

The Almanac

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Anna Hoch-Kenney

Rallying for democracy on the Peninsula

Protesters applaud during a musical performance at the Democracy Fair at Rinconada Park in Palo Alto on June 14. The regional event drew citizens from across the Peninsula and included a performance by folk singer Joan Baez. See story, Page 10.

Cities say they fixed crosswalk vulnerability

Redwood City says manufacturer's app caused the issues

By Arden Margulis

Redwood City and the California Department of Transportation say they've fixed the security flaw that allowed hackers to tamper with crosswalk accessibility buttons earlier this year.

The issue began on April 12 when pedestrians in Menlo Park, Redwood City and Palo Alto heard distorted messages voiced to sound like Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg instead of just the standard crossing instructions.

The compromised buttons in Menlo Park were the only buttons operated by Caltrans. All three jurisdictions disabled the systems in response. Caltrans and Redwood City assured residents that the issue has been resolved and new protocols are in place. Palo Alto declined to comment nor provide the cause or solution to the issue.

"All known changes to the crosswalk messaging have since been reverted and the systems have been restored to normal operation. Additionally, we have enhanced our internal procedures to help prevent future tampering," said Redwood City Deputy City Manager Jennifer Yamaguma.

Yamaguma claimed the issue was caused by users gaining access to the manufacturer's app, Polara Field Service, created by Polara Enterprises, one of the largest manufacturers of accessible crosswalk infrastructure.

For years, Polara has had a

Menlo Park's public pool partnership remains in turmoil

Councilmembers struggling with next steps

By Arden Margulis

After the company behind the Burgess and Belle Haven aquatics centers violated its agreement with Menlo Park, the Menlo Park City Council is in a difficult position: risk further cuts to hours and potentially finding a new operator or subsidize the operator.

The city has contracted Team Sheeper to run the Burgess pool for over 20 years and it began operating the Belle Haven pool when it opened on May 20, 2024.

However, Team Sheeper claims it is risking financial insolvency without city intervention. A majority of city councilmembers have rejected Team Sheeper's past proposed subsidies.

On May 21, the City of Menlo Park sent a notice of default to Team Sheeper after it cut hours at the Burgess Aquatics Center without proper notice and kept hours at the Belle Haven pool lower than contractually required. The decision to cut hours at Burgess came after the City Council denied Team Sheeper's two previous

requests to amend the contract with increased fees and a lower revenue share agreement. Sheeper was allowed to raise non-resident fees.

It was the latest move in a challenging relationship between the operator of the Burgess and Belle Haven pools and the city.

"Is this going to become a practice for [Team Sheeper] when they do not get what they asked for?" Councilmember Cecilia Taylor said during the City Council's June 10 meeting. Taylor, an ardent critic of Team Sheeper, requested the City

Council discuss how it should address the current situation at the pools at that meeting.

Team Sheeper claims it is facing significant financial losses caused by low usage at the Belle Haven pool. Since opening in spring 2024, the Belle Haven pool has recorded 92,000 visits, which is 18% of visits to Burgess pool in the same time period. Both figures exclude subcontractors that run other pool programs.

Low usage is especially

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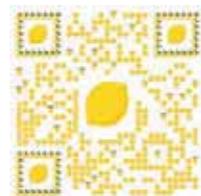


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#3

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COMPASS



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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Anya Motwani

San Mateo County Supervisor Lisa Gauthier opens the Juneteenth flag raising ceremony with an introduction to the holiday's significance on June 11 in Redwood City.

San Mateo County leaders celebrate Juneteenth in flag raising ceremony

Supervisors, advocates reflect on importance of commemorating events

By Anya Motwani

San Mateo County Supervisor Lisa Gauthier, along with a panel of speakers, addressed a crowd during the Juneteenth flag raising ceremony at County Courtyard in Redwood City on June 11.

This annual event centered around spreading awareness about the holiday's history and

articulating its legacy. June 19 marked the effective end of slavery in the United States, when Union forces informed enslaved populations in Galveston, Texas, about their new legal freedom two years after the Emancipation Proclamation.

In her opening remarks, Gauthier emphasized her responsibility of ensuring an

equitable future for San Mateo County residents, and the role of celebrations like the county's in that mission.

"Today we celebrate strength, culture and community," Gauthier said. "Juneteenth represents the resilience, spirit and unwavering fight for freedom."

See **JUNETEENTH**, page 6

Woodside embarks on process to update Town Center Plan

Area plan was last amended in 1988

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The town of Woodside is taking its first step in updating its Town Center Plan — an effort to reimagine the future of the heart of town since 1970.

Woodside's Town Center Plan was last amended in 1988 with the approval of Measure J. The ballot measure required "residentially zoned parcels in and adjoining the Town Center to remain in residential use

unless commercial parking was established on those properties prior to June 1, 1988." There was an attempt to update the plan in 2012, according to Town Manager Jason Ledbetter.

The original Town Center Plan was created to outline a clear vision for the town's commercial and community hub. It aimed to shape the evolution of private properties and infrastructure improvements to sidewalks, trails and buildings.

Consultants from Good City

Company, a San Carlos-based local government and land use consulting firm, will be working with the town on the update.

The purpose of an updated plan is to evaluate where and how Town Center can be improved to better serve the needs of the community. This can include amendments to town policies and guidelines concerning buildings, signage, lighting, parking and more. The

See **TOWN CENTER**, page 18

Portola Valley plans for next year's budget

Town continues to face financial, operational challenges in preparation for fiscal year

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

In preparation for its 2025-26 proposed budget, the Portola Valley Town Council reviewed how it would allocate funds to town committees, non-profit organizations and the town's general fund. As the town navigates a financial crisis, council members called for committees to cut down on costs in a recent Town Council meeting.

According to Finance Director Tony McFarlane, the town's general fund reserve for 2025-26 will be \$2.1 million. The projected surplus from the 2024-25 fiscal year is about \$200,000, he said.

The preliminary budget presentation showed that the projected revenue for the next fiscal year will be about \$8 million and be balanced by \$8 million in expenses. The projected reserve for the end of the next fiscal year is \$1.96 million, McFarlane said.

With this budget, the town will continue to face challenges. Officials say residents with business at Town Hall will deal with shortened service hours and delays in permits, building inspections, website updates and more. He added that difficulties with staff recruitment and retention will also persist as the town relies on consultants and contractors.

Despite these ongoing challenges, Portola Valley recently welcomed two permanent staff members — Town Engineer Robert Burr and Town Clerk Veronica Dao.

The presentation chart displayed an upward trend in revenue by 2027-28. McFarlane explained however that from the 2026-27 through 2029-30 budget, the town will need to make an additional \$2 million in cuts to maintain a balanced budget. Another option is to raise revenue. The options of becoming a charter town, imposing a parcel tax and relocating open space user utility taxes to the general fund are still in consideration to increase town revenue.

Committee budget

For the next fiscal year, the committees' budget amounted to \$44,360. This is significantly less than over the last four years,

said Finance Director Tony McFarlane.

This is due to a major reduction in costs from the cultural arts committee. This year, the Cultural Arts Committee has separated itself from the annual PV Palooza and Summer Concerts that are now operated under the nonprofit organization, PV Palooza Foundation. Both of these events would have added an additional \$14,000 to the committee's budget.

The Cultural Arts Committee is asking, however, that the town allocate about \$3,000 to be used on other events.

Among all committees, Parks and Recreation budgeted the highest amount with a total of \$25,000. The budget includes expenses for the Zotts for Tots race and community picnics that include petting zoos and face-painting. The second highest budget came from the Trails and Paths Committee with a total of \$10,000 with the majority of expenses allocated for the Horse Fair.

Council member Rebecca Flynn noticed the increased costs budgeted for the Horse Fair event. While it is well attended every year, she suggested the budget be cut.

"We're looking at a \$150,000 potential deficit for next year... I have to be very mindful of the consequences that our budget is still constrained, our service levels are less than optimal and our staff is tight," said Flynn.

Council member Craig Taylor recommended that the budget be reviewed by the committees again to see where costs can be cut down and how they can save the town money.

"The message needs to get out that the town doesn't have a ton of money and some of these budgets are higher than they were last year," Flynn added.

Council member Mary Hufty suggested using the newly founded nonprofit Portola Valley Fund to underpin committee projects that the town cannot afford. However, Mayor Judith Hasko warned that fund is still working on logistics and this might not be the best time

See **BUDGET**, page 7

Olympic swimming champion offers advice to grads

Katie Ledecy talks pace, process and time to 5,271 graduating Stanford students

By Gennady Sheyner

Long before Katie Ledecy became one of America's most decorated swimmers, she was a 15-year-old in London, making her Olympics debut and trying to psych herself up for her first international meet in front of a crowd that included members of the British royal family.

The favorite in the competition was English swimmer Rebecca Adlington and, as Ledecy explained, she had expected the crowd to chant "Becky! Becky!"

"And I had programed myself to think they are shouting, Le-DECKY! Le-DECKY!"

Ledecy, who graduated from Stanford in 2020, recalled the story of how she won her first Olympic medal during her return to the Farm on Sunday, when she delivered a commencement address to the university's 5,271 graduating students, its largest graduating class ever. The London race would be the first of her nine Olympic gold medals spanning four Olympics. But to win it, as she recalled, she had to defy the advice of her coaches and other observers who suggested that she pace herself and not go too fast off the block.

Instead, she took an early lead and went on to expand it.

"About midway through race I remember thinking, 'Where is everybody?'" Ledecy recalled. "There's a brief second where I wondered if I'm doing something wrong, like I've gone out too fast. Then I told myself, 'Just keep going.'" And I did."



Andrew Brodhead/Stanford University

Katie Ledecy delivers the commencement speech during Stanford University's graduation ceremony on June 15.

She won by more than 4 seconds.

Ledecy said that later that evening, as she was watching the replay of the race in the Olympic Village, she heard commentators similarly fretting throughout the race about her fast pace. It wasn't until she had a large lead, three-quarters into the race, that they started cheering for her, confident of her victory.

"Can you imagine what it would've been like for me if I were hearing that commentary the whole time I was swimming? I'd be thinking, 'Hmmm, maybe they're right. I should probably slow down.'" she said.

Ledecy told the graduates that there will be people in their lives telling them not to rush, that they're still young. She asked them to consider ways in which being young and unknown can be an advantage. Go fast, she said, when you need to go fast.

"Sometimes, you just have to go for it and find out what you're

capable of," Ledecy said.

Ledecy, who graduated from Stanford as a psychology major and political science minor, focused her commencement speech on the three elements that helped her go the distance as a swimmer: pace, process and time. In discussing her process, she estimated that she had swam about 26,000 miles as part of her training, which set her up for the 5.5 miles that she has had to swim during the Olympics. She likened it to the estimated 14,000 pages of reading assignments (more for English majors) that Stanford students typically have to get through before they graduate.

"As you move forward, trust your process, fall in love with your process, build a community that's supports that process and trusts that all the small, seemingly insignificant moments have added up to something special," Ledecy said. "They made you into the person you are today."

In explaining how she manages

her time during distance races, Ledecy said she often thinks about her family. During the Tokyo Olympics, she recalled, she had two races that were about an hour apart. She was off during the first one and did not medal. For the second one, the 1500m freestyle, she said she had to shrug things off and focus. So she began to think about her grandmothers, repeating their names with each stroke.

"I swam with the sense of strength and freedom," Ledecy said. "I felt like my grandparents lifted me up to gold that day."

Ledecy told the graduates that the truly important work that they will do will "sometimes feel like you're swimming alone."

"Yet I found those are the moments where I most needed my people, my family, my teammates, my coaches. They are the voices that carry you through the tough time."

In introducing Ledecy, Stanford University President Jonathan Levin also alluded to the hard times that members of Class of 2025 faced as they began their Stanford journey during a time when the university was reopening its campus after the pandemic. Traditions had been forgotten, and the class had to "renew the spirit of irreverence, which combined with academic excellence, is essential to Stanford," he said.

"I can confidently say that you will be remembered as the class that brought back fun," Levin said. ■

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JUNETEENTH

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Gauthier's message of an enduring commitment to freedom and justice for Black Americans echoed in Menlo Park City Councilmember Cecilia Taylor's speech as well.

For Taylor, "Juneteenth is about educating all, agitating with love and celebrating with humility."

She urged the audience to engage deeply with the history of Juneteenth and the stories of those who worked toward its federal recognition as a holiday.

Looking to the past was an important theme across the speakers. Advocate and healer Adeshina Shindara, led a libations ceremony as a reminder to recognize those who came before.

"This beautiful ceremony of libation involves invoking the energy, the spirit of our ancestors,

those whose shoulders we stand upon and who have paved the way for our success as Black people," Shindara said. "We say their names, we keep them alive [and] we keep them present in our hearts..."

Gauthier held a small potted plant in which Shindara poured water as the audience and speakers called names of their ancestors in an act of remembrance and to give thanks.

Tochi Ibeanusi, a member of the Bay Area Community Health Advisory Council's Youth Advisory Board, also spoke about the importance of honoring the past.

"Juneteenth means celebrating us, our culture, creativity, our resilience," Ibeanusi said. "It's a time to honor the ancestors who made our existence possible. The contributions we as African Americans have made to not only

this country, but this state, county and to our local communities deserve to be celebrated."

Another member of the Youth Advisory Board, Tatiola Sobomehin, spoke of the joy that Juneteenth represents through her childhood memories of celebrating the holiday in her neighborhood. However, Sobomehin also reiterated that the pursuit of freedom and equity is ongoing.

"Juneteenth represents how far we've come, but it reminds us how far we still need to go," she said. "As it feels harder and harder to advocate for our community ... We still remember this day. We still come together to remember. We still teach our youth, and it's truly important and influential to do so. I hope we will continue to do it each year, despite the powers that rise against us..."

The final speaker was Jacob Virges, a local spoken word poet,

who performed two pieces, one about Juneteenth and another titled "What About My Dreams?" His poetry described the systemic horrors enslaved people faced in the United States, and how such systems evolved.

In light of political uncertainty that Sobomehin mentioned and the persistence of injustice explored in Virges' poems, Youth Advisory Board member Ibeanusi felt optimistic about the change possible by empowering young people.

"Once everyone finds that place where they can foster shared passion, then that's exactly how change happens, and how you start something bigger than yourself," she said after the ceremonies. ■

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Historical Association, La Brea Tar Pits join in new research effort

Partnership centers on researching megafauna from last ice age

By Anya Motwani

The San Mateo County Historical Association announced a first-of-its-kind research collaboration with the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum and the La Brea Tar Pits earlier this month.

Emily Lindsey, the assistant curator and excavation site director at the La Brea Tar Pits, catalyzed this effort when a set of Columbian mammoth teeth in the SMCHA's archives seemed relevant to her study of what caused megafauna extinction at the end of the last Ice Age.

"We have a pretty good idea of the story of what's going on in Southern California ... but what's going on in Northern California and the Pacific Northwest?" Lindsey said. "[We're looking for] differences in timing of extinction based on the different ecological changes that are happening at that time, or differences in human population, abundance, technologies, cultures, things like that."

After some initial analysis, Lindsey did not believe the collagen preservation needed to date bones was present in the mammoth teeth provided by the SMCHA. These specimens were unable to help provide answers regarding the extinction of the Columbian mammoth that once inhabited Northern California.

"I don't think we're going to be able to include [the teeth] in my part of the study, but there's still a fun little mystery," Lindsey said. "There may be other interesting

analyses that can be done looking at, say, enamel isotopes or tooth wear, or other types of studies that might be interesting to other scientists."

While these particular fossils were not ultimately relevant to Lindsey's research, there are other applications for cross-institutional collaboration. Lindsey reflected that "the real goal is just to help track down these fossils."

A colleague sent Lindsey a 1945 paper published in "Science," an academic journal, reporting on a fossil discovery near San Francisco. The author, Frank Stanger, was deeply involved in the SMCHA since its founding and served as its president, so this paper was used to piece together what happened to other animal specimens found in the area.

The elephant bones, prehistoric horse teeth, as well as botanical and insect specimens Stanger discovered could play an important role in her research as well as in the San Mateo County History Museum's upcoming natural history exhibit. Lindsey alongside the SMCHA are attempting to track down the rest of these fossils.

Cooperation between researchers and museums is as important to understanding history as the fossils themselves.

"So these [artifacts] are really valuable resources. They're valuable for the community to learn about the heritage of their very specific area ... but they're really valuable for science because they create these much larger data sets that a lot of scientists don't know



Kensie Pao

Mitch Postel holds a mammoth tooth fossil at the San Mateo County History Museum in Redwood City on June 17.

about," Lindsey said. "Something that's really important that's very much in danger of losing federally funded support is the larger scale databases and infrastructure that help people to find where all the specimens are."

Lindsey said these comprehensive databases can be best achieved through collective research efforts like that between the La Brea Tar Pits, the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum and the SMCHA. Especially at a time when the San

Mateo County History Museum hopes to become more involved in natural history again, the paleontological support Lindsey and her colleagues can offer the SMCHA is invaluable.

"Communicating to each other and getting connections help us spread education as well," said Sean Campbell, a senior fossil preparator at the La Brea Tar Pits. "When I visited the [San Mateo County History Museum], they told me their plans for their natural history

museum section, and it included the Millbrae mammoths, but it also included other things ... These are connections that can help them with their exhibits and learning and education about the materials that they have because to my understanding, there's not a paleontologist that actually works at the [San Mateo County Historical Association]."

The natural history gallery, set to open in 2026 as a part of the San Mateo County History Museum's expansion, is a next step that will allow more of the specimens in its archives to be shared with the public.

"Our vision became, 'Why don't we find the space to do a full natural history gallery that would feature paleontology and the animals that once lived here?'" said SMCHA President Mitch Postel. "Now we're looking at having a 2,700-square-foot space within our new addition to the museum, where we'll show paleoparadoxia and other things ... As we learn more and more, it gets more and more exciting." ■

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BUDGET

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to request its services.

Council member Helen Wolter asked to approve the funding for the town committees' requests but at the limited amount of \$44,000 in addition to asking all committees to tighten their budgets. All council members voted in favor to approve the budget except for Hasko.

Nonprofit funding requests

The town also reviewed nonprofit funding requests from organizations that provide services to Portola Valley and neighboring cities across the Peninsula. The proposed budget for nonprofit funding was \$25,000, but McFarlane recommended about \$18,000.

The nonprofit organizations include Emergency Preparedness in Communities, Human Investment Project Housing, Meals on Wheels and Sustainable

San Mateo County.

"Although these nonprofits do tremendous work throughout the county, I feel that we need to keep our money within the town first," said McFarlane.

The town will continue to discuss the 2025-26 budget in a future meeting. ■

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

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Waymo expands self-driving taxi service to parts of Menlo Park

Robotaxis cover more ground in Bay Area, marking third expansion in Peninsula

By Emily Margaretten

Waymo announced on Tuesday that it is continuing to scale up its self-driving taxi service in the Peninsula to parts of Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Los Altos Hills.

The Mountain View-based company, a subsidiary of parent company Alphabet, says it is expanding its California service by over 80 square miles, marking its third rollout in the Peninsula in less than a year.

The autonomous vehicle company is operating in other major metropolitan areas as well, including Los Angeles County, part of the current expansion, as well as Phoenix and Austin.

“We’re very proud of this progress — we’re the first AV service operating at real scale and we continue to see growing demand and trust in our services,” Waymo said in a June 17 press release.

But it has not been an entirely smooth ride for the robotaxi company, at least during its initial expansion efforts.

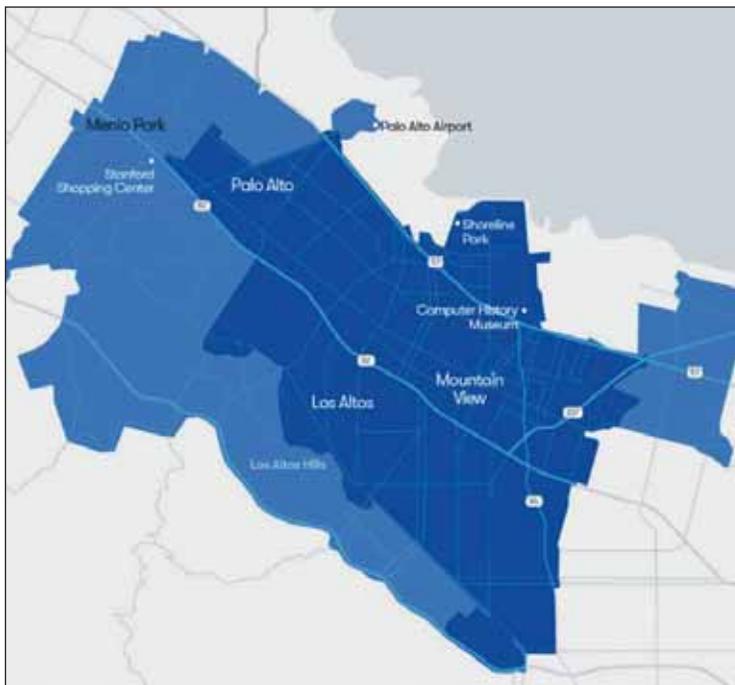
Last August, Waymo surprised

local officials when it expanded its services from San Francisco to Daly City, Broadmoor and Colma. At the time, legislators expressed concerns about the rollout of the robotaxis, advocating for tighter regulations and local control.

Currently, driverless vehicles require a permit from the DMV to operate and if carrying passengers, approval from the California Public Utilities Commission. Companies do not need approval from local jurisdictions.

The autonomous vehicle industry has argued that a patchwork of regulations across different cities would impede technological innovation. The industry also touted its safety record, noting that autonomous vehicles are involved in less collisions than human-driven vehicles.

Since then, Waymo has continued its expansion in the Peninsula. In March, it returned to its roots in Mountain View and started offering rides to select users of the Waymo One app, with pricing set by distance,



Courtesy Waymo

A map of Waymo’s self-driving taxi service coverage area and expansion in the Peninsula as of June. The light blue area represents an increase in the coverage area.

trip duration and demand.

The company says it will continue to work with local partners and policymakers to ensure its services help communities

access reliable and safe transportation, and has received the support of several local nonprofits.

“At the Los Altos Mountain

View Community Foundation, we are excited to welcome Waymo’s expansion into Silicon Valley. As a community-driven organization committed to accessibility, sustainability, and innovation, we recognize the profound benefits autonomous driving technology can bring to our residents,” said Crysta Krames, LAMVCF executive director.

“Waymo’s presence will provide a safe, reliable, and eco-friendly transportation option — especially for seniors, people with disabilities, and those facing mobility challenges,” Krames said in the press release.

Currently, Waymo is the sole commercial robotaxi operator in the U.S. The company says it has provided over 10 million paid rides and serves a quarter of a million paid trips per week across all of its markets, a five-fold increase from this time a year ago, according to the press release. ■

Email Staff Writer Emily Margaretten at emargaretten@almanacnews.com.

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Kensie Pao

Protesters make signs prior to staging along El Camino Real in Palo Alto during the “No Kings” day rally, which stretched from Palo Alto to Sunnyvale on June 14.



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Drag Queen Callie Vacation performs to “Young Americans” by David Bowie during the “We the People” Democracy Fair at Rinconada Cultural Park in Palo Alto on June 14. Callie Vacation, who grew up in the Santa Cruz area but now lives in Colorado, flew out to the Bay Area specifically to participate in this event.

Thousands rally across Peninsula to support democracy

Massive anti-Trump rally includes protest on El Camino

By Emily Margaretten

From Palo Alto to Sunnyvale, tens of thousands showed up along a seven-mile stretch of El Camino Real on Saturday afternoon to protest President Donald Trump on the same day he staged a military parade in Washington D.C.

The “No Kings” demonstration, reportedly held across more than 2,000 cities, was part of a national-day-of-action on June 14 that called for people to reject what it described as the authoritarianism and corruption of Trump. The day also coincided with Trump’s 79th birthday and Flag Day, a holiday that celebrates the adoption of the American flag.

Waving handmade signs and American flags, protesters expressed their opposition to Trump with messages like, “Save democracy,” “No Kings!” and “Hate won’t make America great.”

The “7x7k” No Kings event was aiming for 7,000 people to line the sidewalks of El Camino Real from Arastradero Road in Palo Alto, continuing through Los Altos and Mountain View, to Remington Drive in Sunnyvale.

But it blew past this number with protesters standing nearly shoulder-to-shoulder for most of the 7-mile stretch on El Camino Real.

The turnout was likely closer to 20,000 to 22,000 people, according to Sally Lieber, an event organizer and longtime community activist.

One popular segment, from Castro Street to Grant Street on El Camino Real in Mountain View, reportedly had about 2,000 hand-counted people, according to a safety volunteer.

A Mountain View police officer, parked in a vehicle on Hope Street, remarked that he had not seen a demonstration of this size before in the area.

The demonstration drew regulars who have been attending protests in the Bay Area since Trump took



Kensie Pao

Joan Baez gives a speech during the No Kings Day Democracy Fair at Rinconada Cultural Park in Palo Alto.

office in January. But it also attracted a lot of newcomers, according to IdaRose Sylvester, an event organizer and co-founder of Together We Will Palo Alto Mountain View, a political action network.

“They said they were scared but came anyway and now have hope and do not feel so alone,” Sylvester said.

Richard Hagan, a Palo Alto resident and Vietnam

veteran, said it was easy to attend the event since it was being held right outside his home and was accessible, given his mobility issues using a wheelchair.

“Trump wants to be a monarch but that’s not how democracy works,” Hagan said. “That isn’t why we have equal branches of government,” he added, explaining his reasons for participating in the rally.

Liesel Czymontek, a Mountain View resident and college student, said that she and her family showed up on a whim about 30 minutes before the event started. “I’m not the most educated about a lot of the issues,” Czymontek said. “But I’m Japanese American and there has been a history of incarceration, like what is happening with other groups today... It’s important we speak out.”

The message resonated with the aim of the rally, which was for people to have the opportunity to come out and make themselves visible, Lieber said.

The demonstration also remained peaceful, even against the backdrop of the use of military force in other parts of the country to quell protests, like in Los Angeles.

Sylvester pointed out that Saturday’s rally differed from demonstrations held earlier in the year, like the People’s March and Hands Off demonstrations.

“Back then, our focus was fighting for specific issues, women’s rights, immigrant rights, health care. This time, we’ve generally focused more on daylighting the attacks on democracy at a very core level,” Sylvester said in an email.

“Now we have the government bringing in the National Guard and our military to use our nation’s defenses against its very own people. The gravitas of the moment, the seriousness of what we are fighting for, and what we are potentially facing when doing so, is at an entirely different level,” she said. ■

Email Staff Writer Emily Margaretten at emargaretten@almanacnews.com.



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Protesters line up along El Camino Real in Mountain View near the Castro Street intersection to participate in the 7x7k No Kings Day Rally on June 14.



Anna Hoch-Kenney

A military Jeep carrying protesters drives through the intersection of El Camino Real and Casto Street in Mountain View.



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Participants wave signs along El Camino Real.



Kensie Pao

Melissa Dinwiddie, leader of Indivisible Palo Alto Plus, dresses as the Statue of Liberty and holds up a torch during a speech at the No Kings Day Democracy Fair in Rinconada Cultural Park.



Kensie Pao

From left to right, Avis Begoun, Sally Hayman and Elliot Margolies participate in a sing along during the No Kings Day Democracy Fair at Rinconada Cultural Park.



Anna Hoch-Kenney

A retro car waving the California flag drives past protesters at the intersection of El Camino Real and Casto Street in Mountain View.



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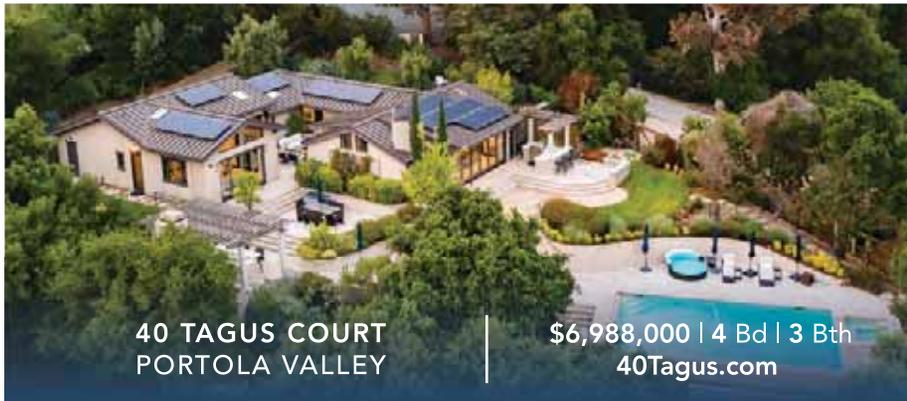




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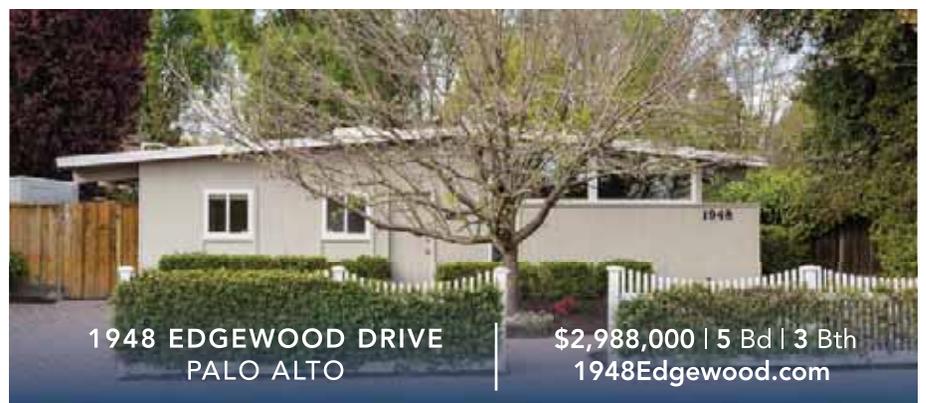
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Police say man ate food during Atherton burglary

47-year-old arrested on Lloyden Park Lane

By Arden Margulis

The Atherton Police Department arrested 47-year-old Tong Thach on Tuesday, June 10, for allegedly breaking into a home on Lloyden Park Lane.

Thach allegedly entered the home while the residents were away. He ate food from the house, and when the residents returned, they called the police, according to Atherton police Sgt. Jeff Taylor. Thach ate approximately \$20

worth of soda, chips and leftover noodles, Taylor said. The resident did not notice any other items missing. The burglary was unrelated to previous burglaries in the town, according to Taylor. Thach was arrested at 4:40

p.m. on suspicion of felony first-degree burglary and transported to a San Mateo County jail. He was arraigned on June 11 and pleaded not guilty to one count of burglary. The court found probable cause

for his arrest, and he was released on supervised own recognizance. His next court hearing is scheduled for July 25, 2025. ■

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

POOL

continued from page 1

impactful on profitability since expenses do not scale with usage. Whether there are zero users or 100, Team Sheeper is required to maintain a minimum of two lifeguards and a manager.

According to Team Sheeper's report to the City Council, direct employment compensation (which excludes employer paid taxes) from Belle Haven pool operations cost \$290,000 in 2024 — \$32 per hour open.

"It's simple math. We've got staff that we are paying but very little revenue coming in," Team Sheeper CFO Carole Hayworth said in an interview.

Taylor blames Team Sheeper for low usage at Belle Haven.

"I believe a part of the reason that the Belle Haven pool was not profiting as much as the Burgess pool is because of the way it was programmed and the level of outreach," Taylor said.

Taylor, who represents the Belle Haven area, objects to the narrative that the Burgess pool is subsidizing the Belle Haven pool. Other councilmembers agree with that narrative, although not the

negative connotation.

"That is the lens that the provider sees the community, that is the reason why he's unable to serve the community as they are... People want to use the pool, it's just who has control over it is not someone who serves the neighborhood," Taylor said. She contends many are not using the facility as they do not feel welcomed.

Taylor wants the council to consider other operators or the city taking control of the pools. When the city sent a request for proposals to run both pools, which Team Sheeper won, it received two other responses.

Mayor Drew Combs, however, sees issues with the city or another private operator taking control.

"I don't know how there's a transition that doesn't result in the pools being closed for some time," Combs said. "Let's be clear, the city doesn't even have a process for hiring lifeguards. We'd have to go talk to the unions. It would probably be more than a year-long process for the city to take control of the pools."

"We've got our surplus, do we want that \$3 million going to go to the pools?" Combs said.

"There are no other operators standing around."

"I disagree with that. I think that's the picture that's been painted for the council, so that we chose (Team Sheeper) which is why I didn't vote for the contract in the beginning," Taylor said in response.

After the request for proposals in 2023, Menlo Park had two other options: SOLO Aquatics and the Swimming Swan. City staff told the council that it had doubts whether SOLO Aquatics, which has programs at the Burgess pool but not experience running a facility, could feasibly manage the pool. Swimming Swan is a pool management company that operates pools across California and in several states. Although city staff recommended Team Sheeper, they said Swimming Swan was a capable operator as well.

While Team Sheeper claims the contract it eventually signed was overly restrictive and the city's expectations led to its financial troubles, nothing about the economic environment has changed since the contract was signed. Even though Team Sheeper operated a seasonal pool at the site of

the Belle Haven Community Campus previously, it overestimated usage of the pool.

Hayworth said the reason it agreed to the contract was because Team Sheeper thought the city would help it if it got into rough waters.

"Our interpretation was that we were in a partnership with the City of Menlo Park, and that we work as partners, and that if there were significant financial issues, they would help to resolve them. That just seemed reasonable to me," Hayworth said.

"The City of Menlo Park continues to work with Menlo Swim and Sport (a division of Team Sheeper) in good faith to provide the Menlo Park community a wide range of aquatic programming at both of its pools. The City is committed to honoring all the terms of its public-private partnership and formal agreement with Menlo Swim and Sport for the benefit of Menlo Park residents, as is the case with every agreement the City enters into. In that spirit, the City routinely provides advertising, promotional support, and community engagement to support its swim centers and help them be successful," Menlo Park Communications Director Kendra Calvert said in a statement.

Hayworth said Team Sheeper had no choice but to lower hours at Burgess earlier this year without much notice as the offseason, when schools are still in session, was about to end.

Months ago, Team Sheeper raised the alarm about its financial state to city staff.

"City staff indicated they would be able to get some financial help for us. We've been talking about it since last September, and we were told to wait, then get our annual financials in, then get them reviewed, then wait longer. Now, we are in this position where we're really in the hole because it's been so long," Hayworth said.

Before the June 10 meeting, Hayworth sent the City Council her proposal for financial remedies. During the offseason, Team Sheeper could only fund 23 hours a week at the Belle Haven pool, fewer than the 63

hours the city wants. Hayworth said the city could fund the extra 40 hours by providing a \$235,000 subsidy.

Hayworth also proposed opening the Belle Haven pool 54 hours a week in the offseason with the city providing a \$182,000 subsidy.

In addition to the other two, Hayworth proposed the city subsidize free lap swimming year-round at the Belle Haven pool for Belle Haven residents, which would cost \$70,000.

Hayworth said all of the subsidies would go only to direct costs and not managerial expenses.

If the City Council does not find a solution by fall, Hayworth warned that Team Sheeper would reduce hours at the Burgess pool to 63 hours a week in the offseason, the contract minimum, and less than the 93 hours a week the community has come to expect.

In the meantime, the city has helped Team Sheeper with marketing more than ever before. Team Sheeper has begun outreach efforts and plans to continue working with neighborhood groups. Although not contractually obligated, the city will fund a mailer to residents advertising the Belle Haven and Burgess pools and offering a one-time use coupon. Menlo Park will not pay for the costs associated with the coupon.

City councilmembers directed Team Sheeper to provide a comprehensive proposal of what it needs to survive in order to prevent a situation where it keeps asking for additional funds.

Hayworth isn't confident that the Belle Haven pool will ever have enough users to financially support operations.

"It's located in a neighborhood that is very small. It's not easily accessible. It's going to take a while, maybe three to five years to get traction from that neighborhood. It's always going to be a neighborhood facility, and that neighborhood should be able to use the pool when they want to use it. We just can't afford it right now," Hayworth said. ■

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



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Swimmers do laps at the Belle Haven Pool in Menlo Park on July 2, 2024.



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Public Notices

T. H. DESIGNS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO.: M-300630

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

1.) T. H. DESIGNS , located at 464 Pacific Ave, Pacifica, CA 94044.

Registered owner(s):

TAMARA HARMON

464 Pacific Ave

Pacifica, CA 94044

This business is conducted by: an Individual.

Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 8/24/1987.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on May 15, 2025.

(ALM Jun 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2025)

WHOLE SOME KINK

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO.: M-300781

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

1.) WHOLE SOME KINK , located at 590

Hillcrest Way, Emerald Hills, CA 94062.

Registered owner(s):

LAUREL CROSBY DETTLOFF

590 Hillcrest Way

Emerald Hills, CA 94062

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 June 02, 2025.

(ALM Jun 13, 20, 27 and Jul 4, 2025)

MSD MOBILE BLOOD DRAW

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO.: M-300835

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

1.) MSD MOBILE BLOOD DRAW , located at

420 LOMOND DR., PACIFICA, CA 94044.

Registered owner(s):

MSD MOBILE BLOOD DRAW, LLC

420 LOMOND DR.

PACIFICA, CA 94044

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 June 09, 2025.

(ALM Jun 20, 27, Jul 4 and 11, 2025)

TAKEMOTO & CO

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO.: M-300712

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

1.) TAKEMOTO & CO , located at 303 Twin

Dolphin Drive, STE 600, Redwood City, CA

94065.

Registered owner(s):

JOHN TOSHI TAKEMOTO

303 Twin Dolphin Drive, STE 600

Redwood City, CA 94065

SHELLIE KIM SAKAMOTO

303 Twin Dolphin Drive, STE 600

Redwood City, CA 94065

This business is conducted by: a Married

Couple.

Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 12/01/2003.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on May 28, 2025.

(ALM Jun 6, 13, 20 and 27, 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-04232

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: Charles Kevin Heisler filed a

petition with this court for a decree changing

names as follows:

CHARLES KEVIN HEISLER to KEVIN HEISLER

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: August 12, 2025,

9:00am, Southern Branch of the Superior

Court of California, County of San Mateo

located at 400 County Center, Redwood City.

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: June 10th, 2025

Stephanie Garratt

JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

(ALM Jun 20, 27, Jul 4 and 11, 2025)

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BY A STATE OR FEDERAL CREDIT UNION, OR A

CHECK DRAWN BY A STATE OR FEDERAL SAV-

INGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION, SAVINGS AS-

SOCIATION, OR SAVINGS BANK SPECIFIED IN

SECTION 5102 OF THE FINANCIAL CODE AND

AUTHORIZED TO DO BUSINESS IN THIS STATE;

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all right, title and interest conveyed to and

now held by it under said Deed of Trust in the

property situated in said County and State

described as: MORE ACCURATELY DESCRIBED

IN SAID DEED OF TRUST. The street address

and other common designation, if any, of the

real property described above is purported

to be: 8975 LA HONDA ROAD, LA HONDA, CA

94020 The undersigned Trustee disclaims any

liability for any incorrectness of the street

address and other common designation, if any,

shown herein. Said sale will be held, but with-

out covenant or warranty, express or implied,

regarding title, possession, condition, or

encumbrances, including fees, charges and

expenses of the Trustee and of the trusts cre-

ated by said Deed of Trust, to pay the remain-

ing principal sums of the note(s) secured by

said Deed of Trust. The total amount of the

unpaid balance of the obligation secured by

the property to be sold and reasonable esti-

mated costs, expenses and advances at the

time of the initial publication of the Notice

of Sale is: \$680,050.03 If the Trustee is unable

to convey title for any reason, the successful

bidder's sole and exclusive remedy shall be

the return of monies paid to the Trustee, and

the successful bidder shall have no further

recourse. The beneficiary under said Deed

of Trust heretofore executed and delivered

to the undersigned a written Declaration of

Default and Demand for Sale, and a written

Notice of Default and Election to Sell. The

undersigned or its predecessor caused said

Notice of Default and Election to Sell to be

recorded in the county where the real property

is located. NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS: If

you are considering bidding on this property

lien, you should understand that there are

risks involved in bidding at a trustee auction.

You will be bidding on a lien, not on the

property itself. Placing the highest bid at

a trustee auction does not automatically

entitle you to free and clear ownership of the

property. You should also be aware that the

lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien.

If you are the highest bidder at the auction,

you are or may be responsible for paying off

all liens senior to the lien being auctioned

off, before you can receive clear title to the

property. You are encouraged to investigate

the existence, priority, and size of outstand-

ing liens that may exist on this property by

contacting the county recorder's office or a

title insurance company, either of which may

charge you a fee for this information. If you

consult either of these resources, you should

be aware that the same lender may hold

more than one mortgage or deed of trust on

the property. NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER:

The sale date shown on this notice of sale

may be postponed one or more times by the

mortgagee, beneficiary, trustee, or a court,

pursuant to Section 2924g of the California

Civil Code. The law requires that informa-

tion about trustee sale postponements be

made available to you and to the public, as

a courtesy to those not present at the sale.

If you wish to learn whether your sale date

has been postponed, and, if applicable, the

rescheduled time and date for the sale of this

property, you may call (855) 313-3319 or visit

this Internet website www.clearreconcorp.com,

using the file number assigned to this case

124461-CA. Information about post-

ponements that are very short in duration

or that occur close in time to the scheduled

sale may not immediately be reflected in the

telephone information or on the Internet

Web site. The best way to verify postpone-

ment information is to attend the scheduled

sale. NOTICE TO TENANT: Effective January 1,

2021, you may have a right to purchase this

property after the trustee auction pursuant

to Section 2924m of the California Civil Code.

If you are an "eligible tenant buyer," you can

purchase the property if you match the last

and highest bid placed at the trustee auction.

If you are an "eligible bidder," you may be

able to purchase the property if you exceed

the last and highest bid placed at the trustee

auction. There are three steps to exercising

this right of purchase. First, 48 hours after

the date of the trustee sale, you can call (855)

313-3319, or visit this internet website www.clearreconcorp.com,

using the file number assigned to this case

124461-CA to find the date on which the trustee's

sale was held, the amount of the last and highest

bid, and the address of the trustee. Second, you

must send a written notice of intent to place

a bid so that the trustee receives it no more

than 15 days after the trustee's sale. Third,

you must submit a bid so that the trustee

receives it no more than 45 days after the

trustee's sale. If you think you may qualify as

an "eligible tenant buyer" or "eligible bidder,"

you should consider contacting an attorney

or appropriate real estate professional im-

mediately for advice regarding this potential

right to purchase. FOR SALES INFORMATION:

(855) 313-3319 CLEAR RECON CORP 3333

Camino Del Rio South, Suite 225 San Diego,

California 92108

(ALM Jun 13, 20 and 27, 2025)

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- 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.

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CROSSWALKS

continued from page 1

publicly accessible app on the Google Play Store and the Apple App Store that allowed city officials to access Polara systems. Within 48 hours of the incident being reported in Silicon Valley, the app was pulled from the stores.

Theoretically, access to the crosswalk buttons requires a four-digit numeric code created by the city. However, many online commenters have pointed out that some cities never change the default password: 1234. Polara later republished the app with additional password security requirements. While a four-digit password allows for 10,000 possible combinations, some cybersecurity experts say it can be cracked instantly.

Polara has since added a lock-out feature that limits users to two password attempts and gave cities the ability to disable connectivity altogether.

Neither Caltrans nor Redwood City would say how the hack occurred. In a statement to technology news organization The Register, Polara said it does not believe its systems were compromised and that the individuals used "valid credentials," which could include the default password. Polara did not respond to

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Approved contracts set stage for Newell Road bridge replacement

Project seeks to boost transportation safety, flood control

By Gennady Sheyner

After more than a decade of political wrangling, design revisions and permitting hurdles, Palo Alto is preparing to start reconstruction of the Newell Road bridge, a project that city leaders see as critical to bolstering flood control around the San Francisquito Creek.

The City Council approved on Monday a series of construction contracts totaling about \$12 million for replacement of the 114-year-old bridge, which spans the creek between Newell Road and Woodland Avenue. The council had approved the project and the environmental analysis in June 2020, but the project has been in permitting limbo as city officials worked on getting approval from the state Department of Transportation.

The green light came when Caltrans authorized the city to move ahead with “advance construction,” an agreement in which the local agency foots the bill for the project with the expectation that the state will later reimburse it. Without that authorization, Palo Alto and

East Palo Alto would have had to wait until next year to access the funding, according to Public Works staff.

Public Works Director Brad Eggleston said that the advance build is a “very routine thing in the highway bridge program.

“We do expect to eventually be reimbursed for these construction expenses,” Eggleston said.

Much of the cost of the \$20-million project will be picked up by Palo Alto’s partners in the effort. The Caltrans program is expected to contribute \$10.4 million for the project, while Valley Water will kick in \$2 million and the city will spend \$6.4 million. The city also has \$2 million in earmarked state funds for the long-awaited project.

To get the work started, the council approved on June 16 a \$9.4-million contract with Granite Construction Company for replacing the bridge and a \$2.6-million deal with Zoon Engineering for construction management services. The project is expected to take about a two years to complete.

For Caltrans, the main objective is to improve transportation

safety. The agency had deemed the 22-foot-wide bridge “structurally obsolete” nearly 15 years ago, making it eligible for state funding. The replacement bridge will be 44-feet wide and include five-foot sidewalks and “sharrow” markings to improve safety for cyclists. It would nevertheless retain its current two-lane configuration.

For the communities on the two sides of the bridge, flood control is in some ways an even higher priority. Many have seen their homes damaged during major floods, when the volatile creek overtops and water spills out into the streets.

Mary Dimit was one of many Palo Alto residents who wrote to the council, urging city officials to approve the project. She recalled the Feb. 4, 1998 flood — the largest one on records — when the San Francisquito Creek overflowed onto the street and into neighboring homes.

“We called our neighbors to warn them of the flooding & then helped them place sandbags by their driveways, etc. in the early morning hours of the night,” Dimit wrote. “We

were luckier than others whose homes were flooded. However, every time there are heavy rains we still worry, especially as the SF Creek overflowed again on January 1st, 2023 & on March 22, 2023, almost overflowed again.”

Xenia Hammer shared her sentiment and thanked the council for advancing the bridge replacement.

“This project is vitally important for public safety, for flood control on San Francisquito Creek and also for transportation improvements,” Hammer said at the June 16 meeting.

The benefits of the project are expected to go well beyond the immediate neighborhoods. The replacement of Newell Road bridge is seen as a necessary prerequisite to the Reach 2 project that is now being coordinated by the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority, a regional agency that includes Palo Alto, Menlo Park, East Palo Alto and the water districts from the two counties on either side of the creek.

Reach 2 focuses on the area between U.S. Highway 101

and the Pope-Chaucer bridge between Palo Alto and Menlo Park. The partners in the regional agency are now in the process of reviewing Reach 2 options, which including to a recent analysis could include the replacement of the Pope-Chaucer bridge, widening of the channel and installation of floodwalls.

Because the Newell Road bridge sits downstream of these improvements, the creek authority cannot advance with its improvements until Newell is replaced. Otherwise, increased water capacity upstream would increase risk around Newell and Woodside roads.

The council Mayor Ed Lauing called the city’s journey to the construction contract as “Herculean effort,” while Vice Mayor Vicki Veenker noted that the project costs has come in under the engineer’s estimate.

“I don’t think we ever see that, particularly with projects that take 13 years to get there,” Veenker said. ■

Email Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@almanacnews.com.

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TOWN CENTER

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update will occur in five phases, said Good City Project Manager Troy Reinhalter.

“We welcome you to participate through a number of avenues to share your feedback and opinions with us and with the council,” Reinhalter said. “We feel that it’s important that the concerns of this community be elevated over those of visitors.”

The major concerns raised by the community are traffic circulation, pedestrian safety and lack of parking. Consultants will also be looking into the different land use agreements in the Town Center area to explore potential housing, commercial

developments and community gathering spaces.

“We want to explore new ideas while keeping the treasured rural character that the Town Center has that draws so many folks to live in this community,” Reinhalter added.

Updates to the area plan include an expansion of the Town Center boundary further down Woodside Road past Woodside Elementary School and an added parcel behind Cañada Corners for an expanded parking lot.

The Good City team plans on engaging with the community through local events to bring transparency on the plan’s updates. To ensure collaboration with the local residents,

the consultants are planning to host pop-up events, community workshops, online surveys and produce informative videos.

Community Advisory Committee

Good City consultants recommended that the Community Advisory Committee be made up of 10 to 12 town committee chairs, property owners and stakeholders. To maintain equal power, there will be no chair for this committee.

Reinhalter said having a larger committee when working on an area plan can help balance diverse opinions and experiences. Consultants thought that this recommended size would still allow for focused conversations and meetings but any larger might lead to inefficiencies.

“Ultimately, the goal is not to have one mind out of the CAC but the goal is to seek a clear recommendation that can be brought forth to the council,” he said.

The nominated CAC members include Planning Commission Chair Lyle Weaver, Planning Commission Vice Chair Matt Garr, Architectural and Site Review Board Chair Don Lindsay and Circulation Committee Chair Ehsan Farkhondeh. The recommendations also listed previous Trails Committee Chair Barry Kuhl and Environment and Open Space Committee Chair Sue Sweeney Burrow.

Town property owners will be involved as CAC members including Lee Ann Gilbert, Richard Ersted, Patricia Del Gavio and Christine Roberts.

According to consultants, CAC meetings will be open to the public to encourage community participation and will allow for a maximum of three minutes per public comment. Meetings will be led by the Good City team to serve as a neutral party, said Reinhalter.

Some local residents stepped up to the mic during public comment to express their

disappointment in the lack of a committee application process.

“The way the proposed committee was selected was really a missed opportunity to engage people who have done their decades of service on the Planning Commission, ASRB and have a particular interest in Town Center,” said local architect Steve Lubin.

Town resident John Hughes asked that, while the town prepares to update the Town Center plan, it also should highlight the issues around affordable housing. Hughes encouraged the council to build units downtown instead of on parcels such as the one on Raymundo Drive, which is only accessible on windy and narrow roads.

“We want to reduce the pressure that we’ll face in the next housing element for affordable housing,” he said. “It’s going to get more difficult. Let’s anticipate it. Let’s put it in the center of town where it belongs.”

Various residents came forward to nominate themselves to serve on the committee, including David Mittleman and Sue Poletti.

“It sounded like (the CAC list) might have excluded some people that have a long history with this and given the complexity of Woodside, I suggest that more scrutiny be given to the list of people who are on that committee,” said town resident Maggie Mah.

She advocated for architects and lifelong town residents Steve Lubin and Steve Patrick to be selected as committee members. Considering Woodside’s equestrian culture, she also suggested that at least one person have some involvement with the horse community.

Council deliberations

Council members agreed with residents about the circumstances around the committee and commented on various issues that the town might face with the staff’s recommendations.

“I don’t have a problem with the extent of the expansion, but to say that we want to have a broad expansion of downtown strikes me as not keeping to the concept of rural,” said Council member Dick Brown.

Jenn Wall pointed out that there is an issue with conflict of interest and recusal among CAC members who could potentially be involved in discussions that pertain to their own businesses and properties in Town Center. She said it’s important to clearly understand how that process would work before appointing specific members.

“What I wish we were looking at tonight was what an application for the Citizens Advisory Committee would look like,” said Wall. “In my mind, a balanced committee would have some members of our commercial property owners, volunteer committees and some residents (with) certain expertise.”

Mayor Pro Tem Paul Goeld and council member Hassan Aburish agreed with Wall that the committee should include more residents who are interested in serving. Goeld suggested that all five districts in Woodside be represented and a subcommittee be formed to review CAC applications.

Mayor Bryan Dombkowski agreed with the subcommittee process, which Wall and Goeld agreed they would lead. He also recommended an expansion of the Town Center boundaries to extend further east on Woodside Road to Highway 280.

Council members unanimously voted to approve a subcommittee to recruit town district representatives on the CAC as well as an expansion on the area boundaries.

“It’s just the start of a long 18-month process so we’ll look forward to your engagement,” said Dombkowski. ■

Email Staff Writer

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Menlo Park City School District receives \$4 million grant

Menlo Park-Atherton Education Foundation’s Board of Directors voted to grant \$4.1 million to the Menlo Park City School District for the 2025-26 school year. A big check was presented to the school board during its meeting on June 5.

The grant is a result of the generosity of district parents, foundation business partners and the community. It was made possible through the contributions from campaigns including the One Community campaign and Schoolhouse Rocks Run events.

“The district is so grateful for MPAEF’s incredible partnership every year,” said Superintendent Kristen Gracia during the meeting. “This year especially we would like to recognize the fact that without MPAEF’s grant we would not be able to invest in our teachers like we do.”

She announced that teacher retention in the district has reached a high of 95%, acknowledging that quality teachers are critical to increasing student performance.

For more information on MPAEF visit mpaef.org.

Portola Valley summer session classes

Online registration for summer session classes in Portola Valley is open for town residents. Sign up for kids’ chess camp, pickleball, fitness and conditioning, chair yoga and aerobics. Currently, priority is given to Portola Valley residents. Registration ends two weeks after the first class.

For more information on summer session visit portolavalley.net/departments/parks-recreation/community-classes.

— *Jennifer Yoshikoshi*

Stanford Jazz Festival

The annual Stanford Jazz Festival will start on June 22 and continue through Aug. 1. Over a six-week festival, 26 concerts will be hosted at Stanford University from a variety of global jazz artists. The first concert will be at 4 p.m. on June 22 at the Dinkelspiel Auditorium and feature a fusion of Indian and western jazz traditions from vocalist Mahesh Kale and saxophone virtuoso George Brooks. Tickets start at \$18 for students and minors and at \$56 for adults. Stanford Jazz members get access to discounted rates.

Tickets for this concert and the other 25 can be purchased at stanfordjazz.org.

Menlo Park, Atherton offers new police portal

Both the Menlo Park and Atherton police departments are launching a new portal where residents can track a majority of incidents police respond to in near-real time. The portal is called Citizen RIMS and is made by Sun Ridge Systems. On Atherton’s portal, residents can sign up for vacation home checks and join the voluntary security camera registration program. The San Mateo County Sheriff’s Department started using the same system earlier this year.

Residents can view the Menlo Park portal at menlopark.citizenrims.com and the Atherton portal at atherton.citizenrims.com.

— *Arden Margulis*

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Loren ‘Wayne’ Pepple, 96, a Palo Alto man who worked as a civil engineer for the Illinois Central Railroad, Pacific Fruit Express and Southern Pacific Railroad, and who was a longtime member of the Palo Alto First Christian Church and Odin Christian Church, on April 30, 2025.

Paul Pei-Jen Hau, 108, a prolific painter who had served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in China and, as a legislator in the National Assembly, was a signer of the

1947 Chinese Constitution, and who later moving to Hong Kong before emigrating to the United States and living in Los Altos for more than 60 years, on May 20, 2025.

Thomas King Wyatt, 89, who worked for nearly 50 years as a dentist in the Bay Area serving patients across multiple generations, and was a skilled pilot, mariner and engineer, on May 29, 2025.

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

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A surprising 'sojourn'

Son turns late mother's unpublished memoir into tale of transgenerational family history

By Ashwini Gangal

A "Joke Sing" is a person of Chinese descent who identifies more with Western, than Chinese, culture. In contrast, a "sojourner," as described by sociologist Paul Chan Pang Siu, is an immigrant who journeys westward to earn money but intends to return home someday.

In the past, "Joke Sing" was a derogatory term derived from "zuk gong," Cantonese for bamboo pole. The metaphor goes thus: Water, once poured into it, gets stuck at the node and never comes back out. Today, though, it is a term of endearment.

In his book "Sojourners to Joke Sings: Tales of Chinatown and Beyond," author Ron Lee traces the history of his forebears in California, a story that goes back to the 1840s, predating the gold rush. It is published by Conocimientos Press.

Lee, who is a fifth-generation Californian of Chinese ancestry, found the blueprint of his book in his late mother L.K. Lennie Lee's memoir, which he discovered after she died in 2021 at the age of 98. The final product, which carries inputs from both mother and son in equal measure, is a look at Chinese-American history through the point of view of the Lee family.

"My whole family knew she (Lennie) was very interested in family history, but none of us had any idea she had completed and written an actual draft of a book," said Lee, in an interview with the Weekly.

The material went from being personal memorabilia she left for her grandchildren to something Lee considered distributing among extended family at his mother's celebration of life memorial service, to something he sought to publish as an ethnic studies-related high school text. But it turned into something much larger — a book for public consumption.

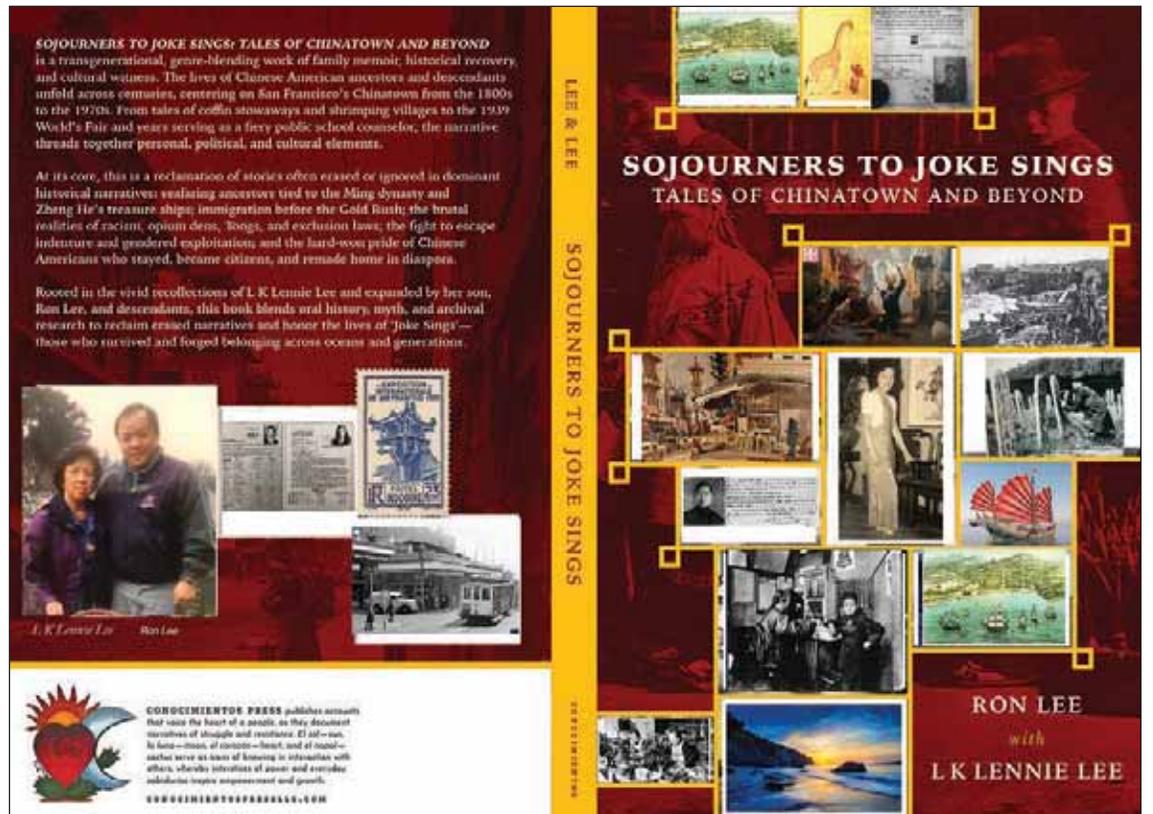
Lennie tacked a message on her memoir: "Grandmother Lee's Autobiography. Note: Needs corrections and upgrading."

"I wasn't quite sure what she



Courtesy Ron Lee

Above: L. K. Lennie Lee wrote a draft of an autobiography that also included information about Chinese-American history and unusual family stories. Right: The cover of "Sojourners to Joke Sings: Tales of Chinatown and Beyond," a book based on an unpublished memoir that Ron Lee discovered after his mother's death in 2021.



meant," said Lee, who at the time had no more than a passing knowledge of Chinese-American history. "In the process, I had to read the manuscript ... I soon began to realize the story she was telling almost defied belief."

In addition to information about Chinese-American immigration history, like the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the book is packed with many "wild stories" and outlandish anecdotes about the bold seafarers who sailed from Kwong Hoy in China to what was then Yerba Buena, now San Francisco.

"My mother was not given to hyperbole; she was a very serious-minded person," he said, which is what made her words all the more compelling to him.

Examples abound. Lennie wrote about "snake potion" that her ancestors in Arizona made by bottling live rattlesnakes in liquor. She wrote about how her forefathers, who were in the funeral business, surreptitiously ferried people from China into California by hiding them in teakwood coffins being shipped here — and about how these hidden stowaways were discovered and killed by white unionists.

"They nailed the coffins

tightly shut. Then they hammered extra-long railroad spikes through the tops of the coffins down into the bodies of the stowaways. The killers continued drinking and celebrating as they listened to the dying Chinese scream and thrash in the coffins. The murderous rampage ended with the whites beating up the Chinese seamen still on board; a number were thrown into the San Francisco Bay," wrote Lennie in the book.

She wrote about the Chinese tradition of burying bones of deceased immigrants for a decade, then exhuming and shipping them back to the motherland. She also wrote about how she managed to avoid being sold into slavery by her own mother; this, sadly, was a practice in San Francisco's Chinatown, where she grew up.

Lennie turned her fortunes around by getting an education and working as a real estate agent and later as a teacher and counselor. "My mom and my forebears were badass people, I'm just a pretty regular person," said Lee, who also worked in the real estate business and was a teacher like his mother. He taught middle school science in the San

Jose Unified School District, Hayward School District and Redwood City School District.

His wife, Lucretia Lee, was a teacher at Walter Hays Elementary School for over 20 years. They've been in San Mateo for about four years, before which they lived in Palo Alto for around five decades.

Lee has been a passionate advocate for the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities. At present, he hopes his book will help educate people, especially youngsters of Chinese origin, about a slice of their own history.

"I see this book not as a historical treatise; I see this book as the telling of a really interesting adventure story that lasted a couple of 100 years," he said. "The goal is to present a real, adventurous story that's based on Chinese-American history."

When — thanks to Charlie Chin, historian at the Chinese Historical Society — Lee learned that nearly 95% of people of Chinese descent today are unaware of their own history, he was all the more motivated to publish his mother's memoir, he said.

Besides, the subject matter,

though personal, has a lot of relevance in the present political moment, he said.

"I don't necessarily see it as something exclusively for Asians or Chinese; I would like to have something that would appeal to just everybody," he said, noting that the tribulations of the early Chinese immigrants have a lot in common with the problems immigrants from other cultures and geographies faced over the years.

The working title of the book was "Becoming American: A 600 Year Odyssey," which he changed given the ongoing political discourse around immigration, assimilation, xenophobia, and what it means to be or "become" American.

To him, it's important "that we all understand where each of us is coming from." ■

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Find more information about
"Sojourners to Joke Sings:
Tales of Chinatown and Beyond"
at odysseytoamerica.com.

Review: 'Sweat' offers steely-eyed look at challenges modern factory workers face

Palo Alto Players stage Pulitzer-winning tale of friendships and livelihoods molded by industry

By Michael J. Vaughn

In her 2015 Pulitzer Prize-winning play, Lynn Nottage followed an effective method of storytelling: if you want a better idea of the big picture, look at the small pictures. Using nothing more than a bar and a parole office, she gives us a great number of insights about what the heck is going on with 21st-century America.

Under director Shawn J West, the Players gave an excellent ensemble performance, rough enough to reflect the dozens of real-life worker interviews that fueled the play's creation. The setting is Reading, Penn., the year 2000, at a time when a local factory, Olmstead's Steel Tubing, is headed for potential layoffs, or even a closure.

On the personal level, best friends Tracey and Cynthia, both longtime floor workers, have both decided to apply for a manager's position, which is rarely given to factory veterans. When Cynthia gets the job, everybody in their local watering hole is ecstatic, but not for long. Tracey, worn down by years of mind-numbing work and single parenthood, cultivates a growing resentment, blaming the hiring choice on Cynthia's being Black ("but I'm not prejudiced"). Amy Meyers invests the part with a captivating intensity, ditching her party girl exterior for a hatred that grows and grows.

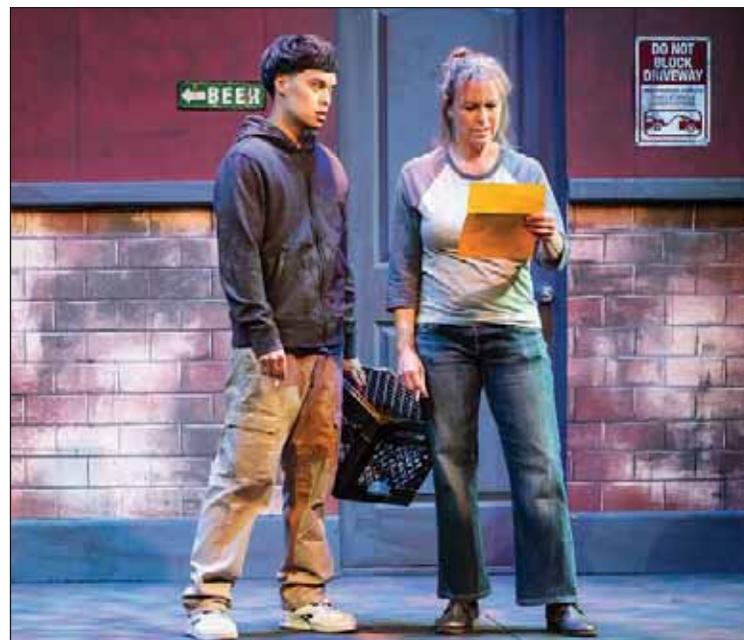


As Cynthia, Kimberly Ridgeway conveys a core of calm strength, refined by years of dealing with bigotry, harassment and her unstable husband, Bruce (Anthony Haynes), who keeps trying and failing to escape his addictions. Cynthia enjoys the rewards of her new position, but feels increasing pressure to take her former coworkers' side in an upcoming lockout when she simply can't. She also begins to suspect that management actually hired her to do their dirty work.

A parallel plot comes with an excellent piece of manipulation by Nottage. A prologue brings us to a 2008 parole office manned by Evan, played with grit and morbid humor by director West. Tracey and Cynthia's sons, Jason and Chris, have just gotten out of jail after some horrible incident

that occurred in 2000. Will Livingston gives face-tattooed Jason an undercurrent of rage, as if he can't bear to live in his own skin. Adam C. Torrian plays Chris from a more thoughtful point of view, intelligent and searching.

Given that setup, it's easier to see, in the boisterous young men of 2000, the recklessness of Jason's party boy attitude and the wisdom of Chris's college ambitions. It's easy to see both of their natures as an inheritance from their mothers. And it's easy to see another candidate for scapegoat in Oscar, the Colombian bar back, who battles his own history of ostracism by crossing the picket line after a company lockout. Aaron Edejer plays the role with a quiet seriousness, amazing for this, his stage debut.



Above: Oscar (Aaron Edejer, left) shows Tracey (Amy Meyers) a flyer advertising job openings at her factory. Left: Friends from left, Jessie (Tannis Hanson), Tracey (Amy Meyers) and Cynthia (Kimberly Ridgeway) enjoy a night out at their local bar before workplace pressures begin to tear them apart. Photos courtesy Scott Lasky.

The peacemakers in the group are Stan (Scott Solomon), the bartender, and Jessie (Tannis Hanson) the third-wheel friend. Both of them play pivotal roles in a stunning outcome.

Nottage's play does a brilliant job of unearthing so much about what's really plaguing our country. It's an intense two and a half hours, but it might help you to understand your more disagreeable friends — the nuances of their motivations. And the way that the rich and powerful

constantly fool us into turning against each other. ■

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The Palo Alto Players present
"Sweat" through June 29 at
the Lucie Stern Theater,
1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.
\$20-\$63. 650-329-0891.
paplayers.org.

Stanford Theatre turns 100

Local landmark marks its centennial with silent films and special guests

By Heather Zimmerman

Downtown Palo Alto's Stanford Theatre marked a triple-digit milestone with a special event on June 9, held 100 years ago to the day that the theater opened its doors.

To take audiences back to the time when the theater was new, the Packard Foundation, which purchased and renovated the theater in the late '80s, screened silent films throughout last week. The June 9 anniversary event featured a screening of the same film that was shown at the theater's opening day in 1925, the silent movie "I'll Show You the Town," starring actor Reginald Denny, who was a big star with Universal Pictures.

David Woodley Packard, who led the effort to revive the Stanford Theatre, spoke at the event and

interviewed Kim Pucci, Denny's granddaughter, who wrote a book about her famous granddad and his second career in aviation. The evening also included another Denny film, "That's My Daddy."

Some audience members dressed up in 1920s fashions and, to further set the scene, vintage cars were parked in front of the theater. ■

Email Arts & Entertainment Editor Heather Zimmerman at hzimmerman@almanacnews.com.

See more photos from the theater's June 9 event, find fun things to do this weekend and read a Q&A with guitarist Jim Babjak of The Smithereens at almanacnews.com/arts-culture.



Old vehicles from the 1920s parked in front of Palo Alto's Stanford Theatre on June 9 for the theater's 100th anniversary celebration.

Anna Hoch-Kenney

Food & Drink



HAVEN WINE & CHEESE, A WOMEN- AND POC-OWNED WINE BAR, OPENS IN MENLO PARK

Story By Adrienne Mitchell
Photos by Magali Gauthier

Menlo Park residents Lea Redmond and Sam Martinez-Colson have been neighbors for nearly two decades. Now they're becoming business partners, opening a wine and cheese bar in their neighborhood that aims to be a haven for the community.

Haven Wine & Cheese, located in the quiet residential area of The Willows, will offer wine by the bottle and glass, a variety of cheeses and tinned fish. It replaces Habibi's Salon, which relocated around the corner.

"Our kids went to school together, and they're both off in college now. And I remember being in (Redmond's) house and (her kids) were little, like 18 months and 2 years old, and us talking about, 'Wouldn't it be really fun to have a wine and cheese bar?' and we'd be drinking wine, of course, while we were talking

about it," Martinez-Colson said.

Haven will celebrate its grand opening Saturday, June 21, with a ribbon cutting at noon and complimentary bubbles and snacks from noon to 2 p.m.

Both women have a background in the tech industry, with Martinez-Colson currently working as a chief people officer. Redmond, who has since exited tech and also co-owns bar-centric restaurant Oeste in Oakland, has had a longtime interest in cheese.

"I want a cheese sandwich, was my first word," Redmond said. "We're creating something out of passion...We care about our community. We want to create something that we would want to go to."

The front section of Haven will feature a cheese case, where patrons can select from around 25-35 cheeses to take home or add to takeout charcuterie boards. There will also be refrigerators stocked with wine bottles, beer and grab-and-go food items, including breakfast options like parfaits and chia

seed puddings and lunch options like soups, sandwiches, salads and charcuterie boxes.

Beyond the retail space, the rest of Haven's footprint will be for ages 21 and up and will include an intimate indoor area with cozy bar seating and small tables, as well as an outdoor patio for larger groups. Redmond and Martinez-Colson partnered with a consulting sommelier to build the wine program, which will have about 60 bottles at a time, with 10-12 of those available by the glass (\$14-\$25).

"As a female in business, and also I'm Latina, (Lea is) Black, we really want to highlight female winemakers, smaller producers and winemakers of color," Martinez-Colson said.

Redmond and Martinez-Colson also aim to make wine accessible at Haven.

"Not every wine has to be a challenge," Redmond said. "Come in and tell us what you like, and we'll try to give you something new to try that is along that line...We just want to be a unique environment for people to come in and not feel intimidated to ask stupid questions."

Haven will offer a wine club, which will include discounts, first dibs at events and limited-edition bottles. Redmond and Martinez-Colson plan to offer a "splash key" for the first few sign-ups, which will enable keyholders to receive a complimentary tasting pour each visit.

To be more accessible to parents, Haven will offer "last hour happy hour" instead of a pre-dinner happy hour. Held during the last hour of service — beginning at 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. depending on the night — Haven will offer specials on small plates and select wines by the glass.

"We don't get to go to happy hours

when you have kids. It's not happening," Martinez-Colson said. "You're picking them up from day care, you're taking them to soccer, doing all the things."

Besides wine, Haven will also have a selection of beers, curated by Redmond and Martinez-Colson, and low-ABV cocktails, including spritzes and sangrias. Haven will also offer nonalcoholic options, including ciders, zero-proof sparkling wines, beers and a couple of specialty mocktails.

Son Souvatdy, the former chef of The BottleShop in Redwood City, developed Haven's food menu. Expect brunch, lunch and dinner

boards, which feature chef specials along with a cheese and charcuterie board. Small plates include housemade pates, bruschetta, olives and housemade pickles. There will be a seasonal salad, Haven Caesar salad and a seasonally rotating soup option, which will be San Marzano and peach gazpacho with roasted summer squash for the summer.

Haven will also carry more than 50 tinned fish varieties from around the globe, including Spain, Portugal and Denmark, as well as domestic offerings from Alaska and Sausalito. Expect sardines with lemon confit, smoked mussels in escabeche, tuna belly, mackerel and more. Patrons can eat the fish along with country bread or with potato chips as a gluten-free option.

"It's like our version of fish and chips," Redmond said.

Redmond and Martinez-Colson worked with designer Julia Goodwin to transform the former hair salon into Haven. The walls are painted a light green to feel bright and light during the daytime and cozy and



Top: Haven Wine & Cheese co-owners Sam Martinez-Colson, left, and Lea Redmond, right, cheers with a glass of wine in their wine bar. Above: A cheese and charcuterie board at Haven Wine & Cheese in Menlo Park.

'We really want to highlight female winemakers, smaller producers and winemakers of color.'

SAM MARTINEZ-COLSON, CO-OWNER OF HAVEN WINE & CHEESE

See **WINE**, page 22

A new omakase restaurant by a former chef at San Francisco's Omakase opens in Menlo Park

Chef Wen Zhao crafts 20-course dinners highlighting silver-skinned fish and shellfish at Ren Omakase

By Adrienne Mitchel

Omakase restaurants along the Peninsula have doubled since 2024. Much of that increase is spearheaded by Sunny Noah, who's opened three omakase spots in just a year and a half.

His latest? Ren Omakase in Menlo Park.

"I was lucky to have met so many great omakase chefs," he said, referring to a style of dining where the chef chooses the menu. "Each one of them have their own dream to pursue and have their own restaurant to conduct their curated menu."

In early 2024, Noah opened Iki Omakase in Palo Alto, highlighting the modern flavors of chef Jiabo Li. Later that year, Noah partnered with chef Tomonori Nagai to open traditional Nagai Edomae Sushi in Redwood City. And on June 17, Noah will be hosting the grand opening of his newest omakase restaurant highlighting the vision of chef Wen Zhao, who he and Li agree is one of the most well-rounded omakase chefs in the area.

Zhao, who focuses on classic edomae techniques with modern twists, is not only skilled in sushi making, Noah said, but also with ostumami, or izakaya-style appetizers, as well as desserts, such as miso ice cream.

"Not a lot of sushi chefs have the

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



Courtesy Ren Omakase

While the types of seafood vary each night at Ren Omakase in Menlo Park, chef Wen Zhao sometimes may create dishes with horsehair crab (kegani).

background of doing washoku, or the kitchen culinary experience," Noah said. "From the start to the end, even the dessert, everything is handmade and homemade here by him."

Zhao said he loves to work with shellfish and that about half the courses at Ren Omakase will likely contain some form of shellfish. One of Zhao's signature dishes is his four-hour sake-steamed abalone served with an abalone liver sauce. His "quad treasure" appetizer features shrimp, sea urchin, tuna tartare and caviar. Other unique shellfish dishes that may be on the menu feature tsubugai (Japanese sea snail), horsehair crab (kegani) and geoduck.

In addition to shellfish, Zhao focuses on rich and oily silver-skinned fishes like mackerel, gizzard shad, Japanese thornyhead and Pacific saury, marinated in traditional edomae style with kombu and vinegar. Preparing these types of fish requires considerable skill, Noah said, as a slight off-balance in the marination process will result in an unpleasant flavor.

"Many chefs are shy from using them because of the difficulty,"

Noah wrote in an email.

Another specialty of Zhao is his ability to pair different types of sea urchin (uni) together, including white, red and purple uni. His uni sauce is a standout, said Noah, and is more "elegant and delicate" than Li's "rich and flavorful" rendition.

Ren Omakase offers two seatings of eight diners a night, one at 5:30 p.m. and the other at 8 p.m. Expect 18-21 courses that include miso soup, at least five appetizers, at least 10 pieces of sushi and dessert. The restaurant cannot accommodate vegetarians or those who are gluten-free; however, Zhao said he can accommodate those with shellfish allergies, although the variety of fish will be limited.

A selection of exclusive and rare sake is available by the bottle (\$299-\$3,999) or glass (\$47-\$1,400), as well as green tea (\$8) and Japanese beer (\$16). A corkage fee of \$65-\$95 applies for outside alcohol, depending on the size of the bottle. A mocktail menu will be developed later on, according to general manager Tora Mak.

Ren Omakase costs \$198 per person plus a 20% mandatory operational support fee.

Compared to other Peninsula omakase spots, it's slightly more expensive than nearby Robin, Sushi Ai in Redwood City and Noah's two other omakase spots, but considerably less expensive than Sushi Shin and Sushi Yoshizumi (which costs \$325 plus a 22% mandatory service charge).

Humble beginnings

Zhao grew up in San Francisco's Chinatown, dropping out of high school at 17 years old and taking a job at Popeye's.

"I realized I'm not going to do this for the rest of my life, and I decided to learn something for my future living to make my life better," he said.

At age 19, he took a job at Live Sushi Bar in San Francisco, the first restaurant of what would later become the Omakase Restaurant Group. In 2015, he transferred to new restaurant Omakase, which would go on to hold a Michelin star for many years. Zhao trained in the kitchen for six years before starting to work at the sushi bar in 2020.

"The training time is pretty hard," he said. "So you got to work like 14, 16 hours a day. You got to

do dishwashing. You got to do all the dirty work. You can't really touch fish. All you can do is just watch."

Zhao's years of hard work inspired the name of his new omakase restaurant, which means "lotus" in Mandarin and symbolizes resilience. The phrase "from the mud, the lotus flower blooms" resonates with Zhao because he feels like after all the years in the mud, he's finally bloomed by opening his own omakase restaurant.

"This place is my dream place," he said.

Zhao also developed the sushi program at Drunken Monk, located just one mile away from Ren Omakase. Ren's general manager Mak is one of the four owners of Drunken Monk, and also previously worked as a server at Okane, a sister restaurant to Omakase.

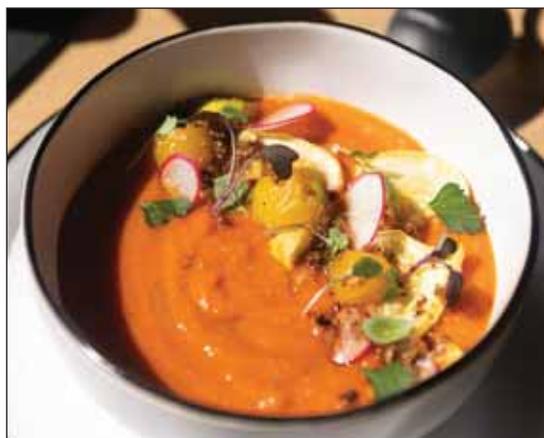
Ren Omakase is located in the former dessert shop Sweet Orchard. The walls, covered in wood, feature handcrafted, detailed woodwork out of Japanese-imported cypress, and the ceiling is covered with beige floral-patterned wallpaper. The sushi counter is also made of pure Japanese cypress (hinoki) and can fit up to 12 people comfortably, although seating is limited to eight.

When asked what he aims to achieve with Ren Omakase, Zhao said, "I just want guests to be happy."

As for Noah, he said he isn't planning on opening any more omakase restaurants along the Peninsula, but he isn't opposed to opening more elsewhere or opening a more casual restaurant concept.

Other upcoming Menlo Park restaurant openings include Yeobo, Darling, opening Friday, and Cafe Vivant, expected to open late July. ■

Ren Omakase, 403 El Camino Real, Menlo Park, 650-213-7338; Instagram: @ren.omakase. Open Wednesday to Sunday with the first seating at 5:30 p.m. and the second at 8 p.m.



Haven Wine & Cheese's San Marzano tomato and peach gazpacho is topped with roasted summer squash, confit tomatoes and spiced olive oil.

WINE

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moodier at night, Redmond said. Haven also has a beachy, natural feel with wood accents and woven fixtures. The top shelf behind the bar will be decorated with an assortment of decor handpicked by Redmond and Martinez-Colson.

The pair put a lot of effort into making Haven "a place where everyone can come and feel comfortable," Redmond said, including selecting larger bar chairs with backs. The decision decreased the seating capacity by two, but the seating is more comfortable for taller and older patrons.

Local artist Daniel Huenergardt created a large mural for the back wall featuring floral patterns and hidden images

of women, an homage to Haven being women-owned.

"We want (Haven) to be representative of us as women, and maybe even inspire other women to take on their daydream project, which is really what this was for us," Martinez-Colson said.

In addition to regular service, Haven will be available for buyouts for special events, like birthdays or company outings. Redmond said she will be hosting her brother's wedding reception at Haven.

Ultimately, Redmond and Martinez-Colson hope Haven functions as a getaway and escape for people to come try new wines, cheeses and tinned fish.

"We love this community. We love this neighborhood," Martinez-Colson said.

Haven Wine & Cheese is the latest in a string of bar and restaurant openings in Menlo Park this year, including Eylan, Bar Loretta and Clark's Oyster Bar. Just this month, Ren Omakase Yeobo, Darling and Bubbela have opened, and Cafe Vivant is expected to open in late July. ■

Email Food Editor Adrienne Mitchel at amitchel@almanacnews.com

Haven Wine & Cheese, 1925 Menalto Ave., Menlo Park; Instagram: @havenwinecheese. Beginning June 21, open Tuesday, Wednesday and Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Thursday to Saturday from 11:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.



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