

# The Almanac

NONPROFIT LOCAL NEWS FOR THE MIDPENINSULA

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## Local attorney sues 'First Amendment auditors' after downtown Menlo Park dispute

Lawsuit alleges Canadian YouTuber behind True North Transparency violated RICO Act

By Arden Margulis

A Redwood City attorney filed a federal lawsuit against YouTubers who filmed people in downtown Menlo Park on March 29 and posted a video bragging about pepper-spraying a man.

"They're goading people into being pepper-sprayed by them. You can't provoke someone with what they call 'fighting words' and then be surprised when someone gets angry," attorney Andrew Watters said in an interview.

Watters posted his own video of his March 29 interaction with the "auditors" outside of Draeger's Market on University Drive. Just two days later, on March 31, Watters sued the creator behind YouTube channel True North Transparency, Richard Troyan, alleging that they engage in racketeering activity, assault, interfering with commerce through threats or violence, and obstructing Watters from exercising his rights.

Watters encountered Troyan

and two other self-styled "First Amendment auditors" at the entrance of Draeger's in Menlo Park around 10 a.m. on Sunday, March 29. Later that same day, online video appears to show Troyan pepper-spraying a man in front of Menlo Park Ace Hardware during a verbal altercation. Police have said they are investigating the incident and that the suspects left the scene before officers arrived.

While the lawsuit only names Troyan, a Canada-based YouTuber who posts videos of public confrontations, Watters said he intends to add the other auditors he encountered to the lawsuit once he identifies them. San Diego County-based YouTube channel iiMPACT MEDIA led by Conrad Rankin also posted video of the incident. Both Troyan and iiMPACT MEDIA have taken down the videos as of April 1.

The videographers are in the Bay Area as part of a trip across California, according to posts on their YouTube channel. The group was seen in Mountain



Courtesy iiMPACT MEDIA via YouTube posts

A group of 'First Amendment auditors' have been touring California over the past week. From left to right: Richard Troyan with True North Transparency, Richard Maza with "Freedom of the Press" YouTube channel, and Nick and Conrad Rankin with iiMPACT MEDIA.

View outside Costco and Trader Joe's but does not appear to have posted video from those locations. In Menlo Park, they went to the farmers market and

Trader Joe's, in addition to Ace and Draeger's.

People calling themselves "First Amendment auditors" post their videos onto sites like

YouTube. While filming in public spaces is generally protected under the First Amendment,

See **AUDITORS**, page 8

## Warm weather triggers hairy caterpillar population explosion in Midpeninsula

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

While sitting under an oak tree, you might look up to see strings of silk hanging from the tree canopy. Look closer and you'll probably see dozens of fuzzy caterpillars covered in gray, red and yellow tufts.

This spring, western tussock moth caterpillars can be spotted throughout the area, infesting local coast live oak trees.

This year's stretch of unseasonably warm weather means Midpeninsula cities and towns

are experiencing an outbreak of the caterpillars. They're named for their tufts of prickly hairs, also known as *setae*, which can cause allergic reactions leading to rashes, hives and difficulty breathing for people with asthma.

The caterpillars hatched earlier than usual this year, said Jeff Dunster, plant health care tech advisor for Urban Tree Management. An infestation on this scale hasn't occurred in years, he added.

"We haven't seen an outbreak like this in over six years," said

Jillian Keller, Menlo Park's city arborist. "Usually, these outbreaks start in May. We believe that this year's early outbreak was caused in part by unusually warm, dry weather."

Live oak trees, which are commonly found on the Peninsula between Hillsborough and Mountain View, serve as the primary host for western tussock moths. The larvae and caterpillars also feed on shrubs and smaller plants as they fall from the trees and get carried by the wind. They can be spotted munching on Japanese

maple trees, roses, lilacs and manzanitas.

When an infestation of caterpillars feeds on plants and defoliates their leaves, it can stress smaller plants, which use their energy to regrow to survive, Dunster said.

Keller added that if the infestation is severe enough, it can cause significant crown thinning in oak trees but healthy trees will survive and grow back their leaves within a few months.

The San Mateo County Parks Department issued a notice on March 30 saying that Flood Park

in Menlo Park was experiencing an infestation of tussock moth caterpillars which "eat large amounts of foliage and cause a general nuisance."

Parks officials explained that the caterpillars will be noticeable throughout April and early May but will have transformed into moths by July.

While the infestation is temporary, Dunster explained that even after the caterpillars are gone, the hairs they shed can cause physical reactions for weeks or months.

See **CATERPILLARS**, page 12

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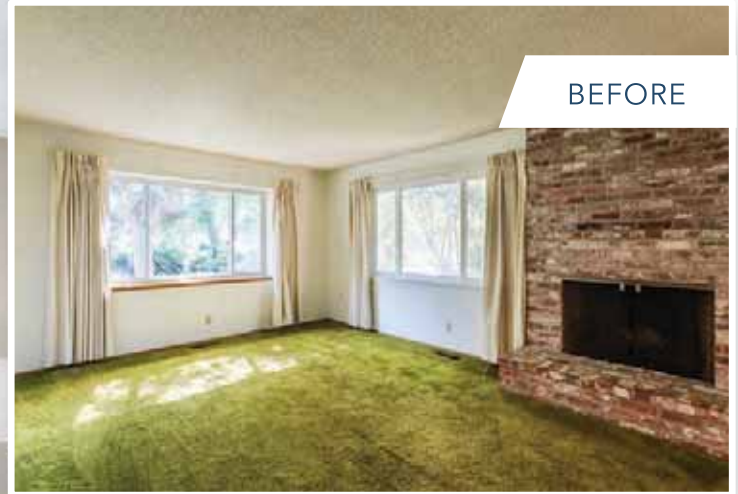
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# Local News

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Magali Gauthier

A biker rides on a trail at the Ravenswood Preserve in East Palo Alto.

## Birdwatching hot spot opens new trail entrance in East Palo Alto

With new gate, neighbors of Ravenswood Open Space Preserve don't have to walk a mile to gain access

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

East Palo Alto now has easier access to the Ravenswood Open Space Preserve with the opening of a new neighborhood access gate on Rutgers Street.

The 376-acre Ravenswood Open Space Preserve is a hot spot for birdwatching, walking and cycling with observation decks and access to the Bay Trail, a partially completed

500-mile path that will eventually circle the entire San Francisco Bay.

The entrance was created through a partnership between Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and the city of East Palo Alto. The two local agencies held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Saturday, April 4, to celebrate the opening of the new access point.

In East Palo Alto's University Village neighborhood,

dead-end streets facing the trail were blocked from accessing it by chain-link fences. To get on the trail, residents had to walk along busy University Avenue or travel more than a mile south to access the bike path.

"It provides safe, convenient access to the Bay Trail and open space, strengthening connections to nature and

See **TRAIL**, page 17

## Atherton's town hall postal annex to close this summer

It's one of several to shutter amid USPS cost-cutting measures

By Arden Margulis

A postal unit operated by the town of Atherton is set to close this summer after the U.S. Postal Service decided to end its contract as part of a larger cost-cutting plan, town staff said Monday, April 6.

Since 1988, Atherton's postal annex located in the town hall has sold stamps, mailed packages and sent certified letters under a contract with USPS. While it didn't offer the full range of services available at other post offices, the Atherton location

almost always had shorter lines.

"The Atherton Postal Annex was essentially convenient for not only Atherton residents but the wider community as well," Town Manager George Rodericks said in an email. "Most often, these services were provided with zero lines. Around the holiday season, we could get a line of three to five people, but that's often far less than you would encounter at the full post office."

USPS notified the town on Feb. 25 that its contract would end as part of a nationwide effort to consolidate and eliminate some

contract postal units. Although USPS pays local operators to run the facilities, the Atherton annex has almost certainly been operating in the red. After accounting for supplies, Atherton only received \$1,225 for operating the post unit in fiscal year 2025, down from \$26,660 in fiscal year 2011.

Payments from the Postal Service are based on a percentage of total sales, which have steadily fallen. As recently as 2004, Atherton sold more than

See **POSTAL ANNEX**, page 12

## First-of-its-kind cancer treatment unveiled at Stanford hospital

'The little proton engine that could' is smallest, least expensive machine in U.S.

By Hannah Bensen

The Stanford School of Medicine unveiled a novel machine on Tuesday that treats cancer patients with a high degree of precision and is smaller and less expensive than its technological predecessors.

The underlying technology, called proton therapy, has existed since the 1950s. It works by targeting protons — the positively charged particles of an atom — of cancerous tumors inside patients, and can reduce the side effects of radiotherapy. But the machines of old could occupy the space of a three-story building, making them too large and costly to install in many hospitals.

Stanford's innovation for proton therapy, created alongside two medical technology companies, was twofold: it compacted the device and positioned patients in a seated position, so that the patient could rotate instead of the machine. Previously, patients would have proton therapy treatment lying down while the machine moved around the patient. Now, the new synchrocyclotron machine that conducts the particle accelerator technology used in the proton therapy is static.

Dr. Billy Loo, a professor of radiation oncology in Stanford's School of Medicine, played a key role in bringing the technology to fruition. Dr. Loo, who is an physician and holds a doctorate in bioengineering, leveraged his clinical expertise in lung cancer and his engineering background to conceive of the smaller machine. The innovation will be the first of its kind in the country, and it will bring the treatment to a region that some in the field previously referred to as a proton therapy desert.

"This is an example of where necessity is the mother of invention," said Dr. Loo. "Even though we're in the advanced technology world of Silicon Valley, it [was] an eight-hour drive to the nearest facility that has proton therapy."

Because of its precision, proton therapy is particularly adept at

treating cancers located near critical structures like the brain, spine, head and neck, lungs, liver, and prostate with minimal damage to the surrounding tissue. In traditional radiation therapy, the beam travels through the tumor and exits out of the body, exposing tissue to radiation. In proton therapy, doses of radiation are delivered directly to the tumor without exiting the body.

Proton therapy minimizes side effects of radiation. That means it's often a good choice for treating cancers in children, who are particularly susceptible to low doses of radiation, said Dr. James Rao, an associate director of proton therapy in the department of radiation oncology at Stanford.

"Since children often can be cured of their cancer and live for many years and decades afterwards, it is very important to reduce the overall radiation dose that their body receives during their cancer treatment," Dr. Rao said. "Even low doses of radiation could potentially increase their risk of another cancer later in life."

While Stanford Medicine will initially be the only location in the world with the new proton therapy machine, dozens of healthcare centers around the world are adopting the device over the coming months and years. The swift uptake of the new machine — which is cheaper, more compact and easier to install — suggests that there is high demand for the technology.

"The adoption of new technologies is often measured and conservative," Dr. Loo said. "To see centers committing to adopting this without yet having seen the first patient being treated gives you an idea of the excitement that there is about this, that people see the value of it."

The compact proton therapy machine has been several years in the making, and Stanford researchers partnered with medical technology companies Mevion Medical Systems and Leo Cancer Care Inc to bring

See **PROTON THERAPY**, page 18

# Atherton police arrest two men for allegedly trying to meet up with a 14-year-old for sex

Detectives stepped in after teen told her parents about online messages

By Arden Margulis

Atherton police arrested two men accused of arranging to meet a 14-year-old girl for sex following an undercover sting operation.

Officers arrested two San Mateo residents on suspicion of attempting to meet the teen for lewd acts on March 31, the Atherton Police Department announced. They were identified as San Mateo residents Inri Aguilar and Luis Zamorarasales, both 25.

District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe said Aguilar first connected with the girl online and began messaging her. Aguilar allegedly tried to arrange to meet the girl for sex even after she told him her age, according to Wagstaffe. The teen became nervous and told her parents, who contacted the police.

Atherton detectives reviewed

the messages on the girl's phone and, posing as her to communicate with Aguilar, arranged a meeting in the town.

Aguilar allegedly said he wanted the girl to bring another minor female for his friend, according to Wagstaffe.

Police arranged for the meeting to take place in front of an unoccupied home. When Aguilar arrived, officers arrested him and Zamorarasales, who was a passenger in the car, and seized their phones.

"In Atherton, this doesn't come across their desks often, and the detectives worked really hard. They did the right steps so we can go and aggressively prosecute it," Wagstaffe said.

Aguilar and Zamorarasales were both charged on April 2 with meeting a minor for lewd purposes and attempted unlawful intercourse, both felonies. Aguilar faces additional charges of felony contact with a

minor for sexual purposes and an enhancement for being on felony probation at the time of the alleged crime.

Wagstaffe said he hopes the case serves as a warning to parents and to predators.

"If you do this in San Mateo County, you are going to get caught," Wagstaffe said.

According to the Silicon Valley Internet Crimes Against Children task force, police departments could arrest someone for trying to commit sexual crimes online against children every day of the week, Wagstaffe said.

"All we can do is try to convict them, hopefully convince the court for good punishment, and then get the word out," Wagstaffe said.

During their April 2 arraignment, both defendants pleaded not guilty to all charges. They remain in custody, with Aguilar's bail set at \$100,000

and Zamorarasales' at \$50,000. Judge Michael Wendler denied Zamorarasales' request to be released without bail, finding he posed a danger to the public. Both men were ordered not to contact the victim.

Their next hearing is scheduled for April 14 at San Mateo County Superior Court in Redwood City.

Court records show Aguilar was on probation for a 2024 case in which he pleaded no contest to one count of felony assault by means likely to cause significant injury. As part of a plea deal, he was sentenced on Dec. 6, 2024, to five months in jail and two years of supervised probation. Aguilar failed to surrender to the jail, and his sentence was doubled on March 25, 2025, after he admitted to violating the plea agreement. ■

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## Police give 'all clear' after bomb threat at county parking structure

By Arden Margulis

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office gave the all-clear after telling people to avoid a county employee parking garage in Redwood City while they investigated a vehicle following a bomb threat.

According to District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe, the county received reports of a bomb in a vehicle and investigated on Tuesday morning, April 7. He said the reports were unconfirmed and court and county operations were happening as normal while emergency responders investigated.

At 11:20 a.m., a responder told a reporter that it was "all clear." Over a dozen fire and police personnel had responded. The Sheriff's Office learned about the threat roughly one

hour before.

Earlier that morning, the county hosted a press conference attended by more than 200 people, including U.S. Rep. Kevin Mullin and top county officials, calling for California to fully fund in-lieu of vehicle licensing fees.

Sheriff's Office spokesperson Gretchen Spiker said there was no connection between the threat and press conference.

The parking structure serves the county's government center at 555 County Center in downtown Redwood City. The

government center includes offices for almost all county departments, including the San Mateo County Superior Court and the District Attorney's Office. The Sheriff's Office is located one block away. ■

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

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Miranda de Moraes

The San Mateo County Sheriff's Office gave the all-clear after investigating a bomb threat at a county employee parking garage in Redwood City.

### CRIME BRIEF

#### Police make arrest after man seen with gun at Menlo Park public pool

Officers arrested a man they believe brought a gun to the Belle Haven Community Center, Menlo Park police spokesperson Nicole Acker said.

On March 30, staff at the community center's swimming pool noticed a patron had placed what appeared to be a semi-automatic firearm on a chair while he swam in the pool. Pool staff called police but he fled before officers arrived.

However, on March 31, pool staff told police he had returned to the site. Officers were able to apprehend a 42-year-old Menlo Park resident a few blocks away after he fled on an electric bicycle. According to Acker, the man admitted to having possessed an Airsoft gun the day prior but he did not have it when police arrested him.

Acker also said the resident showed signs of being under the influence and a search revealed he had methamphetamine in his possession.

Police arrested him on suspicion of obstruction, using controlled substances and possessing controlled substances. He was booked at county jail.

—Arden Margulis

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# Thomas Parker, renowned author and teacher, dies at 82

Menlo Park resident had a passion for teaching the craft of writing

By Gennady Sheyner

Thomas Trebitsch Parker, an award-winning author who spent decades coaching local writers out of his downtown Palo Alto studio and his Menlo Park home, died on March 15. He was 82.

A winner of the O. Henry Award in 1969 for his short story, "Troop Withdrawal: The Initial Step," Parker was a well-known literary figure in the Bay Area, renowned both for his books and for his influence on other writers.

His book about baseball legend Dave Winfield, "Winfield: A Player's Life," which he co-wrote with Winfield, earned a place on the New York Times bestseller list in 1988. He also collaborated on books about Sandra Kurtzig, the first woman to take a Silicon Valley technology company public, and Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany, who is considered the "father of fiber optics," according to his wife, Kathy Parker.

Parker also wrote numerous business books as well as award-winning novels "Small Business" in 1986 and "Anna, Ann, Annie" in 1993. He taught writing at Stanford University, his alma mater, as well as Canada College, Foothill College and University of California at Berkeley. He had also served for many years as a judge for the Palo Alto Weekly's annual short story contest and hosted salons and writing workshops at his Ramona Street studio and at his home.

Born in Manhattan to refugees from Austria, Parker grew up in Cape Cod and attended the Dickensian Boston Farm and Trades School, where he worked as a night watchman, head of the print shop and captain of the school's tennis team, which according to Kathy Parker had no other players. He moved to California to attend Stanford University and worked his way through school with various odd jobs, including selling madras shirts and setting up pinball machines at fraternity houses, Kathy Parker said.

Thomas Parker graduated Stanford in 1965 and worked with Stanford's writing professor Nancy Packer, who became his close friend and mentor. He then received a master's degree in creative writing at San Francisco State University before joining his friend, Paul Crowley, to start a business called Media West, which created presentations for corporations. His novel "Small Business" touched on many of



Courtesy of Kathy Parker  
**Thomas Parker**

his experiences in the corporate world.

A born storyteller with a curious mind, Parker liked to balance his literary endeavors with work in the corporate world that allowed him to meet people and experience different types of work, according to Kathy Parker. The two met on a blind date in 1975, when they were both writing copy, and they were married for 50 years. "He wasn't a literary snob," Kathy Parker said. "Though he did aspire to literary greatness, he wasn't a snob because he liked doing the corporate stuff also." "When you're a novelist of a short-story writer, you're by yourself a lot. He was definitely a people person. He just liked the various types of work that he did."

His novels and short stories often reflected his experiences in other professions. In a 2012 interview with Ploughshares, a literary magazine, Parker reflected on the many jobs he held throughout this career, including working as a clothing salesman, a caterer, a country club chef, a baker, an editor-in-training for a small newspaper and a creative director for a Las Vegas production company. The job that he loved the most, he said, was teaching, both at Stanford and UC Berkeley.

"Over those years, I've worked with approximately 3,000 students in more than 200 workshops and enjoyed most every minute of it," Parker said in the interview. "I've become a mentor because I get a genuine kick out of seeing writers grow and succeed."

His passion for writing workshops was reciprocated by his many students. Some students would take his classes over and over again, Kathy Parker said. "Then they would go outside the class and form their own workshops. It was just an amazing environment and ecosystem. It formed a lot of relationships. There were several marriages that came out of his classes," she said. ■

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# YouTuber provoked, pepper-sprayed shopper at Mountain View Costco, police say

By Arden Margulis

Mountain View police arrested a Southern California YouTuber for blasting pepper spray at a man outside Mountain View's Costco, an alleged assault that police say was motivated by the YouTuber's financial interest and desire for views.

The man who was injured now intends to file a lawsuit against the YouTuber, alleging that he has suffered vision loss for over a week.

Police say Northridge resident Richard Maza, 51, sprayed the victim on March 28 to attract views for his YouTube channel, "Freedom of the Press." Maza describes himself as a "First Amendment auditor," part of a movement whose members film people in public and post the resulting confrontations online.

While the First Amendment generally allows filming in public places where people don't have a reasonable expectation of privacy, a police report obtained by this news organization says Maza deliberately

provoked people so he could claim self-defense.

Mountain View officers received at least four calls before the alleged assault occurred at around 2 p.m., reporting a group of auditors, including Maza, outside the Costco at 1000 N. Rengstorff Ave. The other auditors were identified as Canadian YouTuber Richard Troyan, who runs True North Transparency, and Conrad Rankin and his son Nick Rankin, who post under iiMPACT MEDIA.

The department did not arrest the group after these initial calls. Even though the Costco parking lot is private property, the California Supreme Court has previously ruled that "reasonably exercised" First Amendment-protected activity is allowed in shopping centers.

The man who was pepper-sprayed told officers he was loading groceries into his car when he asked the group why they were filming, according to the police report. After he suggested they "find something better to do," the group began mocking and insulting him. The

victim told police he "flinched" in an attempt to get them to back off, which the group then claimed was assault.

The man told police he began walking away because he feared he might be attacked. When he got into his car, Maza held his camera inside the vehicle. The victim said he struck the camera away in fear, and Maza responded by spraying him with pepper spray, police said.

Although the victim declined medical attention at the scene, his attorney later said he suffered vision impairment that might be permanent. The man told police the next day that his vision was "like looking through crumpled Saran Wrap," the report said. He was diagnosed with a corneal abrasion, prescribed antibiotics, and he said he was in pain and unable to sleep.

Redwood City attorney Andrew Watters, who is suing Troyan over a separate incident in which he personally saw auditors at Draeger's Market in Menlo Park, said his client experienced 80% vision loss for 10 days and continues to have

40% vision loss.

On March 29, the day after Watters' client was pepper-sprayed in Mountain View and while Maza was still in jail, Troyan pepper-sprayed a man in Menlo Park. The Menlo Park Police Department is investigating whether a crime occurred.

Mountain View police said Maza and his group appeared motivated by views and engagement rather than genuine fear. Mountain View police officer Andrew Wong wrote that videos on Maza's YouTube channel showing people being pepper-sprayed drew triple the views of other clips. According to Wong, Maza mocked his victims on social media, behavior Wong said was "not typical of victims who are truly defending themselves."

"Maza and his group were not merely filming people; they were saying things in an attempt to get them angry by using personal attacks," Wong wrote in his report. "It appears that they were being so confrontational with people in an attempt to get people angry enough to cause

them to attack the group."

Video of the Costco altercation shows Maza chasing the victim's vehicle and, after the victim pushed his camera away, waiting until the camera was level with the victim's face before spraying him, according to the police report.

"(The victim) was confined to his vehicle and made no gesture to suggest he was going to get out of his car. Had Maza felt legitimately threatened, he could have simply walked away in any direction," Wong wrote.

When Maza was arrested, he had three canisters of pepper spray on him. Police later impounded Maza's vehicle and requested a search warrant to look for evidence of a premeditated attack, the report said. Court staff did not have a record of that search warrant as of April 7, which may mean it is still pending.

Maza was charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and use of tear gas, both felonies. After his arraignment

See **YOUTUBER**, page 17

## Menlo Park Quarterly Market Report

January 1, 2025 - March 31, 2025

*Rossetti Realty Inc.*

TOP 10 SALES*				
1. \$12,000,000	2. \$9,600,000	3. \$9,500,000	4. \$8,175,000	
1806 Doris Drive	1245 Bay Laurel Drive	1440 Bay Laurel Drive	740 Windsor Drive	
5. \$7,250,000	6. \$7,225,000	7. \$7,220,000	8. \$6,630,000	9. \$6,400,000
1224 Whitaker Way	935 Monte Rosa Drive	1016 Lemon Street	20 Politzer Drive	910 Cambridge Avenue
				10. \$6,250,000
				10 Cheryl Place

<b>ACTIVE LISTING</b> Q1 24: 131 Q4 25: 103 ↑ 27%	<b>AVERAGE SALES PRICE</b> Q1 26: \$3,678,603 Q4 25: \$3,476,140 ↑ 6%	<b>AVERAGE SALES PRICE/SQ FT</b> Q1 26: \$1,656 Q4 25: \$1,602 ↑ 3%
<b>PENDING LISTING</b> Q1 24: 90 Q4 25: 66 ↑ 36%	<b>AVERAGE SOLD DAYS ON MARKET</b> Q1 26: 16 Q4 25: 14 ↑ 14%	<b>MONTHS OF INVENTORY</b> Q1 26: 1.50 Q4 25: 1.40 ↑ 7%
<b>SOLD LISTING</b> Q1 24: 68 Q4 25: 50 ↑ 36%	<b>SALE/LIST PRICE</b> Q1 26: 107.30% Q4 25: 105.30% ↑ 2%	<b>30 YEAR MORTGAGE RATE</b> Q1 26: 6.50% Q4 25: 6.78% ↓ 4%


★ Q1 2025 compared Q4 2024

\*Source: MLS Listings for Single Family Properties | Excludes Condos

### Making A Move?

Sellers Start Here:  [RossettiHomeValue.com](https://RossettiHomeValue.com)

Buyers Start here:  [RossettiPropertyFinders.com](https://RossettiPropertyFinders.com)



**Gail Antoinette Rossetti**  
 Founder | CEO | Broker  
 License #01179344

3525 Alameda De Las Pulgas Suite C Menlo Park, CA Phone: 650-854-4100

## AUDITORS

continued from page 1

Watters and others say the group in Menlo Park went too far.

"This whole thing with them staging these incidents is completely disruptive and agitating to the community, especially a safe and welcoming community like Menlo Park," Watters said. "The hope is that some accountability for these otherwise anonymous individuals will deter them from being violent. I have no problem with them staying on the sidewalk and peacefully filming."

Watters said he reported the group, wearing distinctive black-and-silver T-shirts and cowboy hats, to the police department well before the pepper-spraying incident occurred but was told the department couldn't respond.

"(The department) could have prevented it if they just took action two hours earlier when I filed the complaint. I think they just don't want to get involved, which is unfortunate because someone needs to take a stand," Watters said.

Video taken by Watters shows the group saying things like, "I'm gonna mace the s—t out of you" and saying they have "more than" pepper spray. It also shows one member of the group

holding their hat in front of their face and hiding behind a trash can when Watters films them.

In his lawsuit, Watters alleges that by threatening him and pepper-spraying others while filming and making money through YouTube, the group violated the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act. The RICO Act was created in 1970 to combat organized crime. The law says it is illegal for someone to derive income from, or disrupt interstate commerce through, "racketeering activity," which is partially defined as extortion through threats of physical violence or actual violence.

In the lawsuit, Watters asks that the case be referred to the FBI for a criminal investigation.

Watters' request for a temporary restraining order against Troyan was denied. He said he is appealing the decision.

The lawsuit asks for the court to permanently bar Troyan from harassing Watters and divest from any RICO enterprise. The lawsuit demands at least \$100,000 in damages, according to court records.

Troyan did not respond to an email from this publication.

No hearing has yet been scheduled on the lawsuit or the order. ■

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



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DeLeonRealty\_USA



1765 FALLEN LEAF LANE  
LOS ALTOS

\$4,498,000 | 5 Bd | 3 Bth  
1765FallenLeaf.com



160 PHILLIP ROAD  
WOODSIDE

\$11,988,000 | 5 Bd | 5.5 Bth  
160Phillip.com



927 CONTINENTAL DRIVE  
MENLO PARK

\$4,988,000 | 4 Bd | 4.5 Bth  
927Continental.com



85 BELBROOK WAY  
ATHERTON

\$14,988,000 | 5 Bd | 6.5 Bth  
85Belbrook.com



4118 SUTHERLAND DRIVE  
PALO ALTO

\$5,600,000 | 5 Bd | 3.5 Bth  
4118Sutherland.com



199 HARDWICK ROAD  
WOODSIDE

\$6,988,000 | 4 Bd | 4.5 Bth  
199HardwickRd.com

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# Caltrain faces station closures, service cuts amid budget woes

By Bay City News Service

Officials with Caltrain warned that the train agency could be forced to close a lot of its operations without a new long-term funding source, raising concerns about the future of one of the Bay Area's key commuter rail systems.

The Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, which operates Caltrain, outlined the potential cuts during a budget workshop Thursday, April 2, saying the agency faces a projected average annual deficit of about \$75 million from fiscal years 2027 through 2041 if outside funding does not materialize.

Under a worst-case scenario that transit officials presented to the board, Caltrain could shut more than one-third of its stations, end weekend service,

reduce trains to hourly runs, stop service by 9 p.m., and cut some route segments altogether.

Executive Director Michelle Bouchard said the agency's structural funding gap cannot be solved through efficiencies alone.

"Without a stable, long-term funding solution, we will be forced to make difficult decisions that would significantly reduce service and impact the communities that rely on Caltrain every day," Bouchard said in a statement released by the agency.

Board chair Rico Medina said ridership has been recovering as the system expands service following the rollout of electric trains in 2024.

"But the reality is that the service that has been such a success will be in jeopardy if our funding picture does not improve this year," he said.

Senate Bill 63 authorized the creation of a five-county transit revenue measure district that could place a funding measure on the November 2026 ballot, and supporters have already begun collecting signatures for a citizen initiative tied to the proposal.

Caltrain officials said the rail system currently carries the equivalent of three lanes of traffic on U.S. Highway 101 in California each day. They warned that service reductions could add roughly 36,000 daily car trips and increase pollution by about 220 metric tons of carbon dioxide per day.

The agency said ridership rose 47% in 2025 compared with the previous year, saying it is the fastest-growing transit agency in the United States, helped by faster and more frequent service after electrification of their trains.



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Two electric trains wait at the San Francisco Caltrain station in 2024. The commuter rail service is facing steep service cuts if it can't shore up a hole in its budget.

Transit officials said rising remote work and high fixed costs tied to maintaining electric infrastructure mean new funding will

be needed to avoid cuts that could affect tens of thousands of riders and businesses along the Peninsula corridor. ■

## Despite community concerns, East Palo Alto declines to revisit Flock deal

Residents take issue with data breaches involving automatic license plate readers

By Lisa Moreno

East Palo Alto residents chastised the City Council on Tuesday evening for making last-minute changes to the agenda and indefinitely pausing a conversation to limit police use of Flock Automatic License Plate Readers despite ongoing public concerns.

Mayor Webster Lincoln, who is a part of the agenda-setting committee, said the discussion was "premature" four months after the council decided to enter into a three-year contract with the surveillance company.

The trio of newer council members Martha Barragan, Mark Dinan and Lincoln approved the removal of the item on April 7, setting aside concerns from residents about the security of license plate data.

Dinan argued that a new discussion wouldn't change his

mind, calling the item a "waste of time."

City staff expressed confusion and concern over the decision, after the city's consultants had appeared at the meeting to speak about the item. Vice Mayor Ruben Abrica, who is also on the agenda-setting committee, highlighted his right to add items to the agenda, even if the mayor is not in support of them.

The quick decision enraged constituents, who packed the room to express their concerns about the technology that has experienced various data breaches in the country and on the Peninsula. It was a decision multiple people called "undemocratic."

"It's really insulting for the intelligence of our community to try to keep things secret, as though we don't have the ability to discuss. ... This is a very serious issue, and the council

members who voted for it are insulting the immigrant community," Abrica said.

The trio of council members voted to approve the three-year contract with Flock Safety in December 2025, despite fears over data breaches under a federal administration that has found new avenues to locate and arrest immigrants. They assured the community that the technology could be canceled at any time if used improperly.

But Flock representatives recanted. In recent contract negotiations with the city, the company asked city officials to pay the three year contract in full without an option to terminate. The technology costs approximately \$90,000 annually.

Given the emerging concerns, staff recommended limiting the agreement to a shorter duration.

"Because these terms do not adequately protect the City's interests, staff is proposing to execute a new one-year agreement under the original 2024 pilot study terms at a cost of \$92,000, expiring in December 2026," city documents read. "Under these terms, the City may terminate for convenience."

Lincoln claimed this discussion was "duplicative" and indefinitely tabled it.

Flock cameras, which claim to only document rear license plates on cars 24/7, store recordings for 30 days in East Palo Alto. They originally grew in popularity for their low-cost surveillance abilities, especially among the East Palo Alto Police Department, which has reportedly struggled with low staffing.

East Palo Alto police say the technology has helped document various suspects in car collisions and sexual assault cases. In January, the cameras were used to arrest multiple suspects in a months-long series of armed vehicle robberies, according to police officer Jason Peardon, who helps lead the city's Flock use.

Police Chief Jeff Liu wanted to reassure the community that the department is working intently to deter data breaches, he said. In February, police staff met with members of Indivisible Palo Alto Plus, a progressive grassroots group that has protested Trump's immigration policies, to discuss use of Flock Safety. At that meeting, East Palo Alto revoked the City of El Cajon's access to local surveillance data and incorporated language to deny permission for use of City data for artificial intelligence training, according to meeting documents.

"I'm not speaking to Flock, but I'm speaking to us," Liu said. "I trust Jason, I trust us, and I trust our ability to manage the system. The ALPR program has been effective, well managed and tightly controlled by our department."

Recent investigations, however, have found that numerous nearby jurisdictions, including Atherton, Menlo Park and Mountain View, have shared data with other law enforcement agencies in violation of local policies. These breaches often occur without the knowledge of police agencies, according to

various media reports.

Mountain View opted to disable its cameras after an investigation by the Mountain View Voice revealed that more than 250 California law enforcement agencies had searched the city's license plate camera data without its authorization.

Lily Ho, a Flock representative who presented at an East Palo Alto council meeting in 2025 in an attempt to assuage concerns, claimed that the technology had never been indirectly shared with unauthorized agencies.

Community members at the time were not convinced that the technology is safe. Many made it clear on Tuesday that their concerns have not diminished since then.

"There have been constant breaches of the data that Flock collects, exposing the lives and habits of our people and putting that into the hands of those who want to see our most vulnerable community members detained and sent away," local resident Filiberto Zaragoza said during the public comment period. "How can you trust such a faulty system that has lied about its success?"

Zaragoza, who criticized the council for its minimal discussion on the removed item, said community members would return to express their concerns.

"We deserve to have another conversation around Flock, and you took that from us today," he said. ■

Email Staff Writer

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**TOWN OF WOODSIDE**  
2955 WOODSIDE ROAD  
WOODSIDE, CA 94062

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE WOODSIDE TOWN CENTER AREA PLAN UPDATE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) will hold a hybrid public meeting which is open to the public thereby allowing for the option to attend by teleconference/video conference or in person in Independence Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, Woodside, CA on Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at 6:00 PM.

**At this meeting, the CAC will be presented with an update on the Town Center Area Plan (TCAP) Update project and will discuss long-range design concepts drafted in response to feedback received during Community Engagement Phase I.**

All interested parties are invited to submit written comments to [jpaping@woodsideca.gov](mailto:jpaping@woodsideca.gov) and/or attend in person or virtually at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84842421685>.

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 650-688-6500

April 2nd, 2026

**April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month**

*Drivers are urged to keep their eyes forward and hands on the wheel*

Town of Atherton, California – April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month and the Atherton Police Department wants to remind drivers to stay focused, keep their eyes forward and hands on the wheel. Distractions like checking a phone, using the in-dash touchscreen or car phone app, adjusting the radio, or eating can have devastating consequences.

“Distracted driving continues to put everyone on the road at risk,” Commander Daniel Larsen said. “When drivers take their eyes off the road, even for a few seconds, lives can change forever. We’re reminding our community that safety starts with each of us. Put the phone down, limit distractions, and help people get home safely.”

According to the [2025 California Statewide Public Opinion Survey](#), nearly 71.4% of drivers surveyed said that distracted driving, caused by texting or checking a phone, was their biggest safety concern. In 2023, there were [158 people killed](#) in distracted driving crashes in California, a 6.8 percent increase from the previous year. The numbers are likely underreported because law enforcement officers may not always be able to determine if distraction was a factor in a crash.

Officers of the Atherton Police Department will be actively looking for drivers throughout the month who are in violation of the state’s hands-free cell phone law.

Under current law, drivers are not allowed to hold a phone or other electronic device while operating a vehicle, even when stopped at a red light. This includes talking, texting, or using an app. Using a handheld cell phone while driving can result in a fine, and if a driver violates the hands-free law a second time within 36 months of a previous conviction for the same offense, an additional point will be added to their record.

Follow these simple steps to stay focused and protect everyone on the road:

- **Put your phone away:** Silence notifications and store your phone where you can’t reach it while driving.
- **Plan ahead:** Set your GPS, adjust mirrors and finish any tasks before you start driving.
- **Keep both hands on the wheel and eyes on the road:** Avoid eating, grooming or adjusting controls while driving.
- **Be a role model:** Show your passengers, especially young drivers, that focused driving is the norm.
- **Speak up:** If you’re a passenger and see the driver distracted, kindly remind them to stay focused.
- **Pull over if necessary:** If something urgent comes up, stop and park in a safe place before responding.

Funding for distracted driving enforcement is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

**CATERPILLARS**

*continued from page 1*

“Once they’re gone, they may not be completely gone,” he said.

Dunster recommends people remove caterpillar hairs by hosing down their yards, outdoor furniture and any surfaces that they might come into contact with around the end of May and early June. It’s a good sanitation practice, he added.

In late March, the city of Menlo Park announced that its Public Works Department would be using non-chemical management methods to treat its parks and highly trafficked areas. Menlo Park officials said the city started treating its trees the week of March 23 after it saw a large amount of caterpillars at Burgess Park.

Keller said the city is using high-pressure water to spray the trees, removing the caterpillars and their cocoons. She added that the recent rain also helped slow down the caterpillars.

“These methods are effective in reducing impacts while protecting beneficial insects, wildlife and the broader environment,” said city officials in the announcement.

“The worst of the infestation is over, and our use of high pressure water to spray infected trees has greatly reduced the number of caterpillars in most instances,” said Keller.

Urban Tree Management technicians have seen caterpillars cover the external walls of houses, fences and backyards.

Dunster said most of his clients seek help because they are struggling with allergic reactions to the pest. He’s met adults



Andrea Gemmet

A tussock moth caterpillar at Burgess Park playground in Menlo Park on March 27.

and children covered in rashes, experiencing difficulties sleeping from discomfort, he said.

Companies like Urban Tree are aware of the community’s wariness around insecticides and the secondary impact they may have on other insects, storm water and the environment but Dunster said spraying is sometimes necessary to protect public health.

“This pest wasn’t really a problem until people stopped spraying, and we had regular spray programs that went on for years to manage this particular pest,” said Dunster.

Tree management companies use tree-trunk injections that can help prevent infestations. Although this method can cause some damage to trees, Dunster said it’s a more widely accepted approach than aerial spraying. ■

*Email Staff Writer  
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**POSTAL ANNEX**

*continued from page 5*

\$100,000 worth of stamps in a year.

“Revenues are nowhere near where they used to be,” Rodericks said. The town does not track the cost of staff time to operate it because it’s handled by the town receptionist, who has other responsibilities. If that was factored in, the town likely loses money on the postal unit.

Despite the cost, the town kept operating the annex because its residents valued the convenience. Customers could mail letters and parcels, send priority and media mail, insure shipments and use certified mail services. Mail and packages were picked up twice daily.

Once Atherton’s postal unit closes on June 25, mail will be collected just once a day at Atherton Town Hall as part of its regular USPS service, and the town will no longer sell postage.

Town staff tried “everything we could” to preserve the contract,

but to no avail, according to Rodericks. Across the county, several contract units are being phased out in areas that are served by other post offices. Nationwide, USPS operated 1,356 contract postal units in fiscal year 2025, down from more than 2,000 in 2020.

“Doing so enables us to continue to fulfill our commitment to serve our communities through USPS-operated retail facilities,” Postal Service spokesperson Kristina Uppal said about closing contracted postal units. She did not respond to requests for further comment.

The Postal Service has been under financial pressure for years, and posted a \$9 billion loss in fiscal year 2025. USPS officials warned regulators that it could run out of funds as early as October.

According to the town, there are four post offices within 2 miles of Atherton Town Hall. Find them at [tools.usps.com/locations](https://tools.usps.com/locations). ■

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

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Kids and teens (ages 5-18) will explore AI, robotics, drones, coding, animation, holographic AR, 3D design, and more in a fun, hands-on journey of creativity. They will have a blast building smart robots, designing and flying space drones, and even launching their creations into near space—up to 100,000 feet! Create magical game worlds, design interactive 2D/3D animations, and bring your art to life. Earn NVIDIA AI certificates. No experience needed—beginner to advanced levels. Register now with code PAW26 to save.

**Camp.Integem.com****(408) 459-0657****Code for Fun****Bay Area**

Spark creativity this summer! Code For Fun offers computer science and robotics camps for ages 5-15 in Palo Alto, 35+ Bay Area locations and online. From coding robots to designing games, creating websites to digital art, kids explore, create, and learn through hands-on activities balanced with collaborative projects. Experienced staff ensure every camper at all levels has an unforgettable summer. Half day and full day options available weekly, June through August.

**CodeForFun.com****(510) 578-8920****Destination Science****Bay Area**

The fun science day camp for curious kids 5 to 11! Encourage the love of science, spark creativity, year-round hands-on learning with Destination Science camp. 2026 new camp themes: Robot Olympic Challenge, Movie Maker STEM Lab and Jedi Engineering Science Camp. 15 STEM activities each week including make and take projects. That is three exciting science stations per day, plus games, creative challenges, silly songs and all the friendship and fun of camp. Destination Science's energetic, professional educators make learning fun.

**DestinationScience.org****(888) 909-2822****Emerson Montessori School****Palo Alto**

An amazing summer writing program. Every year, Emerson Montessori School offers its three Write Now!® courses — camp-like sessions designed to improve students' writing and public presentation skills. Each one-week course features a different focus: Expository Writing (prose forms used in school assignments), Creative Writing (stories, plays, poems), and Presentation Skills ("Posters & PowerPoints" this year). Parents are welcome at the afternoon "Authors' Workshops" and "Speakers' Forums."

**EmersonMontessori.com/WriteNow****(650) 424-1267****Harker Summer Programs****San Jose**

Harker summer programs for preschool - grade 12 children include opportunities for academics, arts, athletics and activities. Taught by exceptional, experienced faculty and staff, our programs offer something for everyone in a safe and supportive environment. Register as soon as possible.

**Harker.org/Summer****(408) 553-5737****Lydian Academy****Palo Alto**

Complete UC-approved college-prep, Honors, or AP course in as few as 3 weeks in a 1:1 or small group setting. Popular non-credit Academic Enrichment Programs include our Project-based STEM Skills Workshop in our Innovation Studio, Executive Functioning, Writing Workshops, Public Speaking, Life Skills, Personal Finance, and more. Lydian offers a welcoming and supportive environment for Neurodiverse and 2e learners.

**LydianAcademy.com/Summer****(650) 321-0550****ACADEMICS****Pinewood School****Summer Festival of Learning****Los Altos**

Pinewood's two- or four-week summer program provides a unique blend of academic and enrichment classes designed to sharpen academic skills and deepen a love of learning in an uplifting environment. Specialized teachers and small classes maximize the summer school experience. Our curriculum emphasizes academic growth as well as joyful participation in the arts, technology, and athletics. This balance has been unique to Pinewood from its founding and remains central to the Pinewood experience.

**Pinewood.edu/Summer-at-Pinewood****STANFORD EXPLORE: A Lecture Series on Biomedical Research****Stanford**

Stanford Explore is a lecture series in biomedical research that offers high school students the unique opportunity to learn from Stanford professors and graduate students. Explore various topics in biomedical science, including bioengineering, neuroscience, cancer, and immunology.

**Explore.Stanford.edu****Summer@Stratford****Palo Alto/Bay Area**

A summer full of wonder, exploration, and discovery awaits! From thrilling adventures to hands-on fun, campers will learn new skills, make new friends, and create memories they'll never forget. Day Camp, Academic, Specialty, and Sports Camp options keep campers engaged all summer long. Register today!

**StratfordSchools.com/Summer****(650) 493-1151****ARTS, CULTURE & ENRICHMENT****Castilleja Summer Camp for Girls****Palo Alto**

Casti Camp offers girls entering grades 2-6 a range of age-appropriate activities including art, music, drama, dance, crafts, games and more. Leadership program available for girls entering grades 7-9.

**Castilleja.org/SummerCamp****(650) 470-7833****City of Sunnyvale****Sunnyvale**

Offering 110+ camps for ages 2 to 17 featuring traditional, visual arts, performing arts, sports, aquatics, STEM and teen leadership camps. Full and half day options run June 8 through Aug. 14. Dive into swim lessons for all levels starting in June, or cool off with recreation swim at our aquatic facilities all summer long.

**Sunnyvale.ca.gov/Activities****(408) 730-7350****Community School of Music and Arts****Mountain View**

CSMA summer and school-break camps let young artists explore, create, and share the joy of making art and meeting new friends! 60+ creative camps for ages 5-15! Drawing, Painting, Ceramics, Fashion, Digital Art, Musical Theater, and more. One and two-week sessions are held at our beautiful MV arts campus. After-camp care is available.

**Arts4All.org****(650) 917-6800 ext. 0****J-Camp at the Oshman Family JCC****Palo Alto**

J-Camp is a day camp for incoming transitional kindergarten through 10th grade. Our camp activities build confidence, stretch imaginations and teach new skills. Every session is a unique experience, full of fun and engaging programs. We are a welcoming and inclusive community where campers of all backgrounds and their families learn, play and connect.

**OFJCC-JCamp.com****(650) 223-8622****ARTS, CULTURE & ENRICHMENT****Stanford Jazz Workshop****Stanford**

Stanford Jazz Workshop week-long jazz immersion programs for young musicians in middle school (Giant Steps Day Camp, starts July 6), high school (Jazz Camp, starts July 12 and/or July 19, and advanced teens (Jazz Institute, July 26). All instruments and vocals. On the Stanford campus!

**StanfordJazz.org****(650) 736-0324****ATHLETICS****Bald Eagle****Bay Area**

The first camp ever approved by The Positive Coaching Alliance for message and Development Zone programming. We offer 4 camps: Non-Traditional MultiSports (TK-5th), Sports Leadership & Field Trips (6th-8th), Basketball Camp (3rd-8th) and Coach In Training (free, 9th-10th). Extended Care 7:30 am - 6 pm.

**BaldEagleCamps.com****(888) 505-BALD****Maccabi Sports Camp****Hayward**

Maccabi Sports Camp is an overnight Jewish sports camp located on the beautiful CSU East Bay campus in Hayward. We welcome campers entering grades 3-11 with programs dedicated to building strong character and Jewish community through sports. We offer six core sports: soccer, baseball, basketball, racket sports, volleyball and multi-sport.

**MaccabiSportsCamp.org/wp****(415) 997-8844****Spartans Sports Camp****Mountain View**

Spartans Sports Camp, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation and all proceeds benefit the Mountain View High School Athletic Department. Spartans Sports Camp has raised over \$550,000 since 2012! Follow Spartans Sports Camp on Facebook and Twitter!

**SpartansSportsCamp.com****(650) 479-5906****Stanford Water Polo Camps****Stanford**

New to water polo or have experience, we have a camp for you! Half day or full day options for both boys and girls ages 7-14. Each session teaches fundamentals, shooting & scrimmaging. Session 1: June 8-11, 2026; Session 2: June 15-18, 2026.

**StanfordWaterPoloCamps.com****(650) 725-9016***Please check directly with camps for updates and offerings.**To advertise in print and online, contact your sales representative or email [Sales@EmbarcaderoMedia.org](mailto:Sales@EmbarcaderoMedia.org).*



## Thomas Trebitsch Parker

August 2, 1943 – March 15, 2026

A born storyteller, Thomas Trebitsch Parker was a writer who told other people's stories, sometimes earning himself and those he wrote about, like baseball great Dave Winfield, a place on the New York Times bestseller list, with "Winfield: A Player's Life." Other notables with whom Parker collaborated on books about their singular lives included Sandra Kurtzig, the first woman to take a Silicon Valley technology company public, and Dr. Narinder Singh Kapany, widely recognized as the "father of fiber optics." Parker also wrote the award-winning novels "Small Business" and "Anna, Ann, Annie," and was co-author of numerous business books. His first published short story, "Troop Withdrawal: The Initial Step," about an Army sergeant who removed troops from Viet Nam thanks to his understanding of how paper moved within the military, appeared in Harper's Magazine and received the O. Henry Award, which recognizes outstanding works of short fiction.

Born in Manhattan on August 2, 1943 to Eric and Hedwig Trebitsch — refugees from Austria who met in New York City and later changed their surname to Parker — Tom and younger brother Ken (who would grow up to become an acclaimed flamenco guitarist) moved to Cape Cod with their mother. After her death, the brothers were placed at the straight-from-a-Dickens-novel Boston Farm and Trades School (later Thompson Academy) on an island in Boston Harbor where, after a welcoming by his classmates that included being hung by his belt buckle on a meat hook, Tom took on various roles, including night watchman, head of the print shop, and captain of the tennis team, which had no other players (hence, his killer serve). Among the first from the school to attend college, Parker applied only to places in warm locations after Boston Harbor froze and found himself enrolled as a freshman at Stanford University, quite unprepared. But he rose to the challenge — through his inherent smarts, his survival skills, and perhaps most of all, his humor. He was funny — with his verbal dexterity, prowess at pranks, and always that one eyebrow inevitably raised that was his signature. He worked his way through school with a variety of jobs — setting up pinball machines in fraternity houses, forming a business with friends to sell Madras shirts — all the rage at the time — and cooking at resorts in Maine during summers.

At Stanford, from which Parker graduated in 1965, he joined Beta Chi, which left the national Sigma Nu fraternity in protest of its

racial exclusion rules. Stanford's legendary writing professor, Nancy H. Packer, became his mentor and one of his closest lifelong friends. During the waning days of Tom's life, his wife, Kathy, read him one of Packer's short stories, as he lay in bed. Eyes closed, Tom seemingly falling asleep, Kathy said she would restart the story later. "Why?" Tom asked. "I'm enjoying it," the most he'd said in days. So his wife continued to the end at which point she commented, "It's as if Nancy is in the room with us." Her husband agreed.

Parker served in the Army Reserves, earned his master's degree in creative writing from San Francisco State University, and went into business in 1970s San Francisco with partner Paul Crowley. Their company, Media West, created first slide shows, then elaborate multimedia productions for corporate meetings and events. Parker's novel, "Small Business," was an evocation of this time, during which he met his soon-to-become wife, Kathy, on a blind date; they were married for fifty years. Their son, Gabriel, made their family complete. A prior marriage had ended in divorce.

In addition to writing books, short stories, speeches for executives, and corporate presentations, Parker taught writing classes for years — at Stanford, the University of California, Cañada College, Foothill College, and privately. These private classes — held at his studio on Ramona Street in Palo Alto and his home in Menlo Park — became the writing salon of the San Francisco Peninsula, attended by many from across the Bay Area who themselves became published authors.

When he wasn't writing or teaching, Tom loved to play tennis, cook, read, and spend time with family and friends. Most of all, he lived his whole life as a humorist who delighted in making the unexpected witticism, often at the most serious of times. On a gurney at the ER a few weeks before his death, barely able to speak, his once expansive voice weakened by Parkinson's, he suddenly uttered a single word: "Rosebud." Everyone in that room who had seen "Citizen Kane" roared. Tom's wife asked their son, "How is he still funny?" They looked at his face: eyes were closed, no expression save the one giveaway: that single raised eyebrow — his signature. He was a funny man. Even in the ER not knowing if he would ever come home again. He passed away peacefully at home on March 15, 2026, survived by wife Kathy, son Gabriel, brother Kenneth, and niece Cela. A Celebration of Life will be forthcoming.

PAID OBITUARY

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS



Magali Gauthier

Volunteer Josie Klieman rearranges hangers at the clothing swap station at the Earth Day Festival in Atherton on April 21, 2024.

### Volunteer for Earth Day in Atherton

The town of Atherton is seeking volunteers for its annual Earth Day event at Holbrook-Palmer Park, which runs from 1-4 p.m. on Sunday, April 26. Volunteer shifts are for a minimum of three hours and start as early as 11 a.m. and end as late as 6 p.m.

This year's theme, "Our Power, Our Planet," highlights practical and community-driven solutions to sustainability challenges. Volunteer hours and school credit can be verified for participation in the event. For more information or to register, visit [atherton.news/volunteer-form](http://atherton.news/volunteer-form).

### Portola Valley's new sheriff's captain

A new San Mateo County Sheriff's Office captain will be overseeing policing services for the town of Portola Valley. Capt. Brandon Hensel is a Redwood City native who brings more than two decades of service with the Sheriff's Office in roles that include corrections, patrol and court security. He also has experience as a K-9 handler and trainer.

Hensel recently served as bureau commander for the Transit Police Bureau, where he oversaw public safety along the Caltrain corridor and was in a leadership role as incident commander during Super Bowl LX at Levi's Stadium.

In a town press release, Hensel said he looked forward to working with Portola Valley's leadership, local organizations and the community to provide high-quality services. Hensel will get a formal introduction the Town Council meeting on Wednesday, April 22 at 7 p.m.

### Shred It Day for Woodside residents

The Woodside Community Foundation is hosting Shred It Day from 8-11 a.m. on Saturday, April 11, at Town Hall, 2955 Woodside Road. The event is for Woodside residents only. For free shredding services, residents may drive up from Woodside Road and drop off their papers to be shredded on site.

Only loose papers will be accepted and paper clips and staples are not an issue. Binders or metal cannot be shredded. Residents must be prepared to present proof of Woodside residency. Shredding will be available for three hours or until the truck is full. For more information, visit [woodsidegiving.org](http://woodsidegiving.org).

### Local spring art fair

Alice's Restaurant, located at 17288 Skyline Blvd. in Woodside, is hosting a spring art fair featuring local artists from 3-8 p.m. on Wednesday, April 22. The event will feature unique handmade gifts, jewelry, pottery, paintings and more.

### Assemblyman hosts community coffee in Portola Valley

Assemblyman Marc Berman, D-Menlo Park, is hosting a community coffee with Portola Valley's mayor, Craig Taylor, from 8:30-10 a.m. on Friday, April 10, in the Alder Room, 765 Alpine Road. Residents are invited to enjoy a cup of coffee and ask any questions they have about state issues. For information about this and other upcoming events with Berman, visit [berman.asmdc.org/events](http://berman.asmdc.org/events).

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

THE 40TH ANNUAL PALO ALTO WEEKLY

# SHORT STORY CONTEST

ENTRY DEADLINE:

**APRIL 6 - MAY 15, 2026**

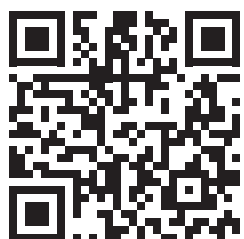
PRIZES FOR TOP THREE WINNERS OF EACH CATEGORY:

**ADULT, YOUNG ADULT AND TEEN**

ALL STORIES MUST BE 2,500 WORDS OR LESS

STORYTELLER CIRCLE SPONSOR

**WOODLAND  
SCHOOL** PORTOLA  
VALLEY



SUBMIT YOUR STORIES:  
[PALOALTOONLINE.COM/SHORT-STORY/](https://PALOALTOONLINE.COM/SHORT-STORY/)



## Town of Atherton

Planning Commission

April 22, 2026

REGULAR MEETING

6:00 P.M.

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

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

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

**NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN** that said application is set for hearing by the Planning Commission at its meeting on **April 22, 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:** April 22, 2026, 06:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

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

**Zoom Meeting Option and Details:**

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

**Meeting ID:** 841 5024 9099

**One tap mobile:**

+13017158592 (Washington DC)

+13052241968 (US)

**Find your local number:**

<https://ciathertonca.zoom.us/j/kglcVN4cq>

**Remote Public Comments:**

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

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

#### Projects under Public Hearing:

Consideration of a **Tree Protection Zone Exception (PTPZ26-00002)** to accommodate two small one-story additions as part of a larger remodel and second-story addition to an existing single-family residence on a portion of **29 Lowery Drive (APN 061-252-090)**. The subject site is a pending parcel associated with an SB9 urban lot split at 29 Lowery Drive. The parcel will be approximately 27,048 square feet in size and located within the R-1A Zoning District. Atherton Municipal Code (AMC) Sections 8.10.050 (Request for exceptions to the Tree Protection Zone (TPZ)) and 8.10.020 (Definitions) outline the requirements for construction activities within the TPZ. The Town of Atherton's Heritage Tree Preservation Standards and Specifications further describes that the Planning Commission may grant a Tree Protection Zone Exception (PTPZ) in the R-1A Zoning District for projects that are within a distance of a heritage tree less than 8 times the diameter of the trunk at breast height, noted as "8x." The PTPZ application requests that the Planning Commission consider approval of two additions of 24 square feet and 73 square feet that are 2.14x and 2.5x from one (1) 50-inch Coast Live Oak, respectively. The existing residence is currently located 1.4x from the subject Coast Live Oak.

This proposal has been determined to be categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to AMC Section 15.32.100 and CEQA Section 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land).

If you have any questions on the item, please contact Gerry Martin, Assistant Planner, at [gmartin@athertonca.gov](mailto:gmartin@athertonca.gov) or (408) 809-9513.

The agenda for this meeting with links to related staff reports can be found online by **Friday, April 17, 2026**, here: <https://www.athertonca.gov/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 PLANNING COMMISSION

/s/ Brittany Bendix

Brittany Bendix, Consulting Town Planner

## Sequoia Hospital in Redwood City gets new president

By Embarcadero Media staff

Dignity Health has appointed Christine McSweeney as president of Sequoia Hospital in Redwood City and Dominican Hospital in Santa Cruz, the health system announced Monday.

"I am deeply committed to continuing the excellent work already underway at both facilities and working collaboratively with our dedicated caregivers, staff, and the communities we serve. I look forward to building on the strong foundations here and contributing to the health and well-being of the Central Coast,"

McSweeney said in a statement on April 6.

McSweeney is set to start on April 13 and will oversee operations at both hospitals. She previously served as president of Holy Cross Hospital-Jordan Valley and Holy Cross Hospital-West Valley in Utah, according to Dignity Health.

McSweeney holds an MBA and is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE). ■



Christine McSweeney

## Oracle to cut 310 positions in Redwood City

700 positions cut across California

By Hannah Bensen

Oracle plans to lay off more than 650 employees across the Bay Area, including 310 in Redwood City. It also plans to lay off 50 employees in Santa Monica.

According to public notices filed in early April, the tech giant plans to lay off 184 positions in Santa Clara, 158 positions in Pleasanton and 310 positions in Redwood City.

Of the employees impacted in Redwood City, over half of the positions were software developers or in software development management, according to the company's public WARN notice filed with the state's Employment Development Department.

Employees who are affected in Silicon Valley are located at 500 Oracle Parkway in Redwood Shores, 230 Leonard Stocking Dr. in Santa Clara, and 5815 Owens Dr. in Pleasanton. Affected employees will depart by June 1, according to Oracle's public WARN notice.

With this round of layoffs, the company has cut over 1,100 positions in California alone since October.

Globally, the company has reduced its staff to 162,000, and last fall, it cut hundreds of employees to invest in data centers that will power artificial intelligence models.

"The demand for cloud computing for AI training and inferencing continues to grow

faster than supply," Oracle wrote in its most recent quarterly earnings report in March. "AI models for generating computer code have become so efficient that we have been restructuring our product development teams into smaller, more agile and productive groups."

"This new AI Code Generation technology is enabling us to build more software in less time with fewer people."

California has the highest unemployment rate in the nation, at 5.4% in January compared to the national average of 4.3%, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The unemployment rate in California has ticked up slowly from 4.4% since January 2023 amid widespread layoffs among large technology companies in Silicon Valley.

Amazon laid off hundreds of workers in Silicon Valley this year and announced a plan to reduce its corporate workforce by 16,000 people nationwide, its second major round of layoffs since October. Meta has indicated plans to lay off over 800 employees in Silicon Valley since October. ■

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

# Livermore vets to transfer to Menlo Park as VA nursing home shuts down

VA complex in East Bay wine country faces uncertain future given feds' 'realignment project'

By Jude Strzemp

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is set to permanently close its community living center in Livermore and relocate the resident veterans to other nursing homes, Livermore Vine has learned.

Located at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System - Livermore Division, the CLC in Building 90 is part of the 113-acre federal medical complex in Livermore Valley wine country offering primary care and specialty health services for veterans.

All 27 resident veterans in the CLC are set to be moved to "nearby facilities" during the next three months, including the VA community living center in Menlo Park and "other community nursing home locations", VA regional director of public affairs Damian

McGee told Livermore Vine on Monday afternoon.

As a result of the transfers, veterans will receive improved services in more modern facilities and families will have better access to public transportation, McGee explained.

"This transition has been in the works for years, as the Livermore campus is more than 100 years old and faces significant challenges due to its aging infrastructure," he said.

VA representatives first confirmed the CLC's permanent closure timeline to community partners via email last week.

"All our veterans currently at this location will be temporarily relocated to Menlo Park," VA officials said in the emails, later obtained by The Almanac's sister publication, the Livermore Vine. "At the same time, please be aware

that the Livermore CLC will be closing permanently."

Beginning in June, there will no longer be activities or services at the site such as bingo games and food donations, they wrote to partner organizations.

"We understand this may come as a significant change, and we truly appreciate all the support, time, and care that has been given to our veterans here," VA officials added.

In recent years, the VA has eyed a "realignment project" for its Livermore Division, including the prospect of closing the entire complex permanently, a move whose roots can be traced back at least two decades.

According to the most recent update on the VA website regarding the Livermore realignment project — provided in September 2022 — the estimated \$505 million initiative includes

constructing a new outpatient clinic in Fremont; constructing a new outpatient clinic, a 120-bed community living center and a logistics center in French Camp as well as renovating an existing space in Palo Alto for use as a specialty procedure center.

The update also states that the Central Valley campus is planned for construction in Stockton. Following the construction and renovation phases of the project, the VA plans to decommission the Livermore campus.

As of Monday, April 6, the complex is operating with normal services and hours, according to the VA website.

McGee said veterans at the CLC and their families have been informed about the relocation plan. ■

Email Staff Writer Jude Strzemp at [jstrzemp@almanacnews.com](mailto:jstrzemp@almanacnews.com).

## YOUTUBER

continued from page 8

on April 2, Maza was released without needing to post bail and was ordered to stay at least 50 yards away from Costco on Rengstorff Avenue.

"It appears Maza's actions were not only not a legitimate attempt of self

defense, but he, along with the rest of his group, was actively seeking to create a circumstance in which he could justify using pepper spray," Wong wrote.

Attorney Watters said he plans to sue Maza for racketeering and injury over the Mountain View incident, alleging his client may be unable to work if his vision loss turns out to be permanent. Damages could exceed \$1 million, and

Watters said the suit could be filed as soon as Friday.

The next hearing in Maza's criminal case is scheduled for May 19 in the Santa Clara County Superior Court.

In Watters' separate civil case against Troyan and other auditors over their actions in Menlo Park, Federal District Judge Noël Wise denied Watters' request for a temporary restraining order without

a hearing, saying the complaint does not show immediate harm requiring urgent intervention while the suit proceeds. Watters has since appealed that decision to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Regardless of the outcome, his civil case will move forward. ■

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

## TRAIL

continued from page 5

supporting the health and well-being of local residents," said Brian Malone, assistant general manager of Midpen in a press release. "We're proud to collaborate on this project that balances accessibility with environmental care."

The city began construction on the new entrance in January and the gate was completed at the end of March. It features a solar-powered automatic pedestrian gate, security fencing, a sidewalk extension, drainage improvements and signage. The gate is designed to meet the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission requirements to secure the Bay Trail outside of operating hours, which run from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

"Access to open space is not a small thing for our community," said East Palo Alto Mayor Webster Lincoln. "This gate is more than just an entrance, it's an invitation to walk, breathe, explore and belong in this incredible regional landscape that connects over 80 miles around the Bay."

The area draws a variety of birds, including sandpipers, great blue herons, pelicans and egrets. The marshland vegetation also serves as habitat for the endangered Ridgway's rail and salt marsh harvest mouse.

Midpen officials stated that the organization will engage with the community to ensure the new entrance meets the neighborhood's needs and supports outdoor recreation while protecting the ecologically sensitive area. ■

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

## Lasting Memories

An online directory of obituaries and remembrances.

Go to: [AlmanacNews.com/obituaries](http://AlmanacNews.com/obituaries)

## OBITUARY

Local residents who died recently include:

**Remo Modesto Imbimbo**, 93, of Woodside, who grew up in San Francisco and was the youngest of four children and son of Italian immigrants. He followed in his father's footsteps, going into the family's concrete business. His skill and work ethic also served him well in the Army, where he served in an

engineers battalion. With his family and partners, he helped build the Millbrae Square Shopping Center, which became the Millbrae Shopping Center. He died on March 20.

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



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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

# Public Notices

VIRSONO HEARING CENTER  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-303286  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) VIRSONO HEARING CENTER, located at 1165B O'Brien Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025.  
Registered owner(s):  
EARLENS HEARING CENTER, INC  
1165B O'Brien Drive  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
State of Incorporation/Organization:  
Delaware  
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 11/03/2020.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 18, 2026.  
(ALM Mar 27, Apr 3, 10 and 17, 2026)

MILKY TEA WORKS  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-303320  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) MILKY TEA WORKS, located at 724 PALOMA AVE, BURLINGAME, CA 94010.  
Registered owner(s):  
LOUIS SREMAC  
724 PALOMA AVE  
BURLINGAME, CA 94010  
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 March 20, 2026.  
(ALM Apr 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2026)

QUIRARTE PAINTING AND HOME SERVICES  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-303444  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) QUIRARTE PAINTING AND HOME SERVICES, located at 1514 W Selby Lane, Redwood City, CA 94061.  
Registered owner(s):  
HECTOR QUIARTE  
1514 West Selby Lane  
Redwood City, CA 94061  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on April 03, 2026.  
(ALM Apr 10, 17, 24 and May 1, 2026)

INQUIRY LAB COACHING  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-303275  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) INQUIRY LAB COACHING, located at 855 Jefferson Ave, BOX #104, Redwood City, CA 94063.  
Registered owner(s):  
NORBERT KEITH TAVARES  
855 Jefferson Ave, BOX #104  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on March 1, 2026.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 16, 2026.  
(ALM Apr 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2026)

KEN MCCOY CONSULTING  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-303297  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) KEN MCCOY CONSULTING, located at 2320 Cheshire Way, Redwood City, CA 94061.  
Registered owner(s):  
KENNETH F. MCCOY  
2320 Cheshire Way  
Redwood City, CA 94061  
State of Incorporation/Organization:  
California  
This business is conducted by: an Individual.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 18, 2026.  
(ALM Mar 27, Apr 3, 10 and 17, 2026)

R&B ELECTRONICS SERVICE COMPANY LLC  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-303349  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) R&B ELECTRONICS SERVICE COMPANY LLC, located at 1103 ODDSTAD DR, REDWOOD

CITY, CA 94063.  
Registered owner(s):  
R&B ELECTRONICS SERVICE COMPANY LLC  
1103 ODDSTAD DR  
REDWOOD CITY CA, 94063  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 24, 2026.  
(ALM Apr 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2026)

JDG REGISTRATION SERVICES  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-303170  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) JDG REGISTRATION SERVICES, located at 648 EL CAMINO REAL STE E, REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063.  
Registered owner(s):  
JDG REGISTRATION SERVICE, LLC  
648 EL CAMINO REAL STE E  
REDWOOD CITY, CA 94063  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 04, 2026.  
(ALM Mar 20, 27, Apr 3 and 10, 2026)

THE GUILD THEATRE  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-303271  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) THE GUILD THEATRE, located at 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park, CA 94025.  
Registered owner(s):  
PENINSULA ARTS GUILD  
905 El Camino Real  
Menlo Park, CA 94025  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.  
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 10/12/2017.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 16, 2026.  
(ALM Mar 27, Apr 3, 10 and 17, 2026)

PENINSULA DIAGNOSTIC AND AMBULATORY CENTER  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-303232  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) PENINSULA DIAGNOSTIC AND AMBULATORY CENTER, located at 91 WESTBOROUGH BLVD #1010, SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94080.  
Registered owner(s):  
PENINSULA DIALYSIS ACCESS CENTER, LLC  
91 WESTBOROUGH BLVD #1010  
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94080  
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA  
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.  
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on March 11, 2026.  
(ALM Mar 20, 27, Apr 3 and 10, 2026)

SORAYAMI  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
FILE NO.: M-303234  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) SORAYAMI, located at 620 Fox Court East, Redwood City, CA, 94061.  
Registered owner(s):  
SORAYA AMIRIAN  
620 Fox Court East  
Redwood City, CA, 94061  
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 March 11, 2026.  
(ALM Mar 20, 27, Apr 3 and 10, 2026)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO  
Case No.: 26-CIV-01817  
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:  
Petitioner: Peggy Chi filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: MARISSA HU to MARISSA CHI

THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.  
NOTICE OF HEARING: 5/20/2026, 9:00AM, Southern Branch of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063. A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:  
ALMANAC  
Date: 03/19/2026  
Hon. Stephanie G. Garratt  
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT  
(ALM Apr 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2026)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO  
Case No.: 26CIV01360  
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:  
Petitioner: C Terrigal Burn filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:  
C TERRIGAL BURN to CHRISTOPHER TERRIGAL BURN  
CHRISTOPHER TERRIGAL BURN to CHRISTOPHER TERRIGAL BURN  
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.  
NOTICE OF HEARING: 4/28/26, 9:00AM, Redwood City of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063. A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:  
ALMANAC  
Date: 2/27/26  
S Mariah  
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT  
(ALM Mar 20, 27, Apr 3 and 10, 2026)

## WOODSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS AND PROPOSALS (RFQ/P)

# NTF-01 SPORTS ENGINEERING SERVICES

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that Woodside Elementary School District ("District") is seeking to establish a pool of qualified persons, firms, partnerships, corporations, associations, or professional organizations to provide sports engineering, civil engineering, landscape architecture, and specialty engineering services for upcoming synthetic and natural grass fields projects.

Application packages are available on the Woodside Elementary School District's website, <https://www.woodsideschool.us/> or at the District's located at: 3195 Woodside Dr., Woodside, CA 94062

Respondents to the RFQ/P should mail or deliver five (5) bound copies, one (1) unbound copy, and one (1) electronic copy on flash drive of their Submittal, labeled "RFQ/P #NTF-01 Submittal," to:

**Hanwool Kim - Business Services CBO**  
**WOODSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

3195 Woodside Dr. Woodside, CA 94062

**ALL RESPONSES ARE DUE BY 2:00 P.M. ON Monday, May 4, 2026.** Oral, telegraphic, facsimile, telephone, and/or email Submittals will not be accepted. Submittals received after this date and time will not be accepted.  
(ALM Apr 10 and 17, 2026)

**To place a legal notice visit**  
**[AlmanacNews.com/legal\\_notices/](http://AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/)**



Courtesy Steve Fisch/Stanford Medicine

The compact proton therapy machine, a new innovation for treating cancer created by Stanford School of Medicine and industry partners, is the first of its kind in the nation.

## PROTON THERAPY

*continued from page 5*

the device from a "napkin drawing" to a prototype to a functional machine, Dr. Loo said. The research was funded by Stanford and its industry partners.

On Tuesday afternoon, medical personnel and community leaders, including Palo Alto Mayor Vicki Veenker, convened at a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the creation of the new technology.

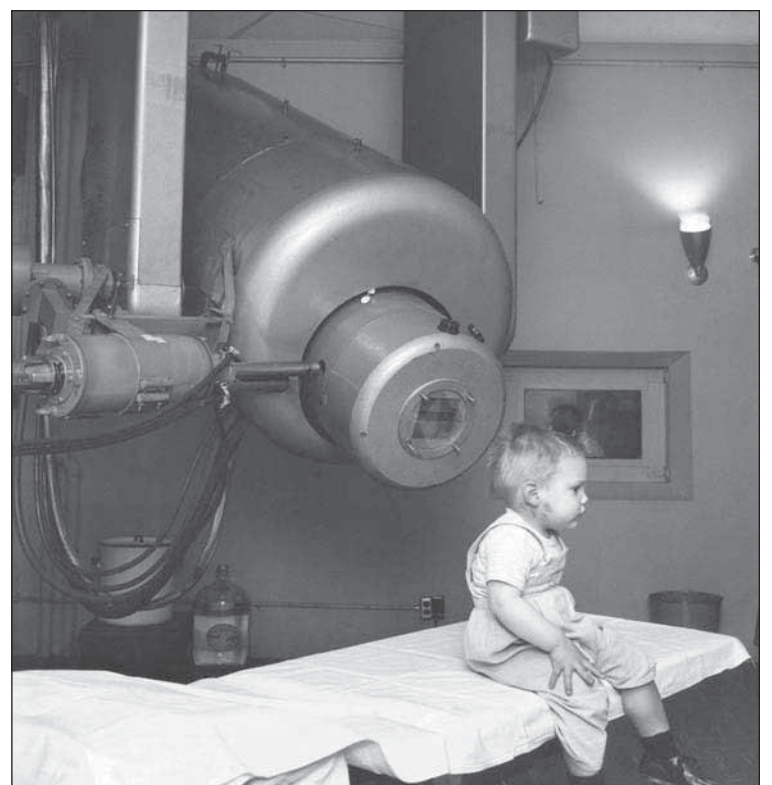
"Soon, we'll be able to treat our first patient using the smallest proton therapy machine in the world at Stanford Medicine," said Dr. Quynh-Thu Le, chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology at Stanford University, at the ceremony. "I call it the little proton engine that could."

In the last year, academic institutions have experienced a reduction in federal funding that some universities indicate could impact their

ability to conduct research. Last month, the U.S. Department of Justice under the Trump administration opened an investigation into the Stanford School of Medicine and threatened to withhold federal funding if it did not comply with demands to submit years of admissions data. Stanford's School of Medicine spends about \$1 billion per year on medical research.

"Federal funding has been kind of the core engine for fundamental research in academic institutions, which is traditionally the source of innovation and new discoveries that then translates out into industry," Dr. Loo said. "Funding cuts from federal research threaten that." ■

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



Courtesy Stanford Medicine

The first high-energy linear accelerator for medical use was developed at Stanford in the 1950s, built in the Department of Physics. In 1956, the first patient was treated: a little boy with an eye tumor. The boy lived into adulthood with his vision intact.

# Artscene

PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

## Down to Earth

From cleanups to crafts, festivals to hikes, here's where to celebrate the planet all month long

By Angela Swartz

This year, Earth Day events stretch out into the month of May throughout San Mateo and Santa Clara counties.

There's eco-crafting, shore cleanups, festivals and lots more you can do to show your appreciation for our planet.

Events are free unless otherwise noted.

**San Mateo County Libraries Earth Month events, ongoing:** Attend Earth Month-themed events across library branches.

These include a juggling, music, magic and storytelling performance to inspire environmental awareness (April 15, East Palo Alto); a workshop to create glass mossariums (April 17, Pacifica); creating blue-toned prints using sunlight (April 25, Portola Valley); and making upcycled key chains (April 29, Foster City).

Throughout April at various county library locations. [smcl.bibliocommons.com](http://smcl.bibliocommons.com).

**San Mateo Community College District Earth Day events, ongoing:** There will be interactive exhibits, clothing swaps, environmental employer booths and sustainable goodies. Events are at College of San Mateo (April 15), Skyline College (April 22) and Cañada College (April 23).

Throughout April at all district campuses. [tinyurl.com/SMCCDEarthFest2026](http://tinyurl.com/SMCCDEarthFest2026)



**Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District events, ongoing:** In April and May, the open space district is hosting guided activities and hikes (La Honda, San Carlos and Palo Alto); and offering volunteer opportunities to do trail maintenance (San Carlos) and remove invasive plants (Portola Valley).

Various dates. [openspace.org/get-involved/events-activities](http://openspace.org/get-involved/events-activities).

**Compost workshops, ongoing:** Silicon Valley cities and agencies are hosting composting workshops and giveaways to raise awareness about the practice. Events are in Cupertino (April 11), Foster City (April 18), South San Francisco (May 3) and San Mateo (May 9).

**Stylish Sustainability Craft Workshop, Los Altos:** Bring an old piece of clothing to the library and artist Gigi Farmer will help turn it into unique, wearable art by adding patchwork, applique, buttons, pockets, trim or lace.

April 16, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Los Altos Library,

13 S. San Antonio Road, Los Altos. [scl.bibliocommons.com](http://scl.bibliocommons.com).

**Mountain View Earth Day:** Mountain View's Earth Day festival will include an insect lab, rescue birds, an upcycling contest, a climbing wall, music and free bike repair.

April 18, noon-3 p.m., Mountain View Civic Center Plaza, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. [tinyurl.com/MtnViewEarthDay2026](http://tinyurl.com/MtnViewEarthDay2026).



Courtesy Frances Freyberg/Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Volunteers at work on a cleanup day at La Honda Creek Preserve.

**Belmont Earth Day:** Our Power, Our Planet: Belmont's Earth Day event this year will include a compost giveaway by Recology.

April 18, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Twin Pines Park, 1 Twin Pines Lane, Belmont. [tinyurl.com/BelmontEarthDay2026](http://tinyurl.com/BelmontEarthDay2026)

**Amy Imai Elementary garden improvement, Mountain View:** The Oshman Family JCC is partnering with Living Classroom to beautify the elementary school's native habitat garden by moving mulch, weeding and putting up signage.

Tickets are \$8 per family. April 19, 10 a.m.-noon, Amy Imai Elementary School, 253 Martens Ave., Mountain View. [tinyurl.com/ImaiSchoolWorkday2026](http://tinyurl.com/ImaiSchoolWorkday2026)

**San Carlos Earth Day:** San Carlos' Earth Day event includes booths and demonstrations focused on sustainability.

April 19, 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Wheeler Plaza Parking Lot on Laurel Street, San Carlos. [tinyurl.com/SanCarlosEarthDay2026](http://tinyurl.com/SanCarlosEarthDay2026)

**Palo Alto Earth Day Festival:** Palo Alto's Earth Day event

includes storytimes, zero waste trivia games, seed bomb and packet-making, and chances to hang out with Sequoia the Bald Eagle and Animal Control's gopher snake.

There will be a raffle for an induction cooktop or Palo Alto Junior Museum & Zoo membership.

April 19, 1-4 p.m., Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto. [/tinyurl.com/PaloAltoEarthDay2026](http://tinyurl.com/PaloAltoEarthDay2026).

**Eco Elegance fashion show, Redwood City:** The Cañada College Fashion Department will host an eco-themed student fashion show.

April 23, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Cañada College Theater, 4200 Farm Hill Blvd., Redwood City. [canadacollege.edu/fashion/images/ecoflyer2026web.jpg](http://canadacollege.edu/fashion/images/ecoflyer2026web.jpg).

**Love Our Earth Festival, East Palo Alto:** Love Our Earth Festival activities include interactive environmental education exhibits, storytimes, children's activities and crafts, live entertainment, plant-based cuisine, and T-shirt screenprinting.

April 25, noon-3 p.m., Cesar Chavez Ravenswood

Middle School, 2450 Ralmar Ave, East Palo Alto. [tinyurl.com/MPLoveOurEarth2026](http://tinyurl.com/MPLoveOurEarth2026).

**RethinkWaste Earth Day, San Carlos:** Tour Shoreway Environmental Center, make upcycled crafts, swap plants and low-waste treats at this event.

Registration is required. Walk-ins are limited.

April 25, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Shoreway Environmental Center, 333 Shoreway Road, San Carlos. [RethinkWaste.org/EarthDay2026](http://RethinkWaste.org/EarthDay2026).

**Coyote Point cleanup, San Mateo:** Help clean up the Bay along Ryder Park to celebrate Earth Day.

There will be music by DJ Ed, games and lunch.

April 25, 9 a.m.-noon, Ryder Park, 1801 J Hart Clinton Dr., San Mateo. [cityofsanmateo.org/1857/Earth-Day-Cleanup-2026](http://cityofsanmateo.org/1857/Earth-Day-Cleanup-2026).

**Millbrae Earth and Arbor Day:** The city of Millbrae is hosting its annual Earth and Arbor Day celebration with a tree planting and cleanup of Spur Trail and surrounding areas.

Students check out an exhibit at a previous Earth Day festival held by San Mateo Community College District.

See **EARTH**, page 21

# Gallery showcases artists in their element

3 artists offer diverse interpretations of earth, water and fire at Qualia Contemporary Art

By Mette Huberman

Three female artists are exploring the beauty and power of Earth's elements in two shows on view at Qualia Contemporary Art in downtown Palo Alto.

The artworks are divided into two separate exhibits: "Emergence" by Yulia Pinkusevich and Cathy Lu representing fire and earth in the front of the gallery space with Pinkusevich's paintings and Lu's ceramic sculptures and "Tidal Traces" with mixed-media works by Stella Zhang representing water in the back.

Lu's five large ceramic sculptures full of incense sticks are attention-grabbing, sitting on the floor in front of Pinkusevich's fire paintings on the wall. In fact, because they

are so large one has to be careful not to bump into the sculptures while walking through the gallery looking at the paintings on the wall.

In contrast, Zhang's mixed-media art in the back of the gallery is a subtler experience, where Zhang has created art pieces inspired by the ocean tides that represent the changes in women's bodies. The two exhibitions opened in early March and will be on view through May 2.

"We selected these three artists to exhibit during Women's History Month as a way to highlight the excellence of women artists in our program," said Dacia Xu, Qualia Contemporary Art owner and director. She has exhibited Zhang's art multiple times over the last six years, whereas this is her second

exhibit with Pinkusevich and the first one with Lu.

## Catching fire

According to the exhibition preview, "The title for 'Emergence' takes its inspiration from the interplay between the words 'emergence' and 'emergency,' referencing environmental and spiritual themes."

Pinkusevich is represented with 15 paintings of various sizes in the exhibit. She used various media in her paintings, such as charcoal, ash, charred paper, mica (a mineral), seeds, dried flowers, and gold flakes in addition to paint.

She explained: "The materials are meant to provide physical aspects in the paintings that link you back to the real world..." and to environmental issues. As examples, she mentioned charcoal from actual fires related to environmental degradation or flowers that need fire to open up to release their seeds.

Two large paintings, called "As the World Burns (Fire)" and "Breath of Life" (Air), she created as part of a four-part series of the elements (fire, air, earth, and water) that she called "Four Elemental Portraits." With "As the World Burns," Pinkusevich used a color palette reminiscent of fire, with its red, orange and pink patterns on a black background of acrylic and ink, and created the look of flames using dry pigment, paper and glitter, as well as the products of fire, such as charcoal, ash and flowers that need high heat to germinate their seeds. For "Breath of Life," Pinkusevich used acrylic, ink, ash, charcoal, glitter, and dry pigment on canvas in white, gray and pinkish tones to resemble a cloud or sky.

Pinkusevich also included six small paintings that she calls "Sacred Flames," part of her series of paintings that have sacred fires as a theme. They have an arched shape reminiscent of Russian Orthodox church icons. As Pinkusevich noted, "the shape of the canvas is supposed to have a sacred hint to that form." From the bottom edge of each painting, she has hung by copper chains two or three natural objects, such as bones, shells, or seeds, that Pinkusevich has collected either by herself or with her family over the last 25 years. "They're meant to be markers of life but also reminders of particular moments."

"Sacred Flame 6" is painted with ink and acrylic in orange, black and white tones. At the bottom edge of the painting hangs a carved bone, a shell, and a seed.



Courtesy Qualia Contemporary Art

Yulia Pinkusevich used fiery colors as well as charcoal, ash and flower seeds to evoke the element of fire in her painting "As the World Burns," seen here in a detail.

Pinkusevich said that the bone is a horse bone that she found in Iceland during her honeymoon more than 10 years ago, and the seed is from a necklace that was gifted to her by a local when she was 16 years old and living in Argentina.

Three of Lu's five ceramic sculptures are large peach-shaped vessels encrusted with glazed pits in amber, ochre, tangerine, and jade-green with serrated leaves at their base. Numerous incense sticks extend from tiny pores like exaggerated hairs.

Peaches are a traditional Chinese symbol of longevity and prosperity. The peach is also the state fruit of Georgia, a symbol of the southern United States, and in the online world, the peach emoji has sexual or gendered connotations. Lu notes that she likes that "this one object or fruit can have several meanings depending on which cultural lens you look at it through."

Another of Lu's sculptures is a large incense burner, which she made in 2023 after coming back from Taiwan to mark the 100th day of passing for her Ah-gong (grandfather). It references the incense burners that are found in many Buddhist or Taoist temples, where lighting incense or joss sticks is a common practice in Chinese and Taiwanese communities. They are a way to

communicate with the afterlife and ancestors, or deities. It is also a way to clear or purify a space. "It's my family's practice, as well as part of my studio practice since 2020. I start every studio day with lighting incense," Lu said.

A final sculpture is called "Nüwa's Arm with Incense," which references the arm of the Chinese goddess who is represented as half-woman, half-snake. Lu has created a textured, blue segmented tube curled along the floor with fingers and long, glossy-looking nails at one end and incense sticks poking out from small, yellow pores the length of the arm. In Chinese mythology, Nüwa is the foundational creator goddess, who created humans from yellow clay. Lu fittingly represents Nüwa's serpentine arm in clay covered with incense sticks.

## Making waves

"In 'Tidal Traces,' Zhang approaches the tide not as a representative subject but as an embodied condition. The ebb and flow of oceanic systems function as a conceptual framework through which the artist reflects on memory, emotion, and the body's negotiation with external forces," according to the exhibition preview.

See GALLERY, page 21

## 2026 Earth Day Festival

Buy Less, Conserve Move Recycle, Community  
Choose Well Engery & Sustainably Compost & Action  
Water Repurpose

**Our Power, Our Planet.**  
Lead with Action.

Join us for a meaningful celebration dedicated to raising environmental awareness and taking action!

Sunday, April 26, 2026

1:00-4:00 PM

Holbrook- Palmer Park  
150 Watkins Ave, Atherton

Register at [Atherton.News/Earth-Day](https://Atherton.News/Earth-Day)



*Progress does not show up silence.  
It happens when people show up.*

Environmental progress is built through everyday action - from communities protecting ecosystems to innovators advancing solutions.

## EARTH

continued from page 19

April 25, 9 a.m.-noon,  
Green Hills Elementary  
Fields, 400 Ludeman Lane,  
Millbrae. [tinyurl.com/MillbraeEarthDay2026](http://tinyurl.com/MillbraeEarthDay2026).

**Atherton Earth Day:**  
Atherton's Earth Day event will feature interactive booths, food and hands-on activities.

April 26, 1-4 p.m.,  
Holbrook-Palmer Park,  
150 Watkins Ave., Atherton.  
[Atherton.News/Earth-Day](http://Atherton.News/Earth-Day).

**Living Electric Fair, Los Altos:** Explore 20+ exhibitors focused on helping people go electric, from commercial and residential buildings, appliances and utilities to transportation. There will be a "build your own" electrification project station, a craft area and live music from The Song Gardeners.

May 3, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.,  
Main and State Streets, Los Altos. [downtownlosaltos.org/event/living-electric-fair](http://downtownlosaltos.org/event/living-electric-fair). ■

Angela Swartz is a  
Contributing Writer.



Volunteers clean up the shore at Ryder Park in San Mateo.

Courtesy city of San Mateo

# Employment

Genesys Cloud Services, Inc. seeks Principal Professional Services Engineer in Menlo Park, CA to be accountable for the Genesys implementation during all stages of the project lifecycle: Business Requirements specification & analysis, Technical Design specification, Implementation & Integration of the solution, Telecommuting allowed for this position. Salary range: \$213,512.00 - \$223,512.00. Send resume to: [Miriam.Graeff@genesys.com](mailto:Miriam.Graeff@genesys.com). Include job code JR110446 in reply. EOE.

## ACCOUNTING

Robinhood Markets, Inc. has an opening in Menlo Park, CA for Senior Corporate Accountant (10274106): Prp & post jrnl entris incldng intrcmpny jrnl entris in accrdnce with US GAAP. Tlcmgt prmtd. Salary Rnge: \$125,000 - \$155,250/year. Minimum Requirements for Position: Master's degree in Accounting, Finance, or a closely related field (or foreign equivalent) and 1 year of experience in the job offered or a related accounting occupation. Education or Experience must include: Experience with journal entries and reconciliation processes. Financial statement analysis and variance analysis. Audit procedures and accounting research under U.S. GAAP. Internal controls, including SOX compliance and testing. Intercompany elimination reviews. Intercompany reconciliations testing. Spreadsheetbased financial analysis. Background checks req. See bnfts at <https://careers.robinhood.com/benefits>. Email resume with job title & job code Ref#10274106 to [rhijobs@robinhood.com](mailto:rhijobs@robinhood.com).

**The Almanac offers employment advertising.**

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## GALLERY

continued from page 20

Zhang's exhibit includes nine mixed-media artworks. The number nine has special meaning to her because it is the largest single number, "signifying the end of a cycle and the preparation for a new beginning," related to tidal and bodily changes. She also explained that nine is considered a lucky number in China.

Zhang uses materials closely connected to the body, such as knitted fabric, thread, cloth and paper, as well as ground pigment in bright and neutral colors. "These soft, fragile and stretchable materials can be sewn, repaired, layered and distressed, reflecting the way bodies absorb pressure from time and the environment," as described in the exhibition preview.

In the reddish-colored "Weiriness" (2026), Zhang said that for this piece she used more than 20 layers of fabric which resemble aging skin with wrinkles, as well as the movement of water and tides. A white, sparkly center further looks like a sunset against the reddish sky.

In the piece "Sinking," she used even more layers of fabric and added a found object from the beach that provides additional texture against a dark-reddish background and recalls the theme of ocean tides. "Retreat" also has a found object but protruding from the canvas in black and white nuances,



Courtesy Qualia Contemporary Art

The exhibition "Emergence," on view at Qualia Contemporary Art, features paintings by Yulia Pinkusevich and ceramic sculptures by Cathy Lu.

which Zhang described as "very quiet, like Oriental philosophy."

Pinkusevich strongly encourages people to see the exhibit to support artists during a time of recession in the art world. She said, "I hope that people understand that even these small gestures of appreciation really make a big difference for the artists." She also reflected on the importance of art in today's world, "The world is completely crazy and only getting crazier; that's why art matters more and more because art has a way of speaking truth in nuanced and subtle ways."

Xu reflected on what she hopes the audience takes away

from the exhibits: "I hope audiences can see just how much excellence is being produced by women artists in the Bay Area, and how emotionally powerful, spiritual and formally sophisticated that the work can be seen all at once." ■

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

"Emergence" and "Tidal Traces" will be on display through May 2 at Qualia Contemporary Art, 229 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto. [qualiagallery.com/exhibitions](http://qualiagallery.com/exhibitions)

## LOS ALTOS STAGE COMPANY

**THE CHERRY ORCHARD**  
adapted by Tom Stoppard  
Anton Chekhov  
directed by Gary Landis

**APRIL 16 - MAY 10, 2026**

[losaltosstage.org](http://losaltosstage.org)  
650.941.0551

Bus Barn Theater 97 Hillview Ave., Los Altos 94022

# Food & Drink

## Finding food on facebook

Inside Facebook Marketplace's thriving – and largely unregulated – food business

By Karla Kane

From custom cookies and garlic noodles to empanadas, Dubai chocolate strawberries and much more, Facebook Marketplace has emerged as a platform to connect buyers with sellers — including vendors of homemade food and drinks — since its launch a decade ago.

A quick local search of the Menlo Park company's platform on any given day brings up many edible items for sale within an adjustable radius. Facebook Marketplace is free to use for sellers arranging local pickups and direct payments, making it appealing for those looking to reach potential buyers in their community, users say, although there are some risks involved.

We spoke with several Peninsula bakers about their experiences using the platform to sell their homemade food — and checked in with local public health departments about the official rules sellers are meant to follow.

In Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, people can legally sell certain foods made in home kitchens directly to the public if they have a cottage food operation (CFO) permit or a permit for a microenterprise home kitchen operation (MEHKO), as referenced in California Retail Food Code 113758(b)(4). Permitted cottage food operators may sell food products that are likely to be safe at room temperature, as determined by a list from the California Department of Public Health.

"Environmental Health encourages community members to be cautious when purchasing food from unverified sources, including online food sales through social media platforms," a spokesperson for the Santa Clara County Public Health Department said in an email. "Unpermitted food sales can pose serious health risks including food poisoning, especially when food is prepared in home kitchens that are not designed for major food production, and the food operator does not follow basic food safety practices."

Redwood City baker Erin Kudrov, who cooks using the name K's Sweet and Savory, got her cottage food operation permit about a year ago and has been selling baked goods, including pies, cakes, cookies and brownies, on Facebook Marketplace for about six months.

She spent 20 years in the corporate culinary world before embarking on her own home baking endeavor. She documents her culinary projects and processes on other social media sites, including YouTube and Instagram, and also sells via the online community platform Nextdoor.

Kudrov has also done some pop-up events and hopes to do more in the future. Peanut butter brownies, mint chocolate brownies, colorful cupcakes and other custom treats are among her most popular products, she said.

"The only obstacle I kind of find with selling online, or even from my home in general, is getting myself out there, because I don't have a storefront so (I'm) trying to be the baker, the picture taker, all in one," she said.

Most of Kudrov's sales have come through word of mouth rather than social media, although there have been periods of Facebook Marketplace success, such as during Thanksgiving, when she received several pie orders through the platform.

Facebook provides an easy way to advertise her products, although she suspects that many food vendors using the site do not have the county permits to sell homemade food, which she finds frustrating.

"I'm finding a lot of people I'm 99% sure do not have a cottage license that are trying to sell, and there's so many of them that it's competition," she said.

"One of the things that you have to advertise when you're placing an ad is your permit number and the city or county you're permitted through," Kudrov added. "(But) it's not like Facebook is vetting these people to make sure they're obeying the laws; that's not their job."



Seegar Gray

Nina Taylor stands for a portrait with loaves of bread she baked for Facebook Marketplace buyers at her home in Palo Alto.

Facebook Marketplace does review posts before approving them, and it has a list of restricted and prohibited items. Although there is not a "food" category, food and beverage posts are apparently allowed regularly. Meta, Facebook's parent company, posts its commerce rules, which state that buyers and sellers must comply with the company's terms and policies and "all applicable laws and regulations."

(Meta did not reply to requests for this news organization for more information on policies or oversight regarding food and beverages for sale on Facebook Marketplace.)

The Santa Clara County Public Health Department spokesperson said that "CFOs and MEHKO operators must include their permit number on social media profiles or posts." And according to an emailed statement from San Mateo County Health Communications Officer Preston Merchant, "Environmental Health Services periodically checks online food sales platforms for unpermitted vendors and pursues enforcement if they are identified."

Kudrov, who said she's never purchased food from Facebook Marketplace herself, joined a cottage food business group on Facebook, where she can interact with other home cooks and bakers and learn about various regulations and rules in different parts of the country.

When it comes to Facebook Marketplace (and any online sales), "I'm trying to focus on myself and how to get my business known and out there, and I make it known that I'm a licensed baker.

That's one of the first things I put in my ads," she said.

She hopes to eventually apply for a MEHKO permit so she can legally sell a greater variety of food types, including smoked meats.

"I have to do research on that and get more information before I even think about jumping into that part of it," she said. "I figure baby steps; one step at a time."

Palo Alto home baker Nina Taylor did not yet have a cottage food permit at the time of her interview with this news organization, and she's not alone among Marketplace sellers.

"I sometimes am the kind of person that's like, 'Let's leap, let's go,' then I realized, I should have actually looked some of these things up," she said of posting her artisan sourdough bread for sale before getting county authorization.

While she's confident in her knowledge of food safety because she's had a food handler card for several years, she does plan on pursuing a cottage food permit.

"It's something I'm considering doing because, of course, I don't want to get in trouble; I don't want folks to feel uncomfortable," she said. The process, she said, is on her "list of 2026 goals to tackle."

Taylor has always liked to cook, although it wasn't until last year that she was given a sourdough starter and fell in love with baking fresh loaves and experimenting with flavors. Friends and family took enthusiastic notice, and soon she was baking multiple times a week and considering their suggestion that she should sell her bread. She wasn't sure how to get started, but as she began

pondering, her social media algorithm kicked into gear and she realized Facebook Marketplace was being used by other home chefs.

"This could be an entry point for me to get my loaves to market," she realized. "Listing on Facebook is very intuitive, very easy." She had bought food via Facebook in the past, and that positive interaction also helped inspire her.

"I have purchased custom sugar cookies from another at-home baker and they were phenomenal ... I've returned to them a couple of times for different things," Taylor said. "I figured, 'Well, that seemed to be pretty successful.'"

At the time of this interview, Taylor had only been selling for a few weeks but had already completed over a dozen orders and was about to prepare more. She enjoys experimenting with flavors including Asiago cheese, cheddar and jalapeno, Hatch chile, lemon-blueberry, and a croissant loaf with a flaky cinnamon-sugar exterior.

"I've become really proud of the product I put out," she said. "I'm hoping (customers) can really taste the love in the loaf."

When posting on Facebook

See **FACEBOOK**, page 23

Dig into food news. Follow the Peninsula Foodist on Instagram @peninsulafoodist and subscribe to the newsletter at [AlmanacNews.com/peninsula-foodist](https://AlmanacNews.com/peninsula-foodist) to get insights on the latest openings and closings, learn what the Foodist is excited about eating, read exclusive interviews and keep up on the trends affecting local restaurants.

## FACEBOOK

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Marketplace, she typically chooses a 15-mile radius, keeping sales on the Midpeninsula. Customers can pick up their orders at her home or she will meet up with them or drop off loaves at an agreed-upon location. Taylor aims to make the process communicative and fun, offering each customer photos and notes on their loaf's "journey."

"Everyone's always been really excited about the communications along the way," she said, noting that the updates "pressure test" buyers' follow-through to complete the orders. She doesn't require deposits or advance payments, and so far she said all customers have been responsive.

"I don't really have anything to lose from that perspective. If someone backs out, then guess what? I have a delicious sourdough loaf I can give to someone or make a delicious sandwich for my husband," she said.

One home baker in Sunnyvale, who asked that their name not be used because they have applied for a cottage food permit but not yet received it, said the casual nature of Facebook Marketplace means that transactions do sometimes fall through.

"I have had instances where

people will message me and then I bake fresh for them and then they never show up and completely ghost me," they said. "Since I'm just starting, I don't have a big operation or anything. I don't have a big volume of orders; I'm treading lightly until I get my license." They now ask for a deposit since they bake on demand for each order.

Los Altos teen and Castilleja School student Chloe Chiang has been baking for five years and selling her products on Facebook Marketplace and Instagram for the past four under the name flourbored. Her specialty is Japanese milk bread, a sweet and fluffy bread made with the Tangzhong method, using a roux that helps the bread stay fresher longer than other types.

"My special twist is, I add special flavors and swirl them inside," said Chiang, who has offered options such as matcha, black sesame, pumpkin chai and lemon. A current bestseller is matcha pineapple milk bread, inspired by the popular Hong Kong pineapple bun dessert.

When she got started, she and her parents knew of other youth bakers selling baked goods without permits, "so I thought it would be OK, but the idea was I did want to scale my business ... and to



Seegar Gray

Erin Kudrov stands for a portrait with a unicorn birthday cake she baked for a client at her house in Redwood City.

become more reputable," she said.

Last year, she obtained her cottage food license, which she said was a smooth process, and has now created a website for flourbored, adding new products such as hojicha cookie bark.

Building connections with your customers, she said, is key for small operations like hers. She arranges order pickups at a nearby

public park and appreciates the opportunity to meet customers in person.

"If you want to start local it makes sense to have that pickup option; you get to have your face out there more," she said.

Chiang thinks it would be fun to open a brick-and-mortar bakery sometime in the future, but for now she's happy with the side

hustle, baking on Wednesdays and weekends. Her advice for selling on Facebook? Make sure to repost your listings every so often, and when potential customers reach out, "Respond quickly to people," she said. ■

Email Assistant Lifestyle Editor Karla Kane at [kkane@almanacnews.com](mailto:kkane@almanacnews.com).

## Palo Alto's Reposado brings Mexican fine dining to downtown San Mateo

The restaurant features a broad range of Mexican fare with Oaxacan, Yucatan and Mayan influences

By Edwina Dueñas

Longtime Peninsula restaurateur Rob Fischer recently expanded his portfolio to downtown San Mateo, opening a second location of fine-dining Mexican eatery Reposado. Reposado got its start in Palo Alto in 2009, with the San Mateo location officially opening in February.

Reposado prides itself on offering a diverse range of Mexican cooking, with dishes inspired from many regions of the country such as Oaxaca and the Yucatan Peninsula.

"The food served is what you would expect at family events in Mexico City," Fischer said.

Expect appetizers such as shrimp empanadas, ceviche huachinango, queso fundido and

fried Brussels sprouts with pomegranate chipotle glaze (\$15.50-\$24). Popular entrees include the crepas con mariscos with shrimp and crab served on handmade blue corn tortillas, pork chop with an al pastor-inspired sauce, and Yucatan classic conchinita pibil (\$29.50-\$47). All entrees come with house-made tortillas, kept warm in a comal in the kitchen.

Vegetarian entrees include tempura-style tofu in a Baja-style macha cashew crema and chile poblano stuffed with soyrizo, potato and raisins and finished with pipian sauce, traditionally made of seeds and chile.

The new San Mateo restaurant is open for lunch on weekdays, brunch on weekends and dinner daily. Brunch entrees include grilled hangar steak and eggs with fresh tortillas, chilaquiles verdes with chicken tinga or adobo short rib, and French toast dipped in vanilla bean and cinnamon custard (\$20-\$35).

Reposado, meaning "rested" in Spanish, refers to the amount of time tequila has been aged in oak barrels. As such, guests will find blanco (unaged), reposado (rested), añejo (aged over a year) and extra añejo (aged three years

or more) tequila varieties on the menu. For a curated experience, guests can order a tequila or mezcal flight featuring three top shelf selections. In addition, a selection of margaritas with fresh lime juice and blue agave tequila is available, plus a handful of nonalcoholic drinks like the Mucho Loco Tamarindo and Jamaiquita.

Fischer took a fresh approach when designing the new Reposado, which is located at Brickline Flats.

"The original location is rustic, and we took the Palo Alto space down to its bones," Fischer said.

The design of the San Mateo restaurant is tailored to the nature of a modern, new building. Fischer combined two 2,200-square-foot spaces to create a roomier, 4,400-square-foot restaurant. The space features a black ceiling complemented by abstract chandeliers and ribbed wood panels surrounding the dining area. Situated along B Street and Baldwin Avenue, the space is in close proximity to the San Mateo Caltrain station.

Originally from Connecticut, Fischer also operates eateries Palo Alto Creamery, Scratch and British Bankers Club. He said he is thrilled about collaborating with



Courtesy Lori Stokoe for Reposado

Reposado offers a diverse range of Mexican cooking, with dishes inspired by many regions of the country.

Bay Area developer Prometheus and contributing to the Peninsula restaurant scene.

"We're very excited to be part of the growing downtown San

Mateo community," Fischer said. ■

Email Contributing Writer Edwina Dueñas at [eduenas3@protonmail.com](mailto:eduenas3@protonmail.com).

Reposado, 311 Baldwin Ave., San Mateo; 650-292-1321, Instagram: @reposadorestarant. Open Monday to Thursday from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 4-10 p.m. Open Friday from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 4-11 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 4-11 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 4-9:30 p.m.

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