

The Almanac

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Courtesy St. Denis Catholic Church

Churches vandalized in Menlo Park

Five Menlo Park churches were vandalized with animal rights messages on the evening of Sept. 27. Police are not characterizing the vandalism as a hate crime and at press time did not have a suspect responsible for the spray-painting. Read the story on Page 5.

Woodside robotics team raises new generation of professionals

Team bonds learning engineering skills

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

On a Wednesday afternoon, dozens of students gathered in room J-1, home base for Team 100, Woodside High School's robotics competitors. With safety goggles on and tools in their hands, students were focused on preparing for the CalGames competition coming up in a few days. They had plans to stay on campus perfecting their robot until 9 or 10 p.m.

In the heart of Silicon Valley, many high school robotics teams are raising the future generation of young engineers, but some may be surprised to know that the one that started it all was Woodside High

School — the inaugural FIRST Robotics Competition team on the West Coast.

“What I love most about our Team 100 Wildhats Robotics team is the way they embody the spirit of gracious professionalism: competing with heart, collaborating with purpose and lifting one another up as part of an alliance,” said Woodside Principal Karen Van Putten

For 30 years, Woodside High School's robotics team has been helping aspiring students become not only engineers but also business professionals, marketing experts and graphic designers. Over time, Team 100 has become a space where

See **ROBOTICS**, page 14

Battle for influence splinters local Sierra Club chapter

Some warn of ‘hostile takeover’

By Riley Cooke

Longtime members of the Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club are raising alarms about what they call a hostile takeover of their organization by a pro-housing coalition.

The internal divide in the chapter — and the organization as a whole — stems from a tension between the Sierra Club's historic environmental and conservation policies and a new wave of climate activists who are struggling to find the space to advocate for denser housing and public transportation.

The Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club, which will hold elections in November, spans three counties in the Peninsula and South Bay: San Mateo, San

Benito and Santa Clara. It was founded in 1933, the fourth local chapter of the organization.

In the Peninsula, one of the top advocacy priorities of the chapter is open space protection and preservation. In East Palo Alto last year, Sierra Club members successfully advocated to protect 17 acres of wetlands that were part of the city's plan for shoreline development. Similarly, the group blocked a 2.5-mile offshore flood barrier wall proposed for Millbrae and Burlingame, arguing that it would endanger the water quality and shoreline ecosystems. Members are still pushing for local cities to adopt dark sky ordinances to reduce light pollution and bird-safe design standards for new construction.

Splitting over priorities

While these environmental efforts are critical to the organization's mission, many Sierra Club members see denser housing and public transportation as equally important — and they have been frustrated for years at the chapter's lack of action in those areas.

“There's a sort of symbiotic relationship between open space preservation and density, right? One of the key pieces of being an open space activist is supporting density in already developed areas,” said Leora Tanjuatco Ross, who has been a member of the Loma Prieta Chapter for 10 years.

Tanjuatco Ross is also the California director of YIMBY Action, a national nonprofit

organization that advocates for more housing as part of the “Yes In My Back Yard” movement. YIMBY activism spun out of a frequent talking point among opponents of new development, which is that they support more housing, so long as it is somewhere else in the city — in other words, “not in my back yard.”

In records obtained by this publication, Tanjuatco Ross sent email blasts from the YIMBY Action account urging recipients to join the Sierra Club in order to become eligible to vote for leadership positions. The subject line of an Aug. 13 email reads: “Get in, we're flipping the Sierra Club.”

“We can make a BIG difference in the Loma Prieta Chapter because leadership positions are decided by a handful of votes in

their fall elections,” the Aug. 13 email continues. “This fall, I will send you a list of some amazing candidates who will turn the local chapter into a force for good.”

Those candidates for the chapter's Executive Committee include transportation activist Mike Swire, battery materials engineer Mike Regula, Mountain View Council member Lucas Ramirez and Palo Alto Forward Vice Chair Natalie Geise. While they aren't explicitly pro-housing in their candidate bios, an email from Ramirez obtained by this publication describes the coalition as dedicated to working on “the most impactful local climate policies - infill housing, transportation,

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Local News

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Lizzy Myers

Administrators at Costaño Elementary in East Palo Alto are getting creative to keep students coming to school every day.

Ravenswood schools aim for better attendance

Schools still recovering from pandemic

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The Ravenswood City School District has made it its mission to reach a 96% attendance rate, and school officials are getting creative to encourage students and families to come to school every day.

In 2023, the school district launched the Ravenswood Promise, an initiative to transform the local schools and “reimagine the Ravenswood

educational experience.” As a part of this strategy, the district has set three priorities: language and literacy, attendance, and talent.

Across all Ravenswood schools, chronic absenteeism continues to be an issue. School administrators say that attendance rates steeply declined during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic, attendance rates were consistently at 94% or above, said Elizabeth Kerridge,

assistant principal of Costaño Elementary School in East Palo Alto. Then, it dropped to as low as 70% and “we’ve been clawing our way back ever since last year,” she added.

Since August, the school district has already seen 3,626 days of school missed in the 2025-26 school year. The grades with the lowest weekly attendance rates last week were transitional kindergarten with

See **RAVENSWOOD**, page 13

Menlo Park churches vandalized with animal rights message

Police aren’t considering hate crime charges

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Five Menlo Park churches were vandalized with animal rights messages last week, according to the Menlo Park Police Department.

The messages, which were discovered on Saturday, Sept. 27, read “Please Pope, bring back reincarnation. No meat = no killing. Obviously. Save souls forever.” Although the Menlo Park Police Department doesn’t have an exact time that the act was committed, it believes the churches were vandalized sometime in the evening and overnight.

Law enforcement officials stated that they currently do not have a suspect and investigations are ongoing.

“They are not considered a hate crime based on what we can tell from the writing, at this time,” added Menlo Park Police spokesperson Nicole Acker.

The targeted churches included the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Catholic, Presbyterian, Lutheran and Christian faith:

- St. Denis Catholic Church, 2250 Avy Ave., Menlo Park
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1105 Valparaiso Ave., Menlo Park
- St. Raymond Catholic Church, 1100 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park
- Menlo Church, 950 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park
- Bethany Lutheran Church,

1095 Cloud Ave., Menlo Park
Lucy Soltau, director of faith formation at St. Denis Church, said she saw the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had been tagged on Sunday morning as she drove by Valparaiso Avenue on the way to St. Denis Church. Soltau said when she arrived at the parking lot of St. Denis, she was surprised to see the same message graffitied on the church’s office building but felt a sense of comfort knowing they were not the only ones.

“I read what they wrote and I got the impression that they were just really passionate about this particular issue and this is the way they chose to express it,” Soltau said. “It didn’t seem to be violent or mean. They even said ‘please’ in their spray painting.”

As a member of St. Denis Church for 10 years, Soltau said it has never been vandalized before last Saturday. The church finished painting over the message two days after.

Menlo Church’s Lead Pastor Phil Eubank said in a statement to The Almanac that while a coat of paint could cover up the graffiti, “acts like this always carry a sense of sadness, not just because of the property damage, but because they often reflect deeper pain or disconnection in our community.” ■

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Sheriff says jail death was murder, case sent to DA

Investigations continue into Sept. 29 incident

By Arden Margulis

San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office investigators say a death at the Maple Street Correctional Center on Sept. 29 was caused by another incarcerated woman giving drugs containing fentanyl to the 31-year-old woman who is now deceased.

Sheriff’s Office detectives believe that the inmate smuggled drugs containing fentanyl into the facility and provided them to Markeisha Monique Renee Blount, leading to

Blount’s death.

While the Coroner’s Office has yet to rule on an official cause of death, the Sheriff’s Office sent the case to the San Mateo County District Attorney’s Office for potential prosecution for murder. Gromnicki, who was in custody and being held for an outside agency related to narcotics and theft, remains at the facility.

The District Attorney’s Office, Sheriff’s Office and Coroner’s Office are still investigating the death.

The Maple Street Correctional Facility has been near maximum capacity as inmates were transferred out of the Maguire Correctional Facility in Redwood City due to elevator issues, which have suspended in-person visitation for months.

Following Blount’s death, the Sheriff’s Office said it has conducted additional sweeps of the facility to locate additional drugs. The Sheriff’s Office says it has a “multi-pronged approach” to prevent contraband from entering the facilities that include

body scanning machines, K-9 units and search procedures.

Blount’s death is the seventh in-custody death since Sheriff Christina Corpus took office in January 2023. Earlier this year, Kyle Harrison died at the Maple Street Correctional Facility in March from an overdose.

“We are deeply saddened by this tragic incident. Our thoughts and prayers are with Markeisha’s family and loved ones during this unimaginable time,” Corpus said in a statement. “Fentanyl is a highly dangerous drug. Even the

smallest amount can be deadly. We will not tolerate people bringing drugs into our facility and putting the safety of our employees, visitors and those in our custody at risk.”

Separately, the Sheriff’s Office recently arrested parolee Brian Siordia, 27, for attempting to smuggle methamphetamine into the Maguire Correctional Facility. He has been charged with 10 felonies and one enhancement. ■

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New Menlo College program to grow culturally competent, Latino leaders

Program to become a minor

By Arden Margulis

Menlo College launched a new Latino Leadership Program aimed at developing culturally competent leaders who can strengthen democratic institutions and contribute to the civic health of their communities.

The initiative, announced on Sept. 18 during National Hispanic Heritage Month (which runs from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15,) will combine classroom learning, mentorship and community engagement to prepare students for leadership roles both within and beyond Latino communities. While the program was inspired by the need to expand pathways for Latino leadership, it will be open to students of all backgrounds.

“Latinos represent nearly 40% of California’s population but remain significantly underrepresented in positions of political and executive leadership nationwide,” said Melissa Michelson, Menlo College’s dean of arts and sciences. “Menlo College is committed to addressing this gap by preparing our students — Latino and non-Latino alike — to become leaders who will shape the future of their communities and beyond.”

The first group of students is expected to graduate in 2027, the same year as Menlo College’s centennial celebration.

Michelson said the program, which is expected to be approved as an official minor by January, will combine coursework with co-curricular experiences such as field trips, campus speakers and volunteer work. Students will begin participating this semester, with at least one field trip and guest speaker already planned.

Menlo College hopes to give students the opportunity to speak with leaders such as U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla, Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court Patricia Guerrero and state Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond.

The minor will include courses such as Latino literature, Latino politics and classes in leadership theory and ethics. Students will also complete a capstone course that requires them to volunteer 40 hours during a semester at local civic organizations, nonprofits or businesses.

The central goal of the program is to help students understand what it means to lead effectively in multicultural contexts. Michelson said the concept of “cultural competency” is critical to leadership in California and beyond.

“You can’t expect somebody to just show up in a Latino community and know how to engage in community organizing or run for office if they didn’t know about that community,” she said. “In order to lead a community, you

have to know that community. You have to know things about Latinos and Latino culture and the history. You have to have knowledge of Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta. You have to know about Diego Rivera.”

Michelson emphasized that the program is designed for all students, not just those who identify as Latino. “While we are an (Hispanic-Serving Institution), this is not just for our Latino students,” she said. “This is for everyone.”

The program also focuses on helping students identify their own leadership styles. “There are many different ways to be a leader,” Michelson said. “The classes are more about, ‘Here are the different ways that people can be leaders. Here are ethical issues that might come up. Here’s some history of some really successful leaders.’ And then once you’ve learned the academic part, the end goal is getting students out into the community.”

Michelson said the idea for the Latino Leadership Program came after learning about the Black Honors College at Sacramento State University, which combines academics with community engagement.

“I thought, ‘What a great program. I wonder if we could do something like that here at Menlo for our students,’ but maybe with a different focus, given that we’re

an HSI,” she said.

Menlo College was designated a Hispanic-Serving Institution in 2019, and Latino students now make up 41% of the student body, 13% above the national average for colleges.

Some recent federal changes have led colleges to scale back diversity programs, but Michelson said while Menlo is proceeding carefully without compromising its values. “We don’t want to do anything that the federal government might find troubling or illegal,” she said. “But we’re also supporting our students who have been personally affected by anti-Latino policies. We’re not backing away from that.”

The Latino Leadership Program is supported in part by a matching gift from a Menlo College donor, and the school is continuing to raise funds to expand opportunities for students.

“We are still raising money,” Michelson said. “The program is being funded in large part by a matching gift from a friend of Menlo, and we are working hard to match that pledge so that we have enough money to do everything we want to do.”

Learn more about the program and supporting it at menlo.edu/degree/latino-leadership-program/. ■

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Foothill College provides world of opportunity outside four-year system

‘Community college serves everyone’

By Hannah Bensen

When speaking to students at his alma mater, Foothill College, Daniel Ramos Mejia shares openly about the 17 course withdrawals on his academic transcript.

Ramos Mejia earned associate’s degrees from both Foothill and De Anza colleges, where he was a first-generation college student with a long commute and a full-time job. At first, he struggled academically. But in his last quarter at Foothill, he walked into his linear algebra class, where his math professor Jeff Anderson was playing reggaeton music. They spoke after class, and something clicked.

With Anderson’s mentorship around time management and strategic career planning, Ramos Mejia earned a 4.0 GPA

with a course schedule that included linear algebra, chemistry and physics. He transferred to San Jose State University for his bachelor’s degree, and on Anderson’s advice, applied for scholarships. He earned so much money — around \$35,000, he estimates — that he quit his full-time job to focus on school.

With a nudge from Anderson, he applied for and soon began a research assistantship in 3-D bioprinting in a Stanford lab, where he worked for three years while at SJSU. Ramos Mejia is now a master’s student in bioengineering at Stanford, where he’s studying on a full scholarship through an ultra-selective fellowship of the National Science Foundation.

At community college, Ramos Mejia said he was allowed to “mess up” without paying a high financial cost. By working hard

and absorbing wisdom from his mentors, he began a trajectory that vaulted him closer to his long-term goals.

The story of Ramos Mejia is a kind of Rorschach test, reflecting belief in the plausibility of the American Dream, the merit of community college, the opportunities of elite institutions, the significance of persistence and the influence of exceptional educators.

For advocates of Foothill, though, students like Ramos Mejia represent a democratic model of education. In an era of college admissions when selectivity is a selling point for many students and universities, Foothill-De Anza Community College boasts a different admissions record: it accepts the top 100% of students into its programs. It’s a point that can be easily glossed over, but one

that administrators and faculty emphasized — repeatedly — with pride.

“Community college serves everyone,” said Simon Pennington, associate vice president of college and community relations at Foothill College. “We have everyone in our classroom, from 14-year-olds doing dual enrollment to people in their 90s doing personal development.”

While the Bay Area’s prominent four-year universities promise big-name professors and prestigious extra-curricular opportunities, schools like Foothill, which is part of the Foothill-De Anza Community College District, are focused on giving students a foothold in a high cost-of-living area.

Foothill serves students from

See **FOOTHILL COLLEGE**, page 17

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Town seeks new bid after Atherton Library work comes in high

Developers want more money

By Arden Margulis

A project to build a children's nature space near the Atherton Library has been delayed after the town rejected all bids it received because they exceeded the project's budget.

The Atherton City Council enthusiastically approved plans in February for a nature-based play area and children's garden behind the library. The design featured several natural play structures, including a small willow hut, a "treehouse," a tunnel of branches, boulders, stumps, benches and pathways.

"It's a nature space; it's filled with natural components, and not a playground," Public Works Director Robert Ovadia said at the time. "It doesn't have swings, doesn't have monkey bars, doesn't have things like that in it."

Miller Company Landscape Architects, which designed the project, estimated construction

would cost \$438,000. However, none of the four companies that bid on the project came close to that figure. Modernscapes Innovations initially submitted the lowest estimate at \$447,840 but later reported a "significant clerical error" that caused it to undercount site furnishings and garden features by \$100,000.

Modernscapes' corrected estimate of \$547,840 would have remained the lowest, but the company was forced to withdraw its bid because the time to submit bids had closed. The next lowest bid, from Suarez & Munoz Construction, came in at \$730,000.

Town staff recommended the council reject all bids and rebid the project. A new request for bids was published on Oct. 1 and closes on Oct. 28. The town hopes to award a construction contract at its Nov. 19 council meeting.

Atherton's library is operated by the San Mateo County

Library Joint Powers Authority, which manages libraries across the county. While SMCL is funded by property taxes, if it receives more property taxes from a city than it needs to run that city's library, half of the surplus goes into a special fund that must be used to provide library services in the city.

Because Atherton's property tax revenues are so high, its library fund has built up a large balance that the town has struggled to spend. The children's area was intended as one way to use those restricted funds. As of June 2025, the fund held \$2.5 million after it grew by \$1.6 million in fiscal year 2024-25.

Before bids were submitted, SMCL planned to use



Courtesy town of Atherton

Renderings show what the new nature space behind the Atherton Library might look like when completed.

\$600,000 from the fund for the children's area and the town's administrative costs related to the project. In total, SMCL expected to draw about \$1.37 million from the fund for various purposes, including

\$375,000 for aesthetic upgrades and design work on solar carports and electric-vehicle charging infrastructure. ■

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

San Mateo County air quality affected by San Gregorio fire

Forward progress on fire has been stopped

By Arden Margulis

Vegetation fire burning in a rural area of western San Mateo County has consumed about 20 acres on Tuesday, Oct. 7, according to Cal Fire, and is affecting air quality in parts of San Mateo County.

The fire was first reported at about 1:45 p.m. near Seaside School Road in the unincorporated community of San Gregorio.

As of 3 p.m., it had grown to roughly 20 acres and forward progress had been stopped, according to Cal Fire, which dubbed it the School Fire. The fire is not located near a school.

While forward progress has stopped, air quality in areas of San Mateo County may be impacted. Purple Air reports that some air quality monitors in Portola Valley and Sky Linda are reading over 100 AQI, which is unhealthy for sensitive groups. The Environmental Protection Agency recommends sensitive groups, which includes people with heart and lung disease, older adults, children, people with diabetes and people of lower socio-economic status, avoid prolonged or heavy exertion.

In San Gregorio, the air quality is as bad as 186 AQI, which is considered unhealthy and may affect the general population.

One building was threatened but none were destroyed.

Coastside Fire, San Mateo County Fire and Cal Fire led the effort to contain the grass fire. Cal Fire crews from Monterey and Ben Lomond assisted in addition to volunteers from La Honda Fire and Kings Mountain Fire. Three Cal Fire air tankers and one helicopter provided aerial support.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation. ■

Bay City News contributed to this report.

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Supporters rally at arraignment for Stanford protesters

Trial set for Nov. 17 for students who are charged with vandalism, conspiracy

By Lisa Moreno

Dozens of supporters attended the second arraignment on Monday, Oct. 6, for the 11 Stanford University students who are being charged with felony vandalism and conspiracy to commit a crime after they barricaded themselves inside the president's office building last year to protest the war in Gaza.

A preliminary hearing, which would have given defense attorneys an opportunity to question the evidence in the case, was set for Nov. 3, but the District Attorney's office secured an indictment from a grand jury on Sept. 29, a move that left the defense shocked.

"It is shameful," defense attorney Emily Rose Johns said in a statement. "They should not be afraid to have their evidence tested. They should not be afraid to demonstrate in front of the public that they have probable cause for any of these charges."

Attorneys for the students believe the felony charges that could result in jail time are "extreme" and are an attempt to make an example out of the defendants, Johns said.

"This is the first (vandalism) case in 22 years that they refuse to have a public preliminary hearing on," she said.

Deputy District Attorney Rob Baker, who is leading the case, said they skipped the preliminary hearing to ensure a speedy trial.

The original complaint against the students was filed in April and the case has been slow



Lisa Moreno

Stanford protesters who are facing felony charges and their supporters gather at the Hall of Justice in San Jose for the Oct. 6 arraignment hearing.

to progress following hours-long court hearings and multiple delays.

"There are significant logistical hurdles to present a preliminary hearing involving 11 defendants," he wrote. "If the court could not commence the preliminary hearing within 60 days due to the unavailability of the defense attorneys, the case would have to be dismissed."

The protesters, one of whom is now testifying against the group, allegedly entered the president's office building on the morning of June 5, 2024 by breaking a window and opening doors to let the remaining group members inside, according to police investigation records. The group spilled fake blood made from corn syrup and ransacked office drawers — damage the university believes amounted to \$300,000 in repairs.

It was a demonstration that came after protesters say they

were met with minimal engagement regarding Stanford's divestment from companies that provide military support to Israel, according to court documents.

"Every day, a country of innocent people is destroyed more and more without a shred of mercy," German Gonzalez, one of the Stanford 11, said in a statement. "The dignity of our fellow humans, the Palestinians, has been so stripped to the point that the lives of an entire country of people who are currently experiencing genocide are only covered in the news when people are arrested for peacefully protesting."

The students showed their commitment to their cause on Oct. 6 as they gathered with approximately 50 people to protest the war in Gaza following their arraignment Monday morning.

The group, holding Palestinian

flags outside of the courthouse, chanted phrases like "Stanford, divest, we will not stop, we will not rest."

"I was not scared the day I was suspended. I'm not scared today, the day I'm being charged. So if you are listening to me, if you're listening to me right now, or if you're reading these words, I ask you to continue your steadfast support for Palestine," Gonzalez said.

Despite their ongoing motivation, the subject may be unusable in court after the District Attorney's office filed "in limine" motions, which seek to exclude certain evidence from trial, Johns said. In this case, the District Attorney's office wants to limit the students' political motivations.

"They filed in limine motions, pre-trial motions to try to have a judge prevent anybody on the defense team, any witness, from talking about what is really going on here, talking about Palestine, talking about the genocide," Johns said.

Baker said Johns' statement was "wrong," and that the District Attorney's office is not filing a motion to prohibit speech.

"The PEOPLE have no objection to *limited testimony* from the defendants, should they testify, as to their motive for committing conspiracy and vandalism. . . Using this trial as vehicle to express political views *unrelated* to the facts and jury instructions will confuse the jury, and result in an undue consumption of time," he wrote

in a message to this publication.

Defense attorneys and Stanford faculty, dozens of whom signed a petition against the charges, believe the contentious case is an attempt to chill political speech.

"The decision to seek felony charges against young people for acts of civil disobedience — undertaken in opposition to what human rights groups, U.N. experts, and genocide scholars have all now concluded is a genocide — reflects a broader political effort to stamp out protest," according to the petition.

The District Attorney's office is not interested in reducing charges to misdemeanors given that the students are "well educated."

Charges shouldn't be reduced because the protesters "are privileged enough to have a Stanford education," wrote Baker and District Attorney Jeff Rosen in a court document.

"We feel confident that the evidence is strong and that we can prove our case to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt," Baker wrote in a statement to this publication.

The trial date for Gonzalez, Cameron Michael Pennington, Kaiden Wang, Amy Jing Zhai, Eliana Lindsay Fuchs, Gretchen Rose Giumarin, Hunter Taylor-Black, Isabella Terrazas, Maya Burke, Taylor McCann and Zoe Georgia Edelman is scheduled for Nov. 17. ■

Email Staff Writer Lisa Moreno at lmoreno@almanacnews.com.

Minimum wage in East Palo Alto to go up next year

By Lisa Moreno

East Palo Alto City Council unanimously approved at a council meeting on Oct. 7, an increase to the minimum wage from \$17.45 to \$17.90 per hour, which will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2026.

The increase is part of an annual adjustment required under East Palo Alto's Minimum Wage Ordinance, which aims to ensure income keeps up with "regional cost of living changes," according to city documents.

Based on the August 2025 Consumer Price Index, which measures the cost of local goods and services, city staff calculated a 2.5% increase in the minimum wage.

East Palo Alto's minimum wage remains slightly higher

than neighboring San Mateo County cities like Menlo Park, where it is currently \$17.10, and Atherton, where it \$16.50. In Redwood City, the current minimum wage is \$18.20, the second highest in the county.

Any employers who are subject to the East Palo Alto Business License Tax or who own a business facility in the city must adhere to the minimum wage changes for every employee who works two or more hours a week.

In July, San Mateo County launched a new Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement in an attempt to combat wage theft and support low-wage workers, especially across largely immigrant communities.

The office provides a free advice hotline for workers and

employers to provide more accessible support for those "often afraid to report violations due to immigration status, embarrassment or other barriers," according to Carolina Babbidge, a deputy county attorney with the department.

"With the launch of the OLSE, every San Mateo County worker now has a place they can go to locally to receive help and seek justice, if they are being taken advantage of and wronged on a job site," County Supervisor Ray Mueller wrote in a statement.

The City of East Palo Alto will publish a bulletin notice announcing the wage increase to employers by Nov. 1. ■

Email Staff Writer Lisa Moreno at lmoreno@almanacnews.com.

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

John Abraham, 89, a Palo Alto resident who was born in Illinois, who graduated from Stanford University and who was a statistician and a teacher, died on July 31, 2025.

Kenneth Bilodeau, 77, a Palo Alto resident who worked at numerous high-tech startups, who helped form the investment management company AKJ Asset Management and who was a superb woodworker and a private pilot, died on Sept. 28, 2025.

Caroline Orr-Kissner, 76, a Los Altos resident who grew up in Palo Alto, earned a master's degree in public administration, spent her early career at the non-profit organization United

Cerebral Palsy and volunteered by running a soup kitchen, supporting schools and comforting veterans in hospice, died on Oct. 2, 2025.

John Bingham, 92, a Palo Alto resident who was born in London, who earned a master's degree from Stanford University, who worked at various technology companies and was key engineer in development of full duplex modem, who held more than 25 patents in the field of digital communications and who loved singing, folk dancing, hiking and traveling, died on Sept. 24, 2025.

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



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160Phillip.com



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LOS ALTOS | \$4,988,000 | 4 Bd | 5.5 Bth
706NSanAntonio.com



58 MARYMONT AVENUE
ATHERTON | \$17,988,000 | 6 Bd | 11 Bth
58Marymont.com



23171 MORA GLEN DRIVE
LOS ALTOS | \$7,500,000 | 5 Bd | 5.5 Bth
23171MoraGlen.com



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LOS ALTOS HILLS | \$9,398,000 | 6 Bd | 9 Bth
28500MataderoCreek.com



579 GLENBROOK DRIVE
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579Glenbrook.com



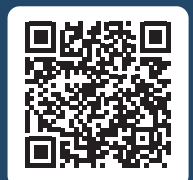
11722 PUTTER WAY
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Wildfire preparedness for parents

The Portola Valley School District and Woodside Fire Protection District will be hosting an online wildfire preparedness presentation for parents from 6:30-7:15 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 14.

The educational event will cover topics including PVSD's wildfire evacuation plan, emergency communication, shelter-in-place and facilities and wildfire risk reduction.

The presentation can be joined through meet.google.com/mba-adgr-kha.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Sustainability resources

The town of Atherton is encouraging residents to take advantage of programs with regional agencies to reduce their environmental impact. However, many of the programs are available to people across the Bay Area and San Mateo County.

- Cal Water's conservation rebates can help fund switching to more efficient appliances, plumbing and landscaping. The rebates are available to anyone who receives water from Cal Water. Learn more at calwater.com/conservation-rebates/.
- Peninsula Clean Energy offers rebates and 0% interest financing for switching to energy efficient appliances, installing solar and switching to an electric vehicle. The programs are available to anyone with a Peninsula Clean Energy account, which is available to all San Mateo County residents. Learn more at peninsulacleanenergy.com/residential/rebates-offers/.
- San Mateo County residents can purchase rain barrels and receive a rebate from the City/County Association Of Governments Of San Mateo County. The association will have two rain barrel distribution events in Daily City and Half Moon Bay. The rain barrels are \$85 each plus tax. San Mateo County residents can get a \$50 rebate on rain barrels and customers of some water providers can get an additional \$50 rebate, up to the total cost of the rain barrels. Learn more at flowstobay.org/bulk-rain-barrel-program/.

— Arden Margulis

Corpus in line for six-year term if she keeps job

Change stems to align election dates

By CalMatters

A Bay Area sheriff facing imminent removal will get an extra two years in office if the move to oust her fails because of a little-noticed change in California law that moved the dates for local law enforcement elections.

San Mateo County Sheriff Christina Corpus has an unusual six-year term because state legislators in 2022 changed the law to put elections for sheriffs and district attorneys in the same years as presidential elections, which meant moving local campaigns originally slated for 2026 to 2028.

Every sheriff or district attorney who ran in 2022, including Corpus, got those two extra years, unless the official was removed from office in the meantime. That means they get two additional years for voters to forget about a scandal, or ride out other controversies.

San Mateo County moved a step closer to removing Corpus this week when retired Superior Court Judge James Emerson found

cause to remove her on Monday night, more than a month after a two-week trial that included a cascade of allegations portraying a chaotic picture of her two-plus years in office.

Emerson found that Corpus had "a close personal relationship outside the boundaries of a professional working relationship" with a subordinate, unlawfully ordered the arrest of the president of the sheriff's deputies' union and retaliated against a captain who refused to conduct the union president's arrest because he believed it violated state law.

"Appellant Sheriff Corpus's purportedly non retaliatory justification for ordering an investigation against (the deputies' union president) is, at the very least, questionable and, more likely, pretextual," Emerson wrote in the advisory opinion.

Emerson's recommendation will be heard in a separate hearing by the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, which already voted 5-0 in June to proceed with the process to remove Corpus.

6-year-term once had an appeal

When former Corpus supporter Jim Lawrence first learned of the proposed change to election dates during Corpus' 2022 campaign, he was delighted.

"We were so high on (Corpus), we campaigned for her, it was such a welcome change," said Lawrence, board chair of the nonpartisan nonprofit Fixin' San Mateo, which advocates for civilian oversight of the San Mateo Sheriff's Office.

"We were gonna have someone pushing for visibility, transparency, accountability, and we didn't have to deal with the (2026) election cycle. We could wait until 2028. There was just almost no downside."

His feelings about the sheriff have changed.

"She had an amazing group behind her: house parties, street parties," Lawrence said. "We got behind her and then she got in the office and made a complete about-face. It's just, it's really hard. How can the residents of San Mateo County live with this for another two-and-a-half years? It's just unbelievable."

Corpus could not be reached for comment.

The issue is of particular import to the group of San Mateo County residents who led a recall effort against Corpus this year.

After a county investigator found Corpus violated policies on nepotism and conflicting relationships, voters in April passed a measure empowering the county board of supervisors to remove

her. If successful, it would be the first removal of a county sheriff in California history.

In the meantime, unions representing San Mateo County Sheriff's Office deputies and sergeants have issued no-confidence votes in Corpus. Six cities in San Mateo County called for her ouster.

Why California moved sheriff elections

The law to change election years came about because California Democratic legislators sought to put elections for county offices on the years where voter turnout is highest, an effort that was opposed by Republicans in the Assembly and Senate.

"Overall, presidential elections attract significantly more voters than midterm elections," the League of Women Voters of California wrote in 2022 in support of the bill. "Furthermore, midterm electorates include fewer people from underrepresented populations — including youth, Black, Latino, and Asian American people than do presidential electorates."

The move faced opposition from the California State Sheriffs' Association, which argued that presidential year elections are "no guarantee that voters will examine their choices more carefully."

"A longer election ballot could result in voter fatigue and fewer votes cast in 'down-ticket' races," the sheriffs' association wrote in opposition to the bill.

Fresno County voters went as far as passing a ballot measure last year that would have forced the county to maintain off-year elections for sheriffs and district attorneys. Attorney General Rob Bonta sued, and a Fresno County Superior Court judge sided with Bonta and the state, keeping Fresno's county elections on the presidential election calendar.

In Alameda County, the successful 2024 campaign to oust former District Attorney Pamela Price was lent heightened urgency by the prospect that she would serve until 2028 if not recalled. The Alameda County Board of Supervisors picked new District Attorney Ursula Jones Dickson as her replacement.

As for Corpus, even if the county board of supervisors votes to remove her, the Palo Alto Daily Post reports that a San Mateo Superior Court judge overseeing Corpus' lawsuit against the county ruled that Corpus won't be removed right away.

The judge ruled she should receive some extra time to challenge her removal: not an extra two years, but an extra two weeks. ■

Menlo Park Quarterly Market Report

July 1, 2025 - September 30, 2025

TOP 10 SALES*

1. \$10,500,000 1310 Bay Laurel Drive	2. \$10,200,000 1025 Continental Drive	3. \$10,175,000 1080 Creek Drive	4. \$9,425,000 890 Berkeley Avenue
5. \$8,750,000 1205 Trinity Drive	6. \$8,690,000 1080 Cotton Street	7. \$7,000,000 1303 American Way	8. \$6,528,800 28 Politzer Drive
9. \$6,035,000 950 Lucky Avenue	10. \$5,858,888 1045 Lassen Drive		

ACTIVE LISTING

Q3 25: 143
Q3 24: 118
↑ 21%

PENDING LISTING

Q3 25: 99
Q3 24: 88
↑ 13%

SOLD LISTING

Q3 25: 101
Q3 24: 91
↑ 11%

AVERAGE SALES PRICE

Q3 25: \$3,485,065
Q3 24: \$3,338,930
↑ 4%

AVERAGE SALES PRICE/SQ FT

Q3 25: \$1,547
Q3 24: \$1,503
↑ 3%

AVERAGE SOLD DAYS ON MARKET

Q3 25: 34
Q3 24: 23
↑ 48%

MONTHS OF INVENTORY

Q3 25: 1.60
Q3 24: 1.90
↓ 16%

If no further homes/condos were to come to market, the area would be SOLD OUT of residential real estate in the number of MONTHS shown

SALE/LIST PRICE

Q3 25: 101.50%
Q3 24: 103.90%
↓ 2%

30 YEAR MORTGAGE RATE

9/25/2024: 6.24% 9/20/2025: 6.27%
Source: Bankrate

★ Q3 2025 compared to Q3 2024

*Source: MLS Listings for Single Family Properties | Townhomes | Condos

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Judge decides County has cause to remove Sheriff Corpus

'Sheriff Corpus elevated her own interest'

By Miranda de Moraes

Just over a month after the thorny, two-week public hearing that aired allegations of abuse of power, a retired judge has concluded that San Mateo County has cause to remove Sheriff Christina Corpus.

Retired Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge James Emerson issued the advisory opinion Monday just one week ahead of the 45-day deadline, finding that Corpus used her position to benefit Victor Aenlle, with whom she had a "close personal relationship outside the boundaries of a professional working relationship," according to a news release.

"The evidentiary record is highly suggestive that appellant Sheriff Corpus and Mr. Aenlle were in a romantic extra-marital relationship," the judge stated in his opinion.

Because of her relationship with Aenlle, the judge found that "Sheriff Corpus elevated her own interest" over her obligation to appoint and recruit hires.

Emerson also found that the sheriff engaged in conflicts of interest, by directing the arrest of the deputy sheriffs' union president, Carlos Tapia, without probable cause. The record, he wrote in his opinion, shows that the sheriff's motives had to do with Tapia's position and/or activities with the Deputy Sheriffs' Association labor union.

Corpus' justification for ordering an investigation against Tapia, the judge wrote, "is, at the very least, questionable and, more likely, pretextual." That's because Corpus "already lost credibility" in denying her relationship with Aenlle.

Once more, Emerson found Corpus guilty of retaliation for transferring Cpt. Brian Philip who refused to deliver a notice that he believed was improper and could violate state law. The judge concluded Philip's refusal was protected under state laws.

Corpus took office in January 2023, with questions arising regarding her conduct within her first year. The Board of Supervisors responded by authorizing an independent investigation by the San Francisco law firm Kecker, Van Nest & Peters LLP.

The firm, in a 408-page report, later referred to as "the Cordell report," found that Corpus had an inappropriate romantic relationship with Aenlle and that they together fostered a culture of intimidation and retaliation at the

Sheriff's Department.

As the county's first female and Latina sheriff, Corpus refuted the county attorneys' portrayal of her in her August testimony, saying that "I've fought tooth and nail to where I've gotten today with integrity."

The opinion comes as Aenlle awaits an update on a separate, 114-page complaint he filed Sept. 18 against County Executive Mike Callagy, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and others. In it, his lawyers assert that the county is responsible for a campaign of retaliation, wrongful termination, defamation and unconstitutional abuse of power against him.

The county denied Aenlle's claims.

"The falsehoods alleged in this

lawsuit are an additional distraction that will cost taxpayer money," the county's Interim Director of Strategic Communications, Effie Milionis Verducci, told this media organization last month.

Measure A, a charter amendment approved by 84% of county voters, authorized the Board of Supervisors to pursue the removal of an elected sheriff for cause. The board voted unanimously on June 24 to begin removal proceedings against Corpus once Measure A passed, which was followed by a 10-day public hearing in August.

Now that Emerson has issued an opinion from that hearing, which needed to happen by Oct. 13, the board will meet in a special public meeting to determine



Courtesy Neil Gonzales

San Mateo County Sheriff Christina Corpus, wearing a red pantsuit, stands outside of the courthouse in Redwood City on Aug. 29.

whether to remove the sheriff once and for all. The County has not yet scheduled that meeting, which will be open to the public and will take place by Nov. 6.

Hours after the judge issued his decision, Fixin' San Mateo County, a grassroots organization that pushes for civilian oversight of the Sheriff's Office to promote transparency and accountability

in policing, released a press statement addressed to the Board of Supervisors. In it, they requested the county hire a permanent inspector general and collaborate with community members in the selection of a new sheriff. ■

Email Staff Writer
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Bay Area airports get millions for upgrades

Palo Alto to get \$1.4 million for runway improvement, weather reporting equipment

By Bay City News staff

Several Bay Area airports were awarded millions in federal grant funding recently for infrastructure improvement projects, made possible by awards from the U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Aviation Administration.

California received \$168 million for airports across the state, while the cities of Hayward, Monterey, Oakland, Palo Alto, Petaluma, San Carlos, San Francisco, Santa Rosa, and Tracy will receive a collective \$64 million from the FAA for projects to their runways, taxiways, and more.

Palo Alto Airport is set to receive \$1.4 million for weather reporting equipment and for installation of a runway visual guidance system, according to the FAA grant announcement.

The agency's Airport Improvement Program funds

airport infrastructure projects such as runways, taxiways, airport signage, airport lighting, and airport markings. Airports are entitled to a certain amount of funding each year, based on passenger volume.

California's senators applauded the appropriated funds announced Sept. 16 for airports in their home state and talked about how important modern infrastructure at transportation hubs were to keep the state running.

"From large international hubs to the hundreds of small regional or local airports, the Golden State's airports play an essential role in helping millions of Californians and visitors alike get where they need to go," said U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla in a written statement. "This tranche of more than \$168 million in federal aviation funding will modernize our airport infrastructure to create a safer, smoother passenger

experience while creating good-paying jobs and investing in low-emission equipment."

"This federal funding will make a critical investment in California's airports, improving their safety and modernizing their infrastructure, while creating more jobs in communities across the Golden State," U.S. Sen. Adam Schiff said in the same statement.

Five of the region's commercial airports had a collective 73,847,719 passengers transit through their facilities in 2024. While Bay Area air travel is slowly returning to pre-pandemic levels, airport officials are pleased with the announcement of funds that will help prepare their sites for the future.

"Since being established in 1982, (Airport Improvement Program) funding has become an important resource for U.S. airports to enhance safety, security,

and sustainability. Airports are critical infrastructure for the region they serve, and AIP funding ensures they are well-maintained and functional," said San Francisco International Airport spokesman Doug Yakel in an emailed statement.

According to Jon Stout, manager of Charles M. Schulz Sonoma County Airport, funds will be used for environmental mitigation efforts, reconstruction projects, and preventative measures.

"These grants are very important for the (airport) as they will allow the continuation of already started projects to move forward," said Stout.

Monterey's airport was the largest single recipient in California, and its funding will be used to construct a new passenger terminal.

Besides commercial airports, Petaluma's small recreational airport is also receiving funds to upgrade their facilities. The airport's manager, Dan Cohen, said the funding is vital to maintain their infrastructure to FAA specifications.

"By taking some of the long-term infrastructure costs, the FAA frees up many federally obligated small airports to cover their annual operating expenses with hangar rents, aircraft fees, and not become a tax burden on local residents," said Cohen. "The airport staff are very grateful to our federal aviation partnerships and are excited to put 100% of the allocated funds towards our shovel ready Taxiway and Taxilane projects." ■

Editor Gennady Sheyner contributed to this story.

RAVENSWOOD

continued from page 5

83% and first grade with 89%.

Costaño was at 90% as of last school year, but if it is able to decrease absences by 2,000, it would be able to boost its rates up to 93%, Kerridge explained.

The main reason students are not coming to school is due to housing and transportation insecurity and lingering concerns about sickness, she said.

In order to support families and students, the district and each school site has been working together and individually to brainstorm ways to improve attendance rates.

"It's a lot of throwing stuff at the wall and seeing what sticks," said Kerridge. "It's gonna work for someone, and that's all that really matters. Sometimes it's just one family at a time."

As part of the district's initiative, start and end times have shifted to allow for more bus routes, increasing the capacity for transportation. Belle Haven Elementary School and Los Robles Ronald McNair Academy start at 8:15 a.m. and Costaño and Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Middle School start at 8:45 a.m., according to Belle Haven Principal Michelle Masuda.

Some schools, including Belle Haven and Costaño, also open school gates as early as 7:30 a.m., allowing parents who have earlier work shifts to drop off their children under the

care of school staff, said Lester Ramirez, a mental health therapist at Costaño.

In classrooms, school administrators are finding ways to celebrate the students who are coming to school every day through raffle entries, prizes, awards and acknowledgements.

Schools also partner with the Tzu Chi Foundation to set up student incentive programs with tokens that can be traded in exchange for items at the student store.

At Belle Haven, students who have only missed one day of school for the month are entered into a raffle for a chance to win an exclusive super panther shirt. On Wednesday mornings, the school also holds an assembly to recognize the student who had the best attendance for the previous week.

Parents and family members who get their children to school are also celebrated during a dinner hosted by the school in the winter and at the end of the school year, said Masuda.

On Sept. 22, Belle Haven posted on its social media account that it reached 96% attendance and 100% for the second grade class. Masuda is making sure to celebrate the daily victories to encourage and remind parents.

Ramirez explained that building strong relationships with parents is important for Ravenswood because it develops trust, familiarity and gets families to be more involved.

"Historically, (students and

families) haven't had the same administrators, they haven't had the same mental health therapist that they could help build a relationship with," he added.

The Ravenswood Promise also aims to retain 80% of its effective educators, maintaining the group of familiar faces for students and parents to see around campus.

He also said there are significant growths in academic excellence when parents are invested in their children and helping them get to school to learn.

"Students with good attendance are four times more likely to be reading at grade level and 2.5 times more likely to graduate from high school," writes the school district.

"It's kind of overly simplified to say that if you're not here, you can't learn. But it's true, and when a student is absent 30 or 40 days a year, that's a lot of missed lessons," said Kerridge.

Ravenswood schools are still at the start of its journey to reach its goal but are proud to be working toward bringing positive change for its students.

"96% is an amazing district goal. As a site, we know we can reach 93% or 94% by the end of the year," said Kerridge. "We always aim for the 96%. That's always our goal. But our trajectory is we will get there in about two or three years, if we keep it up." ■

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Project Number: 56109

- Scope of Work:** The scope of work consists of site, landscape and accessibility improvements including tree protection, unit paving, an accessible wood ramp with railings and custom infill panels, accessible wood fiber surfacing and edging, installation of whole wood products, wood fences with wire mesh infill panels, a property line fence, metal gates and railings, a wood frame play structure and deck connection, wood benches, wood steps, various custom garden elements including a willow hut and log benches, site furnishings, associated concrete curbs and footings, drip irrigation system installation and connection to the existing system, planting bed preparation and installation of planting.
- Plans & Specifications:** Plans & Specifications may be obtained at the Town of Atherton's website at: <http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/bids.aspx> at no cost. Additional information is contained in Town of Atherton Standard Specifications, which are available at: <http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/285>. Contractor shall be responsible for any addendums that may be posted on the Town's website. No Plan holders list will be made be available.
- Project Schedule:** The work shall be completed within NINETY (90) working days from the First Day of Construction, exclusive of procurement periods, as defined in the Notice to Proceed. Contractor will be given sixty (60) calendar days for custom poles procurement time after the City's authorizes a Notice to Procure.
- Bid Submission:** SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, California 94027, **until 1:30 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time October 28, 2025**, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. All proposals must be submitted not later than the date and time prescribed. The Bidder is wholly responsible to ensure its Bid is submitted on the date and at the time and place designated for the opening of bids. Any Bid received after the time and date specified shall not be considered. Any Bid may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for opening bids.
- Engineer's Estimate** for the project is: **\$603,243**
- Bid Requirements:** Bids must be for the entire work and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked: "Bid of (Contractor) for **ATHERTON LIBRARY CHILDREN'S GARDEN, Project No: 56109**", along with date and time of bid opening.

Bidders shall refer to the **Bid Requirements** section of the project Plans and Specifications for additional information and requirements.
- Required Contractor's License:** Bidder must possess a current **California Class "A" General Engineering or a California Class "B" General Building** contractor's license issued by the State of California, at the time the Bid is submitted. The Contractor and all subcontractors shall be licensed by the State of California in the class appropriate for the work contemplated. Failure of Contractor or his/her subcontractors to possess such current license at the time of bidding may be deemed sufficient cause for rejection of the bid.
- Portion of Work to be Performed by the Contractor:** The General Contractor shall perform, with his own organization, work of a value amounting to not less than 50% of the total contract, excluding specialty items as may be indicated on the bid schedule.
- Department of Industrial Relations Registration:** A Contractor or Subcontractor shall not be qualified to bid on, be listed in a bid proposal, subject to the requirements of Public Contract Code 4104, or engage in the performance of any contract for public work, as that term is defined in Division 2, Part 7, Chapter 1 of the Labor Code, unless currently registered and qualified to perform public work pursuant to Labor Code Section 1725.5. (<http://www.dir.ca.gov/Public-Works/PublicWorks.html>)
- Reservation of Rights:** The Town reserves the right to reject any or all bids; to make any awards or any rejections in what it alone considers to be in the best interest of the Town and waive any informalities or irregularities in the bids. If there is a reason to believe that collusion exists among any bidders, none of the bids of the participants in such collusion will be considered and the Town may likewise elect to reject all bids received.
- Substitution of Securities:** The successful bidder may substitute securities for retention monies withheld to ensure performance of the contract, in accordance with California Public Contract Code, Section 22300.
- Prevailing Wage Rates:** Bidders are hereby notified that provisions of California Labor Code regarding prevailing wages and apprentices are applicable to the work to be performed under this contract. Pursuant to Section 1773 et seq. the general prevailing wage rates have been determined by the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations and appear in the California Prevailing Wage Rates. Copies are on file at the office of the City Engineer and are available to interested parties upon request. The successful bidder shall post a copy of the wage rates at the job site.
- Bid Preparation Cost:** Bidders are solely responsible for the cost of plan and specification printing and preparing their Bids.
- Town Contact:** Questions regarding the project should be directed to Robert Ovadia, PE, by written Requests for Information (RFI) to: Public Works Department, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027, no later than eight (8) business days before bid opening. RFIs may be emailed to jmiller@millercorp.com.

New wage in new year coming to unincorporated areas of county

By Miranda de Moraes

There are a lot of things to look forward to in 2026 — and a minimum wage increase is one of them.

Limited to the unincorporated parts of San Mateo County, minimum wage will rise 49 cents, totaling \$17.95 an hour come Jan. 1, 2026. The new rate is almost \$1 higher than the state's and will apply to employees who work at least two hours per week, with a few exceptions.

Inclusive of nearly all North Fair Oaks, regardless of immigration status, the minimum wage will include agriculture workers on the coast, the unincorporated Middlefield Road corridor, as well as the Broadmoor Village in North County.

The Board of Supervisors first established a minimum wage for unincorporated areas in November 2022, upon "recognizing the challenges faced by low-wage workers in one of the most expensive regions in the United States," a press release sent by the county's Chief Communications Officer Michelle Durand stated.

The minimum wage, which

went into effect in April 2023, was \$16.50 an hour, to be adjusted based on a formula involving the consumer price index. This was notably higher than the state's rate, which was as low as \$14 an hour at the time, according to the state's Department of Developmental Services.

Minimum wage is enforced by the county's Office of Labor Standards Enforcement, which coordinates with workers and employers to increase awareness of wage requirements, investigates wage complaints and sometimes conducts spot checks.

The office encourages workers in unincorporated San Mateo to report issues by calling 866-870-7726, emailing olse@smcgov.org or submitting an online complaint. Concerns can be filed in any language, anonymously and confidentially.

The Office of Labor Standards Enforcement also offers employers tools to help with minimum wage compliance, like a free and confidential labor advice hotline at (866) 870-7725. The hotline is staffed by attorneys with the office's nonprofit partner, a pro bono legal help foundation called Step Forward. ■

ROBOTICS

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students from all backgrounds and interests find community while building robots.

Young leaders pave the way

When students join the team, they're often "thrown into the deep end," at least that was the experience for Luke Weppner, a junior on Team 100.

When Weppner joined, rookies were given a robot kit and were guided by a team leader on how to build it. Although he was able to gain a wide variety of skills, he said he didn't feel he had mastered any one skill and wanted to learn more.

Rookies typically begin learning technical skills by getting hands-on experience but the training lacked centralized direction, said sophomore student Kai Montauk.

Seeking to provide rookies with a better experience, Montauk and Weppner took it upon themselves to develop a new training program for new team members that provided more guided support.

"I promised myself that if I could next year, I wanted to make sure that the new rookies not only learned as much as I did, but they had a genuinely

fun experience throughout the whole time, and they felt like we cared about them," said Montauk.

The team fosters a strong pathway for younger students to rise to the top as more senior students graduate over the years. It pushes underclassmen to become leaders, to step up and fill in the roles that are necessary to raise the next class of robotics students, said Team 100 coach Scott Ruth.

Guiding the young team members are a group of retired Intel, Google and Boeing Co. engineers with backgrounds in software, and electrical and mechanical engineering. They dedicate their time to support and mentor students using decades of experience in the field.

Culture of learning

Students are learning how to use professional-grade computer-aided design software, solder metal, code and engineer solutions. If they want to learn something new, mentors never say 'no,' the students said.

"I came in with zero experience of anything and they took me in," said sophomore Lucia Eymann. "They taught me everything."

See **ROBOTICS**, page 15

ROBOTICS

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While the main skills in robotics are around engineering, coding and building, students are also developing soft skills such as communication, team work, professionalism, leadership and responsibility.

Team 100 coach Ruth said he's seen students "become more responsible leaders, more confident in themselves, more capable of leading other students."

Chip Krauskopf has been coaching the team for nearly 10 years and joined through his son, who has since graduated. What's kept him coming back to the team for almost a decade is the opportunity to witness the exponential growth that students have over their four years of high school, he said.

"To see the kids come in as 14-year-olds and how they mature over the four years and come out leaders at the end is really super exciting," said Krauskopf. "They take on eagerly, with the optimism of youth, that they can change the world and make it better."

Mentors also encourage the students to learn from their mistakes and to experiment in order to find the answers to their problems. Unlike other school



Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Woodside High School's Team 100 students work on their robot on Oct. 1 in preparation for the Oct. 4 CalGames.

assignments, the answers to robotics are not at the back of the book, said Krauskopf.

"Nobody walks in here knowing how to build robots. We expect you to make mistakes. We expect you to fail. That's how we learn," said Ruth.

Community and wellness

The robotics team spends hours after school together, even into the late hours of the night. Aside from building robots, they spend evenings eating dinner together, weekends working on their robot and go on overnight

trips to competitions.

"Robotics has been great for developing friendships. I think it's a wonderful community for interacting with people with similar interests," said Montauk. "It's a great centralization of interest, and it's this wonderful little niche, just teams all around the world."

As students spend hours working on their robots, mentors are adamant about setting guidelines around wellness for the team to follow. They also require students to have at least a C in every class in order to

participate in the program.

"First is personal health and wellness, second is academics and third is robotics," said Ruth.

Increasing diversity

While Team 100 has had a number of young women on the team in the past, the number of girls has been trending down, according to Eymann. She joined last year with very little experience but is now serving as the spokesperson for girls and Spanish speakers to join the team.

When Krauskopf began coaching, he said the team was "very male demographically," lacked students from diverse backgrounds and mostly included students who were pursuing engineering schools.

According to Eymann, the team currently has about five girls of which only two or three of them are active on the team. When she joined, there were about 10 to 15 girls, she said.

"We're at an all time low, which is not good," Eymann added. "I've had moments where I've been like, 'Oh, I want to quit,' and then I'm like, but then that's one less girl, and then a bunch of other girls would never want to join."

Krauskopf said although they currently have one female

mentor, it has been difficult recruiting female engineers.

Eymann is also fluent in Spanish and noticed the lack of Spanish speakers on the team. Although she has attempted to recruit Spanish speakers, she said she has been unsuccessful.

"(I'm trying to) be a voice for people who don't speak English, who would be interested in joining, because I think it's a very good opportunity for everybody," she said. "I think if they speak Spanish and don't understand English, they might have less opportunities and robotics can open opportunities for them."

While Eymann ambitiously recruits more people of diverse backgrounds to join the team, leaders are recognizing that more needs to be done.

"Ultimately, we want our team to look like our high school. We're not there yet, but we hope to continue to make changes and I think we're better," said Krauskopf. "We have more female representation, we have some more minority representation than we had in past years, but we still have a ways to go in both those areas." ■

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

'Longevity is going to change almost all aspects of our lives'

Stanford psychologist Laura Carstensen explores how longer lifespans are reshaping human experience and well-being. Inspired by her own recovery from a serious accident, she noticed disparities in how young and old patients were treated, sparking her interest in aging. Her research shows that emotional well-being improves with age, as people shift focus from uncertainty and exploration toward positive experiences and meaningful connections. Carstensen's work highlights how perceptions of time influence motivation, resilience, and emotional balance. With 100-year lives becoming more common, she emphasizes valuing each stage of life and leveraging the strengths of older adults as vital societal resources. **SCAN TO READ THE SPOTLIGHT**



PRESENTED BY



SIERRA CLUB

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and electrification.”

A pro-housing slate is also running for the Peninsula Regional Group Executive Committee — one of the chapter’s two regional groups. Those candidates include Yee Lee, Katie Behroozi, Dave Ashton and Mike Regula (who is running for both positions).

Tanjuanco Ross rejected the characterization that the group is committing a “hostile takeover,” as other Sierra Club members have described it, because the push for more pro-housing policies is coming from within the chapter.

“I’ve been a Sierra Club member for 10 years, so it’s my club too,” she said.

When asked why she was sending emails about the chapter elections from her YIMBY Action email to recruit new members, she declined to comment.

A bitter chapter

Her Aug. 13 email has already circulated among longtime Sierra Club members who see it as an effort to hijack the chapter’s election process.

“Because of the low turnout in Loma Prieta elections, the election of new candidates will be decided by only a few people. They said as much in their email,” Anita Stewart, a longtime Sierra Club member, said in an email to this publication. “This outside organization (YIMBY Action) is attempting to hijack the Loma Prieta Chapter and counterfeited the chapter’s endorsement to support housing development and reduce protections of our local natural resources.”

Stewart said she respects the pro-housing coalition’s goals and agrees with many of them, but feels that the Sierra Club is the wrong venue to advocate for them.

Former Palo Alto Mayor Lydia Kou sent an email blast of her own to Sierra Club members on Sept. 10, alerting them to what she called an “ugly hostile takeover by YIMBY Action and their allies.”

Like many longtime Sierra Club members, Kou does not wish to conflate dense housing policies with the chapter’s existing goals around conservation. Instead, she described the two initiatives as incompatible under the Sierra Club tent, and wrote that the policies of the pro-housing groups actually represent a threat to the chapter’s priorities governing open space and water quality.

“If the fake environmentalists succeed, the Sierra Club, like many of the true environmental



File photo by Veronica Weber

Foothills Nature Preserve in Palo Alto is one of many open space habitats in the Peninsula area that is the jurisdiction of the Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club.

groups in recent years, will lose its focus on conserving natural resources for future generations,” Kou wrote.

She also urged recipients of the email to vote in the upcoming elections for other candidates, most of whom are seeking re-election on the chapter or regional group Executive Committees. Kou did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Housing Action Coalition, a San Francisco-based nonprofit that operates statewide and advocates for more housing to address affordability and displacement, is another organization that has sent email blasts urging members to “flip” the Sierra Club, with the same list of candidates to support as YIMBY Action.

Ali Sapirman, advocacy and police manager at Housing Action Coalition, sent an email out on Aug. 4 urging recipients to join and vote because “the chapter’s policy stances and endorsements do not address the most impactful local actions we have with respect to climate (infill housing and more transportation options).”

Sapirman declined to comment when reached by email.

Not just housing

Despite the urging from YIMBY Action and Housing Action Coalition, Loma Prieta Chapter Chair Mike Ferreira said the number of new members in August has been on track with previous years.

“The numbers were only slightly above average,” he said. “Normally, were it not for this thing that’s going on, we might not even have noticed it.”

Not all the candidates pushed by the two groups are explicitly YIMBY, or even explicitly pro-housing. It appears that other Sierra Club members are more concerned about the coalition’s association with YIMBY groups — even though the candidates

themselves state that their advocacy is primarily about environmental issues, with housing being one of many pieces that make up that advocacy.

Regula said his primary focus is on energy storage and battery technology. Regula has been a member of the Loma Prieta Chapter for about six months, he said, but he hopes to bring his decade of experience in battery materials engineering to the Sierra Club and advocate for renewable energy and more environmentally friendly transportation.

Another main component of his campaign is fostering community within the chapter. One of the challenges Regula sees in the chapter right now is declining membership, for example.

Behroozi, a Menlo Park resident who is running for the regional Executive Committee, said she was motivated to run because it feels more productive to take local action instead of “wringing my hands about the state of the world.” Her climate advocacy in the past has focused on making transportation more accessible while reducing car dependency.

In terms of housing, she said her values align with the existing Sierra Club policies that support infill and transit-oriented development.

“I’d like to see our chapter continue to advocate for these policies and endorse candidates who support them,” she wrote in an email.

Other candidates see housing as a bigger part of their campaign for the Executive Committee.

Ramirez, the Mountain View Council member, said the Sierra Club has gone on record opposing housing that he says is exactly the kind that environmentalists should support.

“High density housing with dedicated land for park space (and) walking distance from

the downtown Caltrain station strikes me as the type of housing that we want to see in our communities,” he told this publication.

Ramirez said he was opposed to building more housing in areas that would contribute to urban sprawl and damage sensitive lands and wildlife habitats, referring specifically to builder’s remedy projects that have been proposed for unincorporated parts of Santa Clara County. Those projects will have severe and negative lasting impacts on the environment, Ramirez said.

Ramirez also noted that there are different perspectives within the Sierra Club, which he has been a member of since 2014. But the tent was big enough for all kinds of advocacy work.

“The intent is not to stifle voices,” Ramirez said.

Like Tanjuanco Ross, he said the idea that pro-housing candidates represented a “hostile takeover” of the Sierra Club also was hyperbole and an inaccurate representation of what actually was possible. He noted that he did not have a position of power in the Sierra Club and doesn’t have control over the election procedures.

With his candidacy, Ramirez says the hope is to include more support for environmentally sustainable policies, like infill housing development in transit-rich areas. Support for those kinds of projects would go hand-in-hand with the Sierra Club’s longstanding work of protecting and preserving agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands, open space areas and wildlife, Ramirez said.

Thinking locally

Nationally, the Sierra Club supports denser housing, more public transportation and other policies that create sizable overlap with the agenda of many YIMBY organizations. In August 2021, the national Sierra Club issued a report over 100 pages long supporting urban infill housing and recommending strategies for local chapters to implement policies toward that end.

The report lists a primary misconception about infill housing advocacy as being that “Sierra Club’s overriding objective, in the urban/suburban context is the preservation of trees.” The report also describes the NIMBY opposition to new housing — that it would be appropriate somewhere else in the city or neighborhood — as “an enormous problem.”

Local chapters must abide by the national policies, but they often diverge when it comes to strategies and endorsements.

While the Loma Prieta Chapter has not made

statements or endorsements of statewide housing policy recently, the statewide group often opposes changes to the California Environmental Quality Act that are intended to make housing easier and cheaper to build. CEQA requires lengthy environmental reports and public engagement for new development, and state lawmakers have authored dozens of legislation in recent years to streamline the process or exempt certain types of development from CEQA review.

The state and local chapters argue instead that CEQA remains an important safeguard against environmental destruction from new developments.

“These half-baked bills written behind closed doors will have destructive consequences for environmental justice communities and endangered species across California,” Sierra Club California wrote in a statement after the passage of Assembly Bill 130 and Senate Bill 131 earlier this year. Both bills either streamline or exempt some developments and rezoning under CEQA.

The elections for the Loma Prieta Chapter take place in November, but like the YIMBY Action email alluded to, turnout is historically low. Stewart, one of the longtime Sierra Club members, said people receive a ballot with background information on candidates, but it often ends up unread, discarded, or both.

Candidates for chapter leadership positions are selected by the chapter’s appointed Nominating Committee, which is instructed to put at least two more candidates on the ballot than there are open positions, according to the chapter bylaws. Candidates can also get a spot on the ballot via a petition signed by at least 40 chapter members. For regional leadership, the petition only needs 15 signatures.

Ferreira, the chapter’s chair, said this is the first time in the chapter’s history that Executive Committee candidates are on the ballot through petitioning, which presents a new challenge for running this year’s elections.

As the internal divide reaches a tipping point in the organization’s future of advocacy, he said the election could also provide an opportunity for greater engagement going forward.

“If you don’t have a burning issue, people are going to tend to think, ‘Why should I vote?’” he said. “So I would expect turnout to double or more.” ■

Staff Writer Emily Margaretten contributed to this report.

Email Staff Writer Riley Cooke at rcooke@almanacnews.com.

FOOTHILL COLLEGE

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a diverse range of socioeconomic backgrounds, Pennington said, and many students pursue their studies while working multiple jobs. Some students also face housing or food insecurity. In 2023, following the passage of a state law that required community colleges to establish a center addressing students' basic needs, Foothill opened the Owl's Nest Center. The center offers services including a daily food pantry, Wal-Mart gift cards, and resources for students facing housing insecurity, such as a recently-opened affordable housing development for students.

On a September afternoon during the college's first week of classes, dozens of students dropped by the owl's nest to grab a granola bar, weekly groceries, or to chat with the program coordinator of the center, Sonia Sánchez. Sánchez said that around 1,300 different students — around a fifth of Foothill's in-person student population — take advantage of the food services per quarter. The center, Sánchez says, gives students the chance to focus on their future goals.

"(They can) focus on their academics because their stomachs will be full, or their basic needs will be met," Sánchez said. "That will be one thing less for them to worry about."

The college is increasingly focused on facilitating job opportunities with family-sustaining wages, Foothill President Kristina Whalen said. Teresa Ong, another top Foothill administrator, said that the college serves as a liaison between academia and industry. For example, after hearing that Silicon Valley-based semiconductor manufacturers Applied Materials and Infinera lacked skilled labor, Foothill created a semiconductor apprenticeship to ensure a talent pipeline.

"When cities say, 'We're going to launch a new industrial park for biotechnology,' we need to be at the table," said Ong, who serves as Foothill's vice president for workforce innovation and economic development. "Because that just means you need a talent pipeline for whatever industrial park you're going to build...and then we know our students will have a job."

The college offers apprenticeship programs in trades such as plumbing, air conditioning and sheet metal which allows students to earn money working while taking classes two nights per week. Amid an increasing skepticism of the value of four-year universities and a burgeoning interest in the trades, Foothill's Dean of Apprenticeships Chris Allen said that the programs are seeing

more applicants. Allen attributed this trend to improved outreach from Foothill and factors related to artificial intelligence.

Foothill students can also obtain associate's degrees in disciplines such as computer science, biology and media at a fraction of the cost of a four-year university. The college estimates that nine months of tuition would cost about \$1,500 for California residents and around \$13,000 for non-residents. Tuition and textbook costs are often waived for first-time, full-time students through the state program such as California Promise, meaning that many students like Ramos Mejia can attend Foothill tuition-free. In comparison, tuition runs \$67,500 per year at Stanford and \$17,500 for in-state students at the University of California, Berkeley.

With 2.1 million students enrolled at 116 community colleges, the California Community College system serves more than double the number of students of the University of California and California State system combined. Still, California community colleges receive less funding per student than any other public education system in the state, at \$13,000 per community college student, \$36,000 for a UC student, and \$22,600 for a CSU student. That figure is also less than the \$21,600 taxpayers spent on a K-12 student in California in 2022.

Even with less financial resources than four-year universities, Foothill has long been recognized for educational excellence and its industry partnerships with Silicon Valley companies. It was recently named the no. 1 community college in the nation by Niche, an education website, and the Foothill-De Anza district has earned the moniker the "Harvard of community colleges," according to some internet forums.

The college has attracted a variety of students with different goals. This publication spoke to Vania, a psychology student from Iran hoping to obtain advanced degrees in neuroscience or counseling; Austin Fujii, a 19-year-old Palo Alto High School alumnus studying sociology who is an involved member of student government; and Cristian Ambriz, a 22-year-old graduate of East Palo Alto Academy who took gap years after high school before starting his associate's degree in kinesiology at Foothill.

Foothill also offers students the chance to transfer their Foothill credits to four-year universities. Paco Li, 19, is an international student from China studying statistics and data science who hopes to transfer to UCLA after obtaining his associate's degree from Foothill.

The college has transfer

agreements with many four-year universities, including most in the UC and CSU system. These agreements guarantee admission to several schools if students fulfill certain GPA and degree requirements. For the most competitive schools like Berkeley and UCLA, Foothill has preferred admission agreements which increase their chances of admission to more than 75%, far higher than the general acceptance rate around 10%.

Current Foothill College student Maria Blaze, a San Jose native who attended Piedmont Hills High School, says that her

Foothill courses and extracurriculars have equipped her with strong public speaking skills and experience in policy and advocacy work. Blaze, who is studying for a political science associate's degree, was elected by her peers to serve as the student trustee of the college. In August, California Gov. Gavin Newsom appointed her to the California Community Colleges Board of Governors.

This past summer, Blaze was one of 25 Foothill students selected to attend Stanford Summer Session, where she took a biology class on a full scholarship. After graduating from Foothill, Blaze

hopes to become a political commentator or run for office.

"Community college has genuinely changed my life," Blaze said. "(I am) someone who graduated from high school with a 2.8 GPA and now is thriving in community college because of the resources that are provided. I am forever grateful for it." ■

Hannah Bensen is a recipient of the California Local News Fellowship who is a member of the Embarcadero Media Foundation Staff through 2027. She can be reached at hbensen@almanacnews.com.



Town of Atherton

Planning Commission, October 22, 2025

REGULAR MEETING, 6:00 P.M.

This meeting is held virtually and in-person at the Council Chambers 80 Fair Oaks Lane

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the **Atherton Planning Commission** will hold a public hearing to consider the items listed below during their regular meeting.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that said application is set for hearing by the Planning Commission at its meeting on **October 22, 2025, at 6:00 PM** in-person and via teleconference accessible through the information provided below, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the projects listed in the public hearing section should or should not be approved. This meeting will be held via teleconference pursuant to Government Code section 54953(e) to provide the safest environment for staff and the public while allowing for public participation. The public may participate in the Planning Commission Meeting via Zoom Meeting or by attending in-person in the Council Chambers at 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027.

Topic: Atherton Planning Commission Regular Meeting

Time: October 22, 2025, 06:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

In person Option: 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027

Zoom Meeting Option and Details:

<https://ci-atherton-ca.zoom.us/j/84150249099>

Meeting ID: 841 5024 9099

One tap mobile:

+13017158592 (Washington DC)

+13052241968 (US)

Find your local number: <https://ciathertonca.zoom.us/j/84150249099>

Remote Public Comments:

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

Email: planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us

Projects under Public Hearing:

- Consideration of a request for **Appeal (APL25-002) of Notice of Violation/Penalty (CE-25-576)** for the removal of a heritage Redwood tree at **97 Placitas Avenue (APN 060-191-140)**. Pursuant to Atherton Municipal Code (AMC) Section 8.10.070 any person causing removal of a heritage tree in violation of Chapter 8 shall submit an amount equal to two times the appraised value of the removed heritage tree as a civil penalty. The penalty for the removal of the subject tree is \$112,000. Per AMC Section 8.10.080 and 17.06.100 the applicant is appealing the penalty to the Planning Commission.
- Consideration of a resolution recommending **amendments to the Atherton Municipal Code (AMC) to adopt an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance**. In the adopted and state-certified 2023-2031 Atherton Housing Element, the Town indicated that it would pursue an inclusionary housing program that would require proposed multifamily developments to provide 20 percent of the units at income levels that meet specific affordability levels. The proposed ordinance will pursue that objective. After the Planning Commission meeting the amendments may proceed to the City Council for consideration and final adoption. Additional information on the Town's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance is available on the Town's website at: <https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/677/Inclusionary-Housing-Ordinance>

If you have any questions on the items above, please contact Brittany Bendix, Consulting Town Planner, at bbendix@ci.atherton.ca.us or (408) 688-2432.

The agenda for this meeting with links to related staff reports can be found online by **Friday, October 17, 2025**, here: <https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/641/Agendas-Minutes>

IF YOU CHALLENGE the listed projects in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues you or someone else raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence delivered to the Planning Commission at, or prior to, the public hearing. Planning Commission decisions are appealable by any aggrieved person to the City Council within 10 days of the date of the decision. If you have any questions on an item please contact the Planning Commission Contact: planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us

ATHERTON PLANNING COMMISSION

Any attendee who wishes accommodation for a disability should contact the Building Division at (650) 752-0542 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

/s/ Brittany Bendix
Brittany Bendix, Consulting Town Planner

Public Notices

AERO AESTHETICS DETAILING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: FBN719429
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) AERO AESTHETICS DETAILING , located at 1250 Aviation Ave / Suite 250-V , San Jose, CA 95110.
Registered owner(s):
AERO AD, LLC
1051 Santa Cruz Ave #1
Menlo Park, CA 94025
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 08/15/2025.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 03, 2025.
(ALM Sep 19, 26, Oct 3 and 10, 2025)

DAX JANITORIAL SERVICES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301693
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) DAX JANITORIAL SERVICES , located at 63 Haven Drive, Daly City, CA, 94014.
Registered owner(s):
DAVID CHRISTIAN WILLIAMS
63 Haven Drive
Daly City, CA 94014
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 September 19, 2025.
(ALM Oct 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2025)

SPEACHY LEARNING CENTER
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301667
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) SPEACHY LEARNING CENTER , located at 1164 Chestnut Street, Menlo Park, CA 94025.
Registered owner(s):
SPEACHY SPEECH THERAPY INC.
1164 Chestnut Street
Menlo Park, CA 94025
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 12/18/2015.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 16, 2025.
(ALM Sep 26, Oct 3, 10 and 17, 2025)

TWO FIFTEEN LIFE SCIENCES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301707
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) TWO FIFTEEN LIFE SCIENCES , located at 3676 Highland Avenue, Redwood City, CA 94062.
Registered owner(s):
MARC BEBAN
3676 Highland Avenue
Redwood City, CA 94062
State of Incorporation/Organization: California
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 September 22, 2025.
(ALM Oct 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2025)

WAGS&CHEW
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301620
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) WAGS&CHEW , located at 1090 Atkinson Ln, Menlo Park, CA 94025.
Registered owner(s):
ASTOR TOYOS
1090 Atkinson Ln
Menlo Park, CA 94025
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 September 11, 2025.
(ALM Sep 26, Oct 3, 10 and 17, 2025)

MAKE MUSIC INSTEAD
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301581
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) MAKE MUSIC INSTEAD , located at 8 Sunset Ln, Menlo Park, CA, 94025.
Registered owner(s):
MOTOHIDE HATANAKA
8 Sunset Ln
Menlo Park, CA 94025
State of Incorporation/Organization: California
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 8/8/2025.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 08, 2025.
(ALM Sep 26, Oct 3, 10 and 17, 2025)

DREAMSCAPE PRINTABLES
FERN MOON STUDIO
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301684
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) DREAMSCAPE PRINTABLES , 2.) FERN MOON STUDIO , located at 1264 Skyline Dr., Daly City, CA 94015. Mailing Address: 1968 S. Coast Hwy #2658 Laguna Beach, CA 92651
Registered owner(s):
CYNTHIA FERN
1968 S. Coast Hwy #2658
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
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 September 18, 2025.
(ALM Oct 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2025)

CAMCO FURNACE
CAMCO
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301621
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) CAMCO FURNACE , 2.) CAMCO , located at 1017 Bransten Rd, San Carlos, CA 94070.
Registered owner(s):
CONCEPTS & METHODS CO INC
1017 Bransten Rd
San Carlos, CA 94070
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 12/10/1992.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 11, 2025.
(ALM Sep 19, 26, Oct 3 and 10, 2025)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 25-CIV-06910
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Pei-Yu Chi filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
PEI-YU CHI to PEGGY CHI
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted.
Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING: 11/20/2025, 9:00AM,

Southern Branch of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: 9/23/2025
Rachel Holt
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Oct 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2025)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 25-CIV-06985
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Raul Garcia-Gonzalez filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
RAUL GARCIA-GONZALEZ to RAUL NOE GARCIA-RON
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted.
Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING: November 25, 2025, 9:00 AM, Civil Department of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, California 94063.
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: September 25, 2025
Rachel Holt
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Oct 10, 17, 24 and 31, 2025)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO COUNTY
Case No.: 25CIV06435
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Ashley Suzanne Hagood filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
ASHLEY SUZANNE HAGOOD to ASHLEY SUZANNE HAGOOD CATANEO
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted.
Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING: 11/03/2025, 9:00am, Hall of Justice of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo County located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: 09/04/2025
Hon. Stephanie Garratt
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Sep 26, Oct 3, 10 and 17, 2025)

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[AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/](https://www.almanacnews.com/legal_notices/)

Employment

ENGINEERING
Robinhood Markets, Inc. has an opening in Menlo Park, CA for Senior Software Engineer (9707037): Crt hgh-qlty pdts tht lvrg tchnlgs, sch as React, TypeScript, & CSS-in-JS. Tlcmgt prmttd. Salary Range: \$187,000.00 to \$253,000.00/year. Background checks req. See bnfts at <https://careers.robinhood.com/benefits>. Email resume with job title & job code to rhijobs@robinhood.com

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Carolyn Compton

September 14, 1935 – May 15, 2025

Dr. Carolyn Compton, a lifelong educator, passionate mentor, and pioneer in the field of learning disabilities, passed away on May 15, 2025. Her career was dedicated to teaching and advocacy, beginning with a B.A. from Oberlin College, an M.A. from San Francisco State University, and a Ph.D. from Stanford University. She taught in public schools in Ohio and Germany, and held positions at San Francisco State University and the University of Alaska. From 1970 to 1997, she held various leadership roles at the Children's Health Council, retiring as Associate Director.

To read more about Carolyn's distinguished career & beautiful life, Scan QR Code:

A Celebration of Life Honoring Carolyn Compton.
Longtime Educator, Founder of Morrissey Compton, Inc., and Former Associate Director of The Children's Health Council
Please Join Us In A Celebration of Life Honoring Carolyn Compton.
October 23, 2025 4:00 - 7:00 PM.
Family Farm 1400 Portola Road Woodside, California 94062.

We kindly request that you RSVP by 10/20.
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PAID OBITUARY

Adrian Enrico Ledda

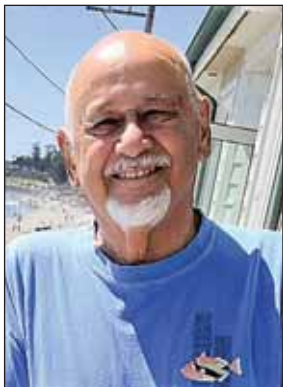
July 4, 1938 – September 13, 2025

Mr. Adrian Ledda was born July 4, 1938, in Redwood City, California and passed away September 13, 2025, in Tyler, Tx. He graduated Menlo Atherton High School and attended College of San Mateo.

Adrian began his career managing Stickney's Restaurants before owning his own businesses in Redwood City and Woodside: Adrian's, Stagecoach Restaurant and the Brown Jug liquor store.

Adrian married Rita Herring on April 14, 1974. He loved animals and spent years in his hobby of breeding and training dogs from his kennel vom Haus Ledda German Shepherd Dogs to the highest levels. He competed in regional and national championships in a sport now called International Working Dog Trials.

Mr. Ledda is survived by his wife Rita of Carthage, Tx; daughter, Stacey McGowan of Willow Glen; son, David Ledda of San Jose; sister, Bobbie Keller of Sunnyvale; 2 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.



PAID OBITUARY

The primary care doctor is becoming endangered in Silicon Valley

Many reasons for scarcity of doctors in area

By Dr. George F. Smith

Not long ago, a friend told me, “I switched insurance and can’t find a doctor who will take me.” Another said, “I left Kaiser after going on Medicare and now no one will see me.” These aren’t isolated complaints. They’ve become the new reality in Silicon Valley: It’s easier to buy a multimillion-dollar home than to find a new primary care doctor.

I saw this problem firsthand before I retired from full-time practice at the end of 2020. At my Palo Alto Medical Foundation clinic in Daly City, only two of us out of more than a dozen internists and family physicians had “open panels” — meaning we were allowed to accept new patients. Everyone else had closed their doors, maxed out with 1,200 to 1,500 patients each.

In my old solo practice, I never turned anyone away. If someone was sick, I squeezed them in. Same-day care built trust, spared ER visits and kept people healthier. But that old

model doesn’t exist anymore.

Now, most Bay Area primary care doctors are employees of giant health systems — Stanford, Sutter, Kaiser. On paper, this should work: doctors get a salary, fewer administrative headaches, flexible schedules, and no hospital rounds or mid-night phone calls. But here’s the catch: many work part-time, often by choice. Younger physicians, especially those balancing family responsibilities, understandably opt for lighter schedules. The result is fewer available clinic hours, longer waits and fewer open panels.

I experienced this from the patient side when I tried to find my own doctor after retirement. I wanted to join Stanford’s network for access to their specialists. Despite searching for months, I couldn’t find a single open primary care physician anywhere on the Peninsula. My only option was a video

visit with a brand-new doctor in Fremont — six weeks out.

Recently, I tested access across major systems in Silicon Valley. The results were discouraging:

- Sutter/Palo Alto Medical Foundation: Four doctors in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties were taking new patients, with waits of four to six weeks.

- Stanford Primary Care: Zero availability on the Peninsula, even with a six-month search window.

- Kaiser Permanente: About a dozen doctors open to new patients, with waits up to four weeks.

- One Medical (Amazon-owned): Same-day visits were available, but unclear if doctors were accepting long-term patients.

That’s slim pickings for millions of residents.

Why is this happening in one of the richest regions on earth? Several reasons. First, recruitment is tough. Housing costs are astronomical. Primary care salaries can’t keep pace. Kaiser has helped with home-loan forgiveness, but others haven’t. The workforce is aging. Many



George F. Smith, M.D.

GUEST OPINION

doctors have retired in the past decade. Too few young physicians are replacing them. Concierge medicine is growing. More mid-career doctors are switching to boutique practices with only a few hundred patients who pay \$3,000—\$20,000 a year. Everyone else is left scrambling. Substitutes fill the gap. Nurse practitioners and physician assistants now handle much of the primary care. While they are capable providers, many patients still prefer a physician for complex care. And medical students aren’t choosing primary care. The field pays less, carries heavy workloads and looks less appealing than specialties.

The irony is painful. Silicon Valley, home of cutting-edge medicine and unimaginable wealth, is experiencing the same doctor shortages long associated with rural America. Patients wait weeks for routine visits, rely on urgent care for acute needs and struggle to build lasting relationships with

a doctor who knows them.

Unless something changes — better incentives to recruit and retain physicians, creative housing solutions, or bold new care models — this shortage will only deepen. Concierge medicine will expand, part-time work will rise, and fewer new doctors will enter the field.

The Bay Area may lead the world in technology, but if we can’t guarantee something as basic as access to a primary care doctor, what does that say about our healthcare system? ■

George F. Smith, M.D. is a board certified internal medicine primary care physician. For the past 40 years he has worked in clinics, ERs and multi-specialty medical groups but dedicated the last 25 years of his full-time work to solo private practice in Daly City. He has lived in Menlo Park for the past 20 years. His professional life is chronicled in his new book, “Tales from the Trenches, A Life in Primary Care,” available as a paperback, ebook and audiobook and in our local libraries.



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United Nations Association Film Festival explores new 'Ground'

Four world premieres included among the 60 documentaries screening in this year's fest

By Karla Kane

The documentary "Soaking the Ground" tells of how a community in the Amazon rainforest is using rainwater capture to help address the impact of climate change. The film makes its world premiere at the festival.

Each year, the United Nations Association Film Festival gives local audiences the chance to hear true stories from all over the world, via the sharing of documentaries that relate to the association's dedication to human rights. This year marks the 28th annual festival, with screenings of 60 films in Palo Alto, Stanford, East Palo Alto and San Francisco between Oct. 16 and 26. This year's theme is "Messages For the Future" and includes documentaries from countries including Afghanistan, Cambodia, China, Congo, Ethiopia, Georgia, Guinea, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malawi, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Palestine, Rwanda, Sudan, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Zimbabwe and many

more, according to a press release from the organization.

Among the selections are four world premieres: "The Burning," about Africa's refugee crisis; "Exodus," about a college student and a village elder helping evacuate thousands back to their homeland during Sudan's civil war; "An Ordinary Insanity," a conversation with the late activist Daniel Ellsberg about the dire threat of nuclear weapons; and "Soaking the Ground," about the efforts by a community in the Amazon rainforest region to utilize rainwater in a land suffering from human-caused environmental damage and climate change.

'An Ordinary Insanity'

"An Ordinary Insanity" kicks off the festival, with a screening

at 6:30 p.m. at Palo Alto's Mitchell Park Community Center Oct. 16 (Palo Alto Mayor Ed Lauing will also offer remarks at the opening festivities). The film was directed by Berkeley filmmaker Judith Ehrlich, who was nominated for an Academy Award for a previous documentary about Ellsberg, "The Most Dangerous Man in America." She also interviewed him for the film "The Boys Who Said No! Draft Resistance and the Vietnam War." Ellsberg, who died in 2023, is best known as the whistleblower of the "Pentagon Papers," and was also a former nuclear war planner who later spoke out against the incredible dangers of nuclear war and weaponry. The film came about as a collaboration with author and activist Norman Solomon, Ehrlich told this news organization in an email interview. In "An Ordinary Insanity," Ellsberg speaks frankly and clearly about the planetary threat posed by nuclear weapons and war, and also discusses how to reduce that grave threat. Though the film is terrifying, there is hope, too, that viewers will come away better informed and ready to take a stand.

"I think, as Dan did, that we need to face the reality of a possible annihilation of humanity due to our ... investment of valuable resources on these weapons of mass destruction," Ehrlich said.

"After taking that in we need to make as much noise as possible to avoid that, support ... organizations that are doing something about that and join the good folks raising their voice in the name of sanity." She noted that in the 1980s, the Nuclear Freeze campaign was an example of a successful mass movement. "We did it then and we need to renew that commitment to end the threat of nuclear annihilation," she said.

'Soaking the Ground'

"Soaking the Ground," directed by Brazilian filmmaker Fred Rahal, is part of The Solutions Storytelling Project, an initiative of the Video Consortium in collaboration with Skoll Foundation. The program supports filmmakers around the world, matched with nonprofit organizations, in making films that showcase solution-oriented responses to global challenges. "Soaking the Ground" is part of the series' second season, focused on Latin American stories. The film features a farmer and a person who harvests products from juçara palm trees in Maranhão, Brazil, and explores how local communities are utilizing barraginhas — rainwater catchment systems — to help mitigate the impact of climate change on the ecosystem and practice sustainable land management.

"We were amazed by how a seemingly small project can create such significant change, and we strongly believe these stories deserve wider visibility to inspire more people and give hope for a better future," Andrea Arauz, project coordinator of the Solutions Storytelling Project: LatAm, told this news organization in an email interview. Throughout the film, Rahal, who did extensive research on the barraginhas, captures the natural sights and sounds of the landscape, alongside an evocative score. He handled all the cinematography, music and sound design himself.

"All these elements, woven together, make the message deeply impactful and resonate with Mother Nature," Arauz noted. "Fred wanted to immerse us in this resilient community, helping us understand the urgency of supporting the barraginhas project and amplifying the message of an Amazon in crisis."

The film screens Oct. 19 at 1:15 p.m. at Mitchell Park Community Center.

'Nice Girls Don't Ask'

Palo Alto filmmaker Jan Krawitz is a professor emerita in Stanford's documentary film MFA program. Her documentary



Courtesy UNAFF

"Nice Girls Don't Ask," by Palo Alto filmmaker and Stanford professor emerita Jan Krawitz, makes subversive use of "social guidance" films from the 1950s.

Artist stirs up 'Tempest' at Palo Alto City Hall

The piece is a work of 3D projection mapping featured as part of the Code:ART interactive media festival

By Heather Zimmerman

Typically “projections” at Palo Alto City Hall tend to involve budgets and numbers, which is undeniably essential work, but not likely to draw an enthralled crowd.

Starting Oct. 16, a different kind of projection — eight stories tall and in constant motion — will temporarily transform the façade of Palo Alto’s seat of government.

Palo Alto City Hall is getting a unique new look courtesy of Code:ART, the city of Palo Alto’s biennial interactive media festival. The event takes place Oct. 16-18, featuring interactive digital works of art placed throughout downtown Palo Alto.

Artist Jeff Dobrow is one of three digital 3D projection mapping artists who have created pieces that will be a centerpiece of Code:ART. Work by artists Alessio Cassaro and Yann Nguema will also be featured.

The projections will be on extended display at Palo Alto City Hall through Oct. 25. Each artist was given the parameters of a diamond-shaped space on the building’s façade to project their works onto.

Dobrow’s piece, “Tempest,” is an abstract work that explores humans’ ever-evolving relationship with technology. A technology-based visual artist and creative director, Dobrow has created projections for venues and events in 17 countries around the world.

We spoke with Dobrow ahead of Code:ART to learn more about his work. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

The Almanac: Let’s start with the basics: What is 3D projection mapping?

Jeff Dobrow: Technically it is what it is, right? I don’t want to put myself in the position of being the definitive point of ‘what is projection mapping,’ you know.

Projection mapping is taking an image or video or content of some sort, and projecting it onto a three-dimensional surface, like the side of a building or a cube or a car or something, anything sort of nonconventional, not a flat screen.

I consider it more so, though, to be establishing a relationship between the content and the object you’ve chosen to work with. So the surface, or the building, in my case, it’s kind of a partner in it. That collaborative union, the paying of respect, looking for opportunities to work with the architecture and all that, to me is what makes projection mapping great.

The Almanac: You’ve created projections for a variety of places, including UNESCO World Heritage Sites. What have been some of your most unusual or challenging projects?

Dobrow: I would probably say my most challenging project — I hate to say the word “challenging” — but I guess it would have been my first time mapping Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello. Because nothing had ever been done like that on that site before, in any capacity of digital art or otherwise, projecting light onto the building — a UNESCO heritage site. Just the gravity of being responsible for messaging that was going to be seen on this building. And it was all an internal challenge.

The Almanac: What is typically your process for creating a piece?

Dobrow: Often there’s an idea or a principle from the project

originators. Whether it’s maybe a spring celebration, or it’s a winter celebration, or it’s to honor something, occasionally it is just absolutely wide open. So if you have something, a tidbit or a spark, that is the essence of what this event is about, you’ve got that. Then you have what the building is going to be, so you have that physical partner. At that point, you start ideating. You start thinking about the architecture. I personally always like to do a deep dive on the architecture and the building and read about it. That’s not so much that I’m saying I really have to know everything about what an architect did in order to do my piece. It’s more like it gets you into a headspace of everything about this project. That, along with what topics feel relevant? What’s something cool that I can then think of and interpret in a completely unexpected or different way? How can I take a simple message and then wrap it into something really unexpected or thought-provoking, or that you don’t see for five times of watching and then it hits you, or you see the relationship. So that’s kind of the framework. Then, based on what the taste is, I fill it in: Maybe it’s lush and elegant and flowing. Maybe it’s techy and chatter and vibrant. But a lot of it is just about the relationship between the building, the subjects, the energy of the place, the surrounding history, or aspects, all of that, and then it just kind of inspires.

The Almanac: Tell us about your piece, “Tempest,” that we’ll be seeing at Code:ART.

Dobrow: “Tempest” is an abstract narrative on our state of affairs with technology, in a way, and it’s just a high-level view of the fact that everything has



Courtesy Jeff Dobrow

A rendering of how artist Jeff Dobrow's piece "Tempest" will look projected onto Palo Alto City Hall.

happened so incredibly fast, and we’ve gone so incredibly far. It’s been a non-linear curve of just exponential growth.

This piece has three acts: “Void,” “Disruption” and “Being.” “Void” is simply us before, “Disruption” is where we are now, and have been some time, probably since the beginning of the Industrial Age — and please, no historians argue with me — but this is all sort of where we are now, which is the blink of an eye. And we’re on the verge of handing over the technological reins to really a fractal infinitum of our own creation, AI. That will result in “Being,” at some point, there will be a post period to what has been this technological boom, whatever that will look like, we will see that as “Being.” We are currently in “Disruption.” But that’s the general essence, is that, yes, technology has come into play, affecting us, you know, first at industrial levels, then in our personal lives and it’s accelerating.

From my perspective, having gotten into computers at a very

young age, the age of 12 and being 56 now, and having been abreast of tech deeply my entire life, I mean, you can see the iterative patterns and the speed at which it’s going. And it’s just truly I have no idea. I have no clue. Probably one of the first times in my life I would say I have no idea how this will all end up.

Read a longer version of this story at almanacnews.com/arts-culture. ■

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

Projections by Dobrow, Cassaro and Nguema will be on display Oct. 16-25, 7-10 p.m., at Palo Alto City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto. The Code:ART festival takes place Oct. 16-18, 6-10 p.m., at locations throughout downtown Palo Alto. Admission is free. For descriptions and locations of all pieces featured in the festival, visit tinyurl.com/PaloAltoCodeART2025.

FILM FESTIVAL

continued from page 20

“Nice Girls Don’t Ask,” which is having its U.S. premiere Oct. 17 at 6:15 p.m., also at the Mitchell Park Community Center, makes subversive use of archival footage from vintage “social guidance” films from the 1950s, which helped shape and enforce adherence to gender norms. It’s the third film in a trilogy she’s made about women’s issues, following “Mirror, Mirror,” which focuses on women and body image, and “In Harm’s Way,” a personal memoir about her own experience as a survivor of sexual violence and the myths about safety she learned in childhood. She felt compelled to make “Nice Girls Don’t Ask” in part due to

the erosion of women’s rights she’s witnessed in recent years, she told this news organization in an email interview. She was also inspired by thoughts of her late mother, who raised her in the 1950s according to the norms of the time. For this film, Kravitz meticulously edited elements from the 120-or-so vintage films she studied for the project.

“My goal was to make a seamless narrative despite the disparate sources used to tell the story,” she said. Kravitz said she hopes that audiences will ponder the cost of this “behavioral strait-jacket” for a generation of women, as well as see it as an ominous parallel to today’s idealizing of a “tradwife” lifestyle on social media and by people in power. “I hope that audiences (find) the

film to be provocative, infuriating, and entertaining, — laughter is definitely permissible!” ■

Email Assistant Lifestyle Editor Karla Kane at kkane@almanacnews.com.

The United Nations Association Film Festival runs Oct. 16-26 at venues in Palo Alto, Stanford, East Palo Alto and San Francisco. General admission tickets are \$18 per session, with festival passes available for \$280 (\$80 for seniors 60 and up). Admission to the opening and closing receptions, which also include a session of films each, is \$60. There are also several free events over the course of the festival, and free tickets for students. For complete schedule, tickets and more information, go to unaff.org/2025/special.html.



Courtesy UNAFF

One of four films making its world premiere at UNAFF, “The Burning” delves into Africa’s refugee crisis.

Food & Drink



SpiceVow specializes in Indian Filipino cuisine, offering dishes such as paneer-stuffed lumpia, palabok butter chicken and chicken lumpia.



SpiceVow co-owners Karen Singh, left, and her husband Rahul Singh, right, mix together paneer, carrots, potatoes and spices to stuff lumpia with at their apartment in Redwood City on Sept. 7.

Fusing flavors

Redwood City couple blends cultures to launch Indian Filipino food concept

Story by Adrienne Mitchel | Photos by Magali Gauthier

Redwood City residents Karen and Rahul Singh are pioneering a cuisine as unlikely as their love story: Indian Filipino fusion.

Think paneer-stuffed lumpia served with butter chicken sauce for dipping, laing palak paneer, butter chicken palabok and even ube chai.

The married couple and business partners launched their catering company and weekend pop-up SpiceVow in May, combining flavors from Karen's upbringing in the Philippines and Rahul's childhood in India. The pair met in 2019 through their day jobs at Bon Appetit Management

Company, where Rahul continues to work today as an executive chef and Karen as a supervisor.

The name SpiceVow pays homage to the oath they took to each other when they married – a marriage not initially supported by their respective families – as well as the blending of their cultures.

Karen grew up learning to cook from her mom in the Philippines, immigrating to the United States at 16 years old and taking a job at McDonald's. Rahul found his passion for cooking while learning from his grandma in India and immigrated at 22 years old.



SpiceVow is a home-based business in Redwood City offering catering and weekend pop-ups.



SpiceVow co-owner Rahul Singh rolls up a lumpia in Redwood City.

A mutual friend introduced the pair online, and their first time meeting in person was in a group setting at Dolores Park in San Francisco.

"First impression, for appearance, I didn't like him," Karen said with a laugh, recalling his beard was long and disheveled. "What got to me was his sense of humor and then how he treated me. He's an amazing guy."

Just six months after asking her to be his girlfriend, Rahul proposed on Valentine's Day. Six months after that, the pair tied the knot at City Hall.

"Her heart is so open and so thoughtful about people," Rahul said. "She has a golden heart. So caring. She puts others before her."

But the couple's journey together was far from smooth sailing, with pushback from both sides of the family. Rahul's mom didn't talk to him for six months after learning of his and Karen's engagement, concerned that Karen already had two daughters and was

Catholic instead of Hindu.

"I asked (Karen), 'Are you willing to fight with this society?'" Rahul said. "And she said, 'I don't understand your language, but you will always see me behind you, supporting you. I'm not going to leave you alone.' And that's why I decided to fight with my family to have her."

Over time, both sides of the family warmed up to their marriage.

"Now my mom, my own mom, loves Rahul more than me," Karen said. "And then Rahul's parents love me more than Rahul."

Similar to their love story, combining Indian and Filipino cuisine has its own struggles. Filipino dishes are typically meat-based and non-spicy whereas Indian food is usually vegetarian and spicy, Karen explained. Some potential customers have also expressed hesitancy about trying foods they're unfamiliar with.

"Some people are like, 'How it's gonna taste?'" Karen said.

"How are you gonna know if you're not gonna try?"

SpiceVow is currently a home-based business and is available for party trays, catering, live chaat stations for events and weekend pop-ups, which operate out of the Singh's Redwood City home.

To order from its weekend pop-ups, customers can send a message to the SpiceVow Instagram account, where updated menus are posted each week. Find vegetarian options such as laing palak paneer (simmered taro leaves, spinach and paneer in a coconut sauce) or butter paneer served over palabok noodles, topped with shredded paneer, crispy garlic, fresh scallions and fried fryums (an Indian snack made of potato starch and tinted sago, \$12.50). Its nonvegetarian counterparts are laing palak chicken and butter chicken palabok with chicharron and egg (\$14).

For dessert, there's chai flan as well as chai puto, a Filipino steamed rice cake infused with masala chai spices and topped

with cheese (\$6-\$22 for six pieces). SpiceVow's iced chai ube latte uses a homemade masala chai with cinnamon, clove, cardamom, bay leaves, ginger, black tea, milk and sugar (\$5).

Orders can be picked up from the couple's home in Redwood City or delivered to all Peninsula cities. Depending on the city and order size, there may be a delivery fee.

For live chaat stations, an interactive catering setup where Indian street food dishes are made to order, customers can pick three dishes between pani puri, papdi chaat, dahi puri, aloo tikki chaat and samosa chaat.

While it's busy balancing full-time jobs, being parents and starting a business, Karen said their kids are extremely supportive of SpiceVow.

"Our kids are the ones who keep pushing us," she said. "They're our biggest supporters, I will say ... They're rare kids that we have."

The Singh's hope to expand to a commercial kitchen and a

food truck before growing the brand internationally in the next 10 years.

"We want more people to see what we can do," Karen said. "We want them to experience the two blended cultures. We're both working hard with extra love, with every menu that we're making." ■

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SpiceVow co-owner Rahul Singh adds a butter chicken sauce to minced chicken cooking in a saucepan in his apartment in Redwood City.



Karen Singh, left, and Rahul Singh met through work at Bon Appetit Management Company, where they both continue to work today.

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- Custom Craftsman home built in 2003 by Chessler Construction in the prestigious Blue Oaks neighborhood
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 - Mech rooms: 160 square feet
- Exquisite Cherry woodwork, including cathedral ceilings, paneling, millwork, and Eucalyptus chevron-patterned floors
- Main level (with slight elevations): foyer, living room with fireplace, formal dining room, butler's pantry, executive office, kitchen, breakfast room, family room with fireplace, bedroom suite, formal powder room, half-bath, laundry room, mud room, attached 4-car garage
- Upper level (with slight elevations): bedroom suite, primary bedroom suite with Bay views, bedroom suite, laundry room
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