

# The Almanac

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

AUGUST 15, 2025 | VOL. 60 NO. 49



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Karina Patel

## Back with friends

Current students welcome first-year students as Menlo-Atherton High School's freshman orientation brought students back to campus on Tuesday, the day before their first day of school in the district.

## Woodside Vineyards sells label to Silver Mountain

Quality and taste will remain the same

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

After 55 years under the ownership of Bob Mullen, Woodside Vineyards will be leaving its local roots and will be handed off to Silver Mountain Vineyards in Los Gatos. Owners say that the struggling wine industry is one of the reasons that led to the sale of the historic label.

Mullen told The Almanac that it was time to sell Woodside Vineyards. As younger generations turn to cider and beer and older generations fade, the wine industry continues to suffer. "There's been no improvement," he said.

Silver Mountain's owner Jerold O'Brien will be taking over Woodside Vineyards label,

equipment and inventory. As another historic vineyard facing the challenges of declining wine sales, O'Brien said he's nervous about being able to sell all the wine.

With the purchase of Woodside Vineyards inventory, O'Brien now has 90 barrels of the 2024 and 2025 inventory. Each barrel makes 24 cases of wine, said Mullen.

Mullen will be celebrating his 100th birthday in February and "in the last of the life he has, I want him to be happy, free of any burden and at peace," said O'Brien, explaining why he agreed to buying Woodside Vineyards.

O'Brien founded Silver Mountain Vineyards in 1979 in the Santa Cruz Mountains

and has been a longtime friend of Mullen. Marsha Campbell, Mullen's wife, said he was the only one who made acceptable offers to them.

"I still have most of my brain, but I'm not as sharp as I used to be," said Mullen. "You've got to be on your toes to run your own business, which is why we decided to sell."

### Change in wine culture

O'Brien said the wine industry had been struggling tremendously for the past 10 to 20 years and the unexpected impacts of the pandemic pushed sales down even further.

He points toward several circumstances that have led

See **WOODSIDE VINEYARDS**, page 11

## Menlo Park changes building code to support electrification

Mayor dissents, doesn't want to bog down renovation

By Arden Margulis

The Menlo Park City Council decided at its Aug. 12 council meeting to further encourage a transition to electric home appliances by amending the building code to add several requirements.

The city council voted 4-1 in favor of city staff's recommendation of requiring pre-wiring to support future electric appliances, requiring heat pumps instead of air conditioners in some cases and requiring general energy efficiency upgrades in many remodels.

Adopting all three programs was the most aggressive action that was presented to council

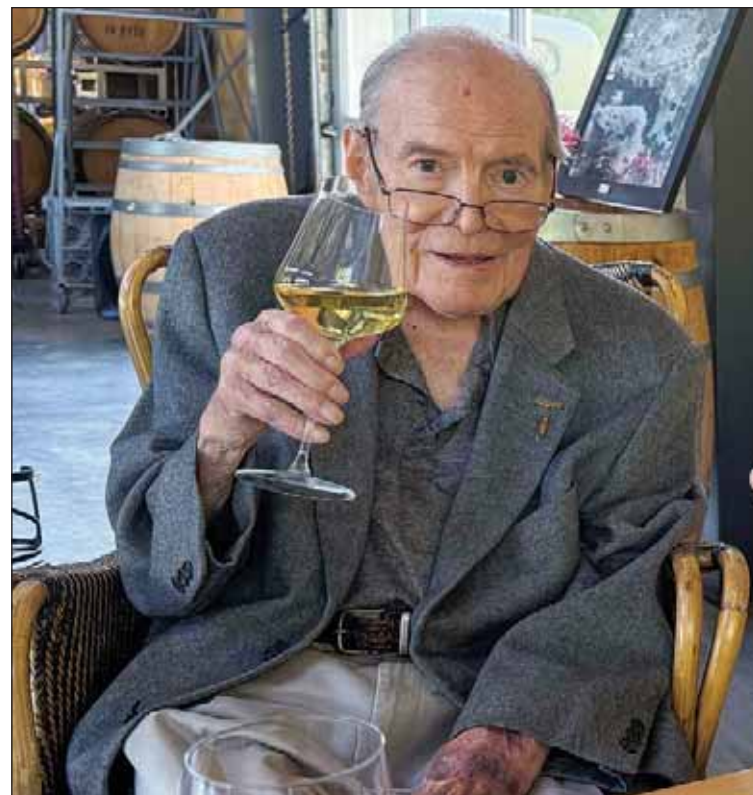
to amend the municipal code to further Menlo Park's building electrification goal. Mayor Drew Combs, who has long-standing concerns with the potential amendments, was the sole dissenter.

### Pre-wiring

The pre-wiring code change expands on a code amendment Menlo Park already approved that requires any changes to a building's electrical box to include electrical equipment that could support electric appliances where gas appliances are already installed.

The council approved requiring

See **BUILDING CODES**, page 16



Courtesy Kristen Tsukushi

Bob Mullen, founder of Woodside Vineyards, raises a glass of Chardonnay during a Woodside Vineyards Thursday event on July 24.

INSIDE

ARTSCENE 20 | FOOD & DRINK 22

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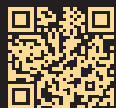
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# Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Woodside Town Manager Jason Ledbetter.

## Getting to know Woodside's town manager, Jason Ledbetter

Preserving town charm while addressing needs

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Newcomer Jason Ledbetter has big shoes to fill in taking over the position as Woodside's new town manager. Aug. 15 marks his third month in town and he's already diving deep into Woodside's unique community and culture.

Hailing from the city of Yreka, Ledbetter has 25 years of experience working in local government and private industry. In his previous role as the city manager, he focused on preparing for fire, making sure the city had the water it needed and working to assure Yreka was financially secure. Now, he hopes to use

his skills to address the community concerns and priorities of the town of Woodside.

### Embracing the community

While in Yreka, Ledbetter noticed that "volunteerism was dying," across the city and the United States, but he said

See **JASON LEDBETTER**, page 14



Arden Margulis

Little House, in Menlo Park, has become a place for seniors to stay connected and active while they age "gracefully," according to one member.

## Little House senior center revived under new director

'You can age gracefully'

By Arden Margulis

Menlo Park's Little House has completely changed over the past eight months, becoming a center for seniors to gather, exercise and get the help they need.

"We have activities for people who still have their independence. However, we also put in the effort to make sure you're keeping your independence as you start to lose it as you age," said Jared Blitz, director of Little House.

Little House is run by Peninsula Volunteers, Inc. Its mission is to "enable seniors to age in place," which means

it aims to support seniors who may not want to move out of their homes. Little House hosts 3,550 classes and programs annually with many aiming to exercise people physically and mentally.

"Longevity is only really great if your quality of life goes with it. I think fitness is probably the No. 1 thing that you can do to maintain your quality of life and your longevity," said Blitz. "(Fitness) is not just for cardiovascular health and cancer prevention but one of the things with regular exercise is it helps unclog arteries in your

See **LITTLE HOUSE**, page 16

## New Las Lomitas leader moves forward

Superintendent aims for transparency

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Las Lomitas Elementary School District's new superintendent, Erik Burmeister, will be leading the school district into the 2025-26 school year. He joins the district after a controversial year that led to its former Superintendent Beth Polito to go on leave.

After a difficult school year, Burmeister is committed to reviving the district through increased transparency, responsibility budgeting and engaging with the public.

Burmeister previously served as superintendent of Menlo Park City School District but after 10

years at MPCSD and a pandemic, Burmeister said he was looking for a new challenge. He returns to superintendency after starting his own education consulting company Solutionary Advisory and serving as the interim superintendent of Fremont Unified School District.

When the opportunity opened at Las Lomitas, Burmeister felt that it would be a perfect fit for him — as someone who is familiar with the community and an experienced superintendent.

"I feel like I'm back at home," he said.

*The following has been edited for length and clarity.*

**The Almanac:** How did you

feel taking on the role of superintendent after the controversial year that this district had?

**Erik Burmeister:** I came in at the tail end of it, which was good because, I think it helped the district to have a leader that had contextual knowledge, but wasn't a part of the conflict or a part of the immediate solution. I was able to come in with the objectivity that I think the moment required, and yet I wasn't so objective that I didn't know the players, the context or the community.

It was the right job at the right time and moment, and I just

See **ERIK BURMEISTER**, page 11



Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Las Lomitas Elementary School District Superintendent Erik Burmeister takes on the 2025-26 school year.



# Jail light malfunction prompts fire department response

Large response follows Tuesday afternoon report

By Arden Margulis

A ceiling light in the lobby of the Maguire Correctional Facility burst into sparks and emitted smoke on Aug. 12 at 4:15 p.m., according to fire department records and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

A deputy in the lobby reported

the incident which prompted three battalion chiefs, seven engines, three trucks and medical personnel to respond to the county's largest jail.

A ballast, which is a device that is typically found in fluorescent lights to regulate the flow of electricity, malfunctioned which caused the sparks

and smoke, according to fire department officials.

The light was extinguished before the fire department arrived on scene.

"No injuries were reported and the lobby remains open. The County's Department of Public Works has been notified to replace the light," said Sheriff's Office Spokesperson Gretchen Spiker.

It is not the first instance

of mechanical issues at the Redwood City facility. In late July, this news organization first reported that the facility's public visitation elevator malfunctioned and had been out of service for over a month, leading to the Sheriff's Office pausing in-person visitation. The issue has yet to be resolved. ■

Email Staff Writer Arden Margulis at [amargulis@almanacnews.com](mailto:amargulis@almanacnews.com).

# Stanford announces it will continue legacy admissions

University returns to test requirements

By Angela Swartz

For the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Stanford University will require applicants to submit standardized test scores in its fall 2026 admissions process. It will also continue legacy admissions despite a new state law, effective Sept. 1, 2025, that will cut state financial aid to students whose colleges continue the practice.

University officials are studying whether they should consider connections to alumni or donors as part of admission to first-year and transfer students, but those like Ellie Eckerson Peters, senior director of research and policy at the Institute for Higher Education Policy, a nonprofit that promotes access to college to all students, say the message Stanford is sending is clear.

"(It) really sends a signal to students and their families about who belongs at the

institution and whose access they're prioritizing," she said. "Stanford is making an active decision to preserve an inequitable practice rather than expanding opportunity."

Stanford students will no longer be able to access the Cal Grant program. The university said it will substitute scholarships for that funding. The university says it will automatically adjust financial aid packages for students.

There are "important issues on which there are many perspectives" on legacy admissions, a university spokesperson told The Stanford Daily, which broke the news. For example, institutions may believe they can't get rid of legacy preferences because it would hurt its alumni donations. However, a 2010 review of the top 100 universities in U.S. News & World Report showed that prioritizing legacy students didn't have a statistically significant impact on alumni giving.

More than half of the colleges



Veronica Weber

Stanford University has decided to preserve legacy admissions and to require standardized tests for admission.

and universities that once gave an admissions preference to the relatives of alumni have stopped doing so in the past decade, according to a February report from nonprofit think tank Education Reform Now.

Schools like Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and Amherst College in Massachusetts, where legacy students used to represent about 11% of each class, have done away with legacy preference in admissions in the last decade.

"Now is the time to end this historic program that

inadvertently limits educational opportunity by granting a preference to those whose parents are graduates of the College," Biddy Martin, Amherst's president at the time, said in a prepared statement.

One undergraduate Stanford student, Teddy Ganea, defended legacy admissions in an October 2024 article for The Stanford Review, a student-run newspaper founded in 1987 by Peter Thiel and Norman Book.

"Legacy is a key engine of

See **STANFORD LEGACY**, page 18

# Stanford newspaper sues Trump administration

The Daily seeks to protect international students

By Lisa Moreno

The Stanford Daily newspaper on last week sued Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem, claiming Donald Trump's immigration policies have impeded the free speech rights of student journalists.

Trump has vowed on various occasions to deport international students who support Palestine, like on his campaign website, where he said the deportations would "make our college campuses safe and patriotic again."

Stanford journalists have "self-censored by declining to cover

pro-Palestinian protests" at the university and seeking to remove past articles in fear of these policies, according to the lawsuit.

The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, a nonprofit that seeks to defend free speech, helped file the lawsuit that claims the federal government is abusing laws to deport students who are legally present.

Specifically, it takes aim at two immigration statutes: One that allows the secretary of state to begin the process of deporting someone if their speech "compromises" a foreign policy interest and another that enables them to revoke a visa "at any time" at their discretion.

The nonprofit believes the laws are being used unconstitutionally and, through a preliminary injunction, it hopes to pause the government from using the immigration statutes while the case is ongoing.

"Their attack is casting a pall of fear over millions of noncitizens, who now worry that voicing the 'wrong' opinion about America or Israel will result in deportation," the nonprofit wrote in a statement.

The federal administration has sought to deport multiple international college students who have protested or written publicly about the war in Gaza, like Rümeysa Öztürk, a Turkish Ph.D. student at Tufts University who was suddenly taken to an immigration detention center after she wrote an opinion piece calling on her school to divest from Israeli companies.

Two students, included in the lawsuit as anonymous plaintiffs,

said deportations obstructed their ability to publish work and studies.

One journalist is listed on the Canary Mission website, which labels people as "anti-Israel" and is used by the Trump administration to "target" people for deportation, according to the lawsuit.

The second student refrained from publishing a study related to Gaza for fear of having his visa revoked.

"I've had reporters turn down assignments, request the removal of some of their articles, and even quit the paper because they fear deportation for being associated with speaking on political topics, even in a journalistic capacity," wrote Stanford Daily Editor-in-Chief Greta Reich in a public statement. "The Daily is losing the voices of a significant portion of our student population." ■

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# Newsom announces new Superior Court judges

## Former commissioner named to job

By Bay City News Service

Gov. Gavin Newsom has announced the appointment of seven new Superior Court judges in three Bay Area counties, including San Mateo, Santa Clara and Alameda. The governor made the announcements on Aug. 7.

In San Mateo County, Newsom appointed Michael Mau, who was a commissioner at the San Mateo County Superior Court since 2022 and ran his own law firm from 1999 to 2022, among other things.

Mau earned his law degree from Santa Clara University School of Law and takes over for judge Jonathan Karesh, who retired. Mau is registered to vote with no party preference.

In Santa Clara County, Newsom selected Kemi Mustapha, who was a managing attorney since 2024 at Bay Area Legal Aid, where she held several positions since 2012.

She also worked as an employee

relations representative at the San Francisco Department of Human Resources from 2011 to 2012.

Mustapha, a Democrat, earned her law degree from the Washington University School of Law in St. Louis and replaces judge Maureen Folan, who retired.



Michael Mau

Newsom also appointed Sarah Cook to serve as a judge in the Santa Clara County Superior Court system. Cook worked as the director of policy and legal services at the Dependency Advocacy Center since 2023, where she has held multiple positions since 2013.

Cook earned her law degree from Washington University School of Law and takes over for judge L. Michael Clark, who retired. Cook is a Democrat.

Newsom's third Santa Clara County Superior Court judicial appointment is Mark Flanagan, who worked as a partner at Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale & Dorr from 2006 to 2025 and as a lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley School of

Law from 2017 to 2019, among other things.

Flanagan earned his law degree from the UC Berkeley School of Law and takes over for retired judge Arthur Bocanegra. Flanagan is a Democrat.

In Alameda County, Newsom tapped Diane Meier, who worked as an attorney in the First District Court of Appeal since 2018 and was a senior staff attorney in the Solano County Superior Court from 2010 to 2018, according to the governor's office.

Meier, a Democrat, earned a law degree from the Washington and Lee University School of Law in Virginia. Meier takes over for Judge Charles Smiley, who now sits on the First District Court of Appeal.

Julie Wilensky was also appointed as an Alameda County Superior Court judge.

Wilensky worked as a deputy city attorney at the San Francisco City Attorney's Office since 2022 and was a senior staff attorney at the National Center for Lesbian Rights from 2018 to 2022, among other things.

Wilensky, a Democrat, earned her law degree from Yale Law School and takes over for judge Noel Wise, who was appointed to the U.S. District Court for the

See JUDGES, page 18

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### Woodside Town Center Area Plan committee meeting

The first Citizens Advisory Committee meeting for the Woodside Town Center Area Plan update will be at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 26. Residents can attend in person at Independence Hall or remotely through Zoom.

The CAC meeting will include an introduction of all members and a presentation from the consultant team covering planning goals, schedules and community engagement activities. Members of the public will be allowed to make public comments during this meeting. The committee will also be discussing constraints, opportunities and ideas for Town Center's future.

For the full meeting agenda visit [woodsdecap.gov/TCAP](https://www.woodsdecap.gov/TCAP). The meeting can be accessible through Zoom on [us02web.zoom.us/j/89883878503](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89883878503).

### The Riekestra returns to Guild Theatre

The annual Riekestra Returns concert will be held at the Guild Theatre in Menlo Park on Aug. 18 at 5 p.m. The Riekestra, the Riekes Center's student-led cover band, will be finishing its summer tour along the coast of Barcelona, Spain, and celebrating with a final performance in Menlo Park.

For tickets visit [guildtheatre.com](https://www.guildtheatre.com).

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

### Menlo Park women's water polo

Menlo Park's women's water polo team, The Menlo Mavens, is hosting a free introductory water polo event at Burgess Pool on Aug. 24 from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. The event is open to women swimmers older than 19 years old.

Participants can be new to water polo, have previously played or are looking for something new to do. There will be a potluck after the game.

Register at [tinyurl.com/MenloMavens](https://tinyurl.com/MenloMavens). The event is hosted in partnership with USA Water Polo.

— Arden Margulis

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# Peninsula residents embrace backyard labyrinths

Features provide opportunity to find your way

By Karla Kane

Have you ever walked a way along its winding path to the center and back? Perhaps you've associated labyrinths with ancient tales and far-off lands (or Jim Henson's 1986 fantasy film starring David Bowie), or maybe you've encountered one at a place of worship or park near you. Some folks have even added them to their own residences, creating a private, appealing space for contemplation and reflection.

Lars Howlett, a master labyrinth builder and designer, said labyrinths resonate with people for many reasons. In addition to their geometric beauty, a

labyrinth can be an excellent meditation practice, "especially for people who have a hard time sitting and quieting their mind," he said. "You can use it as a way of setting an intention or solving a problem or simply connecting to the environment."

Howlett, with his business Discover Labyrinths, has created more than 80 permanent labyrinths at all kinds of places, including hospitals, schools, parks (check out, for example, one of his public labyrinths at Rainbow Park in San Jose) and private residences.

Labyrinths vary in style, size and material. Though they may be historically and mythologically associated with tricky passageways, such as the one



Courtesy Lars Howlett

This residential labyrinth in Portola Valley has three spirals.

in the tale of Theseus and the Minotaur, a labyrinth, as defined by today's labyrinth movement, has a single path to the center and a clear view of the overall design and destination.

Looking to add a labyrinth to

your landscape? Visit these spaces for inspiration. You can find plenty of labryniths at Peninsula parks, places of worship, schools and more. We've listed just a few below, but you can also search for many more online using the world-wide labyrinth locator at [labyrinthlocator.org](http://labyrinthlocator.org).

- Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, 725 Welch Road, Palo Alto

- Stanford University Adjacent to the Windhover building at 370 Santa Teresa St., Stanford. (Stanford also sometimes has an indoor labyrinth available at Memorial Church)

- Electronic Arts campus 205 Redwood Shores Parkway, Redwood City

- Eaton Park, 3000 Eaton Ave., San Carlos

- Mercy Center, 2300 Adeline Drive, Burlingame

While a maze is a puzzle to be solved, involving choices and dead ends, a labyrinth is generally unicursal, with a continuous path leading in and out, making it ideal for walking meditation and contemplation.

As labyrinth aficionados put it, "In a maze you lose your way. In a labyrinth, you find your way," Howlett said. He counts among his mentors Lauren Artress, the founder of the Bay Area-based labyrinth organization Veriditas, where Howlett is also now a faculty member.

Whether designing a labyrinth for a large public space or one to fit a small, private backyard, Howlett said the process is the same: You need to consider design, style, size and materials.

## Consider materials

Howlett's own background is in photography, and he approaches labyrinth design from an artist's perspective. He's worked with many materials, from the ephemeral to the longlasting, and said there are many different options depending on the environment, the intention behind the project, and the budget.

"A labyrinth can be as simple as being mown in the lawn, to using river rocks and placing them on the surface and using mulch, to inlaid brick in the grass or decomposed granite on the site," he said.

He especially loves working with reclaimed brick, and brick made from recycled clay. Labyrinths made using concrete or pavers have a higher cost upfront but likely require less maintenance.

"Usually the more organic materials are less expensive in the beginning and (require) more upkeep and maintenance over time," he said.

Some use labyrinths as a resourceful and eye-catching replacement for grass, using drought-tolerant plants and gravel instead.

"It's a good way to get rid of your lawn and have something nice and attractive you can use in a different way," Howlett said.

As when adding any landscape feature, it's important to consider drainage, and what plants and other materials are best-suited to the particular site and ecosystem.

For the San Mateo County Phoenix Garden, a therapeutic and educational garden that's part of the county health department, Howlett designed a thriving labyrinth of lavender. One of his private clients had mosaics created by an artist in Turkey, which were then shipped to California, where Howlett installed the pieces into a labyrinth over concrete. He's also on occasion painted labyrinths over unused tennis courts.

"Every project is different and that's why I see it as art. Each one is unique," he said.

## Determine your space

While labyrinths can be large and elaborate, some as long as 15 circuits (rings) or more, Howlett said a labyrinth needn't require a lot of space. "People often think they don't have room," he said in regards to adding a labyrinth to a home or garden, but in its simplest form, a walkable labyrinth could have just three turns as it winds its way inward.

"It could be as small as 10 feet in diameter," he said, with a three-foot center and a one-foot path. Having a narrow path isn't necessarily a bad thing, especially where mindful meditation is concerned. "That slows you down and that focuses your experience," he said.

## Choose a style and design

When it comes to selecting a labyrinth's specific design, there are many to choose from, and no matter which you pick, Howlett recommended giving the matter

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See LABYRINTHS, page 10





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Monthly Market Report  
July 1, 2025 - July 31, 2025

**TOP 10 SALES\***

1. \$10,500,000 1310 Bay Laurel Drive	2. \$10,175,000 1080 Creek Drive	3. \$8,690,000 1080 Cotton Street	4. \$7,000,000 1303 American Way
5. \$6,528,800 28 Politzer Drive	6. \$5,858,888 1045 Lassen Drive	7. \$5,250,000 1481 Middle Avenue	8. \$4,800,000 1350 Hillview Drive
9. \$4,402,000 2124 Oakley Avenue	10. \$4,211,000 780 Waita Drive		

**ACTIVE LISTING**  
Jul: 57  
Jun: 58  
-2%

**PENDING LISTING**  
Jul: 33  
Jun: 36  
-8%

**SOLD LISTING**  
Jul: 40  
Jun: 31  
29%

**AVERAGE SALES PRICE**  
Jul: \$3,596,164  
Jun: \$3,387,468  
6%

**AVERAGE SALES PRICE/SQ FT**  
Jul: \$1,613  
Jun: \$1,609  
0%

**AVERAGE SOLD DAYS ON MARKET**  
Jul: 34  
Jun: 19  
79%

**MONTHS OF INVENTORY**  
Jul: 1.40  
Jun: 1.90  
-26%

**SALE/LIST PRICE**  
Jul: 99.30%  
Jun: 101.00%  
-2%

**30 YEAR MORTGAGE RATE**  
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Jun: 6.80%  
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\*Source: MLS Listings for Single Family Properties | Townhomes | Condos

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*The* Almanac

## LABYRINTHS

continued from page 8

deep consideration and checking out a variety of patterns for inspiration. He also offers guidance via his steps for labyrinth building page on his website.

Before you get started Seven questions to consider while planning your labyrinth.

**Intention:** Why create the labyrinth, who will experience it and how will it be used?

**Site:** Where will the labyrinth be located, and how will it relate to the environment?

**Resources:** What people, tools, materials, funds, etc. are available to support the project?

**Design:** Which pattern, how many circuits and what variation might be most appropriate?

**Materials:** What will form the lines, the paths, the perimeter and the foundation of the labyrinth?

**Building:** Who will create the labyrinth, and what is the optimal strategy and timeline for completion?

**Sustaining:** What is the expected lifespan of the labyrinth, and who will tend to its health and vitality?

Information from Lars Howlett, *Discover Labyrinths.com*

"There are archetypal designs — some designs have more energy or history than others and so even though the labyrinth design can be very simple, it's good to look at historic designs, at classical or medieval labyrinths that have been passed down generations," he said. "The classical labyrinth goes back 4,000 years."

There are contemporary patterns out there as well, but in that case, "I think it's good to work with a designer who understands

how different patterns have different energy," he said.

## Becoming a 'master builder'

Howlett previously worked as a photojournalist in Half Moon Bay and is also a former photography teacher at Sacred Heart Schools, Atherton. It was there, as far as he can recall, that he walked his first labyrinth, in 2004. A candlelight labyrinth walk at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco inspired him further, eventually leading him to undergo labyrinth facilitator training and explore labyrinths in Europe, including Sweden, which he said has more ancient and historic walks than anywhere else in the world.

"I came back from that experience and decided I also wanted to design and build them," he said of taking his next labyrinthine step. He studied under the tutelage of master labyrinth builder Robert Ferre, who took him on as an apprentice for several years, and eventually he inherited Ferre's tools and curriculum. He started Discover Labyrinths in 2015 and was named a master builder by his peers in 2017, according to his website.

Though he relocated to Maryland in 2023, Howlett still returns to the West Coast regularly, to visit family as well as to work and remain part of the local labyrinth community. Recently, for example, he led workshops for the Veriditas Labyrinth Summer School in Burlingame. The Bay Area, he said, is "kind of like the epicenter of the modern labyrinth movement."

More information is available at [discoverlabyrinths.com](https://discoverlabyrinths.com). ■

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

## OBITUARIES

**Caroline Buckwalter Wolmuth**, 83, who was born in Palo Alto and lived in Victoria, British Columbia, studied fashion design at Pratt University and visual arts at the University of Victoria, took an interest in clothing design, ikebana and cooking, and played recorder for decades in musical ensembles, died on July 30.

**John Tenanes**, 68, a Palo Alto resident who was vice president of global facilities and real estate at Meta, who was involved in building the company's Menlo Park headquarters, and who served on Menlo Park Chamber of Commerce and the Joint Venture Silicon Valley Board of Directors, died on Aug. 4 from Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease.

**Jacqueline Angelo Geist**, 86, a Palo Alto resident who attended Menlo-Atherton High School and who worked as an executive assistant and personal secretary in the energy, health care and venture capital industries, died on July 30.

**Eugene John Micek**, 92, a Palo Alto resident who was a veteran of the 11th Airborne, who did intelligence work in the aerospace industry, who was a private pilot, and who skydived until his 60th birthday, died on Aug. 1.

**Mary Evelyn Pimentel**, 84, a Menlo Park resident who went to work for the Menlo Park City School District after raising her children and who worked at Laurel School until she retired at 81 years old, died on Nov. 14, 2024.

To read full obituaries, leave remembrances and post photos, go to Lasting Memories at [almanacnews.com/obituaries](https://almanacnews.com/obituaries). ■



## WOODSIDE VINEYARDS

*continued from page 1*

to the current state of the industry: increased competition, increased production and declining sales, older people being unable to drink as much wine and younger generations buying more hard liquor, beer and canned cocktails.

Decades ago, drinking wine and visiting wineries was part of the culture. Campbell recalls taking trips to Napa Valley, learning, connecting and tasting wine for a very nominal fee. Now, most tastings in Napa can cost anywhere between \$40 to \$100.

“The whole atmosphere has changed. That introduction to wine, how to taste it, how to enjoy it and what it involves is just missing,” Campbell said.

She added that the lack of wine cellars is another change in culture that has led to fewer people buying wine. Due to the high cost of living, younger people are living in smaller homes and apartments that don’t accommodate spaces like a wine cellar. In the past, people bought wine with the intention to store it and save it for special occasions, but now the trend is “to buy wine to drink now,” Campbell said.

O’Brien was honest about his apprehension over taking over another label as the industry declines, but he said, “Sometimes I appreciate challenges and in this situation, I did it for Bob.”

To survive the struggling industry, O’Brien said “now that Bob’s happiness is in my hands, I could use all the help I can get.”

### Reflecting on the history of Woodside Vineyards

Mullen has owned Woodside Vineyards since 1970, but prior to his ownership the original grape vines that were planted in 1884 were known to produce wine under the La Questa Vineyards label. The wines were grown from a cutting brought in a suitcase from France, Mullen said.

In 1915, the wine made from the La Questa vines won gold at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition. Mullen said its wine has always been award-winning in every competition it has entered.

“We’re proud of the quality and the fact that we’ve existed this long — and that I’ve existed this long,” said Mullen. “But at 99 years old, it’s time to move on.”

Although Woodside Vineyards will be moving to Los Gatos with Silver Mountain Vineyards, the quality and taste are guaranteed to be the same, said Campbell. Under O’Brien’s management, she is confident that his prioritization of making quality wine will ensure that Woodside Vineyards will continue to be a fine label, she added.

### Celebrating the label

Throughout the summer, Woodside Vineyards had hosted tasting events on every



Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Bottles of La Questa Vineyard wine from 1939, 1960s and 1970s displayed during a Woodside Vineyards tasting event hosted at Neely Wine in Portola Valley on July 24.

fourth Thursday of each month. Campbell described these events as a finale.

On July 24, Neely Wine in Portola Valley hosted a tasting featuring bottles of La Questa wine from 1969, 2002, 2009, 2018 and a 2013 bottle of Woodside Vineyards.

Displayed on the center table were La Questa bottles from 1936, 1960s and 1970s. These bottles were donated to the San Mateo County Historical Association along with framed photos of the Pan-Pacific Expedition medals

and a printed announcement from 1918 alerting patrons about a price increase to \$8 per quart and \$9 per pint.

The legacy of the vineyard and Mullen’s work will be preserved by the San Mateo County History Museum, which will be archiving the artifacts. According to curators, they hope to incorporate these items into the museum in the future.

As a final event for Woodside Vineyards, Silver Mountain will hold an open house for the wine label on Saturday, Sept. 6 from

1:30- 4:30 p.m. Guests will be able to enjoy live music and wine at its venue that overlooks the Monterey Bay.

Silver Mountain Vineyard’s winery in Los Gatos and its tasting room in Santa Cruz are also open every weekend. For more information visit silvermtn.com. Guests can also continue to buy Woodside Vineyard wine from Auto Vino, a food, wine and exotic cars venue in San Carlos. ■

*Email Staff Writer*

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## ERIK BURMEISTER

*continued from page 5*

happened to be the right person. I feel like the universe came together to make this the right moment for me and the right moment for the district, and I’m thoroughly enjoying using my contextual knowledge and my experience to bring stability, excitement and enthusiasm for the future. Because at the end of the day, no community wants their schools to be in turmoil, and no community wants to have a budget crisis.

**The Almanac:** What plans do you have to regain the community’s trust?

**Erik Burmeister:** We’ve already started doing that. In the spring, I did a whole series of community conversations. I filled (two notebooks) full of community, staff and student feedback and also engaged the community in a robust feedback survey.

I spent the summer with my local team here at the district office, really focusing on where each of the functions of the organization can get better, more efficient, and more focused on customer service.

And I think that is doing a lot to increase the community’s confidence, trust and excitement.

We are going to be launching a number of design teams this year focusing on high priority deliverables. We’re going to be reimagining our math pathways, looking at our middle school bell schedule and implementing our science of reading approach. We’re going to be focusing on our multi-tiered system of support and social-emotional learning. We are inviting community members, parents and students to participate alongside staff in those design teams.

**The Almanac:** The district faced a three-day teacher strike that was caused by failed salary negotiations. Do you have a strategic plan on how to approach negotiations the next time around to prevent another strike?

**Erik Burmeister:** My experience is that when everybody has confidence in the numbers that you’re working with and when the governance structure is transparent about its priorities and why those are the priorities that they have, the conflict and disagreement about the end

result can be avoided.

I think that in a small district like ours, it’s difficult to always provide all the details that everybody wants, but we have to do it to avoid the kinds of conflicts that we experienced in the past year.

The other thing is, we’ve got to be transparent from the get go about where we’re spending our money and how much we’re spending. We have to be really honest with the public and ourselves about how much education costs today, because the days of Las Lomitas having enough money to do whatever it wants are gone. That means that we have to operate a little bit more like other school districts that are much more constrained financially than we have historically been.

I always try to provide the context that we’re still trying to get rid of a \$2.5 million structural deficit, but we have time. It’s all those small decisions we make in the interim that are going to get us there. And so we can’t lose sight of the focus of reducing costs, but also reducing the rate of growth of our increasing costs, because education is

getting more expensive.

**The Almanac:** Looking back on the district’s history, have you taken note of what didn’t work to figure out how to make improvements?

**Erik Burmeister:** There’s a lot that Las Lomitas has done right for many years. This is a district that only very recently experienced some challenging years, but this has been a district since 1904 and has a rich history of community engagement. I did the survey during a time where I asked people to give me criticism and critiques. By and large, everybody was really happy — even when I asked them at a time where they had just gotten out of the strike.

We have incredibly supportive parents and really talented students. I’d say where we’re challenged is we don’t have the scale. We’re highly dependent on individuals, because usually one department is one person.

We also need to tell our story better. That’s our budget, instruction, assessment, facility and great place to work story. Sometimes in small organizations, when you don’t have a person who is in charge of

telling that story, it gets lost. If you don’t tell the story enough, that’s where negativity, distrust or a lack of transparency can arise, not out of any bad intent, but because you’re just so small.

**The Almanac:** Is there anything that you’d like local families, teachers and students, to know as you’re coming into this new role?

**Erik Burmeister:** I would say Las Lomitas has an amazing history, and our best days are still ahead of us. I’m really excited about what the future holds and I’m 110% committed. This feels like home to me, and I can’t wait to support the staff and really deliver the experience that Las Lomitas has been known for and also improve upon into the future.

These are going to be some really great years for the school district and I hope everybody is really excited, parents, students and staff alike. I wish everybody a safe, happy, thriving school year and I want everybody to know that Las Lomitas is back. ■

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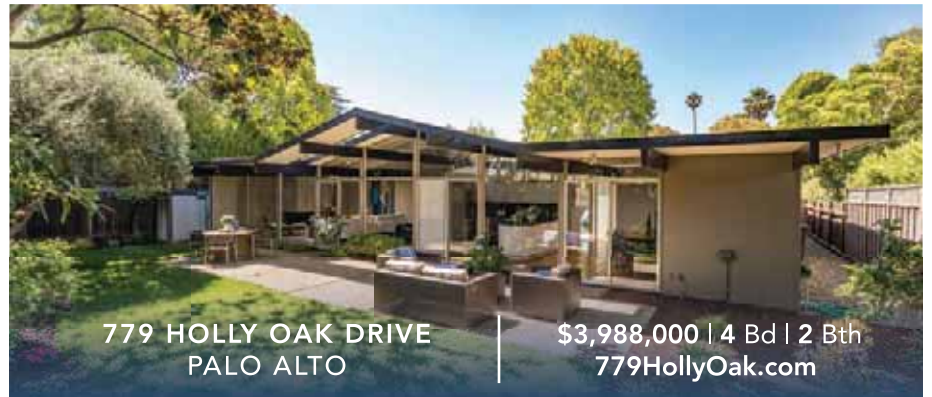
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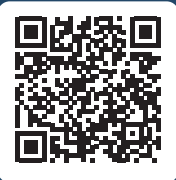


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**JASON LEDBETTER***continued from page 5*

Woodside is bucking the trend. With 11 volunteer committees, Ledbetter said the community-oriented culture was one aspect of Woodside that stood out to him.

He sees the existing volunteerism and public engagement as a positive that will have long term benefits for the community. Ledbetter calls this “one of the beauties of Woodside.”

“It truly is kind of the old school world of the community managing their own institution, which not a lot of other locations have time for,” he said.

In his first three months as town manager, he turned to the community and staff to learn more about the town, he said.

“I purposefully came here wanting to overindulge myself in assimilating,” Ledbetter said. “My focus was engaging with as many groups of people as possible.”

Over the past few months, Ledbetter maintained an open door philosophy, encouraging residents to reach out to him, schedule meetings and pushing himself to quickly broaden his knowledge on all things Woodside. He also welcomed all staff members to get to know

him and took his time to meet individuals recommended to him by the council.

**Top concerns: fire, storms, pedestrian safety**

Coming from Siskiyou County in rural Northern California, Ledbetter is familiar with emergency preparedness and fire risk. After hearing about various concerns from the Woodside community, Ledbetter said that fire danger, hazard mitigation and atmospheric rivers should be the focus of a strategic initiative for the town.

“People enjoy Woodside because of the countryside aspect of it but the rural qualities don’t lead to preparedness very well when it comes to (evacuation),” he said.

In the next month, Ledbetter announced that there will be a vegetation removal contract presented to the council. The contract with the Woodside Fire Protection District will ensure that there are maintained efforts to remove vegetation along roads that serve as emergency outlets and are in areas of high egress and ingress.

Ledbetter also hopes to work on the town’s Storm Water Master Plan to evaluate what infrastructure improvements are needed to prevent flooding

and other hazards during storms.

During his daily walks to Roberts Market and the Village Bakery, Ledbetter said it didn’t take him too long to notice the issues around pedestrian safety in Town Center.

“One of the things that we really have to focus on in Woodside is that there’s just a desire for more pedestrian safety and more opportunities for pedestrians to engage downtown,” Ledbetter said. “It goes hand-in-hand with the young families that want their children to be able to access the school on a pathway in the morning as safely as possible.”

Town Center has become a thoroughway for joyrides by bikers and drivers who pass through Woodside for “entertainment” and “leisure” which can cause increased traffic and unsafe driving, said Ledbetter. In order to make the area safe, he believes that there needs to be more pedestrians, families and community members using Town Center and setting the tone for what’s appropriate. He hopes to incorporate this into the Town Center Area Plan update.

**Setting priorities**

A compliant housing element and an upcoming update

to the Town Center Area Plan leaves Ledbetter with a lot of projects to prioritize. There’s about “100 deliverables within the housing element that have to happen” and a capital improvement project list that the town has prioritized, he said.

“There (are) always too many items and not enough capacity,” he added.

As the town manager, Ledbetter’s daily routine involves evaluating the projects that the town has committed to, prioritizing certain actions and driving projects forward. Many residents will approach the town with their concerns and Ledbetter will always listen, but he said that he will always be honest about what he and the town can do.

“Nobody understands where tax dollars go and that’s an issue,” said Ledbetter, who explained that local communities often assume that all taxes are concentrated at the local level.

According to Ledbetter, 1.25% of sales tax and 10% of property tax go to the town — the rest goes to the state and county. That revenue is supplemented by grants.

Residents often come to Town Hall with requests for road improvements, crosswalks and town events such as farmers markets, but with priorities on

other projects, these requests cannot always be fulfilled right away. Especially with the town’s narrow and winding mountain roads, poorly paved roadways are often a concern.

Although he understands the community’s frustrations around the lack of progress or action on certain projects, he wants residents to know that there is a long pathway to improvement. Certain projects involve traffic studies, evaluations and preparations that are necessary before actions can be taken.

Among these priorities, Ledbetter is also committed to maintaining Woodside’s history and bucolic nature. While he may face pressure from the state about housing, he’s confident that the town will be able to meet obligations and still maintain the character of the community.

“I do take it very seriously ... to maintain Woodside’s rural characteristics and its magical qualities that attract people to Woodside,” he said. “It’s a really enjoyable community to come into and it’s my job to make sure that we maintain aspects of the incorporation of 1956 — open space, country roads, equestrian culture.” ■

*Email Staff Writer  
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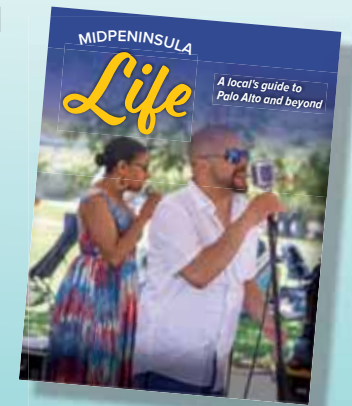
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# Gardener's Paradise a Stone's Throw From Downtown

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4 BD | 2.5 BA | 2,335 SF | \$4,998,000

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In prime downtown Los Altos, only a block from the Village, this beautifully remodeled ranch home blends classic appeal with modern luxury. The light-filled living dining great room is ideal for gathering with family and friends. Cooking is a pleasure in the elegant chef's kitchen which opens to the outdoor entertaining deck and cozy family room. Work from home and distance learning are perfectly accommodated in the comfortable front office while the primary suite with its sumptuous designer bath provides a serene retreat at the end of the day. Exquisitely curated gardens surrounding the home create a lush landscape of climbing roses, manicured paths, and a flourishing orchard which invite true California outdoor living year-round. Become a part of the community and enjoy top rated schools, Lincoln Park, boutiques, cafes and the famous First Friday Monthly Music festival, all in close proximity!



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**COMPASS**



**BUILDING CODES***continued from page 1*

electrical raceways in areas being renovated that could connect to new electric appliances if existing gas appliances are replaced.

City staff hope by requiring the installation of electrical infrastructure by gas appliances, when it comes time to replace those appliances, it will be easier for the building owner to install an electrical appliance.

**Heat pumps**

The city will require homeowners to install reverse-cycle

heat pumps, which provide heating and cooling and are more energy efficient than traditional air conditioning, during a new construction or when replacing a traditional air conditioning unit. The heat pump will be required to be used for cooling but home owners can still use a gas system for heating.

Exceptions will be granted for projects where installing a heat pump would increase costs by more than 20%.

**'Flex path'**

The city will also require any addition or alteration to a single

family home that costs more than \$100,000 to include at least two energy efficiency measures.

Some of the options for energy efficiency measures include adding insulation to attics and air sealing in all accessible areas of the building, adding wall insulation in some projects, adding floor insulation, adding hot water pipe insulation on exposed pipes, replacing a gas furnace and using energy efficient light bulbs.

"From my estimation, that's a really low trigger to then add on all of these other things, especially if we're talking about like a

1940s to early '50s house. There is no insulation in that stuff. If someone wants to add on a really small office, that's going to suddenly become a much bigger project than \$100,000 really quickly," Combs said.

City staff added an exemption to the requirement so if the cost of adding the two energy efficient measures would exceed 20% of the project's total cost, it would be exempt from the requirement.

Combs was concerned that the requirements would be time consuming for city staff to verify and difficult on home owners.

"I regularly get feedback that it is already incredibly frustrating and onerous for residents (to do remodels.) We're going to add that now the city has to come out, and you have to show them your new light bulbs as a part of the process," Combs said.

"My skepticism remains and as I said the previous meeting, I prefer that we provide options to incentivise residents to make what we would say is the 'right choice' versus regulating it," Combs said before voting against the new measures. ■

*Email Staff Writer Arden Margulis at [amargulis@almanacnews.com](mailto:amargulis@almanacnews.com).*

**LITTLE HOUSE***continued from page 5*

brain, similar to what it does in the heart. So it helps prevent dementia, helps prevent mental decline, it keeps you sharp and it keeps you more motivated."

"You can age gracefully in this facility," said Erin Widdef, a member of Little House for over three years. "I didn't think I belonged here. I really didn't. I thought I was too young, but I'm 80 years old and I'm finally learning to deal with the changes in my life which I refused to do before."

Little House offers a range of programs including tech classes, discussion groups, fitness programming and personal training, board games, health programming, music classes and concerts. The not-so-little Little House includes a ceramics studio, outdoor patios, several class areas, a stage and a cafeteria.

"We have a really terrific chef here, Hazel. She does an incredible job. At most senior centers, their food is really bland but we have flavor in our food and it's only \$5 for a meal with usually two options every day. Even the staff eats the food here, because it is actually good," Blitz said.

With its fitness programs, one offering is the Ground Mobility class. "They have this course where the man that runs it teaches you how to get up off the floor.

That's a big deal for old people. If you have anyone old in your life, ask him to get on the floor, and get up. They're constantly trying to let you grow so you're not stagnant," Widdef said.

Another program is the current events group where members meet to discuss local and national news in a respectful manner.

"That group grew from one person to somewhere between 17 and 20 people every week. The discussions are interesting and stimulating," Widdef said.

"I have a best friend now, her name is Pat and she's 90 years old. I met her in the current events group, and we are besties now," Widdef added.

Little House provides a place for social connection, which is especially important as many seniors moved to the area to be closer to relatives.

"I moved here five years ago from Arizona because I have family here. Most of the people in this facility have family here and they weren't born and raised here. The area is a whole new environment," Widdef said.

"I want people to feel like they can come here for a lot of things rather than just one thing. I don't want to be just a place for fitness classes. I want us to fulfill our mission, to provide good enough, interesting enough and relevant enough programming that members can get both

mental, physical, psychological and maybe even spiritual needs fulfilled," Blitz said.

"A really crucial part of Little House is our Ride PVI program. We're trying to combat loneliness and anytime you lose your ability to drive, you might stay home and it's gonna be really easy to stay home. If you don't live within walking distance, chances are your health is going to deteriorate pretty quickly," Blitz said.

Ride PVI works with Uber and Lyft where users can call a hotline to book transportation around San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. Subsidies are available for users. PVI staff also monitor the rides for safety and assistance.

"A lot of our people who come here use Ride PVI to get here — to get here, to get home, to get the doctor, to get to a lot of places so their health doesn't decline. I think that's such a crucial piece to it all," Blitz said.

The service provided 12,750 rides in fiscal year 2024.

While Little House became the first suburban senior center in the United States in 1949, it struggled after the pandemic. Widdef credits Blitz for turning the center around.

"Everything (at Little House) has changed over the last six or seven months," said Widdef. "I used to also belong to Cañada (College gym). I was coming here just for the current events group but I was able to quit that club even though I live much closer to it because everything that I needed there is right here."

"I think that with what has happened in the last six months

since (Blitz) took over, I would say that this is the best kept secret in Menlo Park before it was not," Widdef added.

"When I got in here, I think there had been too much turnover for whatever reason, and there really wasn't a structure in place," Blitz said. "I'm a big believer that structure drives behavior. The stability that there is when you create that structure, people know what to expect every day, and I think they didn't have that before," Blitz added.

"(The reason it has improved is) absolutely because of the management. Jared, I won't give him too big a head, is extremely talented, organized and respectful. He always smiles and is friendly with everybody," Widdef said. "But it isn't just that personality part of him, it's his ability to change this place. Before, it was very disorganized and they didn't have as much. He's brought in so many new programs."

Widdef said she really started to appreciate Little House after she got injured volunteering at the Ronald McDonald House, a place where families of seriously ill children who are receiving care at a local hospital can stay at little to no cost.

"That's when the reality came to me that this is the place I belong to, because even when you're handicapped or have an issue, you're accommodated. They accommodate you 100% and they're enthusiastic," Widdef said. Blitz has big plans for the facility.

"I'm always told that this is the best kept secret here but I don't know if that's a good thing after 76 years. It doesn't need to be a secret. We still have so much room for capacity to help improve people's lives. I would like over the next year to be able to get us closer to where we were pre-pandemic. We used to be open until 8 p.m. and I am hoping to bring that back," Blitz said.

As part of an effort to expand attendance, Blitz reached out to residents at Peninsula Volunteers Property's affordable housing development. Blitz said

the developments have a large Russian, Ukrainian and Chinese population. While they get free memberships for staying at the property, Blitz said few came to Little House.

"We did a campaign there because I was told, 'Oh, they don't like to ever come out here' and I'm not a believer in that. I believe you need to at least make an effort," Blitz said.

Blitz said he brought staff that spoke several languages and educational materials to the developments in order to answer questions and encourage people to use Little House.

"We wanted to make sure they knew what was going on and what was available to them with their memberships, they didn't know and nobody was communicating," Blitz said.

"They've become like the lifeblood of our program — it's been amazing to watch. So you have a group of people who don't even necessarily speak English, but they feel comfortable enough to come in and participate and be involved in everything. It makes me feel really good," Blitz said.

Blitz also wants to put renewed effort into the ceramics studio. "I have a ceramics program — well I wouldn't call it a program. We have a studio. You can go in there and you can use it. Building it up is going to be a main focal point for me," Blitz said.

Right outside the studio is a garden area that Blitz said became overgrown and unkept. He started by asking the Silicon Valley Chapter of the Young Men's Service League to help clean up the area.

"What they did is really amazing. In just a weekend or two, the space completely changed," Blitz said.

Some of the fruits and vegetables the garden grows are used in the kitchen and served to members.

Little House has several membership tiers starting at \$20 a month and is located at 800 Middle Ave. in Menlo Park. ■

*Email Staff Writer Arden Margulis at [amargulis@almanacnews.com](mailto:amargulis@almanacnews.com).*

# Employment

**ENGINEERING**

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## 789 UNIVERSITY AVENUE PALO ALTO



### STATELY LIVING JUST STEPS FROM DOWNTOWN

In the heart of Crescent Park, this stately colonial home offers a rare combination of presence, character, and livability. A column-framed entrance leads to warm, light-filled interiors that showcase the home's more than century-old heritage, with hardwood floors, detailed millwork, and vintage glass doorknobs throughout. While the architecture reflects a bygone era, the layout feels comfortably in step with life today, featuring grand formal rooms, a cozy fireplace, a chef's kitchen with Viking and Sub-Zero appliances, and five generous bedrooms, four of which have en suite baths. The backyard is just as inviting, with a spacious deck, brick pathways, and wisteria-covered trellises creating a peaceful space to relax or entertain. Additional highlights include air conditioning, a gated driveway, and a detached two-car garage. All of this, just a short stroll from the shops and restaurants of downtown Palo Alto, and close to Stanford University, Caltrain, commute routes, and top-rated Palo Alto schools.

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STANFORD LEGACY

continued from page 6

American meritocracy,” he wrote. “For it furnishes the financial and social resources that integrate meritorious non-elites into the elite. Therefore, outlawing the practice is a monumental blunder, one that moves America towards a more unmeritocratic elite, a more unfair system, and a more dysfunctional society.”

The university says it is making other efforts to expand access to a Stanford education to more students, such as increasing the size of this fall’s entering

class by about 150 students. It also says that in recent years, about 20% of the members of each first-year class at the school have been first-generation college students.

According to past reporting from this news organization, in 2019, 16.2% of Stanford University’s accepted applicants were children whose parents attended Stanford, while 1.5% of all accepted applicants had donated to the university. In 2023, just 13.6% of accepted applicants had family or philanthropic ties to the university. This news organization has

asked Stanford for figures from 2024 and 2025 admissions. At the time of publication, the university hadn’t responded.

Mandatory test scores return

Meanwhile, a faculty committee voted to reinstate mandatory SAT or ACT testing, noting that “academic excellence is the primary criterion for admission to Stanford.”

“Stanford considers each component of an application in context as part of an integrated and comprehensive whole,” according to a July 29 statement

JUDGES

continued from page 7

Northern District of California. The third person appointed to Alameda County Superior Court is Cara Sandberg, who worked as deputy county counsel for the Santa Clara County Counsel’s Office since 2023 and worked at Conrad Metlitzky Kane LLP from 2022 to 2023, among other things.

Newsom’s office said “the compensation” each will receive is \$244,727, but didn’t say if that number only accounts for their salary. ■

Public Notices

SAVERS  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-301254  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) SAVERS , located at 875 Main Street, Redwood City, CA 94063. Mailing Address: 11400 SE 6th St., Suite 125 Bellevue, WA 98004.  
Registered owner(s):  
TVI, INC.  
11400 SE 6th St., Suite 125 Bellevue, WA 98004  
State of Incorporation/Organization: WA  
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 11/30/1967.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 31, 2025.  
(ALM Aug 15, 22, 29 and Sep 5, 2025)

VESPENE RECYCLING  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-300928  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) VESPENE RECYCLING , located at 624 HILTON STREET, REDWOOD CITY CA 94063.  
Registered owner(s):  
183672770 LLC  
624 HILTON STREET  
REDWOOD CITY CA 94063  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CALIFORNIA  
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 04/20/2025.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on June 24, 2025.  
(ALM Jul 25, Aug 1, 8 and 15, 2025)

BASKIN-ROBBINS  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-301088  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) BASKIN-ROBBINS , located at 2107 Roosevelt Avenue, Redwood City, CA, 94061.  
Registered owner(s):  
MSCOOP LLC  
1341 Flicker Way  
Sunnyvale, CA, 94087  
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 July 10, 2025.  
(ALM Jul 25, Aug 1, 8 and 15, 2025)

SERVPRO OF DALY CITY, BROADMOOR  
SERVPRO OF BRISBANE  
SERVPRO OF MARINA DISTRICT  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-301115  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) SERVPRO OF DALY CITY, BROADMOOR , 2.) SERVPRO OF BRISBANE , 3.) SERVPRO OF MARINA DISTRICT , located at 1433 North Carolan Ave, Burlingame, CA 94010.

Registered owner(s):  
AWWAD ENTERPRISES INC  
1433 North Carolan Ave  
Burlingame, CA 94010  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 14, 2025.  
(ALM Jul 25, Aug 1, 8 and 15, 2025)

PRO CLEANING BAY  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-301258  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) PRO CLEANING BAY , located at 832 6th Avenue, Redwood City, CA 94063.  
Registered owner(s):  
PRO CLEANING BAY LLC  
832 6th Avenue  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CALIFORNIA  
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 July 31, 2025.  
(ALM Aug 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2025)

EDUMEC JANITORIAL SERVICE  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-300929  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) EDUMEC JANITORIAL SERVICE , located at 1503A Sierra St, Redwood City, CA, 94061.  
Registered owner(s):  
EDUARDO MENDOZA  
1503A Sierra St  
Redwood City, CA, 94061  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 07/03/2010.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on June 24, 2025.  
(ALM Aug 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2025)

ATTORNEY MEDIA  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-301154  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) ATTORNEY MEDIA , located at 714 Upton Street, Redwood City, CA 94061.  
Registered owner(s):  
SILICON VALLEY CONSULTING LLC  
714 Upton Street  
Redwood City, CA 94061  
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 July 18, 2025.  
(ALM Aug 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2025)

ZARY’S FASHION  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-300982  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) ZARY’S FAHION , located at 1210 Sabrina CT, Redwood City CA 94061.  
Registered owner(s):  
ELVIRA KARINA RUIZ  
1210 Sabrina CT  
Redwood City CA 94061  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
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 30, 2025.  
(ALM Aug 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2025)

SINGLE DOSE  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-301101  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) SINGLE DOSE , located at 115 Vallecito Ln, Pacifica, CA 94044. Mailing Address: 446 Old County Rd STE 100-387, Pacifica, CA 94044.  
Registered owner(s):  
SINGLE DOSE THERAPEUTICS, INC.  
115 Vallecito Ln  
Pacifica, CA 94044  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on July 01, 2025.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 11, 2025.  
(ALM Jul 25, Aug 1, 8 and 15, 2025)

FLOURISH WITH JACKIE  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-301210  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) FLOURISH WITH JACKIE , located at 235 Glenwood Avenue, Woodside, CA 94062.  
Registered owner(s):  
PHYSICALLY FOCUSED LLC  
235 Glenwood Avenue  
Woodside, CA 94062  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 24, 2025.  
(ALM Aug 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2025)

KJM ESTATE MANAGEMENT  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-301104  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) KJM ESTATE MANAGEMENT , located at 702 Oak Grove Ave., Menlo Park, CA 94025. Mailing Address: 3652 E Lafayette Ave. Gilbert, AZ 85298  
Registered owner(s):  
KIMBERLEY MCDOWELL  
3652 E Lafayette Ave.  
Gilbert, AZ 85298  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 6/02/25.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 11, 2025.  
(ALM Jul 25, Aug 1, 8 and 15, 2025)

from the university.

Stanford first waived SAT or ACT scores for first-year and transfer applicants in February 2021, so students would not “jeopardize their health or well-being to take future sittings of non-required tests,” according to a university announcement at the time.

Undergraduate students entering Stanford during the 2024-25 school year averaged a 3.94 high school GPA and a 1540 SAT score, for those who submitted scores, according to Stanford. ■

Angela Swartz is a Contributing Writer.

COASTSIDE YOGA COLLECTIVE, LLC  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-301189  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) COASTSIDE YOGA COLLECTIVE, LLC , located at 101 Main Street Suite C, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019.  
Registered owner(s):  
COASTSIDE YOGA COLLECTIVE, LLC  
101 Main Street Suite C  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 12/21/2018.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 23, 2025.  
(ALM Aug 1, 8, 15 and 22, 2025)

**CASE NUMBER: (Numero del Caso): 24-CLJ-07418 SUMMONS, SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO (CITACION JUDICIAL) NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: (AVISO AL DEMANDADO): ALFREDO PIRI PIRI and DOES 1 through 20, inclusive. YOU ARE BEING SUMMONS BY PLAINTIFF: (LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE): LOYA CASUALTY INSURANCE COMPANY. NOTICE!**  
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## A 'DEVIL' OF A TIME

Filmmaker Len Dell'Amico looks back on 15 years of creative collaboration and friendship with the Grateful Dead

By Heather Zimmerman

**T**he Grateful Dead was a carnival centered on musical talent, full of joy, unpredictability, silliness (and in one incident, even a drunken barnyard animal). It was a canny business organization run with foresight and a clear vision, and it was also a little like a religion, with a devoted following and an ethos shared among the organization and its fans.

All these things can be true, according to filmmaker Len Dell'Amico in his memoir "Friend of the Devil: My Wild Ride with the Grateful Dead and Jerry Garcia." His book suggests that such contradictions coexisting in one organization added up to the Grateful Dead's secret recipe that continues attracting fans to this day. The book sits easily with these contradictions, illustrated by personal recollections of Dell'Amico's time with the band, and Garcia himself.

He will discuss "Friend of the Devil" at Kepler's Books on

Aug. 17, a fitting venue as Garcia and frequent Dead collaborator Robert Hunter are known to have hung out at the progressive bookstore in the early 1960s, when it was located at 825 El Camino Real, not far from its current location. Dell'Amico will appear with author Jim Newton, whose new book "Here Beside the Rising Tide," offers a "history of the Grateful Dead that explores the American counterculture through the life of iconoclastic frontman Jerry Garcia, and his merry band," according to an event description.

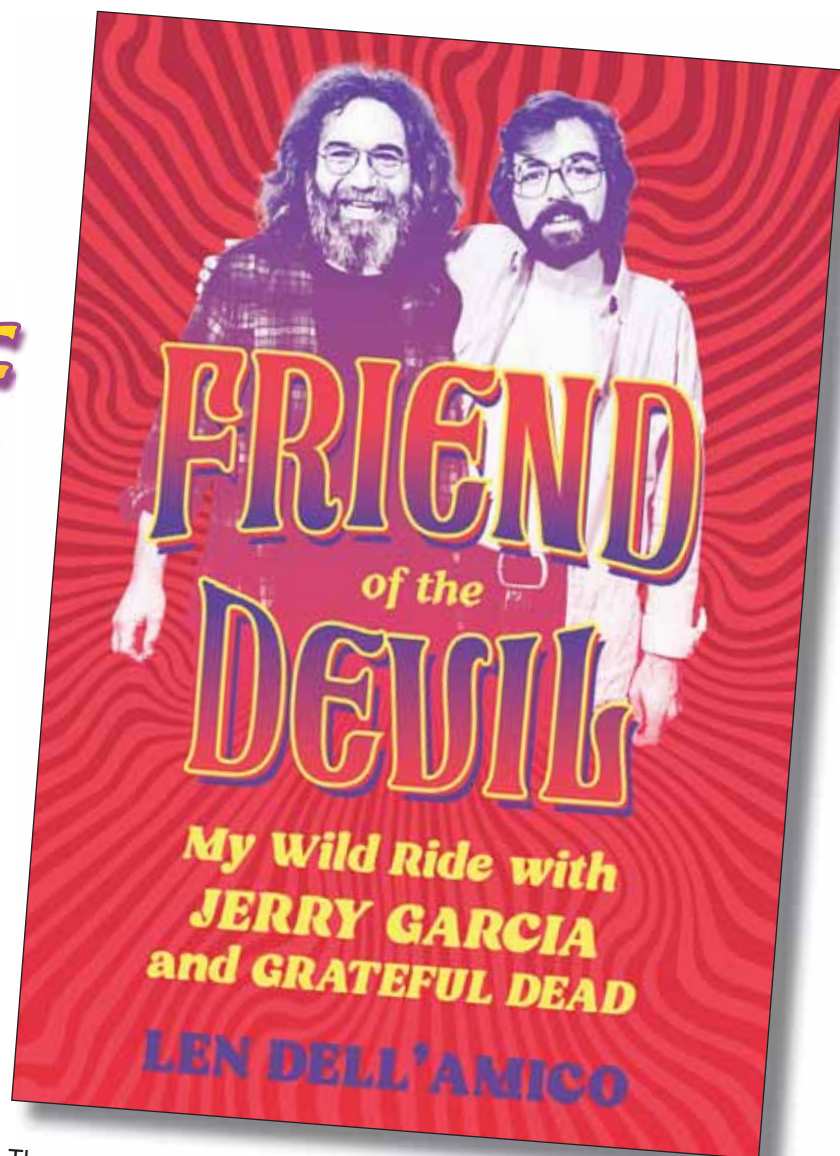
Dell'Amico got a unique perspective on the second half of the Grateful Dead's 30-year existence as both a creative insider and a friend, particularly of Garcia. Working as the band's "film and video guy," from 1980 through the early '90s, Dell'Amico shepherded several high-stakes projects, filmed more than 60 concerts, created videos for some of their songs, and on a personal

level, was on hand for many inspiring, funny and revealing personal moments.

"I always knew that I would have to write this book, even before (Garcia) died, 30 years ago, and because professionally, I got so much out of my working relationship with the Dead, but he was the guy in charge of film and television on behalf of the band, so he was basically my point guy and I learned the whole approach to work (from him), which was unique in show business and uniquely successful. It's mind-boggling how big this thing is," he said in an interview with this publication.

Garcia died on Aug. 9, 1995, and the 60th anniversary of the Grateful Dead's first show is also this year.

Dell'Amico described writing the memoir as the "hardest thing I've ever done" largely because



The cover of Len Dell'Amico's memoir "Friend of the Devil." Courtesy Weldon Owen

the work was far more solitary than he's accustomed to as a filmmaker. His appreciation for creative collaboration, and in particular, what he sees as a formative experience working with the Grateful Dead is borne out in the book.

"The most striking thing was that the Dead were a democracy. I quickly learned that if they had managers, I didn't know who they were. A real manager makes decisions on behalf of the band. You talk to the manager, and whatever happens between the manager and the band is not my business. I would meet with the six guys. Jerry was in charge of film, television, but for important stuff, he would gather the whole band with me, and we would talk it all out and get agreement," Dell'Amico said.

Unusually, the band did everything in-house, he said, from lighting and sound design to ticket sales and merch.

"Jerry had this, not so much a hippie vision as socially minded. So their 'family' was actually a family. Everybody there made good money. They made sure that we had plenty," he said.

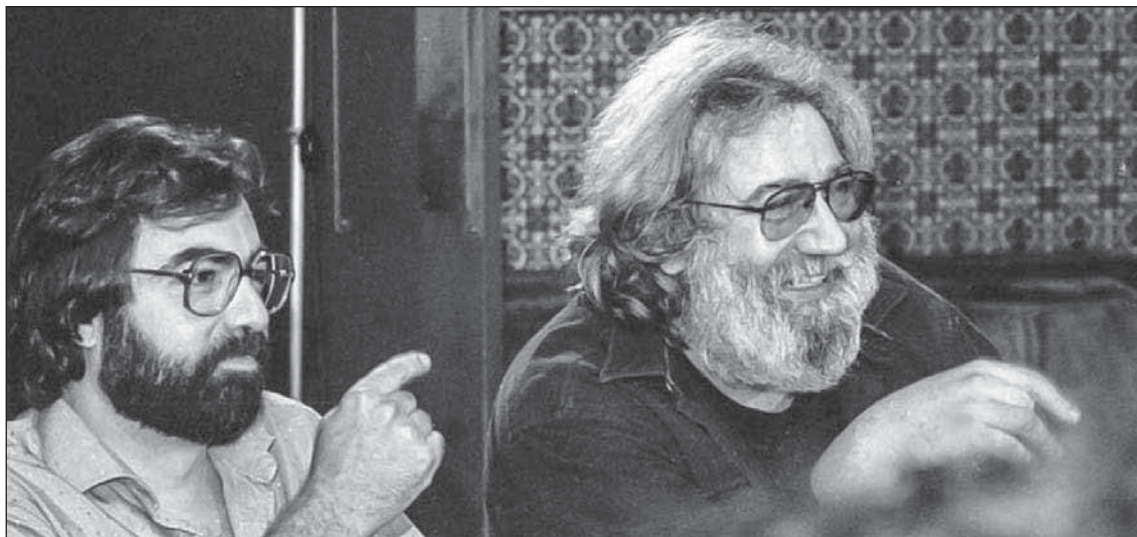
Prior to his work with the band, Dell'Amico was based in New York, filming bands' performances to project onto screens to offer audiences a closer perspective on the performers. Sometimes called video reinforcement, it's a

standard practice at larger venues now, but was in its infancy as Dell'Amico was launching his career.

He filmed big name acts including the Dead for video reinforcement, and speculates that this work got Garcia's attention, landing him a job interview in a pot smoke-filled room backstage at The Warfield in San Francisco in 1980. Garcia wanted to talk about filming the band for a groundbreaking pay-per-view concert, to be broadcast from Radio City Music Hall into 25 movie theaters nationwide on Halloween 1980, a version of livestreaming before what we know as livestreaming existed, Dell'Amico points out.

Dell'Amico notes a few times during our conversation and also mentions in his book that a lot of the Dead's shows and other filmed events are available on YouTube. It reinforces what Dell'Amico describes as Garcia's wisdom in seeking a way to document the band on film, though Garcia died just as the web as we know it was becoming widespread. That legacy on film, making the band accessible to audiences in a new way, built on another unique practice the band encouraged, which was allowing audiences to record audio of their concerts.

In fact, Garcia's vision was something that came better into



Courtesy Susana Millman

Filmmaker Len Dell'Amico, left, and Jerry Garcia appear at the San Francisco news conference and press premiere of the Grateful Dead concert film "So Far" in September 1987.



focus for Dell'Amico after he completed writing his book.

"I finished the book, then I read it, and then I figured out what Garcia was doing. It was kind of mind-blowing. He had a vision for his band and his work, because he wrote the music to interact with electronic media and film, television and what was coming — and he knew what was coming because he was well read and talked to scientists and movers and shakers in the entertainment business, etc. So when we met in 1980 he wanted the Dead to be the first band to electronically distribute a live show across America," Dell'Amico said.

"Friend of the Devil" details how Dell'Amico, with just a matter of weeks to plan, pulls together the pay-per-view show, with help from Saturday Night Live writers Al Franken and Tom Davis, who created comic interludes for the broadcast.

It was the start of a creative collaboration that would also include, among many other projects, the creation of the Grateful Dead concert film "So Far." The film, released in 1987, brought together intimate rehearsal sessions and live performances with striking special effects and computer graphics that were cutting-edge at the time.

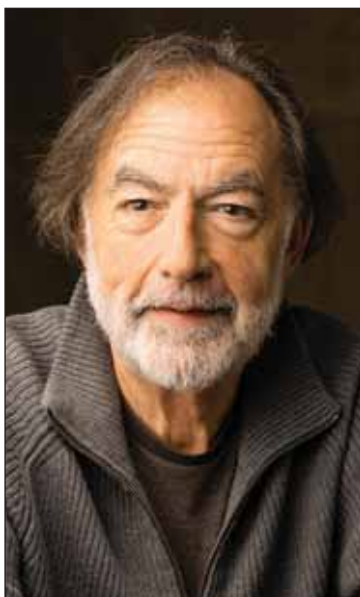
Around the same time, Dell'Amico filmed what would become one of the band's most iconic videos, "Hell in a Bucket," with a cast that featured numerous animals, including a duck and a tiger. Filmed in downtown San Rafael ("the same terrain George Lucas used for 'American Graffiti,'" Dell'Amico notes in the book), the video sees singer Bob Weir in a dive bar, a "brothel" and in a vintage car driven by devils, accompanied by a duck, who it turns out, had a little too much fun on set, drinking from a champagne flute that Weir was holding.

"The (duck's) trainer called me, and he's like, 'You got my duck drunk.' He was drunk. There was no alcohol on the set. When you're shooting a movie in a bar, everyone knows you have to clear it out, you can't have drunk people on the set so you have fake booze. Everyone knew the rule. Plus Bobby had just gotten out of rehab, I didn't want to be responsible for anything, yeah, but he smuggled some real champagne into the car," Dell'Amico recalled.

It's the kind of event that fits with Dell'Amico's description in the book of the band as not really the hippies they were often stereotyped as.

"The actual guys in the band and the crew surrounding them, were maybe far more like pirates," he wrote.

But Dell'Amico writes about the band and particularly Garcia with a mix of respect, affection and



Courtesy Lenn Dell'Amico

Lenn Dell'Amico chronicles his time working as the "film and video guy" for the Grateful Dead and his friendship with frontman Jerry Garcia in his memoir "Friend of the Devil."

some reverence, highlighting the frontman's musical talents, business acumen and vision alongside his kindness and down-to-earth demeanor.

He describes memorable creative moments, big and seemingly small, such as when he's in the studio with Garcia when Hunter drops by with newly written lyrics for what would become a song on their 1987 album "In the Dark."

Dell'Amico shares his rising anxiety as he white-knuckles a night out with Garcia following the musician's recovery from a diabetic coma, as he tries his best to honor a promise to Garcia's wife, Carolyn (AKA Mountain Girl), to keep the evening short and low-key.

The memoir recalls moments that show how relatable Garcia was — even if the particular circumstances might not be something you'd encounter every day.

That's why Dell'Amico might be anxious to point out that his book's title, taken from a Grateful Dead song, invokes the "trickster" aspect of the devil, rather than the more traditional king of hell incarnation.

"There's an afterword explaining the title, because (Garcia's) not a devil, but he's devilish, yeah? He's a trickster, and the trickster is an ancient icon, a mythological thing that resonates over different societies forever," Dell'Amico said. ■

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

Aug. 17, 4-5 p.m., at Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park; \$11.49-\$21.99 (admission without book)/\$45.09 (admission and 1 copy of the book); keplers.org.

# Worth a Look



Courtesy Sleeves

Gangstagrass brings its fusion of hip-hop and bluegrass to Filoli on Aug. 17.

## Gangstagrass

The band Gangstagrass, founded in 2006, brings together hip-hop and bluegrass music in a unique and dynamic fusion of sounds. In addition to releasing multiple records and touring internationally, the group has competed on "America's Got Talent" and produced the Emmy Award-nominated theme song for the series "Justified." This summer, the band released the song "No Kings in the USA." Gangstagrass comes to Filoli to perform as part of its "Summer Stage" series, which brings a variety of musical acts to its picturesque meadow, along with refreshments.

Aug. 17, 7 p.m. (garden opens at 5:30 p.m.), Filoli, 86 Cañada Road, Woodside; \$55 general admission/\$125 VIP; [filoli.org/summer-stage/gangstagrass](http://filoli.org/summer-stage/gangstagrass).

## 'Wearable Treasures Crafted From Nature'

Palo Alto artist Carina Rossner uses real flowers and leaves in her work, casting them in silver and bronze and preserving their delicate textures. She combines them with unusual minerals in free-form designs, creating unique jewelry and wearable art that celebrates the beauty and colors of nature. Long-fascinated by minerals, Rossner's journey to jewelry-making began with community classes, including through Palo Alto Adult School, and she currently works out of her home studio as well as the Palo Alto Art Center metalsmithing studio. A new collection of her work is featured at Viewpoints Gallery through the end of the month.

Through Aug. 31, Viewpoints Gallery, 315 State St., Los Altos; Wednesday to Friday, noon-6 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.; "Meet the artist" events Aug. 16 and 24; [viewpointsgallery.com](http://viewpointsgallery.com).

## Yuri Liberzon

Bay Area-based classical guitarist and educator Yuri Liberzon is renowned for his artistry as well as his technical mastery. He has performed throughout the United States and internationally, collaborated with noted ensembles and fellow artists, and has released multiple albums. He performs at Palo Alto's Museum of American Heritage this week as part of its "Summer Nights" concert series. To RSVP, email [zoe@moah.org](mailto:zoe@moah.org).

Aug. 15, 7 p.m., Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto; free; [moah.org/moahevents](http://moah.org/moahevents).

## Men I Trust

Canadian indie-pop band Men I Trust was formed in 2014 and features Emma Proulx on guitar and vocals, Jessy Caron on guitar and bass, and Dragos Chiriac on keyboards. Known for its hypnotic melodies and dreamy vocals, the trio performs at Stanford this week. Opening the show is strongboi, a collaboration between Ziv Yamin and Alice Phoebe Lou, which started as an ultra-lo-fi project that evolved to a full-band affair, with live performances incorporating songs ranging from disco tunes to jazzy ballads, according to Stanford Live.

Aug. 17, 6:30 p.m., Frost Amphitheater, 351 Lasuen St., Stanford; \$59.06; [live.stanford.edu](http://live.stanford.edu).

## The Motels

New Wave/alt rock-band icons The Motels, featuring frontperson and Berkeley native Martha Davis, have a history dating back to the 1970s. The band released five albums between 1979 and 1985, earning hits with "Only the Lonely" and "Suddenly Last Summer." The band has returned with a new configuration in recent years, releasing albums in 2011 and 2018, and plays at the Guild Theatre this week as part of a string of West Coast dates.

Aug. 17, 8 p.m., The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park; \$57-\$139; [guildtheatre.com](http://guildtheatre.com).



# Food & Drink



*Slice of Homage to soon open in the former home of A Slice of New York*



**Story by Grace Gormley**  
**Photos by Karina Patel**

**I**n June, an independent pizza shop in Sunnyvale closed its doors for the final time, to be replaced by...another independent pizza shop? A Slice of New York has left Sunnyvale to focus on its flagship store in San Jose and is passing the baton to Slice of Homage in the “perfect” transition, according to A Slice of New York founder Kirk Vartan.

“(It) was the ideal solution,” Vartan said. “What happened was what we really asked the universe (for).”

After 9/11, Vartan decided to open a classic New York City pizzeria to honor the Manhattan corner shop he grew up with, debuting A Slice of New York in San Jose in 2006. Now almost 20 years later, A Slice of New York’s Sunnyvale location has closed in what Vartan said is an economically disadvantageous decision that “people call... stupid, dumb, idiotic, nuts, crazy.” But to him, staying in San Jose is “the right choice.”

A Slice of New York was founded by Vartan and his wife, Marguerite Lee. Vartan grew up in Midtown Manhattan, and when he moved to the West Coast in 1998 to work for Cisco, he bemoaned the lack of classic New York pizza.

After reaching “the end of my kind of corporate rope,” Vartan said he “reevaluated where I was and what I wanted to do. And I hadn’t found a (New York) pizza shop yet.”

So he reached out to the owner of his childhood pizzeria, looking for help to open his own pizza place. The owner offered recipes, advice and ingredients to give Vartan a head start and refused to accept payment.

When A Slice of New York opened its first location in San Jose, it had six stools for indoor dining. Over time, the business grew, expanding with a second location in Sunnyvale in 2011. A Slice of New York has earned recognition through awards and acclaim for its pizza and as Silicon Valley’s first brick-and-mortar worker-owned cooperative.

As a cooperative, workers have the option to become owners, meaning they make the decisions for the business and earn a right to a share of the profits based on hours worked. It also means the decision to close the Sunnyvale location was made by the team.

“We always had a very empowered culture,” Vartan said. “But this gives the real ownership of the business’ future, like when we closed our Sunnyvale location, that was a group decision.”

It would have been “the best financial decision” to close the San Jose location, according to Vartan. The business had made large investments in Sunnyvale, which was a significantly larger location, with parking and lots of seating.

But the team made the decision to stay at their flagship location to preserve the “core values” of the business, Vartan said.

**Left:** Slice of Homage’s Detroit Vs Everybody pizza, which features Genoa salami, roasted mushroom, bacon, sausage, pepperoni, whipped ricotta, garlic-infused extra virgin olive oil, basil and freshly grated Grana Padano DOP. **Top:** Slice of Homage’s Red Head pizza with two types of pepperoni, garlic-infused extra virgin olive oil and freshly grated Grana Padano DOP.





**Clockwise from the top:** Slice of Homage's Greek pizza with green bell peppers, red onions, artichokes, Kalamata olives and feta cheese. Steven Barrantes, owner of Slice of Homage, prepares to put a pizza in the oven at his downtown San Jose restaurant. Slice of Homage's Detroit Vs Everybody pizza. Slice of Homage's Post Street pizza features oregano, housemade vodka sauce, grandma sauce drizzle, Pecorino Romano.

"It will break my soul to close San Jose," he said. "If we (were to) close San Jose and open up (Sunnyvale further) then it's just a business making money, not something that you are really tightly bonded with."

Since another pizza shop is taking over the Sunnyvale location, much of their investments into the property will still be put to good use.

"It's a really nice environment," Vartan said of the Sunnyvale store. "What's great is that Slice of Homage gets to enjoy those investments now, which is the ideal scenario."

The board, which currently includes nine employees, made the decision to stay in San Jose and expand that location. A Slice of New York has taken over the space next door and plans to add amenities for customers like more seating, a bathroom and beer options. According to Vartan, this transition is both scary and exciting.

"People are energized right now," he said. "(The team is) going through the grief process...Right now, the light is coming on, and we really see the future for our business and the growth that we want to have. And that's really exciting because that little spark has really invigorated some of our team in ways I haven't seen in a while."

While Vartan and the team at A Slice of New York devote themselves to improving their flagship location, Slice of Homage and its owner, Steven Barrantes, are hard at work preparing to open in Sunnyvale.

Barrantes has spent much of his career working in pizzerias and said that owning his own shop is "a dream come true." He established Slice of Homage in 2020, initially working from his apartment. Now he runs Slices by Slice of Homage at San Jose's San Pedro Social, which he opened in 2022, and works from a Sunnyvale ghost kitchen that started operating in 2024. The new Sunnyvale location is their first stand-alone restaurant.

"I was 17 when I decided I wanted to own a pizzeria because I worked at one," Barrantes said. "It's a huge accomplishment for me personally, but I always like to include my team in all the success."

Barrantes named his business Slice of Homage to pay tribute to many different kinds of pizza. He serves New York, Sicilian, Detroit and Chicago cracker-thin style pizzas and is introducing a Chicago deep-dish at Slice of Homage's new Sunnyvale location. Barrantes has traveled around the country learning different recipes and putting his own twist on them.

"Since I started, I've gone to so many places because of pizza, for pizza, to learn pizza," he said.

Barrantes feels that providing more options to the South Bay customer base will give Slice of Homage an edge in the region.

"For the longest time in the South Bay, I believe that a lot of pizzerias stuck to one style, and I think the consumer is getting smarter and understanding that there are other styles than just a round pizza," he said. "We are wanting to fill that gap here in the South Bay."

Barrantes said the new location will open to third parties sometime in August,

meaning customers will be able to order pizza via DoorDash or Uber Eats, or even call and pick up. Around September, Slice of Homage will be fully open for business, "right in time for football season and the holiday," Barrantes said.

As the business transitions to its first full restaurant, Barrantes said that "the stakes get bigger." On top of getting different licenses, expanding the team and working to pass all the necessary inspections, Barrantes is also working on rebranding the location by painting, changing the flooring and ensuring it will be a unique space.

"The restaurant is transitioning," he said. "I need to put my vision towards what Slice of Homage looks like."

The transition has been made easier by the collaboration between Slice of Homage and A Slice of New York.

"They have really made it easier for us, in the sense that they know the space... we've been working hand in hand on the transition phase," Barrantes said. "Some businesses leave, and they don't care how you put things together, but I think (the people at A Slice of New York) really care. And as a co-op, they really help people... we found a connection."

Vartan got his start in the pizza business

**Slice of Homage Pizza**, 1253 W. El Camino Real, Sunnyvale; Instagram: @sliceofhomage. Opening later this month for pickup and delivery.

with help from another pizzeria and is now "paying (it) forward a little bit," he said. While some may wonder why two competitors are working together, Vartan views it from a different perspective.

"We're small, independent businesses in an industry that's under pressure all the time, and this is a way we're actually able to help each other," he said. "We're collaborating together. We're sharing strategies. We're really working (together) at a level that is atypical." ■

Email Editorial Intern Grace Gormley at [ggormley@embarcaderomedia.org](mailto:ggormley@embarcaderomedia.org).

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