

The Almanac

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

MAY 2, 2025 | VOL. 60 NO. 34



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Menlo Park prioritizes sustainability all year long

City is confident it will continue to trend toward meeting goals

By Arden Margulis

In February 2024, Menlo Park's sustainability manager, Rachael Londer, started in the newly created role. Her job: manage the city's wide-ranging sustainability programs and get the city on track for carbon neutrality by 2030, 15 years before the state's goal.

A year later, and five years before the city seeks to be carbon neutral, the department has wrapped up Earth Month.

"We're really fortunate to have such an active community working to promote sustainability. When I worked at the county, we looked to Menlo Park as a leader in climate action," Londer said.

On April 26, Menlo Park, in collaboration with the city of East Palo Alto and various community organizations, hosted the fourth annual Love Our Earth Festival at the Belle Haven Community Campus. The event served as a way to educate and motivate community members to take

action on climate change, as well as to celebrate the city's progress so far.

It also connected residents with resources, public and private, to help lower their carbon future.

"The event was a massive success," Londer said. "So many more families than we expected chose to spend their Saturday learning about what they can do to be more sustainable."

"While I love celebrating the progress we've made and the tremendous work we've done, we have to really step it up and forge a new path forward if we want to meet the 2030 goal," Londer said.

The goal uses 2005 as a baseline. That was the year the city calculated it generated 349,284 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions. In 2021, the most recent year the city studied emissions, Menlo Park had reduced emissions by 19%. The

See **SUSTAINABILITY**, page 15



Courtesy Veronika Hsu

The cities of Menlo Park and East Palo Alto hosted the fourth annual Love Our Earth Festival at the Belle Haven Community Campus on April 26.

Sequoia Union modifies ethnic studies curriculum

Board of Trustees faces opposition from parents

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Heated debate over ethnic studies and honors classes dominated the Sequoia Union High School District's April 23 board meeting, as teachers and parents packed the room to weigh in on curriculum changes and restoring advanced course offerings for the upcoming year.

The board voted 3-2 to modify the ethnic studies curriculum and unanimously voted to affirm the district's 2025-26 course offerings. Trustees Sathvik Nori and Richard Ginn opposed the changes to the ethnic studies curriculum.

In the fall, the board plans to review graduation requirements, including whether to continue the ethnic studies course as a graduation requirement, and also promised the community that no changes would be made to course offerings without board approval.

Teachers largely voiced their support for the ethnic studies curriculum, while parents expressed concerns about the ethnic studies course causing discrimination and division in the student population.

In 2020, the Board of Trustees voted to make ethnic studies a graduation requirement beginning with the Class of 2025,

making SUHSD one of the first districts in the area to offer the course. The curriculum was created by teachers guided by the state's model curriculum.

The 2020 decision came ahead of state Assembly Bill 101, which the state passed in 2021, making ethnic studies a graduation requirement beginning with the class of 2030, said Assistant Superintendent Bonnie Hanson.

Controversy erupted in January 2024 when two Menlo-Atherton ethnic studies teachers presented their classes with a lesson on the Israel-Hamas conflict. Presentation slides included images of a puppet on strings and a map of Palestine's

territory shrinking over the decades. Parents and community members called the lesson "Hamas propaganda" and antisemitic.

Hanson said the initial curriculum model was not perfect, and the district is working to improve the ethnic studies course structure. She said the district aims to align its curriculum with the state Board of Education's approved course model.

"The purpose (of ethnic studies) is to provide opportunities for student exposure to the histories, culture and world view of people of color and marginalized populations, particularly

in the United States of America, to build an understanding and create space for inquiry," said Executive Director of People, Culture and Community Oyame KenZoe Brian J. Selassie.

Changes to ethnic studies

The curriculum revisions were led by Hanson, Selassie, and ethnic studies teachers from across SUHSD, with support from an external consultant specializing in curriculum development. District leaders reviewed and vetted the final curriculum, Hanson said.

The revised curriculum

See **ETHNIC STUDIES**, page 18

INSIDE

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OUR STATUS HAS CHANGED

but not our mission



So Far GIFTING \$450,000 IN GRANTS

NEW STATUS AS AN INDEPENDENT 501(C)(3) NONPROFIT

The Woodside-area Horse Owners Association (WHOA!) is celebrating the organizational milestone of achieving nonprofit status as *The WHOA Foundation Inc.*, a California public charity 501(c)(3). This step forward will uphold the over twenty-year legacy of public fundraising to support local equestrian projects and programs within the community that align with the Mission and Vision of WHOA! Fundraising began in 2006, under the fiscal sponsorship of the *Woodside Community Foundation (WCF)*, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. This beneficial relationship allowed WHOA! to focus on its initiatives while WCF handled fiscal management. Now as it approaches its 21st anniversary, WHOA! is ready to be its own independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

GIVING VOICE TO OUR MISSION THROUGH GRANTS

The WHOA Foundation Inc's mission supports the preservation of the fundamental role of horses in maintaining the rural character of Woodside and surrounding communities through grants to equestrian projects and programs aimed to foster and promote the appreciation and enjoyment of horses. Equestrian related projects and programs will continue to be supported by fundraising efforts from dedicated community sponsors through annual grants, which to date total over \$450,000. An annual Equestrian Merit Scholarship is also funded for an outstanding student with a background in community service in the equestrian field.

FUNDING EQUESTRIAN PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

Some notable local projects funded include key contributions to the refurbishment of the historic Folger Stable in Wunderlich Park, including the public arena located within. Additionally, grants have been made to repair and maintain the trails and bridges within the Town of Woodside and San Mateo County Parks. A full list of past grants can be found on the website:

www.whoa94062.org/projects-and-programs

WITH OUR GRATITUDE

The WHOA Foundation Inc is most grateful to the *Woodside Community Foundation* for their assistance over the past 20 years. The Foundation is also very grateful to *Michael Degnan, Esq.* whose family has been a part of the Woodside community since the 1940's. Michael, on a pro bono basis, provided the legal expertise and advice to expedite the nonprofit status for The WHOA Foundation Inc.

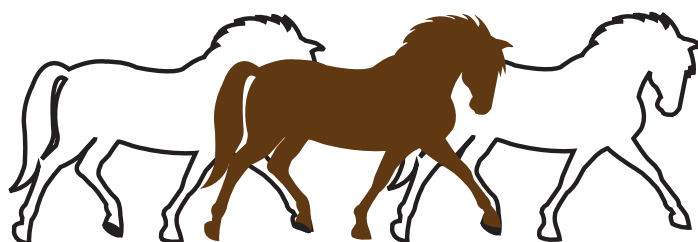
BOARD MEMBERS AND ADVISORS

The Foundation's current Board of Directors include Alexis Bartlo, President, Iain Finlay, Treasurer, and Fawni Hill, Secretary, as well as advisors Donna Poy, Susan Lang, and Michael Degnan, Esq.

WOODSIDE DAY OF THE HORSE - OUR PRINCIPAL FUNDRAISER

The 21st Annual *Woodside Day of the Horse* will be celebrated with a trail ride through the Town of Woodside and the Horse Park at Woodside on Saturday, October 11. The following day, October 12 a family-fun Horse Fair takes place at Woodside Town Hall. It takes over 200 generous sponsors and volunteers to put on this event and it is an excellent showcase for the past successes and future planning for WHOA! as it maintains relevance in our equestrian community and evolving dynamic landscape.

WOODSIDE IS HORSE COUNTRY



THE WHOA FOUNDATION

NOW a California 501(c)(3) Nonprofit

The WHOA Foundation Inc. Federal EIN: 33-1500324

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Local News

MENLO PARK | AThERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Jennifer Yoshikoshi

A Woodside High School student works on an audio production project on April 22.

Students launch own record label at Woodside High School

Program promotes passions along with academics

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

A student-run record label lives among classroom buildings at Woodside High School. 1.99 Records, named after the campus's address on 199 Churchill Ave., is thriving with musicality as students gain an early footing in the music industry.

The club has been producing music, recording songs and performing live music on and off campus. Students are utilizing the school's audio

production classroom, which is fitted with a recording studio, professional mixing board and a computer lab.

Woodside High School junior and club co-president Camille Sonnenburg said she joined the club as a freshman with an interest in producing. At the time, students in the club would mostly work on their own projects and as a new student, Sonnenburg found it difficult to get involved.

In order to change the atmosphere, she pitched the idea of

a record label to club adviser Raphael Kauffmann with the goal to encourage more collaboration and community among students.

To launch the record label, Sonnenburg partnered with Ayla Defouw, a Woodside High School student, to record an original song she had heard her sing in an Instagram video. In May 2024, Defouw's song "Sound of a Hurricane," became

See **RECORD LABEL**, page 14

San Mateo County Supervisor Speier calls out Corpus spending

Sheriff said to have bought \$74,000 table

By Arden Margulis

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors has a lot of issues with Sheriff Christina Corpus, but now they added one more: her spending.

"This is from Sheriff Corpus and she is not here," said county Supervisor Jackie Speier at the board's April 22 meeting.

The board had a \$4 million

fund transfer request to the Sheriff's Office for the purchase of new radios on the consent agenda, where routine items are put to be approved without board discussion. However, Speier pulled the items off the consent agenda at the beginning of the meeting to request Corpus present that item.

Two hours later, when the board went to discuss it, Speier

learned that Corpus had sent Undersheriff Dan Perea in her absence.

"[Corpus] had another meeting," Perea said.

"We expect department heads to appear when they have issues before the Board of Supervisors. The fact that she is unavailable is disappointing," Speier said.

See **SPEIER**, page 16

Becker's bill to reform builder's remedy stalls

Legislation would have shortened window for when the contentious zoning tool applies

By Gennady Sheyner

Proposed legislation by state Sen. Josh Becker that would have curbed the contentious zoning tool known as builder's remedy faltered on Tuesday afternoon when the Senate Housing Committee opted not to advance it, according to Becker.

The legislation, known as Senate Bill 457, was inspired by zone-busting projects like 80 Willow Road in Menlo Park, a mixed-use development in Menlo Park with a height of 461 feet. It is one of dozens of projects that had been proposed through the use of builder's remedy, a state provision that applies to jurisdictions without a state certified housing plan.

Palo Alto saw 10 builder's remedy applications before it secured approval for its Housing Element from the state Department of Housing and Community Development in August 2024. The largest of these is a mixed-use project with 382 apartments at 156 California Ave., site of Mollie Stone's. The project includes two residential towers, one with 17 stories and the other with 11 stories.

Palo Alto's Department of Planning and Development Services recently deemed the application from the project developer, Redco Development, complete. The project will still have to undergo environmental analysis, which would need to be approved by the City Council, before it gets the final green light.

Even among Peninsula cities that have struggled with builder's remedy projects, the Becker bill proved to be somewhat divisive. The Palo Alto City Council voted 4-3 earlier this month to support the bill, while the Mountain View council opted not to back it but to maintain a "watch" position.

In a statement after the Tuesday meeting, Becker, D-Menlo Park, called SB 457 a "focused, practical bill" that tried to address an recent influx of applications that have eroded public trust. Many of the projects that have been submitted under builder's remedy fail to include significant affordable housing, he noted. And some communities in his district have been inundated with builder's remedy applications. Saratoga, he

said, received 22 of them.

"I have worked to ensure that SB 457 struck a fair balance to uphold accountability while giving cities that do the right thing the ability to plan responsibly," Becker said. "California's housing crisis demands laws that are reliable, predictable and fair. While I am disappointed that this bill didn't advance, I remain committed to pushing for reforms that support real affordability and restore confidence in our housing policies."

Critics of the bill have contended that SB 457 would allow cities that have failed to take the necessary actions to approve housing plans to escape consequences. Mountain View City Council member Lucas Ramirez, who opposed the bill, suggested at a council meeting last week that the legislation would "empower bad actor cities to take actions that would allow them to avoid contributing their fair share of housing."

The Becker bill tried to curb builder's remedy in two ways. First, it would have required developers who propose projects that rely on builder's remedy to submit complete applications rather than conceptual "pre-applications" without refined designs or environmental analyses.

Second, it would have shortened the window for when builder's remedy applies. Currently, that window ends when the HCD certifies the housing plan as substantially compliant with state law. SB 457 would have set the deadline to the date that a jurisdiction approves its own plan, provided that this plan ultimately wins state approval.

Supporters of the bill argued that this reform is needed to ensure that cities that approve housing plans don't get penalized because of the length of the HCD's review period, which often takes several months.

"This bill simply asks legislators to correct their unintended consequences and not punish thousands of citizens in housing-compliant cities with egregious projects," Palo Alto Mayor Ed Lauing, who supported the

See **BECKER**, page 18

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.

5/2/25

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS



Courtesy Menlo Park City School District

PAWZitivity facility dogs provide mental and emotional support for Menlo Park City School District students.

Menlo Park City School District wins award for PAWZitivity program

Menlo Park City School District received a J. Russell Kent Award from the San Mateo County School Boards Association for its district-wide program, PAWZitivity: Wellness Facility Dogs Serving TK-Eighth Grade Students. The Kent Award recognizes innovative programs that have been implemented in schools across the county.

PAWZitivity was created to address concerns reported in a survey about academic performance, social acceptance and how to adjust to the rapid pace of the world. Studies showed that trained facility dogs could enhance the psychological development, social skills, relieve anxiety and calm fears in children.

MPCSD launched the pilot program with one full-time dog in 2021 and the feedback from students and staff was entirely positive. Since then, the district was able to bring in six trained dogs from 4 PAWZ Strong, a Michigan-based organization that trains canines. The dogs then moved to Menlo Park to live with staff members and begin their work in providing support for students across district campuses.

The recognition will be presented at the 2025 Annual J. Russell Kent Awards and Emily Garfield Award Celebration on May 2, 2025, in Foster City. Duke, one of the MPCSD dogs, plans to attend.

Portola Art Gallery presents 'Sacred Places of the World'

The Portola Art Gallery in Menlo Park presents "Sacred Places of the World," a photography exhibition by Frances Freyberg. The gallery will feature photographs from the Middle East, Asia, Europe and the Americas, highlighting colorful temples, ruins and domes from across the world.

Freyberg is a Menlo Park resident who specializes in photographs of nature, wildlife, architecture and people encountered during her travels to more than 70 countries. Her photos have been featured in galleries and private collections worldwide.

The Portola Art Gallery exhibition will be open throughout the month of May with a special artist reception from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 3. There is an opportunity to meet the artist on Saturday, May 30, from 11 a.m.- 4 p.m. For more information on the exhibit visit portolaartgallery.com. To see more of Freyberg's work visit francesfreyberg.com.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Menlo-Atherton journalism wins national award

The M-A Chronicle, Menlo-Atherton High School's student newspaper, won the National Scholastic Press Association's Online Pacemaker Award, NSPA announced on April 26 at

See **COMMUNITY BRIEFS**, page 18

CORRECTION

In the April 25 article headlined, "Menlo Park school update on enrollment and special education," the original wording on the percentage of Latinx students identified with learning disabilities in the Menlo Park City School District was misleading. More accurately, 47% of students who are eligible for an Individualized Education Plan under Specific Learning Disability are Latinx.



Affordable Housing Month 2025
Mes de la Vivienda Asequible 2025

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Portola Valley residents ask town to save Dorothy Ford Park

Town Council excludes baseball field, parking lot in zoning ordinance

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Portola Valley residents showed out during a recent Town Council meeting to push for the preservation of Dorothy Ford Park and Ford Field, a town-owned site that has been identified as a potential affordable housing parcel in the 2023-2031 housing element.

After public comment, council members voted 3-1 to approve changes to the site's zoning ordinance which now states that the housing element "shall exclude the existing Little League baseball field and the adjacent surface parking lot serving the baseball field." Council member Mary Hufty voted against the ordinance.

Plans for housing on Dorothy Ford Park include high density housing that would include 20% or more of the units as affordable housing for lower income families.

Council member Rebecca Flynn clarified to residents that the demolition of the baseball field and parking lot for housing was never in consideration, but rather an idea that grew amid misinformation.

As the town is rushing toward a compliant housing element, some council members are eager to push forward with necessary zoning ordinances that will show the state Housing and Community Development it's making progress to meet the Regional Housing Needs Allocation of 253 units.

While the town is actively searching for alternative housing sites through a town committee, HCD is asking the town to zone Dorothy Ford Park in order to have a compliant housing element. Without compliance, the town is subject to builder's remedy although Vice Mayor Craig Taylor reported that no applications have been submitted so far.

In March, the Town Council was presented with four alternative sites for housing: Village Square, Thomas Fogarty Winery Open Space, Christ Church and Hawthorns Area. If alternative sites are reviewed by HCD, Dorothy Ford Park will be removed from the list of housing sites, said Taylor.

Saving the baseball field

Community members were riled as they shared their concerns about losing the baseball field, a home to decades of Little League games for local youth and which many consider as a "town gem." Current Little Leaguers, alumni and parents stood at the podium to speak to the Town Council.

"A really special thing about Ford Field is the memories you make from the start to end of your league experience," said Little League player Charlie Katz. "I ask that you please save the whole field as well as the parking lot so that we can continue to have this great experience at this special field."

Katz is a fourth-generation Portola Valley resident and



The entrance to Dorothy Ford Field parking lot at 3399 Alpine Road in Portola Valley.

great-grandchild to Bob Katz, one of the town's original founders. His father and grandfather had played on Ford Field too, he said.

Ford Field has been a park that many young baseball players have dreamed of playing on. Nine-year-old EJ Sweeney said he had seen his older brothers play on the field and was excited to have the opportunity to play on it himself. The baseball field has not only been a community gathering place for generations of families, but it also carries history.

Dorothy Ford Park was purchased by late Portola Valley resident Tom Ford in 1970 with the intent that the park be gifted to the town and used as an open space, said Susan Ford, wife of Tom Ford. The town named the park after Tom's mother with

promises to maintain the baseball field and open space.

"I hope you will honor the commitment your predecessors on the Town Council made back in the '70s to not rezone these properties and to continue to pursue other properties," she added.

Council member deliberations

Council member Helen Wolter said she supports protecting the baseball field but does not support the same protections for the associated parking lot. Although she believes that youth sports organizations are critical to the wellbeing of kids, she also thinks it's important to address the town-wide parking issues and the growing need for housing for town staff.

"Parking is an issue across

town right now and I'm hesitant to block the parking at the Little League field," said Wolter. "We need to start figuring out how to incentivize carpooling, biking and walking."

Despite her lack of support for preserving the parking lot, Wolter ultimately voted in favor of the ordinance making an exception to the parking lot and baseball field out of fear for the town's noncompliant housing element leading to a lawsuit from the state.

"Putting Dorothy Ford open space on the chopping block at this point for 20% affordable housing is not acceptable to me," said Council member Mary Hufty who voted against changes to the ordinance language.

Council member Flynn recognized the dissatisfaction that many residents felt but expressed her desire to see this same level of energy for "supporting other sites to build affordable housing not at Ford Park but somewhere else other places in town."

After many residents mentioned donating money to preserve spaces like Ford Field, Flynn asked residents to "put their money where their mouth is and donate to our affordable housing fund so that we can build affordable housing so families can live in Portola Valley."

Due to the high cost of living in the area, fewer families are moving into town and local schools are seeing lower enrollment

See **DOROTHY FORD PARK**, page 15

Holiday funds grant over \$1.1 million

Almanac Holiday Fund beats last year's record grant total

By Almanac staff

With a record-breaking amount of money raised over the holiday season from readers, businesses and foundations this year, The Almanac has made grants of \$36,600 each to 10 local nonprofit organizations serving families and children.

In all, \$1,151,000 was the combined giving totals to the holiday funds of The Almanac (\$366,000), the Palo Alto Weekly (\$705,000) and the Mountain View Voice (\$80,000).

The Almanac Holiday Fund began more than 25 years ago and each year selects 10 nonprofits providing needed services to residents of Menlo Park, Redwood City, North Fair Oaks or East Palo Alto to share



equally of the funds raised. This year, The Almanac and its readers supported the Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula, Ecumenical Hunger Program, Health Connected, LifeMoves, Literacy Partners Menlo Park, Ravenswood Family Health Center, St. Francis Center of Redwood City, Star Vista, St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room and Upward Scholars.

"These organizations are leaders in consistently providing critical services to the community," said Embarcadero

Media Foundation President Adam Dawes. "Highlighting the work of nonprofits on the Midpeninsula is one of The Almanac's important missions and we are gratified for the outpouring of support our readers provide each holiday season for these local agencies," he said.

The nonprofit Embarcadero Media Foundation, which publishes The Almanac and Palo Alto Weekly, as well as the Redwood City Pulse and Mountain View Voice community news websites, covers all the expenses of the campaign, so all the money raised goes to the recipient organizations. The Packard, Hewlett and Menlo Park Rotary foundations all provide support, as do several family foundations that prefer to give anonymously. ■

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

New Fire Maps Show New Fire Zones



Dear Monica: I am selling my home and see that it is now in a high fire area. Will the property still be attractive to buyers?

Elena C.

Dear Elena: The new California Fire Maps issued this year show more high fire zones. This new designation will affect insurance availability, which will affect many buyers. Homeowners in this newly expanded zone will be required to maintain more defensible space and build to stricter codes, among several new requirements. Legislators at all levels need to act to help those affected now and in the future. Your home should still sell but it may take longer.

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

Atherton police report another burglary within town

Police offered reward in separate cases

By Embarcadero Media staff

Burglars allegedly struck another Atherton home on Saturday, April 26, just four days after police publicly announced a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of anyone involved in two unsolved residential burglaries earlier this year in which tens of thousands of dollars worth of property was allegedly taken.

According to Atherton police, burglars removed a rear door window to break into a home on Isabella Avenue in West Atherton sometime between 5 and 9 p.m. The method and time of the break-in is similar to the two earlier unsolved burglaries, but it not known if this incident is related. Police said it is under investigation and no

other information is available at this time.

In January, burglars allegedly broke into two homes on Stevick Drive about 2 miles away from Isabella Avenue in the West of Alameda neighborhood. According to police, these two burglaries both took place around 7 p.m. on Jan. 11, and burglars entered both homes by breaking glass doors in the rear of the residences. Approximately \$20,000 in jewelry and gold and silver coins was allegedly stolen from one of the homes on Stevick, according to police.

On April 23, Atherton Police Chief Steve McCulley announced a \$10,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of suspects involved in the two January residential burglaries. The reward, in partnership

with San Mateo County, is the first offered in a pilot program county Supervisor Ray Mueller championed in June 2024.

The program was launched in response to over 90 such crimes in five months in unincorporated parts of the county and Midpeninsula cities like Menlo Park, San Carlos and Atherton. Around the same time, Atherton launched a bait house program to catch and deter burglars.

The Isabella break-in is the fourth reported home burglary in Atherton so far this year, according to police records.

Police are asking residents who live in the area of Isabella Drive to check their surveillance video and report any possible leads to the Atherton Police Department at 650-688-6500. ■

POLICE SAFETY TIPS

The Atherton Police Department has issued the following safety tips for residents:

- Schedule a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design review of your home at 650-688-6500.
- Keep all doors and windows locked, even when you are home.
- When you are not home, make it appear that someone is home by keeping lights on, installing light timers, and leaving on the TV or a radio.
- Install exterior lighting.
- Do not keep valuables in your primary bedroom as this area is a common target of burglars.
- Keep valuables well-hidden and consider using a safe bolted to the floor and/or wall.
- Keep valuables out of your car and lock your car doors.
- Install an alarm system and security cameras (strongly consider having your alarm system monitored for free by our PD Dispatch Center by calling 650-688-6500).

Antonio López becomes San Mateo County poet laureate

Former East Palo Alto City Council member hopes to promote art form

By Angela Swartz

Antonio López, former East Palo Alto Council member and a Ph.D. student in literature at Stanford University, is taking on a new role: San Mateo County's poet laureate.

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors appointed López, 30, to the position on April 8 for a two-year term that ends in March 2027.

Supervisors Noelia Corzo and Lisa Gauthier served on a committee that recommended López for the job. Corzo said in a statement that she admires how López "blends local experiences and observations with powerful themes."

"Mom's walks down Embarcadero Road and through the freeway to get us groceries," López writes in one poem. "Dad



Magali Gauthier

Antonio Lopez becomes San Mateo County's official poet.

migrating from Michoacán on his 18th birthday.... A classroom full of brown babies and black with their hands raised."

The board established the poet laureate post in 2013 "to elevate and celebrate the literary arts and their roles in public life." López succeeds Daly City's Jorge

Argueta. The poet laureate is tasked with judging poetry contests and being an ambassador of poetry for the community.

The board also declared April National Poetry Month, as well as California Arts, Culture, and Creativity Month.

López's work has been published in PEN/America, Palette Poetry, The New Republic, Tin House, Poetry Northwest and more. He published a book of poetry, "Gentefication," in 2021.

This news organization spoke with López about his latest role, what influences his work, the current political climate and what he's working on now.

Q: What do you hope to accomplish in the role?

A: When I teach at high schools, I will ask, "What do you think poetry is?" I like to implore anyone can be a poet. There's such an empowering

effect in being able to tell your story and claim it. I want people to really feel encouraged to write their story. That's how we make a difference; we break down barriers in the country by sharing narratives. The beautiful thing about poetry is it's not an indictment of a person; it's an emotional piece that shares your lived experience. It's up to the person who's reading it to take it with them; that's the seed of change. ... Given the climate, you can't afford not to learn more about one another. Art and poetry are a timeless way to do that. That's the way we combat some of the fear and dehumanization.

Q: How is the current political climate influencing your poetry?

A: Like any other person, leaders are residents just like you. ... We really give a damn about

what's happening in our community. My dad came to the U.S. undocumented and got amnesty under (President) Reagan. I wrote a "What ifs" poem (about my dad's citizenship). Citizenships are colored by the current administration, which is trying to get rid of birthright citizenship. It's unAmerican. This is our home; this is part of what makes our country so beautiful. Part of my poetry is to really do justice to that cultural richness that makes up our county. It's counternative to the rhetoric about (immigrants) not "doing their share," I've seen the opposite in (East Palo Alto).

Q: Your book of poetry came out in 2021; do you have any other publications in the works?

A: "Right to Remain Violets" — a poetry book. I'm thinking

See **POET LAUREATE**, page 14

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Sequoia Union schools report after visit from accreditation group

Campus leaders recognize areas of improvement

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Sequoia Union High School District campuses of East Palo Alto Academy, Menlo-Atherton High School and Woodside High School were visited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges over the past months. As a result, each school has come to recognize its areas of strength and mapped out plans for improvement.

WASC is an organization that provides accreditation of public and private schools in the western region of the United States with the purpose of encouraging quality education and improvement. A visit from WASC occurs every six years and involves a rigorous self-evaluation and peer review process that focuses on inclusion, equity and access to high level learning opportunities for all students.

During a Sequoia Union High School District board meeting, school administrators presented the reports from its campus's self study and WASC committee report. While all three schools reported strength in school culture and spirit they also saw

areas of growth opportunities in supporting English language learners, providing more professional development, maintaining transparency on funds with stakeholders and more.

East Palo Alto Academy

Principal Veronica Miranda-Pinkney presented the self-study report for East Palo Alto Academy highlighting strengths in staff autonomy with curriculum and strong relationships between students and teachers.

Students shared that they would like to see more of their peers participate in school events while staff asked for more consistent opportunities for analysis of data, collaboration and more clarity of resource allocation decisions.

The WASC visiting committee's report rated the different categories of curriculum, teaching and accountability as effective or somewhat effective. When it came to leadership for learning and family and community involvement the school was rated highly effective.

Specific areas of growth that were identified included the implementation of support and

resources targeted for diverse learners to achieve more equitable outcomes to close the gap between English language learners and English only peers. Pinkney stated that since the WASC visit, the school has started looking into how to use the current class schedules to offer support during the school day.

EPPA will also work toward increasing collaboration between teachers and staff through professional development opportunities to address the diverse needs of students. Administrators are planning on partnering with the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center.

WASC is also encouraging the school to promote more transparency in budgeting and auditing practices and to include all stakeholders input into allocating resources and to develop an approach to retaining highly qualified teachers

Woodside High School

During the WASC visit to Woodside High School, Principal Karen Van Putten said she encouraged teachers and students to "just do your

thing." Van Putten expressed that this was an opportunity for the school to showcase all of the good things going on, but also a chance to reflect and find ways to improve.

Woodside High School's WASC visiting committee rated the school as highly effective in curriculum, qualified staff and professional development, family and community involvement, student engagement, and academic and social emotional support.

The report recognized Woodside's overall strengths in providing an inclusive and supportive school culture, commitment to equity and access, and robust college and career readiness programs. It also found that the school offered rigorous curriculum that aligns with college and career readiness, equitable access to advanced coursework and opportunity to learn real-world skills

The self-study also reported that Woodside High School students and administration are engaging in meaningful student leadership opportunities, data driven teaching practices and

a strong support system for academic and social emotional growth.

In areas of growth, the visiting committee found that improvements can be made to provide English language development teachers with more opportunities to collaborate and refine their curriculum.

With the growth of artificial intelligence, the self study identified that there is a need for more professional development focused on optimizing the technological and digital tools in the classroom, said Van Putten.

She is hoping for teachers "to embrace (AI) instead of fighting it. Learn how to use it as a teaching tool and then in the same way teach the students how to use it as opposed to being in constant opposition with the burgeoning technology."

Trustee Mary Beth Thompson acknowledged that Woodside has successfully spearheaded school-wide cellphone policies, which many schools have struggled with implementing. The WASC report wrote that this requirement for

See **ACCREDITATION**, page 18

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Replacement of Newell Road bridge to finally begin

Transportation project critical for regional flood protection

By Gennady Sheyner

After years of setbacks and frustrations, Palo Alto, East Palo Alto and Menlo Park residents who live in flood-prone areas near the San Francisco Creek received a jolt of good news last month, with Caltrans recently approving the long-awaited replacement of the Newell Road bridge.

The state Department of Transportation granted the city of Palo Alto a permit known as E-76, allowing the city to proceed with reconstruction of the narrow bridge that was constructed in 1911. Caltrans had deemed the 22-foot-wide bridge “structurally obsolete” more than a decade ago and included the replacement on its list of funded projects in 2011.

Aside from transportation improvements, the replacement of the Newell Road bridge is also a critical component of a regional plan to improve flood control. Most of the effort is being managed by the San Francisco Creek Joint Powers Authority, which is overseen by elected officials from Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park and the water districts in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. The Newell Road project is the exception in that it is spearheaded by the city of Palo Alto.

Despite the general acknowledgement that boosting flood protection is an urgent priority, the Newell Road project has been beset by complications and setbacks over the past decade. It took years for the city to choose the appropriate design for the new bridge, with many residents arguing that widening the span would only make traffic conditions more dangerous and some advocating for removing it altogether.

After presenting five options, choosing the preferred design and performing environmental analysis, Palo Alto paused the project in 2016 because of insufficient staff capacity and because it wanted the creek authority to first complete a separate project further downstream, near the vulnerable areas around U.S. Highway 101 and East Palo Alto. The creek authority completed that project — which includes widened channels and new levees — in 2019.

Now, both the city and the creek authority are eager to kick off the replacement of the Newell Road bridge, which connects Palo Alto to East Palo Alto. The project is expected to not only bolster flood protection in its immediate area but also to allow



Embarcadero Media file photo by Veronica Weber

A bicyclist coming from East Palo Alto rides across the Newell Road bridge heading into Palo Alto in 2013.

the creek authority to proceed with other improvements further upstream, including in the area of the Pope-Chaucer bridge. The agency’s strategy has been to work from downstream to upstream areas to avoid a situation where expanded water flow capacity upstream overwhelms the particularly flood-prone areas closer to the U.S. Highway 101.

With the Caltrans permit secured on April 14, Palo Alto officials released an invitation for bids the next day, according to the city’s Public Works Director Brad Eggleston. Barring further complications, the invitation envisions a construction schedule of about one-and-a-half years, according to Eggleston. The goal is to get a construction contract to the City Council for approval before its summer break.

“Assuming bidding is successful, and Council approves the contract before its break, the end date would be expected to be in January or February 2027, depending on when the Notice to Proceed can be issued, and of course subject to potential time extensions that may accompany change orders,” Eggleston said.

City leaders and creek authority officials lauded the progress on the Newell Road project, which comes at a time when the agency’s other plans remain in limbo. East Palo Alto City Council member Ruben Abrica, who represents his city on the creek authority board, said that he would like to have a public celebration for the long-awaited project.

“It’s up to Palo Alto, but on the East Palo Alto side, we’re ready for a party,” Abrica said at the April 24 meeting of the creek authority board.

Palo Alto City Manager Ed Shikada also highlighted the positive news on the bridge at a community briefing last week,

noting that the project is now out to bid. Margaret Bruce, executive director of the creek authority, similarly welcomed the latest development.

“A big cheer to Palo Alto and congratulations,” Bruce said. “That’s a long and hard-fought win.”

Meanwhile, the creek authority is moving ahead with its own more expensive and ambitious plan to bolster flood protection in what’s known as “Reach 2,” the area between Newell Road Bridge and the Pope-Chaucer Bridge. That effort faced a stinging setback in early 2023, shortly a heavy New Year’s Eve storm caused flooding in some areas near the creek and forced the creek authority to overhaul its hydrological assumptions.

The Reach 2 effort included, among other things, widening of creek channels and replacement of the Pope-Chaucer bridge between Palo Alto and Menlo Park. Residents in surrounding neighborhoods have been clamoring for the project for decades, with many remembering the devastating flood of 1998 that overwhelmed the Pope-Chaucer bridge in the Crescent Park neighborhood.

The creek authority is now in the process of refining new design options for Reach 2. Bruce said at a public hearing last week that the agency’s consultant, WRA, has recently released a draft of alternatives. The creek authority has shared these proposals with its partner agencies for review and comments.

Bruce plans to present the alternatives to the creek authority board in late May, with the goal of picking a preferred option in June.

“We are making great progress,” Bruce said.

Palo Alto Council member Pat

Burt, a former member of the creek authority board, suggested last week that the city schedule a special meeting before the creek authority’s June meeting to solicit public feedback and weigh in on the new alternatives.

“It’s a pretty momentous decision and would be pretty important for the council to wade in as well as members of the public, even though I know the JPA will have its own public meetings,” Burt said at the April 21 meeting.

Burt and his colleagues will also have to have a difficult discussion about funding the Newell Road bridge replacement, a \$16-million project that is a necessary prerequisite to the Reach 2 work. While the project was expected to be paid for by the state through the bridge improvement program, the various delays to the work prompted Caltrans to move funding from the current year to 2026. Eggleston said that the funding is programmed as “advance construction” in the current fiscal year. This means that the city is authorized to proceed with work “at its own risk, but with the strong expectation that the expenses will be reimbursed by

the Highway Bridge Program.”

The Newell Road bridge project is expected to increase the span’s capacity for accommodating water flow from the current level of 6,600 cubic feet per second to 7,500 cfs. Even though it would be widened from 22 to 44 feet, the bridge would retain its two-lane alignment. It would now include five-foot sidewalks to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians as well as “sharrow” markings. Portions of Newell Road and Woodland Avenue near the bridge would be raised by four feet to improve visibility for drivers.

Shikada noted that the Newell Road bridge replacement will be a “multi-year project,” particularly since work in the channel is prohibited during the rainy season, which goes from mid-October to June.

“I wouldn’t expect the work to really be completed this year but there’s some work that needs to be done outside the rainy season so that once we get through that rainy season we can complete the next phase,” Shikada said. ■

Email Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@almanacnews.com.

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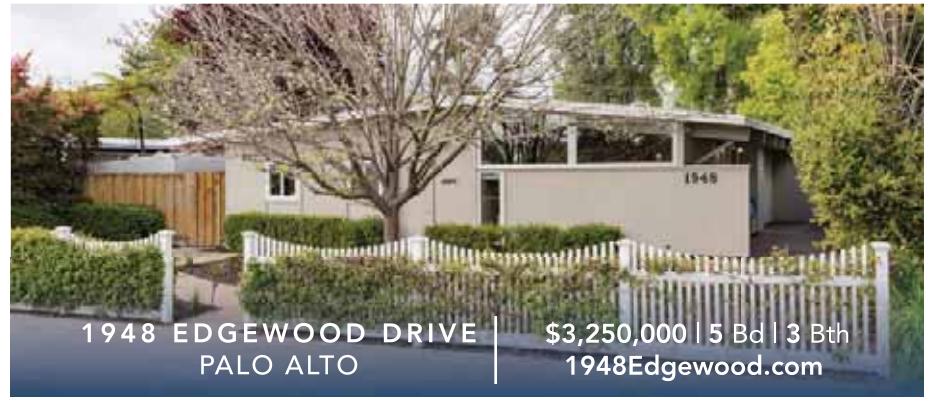
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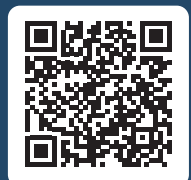
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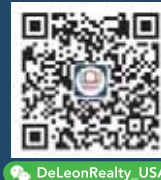


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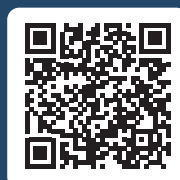
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Nativity Carnival worker charged with attempted murder

Authorities uncertain whether suspect had gun at fair

By Arden Margulis

A Nativity Carnival worker has been charged with attempted murder after the convicted felon allegedly threatened to shoot another individual at the Menlo Park 7-11 after working at the carnival, police say.

Jaydon James Anderson, a 22-year-old Merced resident convicted of felony assault in 2022,

allegedly pulled a 9 mm handgun on an intoxicated 19-year-old at 2:30 a.m. on June 8, 2024. He allegedly aimed the gun at the man, whom he did not know, and pulled the trigger but the firearm was jammed.

As a felon, Anderson is prohibited from possessing a firearm. Police do not know if Anderson had the firearm while working at the carnival.

At a preliminary hearing on

April 28, 2025, two police officers and the victim testified. The defense did not present any evidence at the hearing, according to the district attorney's office. Judge Sean Dabel ruled that the prosecution had enough evidence on all charges to move forward with the case.

Anderson has been in custody with a \$750,000 bail since June 11, 2024.

Anderson is charged with

attempted murder with three enhancements, assault with a semiautomatic weapon and possession of a firearm and ammunition by a felon, all felonies.

The enhancements are for discharging a firearm during a felony, having a prior violent felony and committing a serious felony.

Anderson pleaded not guilty to all charges. He is facing a maximum of multiple consecutive life

in prison sentences.

The nativity carnival is a yearly event in June benefiting the Church of Nativity and Nativity School in Menlo Park. The sponsoring organizations did not respond to requests for comment on the case.

This year's carnival is scheduled for June 6 to 8. ■

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

RECORD LABEL

continued from page 5

the first song released by 1.99 Records.

Co-president and senior Kash Hodges said the song was an "amalgamation of several different groups" on campus. The club recruited musicians from the music department to record instrumentals and collaborated with the video class to film a music video.

The club is a place for any student with a musical interest to bring their ideas into fruition, said Hodges.

Over the last year, the club has transformed. This school year,

the club has already performed several shows and performers are preparing to play at PV Palooza again, said Kauffmann. The music production club will also be hosting a Tiny Desk show on May 2 in the school library, inspired by NPR's popular Tiny Desk concert series.

Kauffmann, who has years of experience performing in bands, said he is inspired and motivated by his students. "It keeps me engaged in a way beyond my curriculum. I don't want to bring them along with me. I'd rather go along with them and let them lead," he added.

Hodges, who plays guitar, has

been rehearsing with a band to perform at the upcoming Tiny Desk show. There will be five groups performing and each will be playing two songs, he said.

The club has also performed shows on campus in areas like the school's loading dock, drawing crowds of students and support from teachers.

A future in music

The students involved in 1.99 Records are talented musicians, songwriters and producers with an interest in pursuing a future career in the industry. Sonnenburg said she prefers to be behind the scenes and wants

to attend college for music business or production.

Hodges will be going to the University of California, Los Angeles, in the fall to major in biochemistry and minor in music industry. He said he doesn't want to place all of his future bets onto music specifically but definitely wants to continue making music.

"I tell kids to pursue their passions," said Kauffmann. "Academics are paramount, but without a passion, we also need to make life worth living. I think being passionate about something and finding something to be passionate about is part of that journey."

Kauffmann worked in studios and performed with bands for 15 years before transitioning into teaching, he said. Many of his former students have gone on to pursue music. Some have started their own rap label, become producers, artists and tour managers.

"The students here are amazing, and it's just really cool to come in here every day and see so many students walk in of their own free will just to play music and work on songs," said Hodges. ■

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

POET LAUREATE

continued from page 8

about my own trajectory coming from the Ravenswood City School District. It was in the bottom 5% of the state. I come from that environment. Then I went to Menlo (School). The book touches on experiences of seeing those impacts on men of color and youth, showing some of the resilience, some of the issues with gangs and how that as a 13/14 year old really colors your perspective on the world.

I'm aiming to put it out in 2027.

Q: How did running for office and being part of local government influence your writing?

A: I look at this idea of shrines, roadside shrines, (in "Right to Remain Violets"). The 2022 grizzly murders (in EPA) and

how community members who are lost- that's what inspired this book. It happened the same day of the Juneteenth celebration at University Circle.

I reappropriate (in the book). Poems mimic proclamations, police reports — black out sections, repurposing law (language). Undoubtedly, being in office) influenced how I look at poetry.

The Ravenswood Business District (redevelopment): When I saw that, metaphorically speaking, the idea of contamination is a good way of thinking about what we buried as a community. You have to deal with that pain. What's at stake (for the district) given all of this history before this? We can talk about RBD, and some people don't feel part of that future.

The council said we made a mistake with the Sobrato 1 deal (with Amazon). Emily Mibach's headline (in the Palo Alto Daily Post) that the council was "haunted" by the deal they made (was) an apt way of thinking about it. People bring up memories of "you made the wrong decision." These are stories that, to me, give me my frame of mind approach to this work (poetry).

Q: Who are your greatest writing influences?

A: Juan Felipe Herrera; he's

integral to the aesthetic of spoken word poetry. Martín Espada wrote a poem about staff and cooks during part of 9/11; think a lot about the folks in the office (Twin Towers), but what about those in the kitchen?

I'm a hip-hop kid — that's what gives my work this percussive feel, almost a manic energy.

The work of Toni Morrison and how she uses memory; (James) Baldwin; Ta-Nehisi Coates has unflinching talks about his community; academics: (W.E.B.) DeBois — "The Souls of Black Folk." They were thinkers but also very active and engaged in the community and the issues of their times.

People in my MFA program. The poet laureate of Cincinnati, Yalie Saweda Kamara, called me to congratulate me. It's such a small world; we're all kind of reading each other and supporting each other. We're here to make a difference and to tell the stories of our community. My mentor said, "You should read the dead and honor the dead and you should celebrate those voices that are coming on."

Q: What has been on your reading list recently?

A: Tommy Orange's work. He's an indigenous writer out of the Bay Area. He talks a lot about being stuck in different worlds (diaspora), thinking

about identity, talking about the loss of a community.

"Bluff" by Danez Smith is about the loss of historically Black downtowns.

I read a lot of works about communities that have had to sacrifice a lot to move forward.

I'm also reading documents from the city (East Palo Alto) general plan and community archive (of audio recordings of citizens) for my dissertation.

Q: When do you wrap up your Ph.D.? What will you do after that?

A: Sometime in 2025.

I'm turning my Ph.D. dissertation into a book: Hood Playing Tricks on Me." It's an academic meditation on how gentrification haunts people of color, from the creation of Ravenswood Shopping Center to the creation of University Circle and the demolition of Whiskey Gulch. They left wounds in the community. It's a history of EPA that honors the struggle of the community to create space for lament and mourning. How do we make space for an EPA that's changed so much in the last 40 years? It's a difficult book, as EPA residents want to feel proud, but we don't always create space for the losses.

I use poems interspersing the power of memory.

The book begins with (NFL player) Davante Adams. On

the Pivot Podcast, he makes a distinction to fans between EPA and Palo Alto. He gives the analogy to "The Lion King's" Pride Rock.

It's (the dissertation) an attempt to reckon with rapid change and violence structurally (in EPA).

I use the word "tricks" because what once was a taqueria is now an Amazon, a basketball center is now a big box. ... The necessity that is burgeoning. The book is really slowing us down to take stock of change and the toll it has had on the community.

Q: What advice do you have for aspiring writers?

A: We need your story. A lot of times, young people don't think their voices matter, but really they are the future. You have all the imagination in the world to help us become a better community. I am happy to support any young writer who is coming up. All you need is a vision; you don't need to know the difference between a sestina and a sonnet. Describe the smell of your mother's cooking, the garbage truck, what you feel on a day-to-day basis. You're going to be seeds of policy and change. ■

This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

Angela Swartz is a Contributing Writer.

LEHUA GREENMAN



"Maybe life isn't going upward as you wish, but if you can learn from yesterday, you can win tomorrow"

650.245.1845 COMPASS

SUSTAINABILITY

continued from page 1

city's goal is to reduce emissions by 90% from the baseline and makeup for 10% through carbon recapture.

To meet its goal, Menlo Park hopes to electrify as much as 95% of homes, decrease gasoline sales by 10% annually, expand access to EV charging stations, reduce vehicle miles traveled by 25% and eliminate fossil fuels from city operations.

The city estimates that 43% of emissions are generated by the use of natural gas in homes so it has prioritized electrifying buildings. City staff constantly look for grants and programs to fund electrification for community members.

One grant came from the state for \$4.5 million. However the grant, slated to fund community electrification, required the city to spend the first half before receiving the rest, and required the city to use all funds by June 30, 2026 or it would have to return unused funds to the state.

The city worked with Peninsula Clean Energy to use the grant on a home electrification program that allows income-qualified residents to electrify their entire homes at no cost. However, the city has struggled to use those funds.

Since the program soft launched in August 2024, 21 homes have scheduled assessments, 17 homes have been assessed, 11 have agreed to participate and two have been upgraded as of February. Assuming all 49 homes are upgraded at the average cost of \$29,000 per home, Menlo Park would still be over \$700,000 short. To stay on track, an additional 25 homes plus the 49 already in the pipeline need to be upgraded by this summer or the city risks not utilizing the full amount.

"I always tell people, 'Anytime you need an appliance replaced or need repairs, do a Google search as there is probably a program out there for it,'" Londer said. "The PCE program is really cool because not only can residents get appliances replaced, they can also get free assessments of their home's energy efficiency."

The city council has since expanded the eligibility requirements of the PCE program in hopes to use more of the grant money before the deadline next year.

Many of Menlo Park's sustainability programs use grants from state, regional and federal organizations to avoid significantly impacting the city's budget. The sustainability team works on submitting applications

and collaborating with other city departments to fund programs related to sustainability.

Even though the federal government has canceled many grants to local governments, Londer is not worried it will halt the city's progress.

"In November, California voters passed Prop 4 and due to the changes at the federal level, the state has really worked on dispersing funds to cities quickly," Londer said.

Proposition 4 was a \$10 billion bond for environmental and climate initiatives state voters approved in 2024.

Menlo Park's sustainability efforts are centered around not only addressing climate change, but also improving resident's lives. "When I think about something as big as climate change, it's easiest for me to envision what sort of life I want to have and what sort of experience I want to have with my neighbors: a healthy community..., a neighborhood garden, a place where our homes don't have indoor air pollutants, where we're able to be really mobile and get to anywhere we want to get to in this city easily," Londer said.

In July 2023, Menlo Park adopted an ordinance to ban gas-powered landscaping equipment

within the city and since then, the sustainability team has worked on providing rebates to asset landscape workers and residents with purchasing new equipment.

"We've distributed \$70,000 to landscapers and to eligible residents to be able to switch their equipment out to electric and we've really moved the needle on concerns people have at the neighborhood level. You don't always realize but gas-powered landscaping equipment creates a lot of noise and pollution, which has now gone away," Londer said.

"I see Earth Day as a call to action for our residents: it's not just the city who's gonna deliver you all these programs and policies. There's a level of proactiveness to engage with us and we want everyone to engage with us," Londer said.

The sustainability team's next big effort: updating building code to promote zero emission buildings. Londer's team will be hosting two workshops on potential changes slated to go into effect in 2026. They include an in-person workshop on May 6 at the Belle Haven Community Campus and a virtual workshop on May 8. Interested participants can register on the city's website. ■

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

DOROTHY FORD PARK

continued from page 7

rates, said Flynn. Additionally, seniors who want to downsize their homes cannot do so unless they move out of the community because Portola Valley lacks a variety of housing types.

Vice Mayor Taylor clarified to residents that the town does not plan on building on the ball field, but is just creating a state required ordinance while the town talks to HCD about the alternative options the town has planned. This action will prevent the town from being sued for a noncomplaint housing element.

"I think it's clear that the local government has no interest in developing but we also want to not be subject to builders' remedy which is something that is going to impact all the residents in the town," he said.

Following the council meeting, Town Manager Mark Linder and Interim Planning and Building Director Terrence Grindall met with state officials in Sacramento to explain their reasons for not wanting to zone Dorothy Ford Park while they seek alternatives sites. ■

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



115 Toyon Court, Woodside

Nestled on a cul-de-sac, this designer-updated home combines style, comfort, and nature. Located minutes from town and top-rated Woodside schools. The main level features three bedrooms, including a primary suite with a sitting area and deck access. Two en-suite baths and a third full bath serve the other rooms. The open-concept family room flows into a fresh kitchen, with a formal dining room and living room boasting picture windows and a stone fireplace. The expansive deck offers seamless indoor-outdoor living. Downstairs, a flexible fourth bedroom, office, or bonus room has exposed beam ceilings, French doors to a private patio, and fire pit. A laundry room and two-car garage add convenience, while the landscaped, tiered backyard is ideal for entertaining or relaxing.

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SPEIER*continued from page 5*

While the board was only set to approve the fund transfer for radios, Speier said she was concerned about the Sheriff's Office's entire procurement process.

"... I have been made aware that there have been 10 massage chairs that were requested through procurement," Speier said. "Now it was declined—thankfully— by the office of procurement, but I think there needs to be a holistic look at how you do your procurement

process in your department."

The Sheriff's Office claims it purchased two massage chairs for employee wellness and did not request any more.

"To enhance employee wellness, the Sheriff's Office recently purchased two massage chairs for employees, using funds earmarked for wellness. At this time, the Sheriff's Office does not intend to purchase additional massage chairs," said Sheriff's Office Director of Communications Gretchen Spiker.

San Mateo County Chief Communications Officer

Michelle Durand confirmed that the county approved the purchase of two massage chairs. However, Durand said the Sheriff's Office requested an additional nine chairs, which the county denied.

The Sheriff's Office did not respond in time for publication about whether additional chairs were requested.

A spokesperson for both Sheriff's unions said neither was involved in the purchase of the chairs.

Supervisor Ray Mueller said he also had concerns about Corpus' reported purchase of

a custom \$74,000 conference table with cooling fans, vents and lockable doors.

In the meantime, the board approved the \$4 million fund transfer for the radios, which had already been purchased. The Sheriff's Office claims its current radios are no longer serviced by the manufacturer and it does not have enough radios.

The board requested Corpus appear at a future meeting to discuss the Sheriff's Office's procurement process. ■

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



Gennady Sheyner

Then-U.S. Rep. Jackie Speier speaks at a 2022 campaign event in San Mateo for then-state Assemblymember Kevin Mullin.

Public Notices

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 Malcolme 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 PEREPOLYTSIA

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)

JDM ICONS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-300472

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

1.) JDM ICONS , located at 557 Grand Street, Redwood City, CA 94062.

Registered owner(s):
JP FAMILY HOLDINGS, LLC

557 Grand Street
Redwood City, CA 94062

State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a Limited

Liability Company.

Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on April 25, 2025.

(ALM May 2, 9, 16 and 23, 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):
WOOSHIFT 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)

MY GYM SAN CARLOS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-300196

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

1.) MY GYM SAN CARLOS , located at 189 El Camino Real, San Carlos, CA 94070. Mailing Address: 2329 Ensenada Way San Mateo, CA 94403.

Registered owner(s):

ROSEK ANDERSEN FITNESS LLC
2329 Ensenada Way
San Mateo, CA 94403

State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a Limited

Liability Company.

Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 24, 2025.

(ALM May 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2025)

ANNALEIA FLORAL
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-300285

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

1.) ANNALEIA FLORAL , located at 1305 Speers Ave, San Mateo, CA 94403.

Registered owner(s):
ANNALEIA HAMILL

1305 Speers Ave.
San Mateo, CA 94403

State of Incorporation/Organization: California

This business is conducted by: an Individual.

Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 3/21/2025.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on April 02, 2025.

(ALM May 2, 9, 16 and 23, 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)

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)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

Case No.: 25CIV02600

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: Gloria Falcinelli Eldredge filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:

GLORIA ANN FALCINELLI to GLORIA FALCINELLI ELDEREDGE

GLORIA ANNE FALCINELLI to GLORIA FALCINELLI ELDEREDGE

GLORIA FALCINELLI ELDEREDGE to GLORIA FALCINELLI ELDEREDGE

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: 6/18/2025, 9:00 AM, Civil Branch of the Superior Court of California, County of SAN MATEO located at 400 COUNTY CENTER, REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063.

A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:

ALMANAC

Date: 4/23/2025

Nancy L. Fineman

JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

(ALM May 2, 9, 16 and 23, 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)

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF:

CHRYSTEL CAPELL CORNEW

Case No.: 25PR000479

To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of CHRYSTEL CAPELL CORNEW.

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

The Petition for Probate requests that: DANIEL RICHARD CORNEW be appointed as

personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.

THE PETITION requests the decedent's will and codicils, if any, be admitted to probate.

The will and any codicils are available for examination in the file kept by the court. THE PETITION requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A HEARING on the petition will be held on May 13 2025 at 9:00 AM in Dept 3, Southern Branch, Hall of Justice, San Mateo County of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo, located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.

If you object to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.

If you are a creditor or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58 (b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.

You may examine the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk.

Petitioner in Pro Per: Daniel Richard Cornew
182 Brookside Dr.
Portola Valley, CA 94028
650-504-2554
(ALM May 2, 9 and 16, 2025)

The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 pm. Visit [AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/](https://www.almanacnews.com/legal_notices/) For assistance email LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com.

The Almanac is adjudicated to publish in San Mateo County.

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

The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 pm. Visit [AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/](https://www.almanacnews.com/legal_notices/) For assistance email LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com.

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PaloAltoOnline.com/short-story

ETHNIC STUDIES

continued from page 1

emphasizes “civic mindedness and is community centered,” said Victoria Dye, director of the professional development department. The district aims to build student skills “to respond to social, political, environmental dynamics of their interest in choosing and the model valuing diversity and practicing empathy,” Dye added.

The ethnic studies criteria will ensure that students learn ethnic studies concepts through case studies rooted in African American, Latino/Chicano, Asian American, Pacific Islander and Indigenous studies.

All lessons will be evaluated based on three criteria: content and skills, pedagogy and delivery and sense of belonging. These standards are intended to encourage student inquiry and allow them to apply their learning to topics of their interest.

Dye said the curriculum will center the history of marginalized people while also incorporating American history to help students see history’s relevance when connecting the past and current issues.

A debate on ethnic studies

During public comment, several parents called on the district to eliminate ethnic studies or further

revise its curriculum, describing the current course structure as “discriminatory, colonialist and divisive.”

“The ethnic studies roll out at Sequoia Union High School District was premature, non-transparent, and has resulted in classrooms using discriminatory material and has students locating themselves on wheels of power and guessing the races of other people,” said an anonymous parent on Zoom, who called for the return of a world history course.

Some parents said the district’s revisions did not go far enough. Menlo-Atherton parent Karen Orzechowski asked the district to develop “a constructive ethnic studies curriculum, one that builds understanding, inspires mutual respect, confronts racism, celebrates ethnic accomplishments and does not glorify violent resistance.”

After the presentation, Ginn said that he did not support the state model curriculum, which the revised lesson plan would be guided by. Although he supports ethnic studies, the board’s approval of the course in 2020 endorsed a coursework that did not follow the state’s model curriculum, he said.

“I believe it includes controversial content and based on the many messages we received and the public comments that we heard, several members of our

community feel the same way,” said Ginn.

Trustee Maria Elena Cruz, an ethnic studies professor at San Jose State University, said she “wholeheartedly supports ethnic studies.” She said the course has exposed her son to the history of marginalized communities and allowed him to connect to their family’s Latino heritage.

“There’s an anti Latino sentiment right now, and I think in ethnic studies, is a good place for students to feel safe to talk about sort of the issues that are happening right now with our community specifically being targeted right from this administration,” Cruz said.

Melissa Diaz, an ethnic studies teacher at Sequoia High School said she has been working hard to survey students to make “the curriculum more inclusive, more local, more relevant and more joyful.” Her goal is to help students build critical thinking skills.

Nori said he believes the revisions make the curriculum slightly better, but was not fully convinced that the revised curriculum solves some of the problems that a lot of our community members have addressed.

“I also do not believe that this curriculum, or in the way it was explained, will sustain court challenges or in the court of public opinion,” Nori added.

Parents call to bring back honors courses

As the school board was set to affirm next year’s course offerings, parents took the opportunity to ask for the restoration of honors classes.

The removal of honors classes, also known as detracking, was approved by the board in 2023 as a way to provide heterogeneous classes rather than separating students in a tiered system. The district’s goal was to improve the grades of less-advantaged students by allowing all students to work together and gain cooperation and participation skills.

East Palo Alto council member Mark Dinan spoke to the board, expressing that his freshman son at M-A has been finding his school work to be less challenging compared to his time in middle school. He said public education is critical for East Palo Alto families, many of whom don’t have the option to supplement learning with private education and enrichment activities.

“For me, detracting is a big message to the many affluent parents in this district, to send your kids to private school if you want them to have a rigorous education,” said Dinan. “I don’t think we need to do that. I encourage the district to restore honors, provide rigorous honors classes for advanced

students and classes at all levels.”

Parents who spoke to the board believe that detracking harms the potential for successful students to engage and be challenged in their classrooms.

“Our most successful students of marginalized communities are stuck in public schools and their access is cut off, and if they’re bored and disengaged, you may really lose an opportunity to change a student’s life,” said an anonymous parent on Zoom.

Despite the concerns, data shows that detracking is improving student scores. A Stanford University study titled “Accelerating Opportunity: The Effects of Instructionally Supported Detracking,” by Thomas S. Dee and Elizabeth Huffaker showed that the initiative strongly benefited students in Algebra classes.

“This initiative also increased attendance, district retention, and overall math credits. These results suggest the impact of higher expectations coupled with aligned teacher supports for the lowest-performing students,” writes the study.

The board’s vote will not bring back honors classes, despite parental disagreement. ■

Email Staff Writer

Jennifer Yoshikoshi at

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ACCREDITATION

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students to store their phones away during class has positively improved focus, productivity and engagement in classrooms.

Menlo-Atherton High School

Menlo-Atherton High School principal Karl Losekoot was proud to report significant growth in student accomplishments across subjects in the last

school year, emphasizing that this was a great year for a WASC visit.

In 2024, suspension rates were declining and there was a 5% growth in standardized test scores for English and math, meaning that more than 70% of students are meeting or exceeding state standards. The school year also saw the most students enrolled in AP classes with 40% of all test results being a score of 5, the highest score possible.

Test scores showed however

that the improvement of English language learners was declining and a decrease in students who show they are college and career ready. In order to address these issues, Losekoot explained that the school is looking to improve efforts to support English learning students, develop more career and technical education pathways and dual enrolled courses.

Overall, the WASC visit found that the school was offering an environment where students

felt connected to the campus and teachers, which promotes academic success and positive mental health. The report also recognized that M-A offers diverse opportunities for students, resources and course offerings that increase student access to state standards.

In order to inform students and staff about the WASC visit and to keep the week fun, the school created an informative music video and a bingo sheet to keep

the spirits up among students and teachers.

The report concludes with goals for M-A to follow which include increasing academic success by providing access to equitable curriculum and learning experiences; increasing student preparedness for college and career readiness; and continuing to grow a positive school culture where students carry a sense of belonging by increasing engagement. ■

BECKER

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legislation, said in a statement.

Becker said that the bill was crafted to prevent abuse of a system that was designed to push cities toward meaningful housing reform. Builder’s remedy, he said, should be “a tool of last resort to get urgently needed, equitable housing built.”

“But when it’s used to push luxury towers that sidestep community standards and strain public services, we all lose,” Becker said.

Becker said in an interview Tuesday afternoon that many people agreed that builder’s remedy should be addressed but had issues with the retroactivity in the bill, which they suggested would create a legal “gray area.” The bill,

as proposed, would have made some projects that had already been submitted, including 80 Willow, ineligible.

He said he was encouraged by support from elected officials and environmental advocates in his district, including council members in Palo Alto and Menlo Park and San Mateo County Supervisor Ray Mueller, as well as advocates from Green Foothills. Becker said he will continue to explore ways to reform builder’s remedy.

“I’m going to keep fighting this, keep having conversations with leadership in the Senate and talk to folks in both houses,” Becker said. ■

Mountain View Voice Reporter
Emily Margaretten contributed
to this report. Email Gennady
Sheyner at gsheyner@almanacnews.com.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

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its spring conference in Seattle.

“It’s gratifying to receive this award and see the thousands of hours editors and journalists have put in being recognized,” said Celine Chien, co-editor-in-chief of the publication, in a press release.

The Online Pacemaker recognizes the best high school online journalism publications and is one of the highest honors a student publication can receive.

“I’m incredibly proud of how seriously everyone takes their role as a journalist,” said journalism adviser John McBlair.

Two teams of three judges evaluated each of the finalists multiple times, and at least two

judges on each team had to agree to recognize the publication. The Pacemaker was first awarded in 1921 and has since been expanded to include recognition for yearbooks, magazines, online sites, video broadcasts and innovation.

The M-A Chronicle previously won the award in 2016 and in 2021, when current Sequoia Union High School District board President Sathvik Nori was an editor-in-chief of the publication. It was also a finalist in 2019 and 2024.

Another Sequoia school’s publication was also awarded the Pacemaker. The Scot Scoop, run by Carlmont High School’s journalism program in Belmont, won the online Pacemaker for the fifth time.

Menlo Park ‘Bike Rodeo’

The Menlo Park Police Department and California Highway Patrol are hosting a bike safety event on Sunday, May 4, from 10 a.m. — 1 p.m. at Flood Park, 215 Bay Road. Community members can get their helmets checked by CHP and bikes repaired free of charge. The event gives riders of all ages a chance to practice safely sharing the road while riding their bikes.

Get more information and register at <https://bit.ly/4iBxiRv>.

—Arden Margulis



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STORYBOOK CHARM IN WOODSIDE GLENS

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SUN 2-4PM



319 Highland Terrace, Woodside

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Tucked away in the enchanting Woodside Glens neighborhood, this circa mid-1930s cottage is wrapped with lush gardens on a level lot, presenting a rare opportunity not seen on the market in four generations. Thoughtfully maintained and updated, the home showcases its original charm with a leaded glass front door and handcrafted built-ins throughout. A welcoming foyer, inviting living spaces, and a flexible floor plan with four bedrooms on two levels plus a detached secondary structure provide both comfort and versatility.

An expansive patio, a soothing spa, and plantings create a peaceful outdoor retreat. Amenities include solar electricity, a portable Generac back-up generator, generous 2-car garage, plus additional off-street parking. Just over one mile from the heart of Woodside for shopping and dining. This home also offers easy access to Highway 280 and the acclaimed Woodside Elementary School. Welcome home!



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Sequoias resident publishes her first children's book at 92



‘Pat’s Cat’ is based on a popular feline at the senior living home

By Angela Swartz

On April 27, writer Helen Park Bigelow celebrated her 92nd birthday in an unusual way: by hosting a book signing in her Portola Valley retirement community's lounge.

A resident cat at The Sequoias, which Park Bigelow has called home for 10 years, helped spark the idea for her latest work, a children's book, aimed at ages 7 to 9. “Pat’s Cat” is the story of the black-and-white cat named Kitty (called “Cicuska” by her previous owner) who likes to spend time outdoors on the campus walking through garden paths.

Although Park Bigelow has written several other books, this is her first children's story. She wrote “David Park, Painter: Nothing Held Back” about her father, a well-known Palo Alto artist, in 2009. In 2014, she published “Given Time: Living Our Last Months Together” about her husband photographer Ed Bigelow's battle with melanoma. In 2023, she worked with her longtime friend and former Portola Valley Mayor Sue Crane to recount the founding of a local winery (“Behind the Barrels: Women of Ridge”).

Artistic talent is in the Park family blood. Park Bigelow's middle daughter, Kathryn Wilder, is an award-winning author (she is the 2025 recipient of the Western Heritage Award). All three of her daughters enjoy writing, Park Bigelow noted.

This news organization spoke with Park Bigelow about her new book, a writing group she's sustained for 37 years and more.

Embarcadero Media: When did you start working on the book? How did you find your illustrator?

Helen Park Bigelow: I wrote a letter to my two great-grandchildren (Lacey and Lucas) a couple of years ago, when they were about 7 and 9. I had that sort of moment of thinking, “What will I say?” I don't know them well. They live in Colorado. I hit upon telling them the story of this remarkable cat who lives here. I really liked how I presented it to these two children. I read it to another daughter of mine and she said, “Oh my gosh that's a great story. You should make it into a children's book.” I started working on it a year ago. It was a very quick job on my end. The

part that took time is the illustrations. Karen (A. Scheckler-Wilson), a good friend who lives in Paris — I knew she was an artist and illustrator and book designer and she loved the story and wanted to do it.

Embarcadero Media: You've written about your father's art career, Sue Crane's winery and terminal illness. How was it diving into your first children's book?

Park Bigelow: It was a delight. It was very easy. I have to say, there's a lot of information out there about how to write a children's book; very strict regulations to follow in terms of length, in terms of age group interest. I did no research and I did not follow any rules.

Embarcadero Media: What do your great-grandchildren think of the book?

Park Bigelow: They were thrilled to see their names in it (in the dedication). They didn't know and they were surprised.

Embarcadero Media: What takeaways do you want children to get from this book?

Park Bigelow: I use a term in the book, “the natural order of



Angela Swartz

Above: Artist Karen A. Scheckler-Wilson illustrated “Pat’s Cat.” The book’s cover is seen here at a signing held at The Sequoias on April 27. Top: Helen Park Bigelow signs a copy of her book “Pat’s Cat.”

things.” I would hope that this term would linger in some way for a child and they, in some way, apply it in their own lives.

Embarcadero Media: What did you learn from the experience of writing a children's book? Would you do it again?

Park Bigelow: I realized I had a delightful time doing it. My antenna will be out for another idea. It's trying to see the world through children's eyes. The only

feedback I got was from my daughter's goddaughter; she loved it.

Embarcadero Media: What did you learn from leading a weekly writing workshop?

Park Bigelow: We've met every week since 1988. ... We've been bonded for a long time. Some people have left and new people have come. ... When you listen to the writing of seven or eight people a week, you learn a lot about them.

They work off of a prompt I give.

Embarcadero Media: Where do you get the prompts from?

Park Bigelow: I create prompts. I was in another group of four people where we were all working on projects and would all read from our projects. More of a critique group. I am a believer in people working together and helping each other.

Embarcadero Media: What are some examples of your prompts?

Park Bigelow: An abstract word like ambition, discouragement, disappointment, a feeling-based word. Hair brush — that's a really good prompt. ... I don't call for a (set writing) time or a word count. Sometimes people will write a haiku or two. I really like an explorative essay. Everything happens.

It's all based on a workshop I took from the writer Natalie Goldberg in Taos. And I came home and started this group.

Embarcadero Media: What do you like about writing?

Park Bigelow: It's natural to me. It's my right thing to do. It gives me energy. It keeps me awake to the world.

Embarcadero Media: Who are your favorite authors?

Park Bigelow: I'm loving Irish authors — Maggie O'Farrell; she wrote a very, very popular book, "Hamnet." ... Neil Williams — he's absolutely wonderful. He did a little book called "This Is Happiness."

I have always been a big reader. "Lad: A Dog." ... Mary O'Hara's trilogy ("My Friend Flicka," "Thunderhead" and "Green Grass of Wyoming"). I read every "Nancy Drew," "Anne of Green Gables," "Heidi."

Embarcadero Media: Because of your macular degeneration, you've moved to audio books. How does that experience differ for you?

Park Bigelow: I had to get used to it. I really miss being able to go back and reread. I'd flip back a few pages and find what I hadn't paid enough attention to. Visual search is much easier.

Embarcadero Media: Are you working on any other books?

Park Bigelow: I'm finishing writing an unusual kind of memoir. I'm writing a book about stories that happened in my life. I plan to self-publish this year. I'm almost done with it. It's 250 pages. ■

Angela Swartz is a Contributing Writer.

Pat's Cat. \$20. Purchase at The Sequoias gift shop, 501 Portola Road, or email Park Bigelow at hpbig_2@yahoo.com to buy a copy. All proceeds go toward The Sequoias staff holiday fund and The Sequoias staff scholarship fund.

Worth a Look

Grateful Dead anniversary party

Much has changed since a band known as the Warlocks played their first gig on May 5, 1965, at Magoo's Pizza Parlor in downtown Menlo Park. Not long after, that band adopted a new identity — one that would shortly become famous — as the Grateful Dead. Now, 60 years later, the spot that was Magoo's is a cocktail bar. The upscale watering hole, known as Bar Loretta, which opened earlier this year, will host a party on May 5 commemorating the Warlocks' first show, as first reported by InMenlo. The event will raise funds for playwright Richard Montoya's new musical "Jerry Garcia in the Lower Mission," about the youth of the Grateful Dead's legendary frontman. The show is slated to debut this fall at Magic Theatre in San Francisco. Peninsula roots-rock band Effie Zilch will perform at the event, which also features band historian David Gans speaking on the band's early days in Menlo Park. And of course, pizza will be served.

May 5, 5:30-7:30 p.m., at Bar Loretta, 639 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park. \$40 per person. tinyurl.com/GratefulDead60th.



Courtesy Amanda Lopez Photography

Effie Zilch plays a 60th anniversary party for the Grateful Dead that will raise funds for Magic Theatre's new musical about the band's frontman, opening this fall in San Francisco.

'Break Open to Beauty'

Peninsula Women's Chorus is celebrating "music's deep, transformative power to awaken emotions" this spring, with a concert titled "Break Open to Beauty." The program's selections include Giovanni Pergolesi's 18th-century portrayal of a mother's grief, "Stabat Mater;" Michael Bussewitz Quarm's "Nigra Sum;" Ron Jeffers' arrangement of "Amazing Grace" and Thomas Morley's madrigal "Fire, Fire My Heart." Audiences can also catch two world premieres of new works for the chorus: Composer-in-Residence Amy X Neuburg's "Home is Where," which explores feelings about home and place, and an excerpt from 2026's Composer-in-Residence Freida Abtan's opera-in-progress, a reimagining of the Orpheus myth.

May 2, 7:30 p.m., First Congregational Church, 1985 Louis Road, Palo Alto;
May 4, 4 p.m., Transfiguration Episcopal Church, 3900 Alameda de las Pulgas, San Mateo; \$10-\$30 with online pay-what-you-wish options;
pwchorus.ticketspice.com/break-open-to-beauty.

Sen. Ron Wyden

Sen. Ron Wyden comes to Palo Alto to discuss his book "It Takes Chutzpah," described on Books Inc.'s website as "a progressive leader's manifesto for being a courageous warrior during turbulent times." In the book, the Oregon senator explores the history of the concept of chutzpah (a Yiddish term for audacity) and how it can be used to create positive change and preserve values such as free speech, health care, reproductive rights, a clean environment and reigning in Big Tech.

May 2, 7 p.m., Books Inc. Palo Alto, 855 El Camino Real #74; free;
booksinc.net/events/calendar

Vintage Vehicles 20th Annual Festival

Visitors can see vintage vehicles lined up along Palo Alto's Homer Avenue plus partake in special activities including a dog tag-making machine, a chance to sit in a Model T, and a "guess what?" table at the Museum of American Heritage's annual Vintage Vehicle & Family Festival. The museum also includes a permanent collection and special exhibitions, specializing in showcasing technological innovations from 1750 to 1950, and is housed in the historic Williams House, the grounds of which also include bountiful gardens.

May 3, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto; free (donations suggested); moah.org/moahevents/event-four-ft5z4.

Silicon Valley Open Studios

Now in its 39th year, Silicon Valley Open Studios showcases the works of several hundred local artists throughout the region over three consecutive weekends, bringing visitors right to artists' workspaces and galleries throughout the area. Each weekend highlights a different region, with Coastside and northern Peninsula studios open May 3-4; Midpeninsula studios on May 10-11 and South Bay studios on May 17-18. Visitors can check out ceramics, glass, jewelry, sculpture, paintings, photography, fiber art, woodworking, mixed-media works and more, plus speak with the artists about their work. The event's website offers an interactive map and pages highlighting each artist's work and when and where to find them.

May 3-4, 10-11 and 17-18, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., each weekend. Admission is free. For more information, svos.org.

Visit almanacnews.com/arts-culture to read about the opening of a new art center in Redwood City. Plus, what's coming up this summer at Stanford.

Food & Drink

HERE ARE 10 NEW ASIAN RESTAURANTS ALONG THE PENINSULA

Dumplings, tofu and sushi, oh my!

Lobster tacos with lobster salad, tobiko, jalapeño and avocado on seaweed chips with spicy mayo and eel sauce (\$19) at Soko Soko Japanese Cuisine in San Carlos.

Adrienne Mitchel

By Adrienne Mitchel

Can't decide between kung pao chicken and dumplings? There's a new spot in Burlingame serving dumplings filled with kung pao chicken. Want Hong Kong-style barbecue but also spicy Sichuan dishes? A San Bruno restaurant recently opened offering both styles of cuisine.

They're among several Asian eateries that have opened recently along the Peninsula, featuring cuisines from China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Here are 10 new spots to check out around the region.

DANBI, LOS GATOS

Los Gatos finally has a Korean restaurant. Danbi, which has two locations in San Jose, has expanded into the former Montebello Market space. Danbi offers a wide variety of Korean cuisine, including bibimbap (\$19.95), bulgogi (\$29.95), Korean fried chicken (\$21.95-\$23.95) and six varieties of soft tofu soup (\$21.95-\$23.95). All entrees come with six banchan: marinated beansprouts, Napa cabbage kimchi, pickled daikon

radish, spicy fish cake and pickled jalapenos and carrots. Danbi Los Gatos does not currently have a beer and wine license.

Danbi, 9 Montebello Way, Los Gatos; 669-240-4135, Instagram: @danbikoreanrestaurant. Open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 4:30-9 p.m.

DUMPLING KITCHEN & BAR, BURLINGAME

A new dumpling restaurant has replaced Burlingame's former I

Privé. At Dumpling Kitchen & Bar, all dumplings (\$12-\$16 for eight), xiao long bao (\$12-\$20 for six) and pork buns (\$10 for three) are handmade, according to its Yelp page. Unique dumpling flavors include kung pao chicken dumplings and mapo tofu dumplings, as well as Thai tom yum xiao long bao. Vegetable dishes (\$8-\$16), fried chicken (\$8) and noodle dishes (\$15-\$18) are also available.

Dumpling Kitchen & Bar, 1125 Burlingame Ave., Burlingame; 650-389-7296. Open Monday to Wednesday from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 5-9:30 p.m., Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and 5-9:30 p.m., Friday to Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

JIN GEGE & YAO YAO, SAN BRUNO

San Leandro sister restaurants Jin Gege and Yao Yao have expanded into a merged San Bruno restaurant offering both Jin Gege's Hong Kong barbecue and Yao Yao's Sichuan dishes. The menu includes items like crispy roasted pork belly, Hong Kong-style char siu, soy sauce chicken, Szechuan-style fish and sour cabbage and Sichuan-style spicy beef soup.

Jin Gege & Yao Yao, 1212 El Camino Real, Suite C&D, San Bruno; 650-636-4380. Open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

MALA TOWN EXPRESS, SAN MATEO

Mala Town Express, a malatang chain with locations in California, Boston, New York City, New Jersey and Las Vegas, opened its first Peninsula



Anna Hoch-Kenney

The exterior of Dumpling Kitchen & Bar in Burlingame.

location April 14 in San Mateo. Malatang is a popular Chinese street food where customers choose their ingredients to be cooked in a spicy and numbing broth. At this fast-casual spot, build your own bowl and pay by

weight, priced at \$9.99 a pound. Upgrade to its signature broth for \$1.99.

Mala Town Express, 77 E. 3rd Ave., San Mateo; 650-541-6666, Instagram: @malatown_usa. Open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.



Adrienne Mitchel

The exterior of MiPot, a Northeastern-style malatang restaurant in Sunnyvale.



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Jin Gege & Yao Yao in San Bruno offers Hong Kong barbecue and Sichuan dishes.

MIPOT, SUNNYVALE

Northeastern-style malatang restaurant MiPot held its grand opening March 20 in Sunnyvale. MiPot allows customers to customize bowls with a variety of noodles, meats and vegetables and select from one of six broth options, including spicy and non-spicy broths. Price varies depending on weight.

MiPot, 150 W. El Camino Real, Sunnyvale; 408-685-2197, Instagram: @mipot.ca. Open Monday and Wednesday to Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 5-9 p.m., Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 5-8:30 p.m.

MR. BAO KITCHEN, MOUNTAIN VIEW

A restaurant specializing in handmade xiao long bao has replaced Rumble Fish in downtown Mountain View. Mr. Bao Kitchen offers both pork xiao long bao (\$12 for six pieces) and a crab and pork variety (\$16 for six), as well as Shanghai-style, pan-fried juicy pork buns (\$12 for six), steamed dumplings (\$12 for eight), potstickers (\$10 for six) and noodle soups (\$14.99-\$16.99).

Mr. Bao Kitchen, 357 Castro St. Unit 3A, Mountain View; 650-282-5026. Open Tuesday to Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 5-8:30 p.m.



From left: The interior of Mr. Bao Kitchen in downtown Mountain View. A kid's portion of chicken pho (\$10.95) at Pho Anh in Mountain View. Photos by Adrienne Mitchel.

PHO ANH, MOUNTAIN VIEW

Replacing Teacub Boba & Snack in Mountain View Shopping Center, Pho Anh is a woman-owned Vietnamese restaurant specializing in pho beef noodle soup (\$17.95-\$21.95). It offers 12 varieties of the dish, including its house special with steak, flank, brisket, tendon meatball, tripe and beef rib. Pho Anh also offers four kids' portions of pho (\$8.95-\$10.95). In addition to pho, the restaurant serves noodle soups (\$14.95-\$17.95), rice plates (\$18.95-\$19.95) and vermicelli dishes (\$17.95-\$18.95).

Pho Anh, 175 E. El Camino Real, Suite C, Mountain View; 650-305-3500, Instagram: @pho.anh175.

Open Monday to Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Thursday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

SOKO SOKO JAPANESE CUISINE, SAN CARLOS

Soko Soko Japanese Cuisine opened Feb. 1 in San Carlos, replacing Hot Wok Bistro Too. The new restaurant combines "the best of traditional Japanese flavors with a modern twist," according to its Yelp page. The menu features robata skewers (\$4-\$9), 17 signature sushi rolls (\$15-\$19), nine vegetarian sushi rolls (\$6-\$16) and entrees like tempura udon or seared Kobe beef with salt and scallion sauce over rice (\$13-\$30). The dessert menu

has four options: deep-fried ice cream, green tea cheesecake, mochi ice cream and matcha ice cream (\$6-\$10).

Soko Soko Japanese Cuisine, 1541 Laurel St., San Carlos; 650-674-6019. Open Monday to Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 4:30-9 p.m., Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 4:30-9:30 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 4:30 to 9:30 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 4:30-9 p.m.

SUSHI EDMATA, SAN MATEO

San Mateo institution Sushi Sam's Edomata has reopened in a new San Mateo location as Sushi Edomata. The new Japanese

restaurant held a soft opened April 9 in the former Stinger Lounge location with a limited food and beverage menu. (Currently, there are no alcoholic beverages.) It aims to carry on the legacy of Sushi Sam's, which closed in December. The menu includes a variety of cooked appetizers, sashimi, temaki, maki sushi and nigiri.

Sushi Edomata, 38 E. 25th Ave., San Mateo; 650-344-0888, Instagram: @sushi.edomata. Open Tuesday to Saturday from 5-9 p.m.

SUSHI TAKUMI, SAN CARLOS

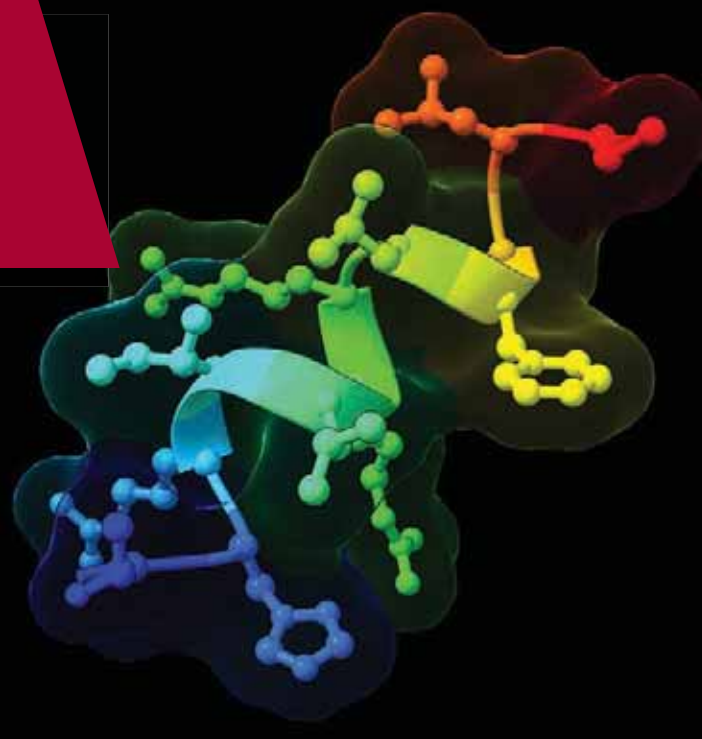
Downtown San Carlos' newest Japanese restaurant, Sushi Takumi, opened March 3 in the former Seiya Japanese Restaurant space. The restaurant offers hot and cold appetizers, nigiri, sashimi, donburi (\$24-\$58), noodle soups (\$13-\$18), maki sushi, temaki and 20 chef special sushi rolls (\$15-\$19). From 4:30-6 p.m. daily, Sushi Takumi offers half off sashimi combos and beer, according to its Yelp page.

Takumi, 741 Laurel St., San Carlos; 650-508-8888. Open Monday to Thursday from 4:30-9 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 4:30-9:30 p.m. ■

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

Newly discovered molecule rivals Ozempic in weight loss

Stanford researchers have identified a naturally occurring molecule, BRP, that can suppress appetite and facilitate weight loss in mice and pigs. It is comparable to Ozempic (semaglutide) but without side effects like nausea or muscle loss. BRP works through a different metabolic pathway, specifically targeting the hypothalamus, which controls hunger and metabolism. Researchers used an AI algorithm, Peptide Predictor, to find BRP among thousands of possible peptides derived from prohormones. Animal studies showed BRP leads to fat loss and improved glucose tolerance without behavioral or GI issues. **SCAN TO READ THE SPOTLIGHT**



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