

The Almanac

NONPROFIT LOCAL NEWS FOR THE MIDPENINSULA

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La Entrada hosts Latin studies convention

A chance to give back to community, other Latin programs

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Latin studies are still alive at La Entrada Middle School in Menlo Park. It is one of the last remaining public middle schools with a Latin program in the state. On Saturday Oct. 18, the local school also became the first middle school campus to host Ludi, a California regional Latin competition.

Over 500 students from across 20 schools, as far north as Redding, joined La Entrada to celebrate Latin and Greek history, language, literature and games. The school's Latin teacher Eleanor Stuart described the event as academic, fun, community service-oriented and sporty.

"Ludi" is the Latin word for games and this annual gathering brings together Northern

California schools to compete in contests inspired by ancient Rome. The competition is part of the California Junior Classical League, an organization that promotes the study of Latin and Greek.

On the day of Ludi, participating schools kickstarted the morning with a breakfast treat and a general assembly where they recited the Junior Classical League creed, sang a song and said the Pledge of Allegiance in Latin. Afterward, students took a test, created by La Entrada students, which were graded throughout the day.

La Entrada has two eighth graders, Christopher Hintz and Avi Buxbaum, who currently serve on the California Junior

See **LATIN STUDIES**, page 18



Anna Hoch-Kenney

'No Kings' on the Peninsula

From left young protesters Matthew, 10, Antonio, 12, Abigail, 3, and Sebastian, 7, wave flags at their first "No Kings" protest at the intersection of El Camino Real and Castro Street in Mountain View on Oct. 18, 2025. "No Kings" events took place around the Peninsula and drew residents from throughout the Bay Area. See story on page 7.

Residents report stolen mail from Menlo Park mailboxes

Postal officials say to hand mail to employees

By Arden Margulis

Several checks have been stolen and "washed" from mailboxes in Menlo Park according to residents and officials.

When Menlo Park resident Eric Tashman put a sizable

check to the Internal Revenue Service in a mail collection box near the Bohannon Drive U.S. Post Office branch, he did not expect his bank to ask him a few weeks later if he wrote a check to a trainer in San Jose. His bank canceled the check before it was cashed.

Tashman is one of several in recent weeks who have reported mailing a check through USPS only to have it attempt to be deposited to a different recipient.

While two residents The Almanac spoke to suggest there has been a rise in mail theft, the

U.S. Postal Inspection Service did not say if there had been a spike.

"I hear this a lot but (mail theft) shows up in different places at different times. So I hear from lots of customers who are shocked at the idea that people steal mail," U.S. Post Inspector

Matthew Norfleet said. "As far as all of a sudden, Menlo Park is having mail theft that it has never had before, it might be true at a particular box, or on a particular carrier route, or in a particular neighborhood."

See **STOLEN MAIL**, page 17



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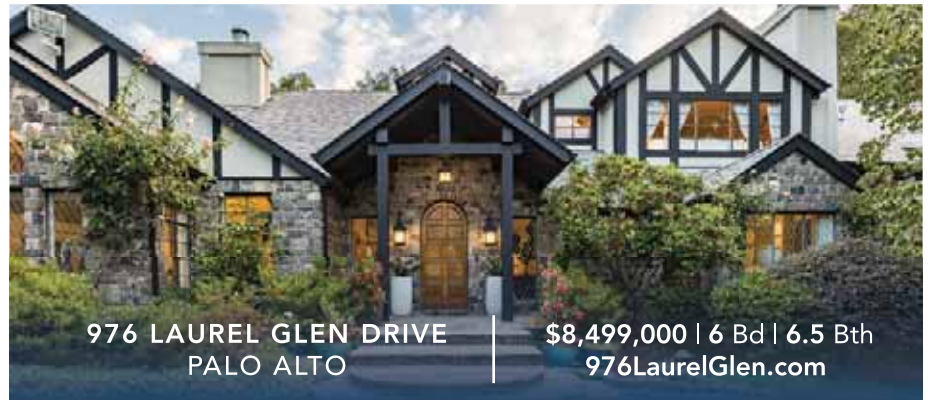
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Local News

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Courtesy Alex Beltramo

Proponents of a ballot initiative to require a citywide vote before the downtown parking lots could be redeveloped prepare signatures to submit to the city on Oct. 10. Pictured are two of the three proponents Van Kouzoujian, middle, and Alex Beltramo, right.

Menlo Park downtown parking initiative headed to vote

Voters will likely decide future of parking lots

By Arden Margulis

An ordinance that would require a citywide vote before Menlo Park repurposes its downtown parking lots will likely be headed to an election as the San Mateo County Election's Office verified that enough signatures

were submitted.

Since the citizen's initiative has qualified, the Menlo Park City Council can either adopt the ordinance entirely, call a special election or place it on the November 2026 ballot. The City Council is scheduled to discuss the initiative at its Nov. 4 meeting.

It is unlikely that the City Council would adopt the ordinance since a majority of councilmembers have reaffirmed their support for the downtown parking lot project several times since the initiative launched in May.

The initiative was started by

See **PARKING**, page 14

Portola Valley school board member resigns

Process to fill vacant seat underway

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Portola Valley School District Trustee Amod Setlur announced on Oct. 17 that he will be resigning from the board on Nov. 13 after three years of service. The school board has launched the appointment process to find a successful applicant who will be seated in mid-November and will serve the remaining 13 months of Setlur's term.

Setlur was elected to the board in November 2022 and his term

was slated to end in December 2026.

"I am grateful for the opportunity I have had to work alongside my fellow trustees, the dedicated administration, staff, and the community to support our students," said Setlur in a written statement. "This decision was made after careful consideration of personal and professional changes that require my full attention."

Setlur told The Almanac that he had talked about leaving the board over the summer and

thought long and hard about his decision.

"Part of my service was to give back to the community, and with some of the changes in my situation, I thought that in order to give it my fullest, I had to make the decision to resign," he said.

Over the last three years, Setlur said he was proud to have served as the district technology liaison, ensuring network security, setting the stage for

See **RESIGNATION**, page 6

San Mateo County supervisors approve \$900K in food assistance

Money for at-risk residents comes amid shutdown

By Hannah Bensen

Amid a federal government shutdown that threatens food assistance benefits, the San Mateo Board of Supervisors approved nearly \$900,000 on Oct. 21 to help purchase and distribute food over the next year.

The funds will be disbursed to the county's eight core service agencies to address a food insecurity crisis in the area that has been exacerbated by federal funding cuts and rising food prices. Funding will be used to purchase food during the holiday season and through next year.

Gov. Gavin Newsom announced on Monday that the federal government shutdown will likely delay November federal food assistance benefits for programs such as CalFresh. County officials said 35,000 San Mateo County residents are recipients of CalFresh, the state's name for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, sometimes known as food stamps.

County officials and community leaders held a press conference Tuesday afternoon to announce the county's funding. The funding will use revenue from Measure K, a half-cent sales tax levied by the county to provide limited-term critical service needs.

"As these benefits collapse, the ripple effects will be (felt) across grocery stores, families, children and seniors," said Claire Cunningham, San Mateo County's director of the human services agency, at the press conference. Cunningham noted that the federal government distributes around \$6.5 million in CalFresh assistance benefits to San Mateo County residents each month.

Leaders at the press conference also issued a call to action for community members to support local food banks and assistance programs to ensure that county residents do not go hungry.

Laura Bent, CEO of the Samaritan House, said that service workers and seniors could be disproportionately affected by the disruptions to CalFresh. Samaritan House is an organization that provides food, housing,

and health services in the county.

Bent shared the story of a Samaritan House client named Cynthia Bell Whittle, a county resident who has struggled with homelessness and the death of her son. Bell Whittle stretches the \$152 a month she receives in food assistance with support from Samaritan House to feed herself and the two grandchildren she is raising. Bent asked for the support of the community, by either volunteering or donating to Samaritan House or other food banks, to make sure that people like Bell Whittle remain fed and healthy.

Leslie Bacho, CEO of the food bank Second Harvest of Silicon Valley, noted that the organization currently serves 500,000 people per month in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. Second Harvest has experienced significant federal funding cuts this year, resulting in a shortage of staples like milk, eggs and chicken. Bacho said that around one in six people in these two counties are making use of Second Harvest.

"Even though we live in this incredibly wealthy community, we actually have a food insecurity crisis here in Silicon Valley," she said. Bacho said community members can help by donating or volunteering with Second Harvest or urging their congressional representatives to end the federal shutdown.

The One Big Beautiful Bill, passed by the federal government and signed into law by President Donald Trump on July 4, could also impact CalFresh by increasing work requirements for many recipients and creating eligibility restrictions for some lawfully-present immigrants. These changes could result in thousands of county residents losing food assistance or seeing reduced benefits, which could put further pressure on local food banks, officials at the press conference said.

"It's easy to feel like (federal policy change) is something that is happening far away in Washington," Bacho said. "But of course, that is having a tremendous impact on our neighbors right here at home." ■

Atherton loses title as nation's priciest ZIP code after 8-year run

Los Altos-Los Altos Hills ZIP breaks into the Top 10

By Linda Taaffe

After eight straight years reigning as the country's most-expensive ZIP code, Atherton's 94027 has finally slipped to second place. The ultra-exclusive Fisher Island, Fla. (33109), took the top spot on PropertyShark's newly released list of the 100 priciest ZIP codes in the U.S., with a 2025 median home sale price of \$9.5 million.

Atherton, long synonymous with Silicon Valley affluence, followed closely with a median sales price of \$8.3 million, a 5% jump from 2024. The town's least expensive home sold for \$3.2 million, while the year's top deal was an off-market sale of a 10,000-square-foot estate once owned by tech executive Stephen Luczo, which changed hands for \$51.5 million, according to the report.

Peninsula rankings

South of Atherton, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills' 94022 ZIP broke a new pricing barrier this year, crossing the \$5 million median mark for the first time

and ranking No. 9 nationwide. Other Midpeninsula ZIP codes that also made the list include: Portola Valley's 94028 at No. 15 with a \$4.2 million median sale price; Palo Alto's 94301 and 94306 at No. 15 and No. 34 with median sales prices of \$4.2 million and \$3.1 million, respectively; Menlo Park's 94025 at No. 38 with a median sale price of \$2.8 million; Redwood City's 94062 at No. 49 with a \$2.6 million median sale price; and Mountain View's 94040 at No. 74 with a \$2.35 million median sale price.

In total, eight San Mateo County ZIP codes made the top 100, and in Santa Clara County, 15 ZIP codes made the top 100 — earning the county the title of the second-most-expensive in the nation, just behind Los Angeles County. San Jose remains the most inland city with multiple entries on the list, led by ZIP 95129, which posted a \$2.59 million median price.

Even as the Bay Area retained the largest concentration of high-value ZIPs — 32 in total — its dominance has waned. Back in 2019, the region accounted for 55 of the nation's wealthiest

ZIP codes. The decline is most visible in San Francisco, which now has only one ZIP in the top 100: 94123 (Marina and Cow Hollow), sharing the No. 74 spot with Mountain View. That's a stark contrast from 2019, when the city boasted 13 top ZIP codes, reflecting a luxury market that has plateaued in recent years.

Statewide

At the southern end of the state, Newport Beach cemented its reputation as California's luxury powerhouse. The coastal city placed all six of its ZIP codes in the top 100, including three in the top 10 — the only city in the nation to do so. Its 92661 ZIP surged from No. 6 to No. 4, following a 20% year-over-year increase to a \$5.7 million median sale price, nearly \$1 million higher than in 2024. Neighboring 92662 on Balboa Island also jumped with a \$5 million median sales price.

Statewide, California remains the epicenter of the nation's luxury real estate, claiming 61 of the 100 priciest ZIP codes, according to the report, which analyzed residential sales that

10 most-expensive U.S. ZIP codes

Information from PropertyShark based on 2025 median sales prices

1. Fisher Island, Fla.: 33109 | \$9.5M
2. Atherton, Calif.: 94027 | \$8.333M
3. Sagaponack, N.Y.: 11962 | \$5.925M
4. Newport Beach, Calif.: 92661 | \$5.721M
5. Water Mill, N.Y.: 11976 | \$5.5M
6. Santa Barbara, Calif.: 93108 | \$5.24M
7. Stinson Beach, Calif.: 94970 | \$5.225M
8. Newport Beach, Calif.: 92657 | \$5.188M
9. Los Altos, Ca.: 94022 & Newport Beach, Calif.: 92662 | \$5.1M
10. Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.: 92067 | \$4.995M

closed between Jan. 1 and Sept. 30, 2025. ■

Email Print & Lifestyle Editor
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Family of Kyle Harrison files \$10 million wrongful death claim against San Mateo County

By Arden Margulis

The family of Kyle Harrison, a 35-year-old man who died earlier this year at the Maple Street Correctional Facility after being sentenced for a fatal crash, filed a claim against San Mateo County alleging negligence and wrongful death.

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors denied the claim, which seeks at least \$10 million in damages, on Oct. 21.

According to a copy of the claim obtained by this news organization, Harrison's parents allege that the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office and its employees failed to provide proper medical

care and administered a medication that was not prescribed for his condition. The filing states that the medication posed a "serious risk of harm or death when mixed with other medications" and that staff "failed to adequately monitor" him afterward.

Harrison's death was caused by the toxic effects of methadone, amitriptyline and gabapentin and was ruled accidental by the San Mateo County Coroner's Office. An investigation by the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office found that Harrison had been prescribed amitriptyline and gabapentin, but not methadone.

The family accuses the county

of multiple violations, including negligence, medical malpractice and civil rights violations under 42 U.S.C. Section 1983. The filing also cites California Government Code sections 844.6 and 845.6, which require jailers to provide medical care to inmates in distress, as well as state codes related to wrongful death and negligent supervision.

The claim seeks damages for funeral and burial costs, medical expenses, loss of companionship and support, and the "pain and suffering of decedent after the ingestion of the medication and prior to his death."

Harrison died on March 15, three weeks after being

sentenced for his role in a fatal street racing crash that killed a San Carlos couple. His death was the sixth in-custody death during the tenure of former Sheriff Christina Corpus. Harrison was awaiting transfer to a state prison at the time of his death and had less than two years remaining on his sentence.

San Mateo County declined to comment.

Under the Government Claims Act, a party must first file a claim with a government agency before pursuing a lawsuit in most cases. ■

Email Staff Writer Arden Margulis at amargulis@almanacnews.com

RESIGNATION

continued from page 5

artificial intelligence in education and helping recruit the new district technology coordinator.

In his last remaining month, he looks forward to overseeing the implementation of the adopted district curriculum including the continuity of a new course model for English

language learners.

"(Setlur's) thoughtful leadership and steadfast commitment to the continuous improvement of our schools have made a lasting impact," said Portola Valley Superintendent Roberta Zarea. "We are especially grateful for his expertise in the areas of technology, safety, and facilities, which have strengthened our schools and supported the success and

wellbeing of every student."

Applications to fill Setlur's seat are being accepted by the board until Nov. 12 at 5 p.m. Applicants will be interviewed during a special meeting during the week of Nov. 17 and a successful applicant will be chosen and seated the same day, according to the district.

"It was not an easy decision to leave a year early, but I know

we are in great hands with great leadership, as well as the current board, so I'll always be cheering from the sidelines and following our success," Setlur said.

Setlur shared that he believes that anyone who has a deep appreciation for the Portola Valley schools and works with a "student-first and community mindset would be phenomenal" as a candidate for the school board. ■

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Photos by Anna Hoch-Kenney

Left: Protesters line El Camino Real during a “No Kings Day” protest in Mountain View on Oct. 18. Right: Participants display signs at the “No Kings Day” Democracy Fair on Oct. 18 at Rinconada Cultural Park in Palo Alto.

‘No Kings’ rally draws thousands to Peninsula protests

By Anna Hoch-Kenney

As honking cars zoomed down El Camino Real in Mountain View on Oct. 18, a person wearing an inflatable unicorn costume danced and waved. Around the corner, a trio of musicians strummed a Buena Vista Social Club tune as a person in an inflatable hippo costume salsa danced.

These were not scenes from an early Halloween party — they were part of the second round of “No Kings Day” demonstrations on the Peninsula, which drew thousands to protest at events in cities including Mountain View and Palo Alto.

Protests were reportedly planned for over 2,500 locations across the U.S., and called for people to peacefully stand up against the Trump administration. The first No Kings Day,

a national day-of-action that countered a military parade through Washington D.C. on President Donald Trump’s 79th birthday, drew millions of protesters on June 14.

Silliness was a big theme in this round of protests on the Peninsula. Mixed among homemade signs and American flags were colorful tutus, pet costumes and frog stuffed animals. Reverend Julie Nelson, who serves at Christ Episcopal Church Los Altos, wore an inflatable unicorn costume to protest at the intersection of Castro Street and El Camino Real in Mountain View. Nelson said she was inspired by protesters in Portland who have started a trend of protesting in frog and other animal costumes.

“It reminds us that we are all human and we all need to laugh and we all need to smile even

when things are really, really hard,” Nelson said.

IdaRose Sylvester, who helped organize a No Kings rally at 16 major intersections along El Camino Real from Sunnyvale to Palo Alto, was thrilled to see both frogs and American flags on display, and emphasized that the rally was an action-oriented event aimed to get people of all ages into activism.

In Palo Alto, protesters participated in a parade from the intersection of El Camino Real and Embarcadero Road to Rinconada Park, followed by a “Democracy Fair” complete with speakers, music performances and activity stations. The event spread across Rinconada Park, and included workshops on immigration and youth organizing at the nearby Lucie Stern Center. U.S. Rep. Sam Liccardo, who attended

and spoke at the Democracy Fair, said protest events like this one continue to be important because they reassure people that they are not alone in their concerns.

“There’s a moment when it’s so imperative that Americans stand up against everything we’re facing together. I think as we see more people standing up, it gives courage to others,” Liccardo told this publication. “People get more engaged and they start volunteering.”

Around 3:30 p.m., a group of about 10 counter-protesters waving American flags joined the Democracy Fair. Max Hsia, a counter-protester who carried a pro-Trump flag reading “Make America Greater Than Ever Before,” described the group as a small, organized group of conservative patriots who wanted to represent the

minority vote in California. “We are here to say that there is no king in America. It’s a duly elected president,” Hsia said. “Trump won the popular vote, the electoral college, all seven swing states, 86% of all counties. He is our president.”

During a speech by retired Judge LaDoris Cordell, the counter-protesters walked up the center aisle of the seated audience chanting “still no king” over a megaphone. A few musicians stepped on to the stage and, alongside Cordell, led the crowd in singing the freedom song “Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around” as the counter-protesters exited the crowd surrounded by volunteer safety monitors in yellow vests. ■

Anna Hoch-Kenney is a Contributing Writer and Photographer.

Advocates challenge Taser use in San Mateo County

Critics say new Taser investments ignore past deaths, accountability concerns

By Angela Swartz

With Redwood City upgrading its Taser equipment and Santa Clara County set to consider widespread use of the devices in its jails, civil liberties advocates are banding together to push officials to discontinue use of the weapons.

Advocates cite \$172 million in settlements from 193 wrongful death cases involving Tasers in the United States, along with the deaths of three people Tased by police in San Mateo County in 2018.

Fixin’ San Mateo County hosted a talk, “The Case Against Tasers,” on Oct. 7. The group’s advocacy efforts began after the

2018 killing of Chinedu Okobi by police officers in Millbrae using a Taser, forming “Justice for Chinedu.”

“The Sheriff’s Office did tweak the (Taser) policy a bit, working with ACLU recommendations,” said Nancy Goodban, a Fixin’ member, in an email.

Fixin’ members have tried unsuccessfully to convince the San Mateo County officials to ban Tasers. Tasers are weapons that fire barbs that cause temporary paralysis.

“But it felt like we had met a brick wall when trying to get either the sheriff or the board to listen,” Goodban added.

The Sheriff’s Office argued to the Community Correction and Law Enforcement Monitoring

Committee on Tuesday, Oct. 14, for the purchase of Tasers for use by deputies in its three central jails following a pilot of the devices. If the recommendation is approved by the committee, it will go to the Board of Supervisors for a vote. A staff report to the committee doesn’t state how many Tasers the Sheriff’s Office is recommending the county buy.

Coalition for Justice and Accountability, which works in Santa Clara County to reduce and eliminate the use of Tasers, participated in the Oct. 7 talk. The group helped limit the number of Tasers the Santa Clara County Sheriff’s Office uses — from up to 1,100 Tasers to just 75.

In an Oct. 14 staff report, the police department noted that during the first six months of the pilot, Tasers helped resolve 39 incidents peacefully, with zero injuries reported.

“The sheriff (Bob Jonsen) is trying to push to arm all of his deputies with a Taser,” Richard Konda of the Coalition for Justice and Accountability said during the talk. “He’s not giving up, and we’re continuing to fight that.”

Past incidents, current use of Tasers by police

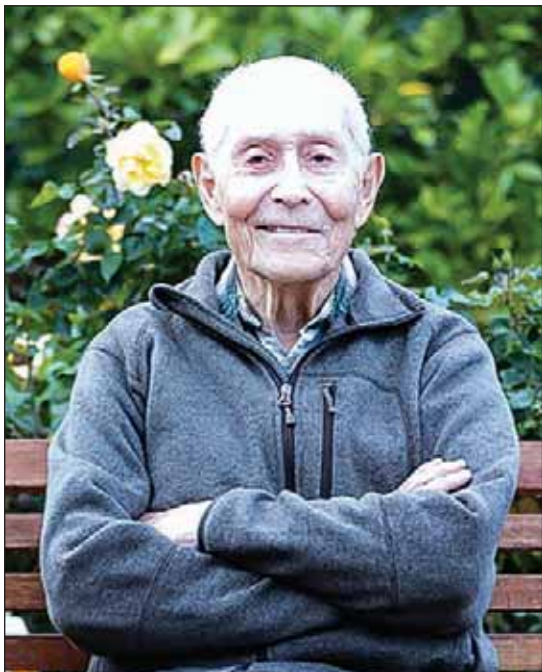
The San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office revised its policy manual in 2019 after the 2018 incidents. The first happened in January, when Warren Ragudo

died after Daly City police used a Taser on him. That August, Ramzi Saad died of cardiac arrest after Redwood City Police officers Tased him.

The District Attorney’s Office investigated Okobi’s death but declined to file charges against the officers. Researchers have shown that police officers are rarely charged in cases of excessive force.

“Until you get a different kind of prosecutor, it doesn’t matter what you do, the cops are not going to feel any threat about using Tasers because they know they’re not going to be prosecuted,” said Aram James, a Coalition for Justice

See **TASER**, page 14



Aldo Louis Dossola
July 2, 1933 – September 28, 2025

Aldo Louis Dossola — or “Nonno” to his grandchildren — lived a life defined by gratitude, humility, and devotion to family. Born in Menlo Park in 1933 to Italian immigrants from the Piemonte region, Aldo grew up among orchards and open fields, helping his parents while learning the values of hard work and perseverance that would guide him throughout his life.

As a boy, Aldo worked at Duca & Hanley’s market, rewarding himself with an ice cream cone after each paycheck — though he always made sure to save some for his family. He loved baseball, playing in the open fields where St. Raymond’s Church now stands and later with the Nativity Youth Baseball Team. Even then, his gift for numbers stood out; he could calculate batting averages in his head long before computers or calculators made it easy.

That natural ability with numbers carried him to Santa Clara University, where he graduated at the top of his class in Business Accounting and remained a loyal Bronco fan for life. His sharp mind and unwavering integrity led him to a distinguished 37-year career at Hewlett-Packard, where he rose to become the Founder and CEO of the HP Federal Credit Union. Among his family’s most cherished keepsakes are personal letters of thanks from Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard—testament to the respect and admiration he earned throughout his career.

In 1961, Aldo’s life changed forever during a cruise to Acapulco, where he met his wife, Carmen. They married in Mexico City and returned to Menlo Park, where they built their home and raised five children together. The home they built together was filled with laughter and boisterous family gatherings.

Aldo believed deeply in community and giving back. He coached youth sports, served as President of St. Raymond’s Board of Education, and remained a devoted member of the Italian American Social Club of Menlo Park, where his father had been a founding charter member. His leadership was quiet but consistent — he led by example, showing that success meant not only achievement but

generosity and kindness.

He loved the outdoors, especially Yosemite, where he led countless family camping trips and summited Half Dome five times — the last at age 73. Those adventures became cherished family traditions, filled with campfire laughter, morning coffee, and his steady presence that made everyone feel safe and cared for.

Family was at the heart of everything Aldo did. He is survived by his children and grandchildren who carry his spirit forward: Loretta Lyle and her husband Scott, of Woodside, and their son Adam, now studying at Purdue University; Aldo Jr. and his wife Sheryl, of Danville, and their daughters Isabella, of San Francisco, and Jacey, recently graduated from Cal Poly SLO; David and his wife Gina, of Redwood City, and their son Dylan, an avid athlete who made his Nonno proud; and Karla and her husband Angelo Basile, of Rome, where Aldo visited yearly and admired Angelo’s service in the Carabinieri.

He was predeceased by his wife Carmen and their first son Joseph, whose memories remained a constant thread throughout his life. Aldo’s visits back to Mexico City and to his family’s ancestral home in Piemonte were journeys of both remembrance and renewal — quiet pilgrimages that honored the roots that shaped him.

Those who knew Aldo will remember his kind and genuine spirit. Whether through friendship, faith, family, or community, he had a way of making everyone feel seen, valued, and loved. He was steadfast but warm, humble yet wise. His presence brought calm; his laughter brought light.

Aldo leaves behind a legacy of love, integrity, and service — a reminder to live with gratitude, to show up for others, and to find joy in life’s simplest moments. His strength, humor, and devotion continue to guide those who were fortunate enough to know him.

The Dossola family extends heartfelt thanks for the prayers, kindness, and friendship shared during this time.

A family mass was held on Friday, October 3, 2025.

Menlo Park bought a vacant lot six years ago — it is still there

Lot was considered for fire station

By Arden Margulis

In November 2019, the city of Menlo Park purchased a .67-acre parcel of land on Willow Road for \$3.6 million with the hope to find a use for the lot later on. Six years later, the lot is only growing weeds and city staff doesn’t have a planned use for the parcel.

The lot is at 1283 Willow Road in Menlo Park’s Belle Haven neighborhood, next to a bus stop and grocery store and down the road from Meta’s headquarters.

The city purchased it from Midpen Housing, which built a 140-unit affordable housing development on a 3.4-acre lot next door. It sold the smaller parcel to the city for tax purposes.

When the city originally paid for the empty lot using surplus funds, the Menlo Park Fire Protection District expressed

some interest in using the lot for a fire station, but no further discussion is documented.

As part of the housing element process, the city evaluated all of its parcels for use for housing. While the city found no constraints for housing at the site, since the parcel is in District 1, the lot was disqualified for housing due to previous developments in the area and combating housing discrimination.

The lot continues to sit vacant with no potential use in sight. The city planned to engage with the community to find potential uses.

The city also owns a lot at the corner of El Camino Real and Ravenswood Avenue that is currently an office building. The lot was disqualified for housing since it is in a long-term lease. ■

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

Woodside man sentenced to prison after 2023 DUI crash

2 passengers died in collision

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

On Monday, Oct. 13, a 54-year-old Woodside resident was sentenced to 11 years in state prison for two counts of vehicular manslaughter. In 2023, James Morton Worthington was driving under the influence on Highway 35 when he lost control and struck a tree, killing two passengers.

The three had gotten dinner and drinks at Alice’s Restaurant prior to the crash. While driving at 90 mph on Skyline Boulevard’s winding roads, Worthington drove off the highway near Reids Roost Road and crashed head-on into a tree, causing the car to explode, according to the San Mateo County District Attorney’s Office.

Witnesses were able to pull Worthington out of the car but the two passengers, Henry Keating and Josh McGuigan, were pronounced dead at the scene. Worthington was transported to

Stanford Hospital with broken ribs and other injuries. According to prosecutors, officers found his blood alcohol concentration at .10% three and a half hours after the crash.

Worthington had been in custody on \$1 million bail, according to the DA’s office.

On Aug. 21, the driver pleaded no contest to two counts of felony vehicular manslaughter charges and admitted to the allegations that he was responsible for the death of the passengers.

During the sentencing hearing, Keating and McGuigan’s mothers, and other family members gave impact statements. San Mateo County Superior Court Judge Kevin E. Dunleavy denied Worthington probation and sentenced him to state prison with 1,676 days credit for time served. ■

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

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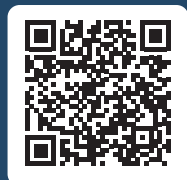


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Supervisors weigh in on how to fill vacant sheriff position

Appointment, election are on the table

By Bay City News Service

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors discussed possible routes in filling the vacant sheriff position at its Oct. 21 meeting after the supervisors officially ousted Christina Corpus from office a week ago.

Supervisors went back and forth for nearly an hour, sharing their opinions on how to proceed. Some leaned toward appointing a sheriff and others eyed a future election to let voters decide.

The board unanimously voted to fire Corpus in a final decision Oct. 14 that made her removal “effective immediately,” according to board president David Canepa.

The vote was the last stage in the board’s months-long process to remove her, a historic move that made San Mateo County the first county in the state to remove an elected sheriff. The county’s voters started the process in March by approving Measure A, a charter amendment that gave the board temporary power to remove the sheriff.

Following the state

government code, Undersheriff Dan Perea has assumed the sheriff’s duties but will not be officially elevated to the title of interim sheriff.

As part of Measure A, the board is required to make a decision within 30 days of removing Corpus, so the board has until Nov. 13 to decide whether to appoint the next sheriff or call for an election.

One of the options is appointing a sheriff to serve the three years left of Corpus’ six-year term. Corpus, along with other sheriffs and district attorneys elected in 2022, were given special six-year terms under a new state law so that elections for these offices could coincide with presidential elections, with the next one set for 2028.

Another option is allowing Perea to keep performing the sheriff’s duties until a special election or the next regularly scheduled election in June of next year. Finally, they can also appoint a sheriff to serve temporarily until the special or regular election with a signature confirming that they will resign.

“An option that is available to

us is to make an appointment of someone to sheriff with the agreement beforehand that that same day we appoint them, they will sign resignation papers for June,” said Supervisor Ray Mueller.

He and other supervisors were concerned that Perea, who was Corpus’ appointee and right-hand man, could hinder the ability of the Sheriff’s Office to heal following Corpus’ removal.

“I believe what’s needed right now in the Sheriff’s Office at the top level is a change in leadership, because any decision that will be made at the top level right now can be questioned,” Mueller said.

Most supervisors were in favor of allowing voters to make the decision during the June 2026 regularly scheduled election.

Canepa expressed some support for having an interim sheriff followed by an election in June despite originally pushing for holding a special election as early as February.

“I’m not wedded to my position, but really looking at the big picture of this, it probably does make sense to have the interim,” Canepa said. “Then it probably

does make sense for us to move forward in June.”

Supervisor Noelia Corzo, although not set in her stance, favored the board appointing a sheriff to serve the rest of Corpus’ term due to concerns that electing a sheriff could be riskier relating to law enforcement potentially cooperating with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

“I support an appointment because I am not willing to risk being in another situation that is making headlines for scandal,” Corzo said. “I’m not willing, personally, to risk having a sheriff win an election with a tiny margin who is going to potentially collaborate with ICE.”

However, Supervisor Jackie Speier was adamant that the board should trust that the voters in San Mateo County will make an informed decision.

“I think we have to have confidence in our voters that they’re going to recognize where the talent is and vote appropriately,” Speier said.

The topic of the cost of holding another election also came up, given how much money the county has spent in removing

Corpus. San Mateo County has not publicly stated a dollar amount for how much the process has cost.

County Attorney John Nibbelin said that a special election to select the next sheriff would cost an estimated \$3.2 million.

“I would assume that this whole process has cost tens of millions of dollars,” Canepa said. “I don’t know what the number is, but I think for bringing peace to a department that has gone through so much, it makes sense to me that those are dollars are well-spent considering the crisis that we’re in.”

There was no decision made during Tuesday’s meeting on how to proceed with filling the vacant sheriff seat.

The board decided to move forward with holding a special meeting for Oct. 28 when the public and members of the Sheriff’s Office will have the chance to share their thoughts.

Mueller also plans to hold a listening session at his office in Half Moon Bay since attending a board meeting in person can be difficult for coastal residents due to distance and travel. ■

Sheriff’s Office investigates attempted burglary in Portola Valley

Residents were home at the time

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

On Saturday, Oct. 18, around 9:30 p.m., an attempted burglary occurred at a Portola Valley home located at the 100 block of Degas Road. Residents were home at the time, according to the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office.

A resident reported hearing glass breaking from a rear sliding door. A few hours after the incident, police reviewed security camera footage and found that the suspects broke the window before fleeing.

No injuries occurred and there was no entry to the home, said the Sheriff’s Office. Investigations are ongoing and local law enforcement are requesting anyone with information to call the Sheriff’s Office at (650) 363-4911. Anonymous tips can be made at (800) 547-2700.

In order to prevent residential burglaries, local law

enforcement advise residents to consider the following tips:

- Consider utilizing motion sensor lights and ensure your home is well-lit.
- Use your security system.
- Install doorbell and security cameras. The footage can assist law enforcement officials in solving cases.
- Trim bushes and trees near windows to eliminate potential hiding spots.
- If you are heading out of town, hold your mail and deliveries or ask a trusted neighbor to collect them.
- Do not post about your vacation photos or about your travel plans on social media until you return.

The Sheriff’s Office offers a Vacation House Watch Program where residents can request deputies to periodically check on their house. The online form for the program can be found on smcsheriff.com/online-crime-reporting. ■

East Palo Alto to spend more than \$1 million on housing assistance

Proceeds from Measure JJ to aid residents facing displacement, requiring help to pay rent

By Lisa Moreno

The East Palo Alto City Council voted on Oct. 21 to spend approximately \$1.1 million of Measure JJ tax funds annually to provide direct rental assistance, foreclosure prevention and legal housing support for city residents.

Following years-long debates on how exactly to spend the funds, the council voted 4-1, with Council member Webster Lincoln abstaining, to grant the money to local housing and legal nonprofits that will provide anti-displacement support beginning in January 2026.

East Palo Alto residents overwhelmingly voted in favor of Measure JJ, which would re-allocate the city’s 2.5% parcel tax to direct housing support instead of general government work, in November 2024. The tax is predicted to generate approximately \$1.6 million in the fiscal year, according to city documents.

Council members approved on Oct. 21 a one-year pilot

program with the East Palo Alto Community Alliance and Neighborhood Development Organization and three-year contracts with Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto, Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County, Samaritan House and WeHOPE.

The East Palo Alto Community Alliance and Neighborhood Development Organization, known as EPACANDO, aims to spend approximately \$148,500 to help save one home from foreclosure.

Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto, called CLSEPA, and local nonprofits Samaritan House and WeHOPE each plan to distribute about \$204,010 in rental assistance annually, according to city documents.

In addition, CLSEPA and Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County are set to spend approximately \$350,000 annually to provide legal services like eviction defense, record expungement and advice.

Rising evictions across San Mateo County are mostly

attributed to non-payment of rent but in many cases landlords unlawfully raise rents, push out tenants on false claims and provide uninhabitable housing, David Carducci, lawyer with the Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County, said at the meeting.

“East Palo Alto residents are particularly vulnerable to all of this,” Carducci said.

According to a new Stanford Study, 2.8% of local renters faced possible eviction during the period between November 2023 to 2024, accounting for 11% of San Mateo County’s eviction filings.

Under Measure JJ, the city must use at least 30% of funds for rental assistance, up to 20% on administrative overhead costs and the remaining half on general anti-displacement services.

Instead, the council approved on Tuesday using 40% to 45% of the funds, dipping into the general bucket, for rental assistance on the recommendation of

See **ASSISTANCE**, page 16

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East Palo Alto backs review of affordable-housing rules

City joins a county-wide effort to study inclusionary housing ordinances

By Lisa Moreno

East Palo Alto City Council joined a San Mateo County-wide effort to study its affordable housing practices and potentially update its regulations relating to provision of below-market-rate units at a council meeting Tuesday evening.

Eleven cities so far have joined the County's Grand Nexus study to help local jurisdictions align on best affordable housing practices while saving money and staff time, East Palo Alto Housing Project Manager Yahira Morales said on Tuesday.

"The goal is also to make housing development feasible in the city while meeting the city's affordable housing needs," Morales said.

East Palo Alto is dedicating \$85,000 to the study, which is set to be completed in November 2026. Cities will engage in public hearings on the results through April 2027 and East Palo Alto staff anticipate the city could update its Inclusionary Housing Ordinance in six months following the completion of the research.

The study comes on the heels of council demands to reevaluate its Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, a city priority that Vice Mayor Mark Dinan specifically expressed interest in when creating the list in April.

Created in 2019, the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance requires developers to allocate a certain percentage of its units for more affordable housing or pay an in-lieu fee

that will directly contribute to housing aid in the city.

Under the city's existing law, a new housing development must allocate 20% of its on-site rentals to affordable housing, including residents who make 35%, 50% and 60% of the average median income. If the units are for sale, 20% of them must cater to median to moderate income levels.

Dinan believes the goals of the ordinance and study are good, he said on Tuesday, but may be outdated and limit development in a county that has "some of the worst cities in the United States for housing production."

"I would have liked to have had a robust debate about whether we should even have an inclusionary housing ordinance, given its lack of performance the last six years, before we spend

money on doing a nexus study," said Dinan, who hopes to nix the ordinance sooner.

Council member Carlos Romero disagreed and said Dinan's statements were not "based in facts." He pointed to local studies that have time and time again proved the need for affordable housing.

"We're not here to discuss an overturning of the inclusionary ordinance," Romero said. "I know that Mr. Dinan has tried, on many occasions, in various places, to try to do so. We're here to discuss this particular contract."

Past studies show affordable housing laws are not the main driver behind a local lack of construction, Romero said.

The city's debate over inclusionary housing grew heated in

September, when council members Webster Lincoln, Dinan and Mayor Martha Barragan voted to allow major developer Sand Hill Properties to avoid paying in-lieu fees. The decision, which turned to personal insults, shook the council and has led the mayor to install speaking limits across the dais.

But on Tuesday, council members unanimously expressed interest in the study but hoped it could be expedited.

"The sooner that people have the information, the sooner they can act," Council member Ruben Abrica said. "And there's definitely a need for more housing of all levels." ■

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

These Peninsula pumpkin patches go beyond the gourds with family-friendly festivities

From corn mazes and petting zoos to hayrides and flower u-picks, here are 13 pumpkin patches to explore this fall

By Stephanie Lam

As the air gets cooler and neighborhood decorations take on a distinctive orange and yellow hue, locals all over the Bay Area are gearing up for their annual pumpkin patch visit.

There are several family-friendly patches scattered across the Peninsula and South Bay where children and adults alike can browse through hundreds of hearty orange pumpkins and pick the right gourd just in time for Halloween. Multiple patches and farms even have non-pumpkin-related activities, including corn mazes, haunted houses, train rides and petting zoos.

Many farms, like Pastorino Farm and Andreotti Family Farm on the Coastsides, have been operated by the same family for generations. They have decades of knowledge about how to craft the friendliest and most interactive attractions. Others, including ABC Tree Farms, operate several suburban patch locations, making it an accessible option for locals.

Take a stroll through these pumpkin patches embracing the autumn spirit in Silicon Valley.

Webb Ranch

Pumpkins are the star of the show in the fall at Webb Ranch. The farm has organic carving pumpkins, baking pumpkins and gourds in specialty colors. There are also other kid-friendly

activities like bounce houses, a farm obstacle course, a corn maze, tractor hay rides, a petting zoo and a reptile zoo.

Food trucks may be on-site on weekends, and Webb Ranch organic produce is available for purchase while supplies last. Outside food is allowed, but pets are not. School groups and other organized groups can visit by appointment.

The ranch has been owned and operated by the Webb family since 1922. Every year, the third- and fourth-generation owners deck out the patch with cozy fall decorations to usher in the season.

Webb Ranch, 2718 Alpine Road, Portola Valley; Instagram: [@webbranchinc](https://www.instagram.com/webbranchinc). Open daily through Oct. 31 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; activities close at 5 p.m. A weekday activity pass is \$5-\$15 each; weekend activity pass is \$10-\$35 each; children 2 and under free. Reservations are required for weekend activity passes before 3:30 p.m. Visit webbranchinc.com for activity pass details or to make reservations.

Arata's Pumpkin Farm

A haunted barn, a petting zoo and a 2-acre, minotaur-themed hay maze? Arata's Pumpkin Farm has it all. Families can shop around for pumpkins around the property, then stroll over to partake in the various activities. The farm also offers hayrides, train and pony rides and picnic areas for visitors.

The farm claims to be one of the oldest sustainable pumpkin farms in San Mateo County and has been around since 1932. Visitors can buy VIP passes or season passes to get convenient parking spots and attraction access. The farm also hosts parties and school programs.

Arata's Pumpkin Farm, 185 Verde Road, Half Moon Bay; 650-726-7548, Instagram: [@arataspumpkinfarm](https://www.instagram.com/arataspumpkinfarm). Open in October Sunday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Friday to Saturday from 9 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Activity prices vary; for details or to make reservations, visit arataspumpkinfarm.com.

Farmer John's Pumpkin Farm

Farmer John's provides a fun and relaxed family atmosphere at its pumpkin patch. There are numerous pumpkin varieties for visitors to browse and choose from, including mini pumpkins, Atlantic Giants and many more.

Patrons flock to the 30-year-old farm for its iconic tipi, vintage tractor rides and hayrides. The farm also regularly offers local food trucks and face painting on weekends. Pets are welcome, and there are no entry or parking fees.

Farmer John's also has an event space that can be booked for parties and educational field trips, where children can learn about the life cycle of a pumpkin and the different varieties of pumpkins. Locals Danny Lopes



Seeger Gray

A child looks at pumpkins near a playground at Lemos Farm in Half Moon Bay on Oct. 2.

and Danny Bretao, also known as "The Dannels," have owned the farm since 2021.

Farmer John's Pumpkin Farm, 850 Cabrillo Highway North, Half Moon Bay; 650-730-9258, Instagram: [@farmerjohnspumpkinfarmhmb](https://www.instagram.com/farmerjohnspumpkinfarmhmb). Open daily through Oct. 31 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Lemos Farm

October time means it's a Halloween palooza at Lemos Farms, where the grounds are outfitted with spooky decor, colorful signs, robust pumpkins and other fall vegetables. Customers can sink their teeth into pumpkin-based foods like ice cream, pie and award-winning bread. Other attractions include pony, train and hayrides, a haunted house, gem mining, a petting zoo, a slide and jumpers.

Known for its painted horse statue outside the farm's entrance off Highway 92, Lemos Farm also hosts birthday parties, private events and experiences, field trips and goat yoga. Besides pumpkins, the farm grows Christmas trees, corn and hay and raises livestock.

Lemos Farm, 12320 San Mateo Road, Half Moon Bay; 650-726-2342, Instagram: [@lemosfarmhmb](https://www.instagram.com/lemosfarmhmb). Open daily in October from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekends only in November through Nov. 16. Admission is \$17.99-\$19.99 for adults, \$29.99-\$37.99 for kids. Prepaid tickets are recommended as walk-in tickets are limited based on capacity levels. ■

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PARKING

continued from page 5

Save Downtown Menlo, a group of citizens and businesses, to block the city's plan to develop several city-owned parking lots in downtown Menlo Park into affordable housing. City leaders eyed affordable housing on the parking lots in order to meet state mandates. Some downtown businesses say that the loss of

parking, coupled with an influx of new residents who themselves wouldn't have adequate additional parking, would be detrimental to many Menlo Park businesses.

The city's requested developers provide replacement parking for most of the spots that are lost but not an additional parking space for every new unit.

If approved, the "Downtown Parking Plazas Ordinance" would require a citywide vote

before any action that restricts the availability of downtown parking, with exceptions for temporary uses and maintenance.

"Our ordinance is simple: it does not prohibit development, but ensures that any proposal to repurpose the downtown parking plazas would first be decided by a public vote," Alex Beltramo, a proponent of the initiative, said in a press release.

"We hope this milestone opens

the door to an inclusive process in which Menlo Park residents are fully engaged in meeting the city's need for affordable housing — in ways that make sense for the whole community," he added.

Menlo Park aims to use the parking lots to help meet its state housing mandate, which requires the city to plan for 2,946 new housing units, including 1,662 affordable units, by 2031. The city's plan calls for at least 345

affordable units across three downtown parking lots.

The city sent a request for proposals to several developers in September and responses are due in December. The city likely won't be able to give the go ahead to start construction until after the election. The city originally hoped to complete the development by 2027. ■

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

TASER

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and Accountability member and retired Santa Clara County deputy public defender. "We've got to get prosecutors to exercise their prosecutorial discretion in a different way."

The county paid Chinedu's family \$4.5 million in a settlement over his death, but Ekene Okobi, Chinedu's sister, said the county has offered "no admission of the harm that has been caused."

"California supposedly is a sanctuary state filled with a lot of sanctuary cities, but the fact of the matter is, there are a number of law enforcement who are coordinating and cooperating with ICE as they sort of reek this path of destruction across our

communities," she said during the talk. "Causing destruction and pain that will be felt for generations. ... It's all the more important for people across the state, across the country, ... around the world, to continue pushing law enforcement to be more accountable."

The county policy updates included adding automated external defibrillators to each patrol vehicle. The devices can be used for emergency first aid if a person is exhibiting heart problems after a Taser is used on them. Sheriff's Office spokesperson Gretchen Spiker confirmed each patrol vehicle contains an AED.

The policy update included a limit on the number of times a Taser can be used on a person. If a Taser has been used three

times on a person, it's deemed ineffective and other use of force should be considered, unless it's an exceptional circumstance, according to the policy.

"Multiple activations and continuous cycling of a Taser has been observed to be associated with the risk of death or serious injury and should be avoided whenever possible," the policy states.

In early August, University of California, Berkeley and Stanford University launched a database, which includes 12,000 cases, that tracks how law enforcement agencies in the state handle misconduct allegations. The system, created using generative artificial intelligence after a team of journalists, data scientists, lawyers and civil liberties advocates collected and

vetted millions of records, also tracks use of force that results in death or serious injury.

"With this new database, Californians will have even better access, making it easier to find out which law enforcement officers have a history of bad behavior and which of our police departments do the right thing to hold their officers accountable," said former state Sen. Nancy Skinner, who helped lead the legislative push for the new transparency laws and helped secure state funding to create the database, in a prepared statement.

More Tasers, acting 'without accountability'

In May, Fixin' and other community members advised the Redwood City council not to invest more money in Tasers. The council voted 6-1 to sign a \$1.5 million contract with Axon to upgrade its Tasers and training.

East Palo Alto is the only city in the county that does not use Tasers.

Sean Allen, a retired police officer with the Santa Clara advocacy group, said Tasers can be "unpredictable" and lethal to people with medical conditions.

Since police departments themselves generally are liable when someone dies after a Taser is used on them, individual officers act "without accountability," he said.

"Because they know (officers are) protected, even if they make a mistake, and they're gonna call a mistake," Allen said. "So the law enforcement community as a whole is gonna be your struggle; getting cops to come out and say something about it. If I tell you what my strategy would be."

Allen suggested that minority and female officers in police unions might be more willing to speak out against Tasers because they might be in better touch with how use of force affects people of color and protected classes, he said. ■


Angela Swartz is a Contributing Writer.


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OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Robert McCartney, 62, of Portola Valley, who loved the outdoors and created lifelong memories at places like Sea Ranch and Lake Wildwood, and was a master fisherman, a pastime he very much enjoyed, married his high school sweetheart, Karen. He died on Sept. 11, 2025.

James Wallace, 71, of Palo Alto, who was an ardent classical and flamenco guitarist since the early age of 14 and who shared his love of playing with young people, and who organized many fundraisers with the North Bay Cancer Alliance and who was very competitive in croquet. He died on Oct. 11, 2025, just three days shy of his birthday.

Robert J. Burt, 83, of Menlo Park, who cherished the memories of his grandparents' farm, where he watched them tend to goats, keep bees and chop wood, and who earned in master's degree in geology at Stanford and eventually began

his work at the UGSG office in Menlo Park. He died on Sept. 19, 2025.

Aldo Louis Dossola, 91, who worked at Duca & Hanley's market and rewarded himself with an ice cream cone after each paycheck, and who met his wife, Carmen, in Acapulco during a cruise, and who coached youth sports and served as President of St. Raymond's Board of Education, died on Sept. 28, 2025.

Monique Kane, 87, of Palo Alto, who met the love of her life through a dating website in 2000, and who joined Community Health Awareness Council in 1986 as a clinical supervisor, guiding interns who provided counseling to thousands of children in local schools, died on Sept. 30, 2025.

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

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Newsom signs law overhauling local zoning

San Mateo County among those affected

By CalMatters

Ever since the Legislature narrowly passed Senate Bill 79 last month, legislation that will pave the way for more apartment buildings around major public transit stops in the state's biggest metro areas, the California political universe has been impatiently awaiting Gov. Gavin Newsom's signature or veto in a heated statewide game of "will he, won't he."

On Oct. 10, he did.

Newsom's sign off on the bill means that apartment developers will soon be able to pack more homes into neighborhoods within half a mile of major rail, subway, and bus rapid transit stops, overriding local zoning restrictions and any possible objections of surrounding neighbors. Buildings immediately surrounding these transit hubs will be entitled to max out as high as nine stories, with those further out topping out at roughly four.

"The world looks to California for leadership — it's time to build modern, connected communities that fulfill California's promise, meeting the needs of today and the next generation," the governor wrote in a signing statement.

The signature caps off a legislative year full of housing policy overhauls that even just a few years ago would have seemed unthinkable. It also reaffirms the governor's political alignment with the "Yes In My Backyard" movement, which has been championing the cause of building more housing in the face of

a statewide housing shortage for nearly a decade. This summer Newsom signed YIMBY-backed legislation to exempt most urban apartment projects from review under one of the state's signature environmental protection laws. "Go YIMBYs," Newsom said when signing that bill into law.

Senate Bill 79 is, indeed, a signature victory for the movement. The bill's author, San Francisco Sen. Scott Wiener, a Democrat, introduced an earlier version of the policy in 2018 with the support of the then still relatively new political organization California YIMBY. This year's version, which narrowly passed both the Senate and Assembly last month with few votes to spare, marks Wiener's fourth attempt.

"In California we talk a lot about where we don't want to build homes, but rarely do we talk about where we do—until now," said Wiener in a statement. "SB 79 unwinds decades of overly restrictive policies that have driven housing costs to astronomical levels, forcing millions of people away from jobs and transit and into long commutes from the suburbs or out of the state entirely. It has been a long road to tackling these decades-old problems, but today's signing marks a new day for affordable housing in California."

Newsom's signature comes as a grave disappointment for many local governments and neighborhood groups, particularly in Southern California. Last month, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass urged Newsom to veto the bill, saying that it

would "erode local control, diminish community input on planning and zoning, and disproportionately impact low-resource neighborhoods."irate homeowner groups and state legislators raised concerns that mandating higher levels of housing density would "fundamentally reshape" suburban-style neighborhoods.

The "upzoning" policy was meant to be a two-fer: Allow for much more housing construction as a way to alleviate the state's housing shortage and its resulting affordability crisis, while also steering more residents towards cash-strapped public transportation systems.

Despite the ferocity of the opposition, the bill that Newsom signed is considerably more modest than the version introduced at the beginning of the year. After 13 separate rounds of amendments, the law will be restricted to just eight highly urbanized counties — Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange, Santa Clara, Alameda, Sacramento, San Francisco and San Mateo — and apply only to select transportation stops (train, subway, light rail and high-frequency buses routes with designated lanes). The law will also give local governments alternative means to comply with their own local programs, require a certain share of units constructed under the bill to be set aside at below-market rents and go into effect on a delayed schedule in certain lower income neighborhoods.

Even in that more muted form, the law is one of most consequential changes to

statewide zoning rules in modern California history.

Over the last weeks, Newsom has come under sustained pressure from both supporters and opponents. Advocates for historic preservation, tenant rights, local control and affluent neighborhood groups, along with Republican gubernatorial candidate Steve Hilton and former reality TV star Spencer Pratt, have rallied their respective audiences to inundate the governor's office with calls and emails urging a veto. Supporters — among them national political commentators, billionaire megadonor Tom Steyer and every corner of the organized YIMBY online universe — have urged their

supporters to do the opposite.

Popular interest in the outcome of the bill seemed to escape the confines typical of California legislative debate. Earlier this week, an online betting pool popped up (the odds were always good for Newsom's signature). The topic even came up during the governor's guest appearance on the recent livestream of the popular online gamer known as "ConnorEatsPants."

Responding to a stream of public comments from his audience packed with incessant inquiries about the bill, the streamer prompted Newsom: "I don't know what this is, but they're saying you need to talk about SB 79." ■

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Woodside Four Corners community feedback

Caltrans will be presenting the community with a four-way stop intersection design on Wednesday, Oct. 29 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at Independence Hall, 2955 Woodside Road. Local residents will have the opportunity to share insights on traffic, cycling, equestrian and parking concerns around the intersection. Caltrans will be using the community feedback for its current design and for future projects.

The online survey is available on bit.ly/4h7TF1y. The meeting can be accessed through Zoom at us02web.zoom.us/j/83170046563.

Local students honored in county art contest

State Assemblymember Diane Papan, D-San Mateo, and San Mateo County Supervisor Lisa Gauthier announced the winners of their joint inaugural student art contest, honoring local high school and middle school students.

The contest's theme, "Art and Labor: Honoring Our History, Inspiring Our Future," celebrated the history, role and presence of organized labor in the county.

Sequoia High School student Aria Luna Parra Rasine was awarded as the winner in the high school category and Menlo-Atherton High School student Emily Chen was recognized as first runner-up. In the middle school category, Carter Fisher from Woodland School in Portola Valley was honored as second runner-up for his artwork.

A formal ceremony for the winners was held in Redwood City on Oct. 21. Winners of the contest received commendations, a display of their artwork and will have the opportunity to have a private lunch with Papan and Gauthier.

"This contest has been a wonderful opportunity to engage with our youth and celebrate the vital role of labor in shaping our communities," said Supervisor Lisa Gauthier in a written statement. "The students' artworks serve as a powerful reminder of the ongoing impact of organized labor and the importance of continuing to support workers' rights and dignity."

Portola Valley Town Trivia Night

The Portola Valley Parks and Recreation Committee is hosting a trivia night from 6:30 to 9 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 8 in Portola Valley Community Hall. The event is free but cash donations will be accepted at the door to fund for future events.

Participants are encouraged to bring their own food and drinks. The committee is hosting up to 16 teams with eight players each. With limited space, registration for the event is required. If you are signing up as an individual, the committee will assign you to a team.

For more information on the event visit portolavalley.net/government/town-committees/parks-and-recreation-committee/trivia-night.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

ASSISTANCE

continued from page 10

Council member Carlos Romero and Vice Mayor Mark Dinan.

"I enthusiastically support that, because if we're paying these taxes and the money sitting in the bank, we should be

spending it and rent relief is something that both landlords and tenants would be in agreement about," Dinan said.

City staff originally pitched four-year contracts and a one-year pilot, but council compromised on shorter agreements because some members were wary of how the funds were being spent.

Lincoln in particular was concerned that the city was spending more tax dollars than in previous years and called the nonprofit selection process too "rushed." He raised a motion to table the discussion but it failed.

"I'm just not prepared to go into an extended contract for a long period, you know, without getting some sort of feedback or evaluation on the performance of this program," he said.

City staff clarified that East Palo Alto is spending more

of the total parcel tax revenue because it is now allocated for more specific usage.

"We're talking about stabilizing lives," Romero said in defense of spending the funds. "And if we cannot understand the humanity of doing that and why that is as important, if not more important, than this notion of creating wealth through real estate, then we have to search our souls."

Under the approved plan, city staff will provide incremental updates and presentations after the contracts begin and when they end. The council will then determine whether or not to extend contracts and whether it should use further funds. ■

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

LEHUA GREENMAN



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STOLEN MAIL

continued from page 1

But I don't think anybody is going to tell you that it's dramatically different in Menlo Park than it was a couple of years ago."

While the Postal Inspector Service is responsible for investigating mail theft, many cases are not reported, Norfleet said. The Menlo Park Police Department has received some cases of mail theft as well.

On Oct. 6, the Menlo Park Police Department received a report that a check was mailed inside the downtown Menlo Park post office only to be altered and cashed at an unknown bank. MPPD suspended the investigation pending further leads, spokesperson Nicole Acker said.

When Tashman reported his case to MPPD, an officer told him it was not their jurisdiction since the check was cashed outside of Menlo Park.

"If identity theft is involved or fraudulent use is involved, our officers and detectives investigate the cases as far as they can with the leads and evidence they are given or uncover. Sometimes this takes time, as you know many of these thefts often don't have an identifiable suspect," Acker said in an email. "Also, sometimes the crime of using stolen credit cards or checks is not in our jurisdiction, so that may be why the resident was told by the officer that it is not in our jurisdiction. It's all circumstantial and complex depending on where the

incident began, where and when it was reported, where the crime occurred, suspect information, leads, etc."

Tashman said he brought his concerns to the local postmaster.

"(The postmaster) acted like she was well aware of the whole thing. She said, 'We've had problems.' It was shocking to me because the Post Office didn't even have the courtesy to basically alert their customers," Tashman said.

The Post Office recommends residents be careful about leaving valuable items in collection boxes.

"The one thing is we do ask people to be very cautious about leaving mail in blue collection boxes, particularly if it's going to be there overnight," Norfleet said. "The safest place to leave your mail is to actually put it in a postal worker's hand. So take it into a post office or the slots inside post offices. Those are just inherently more secure than anything that's out on the sidewalk."

The Post Office is currently upgrading collection boxes to make it harder to take mail from but, with over 100,000 collection boxes in the United States, it takes time. Norfleet recommends residents use upgraded boxes with narrower mail slots over previous versions.

There have also been recent incidents of mail, including ballots, being stolen from residential mailboxes. ■

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

Public Notices

LYON LEARNING CENTER
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301853
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) LYON LEARNING CENTER, located at 1785 Laurel Street, San Carlos, CA 94070. Mailing Address: 260 Autumn Street La Honda, CA 94020
Registered owner(s): CLARISE CHERI LYON
260 Autumn Street La Honda, CA 94020
This business is conducted by: an Individual. Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 9/7/2011.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 06, 2025.
(ALM Oct 24, 31, Nov 7 and 14, 2025)

BALANCED BEAM WELLNESS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301936
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): BALANCED BEAM WELLNESS LLC
PO BOX 8
South San Francisco, CA 94083
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: 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 October 17, 2025.
(ALM Oct 17, 24, 31 and Nov 7, 2025)

CURRENT SOLUTIONS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301910
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) CURRENT SOLUTIONS, located at 887 Heather Dr, San Carlos, CA, 94070.
Registered owner(s): HOLLY LAWRENCE
887 Heather Drive San Carlos, CA 94070
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 October 14, 2025.
(ALM Oct 24, 31, Nov 7 and 14, 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)

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)

INNER CHARMS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301938
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) INNER CHARMS, located at 2721 Victoria Mnr, San Carlos, CA 94070.
Registered owner(s): GORDON WONG
2721 Victoria Mnr San Carlos, CA 94070
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 17, 2025.
(ALM Oct 24, 31, Nov 7 and 14, 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)

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)

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)

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LATIN STUDIES

continued from page 1

Classical League Board as the northern representatives. They said Latin studies is one of the most challenging classes at their school.

Hintz, who has been taking the class since sixth grade, said he's been able to understand English better through lessons on Latin roots.

"The teaching of Latin and the Greek roots is backed up by many studies in being helpful for reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, all of the things for wonderful brain development for not only for English only speakers, but also English learners as well," said Stuart, who has been teaching Latin at La Entrada for nine years.

Plans to host Ludi in Menlo Park had been in the works since last school year. According to Buxbaum, it was a collaborative effort between the seventh and eighth grade Latin classes in preparing and scheduling everything for the annual event.

The opportunity for the school to host the event offered the young scholars a chance to grow student leadership, communication, professionalism



Photos by Karina Patel

Left: Miramonte High School seniors wrap toilet paper around Kadence Yim, center, during the Toilet Paper Toga Contest at Ludi, the long-standing California tradition of celebrating Latin language and culture through games, competition, and community, at La Entrada Middle School on Oct. 18 in Menlo Park. Right: Students from around the Bay Area participate in Certamen, a quiz-bowl style competition during Ludi.

and organization skills. The students were in charge of all event planning details including decoration designs, registration, organizing different activities, staffing and more.

"It felt really nice to kind of give back to the (California Junior Classical League) and to help make an awesome experience for the next generation of Latin students," said Buxbaum.

The event featured 15 different activities including Certamen, a quiz-bowl style competition about classical studies; art and costume

contests; dodgeball and Latin sight reading.

Hintz said his favorite activity was Roman speed dating, where students have the opportunity to ask each other questions about their favorite aspects of Latin language and history.

"It was a relatively small classroom, but we had about 50 kids in there, and it was a really good time and there was a ton of energy," he added.

Ludi attendees were also able to take part in a community service activity to write

get-well cards for children at the Ronald McDonald House in Palo Alto. The activity was organized by a La Entrada student, said Stuart. By the end of the day, they had about 250 cards written in both Latin and English phrases.

As a longtime Latin teacher, Stuart said she was grateful for the opportunity to host such a large event for the classical studies community and to bring more awareness to the La Entrada campus and its decades-long history of teaching Latin.

While many schools across California are removing Latin education from its curriculum, La Entrada remains committed to sharing the discipline to future generations.

"English isn't a Latin-derived language but over 60% of our vocabulary in English comes from Latin and Greek groups. So it still is there. And you know, Latin is not dead. We use it every day," Stuart said. ■

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

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Adrienne
Editor, Peninsula Foodist

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Viewpoint

IDEAS, THOUGHTS AND OPINIONS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES

Both sad and mad following removal of Sheriff Corpus

By Alejandro Vilchez

It's a sad day for Latina leadership in San Mateo County. But I honestly don't know if I'm more sad or mad. I feel both. I'm just trying to figure out which emotion is louder.

I'm sad that a Latina had to go through this, the public humiliation, the fall from grace, the spectacle of being stripped of power. I wasn't a fan of her leadership approach, but she still represented *nuestra comunidad*. And that reflection lands on all of us, especially on Latina leaders who have fought tooth and nail to be taken seriously in spaces dominated by men. When a Latina (or any woman of color) reaches a leadership role, she carries more than just her name. She carries the hopes, pride and burdens of her entire community. That's not



GUEST OPINION

fair, but it's real.

And now, when people in San Mateo County talk about "Latina leadership," this situation this *escándalo*, will be the point of reference. Never mind all the beautiful, bold, and bad-ass Latinas leading in nonprofits, local government and education across this county. I can name plenty.

But I'm also hella mad for two reasons.

First, that "Sheriff" Corpus played the *pobrecita* role and used her Latina-ness as a shield instead of a responsibility. You can't pimp out our cultura for votes and then use it as an excuse to defend inappropriate behavior. *Nuestra cultura*, our history, our shared struggles; none of that protects anyone from accountability. That's manipulation, not leadership.

Second, at our own community. Of all the Latino/a leaders who run local agencies, schools,

nonprofits, small businesses and yes, those of us in positions of influence, including myself, *¿adónde estaban?* Where were we?

We didn't speak up publicly to check Ms. Corpus on this. Sure, we whispered in private meetings, sent texts and shared "chism," but as a community, we were largely silent. *Respeto* to Supervisor Noelia Corzo for being one of the first to act on this as an elected official. And even to former Half Moon Bay Mayor Joaquín Jiménez for stepping up to defend Corpus. Whether we agreed with him or not, he spoke from conviction. But for the most part, those of us with power and influence said nothing. Silence is not solidarity. When one of our own crosses the line, staying quiet doesn't protect our community's image, it damages it. Accountability is love for the community, too.

Two truths can exist at once. Yes, I strongly believe that as a Latina woman in law enforcement, Ms. Corpus faced real barriers and real bias. And yes, she

also abused her power and failed to uphold the ethics her position as sheriff demanded.

When leaders of color fall, the system doesn't just punish the individual, it stains the collective. Now, our current and future Latina leaders in San Mateo County will have to work twice as hard to rebuild trust and redefine what our leadership looks like. My hope is that those of us Latino/as in leadership formal or informal, have an honest discussion about this. Not to gossip, not to tear anyone down, but to reflect on what it means to lead with integrity, humility and love for *la comunidad*.

I write this as a proud husband of a high-profile Latina leader and as a friend, confidant and colleague to countless bad-ass Latina leaders here in San Mateo County. ■

Alejandro Vilchez is a community facilitator, educator, and advocate for leadership grounded in culture, integrity, and social responsibility. He lives in San

Mateo County with his wife, a public sector leader, and works with local organizations on youth development, violence prevention and community engagement.

What's on your mind?

From City Hall politics and the schools to transportation and other pressing issues, the Almanac aims to keep readers informed about their community. But we also want to hear from you.

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Sunnyvale author Kimberly Bea's debut novel, "The Changeling Queen," is a retelling of the Scottish folk ballad "Tam Lin." Courtesy Kensington Publishing Corp

In the Scottish folk ballad "Tam Lin," a brave young woman fights to save her lover from the clutches of the Queen of Faery holding him captive, planning to make him a ritual sacrifice. In Sunnyvale author Kimberly Bea's spellbinding new novel "The Changeling Queen," the mythical monarch herself gets to tell that tale from her own perspective.

"The Changeling Queen" comes out Oct. 28, an appropriate date for a book that has key events set on All Hallows' Eve, when the fairy folk are out and about.

"I've been obsessed with the ballad of 'Tam Lin' for 30 years," Bea said. "Despite the fact that it dates back to the 16th century, the female characters have so much agency in it. It's a girl-rescues-the-guy story, which I always love." And though Janet, the woman, is unmarried and pregnant, "it surprisingly avoids judgment of Janet; it

reads as very, very modern," she added.

For her retelling of "Tam Lin," Bea wanted to try her hand at a villain origin story of sorts, exploring the point of view of the Faery Queen, who, in Bea's sympathetic version, is half-fairy and half-human and was raised as a changeling child among the mortals.

Told in the first person, partly in the form of flashbacks, the queen shares her life journey, from her early years raised as plain Bess in the home of a kindly village midwife and her boorish husband and children. As a changeling, Bess has always known she's different, never quite fitting into her human life, but isn't sure how she'd fare in the Faery realm, either.

She falls in love with handsome Thomas Shepherd, the illegitimate son of a local nobleman. Bess tries to carry on her adopted mother's work as a healer and cunning woman, but struggles against the conventions of human society and its oppressive

A Fairy tale with a twist

Peninsula author's debut fantasy novel is a reimagining of the ballad of 'Tam Lin'

By Karla Kane

attitudes and patriarchal norms. She also must reckon with the pull toward her royal Faery destiny, with its own rituals, customs and ideas of right and wrong — including the fact that every seven years, a life must be sacrificed for the common good, to keep the land of Faery alive and flourishing.

"My interpretation of fairies is, they're not good, they're not evil. They have a very different morality than we have," Bea said. "To me, Faery is outside of that kind of binary Christian morality (of) God vs. the devil."

Ultimately, the queen has to make difficult choices about where her loyalties lie and what she's willing to give up or take on.

"What do you do when your healing has to cause someone else's death? It's a big moral quandary that she has to deal with," Bea said. "By the end of the book, the heroine has less become a villain and more a force of nature."

Though the novel is a fantasy, when writing about events happening in the mortal realm, Bea strove for accurate historical details appropriate to the medieval Scottish setting. She has a particular interest in social history — especially in women's lives and sexuality — and enjoyed undertaking extensive research and consulting with a critique partner. "I love falling down a good research rabbit hole," she said.

The concept of a changeling, a substitute fairy child left in exchange for one kidnapped into another realm, is common in European folklore.

"There's a theory nowadays that people think part of the inspiration for changelings might have been autistic children," Bea noted. If parents felt

their babies or young children stopped behaving as expected, perhaps they feared they'd been replaced by an imposter, she said.

She speculates that postpartum depression could also have played a part in the development of changeling lore. "There's a notion it should be natural, it should be easy to bond with our children, but sometimes mothers struggle with it," she said. "I could see someone distancing themselves from their child if she was in the throes of postpartum depression."

As for the idea of a fairy world itself — the mysterious Underhill — existing alongside ours, reachable when the veil is thin at certain times of the year, or in certain places, "there are a lot of different theories, both modern scholarly theories and from medieval times themselves," Bea said. "Some people favor the theory that the fairies were the Indigenous population of the British Isles," with their ancient burial mounds providing the genesis of the Underhill.

"I also have read recently that a lot of the advice on how to protect yourself from fairies — 'Don't go into the forest at twilight or noon' — these were ideas that were just kind of good recommendations to keep yourself safe anyway," she said, noting that the woods could harbor dangers such as wild animals or bandits. "That kind of intrigued me, that it's just good common sense."

But in "The Changeling Queen," of course, that world is very real. The lush and wondrous Faery realm in the book is populated by all sorts of creatures and figures drawn from mythology and folklore, including brownies, pixies and elfin knights (one of Bea's personal favorite characters is

Worth a Look



Courtesy Hagops Photography

Sunnyvale author Kimberly Bea's debut novel, "The Changeling Queen," is out Oct. 28.

Jenny Greenteeth, a delightfully creepy water hag.) Bea drew on some traditions particular to the story's setting in the Scottish borders region, as well as from other sources, when creating her Faery kingdom.

"I would use imagery and descriptive details from Shakespeare, Yeats; any known fairy lore that seemed like it would be relevant, I got to play around with, which is really fun," she said.

Bea has long been fascinated by ancient history, starting in childhood and continuing through college and graduate school. She grew up in Sunnyvale and moved back a few years ago to be closer to her family after spending 25 years in Minneapolis. She loved writing as a child, then came back to it in post-college adulthood, taking part in the now-defunct National Novel Writing Month challenge and publishing stories and poems in several anthologies.

"It took me a while to learn how to revise, learn how to work with critique partners, to query, to get an agent, which I did when I was 49," she said. "The Changeling Queen" (published by Erewhon Books) is her debut published book, but she already has her next in the works and ideas for more.

Like many creatives, she's also had a number of day jobs over the years. She taught history at

the university level and worked as a bookseller, an editorial assistant for academic publications and a proofreader for the state of Minnesota's Revisor's Office. Now, in addition to her burgeoning writing career, she's also working to become an English teacher, to share her love of literature and writing with future generations.

Bea will have a launch party for "The Changeling Queen" Oct. 28 at Books Inc. Mountain View. As the publication date draws near, "it feels amazing ... (I'm) pinching myself a lot. It doesn't feel real," she said. She hopes that after getting lost in her epic fairy tale world, readers will be inspired to explore more about folklore and history. She also hopes they're moved by the emotional, romantic story.

"It makes me cry at certain points. They say, 'No tears in the author, no tears in the reader,'" she said, paraphrasing Robert Frost. "And, not to be a total sadist, but I do hope for some tears in the reader." ■

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

The launch party for Kimberly Bea's "The Changeling Queen" will be held at 7 p.m. Oct. 28 at Books Inc. Mountain View, 317 Castro St. More information is available at kimberlybea.com; Instagram: [@bea.kimberly](https://www.instagram.com/bea.kimberly).



Courtesy Past Curfew

Peninsula band Past Curfew will perform a fundraiser for the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Peninsula on Oct. 24 at The Guild Theatre.

Past Curfew

The musicians that become known as one-hit wonders may not be in the spotlight for long themselves, but that one catchy song they're famous for often remains an audience favorite for decades. Peninsula band Past Curfew mines the charts from a wide range of eras for a show celebrating a variety of one-hit wonders, including some '80s staples like "Take on Me" by A-ha and Soft Cell's "Tainted Love." The show is a fundraiser for the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Peninsula, and will even feature guest performances by some young musicians from the organization. "They do so much good for so many young individuals," Past Curfew drummer Warren Packard said. Read an interview with the band at almanacnews.com/arts-culture.

Oct. 24, 6:30 p.m., at The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park; \$45.88; guildtheatre.com.

Jonathan Poretz: Sinatra My Way

Vocalist Jonathan Poretz brings the music of Ol' Blue Eyes to Meyhouse Palo Alto. Backed by a jazz trio, Poretz sings some of the standards made famous by Frank Sinatra in a way that captures Sinatra's unique style while still making the tunes his own. Poretz has also paid tribute to other legendary vocalists such as Bobby Darin, Tony Bennett and Sinatra's Rat Pack compatriot Dean Martin.

Oct. 24, 5 and 8 p.m. (5 p.m. show sold out), at Meyhouse Palo Alto, 640 Emerson St., Palo Alto; \$38-\$48; meyhousejazz.com.

ALOK

Writer, comedian, speaker and actor ALOK returns to their alma mater with a show at Stanford Live. ALOK, who holds both bachelor's and master's degrees from Stanford University, has performed in over 40 countries and sold out shows at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and the Netflix Is A Joke Festival, according to their bio. They are the author of the books "Beyond the Gender Binary," "Femme in Public" and "Your

Wound, My Garden." ALOK brings their latest standup show, "Hairy Situation," to Stanford Live, with tales of everything from messing up a TikTok makeup tutorial to being mistaken for a famous Brazilian DJ.

Oct. 25, 7:30 p.m., at Bing Concert Hall, Stanford; \$28.08-\$64.80; live.stanford.edu.

Navigation III: Linger

Djerassi Resident Artists Program hosts a day of performances and installations as part of the program's "Navigation" series led by Djerassi alumni artist Alex H. Nichols. The series invites local and international artists to create ephemeral pieces based on the theme "Linger." Guests are invited to do just that — linger — as they tour one-day-only art installations and performances presented in the redwood forests and mountain meadows of the Djerassi property. The event also includes a lunch of a Japanese tasting bento created by chefs Yusuke Konno and Saya Yaegashi.

Oct. 26, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., at Djerassi Resident Artists Program, 2325 Bear Gulch Road, Woodside; \$50-\$150 donation; djerassi.org/events/navigation-iii-linger.

Food & Drink

Old-school classics

8 Peninsula diners serving decades of history

By Daisy Barringer

Step into a diner and the outside world slips away. Vinyl booths, the clatter of plates, the smell of bacon on the griddle — it's a time capsule, equal parts nostalgic and necessary. This is where you slide into a booth on a sleepy Sunday morning, wrap your hands around a bottomless mug of coffee and order the same dish you've loved for decades. In a region built on reinvention, the Peninsula's diners endure by offering the one thing that never gets old: reliability.

At Millbrae Pancake House, reliability has been on the menu since 1959. Co-owner Erin Burke said it's what keeps people coming back decade after decade. "Part of the appeal is that people don't need to think about what to get," she said. "They already have a favorite, and they expect it to taste the same every time. But it's not just about the menu — it's the feeling of being welcomed the same way every time."

That mix of comfort and consistency is what ties together the region's most enduring diners. Each spot, whether it's one known for Swedish pancakes in Millbrae or hash brown pie in

Palo Alto, offers a story of longevity and community.

Millbrae Pancake House, Millbrae

Opened in 1959, Millbrae Pancake House is the kind of eatery where the décor hasn't changed much, with wood laminate tables, brass chandeliers and green vinyl booths, and neither has its role as a gathering place for families.

"We really are a place that families have come to over the decades," Burke said. "We've had people tell us they had their first Communion here back in the '70s and now they're bringing in their grandkids."

Offerings vary from omelets and waffles to classic plates like New York steak and eggs. At the heart of the menu is the Swedish pancake: thin and crepe-like, dusted with powdered sugar and paired with tart-and-sweet lingonberry butter. Safeguarded for decades and prepared daily by just two trusted staff members, it's a recipe unchanged since the Eisenhower era, when El Camino was still a two-lane road.

But behind the scenes, it's anything but simple. "It's like throwing a party seven days a week," Burke said. "People just



Seeger Gray

Customers eat at Camino Corner in San Bruno on Oct. 16. Mike Murphy, wearing the baseball cap, a longtime San Francisco Giants clubhouse manager, sits next to a framed photo of his Giants Wall of Fame plaque. Murphy said he eats at Camino Corner daily and is frequently joined by his friends at the table.

see the end result, not the massive prep it takes to get ready for a weekend."

With many staffers staying for decades and Burke's nieces and nephews pitching in, Millbrae Pancake House feels less like a restaurant and more like an extended family at meal time.

Millbrae Pancake House, 1301 El Camino Real, Millbrae; 650-589-2080, Instagram: @millbraepancakehouse. Open daily from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Village Pantry, Los Altos

The Village Pantry has been serving old-fashioned

American breakfasts since 1947, making it one of the oldest diners still running in the South Bay. Inside, family photos and weathered holiday cards blanket the walls, creating a cozy, time-worn scrapbook of loyal regulars and heartfelt memories.

This cash-only spot leans into the classics — eggs, bacon, pancakes and hot coffee — served in a setting layered with history. Regulars linger at the counter enjoying endless refills, while the patio hums with neighbors and friends.

The Village Pantry, 184 2nd St., Los Altos; 650-941-0384. Open daily from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Christie's, Burlingame

Downtown Burlingame has evolved into a hub of boutiques and upscale restaurants, but Christie's still feels like a hold-out from an earlier era. The portions are as generous as the service, whether you're digging into blueberry pancakes, eggs Benedict or their famed chicken-fried steak smothered in creamy gravy.

Christie's isn't trying to reinvent breakfast — it delivers the kind of hearty, no-nonsense meals that diners are built on. Named after the former owner's grandmother, it's a place where tradition still matters and a loyal following remains.



Seeger Gray

A customer picks up items from the counter Palo Alto Creamery in Palo Alto on Oct. 15.



Devin Roberts

Millbrae Pancake House co-owner Erin Burke (center) with her niece Lily Maguire (left) and daughter Gracie Burke.

Christie's, 245 California Drive, Burlingame; 650-347-9440. Open Monday through Saturday from 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Sunday from 6:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Camino Corner Restaurant, San Bruno

Camino Corner may not have a legacy as long as some of its neighbors, but this woman-owned, family-run diner has built a loyal following since opening in 1988. Known for hearty plates and friendly service, it's the kind of place where regulars count on being welcomed with warmth and care.

The menu sticks to the classics — pancakes stacked high, French toast dusted with powdered sugar, chorizo scrambles, burgers and country-fried steak with eggs. Bright and welcoming inside with an easy-going atmosphere, Camino Corner remains a reliable stop for breakfast, brunch or lunch.

Camino Corner Restaurant, 110 El Camino Real, San Bruno; 650-583-8782. Open daily from 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.



Magali Gauthier

Craig Eddy, a musician from La Honda, plays live during one of Alice's Restaurant's weekly music shows on Aug. 22, 2019. Every Thursday, all year long, customers are treated to tunes from 7 to 9 p.m.

Johnny's, Half Moon Bay

Few diners on the Coastside have a story as winding as Johnny's. First opened by John and Fiorina Evan in the 1960s, it grew into a beloved local landmark where families gathered for decades. When it closed in 2006, the loss was felt across town, though the spirit lingered through Main Street Grill, which kept the space buzzing until 2022. In 2023, It's Italia restaurant owner Betsy del Fierro and her family brought Johnny's name back to Main Street with the restaurant's renovation and reopening.

Teal banquettes and sunny yellow chairs line a checkerboard floor, while the kitchen serves up lemon ricotta pancakes, savory chilaquiles, burgers, hearty sandwiches and other diner staples. Add wine, beer and brunch mimosas to the mix and Johnny's strikes a balance of comfort food and freshness that makes it feel both timeless and renewed.

Johnny's, 547 Main St., Half Moon Bay; 650-729-3099, Instagram: @johnnyshmb. Open Tuesday through Sunday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.; closed Mondays.

The Pantry, San Mateo

Since opening in 1990, The Pantry has been a family-run favorite that blends classic American diner fare with Filipino home-style cooking. Pancakes and omelets share space with dishes like adobo and other Filipino staples, giving the menu a range that feels

both familiar and distinctive. The casual setting and warm service make it a go-to spot for everything from solo breakfasts to family gatherings.

The Pantry, 1855 S. Delaware St., San Mateo; 650-345-4544. Open daily from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Palo Alto Creamery, Palo Alto

Palo Alto Creamery, which opened in 1923 as the Peninsula Fountain and Grill, still retains its classic diner charm with red leather booths, polished wood and stools at the counters. It's long been a place where locals drop in for comfort food served with a side of nostalgia.

Breakfast means hash brown pie, a skillet piled high with eggs, cheese, bacon and peppers. At lunch, it might be a tuna sandwich, while dinner could be a roast turkey dinner or baby back ribs paired with wine or beer. A bakery case tempts with fresh-baked pies and cakes — apple, coconut cream, chocolate, banana cream and more. And if you somehow manage to resist those, dessert is still non-negotiable: a milkshake poured into a frosty glass with the extra in a metal cup. After more than a century, Palo Alto Creamery shows no signs of slowing down.

Palo Alto Creamery, 566 Emerson St., Palo Alto; 650-323-3131, Instagram: @paloaltocreamery. Open Sunday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Alice's Restaurant, Woodside

Perched among the redwoods at the Four Corners intersection, Alice's mixes the aroma of coffee and bacon with road sign decor, patrons on motorcycles and picnic table outdoor dining. Once a general store, Alice's now draws hikers, bikers and locals lured by its rustic, woody charm.

The menu covers hearty diner fare — scrambles, burgers and homemade pies — with local beers, wines and a full bar. The vibe is casual, dog-friendly and often punctuated by live music or the steady arrival of motorcycles out front. It's the rare

diner that's also a destination.

Alice's Restaurant, 17288 Skyline Blvd., Woodside; 650-851-0303, Instagram: @aliceswoodside. Open Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Sunday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Consistency, comfort, community

So what keeps a diner alive for 50, 60 or even 100 years? For some patrons, the appeal lies in a menu that never changes. For others, it's a gathering place for generations of family members who return to the same booths

decade after decade. What they all share is the promise of familiarity, knowing that your pancakes, coffee and experience will be just as you remember.

As Millbrae Pancake House's Burke put it, "The real secret is community. People know they'll be welcomed, and that keeps them coming back."

Across the Peninsula, diners endure not by chasing trends, but by holding fast to what people crave most: comfort, community and a place to return to again and again. ■

Email Contributing Writer Daisy Barringer at dsbarringer@gmail.com.



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Customers sit at the counter at Christie's in Burlingame on Oct. 16..

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