

The Almanac

NONPROFIT LOCAL NEWS FOR THE MIDPENINSULA

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Courtesy city of Menlo Park

Halloween on the Avenue

The Hillview Middle School band marches in Menlo Park's annual "Halloween Hoopla" parade on Oct. 25. Over 2,000 people attended the parade on Santa Cruz Avenue and event that included a magic show and plenty of candy for all.

Mayor Combs highlights growth, challenges in State of the City

Calls plans for Sunset Magazine site 'provocative'

By Arden Margulis

Menlo Park politicians and community members gathered downtown last week for Mayor Drew Combs' annual "State of the City" address. The mayor struck an optimistic tone about the city's growth while acknowledging challenges ahead.

The crowd on Oct. 23 included senior city staff, elected officials, former mayors, two current council members and leaders of local advocacy groups. Attendees mingled at Bar Loretta over appetizers and drinks provided by owner Ali El Safy before turning their attention to a 20-minute speech by Combs.

The event marked a sharp contrast to Combs' previous address in 2021, which was held over Zoom during the pandemic. This year, he struck an optimistic tone, touting Menlo Park's vibrancy and new additions to the city's dining scene. He also noted that major firms such as data-storage company Snowflake and AI startup Periodic Labs opened offices in the city this year.

Combs praised pedestrian and bicycle safety upgrades on Middle and Coleman avenues, touting them as examples of Menlo Park's investment in decreasing traffic fatalities and increasing mobility.

See **COMBS**, page 14

Portola Valley plans new Ford Field restroom, snack shack

Town aims to use grant before it's too late

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The home field for the Alpine Little League team in Portola Valley has three portable toilets lined up at the edge of the Dorothy Ford Field parking lot, located in front of its decades-old snack shack. The Parks and Recreation Committee is spearheading the project to build a much needed two-in-one flushable restroom and concessions stand funded by donations and grants.

During a recent Town Council meeting, council members expressed their support for moving forward with the project's concept design phase and for staff to draft a resolution that would allow the town to spend money on the new construction.

In 2021, a \$180,000 state grant was authorized and approved by the Town Council "to fund

the construction of a new restroom building at Ford Field to provide users with toilet and sink facilities," according to the staff report. Now, the town has two years left to use the funds before the grant money goes to waste, said Town Manager Darcy Smith.

The project is estimated to take about two and a half years to complete and "could be a successful project with no town funds," she added.

Prior to the meeting, over 20 local residents emailed the town clerk sharing their support for a restroom and upgraded snack shack. Many pointed out that a restroom would benefit not only the Alpine Little League families but also the town's community of hikers, cyclists and runners.

Alpine Little League players, parents and community members also joined the meeting in

person to express the need for a new concessions stand and permanent restroom facility.

Along with serving ballgame snacks like Cracker Jack, chips, sunflower seeds and candy, the shack also serves postgame meals — "a valued tradition" where both teams stay after the game to socialize, said Karen Askey, a member of the Parks and Recreation Committee.

The dilapidated snack shack has rats, mold and no hot water, according to Smith.

Proposed project

The project was put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertainties around Ford Field being considered as a potential housing site in the housing element, Askey said. With two years left to use state grants, town staff urged the council to move quickly to push

forth the project.

The committee presented the council with a prefabricated building that would serve as a joint restroom and concession stand with a storage room and water heater. The proposed blueprint was for a 17-by-20-foot building that would be 40% restroom, 40% snack shack and 20% storage.

The committee estimated the building would cost about \$230,000. Additional funds will be needed to build a concrete base and to hookup utilities for sewer, electrical and water, said Askey.

There are also considerations on whether the new building should be built in the existing area, in the open space area or in the parking lot. The current snack shack is located within the town's 75-foot Alpine Road scenic corridor setback and

does not adhere to the setback requirements.

"I think the precedent of having the existing snack shack where it currently is means that nobody notices it," said Council member Rebecca Flynn, who opposed building it in the parking lot, adding that it would make it more noticeable from the road.

Fundraising details

In addition to the grant, the town is also seeking its first partnership with the Portola Valley Fund, a new nonprofit organization that aims to address the town's budget issues by fundraising for various projects. In May, the Town Council adopted a donation and gift acceptance policy that would allow them to receive financial support during

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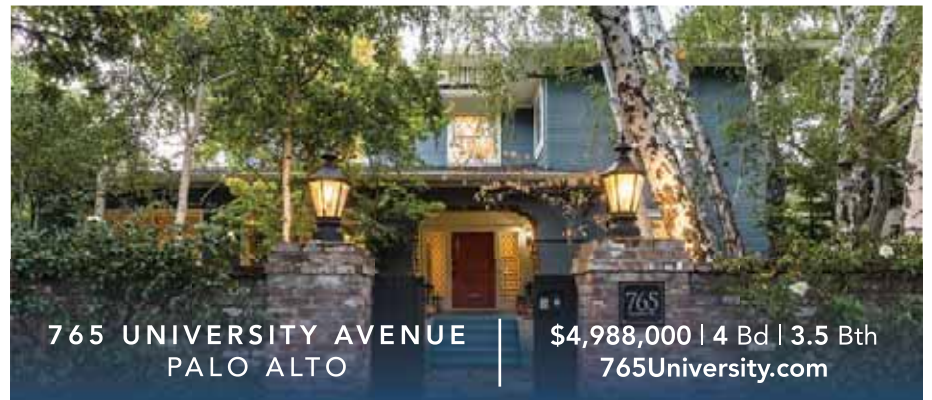


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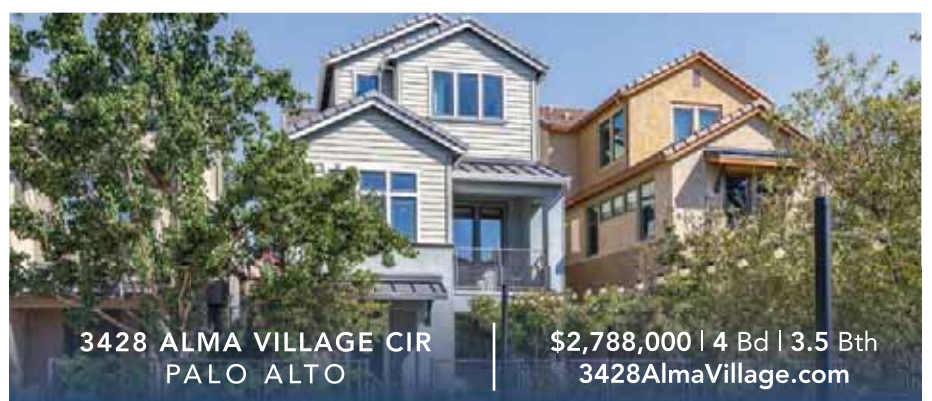
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Miranda de Moraes

Rev. Marlyn Bussey speaks first at a press conference on Oct. 24, where San Mateo County leaders gathered to address the threat of a President Trump-directed deployment of federal troops onto local streets.

County responds to ICE 'surge' threat

Community leaders call for solidarity amid fear

By Miranda de Moraes

Federal authorities shot a pastor from San Mateo County, Rev. Jorge Bautista, in the face and torso with a pepper ball at about 7:30 a.m. last Thursday, Oct. 23.

The pastor — who County Supervisor Noelia Corzo said was “showing zero aggression” and “just standing there” — was among hundreds protesting what would have been President Trump’s deployment of federal troops

to San Francisco.

A few hours later, at around 10 a.m., President Trump declared on his social media platform that “we will not surge San Francisco on Saturday,” ending with “Stay tuned!”

The Thursday morning protest took place near Coast Guard Island in Alameda County, which would have been a base for the federal operation. Officials and residents alike have not known whether a “surge” would include the broader San Francisco Bay

Area, and whether that decision would be temporary or permanent.

Nonetheless, officials are treating the threat as regional. San Mateo County, one of the safest and most foreign-born counties in the United States, remains on alert. Supervisor Ray Mueller called “the idea that we need the National Guard here for any purpose ... frankly, ludicrous.”

County leaders, community

See **ICE**, page 18

Experts offer tips as communities brace for immigration enforcement

Residents urged to make family plans, learn their rights and stay calm when encountering federal agents

By Lisa Moreno

As local leaders prepare for a possible increase in immigration enforcement, legal experts are advising residents to know their rights, remain cautious and document interactions with federal agents and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

President Donald Trump announced last week that a

“surge” of federal agents would enter San Francisco. They arrived at an Alameda Coast Guard base on Oct. 23, where a local pastor was shot in the face with a pepper ball, just hours before Trump called off their deployment.

Despite his wavering commands, San Mateo and Santa Clara county leaders emphasized that they would not welcome increased immigration

enforcement.

While the future remains unclear when it comes to the presence of federal agents — local advocates and legal experts have long prepared for the possibility. Since Trump took office in January, they have hosted multiple events throughout the region, advising people to learn their rights.

See **TIPS**, page 16

Supervisors narrowly decide on long-term appointment of sheriff

Speier, Canepa argue for role for voters

By Alise Maripuu /
Bay City News Service

In a split decision, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors moved forward with the option to make a long-term appointment for the next sheriff during a special meeting on Tuesday.

“Coming to this decision was very difficult,” said Supervisor Ray Mueller. “It really comes down to trying to give the department the ability and the best chance to heal.”

Tuesday’s meeting comes two weeks after the board unanimously ousted elected Sheriff Christina Corpus on Oct. 14. Undersheriff Dan Perea, who was hired by Corpus, has assumed the sheriff’s duties but won’t be elevated to the title of interim sheriff.

San Mateo County is the first in California to remove a sheriff chosen by voters. Without any precedent to act as a guide, the Board was hunting for direction.

One route is appointing a sheriff to serve the three years remaining in 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 those 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.

Alternatively, board members could appoint a sheriff to serve temporarily until the special or regular election with an agreement providing that they will resign.

Many public commenters preferred the first option — that the Board appoint a sheriff to serve the rest of Corpus’ term. Those in favor of a long-term appointment said they had confidence in the board’s decision-making in being able to vet an appointee.

“Please appoint a sheriff to allow much needed healing and forward movement within

our sheriff’s department,” said Rebecca Kieler, a resident of unincorporated San Mateo County.

One concern raised with holding an election is that the winner would only have to secure the highest number of votes instead of a majority. Public commenters in favor of an appointment also said they wanted to ensure that the next sheriff will not tolerate cooperation with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE.

“I worry about whether the next sheriff will do everything they can to protect our community from ICE,” said San Mateo resident Nancy Bott. “We need a sheriff who will refuse to cooperate with ICE.”

The board also heard a joint statement from the sheriff’s office unions in the county — the San Mateo County Deputy Sheriff’s Association, or DSA, and the Organization of Sheriff’s Sergeants, or OSS. Julie Lind of the San Mateo Labor Council, an organization that represents over 100 workers unions in the county including the DSA and OSS, read the statement.

“We also believe that removing the last remnants of former Sheriff Corpus’ command staff will allow the Sheriff’s Office to quickly begin the process of rebuilding,” Lynd said. “To that end, our captains, lieutenants, sergeants and deputies, as well as our civilian colleagues support a long-term appointment to complete the remainder of this Corpus term.”

After more than an hour of public comment, the Board had a tense discussion on members’ preferences in how to fill the sheriff vacancy.

Board President David Canepa and Supervisor Jackie Speier fiercely advocated for the option to appoint an interim sheriff followed by an election in June.

“I have full faith and confidence in the voters,” Speier said. “I believe they have the right to elect the sheriff.”

Meanwhile, Mueller and Supervisor Noelia Corzo argued

See **SHERIFF**, page 17

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BY THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Public Hearing will be held for the Woodside Fire Protection District Board of Directors to consider enacting the following proposed ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT ADOPTING THE 2025 CALIFORNIA FIRE CODE AND THE 2025 CALIFORNIA WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE CODE, INCLUDING SPECIFIED APPENDICES, AND AS MODIFIED BY LOCAL AMENDMENTS, ADOPTING A FINDING THAT THE ORDINANCE IS EXEMPT FROM REVIEW UNDER THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT, AND REPEALING ORDINANCE NO. 13

The proposed ordinance is also identified as Ordinance 14-2025.

All interested persons are invited to attend the Public Hearing and be heard on this matter. The Public Hearing will take place on November 18, 2025, at 7:00 PM at 808 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028. This meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format, and the public may also attend this meeting virtually. Details on participating by Zoom or other virtual format will be available on the published November 18, 2025 agenda for the Board of Directors meeting.

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE: Ordinance No. 14-2025 is the Woodside Fire Protection District's mechanism for adopting the new 2025 Edition of the California Fire Code and the 2025 California Wildland-Urban Interface Code. As mandated by state law, this triennial update incorporates current state fire safety standards and includes essential local amendments. These amendments are critical to ensure that fire prevention and building standards are tailored to the unique, high-risk **climatic, geological, and topographical** conditions of the District, specifically addressing hazards within our District. Ordinance No. 14-2025 is designed to maintain the highest level of public safety and environmental protection. Under state law, after the first reading of the title of the proposed ordinance, which occurred on October 28, 2025, the District is required to hold a public hearing before the proposed ordinance is adopted (Government Code § 50022.3). After the hearing, the Board of Directors may amend, adopt, or reject the proposed ordinance.

CEQA DETERMINATION: The Board of Directors will consider adopting a finding that the proposed ordinance is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

All interested parties are encouraged and invited to submit written comments regarding the proposed environmental findings and/or merits of the proposed ordinance prior to the hearing or participate in the public hearing. Reasonable accommodations will be made to individuals with disabilities. To submit comments electronically, please forward them to Kimberly Giuliacci, Fire Marshal at kgiuliacci@woodsidefire.gov. To submit comments via U.S. Mail, please forward them to the Woodside Fire Protection District, Attn: Fire Marshal to arrive no later than 5:00 p.m. one day prior to the meeting at the following address: 808 Portola Road, #C, Portola Valley, CA 94028.

Please note that any challenge of the proposed action in court may be limited to addressing only those issues raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence submitted to the Fire Marshal at, or prior to, the public hearing.

The proposed Ordinance 14-2025 is available for review online at <http://www.woodsidefire.org/prevention> and will be available in the agenda packet posted for the November 18, 2025, meeting. A certified copy of the proposed Ordinance 14-2025 is also available upon request by contacting the District Office, at (650) 851-1594, 808 Portola Rd. #C, Portola Valley, CA 94028. Copies of the 2025 edition of the California Fire Code and the 2025 edition of the California Wildland Urban Interface Code, and all associated appendices and referenced codes and materials are on file at the District Office, 808 Portola Road, # C, Portola Valley, CA 94028 and are available for public inspection.

Run Dates: October 31 and November 7, 2025

Two Atherton homes burglarized within an hour, police say

Authorities weren't sure whether incidents were related

By Arden Margulis

Atherton police are investigating two home burglaries that occurred about an hour apart on Saturday night, Oct. 25, in addition to one attempted burglary.

One burglary occurred between 9 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. on Faxon Road. An unknown number of suspects entered by smashing a side door, according to the Atherton Police Department. The department said it does not immediately know what was taken.

The other burglary occurred at approximately 10:21 p.m. on Mulberry Lane and entered through an unlocked rear door. Police said no items were reported as missing.

On Monday, Atherton police officers were dispatched to a different home on Faxon Forest Road after a resident reported that someone attempted to smash multiple doors and windows sometime over the weekend.

The incidents are under investigation and police do not have a description of the suspects or vehicles involved. Police did not say whether they believe the incidents are related.

The Atherton Police Department asks residents in the area to check surveillance footage and report possible leads to the department at 650-688-6500.

In September, the Atherton Police Department reported a potential spike in burglaries but later clarified that the spike was due to two burglaries on the same day. At the time, the department announced it would be increasing patrol staffing

POLICE SAFETY TIPS

The Atherton Police Department has issued the following safety tips for residents:

- Schedule a Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design review of your home at 650-688-6500.
- Keep all doors and windows locked, even when you are home.
- When you are not home, make it appear that someone is home by keeping lights on, installing light timers and leaving on the TV or a radio.
- Install exterior lighting.
- Do not keep valuables in your primary bedroom as this area is a common target of burglars.
- Keep valuables well-hidden and consider using a safe bolted to the floor and/or wall.
- Keep valuables out of your car and lock your car doors.
- Install an alarm system and security cameras (strongly consider having your alarm system monitored for free by the PD Dispatch Center by calling 650-688-6500).

during common times for burglaries. On Oct. 23, the department hosted a community safety and security meeting to advise residents about steps they can take to keep Atherton safe.

Atherton has had a total of three burglaries in October. It has had 15 burglaries this year to date compared to 26 from January 2024 to October 2024. ■

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



Eleanor Raab

An Atherton Police Department vehicle during police activity on Middlefield Road in 2024.

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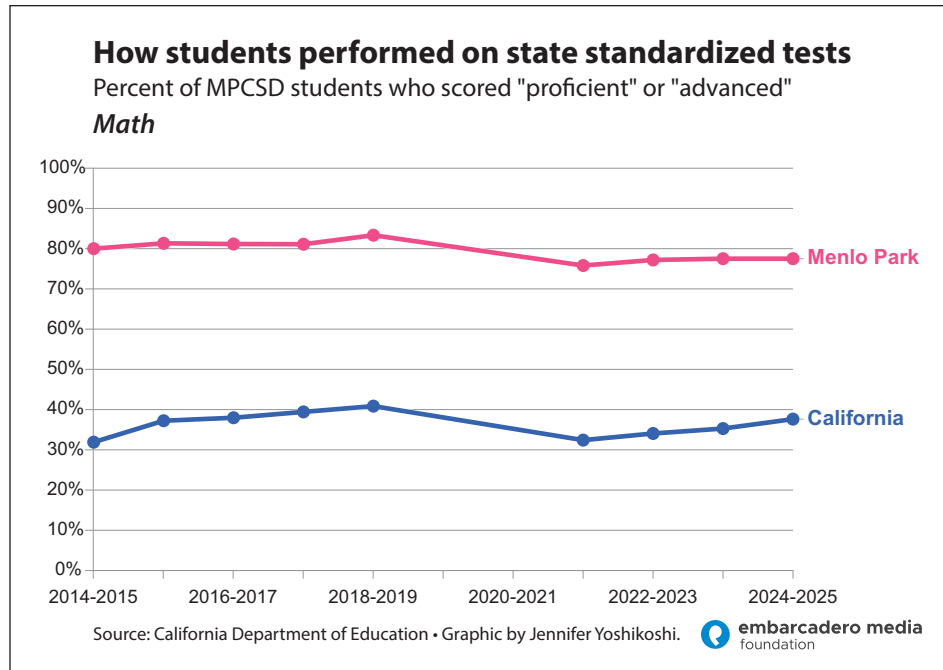
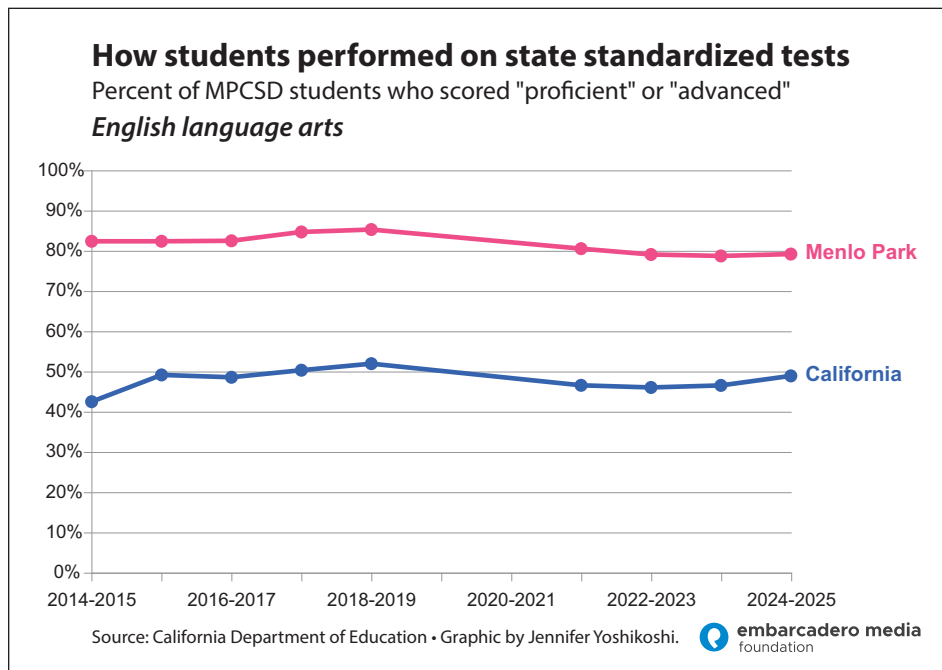
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Menlo Park test scores remain below pre-pandemic levels

District notes new strategies amid changing demographics

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

State test scores for Midpeninsula schools are still below pre-pandemic levels, and that includes Menlo Park City School District. Although the local school district's results have been stagnant for the last few years, school administrators are working on implementing new strategies to boost numbers amid a changing student population.

Earlier this month, the California Department of Education released its state test scores for the 2024-25 school year. The California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress tests third through eighth grade students in English language arts and math.

During the 2024-25 school year, results showed that 79.61% of Menlo Park students scored advanced or proficient on the English language arts exam, an increase of 0.35 percentage points from the previous year. In math, 78.13% of students scored advanced or proficient in math, showing no improvement compared to the year before.

Student performance dropped noticeably during the pandemic. In 2018-19, 82.51% of Menlo Park students met or exceeded state standards in math, compared to 76.85% in 2021-22. In English, the share of students meeting or exceeding standards went from 84.19% to 80.62%.

During a school board meeting on Oct. 23, district officials explained that the pandemic's impact on students and families' emotional, academic and social lives has had a "detrimental effect." While school board members shared their disappointment in the lack of significant improvement in scores, they

expressed their confidence in the district's strategies to boost academic achievement.

"We are working to identify the root causes of our achievement gaps, particularly using race-based data and processes to inform our work," said Katherine Strach, MPCSD's coordinator of data, assessment and English language services, during the meeting.

Since 2021, the percentage of students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds has increased, said Associate Superintendent Jammie Behrendt. Although the district has been putting forth initiatives to improve its efforts, "student needs are changing and our socioeconomically disadvantaged student group is steadily increasing," she added.

Behrendt also pointed out that these families are often working multiple jobs, don't have the funds for after-school tutors and lack resources and access to advantages other students have.

Test scores in English and math show that overall, socioeconomically disadvantaged students are scoring about 40 percentage points below those who are not. In the most recent school year, 44.39% of disadvantaged students scored proficient or advanced in English language arts, compared to 84.48% of students who are not socioeconomically disadvantaged. In math, 40.1% of socioeconomically disadvantaged students scored proficient or advanced, compared to 83.42% of non-socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

The results also show persistently lower scores for the district's Latino students, compared to their peers. Last spring, 53.48% of Latino students scored proficient or advanced in

English, compared to 92.55% of Asian students, 88.33% of white students and 92.15% of multi-racial students. In math, 48.7% of Latino students scored proficient or advanced, compared to 93.89% of Asian students, 82.73% of white students and 89.61% of multiracial students.

Strach presented six strategies for the district to focus on as a way to address the most recent test score outcomes including consistent use of data and assessments, foundational literacy, science focus, stronger classroom instruction, collaborative leadership and empowering leaders.

"We believe that a focused alignment and expectation toward academic excellence will create a more cohesive, efficient and effective system for achieving our educational goals and improving outcomes regardless of race, socioeconomic status or ability," said Strach.

Strach highlighted that the use of assessments through an online program called iReady can help teachers and school sites plan targeted lessons and track student progress. She also encouraged the district to consistently implement literacy curriculum in early grades with a focus on vocabulary and to ensure that continues in higher grades.

Superintendent Kristen Gracia added that specific campuses have been using different strategies to improve academic growth.

"There were some very specific strategies put in place at our schools that we are tracking (to see) what happened with those kids and where we're seeing bumps (in the data)," said Gracia.

Changes for improvement

According to Gracia, the district is currently in its second

year of its six-year strategic plan to grow student belonging, strengthen academic excellence and create inspiring environments.

She added that the utilization of an assessment system that spans elementary and middle school classrooms is a new implementation that has allowed administrators to easily

keep track of student test score data.

The district has also made changes to its literacy program over the past two years. Gracia expressed her confidence in the idea that these foundational shifts will serve as building blocks for improving academics.

See **TEST SCORES**, page 17

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

Properties Are Best Seen in Real Time



Most properties are seen initially online. The photos and websites offer a lot of visual information but properties are best seen by visiting them. You can see the properties and grounds if it is a house, and judge whether the street is quiet or busy. You can also see surrounding houses and whether they impact your experience, how close you are to shopping and transportation. Is there a train nearby that can be heard, a school, or frequent aircraft? There is no substitute for this first-hand experience. You learn much more about a property this way.

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CalFresh recipients, food banks gird for coming pain

Officials say 168,000 local residents are poised to lose benefits

By Clay Lambert

By 9:30 a.m. on this the fourth Saturday of the month the line stretches from the back parking lot, along the side of St. Athanasius Church and peters out somewhere on Rengstorff Avenue. The food distribution begins in 30 minutes and hundreds of people have brought their carts, bicycles — even baby strollers — to help them take away the free groceries they will need to feed their families.

It's a scene that has played out dozens of times, on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month since the early days of the pandemic. About 45 volunteers, many from Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County or Second

Harvest of Silicon Valley, lend a hand to neighbors who come from surrounding apartments, via Mountain View's shuttle and well beyond.

While the need is always great, officials say they expect it to get even worse in November. The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known in California as CalFresh, will effectively run out of funding next month unless appropriations are re-instated by a Congress that is stalled by the government shutdown. Shobana Gubbi, Second Harvest's chief philanthropy officer, said another 168,000 Santa Clara and San Mateo county residents would lose their benefits unless \$31 million is pumped into the system each month.

"We expect these lines to grow," she said amid a light rain.

On Saturday, U.S. Rep. Sam Liccardo donned an orange reflective vest and blue latex gloves to lend a hand and highlight the need for a resolution to the funding impasse.

"We've got a crisis created by two forces," he said in the church parking lot.

First, the Congressional Budget Office reports that the budget bill signed into law by President Donald Trump in July cut about \$186 billion out of SNAP in the next 10 years. The cuts were made to offset trillions in tax cuts in the years to come.

"We are seeing the effects of that," Liccardo said. "And, of course, the government shutdown



Clay Lambert

U.S. Rep. Sam Liccardo talks to the media before lending a helping hand at a Second Harvest food distribution site in Mountain View on Oct. 25.

leaves SNAP in perilous condition despite the fact the administration has \$5 billion sitting in reserves in the Department of Agriculture, reserves Congress intended to be used for emergencies like this."

Efforts like Saturday's food distribution depend on local volunteers. Mountain View resident Jill Rakestraw said she simply saw the need in her own neighborhood

and turned out to help.

"When you see people who really need it, it means something," she said, adding that she has bonded with other volunteers through the years. "It's a great way to give back and we've become a little family."

It falls to Rafael Morales, the program coordinator, to make sure the distribution runs smoothly. He hustles up and down the line and trains volunteers on the spot. Just before the food distribution began on Saturday he explained to volunteers that each person needing assistance had a color-coded card depending on whether they were picking up provisions for one, two or three families. Volunteers paid rapt attention and were ready for the work.

"Speak now or forever hold your peace," Morales shouted with a smile.

The line of people in Mountain View is just one such queue in Silicon Valley. Second Harvest provides food for about 900 sites between Gilroy and Daly City. The organization feeds about 500,000 people a month — one in six residents of Santa Clara and San Mateo counties seeks food assistance, according to Shobana Gubbi, chief philanthropy officer for Second Harvest.

Despite the daunting numbers, she is optimistic that Silicon Valley can and will step up to feed its own.

"We scaled up for the pandemic," she said on Saturday. "We can do this." ■

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Co-Founder, Hilarity for Charity



Dr. Travis Urban
Ray Dolby Brain Health Center



Dr. Golnaz Yadollahikhales
Cedars-Sinai Medical Center



Dr. Leila Parand
Mary S. Easton Center for Alzheimer's Research and Care at UCLA



Dr. Irina Anna Skylar-Scott
Stanford Center for Memory Disorders

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Patricia Varalo, LCSW
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Trial begins for ex-college chancellor accused of corruption

Galatolo's trial may last until January 2026

By Arden Margulis

Former San Mateo Community College District Chancellor Ron Galatolo's trial on 23 felony counts alleging he steered construction contracts to favored vendors in exchange for valuable gifts and then failed to disclose them was scheduled to begin Wednesday, Oct. 29, in San Mateo County Superior Court, after years of delays, added charges and pretrial fights over electronic evidence.

Prosecutors say Galatolo, 60, of Menlo Park, accepted "numerous valuable" gifts, including concert and sports tickets and international travel from firms

doing business with the San Mateo County Community College District. Prosecutors say he did not report them on required Form 700 statements of economic interest. He is also accused of tax fraud, perjury and misappropriation/theft of public funds. Galatolo has pleaded not guilty and remains free on \$150,000 bail.

The case began with an April 2019 whistleblower complaint and culminated in Galatolo's April 2022 arrest at San Francisco International Airport. He served as chancellor from 2001 to 2021, including



Ron Galatolo

two years as "chancellor emeritus," before the district severed ties alleging he failed to perform work under a \$467,700 annual contract.

Even though prosecutors were set to present opening arguments on Oct. 29, the trial is expected to last until January 2026, according to District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe.

After Galatolo's initial arraignment, the District Attorney's Office added two counts, theft of public funds and embezzlement, alleging district money was improperly used to pay Galatolo's private lawyer. Those

counts followed a lengthy dispute over prosecutors' access to emails between Galatolo and his attorney; the California Supreme Court declined to intervene, and prosecutors say the messages are evidence of criminal conduct.

Prosecutors also allege Galatolo wrote off, on his personal 2017 state tax return, a \$10,000 Tubbs Fire relief donation that was actually made by the district's foundation, and (separate from his district role) underreported prices on high-end and classic car purchases to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Separately, former district facilities chief José Nuñez pled

no contest in 2022 to two felonies for using public funds for political purposes. As part of the plea deal Nuñez signed, he agreed to testify against co-conspirators the District Attorney's Office charges. Even after the plea deal, Nuñez faces a maximum sentence of three years and eight months in prison. The District Attorney's Office expects to call Nuñez to testify in Galatolo's case.

Civil litigation has unfolded alongside the criminal case. The district sued several contractors this year alleging "pay-to-play" schemes tied to projects

See **TRIAL**, page 19

Beware the ghost dog that haunts the Woodside Store

Scare sent one docent packing

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The historic Woodside Store on Tripp Road has been around since the 1850s. The aged wooden panels of the building hold nearly two centuries worth of stories — one

of which entails the ghost of one man's best friend. It's a perfect tale for Halloween.

The Woodside Store was built by Dr. Robert Orville Tripp and his business partner Mathias Parkehurst in 1851. Tripp, who was a San Francisco supervisor,

storekeeper, dentist, shingle maker and vintner was a jack-of-all-trades. He operated the store with his family until he died in 1909.

According to historians, he was known for owning big dogs such as one pictured in a photo

displayed in the farthest room of the store. In the early 1990s, the exact same dog was spotted in the interpretive area of the museum — over a century later.

Mitch Postel, president of the San Mateo County Historical Association said one afternoon

he received a call from one of the site managers who was working that weekend. When he answered the phone, she said "I quit."

"This was really out of the

See **GHOST DOG**, page 19

Itty-bitty robots shrink treat blood clots

Stanford mechanical engineer Renee Zhao is pioneering tiny, flexible robots capable of traveling through the body's vascular system to treat medical conditions such as blood clots and brain aneurysms. Her lab combines curiosity-driven exploration with the principles of mechanics and physics to create entirely new technologies, including an origami-inspired robot that moves by spinning. Zhao emphasizes that innovation often arises from open-ended research rather than targeted goals, and credits academia's freedom to explore as key to discovery. Her work demonstrates how fundamental mechanics can inspire breakthroughs across medicine, robotics, and even large-scale systems like underwater vehicles. **SCAN TO READ THE SPOTLIGHT**



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East Palo Alto YMCA begins free weekends for residents

City uses to tax dollars to subsidize memberships

By Lisa Moreno

The Lewis and Joan Platt East Palo Alto Family YMCA began offering free weekend services for all city residents on Saturday. The opportunity is the result of a council-led initiative to use tax dollars to boost recreational services.

Now, all city residents can enjoy full access to the fitness center, outdoor swimming pool, rock-climbing wall, group exercise classes like Zumba, showers and more on weekends. In order to sign up, people must show proof of residency at the YMCA on Bell Street.

City council members, staff and local leaders gathered to celebrate the initiative on Saturday morning. The lobby was mostly quiet at the beginning of their facilities tour, but as the group progressed throughout the building, things grew increasingly livelier with children laughing as they played basketball with

staff and music leaked out from a studio hosting a workout class.

As they walked through the building, council members shared fond memories about the center. Vice Mayor Mark Dinan remembers teaching his child how to swim at the pool, and Council member Ruben Abrica recalls trying out the rock-climbing wall when the facility first opened in 2007.

“It’s a really phenomenal space,” Dinan said, as he peered through gym windows stretching across an entire wall and overlooking the pool.

It’s one of the newest YMCA locations in the region and offers more updated equipment, but city leaders feel that it’s underutilized. YMCA staff hope that at least 300 new residents will use its free services on the weekends this year. They have hit 10% of its goal through signups over the past week.

Dinan championed the effort to increase YMCA funding and pushed to dedicate \$175,000 of

tax revenue to provide the free weekend services.

“I’m thrilled to see the YMCA partnership with the City of East Palo Alto begin,” he wrote. “When I ran for City Council, I promised to focus on Parks and Recreation and expand services for EPA families. This partnership is a step forward.”

City staff originally pitched using \$100,000 of transient occupancy tax funds — hotel taxes dedicated to youth-based organizations — to YMCA membership subsidies for low-income residents, but the council was worried that they would not be able to notify the people who may need the services most.

Dinan alternatively asked for greater funding and pitched that the city provide \$300,000 to offer free servicing for all residents. After debates on how to distribute the funds, the council compromised on \$175,000 at a June council meeting.

“This is a good day for EPA,” Dinan said at the tour. ■



Arden Margulis

Menlo Park Mayor Drew Combs gives his “State of the City” speech on Oct. 23 at Bar Loretta in Downtown Menlo Park.

COMBS

continued from page 1

Menlo Park also had its fair share of challenges this past year. Menlo Park and its pool operator had a lengthy dispute regarding two facilities that Combs said “laid bare the sense of alienation that some in our community still feel.” However, Combs is optimistic that there will be a resolution that unites the community.

While Menlo Park’s financial situation has improved following a voter-approved increase in the transit occupancy tax, the city’s projections anticipate a deficit soon and depleting some of its reserves within five years.

Combs also commented on the builder’s remedy project at the former Sunset Magazine headquarters, calling it “potentially

the most provocative builders remedy project in the state’s history.” Another housing-related challenge the city faces is a ballot measure proposed by Save Downtown Menlo that is headed to an election.

While he avoided taking a position on Save Downtown Menlo’s measure to preserve the downtown parking lots, Combs closed with a call for inclusivity: “Whatever the outcome of this ballot measure, or ultimately the proposal to redevelop the parking lots into affordable housing, I have no doubt that Menlo Park is stronger and better when it strives towards inclusiveness and aspires to reflect the spectrum of lived experiences in all aspects of our community.” ■

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

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

West Menlo Park path closed

The path along San Francisquito Creek and Santa Cruz Avenue between Junipero Serra Boulevard and Sand Hill Road has been closed since Friday, Oct. 17, due to uneven pavement caused by erosion. Menlo Park advises pedestrians and cyclists to avoid the area and use alternate routes. Bicyclists are encouraged to use bike lanes on Alpine Road, Junipero Serra Boulevard and Sand Hill Road. The path will remain closed until further notice.

Speed limit decreases on Valparaiso

Menlo Park, in partnership with Atherton, decreased the speed limit on Valparaiso Avenue between Cotton Street and El Camino Real from 30 mph to 25 mph. The change went into effect on Oct. 22.

Menlo Park says lowering the speed limit is an important part of its “Vision Zero” commitment to end traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2040. A Menlo School student was previously injured on Valparaiso.

Portola Valley trivia night

The Portola Valley Parks and Recreation Committee is hosting a trivia night on Saturday, Nov. 8, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at the Portola Valley Community Hall. Trivia kicks off promptly at 7 p.m. The event is free but donations are accepted at the door to help fund future community gatherings. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own food, drinks and upbeat attitude. Space is limited to 16 teams of up to eight players each — participants can register as a team or sign up individually to be placed on one. To reserve a spot, visit the trivia night registration page or contact organizer Karen Askey at AskeyKaren@gmail.com.

— Arden Margulis



OPEN LETTER TO THE MENLO PARK CITY COUNCIL

Adopt the Downtown Parking Plazas Ordinance

October 30, 2025

Mayor Combs, Vice Mayor Nash, and Councilmembers Taylor, Schmidt, and Wise,

We urge you to adopt the *Downtown Parking Plazas Ordinance* without delay.

Menlo Park needs more affordable housing, and we need to move faster to identify the best sites. Adopting this ordinance now will:

- 1. Respect the voters' mandate.** Our petition was certified by the County after receiving **150% of the required signatures**, showing broad resident support for a public vote before repurposing the downtown parking plazas.
- 2. Save public resources.** An extra election would be costly, distracting, and unnecessary.
- 3. Keep housing on schedule.** Adoption provides immediate clarity, so staff and developers can focus work on the most suitable housing sites now, rather than waiting **6–12 months** for an election cycle.

This ordinance is narrow in scope and simple in effect: if the City wants to accept a proposal to repurpose the downtown parking plazas, residents get a vote. It does not prevent the Council from advocating for projects you believe serve the public interest — you can make that case directly to voters.

Meanwhile, Menlo Park can advance housing where it makes the most sense.

By adopting the ordinance now, you can accelerate the site selection process for the housing we need, while demonstrating your trust in the people of Menlo Park.

Sincerely,

Save Downtown Menlo - savedowntownmenlo.org

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TIPS

continued from page 5

“One of the things that we and others have really tried to convey is that folks should try to stay calm, to not panic and to be prepared for whatever may happen,” Immigrant Resource Center Legal Program Director Alison Kamhi said in an interview with this publication.

How to interact with ICE

Executive director of the Immigrant Resource Center Eric Cohen recommended that people lean on their Fifth Amendment rights — remain silent and refuse to sign documents — if immigration officers show up at their homes, he said at a January Know your Rights event.

While federal agents may attempt to intimidate people, they should remember the following nine steps if ICE is at their residence, Cohen said.

1. Remain silent

Cohen urged people to exercise their right to remain silent, no matter what questions an agent is asking. If someone tells an agent they are from Mexico or don't have documentation with them, it may be enough evidence to deport someone, he said.

“If you don't say anything, what kind of evidence do they have? Nothing,” Cohen said.

2. Don't open door, check warrants

“You have the right not to let anyone into your house unless they have a warrant, an arrest warrant or a search warrant,” Cohen said at the event.

Agents could identify themselves as immigration police, ICE or federal police and often attempt to enter someone's home by showing “fake” or “clay” warrants, he said. Unless a warrant is signed by a judge, which is extremely rare and should be physically verified, a person should not open their door. If the warrant is valid, the person should exit their home and close the door behind them.

If someone wants to hand a note to an officer, or read a document, they should slip them under the door, or show them

through the window, he said.

3. Contact an attorney

“Before you make any decisions, if you're picked up, you want to talk to an attorney, because that attorney might help you figure out whether there's some defenses,” Cohen said.

While everyone has the right to legal defense, people are not appointed a free attorney in immigration court, he said. If arrested, people should refrain from offering any information to federal agents without a lawyer.

People can call various Bay Area nonprofits like the Immigration Legal Resource Center, International Institute of the Bay Area or any rapid response hotline for help finding representation.

4. Don't sign anything

Upon an arrest, federal agents often urge people to sign a voluntary departure, Cohen said, which allows the government to deport someone without an immigration court hearing.

Everyone has the right to refuse signing documents.

“They're going to try to cajole you, try to convince you, try to threaten you to sign them, because it's easier for them,” he said. “It's less costly for them. It helps their numbers”

5. Show red card

Red cards list the rights of any person not to speak to federal officials or sign any documents under their Fifth Amendment rights, as well as their right to deny agents entrance to their homes without a warrant signed by a judge.

Flashing a card through their window is a safer way for people to communicate with agents that they do not wish to further interact with, Cohen said.

Red cards are available for print and distribution via the Immigration Legal Resource Center website.

6. Don't show false documents

Federal agents are good at sniffing out fraud, Cohen said, and showing fake documents like green cards can signal that person is not a resident.

7. Don't run, remain calm

While confrontation with law enforcement can be stressful, Cohen advised people to try their best to remain calm and avoid running from officers who are often posted around the perimeter of a residence or workplace.

“Running can be proof that you might not be here legally, because who else would run?” he said.

8. Make a family plan

Anyone who might be at risk of arrest should plan care



Lisa Moreno

Stanford medical staff and community members protest on Sept. 2 after a woman arrested by ICE was sent to Stanford Hospital for medical treatment.

for their children, coordinate with someone to oversee their finances and manage any other responsibilities, Cohen said.

Children can only be released to emergency contacts, so their information should always be up to date, according to San Mateo County officials.

9. It's your decision

While each person, documented or undocumented, has constitutional rights to remain silent, refrain from signing documents or opening their doors, Cohen said, at the end of the day, it's each person's decision whether or not they want to sign a departure form.

ICE has also been known to target people at workplaces, but businesses also have distinct laws to protect its employees.

There are private and public areas within most workplaces, and federal agents cannot enter a private zone without permission or a judicial warrant. Public areas typically include dining rooms, lobbies and parking lots, and private areas include kitchens, offices and storage rooms, according to the California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice.

Employers do not have to identify their workers or disclose whether or not they're working at the time. If agents do enter, workers do not have to identify themselves or hand over documents.

“Have your red card in your pocket,” Cohen said. “You show it, you don't say anything.”

The protocol to safe interactions with immigration officers during a traffic stop are more tricky, because people don't have the same rights that they do in their house. For example, if an officer has reasonable suspicion for pulling someone over, they are able to request to see their identification.

Legal experts advise people not to run or escalate the situation and remain calm in any case, Kamhi said.

While on the street or in

public settings, agents may ask someone for their name or to verify their identity among other questions, she said.

“But you can ask agents to identify themselves and what agency they represent,” Kamhi said. “You can ask if you're free to go, and if so, you can walk away without saying anything else. If they say, ‘No, you're not free to go,’ then you have the right to remain silent, and silence is golden.”

While protesting or witnessing events where federal agents are present, Kamhi said, it's important people do what makes them feel safe and properly document the situation.

How to report ICE

Lawyers and advocates advised people to confirm ICE sightings with experts like rapid response networks before posting to social media in order to prevent spreading unnecessary fear among immigrant communities.

A rapid response network or hotline is typically composed of a group of local volunteers, lawyers and community leaders, who quickly work to verify ICE sightings and activate legal support when someone is arrested. They can also help people locate their family members.

There are various hotlines in the region:

- San Mateo County rapid response hotline: (203) 666-4472
- Santa Clara County rapid response hotline: (408) 290-1144
- San Francisco rapid response hotline: (415) 200-1548

Civilians often mistake undercover police or SWAT activity with immigration enforcement, which causes “terror” and affects the health of immigrant communities, San Mateo County Rapid Response Network representative Nani Friedman said in a previous interview.

“It affects their economic life, whether they're able to go to work,” Friedman said. “It affects

their ability to pay bills. It affects their physical health and their mental health.”

The administration relies on this hysteria to encourage people to voluntarily leave the country, Kamhi said in a previous workshop.

“They will be banking on the fear and confusion that that causes,” she said.

In cases people do believe they are encountering federal agents, experts advise them to remain silent and take videos for documentation purposes.

But even if residents can confirm an ICE sighting with rapid response, they should avoid posting videos of arrests without speaking to legal experts or the person in the video as it could negatively harm legal cases and cause more trauma for the person arrested, Friedman said.

People can also create “phone-trees,” where they set up a chain of calls among families and neighborhoods in order to spread the word about confirmed immigration enforcement sightings, Cohen said.

How to prepare for ICE

There are steps people can take to feel safer under a looming threat of increased immigration enforcement, including creating a phone-tree and a family plan, printing red cards and even clearing past legal offenses from their record.

Record expungement cannot directly prevent deportation, but may display good conduct in immigration cases, according to legal experts. San Mateo and Santa Clara counties both offer free record expungement through their public defender programs.

People can call 408-535-4290 to make an appointment to discuss expungement with Santa Clara County legal officials and call 650-298-4000 to connect with San Mateo County representatives.

While there has been an influx of expungement requests under the current administration, San Mateo County prioritizes people in immediate danger of deportation, managing attorney for the county's private defender program Mitri Hanania said at a July immigration training event.

“Everybody has constitutional rights, and it doesn't feel very powerful, because a lot of people's constitutional rights are being violated, but thankfully, people are trying to defend those rights,” East Palo Alto Legal Services Executive Director Katrina Logan said at the event. ■

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

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Modest gains projected for California housing market in 2026

Lower mortgage rates and rising confidence expected to nudge sales and prices upward

By Linda Taaffe

After a year of sluggish growth, California's housing market is poised to regain a bit of momentum in 2026. Home sales and prices are projected to inch upward as mortgage rates decline and buyer confidence begins to rebound, according to a new forecast released by the California Association of Realtors.

The 2026 California Housing Market Forecast projects single-family home sales to climb 2% next year, reaching 274,400 units — up from the estimated 269,000 homes sold in 2025. While the increase is modest, it marks a turnaround from the flat activity seen over the past two years.

At the same time, the state's median home price is expected to rise 3.6% to a record \$905,000, following smaller gains of 1% this year and less than 1% in 2024. C.A.R. analysts say softening prices and declining mortgage rates are beginning to draw more buyers back into the market.

"Home prices in California are expected to rise in 2026, but the growth pace will

remain mild compared to what we've seen in past years," said C.A.R. President Heather Ozur. "For would-be buyers who sat out the competitive market during the pandemic, next year could offer more opportunities as inventory increases and lending conditions become more favorable."

Housing affordability expected to improve

C.A.R. projects housing affordability — the share of households able to purchase a median-priced home — to improve slightly, rising to 18% in 2026 from a projected 17% in 2025. While still historically low, the improvement reflects gradual relief from high borrowing costs that have kept many Californians sidelined.

Economic conditions are also expected to shift in ways that support a mild recovery. The association's forecast anticipates a decline in the average 30-year fixed mortgage rate to 6% in 2026, down from 6.6% in 2025. Although still higher than pre-pandemic levels, the easing of rates could help unlock more housing supply, with

active listings projected to rise about 10%.

National and global trends, however, could complicate the picture, according to C.A.R. Chief Economist Jordan Levine.

"As economic uncertainty begins to clear up in the next 12 months and mortgage rates start declining more consistently in the upcoming quarters, housing sentiment will see some improvement in 2026," Levine said. "However, mounting headwinds such as the ongoing trade tensions between the U.S. and its trading partners, the home insurance crisis, and a potential stock market bubble will

remain challenges for the housing market in the upcoming year."

C.A.R. expects California's job growth to slow to 0.3% next year, with the unemployment rate ticking up to 5.8%. The association also projects inflation to edge up slightly to 3% in 2026, after dipping to 2.8% in 2025.

Taken together, the data suggest a housing market that's steadying after years of volatility — neither booming nor busting, but slowly finding its footing. ■

Email Print & Lifestyle Editor Linda Taaffe at ltaaffe@almanacnews.com.

TEST SCORES

continued from page 7

School board member Scott Saywell commented on his disappointment to see that scores were still lower than pre-pandemic levels despite all of the good work that the district had been doing to push for improvements. However, he looks forward to how things improve in the next year or two.

Despite the disappointment, school board President Sherwin Chen is positive

that academic achievement will improve with the strategies that are currently in place.

"It is an incredibly hard thing to get back to pre-COVID (levels), but we know it can be done... There's no silver bullet and it's going to take a while. I think a combination of patience and urgency is what we need here," he said. ■

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

SHERIFF

continued from page 5

in favor of a long-term appointment.

At last week's board meeting, Mueller originally leaned toward allowing voters to choose the next sheriff in the June 2026 election and appointing an interim sheriff for the time being. However, he said at Tuesday's meeting that he was worried that not quickly securing a long-term leader in the Sheriff's Office would only delay its stabilization after the last year of turmoil that plagued the department.

"At the end of our last meeting, I shared with you all that I did have some reservations with respect to the fact that in a special election, someone could win with a very small margin of votes," Mueller said. "I started to also think about the number of times that we're asking our sheriff's department to undergo leadership changes."

Mueller, Corzo, and Supervisor Lisa Gauthier voted in favor of the board appointing a sheriff to serve the rest of Corpus' term. Canepa and Speier voted against it. After the vote, Canepa and Speier voiced their frustrations with the

short time frame in which the board has to choose the next sheriff. The board has until Nov. 13 to appoint the next sheriff.

"The appointment process gives just three members on this Board in a two-week stretch the power to pick the county's next top law enforcement officer for the next three years with no voter input whatsoever," Canepa said in a statement released by his office.

For the appointment process, County Executive Mike Callagy said that applications would be accepted until Nov. 5. He also said that the county would send out and advertise a job description "immediately."

"We will endeavor to start that bright and early (Wednesday)," Callagy said to the board on Tuesday. "Getting information out on how to apply and where to apply. We will do whatever it takes, whether it's radio ads and newspaper ads."

The board said it will plan to hold public forums once the top candidates who apply are vetted and interviewed. Experience in law enforcement, a record of ethical leadership, and ability to be fiscally responsible are some of the qualifications the board will require. ■

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

George Carpenter, 82, of Palo Alto, who was born in Edmonton, Canada, earned a graduate degree at Stanford University, where he studied the interaction of radio waves with the magnetosphere, worked at Stanford Research Institute, where his duties included calibrating GPS satellites using the Stanford Dish, helped develop ground-penetrating radar, retired as director of the Geoscience and Engineering Center at SRI, and enjoyed collecting brass engine models, died on Sept. 6, 2025.

William Green, 88, of Palo Alto, who worked on the legal staff of Bose Cascade before starting his own firm, William E. Green & Associates, who often did free legal work for local nonprofits and churches, who served on the Palo Alto Planning Commission and as chair of the Palo Alto Rail Cross, who was a lifetime golfer and an enthusiastic jazz fan, and who traveled the world with his wife, Loretta, died on Oct. 17, 2025.

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



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ICE

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organizers and residents gathered twice Thursday — once in the morning outside the county building and again in the evening at 500 County Center — to call for unity and share strategies for possible encounters with immigration officers.

At the morning press conference, Mueller said the county had been warned earlier in the week that “an incursion” of the National Guard and Immigration and Customs Enforcement was “imminent.”

“Frankly,” he stated, “we thought those would begin.”

Mueller said his understanding of events came from President Trump’s social media post and a press release from San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie.

In the Truth Social post, Trump said he called off the San Francisco “surge” after friends — Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang and Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff — told him Lurie was “making substantial progress” in addressing crime.

Lurie confirmed the call-off of federal troops in a press release also on Thursday morning, in which he said he told the president that San Francisco “would welcome continued partnerships” with the FBI, DEA, ATF and U.S. Attorney “to get drugs and drug dealers off our streets.”

However, “having the military and militarized immigration enforcement in our city will hinder our recovery,” the mayor of San Francisco added. “We appreciate that the president understands that we are the global hub for technology, and when San Francisco is strong, our country is strong.”

From those sources, Mueller said he believes “the incursion has been delayed,” but that it’s unclear whether an ICE sweep will be too.

He acknowledged the communal anxiety related to the uncertainty of the moment, and attempted to assure the



Miranda de Moraes

Protestors of a federal incursion in San Mateo County bear an upside-down American flag, which was historically used by ships to signal dire distress, according to U.S. Flag Code, and has been co-opted by demonstrators to signal belief that the nation is in danger and/or has violated its founding principles.

community that “we’ve spent time, years, preparing for this. We’re ready.”

The plan is for the county to continue “operating as usual” and to provide resources to the most vulnerable in the community.

Corzo took to the podium, stating that “no one in our community deserves to be harmed psychologically, physically.”

Over 35% of San Mateo County are immigrants, and among the undocumented community, many are afraid to go to work, school and even leave their homes, Corzo said. The county will “keep an eye on” the long-term economic impacts of prolonged ICE activity, the supervisor added.

South San Francisco Mayor Eddie Flores, who is a “proud immigrant” himself, captured the sentiments of the leaders Thursday morning in his speech, stating, “We need our communities to know that we value all of our residents and that we stand with them, that we ensure their safety, that we ensure their security and their due process.”

Speakers also raised concerns about the chilling effect Trump’s threats could have on students.

San Mateo County Office of

Education Executive Director Héctor Camacho said schools would not comply with actions “that threaten the safety, dignity and humanity of our children.”

“Every student is entitled to a free, public education, regardless of their immigration status,” he said.

Schools do not ask about a student’s or a family’s immigration status to enroll; student records are protected by law, and the office does not release personal information without a court order, which would be “over our bodies,” Camacho said.

Additionally, the Office of Education is working with every district and its community partners to ensure accurate information reaches families in the language they speak, helping educators answer questions about immigration enforcement and connecting folks with legal, wellness and mental health support. “Know that our schools will remain safe, supportive places where children are cared for and always welcome,” the executive director concluded.

If an armed immigration agent were to appear on a San Mateo Union High School District campus, trustee Ligia Andrade Zúñiga said the school would activate its emergency Big Five protocol — shelter in place and secure the campus.

Ravenswood School District also released a statement Thursday outlining its safety policies: officers must register with the principal and provide proof of authority; students cannot be interviewed or searched without parental consent unless required by law; and all officer credentials and actions will be documented and shared with district leadership.

Following Sunday’s No Kings protest, which drew thousands to San Mateo County’s plaza at 500 County Center to reject Trump’s agenda, more than 50 returned Thursday evening

to protest a Trump-led federal incursion in the Bay Area.

Among the activists was a teacher at George Hall Elementary School, who said some of his primary school students “know what’s going on” and have asked him questions. He said, “I try to reassure them” by saying “adults here look out for them.”

Another protester, longtime Redwood City resident Judy Kirk, 84, called ICE’s actions “cruel and sadistic.” She said she holds signs denouncing the president and his policies every Friday on Jefferson Avenue because she believes in the “3.5% Rule.”

The rule refers to the finding that no government has withstood a challenge by 3.5% of its population during a significant event, which a researcher at the Harvard Kennedy School called “useful as a rule of thumb in most cases.”

Public officials across the Bay Area issued statements Thursday denouncing the threat of federal intervention.

San Mateo County Undersheriff Dan Perea, who has taken on the duties of county sheriff following Christina Corpus’ official removal last week, affirmed that “as a local law enforcement agency, the Sheriff’s Office does not engage in immigration enforcement.”

In 2023, the Board of Supervisors adopted an ordinance prohibiting the use of county resources to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement except when required by law or court order.

The Sheriff’s Office “will not interfere with or attempt to prevent federal immigration operations,” Perea said. “Our focus continues to be on maintaining public safety and building trust within our communities.”

That said, “any acts of violence toward others, including law enforcement personnel, will be addressed swiftly.”

State Sen. Josh Becker denounced the threat of a raid, calling it “Donald Trump’s war on his own citizens” and “a stain on our nation’s history.” In a video statement, he said, “The Bay Area neither wants nor needs the federal government in our streets.”

Faith in Action Bay Area, a prominent network of faith and community leaders at the front-line of ICE activity response, and a group Corzo regularly refers to, has tracked immigration enforcement trends in San Mateo County.

“We have haven’t seen people arrested in the street based on race or language, in checkpoints, or in worksite raids,” Nani Friedman, a Faith in Action spokesperson, told this news organization.

Residents should know that the organization has only seen

“targeted enforcement operations,” in which ICE awaits a specific individual or two outside of their home or car. The trend is that these targeted individuals typically have deportation orders.

The other notice Friedman wants to emphasize to San Mateo County is that “the vast majority” of those who appear for an ICE check-in or immigration court hearing walk away “just fine.”

“If people don’t go to their immigration appointment, they can get a deportation order just for not showing up,” the Faith in Action representative stated. Hundreds of volunteers from San Mateo County have been accompanying people to court appointments so they “don’t have to show up alone and face that intimidation.”

Visit the organization’s webpage for personal resources or to get involved.

During Thursday’s press conferences, speakers shared several related tactics and services:

- Call the San Mateo County Rapid Response Network at 203-666-4472 or 203-NO-MIGRA, which connects targeted individuals with lawyers, family financial support, or 203-NO-MIGRA, which connects targeted individuals with lawyers, familial financial support and other resources.
- In the event of a perceived ICE action, do not interject yourself because the county can’t protect you, Mueller said. Instead, take a picture or video of the incident so the county can see the identity of the targeted individual.
- Refrain from spreading unverified information on social media that can fuel panic.
- Go to work and school if you feel safe to do so — only undocumented residents with criminal records, for the most part, have been targeted in San Mateo County.
- Ensure school district emergency contact information is up to date, because students are only able to be released to authorized emergency contacts.
- See the county’s Office of Community Affairs Immigrant Services for information, legal referrals and multilingual resources.
- Explore the county’s Know Your Rights sessions and legal clinics to better understand protections.
- Make a family plan for emergencies. ■

Employment

The Almanac offers employment advertising.

The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 pm.

Visit AlmanacNews.com/employment_ads/.

For assistance email LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com.

Email Staff Writer

Miranda de Moraes at

mdemoraes@almanacnews.com.

FORD FIELD

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its budget emergency.

Historically, the town has had great success with fundraising for town projects. In 2005, the town raised \$15 million in private donations to build the Town Center.

“We have very generous, heavy hitters in this town and it’s been 20 years since we’ve had any large fundraising campaign,” said Askey.

The West Menlo Little League also has committed to offering at least \$60,000 to the project, she added. The Parks and Recreation Committee shared that it has an unallocated fund of \$17,000 that it is willing to put toward the project.

While there have been many

verbal commitments to donating, Mayor Judith Hasko asked the committee whether it was possible to obtain pledges to get a stronger estimate on how much people would be willing to donate and when.

Council member Helen Wolter asked what would happen if the fundraising fails, using the example of Atherton’s 2017 failed attempt at fundraising \$25 million for a new civic center.

Smith ensured that the committee would have backup options, adding that the progress for the fundraising campaign would be tracked before they proceed with each step in the project.

“(Ford Field) is a beautiful ballpark and it deserves not to have plastic bins everywhere and a much more thoughtful layout,” said Hasko. “I agree that

this community can make this happen. We have these values in common and we should definitely move forward.”

Although Vice Mayor Craig Taylor was absent from the meeting, all other council members shared their support for the town to pursue the Ford Field project. According to Smith, a resolution to start the project will be presented to the council at its next regular Town Council meeting in November. ■

Email Staff Writer

Jennifer Yoshikoshi at [jyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com](mailto: jyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com).



Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Portable toilets and trash bins are lined up along the edge of the Ford Field parking lot in front of the snack shack.

TRIAL

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at its three colleges and named Galatolo as a co-conspirator; one contractor, Allana Buick & Bers CEO Karim Allana, countered seeking more than \$32 million for reputational harm.

Galatolo’s attorney did not respond to requests for comment ahead of trial.

In court documents, Galatolo’s defense argues that the District Attorney’s Office is misconstruing trivial gifts and a friendly relationship with a financial interest that causes a financial interest.

The defense also argues

that current Trustee Richard Holober and former trustees Maurice Goodman and Dave Mandelkern violated the Brown Act by coordinating to fire Galatolo in 2018. Goodman and Holober are scheduled to testify on behalf of the prosecution. Knowingly violating the Brown Act can be a criminal offense.

Holober did not respond to a request for comment. ■

Editor’s Note: Reporter Arden Margulis is a student in the San Mateo Community College District.

Email Staff Writer Arden

Margulis at [amargulis@almanacnews.com](mailto: amargulis@almanacnews.com).

GHOST DOG

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blue,” Postel said.

When he asked her why, she explained that while she was locking up the store to close at 4 p.m., she noticed a large dog in the interpretive area. She walked into the back room and saw a “gigantic dog standing right in the middle of the room.”

But as she was going to try and get it out of the store, the dog “dissolved” right before her eyes, according to Postel.

“It disappeared as she was looking at it and she was really upset by it,” he added.

As she was trying to gather herself in the room where the dog stood seconds before, she looked over to the wall of photos and saw one of Tripp outside the store with his dogs.

“She said she swore to God, it was the same dog as the one in the picture,” Postel recalled.

After her ghostly experience in the Woodside Store, the site manager told Postel on the phone, “I’m never going to come back here. Goodbye.”

While Postel isn’t sure if she

actually saw a ghost dog or whether it was a creative excuse to quit her job, the site manager surely stuck to her word and never went back to work at the Woodside Store after that day.

The Woodside Store that stands today has existed in Kings Mountain since 1854 and was rebuilt after the original 1851 structure burned down. The store was purchased by the county in 1940 and was listed as a California Historical Landmark in 1949. Since becoming a county park, the San Mateo County Historical Association has been operating the site for tours.

In May, the county celebrated Old Woodside Store Day, bringing guests back to the 1880s and hosting old-time contests and crafts.

The store is open to the public on Tuesday and Thursday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. For more information on the Woodside Store visit historysmc.org/woodside-store-historic-site/. ■

Email Staff Writer

Jennifer Yoshikoshi at [jyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com](mailto: jyoshikoshi@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)

JEWELIANA STUDIO
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301942

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

1.) JEWELIANA STUDIO, located at 303 Twin Dolpin Drive, 6TH FLOOR, Redwood City, CA 94065. Mailing Address: 1826 Bayview Ave, Belmont, CA 94002

Registered owner(s): CHIA JUNG HSU

303 Twin Dolpin Drive, 6TH FLOOR Redwood City, CA 94065

Redwood City, CA 94065
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 20, 2025.

(ALM Oct 31, Nov 7, 14 and 21, 2025)

1TCC
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301894

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

1.) 1TCC, located at 1300 El Camino Real, Ste 100x4, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

Registered owner(s): TRADE CAPITAL CORPORATION

1300 El Camino Real, Ste 100x4 Menlo Park, CA 94025

State of Incorporation/Organization: Delaware

This business is conducted by: a Corporation.

Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 10/27/2022.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 10, 2025.

(ALM Oct 31, Nov 7, 14 and 21, 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)

OC CONSTRUCTION
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-301880

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

1.) OC CONSTRUCTION, located at 1618 Sullivan Ave #324, Daly City, CA 94015.

Registered owner(s): CARLOS OLGUIN ARIAGA

1618 Sullivan Ave #324 Daly City, CA 94015

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 08, 2025.

(ALM Oct 31, Nov 7, 14 and 21, 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)

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)

To place a legal notice visit

AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/

Portrait of the artist as a successful woman

Stanford professor pens children's art history book about a 16th-century female painter

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

There was a time when a popular pub quiz question was “name five women artists.” Meant to stymie the players (which it often did) it also reflected the appalling lack of research about and recognition for women artists over the centuries. Fortunately, that situation has changed, thanks to countless books and museum exhibitions that have focused on the often overlooked and even misattributed work by women.

While most of these scholarly efforts have been directed toward adults, Stanford professor Emanuele Lugli decided to write a children's book about Lavinia Fontana, an extraordinary 16th-century artist who gained not only fame but fortune during her long career. But why would a noted Renaissance scholar on the faculty of a prestigious university choose to write a book geared for 7- to 10-year-olds?

“This invisibility — the difficulty of being exposed not only to women artists but also to teaching that genuinely celebrated them — is precisely why I felt we needed a children's book,” Lugli said.

The result of his efforts is “Lavinia's Wondrous Portraits,” which takes early readers on a journey through Bologna, Italy, following a young girl named Camilla who is learning about such things as what is a portrait, why objects are used as symbols and how an artist works.

The story tells how Camilla's sister is having a portrait painted by “Maestra Fontana” because she is about to be married and will move away, possibly not to be seen again. Symbols within the painting, such as a flower and a copper disc, will remind Camilla of her sister in the years ahead. The narration of this story also introduces

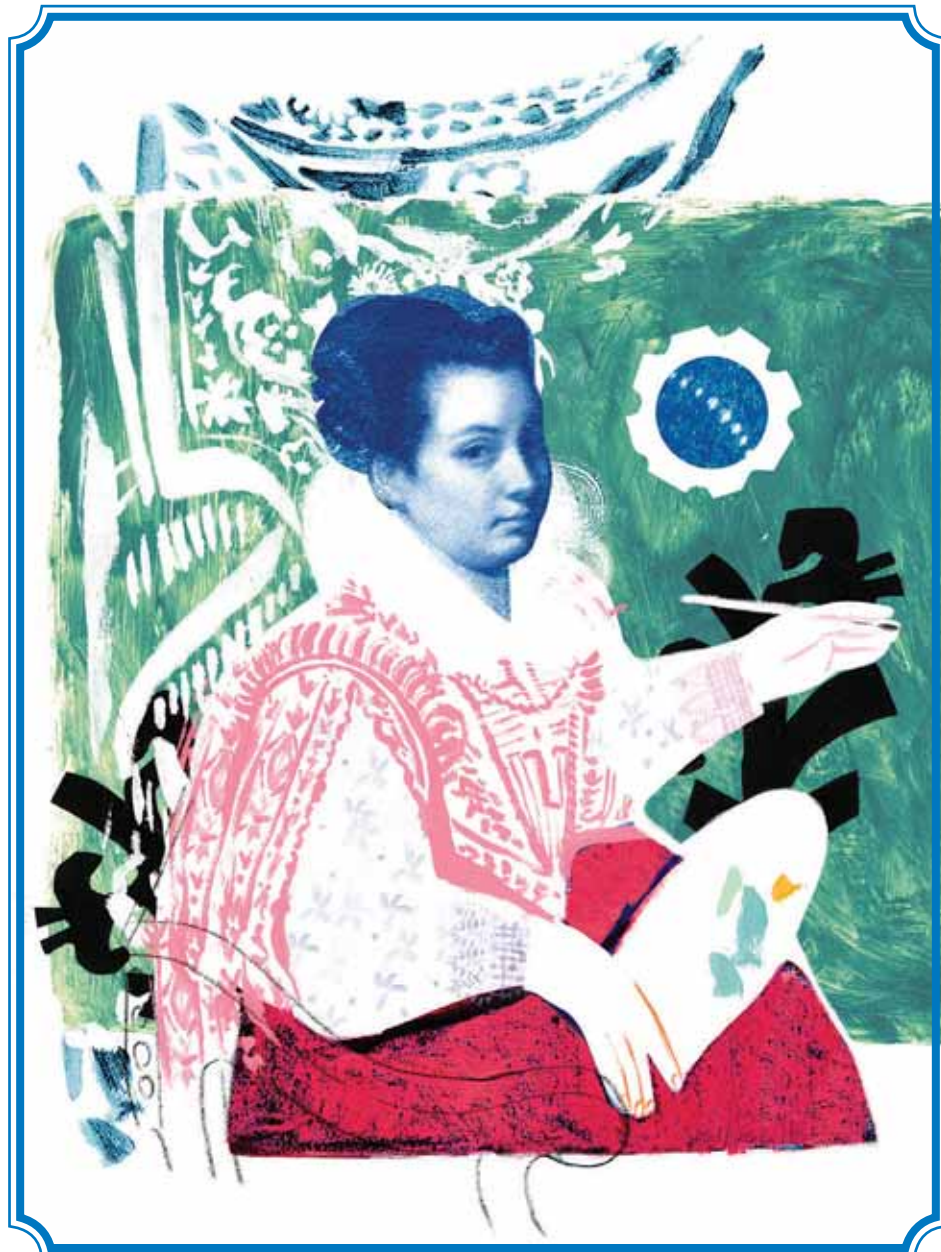
the reader to Lavinia Fontana and explores why she was such a successful artist. Lugli explained why he took this multi-faceted approach.

“To understand why portraiture was so important in 16th-century Europe, you need to know how families were formed and fractured. Marriages could be violent, uprooting women and daughters and transplanting them into new families with no possibility of return,” Lugli said.

He added, “If you don't understand the conditions women faced and the injustices they endured, it's difficult to appreciate how extraordinary Lavinia Fontana was. She fought battles on these fronts while producing portraits that met the needs of her patrons — and of women more broadly.”

Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614) was, indeed, an exceptional figure at a time when women artists faced innumerable challenges: lack of formal training (which included the all-important access to nude models) and societal expectations of marriage and children, to name a few. Fontana managed to overcome these obstacles first by receiving training from her artist father, Prospero, and later by becoming the favored portrait artist for the wealthy families of Bologna. She was known and sought out because of her detailed and realistic renderings of elaborate clothing and jewels. It is estimated that she created over 100 portraits and religious paintings during her lifetime.

Fontana did marry and gave birth to 11 children, neither of which impeded her career. In fact, in a rare circumstance, her husband (a minor painter) gave up his career to assist her as the family's main source of income.



Courtesy Emanuele Lugli

Above: A spread of pages from Emanuele Lugli's children's art history book “Lavinia's Wondrous Portraits,” showing illustrations by Chiara Palillo. Top: Emanuele Lugli's children's art history book “Lavinia's Wondrous Portraits” tells the story of 16th-century female painter Lavinia Fontana. Chiara Palillo incorporated cyanotypes of faces and other elements from Fontana's portraits in illustrations for the book.

In order to capture the unique character of Fontana's paintings, Lugli chose to work with illustrator Chiara Palillo, who did not try to recreate the artist's work in a literal way. The illustrations, done in a unique

cyanotype that also incorporates faces from Fontana's paintings, are not your usual primary color, realistic drawings found in books for this age group. (Cyanotype produces a kind of monochrome photographic



Courtesy Emanuele Lugli

Graphic designer and illustrator Chiara Palillo created the images for Emanuele Lugli's children's art history book "Lavinia's Wondrous Portraits." This spread from the book shows Palillo's art with the text omitted.

print, all in shades of blue, using a chemical that reacts to ultraviolet light — often sunlight is used.)

"We thought: Why not reproduce the faces of all the characters as if lifted from Lavinia's actual portraits, and make them blue, so readers would recognize the connection?" said Lugli. "This way, the illustrations blend Lavinia's original details with Chiara's own artistic additions, mirroring the text, which mixes historical facts with fictional elements."

The resulting book is both entertaining and didactic, with lively views of Bologna, an explanation of why someone would get a portrait painted, and how unusual it was for the artist to be a woman. Included at the end of the story is a primer about the tools of the artist, biographical information about Fontana and thumbnail illustrations of her work and a listing of where her paintings can be seen today. (The Legion of Honor Museum in San Francisco owns "Portrait of Bianca degli Utili Masselli and Children," completed in 1604). On the last page there is a short quiz about the art of portraiture.

When asked what the most difficult aspect of writing for children was, Lugli had a quick response. "The writing itself. In a children's book, every word matters. The text is less than 1,000 words but each one carries weight." He also acknowledged that writing for children made him consider Fontana's paintings in a new light.

"Lavinia painted posthumous portraits in a way that made the deceased interact with family members. I thought, 'how would a child see this?' Suddenly, I realized — these are paintings of ghosts! I don't think I would have been able to recognize them this way if I hadn't been working on the children's book."

"Lavinia's Wondrous Portraits" was published in March of this year and was named one of the most outstanding books of 2025 by the picture book platform

dPICTUS. The book is currently sold out on Amazon but copies can be seen at the Bowes Art & Architecture Library at Stanford University. There is also a small exhibition in the library (located in the McMurtry Building) that offers an inside look at how the book was created.

Five glass cases contain books that inspired the writing of "Lavinia's Wondrous Portraits," materials that explain why portraits exist, examples of the cyanotype technique used by the illustrator, and watercolors that highlight how the unique architecture of Bologna made it "more than a backdrop." The exhibition will be on view until Dec. 12.

Lugli said he has not ruled out writing another book for children and credits his Stanford colleagues for their support and encouragement. "I have wonderful colleagues who are willing to take risks and understand that the study of art history — and education in general — is about more than developing skills and earning degrees. It's about cultivating a life worth living."

What does he hope young readers will take away from the book? "I hope children see history not as the study of the dusty old past, but as a distant planet, full of different life forms." ■

*Email Contributing Writer
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"Lavinia's Wondrous Portraits" is for sale at various online booksellers including telegraphhillbooks.com and amazon.com; the exhibition "Lavinia's Wondrous Portraits: The Making of a Children's Book" is on view through Dec. 12 at the McMurtry Building, Bowes Art & Architecture Library, 355 Roth Way, Stanford (non-Stanford ID holders call 650-723-3408 for building access); events.stanford.edu/event/lavinias-wondrous-portraits-the-making-of-a-childrens-book.

Worth a Look

Zoppé Italian Family Circus

The beloved Zoppé Italian Family Circus returns to Redwood City for its 18th year, for a show led by ringmaster Patrick McGuire and starring Nino the clown (circus director Giovanni Zoppé). The circus is rooted in old-world traditions, with a history dating back to more than a century ago in Europe, and includes performers from around the world. The show is framed around a central story (this year's theme is "Legacy") and involves humor, acrobatics, equestrian acts, canine performances and audience participation. Redwood City is special to the touring company — Giovanni Zoppé's father Alberto gave his final performance there, and his eldest son, still a performer with the group along with his younger brother, was born in the city 15 years ago (and made his circus debut just six days later).

Nov. 1-30, Redwood City Main Library parking lot, 1044 Middlefield Road, Redwood City; check online for specific showtimes and ticket prices; tinyurl.com/ZoppeRWC2025.



Courtesy Peter Speyer

A member of Zoppé Italian Family Circus performs a precarious balancing act. The circus returns for its annual visit to Redwood City starting Nov. 1.

'The Linear Edge'

For "The Linear Edge," the newest group exhibition at Pamela Walsh Gallery, artists Myles Bennett, Michael Dickey, Miquel Gelabert and Dani Tull explore "the possibilities of line as both boundary and breakthrough," according to the gallery's website. Paintings, ceramics and deconstructed canvas hangings are all included in the show. "Across these works, line stretches, layers, fractures, and rebuilds — becoming a site of tension and release, where precision collides with impulse and discipline dissolves into intuition," the website states.

Through Nov. 29, Pamela Walsh Gallery, 540 Ramona St., Palo Alto; Tuesday-Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; free; pamelawalshgallery.com.

Senior PACO concert

Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra's senior PACO ensemble performs works by Antonin Dvořák, Samuel Barber and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor at its upcoming concert, titled "Connection" and led by music director Scott Krijnen. PACO is a community of five all-strings youth ensembles, with the senior group including its most experienced young musicians. The program includes Dvořák's Serenade for Strings in E Major, Op. 22, Barber's Adagio for Strings, Op. 11, and Coleridge-Taylor's Four Novelletten for String Orchestra, Op. 52.

Nov. 1, 7:30 p.m., Cubberley Theatre, 4120 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto; free (\$20 donation per adult is suggested); pacomusic.org.

'Humans 2.0'

Australian performing arts company Circa, led by Yaron Lifschitz and blending elements of circus, dance and theater, brings its "Humans 2.0" program to Stanford Live. Featuring music by composer Ori Lichtik, the show is the next chapter of Circa's "Humans," featuring

10 performers and described by the company as "a symphony of acrobatics, sound and light" and "intimate, primal and deeply engaged with the challenge of being human."

Nov. 1 at 7:30 p.m. and Nov. 2 at 2:30 p.m., Bing Concert Hall, 327 Lasuen St., Stanford; \$36.72-\$91.80; live.stanford.edu.

'Amor! 2: Music from Brazil'

Brazilian conductor, arranger and composer Daniel Afonso joins Schola Cantorum for a concert celebrating the music of Brazil, both traditional and contemporary. The program features works by Brazilian composers, choral arrangements of favorites and traditional tunes, from sambas to lullabies and folk melodies. Schola Cantorum is a choral arts organization with multiple programs, including an auditioned chorus. The group was founded in 1964 and this concert launches its 62nd season.

Nov. 2, 4 p.m., First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, 1985 Louis Road, Palo Alto; \$35; scholacantorum.org/concerts/amor2/.

Gary Shteyngart

Acclaimed author Gary Shteyngart ("Super Sad True Love Story," "Our Country Friends" and others), comes to Kepler's to discuss his newest novel, "Vera, or Faith." The book follows the Bradford-Shmulkin family, particularly observant young Vera, a half-Jewish, half-Korean girl who longs to make a friend, keep her parents together, and meet her birth mom. Shteyngart will be in conversation with Pulitzer Prize-winning author Andrew Sean Greer ("Less," "The Story of a Marriage" and more).

Nov. 3, 7 p.m., Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real #100, Menlo Park; \$11.49 for students/low income tickets; \$21.99 general admission; \$42.99 (includes a book); eventbrite.com.

Food & Drink

Winner winner, chicken dinner

New Menlo Park restaurant Café Vivant celebrates heritage chicken and wine

By Adrienne Mitchel

It's all about chicken and wine at Menlo Park's newest restaurant, Café Vivant.

Created by wine professionals Jason Jacobeit and Daniel Jung, Café Vivant aims to preserve and highlight the flavor of heritage chickens, as well as offer an extensive selection of bottled wines. Located in the former Le Boulanger downtown, Café Vivant also has an attached bottle shop, Somm Cellars, offering wine and a small daytime menu. Both the restaurant and bottle shop opened Oct. 28.

Heritage chickens are selectively bred to mature slowly, resulting in a "beautiful richness and depth of flavor," according to Jacobeit. Industrial hybrid breeds, on the other hand, don't have a lot of natural flavor, so chefs often look to build flavor through marinades, sauces or high-heat cooking techniques, he explained.

The Café Vivant team created its own 80-acre regenerative farm in Pescadero, raising heritage chickens, guinea hens, ducks, rabbits, pigs and sheep alongside heirloom produce. Compost from the restaurant goes back into the soil at the farm.

At the Menlo Park restaurant, heritage chickens undergo a multiday process in which they're brined, then air-dried to concentrate the flavors further before being roasted. Whole chickens serve two and come with foraged mushrooms, roasted farm vegetables and lemon thyme jus. Jared Wentworth, who's worked at Michelin-starred restaurants in Chicago, is the chef behind Café Vivant.

Three types of heritage chicken are available at a time, with new chickens rotated in each month. On Café Vivant's opening menu, find California Golden (\$96), Pescadero Black (\$116) and Delaware (\$128) varieties. The California Golden has the lightest flavor, while Pescadero Black, which is raised on Café Vivant's farm, is dark meat-forward, and the Delaware is a balanced mix of the two.

In addition to whole-roasted heritage chicken, Café Vivant offers heritage chicken nuggets, topped with Keluga caviar and dill creme fraiche (two pieces for \$38). The egg salad (\$15), served with house focaccia and salmon roe, uses eggs from heritage chickens, which "tend to have much darker yolks and a considerably punchier flavor,"



Jim Sullivan

Café Vivant's Pescadero Black heritage chicken is raised for 125 days at the restaurant's Pescadero farm (\$116). Heritage chickens are brined, air-dried, roasted and served whole.

according to Jacobeit.

The dessert program is overseen by executive pastry chef Almira Lukmanova, whose experience includes Michelin-starred Jungsik and The Modern in New York and Sketch in London.

Continuing the chicken theme, Café Vivant offers a fried chicken ice cream, which combines housemade vanilla ice cream with extra crispy chicken skin (\$15). It's served with honey brioche toast, hot sauce caramel, bell pepper-raspberry jam, speculoos-tahini crunch, milk chocolate-miso ganache, marshmallow

fluff and a crisp orange tuile.

"When you eat it, you get this nice, salty vanilla ice cream flavor, and then the actual richness of the chicken starts to creep up on the finish," Jacobeit said.

Café Vivant's camembert cheesecake even resembles a bird's nest (\$15). The base of the nest is made from calamansi curd and is covered with crispy strands of dough. The nest's eggs are made from camembert cheesecake with a yolk from pineapple-pumpkin compote. A quenelle of hay ice cream also adorns the nest.

Jacobeit expects Café Vivant's

lunch service, as well as a reservation-only tasting menu (\$235) with an optional wine pairing (\$115) to launch early next year. Celebrating every part of the chicken, the tasting menu could include chicken consommé made from bones, a dish highlighting chicken skin, chicken liver mousse served with homemade Parker House rolls and a fully-plated main course featuring white and dark meat chicken.

"We're essentially starting with one chicken for each tasting menu, and we're showing that chicken's full comprehensiveness,



Jim Sullivan

Daniel Jung, left, and Jason Jacobeit, right, are co-founders of Café Vivant in Menlo Park.



Seeger Gray

The exterior of Café Vivant in Menlo Park on its opening night, Oct. 28.



Seeger Gray

Customers dine at Café Vivant in Menlo Park on its opening night, Oct. 28.

the full impact of that chicken in many different preparations," Jacobeit said.

Beyond the chicken

While Café Vivant's menu is particularly poultry-focused — there's squab with braised endive (\$35), fried quail with duck fat cornbread (\$33) and seared Guinea hen with thigh pot pie (\$45) — there's also a variety of seafood dishes (\$22-\$48) and even grilled A5 Miyazaki wagyu with Yorkshire pudding.

Café Vivant's wine program offers about 20 wines by the glass and features at least 3,000 bottles, the majority of which are bottle-aged at least 20 years, resulting in "a lot more earthy, mushroomy, deep, savory complexity...that works beautifully with heritage chicken," Jacobeit said.

"Daniel and I always wanted to create the kind of wine program that we would love to see if we were coming as diners for the first time to that restaurant,

the kind of list that you open, and you look across the table at the person dining with you, and you say, 'I literally want to drink everything on these two pages that I have open right now,'" he added.

Most bottles come from Burgundy, France, and the Santa Cruz Mountains, with more than 120 bottles from Ridge Vineyards. Jacobeit said Café Vivant's prices "are often literally a third of what you would find for similar wines at other restaurants," with bottles ranging from the upper \$50s into the \$6,000 range. Rather than trying to maximize on one particular dining experience, he hopes the lower prices will increase the volume of guests participating in the wine program.

"I think the classic Café Vivant experience is coming in and drinking a wine from the '70s or the '80s and spending \$150 to \$225 a bottle, at a price point that oftentimes, especially here in Silicon Valley, may be a well-made but very young line

and at Café Vivant gets you an experience," he said.

Nonalcoholic wines plus low-proof and nonalcoholic cocktails (\$12-\$17) are also available.

Café Vivant's ambiance is clean and minimalist, with neutral tones, wood paneling and a floating gridded ceiling. The dining room seats 45, with a 10-seat bar facing a glass-walled rare and fine wines room.

Jacobeit envisions the attached bottle shop, slightly smaller than the restaurant itself, as a community gathering space. Described as having a "living room feel" by Jacobeit, Somm Cellars has a couch as well as indoor and outdoor tables and chairs. During the day, guests can order pour-over coffee, tea or small bites from the kitchen, such as house-marinated olives, homemade terrines, artisanal cheese and pickled farm eggs.



Jim Sullivan

Tarte tatin with hazelnut baklava, caramelized apple and Calvados anglaise.

And at dinner, Somm Cellars becomes a semi-private dining room for Café Vivant.

This is Jacobeit and Jung's second retail shop, with the first opening in 2020 in New York City. Prior to opening Somm Cellars, the pair met while working for Myriad Restaurant Group. Jung was the head sommelier at Tribeca Grill, and Jacobeit was the wine director at Michelin-starred and James Beard Award-winning Bvctard. Both restaurants have since closed.

The name Café Vivant is a nod to the phrase "bon vivant," referring to a person who lives life to the fullest, and to Romanée-Saint-Vivant, a famous vineyard in Burgundy, France.

The goal of Café Vivant is to "reimagine what poultry, and in particular chicken, can be," Jacobeit said. Most people think

of chicken as a very ordinary protein, he added, but Café Vivant wants to show that it can be extraordinary.

"(Heritage chicken) itself has everything it needs for a premium dish," Jacobeit said. "And when you treat that thing in a simple but thoughtful way, you can get a set of flavors and textures from that bird that I think a lot of people will find very surprising." ■

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

Café Vivant, 720 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park; 650-557-2244, Instagram: @cafevivant. Open Tuesday to Thursday from 5-9 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 5-9:30 p.m. Somm Cellars is open daily from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Instagram: @sommcellars.



Joseph Weaver

Executive chef Jared Wentworth, left, and executive pastry chef Emily Phillips, right, both have extensive experience working in Michelin-starred kitchens.



Seeger Gray

Somm Cellars Wine & Spirits and Café Vivant in Menlo Park on the restaurant's opening night on Oct. 28.

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