

# The Almanac

NONPROFIT LOCAL NEWS FOR THE MIDPENINSULA

JANUARY 9, 2026 | VOL. 61 NO. 18



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## Belle Haven students leave 'Portable City' for new school campus

Elementary school's \$60 million renovation wraps up after two years

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

After two years in portable classrooms, students at Belle Haven Elementary School in Menlo Park returned from winter break on Jan. 6 to a brand-new school. The Ravenswood City School District hosted a grand reopening ceremony on Monday, Jan. 5, to celebrate the completion of its \$60 million campus renovation. "Portable City" is no longer," Principal Michelle Masuda said during the ceremony.

With a balloon arch ribboned with caution tape and kids wearing plastic hard hats, the school community said goodbye to the old cafeteria in February 2024. By that time, most of the original classrooms had been demolished and students had already moved into their temporary learning spaces.

Belle Haven's reopening marks the district's third recent renovation project. Last January, Ravenswood welcomed Cesar

Chavez Ravenswood Middle School students to an upgraded campus and in November, the community celebrated the reopening of Los Robles-Ronald McNair Academy.

Over winter break, teachers were busy setting up their new classrooms as they got ready for the first day of school. Just 18 hours before students walked in, the campus was still bustling with teachers unpacking boxes, volunteers organizing the library and construction workers making final touches.

Belle Haven is the district's first campus to receive a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design gold certification, said Assistant Superintendent Will Eger. LEED is a rating system by the U.S. Green Building Council that awards buildings constructed with the highest environmental standards.

"This school is 100% electric, 100% renewably powered by the

See **BELLE HAVEN**, page 16



Seeger Gray

Fifth-grade teacher Sandra Gaona welcomes students into her renovated classroom at Belle Haven Elementary in Menlo Park on Jan. 6.

## Housing proposals arrive for Menlo Park parking lot plan

Parking may remain a problem, ballot measure looms

By Arden Margulis

Menlo Park residents can envision housing development on downtown city-owned parking lots now that developers have submitted three detailed proposals for review. The plans were submitted in late December after the Menlo Park City Council issued a controversial request for proposals over the objections of many downtown business owners.

The plans offer three different visions for the future of downtown, which the city council will discuss later this month.

Of course, the path to actually

building the housing is anything but smooth. Opponents of the parking lot development plans put forth a ballot measure that will go before city voters in November and threatened a lawsuit (which has been withdrawn but could be refiled at any time). Despite these challenges, three of the six developers that were invited to respond submitted a proposal.

Notably, Eden Housing, the only group to say that building a structure to replace parking at no cost to the city was infeasible, did not submit a proposal.

All three proposals are very different and are from developers from vastly different backgrounds.

With concerns from business owners over the availability of parking, each developer offered a unique way to build replacement parking. However, two of the three said they would only be able to build replacement parking with financial contributions from the city.

Additionally, the types of apartments varied greatly among the proposals. One developer proposed 347 total units with 140 being affordable, another proposed an entirely affordable housing development and the third proposal includes 346 affordable units and 140 market rate units.

Proposed building height also

varied, from three stories tall to as much as nine stories.

### Presidio Bay Ventures

Presidio Bay Ventures is mainly a market-rate San Francisco-based developer, best known in Menlo Park for Springline, its mixed-use development on El Camino Real, and its recent purchase of the former USGS campus in 2025.

In its RFP, the city asked for developers to replace all 556 existing public parking spaces at no cost to the city. While Presidio Bay's plan included 556 public parking spaces, the proposal said that the city may need to help pay for a six-story

parking garage located on Lot 3, which fronts University Drive.

As for housing, Presidio Bay proposes 347 units: 207 at market rate and 140 priced below market rate for people making 80% of the area median income (AMI). San Mateo County's AMI for 2025 was \$185,700 for a family of four.

In its request, the city sought projects with at least 345 residential units for individuals earning between 15% and 80% of the AMI.

The proposed housing would be in five-story buildings, with two stories of parking spaces

See **HOUSING PROPOSALS**, page 14

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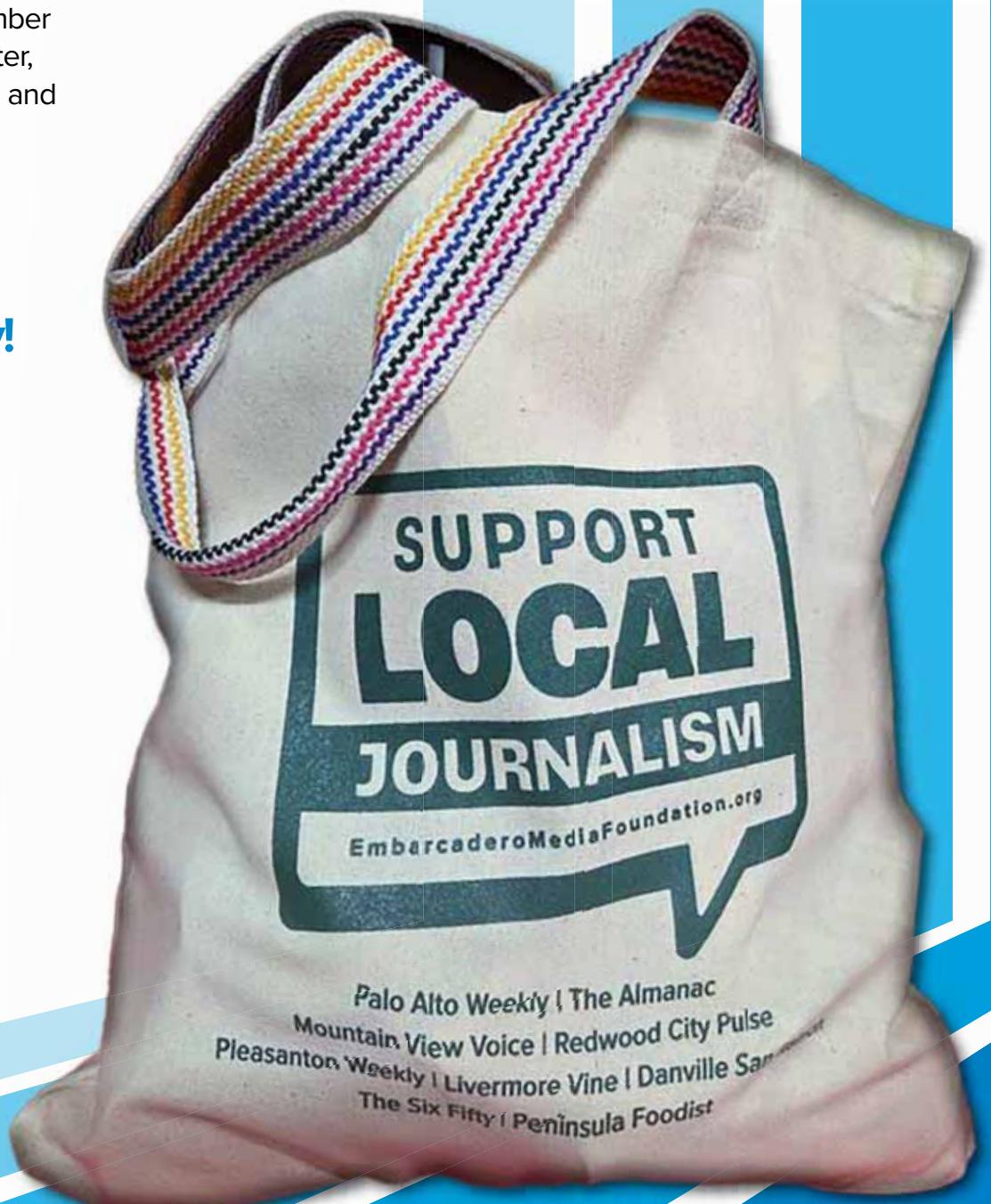
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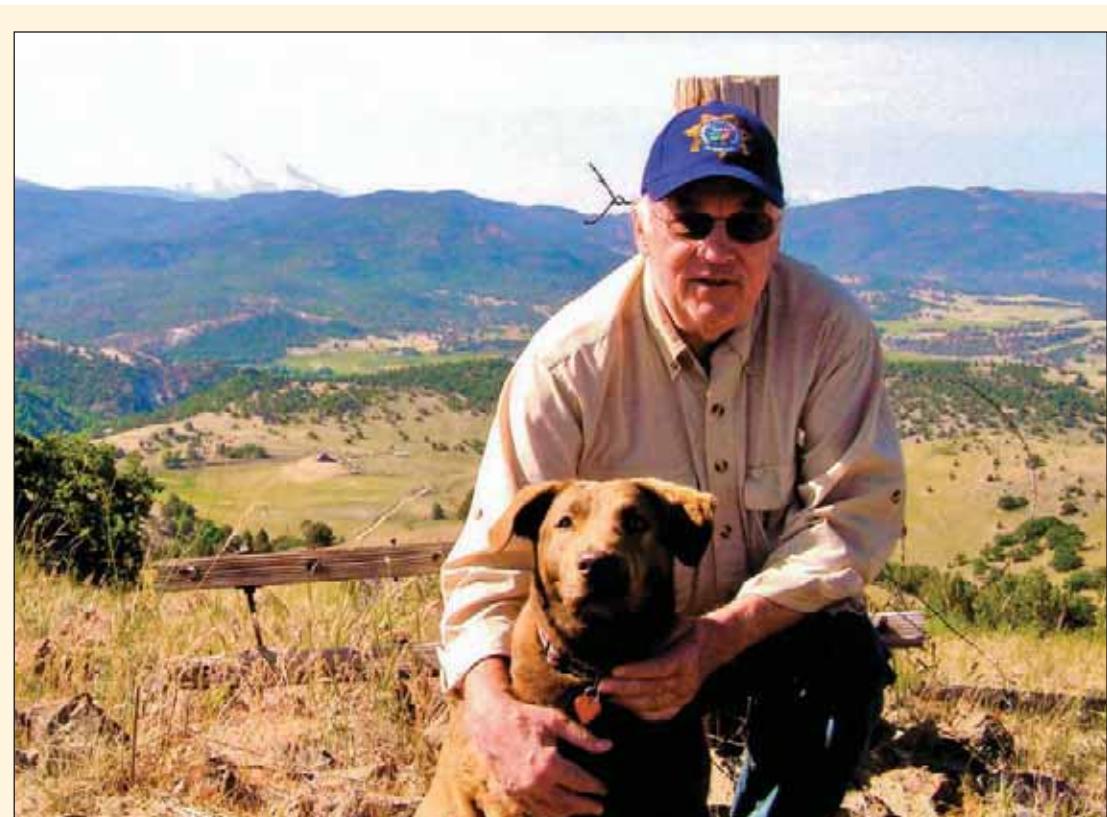
# Local News

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The Almanac  
Holiday  
Fund

Help local  
families in need  
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Courtesy Thomas Fogarty Jr.

Dr. Thomas J. Fogarty, founder of Fogarty Winery and inventor of groundbreaking medical devices, died on Dec. 28, 2025.

## Dr. Thomas J. Fogarty, inventor of balloon catheter, dies at 91

Portola Valley winery founder was leader in medical field

By Brianna Sosa

Dr. Thomas J. Fogarty, a longtime Portola Valley resident who became as well known for his Fogarty Winery as for his invention of the balloon catheter, a groundbreaking medical device, died on Dec. 28, 2025, in Portola Valley. He was 91.

Born on Feb. 25, 1934, Dr. Fogarty grew up in Cincinnati,

Ohio. His father died when Dr. Fogarty was young, so he learned how to fix things around the house. At 15, he developed his first invention, the centrifugal clutch for motorized scooters, which is still the industry standard more than 70 years later.

Dr. Fogarty's entrepreneurial spirit carried into adulthood. In 1961, he created his most notable invention, the balloon

catheter, before he had even completed medical school at the University of Cincinnati. The tool, which helps remove blood clots, was the first minimally invasive surgical device.

Dr. Fogarty's impact is "almost immeasurable," said Fletcher Wilson, one of Dr. Fogarty's mentees at Stanford Medical Center. Dr. Fogarty

See **FOGARTY**, page 11

## Fire in bathroom fan forces evacuation at Atherton elementary school

Flammable lint can be hazardous, official says

By Arden Margulis

School officials evacuated students at Adelante Selby Elementary School in Atherton after a bathroom fan caught on fire around 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 6. It was the first day back in class for students following winter break at the elementary school.

Menlo Park Fire Marshall Gage Schlice said there was very minor

damage to the bathroom and some flames got into the attic.

Students were allowed to return to classrooms by 1:20 p.m. and finish out the rest of the school day, according to Redwood City School District officials.

While fire officials originally suspected the fire was caused by a malfunctioning lightbulb, further investigation pointed to the fan as the cause.

Schlice said this incident serves as a good reminder to clean vents and fans, which trap flammable lint and dust.

"Manufacturers recommend people clean their fans every six months but residents tell us all the time they haven't (done it) in six years," Schlice said. ■

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## Woman arrested at Meta headquarters after demanding to speak with Zuckerberg

A 50-year-old San Francisco woman is charged with one count of trespassing

By Arden Margulis

Office request that Felix be ordered to stay away from Meta Headquarters.

"On what possible basis would that be denied? I've never seen that before. I am not sure what Commissioner Mazzei was thinking of," Wagstaffe said.

It was not Felix's first time being arrested for trespassing in San Mateo County. On Dec. 8, 2015, Felix was arrested for trespassing at the San Francisco International Airport and giving false information to a police officer.

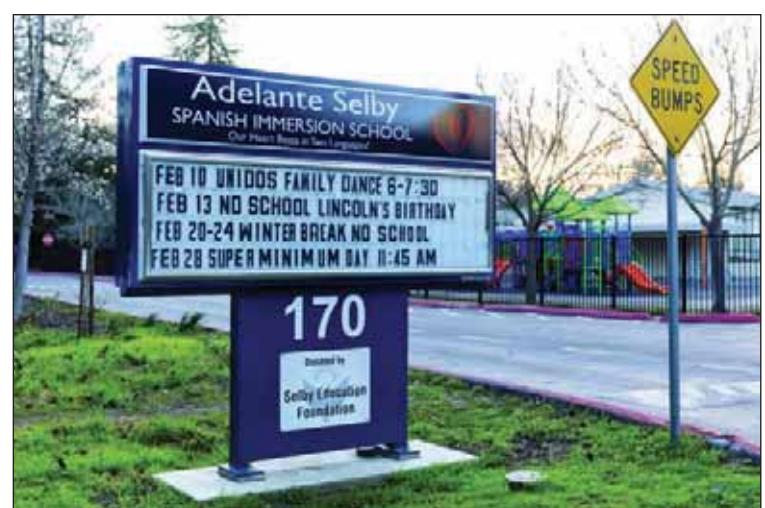
According to Wagstaffe, Felix snuck into a secure area of the United Airlines terminal. When security was alerted, she claimed she was a United employee but refused to provide any identification.

When police arrived, Felix allegedly gave them a false identification and was arrested.

She was sentenced to one year unsupervised probation on June 15, 2016, as part of a plea agreement.

Wagstaffe said Felix does not appear to have had any additional criminal activity in California since that time. Felix is scheduled to appear for a hearing in the 2026 case on April 6. ■

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



Adelante Selby Spanish Immersion School is in Atherton.

Magali Gauthier

# Mushroom experts offer newbie fungi foragers advice on safe practices

State warns of poisoning outbreaks as mushroom foraging gets trendy

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Fungi are sprouting in clusters after weeks of heavy rain in the Bay Area. That may be good news for those interested in mushroom foraging, but as many inexperienced foragers join the scene, expert collectors are urging anyone interested to get proper training before biting into a misidentified mushroom.

Last month, the California Poison Control System reported an outbreak of amatoxin poisoning from foraging and consuming *amanita phalloides*, also known as death cap mushrooms. The California Department of Public Health issued an advisory urging the public to stop foraging and consuming wild mushrooms.

As of Dec. 11, 23 cases of severe poisonings were identified in the Bay Area and Monterey County. All patients were hospitalized with two requiring a liver transplant. One adult died. Poisoned individuals ranged in age from 19 months to 56 years old. All developed nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain within 24 hours, according to CPCS.

Immigrants are particularly at risk of mushroom poisoning outbreaks because some may mistake toxic mushrooms for edible ones they find in their home country, said CPCS Medical Director Dr. Craig Smollin during a Dec. 9 press conference.

"It was a very big year for

*amanita phalloides*," said Mike McCurdy, president of the Mycological Society of San Francisco.

The death cap mushroom is one of the most fatal species and is invasive to California, he added. The toxic fungi hitchhiked its way to California on the roots of European cork oak trees. McCurdy said the Filoli Estate in Woodside was one of the first places to import these trees on the West Coast.

"There is a general knowledge throughout the millennia that mushrooms can be poisonous," said Kathryn Meier, toxicology chair of the Mycological Society of San Francisco. "But there's groups of people who are pretty naive to the risks that could happen if they eat the wrong mushroom."

There are thousands of mushroom species across the globe and while there are many edible species that people have become familiar with such as chanterelles, they also have toxic look-alikes.

"There is no easy way to learn about mushrooms," said McCurdy. "It takes years to really develop a good overall knowledge."

McCurdy has been mushroom-foraging for over 40 years and started building his knowledge around fungi after attending a foray hosted by the Mycological Society. Since 1977, he said he's seen the community's interest in foraging steadily grow, but it wasn't until the COVID-19 pandemic that



Courtesy Eleanor Raab

Amanita phalloides, a toxic mushroom species also known as the death cap, spotted in Menlo Park.

interest spiked.

"During COVID, it just went crazy. People wanted to get out into the woods, and it was a safe place to do something fun," he said. "There was a real spike in interest during COVID and it's become a huge thing."

As fungi foraging continues to gain popularity, McCurdy encourages those who are less experienced to attend forays guided by experienced foragers. Learning how to properly identify mushrooms in the wild takes years of hands-on experience — seeing, smelling and touching the mushrooms, he added.

"If one is going to collect wild mushrooms and eat them, then you really need to get some training in your local area over a period of time so that you can develop this discernment and knowledge of what is safe to eat," said Meier, who spent 36 years working in poison control.

Amatoxin mushrooms, although toxic, reportedly taste and smell normal, she added. To an untrained forager, nothing about it would signal a red flag. It's not until six to 24 hours later that they will start experiencing severe food poisoning symptoms, said Meier. By then, the amatoxin has already caused damage to the liver.

## Local resources for mushroom learners

McCurdy said patience and training from experts is paramount.

The Mycological Society of San Francisco offers many opportunities for the public to learn more about mushrooms and have many experts within the club that can help identify them.

McCurdy also advises against using plant identification apps and field guides for entry-level foragers. Apps are often inaccurate and can cause potential poisonings if used to identify mushrooms intended for consumption, he said.

The Mycological Society of San Francisco holds meetings every third Thursday of the month from September through May at the Randall Museum. McCurdy said this is a great opportunity to bring in collected mushrooms for proper identification.

Other mycological clubs include the Peninsula Mycology Circle, Bay Area Applied Mycology, Fungus Federation of Santa Cruz and Sonoma County Mycological Association. ■



Courtesy San Mateo County Parks Department

A San Mateo County Parks ranger leads a mushroom identification hike at Huddart Park in Woodside.

Established 1965

# The Almanac

Serving Menlo Park,  
Atherton, Portola Valley,  
and Woodside for over 50 years

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# Woodside residents remember owner of The Little Store

'Cozy neighborhood spot' drew friends for life

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The owner of the historic Little Store in Woodside died on Dec. 8, 2025 in the home she built with her late husband Marcel located behind the restaurant. She was 94. Kay Mouney, born on March 26, 1931, was well-known by the community for her role in starting the local restaurant.

Mouney and her husband purchased The Little Store property in 1973, according to the Woodside Historical Committee and turned the former 1907 general store into a restaurant. Staples on the menu were cheeseburgers, fried chicken, milkshakes and a French onion soup topped with a big piece of bread and cheese, said Bree-Anna Vail, a member of the committee.

"It was a fun little cozy neighborhood spot," she added. "It was like a neighborhood place where everyone could gather and you could even send your kids there to have dinner."

At The Little Store, locals remember attending birthday parties, dinners after softball games and a gathering with the late Willie McCovey, a former Woodside resident and first baseman for the San Francisco Giants.

The restaurant was under Mouney's management until December 1998. For 25 years, the small and intimate space on Woodside Road served as a "sanctuary" for many residents.

"When I was waiting to pick up the kids from school, I would be the only person in the restaurant between her and the cook, and they would just kind of leave me alone," said Jim Milton, a longtime customer and friend to Mouney. "I'd read the paper and it was kind of a sanctuary for me back in those days. A little quiet before the storm."

Mouney shared stories with her friends of growing up on a farm in west Texas in a house with many siblings. She worked as an elementary school teacher before meeting her husband, a French restaurateur who also owned Le Pot au Feu, a Menlo Park restaurant that shut its doors two decades ago, said Nita Sierke, Milton's wife.

After the original Little Store closed, residents petitioned to have the place remain a restaurant. In 1998, the town's Planning Commission voted unanimously to protect the building from being turned into an interior design office and maintain it as a dining place.



Courtesy Anne Van Camp

Kay Mouney, former owner of The Little Store, died on Dec. 8, 2025.

The community saw different iterations of the restaurant under various owners who leased the space from Mouney. Most recently, the restaurant has been revived as a cafe and florist by Gena Winter and Aubriana Kasper MacNiven, who also co-own Marigold, a floral arrangement shop in San Francisco.

"I didn't have the privilege of knowing Kay personally, but since taking over The Little Store we've met many people who used to work here during her time or loyal customers who share their fond memories of her," said Kasper MacNiven in a written statement. "While we could never fill her shoes our hope is to carry on a piece of her legacy and honor the love she had for The Little Store."

## Memories of Mouney

As the owner of the restaurant, Mouney made an impact on all who walked in. Former customers-turned-friends described her as a kind person to everyone, hardworking, well-rounded and a "down-to-business woman".

Carly Rivera worked for Mouney at The Little Store during the summer as a 15-year-old waitress. She said Mouney knew everyone who would walk into the store. It was a staple for the local residents, Rivera added.

During her six months at The Little Store, Rivera said she learned valuable lessons from Mouney about how to run a business and how to work efficiently. She continued to keep in touch with her over the years and reflected on the impact that Mouney had on her as a young teenager.

In the decades after managing The Little Store, Mouney spent her days going to yoga, attending Mass and walking her German

shepard Kiki. She named all of her pets Kiki, Sierke said.

After retirement, Mouney continued to be active in the community and developed many strong friendships. Anne Van Camp became a longtime friend after she fell into Mouney's arms when she suddenly fainted at Mass, she said. Since then, she saw her everyday for the last 10 years and attended Mass with her at Our Lady of the Wayside in Portola Valley.

Van Camp recalled Mouney's "wicked sense of humor," and independence. She was "feisty about not wanting help," she said.

Every time Van Camp would ride her horse on Woodside Road, she'd be able to see over Mouney's house fence and wave at her friend, who often spent time in her front yard. Mouney's house now serves as a daily reminder of the cherished memories of the past, she said.

Milton and his wife Sierke also grew close to Mouney in her older age and would visit her home a few times every week. Sierke would even take her to visit museums in San Francisco.

"She was always polite and good natured to people. Her equanimity was very good," said Sierke. "She never sought notoriety in any way and yet lots of people knew exactly who she was."

In 2018, Mouney received the Historic Preservation Award from the town's Historical Committee for her role in contributing to a cornerstone of Woodside's legacy.

A memorial for Mouney was held on Jan. 6 at Our Lady of the Wayside Church in Portola Valley. ■

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## REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman

### Real Estate In The New Year



Dear Monica: Now that the holidays are over, how does the new year look for real estate?

Jim C.

Dear Jim: The signs are that the first part of 2026 will be good for real estate. At the moment, inventory is very low and of the properties on the market in Menlo Park, for example, more than half are condominiums and townhouses. There are only a few houses being offered as yet but there will be more as the market picks up. Interest rates have declined somewhat and if this results in lower mortgage interest rates, this will help buyers who are looking to buy this year.

While we can't predict the future market, it looks like it will be good.

Contact me at [monica@monicacorman.com](mailto:monica@monicacorman.com): Office: 650-465-5971, COMPASS. WSJ Nationally Ranked. Real Trends Bay Area Top 100 Agents

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**District map: <http://tinyurl.com/5n967ph4>**

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The Planning Commission participates in the administration of the planning laws and policies of the Town. It is responsible for recommending to the Town Council ordinances and resolutions necessary to implement the General Plan and adopted development policy. The Commission also conducts necessary public hearings to administer the planning laws and policies of the Town and acts upon applications for zoning amendments, conditional use permits, variances, subdivisions, and other related functions as may be assigned by the council.

Interested residents are encouraged to check residency requirements, request information, and submit applications to the Town Clerk, Jennifer Li, by emailing [jli@woodsideca.gov](mailto:jli@woodsideca.gov).

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# Details emerge as jailed startup founder allowed to exercise \$1M in stock options

Attorney says Palo Alto resident suffered 'mental health issues'

By Arden Margulies

The founder of a mental health startup who's facing felony charges following an erratic episode at a Saratoga winery was granted an unusual request from his jail cell: access to his phone to exercise over \$1 million in stock options. Court records also detail chaotic events that led to charges including arson and attempted murder.

Vikram Beri, 42, of Palo Alto has been held without bail at San Jose Main Jail since his Dec. 6 arrest, when he allegedly set a picnic bench on fire, threw wine bottles at employees and rammed vehicles with his Tesla at a winery parking lot. He faces multiple felony charges.

His attorney filed an emergency motion on Dec. 16 asking the court to allow Beri's brother to access his phone to exercise options valued at more than \$1 million that were set to expire on Dec. 19. According to court records, Beri held a "substantial number" of call options that would have become worthless if they were not exercised by the expiration date.

A call option is a contract that grants the buyer the right to purchase an asset at an agreed upon price by a specific date. If the price of the asset rises above the agreed upon price, the buyer is able to turn a profit by buying the asset under face value.

Court records show the options were held in a Merrill Edge account secured by two-factor authentication, with access codes sent to Beri's phone. That phone was in the custody of the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office, preventing Beri from accessing the account. Some of the options were expiring the day of the motion, but Beri's attorney said it would be unlikely he would be able to exercise them in time.

Beri's brother flew to the Bay Area from India and hoped to be granted permission to sign into the account and exercise the options.

The Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office did not oppose the motion, and Judge Griffin Bonini granted it the same day it was filed.

"This is an unusual request, admittedly, but in fairness it should be granted," Beri's

attorney, David Callaway, told the court. "A defendant's arrest should not, unnecessarily, cause him to lose over \$1 million simply because he lacks access to his cellphone."

Callaway said a deputy district attorney reviewed and suggested edits to a draft of the motion before it was submitted.

Under the court order, the Sheriff's Office was directed to provide Beri's phone and laptop to his brother, who would be allowed to access the Merrill Edge account under supervision. The process was to be audio- and video-recorded by a representative of the District Attorney's Office.

Callaway declined to comment on whether the transaction was made successfully to protect the privacy of his client's transaction.

## Who is Beri?

Beri is the founder of BetterLYF Wellness, an online mental health startup, and an executive director of business development at a farm equipment manufacturer, according to the Daily Mail.

This news organization was



Courtesy Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office

Palo Alto resident Vikram Beri allegedly drove his Tesla into a ditch after attempting to light a winery on fire.

unable to verify his employment.

The Sheriff's Office initially described Beri as a Menlo Park resident, however, court records and Beri's attorney state that he lives in Palo Alto.

## New details of chaotic scene at winery

Newly obtained court records detail what happened before

Beri's arrest.

According to those records, at about 3:30 p.m. on Dec. 6, Beri was smoking near a doorway at Garrod Farms Estate & Stables when a winery owner asked him to move away from the entrance. Beri moved to his car, a 2026 Tesla Model Y, where

See BERI, page 9

# Portola Valley Hardware's 'Toys for Tots' drive collects record donations

Store, local donors team up with firefighters to brighten the season for families

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

It's been an annual tradition for the Portola Valley Hardware and Feed store to participate in the Toys for Tots Christmas drive but the amount of donations received this holiday season reached new heights. This year, local contracting company Blue J Construction donated nearly \$5,000 worth of toys.

Donations have grown modestly since Portola Valley Hardware started collecting toys in 2017, said Stig Nybo, co-owner of the store. Every year, the owners host a holiday

party in the parking lot inviting the community to drop off toys and buy toys from the hardware store to donate. This year, a hundred attendees enjoyed homemade eggnog, carolers and holiday cheer.

Neil Gomoluh, the owner of Blue J Construction, has been participating in the toy drive since 2023. He donated about \$300 worth of toys the first year but set a goal to collect more every following year. Last year, he got his construction crew involved and was able to give about \$900 in toys.

"I told the guys this year, I said my goal is to double it," said Gomoluh, not expecting to accomplish beyond his goal.

In preparation for the drive, Gomoluh started collecting toys around September, taking advantage of holiday sales and special deals to buy as many toys as possible. This year, he got his clients involved, encouraged them to donate and boosted total donations by hundreds of dollars, he said.

On the day of the party, Gomoluh drove up to the store with a truckload of toys.

whom came to live with them around the holidays. His parents would always make sure that every child under their roof had a present to open for Christmas.

"We were taught growing up that you have to always give and make sure you always give and be kind to others," he said.

Nybo and his business partner

Richard Crevelt took over the hardware store in 2017 and were inspired by the Woodside Fire Protection District's toy drive and decided to turn it into a more community-oriented gathering. Rather than having people drop off toys in a designated box, the hardware store wanted to create a space where they could generate toy donations and encourage people to participate.

On the evening of the party, people bring their own toys, but the hardware store also has a stock of its own that partygoers can purchase at a discounted price and contribute to the drive. Afterwards, the toys are handed off to the local firefighters who distribute the toys.

"Both Richard and I have a strong inclination to do well by doing good and that has always resonated with both of us," said Nybo. "So it's fun to see the community gather, have some fun and do some good for humanity." ■



Courtesy Stig Nybo  
Firefighters from the Woodside Fire Protection District pick up carts full of Toys for Tots donations collected during Portola Valley Hardware and Feed's holiday party.

## LEHUA GREENMAN



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

# What \$1 million (and under) gets you on the Midpeninsula

Condo in Menlo Park provides one example

By Linda Taaffe

The Midpeninsula is known for some of Silicon Valley's most distinctive real estate — from family wineries and historic estates to sleek modern retreats tucked into the hills. Most stand out for their design, history or eye-popping price tags.

This week, we're flipping the script. Instead of vineyards, home theaters or wine cellars, we're spotlighting a true rarity on the Peninsula: properties priced at \$1 million or less. There are few options at that level — or none at all in some towns and cities.

We take a look at six Midpeninsula listings at or under \$1 million to see what that budget actually buys in Palo Alto, Los Altos, Redwood City, Mountain View and East Palo Alto.

## Mountain View

### Double-wide mobile home near Castro Street

List price: \$265,000

This 7-year-old, move-in-ready double-wide mobile home in Mountain View features a 995-square-foot layout with large windows, two bedrooms and two full baths. An open-concept kitchen with quartz countertops anchors the combined family room and dining areas. Additional highlights include a laundry area with washer and dryer, ceiling



A move-in ready, double-wide home at this mobile home park in Mountain View is listed for \$265,000.

fans and a walk-in closet in the primary bedroom. The home is on a corner lot in Moffett Mobile Home Park, located walking distance from downtown, Caltrain and light rail.

## Menlo Park

### One-bedroom condo with fireplace, deck

List price: \$888,888

Built in 1965, this 821-square-foot, one-bedroom, one-bath condo in Menlo Park has been updated with designer finishes throughout. The home features an open floor plan with room to entertain and a large bedroom with space for a built-in desk area. Other features include a fireplace, a breakfast bar for more casual meals, marble tile in the bathroom and a

200-square-foot deck that overlooks lush gardens. The property includes a community pool, spa, fitness center, library and extra storage. The home is just one block from Burgess Park.

## Palo Alto

### Turn-key condo with balcony off Cal Ave.

List price: \$998,888

This updated, move-in ready condo offers 1,247 square feet in the heart of Palo Alto's Cal Ave neighborhood. The two-bedroom, two-bath home features new flooring, fresh interior paint, recessed lighting, updated fixtures and new quartz countertops and sinks throughout. The home includes two bedrooms connected by a Jack-and-Jill bathroom, a

Miele washer and dryer and a private balcony that overlooks a landscaped courtyard. Community amenities include a pool, hot tub, garden areas, bike racks, storage and gated parking. The complex is just steps off California Avenue and Caltrain.

## East Palo Alto

### Single-family home on spacious lot

List price: \$999,000

Built in 1982, this freshly painted four-bedroom, two-bathroom ranch-style home in East Palo Alto offers 1,490 square feet living space set on a 5,631-square-foot lot with a roomy driveway and space for a garden, patio or potential home expansion. The home features brand-new wood flooring throughout. "The generous lot size presents ample renovation potential ... The possibilities are wide open. Whether you're looking to move in as-is or transform it into your dream home, this property gives you the space and location to create something special," according to the sales listing.

## Redwood City

### .34-acre vacant lot

List price: \$999,000

Dotted with oaks and redwoods off Portola Road near the border of Portola Valley, this 0.34-acre parcel in Redwood City offers a rare blank slate for building a custom home amid

a wooded setting. The listing notes the property is priced to sell and presents a unique opportunity to expand: an adjacent 3.7-acre parcel is also available for \$2.5 million, allowing buyers to assemble a significantly larger estate if desired. Prospective buyers should be aware that construction will require completing the site studies, reports and permitting process mandated by the city before building can begin.

## Los Altos

### Condo with walk-in closet, fenced patio

List price: \$999,999

Built in 1972, this 960-square-foot turnkey condominium in Los Altos features two bedrooms, two baths and an open-concept kitchen outfitted with granite countertops, solid cherrywood cabinetry, a side-by-side refrigerator and a double oven with convection, microwave and warming drawer. The primary bedroom suite includes a walk-in closet and a double-sink vanity with granite counters and custom solid-wood cabinetry. Additional highlights include a fenced patio, full-size washer and dryer, double-paned windows, a designated storage closet, a covered carport and extra private parking. ■

Email Print & Lifestyle Editor  
Linda Taaffe at [ltaaffe@almanacnews.com](mailto:ltaaffe@almanacnews.com).

## BERI

continued from page 8

he continued to smoke, played loud music and remained on the property.

Beri later returned to the winery and began mixing wine in several glasses, adding fabric softener sheets to some of the glasses, according to court records. He then purchased a case of wine and left the property.

About 45 minutes later, a winery employee spotted Beri near a picnic table that was on fire, with wine bottles placed on top. The table was located near the horse training area, where Garrod Farms also operates stables and offers riding lessons to children and adults.

When the owner asked Beri to leave, Beri allegedly began dancing and chanting around the fire. After the owner extinguished the flames with a fire extinguisher, Beri became aggressive and threw wine bottles at winery staff.

A staff member then sprayed the fire extinguisher at Beri, according to the police report.

Beri then returned to his car and allegedly attempted to hit staff members and hit several other cars, including one with a winery patron in it who was uninjured. The owner then got into his work truck and drove into Beri's car to stop further damage. Beri accelerated and drove into a ditch.

Deputies arrived and ordered Beri to exit the vehicle, but he refused. Deputies requested assistance from the Mobile Crisis Response Team, which declined to respond due to Beri's erratic behavior.

In the motion seeking permission to exercise the stock options, Callaway suggested that Beri's actions stemmed from unspecified "mental health issues."

"Vikram's demeanor would change from calm to extremely irritated in an aggressive manner," one deputy wrote in a report.

After over an hour of Vikram refusing to leave the car, deputies fired pepperball rounds into Vikram's car but he still did not leave. Deputies launched pepperball rounds into his car at least seven times.

Approximately 27 minutes after the first pepperball rounds were deployed, Beri exited the

vehicle fully nude and was taken into custody, according to the report.

According to the police report, Beri was "rambling words incoherently," attempted to fight hospital employees and was sedated.

Beri was charged with nine felonies and one misdemeanor

including one count of attempted murder, four counts of felony assault with a deadly weapon (his vehicle) and one count of felony arson. He is being held without bond and his next hearing is scheduled for Jan. 20. ■

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

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Stanford University School of Medicine, Department of Dermatology

# Tutoring nonprofit makes strides in student literacy, math proficiency

Ravenswood Classroom Partners bridges gaps with school district, community volunteers

By Riley Cooke

In a typical third-grade classroom in the Ravenswood City School District, just one in every eight students is able to read proficiently for their grade level.

Ravenswood Classroom Partners is working to change that. The nonprofit, which is one of the recipients of Embarcadero Media Foundation's 2025 Holiday Fund program, trains dozens of community volunteers to tutor Ravenswood students in reading and math.

Angie Holman has been executive director of RCP for more than six years and is one of only two paid employees at the nonprofit.

"We try to reach kids in the youngest grade, because the district's big goal is to get as many students as they can reading proficiently by third grade," Holman said. "We also do some math support, less so because the district's primary academic goal focuses on literacy."

The more than 140 volunteers take up shifts once a week, some from as far away as Woodside, Portola Valley and even San Francisco, for a designated hour



Courtesy Irene Searles

A volunteer from Ravenswood Partners in Education is providing tutoring to local students.

of "intervention time" during the school day. Holman explained that students are grouped by grade level and academic need, and volunteers work with small groups at a time. Each school in the district has a designated

interventionist teacher who provides curriculum, guides the sessions and adjusts the groups as students advance.

"There's quite a bit of training needed to make sure our volunteers are doing the absolute

best they can to meet students' needs," Holman said. "Our relationship with the district is paramount. It's so important, and we're lucky ... They are wonderful partners for us."

For the youngest students who are 4 or 5 years old, the focus is mainly on letter-sound association, Holman said. The oldest students that receive help from RCP are sixth graders who work on fluency and more advanced reading. Some of the sixth graders form book clubs, Holman said, and discuss titles such as "Fantastic Mr. Fox" and "Esperanza Rising."

With the 2025 grant funding, Holman said RCP focused on expanding its programming and volunteer base.

"Every time we add a new curriculum, it requires more training, more reading materials and books and curriculum stuff," she said. "The funding really helped us with expanding our reach."

RCP wasn't always as intensive

academically. It used to primarily function as a reading program, where volunteers would join students one-on-one and read books together at the student's reading level. Holman described the program as "really sweet," but it did not make the strides in proficiency that they hoped for.

Under Holman's leadership, RCP changed its strategy in the past few years to improve reading and math proficiency for students — to great results. Holman said the district's goal is to have at least 30% of third graders reading at or above grade level. While only 12% meet that threshold currently, test scores have been trending upward in recent years.

RCP and the school district are also contending with a potential huge influx of students for the next academic year. That's due to the closure of The Primary School in East Palo Alto, which was founded by Priscilla Chan with support from her husband Mark Zuckerberg. Ravenswood anticipates as many as 350 additional students will need to transfer to the district — a 25% increase in enrollment.

Not only will the district need to expand teaching and classroom capacity, but so will RCP need to increase its volunteer base to meet demand.

But Holman is encouraged by the progress the nonprofit has already made in the last three years by transitioning to a more curriculum-heavy tutoring program.

"It's just another dose of the curriculum students need to become fluent readers," Holman said. "The students in the district are amazing, and they're eager to learn, but many of them come from home environments that are difficult to navigate." ■

Email Staff Writer Riley Cooke at [rcooke@almanacnews.com](mailto:rcooke@almanacnews.com).

**Menlo Park Yearly Market Report**  
January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025

**TOP 10 SALES**

1. \$10,500,000 1310 Bay Laurel Drive	2. \$10,200,000 1025 Continental Drive	3. \$10,175,000 1080 Creek Drive	4. \$9,500,000 1360 Garden Lane
5. \$9,425,000 890 Berkeley Avenue	6. \$9,250,000 24 Palm Court	7. \$9,000,000 455 San Mateo Drive	8. \$9,000,000 1265 Bay Laurel Drive
9. \$8,750,000 1205 Trinity Drive	10. \$8,700,000 520 Grace Drive		

**ACTIVE LISTING**  
Y25: 461  
Y24: 456  
↑ 1%

**PENDING LISTING**  
Y25: 352  
Y24: 342  
↑ 3%

**SOLD LISTING**  
Y25: 343  
Y24: 349  
↓ -2%

**AVERAGE SALES PRICE**  
Y25: \$3,492,660  
Y24: \$3,390,012  
↑ 3%

**AVERAGE SALES PRICE/SQ Ft**  
Y25: \$1,560  
Y24: \$1,491  
↑ 5%

**AVERAGE SOLD DAYS ON MARKET**  
Y25: 25  
Y24: 24  
↑ 4%

**MONTHS OF INVENTORY**  
Y25: 1.20  
Y24: 0.70  
↑ 71%

**SALE/LIST PRICE**  
Y25: 102.90%  
Y24: 103.30%  
↑ 0%

**30 YEAR MORTGAGE RATE**  
12/01/2024: 7.04%  
12/07/2025: 6.25%  
Source: Bankrate

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## OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

**Katie Clancy**, 81, of Palo Alto, who was born in Montreal, Canada, and moved to California, where she cared for the first adult heart transplant patients as an ICU nurse at Stanford Hospital and where she met her husband, Tom Clancy, who traveled the world with friends and family. She died on Dec. 7, 2025.

**Michael John Flynn**, 91, of Palo Alto, who co-founded

Palyn Associates in Saratoga and was a respected computer architect and who was a renowned professor at Stanford, and later transitioned to emeritus status after his retirement in 1999, and who received numerous awards for his impact on technical achievements, died on Dec. 24, 2025.

To read full obituaries, leave remembrances and post photos, go to [LastingMemories.com/obituaries](http://LastingMemories.com/obituaries). ■

## FOGARTY

continued from page 5

served as a professor of cardiovascular surgery at Stanford for about 14 years. "His inventions are still used ... millions of times a day," Wilson said.

He also spent 13 years as the director of cardiovascular surgery at Sequoia Hospital in Redwood City before returning to Stanford in 1993.

It was the first in a long list of Dr. Fogarty's medical device inventions, including a tissue heart valve and an aortic stent graft, which are credited with making surgeries safer, more cost-effective and more accessible.

In recognition of his numerous scientific contributions, Dr. Fogarty was awarded the Presidential Medal of Technology and Innovation by former President Barack Obama in 2012. He was also inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame and granted the Medical Design Lifetime Achievement Award, the Lemelson-MIT prize, and the Icon in Surgery Award from the American College of Surgeons.

He believed in empowering the next generation of health-care inventors and established Fogarty Innovation at El Camino Health in Mountain View to provide mentorship to others seeking to push the boundaries of medical technology.

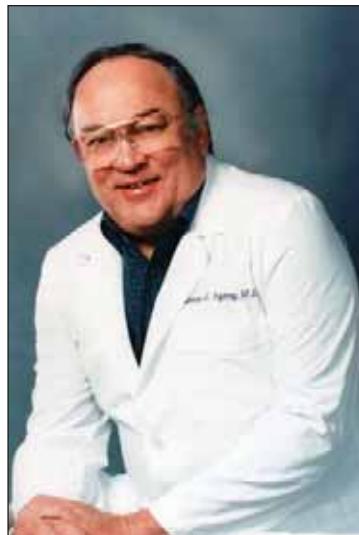
"Dr. Fogarty's career is a testament to a lifetime of dedication to improving patient care," Fogarty Innovation said in a statement announcing his death.

His support "meant everything to me," said Wilson, the founder of Intervene, a medical device company. Dr. Fogarty was Intervene's first major investor.

Dr. Fogarty's mentees, which Wilson dubbed the 'Fogarty entourage,' learned the importance of "paying forward this idea of mentorship," he said. "All the mentees of Fogarty have now become mentors to others."

Dr. Fogarty's influence on the medical community was not limited to his inventions. "He cared deeply for people," said his eldest son, Tom Fogarty Jr.

Even though his father was a highly esteemed professional, his dad didn't take himself too seriously and had a sharp sense of humor, Fogarty Jr. said. When he was a kid, he remembers driving with his father past another father and son flying model airplanes. Dr. Fogarty loved model planes, so he pulled over to watch, while explaining to his son how they worked. A local resident arrived soon after, upset that the model planes were creating a ruckus. A couple of days later, Dr. Fogarty bought model



Courtesy Thomas Fogarty Jr.

Dr. Thomas J. Fogarty is perhaps best known for creating the balloon catheter.

airplanes and passed them out to all of the neighbors in the community.

"He was a problem-solver for sure. He could be a problem creator, too," said Fogarty Jr.

In his free time, Dr. Fogarty loved fishing, hunting, and all things outdoors, which fueled another business venture, Thomas Fogarty Winery, in Woodside.

"He is unlike any person I kind of ever met," said Nathan Kandler, the general manager and winemaker at Fogarty Winery. "You see the word 'iconoclast' thrown around, and I think that's very true," but he was also "incredibly down-to-earth," he said. "In an era where a lot of people talk about greatness, he really did a lot of things that are gonna last and really actually benefit society."

Dr. Fogarty is survived by his wife, Rosalee; their four children, Thomas James Jr., Heather Brennan, Patrick Erin and Jonathan David; and 10 grandchildren. ■

Email Editorial Intern  
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**Ron Allee**  
1940 - October 28, 2025

Beloved Husband and Father Ron Allee passed away October 28, 2025 after a long and brave battle with neurological disease.

He was born on New Year's Day 1940 to parents Richard Allee and Alice Snyder. He and his sister Peggy were raised in Duluth, Minnesota.

Ron was a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Navy. His military career began with him flagging down landing aircraft on the flight deck of the U.S.S. Kearsarge aircraft carrier. He had stations in Hawaii, Guam, and Scotland.

He did work in the Naval Reserves as a Cryptologic Communications Technician for Office of Naval Intelligence.

In civilian life Ron worked as Manager of Service for Cole European Jaguar in San Mateo. He later managed the Service Department of Putnam Lexus Jaguar in Redwood City. Ron had the ability to fix almost anything and was always willing to help friends and family.

Ron married Roberta in 1976. They shared five children together from previous marriages and lived in Menlo Park for over 30 years.

Ron built beautiful model boats that he enjoyed running at Sharon Pond with friends, and occasionally at Golden Gate Park.

He loved spending time at the beach, picnics, Country Western music, and his cats.

He will be forever missed.

He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Roberta, his sister Peggy Molleur, sons Ronald Allee Jr. (Kim), Robert Allee, (Rebecca), Paul Allee, stepchildren Greg Stevens, (Lisa), Katie Evans, (Neal), and grandchildren Kathryn Evans, James Stevens, and Siena Stevens.

A private family service was held November 4.

PAID OBITUARY

## Robert Kenneth Burgess

August 29, 1957 - December 21, 2025

Widely respected and admired, Rob treasured deep and meaningful friendships and relationships across countless groups, communities, individuals, friends and family. He changed a room the moment he walked into it. A man with strong values and principles of kindness, generosity, a consideration of others, and a strong preference for direct communication, Rob has left us with an unforgettable legacy.

Rob passed away peacefully in his sleep at his home in Woodside, California, on the 21st of December, 2025. A lifelong learner, Rob attended The University of Western Ontario before transferring to McMaster University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce. Later in his life, the DeGroote School of Business awarded Rob with an Honorary Doctorate Degree.

"Rockin' Rob Burgess" grew up in the suburbs of Toronto. A go-getter from an early age, experience as a paper boy, youth camp counselor and waiter in the Keg Mansion (where he's proudly in the waiter Hall of Fame) shaped him before launching into the business world in Toronto. Eventually he moved to California to raise his family and lead a highly successful career as a technology executive.

He was a brave risk taker in life and business. Rob found his way to the world of computer graphics early in his career and flourished. His hard-charging energy and uncompromising candor, countered by his witty sense of humor, brought him to the top of the industry. He spent over a decade as an executive at Silicon Graphics in both Canada and the US, before leading public companies Alias Research and Macromedia as CEO. Rob was a leader that people followed because he had their backs as they had his. He built deep friendships with many people he worked with along this journey – embracing their success in both their personal and business lives.

After leading the acquisition of Macromedia by Adobe in 2005, Rob retired to raise his young family. First order of business: a yearlong trip around the world, after which he continued his career serving on a variety of boards including Adobe, Rogers Communications, and for the last 15 years, NVIDIA.

Throughout his life, Rob was deeply committed to youth development. He was a mentor, donor, and counselor to many programs and individuals over the years. Most recently, Rob was Chairman of the Board of The Boys and Girls Club of the Peninsula for over a decade where his contribution had a significant impact on the organization, and had a meaningful purpose for Rob. But Rob's greatest pride and accomplishment is his family. He is survived by his loving wife of 31 years, Jane; their three sons, Brock, Carter, and Riley; Rob's brother, John; and his sisters, Lynda and Susan.

Family and friends will mourn Rob's loss, but we are so lucky to have known him and are grateful for many special memories – his never-ending quest to be comfortable in his Birkenstocks and white socks on those glorious summer days at Camp Creebs in Muskoka, at his home in Woodside, and on the beaches in Cabo.

In the end, Rob rested his head on his pillow one last time. Content that his work here was done. Well, except for his beloved Toronto Maple Leafs. Even someone as special as Rob couldn't turn them around.

Rest in peace, Rob. And thank you. —

A Celebration of Rob's Life will be held on Saturday, January 31, 2026, in Menlo Park.

A second celebration will take place in Toronto in the spring, with details to be shared at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Boys & Girls Club of the Peninsula or a charity of your choice.



PAID OBITUARY



# Give back locally

## WITH A GIFT TO THE HOLIDAY FUND

Contributions to the Holiday Fund go directly to programs that benefit Peninsula residents. Last year, Almanac readers and foundations contributed a record \$366,000 from more than 150 donors for the 10 agencies that feed the hungry, house the homeless and provide numerous other services to those in need.

Contributions to the Holiday Fund will be matched, to the extent possible, by generous community organizations, foundations and individuals, including the Rotary Club of Menlo Park Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. No administrative costs will be deducted from the gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law. All donations to the Holiday Fund will be shared equally among the recipient agencies listed on this page.

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### **Boys & Girls Club of the Peninsula**

Provides after-school academic support, enrichment, mentoring and mental health services for low-income youth.

### **Ecumenical Hunger Program**

Provides emergency food, clothing and household essentials to individuals and families in need.

### **Fair Oaks Community Center**

Helps individuals and families meet their most basic needs, offering homeless services and prevention, food distribution, transportation, rental and utility assistance, shelter referrals, and emergency support.

### **Haven Family House**

Provides interim shelter services and transitional housing in Menlo Park for 23 homeless families with children.

### **Health Connected**

Provides teens and parents with comprehensive sexual health, relationship and digital literacy education programs through local schools.

### **Literacy Partners**

Supports literacy programs that help community members enhance their reading, writing and related skills.

### **Peninsula Food Runners**

Provides food and reduces food waste by picking up from restaurants, caterers and markets and delivering it to nonprofit organizations serving the needs of low-income individuals and families.

### **Ravenswood Family Health Center**

Provides primary medical and preventive health care for low income, uninsured residents of all ages living in Menlo Park, North Fair Oaks and East Palo Alto.

### **St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room**

Serves hot meals six days a week to people in need at its Menlo Park dining room, and provides food and clothing assistance.

### **St. Francis Center**

Helps low-income families become self-supporting through educational and after-school programs, housing assistance, food and clothing at its North Fair Oaks facility.

### **Upward Scholars**

Supports low-income adults by providing them with financial support, tutoring, and other assistance so they can continue their education and qualify for higher-paying jobs.

**DONATE ONLINE:** [AlmanacNews.com/holiday-fund](http://AlmanacNews.com/holiday-fund)



# The Almanac Holiday Fund

## THANK YOU FOR DONATING TO THE HOLIDAY FUND

### Almanac Holiday Fund Donor List

As of Jan. 6th, 136 donors have contributed \$196,181 to the Holiday Fund.

Anonymous.....	\$38,777	Maryann Chwalek.....	100	Don & Catherine Coluzzi.....	4,000
William Tagg.....	2,000	Linda Maki.....	200	Sybille Katz.....	200
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Bettina McAdoo.....	1,000	Cindy Newton & Fred Stanske.....	3,000	Jim Lewis.....	*
Elizabeth McDougall.....	200	Mary Pless.....	250	Erika & Andrea Crowley.....	1,000
Dianne Ellsworth.....	350	Roger Witte.....	50	Gisela Brugger.....	1,000
James Esposto.....	500	Lucy Reid-Krensky.....	200	Linda Golub.....	100
Leigh Flesher & Mark Bailey.....	2,000	Sally Hart.....	50	Mr Mrs Dan Hilberman.....	100
Betty Meissner.....	200	Margaret & James MacNiven.....	100	Barbara Jacobson.....	250
Connie & Robert Loarie.....	250	Michael & Leslie Crisp.....	*	Desmond Lee & Carl Jukkola.....	500
Marjorie Bridges.....	30	Narada Hess.....	75	Gary Shumm.....	500
Mary and Bob Dodge.....	250	Terry Lesser.....	250	<b>Businesses &amp; Organizations</b>	
Ken and Judy Kormanak.....	*	Kurt & Sue Jaggers.....	10,000	Packard Foundation.....	15,000
Bill & Ellie Haynes.....	*	Ellen & Jim Lussier.....	1,000	Hewlett Foundation.....	25,000
John & Lisa Walker.....	200	Sidney Chen & Sandra Lee Chen.....	*	Members of the Menlo Park Band.....	500
Bill & Nancy Ellsworth.....	*	Frank & Betsy Stockdale.....	*	Menlo Rotary Community Foundation.....	10,000
Judy & Doug Adams.....	300	Cynthia Dusel-Bacon & Charles R. Bacon.....	*	Griffin & Sons Construction.....	150
Barbara Kent.....	100	Laura Hofstadter & Leonard Shar.....	750	<b>In Memory Of</b>	
C & B Thompson.....	600	Barbara & Bob Ells.....	5,000	Gene Chaput.....	100
Kathleen Elkins.....	300	Donna & Marty Mackowski.....	250	Stephen F. Martin.....	5,000
Jane Morton and Michael Jacobs.....	250	Charles Schmuck.....	50	Ted Heidinger.....	750
Mark & Karen Weitzel.....	*	Mayling Dixon.....	*	John Pendleton.....	500
Robert Kastelein.....	*	Christina Huntzinger.....	*	Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard.....	1,000
Margaret Melaney.....	1,000	Joan Rubin.....	100	Robert Beresford Williams.....	200
Maggie Mark DaSilva.....	500	Greg and Penny Gallo.....	500	Alan Mendelson.....	*
Kayleen Miller.....	1,400	David Glendon.....	150	Dr. Ernest Wohler.....	509
Lennie Roberts.....	150	Joe and Julie Zier.....	*	Phil & Lucille Phaneuf.....	2,000
Bruce & Ann Willard.....	1,000	Dorothy S Axe.....	100	Jeff Schneiderman.....	500
Jerry & Bobbie Wagger.....	*	Austin Grose.....	500	<b>In Honor Of</b>	
Susan Kirtley.....	400	Lynne Fovinci.....	100	The Liggett Family.....	*
Lynne Young.....	2,500	Kenneth Turkowski.....	240	Nancy Stevens.....	*
Colleen Tate.....	5,000	Richard & Jean Duda.....	150		
Richard & Kim Zamboldi.....	*	Karen Butterfield.....	100		
Dennis Monohan.....	100				

\* Donor did not want to publish the amount of the gift.

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## NEWS



Courtesy County of San Mateo

Supervisor Noelia Corzo, center left, takes the oath of office to be president of the Board of Supervisors for 2026, read by her partner, Justin Terry, a Marine Corps veteran. Corzo is flanked by her parents, Aura Solorzano and Hugo Corzo. Corzo's son, Mikey Alvarado-Corzo, stands beside Terry, on the far right.

## Corzo leads county supervisors for 2026

She is the first indigenous and Latina woman to head the board

By Miranda de Moraes

San Mateo County began the year with a peaceful transfer of power on Jan. 6, as Supervisor Noelia Corzo was sworn in as president of the Board of Supervisors.

As the first indigenous and Latina woman to serve as board president, Corzo intends to prioritize "shared prosperity" and equity, among other goals.

"We have more billionaires in the Bay Area and in our county than anywhere else," the 35-year-old supervisor said on the dais. "We all deserve to share in the benefits of the prosperity that exists in our community."

The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved Corzo as president and Supervisor Ray Mueller as vice president, following the board's system that rotates leadership roles annually by supervisorial district. The board oversees a \$5.5 billion annual budget that affects residents from Daly City to East Palo Alto, the Pacific Coast to San Francisco Bay.

Corzo shed a few tears following a ceremony conducted by the Native and Indigenous People Initiative in the chambers at around 10 a.m. Tuesday, calling the moment "meaningful" as a descendant of Mayan ancestry. She then shared the "untold stories of the matriarchs in her family," who she said have continually inspired her, including through her proudest accomplishment: independently raising her son after becoming a parent at age 20.

Her now 14-year-old son, Mikey Alvarado-Corzo, stood by as the District 2 supervisor

took the oath of office beside her mother, Aura Solorzano, and her father, Hugo Corzo. Her partner, Justin Terry, a Marine Corps veteran, read it aloud.

Corzo intends to focus on issues such as establishing a human rights commission and increasing LGBTQIA+ representation in the county. She said she wants to expand data transparency and trust, and boost fiscal stability. Additionally, she said she wanted to support local working-class families, some of whom must pay over 30% of their income "just to have a roof over their heads," or pay "exorbitant amounts of money" for food and child care.

"That should not be the norm in the United States, that should not be the norm in California, that should not be the norm in San Mateo County," the District 2 supervisor said.

In gratitude for former Board President David Canepa's tenure, Corzo gave him a bouquet on behalf of the board and said, "I think men deserve flowers as well." She was later handed a bouquet and showered with hugs and applause following the transition.

"I can confidently say now that I have more than earned my keep in this role," Corzo said. "While we can't solve every issue, it is both our honor and our responsibility to listen, to care and to help as much as possible."

The system for board leadership appointments was updated in 2023, County Attorney John Nibbelin said at the board's Tuesday meeting. Before 2023, continuing and re-elected board

See **CORZO**, page 16

**HOUSING PROPOSALS***continued from page 1*

on lots 1 and 2, plus five stories of residential and one story of ground-level resident parking on parts of lot 3.

Presidio Bay's proposal also includes two public parks, a few retail spaces and a common room for residents.

While the total cost of the parking garage would be \$33.3 million, Presidio Bay floated the idea that at least some of the parking structure could be funded by an expected contribution to the city as part of its future USGS development. It estimated that the city would need to put up \$15 million towards the parking garage development in addition to using \$10 million from Presidio Bay's anticipated community benefit contribution when it redevelops the 17-acre USGS campus.

If city officials are open to Presidio Bay retaining ownership and management of the parking garage and allowing a paid parking program, the developer could tap into additional private financing, reducing the amount of Menlo Park's



Courtesy Presidio Bay Ventures

A map of the downtown Menlo Park city-owned parking lots that may be used for housing development.

financial contribution.

Aside from the parking garage, Presidio Bay would build 101 public parking spaces and 258 residential parking spaces.

In total, Presidio Bay's plan is estimated to cost \$240.5 million for both residential and parking construction (excluding the

parking garage) at no cost to the city. If the city also wants the six-story parking garage, the total project cost will increase by \$33.3 million.

**Alliant Communities**

Alliant Communities is an affordable housing developer which previously won approval in Menlo Park to build 88 affordable housing units prioritized for teachers and school district staff after defeating a ballot measure that hoped to quash the project.

Unlike Presidio Bay, Alliant Communities said it could build all 556 replacement spaces without needing any city funding. Instead of a multi-level garage, parking spaces would be located on the ground floor of all buildings, with two additional levels of parking on sites 1 and 3.

Alliant's plan also includes 348 long-term bike parking spaces and 113 residential parking spaces.

Alliant said it would be able to build 345 affordable housing units in a mix of unit sizes and affordability levels: 103 studios, 76 one-bedrooms, 90 two-bedrooms and 76 three-bedroom units.

Of those, 140 units will be affordable to people earning 30% of the AMI, 51 units for people making 50% AMI, six units for 60% AMI and 143 for people making 80% of the AMI. Five units would be reserved for property managers.

In total, the project is estimated to cost almost \$306 million. Once the units are rented, Alliant estimates it will bring in nearly \$9 million annually in rent. Alliant also expects \$42,800 in laundry room income, since none of the apartments will have in-unit washer-dryer units.

**Alta Housing and Related California**

Alta Housing, a Palo Alto-based affordable housing operator, partnered with Related California, a mixed-use and affordable housing developer that has built more than 21,000 housing units in the state, to submit a proposal that includes both affordable and market-rate housing.

Alta and Related were the only developers to propose significantly more housing than the city requested. It proposed building 346 affordable

apartments and 154 market rate units. The only other proposal with market-rate apartments included was Presidio Bay, which didn't hit the city's target number for affordable units.

Of Alta and Related's 346 affordable units, 126 would be reserved for seniors.

The proposal also went beyond the parking requirement by proposing 574 public parking spaces in a garage on Lot 3 in addition to 253 spaces for residents. Of the residential parking, 185 would be reserved for the 154 market rate units and the other 68 parking spaces for the 346 BMR units.

However, Alta and Related have yet to figure out how to fund the parking garage and say they need to have further discussions with city officials. One option they suggested is a bond backed by the city, since municipal bonds offer lower interest rates. In total, the proposal estimates the parking garage could cost nearly \$63 million. Alta and Related say they may be able to contribute between \$5 million and \$10 million to construction of the garage.

The developers said they aim to build the parking garage first, so downtown Menlo Park business patrons will have a place to park during construction.

As for size of the buildings, Lot 1 calls for a seven-story and an eight-story building, seven stories on Lot 2 and a nine-story building on lot 3, plus the parking garage.

Before sending the RFP, some Menlo Park City Council members were concerned that developers may be making unrealistic claims about their ability to fund the replacing parking. The council will discuss the proposals in-depth later this month. ■

**COMMUNITY BRIEFS****Volunteer opportunity at Huddart Park**

Grassroots Ecology and San Mateo County Parks are partnering in a community project to remove invasive French broom, a woody invasive plant. The public is invited to volunteer in this restoration effort from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 11, at Huddart Park in Woodside.

Volunteers will be hiking on uneven and steep terrain, kneeling, squatting and standing as they pull plants. Supplies will be provided.

All attendees must register and sign an online waiver. Youth under the age of 18 must have a legal guardian approve the waiver before participating.

For more information visit [grassrootsecology.org/event-calendar/2026/01/11/volunteer-in-woodside-huddart-park](http://grassrootsecology.org/event-calendar/2026/01/11/volunteer-in-woodside-huddart-park).

**Styrofoam recycling drive**

Ladera Community Church in Portola Valley is hosting a styrofoam recycling drive from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Jan. 8-10. The church is only accepting clean, white and rigid styrofoam blocks, bubblewrap and packing pouches.

On Jan. 11, the church welcomes the community to join them in loading the collected styrofoam into a truck. Volunteers will be meeting at 10:30 a.m. for coffee and treats before the work begins at 11 a.m.

For more information visit [ladera.org/event](http://ladera.org/event).

**Short story contest for local youth**

The San Mateo County Libraries is accepting short story submissions from eighth through 12th graders for its annual Young Adult Novelists Convention. This year's theme is "Fantasy vs. Reality: Escape into Fiction." Students must reside or attend a school in the county.

Submission must be 500 words or less and can be in any genre as long as it incorporates the theme. All submissions are due by Friday, Jan. 23. Winners will be announced at the YANovCon on Feb. 28 at the Belmont Public Library.

For more information visit <https://bit.ly/4iXS3si>.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

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Courtesy Alliant Communities

A rendering of what Alliant Communities' development would look like.

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

# California homeowners could qualify for grants for new roofs and fire safety improvements

By CalMatters

Some homeowners in areas of California with high wildfire risk could eventually get money for new roofs or to build fire-resistant zones around their properties under a new state law that went into effect on Jan. 1.

The Safe Homes grant program is designed to help low- and middle-income homeowners with fire mitigation. People who qualify could use grants to create 5-foot ember-resistant zones around properties, also known as Zone Zero, as required by law in some areas. The program will also contribute

toward costs for fire-safe roofs. The state's Insurance Department, which is responsible for implementing the program, is working out the details around eligibility, the amount of and the distribution of grants. It is now developing an application portal that it hopes to have ready by March, said Michael Soller, spokesperson for the department.

The insurance department will be handling all the details of the grants, said Mike Dayton, chief of staff of Assemblymember Lisa Calderon, the Los Angeles-area Democrat and chair of the Assembly Insurance Committee who wrote the law, and has so

far secured \$3 million in the state budget to get the program started.

Soller said homeowners who have policies with admitted insurance carriers or the last-resort FAIR Plan and who live in high-risk areas will have to meet income limits set by the state housing department to be eligible for the grants, whose amounts have not been determined. Communities, cities and counties with mitigation projects could also apply for grants.

He also said the insurance department plans to advocate for additional and ongoing funding for the program.

Another source of funding

could be the federal government, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Soller said. But Gov. Gavin Newsom recently tried to meet with FEMA to talk about disaster aid related to the Los Angeles County fires and was unsuccessful.

Also, two Californians in Congress have proposed legislation that would establish a federal grant program and tax credits for mitigation. U.S. Reps. Mike Thompson, a Napa Democrat, and the late Doug LaMalfa, an Oroville Republican, have introduced their bill for the past two sessions, but it has not made it to a floor vote.

The California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection recently extended the finalization of rules regarding Zone Zero buffers around properties to the first half of next year. The rules are expected to take effect for existing homes in 2029. ■

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## Public Notices

TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY NOTICE OF PROPOSED ADOPTION ORDINANCE SUMMARY  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026 AT 7:00 P.M.  
ORDINANCE NO. 2025-454 ORDINANCE  
OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF  
PORTOLA VALLEY Repealing and Replacing  
Chapter 15.04 [Building Code] of Title 15  
[Buildings and Construction] of the Portola  
Valley Municipal Code Adopting By Reference  
the 2025 California Administrative,  
Building, Residential, Electrical, Mechanical,  
Plumbing, Energy, Wildland-Urban Interface,  
Historical, Fire, Existing Building, Green Building  
Standards, and Referenced Standards  
Codes with Local Amendments

On November 12, 2025, the Town Council introduced an Ordinance which will repeal and replace Chapter 15.04 of Title 15 [Buildings and Construction] of the Municipal Code and adopt by reference the 2025 California Building Standards Code. The Town triennially amends Chapter 15.04 of the Municipal Code to incorporate the most recent edition of the model building code that has been adopted by the California Building Standards Commission.

The Council will consider the adoption of said Ordinance at its regularly scheduled meeting of January 14, 2026 at 7 PM. The full text of the Ordinance is available for review at the Town Clerk's Office, 765 Portola Road, Valley, CA and on the Town's website of [www.portolavalley.net/government](http://www.portolavalley.net/government). The meeting will take place at the Historic Schoolhouse, 765 Portola Rd, Portola Valley, CA; and may be accessed virtually. Comments may be submitted in writing prior to the Town Council meeting; email: [PTTown-Clerk@portolavalley.net](mailto:PTTown-Clerk@portolavalley.net), or at the meeting of Wednesday, January 14, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Town Council at the time and place herein above mentioned. The Town's website is [www.portolavalley.net](http://www.portolavalley.net). The agenda and staff report will be published at <https://www.portolavalley.net/town-government/town-council/minutes-and-agendas> 72 hours in advance of the meeting.

Published: January 9, 2026  
Veronica Dao, Town Clerk, Portola Valley  
1/9/26  
CNS-3997721#  
THE ALMANAC  
(ALM Jan 9, 2026)

TOP METAL DESIGNS, INC  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-302362  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) TOP METAL DESIGNS, INC, located at 831 Sweeney Ave Unit H, Redwood City, CA 94063.  
Registered owner(s):  
TRANQUILINO CEJA  
831 Sweeney Ave, Unit H  
Redwood City, CA 94063

State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 08/05/2004.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 08, 2025.  
(ALM Dec 19, 2025, Jan 2, 9 and 16, 2026)

BLUEBIRD EDUCATIONAL CONSULTING  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-302490  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) BLUEBIRD EDUCATIONAL CONSULTING, located at 2560 Sherborne Drive, Belmont, CA 94002.  
Registered owner(s):  
ELIZABETH HARVEY-GUEDES  
2560 Sherborne Drive  
Belmont, CA 94002  
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 December 24, 2025.  
(ALM Jan 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2026)

EMILY JOUBERT  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-302419  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) EMILY JOUBERT, located at 818 Charter Street, Redwood City, CA 94063.  
Registered owner(s):  
IN ANY EVENT, INC.  
818 Charter Street  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 04/30/2004.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 15, 2025.  
(ALM Jan 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2026)

CASPIAN SOLUTION  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: FBN:721758  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) CASPIAN SOLUTION, located at 2047 Foxworthy ave, San Jose, CA, 95124.  
Registered owner(s):  
SHIVA ADLI  
2047 Foxworthy Ave  
San Jose, CA 95124  
This business is conducted by: an individual.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/15/2025.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 02, 2025.  
(ALM Jan 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2026)

HUSH LINE  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-302341  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) HUSH LINE, located at 1025 Alameda de las Pulgas, Ste 708, Belmont, CA 94002.  
Registered owner(s):  
SCIENCE & DESIGN, INC.  
1025 Alameda de las Pulgas, Ste 708  
Belmont, CA 94002  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 22, 2025.  
(ALM Jan 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2026)

X DRIVE  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-3022422  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) X DRIVE, located at 1383 Laurel Street, San Carlos, CA 94070.  
Registered owner(s):  
NADER HADIZADEH RAEISSI  
1383 Laurel Street  
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 November 20, 2025.  
(ALM Dec 12, 19, 2025, Jan 2 and 9, 2026)

MI SECOND CASA  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-302388  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) MI SECOND CASA, located at 847 N San Mateo Dr, San Mateo, CA 94401.  
Registered owner(s):  
MI SECOND CASA SPANISH IMMERSION  
PRESCHOOLS, INC  
847 N San Mateo Dr  
San Mateo, CA 94401  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 11/10/2025.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on December 10, 2025.  
(ALM Dec 19, 2025, Jan 2, 9 and 16, 2026)

REPOSADO  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-302483  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:

1.) REPOSADO, located at 311 Baldwin Ave, San Mateo, CA 94401.  
Registered owner(s):  
ROBERT SCOTT FISCHER  
311 Baldwin Ave  
San Mateo, CA 94401  
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 December 22, 2025.  
(ALM Jan 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2026)

SUMMONS  
(CITACION JUDICIAL)  
CASE NUMBER: 25CV123745  
(Numero del Caso)  
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:  
(AVISO AL DEMANDADO): MATTHEW  
PEREIRA, an individual and known heir  
of ELMER PEREIRA aka ELMER PEREIRA,  
JR. (DOE7)

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY  
PLAINTIFF: NISSA QUANSTROM  
(LO ESTÁ DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE)  
NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.  
You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center ([www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp)), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site ([www.lawhelpcalifornia.org](http://www.lawhelpcalifornia.org)), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center ([www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp)), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The Court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case. ¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su versión. Lea la información a continuación.  
Tiene 30 DÍAS CALENDARIO después de que

la entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y más información en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California ([www.sucorte.ca.gov](http://www.sucorte.ca.gov)), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede más cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podrá quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin más advertencia.

Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remisión a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services, ([www.lawhelpcalifornia.org](http://www.lawhelpcalifornia.org)), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California, ([www.sucorte.ca.gov](http://www.sucorte.ca.gov)) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. AVISO: Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos exentos por imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperación de \$10,000 o más de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda deschar el caso.

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y dirección de la corte es):

**Superior Court of California, County of Alameda 1225 Fallon St. Oakland, California 94612**

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la dirección y el número de teléfono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):

NAME: Gina Arico-Smith

ADDRESS: 2999 Oak Road, #550, Walnut Creek, CA 94597

SBN: 139645

Tel: 925-817-3715

Fax: 925-930-9588

DATE: 05/19/2022

(Fecha)

Clerk (secretario)

By: Chad Finke

Deputy (Adjunto)

By: M. Cortez

(ALM Jan 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2026)

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[AlmanacNews.com/legal\\_notices/](http://AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/)



## BELLE HAVEN

*continued from page 1*

solar panels on site," said Eger.

The district was also able to reduce water usage on campus by millions of gallons by installing turf across school grounds, he added.

Almost everything is brand new. During a tour of the campus, Eger explained that every classroom has new walls, lights, roofing, sound insulation, ventilation systems and

speakers. After years of sharing space with the city's Belle Haven branch library, the school now has its own dedicated library space again. The branch library moved into the Belle Haven Community Center in 2024.

New classrooms also were intentionally designed to benefit the health and wellness of students. Eger pointed out how classrooms have larger windows that face the school's courtyard and allow for more natural light. Studies have found that adding

more green space on campus has enhanced student wellbeing and academic performance.

On the other side of classrooms, the walls are tall and windows are placed up high, shielding students' eyes from the distraction of recess, people using the gym and friends on the playground, said Eger. The high windows also deter potential break-ins, he explained.

"This reopening celebrates a vibrant community enriched by many cultures, languages



Photos by Seeger Gray

Above: Students walk through Belle Haven Elementary in Menlo Park on Jan. 6. Left: Students greet each other before the school day starts.

and lived experiences and a firm belief that every child deserves to learn in an environment where they are seen, valued and empowered," said San Mateo County Supervisor Lisa Gauthier, who was among the community members, local officials and district board members at the grand opening.

The renovation was funded by Measure I, which voters passed in 2022. The bond authorized an \$110 million in new bond spending to renovate the three elementary schools across the district.

"In order for our children to be able to compete in Silicon Valley, they have to have the right foundation," said Gauthier. "Teachers are already doing the work, but they have to have the skills and the resources they need to be able to survive."

Menlo Park City Councilmember Cecilia Taylor, a former student of Belle Haven, commended the district's leaders in making positive change happen for the community of Menlo Park and East Palo Alto.

Superintendent Gina Sudaria recalled the first time she stepped foot onto Belle Haven's campus when she started her teaching career in 1998. Cabinets were falling apart, she said.

"What we're building is not only the foundation for future generations to come but we are

also going to put Ravenswood on the map because of the work we're doing on the inside and out," Sudaria added.

Over the last few years, the district has been successful in navigating the renovation of multiple schools. In February, the \$4.2 million Los Robles football field will be completed and open in time for the Super Bowl, Eger said. Costaño Elementary School is currently in its design phase with plans to begin a two- to three-year construction process at the start of the 2026-27 school year. The renovated district office is slated to be completed in September.

As Belle Haven students settle into their new classrooms, construction continues for the school's new gym and field. Eger said district officials hope the final portion of the project will be completed by fall 2026.

With concerns about construction inflation, the district wanted to ensure that taxpayer dollars were being used efficiently, meaning there was a "huge sense of urgency," Eger said.

"We don't have a lot of money and so what we have to do is go as fast as we can to make sure that every dollar gets the most bang for the buck. We've been hustling," he said. ■

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



## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the **Atherton City Council** will hold a public hearing to consider the first reading of an **Inclusionary Housing Ordinance** at their regular meeting.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that said item is set for hearing by the City Council at its meeting on **January 21, 2026, at 6:00 PM** in-person and via teleconference accessible through the information provided below, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the projects listed in the public hearing section should or should not be approved. This meeting will be held via teleconference pursuant to Government Code section 54953(e) to provide the safest environment for staff and the public while allowing for public participation. The public may participate in the City Council Meeting via Zoom Meeting or by attending in-person in the Council Chambers at 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027.

**Topic:** Atherton City Council Regular Meeting

**Time:** January 21, 2026, 06:00 PM Pacific Time

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

**Zoom Meeting Option and Details:**

<https://ci-atherton-ca.zoom.us/j/506897786>

**Meeting ID:** 506 897 786

**Remote Public Comments:** Meeting participants are encouraged to submit public comments in writing in advance of the meeting. The following emails will be monitored during the meeting and public comments received will be read into the record.

**Email:** [citycouncil@ci.atherton.ca.us](mailto:citycouncil@ci.atherton.ca.us)

### Description:

Consideration of **amendments to the Atherton Municipal Code (AMC) to adopt an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance**. In the adopted and state-certified 2023-2031 Atherton Housing Element, the Town indicated that it would pursue an inclusionary housing program that would require proposed multifamily developments to provide 20 percent of the units at income levels that meet specific affordability levels. The proposed ordinance will pursue that objective. Additional information on the Town's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance is available on the Town's website at: <https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/677/Inclusionary-Housing-Ordinance>

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

The agenda for this meeting with links to related staff reports can be found online by **Friday, January 16, 2026**, here: <https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/641/Agendas-Minutes>

City Council decisions are final on the date of the decision and may not be further appealed.

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

ATHERTON CITY COUNCIL  
s/ Brittany Bendix  
Brittany Bendix, Consulting Town Planner

## CORZO

*continued from page 13*

members were prioritized on the rotation list ahead of newly elected and appointed members. Starting in 2024, the system was simplified to correspond with district rotations.

Corzo served as the board vice president in 2025, so it was her turn to be appointed president in 2026. Per this system, Supervisor Ray Mueller was promoted to board vice president for the year and is

expected to serve as president next. Supervisor Jackie Speier is next in line for vice president in 2027.

"I am deeply committed to serving every single one of our neighbors whether you share my beliefs or not, whether we look the same or not, whether we speak the same languages or not," Corzo concluded. "We represent all of you." ■

*Email Staff Writer  
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mdemoraes@almanacnews.com.*

## Jewish center committed to increasing the light

Menorah lighting was a first of its kind

### GUEST OPINION

I've heard it and said it so many times, especially around Hanukkah: A little bit of light dispels far more darkness, and even a small good deed can dispel much more evil. Thankfully, this idea associated with the power of the menorah, the candles lit for eight nights in a row to celebrate the holiday, has typically remained theoretical for me. We are blessed to live in a time of safety and abundance, keeping darkness and evil relatively distant.

This year, the lead-up to Hanukkah was very dark, and evil had raised its ugly head. Hours before we were scheduled to host a menorah lighting a Hanukkah celebration in Menlo Park, two gunmen attacked a similar event in Bondi Beach, leaving 15 victims dead and the entire world shaking. My cousin had been at the event, where he shielded his young daughter as gunfire rang out around them.

Helplessness, anger and disbelief were the natural reactions. How could the festival of light be almost extinguished, snuffed out by a hail of gunfire? There

were so many questions, but I could only think of one answer. We had to carry on with our planned Hanukkah event.

After all, Hanukkah is a holiday that celebrates resilience. It commemorates the actions of a few brave Jews — known as the Maccabees — who stood up to a stronger invading force in ancient times, driving them out despite the odds. If there is a time for pushing doubts to the side, Hanukkah is that time.

The menorah lighting was to be the first of its kind for Menlo Park, as is Menlo Chabad, Menlo Park's first Jewish center. My wife Esty and I founded it a little more than a year ago. Thankfully, the spirit of the Maccabees shined through. Families with small children, senior citizens and young



Rabbi David Geisinsky

adults, both those with Jewish backgrounds and those from other faiths, filled the park to show support, watch the ceremony, and grabbed a Hanukkah treat. All in all, more than 200 people turned out, making it Menlo Park's biggest Jewish event ever. We were also pleased to welcome Menlo Park Police Chief David Norris and his wife, Nicole, who lit the menorah, using the shamash, or the helper candle, which was lit by Todd and Carol Maybach.

To me, the event was a testament both to Menlo Park's growing Jewish community and to the supremacy of light over darkness, good over evil. But most importantly, I witnessed the need to increase in good when faced with a challenge. The only response to negativity is to surge forward with more positivity, despite the question that can be overwhelming. ■

*Rabbi Dovid Geisinsky is the co-director of Menlo Chabad. For more info, email [info@menlochabad.com](mailto:info@menlochabad.com) or visit [menlochabad.com](http://menlochabad.com).*

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Letters should be no longer than 300 words.

You can also submit a longer piece of 450 to 600 words for consideration to publish as a guest opinion column.

Questions? Email [editor@AlmanacNews.com](mailto:editor@AlmanacNews.com), or call 650-223-6537.

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**Peninsula Foodist**

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*Adrienne*  
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# Artscene

PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## A one-woman 'collective'

Artist Shahzia Sikander explores feminism, religion through a variety of media in Cantor Arts Center show

By Mette Huberman

The breadth and depth of Shahzia Sikander's art is astounding. As a Pakistani-American artist, she covers artistic themes such as feminism, religion and colonialism with methods as varied as miniature painting, glass mosaic, bronze sculpture and digital animation. A current exhibit at the Cantor Arts Center shows numerous artworks spanning over 30 years of her career, the most significant solo show of an Asian American artist associated with Stanford University's Asian American Art Initiative.

The exhibit, "Shahzia Sikander: Collective Behavior," premiered in 2024 at the 60th anniversary of the Venice Biennale, the prestigious international contemporary art exhibition. It was co-organized by the Cincinnati Art Museum and

the Cleveland Museum of Art, where it showed early in 2025 before moving to the Cantor Arts Center last fall. The Cantor is the exhibit's only West Coast venue.

Aleesa Pitchamarn Alexander, the Cantor Arts Center's associate curator of Modern and Contemporary Art and its Asian American Art Initiative co-founder and co-director, curated the exhibit for the Cantor. She said that the name of the exhibit, "Shahzia Sikander: Collective Behavior," refers to various themes in Sikander's artmaking.

One theme is Sikander's focus on women in her art. "I think it's a kind of reference of the collecting of these female forms and looking at their collective behavior across time in her practice," noted Alexander.

Another theme is her collaboration with other artists:

"Shahzia is a very collaborative artist ... that's really crucial to her practice, so it's kind of like a collective coming together to make her work and to make the show."

### An early portrait

Sikander has an impressive résumé. Born in Lahore, Pakistan, in 1969, Sikander received her bachelor of Fine Arts from the National College of Arts in Lahore in 1991. She became the first woman to teach in the college's Miniature Painting Department and moved to the United States in the mid-'90s to get her master of Fine Arts at Rhode Island School of Design.

Since receiving her MFA, she has lived in the United States, mainly in New York, and has received numerous fellowships and awards, including the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship "Genius" Award in 2006 and the Pollock Prize for Creativity from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation in 2023. She has also exhibited her art in museums and galleries across the world, including the United States, Europe, Australia and Asia.

Sikander dedicated the "Collective Behavior" exhibit to her father, who died in 2021. Next to a pencil-drawn portrait of him named "Abba" from 1987-88, the label text reads: "Sikander Rashid Ahmed (1936-2021), in memory of his unconditional love. He remains her source of resilience and insight to this day."

Alexander said, "It's a very tender, delicate drawing and it also shows how adept she already was as a draft person at that early age (18-19), and drawing really is at the center of Shahzia's practice."

### A feminist lens

In addition to drawing, miniature painting forms the basis of Sikander's art, which originates in historic illustrated manuscripts in Indo Persia. These are detailed and colorful narrative book illustrations, often focused on courtly and royal themes with stylized settings and figures — mostly men.



The 2011 painting "Walled States" blends maps of the United States and of the medieval Islamic-era trading port of Julfar into an abstract work that comments on colonialism and the oil industry.



Mette Huberman

Figures representing East and West are entwined but look past each other in Shahzia Sikander's bronze sculpture "Promiscuous Intimacies."

Sikander has been a leader in the contemporary reinvention of manuscript painting by expanding the forms and themes of the genre. She has experimented with scale in these pieces and also animated her work.

She has also created miniature works through a feminist lens.

Starting with her bachelor of Fine Arts thesis project in 1989, "The Scroll," she used miniature painting techniques to illustrate her life as an adolescent in Pakistan, growing up during a military dictatorship that limited women's rights.

The scroll is more than 5 feet long, which is unusual for a typical miniature book illustration, and the story takes place across time and space. We see a young woman in a home setting, living among family members, servants and pets. At the right side of the scroll, the young woman paints a self-portrait, illustrating that she has become an artist and taken her destiny into her own hands, literally, in spite of conservative social attitudes toward women at the time.

A piece that's also in grand scale, but made with a very different medium is an 8-foot-tall sculpture called "NOW" from 2023. Located in the entrance hall, it is the first artwork that greets the visitor at the Cantor Arts Center. Made of patinated (aged) bronze, it shows a large female form with tentacles instead of feet, a lotus base and hair shaped into ram's horns.

The tentacles represent a self-rooted female who transcends geography, culture, religion and time. The lotus symbolizes wisdom in Hindu iconography as a pedestal for deities.

The sculpture also has a decorative collar motif associated with the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The piece was initially installed on top of the New York State Supreme Court building in Manhattan.

Alexander noted that the title "NOW" is like a reference to the immediacy of our moment and having a kind of monumental iconic female form as something we need right now... (a) very powerful female form, kind of standing guard." Alexander further explained that, "the face of the figure is a sort of self-portrait of Shahzia."

Highlighting female power in a different way is "Infinite Woman" in the main exhibition gallery on the second floor. It is a painting with watercolor, ink, gouache and gold leaf on paper and it shows a large sphere with a repeated set of colorful female bodies in profile circling the globe and resembling spikes. Inside the sphere are gold leaves and individual dark, flowing hairs, which represent gopis, female cowherds and devoted followers of Lord Krishna in Hinduism, as well as female energy and strength.

According to Alexander, the

See **SHAHZIA SIKANDER**, page 20



Shahzia Sikander used a repetition of the female form in the painting "Infinite Woman" to create an image that resembles both a planet and a cell.

### SHAHZIA SIKANDER

*continued from page 19*

painting looks either "like a giant planet out in the universe or it looks like a virus or a cell form, and she's kind of doing that deliberately." The women "become this kind of armor on this planet ... but they're all connected and attached to it via their head." Sikander is quoted on the label: "I see universal movement inherent in women, through their fertility, fecundity, their essence of being."

"Liquid Light II" is a colorful work made of painted, etched, and laminated glass. Sikander created this piece for the Venice Biennale, with the medium a nod to Venice's history of glass-making. It shows two females facing each other with similar features as the "NOW" sculpture: tentacles attached to their feet and standing on a lotus base. The arms look like wings, and Alexander noted that it makes the women look like a "butterfly form."

### East and West

Sikander was working on a mural commission for a New York law firm in 2001. The piece depicted women and law through a non-Western lens. The painting, "A Slight and Pleasing Dislocation II," shows part of this mural, which she discontinued after the 9/11 attacks. It portrays a brown female form with multiple arms wielding various weapons, a reference to the Hindu warrior goddess Durga ready for battle. However, it was perceived as violent because of the sword-wielding figure.

On the label for the painting, Sikander reflects on the New York art scene before and after 9/11: from an integrated, global and inclusive art scene to a siloed art scene where artists were defined by their race, nationality and religion. Alexander commented that, "she was reduced to being seen as a threat as a brown person, as an immigrant, and as a Muslim," but that the painting is "amazingly

powerful in its unfinished state."

Another artwork commenting on East/West differences is the 2020 sculpture "Promiscuous Intimacies." It portrays, in patinated bronze, a Hindu goddess sitting on the shoulder of a Greco-Roman Venus, "playing with traditional power hierarchies," as the label notes. Alexander said, "their gaze never meets and their bodies are tangled together in this kind of power balance, but they never see eye to eye."

A final set of artworks address colonialism. A 2011 painting titled "Walled States" depicts a map of the United States at the bottom with the lost city of Julfar at the top, a major Islamic-era port and trading center founded around the 14th century in what is now the United Arab Emirates. According to the label, the painting "shows the connections between the two countries via the trade, movement, and ecologically destructive qualities of petroleum." Alexander



### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the Atherton Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to consider development standards on properties that are eligible for development under the "Abundant and Affordable Homes Near Transit Act" passed in 2025 as Senate Bill (SB) 79.

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that said item is set for hearing by the Planning Commission at its meeting on **January 28, 2026, at 6:00 PM** in-person and via teleconference accessible through the information provided below, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the projects listed in the public hearing section should or should not be approved. This meeting will be held via teleconference pursuant to Government Code section 54953(e) to provide the safest environment for staff and the public while allowing for public participation. The public may participate in the Planning Commission Meeting via Zoom Meeting or by attending in-person in the Council Chambers at 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027.

**Topic:** Atherton Planning Commission Regular Meeting

**Time:** January 28, 2026, 06:00 PM Pacific Time

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

**Zoom Meeting Option and Details:**

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

**Meeting ID:** 841 5024 9099

**Remote Public Comments:** Meeting participants are encouraged to submit public comments in writing in advance of the meeting. The following emails will be monitored during the meeting and public comments received will be read into the record.

**Email:** [planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us](mailto:planningcommission@ci.atherton.ca.us)

#### Projects under Public Hearing:

A. Consideration of a resolution recommending **amendments to the Atherton Municipal Code (AMC) to adopt an ordinance in response to the "Abundant and Affordable Homes Near Transit Act"** passed as Senate Bill (SB) 79 by the state in 2025. Pursuant to SB 79, properties within one quarter-mile of a transit stop, such as the Menlo Park Caltrain station, are eligible for development of up to 120 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) with height limits no less than 75-feet, beginning July 1, 2026. The City Council held a study session on December 3, 2025, to review the newly adopted state law and subsequently directed staff to put forward development standards that will respond to the state-enabled massing and density, as it applies to properties in the Town of Atherton. The Planning Commission will consider development standards and provide a recommendation to the City Council. After the Planning Commission meeting the ordinance may proceed to the City Council for consideration and final adoption. Additional information on SB 79 is available on the Town's website at: <https://www.athertonca.gov/672/Multi-Family-Housing>

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

The agenda for this meeting with links to related staff reports can be found online by **Friday, January 23, 2026**, here: <https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/641/Agendas-Minutes>

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

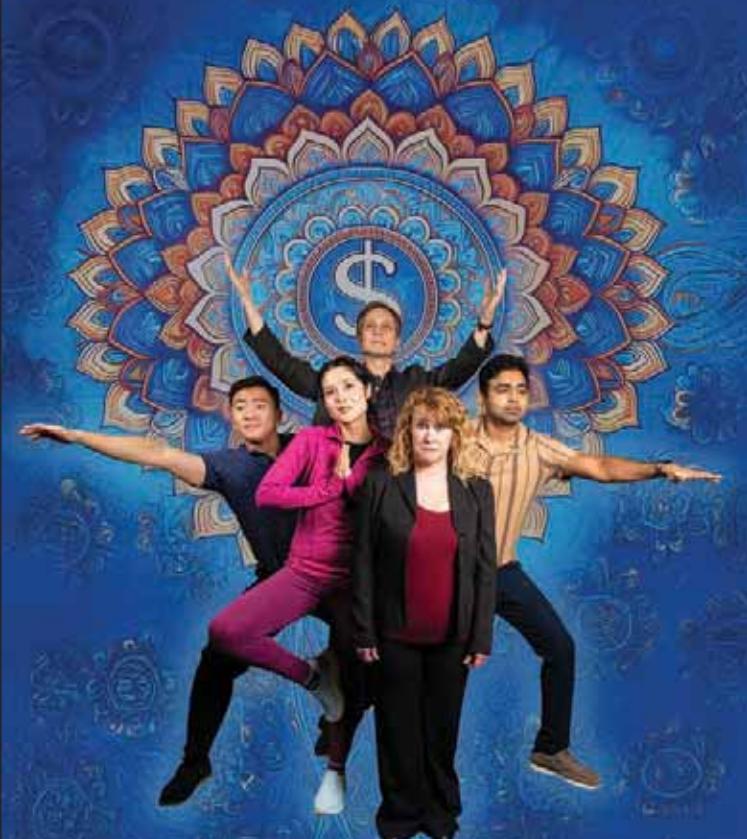
Any attendee who wishes accommodation for a disability should contact the Building Division at (650) 752-0542 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

**ATHERTON CITY COUNCIL**  
/s/ Brittany Bendix  
Brittany Bendix, Consulting Town Planner

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Mette Huberman

The 8-foot-tall bronze sculpture "NOW" incorporates visual references from many sources, including a collar that recalls U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

noted that the painting can look "kind of abstract" but then it "becomes somewhat representational," so Sikander's commentary "can be rather subtle."

Another painting, titled "Land of Tears", created in 2021, shows one of Sikander's signature motifs of an oil rig called a Christmas tree (because of the resemblance) that is used to extract oil across the Middle East. The blue "Christmas tree" is surrounded by numerous figures, including a female figure and skeleton lying in opposite directions and holding hands below the tree. The label states that "Sikander describes this work as visualizing the concept of eco-feminism. While oil is extractive, the feminine offers a counterbalance to the depletion of natural resources."

A nearby large animation, "Parallax," also shows oil extraction in the Middle East, using Sikander's own hand drawings, making the animation beautiful, powerful, and dreamlike at the same time. "The images aren't just digitally created,

they are created by hand," said Alexander. She also strongly encouraged people to see the exhibit in person, because "photographic reproduction doesn't capture the way that they [her artworks] sparkle, the way that light catches them, and the different textures that are present in the work."

In November 2025 at the Cantor Arts Center, Sikander gave the distinguished lecture in Asian Art in honor of the Lijin Collection. In the lecture, she talked about her art and process, her inspirations and collaborations. The lecture and subsequent roundtable discussion can be viewed on YouTube at [tinyurl.com/SikanderCantorNov2025](http://tinyurl.com/SikanderCantorNov2025). ■

Email contributing writer Mette Huberman at [mette.huberman@gmail.com](mailto:mette.huberman@gmail.com)

"Shahzia Sikander: Collective Behavior," will be on view through Jan. 25 at the Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive, Stanford. Admission is free. [museum.stanford.edu](http://museum.stanford.edu).



Courtesy Emily Butler Photography

Close Enemies will play Jan. 9 at The Guild Theatre.

## Close Enemies

No band drama here: These five virtuosos bring harmony to high-energy rock in shows highlighting their respective chops. Led by multiple Grammy Award-winner bass player Tom Hamilton of Aerosmith, Close Enemies brings together drummer Tony Brock (The Babys and Rod Stewart), guitarists Peter Stroud (Sheryl Crow and Don Henley) and Trace Foster and singer Chasen Hampton, who began his vocal career as a member of the Mickey Mouse Club. Bay Area rockers State Line Empire open.

Jan. 9, 8 p.m., at The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park; \$57-\$115; [guildtheatre.com](http://guildtheatre.com).

## Wax Moon and Ben Henderson

Little Green's LG Live RWC music series kicks off 2026 with two acts that have deep roots in the South Bay music community. Acoustic duo Wax Moon features Paul Kimball (Careless Hearts) and John Blatchford (The Mumlers, Doctor Nurse), performing folk- and Americana-inflected ballads that soar with their blended vocals. Longtime San Jose songwriter and graphic designer Ben Henderson plays an eclectic mix of spirited, thoughtful tunes. Singer-songwriter Tala Newell is also featured.

Jan. 9, 8 p.m., at Little Green a Plant Bar, 1101 Main Street, Redwood City; free admission; [tinyurl.com/LGLiveWaxMoonHenderson](http://tinyurl.com/LGLiveWaxMoonHenderson).

## 'Light and Memory'

Watercolor painter Bruce Washburn captures landscapes and cityscapes with crisp lines and vivid hues that seem unexpected for the medium. His paintings offer multilayered vistas, not only through the mosaic of buildings in a skyline or an undulating horizon of mountains and valleys, but in how he plays with a sense of memory in these scenes — both his own memories and sometimes imagined views from the past and future. Many of his works feature familiar scenes from the Peninsula, Bay Area and Northern California, including Edgewood Park, Los Altos, San

Francisco, Mendocino and Yosemite National Park, as well as images from the Northeastern United States and Europe. Washburn will be on hand at a reception Jan. 10 and at Meet the Artist days Jan. 14 and 28.

Reception takes place Jan. 10, 1-4 p.m. Show runs through Jan. 31 at Portola Art Gallery, 75 Arbor Road, Menlo Park; [portolaartgallery.com](http://portolaartgallery.com).

## Keith Raffel

Peninsula resident Keith Raffel has had a career so unique that it sounds like something from a novel — former counsel to the Senate Intelligence Committee, Silicon Valley CEO, Harvard scholar, Congressional candidate — and in fact, he's a novelist, too. Already the author of five thrillers, Raffel began writing a syndicated column in 2023 that reflects on his time in Washington D.C. and the current state of politics in the U.S. and the Middle East. Raffel has brought together some of those essays in a new collection, "The Raffel Ticket: Betting on America," which was published in November. He discusses his new book in conversation with Zack Bodner, author of "Why Do Jewish? A Manifesto For 21st-Century Jewish Peoplehood," in an appearance at the Oshman Family Jewish Community Center.

Jan. 13, 7 p.m., Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto; \$25 admission plus book/\$15 admission only; [paloaltojcc.org](http://paloaltojcc.org).

# Food & Drink

## New year nutrition

Stanford dietitian offers advice for maintaining healthy eating resolutions

By Karla Kane

**A**t the start of a new year, folks often tend to think in terms of resolutions and self-improvement goals. Are healthier food habits on your to-do list for 2026? We checked in with a local nutrition expert who said that making small changes, such as adding more servings of vegetables to your plate each day, can have a long-term positive impact.

"Foods can really make a difference in people's labs and health," said Leah Groppo, a registered dietitian with Stanford Health Care.

### Lifestyle reflection, not drastic diets

When it comes to food resolutions, Groppo's advice is to focus on manageable steps rather than going for extreme restrictions or shifts, which can be unrealistic (and not always healthful).

Everyone has their own unique health needs. In general, though, in the U.S., "people drastically underconsume veggies and fruit," Groppo said. Her top recommendation is to add more plants and fiber-rich foods to your meals in a way that suits your tastes and lifestyle.



Embarcadero Media file photo

Leah Groppo, a registered dietitian with Stanford Health Care, recommends adding more plants and fiber-rich foods to your meals in a way that suits your tastes and lifestyle.

"It's so much more fun to say, 'Oh, I'm on the 'mind diet' ... or the 'menopause diet,'" she said. But instead, she recommends the basics: "focusing more on a plant-based diet, adding fiber, more greens; seeing, 'where can you fit that in?' versus trying to

do this big overhaul," she said. "Reflecting on your own life and figuring out what works for you. 'Am I a person who drinks a lot of sweetened beverages? Maybe I can cut down on that.'"

She offered the example of a patient who simply started

adding more greens to his daily soup at lunchtime and within a few months had significantly improved lab results. He "didn't get stuck on a specific diet name," she noted, but rather made a little shift.

### Many paths to healthier food choices

Groppa strives to be culturally sensitive and inclusive when giving nutritional advice. She emphasizes that healthy food options exist within a wide variety of global cuisines.

For example, the Mediterranean diet is often idealized, and while Groppo agrees that it can be a good option, it's not the only one. No one should feel pressured to forego their cultural preferences and traditions for a diet that doesn't resonate with them.

The same benefits can be achieved through a variety of culinary traditions, with a goal of amping up the vegetable and legume portions on the plate no matter what type of cuisine it is.

### A win-win for individual and planetary health

Fruits and vegetables are packed with essential nutrients, and fiber is important to maintaining good gut health and providing food for the good bacteria we need.

"It does things like decrease risk for diabetes and heart disease, helps reduce unhealthy



Above Left: Artichokes from Blue House Farm in San Gregorio. Courtesy Blue House Farm. Center: Colorful chard for sale at the Portola Valley Farmer's Market. Photo by Veronica Weber. Right: The vegetable box available at a drive-through organized to help local farmers struggling during the coronavirus pandemic sell fresh fruit and vegetables, outside the Palo Alto Arts Center on July 17, 2020. Photo by Magali Gauthier.

cholesterol; it adds bulk" and reduces constipation, she said.

As a dietitian, her strategy is to focus on enhancing meals rather than making diets more restrictive.

"I always think about additive nutrition, not taking away," she said. "For example, maybe we have white rice but we can stir-fry carrots and other veggies into that, adding more to the rice. There are so many vitamins and minerals and fiber and roughage in that, and our bodies need that to function well."

And while Groppo, who specializes in endocrinology, acknowledges that fruit sometimes gets a bad rap because it can raise blood sugar, in most cases it's a good, nutrient-rich choice, especially at the end of meals.

Often, food choices that benefit individual health, such as shifting to more plant-based options, are also more sustainable environmentally, she said.

"There is a whole movement around planetary health in general, and I think that's a piece of it too. We're all here on this land. I think a lot of things that are good for the planet are in fact also good for us. It's a win-win that it would be healthy for both."

## Look to the science

Registered dietitians like Groppo have an extensive academic background in nutrition science (including a master's degree), as well as training in working with patients effectively. This education "primes us to look at different diets ... with a more scientific lens," she said.

"It's a really interesting profession," Groppo added. "Sometimes it can be frustrating when there are a lot of different people saying a lot of different things that are not exactly scientific."

When seeking out health and nutrition information, consider the quality of the source and if it's backed by scientific evidence and study, whether it's an academic journal article or social media post.

"I do like to look for people's credentials," Groppo said. "Just thinking through, who are you listening to and who is in your algorithm?"

She is skeptical of those touting specific diets or products as universal solutions. "Somebody who's so sure that one thing is the best thing for everybody, I always have a bit more reservation around that," she said.

Everyone's body, lifestyle and health situation is unique, and when making changes in eating habits it's important to make goals that work for you. Her approach to offering nutritional guidance is, "I'm not telling (patients) what to eat, I'm listening and



Courtesy Leah Groppo

Leah Groppo, a registered dietitian with Stanford Health Care.



## 'Foods can really make a difference in people's labs and health.'

LEAH GROPO, REGISTERED DIETITIAN WITH STANFORD HEALTH CARE

understanding who they are," she said.

(Stanford's Health Library, she noted, is a free resource open to anyone, with librarians who can research all sorts of health questions.)

## Encouraging healthy habits in kids

As a mom as well as a dietitian, Groppo knows there is a lot of interest (and pressure) among parents to encourage healthy eating habits in their children. Her advice is to let kids participate in choosing and preparing food as much as possible.

"My daughter is 5 and ever since she was 3 she can snap the little ends off green beans, she can help with a lot of things," she said. "We also like to garden, which I know isn't available for everybody."

In her house, there is a bowl full of fruits and veggies that the family aims to empty together by the end of each day. Prioritizing the whole family choosing from the same foods and eating together,

as well as offering diversity — multiple types of vegetables in different formats along with carbohydrates and proteins — helps kids feel empowered when choosing from the options available, Groppo said.

"Kids really need to see things over and over before they might try it," she added.

She tries to keep family meals casual and low-pressure to foster a good relationship with food. "We're in the long game," she said.

## Finding balance

Ultra-processed foods — many mass-produced packaged snacks, cereals and other products — have become prevalent in many households for their convenience. But they also can be full of additives, sugars and salt, as well as lacking in fiber and other key nutrients.

According to an article from Stanford Medicine (referencing the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition), highly processed foods account for nearly 60% of U.S. adults' calorie consumption and nearly 70% of children's. They have been linked to health problems including diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Gropp said that instead of villainizing certain foods, she instead encourages patients to fill up on whole or minimally processed foods when possible. She enjoys roasting nuts and flavoring them with different spices for a snack that is both fun and more nutritious than a product like Cheetos, but she



Above: Mushrooms for sale from Far West Fungi at the farmers market at the Caltrain station in Mountain View on July 18, 2021. Photo by Magali Gauthier. Top: Strawberries from Blue House Farm in San Gregorio. Courtesy Blue House Farm.

said there's no need to beat oneself up when that isn't always an option.

She never wants her patients to think, "I can't be healthy because I'm relying on throwing these chips into my kids' lunch because that's all I have time for," she said. Instead, it's about balancing it out with more fresh and whole foods at other meals.

"I don't think food has to be a moral decision on if we're a good parent," she said. "We want to build on previous successes."

## Having fun with food

Nutritional supplements are a big industry now, but Groppo recommends instead eating whole fiber-rich foods and exploring how to "eat the rainbow in fruits and veggies." Families should have fun experimenting with

ingredients and recipes that bring joy to mealtime.

In Groppo's own house, "We're so nerdy we almost fight over the last Brussels sprout," she said. She recalled her husband joking about her complimenting her own cooking. "Well, I make food that I like!" she said with a laugh. "I think it tastes great."

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