

The Almanac

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Woodside women take the reins

With town's long equestrian legacy at risk, locals step up to save it

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Driving through the bucolic town of Woodside, visitors might be lucky enough to see a local equestrian riding their horse on a trail or spot a horse grazing in a resident's paddock. Woodside is known for its strong equestrian culture, but local horse riders say that spirit is declining among new residents. A number of women in town are working hard to preserve it.

While there were about 3,000 horses in Woodside in the 1990s, now there are only 300, according to local equestrian Bree-Anna Vail.

Across multiple equestrian organizations such as the Woodside-area Horse Owners Association (WHOA) and the San Mateo County Horseman's Association, women are leading efforts to educate the community, spread awareness of local

horse culture and preserve the legacy of equestrianism.

Over the years, those efforts have included saving barns, advocating for horses on trails and teaching youth about horses. From fundraising to restoring the historic Folger Stable, founding the annual Day of the Horse event and leading youth education programs, women have taken the reins.

A shifting culture

To protect the equestrian heritage of Woodside, a group of local women joined together to form WHOA in the early 2000s, after the "horse-friendly feel" of Woodside began to shift, said Donna Poy, a founding member.

"A lot of (change) came from the fact that more people were moving to Woodside that were not horse people and didn't understand horse culture," Poy

See **EQUESTRIANS**, page 17



Seeger Gray

Bree-Anna Vail laughs as Sawyer the horse lifts a bucket at the Folger Estate Stable in Woodside on May 29.

Cecilia Taylor won't seek reelection to Menlo Park City Council

Two-term council member is city's first Black woman elected, first to represent Belle Haven district

By Arden Margulis

Councilmember Cecilia Taylor announced that she will not run for a third term on the Menlo Park City Council on June 28.

"It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve the Belle Haven and Haven Avenue communities for the past eight years," she

wrote in an email to supporters. Taylor, first elected in 2018, is the first person to represent the



Cecilia Taylor

Belle Haven community on the City Council after Menlo Park switched to district-based elections. A third-generation Belle Haven resident, Taylor had run unsuccessfully in 2016 under the city's at-large system and lost to two incumbent candidates who lived west of Interstate 101.

After that election, a law firm threatened the city with a lawsuit if it did not enact district elections, citing Taylor's loss as an example of how the at-large system disenfranchised Black and Hispanic voters.

In the two years before her next campaign, Taylor founded the nonprofit Belle Haven Action, where she serves as

executive director. She went on to win the District 1 seat in 2018 with more than 75% of the vote and ran unopposed for reelection in 2022. She is the first Black woman to serve on the Menlo Park City Council and the first Belle Haven resident to hold a seat since 1986.

Taylor told supporters she made the decision not to run on this November's ballot after careful consideration on how to best serve the community.

"Although I will be stepping away from elected office, I will never step away from this community. Belle Haven and Haven Avenue are part of who I am, and I look forward to continuing

to serve in new ways while supporting the next generation of leaders who will carry our work forward," Taylor wrote.

"Councilmember Cecilia Taylor has been a great colleague for the past eight years. She has made a big difference for Menlo Park. I look forward to her future successes," Mayor Betsy Nash wrote in a message to this news organization following Taylor's announcement.

The District 1 seat is one of three that will go before voters in November, along with District 4, which includes Allied Arts and downtown Menlo Park, and District 2, which

represents the Willows.

Mayor Betsy Nash, who represents District 4, previously announced she will not seek reelection. Two candidates, Charlotte Reed and Laura Melahn, have entered the race for that seat.

Councilmember Drew Combs is running for reelection in District 2 and will face a contested election, with Vamsi Velagapudi throwing his hat into the ring.

The official nomination period for candidates to file paperwork with the Menlo Park City Clerk's Office starts July 13. ■

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

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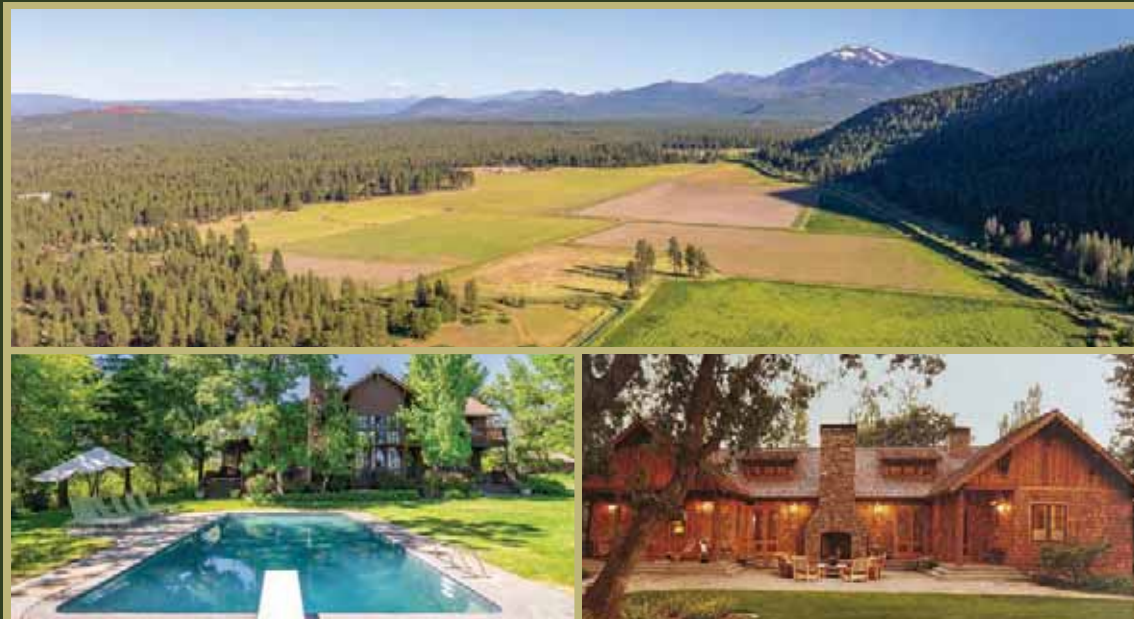
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Black Ranch is a magnificent 1,000-acre property located northeast of Redding, California.

It features an extensive ranch compound with beautiful homes, a tennis court, swimming pool, stable, and expansive views of Burney Peak. Bordered on three sides by National Forest lands, Black Ranch is a remarkable wildlife habitat that provides excellent conservation and recreation opportunities. The ranch's farmland currently is leased to provide annual income. Abundant wetlands and the presence of Burney Creek underscore the valuable water resources.

\$4.85 Million.



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The Bar 13 Ranch is both a trout fishing paradise and working cattle ranch located on the banks of the world-famous Fall River.

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The ranch's 290 acres comprise irrigated farmland, pastures, corrals, barns, and a two-bedroom, two-bath riverfront home with boat dock.

\$3.95 Million.



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Local News

MENLO PARK | AThERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Magali Gauthier

Maddy Schwarz of San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory floats western snowy plover eggs near Bedwell Bayfront Park in Menlo Park on April 17, 2025. The photo was part of a multimedia story that won best photo essay in the California Journalism Awards.

Almanac journalists earn statewide honors for their work in 2025

Print and online coverage nets 22 California Journalism Awards

By Almanac staff

The Almanac won 22 awards for its work, including six first-place nods, in this year's California Journalism Awards, announced this month.

Organized by the California News Publishers Association, the annual competition recognizes excellence in journalism. It drew thousands of entries

from across the state and covered work that was produced in 2025.

The Almanac was also a finalist for General Excellence, the annual journalism competition's top prize. Its sister publication, the Pleasanton Weekly, won first place.

Reporter Arden Margulis' coverage of violent threats against a local high school won top honors for breaking

news. Menlo-Atherton High School was placed on "secure campus" status, a milder form of lockdown, when a threat was reported to the school's See Something, Say Something tip line. Margulis doggedly pursued the story beyond the initial incident. His follow-up reporting delved into the nature of the alleged threat

See **HONORS**, page 16

Ravenswood district renames César Chávez Ravenswood Middle School

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

César Chávez Ravenswood Middle School in East Palo Alto has a new name. Ravenswood City School District has renamed it Ravenswood Middle School.

The discussion to change the name began days after a New York Times investigation detailed allegations of sexual abuse against the late labor activist in March.

At its June 18 meeting, the school board unanimously

agreed to the new name.

The district adopted Chávez's name in 2019 when RCSD consolidated César Chávez Academy and Ravenswood Middle School onto one campus at 2450 Ralmar Ave. Due to the community's concerns over the erasure of the activist's legacy, the district decided to combine both schools names.

The most recent effort to rebrand the school involved months of community input, surveys, public meetings and student advisory sessions. Out

of 170 survey responses, students represented the largest group, making up 62% of participants.

Ravenswood Middle School led by a wide margin, receiving 59 submissions. Other suggestions, which garnered only two to six entries included: no change; Lions, the school mascot; Dolores Huerta Middle School; East Palo Alto Middle School; and Apollonia Grey Uhilamoelangi, after the late

See **RAVENSWOOD**, page 14

Atherton adopts a balanced budget, with surplus

In a challenging economy, many Bay Area cities are struggling with projected shortfalls

By Neil Gonzales

Atherton has achieved something of a fiscal rarity for a Bay Area jurisdiction in this challenging economy. At its meeting June 17, the City Council adopted the town's 2026-27 budget with no general fund deficit — a feat that other communities on the Peninsula have been struggling to do.

Atherton is budgeting for a \$2.8 million surplus in the general fund, which generates revenue primarily from property, sales and other taxes, along with various fees. It covers core services such as public safety, infrastructure, parks and administration.

According to the town's online budget dashboard, revenues are projected at \$26.2 million while expenditures are projected at \$23.4 million.

"This is an excellent budget," Councilmember Elizabeth Lewis said at the meeting.

Lewis also praised the town's decision to direct funds toward improving street safety and addressing other needs.

"We're putting our funds into the infrastructure and improving our streets and drainage problems that our residents have been telling us (about)," she said.

City Manager George Rodericks attributed Atherton's strong budget position to the town exercising fiscal discipline.

"Atherton is fiscally conservative," Rodericks said in an email to The Almanac, "and we budget within our means."

One strategy that has helped is not treating certain state funding mechanisms like the Educational Revenue Augmentation Fund (ERAF) as a consistent revenue stream, he said.

"More than a decade ago, we recognized that ERAF was always at risk of attack by the state," he said, "so we removed it from our operational budget expectations as a guaranteed revenue."

Instead, he said, the town taps money from ERAF to cut down on long-term debt such as pension liabilities or for one-time

capital expenses.

"We do not count on it for general operations or for annual capital projects except where specifically dedicated in a given year," Rodericks said.

"Beyond that, our approach is simple," he added. "We tend to save for projects and then build them rather than take on debt or pursue independent revenue measures."

But the yearslong wrangling over the state's in-lieu vehicle license fee (VLF), which is paid by ERAF, still has an impact on Atherton, as it does for all the other jurisdictions in San Mateo County.

This year, San Mateo County officials said Atherton has a \$741,000 VLF shortfall. The county government and San Mateo County cities had a combined shortfall of \$119 million.

The state budget recently passed by the California Legislature and awaiting Gov. Gavin Newsom's signature includes reimbursing approximately 65% — \$77 million — to bridge a significant portion of the fee owed to the county and its cities.

That funding would provide relief to local governments and support services such as police and fire protection, transportation infrastructure, libraries and childcare programs.

That fee "has always been included in our basic property tax revenues," Rodericks said, "and we do depend on it for operations so its reduction has been a noticeable hit to the town."

According to Rodericks, property tax — including the vehicle fee — accounts for 78% of Atherton's general fund revenues, with strong home construction and permit activity adding another 11%.

On the expenditure side, he said, the police department accounts for nearly 50% of the town's budget and public works 18% with the balance spread across the other departments.

"The key point is that this represents spending about 89% of what we take in," he said.

See **BUDGET**, page 7

Atherton Library unveils long-awaited Children's Garden

By Sydney Feldman

Atherton Library celebrated the grand opening of its Children's Garden, a 6,200-square-foot outdoor space designed for children and their families to play, learn and enjoy a natural environment.

"This garden reflects our community's commitment to nurturing children's physical, social, emotional and intellectual growth," said Atherton Mayor Stacy Holland on Saturday, June 27. "It is a living testament to what can be achieved when community members, partners and local organizations come together to create something meaningful for future generations."

Located on the west side of Atherton Library beneath a grove of redwood and oak trees, the garden contains a willow hut, a tree house and an outdoor classroom area connected to the library's makerspace.

"The Children's Garden expands the library experience beyond our walls and creates new opportunities for children and families to learn, imagine and connect with nature," said Anne-Marie Despain, director of San Mateo County Libraries.

The \$682,000 project was approved by the Atherton City



Courtesy Atherton Library

The Atherton Library celebrated the grand opening of its new Children's Garden on June 27.

Council last year. Funding was provided by the San Mateo County Library Joint Powers Authority and a \$10,000 donation from the Friends of the Atherton Library. The garden, inspired by a similar locale behind the old Atherton Library, was designed by Miller Company Landscape Architects and constructed by Selway Construction.

Following remarks from

Holland and Vice Mayor Rick DeGolia, the event included a ribbon-cutting ceremony, storytime and hands-on maker activities.

"Libraries have always stood for the belief that access to knowledge, resources and opportunity should be available to everyone, and that principle doesn't stop at the library doors," said Atherton Vice Mayor Rick DeGolia,

the chair of the San Mateo County Libraries Joint Powers Authority Governing Board. "This garden honors a beloved part of Atherton's past while creating new opportunities for children and families to explore, imagine, learn and connect with nature." ■

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Menlo Park police recover two bikes in back-to-back thefts

By Arden Margulis

A 22-year-old man was arrested in Menlo Park on June 24 for allegedly stealing two bicycles worth \$300 each from homes near downtown Menlo Park, the Menlo Park Police Department said.

According to police, a resident reported at 8:42 a.m. that a suspect had taken a Giant brand bike off the porch of a home on the 1000 block of Santa Cruz Avenue.

Police then found a man, later identified as William Moran Moran, matching the description of the suspect riding a different bicycle on Werth Avenue. Police determined the bike he was riding, a Specialized Tricross, had been stolen from an open garage on Windsor Way.

Officers later found the Giant bicycle discarded in nearby bushes on Windsor Way, and both bikes were

returned to their owners.

Moran was arraigned at the San Mateo Superior Court on June 25 on two counts of felony burglary and one count of misdemeanor possession of burglary tools, according to court records. Judge Elizabeth Hill released him under supervision while the case is pending.

Court records show Moran was charged June 1 with possession of a controlled substance. In 2025, he was charged with felony possession of a controlled substance with intent to sell and misdemeanor possession; the felony charge was later dropped as part of a plea agreement that included a one-year probation term. That probation remained active at the time of both of his 2026 arrests, according to court records.

Moran is due back in court in Redwood City on July 29. ■

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OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

David Luenberger, 88, of Stanford, who was born in Los Angeles, received a master's degree and a doctorate in electrical engineering from Sanford University, and who conducted groundbreaking research in control theory, optimization, economics, information science and investment science, and was one of the co-founders of the university's Department of Engineering-Economic Systems. He authored six books and was an honorary professor at several international universities, was an accomplished magician, and loved playing jazz piano, skiing, body-surfing, writing short stories and taking photographs. He died on May 19.

Brian Goncher, 69, of Palo Alto, who was born in Cleveland, attended University of Chicago and later worked at the Wold Bank in Chicago, then moved to Berkeley and worked in the corporate office of Bank of America, relocated to the Bay Area in the 1990s and settled into a cottage in Woodside. He served as a financial consultant and became interested in the emerging field of clean energy, established the National Clean Energy Practice at Deloitte in 2004 and helped to launch Winterfest, an annual gathering that focuses on sustainable energy. He later moved to Palo Alto and became a mentor to young people interested in jobs in clean energy. He died on May 30.

Leanne Giles, 78, of Palo Alto, who was born in Provo, Utah, spent a year in Tehran in the 1970s, loved to travel with her family, and who, in 1992, went door to door in Palo Alto to raise money for disaster relief after Hurricane Iniki. She faithfully served her congregation, and loved reading, completing puzzles and spending time with her children and grandchildren. She died on June 2.

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

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Caught in tech giant's shifting plans, Japanese eatery ends 26-year run

Dashi's last day in Menlo Park is July 3 after Meta terminates lease

By Sydney Feldman

When Joanna Martinez first went to Dashi Japanese Restaurant in Menlo Park 21 years ago, it was bustling.

Martinez quickly learned that if she and her co-workers didn't arrive promptly at 11:30 a.m. from their warehouse around the corner, they would face a 30-minute wait. The restaurant, owned by John Bek, was "always packed, always booked."

"We looked forward to sitting at the bar because I like talking to John ... but everybody was super kind," Martinez said. What began as a place to grab lunch with her colleagues became Martinez's venue of choice for special occasions. "That's where we would celebrate," she said.

The 26-year-old establishment will permanently shut its doors on July 3, two months after Meta's property management team informed Bek that his lease would be terminated in 60 days.

Dashi sits near the intersection of Willow Road and Hamilton Avenue in a strip mall across the street from Meta's sprawling corporate headquarters. Aside from national chains Starbucks and Jack in the Box, it is the oldest restaurant in the Meta-owned mall, which the tech company bought to use in the now-halted Willow Village. The shopping plaza also includes restaurants Mi Taqueria, HAJI'S Restaurant, and SAJJ Mediterranean.

Bek, the third owner of Dashi, acquired the restaurant 23 years ago. When he took over, he said he made efforts to talk to his customers and forge personal relationships with them. He felt confident that his approachable personality would set him up for success.

"John tries to make everybody that comes into his restaurant feel like they're in a friend's house," said Rudy Torres, a longtime customer. "He's always very welcoming to everyone that comes into his restaurant. He knows everybody by first name, even families, fathers, mothers, children."

Initially, Bek said 70% of his business came from corporate



Seeger Gray

Owner John Bek is closing Dashi Japanese Restaurant in Menlo Park on July 3 after landlord Meta ended the lease.

workers at nearby companies like Martinez coming for lunch. But the scene began to change 10 years ago when Meta purchased the complex and properties in its surrounding area.

Martinez said Bek made renovations — fixing the bathroom, upgrading the lighting and removing a divider in the middle of the restaurant — after Meta acquired the strip mall with the expectation that the company's employees would become part of his clientele.

However, the tech giant's presence has had the opposite effect. According to resident Chris Andrews, many office parks have been shuttered without being replaced after being bought by Meta. Andrews said that since he moved to the Willows neighborhood in 2010, the area has become less residential in favor of "people hurrying from point A to point B in their cars." For him, these changes represent a larger trend: the "chain-ification" of Menlo Park that he says is institutionalizing the city and taking away from its "funky local character" as a smaller town in a big-city area.

Meta, then Facebook, relocated its headquarters to the former Sun Microsystems campus in Menlo Park from Palo Alto in 2011. Since moving into those 11

buildings — now known as the East campus — the company has had numerous expansions, many of which involved buying office buildings in the nearby vicinity.

"My customers, one by one, said, 'Hey, I can't see you anymore because we're not getting a lease renewal from Facebook,'" Bek said. "I'm like, 'Oh my God,' but I didn't notice an immediate impact because it was one company at a time."

Bek said even as business began to slow, he held on to hope after Dashi and the other restaurants in the complex were promised a spot in Meta's Willow Village, an enormous mixed-use redevelopment.

Willow Village, which was first announced in 2017, called for 1.6 million square feet of new office space, over 1,700 housing units and up to 200,000 square feet of retail space. It was approved by the Menlo Park City Council in December 2022 after years of negotiations with the city.

On May 1, Meta announced they would be shelving the development indefinitely due to "changing market conditions." Willow Village was expected to bring in significant revenue for the City along with affordable housing and other amenities to the historically underserved

Belle Haven neighborhood.

Two days after Meta pulled the plug on Willow Village, Bek received the letter ending his lease.

Even before the project was suspended, Dashi had been struggling financially. Since 2024, the business has been losing money. In 2023, Bek said he made \$13,000 before income tax, yet he said he has not compromised his employees' salaries.

"(Meta) did help us quite a bit in small ways, but when you take away 90% of your customers, there's so little you can do about it," Bek said.

Adam Alberti, a spokesperson for the Belle Haven Center, which is owned by Meta, said in a statement that the Center has voluntarily provided over \$170,000 in financial relief to Dashi in recent years, and forgave lease obligations by allowing the business to remain on a "flexible" month-to-month lease with "discounted terms."

"Despite the unprecedented financial assistance from the retail center, Dashi chose not to pay rent or meet basic lease obligations for long periods," Alberti said in a statement. "We respectfully disagree with any characterization that this extensive, multi-year assistance constitutes mistreatment, and we

wish Dashi's and its owner the best in their future endeavors."

Bek denied that he missed any payments and offered to provide his bank records as proof. "It's been 100% paid," he said, although he acknowledged that he sometimes made his payments late. In most of those cases, Bek said, he received permission to pay past deadline.

He also said that CBRE Group Inc., Meta's real estate partner that oversees his lease, never provided financial aid to him directly and only helped by lowering his rent during the pandemic.

Before receiving the letter on May 3, Bek told this news organization he made numerous attempts to speak with Meta and its real estate partners, including writing a letter to the property management team in March in which he said he would report his situation to the media. He said none of his attempts came to fruition.

"I lost millions and millions of dollars in cash," Bek said. "We used to average about 200 to 250 transactions a day. (Now,) I'd be lucky if I get ... 12."

Loyal patrons are deeply upset by the loss of Dashi.

"It's unfair for a small business owner like John to lose his bread and butter because this giant company can do whatever they want just because they're able to," said Jason Lee, who has been eating at the restaurant for 23 years.

Upon finding out the news, Martinez said she emailed Meta multiple times and has posted on its platforms, Facebook and Instagram, in protest. "I'm disappointed because I feel like Meta has a responsibility to all those businesses there, and they're not keeping their promise," Martinez said.

Bek said what he wanted most was for Meta's executives to hear him out.

"Tell Mark Zuckerberg, 'Hey, give me one minute,'" Bek said. "I've lost everything. I got nothing else to lose at this point." ■

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BUDGET

continued from page 5

Atherton's budget also shows a projected year-end positive fund balance of \$11.7 million, according to a summary by Rodericks. The town exceeds its 30% reserve requirement at \$7 million with unallocated

reserves of \$4.7 million. The Capital Improvement Program totals \$5.2 million across street, drainage, bike/pedestrian, parks and facilities projects.

Other jurisdictions are grappling with balancing their budgets.

East Palo Alto is projecting

a deficit of \$4.7 million in the general fund and plans to draw from its reserves to cover that gap.

Menlo Park had to make steep cuts and raise fees in order to eke out a balanced budget. Redwood City is down \$1.3 million in the general fund for the fiscal year that begins

July 1 but is forecasting annual deficits ranging from \$22 million to \$29 million starting in 2027-28.

At the same Atherton meeting, the council approved a \$7,374 raise for Rodericks consisting of a 2.5% cost-of-living adjustment, bringing his salary to \$302,347 a year. The council

also awarded him a one-time \$15,000 bonus.

"I am deeply appreciative of the council's confidence in me and in the town's team," Rodericks told The Almanac. ■

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Menlo Park Fire Protection District celebrates 110 years

By Sydney Feldman

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District celebrated a big birthday on Saturday, June 27.

“For 110 years, the District has proudly served our communities with a steadfast commitment to protecting lives, property, and the environment,” said Fire Chief Mark Lorenzen in a statement. “This milestone is a tribute to the generations of firefighters, paramedics, prevention personnel, and professional staff whose dedication, courage, and compassion have earned the trust of those we serve.”

The district is responsible for approximately 90,000 residents across Menlo Park, Atherton, East Palo Alto and parts of unincorporated San Mateo County. For its centennial in 2016, the Department commemorated the occasion with a parade down Santa Cruz Avenue.

On June 27, the Schapelhouman Fire Museum offered a tour by the Retired Firefighters Association, and the department is planning to appear in the city’s annual Fourth of July parade on Saturday.



Courtesy Menlo Park Fire Protection District

Menlo Park's Fire Station 6's building with a vintage fire engine (left) and a 1918-era fire station housing a museum (right).

Fire Protection District Board President Virginia Chang Kiraly said the district's FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Task Force, a team put together by retired fire chief Harold Schapelhouman,

has been sent to help out with some of “the worst man-made and natural disasters in American history” like the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Chang Kiraly said the recent \$56 million in federal funding allocated to FEMA's National Urban Search and Rescue program is “especially meaningful on the 250th anniversary of the

signing of the Declaration of Independence” and allows the nation's 28 FEMA task forces to unite to “continue serving Americans during the worst possible disasters.”

Last year, the district submitted a proposal to completely reconstruct Station 1, the main fire station on Middlefield Road in Menlo Park. It plans to replace the 71-year-old building with a new two-story firehouse, training tower and 14,700-square-foot administrative office to serve as the district's headquarters and community meeting space.

The city of Menlo Park conducted an initial review of the plans and is currently seeking a contractor to create an environmental impact report for the project. All funds it expects to need have been set aside in a capital improvement fund.

“Menlo Fire is internationally renowned for what we do,” Chang Kiraly said, “and I think that's something that we continue to be very, very proud of.” ■

*Email Editorial Intern
Sydney Feldman at sfeldman@almanacnews.com.*

Menlo Park has county's first West Nile detection

By Sydney Feldman

A dead crow near Nealon Park in Menlo Park tested positive for West Nile virus on June 24, marking the first detection of the disease in San Mateo County this year.

The carcass was reported through the West Nile virus call center organized by the California Department of Public Health. Infected birds have been found in Atherton and Portola Valley in previous years.

District staff are setting additional mosquito traps in neighborhoods near where the dead bird was found, according to a press release from the San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District.

“Because birds can fly a far

distance, we cannot be sure that this bird was actually infected where it was found,” said Rachel Curtis-Robles, the Vector Control District's public health education and outreach officer. Curtis-Robles said that the traps will collect mosquitoes to be tested for the virus.

West Nile virus is the leading cause of mosquito-borne disease, according to the CDC, and affects around 2,000 people in the U.S. each year. Most people remain asymptomatic, but those with mild illness can experience flu-like symptoms and sufferers of severe illness may require hospitalization.

The virus — which does not currently have any vaccines or medications available to prevent transmission — is most commonly spread through the bite of an infected mosquito.

The San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District encourages residents to reduce potential exposure to mosquitoes by dumping standing water where mosquitoes can breed, applying EPA-certified insect repellent with active ingredients such as DEET or picaridin and wearing long sleeves and pants in the early morning and late evening, when mosquitoes are most active.

Curtis-Robles said residents can notify the agency when they see mosquito activity.

“It's really helpful when the public calls to report biting mosquitoes so we know where to focus our efforts,” Curtis-Robles said.

Dead birds should be reported at 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473). For more information



Veronica Weber

A dead crow found in Menlo Park tested positive for West Nile virus on June 24, making it the first diseased animal found in San Mateo County in 2026.

about West Nile virus or San Mateo County's services, visit smcmvcd.org. ■

*Email Editorial Intern
Sydney Feldman at sfeldman@almanacnews.com.*

California launches AI job-loss tracker to monitor workforce impacts

By Bay City News Service

California has launched what state officials describe as the nation's first public dashboard to track potential job losses linked to artificial intelligence, part of an effort to monitor how the technology is affecting the workforce.

Gov. Gavin Newsom announced the California AI-Unemployment Tracker on June 25, saying the online tool will provide monthly updates to identify possible AI-related job displacement, a press release issued by the governor's office noted.

The dashboard was developed in partnership with

the California Employment Development Department and researchers at the University of California's California Policy Lab.

State officials said the tracker is intended to serve as an early warning system to help guide workforce policies, including job training, retraining, and employment assistance.

An initial analysis accompanying the dashboard found no evidence of widespread AI-related increases in unemployment claims statewide, according to Gov. Newsom's office.

However, researchers reported higher claims among some college-educated workers in occupations with high AI exposure

and in the San Francisco Bay Area following the 2022 public release of ChatGPT-3.5, the report said.

The tracker was created under an executive order signed by Newsom directing state agencies to prepare workers, businesses, and communities for the economic effects of artificial intelligence. ■

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COMPASS

Billionaire tax, affordable housing: See the measures on California's November ballot

By CalMatters

On Nov. 3, Californians will vote on 14 state-wide ballot measures on environment, taxation, election, housing and healthcare.

For months, interest groups sponsoring ballot initiatives spent heavily on ad blitzes and signature gathering to get on the ballot, but some agreed to withdraw high-profile proposals after striking deals with state leaders or other interest groups this week, ahead of Thursday's deadline to finalize the November ballot.

Rideshare giant Uber and the state's trial lawyers pulled rival measures in a deal with state lawmakers and healthcare labor unions and the California Hospital Association agreed to pull two measures that would have capped hospital executive pay and restricted spending by healthcare unions.

Here's what's on your November ballot:

Billionaire tax

What it does: This high-profile measure would apply a one-time 5% wealth tax on the assets of roughly 200 California billionaires, to be paid over five years. Ninety percent of the revenue would go to pay for healthcare for low-income Californians and 10% toward education and food assistance programs.

Supporters: Service Employees International Union—United Healthcare Workers West, independent U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, Teamsters California

and AFSCME California

Opponents: Gov. Gavin Newsom, prominent billionaires including Google co-founder Sergey Brin and Ripple Labs co-founder Chris Larsen, the California Teachers Association, California Primary Care Association and California Medical Association

Audit new tax spending

What it does: This measure in response to the billionaire tax proposal would require state audits of programs funded by new taxes. It would also apply revenue from new taxes to the state's spending cap, which requires that spiking revenue go back to taxpayers or toward education. That would effectively cancel out the wealth tax proposal. If voters approve both measures, the one with more votes will prevail.

Supporters: Building a Better California, primarily funded by Brin and venture capitalists John Doerr and Michael Moritz, and Reform California, led by GOP Assemblymember Carl DeMaio of San Diego

Opponents: Proponents of the billionaire tax initiative

Prohibit new personal property tax and retroactive taxes

What it does: This measure is also aimed at undercutting the wealth tax proposal. It would prevent new taxes on personal property, which would offset the wealth tax. If both pass, the one with more votes prevails.

Supporters: Building a Better California and Reform California

Opponents: Proponents of the billionaire tax initiative

Make high-earner income tax permanent

What it does: The measure seeks to make permanent a temporary income tax — up to 12% — on high earners that voters approved in 2012. The tax applies to household income over \$721,000 for couples and over \$360,000 for individuals. The tax generates between \$5-\$15 billion each year for K-12 schools and community colleges. It is set to expire in 2031.

Supporters: The California Teachers Association, California Federation of Teachers and California School Employees Association

Opponents: California Taxpayers Association

Higher threshold for local special taxes

What it does: This would raise the threshold for citizen-driven special tax ballot initiatives to pass from a simple majority to two-thirds, making it harder to impose or increase taxes. The measure, placed on the ballot at the last minute by state lawmakers, reflects a deal state leaders struck with Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association.

Supporters: Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, California legislators, Newsom

Affordable housing bond

What it does: This would allow the state to borrow a record \$11.25 billion for affordable housing, with \$10 billion to buy, build, rehabilitate and preserve affordable homes and \$1.25 billion to help veterans buy homes.

Supporters: Newsom, Democratic state lawmakers, the California Apartment Association and AFL-CIO California

Opponents: Republican state lawmakers

\$25 billion homebuying loan

What it does: This would create a \$25 billion mortgage loan program for home buyers who make less than 200% of the area median income. The measure would offer fixed-rate mortgages for up to 17% of the purchase price on homes priced under \$1.5 million. Home buyers must pay at least 3% of their down payment.

Supporters: Former Senate Majority Leader Bob Hertzberg, Building a Better California, the California Association of

Realtors, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America and Western States Regional Council of Carpenters

Rainy day fund

What it does: This constitutional amendment from top Democratic leaders would allow the state to deposit up to 20% of its general fund tax revenue into its rainy day fund each year, instead of the current 10%. The state could also spend some tax revenue to pay down its \$20 billion federal unemployment insurance debt.

Supporters: Newsom and legislative Democrats

Opponents: Legislative Republicans

Expedited environmental review

What it does: This would amend the state's landmark California Environmental Quality Act to create deadlines for environmental reviews of most housing, transportation, water, health and clean energy projects to speed up permitting and limit the court's ability to stop or delay developments.

Supporters: California Chamber of Commerce, Building a Better California, the California Building Industry Association, PG&E and Edison

Opponents: Clean and Healthy California, a coalition of environmental advocates and the California State Building and Construction Trades Council

Voter ID

What it does: This constitutional amendment would require voters to present government-issued ID when voting in person or the last four digits of their ID number when voting by mail. Voters would be required to state under the penalty of perjury that they are U.S. citizens.

Supporters: Reform California, GOP U.S. Rep. Ken Calvert, and state Sen. Tony Strickland of Huntington Beach

Opponents: League of Women Voters of California, ACLU California Action and California Donor Table

Public campaign financing

What it does: This measure would allow state and local political candidates to tap into public funds for their campaigns. Public campaign financing has been banned in California since 1988. State lawmakers approved the measure last year to send it to voters this November.

Supporters: California Common Cause, California

Clean Money Campaign and ACLU California Action

Opponents: California Taxpayers Association

Recall election reform

What it does: After a recall, this constitutional amendment would eliminate the election to pick a successor immediately, such as when Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger replaced the recalled Gov. Gray Davis, instead leaving the post vacant until it's filled in a separate election. It would also allow the recalled official to run for the office again.

Supporters: League of Women Voters, California Common Cause and Secretary of State Shirley Weber

Opponents: Election Integrity Project California

Clinic funding

What it does: This measure would require federally qualified health centers to spend 90% of revenue on direct patient care and services that aid in providing care to low-income and underserved people. Clinics that don't comply would be fined; the money would go into a state-operated account for worker training and staffing.

Supporters: Service Employees International Union—United Healthcare Workers West

Opponents: The California Primary Care Association, which represents clinics, the California Medical Association, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California and the California Teachers Association

Immunology research bond

What it does: This would allow the state to borrow \$8.4 billion in debt to research immune system-based technologies for treating conditions including cancer, heart disease and Alzheimer's. The money would be divided between a University of California-affiliated nonprofit and a grant for public or nonprofit institutions. Any resulting technology and drugs from the research would be sold at 20% below the national average.

Supporters: Gary Michelson, philanthropist and funder of the California Institute for Immunology and Immunotherapy, Meyer Luskin, philanthropist and institute board member, The ALS Association, The Alzheimer's Association and Blood Cancer United

Opponents: Robert Kaplan, former associate director of the National Institutes of Health. ■

CalMatters' Ben Christopher contributed reporting.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Hassett Ace Hardware celebrates Redwood City store reopening

Hassett Ace Hardware in Redwood City reopened in May following a car crash that sparked a fire in December 2025, and is ready to celebrate its comeback with the community.

From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on July 12, the store, located at 282 Woodside Plaza, will be hosting a community event featuring food, vendor demonstrations, giveaways and live music, including a visit from special guest Marcus in the Morning from noon to 2 p.m.

Menlo Park Community Watch Group

The Menlo Park Police Department is reintroducing its neighborhood watch program as the Community Watch Group (CWG). The group is made up of local volunteers who encourage residents to work together to promote awareness, communication and neighborhood safety.

CWG volunteers support crime prevention efforts in their area. The MPPD offers training, safety information, liaison assistance and presentations on neighborhood crime prevention, personal and community safety, and crime prevention through environmental design.

Menlo Park residents who are interested in bringing the CWG program to their neighborhood can visit tinyurl.com/communitywatchgroup or email CWG@menlopark.gov.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

DISCOVER LADERA COUNTRY SHOPPER



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Public Notices

TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY
NOTICE OF ELECTION
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a General Municipal Election will be held in the Town of Portola Valley on Tuesday, the 3rd day of November, 2026, for the following Officers: THREE Town Councilmembers, each for a full term of four years.

The filing period for candidates opens on Monday, July 13, 2026 at 8:00 a.m. and closes on Friday, August 7, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. If an incumbent fails to file his or her nomination by the close of filing on Friday, August 7, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. (the 88th day before the election), the filing period will be extended for five (5) days, ending Wednesday, August 12, 2026 at 5:00 p.m. (the 83rd day before the election) to nominate candidates other than the person(s) who are the incumbents for that incumbent's elective office. If no one or only one person is nominated for an elective office, appointment to the elective office may be made as prescribed by Section 10229, Elections Code of the State of California.
Published: July 3, 2026
Veronica Dao
Town Clerk
Town of Portola Valley
7/3/26
CNS-4056255#
THE ALMANAC
(ALM Jul 3, 2026)

REALLY GOOD REMEDIES INC.
REALLY GOOD ORTHOTICS INC.
HERBAFLU INC.
FUTURHERB INC.
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-303995
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) REALLY GOOD REMEDIES INC. , 2.) REALLY GOOD ORTHOTICS INC. , 3.) HERBAFLU INC. , 4.) FUTURHERB INC. , located at 214 De Anza Blvd, San Mateo, CA, 94402. Mailing Address: 380 Hamilton Ave #507 Palo Alto, CA 94301
Registered owner(s):
REALLY GOOD WORLD INC.
380 Hamilton Ave #507 Palo Alto, CA 94301
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on May 29, 2026.
(ALM Jul 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2026)

SOLIVANA LONGEVITY LAB
SOLIVANA RESEARCH INSTITUTE
MADE BY SOLIVANA
NATASHA BERNESS
SOLIVANA
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304179
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) SOLIVANA LONGEVITY LAB , 2.) SOLIVANA RESEARCH INSTITUTE , 3.) MADE BY SOLIVANA , 4.) NATASHA BERNESS , 5.) SOLIVANA , located at 1922 el camino real, Redwood City, CA 94063.
Registered owner(s):
INNER LIGHT WELLNESS LLC
1401 21st 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 June 16, 2026.
(ALM Jun 26, Jul 3, 10 and 17, 2026)

BAND OF CEOS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304036
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) BAND OF CEOS , located at 358 Albion Avenue, Woodside, CA 94062.

Registered owner(s):
JOHN FRANCIS MARONEY
358 Albion Avenue
Woodside, CA 94062
KERMIT POPE
358 Albion Avenue
Woodside, CA 94062
This business is conducted by: an Unincorporated Assoc. Other Than a Partnership.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/01/2012.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on June 03, 2026.
(ALM Jun 12, 19, 26 and Jul 3, 2026)

ZETINO TREE SERVICE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304142
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) ZETINO TREE SERVICE , located at 983 GARDEN ST, E PALO ALTO CA 94303.
Registered owner(s):
NEFTALI JACINTO ZETINO
983 Garden St
E Palo Alto CA 94303
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 06/11/2026.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on June 11, 2026.
(ALM Jun 19, 26, Jul 3 and 10, 2026)

PEBBLE & PULSE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304030
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) PEBBLE & PULSE , located at 50 Woodside Plaza #447, Redwood City, CA 94061. Mailing Address: 1401 21st Street, Ste R Sacramento, CA 95811
Registered owner(s):
PEBBLE & PULSE LLC
1401 21st Street, Ste 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 June 02, 2026.
(ALM Jun 19, 26, Jul 3 and 10, 2026)

SUMMONS **Case No. 25-FAM-01871**
(CITACION JUDICIAL)
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT (A VISO AL DEMANDADO): **SHASHA YAN**
YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF: (LO ESTÁ DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE): **Valentin Leynov**

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond Within 30 days. Read the information below. You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more Information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court. There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from

a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of \$10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case. ¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 días, la corte puede decidir en su contra sin escuchar su version. Lea la información a continuación. Tiene 30 DIAS DE CALENDARIO después de que le entreguen esta citación y papeles legales para presentar una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefónica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y mas información en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede mas cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentación, pida al secretario de la corte que le dé un formulario de exención de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podra quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin mas advertencia. Hay otros requisitos legales. Es recomendable que llame a un abogado inmediatamente. Si no conoce a un abogado, puede llamar a un servicio de remisión a abogados. Si no puede pagar a un abogado, es posible que cumpla con los requisitos para obtener servicios legales gratuitos de un programa de servicios legales sin fines de lucro. Puede encontrar estos grupos sin fines de lucro en el sitio web de California Legal Services, (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California, (www.sucorte.ca.gov) o poniéndose en contacto con la corte o el colegio de abogados locales. AVISO: Por ley, la corte tiene derecho a reclamar las cuotas y los costos exentos por imponer un gravamen sobre cualquier recuperación de \$10,000 mas de valor recibida mediante un acuerdo o una concesión de arbitraje en un caso de derecho civil. Tiene que pagar el gravamen de la corte antes de que la corte pueda desechar el caso. The name and address of the court is (El nombre y dirección de la corte es): Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo

400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94080
The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is
(El nombre, la dirección y el numero de teléfono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es): **Crisostomo G. Ibarra, Ibarra Professional Law Corporation, 459 Fulton Street, Suite 109n San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 398 - 5329**
DATE (Fecha): **01/14/2026**
Chad L. Peace , Clerk, by /s/ Angelica Flores Valdivia , Deputy Clerk
(Secretario) (Adjunto)
NOTICE TO THE PERSON SERVED: You are served
(ALM Jul 3, 10, 17 and 24, 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

Visit AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/

The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 p.m.

RAVENSWOOD

continued from page 5

community leader known as Mama Dee.

“Ravenswood” was a near-unanimous choice among adult respondents, according to a district presentation.

Survey results showed that the majority of community members wanted the school's name to reflect state, national or global figures, cultural and historical respect, and serve as an inspiration for students.

During the board meeting, member Jenny Varghese Bloom said that when she asked her neighbor about what the school should be renamed, the neighbor said, “You should name it Ravenswood because you're going to put Ravenswood on the map. Ravenswood needs to get out there.”

The cultural significance of the name Ravenswood goes back to 1849, when the area of East Palo Alto was known

as Ravenswood, founded and named by Elijah Woods, according to a 1998 Los Angeles Times article. While Ravenswood serves as the city's original name, it went through multiple monikers over the years, including Cooley's Landing in 1868, Runnymede in 1916 and finally East Palo Alto in 1925.

District staff said that the name “Ravenswood” honors the legacy of East Palo Alto “without tying the school's identity to a single individual whose legacy is now contested.”

Superintendent Gina Sudaria said district staff will be working through the logistics of changing the name throughout the month of July. She said the team hopes to make modifications as soon as possible and have them in place by the first day of school on Aug. 12. ■

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

Employment

ENGINEERING

Snowflake Inc has mltp l positions avail in Menlo Park, CA for the ff. Tlcmgt prmttd. Successful candidate's starting sal will be dtrmnd based on permissible, non-discriminatory fctrs such as skills, exp, & geo lctn. This role is also elgbl for a cmptve bnfts pckge that incld: medical, dental, vision, life, & disability insrnce; 401(k) ret plan; FSA & HSA; at least 12 paid holidays; PTO; parental leave; ee asst program; & other co bnfts. To apply, send rsme & trnscrpts w/ job title & Ref# to resume@snowflake.com. EOE. Consulting Manager (Ref#8812922) Guidng custmrs thru proces of migrtn to Snowflake & devlpng mthdlgies to imprv mgrtn proces. Up to 75% domstc trvel rquird. \$242292 – 264000/yr. Account Executive (Ref#9434052) Being exprt on Snowflake's product & condct discvry calls, custmzed demos, & prntations to prspctve custmrs. \$140000 - 183750/yr. Software Engineer (Ref#9930616-SE4MPMS0) Dsgn & dvlop features, undrstnd custmr rqmts & meet busnss goals. \$161637 - 220800/yr. Software Engineer (Ref#10256214-SE2MPBS1) Solvng real businss needs at large scale by applyng softwr engineerng & anlytcl prblm solvng skills. \$160000 - 230000/yr. ML Scientist (Corp) (Ref#8938840) Rview the mtrics frm the AI/ML apps & idntfy any issues or bugs. \$133952 - 192050/yr. Solution Engineer (Ref#9515242) Prsnt technlgy & vsion to executivs & tchnical contrbutrs at prospts & custmrs. \$155522– 181125/ yr. Software Engineer (Ref#10291445-SE3MPBS2) Dsgn & dvlop features, undrstnd custmr rqmts & meet businss goals. \$160000 - 240000/yr. Software Engineer (Ref#10487351) Dsgn & dvlop features, undrstnd custmr rqmts & meet businss goals. \$161637 – 240000/yr. Software Engineer (Ref#10117659-SE4MPBS1) Dsgn & dvlop features, undrstnd custmr reqmts & meet businss goals. \$160000 - 200000/yr. Software Engineer (Ref#9735003-SE3MPMS0) Dsgn & dvlop features, undrstnd custmr reqmts & meet businss goals. \$161637 - 192000/yr. Software Engineer (Ref#10084582-SE3MPBS1) Dsgn & dvlop features, undrstnd custmr reqmts & meet businss goals. \$135699 - 184000/yr. Software Engineer (Ref#10434794-SE2MPMS1) Solvng real businss needs at large scale by applyng software engineering & anlytcl prblm solvng skills. \$161637 - 230000/yr. Software Engineer (Ref#10306391-SEMPMS0) Dsgn & dvlop features. Undrstnd custmr rqmts & meet business goals. \$161637 - 240000/yr.

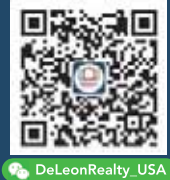
ENGINEERING

Robinhood Markets, Inc. has an opening in Menlo Park, CA for Senior Software Engineer SWEIMPI5: Dsgn, dvlop,& opрте sclble, highly avilble infstrctre systms that spprt core prdct functionality & intrnal srvcis. Telecommuting prmttd. Minimum Requirements for Position: Bachelor's degree (or foreign equivalent) in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, Software Engineering or a related field and 5 years of progressively responsible post- baccalaureate experience in the job offered or related occupation. Alternatively, Master's degree (or foreign equivalent) in Computer Science, Computer Engineering, Software Engineering or a related field and 3 years of experience in the job offered or related occupation Education or experience must include: 1.GoLang, Python, or Scala 2. Kubernetes or Docker 3.EC2, S3, IAM, or VPC 4. Terraform or CloudFormation 5.Prometheus, Grafana, or Datadog 6. Build kite, Jenkins, or GitHub Actions 7. PostgreSQL, Redis, or DynamoDB 7. Kafka or Kinesis Salary Rnge: \$213,512-\$230,000/yr. Bckground checks req. See bnfts at <https://careers.robinhood.com/benefits>. Apply here: https://job-boards.greenhouse.io/robinhood/jobs/7975544?t=gh_src=&gh_jid=7975544 and indicate job code SWEIMPI5 in your application.

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HONORS

continued from page 5

from a former student and police disputing a nonprofit's claim that it had stopped a school shooting from happening.

Reporter Jennifer Yoshikoshi's series of stories on TIDE Academy in Menlo Park won the youth and education category. Yoshikoshi followed every late-night meeting, protest and parent demonstration leading up to the Sequoia Union High School District's controversial decision in February to close the small STEM-focused

high school. This month, her coverage continued with the bittersweet commencement ceremony celebrating TIDE's last graduating class and an investigation into where its reassigned teachers would be working this fall.

"Menlo Park businesses band together to fight downtown housing development," Margulis' reporting on the ongoing fight over the city's plans to redevelop several parking lots, won first place for housing and land-use coverage.

Visual journalist Magali Gauthier's photography and

reporting about unintended impacts on western snowy plovers in Menlo Park won for best photo essay.

The Midpeninsula Life magazine, edited by Linda Taaffe and Karla Kane, won first place for print special sections. Douglas Young won the inside layout category for his creative design of a Food & Drink section story on a Menlo Park man's home-based business making protein bars. Young also took second place in the same category for his layout of a story about the rebirth of Sushi Sam's restaurant in San Mateo.

The Almanac's Arts & Entertainment staff, led by editor Heather Zimmerman, snagged three of the top five places for its A&E coverage. Zimmerman's stories, "The mighty winds: Music@Menlo concert hails often overlooked ensemble" and "Musician finds

the hidden songs in sticks and stones and penguin bones" won second and third places, respectively. Contributor Sheryl Nonnenberg's "Treasure hunt: How the Filoli estate is rebuilding its collection" took fourth place.

Margulis placed second and third for his enterprise news stories. "Atherton declines to disclose anonymous donor for new BMW police motorcycles" came in second and his series of stories on Menlo Park's troubled public pool operator, "Menlo Park's pool operator is sinking, but City Council won't give it a lifeline" took third place.

Two of Yoshikoshi's stories were awarded second place: "Portola Valley community works together to rescue mountain lion cubs" in the environmental reporting category and "Locals call for better design of Four Corners intersection"

for transportation reporting. Her story on Woodside High School's student-run record label 1.99 Records came in third in the feature story division.

Stories in The Almanac's Food & Drink section also placed in the food writing category. Adrienne Mitchel's story about Sara's Kitchen, an eatery opened by a Peruvian refugee, won second and Kane's story on seaweed foraging classes on the San Mateo County coast took fifth.

In all, The Almanac bagged six first-place awards, six second-place awards and three third places, as well as being named a top-five finalist a total of seven additional times. The contest is organized by division, with The Almanac competing against similar news outlets, based on circulation and number of staff. ■



TOWN OF PORTOLA VALLEY

NOTICE OF PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2026 AT 7:00 P.M.

Applicant: Woodside Priory School

302 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028;

File #: PLN_USE0002-2026

A public hearing has been scheduled by the Town of Portola Valley's Planning Commission for the special review and approval of an occasional event permit in accordance with paragraph 19 of the conditions of approval of the existing Conditional Use Permit X7D-30 (as amended by Planning Commission Resolution No. 2025-4) to host an evening community celebration on Friday, October 9, 2026 featuring youth and high school football games, associated food vendors, family activities, and entertainment. The property is owned by the Benedictine Fathers of the Priory, Inc., and the parcel APNs are: 079-053-050, 079-053-320, 079-053-350, 079-071-100, 079-220-040, 079-053-420, 079-053-400, 079-053-130, 079-053-390, 079-053-140.

The project has been determined to be exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15323 Class 23 – Normal Operations of Facilities for Public Gatherings.

The Planning Commission will conduct its review and discussion of the project during a hybrid in-person and Zoom videoconferencing public hearing on Wednesday, July 15, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. You are invited to attend and provide written or verbal comments. Members of the public may attend virtually by utilizing the Zoom meeting information posted below or in person at the Town's Historic School House, 765 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028. Written comments may also be submitted to Planning staff.

To Access the Zoom Videoconferencing Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83006083336?pwd=FBWVoO62kJMz8xolNwRma6XU81QpEJ.1>

Meeting ID: 830 0608 3336

Passcode: 443334

To Access the Zoom Meeting By Phone:

1-669-444-9171 Enter same Meeting ID & Passcode above

Remote Public Comments:

Meeting participants are encouraged to submit public comments in writing in advance of the meeting. Please send an email to Nicholas Martell, Consultant Planner, at nmartell@portolavalley.net by 12:00 PM on the day of the meeting. All comments received by that time will be included in the public record and distributed to Commissioners prior to the meeting. Members of the public can also provide comments in person at the meeting.

For more project information, please visit: <https://www.portolavalley.net/departments/planning-building-department/development-projects>. The agenda and staff report will be posted on the Town's website by 5:00PM the Friday prior to the meeting at <https://www.portolavalley.net/town-government/planning-commission/minutes-and-agendas>.

Dated: June 30, 2026

Sarah Cawrse
Planning & Building Director



Anna Hoch-Kenney

Quota owner and baker Eric Shoemaker spreads melted chocolate for Quota dark chocolate and peanut butter bars at his home kitchen in Menlo Park on July 21, 2025.



Seeger Gray

A graduate wears an embellished cap before TIDE Academy's graduation ceremony starts in Los Altos Hills on June 4.

EQUESTRIANS

continued from page 1

added. “Suddenly it seemed like we were getting more challenges from neighbors.”

One tangible example of Woodside’s equestrian heritage is the network of trails that criss-cross the town, winding through private properties and running alongside roads.

Equestrians said that the horse community is seeing less advocacy for horses on trails with the increase of cars and bikes. Decades ago, drivers would slow down and wave if they saw a horse rider on the road.

“Nowadays, you’re lucky to get across the street with your horse without getting hit,” Poy said.

Woodside horse owners believe that the rise of smartphones and computers has transformed the slow pace of life that the town once fostered, changing the level of appreciation that the community has for barn life.

Jo Egenes, steering committee member of WHOA, said the equestrian lifestyle also requires dedication, time and patience, a way of life that is opposite from the Silicon Valley pressure cooker. Horse riding also has become a lot more expensive since Egenes started over 60 years ago, she added.

As Woodside brings in more billionaires and affluent individuals, the rundown barns and stables are being torn down and replaced by private tennis courts and accessory dwelling units, said Egenes and Poy.

Protecting Woodside’s equestrian legacy

One of Woodside’s most well-known events is Day of the Horse, hosted by WHOA every October. The celebration was created in the early 2000s by



Seeger Gray

Bree-Anna Vail teaches third graders on a field trip about horses and equestrian equipment at the Folger Estate Stable in Woodside on May 29.

Poy and Fenestress Hall, who wanted to encourage the community to embrace and understand equine culture.

The event features a trail ride catered toward “horsey people” and a horse fair for “non-horsey people that they hope to make horsey,” said Poy. Day of the Horse has grown to become a two-day weekend event.

In 2004, the town passed a resolution recognizing the second Saturday of October as Day of the Horse, prior to its inaugural event in 2005. In its first year, Day of the Horse drew 272 people to the trail ride and about 500 people to the horse fair, said Poy.

Now, the horse fair brings in nearly 2,000 attendees from across the Bay Area and beyond.

However, the original intent of Day of the Horse — to encourage people to get involved in equestrianism — has evolved.

It’s become more of a Woodside tourist attraction, bringing in families who are looking for a free weekend activity. But despite the change, Poy likes to think that Day of the Horse is still effective in exposing people to horses and allowing them to experience them up close.

To date, WHOA has contributed over \$556,000 in donations to support youth riding programs, hitching racks, park trail maintenance and horse shows.

Renovation of Folger Stable, preserving history

Another pillar of Woodside equestrian history is Folger Stable, a once-opulent remnant of the Folger estate in what’s now Wunderlich County Park. By 2004, the 1905 structure was in dire need of renovation, and had been in shabby conditions for years — holes in the ceiling,

rotting wood and a children’s wading pool being used to collect rainwater in the loft.

It took five years to convince the community to renovate the barn, said Susan Lang, who led the Folger Stable renovation project. The fundraising efforts began in 2004 as the Folger Stable Committee kicked off its campaign. The renovation was completed in 2010, costing \$3.3 million.

Poy, who served alongside Lang on the committee, said Lang was a major pillar in pushing for the completion of the renovation. She was “gracious but tenacious.”

“Had she not done that, the whole barn would have just fallen,” Poy said. “It was in very bad shape.”

The remodeled Folger Stable converted the carriage room into a museum, featuring exhibits that tell the story of the Folger estate’s history of farm work, horse riding and lumber milling. The museum has also become a hot spot for school field trips, creating opportunities for younger generations to learn about the equestrian lifestyle.

Vail, a Woodside resident, volunteers at Folger Stable in a program hosted in collaboration between the Friends of Huddart and Wunderlich Parks and the San Mateo County Historical Association.

She’s been in the program since the barn restoration in 2010 and has worked with thousands of elementary school-age children teaching them about horses. In late May, Vail taught her last program for the school year with a horse named Sawyer by her side. She said her goal is to keep kids interested in horses, teach them not to be intimidated, keep them off of screens

and bring them outdoors.

Vail also does “public relations” on her own time and rides her mustang Gracie down to Buck’s Restaurant or Robert’s Market.

“I love to ride down, have the kids come out, pet Gracie, take pictures with her and try to encourage kids to want to enjoy horses,” Vail said. “If we can get more of the young people to beg their parents for a horse, that’ll be our best shot.”

‘The end of the trail’

As many of the women active in the equestrian community are aging out, Vail highlights the importance of bringing younger generations into horse riding. The majority of Woodside women equestrians are between 60-90 years old.

While equestrians like Vail are volunteering their time to educate youth about equestrianism and its local history, there’s competition between the plethora of extracurriculars that kids can choose from, said Poy. Children might join a soccer team or take art and music classes instead. As Woodside experiences a shift in culture, equestrian heritage is at risk of a continued decline, she added.

Poy, who recently put down her 34-year-old horse, explained that many people in her age group between 70-80 years old are not getting another horse after their current horse dies. “It’s kind of the end of the trail,” she said.

Egenes and Poy said with the changes in equestrian culture, their current goal is to have local people “tolerate” horses. Not everyone has to become a horserider but they should appreciate and respect them, said Egenes.

“It’s really important that people can appreciate the value of the horses here at Woodside,” she added. “I just want the people to hopefully enjoy seeing the horses on the trail because it’s just such an important part of this town.” ■

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



Michael Molcsan

Jo Egenes with her horse Flora at her home in Woodside on June 25.

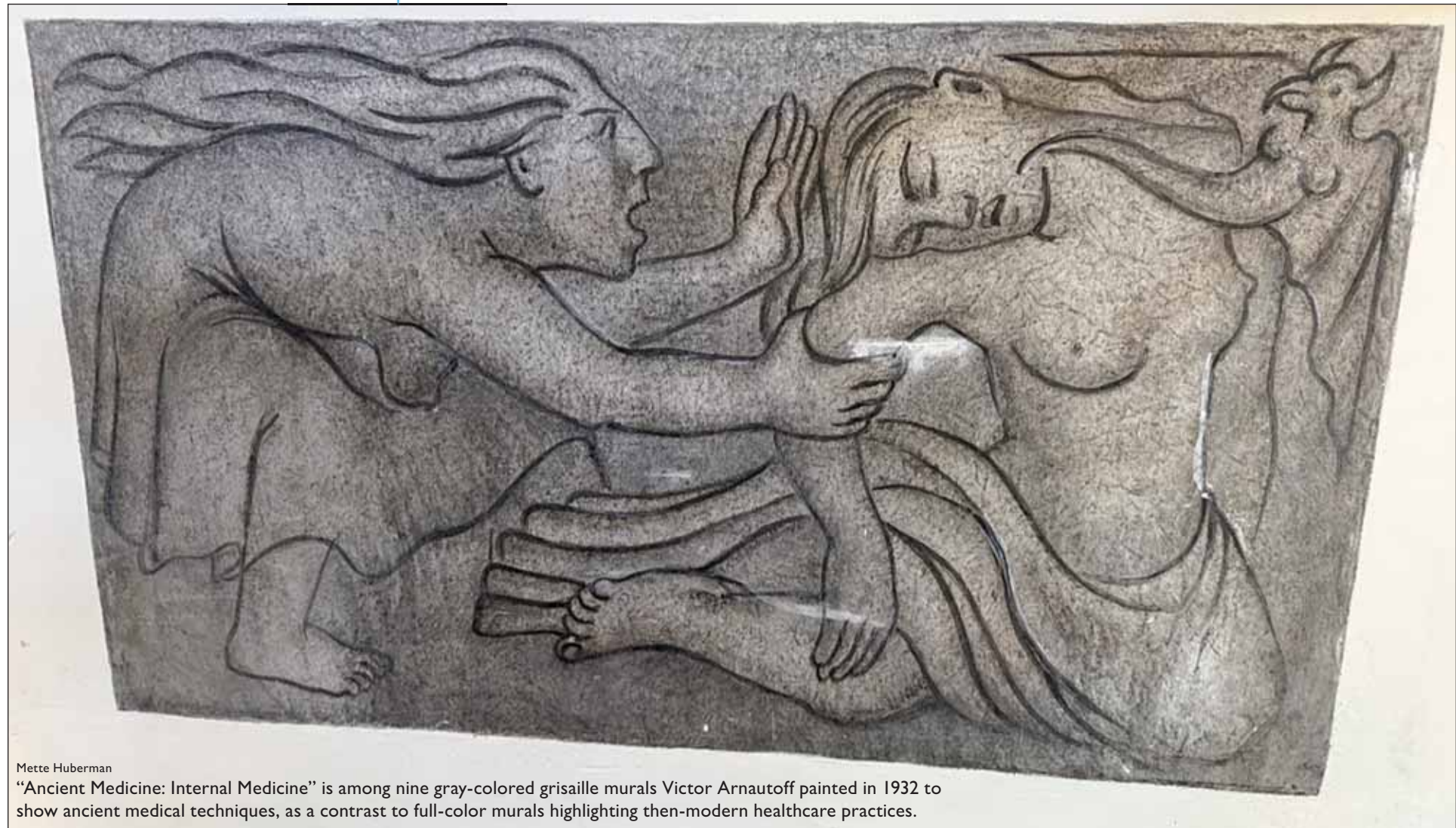
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one nation,
evermore
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MEDICAL MARVELS



Mette Huberman

“Ancient Medicine: Internal Medicine” is among nine gray-colored grisaille murals Victor Arnautoff painted in 1932 to show ancient medical techniques, as a contrast to full-color murals highlighting then-modern healthcare practices.

Murals by a Diego Rivera protégé portray the history of medicine on exterior of future museum

By **Mette Huberman**

Although the Palo Alto Museum isn't expected to open to the public until the fall, it's already possible to catch a glimpse of history there, thanks to the series of 17 beautiful and interesting Depression-era murals on the front of the building. Collectively named “Modern and Ancient Medicine,” they were painted by Russian-American artist Victor Arnautoff in 1932 for the Palo Alto Medical Clinic.

Not only are the murals, according to the Palo Alto Museum, the only buon (true) frescoes in Santa Clara County, they also speak to the medical innovations at the time, and showcase Arnautoff's influence by Diego Rivera, whom

he learned from and collaborated with in Mexico.

This was Arnautoff's first solo commission in California and he depicted medical pioneers, as well as contrasted modern and ancient medical methods. The mural series features four multicolored frescoes representing modern medicine in action, along with nine gray-colored frescoes appearing like reliefs (called grisaille) depicting medical practices of the past, and four sepia-colored medallion portraits of prominent scientists.

The Roth building

The Roth Building, as the former Palo Alto Medical Clinic is now known, was constructed as a medical clinic for Dr. Russell Lee and five other doctors, who

opened one of the nation's first group practices. The building is named after Dr. Fritz Roth, one of the clinic's founding doctors.

The architect Birge Clark, whose work is well-represented throughout Palo Alto, designed the Spanish Colonial Revival style building. He was the brother of Esther Clark, who was the only founding female doctor at the clinic.

The clinic later became the Palo Alto Medical Foundation and now houses the Palo Alto Museum after a lengthy renovation that began in 2023.

The building is U-shaped with a clay tile roof and a second floor with a wooden balcony. Below the balcony is an arched arcade with a covered exterior gallery and a courtyard entrance that

houses the 17 murals, with 13 inside the covered gallery and four on the front at the entrance. The almost 100-year-old murals were painted by Arnautoff in true fresco style, where pigments are applied onto freshly laid wet plaster which makes the color a permanent part of the wall as it dries.

The multicolored frescoes

Arnautoff was a patient of Dr. Lee and “might have suffered from an ulcer... (because) he was a smoker,” said Nadya Chuprina, Palo Alto public art program coordinator. Dr. Lee persuaded the artist to carry out the commission, which Arnautoff did with the oversight of Dr. Lee, in terms of the medical methods and pioneers included.

“The mural was intended not only as a tribute to the evolution of medicine, but also as a reflection of the clinic's innovative philosophy and commitment to advancing patient care,” as Chuprina describes in her public tour notes. The artist himself appears in one of the multicolored murals, which shows Arnautoff being X-rayed by a doctor who resembles Dr. Lee.

This mural showcases the advancement in medical technology at the time, in this case the fluoroscope, an early form of X-ray. The other multicolored panels, starting from the left side, feature pediatrics, internal medicine and surgery, respectively. They also depict realistic scenes from clinical settings and

See **MEDICAL MARVELS**, page 20

Worth a Look

Taj Farrant

Young Australian-born blues rocker Taj Farrant is making a name for himself in the music world while still a teenager, known for his guitar prowess, energetic performances and unique style. He released his debut album, "Chapter One," which blends rock, blues and pop influences, in 2024. Farrant has collaborated with the likes of Carlos Santana and Buddy Guy and makes a stop at Menlo Park's Guild Theatre July 9.

July 9, 8 p.m., The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park; \$46-\$104; guildtheatre.com.



Courtesy TJF Management Group

Taj Farrant performs July 9 at The Guild Theatre.

Chris Stapleton

Grammy-winning country-music star Chris Stapleton (most recently, he won Best Country Solo Performance this year for "Bad As I Used To Be") comes to Shoreline Amphitheatre as part of his "All-American Road Show" tour. The Kentucky-raised singer-songwriter, who has worked with numerous other luminaries over the course of his successful career, has a noteworthy guest at the Mountain View show who's especially dear to local music lovers' hearts: Palo Alto-raised guitar virtuoso, singer-songwriter and fellow Grammy-winner Molly Tuttle, joining Stapleton at several of his California dates.

July 8, 7:30 p.m., Shoreline Amphitheatre, One Amphitheatre Parkway, Mountain View; prices vary; ticketmaster.com.

'JANE!'

Jane Stanford, the wealthy, eccentric Gilded Age matriarch of Stanford University, led a life of luxury and heartache, her death surrounded in infamous mystery (by poisoning, while on vacation in Hawaii!). Stanford's Cantor Arts Center's new exhibition "JANE!" brings together quirky artifacts such as paintings, clothing and "spooky messages from beyond the grave," some of which are being shown for the very first time, according to Stanford.

July 2 through May 18, 2028, Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive, Stanford; open Monday and Friday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Thursday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; free; tinyurl.com/JaneCantorArtsCenter.

BraveMaker Film Festival

The BraveMaker Film Festival highlights films about justice, diversity and inclusion. Over five days, the Redwood City-based festival will screen features, documentaries and shorts, hold panel discussions, filmmaker Q&A's and workshops with film industry professionals. Visit almanacnews.com/arts-culture to read an interview with filmmaker Annette King, whose documentary "Magical Bridge: Kind by Design," is showing July 9 at the festival.

July 8-12 at various venues in downtown Redwood City. Passes start at \$150. bravemakerfilmfest2026.eventive.org.

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, July 15, 2026, at 6:00 PM, to consider:

831 Glencrag Way **APPL2026-0001**

Applicant: Munish Manrao / Appellant: John Clark

Planner: Sage Schaan, Planning Director

Review of an Appeal of the Planning Director's decision to approve a Stable Permit Exception (XSTA2026-0001) to the private stable standards allowing two (2) horses on a property that is approximately 19,794 square feet, when 1-acre (43,560 square feet) is required for two horses, based on a recommendation of approval from the Livestock and Equestrian Heritage Committee. The appellant requests that the appeal be upheld by the Planning Commission and that the Stable Exception be denied.

This application is Categorically Exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §15301, existing facilities and §15303, conversion of small structures.

90 Roan Place **VARI2026-0002**

Applicant: Hao Zhong **Planner: Keigo Yamamoto, Assistant Planner**
Presentation, review, and approval, conditional approval, or denial of a Variance to setback requirements for a deck extension encroachment into the basic required side setback.

This application is Categorically Exempt under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §15301, additions to existing structures and §15303, new construction of small structures.

The application materials are available for public review by contacting Sage Schaan at sschaan@woodsideca.gov and Keigo Yamamoto at kyamamoto@woodsideca.gov.

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

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EmbarcaderoMediaFoundation.org

2345 YALE ST., 1ST FLOOR | PALO ALTO

MEDICAL MARVELS

continued from page 18

famous doctors in the fields at the time.

Chuprina explained that “Arnautoff would go to the clinic and sketch out clinicians’ rooms ... he wanted to be as realistic, as precise, as possible.” In the pediatrics-themed panel, a doctor and nurse are standing in the back. The doctor is depicted as Emmett Holt, a distinguished American pediatrician and pioneer in children’s diseases, holding a naked baby. He is handing the baby to the mother, who is sitting on a chair ready to receive her child. In all of the multi-colored frescoes, he is the only character who is looking directly at the viewer.

This is not the case in the next panel showing internal medicine. Here a doctor, Sir William Osler, a Canadian internist who was a highly regarded teacher and writer, is depicted as examining a woman naked from the waist up facing the viewer. This image was controversial to the degree that it was written about in the papers and one of the founding doctors, Dr. Roth, wanted the mural painted over. However, this did not happen and Chuprina observed that it captures a realistic, intimate moment between a doctor and patient. The doctor is standing behind the patient, looking down while examining her, and thus is portrayed as being respectful of the patient.

The grisaille frescoes

Between 1929 and 1931, Arnautoff worked as an assistant to Rivera in Mexico and learned the fresco technique from him. Among other projects, they collaborated on fresco paintings at the Palace of Cortés in Cuernavaca. For their fresco series at the palace, they used a composition with colored frescoes at the top and grisaille frescoes at the bottom. Thus, Arnautoff most likely was inspired to use a similar composition for his “Modern and Ancient Medicine” series at

the Roth Building, according to Chuprina.

Four of the nine grisaille frescoes contrast ancient medical practices with the modern medical methods in the colorful frescoes. For example, the grisaille fresco contrasting the surgery panel depicts a man having a wound cauterized with a hot poker. Similarly, below the modern technology fresco a grisaille fresco depicts a man who is using ancient technology, such as a compass while looking to the stars.

The remaining five grisaille frescoes are located below the four windows and above the entrance door. Beneath the windows, on the two wing walls of the exterior gallery, are contrasting images showing the modern microscope and Bunsen burner on the left and the older remedies of herbs and roots on the right. Underneath each window on the entrance wall are two frescoes depicting a woman and a man, who may be modeled after Arnautoff and his wife, Lydia. They are holding various tools representing war and peace, such as a scythe (death) and a scale (justice). Above the entrance door is a narrow fresco depicting a skull and snake surrounded by books representing knowledge.

Chuprina said that the people represented in the grisaille frescoes, in addition to Arnautoff and his wife, are reminiscent of pre-Columbian people. Arnautoff was influenced by Rivera and inspired by the images he had produced in collaboration with him in Mexico. She further noted that grisaille frescoes, apart from being very rare, resemble reliefs in granite or marble and are hard to produce.

The medallions

Four sepia-colored medallion portraits on the arches leading to the exterior gallery depict from left to right, Joseph Lister, Hippocrates, Louis Pasteur and Wilhelm Röntgen. Hippocrates was a Greek physician and philosopher of the classical period who is considered one of the most



Mette Huberman

Victor Arnautoff’s mural panel “Modern Medicine: Technology” is a self-portrait, showing him being X-rayed by a doctor resembling Dr. Russell Lee, who commissioned the murals. Lee was a founding member of the Palo Alto Medical Clinic.

important figures in the history of medicine.

The three other portraits depict prominent 19th-century European scientists. Lister was an English surgeon, medical scientist and pioneer of antiseptic surgery. Pasteur was a French chemist, pharmacist and microbiologist renowned for his discovery of pasteurization. Röntgen was a German experimental physicist who produced and detected electromagnetic radiation known as X-rays.

Chuprina noted that, “it tells us everything about the artist and his level of skill and thoughtfulness ... he was able to utilize the space to tell this really complex story of the history of medicine... Everything is very intentional and succeeds to tell this very compelling story: “This is a modern clinic with progressive practices — we no longer expel demons.”

Conserving the murals

In 2016, the historic frescoes officially became part of the Palo Alto Public Art Commission’s

More Depression-era murals to see on the Midpeninsula

Victor Arnautoff’s recently restored “Modern and Ancient Medicine” frescoes at Palo Alto’s historic Roth Building may be among the Peninsula’s best-known examples of Depression-era public art, but they’re not the only surviving works from the New Deal era, which roughly spanned from the early 1930s into the early 1940s.

These murals were funded through federal New Deal programs during the Great Depression to put artists to work and predominantly celebrate workers, history and American life. Many were installed in post offices, libraries, public schools and hospitals.

Just north of Palo Alto’s frescoes, you can find another lesser-known example of New Deal-era art at the Allied Arts Guild, 75 Arbor Road, in Menlo Park. Artist Maxine Albro, one of the few women commissioned to paint public murals under the federal art program, painted “The Patron Saint of Craftsmen.” The mural, which was restored in 1990, is still visible along Arbor Road. Albro was also professionally linked to Arnautoff. While painting murals inside San Francisco’s Coit Tower, the two artists reportedly exchanged wall assignments at Arnautoff’s request.

In Redwood City, the historic Redwood City Post Office, 855 Jefferson Ave., features “Flower Farming and Vegetable Raising” in its lobby. The 1937 mural by José Moya del Pino was commissioned through the federal Treasury Section of Fine Arts and celebrates the city’s once-thriving flower industry. At the time, Redwood City was known as the chrysanthemum capital of the world. ■

—Linda Taaffe

collection, which allowed program staff to provide maintenance and conservation of the murals. A detailed condition assessment and subsequent restoration were carried out by fine art conservators and experts on Rivera and Arnautoff frescoes.

Partially funded by a grant from the Santa Clara County’s Historical Heritage Grant Program, the project began in 2023, and in 2026 the four multicolored frescoes were fully restored. Restoration has begun on the remaining frescoes, which will be completed when the commission secures additional funding.

A prominent New Deal muralist

Arnautoff led a fascinating life. He was born in 1896 in Mariupol in the Russian Empire, now Ukraine, and served as a cavalry officer in the White Army during World War I, until he was forced to flee to Manchuria, China, in 1920 after the Bolshevik Revolution. He lived for five years in China, where he met his wife Lydia Blonsky and had two sons. In 1925, Arnautoff immigrated to San Francisco to study at the California School of Fine Arts and his family followed. They moved to Mexico in 1929, where he worked with Rivera and had a third son.

The family moved back to California in 1931 and Arnautoff became one of the most prominent muralists during the New Deal era. In addition to his commission in Palo Alto, he was among the team of artists who worked on murals at Coit Tower in 1934, where he also served as technical director. He painted the controversial “Life of Washington” murals at George Washington High School in San Francisco in 1936 as a Works Progress Administration commission.

Arnautoff taught at Stanford

University from 1938 to 1962 and influenced a generation of artists, including Richard Diebenkorn. As a Communist, he was investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee, though he retained his academic position. After his wife’s death in 1961, he retired and returned to the Soviet Union in 1963. He continued to make art and remarried in 1970. Arnautoff died in Leningrad in 1979 at the age of 82.

Chuprina described Arnautoff’s frescoes in Palo Alto as “a hidden gem... It’s an outdoor mural and it’s accessible to our community 24/7. We don’t have to wait for the museum to open. We don’t have to buy tickets.” ■

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The Arnautoff “Modern and Ancient Medicine” frescoes are located at the Palo Alto Museum, 300 Homer Ave., Palo Alto. The museum is expected to open in the fall. For more information about the murals, visit tinyurl.com/PaloAltoArnautoffFrescoes or paloaltomuseum.org/moments-in-history-victor-arnautoff-1896-1979.

CORRECTION

The story “Cheers to 250 Years: A Guide to Fourth of July Events on the Peninsula and Beyond” in the June 26 issue incorrectly included a listing for a drone show in Sunnyvale. The event is not taking place in 2026. The city of Sunnyvale will hold a daytime festival in downtown Sunnyvale on July 4. The Almanac regrets the error.

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DISTILLING A LEGACY

How a 30-year-old Mountain View distillery is adapting amid a decrease in drinking

By Adrienne Mitchel

For Dave Classick Jr., distilling is a combination of physics, art, history and heart.

Classick is the head distiller — and sole employee — at Essential Spirits Alambic Distilleries, an under-the-radar operation tucked away in a small industrial area in Mountain View. His parents, David Classick Sr. and Andrea Mirenda, founded the business out of their Mountain View garage in 1996, moving the business in 1998 to where it continues to operate today.

Since his parents' retirement pre-pandemic, Classick is continuing their legacy of producing small batch, handcrafted liquors. It's a passion that his parents learned from a third-generation master distiller in France and one he hopes to pass down to the next generation of his family.

But the distilling industry is a fickle business, he explained, one that requires flexibility and adaptation. As consumer demand shifts and government regulations change, Classick is restructuring the business model of Essential Spirits.

"It's adapt and survive mode right now, for, I think, many different places," he said.

For decades, Essential Spirits operated primarily as a contract distiller, using its handmade copper alambic still to produce spirits for other companies. (Most notably, it developed the recipe for Tahoe Blue Vodka, although Essential Spirits no longer manufactures for the brand.)

Taking the ethos from Hewlett-Packard — where both

Classick and his father worked for many years — of "Focus on where you add value, and partner with excellence where you don't" — they decided to focus on the manufacturing of the spirit, while another party worked on marketing and sales.

"The idea was that we would grow with those brands as they became successful," Classick said. "The reality is it's just a tough thing to sell, particularly in California."

California liquor laws are "byzantine" and still reflect the long-lasting impacts of Prohibition, explained Classick. California is a three-tier state, meaning that it mandates a strict separation of powers between producers, distributors and retailers.

This rule was originally implemented to prevent monopolies following Prohibition. Distributors aren't often willing to serve smaller manufacturers like Essential Spirits, Classick said, and they typically take about a 35% markup on the product.

"Even if you've made a wonderful product, if you don't have support on the distribution side of things, you're not going to get shelf space, you're not going to get interaction with customers, you're not going to get placed in bars," he said.

In addition to contract work, Essential Spirits produces its own rums, brandies and bierschnaps — but it is not allowed to sell them online, and it can't sell its rum or bierschnaps at the distillery.

Essential Spirits operates under two different licenses: a brandy maker's license (which

allows the distillery to sell bottles of brandy but does not allow brandy tastings at the distillery) and the distilled spirits plant license (which permits tastings of spirits but not the sale of bottles at the distillery). Currently, Essential Spirits products are only available for purchase at Ava's Market and Sav-More Food Store in Mountain View.

Many newer distilleries operate under a craft distiller's license, which was created in 2015 and allows customers to buy bottles at the distillery. Classick plans to eventually apply for this newer permit, but notes that you can't transfer permits — he'd have to surrender his current permit and reapply.

"That's certainly helped (the spirits industry), because usually tasting rooms are one of the things where A) the manufacturer gets the most margin, and B) there's a lot more personal interaction between the person that made the spirit and the person that's drinking the spirit," Classick said.



Courtesy Essential Spirits Alambic Distilleries

Top: Dave Classick Jr., left, and Dave Classick Sr. pose for the picture in front of their copper alambic still at their distillery in Mountain View. Above: Andrea Mirenda, left, and David Classick Sr. created Essential Spirits Alambic Distilleries out of their garage in 1996.

Shifting drinking habits have also disrupted the spirits-producing industry, Classick said. Last year, a Gallup survey found that only 54% of U.S. adults drink alcohol, the lowest percentage over a 90-year trend. Additionally, a KFF Health

Tracking Poll published last year found that one in eight American adults use a GLP-1 (many people naturally lose the desire to drink alcohol while taking GLP-1 medications.)

"I've talked to friends that own liquor stores, and they said if they weren't selling chips and sodas, they'd be out of business," Classick said.

Instead, the industry is seeing a rise in low-alcoholic options and ready-to-drink cocktails (RTDs). Ready-to-drink cocktails have more than doubled their market share since 2021 and were up 11% in market share in 2025, according to a report published in February by DISCUS.

"Everybody always presumes that when times are tough, people are going to drink more," Classick said. "It's not really the case. The real statistic is they're not willing to give up their alcohol budget until the very last minute, so the ratio of what they're spending on alcohol to

Continued on next page



From top left clockwise: Andrea Mirenda, left, and David Classick Sr. made their PurePear pear brandy from pears that would otherwise go to waste; the exterior of Essential Spirits Alambic Distilleries in Mountain View; Essential Spirits' Sgt. Classick rums; and a handmade alambic still at Essential Spirits. All photos courtesy Essential Spirits Alambic Distilleries.

Essential Spirits Alambic Distilleries, 144B S. Whisman Road, Mountain View; 650-962-0546, Instagram: @essentialspirits. While not open to the public, tours are available for groups of five or more.

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even artichokes, he noted.

What differentiates Essential Spirits from other distilleries is its copper alambic still, hand-made in Bordeaux by a third-generation still maker whose great-grandfather worked on the Statue of Liberty.

The physical shape of each still plays a role in the character of the distillate it produces, Classick noted. For example, Essential Spirits' alambic still has soft radiuses in the curves of the gooseneck, resulting in a medium body with a bit of weight on the palate, he said.

"It's not viscous, but it has presence," Classick said. "Things that are made on column stills won't have any of that character. ... It'll be sharp, it'll be thin, it'll have its own physical characteristics."

Designed specifically for making fruit brandies, the alambic still does a double distillation in a single pass and doesn't require the spirits to rest.

"Some spirits, even if they're clear, they still let them sit in stainless steel for about three to six months before they bottle it to mellow it out, to take the sharper edges off of it, to absorb some moisture, some water molecules from the atmosphere," Classick said. "We don't have to do that with this still."

Classick offers reservation-only distillery tours for groups of five or more (\$40 per person). The space is small, and production has to shut down during tours. The nearly three-hour experience includes an explanation about the equipment, education on the spirits and a tasting. ■

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other things may change, but the amount that they drink doesn't actually change, and that's been consistent over time."

Essential Spirits' liquors had a brief stint at the bar of downtown Mountain View restaurant Scratch, but Classick said without a distributor, being an ambassador and showing up every two to three weeks, it's hard to stay on the bar shelf.

"My main focus for the near future is going to be trying to get placed more locally, and then figure out how to drive consumer attention to the fact that there's spirits being made locally, and it's something that Mountain View can be excited about and proud about," he said.

The first spirit the business produced was bierschnaps, made from brewing American-style pale ale, then distilling it. The 80-proof distillate can be sipped as an aperitif or mixed in a cocktail.

"It's like an unaged whiskey

that has had a little bit of hops added to it," Classick said.

The newest product is the PurePear pear brandy, which was first made in 2008. Classick Sr. had read an article about a farmer in Lake County who couldn't get enough pickers to pick pears off the trees in time for them to stay hard enough to make it to market, resulting in a surplus of pears that ultimately would have to be tossed. Classick Sr. asked the farmer for those pears, turning 5 tons of pears into brandy.

"We touched every single pear because we had to cut the stems off and any bruises off, and then crushed it, fermented it and distilled it," Classick Jr. said. "They used to put stills on wagons and cart them by horse from farm to farm. Distillation used to be a way of preserving the physical labor efforts that you've put into your crop."

In fact, anything that can be fermented and produce alcohol can be distilled, including apples, strawberries, plums and



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