

The Almanac

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

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At IKEA, after-hours work drones on Company says technology won't replace workers

By Arden Margulis

Stocking shelves at IKEA just got a high-tech twist: drones now buzz through the East Palo Alto warehouse after dark, checking inventory while humans sleep. The store is the 100th in the Scandinavian chain to get the airborne assistants, which promise more accurate stock data and fewer headaches for staff.

For now, the drones will operate only when staff and customers are not in the warehouse. However, they are capable of running night and day. In some IKEA distribution centers, drones already operate all day.

IKEA partnered with Swiss autonomous drone company Verity to create the drones. Verity also works with other companies including e-commerce giant Amazon and American shipping courier United Parcel Service, according to its website.

Before the roll out, Verity mapped the store and created a "digital twin" of the warehouse, according to Verity Customer Success Manager Adam Sloan.

"Verity drones are equipped with cameras and motion sensors that enable them to navigate their environment with near-perfect reliability," said Sloan. "Any facility co-worker can begin the process by simply clicking a button to unlock the system. The drones then take off, fly to each location they are scheduled to scan, and complete the task. This entire cycle can take place with no dedicated operator on site, including at night or at weekends, without the need for any lighting."

"It's really important to make sure that we have good stock accuracy for our customers," said EPA store manager Natasha Marsh.



Arden Margulis

See **IKEA**, page 20

The IKEA store in East Palo Alto joins others in the company in using drones to help with after-hours tasks.

Atherton won't disclose anonymous donor for new police motorcycles

First Amendment advocates note potential for conflict

By Arden Margulis

The Atherton Police Department and City Council unanimously accepted an anonymous \$180,000 donation for three new motorcycles. The donation will pay for three new BMW motorcycles to replace older ones police say have exceeded their service life, according to a staff report.

When asked if police solicited the donation, Deputy City Manager Anthony Suber said, "The police department often gets donations from residents that are unsolicited."

The donor asked to be anonymous, which is "typical," according to Suber.

David Loy, legal director of the First Amendment Coalition, said Atherton cannot hide the identity of donors. The First Amendment Coalition is a non-profit that works to advance government transparency and highlight free speech concerns. The city declined to disclose the donor or say if the donation was solicited, despite inquiries by The Almanac.

"The public has an overwhelming and compelling interest in knowing who is giving favors to or receiving favors from a public agency," said Loy. "Does this person potentially have other business for the city? Are they potentially seeking to curry favor with the city? Do they have a potential land use

issue or zoning permit up for approval? This is precisely why we have public disclosure laws, because transparency is the oxygen of accountability, and the people cannot hold the government accountable without the information necessary to do so."

This news organization requested more information under the California Public Records Act, including communications with the donor, documents showing the donation and a ledger of past donations with donors' names. Under state law, Atherton must respond by April 25 with either the records, a timeline for disclosure, or a legal justification for withholding them.

"The donation may be entirely

legitimate and altruistic, but the people have a right to get all the information necessary to decide that for themselves," Loy said.

Similar battles over donor anonymity have played out across California.

In 2001, the Court of Appeals ruled that a California State University, Fresno-affiliated foundation could not conceal the names of donors who paid for luxury stadium suites, following a lawsuit by the Sacramento Bee. The court rejected claims that disclosure would violate donor privacy or deter future contributions, stating: "The public should also be able to determine whether any favoritism or advantage has been afforded certain individuals or entities in connection

with the license agreements, and whether any discriminatory treatment exists."

Loy believes that case is analogous to Atherton's situation.

"This is exactly why we have campaign finance laws. People running for office have to disclose who gave them money because the public has a right to know who is paying for someone's campaign. Well, the same principle applies to who is paying for city operations," Loy said.

In another case, the independent Auditor-Controller in Orange County forced officials to reveal the donor behind a \$50,000 park improvement gift. ■

Email Staff Writer Arden Margulis at amargulis@almanacnews.com.

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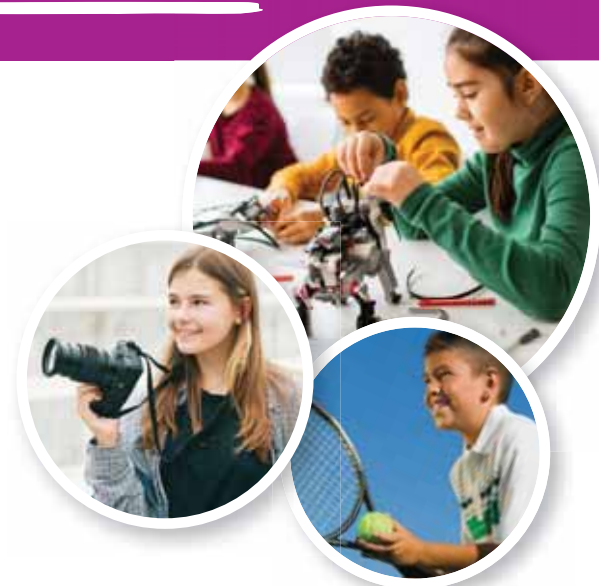
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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Scenes from a rehearsal for the Portola Valley Theatre Conservatory's upcoming show, "The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane," on April 21.

Portola Valley Theatre Conservatory's MainStage show returns

Intergenerational performance feels like family

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The Portola Valley Theatre Conservatory's MainStage performance is back after a five-year hiatus with a production of "The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane." The play, featuring veteran performers and newbies ages 7 to 79, is the first MainStage production since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Due to popular demand, PVTVC Executive Director Maddie Zdeblick decided she wanted to bring MainStage productions back as a way to reunite the community in a

multigenerational performance.

"The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane" is based on the children's novel by Kate DiCamillo and was adapted into a stage play by Dwayne Hartford. It tells the story of a porcelain rabbit that feels that his life as an inanimate object is out of his control. As he gets moved around, he meets new people and learns the meaning and importance of relationships.

"I think a lot of people in our community and around the world are feeling a little bit out of control," said Zdeblick. "And so this play has been a way for us to remind each other and hopefully

remind others that the one thing we can really hold on to during these times is each other and really lean strongly into those relationships we're building."

The production embodies a sense of community, featuring children, parents and elders who all have varying levels of experience acting, but are all just having fun. The cast includes a married couple, a father and daughter and a mother and her children.

Jay Hartman was encouraged to audition for the play by his daughter Avery Hartman

See **THEATRE**, page 12

Sheriff Corpus files public records lawsuit against county

Suit seeks access to Cordell's contract, billings

By Arden Margulis

Sheriff Christina Corpus has filed a lawsuit against San Mateo County alleging the county improperly withheld documents about Judge LaDoris Cordell's agreement with the county to investigate Corpus.

The lawsuit, filed on Friday, April 11, claims Corpus requested Cordell's contract, her invoices, her timesheets and records of payments on March 7, 2025, and the county denied her request on April 1, citing attorney-client privilege and the work-product doctrine.

In her March 7 request, Corpus also requested all emails between Cordell and the Board of Supervisors and the county attorney's office, unredacted versions of any evidence Cordell obtained or created during her investigation, all correspondence between County Executive Mike Callagy — who is also named in the suit — and members of the Sheriff's Office regarding Victor Anelle, and all correspondence between Callagy and former Assistant Sheriff Ryan Monaghan since Sept. 1, 2024. The county declined all of the requests, except for emails between Callagy and Monaghan — and the county said it found no responsive documents. She is not seeking any of those documents in her lawsuit.

According to the First Amendment Coalition, a legal group that assists journalists and citizens with obtaining

public records, attorney-client privilege only applies to communications between an attorney and their client provided it is "made for the purpose of the legal consultation, rather than some unrelated or ancillary purpose."

For the work-product doctrine to apply, the documents must be created by an attorney while representing their client and must include the "impressions, conclusions, opinions, or legal research or theories" of the attorney.

The FAC also said that billing records can be disclosed under the Public Records Act as long as "the records do not relate to active and ongoing litigation and do not disclose information for the purpose of legal consultation between the public entity and its attorney."

Corpus claims that since the board commissioned Cordell to "perform an investigation under the Board's legislative powers in order to pass legislation" it is not considered "ongoing litigation." She cites a previous court ruling that said the Cordell report was an "investigation in connection with proposing or enacting legislation" to support her claim that the report is not part of ongoing litigation.

The case is scheduled for a case management conference on June 23. ■



Christina Corpus

Two office veterans announce candidacy for county superintendent

Candidates vie to succeed Nancy Magee

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Days after current Superintendent of Schools Nancy Magee announced she would not seek re-election in 2026, two candidates from the San Mateo County Office of Education have declared they are entering the race for the superintendent seat in the June 2026 election.

Héctor Camacho, executive director of Equity, Social Justice and Inclusion of the San Mateo County Office of Education, and Chelsea Bonini, county Board of Education trustee, are vying for the position.

The superintendent of schools oversees the San Mateo County Office of Education and provides support to 23 school districts in the county. The elected

individual is responsible for reviewing school district budgets and monitoring its compliance with state and federal laws.

For the remainder of Magee's term, she said she will be focused on implementing initiatives to increase access to youth mental health services and to accomplish the Office of Education's strategic goals. Magee's term will end in January 2027.

Chelsea Bonini

Bonini, who was elected in 2020 and re-elected in 2024, carries over a decade of experience in educational leadership from her service on the Office of Education's Personnel Commission and as a San Mateo Foster City School Board trustee. She began her career in education in 1994 as a kindergarten teacher in the South

San Francisco Unified School District.

"Strong schools are the foundation of thriving communities," said Bonini in a press release. "I am committed to ensuring that every student in San Mateo County has access to inclusive and high-quality educational opportunities."

See **CANDIDATES**, page 20

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS



Courtesy Menlo School

The cast of “Curtains” assembles for a photo.

Menlo School’s production of ‘Curtains’ nears

Menlo School in Atherton is presenting its production of “Curtains,” a murder mystery comedy musical filled with suspense and wit. The musical will be performed in Spieker Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. on May 2 and May 3, and at 3 p.m. on May 4.

The production tells the story of a series of deaths that occur after a leading lady in a production of “Robinhood” collapses during her final bow. A theater-loving detective steps in to solve the case.

“Curtains is a love letter to the magic of theater — packed with humor, heart and plenty of surprises. Our cast and crew have poured their energy into bringing this show to life, and I can’t wait for audiences to experience the fun with us,” said Director Steven Minning.

Tickets for “Curtains” are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students. They can be purchased online at menloschool.org/tickets.

Portola Valley town manager search underway

The town of Portola Valley is seeking the community’s input in its search for a new town manager. A survey is open for all residents to share their thoughts on what qualities and characteristics they believe the next town manager should carry.

Portola Valley is partnering with the executive recruiting firm, WBCP, Inc. in its recruitment efforts. The anonymous survey will be open until 5 p.m. on Friday, May 2. A community input town hall on the recruitment efforts will take place on Tuesday, May 6 at 5 p.m. on Zoom. For more information on the town hall visit portolavalley.net.

Find the survey on surveymonkey.com/r/M7JYF2W. Direct any questions regarding the survey to Richard Kuhns at richard@wbcpinc.org or call WBCP, Inc. at 866-929-9227.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Hearing set on Sunset campus historical nomination

The California Register of Historical Resources will hold a hearing at 9 a.m. May 9 on the nomination of the former Sunset headquarters at 80 Willow Road to the National Register of Historic Places. The designation could make it more difficult for developer N17 to move forward with a proposed three-tower development called Willow Park.

The register is accepting public comments. Members of the public can submit written comments before the meeting or speak during the hearing.

More information is available at bit.ly/42zXcAp.

Police plan distracted driving enforcement

The Menlo Park Police Department will conduct an enforcement operation targeting violations of the hands-free cellphone law from April 21 through April 30. Police will also be actively looking for drivers violating the law separate from the operation.

The effort is part of Distracted Driving Awareness Month and the “Eyes Forward, Hands on the Wheel: Focused Driving Saves Lives” campaign. Officers will focus on identifying drivers using handheld devices or engaging in other distractions behind the wheel.

Under state law, drivers are prohibited from holding a phone or electronic device while operating a vehicle, even when stopped at a red light. Violations may result in fines, and repeat offenses can add points to a driver’s record.

Funding for the enforcement is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

— Arden Margulis

Chan Zuckerberg Initiative will close East Palo Alto school

The Primary School serves more than 400 children

By Gennady Sheyner

The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative has announced that it is preparing to shut down The Primary School, a tuition-free private school that serves hundreds of children in East Palo Alto and the Belle Haven neighborhood in Menlo Park.

The school will shut down at the end of the 2025-26 school year, according to an announcement that The Primary School posted on its website. The school declined to respond to questions about the closure or to provide any additional comments about the decision.

"This was a very difficult decision, and we are committed to ensuring a thoughtful and supportive transition for students and families over the next year," the school said in a statement.

Since opening in 2016, the school has been serving more than 200 students per year. According to the school's website, its Clarke Street location in East Palo Alto has 443 children enrolled, about 58% of whom receive either individualized



Embarcadero Media file photo by Veronica Weber

Preschoolers Genesis Arteaga Callejas, center, and Anna Herrera Saldana, right, play on the seesaw during recess at The Primary School in East Palo Alto in this file photo.

education programs or specialized support services.

Spearheaded by Priscilla Chan, a pediatrician and wife of Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, the school strived to combine education with health care and other types of support services. According to the school's website, 61% of the students in its East Palo Alto campus are

Latinx, 7% are Black and 7% are Pacific Islander.

While the school is shutting down, CZI has announced that it plans to invest \$50 million in the East Palo Alto, Belle Haven and East Bay communities, which will include investments in 529 education savings plans for all students and transition specialists to help families

navigate their switch to new schools.

It has also pledged to collaborate with the Ravenswood City School District as it welcomes many of The Primary School's families.

"Over the years the District has added dedicated family engagement roles, strengthened health programs, and expanded early childhood care," the school's announcement states. "We look forward to sharing our learnings to support their bolstering of crucial student and family services."

The school also expressed gratitude to members of the community who entrusted it with the well-being of their children as well as appreciation for its "local partners in East Palo Alto and East Bay." "We know that our partners in the Ravenswood City School District and the East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, and East Bay communities will work to ensure our students and families are cared for, and we appreciate that the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative will support those efforts through a \$50 million commitment,

over five years, that invests in parent engagement programs, early childhood education, and healthcare services across these communities, and helps maintain critical support for TPS families that join the District," Jean-Claude Brizard, board chair at The Primary School, said in a statement.

The closure comes at a time when Zuckberberg has been winding down programs at Meta that pertain to diversity, equity and inclusion. ■

Email Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@almanacnews.com.

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Two elderly residents targeted in Menlo Park, Atherton scams

Police point to DOJ website for tips

By Almanac Staff

Police arrested a San Jose man last week for allegedly scamming an elderly Menlo Park resident out of \$35,000 in a scheme that may have international connections, Menlo Park police said on April 17. Separately, Atherton police arrested a woman for impersonating a PayPal representative to allegedly convince an elderly Atherton resident to hand over \$15,000 in cash. Atherton police arrested the woman before cash was handed over.

The Menlo Park scam began Feb. 13 with a text message to the 77-year-old victim, purporting to be affiliated with a major online retailer and a federal agency. The Atherton scam started when the resident opened a fraudulent email claiming to be from PayPal and informing the resident there was an unauthorized withdraw.

In Menlo Park, the text allegedly threatened the victim with

prison time unless they provided cash to a courier. On Feb. 11 and 12, the victim withdrew \$35,000 in cash from multiple bank branches, and on Feb. 12, the suspect allegedly collected a box with the cash at the victim's home.

Menlo Park police identified the suspect as a 22-year-old San Jose resident, and arrested him at his home on Wednesday. He was booked into San Mateo County Jail on suspicion of theft by false pretenses, theft using an access card and elder abuse.

"This arrest reflects our dedication to protecting vulnerable residents from predatory scams," said Menlo Park police Detective Eddie Mazon. "We urge the community to stay vigilant and report suspicious activity immediately."

Atherton police arrested a 57-year-old woman when she arrived at the victim's residence. She was booked into San Mateo County Jail on suspicion

See SCAMS, page 18

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Liccardo looks to counter Trump with 'innovation agenda'

New member of Congress outlines strategy

By Gennady Sheyner

When Sam Liccardo ran to succeed Anna Eshoo in the House of Representatives last fall, he campaigned on bipartisanship and pragmatism, eager to pass legislation on housing, climate change and other issues of concern to his Silicon Valley constituents. Now, the former San Jose mayor finds himself in the Democratic opposition as he tries to curtail the actions of the Trump Administration and its allies in Congress. Embarcadero Media Editor Gennady Sheyner sat down with Liccardo on April 15 to discuss how things are going so far. This interview was edited for clarity and length.

PAW: What have your first few months in the House been

like? Have there been any surprises as you went from campaign to reality?

SL: For anyone in elected office, the immediate focus has to be on building a team and I feel very confident we built a great team, both here in the district as well as in Washington. You know, those are the nuts and bolts I know that don't ever make the headlines that are really essential for serving the community. And in Washington, there was a strong bias for me to make sure I had people who understood the Beltway and can navigate the world on the Hill.

PAW: But what do you do with this team when you're in a minority and you're dealing with what every Democrat is dealing with?

SL: So, the environment is a

unique one. My focus is to identify those tools that a first-term member of Congress can employ in an environment where my party does not control either house of Congress or the White House ... and where my party has not been responsible for the majority of the Supreme Court appointees. As I look at the daily outrages which cause enormous amounts of frustration and fear and anger throughout our community of the country, as I see it, there are really three areas where I can have an impact. One is to legislate. The other is to litigate. The third is to communicate, because we're in a world in which we're the minority and we can't get people anything passed without a lot of help from the other side.

My efforts at legislation come in really two forms. One is those areas where I do believe I can work across the aisle. For example, I co-sponsored a stablecoin bill. We desperately need regulations to ensure enforcement of U.S. fraud statutes and consumer protections on stablecoin. So, I was a co-sponsor of that bill,



Simmerdeep Kaur

U.S. Rep. Sam Liccardo delivers the keynote address at a Peninsula Volunteers Inc. event on March 20 in Menlo Park. He says he is learning effective responses to chaos in Washington.

and it's now gone through the committee, and it's going on to the floor for vote. ... There's a lot of issues around housing ... and we're drafting three pieces of legislation to attempt to address this housing crisis that's felt in so many metros, in a way that I believe we can get Republicans on board focusing on housing supply (and) tax credits.

PAW: During your campaign, you mentioned that you wanted to kind of reach across the aisle, find consensus areas. How has that been going? Has it been as you expected?

SL: It's obviously several times harder. When Trump is in the White House, there is a

See **LICCARDO**, page 18



Affordable Housing Month 2025
Mes de la Vivienda Asequible 2025

Local Solutions
FOR Lasting Impact

May 2025 | Mayo de 2025

Register at hlcsmc.org | Regístrate en hlcsmc.org



Town of Atherton

Town Administrative Offices
80 Fair Oaks Lane
Atherton, California 94027
650-752-0500

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Atherton City Council will hold a public hearing to consider amendments to Atherton Municipal Code Chapter 3.16 relating to requirements for contracting public works projects.

The public may participate via: Zoom Meeting or in-person.

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/506897786>

Meeting ID: 506 897 786

Dial by your location: +1 669 900 6833

Meeting ID: 506 897 786

Remote Public Comments:

Meeting participants are encouraged to submit public comments in writing in advance of the meeting. The following email will be monitored during the meeting and public comments received will be saved for the record.

Email: council@ci.atherton.ca.us

Description: The purpose of the amendments is to adopt Atherton Municipal Code amendments to Chapter 3.16 relating to purchasing, including Section 3.16.240 relating to requirements for contracting public works projects, and Section 3.16.280 relating to Public Works project bids in excess of maximum authority. A copy of the City Council staff report and draft amendments to the Ordinance can be found online, by Friday May 16, 2025 here: <https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/641/Agendas-Minutes>

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that said ordinance is set for public hearing and first introduction by the City Council at its meeting on May 21, 2025, at 6:00 PM via teleconference accessible through the above-described information, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the amendments should or should not be approved.

IF YOU CHALLENGE any amendments to the Atherton Municipal Code Chapter 3.16 in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the City Clerk at, or prior to, the public hearing.

If you have any questions on the item please contact Anthony Suber at asuber@ci.atherton.ca.us or 650-752-0500. Any attendee who wishes accommodation for a disability should contact the City Clerk's Office at (650) 752-0500 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

ATHERTON CITY COUNCIL
/s/ Anthony Suber
Anthony Suber, City Clerk

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for the Menlo Park Community Clean Up!

Hosted by Compass Menlo Park



Sunday, April 27th 9AM - noon
Meet: 1377 El Camino Real parking lot

Join us in making a difference! Let's come together to clean up our Menlo Park neighborhoods and show our commitment to a cleaner, greener environment. Coffee, treats, and supplies provided.

For details and to RSVP, scan here >



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Menlo Park schools provide update on enrollment and special ed

Dwindling numbers could lead to reduced classes

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Menlo Park public schools are preparing for lower enrollment and are recognizing more students who need special education services.

During a recent Menlo Park City School District meeting, the school board was presented with the annual preliminary enrollment data and special education update.

Dwindling enrollment

From transitional kindergarten through eighth grade, enrollment is expected to decrease by 55 students in the 2025-26 school year, a decrease of about 2 percent, according to Superintendent Kristen Gracia. However, these numbers will change closer to the start of the school year in August, she clarified.

Decreasing birth rates paired with California's high cost of living is leading to lower enrollment rates across the state, said Gracia. California's Department of Finance projects a decline of over 500,000 students over the next decade if current trends of infertility and migration continue.

As of April, MPCSD anticipates

a decline in enrollment for TK, kindergarten, second, third, fourth, fifth, seventh and eighth grade.

The 2024-25 school year has a total enrollment of 2,702 students and the anticipated enrollment for the following year is 2,647. Population statistic experts project a student population of 2,584. Since 2019, the total number of students has decreased by more than 200.

Tracking anticipated enrollment is necessary for the district to plan the number of classes per grade level, for budgeting, staffing, program planning and more. With the current estimated number of students, the district projects it will reduce three classes between TK and fifth grade, said Gracia.

"We are being conservative when making these decisions as we manage the constraints of our budget," she added.

However, enrollment numbers are always fluctuating, Gracia said. By the start of the school year, the district may end up having to add more classes rather than reduce.

Re-enrollment occurs during March and April. As of April 17, 200 students had not re-enrolled

for the next school year yet.

The district plans to have another enrollment update in September.

Special education update

Over the past six years, the percentage of Menlo Park students with an Individualized Education Program has steadily increased to about 9%, which is lower than the state average of 13%. An IEP is a legally binding document that maps out specific services that a child with a disability needs in order to learn in a classroom.

"We want to make sure we're identifying any student that may need the services, so I don't see the increase in special education as an issue," said Stephanie Sheridan, assistant superintendent of student services.

Across the country, about 7 million children ages 3 to 21 received special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. That is about 15% of all public school students, according to Sheridan.

Nationally, the most common type of disability reported in students involves specific learning disabilities. Those may include dyslexia and difficulties writing

and doing math.

Through special education parent surveys, the district found that families were largely satisfied with the program, including their experience communicating with service providers, case managers and the district.

Sheridan said MPCSD also implemented a parent network to allow families with special education students to connect with each other. The district also hosts professional development workshops for parents to learn how to transfer classroom skills to their home.

Parents have the opportunity to work with behavior specialists, speech pathologists and physical therapists to learn how they can support and engage with their kids at home.

Sheridan reports that despite improvements to the special education program, the district has been identified as being significantly disproportionate by the state. This means that there is an inappropriate overrepresentation and over-identification of ethnic minority children in special education programs.

In Menlo Park schools, Latinx students are 3.5 times more likely

to be in special education, she said. MPCSD is actively working toward lowering this disproportionality and has been able to decrease the risk rate from five years ago when it was nearly five times more likely for a Latinx student to be in special education.

Sheridan clarified that this over identification comes in relation to the overall student population. Currently, there are 51 students under a specific learning disability and 24 of them are Latinx — leading to 47% of Hispanic students being identified with learning disabilities. However, the total percentage of Latinx students at MPCSD is 20%.

According to Sheridan, this is a common trend in San Mateo County and across the state. This disproportionality is not due to language barriers, she said.

Moving forward, MPCSD will be focusing on addressing earlier intervention and investing more money into it. By acting early, the district is able to provide more support to students before they enter into special education. ■

Email Staff Writer

Jennifer Yoshikoshi at

jyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com.

Department of Communication presents
2025 Rebele Symposium

The New(s) Influencers

Nearly 40% of U.S. adults under 30 regularly get news from online news personalities and content creators, who draw millions more followers, readers and listeners than legacy media. How are these news ecosystems complementary or competitive? What can each learn from the other? What does it mean for U.S. democracy when there are so many news outlets to choose from?

What Legacy Media and Online News Content Creators Can Learn from Each Other

April 29, 5:30pm to 6:45pm PT
Encina Hall, Bechtel Conference Center
616 Jane Stanford Way, Stanford, CA 94305

Free
and Open
to the Public

Kyla Scanlon



Popular online content creator and economics educator, author of *In this Economy: How Money & Markets Really Work*

Matt Kiser



Founder of newsletter, *WTF Just Happened Today?* —today's essential guide to the daily shock and awe in national politics.

Peter Hamby



Host of Snapchat's *Good Luck America* and founding partner of *Puck News*.



Moderator Janine Zacharia, a former journalist for the *Washington Post*, *Bloomberg*, *Reuters* and other news outlets, is an award-winning instructor at Stanford where she teaches news reporting and writing fundamentals and foreign correspondence. She is the author of newsroom playbooks including *How to Report Responsibly on Hacks and Disinformation* and *Polarization and the Press: 12 Ways to Restore Respect for Your Reporting*.



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NOTICE INVITING BIDS

TOWN OF ATHERTON | STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Notice Inviting Bids: Town will receive sealed bids at the office of the City Clerk, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, California, 94027 until 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 15, 2025 for the following public work:

2025 SPRING PATCHING AND STREET OVERLAY PROJECT

Project Number: 56090

Scope of Work: The project scope consists of pavement repairs, rehabilitation, and overlays, including:

- 1.1** Grinding and replacing approximately 15,500 square feet of asphalt to a six-inch depth on various streets. This work includes all necessary traffic control, grinding, sweeping, tack coating, replacing asphalt to appropriate depth in an appropriate number of lifts, and finishing rolling per Town of Atherton Standard specifications and special provisions. Some hand work around utility manhole covers will be required.
- 1.2** Grinding and replacing of approximately 70,000 square feet of asphalt for 2 inches of asphalt concrete pavement on Various Streets. Once the roadway is grinded down, the contractor and the Town's project engineer shall identify any pavement failures for repairs. Grind and replace (digouts) asphalt to a 6-inch depth from the milled surface: then contractor shall perform crack sealing (per specification). Some hand work around utility manhole covers will be necessary. Repave the entire street with a self-propelled paver & finish per Town Standard Specifications.
- 1.3** Reconstruct manhole to grade at Southgate Drive/Park Drive, including root removal and pavement repairs.
- 1.4** Replacement and installation of traffic striping, pavement markings, and markers.

1. Plans & Specifications: Plans & Specifications may be obtained at the Town of Atherton's website at: <http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/bids.aspx> at no cost. Additional information is contained in Town of Atherton Standard Specifications, which are available at: <http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/285>. Contractor shall be responsible for any addendums that may be posted on the Town's website. **No Plan holders list will be made be available.**

2. Project Schedule: The work shall be completed within **THIRTY (30)** working days from the First Day of Construction as defined in the Notice to Proceed.

3. Bid Submission: SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, California 94027, **until 1:30 p.m. Pacific Standard Time May 15, 2025** at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. All proposals must be submitted not later than the date and time prescribed. The Bidder is wholly responsible to ensure its Bid is submitted on the date and at the time and place designated for the opening of bids. Any Bid received after the time and date specified shall not be considered. Any Bid may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for opening bids.

4. Engineer's Estimate for the project is: **\$500,000.**

5. Bid Requirements: Bids must be for the entire work and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked: "Bid of (Contractor) for **2025 SPRING PATCHING AND STREET OVERLAY PROJECT, Project No: 56090**, along with date and time of bid opening. Bidders shall refer to the Bid Requirements section of the project Plans and Specifications for additional information and requirements.

6. Required Contractor's License: Bidder must possess a current **California Class "A" General Engineering or a "C-12" Earthwork and Paving** contractor's license issued by the State of California, at the time the Bid is submitted. The Contractor and all subcontractors shall be licensed by the State of California in the class appropriate for the work contemplated. Failure of Contractor or his/her subcontractors to possess such current license at the time of bidding may be deemed sufficient cause for rejection of the bid.

7. Portion of Work to be Performed by the Contractor: The General Contractor shall perform, with his own organization, work of a value amounting to not less than 50% of the total contract, excluding specialty items as may be indicated on the bid schedule.

8. Department of Industrial Relations Registration: A Contractor or Subcontractor shall not be qualified to bid on, be listed in a bid proposal, subject to the requirements of Public Contract Code 4104, or engage in the performance of any contract for public work, as that term is defined in Division 2, Part 7, Chapter 1 of the Labor Code, unless currently registered and qualified to perform public work pursuant to Labor Code Section 1725.5. (<http://www.dir.ca.gov/Public-Works/PublicWorks.html>)

9. Reservation of Rights: The Town reserves the right to reject any or all bids; to make any awards or any rejections in what it alone considers to be in the best interest of the Town, and waive any informalities or irregularities in the bids. If there is a reason to believe that collusion exists among any bidders, none of the bids of the participants in such collusion will be considered and the Town may likewise elect to reject all bids received.

10. Substitution of Securities: The successful bidder may substitute securities for retention monies withheld pursuant to law and under the terms of this contract to ensure performance of the contract, in accordance with California Public Contract Code, Section 22300.

11. Prevailing Wage Rates: Bidders are hereby notified that provisions of California Labor Code regarding prevailing wages and apprentices are applicable to the work to be performed under this contract. Pursuant to Section 1773 et seq. the general prevailing wage rates have been determined by the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations and appear in the California Prevailing Wage Rates. Copies are on file at the office of the City Engineer and are available to interested parties upon request. The successful bidder shall post a copy of the wage rates at the job site.

12. Bid Preparation Cost: Bidders are solely responsible for the cost of plan and specification printing and preparing their Bids.

13. Town Contact: Questions regarding the project should be directed to Robert Ovadia, PE, by written Requests for Information (RFI) to: Public Works Department, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027, no later than eight (8) business days before bid opening. RFIs may be emailed tojmirsaidi@interwestgrp.com

who has been in countless PVTC productions. The last time that he was cast in a play was decades ago in the sixth grade.

Luckily, he was cast as the father of his daughter's character, a role he had been perfecting for 16 years.

"I've been a theater dad for 12 years but being part of the play just puts a different twist on it when you're actually in the rehearsal instead of just dropping her off," Jay Hartman said.

During rehearsals, a mix of energy and personalities fill the room. With young children running around, teenagers on their phones, a mom rounding up her kids and elders chatting with each other, the room felt like a mirror image of a typical family gathering. Avery Hartman, who plays Abeline, described PVTC as her second home.

"There's something about (people of) different ages telling different stories and I think it is more relational to people who watch it in the audience where they can see themselves in every level of the characters on stage," said Roxie Reid, who plays Bryce, Jack and a traveler in the production.

While younger cast members appreciate the wisdom that older peers bring, adults are learning patience from the youngsters. Darlene Batchelder who plays Nellie, the witch and the old lady said she appreciates the young people's brilliance and unique perspective.

Darlene is acting alongside her husband Darrell Batchelder, the oldest in the production, who has been in over 30 productions with her. This is the first time that they have been cast as husband and wife in the same play. Darrell said he adlibs a kiss as he walks off the stage, something he would never do if it wasn't with his wife.

Anna Shirzadi, who joined the production with her 7-year-old twin daughters Mina and Roya, said her kids have been helping her run lines at home but they can be a couple of tough critics, she added.

The twins have been in a couple of PVTC productions and have "The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane" entirely memorized. Mina said she loves acting because it's fun to pretend she's someone else. She and her sister both play the roles of crow and star.

Community members can see this MainStage production come to life at the Portola Valley Theatre Conservatory starting on May 1 and May 2 at 7 p.m. The show will run until May 11.

For more information on performance times, dates and tickets visit pvtc-ca.org/mainstage-productions. ■

Menlo Park robotics startup energizes area kids

Burning Gear Robotics aims to make robotics accessible to all

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Burning Gear Robotics, a nonprofit organization in Menlo Park, aims to make STEM education more accessible and engaging for youth in the Bay Area. Since 2020, the robotics organization has mentored and taught over 100 students from elementary through high school.

The organization was founded by Lixia Liao, a Menlo Park parent and former researcher at the U.S. Geological Survey. When her son was 4 years old, she noticed that the STEM programs in Menlo Park public schools were underdeveloped while sports programs were seeing 10 times more enrollment.

With a background in civil engineering, Liao led a two-person robotics team with her son and his friend when they were in elementary school. When others saw the projects that Liao's son was creating, more people began to show interest and Liao's small team grew into what is now Burning Gear Robotics.

In just its second year, that team qualified for both the state championship and national U.S. Open Robotics Tournament. The organization has expanded to teach youth about engineering across San Mateo, Santa Clara and Alameda counties.

"We're trying to make robotics fun and creative, so they can shape their future with their own hands," said Liao. "That's how we can empower the community with robotics."

Burning Gear Robotics encourages mentorship and sharing knowledge to the community. Liao explained that experienced high school and middle school students who learn from the program go on to teach younger participants. When students are not preparing for competitions, they hold workshops at libraries and parks, organize community fundraisers and introductory events.

"If you reach your hand and turn around in a circle, then what you can reach is only you. But each time your hand touches another person, you'll

have tons of them do the same thing to make a chain reaction," Liao said.

Her passion for robotics grew alongside her son's growing interest in STEM. In order to teach others, Liao spent two years learning about coding and mechanical engineering through a private tutor to be able to teach others. She also received additional help from parents who work at Nvidia, Meta and Google.

Recently, Burning Gear Robotics formed a partnership with Zeffy, a free fundraising platform which allows every dollar collected to directly benefit the organization. With the help of Zeffy, Liao said every \$1,000 raised will go toward increasing student access to a robotics team or to fund a new team with equipment.

The organization is trying to save as much money as possible by using public spaces for its robotics classes. The robotics teams often meet in libraries, school classrooms after school hours and coffee shops.

In April, Burning Gear Robotics led a week-long



Courtesy Burning Gear Robotics

A Menlo Park family's brainchild, Burning Gear Robotics is bringing fun technology to kids across three counties.

robotics camp with a dance school in Belmont, exposing young girls to the idea that they can build robots. Most of these dancers did not have any prior STEM experience, said Liao.

As the organization continues to grow, students will expand their interests toward starting their own robotics teams and Liao supports this. She explained that Burning Gear

Robotics is determined to create new opportunities and encourage young aspiring engineers to explore STEM.

For more information on Burning Gear Robotics workshops and classes visit burning-gear-robotics.org. ■

Email Staff Writer
Jennifer Yoshikoshi at
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MENLO PARK | 35Hesketh.com



27690 BRIONES COURT | \$3,988,000 | 4 Bd | 2.5 Bth
LOS ALTOS HILLS | 27690Briones.com



1932 EMERSON STREET | \$10,500,000 | 6 Bd | 6 Bth
PALO ALTO | 1932EmersonStreet.com



119 KELLOGG AVENUE | \$3,988,000 | 5 Bd | 3 Bth
PALO ALTO | 119Kellogg.com



206 PALMITA PLACE | \$1,988,000 | 3 Bd | 2.5 Bth
MOUNTAIN VIEW | 206Palmita.com



295 BAY ROAD | \$2,488,000 | 4 Bd | 2.5 Bth
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Offered at \$7,988,000

Notice to Buyers:

Although a good buyer's agent can add significant insight and value, you are not required to use one to purchase a DeLeon listing. If you would like to submit an offer to us directly, please contact the DeLeon Buyer's Team at **650.543.8528** and we will waive 100% of the buyer's-side commission.

Listed by Michael Repka of the DeLeon Team

Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | 650.488.7325 | michael@deleonrealty.com | Equal Housing Opportunity
中文諮詢請聯繫 Audrey Sun, DRE #01933274 電話: 650.785.5822 | [DELEONREALTY.COM](https://www.DELEONREALTY.COM) | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224



NEWEST HOMES ON THE MARKET



1932 EMERSON STREET, PALO ALTO

6 Bedrooms 5,310 Sq. Ft. Home
6 Bathrooms 10,000 Sq. Ft. Lot

Listed at \$10,500,000 | 1932Emerson.com

For more information about this property, please contact

Michael Repka | DRE #01854880

650.488.7325



27690 BRIONES COURT, LOS ALTOS HILLS

4 Bedrooms 3,116 Sq. Ft. Home
2.5 Bathrooms 1 Acre Lot

Listed at \$3,988,000 | 27690Briones.com

For more information about this property, please contact

Michael Repka | DRE #01854880

650.488.7325

DON'T OVERPAY TO SELL YOUR HOME LIST WITH US FOR 3% TOTAL COMMISSION

We have entered a new era where sellers are no longer permitted to offer any commission to buyer's agents in the MLS, which means that no commission details are advertised on sites like Zillow or Redfin. Buyers also need to sign agreements with their agents outlining the commission they will pay their own agents before they show any properties. If a seller wants to offer additional compensation to the buyer's agent, they can, but it is neither required nor encouraged.

While some listing agents will still try to contractually obligate sellers to pay 2% or more to the buyer's agent, DeLeon Realty has taken a different approach. Our sellers benefit from our industry-leading home preparation, staging, and marketing services while paying a total commission of 3%. Additionally, if a buyer chooses not to pay a buyer's agent, Ken DeLeon and his team will represent them on our listings at no cost to either the buyer or the seller.

Our client-centric business model and policies are just a few of the reasons why we are the leading listing team in all of Silicon Valley!



Contact us today!

Michael Repka (DRE #01854880) **650.488.7325**
中文諮詢請聯繫 Audrey Sun (DRE #01933274) 電話: **650.785.5822**
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35 HESKETH DRIVE MENLO PARK



EXCEPTIONAL DESIGN & CRAFTSMANSHIP IN CENTRAL MENLO

Blending modern design with timeless sophistication, this 2023-built home rests on nearly a quarter acre in prime Central Menlo. Meticulously crafted with high-end materials and exceptional attention to detail, the three-level floorplan of nearly 5,000 square feet is designed for contemporary living, offering expansive gathering areas, a central great room anchored by a gourmet kitchen with top-tier appliances, and a family room where a wall of glass opens to the backyard for seamless indoor/outdoor flow. The lower level provides outstanding flexibility, complete with a full bar, temperature-controlled wine cellar, and gym, while five bedroom suites include a luxurious primary suite with a spa-like bath. Outside, the private backyard is ideal for entertaining, featuring a pool and a covered, heated patio. All of this, just moments from downtown Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Stanford University, and top-tier public and private schools, in a coveted neighborhood near the Atherton border.

OPEN HOUSE

SAT & SUN 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

35Hesketh.com

Offered at \$8,988,000

Notice to Buyers:

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LICCARDO

continued from page 8

palpable fear Republicans have of stepping out of line. That fear is demonstrated daily, but I've had many conversations with other colleagues at the gym at 9 p.m. or the elevator where they've expressed very serious concerns about whatever's happening, but are not willing, ultimately, to put their name on a bill. And so a lot of the stuff I've been working on across the aisle is literally to take on what we're seeing. For example, one bill I'm working on with several colleagues is to create what's called a private right of action. I know that's not very interesting, but essentially it would enable fired federal workers or beneficiaries of federal benefits to sue federal decision makers and have them be personally liable for violating the 1974 Impoundment Act, which is a tool that Congress passed in 1974 to enforce Article 1 of the Constitution — the power of the purse, the separation of powers with Congress. So the problem with that '74 law is that it can only be implemented with criminal sanction. And right now, Trump controls the Department of Justice in a way that no other president has in history. And so we need to empower Americans

throughout the country to be able to take initiative and to be able to hold Elon Musk and DOGE accountable. And by that, I mean having them be personally liable.

PAW: What do you see as the biggest outrage from your perspective, and the one that you think is most worthy of Congress's attention and your own attention, as far as responding to federal actions?

SL: The president, like all this, took a vow to follow the constitution. So let's start there. And I think the most recent apparent violations of the Supreme Court order about returning Abrego Garcia gives rise to a constitutional crisis if the court ultimately issues a contempt order that is not complied with. So we're clearly on that path.

PAW: Do you think we're not yet at the constitutional crisis?

SL: Well, we're in the zone. I mean, on Day 1, we have a president who attempted to eviscerate the Fourteenth Amendment granting citizenship to Americans born here. We have a complete violation of Article 1 of the Constitution with congressional capitulation about both the spending power and the power to impose duties and tariffs. You know, the list goes on and on, but the No. 1 concern has to be, are we going

to be a nation in which there is a rule of law, and that starts with the Constitution? We can all identify many decisions by this president that have been far more impactful in terms of the ability of people to pay bills and survive day-to-day, like the tariff decision, which is going to put a lot of people out of work and create a lot of suffering. But what I think about it in terms of what is most disconcerting to me, it's undermining constitutional order, because once that gets broken, it's awfully hard to put back together. The arsonists can move a lot faster than the home builders can.

PAW: So what should the Democratic strategy be? We've seen two approaches, with the most visible division coming over the continuing resolution. The House did one thing (with almost all the Democrats voting against it) and the Senate did another (with several Democratic senators joining Republicans to pass the bill).

SL: I identify three things that I'm doing and I think we can do, and it's to legislate, litigate and communicate. On the litigation front, I'm part of a rapid response task force with Democratic leadership ...and we're providing information, we're helping with strategy, we're writing amicus briefs. ... We're in a support role, but I think an important support role. ... As we've seen, more than 60 injunctions have now taken hold to stall the worst of the abuses, the worst of the violations, the Constitution violations, and hold them up. In some cases, we may be able to stop them completely. In some other cases, we're just going to stall them for a few months and buy time. And buying time does just two things. It gets us closer

to the 2026 election. And the second thing it does is it gives Trump more time to alienate his friends. And he's been working pretty hard at that.

PAW: During the Democratic division over the continuing resolution, Sen. Chuck Schumer's position was kind of, 'Let's let him fall on his own sword.' ... So do you kind of agree with Schumer that one of the strategies should be just to let him do his thing and let the voters respond in 2026?

SL: Let me be clear that I thought the vote that Schumer took on the budget resolution was... political malpractice. You know, I do agree with the notion that I think Napoleon, which I'll paraphrase: 'You know, when your opponent is shooting themselves in their foot. Don't interrupt them.' But we have to do more. Democrats have to demonstrate more than just that they are the lesser of two evils. We have to show we can affirmatively fight to reduce the cost of living that is choking millions of American families, and that's critical for us to win in the next election. ... I think for Democrats, it's also important that we focus not on just winning in 2026 or 2028, which we have to win. We have to enable America to win the next century, and that requires us to lean in on what I would call an Innovation Agenda. ... We don't have to betray our values and principles. This is about ensuring that early-stage, one-molecule companies can get the financing they need to get to a clinical trial, which could have extraordinary impacts for millions of people.

PAW: Have you been surprised by Silicon Valley's response to everything's been happening in Washington, and I mean that

both at the Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk level and at the level of the constituents you've been talking to in telephone town halls and the people you've been meeting?

SL: So this distinction between innovators and oligarchs is an important one. This is a Valley that was built on relatively libertarian principles.... That includes many recent innovators, and for example, in the fintech and cryptocurrency space. Not all of them, by the way, are on board with my beliefs, but that strong libertarian streak is an important one for us to tap into again, because I think it's still very much here. I think as we look at the actions of Musk and the capitulation of some companies and individuals to Trump — it runs counter to Silicon Valley character. So I think we need to make Silicon Valley Silicon Valley again.

I think there's a lot of people in this Valley who are pretty frustrated about what they're seeing, and we certainly saw that in the vote in November. We know where the residents are overwhelmingly. Those are residents for whom I am doing my best to find ways to make it harder for people to capitulate. For example, there's a letter that's going to managing partners at several law firms that I believe engaged in bribery with this administration. And our next step is to go to the state bars and get those managing partners disbarred. Let's end their careers and make sure that people know that when they capitulate to an authoritarian that there's a price to pay, and that price should be with their career. ■

Email Editor Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@almanacnews.com.

Employment

ENGINEERING

Snowflake Inc has mltpl Senior Software Engineer positions avail in Menlo Park, CA. Build a fmyl of 1st-clas APIs tht prvd lang-agnstc non-SQL intrfc for all Snowflake rsourcs. Tlcmgt prmttd. Successful candidate's starting sal will be dtmnd based on permissible, non-discriminatory fctrs such as skills, exp, & geo lctn. This role is also elgbl for a cmptve bnfts pckge that incld: medical, dental, vision, life, & disability insrnce; 401(k) ret plan; FSA & HSA; at least 12 paid holidays; PTO; parental leave; ee asst program; & other co bnfts. \$215,197 - \$285,000/yr. To apply, send rsme & trnspts w/ job title & Ref#7405062-SrSESMB5 to resume@snowflake.com. EOE.

ENGINEERING

Snowflake Inc has mltpl Senior Software Engineer positions avail in Menlo Park, CA. Dsgn & build APIs & lang featur tht data engrs, data scientts & app dvlprs use to anlyz & trnsfrm data & build prdctn redy data piplns. Successful candidate's starting sal will be dtmnd based on permissible, non-discriminatory fctrs such as skills, exp, & geo lctn. This role is also elgbl for a cmptve bnfts pckge that incld: medical, dental, vision, life, & disability insrnce; 401(k) ret plan; FSA & HSA; at least 12 paid holidays; PTO; parental leave; ee asst program; & other co bnfts. \$215,197 - \$276,000/yr. To apply, send rsme & trnscripts w/ job title & Ref#7405062-SrSESMM5 to resume@snowflake.com. EOE.

Element Energy, Inc. has multiple openings for the following positions in Menlo Park, CA: Battery Data Analyst (Wage Offer: \$145,000/yr): Telcmmtng permssble up to 2 days/wk. Software and Algorithms Engineer (Wage Offer: \$155,605/yr). Systems Engineer (Wage Offer: \$150,259/yr): Domstic travl up to 20%. To apply, email resume and cover letter to HR@elementenergy.com and reference job title. EOE. Principals only.

ENGINEERING

Snowflake Inc has mltpl Software Engineer positions avail in Menlo Park, CA. Dsgn, devlp, & suprt ptabyte-scale cloud dtbse tht is hghly prallel & fault-tlrnt. Tlcmgt prmttd. Successful candidate's starting sal will be dtmnd based on permissible, non-discriminatory fctrs such as skills, exp, & geo lctn. This role is also elgbl for a cmptve bnfts pckge that incld: medical, dental, vision, life, & disability insrnce; 401(k) ret plan; FSA & HSA; at least 12 paid holidays; PTO; parental leave; ee asst program; & other co bnfts. \$155,605 - \$218,500/yr. To apply, send resume and transcripts w/ job title and Ref#7405062-SESMM2 to resume@snowflake.com. EOE.

If you wish to learn more about the employment advertising options, please visit AlmanacNews.com/employment_ads/.

SCAMS

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of theft by false pretenses, elder abuse and conspiracy to commit a felony.

The district attorney's office has not filled charges in either case. Officials did not say if the two cases were related.

Residents with information about the cases or similar scams are encouraged to contact the Menlo Park Police Department at (650) 330-6300 or the Atherton Police Department at (650) 688-6500.

Law enforcement officials

said to avoid scams, never click unknown links, share personal details or send money to unverified sources. To learn more about fraud prevention and common scams, visit the official website of the California Department of Justice.

Atherton police previously issued a warning regarding scams on April 8. ■

Editor's note: It is Embarcadero Media Foundation's policy to withhold the names of those arrested for most crimes until the District Attorney's Office has determined that there is sufficient evidence to file charges in the case.

The Almanac
AlmanacNews.com

LET'S DISCUSS:
Read the latest local news headlines
and comment on articles
at AlmanacNews.com

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Maria Luisa Sandin Márquez, 74, of Palo Alto, who worked at a chocolate factory, cheered for the Giants, and taught at a first-grade Sunday School, died on April 15, 2025.

Jameson Quinn, 51, of Portola Valley, who was dedicated to devising new voting methods, died after falling into a canyon in Guatemala City while attempting to rescue a small dog on March 23, 2025.

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



YOUR NEW HOME AWAITS



DeLeonRealty_USA



23171 MORA GLEN DRIVE | \$7,888,000 | 5 Bd | 5.5 Bth
LOS ALTOS | 23171MoraGlen.com



135 SEALE AVENUE | \$5,988,000 | 5 Bd | 5 Bth
PALO ALTO | 135Seale.com



8 REYNA PLACE | \$8,988,000 | 4 Bd | 7 Bth
MENLO PARK | 8Reyna.com



12355 STONEBROOK COURT | \$9,988,000 | 6 Bd | 9 Bth
LOS ALTOS HILLS | 12355StonebrookCt.com



5 OAK FOREST COURT | \$5,788,000 | 4 Bd | 5.5 Bth
PORTOLA VALLEY | 5OakForest.com



11 CHATEAU DRIVE | \$2,488,000 | 3 Bd | 3 Bth
MENLO PARK | 11Chateau.com



25893 W. FREMONT ROAD | \$15,950,000 | 5 Bd | 9 Bth
LOS ALTOS HILLS | 25893WFremont.com



695 N CALIFORNIA AVE | \$3,988,000 | 4 Bd | 2 Bth
PALO ALTO | 695NCalifornia.com



SCAN THE QR CODE FOR
MORE DETAILS OR VISIT US
AT **DELEONREALTY.COM**



Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | 650.488.7325 | michael@deleonrealty.com
中文諮詢請聯繫Audrey Sun, DRE #01933274 電話: 650.785.5822
DELEONREALTY.COM | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224



Public Notices

NOTICE OF LIEN SALE is hereby given pursuant to Sections 21700-21716 of the California Business & Professions Code, Section 2328 of the UCC, and Section 535 of the Penal Code. The undersigned, Menlo-Atherton Storage Storage ("MAS") in Menlo Park, CA, will sell via online public sale by competitive bidding the personal property of Nena Byrd, Virginia Reyes, Nancy C. Spencer, Morgan D. Ropp, and Edgar P. Rodriguez Estrada. Property to be sold: personal affects, shelving units, tools, boxes of unknown contents & more.

The auction will be held online at www.storagetreasures.com. The sale will begin April 28, 2025 at 4pm and end on May 5, 2025 at 4pm. Goods must be paid for in CASH at MAS and removed at completion of the sale. Sale is subject to cancellation in the event of settlement between MAS and obligated party. Menlo-Atherton Storage, 3757 Haven Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025 650.366.3757. Please refer to www.storagetreasures.com for all other terms and conditions governing the bidding and auction process.

(ALM Apr 18 and 25, 2025)

Notice of Public Hearings

The Woodside School District will hold two separate public hearings on the proposed Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), including the Budget Overview for Parents cover page, and the proposed Budget for fiscal year 2025-26. Date and Time: May 13, 2025, at 6:00 pm Location: Woodside School District, 3195 Woodside Road, Woodside, CA 94062. Website: www.woodsideschool.us

Copies of the LCAP and Budget are available for review at the Woodside School outdoor bulletin board (outside front office), Woodside Post Office, Roberts market (Woodside) May 6 to May 13, 2025, between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm and posted on the District website, www.woodsideschool.us.

To request a printed or electronic copy, contact Michelle Ahlstrom, mahlstrom@woodsideschool.us, 650 851-1571 ext. 4004. Public members or stakeholders may request to comment at the public hearing on the LCAP and proposed budget or any item therein, by following the instructions for public comment found on the District website.

(ALM Apr 25, 2025)

JUNK KING SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-300341
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) JUNK KING SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO , located at 863 Malcolm Road , Burlingame, CA 94010. Mailing Address: PO BOX 1486 San Bruno, CA 94066
Registered owner(s):
FLAGSHIP JKBAY INC
2108 N St Ste N
Sacramento, CA 95816
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on April 09, 2025.
(ALM Apr 25, May 2, 9 and 16, 2025)

PRESTIGE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-300317
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) PRESTIGE , located at 1300 Industrial Road #15, San Carlos, CA 94070.
Registered owner(s):
PRESTIGE ENTERPRISES LLC
1300 Cotton Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025
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 03/04/2025.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on April 04, 2025.
(ALM Apr 25, May 2, 9 and 16, 2025)

ALEX THE LOCKSMITH
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-300201
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) ALEX THE LOCKSMITH , located at 2302 Carlmont Drive Apt 5, Belmont, CA 94002.
Registered owner(s):
OLEKSANDR PEREPELYTSIA
2302 Carlmont Drive Apt 5
Belmont, CA 94002
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 24, 2025.
(ALM Apr 25, May 2, 9 and 16, 2025)

FORD AVIATION CONSULTING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-300068
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) FORD AVIATION CONSULTING , located at 360 Bowsprit Dr, Redwood City, CA 94065.
Registered owner(s):
CAROL MARY FORD
360 Bowsprit Drive
Redwood City, CA, 94065
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on January 1, 2025.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 10, 2025.
(ALM Apr 4, 11, 18 and 25, 2025)

HIGHWAY 1 FITNESS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-300300
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) HIGHWAY 1 FITNESS , located at 225 Cabrillo Highway Suite 104B, HALF MOON BAY, CA 94019.
Registered owner(s):
WOOSHIFIT LLC
515 EL GRANADA BLVD
HALF MOON BAY, CA 94019
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 01/01/2022.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on April 03, 2025.
(ALM Apr 11, 18, 25 and May 2, 2025)

D & V CLEANING LLC
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-300315
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) D & V CLEANING LLC , located at 222 88th St APT 202 , Daly City, CA 94015.
Registered owner(s):
D & V CLEANING LLC
222 88th St APT 202
Daly City, CA 94015
State of Incorporation/Organization: California
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 03/10/2025.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on April 04, 2025.
(ALM Apr 11, 18, 25 and May 2, 2025)

The Almanac is adjudicated to publish in San Mateo County.

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

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

For assistance email LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com.

SILVER OAKS MEMORY CARE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-299925
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) SILVER OAKS MEMORY CARE , located at 16 Coleman Place, Menlo Park, CA 94025.
Registered owner(s):
FOX OPS LLC
355 Main Street
Vacaville, CA 95688
State of Incorporation/Organization: California
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 10/1/2018.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on February 27, 2025.
(ALM Apr 11, 18, 25 and May 2, 2025)

CLAU THERAPY
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-300076
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) CLAU THERAPY , located at 2027 Dumbarton Ave, E Palo Alto, CA, 94303.
Registered owner(s):
CLAUDIA CATTANEO AUXIER
2027 Dumbarton Ave.
E. Palo Alto, 94303
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 March 11, 2025.
(ALM Apr 11, 18, 25 and May 2, 2025)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 25-CIV-02282
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Jose Orlando Ramirez filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
JOSE ORLANDO RAMIREZ to ORLANDO JOSE RAMIREZ
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: 6/2/2025, 9:00am,
Civil department of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, Ca 94063.
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: 04/03/2025
Chad L Peace
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Apr 25, May 2, 9 and 16, 2025)

CANDIDATES

continued from page 5

In her campaign, Bonini states her intentions to prioritize reading accessibility for all students and expanding access to mental health resources.

“Our children cannot learn effectively if their mental health needs are not addressed,” said Bonini. “Our mental health supports for students and families need to become more proactive, seamless, empathetic and stigma-free.”

Bonini has also led efforts to increase transparency and accountability for the office’s \$100 million budget through policy revisions and adoption of a governance handbook.

Currently, there is a \$20,000 per student funding gap that exists among San Mateo County school districts. Bonini stated her plans to continue efforts toward securing increased and sustainable funding for school districts through regional collaboration.

For more information on Bonini’s campaign visit [vote bonini.com](http://votebonini.com).

Héctor Camacho

Camacho began his career in education as a bilingual instructional aide 26 years ago. He said that sparked his passion for teaching. Since then, he has held positions in teaching, counseling and administration. Camacho also served as a San Mateo County Board of Education trustee for 11 years.

In 2022, he worked with Reach University on a project that focused on addressing the teacher shortage and creating affordable pathways for non-teaching school staff in rural



Chelsea Bonini

areas to pursue a teaching career.

After working for decades in education, Camacho said he is running for superintendent of schools because he cares about the students and believes that “every child should feel safe, seen and supported.”

If elected, Camacho will be looking at how the county can support the expansion of early childhood education, child-care services and addressing the teacher shortage in these classrooms.

With ongoing conversations about the lack of teachers, Camacho said he has met many classified employees who have been working for decades as custodians, office assistants, bus drivers and paraprofessionals and would make great teachers, but have not been able to finish school and obtain a degree.

Camacho also wants to look into innovative pathways for these staff members to complete their degrees, earn their teaching credentials and begin their careers in local schools.

“I’m hoping to recruit folks because we need teachers who are supported and respected and who are empowered to lead from the classroom,” he said.

“This isn’t a political position,” said Camacho. “This is a position for people that have worked in schools, know the issues that schools and students are facing, understand the communities that they work in and how to make really positive change.”

For more information on Camacho’s campaign visit votehector.com. ■

Email Staff Writer

Jennifer Yoshikoshi at

jyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com.

IKEA

continued from page 1

The drones won’t replace any of the 300 employees at the East Palo Alto IKEA, according to Marsh. And IKEA said employees would not have reduced hours due to the drones, even if their workload is decreased.

“There aren’t any coworkers whose job is just checking inventory. Currently, it’s just a portion of their shift,” she said. “Now we can allocate that time to other tasks like replenishment, picking online orders.”

The drones fly throughout aisles in the warehouse section of the East Palo Alto store and scan barcodes of products on shelves based on what

employees have said needs to be checked. The goal is to improve IKEA’s stock accuracy, employee satisfaction and employee workload.

Verity claims to have a reliability rate of 99.992%.

“IKEA knows we are in an omnichannel environment and the partnership with Verity gives us more time and efficiency,” Marsh added, who explained that IKEA wants customers to have a seamless experience in stores and online.

The drones have been in a trial phase since February and became fully operational in March. ■

Email Staff Writer Arden Margulis at amargulis@almanacnews.com.

TAKING UP *for* *a* COLLECTION

Filoli staff go treasure hunting on a mission to return mansion's contents to original glory

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

Filoli Historic House and Gardens is the only National Trust for Historic Preservation property on the San Francisco Peninsula. Visiting the 654-acre site in Woodside, with its 54,000-square-foot Willis Polk-designed mansion, is an opportunity to step back in time and imagine how the previous owners, the Bourn and Roth families, enjoyed a life of wealth and prestige. In order to make the experience as authentic as possible, the estate's staff has made a concerted effort to find and/or replace significant objects that once belonged in the home. It is a monumental task that involves research, perseverance and patience, as well as a healthy dose of good luck.

Filoli Director of Museum Collections Kevin Wisney said that the story begins with William and Agnes Bourn, who purchased the land in 1917 with the plan to build a country retreat on the Peninsula. It took three years to build the house and the Bourns (whose wealth came from gold mines and the Spring Valley Water Company) owned the property until their deaths in 1936.

"The major part of the story is about them — they envisioned it and built it," said Wisney. He explained that the Bourns loved California and purchased art and furnishings from regional artists that they knew.

"We think about the formation of California, the people who were here creating the state — it is a compelling story. Seeing the collection that Agnes Bourn built tells a story about her life, the time



Anna Hoch-Kenney



Above: Filoli curator Kevin Wisney stands between two recently acquired torchieres (the golden stands) in the Filoli estate's house. Left: A photograph of Yosemite by Carleton Watkins, one of the first photographers to photograph the valley, hangs at Filoli.

and what was happening in the world," he said.

In 1937 the house had new owners, William and Lurline Roth (heiress to the Matson Navigation Company), who purchased not only the house but all of its contents.

"They were buying a feeling, a lifestyle. The Roths were incredibly social and it was a great place for business events and parties," Wisney said.

The Roths expanded the gardens and made Filoli the showplace we know today, but in 1975 Lurline Roth determined that the property should be cared for by the National Trust and opened to the public. She and other family members took some of the contents of the house and the rest was auctioned off by Butterfield & Butterfield. By the time

the Trust took possession, the house was empty.

It fell to the staff to fill the house again.

"They accepted a lot of things that were not necessarily of the time, mainly just to decorate it," Wisney said. But there was always an underlying desire to remove objects that did not fit the Bourn era and to acquire original pieces, or reasonable replacements.

In order to do this, Wisney has had to become a bit of a sleuth. Thanks to copious photography taken in the home (the house was often featured in local magazines and the Bourns also had photographs taken for record-keeping), he has been able to determine what was in each room. In addition, a 1936 bank assessment of the entire house was undertaken and virtually everything was inventoried. "It's an incredible resource for us," said Wisney.

Using this background information, Wisney has endeavored to replace key pieces in each of the downstairs rooms. The house's upper floor is used for offices and storage and is not open to the public. While the task sounds daunting, he explained that he is not looking for every ash tray or vase, but rather "major objects that define a room."

He had a recent success in the acquisition of two gilded torchieres (plant or candle stands) that once stood in the Reception Room. Acting on a tip from a donor, Wisney learned that a pair of stands were being offered by a Los Angeles auction house. They looked very much like the objects from the Bourn era and he obtained permission to bid on them. He did not have much hope and, after the auction, "I more or less forgot about them." But then he got an email saying that his bid was successful. Surprised and pleased, he drove to Los Angeles in order to pick them up and noticed something amazing. A small black-and-white picture attached to one

See **COLLECTION**, page 22



Anna Hoch-Kenney

A recently acquired Arthur Putnam bronze sculpture is displayed at Filoli.

COLLECTION

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of the stands revealed that it was taken in a room with wall-paper just like that found in the Reception Room. They were original pieces, once owned by the Bourn family.

"You follow a lot of dead ends and then something will hit you and you say 'This is it — this is the one,'" he said.

There are other avenues that Wisney can pursue, including public donations and assistance from Filoli friends and donors. Descendents of the Bourns and Roths have donated furniture and decorative items, as well as personal belongings like Lurline Roth's dresses.

Photographs revealed that the house was once "littered with objects from Tiffany and Cartier," as Wisney described it. While some of the inventory descriptions are vague, by blowing up these vintage photographs, Wisney was able to see that the Bourns owned a "pine needle" lamp by Tiffany. A generous donor offered to fund the purchase of a similar lamp, as well as an ink well and box, all of which are now on display.

When Wisney discovered that Agnes Bourn collected mezzotints and displayed them in the mansion's long hallway, the same donor offered to purchase several so that the area could be returned to its original state. "It's fun when donors get excited with you," said Wisney.

He noted that it is not unusual for people to stop by or call to say that they have objects they believe came from the house. There is a lengthy process involved before a piece can be accepted, from initial examination to presentation to the president of Filoli, to detailed condition reports and final consideration by the board of trustees. He encourages anyone who thinks they have an object from the house to contact him. "If it is a Bourn piece we will do what we can to acquire it because they are so rare," he said.

When asked if he had one special object that he would love to find, Wisney responded quickly. There was once a trifold screen in the dining room that framed

three bright tapestries of flowers and birds. A descendent of the Bourns was able to buy the screen frame at auction, but not the tapestries. Apparently, the tapestries were made by a famous European firm and the only surviving example of their work is in the British Museum. Wisney said he would love to replace them with reproductions as they would "light up the room."

The tapestry project will have to wait, however, until the draperies in the room are replaced. His research revealed that the drapes, made by the renowned House of Scalmandré, were once a "deep aubergine color" but have been faded by the sun. Luckily, he was able to work with a local firm in finding the original loom card for the weaving and they will be reproduced.

It is this kind of success that keeps the project moving forward, in spite of a limited budget and the passage of time.

"It is an ongoing process," explained Wisney. "We think we have approximately 40% of the pieces brought back."

In the meantime, there are some relatively simple fixes that don't require acquisitions. Wisney said that recent research revealed that the library originally had a blue palette, rather than the red we see now. Estate staff aim to return the room to its original appearance.

Wisney acknowledged the work can be "slow and frustrating," but each object returned or replaced provides another piece of the puzzle and offers visitors the chance to enjoy a rare, authentic experience in an early 20th-century California manor house.

"It all tells a cohesive arc of a story about a woman, a place, a state, a time," said Wisney. ■

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Visitors can tour Filoli's house and gardens daily, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Filoli is located at 86 Cañada Road, Woodside. Admission is \$29-\$39. For more information, visit filoli.org.

Worth a Look

The Flying Karamazov Brothers

The long-running, comedic and theatrical juggling act The Flying Karamazov Brothers has been going strong since 1973, when the troupe was founded in Northern California, and in the many years since has appeared everywhere from "Seinfeld" to "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" to the 1984 Olympics. The "Brothers" bring their high-energy high jinks to Palo Alto, where audiences should "expect the unexpected," according to the Oshman Family JCC, which is hosting the event.

April 26, 7 p.m., Albert and Janet Schultz Cultural Arts Hall, Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto; \$49.87-\$60.54; tinyurl.com/KaramazovPaloAltoJCC.



Courtesy Robin Klinger Entertainment

The Flying Karamazov Brothers will perform at the Oshman Family JCC.

Richard Howell

Celebrated jazz saxophonist, vocalist and educator Richard Howell is joined by a full backing band for his upcoming performances at Meyhouse Palo Alto. Howell defines his work as "Bridge Music," a "jazz pathway" that can connect and unite listeners. He's performed and/or recorded with icons such as Etta James and Chaka Khan and played at venues including Zellerbach Hall, the Royal Albert Hall and in the Newport and New Orleans Jazz Festival.

April 25-26, 6:30 and 8:30 p.m., Meyhouse Palo Alto, 640 Emerson St., Palo Alto; \$50; meyhousejazz.com.

Dabin Presents: Stay in Bloom

Canadian musician, DJ and producer Dabin returns to Stanford's Frost Amphitheater for his "Stay in Bloom" festival, which debuted in 2024. Dabin, according to his website, "distinguishes himself with a unique genre-defying live show in which he incorporates electronic guitar, synthesizers and drum pads." Stay in Bloom offers two days of music, featuring artists Blanke, Audrey Nuna, Tisoki, Johnny Chay, William Black, Max, Hoang, Nikita The Wicked and Dab the Sky — Dabin's collaborative project with fellow electronic producer Said the Sky.

April 26-27, 4 p.m., Frost Amphitheater, 351 Lasuen St., Stanford; \$149.38; live.stanford.edu.

Rally for Riekes

The mission of Menlo Park's Riekes Center is to help bring out the best in every student, whether it be through creative arts, outdoor skills or physical fitness. The community is invited to celebrate the center and support the organization's scholarships at its Rally for Riekes fundraising event, which will feature games, entertainment, dinner and more.

April 26, 5 p.m., The Riekes Center, 3455 Edison Way, Menlo Park; \$250 for individual tickets; rieakes.org/rally-for-rieakes.

Dorsey Nunn

Menlo Park's Dorsey Nunn has been advocating for the rights of California prisoners and their families since he himself was incarcerated at a young age. In 2003, Dorsey cofounded All of Us or None, a grassroots movement of formerly incarcerated people working to secure their civil and human rights. His memoir, "What Kind of Bird Can't Fly?," written with longtime journalist Lee Romney, "links the politics of Black Power to the movements for Black lives and dignified reentry today," according to his publisher, Heyday Books. Dorsey will discuss his experience and decades of work in conversation with Lee at an event at Kepler's Books.

April 29, 7 p.m., Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real #100, Menlo Park; \$11.49-\$32.49; tinyurl.com/DorseyNunnKeplers.



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At 70, Los Altos resident Alice Larse created a cookie company. Twenty-six years later, her legacy lives on

By Adrienne Mitchel

At 70 years old, many people have begun their retirement. Not Alice Larse — she started her debut company, one whose cookies would be included in a Grammys swag bag, enjoyed by Wolfgang Puck and twice win Best Cookie by the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade.

Alice's Stick Cookies specializes in Larse's recipe for vanillinsocker cookies — buttery, melt-in-your-mouth Swedish shortbread cookies that look like biscotti. The Los Altos-born company got its start selling at Draeger's Market around 26 years ago. Now, Larse's stick-shaped cookies are available in three flavors and can be found in specialty food stores all along the Peninsula and are available for online order nationwide.

Larse died last April, but her influence

More information is available at alicesstickcookies.com. Instagram: @alicesstickcookies.

and legacy live on in the people whose lives she impacted and in her cookies that continue to be sold today.

"She is one of the most influential people in my life as my grandma, but also my professional life, inspiring me to cook for a living," said Lars Smith, owner of State of Mind pizzeria. "She and I had a really special relationship, and she really knew who I was, even at times when I didn't."

Smith, who owns a public house and pizzeria in Los Altos and Redwood City, as well as a slice house in Palo Alto, said he was raised in his "grandma Alice's" kitchen and has fond memories of baking with her. He grew up eating her stick cookies, which he described as "a work of art," but he didn't often bake them himself, saying that he didn't inherit the baking gene.

"Even in her 90s, I needed her help to make cookies and cakes and stuff like that," Smith said.

Larse grew up in Washington, moving to California and eventually to Los Altos in the 1950s for her husband's job in the budding space industry. She was heavily

involved in the Los Altos community as well as the Episcopal Church.

"Her whole life was about living her life like Jesus lived his — not the church, not the hierarchy, but she would give anything to anybody at any time," Smith said.

For Larse, creating her business was never about the money, Smith said. It was all about passion.

"My grandpa was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, which is traumatic in many ways, and she was looking for ways to stay busy," he said. "Baking was something that she really loved to do, and she didn't shy away from a challenge in life."

When Larse turned 80, she decided it was time to retire, selling the company to Los Altos resident Kelly Flaig, whose daughter was in the same kindergarten class as Larse's great-grandson.

"We had no experience in baking...but what steered us to the company was everybody in the community knew them and loved them," Flaig said. "One of my closest friends said, 'Oh my gosh, I've been buying those for 10 years at Draeger's.'"

Since Flaig took over in 2011, she's kept the same recipes (which are free of eggs, nuts and nut oil) and the same commercial kitchen in Santa Clara that

Larse used, she said.

"People always say, 'You should come up with another flavor. You should change it,'" she said. "Nope, exactly the same."

Alice's Stick Cookies originally came in four flavors — vanilla, lemon and cinnamon ginger are in production today, and orange chocolate will be reintroduced soon. Vanilla is the bestseller, but Flaig said she can't pick a favorite between vanilla and cinnamon ginger, which reminds her of a snickerdoodle.

"There's a certain snap with the cookies. It's not hard, but there's a certain crunch to it," she said. "They're in loaves, hand cut, so you'll see that they're not exactly the same size and shape."

Flaig's four children grew up helping out with Alice's Stick Cookies. Her sons would bake at the commercial kitchen, and her daughters would help out at demos and events.

Flaig said there are many ways to enjoy Alice's Stick Cookies. Crumble them over ice cream, dunk them into coffee, add them to a charcuterie board, dip them in chocolate or even make a cheesecake crust out of them.

See **COOKIES**, page 26



Clockwise from the top: Alice's Stick Cookies offers three flavors of vanillinsocker cookies: vanilla, lemon and cinnamon ginger. Alice's Stick Cookies can be ordered online through the website or found at most local specialty food stores. Los Altos resident Kelly Flaig is the current owner of Alice's Stick Cookies. Alice's Stick Cookies are baked at a commercial kitchen in Santa Clara. All photos courtesy Alice's Stick Cookies.



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Koichi Baba, owner of Koma Sushi in Portola Valley, behind the restaurant's sushi bar.

Kanpai Sushi in Palo Alto to close next month, merging with Portola Valley's Koma Sushi

Koma Sushi will have an updated menu with small plates from Kanpai and a new omakase prix fixe option

By Adrienne Mitchel

After about a decade in Palo Alto, Kanpai Sushi will have its final day of service May 24. Despite losing its lease, Kanpai isn't permanently closing, said owner Koichi Baba, as the sushi spot will be merging with its sister restaurant in Portola Valley.

Beginning June 2, Koma Sushi in Ladera Country Shopper will have a revamped menu featuring favorites from Kanpai's menu, and customers can expect to see familiar faces of the Kanpai staff. While the name Koma Sushi will remain, expect the menu to feature "more authentic Japanese appetizers and small dishes" from Kanpai's menu, including broiled miso-marinated black cod and lamb chop with wasabi mayo and unagi sauce, Baba said. He also plans to introduce a "more traditional Japanese style" omakase five-course prix fixe option to Koma.

This isn't the first time Baba had to merge his restaurants due to losing his lease. In 2021, he was forced to close Koma Sushi in Menlo Park, merging the restaurant with Palo Alto's Kanpai Sushi.

Koma Sushi has a history spanning back to 1977, when founder Riyoko Lingerfelt opened the original restaurant. Baba, who had been an exchange student in the U.S. twice, was living in Tokyo and knew about the restaurant from a mutual friend. Excited to return to the U.S., he

took a job at Koma Sushi, taking over the business when Lingerfelt was ready to retire in 1988. He later would expand the restaurant to Menlo Park, where it stayed for two decades before losing its lease.

During his 40-year career in Bay Area Japanese restaurants, Baba has noticed a shift in consumer dining habits. Decades ago, about half of the customers would order kitchen food, like tempura, teriyaki and sukiyaki, as their entree and the other half would order sushi, he noted. More recently, he estimates more than 70% of customers order sushi as an entree and kitchen food as a side order.

When asked what differentiates his sushi restaurants from others in the area, Baba posits the authenticity of his food.

"We are one of the few Japanese-owned Japanese restaurants in the Bay Area. I would say more than 90% of the Japanese restaurants now are operated by non-Japanese owners," he said. "The way we cook and the way we serve is very traditional Japanese."

The Palo Alto resident is open to opening more Japanese restaurants, if the opportunity presents itself, but for now, he's content with pairing down the scale to just one.

"The good thing is that I can stay at one place in Portola (Valley) every day," he said. "I can greet our regular customers every time they come in. Sometimes they come in and they miss me ... Now I am able to meet with them every day. That's something that I am looking forward to."

Baba said he hopes to see his Palo Alto regulars come dine at Koma Sushi and looks forward to becoming more involved in the Portola Valley community. ■



From the top down: Kanpai Sushi's dragon roll has shrimp tempura and avocado inside and is topped with eel. Kanpai Sushi's homemade tamago. A platter of Amaebi, tuna, albacore, yellowtail tuna, salmon, surf clam, scallop, and squid sashimi, served with fried Amaebi heads on a bed of shredded daikon radish, at Kanpai Sushi in Palo Alto. Photos by Magali Gauthier.

Koma Sushi, 3130 Alpine Road, Portola Valley; 650-367-6547. Open Monday to Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4:30-8 p.m., Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4:30-8:30 p.m. and Saturday from 4:30-8:30 p.m.



Courtesy Lars Smith

From left, Lars Smith, his brother and business partner Andrew Smith and his grandmother Alice Larse, founder of Alice's Stick Cookies.

COOKIES

continued from page 24

Cookies can be purchased directly from the website (priced at \$27 for three eight-ounce boxes, \$45 for six, \$81 for 12 and \$150 for 24) or at various specialty stores for \$10-\$12 a box.

Alice's Stick Cookies are available at DeMartini Orchard, Draeger's, Andronico's Market, Gourmet Works and BK Collections in Los Altos; The Market at Edgewood, Sigona's Farmers Market and Schaub's Meat, Fish & Poultry in Palo Alto; Draeger's in Menlo Park;

Dehoff's Market, Sigona's Farmers Market and Delucchi's Market in Redwood City; Mills Cargo in South San Francisco; Bianchini's Market in San Carlos and Portola Valley; Dean's Produce in San Mateo; and Zanotto's Market in Sunnyvale.

Flaig said she has had many wonderful opportunities because of Alice's Stick Cookies, including lunch with chef Wolfgang Puck as well as singer-songwriter Carol Connors. As for the future of the business, she hopes to continue finding new specialty stores to carry the cookies and

introducing them to new communities. ■

Email Food Editor Adrienne Mitchel at amitchel@embarcaderomedia.org.

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