

The Almanac

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Arden Margulis

Celebrating a milestone in Menlo Park

Mademoiselle Colette owner Debora Ferrand, right, celebrates 10 years since opening the patisserie's first location in downtown Menlo Park on Oct. 11. See story on page 8.

Former Stanford employees regroup, reflect after layoffs

While some try to resurrect slashed programs, others set sights for new career paths

By Hannah Bensen

As a communications manager on a human relations team at Stanford University, Matt Nazario-Miller helped review a script that would be read to staff members who were to be laid off by the university.

On July 30, Nazario-Miller listened as his supervisor read him the exact script he helped review, a move he described as a “slap in the face.” Nazario-Miller was being laid off, effective Oct. 1.

Nazario-Miller was one of 363 staff members whom Stanford laid off over the summer, citing a “challenging fiscal environment shaped in large part by federal policy changes affecting

higher education.” The workforce reduction came after a June announcement that called for a \$140 million reduction to the university’s general fund ahead of the 2025-2026 school year and a reduction in staff positions. The university also implemented a staff hiring freeze in February.

In July, federal lawmakers raised the endowment tax on institutions with large endowments like Stanford from 1.4% to 8% as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill, which President Donald Trump signed on July 4. The increased tax will result in Stanford paying more than \$1 billion in federal taxes in the next five years instead of

See **LAYOFFS**, page 18

Ballots reported stolen from mailboxes in San Mateo County

Postal officials say such thefts happen every cycle

By Arden Margulis

Several ballots and pieces of mail were stolen in Emerald Hills sometime between Oct. 4 and Oct. 6, according to residents and county officials.

“The San Mateo County Registration and Elections Division was notified by five voters in the Emerald Hills

neighborhood of Redwood City of possible mailbox thefts, during which their Vote by Mail ballots may have been stolen. Each of these voters requested that a replacement ballot be issued,” Mark Church, San Mateo County chief elections officer and assessor-county clerk-recorder, said in an email.

An Emerald Hills resident, who asked not to be named,

said she found her mailbox — and many of her neighbors’ mailboxes — open and empty on Monday after her ballot was delivered on Saturday.

“It seems crazy that someone went out of their way to steal mail with ballots,” the resident said. She saw her ballot was supposed to arrive Saturday through the U.S. Post Office’s Informed Delivery service,

which previews what mail is set to arrive at an address. The resident said all of her mail was missing, not just the ballot.

Church says it’s not uncommon for ballots to go missing. “Requests for replacement ballots are common in every election and typically result from ballots that are lost, damaged or spoiled,” he said. Church also said that when a replacement

ballot is requested, the original ballot is automatically voided.

According to Church, replacement ballot requests for the November 2025 Special Election are lower than normal. The Elections Office received 15 replacement ballot requests in the first week of the special election compared to 91 in the

See **BALLOTS**, page 10

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Local News

MENLO PARK | AHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Courtesy Duncan Dobson

Retired Woodside Elementary School teacher Bill Dolyniuk reunites with former student Duncan Dobson, who dedicated his book 'Dobson's Arc' to him.

Artist dedicates book to former Woodside Elementary teacher

'Dobson's Arc' inspired by Bill Dolyniuk

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

'Dobson's Arc' is a book that blends science, math and art showcasing the history and theories of the world's innovators and masterminds. The book stems from the lasting impact that a Woodside Elementary School teacher had on a student who grew up to become an artist decades later.

Duncan Dobson grew up in Woodside in the late 1980s, attended Woodside Elementary from second through eighth grade and lived in the second-biggest house on the historic Green Gables Estate. The 74-acre property, which was owned by the Fleishhacker family since 1911, sold for \$85 million in September.

Growing up with a father who worked in the

semiconductor industry, Dobson said his interest in math and science was rooted in his childhood. However, it wasn't until he was in Bill Dolyniuk's seventh grade algebra class that the concepts and equations really clicked in his head.

"I vividly remember Bill Dolyniuk writing some equations on the board and

See **DOBSON**, page 17

Menlo Park residents submit signatures for downtown parking lot measure

Measure is one step closer to a vote

By Arden Margulis

Menlo Park residents have submitted enough signatures to force a citywide vote on an ordinance that would require voter approval before Menlo Park could build housing on its downtown parking lots.

On Oct. 10, Save Downtown Menlo submitted 3,440 signatures, around 60% more than required to force the initiative

to go before voters. Once the city verifies it has enough valid signatures, the Menlo Park City Council will have three choices: call a special election, submit the ordinance for the Nov. 3 2026, election or adopt the ordinance outright.

The proposed "Downtown Parking Plazas Ordinance" would require a citywide vote before the council could lease, sell or otherwise repurpose any of Menlo Park's downtown

parking lots. Routine maintenance, improvements that preserve or expand parking and short-term community uses such as farmers markets would still be allowed.

The measure aims to block the city's controversial plan to pursue affordable-housing projects on some of the parking lots, a key element of Menlo Park's state-mandated Housing

See **PARKING**, page 16

Corpus forced out as San Mateo County sheriff

Supervisors' vote is unanimous

By Michelle Iracheta and Miranda de Moraes

In a historic and unanimous vote, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday removed Christina Corpus from her position as sheriff, effective immediately.

Corpus' Undersheriff, Dan Perea, will temporarily "discharge the duties of the sheriff," according to the county charter.

Perea issued a statement following the removal.

"The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office wishes to assure our communities that our public safety service remains constant and uninterrupted," Perea said. "The Sheriff's Office remains dedicated to protecting lives and property and is committed to providing the highest level of professional law enforcement and correctional services."

Before the final vote, District 3 Supervisor Ray Mueller, who didn't offer any personal commentary, defended his vote as "solely and entirely based on admin record." He asked County Attorney John Nibbelin whether he or Supervisor Noelia Corzo were in legal conflict to take action on a decision on Corpus, to which Nibbelin replied that no one on the board was in conflict.

Corzo, who, along with Mueller, was among the first supervisors to speak out against Corpus in 2024.

On Tuesday, she said that she had given Corpus the "benefit of the doubt" and called the removal process a "fair procedure."

"Corpus has had more than enough time. She was not able to provide anything but empty words," Corzo said. "I want to acknowledge the deep harm this has caused in our community. I take responsibility for misguiding our community."

'Repugnant and corrupt'

While voting, Corzo also asked Corpus' attorneys to return the challenge coin she gave her years ago.

Supervisor Jackie Speier called Corpus' actions while in office "nothing short of repugnant and corrupt."

The Board must either appoint her successor within 30 days or



Miranda de Moraes

San Mateo County Sheriff Christina Corpus speaks to the board of supervisors on Oct. 14.

call for a special election, according to the county charter.

Corpus appeared at the meeting Tuesday alongside her legal team. The board chambers quickly filled with sheriff's deputies, county staff and members of the public.

The special meeting follows the release of a nonbinding advisory opinion from retired Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge James Emerson, who oversaw a two-week public hearing in August regarding the allegations against Corpus.

In his Oct. 6 opinion, Emerson concluded that the county has cause to remove the sheriff based on four findings, including conflict of interest, retaliation and misuse of authority. Corpus has denied wrongdoing.

Conviction, not convenience

Corpus took the podium at one point to defend herself, speaking directly to the law enforcement community, asking them to "remember why you serve, you serve the constitution, not the convenience of politicians."

"Serve justice without fear or favor. I have sacrificed my peace, my marriage and precious time with my children and family for this mission because I believe in justice," Corpus said. "I was offered the chance to walk away quietly, to take a payout and disappear."

"Leadership isn't about

See **CORPUS**, page 8

Chaparral Ranch in Woodside replaced with new vendor

Excel Equestrian to take over operation

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The San Mateo County Parks Department has approved a contract with a new horse-boarding vendor for Wunderlich Park. Excel Equestrian will replace the current Woodside vendor Chaparral Ranch in November.

The selection of Excel Equestrian comes after the San Mateo County Parks Department opened a request for proposals for a stable operator in April. Applicants included Chaparral Corporation and Over The Moon Eventing, a riding school based in Watsonville.

Excel Equestrian is a Redwood City-based vendor that currently operates out of Wunderlich Park's Folger Stables. The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors approved its two-year probationary contract during its meeting on Oct. 7.

The incoming stable operator will be responsible for feeding the horses daily, cleaning stalls and stable facilities, conducting night checks and providing all other services required to operate a horse boarding facility, according to the contract.

Although the resolution



Lizzy Myers

Folger Stables in Woodside is a popular spot for equestrians on the Peninsula.

approved by the Board of Supervisors states that the agreement begins in October, San Mateo County Parks spokesperson Carla Schoof told The Almanac that "At Excel Equestrian's request, Chaparral Corporation's contract has been extended through October 2025 to ensure continuous care of boarded horses and to support a smooth transition."

Chaparral's 10-year contract with the county ended on July 31

but due to the extended proposal review process, its contract was extended through the end of September.

The initial agreement with Excel Equestrian will be valid until Oct. 31, 2027, and will be revisited in a renewal process for two additional four-year terms under the county parks discretion.

The county found that Excel Equestrian was the most qualified applicant because of its

existing knowledge of Folger Stables and experience operating horse boarding facilities in San Mateo County.

In August, Bay Area equestrians began to express concerns about whether Chaparral Ranch's contract would be renewed by San Mateo County after a series of investigations in San Francisco and Gatos revealed the corporation was abusing its horses.

County parks officials told The Almanac that although other locations were found to be neglecting the horses, there was no evidence of animal mistreatment in Woodside.

Over the last two years, Chaparral Corporation has closed down its businesses in Los Gatos, San Francisco, Milpitas, Camp Mather in Yosemite and now in Woodside. Its remaining stables are located in Sunol and Marina.

Excel Equestrian and Chaparral Corporation did not respond to a request for comment. ■

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Local school district policy on e-bikes coming soon

Menlo Park City School District plans on draft

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The Menlo Park City School District is addressing the rise in concerns around electric bicycle safety among older students at Hillview Middle School. During a school board meeting on Oct. 9, board members agreed that a district policy about e-bikes would be beneficial for the community.

In a presentation to the board, Superintendent Kristen Gracia discussed the various classes of e-bikes, ongoing issues around e-bikes on campus and the increase in challenges with the bike's rising popularity.

"Last year, we observed up to a hundred student e-bikes in

the Hillview (Middle School) bike racks," said Gracia. "This fall, we're noticing around 25 at (any given time). Each year it has grown and we anticipate even more this spring."

The California Vehicle Code defines e-bikes as "a bicycle with fully operable pedals and an electric motor that does not exceed 750 watts of power." These bikes are also categorized into three classes and do not require a driver's license.

Class 1 bikes are only pedal assisted, can travel up to 20 mph and do not have an age requirement. Class 2 bikes have pedal assist and a throttle that can speed up travel without pedaling. Class 3 is only pedal assisted, can travel up to 28 mph and riders must be 16 years old to operate.

District administrators have also noticed other types of motorized vehicles including electric scooters and skateboards. Although they are not as popular as e-bikes, Gracia noted that she saw three scooters and two motorized skateboards at the Hillview bike racks last week.

What some parents might not know is that California law

requires a driver's license to operate a motorized scooter.

Gracia added that she and Hillview Assistant Principal Andrew Dinh also spotted bikes that they believe are either pocket bikes, also known as mini choppers, and off-highway vehicles — both are illegal to ride on roadways.

Ongoing issues and concerns

Every morning, about 850 students and a hundred staff members arrive on campus within 20 minutes — meaning there are 400 cars, 300 bikes and a hundred students walking and getting off the bus, said Hillview Principal Danielle O'Brien.

During arrival and dismissal times, the congested state of the roads around the school can cause "troubling conditions for e-bikes," in what is already a dense traffic environment.

Due to the age and stage of development in middle school students, many underestimate the risks of reckless riding, not wearing helmets, speeding, riding on sidewalks and giving rides to friends on the back of e-bikes.

Over the last 12 months, the

Menlo Park Police Department has received six reports of traffic collisions involving juveniles on e-bikes. Four have been reported in Atherton.

"A lot of these accidents don't get reported," said Atherton Police Officer Dimitri Andruha. "We had many more. Most of these are on major thoroughfares such as Middlefield (Road) and Ravenswood (Avenue)."

Menlo Park Officer Shaun Nissen added that because students are traveling at such high speeds in the bike lanes, there is the potential for collisions with cars who might be crossing into the lane. Drivers are still getting used to the idea that e-bikes are on the road and while they are still checking to see if the bike lane is clear, an out-of-view e-bike can come by within seconds, he explained.

Menlo Park City council members Jeff Schmidt and Jennifer Wise also joined the conversation commending the school board for discussing e-bike safety.

Schmidt shared that he formerly owned a motorcycle and currently owns a class 2 e-bike. In

See **E-BIKES**, page 8

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Portola Valley seeks one-year contract with San Mateo County Sheriff's Office

Town finds costs steadily increase

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The contract with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office is the biggest expense on the town of Portola Valley's annual budget. This year, as the town pays more than \$2 million annually for law enforcement services, council members and residents are expressing dissatisfaction with the lack of deputy presence around town.

During a recent Town Council meeting, council members approved a resolution that authorizes the mayor to work with the town manager to negotiate and execute a one-year agreement with the Sheriff's Office.

Over the years, the Sheriff's Office's contract with Portola Valley has dramatically increased by over 57% since 2022. According to the staff report, the proposed contract rate for the town's fiscal year 2025-26 law enforcement budget is about \$2.3 million. However, the town has a credit balance of about \$200,000 from the county, which it can use toward the Sheriff's contract, decreasing the total cost to about \$1.9 million.

Given the town's current financial struggles, the Town Council is considering a shorter contract compared to its neighboring jurisdictions. In September, Woodside approved a five-year contract with the Sheriff's Office starting at a rate of \$3.1 million with a 7% annual increase.

In an effort to reduce costs, Portola Valley is considering alternate options for law enforcement services, including a joint Sheriff's Office contract with Woodside and inquiring with other local jurisdictions about providing services to the town.

The town's amended contract is for 0.25 full-time equivalent for an administrative sergeant, which is equal to about 10 hours a week. The written contract also adds that if the town requests additional hours and deputy support, the town will be responsible for overtime costs.

Town staff shared during the Town Council meeting that it briefly communicated with the Sheriff's Office financial director to negotiate an agreement but have had no luck with further communication.

"It's a blue moon if I've ever seen a patrol person anywhere in my neighborhood, so maybe

they should drive around a little more," said Council member Rebecca Flynn. "Anyway, (it would) be nice to see them a little more frequently on the smaller streets."

During the sheriff's annual report presented by Capt. Frank Dal Porto, Mayor Judith Hasko questioned whether the Sheriff's Office had changed its patrolling and monitoring or whether the community just hasn't noticed its deputy's presence.

Dal Porto explained that deputies provide the town with service 24 hours a day and deputies are trained to take different routes every day. It also depends on where they are receiving calls and whether they are involved in traffic enforcement, he said.

Assistant Town Manager Corie Stocker-Pedalino said deputies also fluctuate their patrol time between Portola Valley and Woodside.

Council members commented on the vague contract, seeking clarifications on what specific services are provided under their terms and whether they are actually dedicating a certain amount of hours in Portola Valley.

In the negotiation process, Vice Mayor Craig Taylor expressed his desire to see more clarification around how much overtime would cost for additional services and, "how much are they really in Portola Valley?"

"Are they really here 24/7? I've heard a lot of comments saying 'We don't see them, maybe they're here, maybe they're not and maybe there's a good reason,'" Taylor added.

The concerns around overtime costs flowed into a discussion about the need for more affordable housing options for local workers and making "it more attractive" for new hirers.

"(The Sheriff's Office) is having such a hard time hiring that we're seeing more overtime costs because they're having to fill the gaps because they don't have enough personnel," Council member Helen Wolter explained.

According to town staff, many deputies are commuting to San Mateo County from the East Bay due to the housing costs.

The Sheriff's Office contract is guaranteed to increase every fiscal year, according to town staff. While Portola Valley continues to explore other options around law enforcement services, all council members showed support for staff's negotiation efforts to obtain a one-year

contract. The advantage to a one-year contract is that in the next fiscal year, it will give them another opportunity to negotiate if they were to continue seeking services from the Sheriff's Office. ■

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by Monica Corman



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SCAN ME



Mademoiselle Colette marks 10 sweet years on the Peninsula

Small business has expanded over the years

By Arden Margulis

When Atherton resident Debora Ferrand opened Mademoiselle Colette on Santa Cruz Avenue a decade ago, she hoped to bring a taste of Paris to Menlo Park. Ten years later, her dream has become a four-location patisserie known for its butter-rich croissants and classic French fare.

It was a near-instant hit. Its small Menlo Park location was sold out every day in its first month, sometimes before noon. The Almanac reported at the time. Less than a year after it opened, Ferrand leased a commercial kitchen to keep up with demand.

“Because the kitchen was so small, we (were) unable to have more products and make enough to last the whole day. After a few months, we saw people sometimes come from San Jose or San Francisco, and by the time they arrive here, we are sold out. So we started to look for a commercial kitchen,” Ferrand said. Pastries are delivered daily from the kitchen to its cafes.

Almost a year after opening, Mademoiselle Colette expanded to a second location in Palo Alto, which focused on pastries

and drinks since it did not have a kitchen. Colette then added a full-service Redwood City location in October 2019.

Colette opened its newest location at the Atherton Library in November 2023 as the town celebrated its centennial. Colette also added sorbet and ice cream to its offerings.

While Ferrand said her biggest challenge has been hiring, Colette has also been affected by recent tariffs. Colette’s pastries only use imported French butter which has more fat than American butter.

Ferrand says Colette’s quality ingredients are one of the things that make the patisserie popular.

“I think all this quality and savoir faire (a French term roughly translated to “know-how”), people recognize, and people realize that we do things from scratch and with love,” she said. “My team arrives at 2 a.m. and they prepare the breads, they prepare the croissants. We bake everything. We bring everything (from the kitchen) fresh in the morning.”

While turnover is high in the restaurant industry, Mademoiselle Colette has some long-time employees. “I have my two longest employees and they’ve been with me for eight

years. Without them, I cannot do it. And all my team is amazing,” Ferrand said.

One of those longtime employees is Barbara Sampaio, the manager of the Menlo Park location.

“I’m here because I love this store and I have a lot of love for the clients, and especially my team. If I don’t have support with my team, I cannot be successful,” Sampaio said.

Sampaio started eight years ago as a dishwasher at the Menlo Park location after arriving from Brazil. “I asked (Ferrand), if you have some job for me. But it was uniquely difficult, because when I arrived, I didn’t speak English or Spanish, just Portuguese from Brazil. I told her I’m hard working and she gave me a chance to work as a dishwasher,” Sampaio said. Sampaio and Ferrand also connected since Ferrand was born in Brazil but grew up in France.

“When I arrived at Colette, I got to know Deborah (Ferrand) and her sister Sabrina. They helped me a lot and everyone here gave me the strength to go up (in the company). I started to study English and Spanish,” she added.

After two years, Sampaio became a server and then a shift manager. She became manager



Arden Margulis

Mademoiselle Colette owner Debora Ferrand celebrated 10 years since opening the patisserie’s first location in Downtown Menlo Park on Oct. 11.

of the Menlo Park location after the COVID-19 pandemic and has been in that role for five years.

“Everything is made with a lot of love. When you put it on display, you put a lot of love there. So I think (the store’s success) is a combination of the good product and the very appreciation for the client when they come into the store,” Sampaio said. “I love people. I love talking. My biggest challenge is making you smile. If you come into my store, I cannot let you leave before making you smile.”

Ferrand said Mademoiselle Colette will be focusing on increasing its catering business and expanding into some supermarkets.

“We now have the team for wedding cakes and catering,” she said.

The highlight of Colette’s 10

years? It’s moments with clients.

“We share a lot of special moments with clients: births, marriages, celebrations. We’ve done so many ‘gender reveal’ cakes and then cakes after the kids arrived and then the kids are starting to order products — it’s special,” Ferrand said.

Ferrand also said her family’s support was instrumental.

“The food business is long hours, weekends, it’s very intense. My family support was essential, and I wouldn’t be able to do this without them,” Ferrand said. “My family were very proud and very supportive. My son, I really feel that he’s proud to have a mama that is a business woman that, you know, built the business from scratch that has four locations today.” ■

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

CORPUS

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convenience, it’s about conviction,” she added.

Speaking on her behalf, Corpus’ attorneys told the board that when she was voted in, she had promised 21st-century policing and that the community would have a seat at the table.

Attorneys argued that the individuals seeking to remove Corpus do not represent the community.

“There’s a difference between amplitude and numerosity; you’re hearing from loud folks,” one attorney said. “They don’t represent the community.”

Attorneys also argued that the

board is establishing “a precedent that’s very dangerous.”

“The defining principle is you wanted to create a provision that would establish the lowest possible bar for removal,” the attorney added.

Corpus has denied wrongdoing and has not publicly commented on the advisory opinion. In August, she told board members she had “fought tooth and nail” to get where she is and that she acted with integrity.

The controversy has deeply divided the Sheriff’s Office and sparked calls for reform. Outside the chambers before Tuesday’s meeting, Redwood City resident Martin Elliot said he’s been

following the case closely and has concerns about how the department is being run.

“There’s been a lot of damage to the morale of the department,” Elliot said. “It’s a system of who you like, who’s on my side.” He added that he’d like to see the office become more merit-based.

Elliot also said he believes the acting sheriff should have no ties to Corpus and that the board should appoint a temporary replacement before holding a special election.

The board’s authority to consider removal stems from Measure A, a voter-approved charter amendment passed in March that temporarily grants the board the power to remove an

elected sheriff for cause.

‘A sheriff you can trust’

Corpus campaigned heavily in 2022 on the idea that her administration would feature integrity.

Corpus made history as the county’s first Latina sheriff and one of two Latinas elected as sheriffs in California in 2022. She launched her campaign with the slogan, “a sheriff you can trust.”

Running against then-Sheriff Carlos Bolanos, her boss, who had been sheriff since 2017, she was careful not to criticize him and knew that running for office would be risky.

“Actions speak louder than buzzwords ... And accountability

starts at the top,” she said at the time.

Bolanos, whose tenure was marred by his own administration’s controversies, was appointed by a 3-2 vote, following Greg Munks’ early retirement. Munks’ tenure had also been tumultuous. Bolanos was officially elected in 2018.

Corpus received her master’s degree in law enforcement and public safety leadership at the University of San Diego. ■

Email Editor Michelle Iracheta and Staff Writer Miranda de Moraes at miracheta@almanacnews.com and mdemoraes@almanacnews.com.

E-BIKES

continued from page 6

his experience obtaining a motorcycle license, he was taught that many accidents happen because of other drivers on the road.

With how fast these e-bikes travel and how silent and invisible they can be, there are more dangers associated with children riding them on the road.

“You can be the safest person

and you have to really focus and pay attention and be very situationally aware and things still happen every single day because drivers don’t see you,” said Schmidt.

Gracia explained the relationship between e-bikes and students as a “developmental mismatch where the cognitive and physical abilities of young riders are outpaced by the machines they operate.”

Future e-bike policy

Board members showed support for district staff to move forward in drafting a policy around e-bikes across its campuses.

The policy may outline rules about e-bike registrations, whether the bikes should be allowed on campus, or if only Class 1 bikes are permissible, said Gracia as she shared a few ideas with the board.

“E-bikes are here to stay

and I would not want to see us get in the way of kids using bicycles and developing that independence and developing that healthy environment,” said school board member Francesca Segrè. “I really think it’s on us as drivers to be aware.”

Although the district policy would be enforced on students, Segrè emphasized that she would like for more conversations from district and

school leadership to be targeted at adults, parents and drivers rather than penalizing students.

With a unanimous agreement among the school board, the district will be preparing a draft policy with various options to be presented during the next board meeting on Oct. 23. ■

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



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Redwood City man charged in Atherton hit-and-run that killed dog

Incident happened weeks after driver's DUI

By Arden Margulis

A 71-year-old Redwood City resident is facing felony charges for a hit-and-run in Atherton that injured one person and killed a dog that occurred less than one month after the suspect was released from jail in a driving while intoxicated case.

Lucio Villagomez Sosa is accused of hitting an elderly

man and his dog while they were crossing El Camino Real at Selby Lane in a marked crosswalk on Aug. 8. Sosa allegedly ran over the man's foot and killed a Bernese mountain dog named Boe before fleeing the scene.

Prosecutors say the incident was captured on video. When police later contacted Sosa, he admitted to driving the green van that hit and killed the dog, according to the San Mateo

County District Attorney's Office. He claimed he fled because he was scared.

Less than a month earlier, Sosa was sentenced to 10 days in jail for a DUI that occurred on New Year's Eve 2024. His blood alcohol was allegedly more than .15%.

Sosa pled no contest to the DUI charge as part of a plea deal that dropped an enhancement related to his high blood alcohol

concentration and misdemeanor related to the DUI. He served 10 days in jail starting on July 11.

His driver's license was suspended as a result of the DUI. His license was allegedly still suspended from the DUI during the Aug. 8 hit-and-run.

Sosa is now charged with felony hit-and-run, misdemeanor hit-and-run and two misdemeanors for driving with a suspended license. He pleaded not

guilty on Aug. 12.

He is due back in court on Oct. 15. The intersection where the Aug. 8 incident happened has been a focus of the Atherton Police Department. The department previously conducted safety operations and ticketed drivers who did not stop for pedestrians. ■

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

Employment

Engineer, Chemistry

Pacific Biosciences of California, Inc. has an opening in Menlo Park, CA. Engineer, Chemistry (Biosensor/Samples): Assist in product development, stabilize chips manufacturing process; work with protein-DNA samples and with biosensors. Salary range: \$116,168 - \$116,168 per yr. Submit resume (principals only) on the Pacific Biosciences website at <https://www.pacb.com/careers> for Engineer, Chemistry (Biosensor/Samples) JR100733. EOE

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BALLOTS

continued from page 1

first week of the November 2024 Presidential General Election.

The San Mateo County Elections Office started mailing ballots in early October for the statewide special election on Nov. 4.

"We've never really seen ballots targeted," said Matthew Norfleet, a postal inspector with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, which investigates mail theft and other mail-related crimes. Norfleet said thieves typically take all contents from a mailbox and discard items

without monetary value, such as catalogs, junk mail and ballots.

"(Ballots) are an example of the kind of mail that we find discarded during election season. We'll sometimes find a bunch of ballots that are dumped in the side of the road or even put back in the mail stream because somebody stole mail and took out all the things they can make money with," Norfleet added.

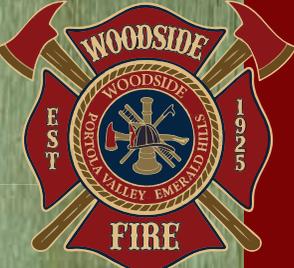
"Some people never think to report (mail theft) to us. I encourage your readers to report that to postal inspectors, either online, usps.gov, or through our number 877-876-2455," Norfleet said.

Church said his office does not report mail theft to USPIS or law enforcement but encourages affected residents to report any suspected theft or vandalism to law enforcement in their area. Residents can track their ballots and ensure they are received at smacre.gov/elections/track-your-ballot. ■

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

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To the Valued Readers of *The Almanac*,

My name is Esther Wojcicki. For decades, I've had the profound privilege of teaching journalism at Palo Alto High School, building a program that grew from a small group of students into the largest and most distinguished scholastic media programs in the nation. My journey in journalism began even before that, as a professional journalist myself, and it instilled in me a deep conviction: clear writing helps you think clearly, and communicate effectively. It also provides an invaluable service to the community. I always taught my students that journalism is critical to the effective functioning of a democracy.

That belief is more relevant than ever today, especially when it comes to local journalism. For me, teaching journalism wasn't just about reporting; it was about empowering students with critical thinking, research, and communication skills and providing the community with news. We treated our classroom like a real newsroom. They learned that quality journalism requires effort, persistence, and a dedication to getting it right, and it takes multiple revisions.

Today I serve on the board of the *Embarcadero Media Foundation*, the nonprofit parent organization of *The Almanac*. This ethos of rigorous, community-focused reporting is precisely what *The Almanac* provides. It's the vital source for understanding what's happening right here in our communities – from city council decisions to school board meetings, from local events to the stories of our neighbors. Without dedicated journalists asking questions and presenting analyses, how would we stay informed and engaged in the issues that directly impact our lives?

The traditional models that once funded local newspapers are changing, and the advertising revenue they relied on is diminishing. This isn't just an economic shift; it's a critical moment for the future of local journalism and our country. If we want to continue to have a vibrant, independent, and professional news source that holds local institutions accountable and reflects our community's values, we, the readers, must step up.

Becoming a supporting member of *The Almanac* is more than just a subscription; it's an investment in the future of our community. Your contribution directly supports the salaries of our dedicated journalists, covers production costs, and allows for expanded coverage of the stories that matter most.

Please join me in supporting *The Almanac*. Commit to becoming a supporting member today. By doing so, you are not just ensuring the survival of a local publication; you are actively shaping the future of journalism.

Sincerely,

Esther Wojcicki

Nationally recognized educator, author and Embarcadero Media Foundation Board Member



THE FUTURE OF LOCAL JOURNALISM IS IN YOUR HANDS.

Fall Membership Drive

We are kicking off our fall membership drive with an important message: *the future of local journalism is in your hands.*

Independent, nonprofit journalism only thrives when our community steps up to support. Your membership powers the work of our reporters and helps us mentor the next generation of journalists who will continue to tell our stories.

Our mission is to inform, hold local government accountable, and strengthen community. This essential work is only possible with your support. If you believe in our mission, we invite you to become a member today.

Now through October 26, new members can join at a special introductory rate: \$9.99/month or \$119 annually. Be sure to enter the coupon code in the payment box to claim your discount. Use coupon code **fall25basic** to receive your discounted Basic membership. Use coupon code **fall25plus** to receive your discounted Plus membership.

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If you would like to pay for your discounted, annual membership of \$119, or make a donation by check it may be sent to:
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NO KINGS!

Join us on **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18**
Parade & Democracy Fair — in PALO ALTO

In America, we say, “No Kings!”

That commitment to democratic freedom unites people across this country — and across our region—to fight tyranny together.

Join us first for a **peaceful, patriotic march.**

Bring costumes, musical instruments, American flags, and your best protest signs.

Then join us for an **action-oriented, family-friendly fair** in the park. Speakers and music. Action tables. Kids’ activity area. And more.

PLUS: Sign up for **DEMOCRACY ACADEMY workshops!** action-oriented sessions on how to resist autocracy and rebuild democracy.

PARADE

El Camino Real &
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11:30 AM-1:30 PM

DEMOCRACY FAIR

Rinconada Cultural Park
Palo Alto
1:00-4:00 PM



DEMOCRACY ACADEMY WORKSHOPS

Lucie Stern Community Center
Palo Alto
10:00 AM-3:00 PM

Multiple workshops will run currently with the Parade & Democracy Fair. Sign up today!

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MODEL OPENS THIS NOVEMBER

Discover Acacia by Dividend Homes – a limited collection of just sixteen, 2-and 3-bedroom residences coming to Palo Alto. Located just minutes from Stanford, these residences have been designed for modern living, featuring open living and dining areas, and rooftop decks. Plus, Dividend Homes' state-of-the-art appliances, elevated finishes, and designer details add comfort and style that your family will cherish for years to come. Visit AcaciaPaloAlto.com to learn more or schedule your personal tour of our model home.





Patricia Gayle Engasser

August 28, 1938 – October 12, 2025

The only child and absolute apple of her parents Virginia and Raymond Engasser's eye, Pat was raised in Los Angeles and Long Beach, CA. Always the overachiever, she got her first job at age three! A Hollywood agent saw Pat on a street corner and told her mother that the brown-eyed girl had to be in the movies. Known as a child actress who could master her lines and cry on demand, "Patsy Nash" appeared in 7 studio films during Hollywood's golden age. Her precocious nature spilled over into school, where she skipped the third grade and at St. Anthony's high school in Long Beach, she was the girl selected to take math and science on the boys' campus. Though money was tight due to her father's year-long battle with tuberculosis, her parents insisted that she attend her dream school – Stanford. And so, she joined the "59 Forever" group, marked by decades of inspiration, adventure and enduring friendships.

Pat went through Stanford "burning the candle at both ends," studying like crazy to get into medical school, which she started her senior year of college, and trying never to miss a party. Sleep was never high on Pat's list of priorities. In the era when girls were expected to wear skirts to walk across the Stanford Quad, Pat graduated from Stanford Medical School in 1962 and from a Dermatology residency and fellowship in 1967. The opportunities Stanford gave her and sense of boundless optimism the school exuded made Pat a life-long, die-hard Stanford fan. For decades, she gave time and energy to the University – leading countless fundraising campaigns and reunion efforts, serving on innumerable committees, including those to nominate the Dean of the Medical School and Chair of the Dermatology Department, chairing the Stanford Parents' Fund and being named Stanford Medical School's first ever Dean of Alumni Affairs.

Stanford awarded her the Gold Spike in 1991, the University's highest honor for extraordinary volunteer service, recognizing individuals for long-term, exceptional contributions to the school. Her work at Stanford continued for decades as a Clinical Associate Professor of Dermatology, teaching and mentoring residents, a position she also held at UCSF Medical School. In retirement, Pat was an avid Stanford sports fan and enthusiastic participant in their Continuing Studies and Travel programs, which took her from the Silk Road to Macchu Picchu.

It seemed only fitting that the Stanford Band and Dollies surprised her for her 80th birthday.

Grateful to Kaiser Permanente, where she practiced medicine for over 30 years, to her impressive colleagues and to all the patients she got to serve, Pat retired at 60 to focus on her family and travel. Her beloved parents, "Nana and Raymond," helped her to raise her only child, Tina Rooke Jones, for whom her love and dedication knew no bounds. Tina and Pat traveled the world together – her daughter often in tow as Pat lectured on cosmetic reactions and contact dermatitis at conferences and universities in South America, Asia, Europe, and all over the U.S. Renowned in her field, she published over 35 papers, served on the Board and Executive Committee of the Academy of Dermatology and was recognized with numerous awards, including the Women's Dermatologic Society's Rose Hirschler Award for outstanding achievement in 2005, Practitioner of the Year by the San Francisco Dermatology Society in 2008, and the prestigious Dermatology Foundation's Clark W. Finnerud Award in 2011, which acknowledged Pat as an exemplary teacher and practitioner who embodied the highest ideals of her specialty.

While she had an esteemed career, the Women's Dermatologic Society published Pat's true perspective in 2023, "Professional success for me is having a wonderful family whom I love. I would like to be remembered for being a good mother and grandmother." After 34 years in Atherton, Pat moved to a house in Menlo Park adjacent to her daughter and "the world's best son-in-law," Warren Jones, to help raise their twins, Austin and Sophie Jones (now 24). "Nana" was more than a grandmother, she was a chauffeur and a cheerleader for her active grandchildren, believing in them and applauding them at every step along their journey.

Because Pat was an only child, her friends were her family. She loved the dinner parties, gift exchanges, trips to the theater, opera, symphony and ballet, the concerts and movies, and the museums that she visited in all corners of the world. Though she was a trailblazer who busted through many a glass ceiling, she did it in style and with grace, paying it forward by mentoring countless young doctors. A devout Catholic, curious, humble, open-minded, generous, and ceaselessly stylish, Pat will be missed by a large community of friends, family, and fans.

PAID OBITUARY

PARKING

continued from page 5

Element. In early 2025, the city sought proposals from developers to build affordable units downtown, but following strong resident backlash, the council delayed declaring the lots "surplus land," a necessary legal step before transferring public property for housing.

In May, Save Downtown Menlo launched the efforts to get an initiative after the city council maintained its support for using the parking lots to meet its housing goals. Save Downtown Menlo argues that the loss of parking would be detrimental to local businesses and the city did not exhaust consideration of alternative sites.

Opponents of the initiative say that Menlo Park's housing plan

included careful consideration of alternative sites and public input.

The city continued to move forward with the plan in September by issuing a request for proposals to some developers for plans for the parking lots.

This is not the first time an initiative has been launched to block a housing development in Menlo Park. Measure V in 2022, sought to require citywide votes on zoning changes for single-family parcels. That measure failed with only 38% support.

Save Downtown Menlo has collected signatures at local events, Draeger's Market and the Sharon Heights Shopping Center. Residents were also able to sign the petition at some local businesses. ■

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

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Ladera Church community support program

The Ladera Community Church is offering a community support program titled "Reflections for These Times," at 12:30 p.m. on every first and third Wednesday through Nov. 19.

Each session will include a tai chi prayer, time to share and connect, a candle lighting and silent meditation. Afterward, participants can enjoy snacks and conversations in the fellowship hall. For more information contact church@ladera.org.

Family Nature Day in Woodside

Local San Mateo County organizations including Peninsula Open Space Trust, San Mateo County Health, Friends of Huddart and Wunderlich Park and San Mateo County Parks are hosting Family Nature Day. The event will take place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 25 at Huddart Park, 1100 Kings Mountain Road in Woodside.

This free event is best for children under the age of 10 and will feature kid-friendly walks, nature scavenger hunts, dissecting owl pellets, live reptiles, animal artifacts station and more. Register for the event at post.onl/familynatureday.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

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. Scan QR Code:



PAID OBITUARY

DOBSON

continued from page 5

thinking, ‘Oh, I get it,’” he said. “When it clicks, it’s pretty cool.”

Dolyniuk, who primarily taught life and physical sciences and algebra, retired from Woodside Elementary in 2010 after teaching for nearly three decades. “Dobson’s Arc” is dedicated to Dolyniuk along with Dobson’s late father, Duncan Dobson Jr. and his high school calculus teacher Dan Kunkle.

Dobson wasn’t much of an artist as a child, but he discovered a passion for mixed media art in the 2000s. In 2017, he developed a specific style of collage paintings featuring notable people such as Isaac Newton, Marie Curie, Pythagoras and J. Robert Oppenheimer. He said some compare his art style to depictions of Orthodox Christian icons.

“I thought it was fun to have neon, glitter and metallic paint all around these boring old, 100-year-old scientists,” said Dobson, “I just thought it jazzed them up.”

“Dobson’s Arc” is a cumulation of nearly 10 years of artwork bound into the form of an educational book that explains the inventions, formulas and theories of over 50 different scientists and mathematicians. Dobson credits his mother Lucy Dobson for giving him the idea to use his art in a book and encouraging him every step of the way.

A lasting impact

Dolyniuk had reconnected with Duncan Dobson’s mother, who invited he and his wife for lunch one day. It was then that Dobson and Dolyniuk reunited for the first time in over 30 years.

Dolyniuk said it was very gratifying to be able to connect with his former student again. He’s still in touch with a few others through

Facebook, he added.

Even after decades, Dolyniuk said he remembered Dobson very well as an intelligent and talented kid who loved to talk and was always full of energy. He was surprised to learn that he had dedicated the book to him.

“I was both thrilled and humbled that Duncan (Dobson) would remember me in that vein and actually dedicate a book to me,” he said. “He’s really brought in the art asset of his endeavors, and combined it with his love of math and science and that’s quite an accomplishment”

With Dolyniuk’s help, Dobson was able to revisit his former elementary school in February to give a talk about his artwork and book to a class of sixth graders. He also worked with the art teacher to help the students make their own versions of collage paintings in his style.

“I hope that (the students) felt like if they wanted to make art, they can do what they want to do,” Dobson said. “Even if it seems odd or strange to others, you can still do it and show them what’s possible.”

Dolyniuk felt that the book was a great representation of STEAM, an acronym for science, technology, engineering, art and math. As a teacher, he had always tried to teach interdisciplinary lessons, showing “how all things are connected,” he added.

“Math in a sense is an art and it’s also a language,” Dolyniuk said. “The numbers express an idea that can have lasting effects in the real world, and to understand those ideas, appreciate them and to see their beauty, I think you have to have some sort of art background or appreciation.” ■

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

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS

**TOWN OF ATHERTON
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Notice: The Town of Atherton (Town) hereby gives notice that it will accept bids for construction of the following public work:

ATHERTON LIBRARY CHILDREN’S GARDEN

Project Number: 56109

1. **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.
2. **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 available.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **Engineer’s Estimate** for the project is: **\$603,243**
6. **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.
7. **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.
8. **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.
9. **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>)
10. **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.
11. **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.
12. **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.
13. **Bid Preparation Cost:** Bidders are solely responsible for the cost of plan and specification printing and preparing their Bids.
14. **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.

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Patricia Gayle Engasser, 87, a Palo Alto resident and Stanford Medical School graduate who appeared in seven studio films as a child actress during Hollywood’s golden age, who practiced medicine for over three decades at Kaiser Permanente and who served as a Clinical Associate Professor of Dermatology at Stanford, died on Oct. 12, 2025.

Todd Iversen Smith, 85, a Palo Alto resident who served as a professor of physics at Stanford University, who did pioneering low

temperature research at the Hansen Experimental Physics Laboratory and who loved traveling, including exploring Ireland and Scotland in the last three weeks of his life, died on Sept. 24, 2025.

Jerry Strom, 89, a Los Altos Hills resident who served in the U.S. Army, who owned a Palo Alto restaurant and who later had a career in multi-residential real estate, died on Oct. 1, 2025.

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

Dozens face layoffs at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital

Hospital plans to cut 87 positions due to 'ongoing economic uncertainty'

By Gennady Sheyner

Citing financial challenges and economic uncertainty, the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital is preparing to reduce its workforce by 87 positions in December, according to a notification that the Palo Alto medical institution filed with the state this week.

The hospital at 725 Welch Road submitted on Oct. 10 a notice with the state Department of Economic Development listing the 87 positions that will be eliminated by Dec. 12, 2025. According to an accompanying letter from N. Christopher

Comma, vice president for human resources at the hospital, the employees will remain on the payroll with benefits until that time.

"The hospital continues to operate and is not closing as a result of these layoffs," Comma wrote.

The vast majority of the 87 positions that are being eliminated are non-unionized positions, though the list also includes 13 positions that are represented by the Service Employees International Union and six that are represented by the Committee for Recognition of Nursing Achievement, the union

that represents hospital nurses.

The positions include clinical pharmacists, case managers, application architects, administrative assistants, housekeeping specialists, food service workers, clinical pharmacists and a chaplain, according to the list provided by the hospital.

The children's hospital, which is affiliated with Stanford Health Care, is one of many medical institutions across the nation that are facing financial pressure as a result of recently enacted federal policies and legislation, most notably the "One Big Beautiful Bill." In Santa Clara County, officials are projecting

an annual loss of about \$1 billion in revenues annually because of the recent federal actions.

"Ongoing economic uncertainty in 2025 has created serious operational and financial challenges for academic medical institutions," Comma wrote in the letter. "At Stanford Children's, anticipated changes in regulatory headwinds are expected to have significant budgetary consequences." These developments, along with rising operational costs, shifts in funding sources, and programmatic changes, have resulted in this workforce reduction."

In addition to the cuts at the hospital, Stanford University has also been reducing the workforce on its academic campus. Earlier this year, the university announced that it is laying off 363 employees, a workforce reduction that took effect on Sept. 30, according to documents filed with the state.

Comma noted in his letter that effected employees who are subject to permanent layoffs will be provided with severance benefits, continued health insurance and career transition services. ■

Email Gennady Sheyner at gshyner@almanacnews.com.

LAYOFFS

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\$175 million, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

In fiscal year 2025, which ended Aug. 31, the endowment disbursed \$1.9 billion to support academic programs, offer financial aid and enable educational goals, the university reported. When asked whether the university considered using endowment funds to avoid layoffs, Stanford's Director of Media Relations Luisa Rappoport pointed this publication to previous communications from the university which state that 75% of endowment funds can be used only for purposes designated by the donors.

"While the remaining funds support general university operations, they are designed to support the university over the long term," says a Sept. 8 Stanford Report. "The endowment tax will make it harder for the endowment payout to keep up with inflation, and removing too much from the funds now would make it difficult to pay expenses that are covered annually by endowment payout down the road."

Rappoport noted that staff were given at least 60 days of paid notice prior to their final day, generally on Oct. 1, meaning that many affected staff were informed of their layoff at the end of July. Rappoport also said that eligible employees received severance pay based on their years of service to the university, contributions to their benefits premiums for three months, and outplacement assistance that helps departing employees find new opportunities.

With approximately 18,000 faculty and staff, around 2% of Stanford's workforce was laid off. Rappoport declined to specify how the university leadership

determined which staff members would be impacted. No faculty members were laid off.

Nazario-Miller is one of five former Stanford University staff members who spoke to this publication in the aftermath of getting laid off. The staff members spoke about what they experienced, how they are faring, and what they think the lay-offs mean for the future of Stanford.

After the news, Nazario-Miller has struggled to understand what the decision means for him and for the future of higher education. Nazario-Miller obtained his master's in education and has worked in K-12 systems or higher education for his entire career.

"The decision is reinforcing for me what I've always known to be true: that higher ed has a lot of work to do," Nazario-Miller said. "Education is about learning. Education is about community. I think we have lost our way in our capitalistic society in considering education as a form of business and considering only the bottom line."

'Like getting kicked out of the family'

Colleagues Sarah Meyer Tapia and Diane Friedlaender were the director and associate director, respectively, of Stanford Living Education. Known as SLED, the program offered around 60 courses across three branches of curriculum that focused on student well-being. Wellness offered courses on topics such as financial literacy, nutrition, sleep, and relationships. LifeWorks integrated the arts with contemplative practices. LEAD, one of the program's branches of curriculum, focused on students' leadership and change-making skills. In total, the program served around 1000 students, Friedlaender said.

"It's felt like the most purposeful work I've ever done," said Meyer Tapia, who had worked at Stanford for 13 years.

When Friedlaender received a calendar invite from Jim Jacobs, the executive director of Vaden Health Services and the programmatic supervisor to SLED, at the end of July, she suspected what was about to happen. Jacobs read from a script and told Friedlaender that her position had been eliminated. The decision was not performance related, she was told, but related to budget concerns.

After hearing the spring announcements from the university's leadership about pending staff layoffs, the SLED staff had considered they would have to make reductions to their budget. Still, the elimination of SLED and the layoff of the entire four-person team that runs the program came as a shock to both Meyer Tapia and Friedlaender. Friedlaender was the first of her four colleagues to hear the news, a sequence that Meyer Tapia, as director of the program, found "painful."

Friedlaender, a Stanford staff member for 21 years, said the news was "personally devastating." But more than that, Friedlaender said she felt crushed for her students.

"I realized how much being there has become part of my identity," Friedlaender said. "It's just a part of the fabric of my life. That's where I spend my time."

For Meyer Tapia, the news was also devastating. On the very same day that she was laid off from her position as director of SLED, her husband, a staff member in the athletic department who worked at Stanford for 18 years, also learned he would be laid off, meaning that both income earners were unemployed overnight. Meyer

Tapia also noted the benefits that would be foregone. Meyer Tapia's son will apply for colleges soon, but if she is not a Stanford employee, he will be ineligible for the Stanford tuition benefits available to staff. The news has also left an emotional impact.

"It almost feels like getting kicked out of the family," she said.

While the grief of the lost job hits both Friedlaender and Meyer Tapia in waves, both staff members said their work isn't over. The pair are in communication with Stanford donors and academic programs to find a new home for SLED on campus. Meanwhile, Friedlaender is doing consulting work and may offer workshops, courses and coaching to various institutional entities. With hopes of rehoming SLED in some capacity at Stanford, she is not looking for jobs elsewhere.

Meyer Tapia has a consulting business outside of Stanford and three roles on campus leading various curricula for Stanford Lifestyle Medicine, the Distinguished Careers Institute, and Healthy Living workshops for faculty and staff. Meyer Tapia said she prefers not to dwell on the past, but on what she and Friedlaender can build from the ashes of the former program.

"I don't know that it's useful spending all of our energy ranting and raving," she said. "So how are we going to ... create something in the world that is beautiful and serves our community?"

They aren't the only affected Stanford employees who are responding to the layoffs by building their networks and redoubling their efforts to support higher education. Days after the layoff news, Nazario-Miller began organizing a

Higher Ed Staff Hope Collective of staff in higher education who are experiencing job loss or who are worried about the future of higher education.

The Collective meets bi-weekly, and around 40 people from institutions such as Stanford and the University of Southern California — who have laid off at least 700 staff in similar budget reduction efforts — are regularly attending the virtual events and workshops that the Collective hosts.

The Collective has given Nazario-Miller a meaningful community to think about larger questions, and he said some members of the collective are using Stanford's severance pay to catalyze entrepreneurial endeavors.

Nazario-Miller is also actively interviewing for full-time positions with benefits. In the meantime, he's starting a contract role in October as the employee onboarding and learning specialist for LinkedIn — his first foray into an industry outside of education.

'Shattering' news

Another staff member was laid off from a role that primarily supported students and researchers working in history and the digital humanities. The staff member is searching for new opportunities in the area, and was granted anonymity so she could speak candidly for this story.

The staff member said she cared deeply about her work. When her boss informed her of the layoff, her first question was whether she could complete some of the projects she was working on. Her boss told her that she couldn't; the termination was effective immediately on July 29, when she was informed of the decision, and

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

she had to pass off the projects. The staff member became emotional describing the impact the layoff has had for her.

“After years of hearing you were a top performer and getting stellar reviews and putting your all into something ... someone looked at a list of people and decided that you didn’t matter to the institution enough to be retained,” she said. “Honestly, it’s been really shattering. I’ve felt like I’ve been in the twilight zone.”

In the aftermath of the news, she has struggled to begin the job hunt because of the emotional toll of being laid off. While Stanford provided a resume writer to help polish her application materials for future positions, she said the resume writer did not understand her work and the resume, which seemed to her AI-generated, was unusable. In the meantime, she is rebuilding her resiliency and taking advantage of the counseling services Stanford provided to impacted employees.

“I have been focusing on family and getting things done around the house, but it’s difficult because I’m watching my bank account get smaller while I’m doing that,” she said, adding that she plans to begin searching for a job once she’s rebounded psychologically.

The layoffs have left the staff member feeling unsettled about the world and disappointed that Stanford didn’t place more value on the work of the 363 terminated staff members. She also worries about how her absence will impact her team’s work and what it means that her voice will be missing. She said she often encouraged her team to consider the longevity of a project or think about how their work contributed to the community. More broadly, she wonders about the quality of the training of the next generation of students and leaders.

“The university is still able to function and perform their goal, their mission of education,” she said. “But ... are we asking the philosophical questions about that mission and how we can empower the next generation to be better thinkers with strong research skills and ready to make important contributions to humanity as a whole?”

Mission and values

Since the university’s administration of budget cuts in the spring, one staff member had been considering how to continue their office’s operations with less resources. When the

staff member, who was the director of a student-facing office, learned they were being laid off, the news came as a shock. The staff member was granted anonymity so they could speak candidly as they pursue new job opportunities in higher education.

After being laid off, the staff member worried about securing a livelihood in a tough job market in higher education that has been racked by workforce reductions amid changes in federal policy. More than that, though, they worried about the impact the layoffs would have on students, especially international students, and the other campus offices that serve students. (See sidebar).

The layoffs have left this staff member grappling with a range of questions, including what Stanford represents and what a university ought to value. Stanford, the staff member said, serves as a nexus between academic achievement and private and corporate interests. In a system of academic capitalism, knowledge is the capital that Stanford produces. And faculty, not staff, are seen as the personnel most central to the most important product of academic capitalism, the staff member said.

“Staff are seen to be, in some ways, second-rate citizens,” the staff member said. “They’re seen as expendable.”

Going forward, the staff member is following some job leads in higher education.

The staff member still finds hope in being an educator, but noted that higher educators will grapple with many of these questions in the years to come. They also noted that the public is a stakeholder of the university as a consumer of higher education and the recipient of the public good that the university creates. Community members, the staff member said, can put “healthy pressure” on institutional leadership to carefully consider and communicate their mission to the public.

“Are the leaders going to listen to the range of their constituents and their stakeholders, not just a small portion of them, not just the most powerful of them?” the staff member said. ■

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.

To read more about the layoffs and their impact on the Stanford community, visit tinyurl.com/Stanford-layoffs

Public Notices

BALANCED BEAM WELLNESS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301849
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) BALANCED BEAM WELLNESS, located at 316 Lux Ave, South San Francisco, CA 94080. Mailing Address: PO BOX 8 South San Francisco, CA 94083.
Registered owner(s):
CHLIEZY TORRES
PO BOX 8
South San Francisco, CA 94083
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 October 06, 2025.
(ALM Oct 17, 24, 31 and Nov 7, 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)

INNER GARDENS HEALTH
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301758
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) INNER GARDENS HEALTH, located at 1017 El Camino Real #279, Redwood City, CA 94063.
Registered owner(s):
BE-LEADERS LLC
1017 El Camino Real #279
Redwood City, CA 94063
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 26, 2025.
(ALM Oct 17, 24, 31 and Nov 7, 2025)

DISCELI CONSTRUCTION GROUP
DISCELI BUILDERS GROUP
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301749
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) DISCELI CONSTRUCTION GROUP, 2.) DISCELI BUILDERS GROUP, located at 1224 Pompan Street, San Jose, CA 95122. Mailing Address: 3875 BOHANNON DRIVE #4031 MENLO PARK, CA 94026
Registered owner(s):
ERVIN JEOVANNY DISCUA TURCIOS
3875 BOHANNON DRIVE #4031
MENLO PARK, CA 94026
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 25, 2025.
(ALM Oct 17, 24, 31 and Nov 7, 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)

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)

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)

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)

To place a legal notice visit AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/

Artscene

PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

SPOOKY SPECTACLES AND HAUNTED HAPPENINGS

Festive and frightful events await
around the Peninsula

Courtesy Getty Images

By Julia Brown

Halloween time has arrived, and with it comes a packed Peninsula events calendar. Expect an extra spirited holiday with Halloween falling on a Friday this year, but there's also a wide variety of festivities in the days leading up to Oct. 31.

Our guide to Silicon Valley Halloween festivities covers all ages and includes parties and special events; concerts, screenings and performances; family-friendly festivities; and food-and-drink events and restaurant celebrations. Avoid the frightful fear of missing out and read on for details.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Filoli Nightfall The Filoli estate transforms its historic house and gardens for Halloween, with creepy decorations and a glowing garden display, and opens for evening visits with nighttime walks, live music, games and crafts, refreshments and the chance to see the "Trolls" exhibition by moonlight. Witches Tea, a daytime activity for young guests and their families, offers sweet treats and bubbly brews, plus storytime.

Nightfall takes place through Nov. 10; \$45-\$49 adults, \$35-\$39 children.

Witches Tea takes place weekends, 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. through Nov. 2; \$75 per person. Both events are held at Filoli, 86 Cañada Road, Woodside. filoli.org/nightfall.

Haunted Hangar Hiller Aviation Museum will be decorated for Halloween with its Haunted Hangar event Oct. 17-27. Weekend activities include a scavenger hunt, paint-a-plane, kids' festival and the famed Helicopter Pumpkin Drop.

Haunted Hangar is open Oct. 17-27; Paint-a-plane Oct. 18-19, 10 a.m.-noon; Halloween Kid's Festival and Pumpkin Drop Oct. 25-26, 10 a.m. to noon; Hiller Aviation Museum, 601 Skyway Road, San Carlos; \$24 adults, \$16 seniors and youth, free for kids 3 and under. hiller.org.

Scare Faire and Costume Swap The Museum of American Heritage and Transition Palo Alto will host a free costume and decoration swap plus crafts, games and activities for all ages.

Oct. 19, 1-3 p.m. at the Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto; free. moah.org/moah-events/scare-faire-costume-swap.

Historic Union Cemetery Halloween Tours The Redwood City historic landmark will celebrate Halloween with two timely tours.

Oct. 25, 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the Historic Union Cemetery, 316 Woodside Road, Redwood City; free. historicunioncemetery.org/tours.

Grassroots Ecology Night Hike Naturalists will lead a guided 2.5- to 3-mile hike to see the creatures that emerge when the sun goes down, including bats, spiders and glow-in-the-dark scorpions.

Oct. 26, 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Pearson-Arastradero Preserve, 1530 Arastradero Road, Palo Alto; free. Spaces limited. tinyurl.com/grassrootsnighthike.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY FESTIVITIES

Spooky Storytime at The Foster Little ones are encouraged to wear costumes for a spooky afternoon that includes storytime, a Venus flytrap-themed puppet activity, dancing and a scavenger hunt.

Oct. 19, 10:30 a.m. to noon, at The Foster Museum, 940 Commercial St., Palo Alto; free. thefoster.org/storytime-with-anna.

Jack O'Jaunt The city of Palo Alto's sixth annual pumpkin carving competition and display invites the community to vote for the scariest, cutest and most creative jack-o'-lanterns. Participants can carve their own pumpkins ahead of time at home and bring them to the display, or carve them in a workshop on the day of the event.

Oct. 24, display and competition takes place 6:30-8:30 p.m.; carving workshop takes place 3-5:30 p.m.. Both events take place at Lytton Plaza, University Avenue and Emerson Street, Palo Alto. \$25 resident, \$28.75 nonresident fee for those carving on-site (fee includes a pumpkin and carving kit, but no instructors will be present.) tinyurl.com/2025PAJaunt.

Halloween for Families Gamble Garden's annual Halloween event will include face



Courtesy Filoli

The Filoli estate transforms its historic house and gardens for Halloween with its Nightfall event, through Nov. 10.

painting, crafts, trivia, treats and a scavenger hunt. The Palo Alto Junior Museum & Zoo will showcase Eloise the opossum and her zoo pals.

Oct. 25, 10:30-11:30 a.m. at Gamble Garden, 1431 Waverley St., Palo Alto; \$45 for adults (\$36 for members), \$55 for kids (\$44 for members), free for children 1 and under. gamblegarden.org/event/halloween-for-families.

Halloweek Menlo Park's Halloween festivities include a parade where kids can trick-or-treat at downtown merchants, followed by a carnival at Fremont Park; the Pumpkin Splash at the Belle Haven and Burgess pools, featuring floating pumpkin patches; and a trunk-or-treat at the Belle Haven Community Campus.

Halloween Hoopla Parade and Carnival is Oct. 25, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.; parade starts in the parking lot behind Cheeky

Monkey (640 Santa Cruz Ave.); carnival is at Fremont Park, Santa Cruz Avenue at University Drive, Menlo Park; free.

Pumpkin Splash is Oct. 26, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Belle Haven Pool (100 Terminal Ave.) and Burgess Pool (501 Laurel St.), Menlo Park. Tickets are \$12 each and include swim time, pumpkin decorations and a treat bag.

Trunk-or-treat is Oct. 28 from 4:30-6 p.m. at the Belle Haven Community Campus, 100 Terminal Ave., Menlo Park; free. tinyurl.com/menloparkhalloweek.

Monster Bash The city of Mountain View's family festival features a treat trail, spooky games, performances, an inflatable zone and a "Creepy Crawly Ooey Goey Zone," with live animal guests. Visitors can grab a bite at several food trucks.

See SPOOKY, page 21

West Bay Opera stages strong 'Samson et Dalila'

Saint-Saëns' epic captures biblical tale's drama with rare choral elements, meaty roles for powerful voices

By Michael J. Vaughn

The little company that could is at it again, presenting the kind of opera that even the big companies do only once every 10 years. Saint-Saëns' "Samson et Dalila" is the kind of lesser known treasure that makes a great addition to any aficionado's list. Although West Bay Opera's production suffers a few dips in energy, it features some excellent voices that fully reveal the score's innovative musicality and achieves an agreeably adrenalinizing climax.

An immediate difference comes in the first act, which features so much ensemble music you might think you've entered a choral performance. The Hebrews, firmly under the thumb of their Philistine oppressors, lament their haggard conditions in a handful of numbers, and even offer a fugue — an operatic rarity — in "Nous avons vu nos cités renversées." Bruce Olstad's chorus handles the material adeptly, and it's a real treat for those who enjoy choral music.

The Hebrew leader is their warrior, Samson (he who once slaughtered a thousand enemies using the jaw of an ass), who is indulging in a bit of rabble-rousing, looking for a bit of good trouble to help his people. He is met with a perfect opening when the Philistine leader Abimelech (baritone Casey

Germain) attacks him with a sword. Samson wrests the weapon away and slays the poor schmuck, which inspires the Hebrews to rise up against their overlords.

Just like that, the Hebrews are celebrating their victory, but the Philistine high priest (bass-baritone Kellen Schrimper) has a Plan B, in the (luscious) form of Dalila. The professional seductress makes a grand entrance, immediately drawing the attentions of Samson. This leads to an intriguing trio with an old Hebrew (Casey Germain again!) who gives plentiful warnings to his warrior friend.

Schrimper gives a solid lower-toned authority to our villain, without going over the top (just doing his job, really). Mezzo Kim Stanish's default expression is bemusement, which suits Dalila well. Her performances of the two well-known arias, "Amour! Viens aider ma faiblesse" and the show-stopper "Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix," accentuate her truly lush lower tones, a trait that is sorely underestimated in the world of High C's.

Tenor John Kun Park brings a powerful voice and an energetic physicality to the role of Samson. His most moving moments came in the third act, after his dalliance with Dalila has condemned him to blindness and prison (something about hair?). You can really feel his despair, having lost

his strength and failed his people with one wrong move.

The only drawback came in Act II, when the two met at Dalila's mountain retreat. Although the singing was beautiful, the chemistry just wasn't there. Even a little more physical closeness would help. This opera works at its best when there's a bit of actual affection between the two; it makes the subsequent betrayal that much deeper. As it is, the final move to lovemaking seems a little sudden and jarring.

Fortunately, the Act III buildup to the destruction of the temple is utterly satisfying and dramatic, in terms both theatrical and musical. It's notable that the opera has one of the quickest endings ever. The temple comes down and bam! Curtain.

Conductor Jose Luis Moscovich and his orchestra handled the score with aplomb, notably in the strings, bringing out all of the inventiveness that initially brought Saint-Saëns some harsh critiques. I especially enjoyed the music of the Philistines, where strong percussion and the use of tambourines, triangles and bells was used to illustrate a certain barbarism. This pagan bent was also brought out by a captivating trio of dancers choreographed by Daiane Lopes da Silva: Aikaterini Bousleli, Lydia Lathan and Tai Lum. Meant to illustrate an evil lasciviousness, the dances



Courtesy West Bay Opera

John Kun Park, left, and Kim Stanish play the title roles in West Bay Opera's "Samson et Dalila."

instead forged a sublime fusion of sexuality and artistic beauty.

I always enjoy the projections of Peter Crompton and Frederic O. Boulay. The images of primitive sculptures used in various scenes were roughly gorgeous. I longed for a temple destruction that perhaps featured a few fragments falling from the flies, but it could be I'm asking too much. Kudos to child actor Hayden Alexander Beattie, who did an excellent job of leading the blind Samson around the temple. The prosthetic used to feign Samson's blinded eyes didn't quite work; from the

audience, it resembled a pair of rose-colored glasses. The action of the opera takes place in Gaza, 1150 BC, which certainly creates a few modern-day echoes. ■

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West Bay Opera presents
"Samson et Dalila," Oct. 18, 7 p.m.
and Oct. 19, 2 p.m., Lucie Stern
Theater, 1305 Middlefield Road,
Palo Alto; \$54-\$140; 650-424-9999,
wbopera.org.

SPOOKY

continued from page 20

Oct. 25, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.,
at Rengstorff Park, 201 S.
Rengstorff Ave., Mountain
View; free. [tinyurl.com/
monsterbashmountainview](http://tinyurl.com/monsterbashmountainview).

Halloween Night at the Museum The Palo Alto museum hosts a night of weird history and artifacts, mad science, tarot card readings, a flashlight ghost hunt and Halloween candy.

Oct. 31, 5-9 p.m. at the
Museum of American Heritage,
351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto;
free. [moah.org/moahevents/
halloween-night-at-the-museum](http://moah.org/moahevents/halloween-night-at-the-museum).

FOOD AND DRINK EVENTS

Witches & Warlocks Wine Stroll Costumes are encouraged at this Halloween-themed wine stroll with over 20 tasting sites. Tickets include a collectible wine glass and a map to tasting sites.

Oct. 17, 6-9 p.m. (doors open
at 5 p.m.) in downtown Los
Altos; \$65.87 each. [tinyurl.com/
witchesandwarlockswinestroll](http://tinyurl.com/witchesandwarlockswinestroll).

Springline Barks & Boos Dress up your pup for a night at the dog

park featuring pet vendors, a live DJ, a costume contest, complimentary food and drinks available for purchase.

Oct. 24, 5-7:30 p.m. at
The Glade Dog Park,
1300 El Camino Real, Menlo
Park; free. [eventbrite.com/e/barks-
boos-tickets-1632782920669?aff=
oddtcreator](http://eventbrite.com/e/barks-boos-tickets-1632782920669?aff=oddtcreator).

CONCERTS, SCREENINGS AND PERFORMANCES

Cinema at the Cemetery The city of Colma Recreation Services hosts a screening of Disney's "The Haunted Mansion" outdoors on the Italian Cemetery Mausoleum lawn.

Oct. 18, 6-9 p.m., at the Italian
Cemetery, 540 F St., Colma; free.
colma.ca.gov.

Laser Halloween Spooktacular De Anza College's planetarium presents a display of Halloween-themed laser-drawn images accompanied by spooky tunes.

Oct. 18 and 25, 7-8 p.m. at the
Fujitsu Planetarium at De Anza
College, 21250 Stevens Creek
Blvd., Cupertino; \$13.40.
deanza.edu/events.

Scary Tales and Spooky Music

An hourlong program will feature scary tales and haunting organ music from Pastor Burke Owens and organist Diane Keller.

Oct. 26, 6:30 p.m. at First Palo
Alto United Methodist Church,
625 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto.
firstpaloalto.com.

"Scary music from Disney, movies and the classics" The Redwood Symphony performs a family-friendly concert. The event also includes a behind-the-scenes tour and a raffle in which the winners get a chance to briefly conduct the symphony.

Oct. 26, 3 p.m., at Cañada
College theater, 4200 Farm Hill
Blvd., Redwood City.
redwoodsymphony.org.

The Hustle '70s Disco Halloween A Halloween dance party inspired by 1970s disco favorites such as Donna Summer, ABBA, Sister Sledge, Earth, Wind & Fire and others.

Oct. 25, 8 p.m., at The Guild
Theatre, 949 El Camino Real,
Menlo Park; \$29.49.
guildtheatre.com.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show The Bawdy Caste performs alongside two screenings of the cult



Courtesy Hiller Aviation Museum

Hiller Aviation Museum is decorated for Halloween with its Haunted Hangar event Oct. 17-27. Activities include a kids' festival and helicopter pumpkin drops.

classic film "The Rocky Horror Picture Show."

Oct. 26, 4 and 7 p.m., at
The Guild Theatre, 949 El
Camino Real, Menlo Park;
\$28.49. guildtheatre.com.

Deadwood Halloween Alex Jordan and members of the Dark Star Orchestra play a concert that revisits the Grateful Dead's iconic 1983 Halloween show in Marin.

Oct. 31, 7:30 p.m., at the Fox
Theatre, 2221 Broadway St.,
Redwood City; \$63-\$73.
foxrwc.showare.com.

Visit [almanacnews.com/
arts-culture](http://almanacnews.com/arts-culture) for more Halloween
events. ■

CORRECTION

The Oct. 9 Weekend Express arts newsletter's subject line contained an error in the name of the United Nations Association Film Festival's 2025 theme. The correct name is "Messages For the Future."

Food & Drink



Courtesy Plucky's Cafe

Plucky's Cafe in Burlingame is offering a Pumpkin Spice Latte for the fall.



Courtesy Red Rock

Red Rock Cafe in Mountain View is offering its Pumpkin Spice Latte, available both hot and iced, through Thanksgiving.



Courtesy Little Green

Little Green A Plant Bar in Redwood City will soon offer a Cranberry Iced Tea with syrup from Small Batch Jam Co.

Pumpkin spice and everything nice

These 16 Peninsula coffee shops are offering seasonal fall drinks

By Adrienne Mitchel

For many, pumpkin season is the unofficial start of fall. It's when coffee shops advertise pumpkin spice lattes, when grocery stores are filled with pumpkin spice versions of pretty much everything and visiting pumpkin patches is the designated weekend outing.

But for those who want to expand their palate beyond the ubiquitous Starbucks PSL while still getting their caffeine jolt, here are the fall drink offerings at a variety of Peninsula coffee shops.

Blue Bottle Coffee, multiple locations

The Oakland-founded roastery now has locations in San Mateo, Palo Alto, Los Gatos, Santa Clara and more. Blue Bottle is offering two seasonal drinks this year: the Fall Latte and the Orange Cream NOLA, available until Oct. 27 or while supplies last.

The Fall Latte (\$8), available hot or iced, uses orange blossom syrup from the pink House alchemy brand and is topped with freshly cracked black cardamom.

The Orange Cream NOLA (\$6.50) is a play on Blue Bottle's classic NOLA, a New Orleans-style iced coffee cold-brewed with roasted chicory and mixed with cane sugar and your choice of milk. This autumnal version, available hot or iced, replaces the sugar with a vanilla-orange syrup from pink House alchemy.

Coffeebar, multiple locations

Founded in Truckee by former competitive skier Greg Buchheister in 2010, Coffeebar now has three Peninsula cafes with a fourth on the way in Los Altos. Its fall drinks will be available until early spring, according to senior marketing manager Tyler Laney.

Coffeebar's Banana Bread Latte is made with housemade banana bread syrup (crafted with real banana puree, brown sugar and vanilla) and topped with cinnamon (\$7-\$8.25). Its Pumpkin Pie Latte features pumpkin puree, brown sugar and fall spices and is topped with cardamom (\$7-\$8.25). For chocolate lovers, the Spiced Orange Mocha features a Sichuan-infused orange syrup and housemade chocolate sauce and is topped with cocoa powder

(\$7-\$8.25). All three are available iced or hot.

For tea drinks, Coffeebar has launched a Rosemary Matcha with housemade rosemary syrup infused with allspice, sage and cardamom and topped with rosemary sugar (\$7-\$8.25). Coffeebar also introduced a Thai Iced Tea with sweetened condensed milk and agave (\$7.75).

For those looking to avoid caffeine, the Autumn Spice Tea Latte features housemade apple-cinnamon tea syrup and rooibos concentrate and is topped with apple tea sugar (\$6.75-\$8), and its Autumn Spice Cider is made with apple juice and apple-cinnamon tea syrup (\$6.50-\$7.75).

Want to add a touch of pumpkin to your beverage? Coffeebar's Pumpkin Puff Cream (\$1.50), made with pumpkin puree and vanilla agave, can be added to any iced drink.

Con Azucar Cafe, Redwood City

This San Jose-founded franchise expanded to Redwood City in June and is offering seasonal drinks through Nov. 30. In addition to a classic hot or iced Pumpkin Spice Latte (\$7-\$7.70), Con Azucar is offering

Pumpkin Pie Chai (an iced chai latte with pumpkin cold foam, \$8-\$8.50), Pilloncillo Cold Brew with Pumpkin Cold Foam (made with cafe de olla cold brew, \$7-\$7.70) and Shaken Pumpkin Espresso (\$7.80).

Coupa Cafe, multiple locations

Created by Nancy Coupal in 2004, this Venezuelan-influenced cafe has locations in Redwood City, Palo Alto, Los Altos and Stanford.

Coupa Cafe is offering a Pumpkin Spice Frappe and Pumpkin Spice Latte, which is made with tiger spice chai and pumpkin syrup and topped with whipped cream and cinnamon sprinkles (\$5.85-\$6.40). These drinks will be offered "throughout the Holiday season," Coupal wrote in an email.

Covour Coffee, Palo Alto

This Midtown coffee shop is offering a lineup of four seasonal beverages from now to Dec. 1. Returning beverages include a Pumpkin Pie Latte with pumpkin puree, condensed milk, cinnamon and a pumpkin cream top and Cafe de Olla with

piloncillo, spices, orange peel and an Einspanner cream top.

New seasonal drinks include the Cinnamon Cream Cold Brew with an Einspanner cream top and the Tahini Latte with tahini, saffron, cardamom, honey, brown sugar and cinnamon. All seasonal drinks are \$7.

Craftsman Coffee, Pacifica

Formerly a mobile coffee truck, Craftsman Coffee planted its roots in Pacifica last year. From now to the end of January, the coffee shop is offering two seasonal beverages. Its Pumpkin Spice Latte features a housemade syrup made from pumpkin puree, brown sugar, cinnamon cloves, cardamom, ginger and allspice (\$8.25). Its Mint Mocha is made with Ecuadorian raw cocoa, coconut sugar and mint syrup (\$8.25).

Gregorys, Palo Alto

Visit Northeast chain Gregorys at Stanford Shopping Center to try three seasonal beverages until Nov. 3.

In addition to a Pumpkin Spice Latte available hot or iced (\$6.15-\$7.30), it's also offering the



Courtesy Gregorys

Gregorys is offering a Full Moon Latte, made with salted egg yolk syrup and sesame vegan cold foam, until Nov. 3.



Courtesy Zörek

Zörek in San Bruno is offering Pumpkin Spice Lattes through the end of November.



Courtesy Covour Coffee

Covour Coffee's Pumpkin Pie Latte is made with pumpkin puree, condensed milk, cinnamon and a pumpkin cream top.

Smashing Pumpkin Cold Brew with oat milk and pumpkin spice sauce (\$5.55-\$6.55).

For those looking for a pumpkin respite, Gregorys offers a Full Moon Latte and a Full Moon Matcha Latte, made with salted egg yolk syrup and sesame vegan cold foam (\$8.34-\$8.70).

Little Green A Plant Bar, Redwood City

This coffee and plant shop is embracing fall with flavors of caramel and cranberry. Seasonal coffee-based drinks include a Caramel Latte (\$6.15) and Bicerin (a small cortado-sized drink with espresso and steamed milk plus a spoonful of Nutella, \$5.10).

Non-coffee drinks feature syrup and jam from Pacifica-based Small Batch Jam Co, which opened a small retail space inside Little Green last month. Little Green currently offers a Spiced Apricot and Vanilla Jam Shrub (\$6.15), a vinegary drink owner Riley Talain said is "good for kombucha lovers," and the shop

will soon offer a Cranberry Iced Tea (\$6.15).

All seasonal drinks will be available into January or while supplies last, according to Talain.

Mints & Honey, San Carlos and Burlingame

The all-day brunch cafe is offering four autumnal lattes, all available in iced or hot versions: Pumpkin Spice, Cookie Butter, Cinnamon Bun and Maple Pecan (\$6.50). Iced versions are topped with vanilla sweet cream, except Pumpkin Spice which is topped with pumpkin sweet cream.

Two other seasonal beverages are also topped with pumpkin sweet cream: Pumpkin Cloud Cold Brew (\$6.75) and iced Pumpkin Cloud Chai (\$6.95).

Plucky's Cafe, Burlingame

This mother-daughter-owned board game cafe is offering two coffee-based seasonal beverages: a Pumpkin Spice Latte (\$7.50) and a Butterscotch Kraken, a

latte made with housemade butterscotch and condensed milk (\$7.50). Both lattes are available hot or iced.

For those looking for a caffeine-free drink, it also introduced its Frosthaven Mango Float, an iced drink made with raspberry tea and mango sorbet and topped with house cream (\$10).

Red Rock Coffee, Mountain View

Known for its open mic nights and craft coffee, Red Rock is offering its Pumpkin Spice Latte, available both hot and iced (\$7.25-\$8.25), through Thanksgiving, according to general manager Jean Boulanger.

Red Rock partners with Sightglass Coffee, and on Tuesdays it serves a rotating single-origin espresso.

The Farm, Palo Alto

The newest coffee shop in the California Avenue neighborhood, The Farm, is offering a Salted Maple Latte dusted with

pumpkin spice until Nov. 1, according to owner Jan Unlu.

The Yard Coffee, Redwood City

Located in a historic house, The Yard Coffee will offer its Apple Cider Royale, made with apple juice, cinnamon syrup, whipped cream and caramel drizzle, during the month of November.

The Yard is temporarily closed for renovations through the end of the month, but will be open in November with "some exciting updates to our space and offerings," according to owner John Feig.

"The weather here makes for very warm and even hot weeks through October, so my favorite part of Autumn is when it actually starts to get cold and overcast. In my opinion, it makes coffee more enjoyable," general manager Eppi Carrion wrote in an email. "People also start putting up decorations and lights around town for the season and it feels special."

Verve Coffee Roasters, Palo Alto

This Santa Cruz-based roasting company has two ways to enjoy pumpkin this fall. The Pumpkin Pie Latte, available hot or iced, is made with real pumpkin puree, warming spices and organic sugar and is topped with a graham cracker crumble (\$7.50). Its Pumpkin Pie Cold Foam can be added to any drink, such as an iced latte or iced matcha latte (\$7.50).

ZombieRunner Coffee, Palo Alto

This Palo Alto-founded coffee shop has two locations in the city. For the month of October, the shop is offering a Maple Pecan Zombie made with oat milk, cold brew concentrate and maple and pecan flavoring (\$6.75).

Zörek, San Bruno

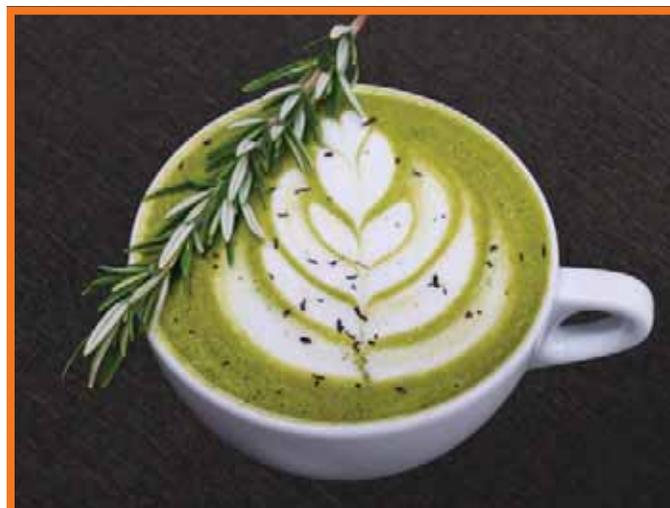
The brothers behind Mazra are offering two seasonal lattes at their Levantine-inspired cafe Zörek. Available through the end of November, Zörek is serving both its Pumpkin Spice Latte, which is made with real pumpkin, and its Cardamom Spice Latte (\$7.56). ■

Email Food Editor Adrienne Mitchel at amitchel@almanacnews.com.



Courtesy Coupa Cafe

From left, Coupa Cafe's Pumpkin Spice Frappe, hot Pumpkin Spice Latte and iced Pumpkin Spice Latte.



Courtesy Coffeebar

Coffeebar has launched a Rosemary Matcha with housemade rosemary syrup infused with allspice, sage and cardamom and topped with rosemary sugar.

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Refined Portola Valley Ranch Retreat 35 BEAR PAW

3 BEDS | 2.5 BATHS | 2,615 SF HOME | 22,670 SF LOT | OFFERED AT \$3,595,000

Located in one of Silicon Valley's most desirable residential enclaves, Portola Valley Ranch, amid 350 acres of private open space preserve, this refined contemporary home fully embraces its natural surroundings. Clean architectural lines, sliding glass doors and clerestory windows define the expansive living / dining great room and suffuse it with light. Beautiful Australian eucalyptus flooring throughout the home unifies it with a warm, welcoming aesthetic. Custom cherry cabinetry accentuated by walnut trim in the chef's kitchen and adjacent family room create an inviting setting for cooking while gathering with family and friends. The oversized primary bedroom with a front balcony that extends the length of the room has a marvelous view of mature trees framing the western hills. Two additional bedrooms, both opening to the outdoors, share the bright hall bath. The oversized two car garage includes an EV charger and a storage closet ideal for wine collectors. Tucked away on a quiet cul-de-sac in this special community offering a clubhouse, tennis courts, pools, exercise facilities, a vineyard, a playground and hiking trails, this serene retreat feels miles away but is conveniently located just minutes from highway 280 and Stanford University. Dont miss it!

Open Saturday 10/18 & Sunday 10/19 from 2:00 - 4:00pm



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