

The Almanac

NONPROFIT LOCAL NEWS FOR THE MIDPENINSULA

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Opponent concedes to San Mateo County prosecutor in judge race

Brian Donnellan led with 80.6% to Jay Boyarsky's 19.4% in early returns

By Arden Margulis

Brian Donnellan has taken a decisive lead in the race to become the next San Mateo County Superior Court judge, according to election returns released early Wednesday morning, June 3.

Donnellan has received 80.6% of the vote while his opponent, Jay Boyarsky, has 19.4%.

"I congratulate Deputy District Attorney Brian Donnellan who appears headed to victory in the election," Boyarsky said in a statement. "His courtroom experience and background indicate he will be a worthy addition to the excellent San Mateo County judiciary."

The contest, on the ballot as the No. 4 seat, is the county's

first competitive Superior Court race since 2014. Judges are typically appointed by the governor and often run unopposed in subsequent elections, but the retirement of Judge Susan Greenberg created an open seat on the bench.



Brian Donnellan

Both candidates have worked as prosecutors for more than 20 years. Donnellan is a deputy district attorney in San Mateo County, while Boyarsky serves as chief assistant district attorney of the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office.

The final election night update, released shortly after

midnight on June 3, includes all in-person regular ballots but only vote-by-mail ballots received by the county elections office by Friday before Election Day.

So far, 80,325 ballots have been counted, representing 18% of San Mateo County's 447,306 registered voters, according to the county elections office.

Results will continue to be updated throughout the week with mail-in ballots. The county has over 30,000 ballots left to count. An exact total of remaining ballots was scheduled to be provided Wednesday evening. All 12,024 in-person votes have already been counted. ■

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



Lloyd Lee

Voters cast their ballots in East Palo Alto on Oct. 31, 2020.

High school district settles students' antisemitism lawsuit

Sequoia district pays \$325K and require staff training, new curriculum

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The Sequoia Union High School District will be teaching students and training staff about antisemitism as part of a \$325,000 settlement in a lawsuit that alleged the district discriminated against Jewish students.

The suit was filed in November 2024 by the families of six students from Woodside and Menlo-Atherton high schools. The lawsuit alleged that the district and its staff created a hostile environment for Jewish students as antisemitism began to rise with the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Besides paying the families of the students \$325,000, the settlement agreement makes it mandatory for every administrator, teacher, coach and staff member to complete an annual antisemitism training course and prohibits teachers from using supplemental curriculum

about the Israel-Palestine conflict without clearance from an independent agency. Starting this fall, world history students also will be taught about the history of antisemitism and what it looks like today.

The district also agreed to implement a new process to review and respond to complaints involving antisemitic actions and will have an independent agency oversee its compliance with these agreements through June 2029.

"We are committed to providing all students with a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment free from discrimination, harassment and bullying, and we have zero tolerance for antisemitism, or any form of discrimination, harassment, intimidation or bullying," said Superintendent Crystal Leach in a district press release.

Omer Beck, a former Woodside student, said the

settlement feels like "justice for all students who were experiencing discrimination within the district." He told The Almanac that it was common to hear students casually make remarks about each other's nationalities, race and ethnicity.

Beck shared that he was kicked out of the school's Freedom Club during his junior year — a club that was advertised as a space to learn about Palestinian culture, something he was interested in. During the first meeting, he said he found the club to be welcoming and light-hearted, but the second meeting was the complete opposite.

"The teacher, who was running the club, was lecturing about the political aspect of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which was a very dramatic change," Beck said.

While he believed the video fairly explained the international conflict, Beck said he was

surprised to hear the teacher make his own claims that "Jewish people were terrorists and ethnic cleansers." Beck spoke up to share that he didn't think these claims were true and was later told that his opinions weren't valued.

At the next meeting, Beck was accused of collecting evidence on other students while he was working on college applications. He said he was kicked out of the classroom and told not to come back.

"After I was kicked out, it was made very clear that Jewish students were no longer welcome in that classroom, and it was very disturbing. It felt like a blast from the past," Beck said.

Omer's father, Etai Beck, said that while discrimination is not new for the Jewish community, it was shocking to see that antisemitism still exists in modern times.

"We came here in 2008 to a very

open global community that felt very safe and now all of a sudden it feels like we need to hide again," Etai Beck said. "We can't wear some of our signs. We don't want people to know who we are."

As a parent, he said he is happy with the settlement agreements and the district's actions to implement real policies about curriculum and the review of complaints.

"There are a lot of teeth to this new arrangement, and I really hope that this becomes a story for all school districts throughout the entire country to understand that there are consequences for not keeping your students safe," Etai Beck said. "It happens to us as part of the Jewish community today and it can happen to any other community in the future." ■

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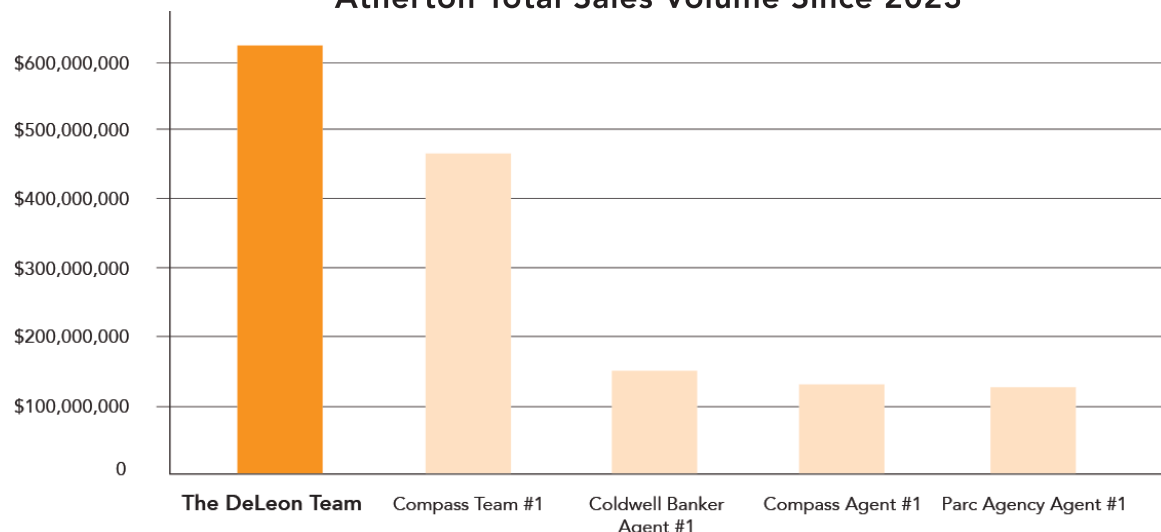
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Supervisor Lisa Gauthier scans a marshy area in Menlo Park while participating in San Mateo County's one-day homeless count on Jan. 29.

Homeless population rises in county's one-day count

Sheltered homeless population grows while unsheltered numbers hold steady

By Hannah Bensen

San Mateo County's homeless population has ticked up slightly in the past two years, according to new data from the county's "Point In Time" count earlier this year.

The federally mandated homeless count is conducted every two years and requires volunteers to canvas the entire county — including all streets, shelters, cars and parks — to identify unhoused people. This year's count took place on Jan. 29.

Preliminary results released June 1 found 2,240 people experiencing homelessness, up slightly from 2,130 in 2024.

That figure is nearly double the number of homeless people — 1,253 — counted in 2017. That was the county's lowest record figure in over a decade.

This year, 1,095 homeless people were located in shelters, an 11% increase from the 2024 sheltered population. Additionally, 1,145 people were unsheltered, the same as the 2024 tally. The county has expanded its shelter capacity by 41% since 2020, according to a county press release.

Of the 1,145 unsheltered individuals, 482 people slept in cars, 311 in RVs and 246 slept on the street.

Pacifica recorded the highest

number of unhoused residents in the county, with 228 people counted despite having a population of only about 39,000. By comparison, much larger cities reported fewer unhoused residents, including Redwood City (175) and Daly City (147). East Palo Alto, another relatively small city of roughly 30,000, also had a notably high count, with 107 unhoused residents. The figures suggest that Pacifica and East Palo Alto bear a disproportionate share of the county's unhoused population relative to their size.

The Point In Time count

See **HOMELESS**, page 17

Canepa takes early lead in race for San Mateo County elections chief

By Miranda de Moraes

Preliminary election results Tuesday night showed David Canepa leading Jim Irizarry in the race to head the San Mateo County's Assessor, Clerk-Recorder and Chief Elections (ACRE) Office.

The office has been held since 2011 by Mark Church, who decided not to run for reelection.

As of 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Canepa has 54.7%, while Irizarry has 45.3%, according to the San Mateo County Elections Division. Over 80,000 votes for Tuesday's primary election have been tallied, including 68,301 mail-in ballots and 12,024 vote center ballots.

Canepa, a county supervisor who used to lead the board, had just over 6,200 votes more than Irizarry, ACRE's second-in-command, who has served in the office since 2013.

"Hey, look — there's more votes to be counted," Canepa said. "But we're in a position right now where we think we're on a path to victory."

Canepa received \$246,590.50 in donations, with contributions from numerous labor unions like Service Employees International Union Local and United Food and Commercial Workers Local 5.

Irizarry had over \$130,000 in campaign funding, with at least \$128,000 of it self-funded.

Canepa is currently serving in his third term on the Board of Supervisors, meaning that if he wins, he would leave his seat two years early. If elected, he said he will seek to "modernize this office and restore

confidence in how it serves our community."

Canepa said he was prompted to run for the seat because he believes morale inside ACRE is poor and the office needs new leadership. He described the office's management as a "dumpster fire that needs to be extinguished" and called the workplace a "very, very toxic atmosphere."

ACRE has received a barrage of allegations from former and current employees related to retaliation, discrimination and a workplace culture driven by fear, this news organization revealed in a recent investigation by this news organization. Irizarry opponents point to these concerns as justification for the need for change, and why Canepa should be the guy.

Irizarry has denied such claims and defended his department, asserting that ACRE is committed to maintaining a "professional, respectful and collaborative work culture grounded in transparency and accountability."

Irizarry's endorsements include Church, who said Irizarry is the only candidate who is a state-certified property tax appraiser and who has administered over 35 elections, closed 13 property tax assessment rolls and expanded voter access to youth, seniors and underrepresented communities.

Find the latest vote tally on the County's election page at <https://tinyurl.com/CountyElection2026>. ■

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Ravenswood's Measure A school bond headed for approval

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Ravenswood City School District's Measure A appeared headed for approval on Tuesday night as early results show voters favor it by 66.2%, exceeding the 55% needed to pass.

The \$70 million bond measure aims to fund the construction

of new classrooms in response to the anticipated jump in enrollment after The Primary School in East Palo Alto closes this summer. Construction will primarily take place at Costano School of the Arts.

Measure A will tax property owners an average of \$27.50 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation until June 30, 2053.

Up until a few years ago, many of Ravenswood's schools had not been significantly renovated since the 1950s. Recently the district has completed the renovations of Cesar Chavez Ravenswood Middle School, Los Robles-Ronald McNair Academy and Belle Haven Elementary. The makeover at Costano will mark the district's fourth recent

construction project.

Students at Ravenswood's upgraded campuses are now learning in modernized classrooms with upgraded ventilation systems, technology, safety systems, green spaces and energy efficient infrastructure.

Last April, The Primary School, funded by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, announced it would

shut down its tuition-free private school at the end of this school year.

With over 400 students being displaced, Ravenswood hopes to use the bond measure funds to adjust construction plans for the sudden increase in enrollment. ■

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Incumbent Mueller takes overwhelming lead in San Mateo County supervisor race

Ray Mueller has 85% to challenger Joaquín Jimenez's 15%

By Arden Margulis

Incumbent San Mateo County Supervisor Ray Mueller seems poised to handily win reelection to his seat representing much of the southern part of the county and the Coastsides, according to results released after polls closed on Tuesday.

Mueller leads with 85% of the vote compared to Coastsides advocate and former Half Moon Bay mayor Joaquín Jimenez, who has 15% of the ballots counted on election night.

"I'm blown away by the margin," Mueller said. "I'm just so honored to have the opportunity to get to keep working with my neighbors to help people in our county."



Ray Mueller



Joaquín Jimenez

"Congratulations to Supervisor Ray Mueller for winning the election and running a good campaign," Jimenez told this news organization. "Going into this election, I knew it was gonna be an uphill battle, but this is democracy, and I am a big supporter of it."

As of shortly after midnight on Wednesday, 80,325 ballots — 18% of the county's 447,306 registered voters — had been counted on election night, June

2, which include all in-person votes and vote-by-mail ballots received by the Friday before election night.

Mueller is set to serve a second term without a general election since only two candidates ran for the seat.

Mueller, an attorney who was first elected to the board's District 3 seat in 2022, previously served a decade on the Menlo Park City Council, said his first term focused on public safety. Jimenez, a longtime Coastsides community advocate and former Half Moon Bay council member, said he ran to improve support and economic opportunity for farmworkers, in addition to wanting to work on housing and environmental issues.

District 3 encompasses Atherton, Menlo Park, Portola Valley, Woodside, San Carlos, and parts of Belmont, in addition to much of the Coastsides, including Pacifica, Half Moon Bay and unincorporated communities.

Election day results only include mailed ballots received before May 29 and in-person votes. Tallys from mailed ballots received after Friday were not available before The Almanac's deadline.

In the 2022 primary election, 174,122 people voted. ■

Bay City News contributed to this report.

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Rep. Mullin and challenger Hoelter likely to face off for District 15 seat in November

By Miranda de Moraes

U.S. Rep. Kevin Mullin will likely face off against first-time Republican candidate Charles Hoelter in November to represent California's Congressional District 15, according to San Mateo County's preliminary polling results.

As of 10 a.m. on Wednesday, June 3, Mullin was leading the five-candidate race with more than 60% of the vote, while Hoelter had about 25%. The three other candidates paled in comparison, with Democrat Anthony Van Dang in third place with just over 6%. Democrat Mantosh Kumar and Independent Jim Garrity each garnered around 4%.

"I look forward to helping elect Democrats across California and

the nation," Mullin said, "so we may take control of the House and be a check on Trump and MAGA extremism and preserve our democratic republic for future generations."

The congressional race reflects the redrawn maps approved by California voters in November to favor Democrats and in response to President Donald Trump's call to remake maps in Texas to help secure a Republican majority in the House of Representatives.

Mullin was born in San Mateo County and won the seat in 2022 with over 73% of the vote against Republican challenger Anna Cheng Kramer. Before his tenure in Congress, he represented San Mateo County in the California State Assembly from 2012 to 2022, serving as the



Kevin Mullin



Charles Hoelter

speaker pro tem from 2014 until his departure.

He signed over 60 bills into law, many of which focused on elections and democracy reform, like All-Vote-By-Mail. He said he's committed to bipartisan cooperation and also passionate about climate resiliency, calling himself one of the architects of the \$3.7 billion sustainability project that helped fund Caltrain's electrification and the creation of San Mateo County's OneShoreline sea level rise program.

Hoelter, the sole Republican candidate in the primary, is a retired UPS supervisor who has lived in San Mateo County for over three decades. His top three objectives are to keep "men out of women(s) sports," impose term limits on politicians, require voter ID at elections and "clean-up" voter rolls for all states.

He has been married 31 years, has three children and would like to create apprenticeship programs in high schools in all states.

Find the latest vote tally on the County's election page at <https://tinyurl.com/CountyElection2026>. ■

Email Staff Writer Miranda de Moraes at mdemoraes@almanacnews.com.

Bonini takes early lead over Camacho in tight race for San Mateo County superintendent

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Chelsea Bonini is leading by a hair for San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools with 50.48% as opponent Héctor Camacho follows with 49.52% according to early returns from the June 2 primary election. The two former educators vying for the seat both have decades of experience working in education.

As of 12:30 a.m. on election



Chelsea Bonini



Héctor Camacho

night, Bonini had won 32,666 votes while Camacho had 32,051.

The superintendent of schools oversees the San Mateo County

Office of Education and supports 23 school districts in the county. The person elected will be responsible for reviewing and approving each district's budget, monitoring compliance with state and federal laws, and reviewing each district's Local Control Accountability Plan.

Camacho is the executive director of Equity, Social Justice and Inclusion of the San Mateo County Office of Education. Over 25 years, he's worked

as a paraprofessional, teacher, counselor and served on the county Board of Education for 11 years.

Bonini is currently serving her second term on the Board of Education after being reelected in 2024. She formerly taught kindergarten, first grade and second grade and is also an attorney. Bonini has served on the school board for the San Mateo-Foster City Elementary School District. ■

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Contentious Woodside housing project gets thumbs-up from council

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The contentious multigenerational and affordable housing project on 10 Still Creek Road was approved in a 4-1 vote by the Woodside Town Council on May 26. Council member Hassan Aburish, who represents District 5, cast the dissenting vote.

The housing project is located in the Western Hills neighborhood in District 5 and was proposed by property owners Christin New and David Mittelman. The proposal for a main residence and three additional dwelling units is listed on the town's pipeline list of projects that will help it meet its state-mandated housing requirements.

After the project was denied by the town's Planning Commission in November 2025, the couple filed an appeal.

"This project has always meant more to us than just helping our family. We see it as a civic responsibility. Woodside has been working to meet its housing element obligations, and we're proud to help bring much-needed affordable housing to our community," New and Mittelman said in an email.

The couple's project to house their aging parents and offer affordable rental housing to local

workers faced an uphill battle. For six years, New and Mittelman struggled with getting their proposal approved due to issues with building setbacks, slope stability, and neighbors' concerns over wildfire risk and lack of emergency vehicle access.

The May 26 meeting was a continuation of the project's hearing on May 12, where neighbors brought in experts on wildfire and geophysics to make public comments opposing approval of New and Mittelman's proposal. The council opted to continue the meeting to better evaluate all the new information that was presented.

During deliberations, all council members except for Aburish expressed their support for the project after reviewing the submitted testimonies and the staff report.

While Aburish sympathized with New and her family's struggles to get the housing project approved, he said upon seeing how large the development would be, he could understand why it's been a point of contention among the neighbors.

Aburish compared the situation to another controversial project, on 215 Grandview Drive, that led to litigation between the property owner and the neighbors over the width of a private

road easement. The neighbors won the lawsuit and the property remains undeveloped, Aburish said.

"I would encourage everyone to please mediate," Aburish said. "I would hate to see you get this house built, move in and still have all this conflict with neighbors."

New and Mittelman explained that the circumstances of 10 Still Creek are different and they are confident in the legal basis of their project's approval. The couple said they look forward to starting the permitting process and hopes to break ground in 2027.

David Madrid, one of 54 neighbors who oppose the project, told The Almanac that after the Planning Commission denied the project, he met with New to ask her to reconcile with neighbors and work toward a compromise.

"The land that sustains Skywood Acres and Still Creek is beautiful and historic yet fragile," said Madrid. "My family and I want to be good stewards of that land and constructive neighbors to the people who live here."

Madrid said he sees his neighborhood as a place where people are respected and cared for and found the disagreement between New, Mittelman and the



Seeger Gray

Christin New and David Mittelman stand for a portrait near story poles marking the outline of a multigenerational home they plan to build at 10 Still Creek Road in Woodside.

neighbors "troubling."

"I remain committed to reducing that strife, pursuing reconciliation and restoring a sense of welcome in Skywood Acre and Still Creek," he added.

New and Mittelman said they appreciate the time that their neighbors and the council took to ask questions and carefully review their proposal. While it was a difficult process, they hope to move forward with their neighbors in a "spirit of goodwill"

and open themselves to conversations about their concerns.

"We hope this can be a good example of balancing housing goals with neighborhood concerns, all within the current rules," they said. "Still, this process showed some of the challenges Woodside faces with its zoning code and planning process." ■

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Google 'Debug Project' would release 32 million sterile male mosquitoes

By Kathleen Kirkwood /
Bay City News Service

They want to do what? A Google proposal to release 32 million mosquitoes in California and Florida might prompt double-takes.

The goal, however, is to "stop bad bugs with good bugs" and stymie the invasive *Aedes aegypti* mosquito species by releasing sterile male mosquitoes into the wild, according to Google's Debug Project.

Thus, when a wild female mosquito mates with a sterile male, her eggs won't hatch. And the mosquito population dwindles with each generation. Male mosquitos can't bite humans.

According to a notice in the federal register, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is reviewing the Debug request to release up to 16 million mosquitoes annually, over a period of two years, in California and Florida.

Aedes aegypti, known as the

yellow fever mosquito, is a small day-biting species with white stripes on their back and legs. They've become established in many areas of the state — especially Southern California and the Central Valley, according to the California Department of Public Health.

There are more than 3,500 different species of mosquito, but just *Aedes aegypti* transmits most cases of dengue, Zika, yellow fever and chikungunya.

Google's application for an experimental use permit calls for using lab-bred male mosquitoes infected with a naturally-occurring bacteria called *Wolbachia*. The bacteria would make the male mosquitoes unable to breed with wild mosquitoes, which don't have *Wolbachia*.

According to the Debug website, a team of engineers and scientists are building automated rearing systems that

See **MOSQUITOES**, page 12

Palo Alto Citywide



YARD SALE

Saturday, June 6 from 8am to 2pm

Shop the Sale

A full-page map listing all participating sale locations and merchandise will be printed in the Friday, June 5 edition of the Palo Alto Weekly. The map and sale listings will also be available online at www.paloaltoonline.com/yardsale in late May.

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Jury finds retired Woodside attorney guilty of molesting children

Alan Russell, 83, faces life in prison; he plans to appeal, his attorney says

By Katy St. Clair / Bay City News Service

A retired attorney from Woodside in San Mateo County was found guilty of sexual crimes involving children, District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe announced.

On Wednesday, May 27, Alan Russell, 83, was found guilty by a jury of being in possession of child sex abuse material and molesting several minors.

Russell's crimes occurred 20 years ago and spanned eight years, according to the county Sheriff's Office, and he used his role as a family friend to molest

three young boys whom he took on trips. He was arrested in March 2023.

Russell's attorney Peter Goldscheider said his client was "very disappointed" by the verdict and that he plans to appeal.

Goldscheider said the fact that the witnesses took between 20 and 30 years to come forward made the allegations difficult to rebut.

"I believe the entire prosecution was beyond the statute of limitations," Goldscheider wrote in an email Thursday, May 28, adding that it was "an interesting issue the courts of appeal and perhaps Supreme Court will be

called on to address."

Russell is scheduled to be sentenced on June 22 and is facing life in prison. He was remanded into custody after being out on \$2.5 million bail, according to Wagstaffe.

The trial started earlier this year but was delayed in January after Russell was placed on a 14-day involuntary psychiatric hold at Stanford Hospital.

At the time, Superior Court Judge Renee Reyna found Russell "voluntarily absented" himself from the trial by attempting suicide with a pellet gun shortly before the first day of opening statements on Jan. 20. ■

Kennedy Middle School teacher on leave, student arrested after alleged fight

By Arden Margulis

A teacher at Kennedy Middle School in Redwood City has been placed on paid administrative leave and one student was arrested after an altercation on May 22.

The teacher allegedly got into a physical altercation with a student shortly after the school day ended. The district immediately placed the teacher on paid leave for the rest of the school year while it conducted an investigation, district spokesperson Jorge Quintana said.

"Redwood City School District is committed to maintaining a safe learning environment at all district schools," Quintana said in a statement. "Kennedy Middle School administrators and support staff have communicated with

families and implemented a plan to support students in the teacher's classroom as the school year concludes."

Quintana added that counselors and student support staff would remain available for students who may need additional support.

The incident happened just two weeks before the middle school let out for the year. The district did not say what caused the incident.

The Redwood City Police Department arrested the 14-year-old male student on May 22 on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon likely to produce great bodily injury and assault with a deadly weapon likely to cause great bodily injury to a school employee for throwing a backpack at the teacher, according to Capt. Junsun Lee. The department's

investigation is still ongoing.

This news organization reviewed a video that appeared to show the student throwing a backpack at the teacher, who then put the bag down and confronted the student. The teacher appeared to attempt to put the student on the ground and fight the student until an adult intervened.

The police department reported that the parties declined medical attention in an activity log from the incident.

Quintana said the district is limited in the information it can share due to personnel and student privacy concerns. Lee said he could not provide additional details on the student's case because the student is a juvenile. ■

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

Major injuries in Ladera hit-and-run of three cyclists

The driver and two passengers fled the incident scene

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

A hit-and-run driver struck three bicyclists in Ladera on May 28, before she and her passengers fled the scene, abandoning a BMW car and fleeing on foot, according to California Highway Patrol Officer Sophie Lu. One cyclist was transported to Stanford Hospital with major injuries, she said.

The collision occurred on

Alpine Road and La Mesa Drive around 1:30 p.m., according to the CHP. The hit-and-run driver was described as a blonde Hispanic woman, approximately 35 years old, and the two passengers were described as Hispanic males.

As of June 1, there was no

information available on whether the suspects had been apprehended. Law enforcement officials said the investigation is ongoing. ■

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



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California Attorney General sues 23andMe for security breach

Genetic testing company based in Palo Alto 'lied to consumers about severity,' AG says

By Emily Margaretten

The California attorney general is suing genetic-testing company 23andMe, which was previously headquartered in Mountain View and is now based in Palo Alto, for a 2023 data breach that impacted nearly 7 million users.

In his suit, Attorney General Rob Bonta alleges that 23andMe, which changed its official name to Chrome Holding Co. last year, failed to adequately protect sensitive personal information and genetic data. The company then misled customers about a 2023 data breach that occurred over a period of five months, according to a May 28 press release.

According to the complaint, customer information was offered for sale on the "dark web" by unauthorized agents who touted that the data belonged to Asian-Pacific Islander and Jewish users. This occurred at a time of escalating anti-Asian and antisemitic hate and violence.

"23andMe collected genetic data about millions of people, failed to meet its obligation under California law to keep that information safe and then lied to

consumers about the severity of its 2023 data breach," Bonta said in the press release. "Our investigation found that the company failed to take basic steps to protect users' data — data including the sensitive personal information, family histories, and health conditions of consumers."

Founded in 2006, 23andMe was the first company to sell DNA sequencing kits directly to consumers. It quickly rose to prominence before facing financial hardships and filing for bankruptcy last year.

The 23andMe Research Institute, which acquired 23andMe's assets last year in a bankruptcy auction, said in a statement that it is a "newly established independent nonprofit organization" that isn't involved in the lawsuit.

"The lawsuit pertains to events and operations associated with the former commercial entity prior to the creation of the 23andMe Research Institute," spokesperson Tracy Keim said in the statement. "The institute was not involved in the complaint and has no role in the underlying litigation."

The data breach

In 2023, 23andMe confirmed that it had experienced a major data breach in which 14,000 accounts had been hacked, with unauthorized agents gaining access to the sensitive information of 7 million customers, including more than 850,000 Californians, according to Bonta.

The data breach involved a type of cyberattack called "credential stuffing," in which unauthorized agents collect sensitive information from businesses by finding weak and common passwords that customers tend to use to log into their accounts, according to the press release.

According to Bonta, the hackers accessed the company's system first by using account credentials stolen in other data breaches, including from MyHeritage, another genealogy site that had partnered with 23andMe. The security breach at MyHeritage was well-publicized, but 23andMe did not check or prevent credential reuse, Bonta said.

The agents then used a "vulnerability involving a critical coding error in 'DNA Relatives' — a feature that allowed DNA-related customers to share information and contact each other — to steal

additional identifying information, ancestry reports and reports indicating the percentage of DNA shared with potential relatives," Bonta said.

News about the cyberattack was only made public after the data of 1 million customers was offered for sale on the dark web, according to Bonta.

That same year, the California Department of Justice conducted an investigation and concluded that 23andMe's data security procedures, prior to the breach, "fell below security and industry standards," despite the company touting its security practices as meeting the "highest industry standards," according to Bonta's press release. Additionally, 23andMe "omitted key information in an effort to hide and downplay" the severity of the breach and the

company's responsibility for it, the release said.

"23andMe continued to inform consumers that there was no data security incident within its systems, despite being informed by the threat actor during ransom negotiations of multiple exploitable vulnerabilities within 23andMe's systems," Bonta said.

The lawsuit alleges that 23andMe violated multiple laws, including California's Genetic Information Privacy Act, Reasonable Data Security Law, False Advertising Law, Unfair Competition Law and the California Consumer Privacy Act. ■

Email Staff Writer Emily Margaretten at emargaretten@almanacnews.com.

Laurie Jenks

May 1, 1929 – April 27, 2026

Laurie Jenks, born Vera Dolores Engberg in San Jose, CA, passed away at her home in Atherton just a few days before her 97th birthday. She took great pride in her Swedish heritage and in her family's journey from Sweden to Galesburg, IL, and later to Ripon, CA and San Jose, where she spent her childhood on a ranch. Riding her big brother Glenn's pony and tending to two pet pigs were among special memories. Laurie lived in Mount Hermon during her high school and college years in a home built by her father. She studied at San Jose State and Wheaton College in IL, earning a degree in occupational therapy. She met John Jenks at Mount Hermon Christian Conference Center. They married in 1952, living in Palo Alto before settling in Atherton where they raised four children. The couple celebrated 65 years of marriage before John passed away in 2017.



Faith in Jesus Christ was the anchor for both John and Laurie, motivating their generosity and deep commitment to their family and their community, including Mount Hermon and Menlo Church, where they were both active members for over 65 years. Laurie's unique spirit of love and fun were evident to all who knew her. Her giving heart and boundless energy fueled her gift of hospitality. Laurie and John opened their home to friends and friends of friends, for church, school, and Young Life gatherings, always wanting to be good stewards of all they'd been given. With flowers, balloons and an endless supply of chocolate chip cookies, Laurie took every opportunity to celebrate.

Laurie was an avid gardener, known for her beautiful backyard and a fresh bouquet on the kitchen table. Her flower committee created sprays for Menlo Church services for years. With a love of nature and staying active, her life was full with camping, hiking, skiing, tennis, golf, and she even tried hang gliding at age 80. She crewed for John in nationwide sailing competitions for years.

Laurie is survived by her four children, Sharon Hughes (Steve), Linda Jenks, David Jenks and Nancy Jenks; six grandchildren and their four spouses; and eight great-grandchildren.

A private family gathering will be held this summer in her memory.

PAID OBITUARY

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TOWN OF ATHERTON

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

2026 CRACK SEAL AND SLURRY SEAL PROJECT
Project Number: 56171

- Scope of Work:** Performing crack sealing and Type II micro-surfacing per Town specifications on the listed streets, which includes notifications, traffic control, prep work, micro-surface seal installation, compaction, sweeping, and re-striping/pavement markings (as needed) with a 1-year guarantee.
- Plans & Specifications:** Plans & Specifications may be obtained at the Town of Atherton's website at: <http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/bids.aspx> at no cost. Additional information is contained in Town of Atherton Standard Specifications, which are available at: <http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/285>. Contractor shall be responsible for any addendums that may be posted on the Town's website. **No Planholders list will be made be available.**
- Project Schedule:** The work shall be completed within **FIFTEEN (15)** working days from the First Day of Construction as defined in the Notice to Proceed.
- Bid Submission:** SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, California 94027, until **2:00 p.m.** Pacific Standard Time **June 25, 2026**, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. All proposals must be submitted not later than the date and time prescribed. The Bidder is wholly responsible to ensure its Bid is submitted on the date and at the time and place designated for the opening of bids. Any Bid received after the time and date specified shall not be considered. Any Bid may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for opening bids.
- Engineer's Estimate** for the project is: **\$365,000**
- Bid Requirements:** Bids must be for the entire work, and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked: "Bid of (Contractor) for **2026 CRACK SEAL AND SLURRY SEAL PROJECT, Project No: 56171**", along with date and time of bid opening. Bidders shall refer to the Bid Requirements section of the project Plans and Specifications for additional information and requirements.
- Required Contractor's License:** Bidder must possess a current **California Class "A" General Engineering, or "C-12" Earthwork and Paving, or "C-32" Parking and Highway Improvement or any specialty required** contractor's license issued by the State of California, at the time the Bid is submitted. The Contractor and all subcontractors shall be licensed by the State of California in the class appropriate for the work contemplated. Failure of Contractor or his/her subcontractors to possess such current license at the time of bidding may be deemed sufficient cause for rejection of the bid.
- Portion of Work to be Performed by the Contractor:** The General Contractor shall perform, with his own organization, work of a value amounting to not less than 50% of the total contract, excluding specialty items as may be indicated on the bid schedule.
- Department of Industrial Relations Registration:** A Contractor or Subcontractor shall not be qualified to bid on, be listed in a bid proposal, subject to the requirements of Public Contract Code 4104, or engage in the performance of any contract for public work, as that term is defined in Division 2, Part 7, Chapter 1 of the Labor Code, unless currently registered and qualified to perform public work pursuant to Labor Code Section 1725.5. (<http://www.dir.ca.gov/PublicWorks/PublicWorks.html>)
- Reservation of Rights:** The Town reserves the right to reject any or all bids; to make any awards or any rejections in what it alone considers to be in the best interest of the Town and waive any informalities or irregularities in the bids. If there is a reason to believe that collusion exists among any bidders, none of the bids of the participants in such collusion will be considered and the Town may likewise elect to reject all bids received
- Substitution of Securities:** The successful bidder may substitute securities for retention monies withheld to ensure performance of the contract, in accordance with California Public Contract Code, Section 22300.
- Prevailing Wage Rates:** Bidders are hereby notified that provisions of California Labor Code regarding prevailing wages and apprentices are applicable to the work to be performed under this contract. Pursuant to Section 1773 et seq. the general prevailing wage rates have been determined by the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations and appear in the California Prevailing Wage Rates. Copies are on file at the office of the City Engineer and are available to interested parties upon request. The successful bidder shall post a copy of the wage rates at the job site.
- Bid Preparation Cost:** Bidders are solely responsible for the cost of plan and specification printing and preparing their Bids.
- Town Contact:** Questions regarding the project should be directed to Robert Ovadia, PE, by written Requests for Information (RFI) to: Public Works Department, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027, no later than eight (8) business days before bid opening. RFIs may be emailed to sharrison@interwestgrp.com.
- Understanding:** By submitting a bid in response to this advertisement for bids, the bidder shall be conclusively deemed to have read, understood, and agreed with all of the information and materials contained in the bid documents, including but not limited to the standard specifications, the special provisions, the required nature and amount of insurance and the documentation evidencing said insurance.

North Fair Oaks charter school coach pleads no contest to statutory rape

Palo Alto resident Anthony Gutierrez-Molina, 31, worked at Summit Everest High School

By Bay City News/Almanac staff

A former athletic director and soccer coach at a now-shuttered charter school near Redwood City pleaded no contest to statutory rape and other charges stemming from a case involving two students, the San Mateo County District Attorney's Office said Thursday, May 28.

Palo Alto resident Anthony Giovanni Gutierrez-Molina, 31, worked at the now-closed Summit Everest High School in North Fair Oaks. The school, operated by Summit Public Schools which runs Summit Prep in Redwood City, closed last year.

Gutierrez-Molina was arrested in March and subsequently charged with 12 counts of statutory rape and six counts of oral copulation with a person under the age of 18. He pleaded no contest on May 27 to three counts of unlawful sexual intercourse with a minor and two counts of felony oral copulation with a minor in exchange for the other charges being dismissed.

According to prosecutors, Gutierrez-Molina "became very friendly" with a 16-year-old girl who was part of the community engagement program he ran at the school. In March 2023, he brought the girl to his home and had sex with her.

Their sexual interactions also occurred on school property, and continued through November 2024, ending only after Gutierrez-Molina's wife told him she was pregnant, according to District Attorney Steve Wagstaffe.

A second girl was drawn into illegal sexual relations with Gutierrez-Molina, and they had sex three times at his home, prosecutors said.

"The abuse committed by

Anthony Gutierrez Molina was serious, harmful, and completely unacceptable. Our deepest sympathies are with the students and families who were impacted," Summit spokesperson Izzy Mason wrote in a statement.

Summit had previously motioned to quash a search warrant sought by the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office for records relating to its own investigation into Gutierrez-Molina. Court documents indicate Summit officials learned of at least one of the illegal sexual relationships in September 2025, six months before Gutierrez-Molina was arrested.

Records obtained by The Almanac indicate that Summit reported Gutierrez-Molina to police that fall. An attorney for Summit prepared a report but charter school officials did not want to disclose it to police, citing attorney-client privilege.

Before a judge ruled on the motion, Summit and the District Attorney's Office jointly came to an agreement about the report, the details of which are not included in court records. Mason declined to answer questions on the motion, citing the legal proceedings and student privacy.

Gutierrez-Molina is scheduled to be sentenced on Sept. 8 and is facing up to two years and eight months in state prison, Wagstaffe said. Though he was originally held on \$1 million bail, he is currently out of custody on \$500,000 bail. ■

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Laurie Jenks, 96, of Atherton, who was an avid gardener, known for her beautiful backyard and who spent years on the flower committee, which created sprays for Menlo Church services, for years. Laurie loved nature, skiing, golf and at age 80, tried hang gliding. She died on April 27, 2026.

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

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

2026 SPRING PATCHING AND STREET OVERLAY PROJECT Project Number: 56170

1. **Scope of Work:** The project scope consists of pavement repairs, rehabilitation, and overlays, including:
 - 1.1 Grinding and replacing approximately 32,010 square feet of asphalt to a six-inch depth on various streets. This work includes all necessary traffic control, grinding, sweeping, tack coating, replacing asphalt to appropriate depth in an appropriate number of lifts, and finishing rolling per Town of Atherton Standard Specifications and special provisions. Some hand work around utility manhole covers will be required.
 - 1.2 Grinding and replacing of approximately 90,000 square feet of asphalt for 2 inches of asphalt concrete pavement on Various Streets. Once the roadway is grinded down, the contractor and the Town's project engineer shall identify any pavement failures for repairs. Grind and replace (digouts) asphalt to a 6-inch depth from the milled surface: then contractor shall perform crack sealing (per specification). Some hand work around utility manhole covers will be necessary. Repave the entire street with a self-propelled paver & finish per Town Standard Specifications.
 - 1.3 Replacement and installation of traffic striping, pavement markings, and markers.
 - 1.4 Construct two raised crosswalks along Selby Lane along with 6" thermoplastic white fog lines along the length of Selby Lane as shown on the plans per the Town Standard Specifications.
2. **Plans & Specifications:** Plans & Specifications may be obtained at the Town of Atherton's website at: <http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/bids.aspx> at no cost. Additional information is contained in Town of Atherton Standard Specifications, which are available at: <http://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/DocumentCenter/View/285>. Contractor shall be responsible for any addendums that may be posted on the Town's website. **No Plan holders list will be made available.**
3. **Project Schedule:** The work shall be completed within **FORTY FIVE (45)** working days from the First Day of Construction as defined in the Notice to Proceed.
4. **Bid Submission:** SEALED BIDS will be received at the office of the City Clerk, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, California 94027, **until 1:30 p.m. Pacific Standard Time Thursday, June 25, 2026**, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read aloud. All proposals must be submitted not later than the date and time prescribed. The Bidder is wholly responsible to ensure its Bid is submitted on the date and at the time and place designated for the opening of bids. Any Bid received after the time and date specified shall not be considered. Any Bid may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for opening bids.
5. **Engineer's Estimate for the project is: \$735,000.**
6. **Bid Requirements:** Bids must be for the entire work and shall be submitted in sealed envelopes clearly marked: "Bid of (Contractor) for **2026 SPRING PATCHING AND STREET OVERLAY PROJECT, Project No: 56170**, along with date and time of bid opening. Bidders shall refer to the Bid Requirements section of the project Plans and Specifications for additional information and requirements.
7. **Required Contractor's License:** Bidder must possess a current California Class "A" General Engineering or a "C-12" Earthwork and Paving contractor's license issued by the State of California, at the time the Bid is submitted. The Contractor and all subcontractors shall be licensed by the State of California in the class appropriate for the work contemplated. Failure of Contractor or his/her subcontractors to possess such current license at the time of bidding may be deemed sufficient cause for rejection of the bid.
8. **Portion of Work to be Performed by the Contractor:** The General Contractor shall perform, with his own organization, work of a value amounting to not less than 50% of the total contract, excluding specialty items as may be indicated on the bid schedule.
9. **Department of Industrial Relations Registration:** A Contractor or Subcontractor shall not be qualified to bid on, be listed in a bid proposal, subject to the requirements of Public Contract Code 4104, or engage in the performance of any contract for public work, as that term is defined in Division 2, Part 7, Chapter 1 of the Labor Code, unless currently registered and qualified to perform public work pursuant to Labor Code Section 1725.5. (<http://www.dir.ca.gov/Public-Works/PublicWorks.html>)
10. **Reservation of Rights:** The Town reserves the right to reject any or all bids; to make any awards or any rejections in what it alone considers to be in the best interest of the Town, and waive any informalities or irregularities in the bids. If there is a reason to believe that collusion exists among any bidders, none of the bids of the participants in such collusion will be considered and the Town may likewise elect to reject all bids received.
11. **Substitution of Securities:** The successful bidder may substitute securities for retention monies withheld pursuant to law and under the terms of this contract to ensure performance of the contract, in accordance with California Public Contract Code, Section 22300.
12. **Prevailing Wage Rates:** Bidders are hereby notified that provisions of California Labor Code regarding prevailing wages and apprentices are applicable to the work to be performed under this contract. Pursuant to Section 1773 et seq. the general prevailing wage rates have been determined by the Director of the California Department of Industrial Relations and appear in the California Prevailing Wage Rates. Copies are on file at the office of the City Engineer and are available to interested parties upon request. The successful bidder shall post a copy of the wage rates at the job site.
13. **Bid Preparation Cost:** Bidders are solely responsible for the cost of plan and specification printing and preparing their Bids.
14. **Town Contact:** Questions regarding the project should be directed to Robert Ovadia, PE, by written Requests for Information (RFI) to: Public Works Department, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027, no later than eight (8) business days before bid opening. RFIs may be emailed to jmirsaidi@interwestgrp.com
15. **Understanding:** By submitting a bid in response to this advertisement for bids, the bidder shall be conclusively deemed to have read, understood and agreed with all of the information and materials contained in the bid documents, including but not limited to the standard specifications, the special provisions, the required nature and amount of insurance and the documentation evidencing said insurance.



Courtesy San Mateo County

The courtyard of Colibrí Commons in East Palo Alto fills with residents and guests at the recent opening celebration.

Nearly 180 affordable homes open after massive North Fair Oaks fire

Eight-alarm blaze destroyed construction site two years ago

By Bay City News Service

Nearly 180 affordable apartments have opened in North Fair Oaks less than two years after an eight-alarm fire destroyed the Middlefield Junction construction site, San Mateo County officials announced on Friday.

County officials, housing advocates and the developer joined residents on May 29 to celebrate the completion of the housing complex, which aims to help families remain in one of the nation's most expensive housing markets.

"Every day I hear from families who are fighting to stay

here, families who have lived here for generations and families who came here seeking stability and opportunity," Supervisor Lisa Gauthier said during the dedication ceremony. "Housing is not just shelter. It is dignity. It is belonging."

The development is part of a broader affordable housing effort in San Mateo County. Since 2013, the county's Board of Supervisors has directed \$364 million through its Affordable Housing Fund to support the creation of more than 5,100 affordable homes. The total includes \$223.7 million generated through the local Measure K half-cent sales tax, according to county officials. ■

MOSQUITOES

continued from page 7

can raise enough "good bugs" to decrease the wild mosquito population.

After separating the males from the females, which is a very slow process, the sterile males would be released into the wild.

"Male mosquitoes seek out females to mate with, finding them in places that pesticides could never reach," according to the Debug site at debug.com

"Releasing the right number of good bugs in the right places is critical, so we're building software and monitoring tools to guide each release. And since male mosquitoes can't bite, people in the areas where we release them won't get bitten any more than usual."

According to the Debug site, there are several projects around the world looking at how sterile insect technology and Wolbachia bacteria can be used to combat mosquitoes and the diseases they transmit.

"There are projects with *Aedes aegypti* and *Wolbachia* underway in the United States, Singapore, and a number of studies with other types of mosquitoes, some dating back decades," according to the Debug Project. "All face similar problems of how to make a broader and sustainable impact on mosquito populations and demonstrate that they can protect against mosquito borne diseases."

The public comment period on Google's application for an experimental use permit ends on June 5. ■

Gary Saxon, owner of The Record Man, dies at 82

Saxon opened The Record Man in 1988 and helped make the vinyl shop a Redwood City fixture

By Miranda de Moraes

Gary Saxon, the longtime owner of The Record Man and a revered figure in Redwood City's community, died on May 6. He was 82.

Saxon opened the Record Man, a vinyl record shop on El Camino Real in 1988. The store was family-run, a place his daughter, Athena Saxon, 28, remembers spending more time at growing up than in their small family home.

"This was our playground," Athena Saxon said of the shop. "Weekends, we were at the store, my sister and I were running around the parking lot, we were making forts out of boxes, we were climbing over roofs, running around, we were causing havoc with the boys, with the people in the back store, and playing games."

When asked how to describe her father, Athena said: "Awesome."

She characterized him like that over a dozen times in an hour-long call, which might be because he would tell her that even when he hardly had the



Gary Saxon with his dog, Hunter, outside of The Record Man.

strength to say much more. He'd whisper, "You're awesome," Athena said.

Saxon was born in Evanston, Illinois and grew up in a log cabin near Woodside and Atherton with his mom and little brother. He attended Sequoia High School for one year and was part of the inaugural class of Woodside High School.

He served four years with the U.S. Army, including time fighting

in Korea and received an honorable discharge, even though "he wasn't always the most behaved," Athena said, laughing.

Shortly thereafter, Gary moved to San Francisco, lived in a commune in the Haight-Ashbury district and "became a hippie," where he was "doing things that they shouldn't be doing," Athena Saxon said.

Barefoot and vegan, Gary hosted a number of notable

visitors at his commune, including Bob Dylan and Mama Cass, Athena said.

He was fascinated by spirituality and exploring ideas like "Why are we here?" and "What is existence?"

He married his first wife, who died a couple of years ago, and had Kimberly Saxon, his first child, likely in the '60s. Kimberly, her half sister, is 61.

Athena doesn't know what her dad was up to in this time period, but she said she thinks he was "living in random places," like the mountains, and believes he started selling second-hand jeans to make money at the local flea market. He would walk around with a big tape measure around his neck and size people who would walk by, fitting them for jeans.

Gary then started buying and selling pre-loved books... and then records. One day, someone asked where "the Record Man" was, and the name just stuck.

He also rose to become manager of Round Table Pizza in Redwood City and had been really proud of that role ever since, grabbing pizza from there

even toward the end of his life as a special treat.

In the '80s, Kimberly Saxon noticed an apartment for rent on El Camino Real and figured it would be a perfect space for her dad to store his records and set up a shop, as he was just keeping them at his mom's garage at the time.

And then, while filming a commercial for the shop, Gary saw Athena's mom, Angela E.S. Saxon, for the first time and was like, "Who's that?" The rest is history.

Very soon after, Angela started helping out at the record store and would continue to carry the team even through today, helping to buy the building and running it on the daily.

Gary then had Athena and her twin sister, Phaedra Saxon. The girls would spend much of their time at The Record Man, seeing as their parents were busy running the business, so Athena Saxon regards it as their second living room, where she'd hang out with her dad more than in her childhood home.

See **SAXON**, page 19

The local's guide to the Bay Area food scene.

Peninsula Foodist

Read about hot spots, restaurant trends and the lifestyles of those who love everything about food.

Stay tasty,
Adrienne
Editor, Peninsula Foodist

Sign up to receive the Peninsula Foodist newsletter at AlmanacNews.com/peninsula-foodist

SUMMER SPLASH

PUT YOUR HOME IN THE SPOTLIGHT THIS SUMMER WITH DELEON

DELEON REALTY'S ANNUAL SUMMER SPLASH

This July, seize a rare opportunity to stand out when inventory is low and buyer demand is high! Summer Splash is designed to put your home front and center at exactly the right moment.

Our Summer Splash listings are powered by Silicon Valley's most comprehensive marketing campaign, spanning TV, radio, Chinese media, social platforms, and direct mail, all strategically aligned to drive attention, create urgency, and deliver exceptional results.

SUMMER SPLASH SELLER BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Premium placement in the Summer Splash section of *The DeLeon Insight* (~80,000 homes)
- A multi-page feature booklet inserted in *The Almanac* and *Palo Alto Weekly*
- Targeted digital and social media campaigns
- Advertising across local and Chinese-language newspapers
- Global marketing outreach to international buyers
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June 12 to take part!

SIGN UP TODAY Call 650.900.7000
or email info@deleonrealty.com



Ken DeLeon (DRE #01342140)

DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224 | Equal Housing Opportunity



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LOS ALTOS HILLS

\$36,999,000 | 5 Bd | 12 Bth
27500LaVida.com



100 FIRST STREET, UNIT 317
LOS ALTOS

\$4,988,000 | 3 Bd | 3 Bth
100First317.com



112 ALMENDRAL AVENUE
ATHERTON

\$35,988,000 | 6 Bd | 11 Bth
112Almendral.com



160 PHILLIP ROAD
WOODSIDE

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



425 CLAREMONT WAY
MENLO PARK

\$4,888,000 | 4 Bd | 4 Bth
425ClaremontWay.com



85 BELBROOK WAY
ATHERTON

\$13,988,000 | 5 Bd | 6.5 Bth
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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Menlo Park waste checks by Recology

Recology will be randomly checking the contents of residential carts and commercial bins starting this month. Audits will last for six to eight weeks this summer and are required by the state to monitor the contamination levels of each waste stream.

“Recology’s Waste Zero Specialists will audit randomly selected collection containers on each collection route for solid waste, recyclable materials and organic materials for commercial and residential customers,” according to Menlo Park officials.

Audits will occur on mornings before Recology’s scheduled pickups. Specialists, wearing vests, may be seen flipping open the lids of containers, opening bags

and documenting the materials found inside them.

If contamination is identified, the container will be tagged with an “OOPS!” note to inform customers and provide tips on sorting waste. Containers with excess contamination or hazardous materials may not be collected. If this happens, call Recology at 650-585-3900.

To learn more about proper waste disposal for compost, recycling and landfill containers visit whatbin.com.

Wildland fire drill in Los Trancos area

The Woodside Fire Protection District is conducting a wildland fire drill in the Los Trancos area June 8-13. Local residents can expect an increase in fire and emergency vehicles, and firefighters running simulated wildfire operations and training exercises. Fire officials

are assuring the public that there is no cause for alarm and exercise personnel will be clearly marked and efforts also will be made to ensure minimal impact on residents.

Atherton Sounds of Summer returns

Atherton’s summer concert series Sounds of Summer is returning to Holbrook-Palmer Park on June 18 from 6-8 p.m. The first performance of the season will feature Take 2 Dance Band. Food trucks and activities will be also be available for attendees. Pets are also welcome. Holbrook-Palmer Park is located at 150 Watkins Ave. Check athertonca.gov/500/Events for the full schedule.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Public Notices

TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY
NOTICE OF ORDINANCE ADOPTION
ORDINANCE NO. 2026-455
Ordinance No. 2026-455 amends the Town Zoning Code (Title 18 of the Portola Valley Municipal Code) to add Chapter 18.25 Standards for Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADU) and Chapter 18.82 Indemnification of Town; and amends Section 18.36.040 Accessory Uses.

This Ordinance was introduced on May 13, 2026, and was passed and adopted at a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley on May 27, 2026 by the following 5-0 vote: Ayes: Wolter, Hasko, Flynn, Hufty, Taylor; Noes: None; Absent/ Abstain/Recuse: None.

This ordinance shall go into effect 30 days after the date of adoption. The full text of the Ordinance is available for review at the Town Clerk’s Office, 765 Portola Road, Valley, CA and with the agenda materials for the May 27, 2026 Town Council meeting at <https://www.portolavalley.net/town-government/town-council/minutes-and-agendas>.
Published: June 5, 2026

Veronica Dao
Town Clerk
Portola Valley
6/5/26
CNS-4047873#
THE ALMANAC
(ALM Jun 5, 2026)

TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
CONSIDERATION OF TOWN CHARTER
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2026 AT 7:00 P.M.
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that on June 24, 2026 at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as it may convene, the Town Council of the Town of Portola Valley will hold a public hearing to consider and receive comments from the community regarding the proposed adoption of a Town Charter for the Town of Portola Valley. Over the past year and pending further direction at the Town Council study session on April 22, 2026, the Town Council has examined the viability of several locally controlled revenue enhancement options and has prioritized the consideration of a real property transfer tax (RPTT). A RPTT can only be implemented by charter cities and towns so the Town Council is considering providing the residents with the option to move from being a General Law Town to being a Charter Town.

On May 13, 2026, the Town Council held the first public hearing to consider and receive comments from the community regarding the proposed adoption of a Town Charter for the Town of Portola Valley. They approved further consideration of the proposed charter.

The public hearing on June 24, 2026 fulfills the requirements California Government Code § 34458 for a second public hearing to consider the Town charter prior to potential adoption by the voters at a subsequent election.

The meeting will take place at the Historic Schoolhouse, 765 Portola Rd, Portola Valley,

CA; and may be accessed virtually. Comments may be submitted in writing prior to the Town Council meeting by email: PVTownClerk@portolavalley.net, or in person or remotely via Zoom at the meeting of Wednesday, June 24, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. All interested persons are invited to appear before the Town Council at the time and place herein above mentioned.

The Town’s website is www.portolavalley.net. The agenda and staff report will be published at <https://www.portolavalley.net/town-government/town-council/minutes-and-agendas> 72 hours in advance of the meeting.

Published: May 29, 2026
Veronica Dao
Town Clerk
Portola Valley
6/5/26
CNS-4048069#
THE ALMANAC
(ALM Jun 5, 2026)

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published at <https://www.portolavalley.net/town-government/town-council/minutes-and-agendas> 72 hours in advance of the meeting.
Published: May 29, 2026
Veronica Dao
Town Clerk
Portola Valley
6/5/26
CNS-4046205#
THE ALMANAC
(ALM Jun 5, 2026)

COLLECTABLE PASTIMES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-303891
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) COLLECTABLE PASTIMES , located at 870 Coleman Ave, Menlo Park, CA 94025.
Registered owner(s):
RILEY SEAN GORODSKY
870 Coleman Ave
Menlo Park, CA 94025
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 5/15/26.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on May 18, 2026.
(ALM Jun 5, 12, 19 and 26, 2026)

UBS REALTY ADVISORS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-303901
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) UBS REALTY ADVISORS , located at 274 Redwood Shores Parkway #408, Redwood City, CA 94065.
Registered owner(s):
ERIC H. WASSMANN
274 Redwood Shores Parkway #408
Redwood City, CA 94065
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on May 19, 2026.
(ALM May 29, Jun 5, 12 and 19, 2026)

SOLIVANA WELLNESS
SOLIVANA WELLNESS LAB
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-303750
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) SOLIVANA WELLNESS , 2.) SOLIVANA WELLNESS LAB , located at 1922 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA 94063. Mailing Address:
1401 21 Street, Suite R Sacramento, CA 95811.
Registered owner(s):
INNER LIGHT WELLNESS LLC
1401 21 Street, Suite R
Sacramento, CA 95811
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 May 04, 2026.
(ALM May 15, 22, 29 and Jun 5, 2026)

THE WAY APOTHECARY
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-303872
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) THE WAY APOTHECARY , located at 14 Blue Jay Way, Redwood City, CA 94062.
Registered owner(s):
NIGHT RAIN AROMATICS, LLC
14 Blue Jay Way
Redwood City, CA 94062
State of Incorporation/Organization: DE
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 May 15, 2026.
(ALM May 29, Jun 5, 12 and 19, 2026)

PJD ENTERPRISES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-303952
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) PJD ENTERPRISES , located at 215 W Oakwood Blvd, Redwood City, CA 94061.
Registered owner(s):
PAUL DEMERS
215 W Oakwood Blvd
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 May 27, 2026.
(ALM Jun 5, 12, 19 and 26, 2026)

ROCKAWAY BEACH DENTAL GROUP
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-303746
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) ROCKAWAY BEACH DENTAL GROUP , located at 205 Rockaway Beach Avenue #8, Pacifica, CA 94044. Mailing Address: 2383 California Street, Suite 5 San Francisco, CA 94115
Registered owner(s):
BAY AREA DENTAL INC.
2383 California Street, Suite 5
San Francisco, CA 94115
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 11/17/2025.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on May 04, 2026.
(ALM May 22, 29, Jun 5 and 12, 2026)

SIENNAHAZEL
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-303853
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) SIENNAHAZEL , located at 2032 Brittan Ave, San Carlos, CA, 94070.
Registered owner(s):
ANDREA AINING KOH
2032 Brittan Ave
San Carlos, CA 94070
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on May 13, 2026.
(ALM May 22, 29, Jun 5 and 12, 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-03681
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Sally S. Lee filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
SALLY S. LEE to SALLY SHIMADA-LEE
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: 07/15/26, 9:00AM, Civil Department of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo County located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: 05/25/26
Stephanie G. Garratt
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Jun 5, 12, 19 and 26, 2026)

The Almanac is adjudicated to publish in San Mateo County.

- Fictitious Business Name
- Abandonment of Fictitious Business Name
- Name Change
- Partnership Withdrawal or Dissolution
- Petition to Administer Estate - Probate Hearing
- Notice of Bulk Sale
- Legal Summons
- Trustee Sale

The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 pm.
Visit AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/
For assistance email LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com.

What election night results mean in the race for California's next governor

By CalMatters

An interrogation is a staple scene in TV cop shows, with a detective often telling a suspect that “we can do this the easy way or the hard way.”

That phrase pretty much described Democrat Xavier Becerra's situation going into Tuesday's primary election for governor.

It seemed almost certain that he would finish either first or second given pre-election polls and the early returns on Election Day, and thus move on to the November general election. But it was uncertain whether billionaire Democrat Tom Steyer or Steve Hilton, a British-born former television commentator, would also be one of the top two.

Were it Hilton, Becerra would likely have an easy November win, given the state's very lopsided Democratic voter registration margin versus Republicans — the latest count at 45% to 25% — and Hilton's association with uber-unpopular President Donald Trump.

Facing Steyer in November would be a much different scenario. He spent more than \$200 million on his primary campaign, much of it on TV and internet ads that portrayed Becerra as incompetent or potentially corrupt. If given the chance, he would spend even more on attacks.

Wednesday, June 3, 12 hours after the polls closed, it seemed very likely that Hilton would

be Becerra's November rival if results hold, and thus just as likely that the former congressman, attorney general and Biden administration cabinet member would succeed Gov. Gavin Newsom.

As votes were counted throughout the night, Becerra and Hilton ran neck-to-neck with shares in the mid-20% range — Hilton slightly ahead Wednesday morning — while Steyer was about seven or eight percentage points behind.

Late on election night, appearing before a throng of cheering supporters in Los Angeles, Becerra came close to declaring himself a primary winner. He portrayed himself, if winning in November, as “a working-class governor with a law degree and a union card.”

He also would be California's only Latino governor in the state's modern era and thus a symbolic figure for the state's largest ethnic group, which he celebrated by delivering some of his remarks in Spanish.

Becerra's rise to the top of a 61-candidate field of would-be governors has been one of many unforeseen aspects of a campaign unlike any other we've seen in the post-World War II era.

For months, we didn't even know who was running. The race had no natural frontrunner as potentially dominant figures such as former Vice President Kamala Harris weighed their chances but gave it a pass. Sen. Alex Padilla and Attorney General Rob Bonta also steered

away. Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis announced she would run, then dropped out to run for state treasurer, a race she was leading with more than half of ballots counted.

The field narrowed itself down to 10 serious candidates. Two months ago, Becerra was merely one of several politicians in the lower tier with just a 4% share of support in an April 5 tracking poll by the state Democratic Party. Congressman Eric Swalwell was the leading

Democrat in that poll at 12%, followed closely by Steyer.

Just days later, however, Swalwell suspended his campaign and resigned from Congress after several women accused him of sexual harassment or assault. By mid-April, Becerra had shot up to the top of the Democratic heap, tied at 13% with Steyer in a later poll.

From then on, it was a one-on-one duel with Steyer. Despite his rival's ceaseless barrage of personal invective, Becerra

continued to gain and by the last pre-election Democratic tracking poll on May 16, he led Steyer 21% to 15%, roughly the same margin in the election tally so far.

While it's still mathematically possible for Steyer to claim one of the top two positions, nothing in the overnight results pointed in that direction.

That means we will soon turn to November and what likely will be an easy win for Becerra, who would then learn how difficult it is to govern such a complex



Town of Atherton

Planning Commission, October 22, 2025

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 City Council** will hold a public hearing to consider the proposed Fiscal Year 2026/27 Operating and Capital Improvement budget for adoption and consider proposed changes to the Atherton Master Fee Schedule.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that said item is set for hearing by the City Council at its meeting on **June 17, 2026, at 6:00 PM** in-person and via teleconference accessible through the information provided below, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the projects listed in the public hearing section should or should not be approved. This meeting will be held via teleconference pursuant to Government Code section 54953(e) to provide the safest environment for staff and the public while allowing for public participation. The public may participate in the City Council Meeting via Zoom Meeting or by attending in-person in the Council Chambers at 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027.

Join Zoom Meeting:

Dial by your location: 1 669 900 6833

Meeting ID: 506 897 786

<https://zoom.us/j/506897786>

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: council@athertonca.gov

Description: The City Council is considering resolutions for the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2026/27 Operating and Capital Improvement Budget (CIP). This also includes resolutions for adopting salaries and benefits for unrepresented staff, approving the Fiscal Year 2026/27 Salary Schedules and Classifications, and the FY 2026/27 Appropriations Limit. The Council will discuss and provide feedback on the proposed Operations and CIP budget, revenues, expenditures, capital projects, salaries and benefits. There is a recommendation to the Council to adopt resolutions for FY 2026/2027 Operating and Capital Budget, FY 2026/2027 Salaries and Benefits Schedules, FY2026/2027 Gann Limit Appropriations, and adopting a resolution that will amend the Town's Master Fee Schedule **A copy of the City Council staff report and draft Resolution can be found online, by Friday, June 12, 2026 here: <https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/641/Agendas-Minutes>**

The proposal has been determined to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to CEQA Section 15308, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for protection of the Environment.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that said application is set for hearing by the City Council at its meeting on **June 12, 2026 at 6:00 PM** via in-person and teleconference accessible through the above-described information, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the amendments should or should not be approved.

IF YOU CHALLENGE any actions taken to adopt the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Operating and Capital Improvement Budget, Salaries Schedule, Appropriations Limit or revised Master Fee Schedule 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 City Council at, or prior to, the public hearing.

If you have any questions or would like to submit comments on the item please contact Anthony Suber, City Clerk at asuber@athertonca.gov or 650-752-0529. Any attendee who wishes accommodation for a disability should contact the Building Division at (650) 752-0542 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

ATHERTON CITY COUNCIL

/s/ Anthony Suber

Anthony Suber, Deputy City Manager

HOMELESS

continued from page 5

is an imperfect estimate of the county's homeless population, requiring volunteers to identify unhoused individuals with their own eyes. Some organizations have argued that the method underestimates the homelessness problem since people are often not visibly homeless. Despite its shortcomings, Claire Cunningham, the county's director of the Human Services Agency, said data from the count provides an apples-to-apples comparison of homelessness numbers over time.

“It's one of many data points we track on the movement of people into and out of homelessness,” said Claire Cunningham, director of the county's Human Services Agency, in a press statement. “Our work continues to focus both on helping people exit homelessness and preventing others from falling into it.”

San Mateo County has invested heavily in housing initiatives.

Since 2013, the county has put around \$365 million in Measure K tax receipts and other local funding into supporting the creation of more than 5,100 affordable permanent homes, according to the county's preliminary report.

San Mateo County has among the most expensive homes in California. Rental prices have also increased in recent years. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the monthly fair market rent for a two-bedroom unit in San Mateo County increased from \$3,359 in 2024 to \$3,604 in 2026. To afford that rent without spending more than 30% of income on housing, a household would need to earn about \$144,000 annually. ■

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.

Employee allegations roil county elections chief race

Former and current staffers question workplace culture

By Miranda de Moraes

Retaliation, discrimination and a workplace culture driven by fear are among the allegations former and current employees have raised against San Mateo County elections chief candidate Jim Irizarry.

Irizarry — the joint office's second-in-command of the Assessor-County, Clerk-Recorder and Elections Office (ACRE) — a candidate for the top job that oversees elections, property assessments and public records against Supervisor David Canepa in the June 2 primary.

But a \$30,000 separation agreement, a pending lawsuit, employee accounts, union criticism and a management review are raising questions about workplace culture and whether Irizarry represents continuity at an office some workers say needs change.

Irizarry has defended his department, asserting that ACRE is committed to maintaining a “professional, respectful and collaborative work culture grounded in transparency and accountability.”

“We do not agree with that characterization of the workplace environment,” the candidate said of the allegations. “I strive to create a professional environment built on respect, trust, and open communication, where employees are valued and empowered to succeed.”

ACRE oversees elections, marriage and birth certificates, fictitious business filings, election logistics and the assessed value of all taxable property in the county.

On the docket

In May 2025, Alicia Garcia, a former management analyst at ACRE, who is Hispanic, filed a lawsuit against the county, Church, Irizarry and Julieta Fernandez, Church's executive assistant. Garcia alleged in her complaint that she was subjected to retaliation, racial and disability discrimination, intentional infliction of emotional distress and a hostile work environment.

Garcia claimed that race and disability were motivating factors in adverse treatment that caused her “severe humiliation and physical and mental distress,” and that she was

given inferior assignments, passed over for promotion and excluded from work meetings, lunches and seminars.

Several employees left or resigned, including some Hispanic employees who allegedly experienced similar claims of “hostile treatment,” the complaint asserted.

The lawsuit is pending. Garcia filed a first amended complaint on May 15, and the court has scheduled a case management conference for Nov. 19.

Irizarry said the county disputes the claims made in the complaint

But Garcia's complaint is one of several accounts from current and former employees who have raised concerns about workplace culture and retaliation under ACRE management, including Church and Irizarry.

Past settlement

Mary Hill, a former elections worker, said she believes she was pushed out in retaliation for her union activity.

Hill worked at the San Mateo County Elections Division for more than six years, first as a volunteer, and later as a full-time

elections specialist, according to ACRE's human resources spokesperson.

“During that time, I witnessed a culture of fear and emotional toxicity,” Hill said.

She said she became an SEIU 521 union steward in late 2021 amid concerns that management had installed cameras in the Elections Division's office, including in employee areas, but not inside their own offices.

Irizarry said the cameras were installed to protect election materials and noted ballots are not processed inside executive offices.

A \$30,000 separation agreement between Hill, who was represented by SEIU Local 521, and the county, represented by Irizarry, characterized Hill's departure as a resignation effective Sept. 23, 2022.

While the agreement stated it was not an admission of wrongdoing or liability by any party, the county paid Hill as she released a range of claims, including wrongful discharge, retaliation and employment discrimination.

Irizarry said the matter was resolved for “nuisance value” to

conserve public resources and said Hill “was separated from her position” for violating the public's trust by disclosing confidential voter registration information through public tweets. In an April 28 Facebook post on his campaign page, Irizarry called Hill's claims “completely untrue, defamatory, and reprehensible,” and cited voter privacy laws.

In one June 2022 post on what was then-Twitter, Hill wrote: “If you were wondering if we see any of those weird notes or etc. you write on mailers or whatever including your ballots? Yes. We totally see them. And potentially make copies of them. Hypothetically.”

Hill said at the May 5 Board of Supervisors meeting that she regretted posting those tweets.

A history of trust issues

A 2016 administrative review commissioned by the county described a “trust deficit” between ACRE employees and management, and said the unhealthy work environment may have hampered employee performance.

See **ALLEGATIONS**, page 20

The first step in planning your weekend starts here

Weekend
Express

EAT SEE PLAY

SIGN UP AT

AlmanacNews.com/weekend-express

Presented by *The Almanac*

Your weekly
email with tips
and insights
about hot events
and cool activities



- Music
- Eating out
- Movies
- Fun and free
- Art exhibits
- Theater
- Lectures and learning

LinkedIn, Intuit to lay off over 800 employees in Mountain View

Reductions are latest in a wave of tech layoffs

By Hannah Bensen

As layoffs continue to roil the tech industry, LinkedIn and Intuit recently announced plans to cut over 800 employees in Mountain View alone, with hundreds more layoffs throughout the state.

LinkedIn is laying off 411 employees from its Silicon Valley headquarters, which sits at the border of Mountain View and Sunnyvale, along with nearly 200 more across California. Intuit is cutting 493 employees in Mountain View and over 400 elsewhere in the state. In total, Intuit will cut 17% of its workforce worldwide, the company said in a blog post published at the end of May.

Software engineering roles were disproportionately represented in the California cuts at both Intuit and LinkedIn, which were detailed in state regulatory filings. Of the 606 layoffs at LinkedIn, about two-thirds were staff or managers in software development roles. Roughly a third of impacted

staff at Intuit were in similar roles. Management positions were also prominent in both sets of layoffs.

The professional networking platform LinkedIn, which is owned by Microsoft, has 17,500 employees worldwide. Intuit, a financial technology company behind software including TurboTax and Mailchimp, has roughly 15,000 employees.

The reduction in headcount at the two tech giants come amid a wave of layoffs in the sector, with one industry tracker estimating that 100,000 tech jobs have been eliminated in 2026.

On Wednesday, Meta laid off 8,000 employees worldwide, a 10% reduction to its workforce as the company has ramped up investment in artificial intelligence. Oracle dismissed 700 employees statewide in April amid an aggressive expansion in AI.

LinkedIn announces planned cuts

On July 13, LinkedIn plans to dismiss 352 employees in

Mountain View, along with another 59 in Sunnyvale, according to filings the company made with the California Employment Development Department.

The company also intends to cut 108 staff members in San Francisco and 21 in Carpinteria, a small city near Santa Barbara, along with 66 California-based remote workers.

"As part of our regular

business planning, we've implemented organizational changes to best position ourselves for future success," LinkedIn spokesperson Jonny Wing said in an email.

LinkedIn is looking to "scale back investments" in certain areas such as marketing campaigns, vendors, customer events and underutilized office space, according to Business Insider.

Wing declined to comment on the record about whether artificial intelligence played a role in the layoff decisions.

Affected employees are located at 700 E. Middlefield Road, Mountain View; 1000 W. Maude Ave., Sunnyvale; 222 Second St., San Francisco; and 6410 Via Real, Carpinteria.

See **LAYOFFS**, page 20



Town of Atherton

Planning Commission, October 22, 2025

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 City Council will conduct a public hearing as required pursuant to Government Code section 3502.3, at which the Town will present information on the status of vacancies in Town and the Town's recruitment and retention efforts at the June 17, 2026 Council Meeting. The Town will present any challenges related to recruitment and retention of Town employees and efforts being made to address these challenges, if they exist.

The public may participate in the City Council Meeting via Zoom Meeting or by attending in-person in the Council Chambers at 80 Fair Oaks Lane Atherton, CA 94027.

Join Zoom Meeting:

Dial by your location: 1 669 900 6833

Meeting ID: 506 897 786

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

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: council@athertonca.gov

Description: The City Council will receive a presentation from the City Manager's Office related to the Town's recruitment and retention efforts. The Town will present any challenges related to recruitment and retention of Town employees and efforts being made to address these challenges, if they exist. **A copy of the meeting agenda, staff report, and draft resolutions can be found online by Friday, June 12, 2026 here:** <https://atherton.news/Agendas>

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that said Resolutions are set for hearing by the City Council at its meeting on **June 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM** via teleconference accessible through the above-described information and in person at 80 Fair Oaks Lane City Council Chambers, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the Resolutions should or should not be recommended for approval.

IF YOU CHALLENGE any actions taken by Council with respect to this item, 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 City Council at, or prior to, the public hearing addressed to, City Clerk, The Town of Atherton, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA. 94027.

If you have any questions on the item, please contact Anthony Suber, Deputy City Manager, at asuber@ci.atherton.ca.us or 650-752-0529. Any attendee who wishes accommodation for a disability should contact the Building Division at (650) 752-0542 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

ATHERTON CITY COUNCIL

/s/ Anthony Suber

Anthony Suber, Deputy City Manager

SAXON

continued from page 13

Athena remembers taking important phone calls or having big conversations in the store and joking with patrons about it.

"It's kind of rude that you're interrupting," they would quip, according to Athena. "We're having a family meeting right now."

While the shop is now highly regarded as vintage and retro, Athena said it "wasn't seen as cool" when she was growing up, especially because they did not make much money and because everything was "dirty and used."

That said, she and her family saw the value in it, and now she's happy that it feels like "the rest of the world does" too.

While the long-term future of The Record Man is uncertain, the shop will continue operating as usual for now and intends to host its biggest annual summer parking lot sale yet. Athena hinted that this will likely be the last one, and probably the largest.

Behind The Record Man, another Saxon-owned shop, sells cassettes, DVDs, video games and other items. Anthony Chavez, an aspiring artist and filmmaker who helps run that shop, recalled Saxon's colorful stories and motivating advice. Gary would tell Chavez about "this guru" who said "there's a great fire within," and to use that phrase as fuel to pursue

Chavez's creative dreams.

When asked how patrons regarded Gary, Chavez giggled and said that there were "no bad reviews."

Gary told the Pulse in 2024 in a feature about his shop that he came of age during the transition from Big Band music and jazz to rock.

"All of the sudden, around 1956 — 'One, two, three-o'clock, four-o'clock rock!' Elvis and Little Richard and Chuck Berry changed everything," Gary Saxon said.

After mentioning that he saw James Brown play at the American Legion on El Camino, Gary said, "I'm not Mr. Redwood City, but I could be."

Gary died from hip and knee joint infections after an accident, the Santa Clara County Coroner's Office said.

For years, he had battled cancer on his face, immunocompromising his body and making medical operations riskier, Athena said.

The Saxon family will hold a celebration of life for Gary, open to the public, in the parking lot of The Record Man on July 25. Anyone in the community is welcome to attend. Contact Athena Saxon to RSVP at athenarowene@gmail.com. ■

*Email Staff Writer
Miranda de Moraes at
mdemoraes@almanacnews.com.*

ALLEGATIONS

continued from page 18

The Mejorando Group, a government management consulting firm, conducted the review several years after Church began his tenure as head of ACRE in 2011. Irizarry started at ACRE in 2013.

The review also said Church and Irizarry's decision-making reflected an "analysis paralysis" approach that delayed decisions and left employees feeling disempowered.

Church disputed parts of the review at the time, saying in

a memo to employees that it contained "incorrect assumptions, factual errors and inconsistencies."

Irizarry said the review was "politically driven," "categorically disputed," and "proven incorrect." The department, he said, has received 22 awards and a 4.75 Yelp rating, which "speaks to our commitment to excellence."

Vacancies and technology

At the County Board of Supervisors Feb. 24 meeting, Mercedes Segura, the chapter chair for SEIU Local 521, offered public comment alleging

that workplace morale in the Assessor's Office had fallen to "historic lows," citing "chronic mismanagement, failed workforce planning and a lack of accountability at the executive leadership level."

Segura also said qualified candidates were not being hired, assessment appeals were backlogged and almost 10,000 deeds remained unprocessed.

The office had 39 vacancies out of 167 positions on Oct. 26, according to Effie Milionis Verducci, the county's director of strategic communications. That figure has fallen to 28 today.

Irizarry told this news organization that Segura's claims were "spurious" and contained "significant inaccuracies and mischaracterizations regarding the work of this office."

Employees have also raised concerns about the office's new software system, known as the Assessor Property Assessment System, or APAS. The system was deployed in 2023 and cost over \$45 million, according to the county.

One appraiser, who requested anonymity for fear of retaliation, said the new technology slowed processing. The old system, she asserted, could process 400 deeds a day, whereas today, it's up to 150.

Church rejected criticism of ACRE, defending that it's an "award-winning department," and that attacks on the office "do a disservice" to the public and employees.

He called the vacancy rate "reasonable and well-within an acceptable range," and said that his office is extending offers to fill seven full-time positions.

He also disputed criticism of APAS, and said the platform has improved workflows and is "widely recognized across California as one of the most advanced and innovative property assessment systems in use today." He rejected claims that APAS has caused lost revenue, noting that it has strengthened ACRE's ability to deliver "timely, accurate and accountable services."

Virginia Porter, who worked as a county vote center representative for five elections, described the Elections Office as "heavily driven by fear, hierarchy and message control under leadership associated with Mr. Irizarry." Porter said she mainly dealt with employees reporting to Irizarry, but believed the atmosphere reflected the office's tone and

structure under his leadership.

Union and elected officials split on race

Church, who has led the office since 2011 and is not seeking reelection, has endorsed Irizarry.

While SEIU Local 521 did not comment on Irizarry's leadership, the union told this news organization it has endorsed Canepa for the open seat because it believes he is committed to addressing the "systemic challenges residents face" and issues that matter most to working families.

Canepa said he was prompted to run for the seat because he believes morale inside ACRE is poor and the office needs new leadership. He described the office's management as a "dumpster fire that needs to be extinguished" and called the workplace a "very, very toxic atmosphere."

Irizarry called Canepa's comment a "political statement" with "no basis in reality," adding that Canepa has complimented ACRE's innovation and public service "consistently over the years."

Church said Irizarry is the only candidate who is a state-certified property tax appraiser and who has administered over 35 elections, closed 13 property tax assessment rolls and expanded voter access to youth, seniors and underrepresented communities.

County Supervisors Jackie Speier, Noelia Corzo and Ray Mueller have endorsed Irizarry.

"Consensus amongst myself and the large majority of current and former elected officials at the County is that Mr. Irizarry is the most qualified candidate to run the office," Mueller said. ■

*Email Staff Writer
Miranda de Moraes at
mdemoraes@almanacnews.com.*



Town of Atherton

Planning Commission, October 22, 2025

REGULAR MEETING, 6:00 P.M.

This is 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 City Council 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 City Council at its meeting on **June 17, 2026, at 6:00 PM** in-person and via teleconference accessible through the information provided below, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the projects listed in the public hearing section should or should not be approved. This meeting will be held via teleconference pursuant to Government Code section 54953(e) to provide the safest environment for staff and the public while allowing for public participation. The public may participate in the City Council Meeting via Zoom Meeting or by attending in-person in the Council Chambers at 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA 94027.

Join Zoom Meeting:

Dial by your location: 1 669 900 6833

Meeting ID: 506 897 786

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

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: council@athertonca.gov

Description: The City Council will review a request for a resolution to amend the Atherton General Plan and implement changes to the **Community Safety Element, Open Space and Conservation Element, and Circulation Element** to comply with state law. The proposed changes will bring the General Plan into alignment with the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. This proposal has been determined to be categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to: CEQA Section 15061 (Common Sense Exemption).

A copy of the meeting agenda, staff report, and draft resolutions can be found online by Friday, June 12, 2026 here: <https://atherton.news/Agendas>

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that said Resolutions are set for hearing by the City Council at its meeting on **June 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM** via teleconference accessible through the above-described information and in person at 80 Fair Oaks Lane City Council Chambers, at which time and place all persons interested may participate and show cause, if they have any, why the Resolutions should or should not be recommended for approval.

IF YOU CHALLENGE any actions taken by Council with respect to this item, 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 City Council at, or prior to, the public hearing addressed to, City Clerk, The Town of Atherton, 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, CA. 94027.

If you have any questions on the item, please contact Anthony Suber, Deputy City Manager, asuber@athertonca.gov or 650-752-0529. Any attendee who wishes accommodation for a disability should contact the Building Division at (650) 752-0542 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

ATHERTON CITY COUNCIL

/s/ Anthony Suber

Anthony Suber, Deputy City Manager

LAYOFFS

continued from page 19

Intuit joins wave of tech layoffs

Intuit, which is headquartered in Mountain View, announced that it would cut 910 employees across California, starting on July 31.

In addition to 493 Mountain View-based employees, the layoffs will impact 90 employees near Los Angeles, 277 from its San Diego office, and 50 San Francisco employees. The totals for each city include remote employees, according to state filings.

Intuit announced in the May 20 blog post that its priorities included scaling its AI-native platform and that it would reduce layers of management

and overlap between roles.

Sara Day, a spokesperson for Intuit, said that the company is changing its operating model to increase accountability and accelerate decision making.

"AI is an important part of how we're evolving as a company, but these decisions were not driven by AI replacing employees," Day said in an email. "These changes are a necessary evolution to reduce complexity and architect an organization that operates with the velocity required to fuel our growth engines."

Affected employees are located at 2601 Garcia Ave., Mountain View; 505 Howard St., San Francisco; 7535 Torrey Santa Fe Road, San Diego; and 21650 Oxnard St., Woodland Hills. ■



OUR SUMMER GUIDE TO SCHOOLS, CAMPS AND CLASSES

Summer is almost here! For the youngsters, it's the time to get out and play, and probably to try out some awesome summer camps and programs. It also may be time to make plans for the next school year. But why should kids have all the fun? People of all ages can make the most of summer by picking up a new hobby, learning a new skill or refining an existing practice. Our summer education guide is here to offer some ideas while you soak up all that summer sunshine.

CAREERS

CAREERGENERATIONS

2100 Geng Road, Suite 210, Palo Alto
careergenerations.com

CareerGenerations offers career counseling and group workshops to meet the career needs of a variety of individuals, including college students looking for internships and graduates and professionals exploring career options or looking for employment.

JOBTRAIN

1200 O'Brien Drive, Menlo Park
jobtrainworks.org

JobTrain has a variety of training programs for adults — providing instruction in the culinary arts, business administration, health care and more — as well as programs specifically for young adults, to help with GED diploma preparation, job placement and vocational training. The center also offers on-site preschool with income-based fees. Open-entry GED/high school equivalency classes run on weekdays.

REBOOT ACCEL

1865 Camino a los Cerros, Menlo Park
rebootaccel.com

ReBoot Accel keeps members of the community current, connected and confident about reentering the workforce through workshops taught by experts.

COOKING

La Toque De Cindy

904 Cowper St., Palo Alto
cindytoquecooking.com

La Toque De Cindy offers cooking camps and classes for kids (with a specialty in chocolate), plus cooking experiences for people of all ages.

SUR LA TABLE

Town & Country Village, 855 El Camino Real, Suite 57, Palo Alto | surlatable.com

Sur La Table offers hands-on cooking classes, guiding students in making regional cuisines, themed meals and baked goods.

TASTE BUDS KITCHEN

2775 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto
tastebudskitchen.com/palo-alto

The Palo Alto franchise of Taste Buds Kitchen offers cooking classes, camps, parties and events for all ages.

CULTURE

JOY CULTURE FOUNDATION

934 Santa Cruz Ave., Suite A, Menlo Park
thejoyculturefoundation.org

The nonprofit Joy Culture Foundation operates the Little Bookworm Library to provide families a place to immerse themselves in Chinese culture and language. The center has children's books in Mandarin and English available for checkout, as well as bilingual language and culture classes.

MUSTARD SEED LEARNING CENTER

Palo Alto (various locations)
mustardseedlearningcenter.org

Mustard Seed Learning Center is an after-school tutoring and care program that teaches local youth to speak Mandarin Chinese, in addition to emphasizing social development and excellence in academics. After-school programs are held at 3048 Price Court, Palo Alto, and Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. The center also offers a preschool program that takes place at the Price Court address.

DANCE & THEATER

DANCE CONNECTION

Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto
danceconnectionpaloalto.com

Dance Connection offers combination and graded classes for youth (age 3 and up) and adults. Ballet, jazz, tap, hip-hop, lyrical and other instruction are available for students at various levels of ability.

MANNAKIN THEATER AND DANCE

en Avant School of Dance, 1841 Bay Road, East Palo Alto | mannakindance.org

Mannakin Theater and Dance offers youth dance classes at en Avant School of Dance studio in East Palo Alto.

VICTORIA BALLET

370 California Ave., Palo Alto;
151 Main St., Los Altos
victoriaballet.dance

The classes offered at this ballet school (which teaches children and adults) include all experience levels — from

beginners to pre-professional dancers.

ZOHAR SCHOOL OF DANCE & COMPANY

Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Road, Room L-4, Palo Alto
zohardancecompany.org

With roots going back to 1979, Zohar School of Dance holds a range of adult dance classes including jazz, modern, ballet and tap.

MUSIC & VISUAL ARTS

COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND ARTS

Finn Center, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View | arts4all.org

The Community School of Music and Arts offers year-round classes (and private lessons) in music, visual and digital arts, with courses for adults and children.

NEW MOZART SCHOOL OF MUSIC

2100 El Camino Real, Suite C, Palo Alto
newmozartschool.com

New Mozart School of Music offers music lessons and group classes in a variety of instruments year-round to students of all ages and abilities.

PACIFIC ART LEAGUE

668 Ramona St., Palo Alto
pacificartleague.org

Pacific Art League offers a range of classes for children and adults with varying experience. Instructors teach many media, including drawing, painting, watercolor, digital art and more.

PALO ALTO ART CENTER

1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto
cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Community-Services/Arts-Sciences/Palo-Alto-Art-Center

Palo Alto Art Center classes and workshops — teaching children, teens and adults — cover such areas as ceramics, painting, drawing, jewelry, sculpture, mixed media and more.

PALO ALTO SCHOOL OF CHAMBER MUSIC

600 Homer St., Palo Alto
schoolofchambermusic.com

Palo Alto School of Chamber Music offers chamber music programs for children, teens

and adults. Participants are matched in groups according to age and experience level.

OLDER ADULTS

AVENIDAS

450 Bryant St., Palo Alto / Cubberley Community Center, 4000 Middlefield Road, Room H-5, Palo Alto
avenidas.org

Avenidas offers classes, as well as lectures and workshops, for seniors focusing on topics such as health, fitness, languages, computing, music and writing.

LITTLE HOUSE ACTIVITY CENTER

800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park
1pvi.org/littlehouse

Little House Activity Center offers classes and activities on various topics, including fitness, arts and technology.

PARENT EDUCATION

CHILDREN'S HEALTH COUNCIL

650 Clark Way, Palo Alto
chconline.org

Children's Health Council works with families living with child-behavior issues, dyslexia, anxiety and depression, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism.

SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT

ATHENA ACADEMY

525 San Antonio Ave., Palo Alto
athenaacademy.org

Athena Academy educates dyslexic and twice-exceptional students in first through eighth grades, with an emphasis on building confidence and helping students embrace their talents and unlock their potential.

BOWMAN SCHOOL

4000 Terman Drive, Palo Alto
bowmanschool.org

Bowman School offers Montessori education for elementary through high school (upper secondary campus at 835 Page Mill Road, Palo Alto), as well as early education programs (at 693 Arastradero Road, Palo Alto and 3801 East Bayshore Road, Palo Alto).

CASTILLEJA SCHOOL

1310 Bryant St., Palo Alto | castilleja.org

Castilleja is an independent school for girls in middle and high school with a goal of inspiring young women to become confident leaders and changemakers.

CHALLENGER SCHOOL

3880 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto
challengerschool.com

Challenger School's Palo Alto location is open to students from preschool through eighth grade with an emphasis on preparing students to become self-reliant, individual and independent thinkers.

EMERSON SCHOOL

2800 W. Bayshore Road, Palo Alto
emersonmontessori.com

Emerson School provides a year-round program for grades one to eight, teaching a personalized, Montessori curriculum. Emerson also offers an infant center and a preschool program.

FUSION ACADEMY

2191 E. Bayshore Road, Suite 100, Palo Alto
fusionacademy.com/campuses/palo-alto

Fusion Academy Palo Alto offers 1:1 education and customized schedules for students in middle and high school.

THE GIRLS' MIDDLE SCHOOL

3400 West Bayshore Road, Palo Alto
girlsms.org

A progressive school with a focus on hands-on and project-based learning, The Girls' Middle School strives to empower and educate middle schoolers with a holistic approach.

IMAGINATION LAB SCHOOL

4050 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto
imagination-school.org

Imagination Lab School serves students in grades TK-8 with a mission of igniting curiosity and building confidence and creativity.

KEYS SCHOOL

2890 Middlefield Road and 3981 El Camino Real, Palo Alto | keysschool.org

Keys School, serving elementary and middle school students, emphasizes nurturing the whole child.

LYDIAN ACADEMY

410 Sherman Ave. Palo Alto
lydianacademy.com

Lydian Academy offers year-round, one-on-one education for middle and high schoolers, with full-time, on-demand and tutoring options and opportunities for collaboration.

MENLO SCHOOL

50 Valparaiso Ave., Atherton
menloschool.org

Menlo School is open to students in middle and high school, with a goal of challenging and empowering its students to fall in love with learning.

MID-PENINSULA HIGH SCHOOL

1340 Willow Road, Menlo Park
mid-pen.org

Mid-Peninsula High School aims to prepare its students for successful college careers and provide an inclusive and collaborative learning environment.

PENINSULA SCHOOL

920 Peninsula Way, Menlo Park
peninsulaschool.org

Peninsula School is a progressive institution teaching students from nursery through eighth grade, with an emphasis on choice and experience.

PHILIPS BROOKS SCHOOL

2245 Avy Ave., Menlo Park
phillipsbrooks.finalsite.com

This independent day school offers child-centered learning

See **CLASSES**, page 22

PVI Technology Center

Our **Tech Connect Program** will teach you the basics of using the **Apple Watch, iPhone, and iPad**, including email, Zoom, internet safety, taking photos, and more.

**Now offering a new class:
Introduction to AI**



Call to learn more
650-326-0665

Bring your own iPad or you can borrow one from class

Intro AI NEW CLASS 3 weeks
April 22 – May 6 (Wednesdays 1–3 p.m.)
June 17 – July 1 (Wednesdays 1–3 p.m.)

iPad Intro to iPad 8 weeks
April 21 – June 9 (Tuesdays 10–12 p.m.)

Advanced iPad 4 weeks
June 23 – July 14 (Tuesdays 10–12 p.m.)

iPhone Intro to iPhone 7 weeks
May 5 – June 16 (Tuesdays 1–3 p.m.)
May 7 – June 18 (Thursdays 10 a.m.–12 p.m. or 1–3 p.m.)

Advanced iPhone 7 weeks
June 30 – August 11 (Tuesdays 1–3 p.m.)
July 2 – August 13 (Thursdays 10 a.m.–12 p.m. or 1–3 p.m.)

Apple Watch 3 weeks, May 20 – June 3 (Wednesdays 1–3 p.m.)

800 MIDDLE AVENUE, MENLO PARK • 650-326-0665 • 1PVI.ORG

for children from preschool through fifth grade.

SAVVY YOUNG WRITERS
Downtown Palo Alto (multiple locations)
savvyyoungwriters.com

Savvy Young Writers offers writing tutoring and mentoring for grades 3–12. It also features a program for writing college admissions essays.

SILICON VALLEY INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

151 Laura Lane, Palo Alto;
475 Pope St., Menlo Park | svintl.org

Silicon Valley International School offers bilingual immersion day school with two nursery-to-fifth-grade bilingual programs in French/English, German/English and Mandarin/English as well as middle and high school programs.

STRATFORD SCHOOL

870 N. California Ave., Palo Alto
stratfordschools.com

The Palo Alto location of Stratford School has preschool, elementary and middle school programs, plus after-school clubs and an extended-day program.

SYNAPSE SCHOOL

3375 Edison Way, Menlo Park
synapseschool.org

Synapse is a TK-eighth grade independent school. Parent education is an integral part of Synapse's experience for families, as is social-emotional learning.

WOODLAND SCHOOL

360 La Cuesta Drive, Portola Valley
woodland-school.org

Woodland School is an independent school offering small classes and an emphasis on student-driven projects for children in preschool up through middle school.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

EPACENTER

1950 Bay Road, East Palo Alto
epacenter.org

EPACENTER is a creative development organization that offers a range of programs in disciplines such as the arts and technology. Founded as a hub for youth, it now offers opportunities for all ages.

HIDDEN VILLA

26870 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills
hiddenvilla.org

In addition to its long-running summer camp programs, Hidden Villa offers a variety of classes and workshops, including on nature and farm-based topics.

THE RIEKES CENTER

3455 Edison Way, Menlo Park | riek.es.org

The Riek.es Center offers year-round programming in fitness, arts and nature for individuals

of all ages and abilities. The center also provides programs for home-schooled students.

SEQUOIA DISTRICT ADULT SCHOOL

3247 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park
seqsas.org

Sequoia District Adult School holds classes in English as a second language and computer and business skills. Students can also earn a high school diploma or GED certificate.

STANFORD CONTINUING STUDIES

Littlefield Center, 365 Lasuen St., Stanford | continuingstudies.stanford.edu

Stanford Continuing Studies organizes in-person and online classes in liberal arts and sciences, creative writing, and professional and personal development.

SPORTS

BAYLANDS GOLF LINKS

1875 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto
baylandsgolfinks.com

Private lessons and clinics teaching golf techniques, rules and etiquette are available for sign-up at any level of experience throughout the year.

KIM GRANT TENNIS ACADEMY

3005 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto
kimgranttennis.com

The Kim Grant Tennis Academy organizes an array of tennis classes and programs for adults and children at multiple locations, including in Palo Alto and Woodside.

SPRING DOWN EQUESTRIAN CENTER

725 Portola Road, Portola Valley
springdown.com

Spring Down Equestrian Center educates children and adults on horses and horseback riding. Classes and camps held year-round.

WEBB RANCH RIDING SCHOOL

2720 Alpine Road, Portola Valley
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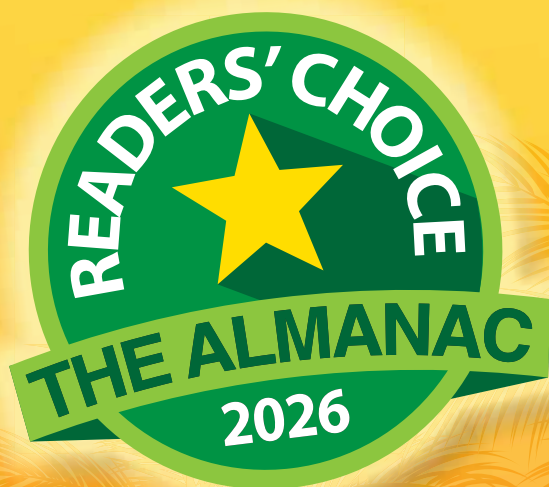
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woodsidevaulters.org

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Let's Educate is published quarterly in the Palo Alto Weekly and The Almanac. Descriptions of classes and schools are provided. Listings are free and subject to editing. To inquire about submitting a listing for the next Let's Educate, email editor@paweeekly.com. To place a paid advertisement in Let's Educate, call the display advertising department at 650-326-8210.



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PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCES IN ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT



Exhibition brings the playful spirit of improv to Art Bias

By Karla Kane

For anyone who's ever entertained the idea of joining the circus, Redwood City artist and educator Terry Sand has a message for you: "It's never too late to run away." Her goal is to bring the freedom and playfulness inherent in improv comedy to all she does, and to help others feed their creative spirits too. No matter your background or stage in life, "you can run away and join the circus metaphorically," she said, escaping the anxiety and/or drudgery of everyday woes.

"The Shinsplintski Family Circus" exhibition, offering a peek into Sand's whimsical world, opens at Art Bias in San Carlos on June 7. During the open-studios event, visitors can catch three mini performances from Sand and members of her long-running improv class, including a musical number.

"We come blasting in with hula hoops and do this little crazy modern dance circus opening," Sand said of the group's act, which also includes demonstrating improv games to help show

'We come blasting in with hula hoops and do this little crazy modern dance circus opening.'

TERRY SAND

the connections between the creative process of improv and other types of art. There will also be an activity for kids, and animal crackers for everyone.

"It's just going to be a lot of music and actors and fun costumes and 'insecurity' guards," she said, inviting attendees to "use your imagination to travel off to the silliest circus on Earth."

The accompanying art exhibition includes Sand's circus-themed art in a variety of media, including paintings and sculpture. In addition to the opening presentation, the visual-art exhibition will run through June 29.

"Her current work draws inspiration from Alexander Calder,

responding playfully to his iconic Calder's Circus," according to a press release from Art Bias, where Sand is one of the resident artists. "Echoing Calder's imaginative use of small-scale figures and kinetic storytelling, Terry reinterprets the circus as both object and performance — imbuing everyday materials with personality, humor, and a touch of absurdity."

Art Bias opens its studios to the public every first Sunday of the month and Sand emphasized that her June 7 festivities are meant to celebrate the organization as a whole and the other resident artists as well, with special gratitude to Art Bias' executive director Terra Fuller, whom she said has supported and inspired her. The event will also include pop-up sales from Mason and Mason Handmade and Kitchen Table Travel, according to Art Bias' website.

For Sand, improv and visual art naturally go hand in hand. One of the lessons of improv she carries



Courtesy Terry Sand

Above: Redwood City artist Terry Sand brings the spirit of improv to her visual artwork. Top: Artist Terry Sand (lower right) and members of her improv class in Redwood City will perform at Art Bias June 7.

See **CIRCUS**, page 25

Worth a Look

BERTHA: Grateful Drag

There's many a Grateful Dead tribute band out in the world, each bringing their own spin to the favorite tunes of the legendary group. But how many of them are performing "Truckin'" in full drag? BERTHA:

Grateful Drag may have a more glam aesthetic than the T-shirts, jeans and flannels of the group they're covering, but this group of queer and allied artists from Nashville also have the musical bonafides. And they have a truly wild origin story involving Area 51, Jerry's middle finger, a cloning accident and, uh oh, the infamous "Brown Acid" that all led to the creation of these "musical mutants" and that absolutely probably mostly somewhat happened.

June 11, 8 p.m., at The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park; \$59-\$82; guildtheatre.com.



Courtesy BERTHA

BERTHA: Grateful Drag will perform Grateful Dead favorites June 11 at The Guild Theatre.

Jazz on the Hill

The College of San Mateo gives the season of al fresco concerts an impressive start with Jazz on the Hill, a full day of free live music. The festival marks its 20th anniversary this year. The lineup includes a quartet led by Peninsula-raised reeds player Nathan Tokunaga; vocal and guitar duo Tuck & Patti; Roger Glenn Latin Jazz Ensemble with special guest Ray Obiedo; Miles Davis all-star tribute band Miles Smiles with Essiet Essiet, David Sanchez, Edward Simon, Eddie Henderson and Akira Tana; and saxophonist, singer-songwriter Vanessa Collier. Audiences can also catch the next generation of musical talents with the youth stage, featuring performances by Oaktown Workshop, Stanford Jazz Combo, SF Jazz High School Allstars and San Jose Jazz High School Allstars. There will also be community booths, local craft and artisan vendors and food trucks.

June 6, 11 a.m.- 6 p.m., at College of San Mateo, 1700 W. Hillsdale Blvd., San Mateo; free admission and parking; collegeofsanmateo.edu/jazzonthehill.

Emi Makabe

New York-based Japanese composer, vocalist, shamisen player, pianist and educator Emi Makabe swings by Palo Alto for a show presented by Earthwise Productions. Makabe's ethereal vocals soar through a unique style of jazz that draws on elements of Japanese folk music and improv, while the shamisen, a traditional Japanese stringed-instrument, brings a quality that can be dreamy and melancholic at turns. She is joined by Thomas Morgan, bass; Kenny Wollesen, drums, and Vitor Gonçalves, piano.

June 6, 8 p.m., at Mitchell Park Community Center, Palo Alto; \$20; tinyurl.com/EmiMakabePaloAlto.

Foothill Symphonic Winds

The Peninsula orchestra marks two milestones with its "Celebration" concert, hailing the United States' upcoming 250th anniversary and honoring music director David Bruce Adams, who is retiring after 35 years at the group's helm. The program, which features music by American composers, includes familiar pieces such as "America the Beautiful" by Samuel Augustus Ward and "The Cowboys" by John Williams, in addition to newer compositions, such as 2007's "American Hymnsong Suite" by Dwayne S. Milburn, the 2009 piece "Kindred Spirits" by Brian Balmage and Kevin Day's 2017 composition "A Hymn for Peace."

June 7, 3:30 p.m., at Cubberley Theatre, 4120 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto; \$20 adults/\$10 students and seniors; FSWinds.org.

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CIRCUS

continued from page 23

with her into all her artwork is, “yes, and.” Saying yes to your own ideas, to tell your ‘committee’ to go on sabbatical and just say, ‘yes.’ Your first idea is the right idea,” she said. “When I start to paint something, what I do is I just start throwing paint on the canvas, and to me that’s like asking the audience for a suggestion. You have to trust yourself and you have to trust your process. I don’t have to know what it is before I see it — same with improv, you don’t know what your scene is going to be, you start building it with the other actors.”

Sand has led a life full of art, improv and saying “yes” to opportunities that have come her way (as well as creating her own). After earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees in modern dance from UCLA, she got “sick of the whole Hollywood/L.A. scene,” moved up to the Bay Area and never looked back.

In San Francisco, she worked with San Francisco Dance Theater and the San Francisco Arts Commission, was crowned the first winner of the “Miss Haight-Ashbury” contest in 1982 (“I did the whole thing in roller skates,” she noted), co-founded all-female improv troupe FEMPROV and was a TV host with KPIX. She’s also been a motivational speaker, leading comedy-centric team building and improv workshops, and an activity director for seniors (she’s also worked with kids and folks of all ages). And she’s loved creating art for as long as she can remember.

“I just like to play. I’ve always taught improv and I’ve always done art all along, even as a dancer,” Sand said. “I take my improv concepts and my modern dance sensibilities and put it on canvas and sculpture. It’s now kind of fusing together.”

She moved from San Francisco down to Redwood City in 1993 and has been teaching improv through the city’s parks and recreation department for many years, as well as occasionally teaching at Art Bias.

Donne Davis, who took her first improv class from a Stanford professor back in 1981, said she, like Sand, loves the open-minded “yes, and” philosophy of improv and applying it to life in general. She’s been taking Sand’s improv class for the past year and said she looks forward to performing at the Art Bias event — hula hoop and all.

“We don’t get that many opportunities to play and be silly as we get older, but in improv we do. I always say I get a great ab workout from laughing so hard in our improv classes,” she told this news organization in an email. “Terry is a fabulous teacher and gives



Courtesy Terry Sand

Terry Sand’s circus-themed creations include characters such as this circus artist with a broken leg.

‘I take my improv concepts and my modern dance sensibilities and put it on canvas and sculpture. It’s now kind of fusing together.’

TERRY SAND

us so many opportunities to use our creativity in ways we never could’ve imagined.”

Sand’s next Redwood City sessions will start up in August and while she usually teaches on Saturday afternoons at Red Morton Community Center, she plans to add a Tuesday evening class for those not available on weekends. She also plans to expand to teaching at Redwood City’s brand-new Veterans Memorial Building and Senior Center as well and has big dreams for the space. Sand has her eye on that as the perfect venue for a full-length musical production of “The Shinsplinski Family Circus” in the future. “Redwood City’s going to become the theatrical improv extravaganza of the world,” she said with a laugh. “That stage, it has the Shinsplinski Family Circus written all over it.” ■

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

“The Shinsplinski Family Circus,” performances take place June 7 at 1:30, 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. as part of Art Bias’ open studios, noon-4 p.m.; 1700 Industrial Road, San Carlos; free; artbias.org. More information on Terry Sand is available at terrysand.com.

CORRECTION

The review “Politics, lust and religion bring topical high drama in ‘Tosca’ in the May 29 issue of The Almanac ran with an incorrect byline. The author of the review was Michael J. Vaughn. The Almanac regrets the error.



Courtesy Terry Sand

Redwood City artist Terry Sand’s “The Shinsplinski Family Circus” is on view at Art Bias in San Carlos. Sand is also an improv teacher.

TOWN OF WOODSIDE
2955 WOODSIDE ROAD
WOODSIDE, CA 94062

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEARBY GIVEN THAT THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE TOWN OF WOODSIDE will hold a hybrid public hearing allowing for the option to attend by teleconference/video conference or in person in Independence Hall, 2955 Woodside Road, Woodside, CA on **Wednesday, June 17, 2026, at 6:00 PM**, to consider:

2955 Woodside Road, Suite 100

CUSE2026-0001

Alessandra Maahs

Planner: Keigo Yamamoto, Assistant Planner

Presentation and approval, conditional approval, or denial of a proposal, requiring Planning Commission review, for a new Conditional Use Permit (CUSE2026-0001) to allow a new fitness/pilates studio.

The project is Categorically Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to §15301(a), which includes minor interior alternations to existing facilities and operation of existing facilities with negligible expansion to existing or former use.

2950 Woodside Road

CUSE2025-0004

Tom Gallagher

Planner: Gillian Naegele, Associate Planner

Presentation and approval, conditional approval, or denial of a proposal, requiring Planning Commission review, for an amendment to an existing Conditional Use Permit (CUSE2020-0005) to allow for the sale of wine and beer within the existing gas station convenience store at the Chevron Station.

The project is Categorically Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to §15301(a), which includes minor interior alternations to existing facilities and operation of existing facilities with negligible expansion to existing or former use.

All interested parties are invited to submit written comments to townhall@woodsidedca.gov and/or attend in person or virtually at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86068472736> and give testimony.

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Courtesy Roku

Former Palo Alto resident wins 'The Great American Baking Show'

By Adrienne Mitchel

Ruiqi Chen did not think she'd win "The Great American Baking Show." During the first challenge of the finale, she made a mistake that she thought sealed her fate – her meringues were all cracked.

"At the time I thought, 'I know that I'm not going to win at this point because my Signature (competition) was a disaster. Let me just do something that can end this experience on a good note,'" she said.

So when she was declared winner of Season 4, she was "completely shocked."

"The Great American Baking Show" is an American adaptation of "The Great British Bake Off," a British baking show which gained massive popularity in the U.S. around 2018. Judged by celebrity chefs Paul Hollywood and Prue Leith, both shows star home bakers completing three challenges per episode. The Signature challenge showcases the bakers' signature recipes, while the Technical gives contestants a pared-down recipe without prior knowledge of what they're making. The Showstopper ends each episode with a visually impressive creation.

Chen's passion for baking began during the pandemic when she returned from college to quarantine in her childhood



Courtesy Roku

Prue Leith watches Ruiqi Chen bake while filming an episode for "The Great American Baking Show."

home in Nashville, Tennessee. During that time, she craved store-bought desserts from her childhood and decided to try to recreate them.

"The thing that got me into actually baking pastry was specifically these Costco cream puffs that my family used to buy," Chen said. "I was having a craving for them, so I tried making cream puffs. After that, it weirdly gave me unearned confidence, and I immediately went to macarons."

She enjoyed baking for friends and family as a hobby and, at the encouragement of her friends, applied on a whim for "The Great American Baking Show." While she didn't hear back for that season, a casting agent reached out the following year encouraging her to apply again. She made it to the final round of casting before ultimately being cut.

"I had gotten to meet a lot of other really amazing bakers through the process, so I figured I might as well do it one more time to try and meet other people," Chen said.

The third time was a charm,

and she was picked for the show. While Chen now lives in New York, she was living in Palo Alto at the time of casting and filming. She has fond memories of volunteering at the Palo Alto farmers market and taking pottery classes at the Palo Alto Art Center.

Chen purposely did not tell her friends that she had been cast, preferring to keep it a surprise until the trailer dropped. But she couldn't keep it a secret from her parents, who would definitely be suspicious of her monthlong stay in London to film.

"Interestingly, my parents actually were not super thrilled I was going to do it at first, because I don't think they understood what kind of show it was. I think they probably thought I was going on like 'Love Island' or something," she said with a laugh. "But then once they realized that it is 'The Great American Baking Show,' which is the most wholesome show in the world, they were like, 'OK, we're more on board with this now.'"

A lot of preparation went into being a contestant, Chen



Above: The cast of season 4 of "The Great American Baking Show." Left: Former Palo Alto resident Ruiqi Chen won the most recent season of "The Great American Baking Show."

The experience in England began in July 2025 with a week of testing recipes with British ingredients, followed by two days of filming, then two days off, for three weeks.

Chen made a strong first impression on the very first day of filming.

"I actually got two handshakes in the first episode, which apparently was the first time in 16 years that Paul Hollywood's ever done that," she said.

In the show, a handshake from Hollywood is a rarity, and if a contestant is lucky enough to receive it, it means their bake is perfect. Chen's black sesame Thai tea cake and her lemon raspberry cake both earned her the prestigious handshake.

"I think I completely blacked out during both handshakes," she said. "It just felt very surreal and out of body."

Other top moments of the show for Chen include the Technicals ("I really masochistically loved Technicals because they felt like little puzzles to me," she said) and the close friendships she made on the show.

"After really long filming days, we would all gather in one person's apartment and get takeout and just chat about the day and eat our food," she said. "Those evenings were so much fun."

Of course, the ultimate highlight was taking home the glass cake stand trophy, the prize for

said. For two months last year, Chen balanced a full-time job at LinkedIn with "boot camp," time spent preparing and perfecting the recipes for 10 challenges.

Not only did she have to ensure she could complete each challenge in the allotted time, she also had to write up each recipe for producers to flag for potential issues once she arrived in England.

"For example, for cookie week, I wanted to do my cookie sculpture out of sugar cookies that contained cream cheese," she said. "I submitted that recipe, and they were like, 'Just so you know, British cream cheese is very different from American cream cheese. This recipe might not work. You may have to rework it once we get there.'"



Courtesy Ruiqi Chen

Clockwise from top left: Ruiqi Chen's Year of the Horse sugar cookies; dark chocolate, cherry and almond entremets; lemon and chamomile cake; and dark chocolate caramel Valentine's tarts.



winning the show. Ironically, it was the belief that Chen thought she couldn't win the show that helped her win, she explained.

"Because I thought I wasn't going to win, I took that pressure off of myself, and I was like, 'OK, I can just be in the moment and have fun now, and just enjoy these last two bakes in the tent,'" she said. "And when you're not stressed about something, it's just much easier to focus and get things done well."

Chen had to keep her win a secret until the show aired in May nearly a year later. She laughed while recalling that her friends unknowingly touched the cake stand trophy multiple times while helping her unpack during the move from Palo Alto to New York.

"I had just draped a sweater over it, and all of my poor, oblivious friends were touching it and moving it out of the way, and putting things next to it or on top of it without realizing what it was," Chen said.

Now settled in New York, Chen plans to continue baking as a hobby with a renewed confidence in her skills. She said that before the show, part of her thought that compliments on her baked goods were just out of politeness. But winning the show made her more sure of her abilities.

"I think the fact that we all made it through (boot camp)

was a testament to how much you can do when put under pressure," she said. "That gave me more confidence just around handling challenges in day-to-day life too." ■

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

Dig into food news. Follow the Peninsula Foodist on Instagram @peninsulafoodist and subscribe to the newsletter at 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.



Courtesy Ruiqi Chen

Above: Ruiqi Chen's classic mille-feuille. Right: Her orange chocolate opera cakes.



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