tree ordinance also allows bay laurels and tanoaks smaller than 38 inches in diameter to be removed without a permit, if they're within a 100 feet of a habitable structure or 30 feet of an evacuation route. Larger trees can qualify for an expedited tree removal permit, up to three per parcel per year.

But San Mateo County arborist Natalie Krug said it's important to keep potentially infected plants at the site where they are cut. Residents, landscapers, gardeners and contractors should be aware that moving infected material risks

spreading the disease.

Vulnerable oak species can also be treated with sprayed or injected phosphonate to help prevent infection.

Krug said that trees infected with sudden oak death can catch secondary pathogens and infestations — from insects like bark and ambrosia beetles — which continue to weaken the structure of the tree.

"So we see trees become more susceptible to damage and rain and wind events," said Krug and, ultimately, there's "lots of trees falling over."

If there are weakened trees in the vicinity of high-use public areas or near structures, the county will fell the trees, cut them into smaller pieces and scatter them across the forest floor. The fragments are cut to Cal Fire approved size for fuel management and for faster decomposition, Krug said.

At Filoli Historic House and Garden in Woodside, trees

showing signs of infection have been removed from the garden for safety. But there are pockets of sudden oak death among the thousands of oaks on the 654 acre-property where the trees die and fall, said Jim Salyards, Filoli's director of horticulture. That's a fire hazard, he added.

"We are working toward getting a FEMA grant that will help with fire suppression," said Salyards.

Krug also said it's difficult to tell if a symptomatic tree is infected with sudden oak death.

"The disease response that oaks have are just a disease response, pathogen response," said Krug. "So it's going to be similar to the characteristics of when other pathogens are impacting the tree — so we can't definitively say."

To help diagnose sudden oak death, Garbelotto's team runs a program for licensed tree professionals to collect samples from symptomatic oaks and to

send them back to the lab for testing.

Both the county and Filoli also participate in Garbelotto's annual "SOD Blitz" to help identify affected areas. Krug recommends residents do so as well.

During the annual event, volunteers identify and collect samples across the state from symptomatic trees, particularly bay laurels. The materials are sent back to Garbelotto's lab for testing. That's how NA2 was discovered.

Debbie Mendelson has publicized and managed the project in parts of San Mateo County, including Woodside and Portola Valley since 2007. She said it typically takes place over a weekend in May.

"It takes the lab all through summer to test results and usually the best time is early November to actually present the results," said Mendelson. "So people that did the survey — whether they did it for an organization or just did three trees on their own property, it doesn't matter. All are welcome and all are needed."

This year, around 300,000 acres were surveyed across 18 counties and scientists estimate a 5.7% statewide infection rate. That's up 3% from 2023. In the sampling location that includes most of San Mateo County and parts of Santa Clara County, a 10.8% infection rate was found.

"Trees ask nothing of us," said Mendelson. "They're real givers, ... I just wish a lot of people would understand what a threat it is if we lose [them]."

Garbelotto said that the discovery of NA2 would not have happened last year without the citizen science project.

"It's a large-scale program — we surveyed the entire state," said Garbelotto. "There's not enough money for any lab to do that survey with grant money. This is a really wonderful example of citizen science in action." ■

## NUESTRA CASA

continued from page 13

But Nuestra Casa's Promotora — or promoter — Program is one of its key outreach efforts.

Promotoras are community ambassadors who live in the communities Nuestra Casa serves, and over the past years, the organization has worked to provide more mentoring opportunities for them.

"This past fall, our promotoras were able to attend a conference in Los Angeles where

they were able to connect with a larger network of promotoras, and it's just been amazing seeing these women grow and develop over all these years," Yunpanqui said.

Nuestra Casa is also proud of its recent work toward water and environmental justice, she said.

In 2019, the organization issued a community needs assessment among Latinos, African Americans and Pacific Islanders, asking what issues they were most concerned about.

Aside from displacement,

water quality was a top priority.

"These two concerns have really impacted our work over the past five years, to the point that we developed an environmental justice program as well as a housing Justice Program and a task force that is specifically looking into water quality," Yunpanqui said.

Community members are now able to come in and go on field trips to the bay lands to learn more about their environment.

"We want to make sure that their voices are heard and that

they have a seat at the table during important meetings," she said.

Nuestra Casa also walks people through the process of submitting public comment at city meetings to further promote engagement.

So, whether it be regarding

air quality, water quality, housing or education, Nuestra Casa aims to shift with the changing-needs of their community and empower Latinos to take action, she said. ■

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

Nuestra Casa is a past recipient of the Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund, earning a \$10,000 grant in 2024. More information, including how to contribute, a list of people who've already donated and additional stories about the impact of the Holiday Fund at [PaloAltoOnline.com/holiday\\_fund](http://PaloAltoOnline.com/holiday_fund).

**FIRES**

*continued from page 5*

evacuation planning, added Pfau.

During public comment, residents shared fears about how they would evacuate if Alpine Road and Portola Road are not able to be accessed. The community has expressed concern about traffic congestion in these areas. With the recent approval of Stanford University's Portola Terrace housing development on Alpine Road, the town will be conducting a traffic study in this area.

Town resident Caroline Vertongen commented on the need for a water assessment in the town, considering that fire hydrants in Los Angeles were lacking water when they were needed the most.

"Many streets are too narrow for the big fire trucks, many fire hydrants are out of water, the water pressure is too low," said Vertongen. "All the projects on Alpine and Portola Road will reduce the water pressure for everybody above [the road]."

Vertongen asked the council for an updated town Safety Element, which was last updated in 2022.

Despite decades of conversations and education around evacuation, Portola Valley resident David Cardinal said he's not sure if anyone is ever prepared to evacuate quickly if a fire were to strike. He questions how many people will actually leave when a warning is issued and whether they will be ready to jump in a car when they're told to.

"I think the road structures, emergency response plan, traffic control, that's all good, but people still have some responsibility," said Cardinal. "That was an issue in the Pacific Palisades fires. A lot of people didn't want to leave, they got stuck and at that point it's kind of on them in a way."

**Home insurance**

According to a Jan. 14 article in *The Guardian*, the losses from the Los Angeles fires will cost around \$250 billion, which could be the costliest wildfire to occur in American history.

Despite widespread concerns on the impact the fires will have on statewide home insurance, Michael Soller, Deputy Commissioner for Communications at California Department of Insurance, said the state does not "expect to see any immediate effects as a result of these wildfires."

The state's first priority is to make sure insurance claims are getting paid to victims of the L.A. fires, Soller added.

Residents in WUI areas have



Jules Hotz for CalMatters Los Angeles

Wildfire smoke from the Eaton Fire fills the atmosphere around downtown Los Angeles on Jan. 9.

lost home insurance plans and seen high premium rates as climate change impacts continue to worsen, increasing risks of wildfires and natural disasters.

"The only bill I raced to pay the instant I got it this year was our home insurance for 2025 from State Farm," said Cardinal, who like many residents worry about their plans being canceled.

The majority of homeowners who lost their coverage plans have resorted to the state's FAIR Plan, but Soller said new state regulations could help bring residents back into the regular insurance market. The FAIR Plan is an insurance of last resort and offers limited coverage to those who won't be insured by other companies.

From 2022 to 2023, the FAIR Plan reported an 18% increase in new and renewed policies but Soller explained that these new laws aim to get people off of FAIR.

In December 2024, Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara announced that the state finalized its Sustainable Insurance Strategy — California's largest insurance reform in 30 years. New regulations have already gone into effect.

For the first time, insurance companies are required to write more policies in areas with higher risks for natural disasters. In exchange, companies will be able to utilize a computer tool called catastrophe modeling, which will allow them to assess risk before writing policies. The state hopes to see these modeling tools create more stability in rates.

If companies do not abide by these regulations, which are already in effect, the state can revoke the privilege of using the tool, reexamine its rates and conduct an investigation in all

its operations.

"We're going to hold them accountable for writing these policies," said Soller.

New regulations will take into account climate change, an aspect that "was not on the radar" when previous laws were written in the 1980s. Soller said the goal for these updated policies is to support the state as it continues to experience "hotter and drier summers and wetter winters."

**Local fire mitigation efforts**

While the Peninsula has been victim to wildfires in the past, "the risk is much different than Southern California," said Schalet.

Across the Peninsula, local fire jurisdictions are proactively clearing vegetation and dry brush to prevent the spread of wildfire.

In Woodside, Palo Alto and on Stanford University land, fire departments are also utilizing artificial intelligence to detect early signs of wildfires and provide alerts to first responders. AI wildfire sensor technology is able to recognize fires before they are visible.

There are currently 50 AI sensors installed in WUI areas around the south Peninsula.

In these areas, cities are also working on making escape routes more accessible by widening roads and reducing vegetation.

Local fire departments are also actively engaging and creating Firewise communities to educate and promote wildfire prevention techniques such as creating defensible spaces around homes.

Menlo Park Fire Protection District will become the first in the U.S. to use a hands-free augmented reality tool that will make navigating through

smoke, darkness and high heat easier.

**What can residents do to prepare for an emergency?**

San Mateo and Santa Clara County officials encourage the public to sign up for the county-wide emergency alert systems.

San Mateo County residents can register for SMC Alert and Santa Clara County locals can join AlertSCC. The alert system will send warnings and up-to-date information on emergency situations including fire, weather, utility accidents, and more directly to your mobile device, landline and email.

Emergency management officials also say it's important for households to have an evacuation plan with a location for all

members of the family to meet when an emergency occurs. Residents should also have a "go bag" prepared with important documents, medication, change of clothes, first aid kit and other necessities.

Homeowners can also do their part in fire mitigation efforts by maintaining their defensible space, which is the buffer between a structure and the trees and vegetation around it.

According to FIRE SAFE San Mateo County, maintaining these areas can slow down or stop the spread of wildfire and protect your home. In order to do so, residents can remove dead and dry vegetation around their homes, mow lawns, and create a separation between vegetation and flammable outdoor structures such as fences, patios and furniture.

These actions can also qualify homeowners for a discount on home insurance premiums.

"Maintaining your defensible space is the best way that you can protect your home. Part of the challenge that we're seeing in L.A. is if your neighbor doesn't maintain their defensible space, they create a weakness in the chain of protecting your house," said Schalet.

Forming good relationships with your neighbors can be helpful in emergencies, he added.

Residents can also consider hardening their homes with fire resistant windows, ignition resistant building materials in walls and decks and building roofs with fire resistant materials. ■

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

# Employment

Skan Inc. – Menlo Park, CA – Senior Customer Success Manager – Manage the full life cycle of customer journey resulting in customer satisfaction, revenues, and profitability goals. Telecommuting permitted 100% of the time. Sal: \$174,290/yr. To apply: Send resumes to team\_hr@skan.ai. Req# 4318819.

Schlumberger Technology Corporation is seeking a **Machine Learning Architect**, in Menlo Park, CA, to lead the design & implement of state-of-the-art ML models & algorithms to solve complex business problems. Min Master's, or frgn ed equiv, in CS, Math, Physics, Applied Sci, or a rel STEM field + 2 yrs of post-bacc exp in job offered or any ML/eng rel job titles. Comp for role: \$200,304- \$231,600/yr. Apply online & see complete req's, visit <https://careers.slb.com/> , Job ID: 7168

Schlumberger Technology Corporation is seeking a **Software Architect**, in Menlo Park, CA, to collaborate w/the Product Software Architect to define & implement the Product Line roadmap. Min Master's in CS, Comp Eng, or rel STEM field, or foreign equiv + 3 yrs of post-bacc exp in job offered or any ML/eng job titles. Comp for role: \$185,250- \$204,000/yr. Apply online & see complete req's, visit <https://careers.slb.com/> , Job ID: 7167

Senior Computer Vision Engineer (multiple positions available) for Stryker Corporation in Menlo Park, CA, to research, design, develop, and deploy state-of-the-art 2D/3D comp. vision, AR and MR, deep learning-based algorithms into both existing and new med. dev. prods. Req: Bach. deg in S/W Engg, CS, Robotics, Elect Engg, or Com Engg + 6 yrs of exp. as a Comp. and Info. Research Scientist or related occu. designing, dev. and testing comp. vision s/w systems using neural networks and traditional computer vision algorithms or, alternatively, a Mast. deg + 4 yrs of exp. or, alternatively, a PhD + 2 yrs of exp. Salary Range: \$111,200.00 - \$182,100.00. Salary Offered: \$178,837.00/year. Three days of remote work allowed per week. Submit resume to hrpractices@stryker.com. Reference Position Number: 1471.

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# Public Notices

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME  
File No. M-293673

The following person(s)/registrant(s) has/ have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name(s). The information given below is as it appeared on the fictitious business statement that was filed at the County Clerk-Recorder's Office. FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME(S): WAVES OF GRIEF COLLECTIVE  
1259 El Camino Real, Unit 1118  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
FILED IN SAN MATEO COUNTY ON: 03/13/2023  
REGISTRANT'S NAME(S): OCEANFLOW COLLECTIVE  
1259 El Camino Real, Unit 1118  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
THIS BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED BY A Corporation.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk Recorder of San Mateo County on January 03 2025.  
(ALM Jan 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2025)

PAROLE PORTFOLIO SPECIALISTS  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299458  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) PAROLE PORTFOLIO SPECIALISTS, located at 50 Dorchester Dr, Daly City, CA 94015.  
Registered owner(s): AARON JEREMY LOWERS  
50 Dorchester Dr  
Daly City CA 94015  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 12/01/2024.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on January 07, 2025.  
(ALM Jan 17, 24, 31 and Feb 7, 2025)

CALLINGS.AI  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299417  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) CALLINGS.AI, located at 8 Rockwood Ct, San Mateo, CA 94403.  
Registered owner(s):  
JOBHUNTERS INC.  
8 Rockwood Ct  
San Mateo, CA 94403  
State of Incorporation/Organization: DE  
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 December 31, 2024.  
(ALM Jan 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2025)

GREEN WHALE  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299201  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) GREEN WHALE, located at 123 Escalona Ave, EL GRANADA, CA 94018. Mailing Address: PO BOX 1541 EL GRANADA, CA 94018.  
Registered owner(s):  
NICHOLAS GOLDSWORTHY  
PO BOX 1541  
EL GRANADA, CA 94018  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 06, 2024.  
(ALM Jan 17, 24, 31 and Feb 7, 2025)

SPHYNX CONSULTING  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299391  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) SPHYNX CONSULTING, located at 188 Stone Pine Lane, Menlo Park, CA 94025.  
Registered owner(s):  
BLANKA SKUBNIK  
188 Stone Pine Lane  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
DOUGLAS SCOTT PHILLIPS  
188 Stone Pine Lane  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
This business is conducted by: a Married Couple.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/02/2015.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 27, 2024.  
(ALM Jan 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2025)

MONTESSORI@HOME  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299436  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) MONTESSORI@HOME, located at 413 Miramontes Ave., Half Moon Bay, CA 94019.

Registered owner(s):  
WENDY JOHNSON ROSSELL  
413 Miramontes Ave.  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on January 03, 2025.  
(ALM Jan 17, 24, 31 and Feb 7, 2025)

DLC INTERIORS  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299247  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) DLC INTERIORS, located at 730 Lincoln Ave, Redwood City, CA 94061.  
Registered owner(s):  
NOELLI ALMEIDA DE LA CRUZ OCHOA  
730 Lincoln Ave  
Redwood City, CA 94061  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/01/2023.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 09, 2024.  
(ALM Jan 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2025)

BECK BROS  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299467  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) BECK BROS , located at 1221 S El Camino Real #111, San Mateo, CA 94402.  
Registered owner(s):  
1221 S EL CAMINO REAL LLC  
1221 S El Camino Real #111  
San Mateo, CA 94402  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 12/07/2017.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on January 07, 2025.  
(ALM Jan 17, 24, 31 and Feb 7, 2025)

SPIFFY POTTERY STUDIO  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299486  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) SPIFFY POTTERY STUDIO, located at 1919 Menaloto Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025. Mailing Address: PO BOX 368 Palo Alto, CA 94302.  
Registered owner(s):  
THE SPIFFY STUDIO LLC  
PO BOX 368  
Palo Alto, CA 94302  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/09/2025.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on January 09, 2025.  
(ALM Jan 17, 24, 31 and Feb 7, 2025)

GIDEON SYSTEMS  
GIDEON SYSTEMS AI  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299509  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) GIDEON SYSTEMS, 2.) GIDEON SYSTEMS AI, located at 25 Amherst Ct, Menlo Park, CA 94025.  
Registered owner(s):  
JERVIS E WILLIAMS II  
25 Amherst Ct  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/06/2025.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on January 10, 2025.  
(ALM Jan 17, 24, 31 and Feb 7, 2025)

SOLAR TECHNOLOGIES  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299257  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) SOLAR TECHNOLOGIES, located at 14 Beta Court, San Ramon, CA 94583.  
Registered owner(s):  
STE ELECTRIC  
14 Beta Court  
San Ramon, CA 94583  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 4/10/2012.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 11, 2024.  
(ALM Jan 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2025)

WESSAM AUTO SALE  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299263  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) WESSAM AUTO SALE, located at 1311 Adrian Ave, San Mateo, CA 94403.  
Registered owner(s):  
FADHIL NAFI FADHIL  
1311 Adrian Ave  
San Mateo, CA 94403  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 11, 2024.  
(ALM Jan 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2025)

KB STAGING  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299268  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) KB STAGING, located at 14 Vista Road, San Mateo, CA 94403. Mailing Address: 311 Avila Road, San Mateo, CA 94402.  
Registered owner(s):  
CER DESIGNS, LLC  
311 Avila Road  
San Mateo, CA 94402  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 12, 2024.  
(ALM Dec 20, 2024, Jan 3, 10 and 17, 2025)

LATINMEX RESEARCH CONSULTANTS  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299403  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) LATINMEX RESEARCH CONSULTANTS , located at 274 Redwood Shores Parkway PMB 737, Redwood City, CA 94065.  
Registered owner(s):  
EULALIO R SEGOVIA  
274 Redwood Shores Parkway PMB 737  
Redwood City CA 94065  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 27, 2024.  
(ALM Jan 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2025)

DETAILED-NOTARY  
ELITE INK NOTARY  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299394  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) DETAILED-NOTARY, 2.) ELITE INK NOTARY, located at 1422 Bellevue Avenue Apt 100, Burlingame, CA 94010.  
Registered owner(s):  
TIFINI LYNNE VEGA  
1422 Bellevue Avenue, Apt 100  
Burlingame, CA 94010  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on January 8, 2024.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 27, 2024.  
(ALM Jan 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2025)

HAS FUND MANAGEMENT  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-299384  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) HAS FUND MANAGEMENT, located at 104 MESA VERDE WAY, SAN CARLOS, CA 94070.  
Registered owner(s):  
APRIL S. CARLSON  
104 MESA VERDE WAY  
SAN CARLOS, CA 94070  
THOMAS W. STEUBER  
600 MCCORMICK STREET, SUITE A  
SAN LEANDRO, CA 94577  
This business is conducted by: a General Partnership.  
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 December 26, 2024.  
(ALM Jan 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2025)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO COUNTY  
Case No.: 24CIV07611  
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:  
Petitioner: Nicholas Raymond Damer filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:  
NICHOLAS RAYMOND DAMER to NICHOLAS RAYMOND LIBERTY

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.  
NOTICE OF HEARING: 02/05/2025, 9:00am, Southern Branch of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063. A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:  
ALMANAC  
Date: December 6, 2024  
Stephanie G. Garratt  
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT  
(ALM Dec 20, 2024, Jan 3, 10 and 17, 2025)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO  
Case No.: 24-CIV-07880  
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:  
Petitioner: Bradley Joseph-Van Tran filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:  
BRADLEY JOSEPH-VAN TRAN to BRADLEY VAN JOSEPH  
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.  
NOTICE OF HEARING: February 18, 2025, 9:00 AM, Superior Court of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063. A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:  
ALMANAC  
Date: DECEMBER 20, 2024  
Elizabeth Lee  
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT  
(ALM Jan 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2025)

## SUMMONS

### (CITATION JUDICIAL)

**Case Number: (Numero del Caso): 24-CIV-07684**

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT (AVISO AL DEMANDADO): ALL PERSONS UNKNOWN, CLAIMING ANY LEGAL OR EQUITABLE RIGHT, TITLE, ESTATE, LIEN OR INTEREST IN THE PROPERTY DESCRIBED IN THE COMPLAINT\* ADVERSE TO PLAINTIFFS' TITLE, OR ANY CLOUD UPON PLAINTIFFS' TITLE THERETO AND THE TESTATE AND INTERSTATE SUCCESSORS OF JUNE R. DONEGAN, DECEASED, THE TESTATE AND INTERSTATE SUCCESSORS OF RUSSELL J. SHUMAN, DECEASED, AND ALL PERSONS CLAIMING BY, THROUGH, OR UNDER SUCH DECEDENTS; AND DOES 1-10, INCLUSIVE.

**YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: (LO ESTÁ DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):** BRET F. MADHVANI, an individual, SERLA A. HIRSCHLER, an individual, and DAVID M. HIRSCHLER and SERLA A. HIRSCHLER, Trustees of the DAVID AND SERLA HIRSCHLER LIVING TRUST.

**NOTICE!** You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. **NOTE:** The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.

**¡AVISO!** Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación.

Tiene 30 DÍAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta.

Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia.

Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remisión a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services, (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California, (www.sucorte.ca.gov) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. **AVISO:** Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos exentos por imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperación de \$10,000 ó más de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que

pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desear el caso.

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y dirección de la corte es):

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

400 COUNTY CENTER

REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is:

(El nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):

MICHAEL R. WANSER, ESQ., GVM LAW, LLP

1000 MAIN STREET, SUITE 300

NAPA, CA 94559

(707) 252-9000

DATE (Fecha): 12/5/2024

Neal I. Taniguchi,

Clerk, by (Secretario)

Unaloto Finau

Deputy (Adjunto)  
**\*THE PROPERTY DESCRIBED IN THE COMPLAINT** is that certain real property located in San Mateo County, California, commonly known as 317 Bay Road, Menlo Park, California, 94025 designated as San Mateo County Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 062-035-150, and more particularly described as: Lot 3 in Block 7 as shown on map entitled "BLOCKS 1 TO 17 BELLE HAVEN CITY, SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA," filed in the office of the Recorder of San Mateo County on October 11, 1930 in Book 189 of Maps at Pages 43, 44, and 45.

(ALM Jan 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2025)

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

# Artscene

PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN  
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## Peninsula rock duo **Effie Zilch** celebrates 'Multitudes' with show at the Guild Theatre

Proceeds from the record release show will go to L.A. fire relief



Courtesy Effie Zilch

Peninsula roots-rock duo Effie Zilch is longtime friends Evanne Barcenas and Steve Wyreman.

By Karla Kane

At the heart of Peninsula rootsy-rock band Effie Zilch is the deep connection between longtime friends Steve Wyreman and Evanne Barcenas.

"The sort of magic between our partnership is, we have very different sensibilities in terms of what we bring to the table," Barcenas said. "I don't know if it's the confidence of being older and wiser but we are pretty open with each other. There's a lot of trust in the music partnership and the making of the music."

The duo's latest release, "Multitudes," which came out recently via East Palo Alto's Redtone Records, is a collection of songs that started percolating while Barcenas and Wyreman were on the road in recent years, touring with friend and Redtone label mate Miko Marks.

"Whenever we were home it was like this frenzy to get out the music that was circulating in our heads," Barcenas said (so much music, in fact, that she said a second batch of songs from this period will be coming out soon).

"It really felt like we were chasing time in a way, because there was so much material that had been built up in our travels, and that's 'Multitudes.'"

They'll celebrate the new record's release with a show at the Guild Theatre on Jan. 24, and donate the proceeds of the

concert to Los Angeles fire-relief efforts.

"Many of our musician friends are there and we feel called to do that," Barcenas said.

Effie Zilch's sound, showcasing Barcenas' soulful vocals and Wyreman's masterful guitar and keyboard skills, takes influence from classic rock'n'roll, country, folk and blues.

"All those things walked such a close line in the 1960s. We're drawing from a little bit of that era, with a few modern twists, because we are contemporary people living in the modern age," Wyreman said. "I'm not, like, a throwback artist or anything like that, but I think it was just whatever we were gravitating towards, what we thought sounded cool or interesting."

Wyreman "is a bit of a forensic musicologist," Barcenas said. "Steve's record collection is something to behold."

The duo's songwriting process varies from song to song, with Barcenas sometimes coming to Wyreman with lyrics and a melody ready to be fleshed out, for example, while sometimes he'll have a chord progression and hint of a vocal part that needs her magic touch.

"It is an absolutely pure collaboration," Barcenas said.

They also value authenticity over perfection.

"With technology, there's so much capability to make everything perfect, but a lot of what we

love about music is that human element," she said. "Multitudes," "sounds like who we are, not what we can make ourselves be. There's a rawness that I think more and more is speaking to me, as far as art is concerned."

The two first met in the 1990s as music-loving teenagers. Barcenas, a Menlo School alumna, recalled meeting Wyreman, who went to Menlo Atherton High School, in a hallway.

"Steve was carrying his faded yellow Strat," Barcenas said. "He started playing and I was, like, 'Oh my God! Well, I have to play music with him.'"

It was the start of a beautiful friendship — and a fruitful musical relationship. The two were soon playing in coffee shops and dive bars around the Bay Area, but their paths diverged after graduation. Barcenas headed to UCLA to study theater, while Wyreman embarked on a thriving full-time musical career, working in L.A. and New York with the likes of Rihanna and John Legend and touring with The Rolling Stones and Mary J. Blige. He even won a Grammy Award for his songwriting work on Leon Bridges' "Bet Ain't Worth the Hand," and was nominated for a second.

Meanwhile, after a few years of playing music in SoCal, Barcenas "had a colossal freakout. I was a young girl in L.A. kind of being told to be something that I wasn't. I kept getting really close and

then not getting anywhere," she said. "I cased up all my guitars and put them under my bed and didn't take them out for a while." She moved back up north and ended up working in tech, became a mother of two, and then returned to Menlo School as a performing arts teacher.

But Wyreman hadn't given up on Barcenas and their musical chemistry.

"He kept knocking on my door and asking what songs I had, and I kept saying, 'I don't have any, Steve; leave me alone!'" she said with a laugh. But eventually, when she attended a session of another band Wyreman was working with, she was ready to give music another chance.

With both band mates living on the Peninsula again, Effie Zilch (the band name comes from the mythical muse of the late, great San Francisco Chronicle columnist Herb Caen) has been going strong ever since, releasing multiple original albums and collaborating with other Redtone artists. They're also part of the blossoming artistic scene at Feldman's Books. In fact, one of their recent music videos, "One Hundred Years," was directed and produced by Feldman's store manager Aidan Stone, filmed in part at San Francisquito Creek and also at owner Jack Feldman's home.

"We're fortunate to have the Guild, and be a part of Feldman's with our fellow thinkers and

makers and readers," Barcenas said.

At the Jan. 24 show, Effie Zilch's lineup will include Barcenas on vocals and acoustic guitar; Wyreman on lead guitar; Redtone founder Justin Phipps on piano and harmonica; Will Baldocchi on drums, Josh Lippi on bass; and Kate Lamont and Kyle Tkatch on backing vocals. Special guests will include Tiffani Marie of Artelia Green, who recites poetry on the Effie Zilch track "Unsung Pages," Lee Bob and The Truth, and TK Rhodes (Tkatch and Lippi), with Lamont also performing one of her own songs. Ladera-raised musician Megan Keely will open the show. Her father, Bert Keely, Wyreman noted, taught him guitar years ago. "It all goes back," he said.

"Our philosophy of music at this point is, so many of our friends are incredibly talented. We're so lucky to play with them. Whenever we get a chance to play, it feels like family. We wanted to make that concert feel like that," Barcenas said. "A tribute to the music we make and the people we make it with." ■

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

Effie Zilch's record release show is Jan. 24, 8 p.m., The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park; \$34.76; [guildtheatre.com](http://guildtheatre.com).

# Worth a Look

## Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ & Blood Moon Orchestra

Multi-instrumentalist and Emmy Award-winning composer Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ combines Vietnamese musical traditions with fresh ideas and new compositions. Võ grew up and received her musical training in Vietnam and has called the Bay Area home since 2001. According to her website, she was the first Vietnamese

artist to perform at the White House, during the Obama administration. As part of Stanford Live's celebration of the harp, Võ, playing the Vietnamese 16-string đàn tranh (one of several instruments she uses in her musical career), is joined by Hwayoung Shon on the Korean gayageum, Shirley Muramoto on the Japanese koto, and Winnie Wong on the Chinese guzheng for an evening of harp and zither music.

Jan. 17, 7 and 9 p.m., *The Studio, Bing Concert Hall, 327 Lasuen St., Stanford*; \$45 general admission; at press time, the earlier show was at capacity, with tickets still available for the later show; [live.stanford.edu](http://live.stanford.edu).



Courtesy Jason Lew

Multi-instrumentalist and Emmy Award-winning composer Vân-Ánh Vanessa Võ performs at Stanford Live on Jan. 17.

## 'Noises Off'

A perennial theater favorite, Michael Frayn's madcap 1982 comedy "Noises Off" is a beloved play-within-a-play that follows the chaotic behind-the-scenes happenings of a cast and crew putting on a production of the ridiculous "Nothing On" as they reckon with all kinds of mishaps, missed lines and interpersonal clashes. Palo Alto Players offers its version of the ultimate backstage farce, directed by Linda Piccone and with actors playing both their characters and their characters' characters.

Jan. 17-Feb. 2, *Lucie Stern Theater, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto*; \$35-\$60; [palyplayers.org/event/noises-off](http://palyplayers.org/event/noises-off).

## Jerry's Middle Finger

The influence of the late Jerry Garcia still seems to loom large over the Peninsula, Garcia's former home. The latest Grateful Dead-adjacent act to come to the Guild, Jerry's Middle Finger, is a band founded about a decade ago by Garcia-loving musicians, playing the music of the Jerry Garcia Band (Garcia's non-Grateful Dead side project). The lineup includes lead guitarist and vocalist Garrett Deloian, vocalists Halina Janusz and Lisa Malsberger, keyboardist Jon Gold, bassist Son Vo and drummer and vocalist Rodney Newman.

Jan. 17, 8 p.m., *The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park*; \$38.24-\$86.91; [guildtheatre.com](http://guildtheatre.com).

## Schuyler Bailar

When Schuyler Bailar joined the men's swimming team at Harvard University, he became the first openly transgender NCAA Division I athlete. At Harvard, Bailar earned a degree in cognitive neuroscience and evolutionary psychology and now researches transgender health. He's also the host of the gender and culture podcast "Dear Schuyler" and creator of the online series LaneChanger.com. Bailar's book "He/She/They" is described as a "science-backed and common sense guide to the conversation about gender identity," covering topics such as pronouns and the debate over trans women in sports. Bailar will discuss the book at Kepler's in conversation with writer Marcie Bianco, the print editor of Stanford Social Innovation Review and the author of "Breaking Free: The Lie of Equality and the Feminist Fight for Freedom."

Jan. 17, 7 p.m., *Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real #100, Menlo Park*; \$11.41-\$45.09; [tinyurl.com/BailarKeplers](http://tinyurl.com/BailarKeplers).

## Jeff Minniweather

Jazz drummer Jeff Minniweather and friends (Steve Heckman on saxophone, Doug Miller on bass and Larry Vuckovich on piano) perform the music of two jazz icons — Duke Ellington and Count Basie — at two shows at Meyhouse Palo Alto this week.

Jan. 18, 6:30 and 8:30 p.m., *Meyhouse Palo Alto, 640 Emerson St., Palo Alto*; \$50; [meyhousejazz.com](http://meyhousejazz.com).



Courtesy The Haggin Museum, Stockton, CA

The painting "Flowers and Fruit," credited to Artist Uncertain, is the focus of Stephanie A. Brown's book.

## A mystery flowers in 'The Case of the Disappearing Gauguin'

Redwood City author's book examines  
the authenticity of a rare West Coast  
Gauguin painting

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

It is almost always newsworthy when a valuable work of art is found in a thrift store or hidden in the back of an attic. Museum curators revel in finding previously undiscovered or unrecognized masterpieces in their capacious collections. But what happens when the opposite scenario takes place — when a masterwork is determined not to be authentic and therefore not of value?

Redwood City resident Stephanie A. Brown, who holds a doctorate in French history from Stanford University, has written a fascinating book entitled "The Case of the Disappearing Gauguin: A Study of Authenticity and the Art Market," about this very subject. The book reads like a detective story with a famous artist, shadowy characters, international settings and, at its core, a beautiful still life painting that may, or may not, have been created by post-impressionist Paul Gauguin.

The saga began in 2016 when Brown, who has worked as a curator and professor of museum studies at various institutions, was contracted by the Haggin Museum in Stockton, California to assess their art collection. Little did she know that this consulting position would consume her for the next four years and take her across the country and even to France in order to undertake research in libraries and archives.

"I met retired curators whose

books I had used in my research. I went into paintings storage in Brest's Fine Art Museum. I became friendly with the archivists I met. I had not imagined, when sitting in my desk during the pandemic, that this project would lead to that," she said.

In order to understand the importance of Brown's work a little background is needed, both on the painting in question and the museum in which it has been housed for the last 94 years. The Haggin, which is located in Stockton's Victory Park, was founded almost a century ago to celebrate the city's prominence as an agricultural center of the San Joaquin Valley. Collections include farming equipment, Native American baskets and a one-room school house. But there is also a fine art component that consists of notable paintings by American landscape artists Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran as well as European paintings by Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Marie Laurencin.

Why would a regional history museum own works of fine art? The museum owes its very existence to the largesse of Eila Haggin McKee and her husband, Robert. When the city was failing in its efforts to raise funds for the museum, McKee stepped forward and offered to underwrite it, with the proviso that the museum be named after his late wife's family and that they accept her art collection. And so, the Haggin Museum not only owned historical artifacts but also prized art

works, the most valuable of which was a small, undated painting entitled “Flowers and Fruit” by Paul Gauguin.

The painting held pride of place in the museum’s galleries, especially as the value of Gauguin’s art work rose into the millions of dollars. It received little fanfare or notice otherwise until the day Brown entered the museum and saw it.

“I was so surprised to come across a Gauguin in Stockton — the Haggin’s art collection is almost all academic, mainstream and traditional art and Paul Gauguin did not fit into that category,” she explained.

Brown began to piece together the history, or provenance, of the painting with some financial backing from the museum as well as during her own travels. In the book, she details how the painting appeared in an auction house in Paris in 1923 and then changed hands numerous times before traveling across the Atlantic in 1929 to appear in an exhibition at the Reinhart Gallery in New York City. This is where McKee, the daughter of a wealthy California landowner and miner, acquired the painting and brought it back to her collection in Stockton, where it remained until her death.

Brown’s meticulous and detailed research into the history

of the painting might lead one to wonder why there would be any question about the authenticity of “Flowers and Fruit.” But Brown’s book very effectively explains why, in the vast and murky world of the art market, it is just not that simple.

In order for an art work to be deemed the real thing, acceptance by recognized experts who create a catalogue raisonné, a detailed listing of an artist’s work that includes data like title, date, exhibition and auction history, must be undertaken. In 1964, the first catalogue raisonné for Gauguin listed the painting as having “disappeared.”

Brown said, “In the 1950s both French and American culture was more parochial than now, and people in Stockton didn’t know what was happening in the art world, any more than the art world knew that there was a history and art museum in Stockton.”

It did not help that the Gauguin painting at the Haggin was never really publicized and it never left the museum to be loaned to other, larger institutions. This meant that curators and art historians never had a chance to establish one other important aspect of validity for a work of art: connoisseurship. “So, if there had been an art curator at the Haggin in the 1950s who knew someone



Courtesy Hellena Cedeno Photography  
Author Stephanie A. Brown.

at MOMA, say, and the still life had been exhibited there, that would have been an opportunity for the art world to examine it, to see if it made sense in the context of Gauguin’s other works,” said Brown.

Added to the complexity of the situation is the almost Byzantine life of the artist himself. Gauguin is perhaps best known for his tumultuous relationship with fellow artist Vincent van Gogh, thanks to recent books and movies. Brown’s careful research into his life as a self-taught painter, a voyager to tropical locales and a pioneer in the symbolic use of color hones in on Gauguin’s peripatetic lifestyle as a key component. “For Gauguin, who died on the far side of the world from his family in Denmark and his friends and colleagues in France, and who was a nomad most of

his professional life, it’s much more difficult to be sure of what’s what, what’s real and what isn’t,” she said.

The artist was often destitute and left canvases with landlords as collateral or traded them for needed goods. Unlike van Gogh, there was no one person who collected, organized and cared for his voluminous output, leaving Gauguin’s work vulnerable to forgery.

A more recent catalogue raisonné does not include “Flowers and Fruit,” but that does not mean the story is over. Brown’s book has led to an exhibition at the Haggin that invites viewers to examine the painting, read its history (which now includes technical analysis of the paint and canvas) and decide for themselves.

On view at the Haggin through the spring is “The Case of the Disappearing Gauguin,” an exhibition drawn from Brown’s book that also borrows its title. The show tells of the painting’s journey and delves into what technical analysis of the paint and canvas reveals.

Brown said that the Haggin can play the long game, since the painting is held in perpetuity by the museum and, while it is currently labeled as “artist uncertain,” tastes and opinions change over time. She joked that, “Unless

we find a photograph of Gauguin standing in front of this painting holding a sign that says, ‘Here’s my painting’ we will never have a definitive answer.” But after years of research and examination, what does she think about “Flowers and Fruit”?

“I think different things on different days. What is more interesting to me is how much we all care about the idea of authenticity. The painting is authentic; it has traveled, it has had a whole life, it’s connected to the people in Paris, New York and Stockton. Regardless of whether it is or isn’t a Gauguin, it’s a historical object that can tell us things about our common cultural past. And it’s a pretty painting.” ■

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The Haggin Museum is located at 1201 N. Pershing Ave., Stockton. “The Case of the Disappearing Gauguin” is on view until April 6. [hagginmuseum.org](http://hagginmuseum.org)

“The Case of the Disappearing Gauguin: A Study of Authenticity and the Art Market” is available at [rowman.com](http://rowman.com) and at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

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# Food & Drink

## Spice it up!

Check out these local companies offering specialty spices, seasonings and teas

By Karla Kane

They say variety is the spice of life, so this week we're mixing it up and exploring three local companies offering spices and tea blends in various configurations. Beirut Spice Co. brings high-quality, sustainably sourced spices and seasonings direct from Lebanon to the U.S. Whole Spice Kitchen aims to make it simple to cook wholesome, favorite Indian meals at home, and Simply Bhonu offers special chai blends and an emphasis on Parsi cuisine.

### Simply Bhonu

Over the course of her three decades or so in the food and hospitality industries, chef Perinaz (Peri) Avari has worked in high-end hotels in India, promoted Indian cuisine in China and, after moving to the Bay Area, founded food companies that catered to offices around Silicon Valley. Now she's followed her heart by starting Simply Bhonu, a Menlo Park-based tea and spice brand that pays tribute to her heritage and aims to make Indian — and especially Parsi — cuisine more accessible to home chefs.

Avari grew up in Mumbai, India, and is of Parsi heritage. Parsi culture stems from Zoroastrian Persians who, fleeing persecution, immigrated to western India around the eighth century C.E. and developed a regional Parsi culinary style that fuses Persian flavors

and techniques with Indian ones, she said. Parsi dishes often have a distinctive balance between tartness and sweetness, for example, thanks to blends of sugar and vinegar or lemon, she said.

While she's enjoyed her food and hospitality work over the years, "this is more my dream, my passion," Avari said of her company, which she launched in 2022 and which was all started by her penchant for a great cup of tea.

"I love chai. I've been making this blend forever," she said of the cozy, classic Indian beverage, which marries strong black tea with warming, flavorful spices. Avari said she's perfected her own version of masala chai with cardamom, ginger root, nutmeg and mint after years of brewing it at home each morning.

Avari has also developed her take on a Parsi choi (the Parsi word for tea), featuring lemongrass, mint and rose petals, offering a more delicate, herbal profile than traditional masala chai.

"I like to say, 'Have the masala chai in the morning, when you need that hit of spices. In the afternoon, have the Parsi choi,'" Avari said.

Both chai blends are available as loose-leaf tea, which is Avari's preferred brewing method. Avari had personally stopped using tea bags altogether, dismayed by what she'd learned about many bags being made with unnecessary plastics. But "really quickly the



Courtesy Simply Bhonu

Simply Bhonu is a Menlo Park-based tea and spice brand that aims to make Indian and Parsi cuisine more accessible to home chefs.

market had spoken and they wanted tea bags," she said. She spent six months hunting for a more eco-friendly option and now also offers both blends in plant-based bags as well.

"No strings, no staples, no tags: You just put in the compost," she noted.

Last year, she expanded beyond chai to include spices. Simply Bhonu (bhonu means "food" in Parsi) currently offers blends including seasonal mulling spices, garam masala (a multipurpose Indian staple made of cardamom, black pepper, cinnamon, cloves, cumin, coriander and nutmeg), and her signature Parsi Dhansak Vaghar blend made of onion, jaggery (an unrefined sugar), red chili pepper, cumin, tamarind, coriander, mustard, salt, ginger, cardamom, garlic and cinnamon. The package contains instructions for making the complete dish — just add lentils, a bit of salt, vegetables and an optional protein of your choice.

The goal is to provide "spices that will make life easier when you put it in one pot and cook an Indian meal for, like, six people," she said. "The idea is (about) simplifying life when Indian cooking is concerned."

Simply Bhonu sources its spices from an Indian distributor in Berkeley and San Francisco Herb Co. The black tea is imported from Assam, in northeastern India. Avari hopes to add more Indian and Parsi seasoning blends to her line eventually.

Simply Bhonu's products are available online and at pop-up markets and events around the Peninsula and San Francisco. They're also in stock at Little Green in Redwood City. Avari shares recipes for her takes on Parsi and Indian meals via her blog, Peri's Spice Ladle, as well as via several e-cookbooks.

Avari, who also teaches group and private cooking classes, hopes to get Simply Bhonu products into more retail locations over the next year. For now, she's relishing her time meeting

potential customers face-to-face.

"I love talking to people in person," she said.

More information is available at [simplybhonu.com](http://simplybhonu.com).

### Beirut Spice Co.

Naseem and Tina Raad, the husband-and-wife duo behind Beirut Spice Co., grew up in both Lebanon and locally (in Los Gatos and Daly City, respectively), and they still split their time between Lebanon and the Bay Area. They founded



Courtesy Simply Bhonu

Simply Bhonu offers two tea blends — masala chai and Parsi choi.



Courtesy Simply Bhonu

Chef Peri Avari is the founder of Simply Bhonu, a Peninsula-based spice blend and tea company.

their company with the goal of contributing positively to the Lebanese economy, which has been in crisis for the past several years.

They asked themselves, “What products do we have available that we could export and sell on the international market?” Naseem Raad recalled. “I was talking to my uncle and he mentioned that he had met this farmer who was the head of a co-op, who gathered products from a number of sources.”

This planted a seed of an idea to help support Lebanese independent farmers by exporting their high-quality herbs and spices.

“We identified spices that were ready to go, set up the supply chain, registered with the FDA, worked with customs and brought it in,” Naseem Raad said. “We do fair trade with the farmers. We share our profits transparently with them; that’s kind of the core of this process.”

Beirut Spice Co. was launched about a year and a half ago and currently offers spices and seasoning blends, including za’atar (wild thyme, sumac and toasted sesame seeds, also available in a spicy blend), Aleppo pepper and several salt mixes.

Tina Raad’s personal favorite is the Mediterranean sea salt blend, with rosemary, dried onion, oregano, wild thyme, smoked chili flakes, dried parsley and fennel seed.

“I put it with everything — chicken, pasta, avocado, salmon, eggs,” she said. “I don’t have to think about what to mix together; it’s all already thought of for me.”

The company is also focused on sustainable agriculture, using noninvasive plants that have been flourishing in Lebanon for millennia and are harvested with traditional methods.

“We weren’t interested in bringing something in that involved a lot of water or wasn’t natural to the area,” Naseem Raad said. “These are herbs and spices that grow very naturally.”

They’re also proud that their products are vacuum sealed for freshness, as opposed to using citric acid or oils as preservatives.

Although the Raads are new to the supply chain and import-export world, Tina Raad does have some experience in the food and beverage industry in the United States, having worked as a hotel manager as well as selling homemade jams and jellies at farmers markets about a decade ago.

Because of her background, “I’m the leading force of the in-person markets we do for the spices,” she said. “I like to be out in the community and meet people and connect with small businesses.”



Courtesy Beirut Spice Co.

Mediterranean herb sea salt is Tina Raad’s personal favorite product.

San Francisco is now their U.S. base, and they’re bringing their products to markets and events around the Bay Area, including on the Peninsula. Over the summer they were part of the annual Lebanese Festival in Redwood City and, in late December, came to Head West Marketplace in downtown San Mateo.

They have warehouses on the West Coast and East Coast and sell all their products online via their website and on Amazon, as well as in a few retail stores (in San Francisco and Pleasanton). They hope to expand into wholesale on a larger scale eventually.

“There is a market for

Mediterranean spices and products and goods,” Naseem Raad said. “The Mediterranean diet, and Middle Eastern foods, are trending really well in the Bay.”

Though the company is a new one — “We’re still babies, in the business sense,” Naseem Raad said — they’re optimistic for the future.

Above all, they’re keeping their mission to bring all-natural Middle Eastern flavors to the U.S. while sustainably nurturing Lebanon’s economy at the forefront. The Raads are full of appreciation for their employees in Lebanon, who have persevered under tumultuous conditions to deliver high-quality products ahead of time, even



Courtesy Beirut Spice Co.

Naseem and Tina Raad founded Beirut Spice Co. out of a desire to support the economy in Lebanon while bringing high-quality spices and seasonings to the U.S.



Courtesy Beirut Spice Co.

Beirut Spice Co. offers premium spices and seasonings from Lebanon.

during periods of increased danger, upheaval and wartime conditions.

“We’re trying to build up sectors from the ground up,” Naseem Raad said. “Employing people and doing it through business, in a way that doesn’t prey on the farmers, and we hope that it continues from there.”

More information is available at [beirutspice.co](http://beirutspice.co).

### Whole Spice Kitchen

Leena Jadhav grew up loving the delicious Indian food prepared by her mother. But she didn’t actually learn to cook until she became a mother herself and started getting more interested in nutrition and food.

“I essentially just did a lot of research, trial and error, so many cookbooks,” she said.

When her daughter went off to college, she missed these home-cooked family meals.

“(My daughter) got her first apartment, and she wanted to make some of these dishes,” Jadhav said. “With Indian food, it requires a lot of different spices and speciality ingredients. Some of them are hard to find.”

She wrote down her favorite recipes and gathered ingredients, sending them off in care packages to her daughter, whose roommates also enjoyed being able to make fresh Indian meals at home. Meanwhile, Jadhav’s friends also expressed an interest in trying Indian cooking but didn’t know where to start.

“It shouldn’t be this hard to make these dishes; the hardest part is getting all the ingredients, having them on hand,” she recalled thinking. In 2022 she began testing and experimenting to come up with recipe starters to make Indian cooking at home more user-friendly for the general public. And in 2023, Whole Spice Kitchen was launched.

The company, which operates out of a commercial kitchen in San Mateo, gives customers shelf-stable, pre-portioned whole and ground spices, detailed recipes and dry goods such as rice, beans or lentils. These ingredients can be used to make meals such as palak paneer, achari chicken, black-eyed peas with spinach and split red lentils with basmati rice. Cooking methods include options for pressure cooking, stovetop and oven preparation, depending on the recipe.

No preservatives or processed items are used, according to Whole Spice Kitchen’s website. Customers add proteins and vegetables to complete the meal (along with pantry staples, such as cooking oil).

“These are dishes I grew up eating and enjoy making for our family,” Jadhav said. While she loves them all, “If I had to choose one it would be the cauliflower (with turmeric and green chilis),” she said, which comes with a recipe and two spice mixes.

Indian cuisine, she said, is nutrient rich. It’s typically made with fresh vegetables and lean- and plant-based proteins, and it boasts anti-inflammatory properties thanks to the spices (which also give it plenty of flavor).

“It’s inherently healthy in that way,” she said.

And while not all of her recipes are plant-based, “I have a lot of customers starting a vegan (or vegetarian) lifestyle, or they just want more options for vegetables,” she said.

The products are available online, as well as at select pop-ups and at the San Mateo Farmers’ Market. Jadhav obtains her spices from Bay Area spice merchants.

The company is “100% direct-to-consumer right now,” she

See **SPICE IT UP!**, page 23

# Ettan owners to debut new Cal-Indian restaurant in Menlo Park

Eylan's menu focuses on live-fire cooking and an extensive wine program

By Adrienne Mitchel

The creators of Palo Alto's Ettan are launching what they say is their "most polished product yet." Eylan, a Cal-Indian restaurant focused on live-fire cooking.

Chef Srijith Gopinathan and restaurateur Ayesha Thapar's newest restaurant opens Wednesday, Jan. 15, at The Villa Menlo Park, newly opened within the Stanford's Middle Plaza development, less than a 10-minute drive from Ettan. The menu features seasonal ingredients and pan-Indian flavors, with influence from the Bay Area's culinary landscape.

"We're trying to give people the diversity and the depth of what the Indian story looks like because people tend to box India in a very certain space," Thapar said.

Thapar, who also co-created Los Altos' Little Blue Door and San Francisco's Copra with Gopinathan, explained that Indian cuisine hasn't yet achieved mainstream popularity to the extent that other cuisines, like Italian or Japanese, have. People tend to imagine Indian cuisine as either North Indian (butter chicken, naan, etc.) or South Indian (dosa, sambar, etc.), but Indian cuisine can be much more, Thapar said. For example, Eylan is offering ceviche and Kobe beef with Indian flavors.

"We wanted to create a concept that was built around a wood-fired grill and to show a different aspect of the Indian cuisine that may be viewed as a little bit more approachable, less ethnic, more global (and) more influenced by California," Thapar said.

Eylan's menu includes Indian-inspired snacks and small plates, like taro root chaat with winter vegetables, as well as puchkas (spherical deep-fried hollow shells made from flour) filled with chickpeas, green grapes and chaas (a cultured dairy drink). Find innovative Indian breads, like mutabar with sweet potato or Dungeness crab, as well as flaxseed poee with smoked eggplant choka, avocado thecha and burani raita, a yogurt sauce.

Vegetarian live-fired items include celeriac and pineapple with spicy murabba (a fruit preserve) glaze, as well as king trumpet mushrooms in achaari spice rub with smoked chili ghee. Nonvegetarian live-fired dishes include blue shrimp with lemongrass, ajwain (a pungent spice seed) and turmeric; pomegranate chicken kebab with lime vinaigrette; and whole sea bream with a spiced scallion crust, coconut and fish bone broth and nine grain kitchadi (a rice and lentil dish).

For Gopinathan, wood-fired cooking takes him back to his childhood in India. Born in Kerala and raised in Tamil Nadu, he didn't have access to gas cooking until middle school.

"Eylan's cuisine is focusing not just in one part of India, it's actually the length and breadth of India," Gopinathan said. "It's a very enjoyable, very fun kind of cuisine ... focusing on the essence of live-fire cooking from across the country."

The dessert menu includes a masala chai "sundae" with toasted ghee cake, whipped bourbon milk, cardamom-soaked cherries and a spiced crumble, as well as a shaved rose lassi featuring fluffy ice flavored with

gulkand, a sweet preserve of rose petals, and strawberries.

One facet of Eylan that stands out from Gopinathan and Thapar's previous projects is the wine program, they said.

"With Eylan, we wanted wine to be a feature of the story ... and hence we really built the restaurant keeping wine in mind, which I don't think we did for the other two," Thapar said.

Eylan offers over 200 bottles from classic regions like Burgundy, Champagne, Piedmont and California, curated by wine director Andre Sydnor, who also created Copra's wine program.

The bar menu, created by West Bev Consulting, includes nonalcoholic, low-ABV and full-proof beverages, all influenced by the flavors of India. Eylan's Week in the Knees is a nonalcoholic milk punch made with Pathfinder amaro (a hemp-based nonalcoholic spirit), spiced tamarind syrup, lemon and Demerara sugar. Low-ABV options include Time Out, made with vermouth blanc, lime, lemongrass and prosecco, and full-proof options include Bazaar Paloma with tamarind, grapefruit, mezcal and warm spices.

The 148-seat restaurant includes a covered patio and a 50-seat private dining room on the second floor. Three olive trees stand prominently in the main dining room, and the private dining room features AI-generated artwork.

"We don't force fit a concept into a location," Thapar said. "We almost build a concept for a location. We look at what the location warrants, and so we had this particular location in mind. From a design perspective, we



Courtesy Chad Santo Tomas

The bar area at Eylan, a new Cal-Indian restaurant in Menlo Park specialized in live-fire cooking.

wanted to be very bold, very colorful."

Gopinathan and Thapar anticipate the restaurant's location will bring in customers from Woodside and Atherton, a demographic that hasn't been as prevalent at Ettan, as well as attract customers who aren't too keen about the lack of parking in downtown Palo Alto.

"I hope that Eylan is viewed as a totally different and unique product from the other two that we've created," Thapar said. "So I hope that when people compare it, it stands up against the other two, and I also hope that it's different from the other two."

The pair wish Eylan, like Ettan, becomes both a beloved neighborhood restaurant and a destination restaurant.

"I think we have all the ingredients to become the newest sweetheart of Peninsula,"

Gopinathan said.

Gopinathan and Thapar aren't stopping at Eylan — they're working on a line of food products and are in the early stages of a new project "very different to the other three (restaurants)" that revolves "strongly around a drinks concept."

"As long as what we have to say is different, we'll do a new brand," Thapar said. If not, they'll open additional locations of their existing restaurant concepts, but not in the Bay Area, she said. ■

Email Food Editor Adrienne Mitchel at [amitchel@almanacnews.com](mailto:amitchel@almanacnews.com).

Eylan, 500 El Camino Real, Menlo Park, Instagram: @eylanrestaurant. Open Tuesday to Sunday from 5-10 p.m.



Courtesy Chad Santo Tomas

The menu at Eylan focuses on live-fire cooking, including kebabs.



Courtesy Chad Santo Tomas

West Bev Consulting developed the cocktail program at Eylan, which includes drinks like Dirty Spritz, Not a Trace and Flavor Flav.



Courtesy Whole Spice Kitchen

Whole Spice Kitchen founder Leena Jadhav offers info on her products at the USA Today Wine and Food Experience in October 2024.

**SPICE IT UP!**  
continued from page 21

said. “I really like to be able to talk to our customers (in person or via email). I want to make sure that all the questions are answered.”

She likes the idea of eventually offering products in local, independent grocery shops as well,

and hopes to add more recipes to her offerings soon, including some regional specialties.

Jadhav has never started a business or worked in the food industry before.

“All this is an incredible new adventure of learning and experiments,” she said.

Her hope is to help others in the way that she helped her

daughter and her college friends — making it easy and convenient to prepare fresh Indian food and get the pleasurable creative and sensory experience of working hands-on with whole ingredients.



Courtesy Whole Spice Kitchen

Whole Spice Kitchen’s recipe kit for roasted cabbage with fennel includes special spice blends.

“There are so many options to eat out, order out, buy premade food,” she said. “I do really want to support folks who want to cook at home, who want to take charge of what they’re making, what ingredients they’re using,

what they’re cooking for their family.”

More information is available at [wholespicekitchen.com](http://wholespicekitchen.com). ■

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



Courtesy Whole Spice Kitchen

Whole Spice Kitchen packages offer customers pre-measured portions of whole and ground spices with a goal of making Indian cooking at home easier.

## Menlo Park Yearly Market Report

January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

*Rossetti Realty Inc.*

TOP 10 SALES*			
1. \$13,750,000 1170 May Brown Avenue	2. \$12,000,000 842 Hermosa Way	3. \$9,980,000 680 Cotton Street	4. \$9,700,000 1221 Cotton Street
5. \$9,500,000 3 Shasta Lane	6. \$9,025,000 480 Arlington Way	7. \$8,580,000 1045 Trinity Drive	8. \$8,501,000 2315 Crest Lane
		9. \$8,286,525 2308 Loma Prieta Lane	10. \$8,200,000 680 Ringwood Avenue

<b>ACTIVE LISTING</b> Y24: 492 (+6%) Y23: 464	<b>AVERAGE SALES PRICE</b> Y24: \$3,417,296 (+1%) Y23: \$3,395,619	<b>AVERAGE SALES PRICE/SQ FT</b> Y24: \$1,484 (+2%) Y23: \$1,452
<b>PENDING LISTING</b> Y24: 333 (+9%) Y23: 305	<b>AVERAGE SOLD DAYS ON MARKET</b> Y24: 24 (-11%) Y23: 27	<b>MONTHS OF INVENTORY</b> Y24: 1.20 (-20%) Y23: 1.50 <small>If no further homes/condos were to come to market, the area would be SOLD OUT of residential real estate in the number of MONTHS shown</small>
<b>SOLD LISTING</b> Y24: 347 (+16%) Y23: 299	<b>SALE/LIST PRICE</b> Y24: 103.30% (+2%) Y23: 100.80%	<b>30 YEAR MORTGAGE RATE</b> Y24: 7.04% (+2%) Y23: 6.90% <small>Source: Bankrate</small>

\*Year 2024 compared to Year 2023 \*Source: MLS Listings for Single Family Properties | Townhomes | Condos

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Tucked away on a serene acre, this remarkable estate seamlessly blends luxury and livability with unmatched privacy and proximity. Spanning 10,462 square feet of thoughtfully curated living space, plus over 400 square feet of utility rooms, the home showcases high-end finishes and impeccable craftsmanship across a multi-level layout designed for modern lifestyles. Expansive living areas flow into a gourmet chef's kitchen, cinema-grade theater, sauna, executive office, and a wine cellar with a tasting room, offering a perfect blend of spaces for grand entertaining, working from home, and serene relaxation. Five generously sized bedrooms, each with its own en suite bathroom, include a lavish primary suite that serves as a personal sanctuary. Outside, the lush, resort-like grounds evoke the ambiance of a tropical getaway, featuring a sparkling pool, outdoor kitchen, fireplace, and an unrivaled sense of serenity unique to Los Altos Hills. Additionally, you will enjoy two garages, solar panels, and home automation. Despite its secluded feel, this estate is just a short walk from downtown Los Altos and a quick drive to Silicon Valley's top tech companies, commute routes, and top-tier schools, including Gardner Bullis Elementary (buyer to verify eligibility).

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