

For former TIDE students, a rocky start and missing programs at Woodside High

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

When the Sequoia Union High School District's board decided to close TIDE Academy in Menlo Park, members proposed the idea of creating "TIDE at Woodside" as a way to carry on the small STEM-based school's culture and curriculum. Although it was unclear what that would look like, parents say that now that the new school year is in session, they see little evidence of that plan taking shape.

District officials promised displaced TIDE students and their parents that the transition would be smooth. But parents said that it's been a bumpy road. Over the past three weeks, students and their families say that late buses, lack of support and communication from the district, and the absence of promised courses have made the transition anything but smooth. TIDE Academy, a small

alternative high school formerly located on Jefferson Drive in Menlo Park, closed in June after graduating its final senior class. Among 122 TIDE students who stayed in the district, 26 chose to transfer to Woodside High School. Many others chose to attend Menlo-Atherton or Sequoia high schools.

A week after the board decided to close the alternative STEM-based school in February, TIDE parents were sent an email that outlined ways the school's unique programs would continue to be offered at Woodside High.

The district promised that TIDE students would stay with their cohorts, that students would be supported emotionally and socially during the transition and that dual enrollment courses offered at TIDE would be accessible at Woodside.

Now that school has officially

See **WOODSIDE HIGH**, page 14



Seeger Gray

Students gather outside the gym during Wildcat Welcome Day at Woodside High School in Woodside on Aug. 11.

Newly appointed Atherton Council member says she's ready to listen, learn

Town volunteer Christine David is moving from adviser to policymaker

By Arden Margulis

Christine David may be new to the Atherton City Council when she takes office in December, but the long-time resident is no stranger to getting things done in the town, having spent years serving on town committees and helping shape major projects.

David, 63, is one of four candidates who were appointed by the current City Council at a special meeting on Aug. 18. Atherton's elected officials canceled its November council election because it didn't have a competitive race — the number of candidates equaled the number of available seats.

David and Planning Commissioner Jerry Leugers will join the council as newcomers, while incumbents Rick DeGolia and Bill Widmer will return for new terms. Widmer, who has served on the council since 2010, will serve a two-year term filling the remainder of the term vacated by Councilmember Diana Hawkins-Manuelian.

In 2014, David was appointed to the town's Civic Center Adviser Committee, which was tasked with assisting the City Council in planning its new \$32 million civic center — completed in 2021.

"It was an incredible process:



Christine David

We worked with WRNS Studios and went through a bunch of iterations to come up with what now looks like home," David said.

As part of her work, she also helped raise funds for the project, which received over \$7 million in donations. David has continued to fundraise for the civic center and is currently chair of the board of the nonprofit Friends of the Atherton Library.

In 2017, David was appointed to the Parks and Recreation Committee. However, in 2019, David and one of her committee colleagues both resigned in protest of the City Council's decision

not to move forward with an off-leash dog area at Holbrook-Palmer Park.

David said that she was "mad at bureaucracy" at the time and didn't understand the role of committee members.

"On a committee, you are appointed by the town council at the pleasure of the town council. You're an advisor, not a policy-setter," David said. "At the time, I didn't really get that and I needed to."

After a failed council bid in 2020, David is now preparing to become a policy-setter herself. She said her focus will be on addressing the town's problems and listening to residents.

"I want town residents to know

how honored I am and glad to be of service," David said. "I have 'big ears' and I want to know what people think."

One of the issues David hopes to address is a result of the civic center's success: not enough parking for all of the visitors. David said she wants to make sure that the civic center and nearby Holbrook-Palmer Park are accessible to everyone — including pedestrians — while also protecting the town's open space. It's a tall order in a town with almost no sidewalks.

David said she looks forward to the results of the town's transportation study and its

See **CHRISTINE DAVID**, page 15



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6:00 PM


SEP. 26
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OCT. 17
4:30 PM


OCT. 23
7:30 PM


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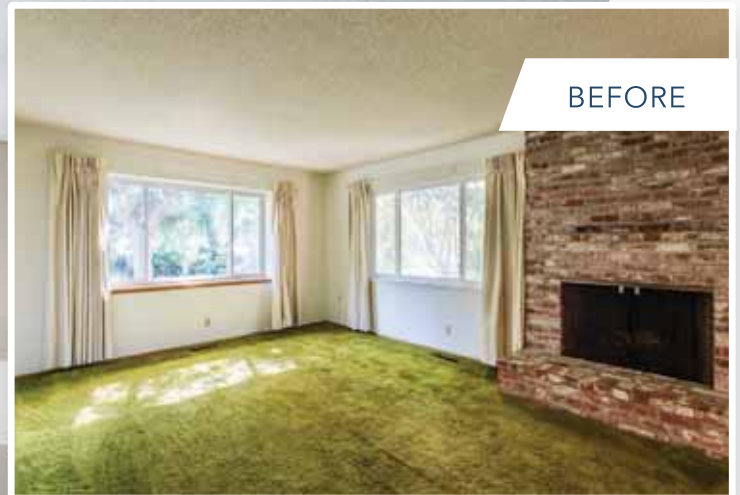
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B. Sakura Cannestra

Stop the Scandal, a group of high school interns at the public safety watchdog organization Fixin' San Mateo County, held a rally at the San Mateo County Center in Redwood City on Aug. 25.

Youth advocates rally for stronger Sheriff oversight in San Mateo County

Teens deliver petition calling for county to create independent inspector general

By B. Sakura Cannestra

Stop the Scandal, a group of high school-aged interns within the public safety watchdog organization Fixin' San Mateo County, delivered a petition to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors calling for the county

to establish an independent inspector general for stronger oversight of the Sheriff's Office.

The Stop the Scandal interns hosted a small rally the morning of the board meeting on Aug. 25, and talked about the community benefits of an independent inspector

general. Advocates for public safety oversight and reform have redoubled their efforts pushing for independent oversight of the county Sheriff's office following a string of scandals, including the removal of former Sheriff Christina

See **OVERSIGHT**, page 16

Measure N asks voters to make Portola Valley a charter town

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

In November, Portola Valley voters will decide whether to make the town a charter town and authorize a real property transfer tax. If approved, Measure N would establish a tax of \$10 per \$1,000 of a property's sale price.

In July, the Town Council unanimously placed the local funding measure on the November ballot in hopes that the tax will provide Portola Valley with a reliable stream of revenue that will help address an ongoing budget deficit.

As a charter town, revenue from the tax would directly go into the town's general fund. With a bigger budget, Portola Valley could address townwide maintenance needs on storm drains, vegetation management, wildfire prevention and maintain its level of police services from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. Tax revenue will also be used for general municipal services.

Becoming a charter town will allow Portola Valley to maintain its local autonomy and establish a locally controlled funding source, the town says, while preventing San Mateo County from taking over the town's zoning and planning services.

"If Portola Valley were to lose

our town status, we would lose local control over important decisions that affect our community, including zoning and land use," wrote proponents for Measure N. "Instead of decisions being made in our town, these decisions could be made by (the) county."

Primary signers in support of the measure include town historian Nancy Lund, Brenda Lane Munks, Rita Comes, former mayor Gary Neilsen and Trails and Path Committee member Fred Leach.

Arguments in favor of the ballot measure cite the impact the town charter would have on establishing funds to reduce wildfire risk through vegetation and brush management and preventing flooding and water pollution by repairing deteriorating storm drains.

The argument against Measure N is led by William Urban, a member of the town's Finance Committee. He argues that the tax is "unfair and inequitable." Urban claims that the town did not ask the Finance Committee for an endorsement before moving forward with the measure.

"Only 2-3% of residents selling properties each year would pay a tax of \$45,000 and up on an average-priced sale,

See **CHARTER TOWN**, page 8

M-A math teacher among honorees of Sequoia high school district

By B. Sakura Cannestra

Sequoia Union High School District announced its annual awards recognizing top teachers, staff and volunteers for their efforts and dedication to their school communities.

Chris Campaña, former president of the Woodside Athletics Booster Organization, is the 2026 Volunteer of the Year, Menlo-Atherton High School math teacher Bobby Wong the district's 2026 Certificated Employee of the Year, and Carlmont High School

custodian Gary Hogan the 2026 Classified Employee of the Year. The district's honorees were celebrated at its annual staff convocation event on Aug. 10.

"We congratulate Chris Campaña, Gary Hogan and Bobby Wong and thank them for the many ways they have strengthened their school communities," said Superintendent Crystal Leach. "Their service is a powerful reminder that it takes all of us, and each of us can make a difference."

Campaña served as the booster organization's president from

July 2023 to June 2026, helping raise more than \$200,000 each year to support the high school's athletics program. He graduated from Woodside High School himself in 1980, and is the parent of a 2025 graduate and a current junior at the school.

Booster organization volunteers and student athletes described Campaña as energetic, innovative and dedicated in a video from the district. Woodside High School Principal Karen Van Putten said

See **HONOREES**, page 16



Courtesy Sequoia Union High School District

Menlo-Atherton High School math teacher Bobby Wong received the Sequoia Union High School District's 2026 Certificated Employee of the Year award at the district's staff convocation event in Redwood City on Aug. 10.

Meta to pay \$17 billion in social media settlement with states

Menlo Park-based tech giant will also limit 'likes' for teens

By CalMatters

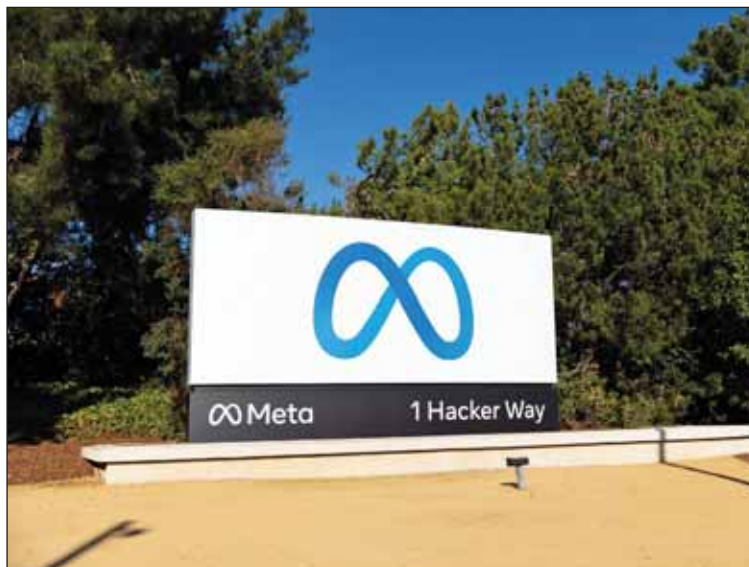
Menlo Park-based Meta agreed to pay up to \$17 billion and to make changes to its platforms to end a major case on children and social media addiction.

California will receive up to \$2.1 billion if the settlement is approved by a judge, according to an Aug. 26 statement from the Attorney General Rob Bonta. Meta will agree to a payment of more than \$12 billion, with an increase up to the \$17 billion over 10 years if other social media companies settle related claims, the New York Times reported.

A group of 47 states led by the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Kentucky and New Jersey accused Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, of engineering their products to be addictive to children.

Despite knowing its products could damage kids' mental health, the attorneys general said, Meta continued to promote them, even as its own research showed the harms. The case has been compared to past litigation against Big Tobacco and was seen as a major test of similar litigation tech companies face around the United States.

"Today, we have secured a settlement with Meta that will make social media less dangerous for our kids and make a



Embarcadero Media file photo

California would get \$2.1 billion from Menlo Park social media giant.

world of a difference for children and their families," Bonta said in the statement.

A Meta spokesperson did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Opening statements in the suit started just last week in an Oakland federal court, with a weeklong trial anticipated. The case was among the largest in a series of bellwether cases testing claims that major tech companies deliberately marketed products to children, even as those products damaged their mental health.

Earlier this year, Meta and Google were found liable by a Los Angeles jury in a suit that tested similar claims. Meta

lost another, similar suit in New Mexico this year as well. Those cases are still pending. But today's settlement eclipses any legal challenge so far.

Lexi Hazam and Previn Warren, attorneys who have represented families and school districts in other litigation against tech companies, praised the ruling in a statement, calling it "a major step toward holding Meta accountable for the harm its platforms have caused young people."

Meta continues to face claims from parents and school districts around the country. Google, Snap, and TikTok are among the other companies facing similar suits.

"We will not rest until every one of these plaintiffs sees justice for the harms caused by all of the defendants' platforms," Hazam and Warren said.

Under the terms of the deal, which still must be approved by a judge, Meta will change how it operates its platforms. The California attorney general noted that the changes would include a daily time limit of two hours for users under 18, or one hour if other social media platforms also agree to limits.

The settlement would also stop the platforms from displaying likes or reactions to users under 18, and teens would receive new mechanisms for reporting harmful content. Meta, under the terms, would agree to respond to 90% of those reports within six hours. The company will also cease sending notifications to underage users overnight or during typical school hours.

Meta will also broadly review and improve safety protections for teens.

"Meta has agreed to make massive transformations that will reduce the risk of harm from its platforms — and will do it within months," Bonta said in his office's statement. "We are talking about time limits, stopping notifications during school, a block on the app during critical overnight hours, bans on plastic surgery filters, and so much more." ■

Motorcyclist killed in collision near Stanford Shopping Center

By Gennady Sheyner

A man in his 20s was killed last Wednesday afternoon after the motorcycle he was riding collided with a vehicle near Stanford Shopping Center.

The collision occurred shortly before 4:30 p.m., Aug. 19, on the 100 block of El Camino Real, near

Sand Hill Road. According to the Palo Alto Police Department, the sedan was traveling north on El Camino and was making a left turn when it collided with a motorcycle, which was traveling southbound.

The driver, a woman in her 20s, remained at the scene and cooperated with police, who

closed the roadway for about three hours as they investigated.

The victim in the Aug. 19 crash was later identified by the Santa Clara County Coroner's Office as Pedro Armando Garcia Hernandez, 24, of Redwood City. Police said he was transported by the Palo Alto Fire Department to a local hospital, where he

succumbed to his injuries.

Anyone with information about this incident is asked to call the department's 24-hour dispatch center at 650-329-2413 or to send a text with the keyword PAPD to 847411. ■

Email Gennady Sheyner at gshyner@almanacnews.com.

Fatal motorcycle crash closes lanes on Highway 101

By Bay City News Service

A fatal crash involving a motorcycle was reported Thursday morning,

Aug. 20, on southbound U.S. Highway 101 in East Palo Alto, according to the California Highway Patrol.

The victim in the crash

was later identified by the San Mateo County Coroner's Office as Irma Elizabeth Oxlaj Vargas, 38, of Redwood City.

The crash was reported shortly after 6 a.m. on southbound Highway 101

near the University Avenue on-ramp.

The two right lanes of the highway were still blocked two hours later. More details about the case were not immediately available. ■



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CORRECTION

In "Atherton cancels November election, appoints four to City Council" in last week's issue of The Almanac, the story gave the incorrect date for when Atherton City Council terms end. They end in December.

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Portola Valley to hold election for uncontested council race

Residents will also vote on Measure N ballot measure in November

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Portola Valley will have an uncontested Town Council race this November with no challengers stepping up to run against three incumbents. Unless write-in candidates file to run by Oct. 20, Mayor Craig Taylor and Councilmembers Mary Hufty and Judith Hasko will return to their seats at the dais.

The town will not be cancelling the council election because voters will also be making a decision on Measure N, a ballot measure seeking to boost the town's revenues by adopting a town charter so it can authorize a real property transfer tax. According to Town Manager Darcy Smith, if a town ballot measure has been submitted and qualified for the ballot, the election for Town Council must also be held.

Craig Taylor

Mayor Craig Taylor was elected to the council in 2022 and previously served on the town's Planning Commission and Emergency Preparedness Committee. He's lived in Portola

Valley for over 40 years and has dedicated over 20 years of volunteer service to the town.

Taylor is also an active volunteer field member of the Bay Area Mountain Rescue Unit and is a retired tech executive.

As he seeks reelection, he said his priorities include earthquake and fire safety, government transparency, communication, preserving open space and exploring housing element alternatives.

Taylor is also a strong supporter of Portola Valley's ballot initiative to adopt a town charter.

"This measure will allow the town to pay for the increasing costs of sheriff services and to maintain the roads and drainage systems to an appropriate standard," he wrote in his candidate statement.

Learn more about Taylor's campaign at craigtaylorforpv2026.com.



Craig Taylor

Mary Hufty

Hufty has lived in Portola Valley for over 30 years and is completing her first term on the council. Over the last four years, Hufty said she has focused on gaining the community's trust by hosting office hours and maintaining transparency.

She is seeking reelection to continue the town's work in developing "strong partnerships among neighbors, businesses, local organizations and volunteers, according to her candidate statement. Hufty added that her years on the council have "strengthened her ability to help guide the town through the financial, public safety and management challenges ahead."

Hufty is a retired family physician, Stanford graduate, volunteers as a Jasper Ridge docent and considers herself a conservationist. She is also an active equestrian who owns three Icelandic horses.



Mary Hufty

"Together, we can protect what makes Portola Valley special while planning wisely for the future, creating a resilient rural community where people and nature continue to thrive for generations to come," she said.

For more information on her campaign visit maryforcouncil.org.

Judith Hasko

Hasko has been an active volunteer in town for 16 years and has served on the Trails and Paths Committee, Planning Commission and several ad-hoc committees including the Portola Road Corridor Plan Task Force and the Ad Hoc Affordable Housing Committee. She was elected onto the council in 2022 and was appointed mayor in 2025.

Hasko is an attorney who has worked in the life sciences industry for 30 years. She said her professional experiences in crafting "long-term

mutually beneficial solutions" for her clients has enabled her to "achieve practical and balanced solutions" for the town's challenges.

In her reelection campaign, Hasko emphasizes the town's need for council members who embrace the town's character and history as embodied in the general plan, prioritize the town's financial health and focus on the community's safety.

Hasko currently does not have an updated campaign website. ■

Email Staff Writer
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jyoshikoshi@almanacnews.com.



Judith Hasko

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CardVault by Tom Brady burglarized a week after opening

By Gennady Sheyner

Just one week after its opening, CardVault by Tom Brady has been burglarized by one or more intruders who smashed the store's window and made off with about 60 trading cards, according to Palo Alto police.

The store at Town & Country Village, which hosted its grand opening on Aug. 15, was burglarized at about 12:30 a.m.

on Saturday, Aug. 22. Police said the unidentified suspect or suspects entered the store by smashing the window and smashing several display cases. The trading cards that were taken are valued at over \$12,000, according to the police.

The store at 855 El Camino Real opened to great fanfare, with throngs of sports fans lining up outside the store and Brady himself making an appearance to greet visitors and

join business owners and city officials in cutting the ribbon.

It specializes in trading cards and sports collectibles and features a "vault" with autographed memorabilia.

The location in Palo Alto is CardVault's 17th location. It has two others in California, one in Sacramento and another in San Francisco. ■

Email Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@almanacnews.com.



Gennady Sheyner

CardVault by Tom Brady is shown here on Aug. 11, days before it opened at Town & Country Village.

CHARTER TOWN

continued from page 5

while the 97-98% of non-selling residents and renters get a free pass," the opponents wrote.

Opponents say the initiative goes against the town's community values. Urban added that the Town Council failed to include exemptions for those moving within the town or for reasons due to fire or natural disasters.

He also argues that the transfer tax will either reduce the seller's net proceeds or increase prices for buyers, creating a

limitation on the number of potential buyers and the realized price. He said "there are better, fairer alternatives for additional revenue, expense management and an imperative to explore them."

Proponents of Measure N state that the town may create additional exemptions and may consider other measures to enhance accountability for how the revenue will be used, supporters said.

If Measure N does not pass, the town will be at risk of cutting service levels and

becoming unable to fund community needs for emergency preparedness and wildfire prevention, said those in favor.

Supporters also contend that the decision to pursue the real property transfer tax was made after extensive analysis and input from the Finance Committee.

In a rebuttal argument, also signed by town resident Danna Breen, Urban writes that the town is not at risk of a "financial collapse" or disincorporation. He called the proponents' messaging "fear mongering" and "exaggerated."

He proposed that the council could have offered an alternative tax measure for voters to choose — an annual parcel or user utility tax of \$800 or less per residence that would "spread the tax burden equitably," across town. He also suggested a transfer tax that could be applied on the difference between sale price and tax-assessed value.

Proponents argue that a parcel tax is harder to enact and would be regressive for the town, "forcing homeowners to suffer an increased annual tax

burden no matter what their circumstances."

"We should strive to share taxes fairly for the kind of town we all want — not to saddle a huge exit toll on our departing neighbors," Urban wrote.

The ballot measure needs a simple majority to pass.

For more information on Measure N, visit portolavalley.net/town-government/election-information. ■

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

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Midpeninsula native tapped to lead thousands of cadets at West Point

Elizabeth Fetter selected to serve as first captain at military academy

By Hannah Bensen

Elizabeth Fetter's resume is littered with accolades. In 2021, she won a regional cross-country meet representing Palo Alto High School, and as a junior in college she was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa for academic excellence.

Now, she's gearing up for her hardest assignment yet.

Fetter, a Palo Alto native, was recently selected as the first captain at West Point, the highest-ranking member in a corps of 4,400 cadets. She is one of only three students from Palo Alto High School who have matriculated to a United States military service academy in the past three years.

Now, as the top-ranking cadet at West Point — also known as the brigade commander — Fetter will help maintain the overall development and discipline of the entire corps of cadets.

"It's not so much that I, as a senior cadet, am giving these commands or these orders down," Fetter explained. "It's about this idea of initiative. What is the friction in your unit? What do you see as a gap? And then, what resources do you need from me to help you solve that gap?"

John Bungarden, Fetter's former high school social studies teacher and a retired ROTC officer in the Army, called Fetter's selection a "remarkable achievement."



Courtesy U.S. Military Academy

Elizabeth Fetter was recently selected as first captain at the United States Military Academy West Point, the top-ranking cadet at the school.

"First captain, that's beyond impressive," he said.

West Point, also called the United States Military Academy, is one of five service academies that commission officers into the military branches. Cadets at West Point, who must obtain a nomination from a member of Congress to gain admission, become commissioned officers in the Army after graduation.

The school's corps system is modeled after the Army's

operations hierarchy. Cadets gain more responsibility as they become older and more experienced leaders. Freshmen are called plebes, and they learn the customs of the Army, such as saluting to older, higher-ranking cadets and marching. Sophomores are called cadet corporals and oversee a single plebe. Juniors, called cadet sergeants, oversee six people. Cadet lieutenants — seniors — are in charge of a platoon of 30 people.

Similar to a student body president, the first captain is not necessarily the cadet with the highest GPA — though Fetter was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa as a junior — but is selected on the basis of their leadership skills, academic excellence, fitness and character. The brigade's top leadership positions are a team of 10

cadets, with Fetter at the helm, and are selected by West Point's officers and other cadets.

For Fetter, serving as first captain is an exercise in "servant leadership" — a style of leadership centered on putting the corps first, an approach that resonated with her after reading James C. Hunter's book "The Servant."

"This position does not care about my preferences. It cares about what the corps needs," she said. "It's really about how I can serve others and be the best leader that the corps needs."

Fetter has cultivated the concept of servant leadership at West Point. During her first year, Fetter said, she felt focused on herself: on getting the land navigation score, getting the best grades or learning how to greet other cadets.

"I didn't have that team-oriented mindset, and so I basically was just in the training with that wrong attitude," she said.

That mindset began to shift, Fetter said, during a nine-day summer field exercise after her plebe year. The exercise is called Cadet Field Training, and is an opportunity for cadets to practice missions, tactical leadership and battle drills.

"If you're not a team player, the mission will not be accomplished. You need everyone in that unit working towards the end goal," Fetter said.

Fetter is seemingly her own worst critic: people who knew her before West Point said she possessed a maturity and self-assuredness beyond her years. Bungarden, her retired teacher, described her as smart, clear-spoken and inquisitive in high school.

"She is remarkably capable and competent, and quietly so. She's not flashy," Bungarden said. "She was thoughtful, and she seemed sensitive to the folks around her."

Fetter, who graduated from Paly in 2023 as a stand-out cross-country and track athlete and swimmer, was recruited to run at West Point. Michael Davidson, Paly's cross-country and track and field coach, described Fetter as warm, kind and resilient.

"From the beginning, Elizabeth was a little bit of a different person," Davidson said. "She showed leadership qualities early on."

Fetter does not come from a military family, but her parents emphasized community and service growing up. Bungarden was the person who encouraged Fetter in high school to consider West Point, and Fetter was

See **WEST POINT**, page 12

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Fifth annual PV Palooza

Portola Valley's fifth annual PV Palooza summer music festival is taking place on Saturday, Aug. 29, from 10:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. at Town Center. The event will feature 20 local bands, four stages and local art, food, wine and beer vendors.

All bands are local to Portola Valley, Woodside, La Honda and Skylonda, with musical genres range from rock opera to reggae. They include Dr. Sig & The SuperNaturals, This Way Up, Black Krim, The Bundy Browne Band, Across the Holler and Pacific Vibration.

Local beers and wines will be served by Devil's Canyon Brewing Company and the barbecue will be sold by Lord of the Ribs.

The event is free and is open for all ages. Children's activities will also be available onsite. Portola Valley Town Center is located at 765 Portola Road.

For more information, visit pvpalooza.com.

Atherton committee and commission recruitment

The town of Atherton is seeking residents who are interested in volunteering for open committee seats this fall. Applications are open for three committees — Environmental Programs, Audit and Finance, and Transportation, Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety — and the Planning Commission.

Residents can apply on tinyurl.com/AthertonCommitteesForm. Send questions to City Clerk Michael Gallagher at mgallagher@athertonca.gov.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

49ers team owner arrested in misdemeanor charges in Ohio

By Bay City News Service

San Francisco 49ers owner Jed York was arrested over the weekend in Ohio on suspicion of disorderly conduct and possession of criminal tools, according to court documents.

York, 46, was arrested on Sunday, Aug. 23, in East Palestine, Ohio, on suspicion of engaging in prostitution, but that was amended to a misdemeanor charge of disorderly

conduct on Monday, according to Columbiana County Court records.

York, whose legal name is John Edward York, pleaded no contest to the amended charge and to another misdemeanor charge of possession of criminal tools. Authorities did not provide a description of the alleged criminal tools.

According to court records, York paid a total \$1,285, which includes \$1,150 in fines and

\$135 in court fees, according to documents filed Monday in Columbiana County Court.

The CEO and principal owner of the 49ers, York has been with the team for more than two decades. He is the grandson of former owner Eddie DeBartolo Jr. and the son of Denise DeBartolo York and Dr. John York, the team's co-chairmen.

The 49ers did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday, Aug. 24. ■



40 HILLBROOK DRIVE PORTOLA VALLEY



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Locals fight to keep archives in San Mateo County

National Archives facility holds historic records for California, Nevada and Pacific Islands

By Christopher Vinasco /
Bay City News Service

U.S. Rep. Kevin Mullin joined historians, researchers and community advocates in San Bruno on Aug. 24 to push back against the planned closure of the National Archives facility.

The press conference was held outside the National Archives at San Francisco, which is located at 1000 Commodore Drive in San Bruno. Speakers described how records kept there have helped them trace family histories and preserve stories tied to communities across California and the Pacific.

The event was the latest step in an ongoing effort to stop the National Archives and Records Administration from closing the facility as part of a broader push to cut operating costs and reduce the agency's physical footprint.

The federal agency responsible for preserving and providing public access to historically significant federal records, NARA has said the closures are intended to improve efficiency as more government records become digital, though it has not publicly detailed how much the San Bruno closure itself is expected to save.

On Wednesday, Aug. 19, Mullin (D-San Mateo) and Rep. Judy Chu (D-Monterey Park) led a bipartisan, bicameral group of 37 lawmakers in sending NARA a letter urging the agency to reconsider the closure. The San Bruno facility holds immigration, naval, geological and tribal records dating as far back as the 1850s and covering California, Nevada, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa and other parts of the Pacific.

Mullin's office also said that he had introduced the National Archives Protection Act, which would require congressional approval before NARA could close an archives facility, federal records center or research room.

Lawmakers say they still lack specific information about the financial rationale for closing the San Bruno facility, including how much money the federal government expects to save.

Their letter asks NARA how much the facility costs to operate, how much closing it would save, what it would cost to move the records and whether less expensive alternatives could keep the collection in the region.

Monday's event was also a demonstration of what access to the archive has meant to people who have used it.

Anna Eng, a University of California at Berkeley lecturer and member of Save Our National Archives, said her family had long known through oral history that her great-great-grandfather died in a mining accident, but had no documents explaining what happened. She said records preserved by NARA eventually gave her details and evidence her family had not previously had.

"In these files are precious family heirlooms, photographs, wedding certificates, detailed maps of home villages, materials too delicate and brittle to be scanned or transported," Eng said.

She said moving those records away from the communities whose histories they document could make similar discoveries more difficult for future generations.

"To remove these materials



Courtesy Christopher Vinasco-Gomez/Bay City News

Supporters gather outside the National Archives at San Francisco during a press conference opposing the facility's planned closure in San Bruno on Monday, Aug. 24.

from the communities and regional history from which they emerge would be to deny descendants and future generations access to these stories," Eng said.

Chu didn't attend Monday's event, but Julie Soo read remarks on her behalf. Chu said the San Bruno records give descendants a way to learn directly about relatives whose experiences, particularly under the Chinese Exclusion Act and during the incarceration of Japanese Americans in World War II, have often been overlooked or erased from the broader historical record. She pointed to her own grandfather, who immigrated from China to San Francisco in 1904, saying records like those housed at the archive help families preserve evidence of where they came from and

what was endured by earlier generations.

The lawmakers' letter says descendants have used the San Bruno collection to learn directly about relatives affected by the Chinese Exclusion Act and the incarceration of Japanese Americans.

The archive remains actively used. According to the letter, about 500 researchers visit the facility in an average year and use roughly 3,000 original records in its research room. Staff also handle nearly 2,000 written reference requests annually.

Lawmakers say the closure could result in the collection being divided among six facilities around the country, potentially requiring families and researchers to travel farther to see original documents. They also warned that locations

elsewhere may be less familiar with the regional immigration patterns and history represented in the records.

The letter also raises concerns about physically moving more than 100,000 cubic feet of permanent records within the proposed two- to three-year closure timeline. Some documents date to the late 1800s and could be vulnerable to damage during transportation, lawmakers wrote.

The group has asked NARA to respond to its questions by Sept. 18 and reconsider the closure.

Mullin's legislation would go further by requiring Congress to approve future NARA facility closures, while the immediate fight in San Bruno remains focused on keeping the records close to the communities whose histories they preserve. ■

WEST POINT

continued from page 10

intrigued by the school's values. A high school visit to the campus clinched her commitment to West Point. Visiting for the first time, she woke up at 5 a.m. to attend a workout with the team. In the pre-dawn hours, the entire school was awake.

"I knew, this is a place that I want to be," Fetter said, recalling the visit. "This is a place that values fitness. This is a place that values community. This is a place that values doing hard things together."

As West Point's incoming first captain, Fetter will lead a corps in which women remain a minority, at about 22% of the

corps. She is the ninth female first captain at West Point in the 150-year history of the position; the first woman was elevated to the top position in 1990.

Her selection as first captain also comes amid the backdrop of defense secretary Pete Hegseth blocking promotions for high-ranking women in the military. The percentage of women nominated to high-ranking positions in the military has dropped to a two-decade low.

Speaking only for herself — not for women in the military broadly — Fetter said she doesn't think much about her gender. Take pull-ups, for example: For years, she thought she wasn't capable of doing them. But after taking a

gymnastics class at West Point, she was able to do six. Her experience as a woman at the male-dominated school, she said, has been entirely positive.

'This is a place that values doing hard things together.'

ELIZABETH FETTER

"Any job I have, or any mission I want to accomplish, if I think about it in gendered terms, then my ability to accomplish that mission becomes out of my control," she said. "What can Elizabeth do as herself to accomplish this goal?"

After her service as first

captain this academic year, Fetter, who studies history, will be commissioned into the Army with the rank of second lieutenant. She will then have

a five-year commitment as an officer, with three additional years in the reserves.

Looking back on her hometown, Fetter sees a shared emphasis on hard work, dedication and service between Palo Alto and West Point, even if those values manifest

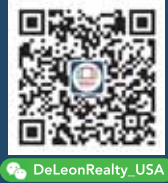
differently in each community. She hopes that more Palo Alto students will consider careers in military service.

"My hope is that more young people from the Bay Area will see West Point and the other service academies — and just service to the nation in general — as a path that brings so much purpose and drive and motivation and community to their lives," she said. "It's genuinely been an experience that's changed my life for the better." ■

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



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WOODSIDE HIGH

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started, parents said they are seeing what they consider “empty promises.”

Adjusting to a new school

TIDE’s small classroom environment and student population attracted many neurodivergent students. The STEM-based school was able to support students with unique educational needs, according to community members who spoke at public meetings in favor of keeping TIDE open.

District data showed that 22% of TIDE students had Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and 14% had 504 plans, documents that provide specialized support for students with disabilities. At TIDE, students with learning accommodations had a 100% graduation rate while the Sequoia district’s average rate is 80%.

Transitioning from a school of 200 students to a new campus of nearly 1,700 was an overwhelming move for some students.

In preparation for the first day of school, Toni Ouradnik said she took her daughter to Woodside’s freshman welcome day on Aug. 8, even though she’s a junior. Ouradnik also went with her daughter the day before school started to walk through her schedule, find her classrooms and introduce her to her teachers.

‘Being new to a school, every little detail that gets overlooked causes anxiety and frustration.’

MARIJANE LEONARD

With a child who has a 504 plan and is diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder, Ouradnik said she wanted to make sure her daughter saw some familiar faces on her first day and felt well prepared for a new campus. She added that prior to school starting, TIDE students had no idea which of their former teachers would be at their new schools.

“Asking families to choose their district transfer before they’d even started talking about what a program could be, was intentional,” said Ouradnik. “How do you get people to choose ‘TIDE at Woodside’ when all you have is the phrase ‘TIDE at Woodside?’”

At Woodside, only three rising seniors from TIDE enrolled. Parent Rebecca O’Brien said



Seeger Gray

Students pick up checklists for Wildcat Welcome Day tasks at Woodside High School in Woodside on Aug. 11.

that despite there only being three seniors, the district did not uphold its promise to keep student cohorts together. Her son does not have any classes with his TIDE peers, she said.

“In senior year, there is no part of ‘TIDE at Woodside’ that exists,” O’Brien added.

During the first days of school, all former TIDE students were invited to participate in a tutorial session with two former TIDE teachers, and about half of them participated in, said public information officer Naomi Hunter. Additional sessions will be offered in the coming weeks, she added.

Tardy on the first day

Prior to the closure, the TIDE community shared concerns about the transportation that would be made available if students were forced to transfer to the district’s other comprehensive high schools in Atherton, Woodside and Redwood City.

“A lot of us (have) considered that we are not going to Woodside for various reasons,” said former TIDE student Max Tsao, during a February district board meeting. “Many of us are worried about the transportation, since going from Menlo Park to Woodside, during rush hour, would take us at least half an hour to 40 minutes.”

According to several parents, some students have to be on the bus to Woodside as early as 6:40 a.m. to catch a ride from the Willows neighborhood in Menlo Park — almost two hours before school starts at 8:30 a.m.

TIDE parents said they received minimal information over the summer and inquired about the bus routes in late July. They did not hear back about the available bus stops until the week before school started, according to Marijane Leonard.

On the first day of school, Leonard’s child took the school bus from the Menlo Park Caltrain station. The bus was 10 minutes late, she said. And on the second day, it was late again, causing her child to be marked tardy.

The bus was taking what Leonard described as “the slowest way” to get from Menlo Park to Woodside via El Camino Real onto Woodside Road.

After two days of tardiness, Leonard suggested that bus drivers take a route along Alameda de las Pulgas instead. Although Leonard’s emails were never acknowledged, the route she suggested was adopted and students have been arriving on time, she said.

“These things add up over time and especially being new to a school, every little detail that gets overlooked causes anxiety and frustration,” said Leonard.

Ouradnik, who also contacted the district in July about transportation options, said she never received a response. She drove her child on the first day of school to help her get settled and after hearing about delays on the bus, she said she was glad she did. Being late is a primary trigger for her child’s anxiety, Ouradnik added.

While issues with the bus appear to be resolved, parents said they are still frustrated by the district’s lack of communication.

Lack of classes, improper preparation

Emails to parents show multiple occasions where individual board members and district-wide messaging indicated that TIDE’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways and dual enrollment programs would be maintained at Woodside. These programs

were crucial offerings that TIDE students said they benefitted from, allowing them to earn college course credits and gain experience in professional skills.

A Feb. 13 email explicitly stated that the computer science, and graphic and interactive design pathways would continue at Woodside High.

But for O’Brien’s son, who was on his way to complete the computer science track in his senior year, the courses he needed were not available at Woodside.

O’Brien started asking in March whether a specific course, Javascript CS22A, would be available through Woodside’s computer science CTE pathway. In May, after multiple emails, O’Brien finally got a response that the course would not be offered, by which point her son had already committed to attending Woodside.

In the spring, TIDE students who enrolled at Woodside met with a Woodside counselor and chose their classes for 2026-27, according to Hunter. She added that many students chose classes

other than the TIDE pathways and expressed interest in taking AP classes and other electives not offered at TIDE.

“Continuing the TIDE program at Woodside as it existed previously was simply not feasible with the number of students and the level of demand for the pathways,” said Hunter.

O’Brien said her son will be unable to complete his CTE pathway, for which he would have received a certificate.

“I think him not having a CTE has a real impact on college applications. (Colleges are) really competitive,” O’Brien added.

Parents are disappointed by the difficulties they’ve had with receiving support from the district in what they feel is an unorganized process. For O’Brien’s son, lack of guidance from the district is causing disruptions to his education.

A week before school started, the family was also made aware of a mandatory summer Advanced Placement Calculus packet that had to be completed by the first day of school. He was unable to finish it and is already starting out the year with a failing grade, O’Brien said.

She said she is also concerned about how this rough transition will impact her son’s college application process. Despite completing his physical education requirements through an online course at TIDE, Woodside’s counselors appear to lack her son’s records. As of Aug. 20, the issue has not been resolved, she said.

District officials said the work to incorporate and welcome TIDE students into Woodside is ongoing.

“Staff considers them part of the Woodside community,” said Hunter. “Woodside staff is committed to making each and every student, and their families, feel welcome at Woodside.” ■

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



Seeger Gray

Students gather books in the library during Wildcat Welcome Day.

CHRISTINE DAVID

continued from page 1

recommendations for alleviating parking challenges. Atherton began requiring resident permits to park on streets near the civic center due to the influx of visitors.

But top of mind for many Atherton residents are state housing laws that require the town to accommodate significantly more housing. Atherton, which historically restricted residential development largely to single-family homes on one-acre lots, is now required to plan for hundreds of additional units, including 200 new below-market-rate units.

As first reported by The Almanac, a developer has submitted plans to convert a single-family home to a 30-unit townhome development using Senate Bill 79, a new state law that allows greater residential density near a transit station.

“That was why I ran in 2020. I was watching SB 50 (a failed precursor to SB 79) turn into all these other Senate bills. The state just took over local control and it still is happening,” David said.

David said Atherton and other California cities need to fight to return zoning control to municipal governments.

“I think any local person knows their locale better than anybody else — that’s why they are called ‘locals,’” David said.

David, along with Leugers, DeGolia and Widmer, will be sworn in at a council meeting in December.

“I welcome them to the council team and look forward to working with both our current council and the incoming members, as we continue advancing the town’s priorities together,” Town Manager George Rodericks said.

DeGolia said he was looking forward to working with both David and Leugers on the council. “This is the first time since 2000 that two new members have joined the council at the same time, so there will definitely be a serious adjustment period for the council,” said the incumbent who will start his fifth term on the council in December.

“The three other members of the council have worked together for 13 years and we’ve done some very significant things in the town over that period. Given that long-term working relationship, I think that the two new members will have no problem adjusting and getting involved in our work,” DeGolia added.

The Almanac made numerous attempts to contact Leugers for this story but did not get a response. ■

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

Public Notices

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE’S SALE TS No. **CA-26-1051459-CL** Order No.: **FIN-26010046** **YOU ARE IN DEFAULT UNDER A DEED OF TRUST DATED 8/24/2001. UNLESS YOU TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY, IT MAY BE SOLD AT A PUBLIC SALE. IF YOU NEED AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF THE PROCEEDING AGAINST YOU, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER.** A public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash, or cash equivalent if deemed acceptable to the trustee, cashier’s check drawn on a state or national bank, check drawn by state or federal credit union, or a check drawn by a state or federal savings and loan association, or savings association, or savings bank specified in Section 5102 to the Financial Code and authorized to do business in this state, will be held by duly appointed trustee. The sale will be made, but without covenant or warranty, expressed or implied, regarding title, possession, or encumbrances, to pay the remaining principal sum of the note(s) secured by the Deed of Trust, with interest and late charges thereon, as provided in the note(s), advances, under the terms of the Deed of Trust, interest thereon, fees, charges and expenses of the Trustee for the total amount (at the time of the initial publication of the Notice of Sale) reasonably estimated to be set forth below. The amount may be greater on the date of sale. **BENEFICIARY MAY ELECT TO BID LESS THAN THE TOTAL AMOUNT DUE.** Trustor(s): **Jay B. Bartels, an unmarried man** Recorded: **8/30/2001** as **Instrument No. 2001-135302** of Official Records in the office of the Recorder of **SAN MATEO** County, California; Date of Sale: **10/7/2026 at 01:00 PM** Place of Sale: **At the Marshall St. Entrance of the San Mateo County Courthouse, Southern Branch Hall of Justice & Records, 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063** Amount of unpaid balance and other charges: **\$727,012.85** The purported property address is: **3333 WOODSIDE ROAD, WOODSIDE, CA 94062** Assessor’s Parcel No.: **072-370-220** All bidders, at the date, time, and place of the scheduled sale, will be required to show satisfactory support to the auctioneer of their ability to pay the amount they intend to bid, unless arrangements have been made with the trustee prior to the scheduled sale. **NOTICE TO POTENTIAL BIDDERS:** If you are considering bidding on this property lien, you should understand that there are risks involved in bidding at a trustee auction. You will be bidding on a lien, not on the property itself. Placing the highest bid at a trustee auction does not automatically entitle you to free and clear ownership of the property. You should also be aware that the lien being auctioned off may be a junior lien. If you are the highest bidder at the auction, you are or may be responsible for paying off all liens senior to the lien being auctioned off, before you can receive clear title to the property. You are encouraged to investigate the existence, priority, and size of outstanding liens that may exist on this property by contacting the county recorder’s office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge you a fee for this information. If you consult either of these resources, you should be aware that the same lender may hold more than one mortgage or deed of trust on the property. **NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNER:** The sale date shown on this notice of sale may be postponed one or more times by the mortgagee, beneficiary, trustee, or a court, pursuant to Section 2924g of the California Civil Code. The law requires that information about trustee sale postponements be made available to you and to the public, as a courtesy to those not present at the sale. If you wish to learn whether your sale date has been postponed, and, if applicable, the rescheduled time and date for the sale of this property, you may call **800-280-2832** for information regarding the trustee’s sale or visit this internet website **<http://www.qualityloan.com>** , using the file number assigned to this foreclosure by the Trustee: **CA-26-1051459-CL** . Information about postponements that are very short in duration or that occur close in time to the scheduled sale may not immediately be reflected in the telephone information or on

the internet website. The best way to verify postponement information is to attend the scheduled sale. **NOTICE TO TENANT:** You may have a right to purchase this property after the trustee auction pursuant to Section 2924m of the California Civil Code. If you are an “eligible tenant buyer,” you can purchase the property if you match the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. If you are an “eligible bidder,” you may be able to purchase the property if you exceed the last and highest bid placed at the trustee auction. There are three steps to exercising this right of purchase. First, 48 hours after the date of the trustee sale, you can call **866-645-7711** , or visit this internet website **<http://www.qualityloan.com>** , using the file number assigned to this foreclosure by the Trustee: **CA-26-1051459-CL** to find the date on which the trustee’s sale was held, the amount of the last and highest bid, and the address of the trustee. Second, you must send a written notice of intent to place a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 15 days after the trustee’s sale. Third, you must submit a bid so that the trustee receives it no more than 45 days after the trustee’s sale. If you think you may qualify as an “eligible tenant buyer” or “eligible bidder,” you should consider contacting an attorney or appropriate real estate professional immediately for advice regarding this potential right to purchase. **NOTICE TO PROSPECTIVE OWNER-OCCUPANT:** Any prospective owner-occupant as defined in Section 2924m of the California Civil Code who is the last and highest bidder at the trustee’s sale shall provide the required affidavit or declaration of eligibility to the auctioneer at the trustee’s sale or shall have it delivered to QUALITY LOAN SERVICE CORPORATION by 5 p.m. on the next business day following the trustee’s sale at the address set forth in the below signature block. **NOTICE TO PROSPECTIVE POST-SALE OVER BIDDERS:** For post-sale information in accordance with Section 2924m(e) of the California Civil Code, use file number CA-26-1051459-CL and call (866) 645-7711 or login to : **<http://www.qualityloan.com>** . The above statutorily mandated notices to Tenant, Prospective Owner-Occupant, and Prospective Post-Sale Over Bidders are brief summaries of what may be required under Section 2924m of the California Civil Code. Compliance with all relevant provisions will be required. The undersigned Trustee disclaims any liability for any incorrectness of the property address or other common designation, if any, shown herein. If no street address or other common designation is shown, directions to the location of the property may be obtained by sending a written request to the beneficiary within 10 days of the date of first publication of this Notice of Sale. If the sale is set aside for any reason, including if the Trustee is unable to convey title, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled only to a return of the monies paid to the Trustee. This shall be the Purchaser’s sole and exclusive remedy. The purchaser shall have no further recourse against the Trustor, the Trustee, the Beneficiary, the Beneficiary’s Agent, or the Beneficiary’s Attorney. If you have previously been discharged through bankruptcy, you may have been released of personal liability for this loan in which case this letter is intended to exercise the note holders right’s against the real property only. Date: **QUALITY LOAN SERVICE CORPORATION 2763 Camino Del Rio S San Diego, CA 92108 866-645-7711 For NON SALE information only Sale Line: 800-280-2832 Or Login to: <http://www.qualityloan.com> Post-Sale Information (CCC 2924m(e)): (866) 645-7711 Reinstatement or Payoff Line: (866) 645-7711 Ext 5318** QUALITY LOAN SERVICE CORPORATION TS No.: **CA-26-1051459-CL** IDSPub #0316698 8/28/2026 9/4/2026 9/11/2026 (ALM Aug 28, Sep 4 and 11, 2026)

PROPERTY SHERLOCK
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304713
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) PROPERTY SHERLOCK , located at 504 Elm St, San Carlos, CA, 94070.

Registered owner(s):
ROOSTHAVEN INC.
504 Elm St
San Carlos, CA, 94070
State of Incorporation/Organization: DE
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 August 19, 2026.
(ALM Aug 28, Sep 4, 11 and 18, 2026)

CREATE CHANGE CONSULTING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304510
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) CREATE CHANGE CONSULTING , located at 19 Athlone Ct, Menlo Park, CA 94025.
Registered owner(s):
LUCY OKUMU
19 Athlone Ct
Menlo Park, CA 94025
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 6/4/2024.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 22, 2026.
(ALM Aug 14, 21, 28 and Sep 4, 2026)

PENINSULA PROBUILD CONSTRUCTION
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304727
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) PENINSULA PROBUILD CONSTRUCTION , located at 3585 Hoover st , Redwood City CA 94063 .
Registered owner(s):
SEBASTIAN CHITIC
3585 hoover st
Redwood City CA 94063
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 08/21/2026.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 21, 2026.
(ALM Aug 28, Sep 4, 11 and 18, 2026)

EDUARDO AUTO DETAIL & REPAIR
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304556
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) EDUARDO AUTO DETAIL & REPAIR , located at 232 WISTERIA DR, EAST PALO ALTO, CA 94303.
Registered owner(s):
EDUARDO J HENRIQUEZ RECINOS
232 WISTERIA DR
EAST 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 07/01/2026.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 28, 2026.
(ALM Aug 7, 14, 21 and 28, 2026)

SALTY DOG GROOMING COMPANY
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304697
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) SALTY DOG GROOMING COMPANY , located at 1485 El Camino Real Suite 202, Belmont, CA 94002. Mailing Address: 4190 Sierra Road San Jose, CA 95132
Registered owner(s):
SD GROOMING COMPANY LLC
4190 Sierra Rd
San Jose CA 95132
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 August 17, 2026.
(ALM Aug 28, Sep 4, 11 and 18, 2026)

ANN WALTON BOOKS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304535

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) ANN WALTON BOOKS , located at 235 Medio Avenue, Half Moon Bay, CA 94019.
Registered owner(s):
VICTORIA ANN ATWELL
235 Medio Avenue
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on November 4, 2025.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on July 24, 2026.
(ALM Aug 7, 14, 21 and 28, 2026)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 26CIV05596
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Diane Marie Webster filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
DIANE MARIE WEBSTER to DIANE MARIA FERREIRA
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted.
Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING: October 7, 2026, 9am, Southern Branch of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo located at 455 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063. A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: August 14, 2026
Stephanie G. Garratt
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Aug 28, Sep 4, 11 and 18, 2026)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO COUNTY
Case No.: 26-CIV-05972
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Ramiro Macias filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
RAMIRO BARRAGAN MACIAS to RAMIRO MACIAS
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted.
Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING: 10/7/26, 9:00 am, Southern Branch of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063. A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: August 6, 2026
Stephanie Garratt
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Aug 28, Sep 4, 11 and 18, 2026)

To place a legal notice visit [AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/](https://www.almanacnews.com/legal_notices/)
The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 p.m.

Police arrest 3 Midpeninsula teens suspected of assault

Trio taken into custody in Atherton

By Bay City News Service and Mountain View Voice staff

Officers recently arrested three East Palo Alto teenagers suspected of beating up someone in Mountain View in June, the Mountain View

Police Department said on Monday, Aug. 24.

On June 20, calls came into police reporting a fight in progress at the IFES Society Hall on Stierlin Road. Officers arrived and found a 26-year-old Turlock man suffering from an assault, which he reported

caused him to lose consciousness. The victim said three suspects gave him several injuries, including lacerations, bruising and eyelid swelling.

Mountain View police identified two 15-year-olds and one 14-year-old as suspects in the

assault. The trio were taken into custody on Friday, Aug. 21, in Atherton due to an unrelated case, police said.

Once in custody, Mountain View police filed additional charges related to the June battery. All three teenagers are suspected

of assault with force likely to cause great bodily injury, while the 14-year-old is also suspected of making criminal threats.

Early Monday morning, search warrants were executed at three addresses in East Palo Alto. No additional arrests were made. ■

OVERSIGHT

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Corpus from office in 2025.

A handful of students spoke at the rally, including Carlmont High School senior Jiya Venkatesh, who said they've seen interest from the community in an independent oversight mechanism. They say an inspector general would have greater ability to investigate complaints about the Sheriff's Office, including subpoena powers.

"If there's abuse happening, there needs to be someone it can be reported to," Venkatesh told this news organization. Venkatesh also sits on the county's Juvenile Justice

& Delinquency Prevention Commission.

The group gathered more than 550 signatures ahead of Tuesday's meeting, when they spoke about the proposal during public comment and delivered the petition to the board.

The county's Independent Civilian Advisory Commission to the Sheriff's Office recommended the county create a permanent independent inspector general in April 2025. Multiple neighboring counties have had long-standing independent oversight bodies, including Santa Clara County and the City and County of San Francisco.

San Mateo County posted a job listing for an "ombudsperson"

to work with the Sheriff's Corrections Division, which operates two jails. According to the listing's LinkedIn post, which closed on Aug. 11, the ombudsperson will act as a bridge between incarcerated people, their families, the community at large and the Sheriff's office. Venkatesh and fellow Carlmont High School senior Anoushka Swaminathan both said the ombudsperson does not have enough power, purview or independence from the Sheriff's Office to provide actual oversight of the department.

Momentum for independent oversight has been strong across the state, according to Fixin' San Mateo County executive director

and founder Nancy Goodban, who noted Monterey County's Board of Supervisors reviewed a proposal to create an Office of the Inspector General on the same day.

"It's time for us to get on the bandwagon," Goodban said.

Alongside the broad political will, Goodban said the group has seen more interest from younger residents. She said they had a handful of students from Sequoia High School working with the organization last year, and this summer were able to bring in 10 high school interns, mostly from Carlmont High School.

Venkatesh said she's been following Fixin' San Mateo's advocacy work ever since she was a

freshman. Although she agreed with many of their ideas, she saw the need for more momentum. As an intern, she developed a mobilization strategy that involved creating the petition, talking to partner organizations and ramping up the group's outreach.

She says she's seen more people become interested in the topic and generally in what's happening in their local government.

"We all know about our national issues, we know about our state issues to an extent, but our local issues often go unknown," Venkatesh told this publication. ■

Email Staff Writer

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OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Kalani Engles, 87, of Portola Valley, was an artist whose career spanned 45 years and whose work was featured in more than 120 exhibitions and represented by 15 galleries across the Bay Area, New York, Los Angeles, Dallas and Denver. She died on July 14, 2026.

Beverly Jane (Stout) Balanis, 95, of Menlo Park, was an award-winning watercolor artist whose work was selected for dozens of individual and group exhibitions throughout the Peninsula and who volunteered as a docent at Stanford University's Cantor Art Center and collected Native American art from the Southwest. She died on Aug. 4, 2026.

Blake Nichols Sandy, 65, of Portola Valley, who was born at Stanford Hospital and grew up in Ladera, attended Woodside High School, hiked the Camino de Santiago and was a devoted Led Zeppelin fan, died on Aug. 20.

Yvonne Elsie Jacobson, 88, of Los Altos Hills, grew up on her family's cherry orchard in Sunnyvale and wrote the 1984 history book "Passing Farms: Enduring Values" about the farm's disappearance, who attended Fremont High School and won a speech and debate contest against future Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, graduated from Stanford University, and who taught courses on religion and art at San José State University, De Anza College and Foothill College, died on Aug. 18.

Charles Leonard Aker, 73, of Leon, Nicaragua, a tireless advocate for addressing climate change who was born and raised in Palo Alto, graduated from Palo Alto High School, earned a doctorate in biology and who moved to Nicaragua in 1984 to become a professor and investigator at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua in Leon, died on July 18.

Andrew Kennedy Ludwick, 80, of Palo Alto, who co-founded the pioneering networking startup SynOptics Communications in 1985, pioneered twisted-pair Ethernet and who was an advisory board member for the Northern California Innocence Project, a founding member of the 49er Foundation Red & Gold Society, and who was an avid golfer, died on June 2.

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

HONOREES

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in the video that he understood the organization's mission "to provide for every student."

Campana told this news organization that he was driven to engage with his children's sports teams while they were students, and wanted to encourage other parents to donate, volunteer and be involved with their students' high school community. When he became booster president in 2023, much of his efforts were directed toward rebuilding volunteer efforts that had been lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Campana ran track while attending Woodside, and both his children played a variety of sports at the school. Between watching his children's meets and other games involving the school's 45 teams, he's seen the joy that comes from updated equipment and nicer uniforms — and how much coaches and administrators appreciate the extra support from parents.

"I was glad for the recognition," Campana said. "It'll tell the story about the importance of all the volunteer roles at the different schools and how we all make an impact."

While he's stepped down as president, Campana said he's continuing to volunteer with the organization, especially during fundraising events like the annual Wildcat Prowl run and

Crab Feeds.

Wong has taught math at Menlo-Atherton High School for nearly 30 years, and a news release from the district says he's known for going above and beyond to support students. In a video from the district, multiple students and colleagues described Wong as generous, caring and conscientious. One of the interviewed students said Wong creates a "nice space for people" by speaking to his students with interest and respect.

Principal Karl Losekoot said Wong's classroom is always packed with students during

lunch either asking him for help on their math assignments or "just hanging out."

"I'm just teaching the way I teach," Wong said in the video.

Hogan began working as a custodian at Carlmont High School in 2001 and retired in spring 2026. Many students and staff recognize him as a happy and caring presence on campus, describing him as genuine, empathetic and phenomenal in a video from the district. ■

Email Staff Writer

B. Sakura Cannestra at

scannestra@almanacnews.com.



Courtesy Chris Campana

Former Woodside High School Athletic Booster Organization president Chris Campana was recognized as the district's 2026 Volunteer of the Year.

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In-laws unto themselves

Bestselling Mountain View author Parini Shroff's second novel finds two soon-to-be-ex family members finally getting to know each other

By Angela Swartz

On the wall of Parini Shroff's home office in Mountain View is a framed copy of the first short story she ever wrote. The tale is called "The Magic Hole" and she wrote it at age 7.

The piece is a reminder to Shroff of her writerly beginnings as a child growing up in Los Altos. Now she's a USA Today bestselling author for her debut novel "The Bandit Queens," published in 2023. The book, which is in the dark humor fiction genre, follows women who seek revenge against their abusive husbands. The following year, the book was longlisted for the Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction.

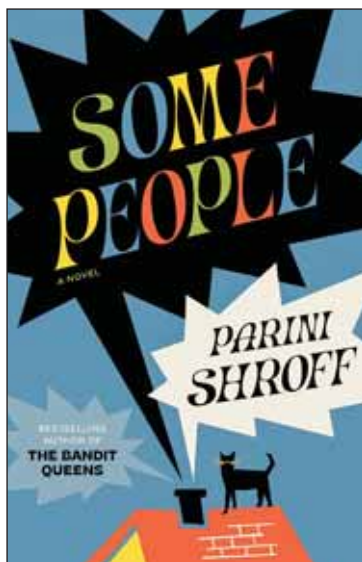
She published her latest work, "Some People," on July 7. The story follows Malti, an Indian woman living in Silicon Valley who suffers a concussion. She is forced to stay under the care of her daughter Kavya's soon-to-be-ex-husband, Nathan, because Kavya is away at graduate school in India. Shroff puts her characters in a pressure cooker where she explores topics like cultural misunderstandings, assimilation, privilege and childhood baggage.

Shroff began her professional writing career after paying off her loans from law school at Loyola Marymount University in Southern California. She earned her master's in fine arts from the University of Texas at Austin. Shroff still practices contract law part time, but reserves her mornings for novel writing.

She has done various writing residencies, including at Djerassi in Woodside.

Embarcadero Media spoke with Shroff about "Some People" and how she formed her love of books as a child at Woodland Library in Los Altos where she devoured "The Boxcar Children," "Sweet Valley High," "Nancy Drew," "The Baby-Sitters Club," "Fear Street" and other series.

The following interview has been condensed for clarity and space.



Courtesy Penguin Random House

"Some People" is the second novel by Parini Shroff.

Embarcadero Media: How did you get into writing as an attorney?

Parini Shroff: I practiced law to get out of the debt that the law degree put me in. Once I paid off my loans, I felt like a free agent.

I was like, 'I wanna pursue creative writing' and pick up ... where I left off when I was a younger person. I'm glad I waited. ... I had maybe more to write about at that point in my life.

I knew that one thing I could do would be practicing part time that would support the writing, so that I could eat, but also satisfy the creative drive.

Thankfully it worked out.

Embarcadero Media: What inspired the book?

Shroff: I'm engaged, and therefore I've been recently fascinated by this idea of in-laws and those dynamics. They're forced family. You're meant to treat them like family, and they are family, but they're not with *your* family.

In tandem with that was the notion that I'm someone who's constantly triangulating. I'm seeking how to keep the peace.

I was toying with the idea of 'what if that common person in an in-law dynamic is removed and the people who share that common person are forced to reckon with each other without a mediator?'



Courtesy Devin Spratt

Author Parini Shroff, who grew up in Los Altos and now lives in Mountain View, set her novel, "Some People," in Silicon Valley. Courtesy Penguin Random House.

Embarcadero Media: When did you start working on the book?

Shroff: I wrote it in the summer of 2024. This book was very unusual for me in that it came out very quickly. ... I was just grateful to be caught along the ride.

Embarcadero Media: Where do you write?

Shroff: I write predominantly in my office. I wish I could be the kind of person who writes in coffee shops, or who can go with a group and have joint writing sessions. But I need quiet, and I need to be alone. I don't like breathing or noise around me because it helps with the escapism. You dive into the story. You're in your character's mind.

Embarcadero Media: What advice do you have for transitioning from working on short stories to a full novel?

Shroff: For me, the 'Bandit Queens' started off as a short

story. I revised it and revised it, and I cleared (it) away for several years. I had enough distance to look at the four corners of the page and want to know more.

What makes novels most interesting are characters. If you just sit with that character, and write something from their perspective ... to really get to know them and their bones, then you can put them in the world and have them navigate situations and that maybe that will allow a larger work to unspool.

Embarcadero Media: Who are your favorite authors?

Shroff: I love Britt Bennett. I love Lily King, Toni Morrison. I love James McBride. I have humor in my work, and he's funny. I love Margaret Atwood, Zadie Smith.

Embarcadero Media: Are you working on any other books at the moment?

Shroff: I'm working on

something new. A sequel to the 'Bandit Queens.'

Years after what I thought was pencils down with the 'Bandit Queens,' the women's voices just started talking in my head when I was writing 'Some People,' so I opened up a fresh notebook and started taking notes. Once I was done with 'Some People' I turned back to the women of the 'Bandit Queens.' ■

Angela Swartz is a Contributing Writer.

"Some People," Parini Shroff. Penguin Random House. Hardcover: \$26.41, E-book: \$13.99. parinishroff.com.

Visit almanacnews.com/arts-culture to read about a children's podcast festival taking place this weekend in San Carlos.

Bay Area singer-songwriter's novel inspirations

Musician Matt Jaffe will perform Aug. 28 at The Guild Theatre

By Heather Zimmerman

Matt Jaffe's newest single, released a couple weeks ago, is "The Saddest Happy Ever After." A wistful, dreamy ballad with a vintage rock 'n' roll vibe, the song lives up to its name. "Does the story end or begin again? Is this a new book or just a new chapter?" the chorus asks.

For singer-songwriter Jaffe, the song is the latest chapter in a musical career that kicked off while Jaffe was still in high school. He recorded his first album at 16 years old, mentored by Jerry Harrison of Talking Heads.

Since then, he has co-written with Tom Higgenson of Plain White T's and toured with Blues Traveler, Wilco and Bob Weir.

Jaffe, who grew up in Mill Valley, is now 31 and based in San Francisco. He has recorded eight albums and is at work on a new album, "Station Eleven," which includes "The Saddest Happy Ever After" and four other singles released so far this year.

Peninsula audiences can hear from Jaffe when he opens for Bob Schneider Aug. 28 at The Guild Theatre.

Jaffe discovered an interest in music at a young age after his older sister began playing classical violin, and he was inspired to take it up as well.

"Our mom was very, very disciplined in getting us to practice. It wasn't so much about it being violin, but about having something to focus on," Jaffe recalled.

The practice paid off, even though his instrument of choice would quickly switch to acoustic guitar — and he'd begin to play music closer to what he heard his parents listening to.

"When I would drive around with my parents, we'd listen to U2 albums and Rolling Stones and

stuff far less violin-heavy. So I just wanted to take after the groups that started inspiring me," he said.

While still a teenager, Jaffe performed at local open mics, where he was discovered by a fellow Mill Valley resident whose music he admired: Talking Heads keyboardist and guitarist Harrison. He shepherded Jaffe through recording demos and refining his songwriting.

"That was a huge nudge towards getting me to pursue music full-time," he said. The experience introduced him to playing with a band, and taught him to write music with a band in mind, rather than writing for himself solo.

"He taught me how to take some quirkier impulses and turn it into something more palatable. He ushered me into a phase of knowing how to write a song that represented what I wanted to say," Jaffe said. "They always say that editing is actually the most important part of a writing process. I think it's so much what you take out, and he helped me streamline."

Harrison and Jaffe are still in touch. "We have still worked together over the years, and he continues to be a very cherished mentor," Jaffe said.

Starting a music career so early gave him a solid foundation, and like so many things in life, came with trade-offs. As a young performer, Jaffe recalled, "You have just sort of this automatic visibility." When he'd play open mics, he'd always be given a slot early in the evening because he would often be playing on a school night. "You get eyeballs and ears on you immediately. People are curious what you're going to do, whether that's premature unfair judgment or encouragement and enthusiasm," he said.

"I think also having been discovered, or whatever word you



Courtesy Edward Saenz, design by Casey Castille

Singer-songwriter and guitarist Matt Jaffe is working on a concept album likely to be released in early 2027.

want to use, while I still did have a lot of sort of youthful strangeness in the music before I learned how something 'quote unquote' should be, which is obviously not really a real thing. But still, we develop these ideas of what should or shouldn't (be)."

There were challenges as well — the early start gave him an impression that launching a music career might have a simpler trajectory than it typically does. Also, there was the challenge of striking a balance between career demands and the life experiences that might never come again, or just spending time with peers as a teen or young adult. Jaffe dropped out of college and formed a band.

"I don't have any regrets, but I also acknowledge that choices are made and things are lost," he said.

Since the early days of his career, Jaffe said he's found that he's focusing less on hewing to the sound of a particular genre and more on whatever direction a song might be taking him.

"I've gotten much more into learning how to present a song in the most exciting way, rather than being more dogmatic about it being rock 'n' roll. For me, it's become more important for the substance to guide and sometimes

that's maintained the rock 'n' roll approach, but other times, no guitars appear on the song, or it's just a string section, or entirely synthetic. So, yeah, just trying to think more about how to produce a song with the song's best interest at heart," he said.

Jaffe's lyrics have a strong sense of imagery, and when it comes to lyrics especially, he said he's often inspired by novels — that includes his latest work in progress, "Station Eleven," which takes its name from Emily St. John Mandel's dystopian novel. "Station Eleven" will be his first concept album. He aims to release the album early next year.

"The long and short of it is the utter brutalizing of the environment by humanity, and the sort of Hail Mary of trying to find a habitable planet elsewhere in the universe, and mourning our planet, but also embracing technology that will allow for a future for the species," he said of the album's concept.

"For me, it's been trying to find the balance of something sort of sci-fi, but that's still human-driven, emotionally-driven. I love sci-fi movies and speculative fiction and dystopian stuff, but I don't like it as much when it's driven by

technology more than humanity. So, trying to find the balance of enthusiasm for space travel and time travel balanced with grief for a place, despite that grief being wrought upon oneself."

Audiences at The Guild can expect to hear some songs from this latest work, as well as music from throughout Jaffe's career. Although he sometimes plays solo, for this show, it will be a "power trio," he said.

"It's very much energy-driven. The studio has allowed me to explore some ballad-type material with more nuance, but the live show is still very much meant to be sort of a freight train, so hopefully we can bring that. We've gotten to play The Guild a couple of times, and it's always been a real treat to be there. ■

Email Arts & Entertainment Editor Heather Zimmerman at hzimmerman@almanacnews.com.



Courtesy Kelly Ferreira, design by Casey Castille

Matt Jaffe pictured with his wife, Lisa, in a detail from the cover art for his forthcoming album, "Station Eleven." He said he wanted to do "a sci-fi take on the cover of 'The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan.'"

Matt Jaffe opens for Bob Schneider, Aug. 28, 7 p.m. (doors), at The Guild Theatre, 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park; \$43.87-\$136.65. guildtheatre.com.

TOWN OF WOODSIDE
2955 WOODSIDE ROAD
WOODSIDE, CA 94062

NOTICE OF NOMINEES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the following persons have been nominated for the offices designated to be filled at the General Municipal Election to be held in the Town of Woodside on Tuesday, November 3, 2026:

Town Council - District 2

Lyle Weaver Councilmember

Town Council - District 3

Daniel Druker Councilmember

TOWN OF WOODSIDE
2955 WOODSIDE ROAD
WOODSIDE, CA 94062

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEARBY GIVEN THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL 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 **Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 7:00 PM**, to consider:

1 Montelena Court EASE2025-0002; GPCD2025-0002

Rebekah Witter Planner: Sage Schaan, Planning Director

Town Council review of a proposal to abandon one existing 80-foot-wide Conservation Easement located at 1 Montelena Court adjacent to Woodside Road to allow future construction of an Accessory Dwelling Unit(s) and to retain existing horse turnout areas and shelters as an accessory use to the housing unit(s).

The project is Categorically Exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15303(e), which includes accessory structures; and Public Resources Code Section 21080, which applies to ministerial approvals.

The application materials are available for public review by contacting Sage Schaan at schaan@woodsideca.gov.

All interested parties are invited to submit written comments to townhall@woodsideca.gov and/or attend in person or virtually at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85437892933> and give testimony.



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Food & Drink



Jen Mallari feeds her daughter, Avi, at a picnic table in front of the Simiz Kai Lelei food stand in East Palo Alto.

Polynesian plates

Simiz Kai Lelei brings Tongan and Samoan flavors to East Palo Alto and beyond

Story by Edwina Dueñas | Photos by Anna Hoch-Kenney

If you ask Simiz Kai Lelei co-owner Lorrita Achica what's a must-have on a plate of Polynesian food, she answers quickly.

"Starch," Achica said.

Think taro, green bananas, sweet potatoes and cassava, often cooked in coconut milk. These starches are more than just a side dish: They anchor a traditional plate of Tongan and Samoan cuisine, which is not always easy to find in San Mateo County.

Other common ingredients in Polynesian cuisine are seafood, corned beef and coconut, and tropical fruits. Simiz Kai Lelei, an East Palo Alto eatery, brings the rich flavors of Tonga and Samoa to Peninsula diners

through dishes like their "Poly Plate," which features a spread of traditional Polynesian dishes.

Owners and husband-and-wife duo Bautista Sione Atu Latu and Lorrita Achica have been serving genuine Polynesian flavors from their licensed home kitchen and food trailer since November 2023. Latu is the main chef and Achica focuses on prep work, service and social media marketing.

Both grew up in East Palo Alto and have raised their five children in the city. Latu worked as an industrial tow truck driver for 17 years and is now an HVAC technician. Achica was a stay-at-home mother and gained kitchen experience at See's Candies.

Married since 1999, Achica's

family is from Tonga, while Latu's hails from Samoa. Together, they create fresh weekly menus featuring dishes from each country. Behind the scenes, preparing for a Poly Plate sale is a labor of love and a family affair.

"We need four hours to make it happen," Achica said. "A lot of love is put into the food, and the kids even help, like skinning the potatoes or doing local deliveries."

The Polynesian community has long had a strong presence in East Palo Alto, making up 7.83% of the population as of 2026. In San Mateo County, Polynesians represent 1.09% of residents, or just over 8,000 people.



Lorrita Achica chats with the Mallari family as they eat in front of Simiz Kai Lelei, a Polynesian food stand Achica and her husband run in the front yard of their East Palo Alto home.

See **POLYNESIAN**, page 22

POLYNESIAN

continued from page 21

Even so, Tongan and Samoan food can still be difficult to find. Fabric store and food market Polynesian Luau in Daly City is currently the only brick-and-mortar restaurant in the county serving Tongan food. San Mateo-based restaurant Tokemoana helped introduce the Peninsula to Polynesian cuisine before closing in 2023. One of its founders later became instrumental in helping Simiz Kai Lelei get off the ground.

The couple cooks from their home and shops for staple ingredients at local Fijian markets, with Achica's uncle providing starches grown on his farm in Tonga. Since many entrees and starches are time-intensive to prepare, the business offers Poly Plate sales once a week to balance work, family and catering orders. The weekly menu is posted on Instagram a few days before each sale.

Poly Plates include entrees, side dishes and a starch for \$25. A recent surf-and-turf plate featured kuku (baked coconut mussels), crispy coconut shrimp, crab macaroni salad, feke (octopus in coconut cream sauce), lu pulu musima (taro leaf-wrapped brisket) and taro. Another plate included their signature mui pipi (turkey tail), sapa sui (Samoan-style chop suey), manioke (cassava) and Samoan sausage bangers stuffed with egg salad. Other weekly entrees have featured lamb curry, pilikaki (mackerel), fried chicken and cabbage-salted brisket.

Desserts include pineapple custard pie and trifle cake, which was inspired by Achica's grandma, who often made the English layered dessert when Achica was growing up. A staple drink on the menu is otai (\$7), a Tongan beverage made with



Bautista Sione Atu Latu prepares fried rice on a backyard grill for Simiz Kai Lelei.

shredded watermelon, coconut milk and crushed ice. For her own spin, Achica adds Cool Whip to make it creamy and dairy-free.

"It's always quality over quantity for us," Achica said, noting that they prepare 50-60 plates for the weekly sale. "We don't cut corners to keep the flavors and the culture authentic."

For plate sales, Simiz Kai Lelei has built a steady customer base, most of whom are Tongan elders who stop by after Sunday Mass. The eatery also offers catering on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays for funerals, weddings, bridal showers and graduations. Vending at community events such as the Top of the Hill Festival in Daly City and Tonga Day has helped widen their clientele.

"Currently, about 20% of our

customers are non-Polynesian," Achica said. "It means everything to me for a new audience to try our food."

For the owners, cooking is rooted in tradition. The East Palo Alto community had already tasted Achica and Latu's cooking through food exchanges, especially at funerals. In Polynesian cultures, providing meals for mourners is a common practice, and Achica and Latu often contributed to families in need. The name Simiz Kai Lelei honors Latu's father, Simi, who encouraged the pair to turn their cooking into a business.

As she set up her business, Achica turned to Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center for guidance. Fusi Taaga, co-founder of Tokemoana and a business consultant at the nonprofit, has been a key resource for Simiz Kai

Lelei. As a fellow East Palo Alto native and Tongan food entrepreneur, Taaga helped Achica and Latu obtain their business license, get food handler's cards and establish an LLC.

Despite the closure of its brick-and-mortar location, Tokemoana continues to offer catering, and Taaga looks forward to seeing more Polynesian spots build a bigger audience for the cuisine.

"I take the lessons learned as a small business owner in the food world and help other owners avoid those mistakes," Taaga said. "Being able to do that has been really fulfilling."

Taaga also said that the expense of importing ingredients along with the high cost of living, utilities and staff wages in the Bay Area pose challenges for restaurateurs hoping to open brick-and-mortar Polynesian

eateries. Epi Aumavae, the board president of Burlingame-based nonprofit Samoan Solutions, echoes these concerns.

"There is a lack of access to resources and economic disadvantages our community experiences," Aumavae said. "Entrepreneurs have the talent and drive, but not necessarily the information to legitimize their business."

To help fill the gap, Samoan Solutions offers outreach, advocacy and education programs to empower the community. During the summer, they host a monthly Nesian Night Market to provide Polynesian-owned businesses a space to vend and showcase their goods, and Simiz Kai Lelei has been a past vendor. The most recent Nesian Night Market was on Aug. 21 in San Bruno. The nonprofit is also organizing the fan festival at the Stanford vs. Hawaii football game on Saturday, Aug. 29, that features a Pacific Islander Heritage Celebration.

Alongside these efforts, eateries like Simiz Kai Lelei are celebrating Polynesian culture while introducing communities to a cuisine they may not have tried before. For those discovering Tongan and Samoan cuisine for the first time, Achica invites them to try a Poly Plate not just for the food, but also for a taste of her family's culture and hospitality in every bite.

"Our food is filled with love," Achica said. "We want to create that feel-good, close-to-home impression on everybody." ■

Email Contributing Writer Edwina Dueñas at eduenas3@protonmail.com.

Simiz Kai Lelei, 2228 Pulgas Ave., East Palo Alto; Instagram: @simiz_kai_lelei. Open Sunday from noon until sold out; check hours on Instagram.



Lorrita Achica prepares a plate of Polynesian food for Simiz Kai Lelei.



Lamisha Brown, a customer and childhood friend of Lorrita Achica, takes a bit of the hibachi plate at the Simiz Kai Lelei food stand in East Palo Alto.



LOVE LOCAL

All Things Local

Bianchini's annual Love Local event has begun and runs all the way through September! It's a month-long celebration of the farms, ranches, and makers right here in our own backyard — filled with activities, recipes, and specials showcasing locally grown and produced goods. So mark your calendar and come experience local with us. Remember:
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Portola Valley — Sunday, August 30 · 12:00–3:00 PM

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San Carlos — Wednesday, September 9

• **Barebottle · 12:00–4:00 PM**

San Carlos — Thursday, September 10

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• **Laughing Monk · 12:00–4:00 PM**

• **Devil's Canyon · 3:00–5:00 PM**

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• **Portola Valley — Sunday, September 20 · 12:00–3:00 PM**



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