

The Almanac

NONPROFIT LOCAL NEWS FOR THE MIDPENINSULA

OCTOBER 16, 2026 | VOL. 62 NO. 7



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In West Menlo Park, a tricked-out little tree has an outsized presence

A resident works undercover to brighten the neighborhood with a decorated tree

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

Several years ago, the city of Menlo Park planted a small fir tree on the corner of Avy and Orange avenues. It was bare and a bit scrawny, as most young trees are, but then something out of the ordinary happened. Someone began embellishing it with decorations that changed with the seasons. But who was doing it, and why?

A little online sleuthing revealed the person behind the mystery: a longtime Menlo Park resident who lives close by but would only agree to speak to The Almanac if her name not be published. Her preferred moniker is the nickname her family has given her: The Tree Fairy.

The crafty resident recalled how her secret efforts began, shortly after the tree was planted. "Someone hung a single ornament on it," she said, "and it reminded me of the scrawny

tree that used to show up in the Peanuts comic series."

After the holidays, she decided that the tree needed a makeover, so she created some decorations for Valentine's Day. That was the beginning of the decorated West Menlo tree, and the displays have only become bigger, better and more elaborate over the years.

"My first thought was popular holidays and/or special occasions," she said. "St. Patrick's Day was coming up a few weeks after Valentine's Day. Then it was Easter, followed by Memorial Day. It just seemed like there was some sort of holiday every month. I decided a monthly change to the decorations would be a good schedule."

If there are longer gaps between holidays, she does "fillers" like graduation or back-to-school. While she covers the cost of all the purchased decorations, there

See **TREE**, page 15



Seeger Gray

A Menlo Park resident holds a ghost ornament on a tree she covered in Halloween decorations on the corner of Orange and Avy avenues in Menlo Park on Oct. 9.

Candidates for Menlo Park council spar over city's future in election forum

Ahead of November election, six hopefuls make their pitch

By Arden Margulis

Menlo Park City Council candidates debated the future of downtown, Meta's role in the city and how to fix issues with Belle Haven's new \$65 million community campus at The Almanac's candidate forum on Oct. 8.

The forum featured all six candidates running to represent three of the city's council districts: Wonman Lee and James Rohr in District 1, incumbent Drew Combs and Vamsi Velagapudi in District 2, and Charlotte Reed and Laura Melahn in District 4.

As the only incumbent seeking reelection, Combs defended his record and Meta employment,

while Velagapudi said the City Council needed change and a representative who is able to work more closely with Meta. Reed and Melahn sparred over the city's plan to build affordable housing on downtown parking lots. Rohr and Lee pitched their visions for how their district can get a long-awaited grocery store after plans for a major development were paused.

Voters in each district will choose their representatives on the Nov. 3 ballot. District 1 represents the Belle Haven and Bayfront neighborhoods; District 2 includes the Suburban Park, Flood Triangle, Lorelei Manor and Willows neighborhoods; and District 4 covers downtown Menlo Park, Allied

Arts and parts of central Menlo Park.

The forum was livestreamed by the Midpen Media Center, and a recording is available on the center's YouTube channel.

The District 4 candidates differed over the city's controversial plans to build affordable housing on three city-owned downtown parking lots. An initiative to require a citywide vote on future changes to downtown parking plazas that diminish parking availability, access or convenience, is on the Nov. 3 ballot as Measure P.

Melahn, who refused to take a position on Measure P, said developers' proposals and an economic feasibility study showed the effort

was financially unworkable. She advocated amending the city's housing plan to replace the parking-lot units by building elsewhere.

Reed, who opposes Measure P, said state housing bonds and infrastructure funding could help close financing gaps to pay for parking structures.

"Developing downtown is the best option that we have to build housing and prevent financial punishment from the state for Menlo Park not following through on its development plans. It's really important that we follow through and build the housing and parking structures," Reed said.

Reed criticized Melahn for declining to answer a yes-or-no

question on whether she supports Measure P.

"I am on team Menlo Park. That is my answer to where I stand on Measure P. That is a position that is focused on what's good for the city in the long run. To be on team yes or team no is not productive," Melahn said.

Seeking to represent Belle Haven, both Rohr and Lee expressed the need for the community to finally have a grocery store and pharmacy.

Lee said the Meta's indefinite "pause" on Willow Village, its mixed-use mega-development slated for Belle Haven, had left the neighborhood without a

See **FORUM**, page 12

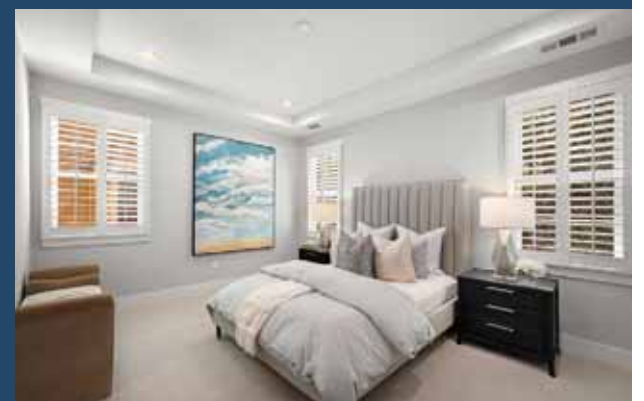
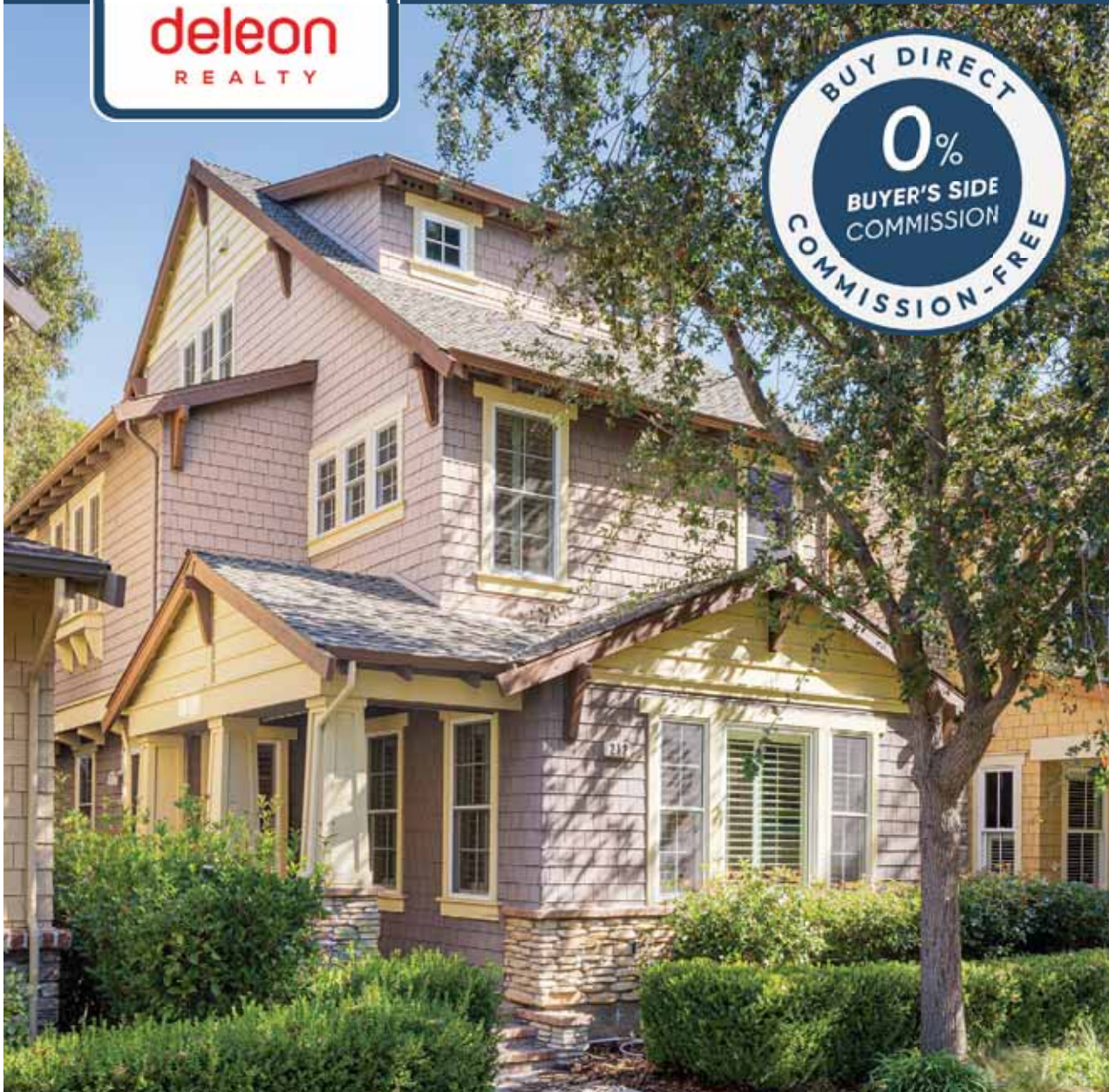
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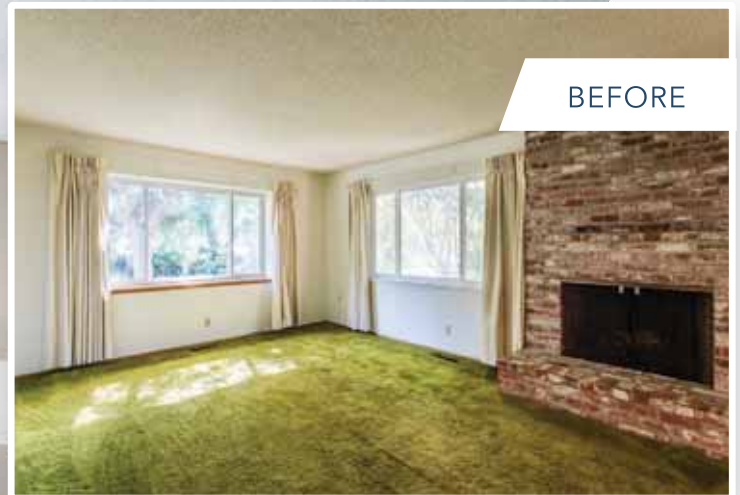
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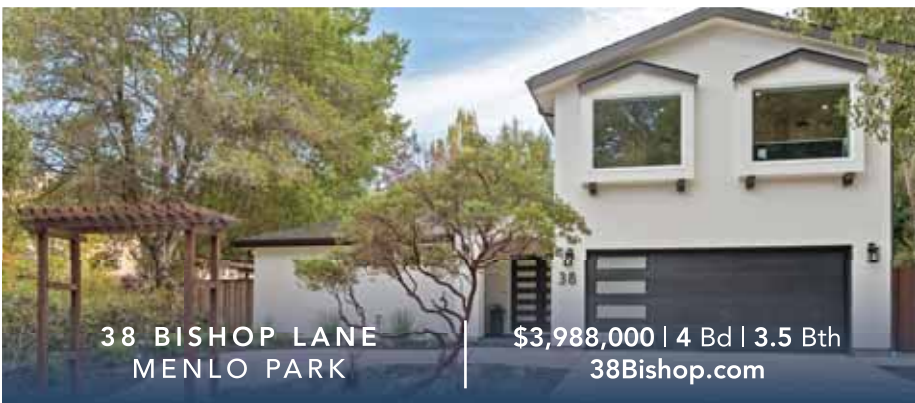
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Local News

MENLO PARK | ATHERTON | WOODSIDE | PORTOLA VALLEY



Allyson Moore

A fenced-off playground structure with metal slides at Flood Park in Menlo Park on Oct. 9.

Too hot to slide: County delays Flood Park playground opening, again

\$4.1 million playground project has been in the works since 2014

By Arden Margulis

The San Mateo County Parks Department is delaying the long-awaited opening of the renovated Flood Park playground in Menlo Park because the metal slide has gotten dangerously hot this summer, it announced Oct. 7.

The department said it is monitoring playground equipment temperatures and investigating ways to shield parts of the playground from direct

sunlight. Officials hope to be able to open the playground by November thanks to cooler fall weather and the changing angle of the sun.

County Parks spokesperson Jeneane Crawford told The Almanac that the slide reached over 130 degrees during peak hours. However, the temperature largely depends on the angle of the sun and can be safe to use on otherwise hot days, she said.

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors approved a \$4.1

million contract to build the playground in May 2025. While construction was originally estimated to take nine months, the opening was delayed in June because safety reviews identified a need for modifications.

The new play area includes a climbing tower, zip lines, slides, spinners and swings, along with informal play space and a separate area for children ages 2 to 5.

See **FLOOD PARK**, page 14

TV show on Silicon Valley's 'outsized egos' to film in Woodside this week

Production of AMC's 'The Audacity' will impact local roads

By Arden Margulis

AMC's dark comedy-drama "The Audacity," set in Silicon Valley, will film in the Woodside Town Center area on Friday, Oct. 16, from 7 a.m. to noon, according to a notice sent to residents.

Crews are set to film on Mountain Home Road between Woodside and Portola roads and shoot one scene at the intersection of Mountain Home

and Woodside roads between 9 a.m. and noon. No streets will be closed, and driveways and horse trails will remain open, though traffic may be briefly controlled during takes, the notice states. AMC will also have California Highway Patrol officers on standby.

Created by Jonathan Glatzer, who previously worked on HBO's "Succession" and AMC's "Better Call Saul," the series follows Duncan Park, a

data-mining CEO who seeks to exploit people's privacy for financial gain, and his psychiatrist, JoAnne Felder, who struggles with her own ethical dilemmas.

AMC describes the show as exploring the "warped dreams, outsized egos and ethical lapses of the self-styled inventors of the future." Its Silicon Valley setting includes

See **FILMING**, page 12

Menlo-Atherton grad files sexual abuse lawsuit against teacher, Sequoia district

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

A former Menlo-Atherton High School student is alleging that her teacher sexually abused her about 20 years ago, when she was a teenager. A lawsuit was filed in San Mateo County Superior Court in June against the Sequoia Union High School District and instructional coach Salvadora Calonje for childhood sexual abuse and failure to protect the former student.

The suit details incidents that occurred between 2006 and 2010, alleging that Calonje, who was in her early 30s at the time, "abused her position of authority and trust to groom, sexually harass and abuse," the former student, referred to in the lawsuit as Jane Doe.

The alleged incidents occurred on and off campus during and after school hours, according to the lawsuit. It also accuses Calonje of groping, molesting, forced digital penetration, intercourse and oral copulation. The suit adds that Calonje would often bring Jane Doe to school and take her home in sight of other district administrators and staff.

The lawsuit states that Jane Doe believes that other students were also abused by Calonje.

The suit names the school district for allegedly failing to take steps to prevent teachers from sexually abusing students, inadequately investigating and supervising employees, and for failing to warn and educate students about known dangers posed by its staff.

The lawsuit alleges that the district was negligent in failing to report Calonje to law enforcement and in implementing policies and protocols to detect and report suspected abuse.

"Proper action, adequate supervision, and timely reporting could have prevented some of all of the abuse suffered by (Jane Doe)," the complaint said.

The district did not respond to this news organization's repeated requests for comment.

Calonje was promoted to serve as an instructional coach for the district in 2022 after previously teaching Spanish

at Menlo-Atherton. She also served as the head of the World Languages Department and developed a gender-inclusive language unit, according to the M-A Chronicle.

Although the alleged abuse occurred 20 years ago, state law allows victims who experienced sexual abuse before Dec. 31, 2023, to file a civil claim before they turn 40 years old or within five years of discovering psychological impacts from the assault.

'One of the horrible side effects of sexual abuse is that individuals have to suffer in silence for so many years.'

ALEX CUNNY, ATTORNEY

Jane Doe has suffered from severe emotional distress, physical and mental pain, and costs for medical treatment, the suit said.

"Unfortunately, sexual abuse survivors take a long time to come forward. Delayed disclosure is often very normal," said Alex Cunny, the attorney representing the case. Cunny works for Texas-based sexual abuse law firm Lanier Meyer McBride Blair LLP.

"One of the horrible side effects of sexual abuse is that individuals have to suffer in silence for so many years. So it's a good thing that the law now reflects and respects that time it takes to come forward," he added.

Lanier Meyer McBride Blair has also been placing social media ads about the lawsuit, offering free consultations and encouraging those with similar experiences to contact the firm.

Evidence is still being collected for the case, but the school was served with the lawsuit in mid-June, according to Cunny. The Almanac was unable to confirm whether Calonje is currently employed by the district. ■

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Residents begin preparing for El Niño winter storms

Officials provide sandbags early, urge residents to make emergency plans

By B. Sakura Cannestra

Experts are warning of unusually warm water in the Pacific Ocean, the phenomenon known as El Niño, which is developing this year. This has historically signaled wet winters in the Bay Area, so officials are urging residents to start preparing for storms and potential flooding.

The National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center announced Oct. 8 that there's a very high chance this year will feature a strong-to-very strong El Niño through March 2027. The high likelihood of strong rain bears strong resemblances to 1998, when the San Francisquito Creek overflowed and flooded neighborhoods in Palo Alto,

East Palo Alto and Menlo Park.

Although it's clear El Niño will be shifting normal storm patterns, NWS meteorologist Brian Garcia said it's impossible to predict the impacts now as there have been relatively dry winters with this weather pattern before. Past El Niño winters include 1997-98 and 2015-16. While there was historic flooding in 1998, he said there was an average amount of rainfall in 2016.

The way rain impacts a region relies on a variety of factors, including where the rain falls and over what amount of time. Garcia said there may even be compounding impacts from rising sea levels, storm surges and increased rainfall that could create a situation in which floodwater cannot drain



Magali Gauthier

A city crew on the Pope-Chaucer Bridge removes floating debris from San Francisquito Creek using a bulldozer on Jan. 9, 2023.

until the tide lowers. But any fine details of this year's storms, including whether they'll materialize, are "blurry."

"We have this generalized look at what the pattern could be, but the details of how that pattern lays out and what type of storms we get across our area can only be resolved once we get into a window that's much closer in time as opposed to months out," Garcia said.

While the details are still unclear, Garcia encouraged residents to make necessary preparations for the upcoming winter storms and sign up for regional emergency alerts. That's AlertSCC in Santa Clara County and SMC Alert in San Mateo County.

Making preparations

Long-time residents near the San Francisquito Creek have a hunch of what to expect. Crescent Park resident Tom Rindfleisch had about a foot and a half of water in his Palo Alto yard in 1998, and nearly had to reckon with another flood in 2022. He runs the Crescent Park Neighborhood Association's mailing list and has been following the

authority's flood protection work since it was formed in 1999.

Rindfleisch said the lack of certainty around the storms and flooding adds to residents' anxieties around preparations, leaving many of his neighbors worrying whether they've prepared enough — especially newer residents who haven't experienced past floods.

"It's a challenging problem for residents here, in terms of just the threat being there and nagging," Rindfleisch said. "A lot of people lose sleep over the potential of floods in the winter rainy season, and this year it's going to be particularly strong because of this El Niño effect."

Local officials are making preparations as well. At the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority's Sept. 24 meeting, authority staff described cleaning the creek-bed and removing limbs from trees to prevent debris from blocking up the creek. They're also preparing excavators to install beside the Pope-Chaucer bridge and University Avenue bridge in case of blockages.

See **STORMS**, page 16

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Valerie Pillsbury, 66, a Palo Alto High School graduate who spent her entire 39-year career as a U.S. National Park Service ranger, who worked at Grand Canyon, Lassen, Yosemite and Sequoia/Kings Canyon national parks, and who mentored countless interpreters throughout her career, was known for her positivity, compassion and humor, died on Oct. 5, 2026.

David Fryberger, 95, of Palo Alto, who spent more than three decades as a

physicist, administrator and theorist at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, who helped develop an early touch-panel screen and collaborated on the 1974 discovery of the J/psi particle, and who pursued his own theories of subatomic particles into retirement, was an avid soccer player and choral singer, died on May 3.

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

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The Almanac is published every Friday at
**3525 Alameda De Las Pulgas,
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The Almanac (ISSN 1097-3095 and USPS 459370) is published every Friday by Embarcadero Media Foundation, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025-6558. Periodicals Postage Paid at Menlo Park, CA and at additional mailing offices. Adjudicated a newspaper of general circulation for San Mateo County. The Almanac is delivered to homes in Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside. However, in order to continue delivering you the news you depend on, we encourage you to become a paid subscribing member. Go to AlmanacNews.com/become-a-member/ to start supporting The Almanac today. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Almanac, 3525 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park, CA 94025-6558.

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High schoolers discourage Sequoia district from full-day phone ban

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

A recent survey conducted by the Sequoia Union High School District found that students overwhelmingly oppose a full ban on cell phones. School staff and parents, on the other hand, are more likely to support an all-day restriction on student phone use.

The district's current policy on mobile devices, which was adopted in June, only restricts smartphones during instructional periods until the end of this school year. Students are allowed to use their phones during lunch and passing periods, but the policy for next school year could be different.

The policy applies to mobile devices including tablets, flip phones, smartwatches, earbuds, smart glasses and gaming devices. Personal laptops are allowed.

The district's most recent survey collected feedback from 1,267 students, 273 staff members and 1,077 parents.

Among students, 94% said they oppose a full-day phone ban and 72% shared that they need their mobile devices to stay connected with parents and for safety. Students are also

concerned that the ban would hurt morale and encourage rule-breaking.

In the survey, 79% of students said they are currently using their phones to coordinate plans, rides and schedules, and to check in with their family and friends.

They said a ban would feel "overly controlling."

During a school board meeting on Oct. 7, members of the Student Advisory Council opposed the full ban of personal mobile devices. Student trustees from Woodside and Sequoia high schools said phones are used for connection, school notifications, safety and learning.

"In a world full of advancing technology, restricting cell phones would directly affect the social life at Woodside and also across the district," said student Trustee Mina Burr.

Despite the current ban, staff said "enforcement is inconsistent and burdensome." They also found that students are "glued to screens" when they are allowed to use their phones outside of the classroom, decreasing the level of socialization during breaks.

Compared to students, survey results showed that most

staff support a bell-to-bell cellphone ban. Teachers think that restricting phones all day will help students build social skills and reduce distractions. However, there were some concerns for students who need their phones for jobs, parents and two-factor logins.

Staff said in the survey that students try to get around the rules in a number of ways: having decoy phones to store during class; denying they have a phone at all; and using their phones during restroom breaks.

"Staff want clearer rules, consistent enforcement," said Jarett Dooley, executive director of student services.

In the survey, 62% of parents said they would support a full-day ban in the hope that it will increase students' focus and face-to-face interactions as well as improve social skills. But parents said they are worried about not being able to reach their children during an emergency or to coordinate ride changes.

At Woodside High School, students are entering their fourth year with a partial cell-phone ban. In 2023, the school

See **PHONE BAN**, page 14

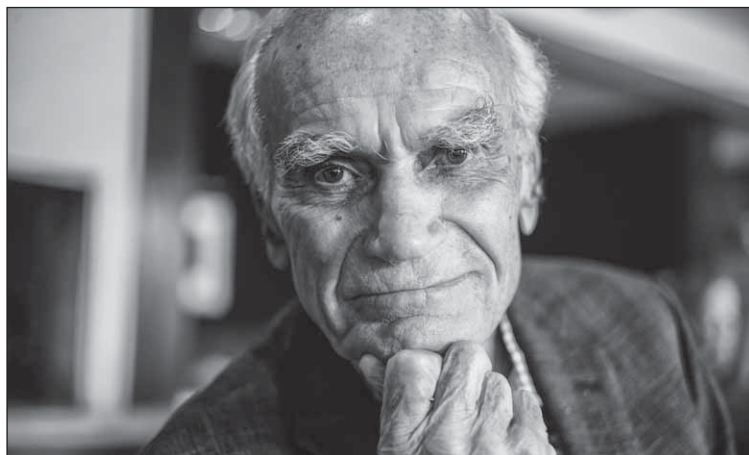
Bill Draper, Silicon Valley venture capital pioneer and Atherton resident, dies at 98

By Angela Swartz

Bill Draper, the pioneering Silicon Valley venture capitalist who was an early investor in companies like Yahoo, Skype and Tesla, in a career that spanned decades, died at his Atherton home on Sept. 8. He was 98.

William H. Draper III was born Jan. 1, 1928, in White Plains, New York, to Katherine Louise Draper and William Henry Draper Jr. His father was a banker, military general and diplomat who founded the first West Coast venture capital firm, Draper, Gaither and Anderson, in 1959. Later, Draper's father also served as the first ambassador for NATO.

Bill Draper grew up in Scarsdale, New York, where he served as president of his high school student body. He attended Yale University with former President George H. W. Bush. He took a gap year to serve in the Army, then graduated in 1950 with a bachelor's



Courtesy Christopher Michel via Wikimedia Commons

William "Bill" Draper III, one of Silicon Valley's pioneering venture capitalists, a philanthropist and longtime Atherton resident, died Sept. 8.

degree. He earned his master's in business administration from Harvard Business School in 1954.

In 1953, he married Phyllis (Culbertson) Draper, whom he met on a boat trip to Europe.

"I picked my wife in three days," he said in his 2011 oral history. "Fifty-nine years later, I still think I hit the jackpot."

Draper began his venture

capital career in 1959 at his father's firm. He and his wife, Phyllis, drove from Chicago to Palo Alto in a brand-new convertible Chevrolet to start his venture, according to Draper's oral history.

Draper left in 1962 to form his own firm, Draper & Johnson Investment Company.

See **BILL DRAPER**, page 17

REAL ESTATE Q&A

by Monica Corman



Transferring Your Property Tax Base

Dear Monica: I bought a property last year and just got my tax bill, which was very high. I was expecting to be taxed the same as I was on the house I sold, not at the new rate. How can I resolve this?
Gale C.

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Legislators unite for Woodside town hall on dangerous mountain highways

Frequent accidents on routes 84 and 35 have sparked outcry for new safety measures

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Local legislators will be holding a town hall on problems surrounding speeding and reckless driving on highways 84 and 35 on Tuesday evening, Oct. 20, at Mountain Terrace in Woodside.

The event, a mix of presentations and a chance for the community to ask questions, is hosted by state Sen.

Josh Becker, D-Menlo Park, Assemblymember Marc Berman and San Mateo County Supervisor Ray Mueller.

The meeting comes after two cyclists died in vehicle collisions on the highways that twist through the Santa Cruz Mountains. In August 2025, Redwood City bicyclist Eric Biron died after being hit by a pickup truck at the intersection of highways 35 and 84, known

locally as Four Corners. In July, East Palo Alto cyclist Jakub Solovsky died when he was hit by a Porsche while riding on Highway 35.

"The heartbreaking death of a cyclist this summer was not an isolated incident," said Becker in his September newsletter. "These corridors have experienced repeated fatal and serious-injury crashes, and residents and roadway users have been raising

concerns for years. And the problem is getting worse."

The legislators will be joined by San Mateo County Sheriff Ken Binder and a representative from the California Highway Patrol. Representatives of Caltrans, the state agency that oversees California highways, will present their work and plans to increase safety. Besides hearing about immediate and long-term goals and updates from Caltrans' Road Safety Audits, community members will be able to ask questions of both legislators, the sheriff, CHP and Caltrans, according to Kathleen Moazed, Mueller's legislative aide.

"Every option, including speed cameras, must be seriously evaluated to reduce the tragic and senseless injuries and deaths that have traumatized these quiet communities," said Berman in an email.

As the meeting approaches,

some members of the public are preparing to present a draft of legislation for speed cameras in the area, aiming to deter motorists from speeding on winding roads. Others argue that the highways need more straightaways, turnouts and passing lanes.

Local petitioners with the Safe Corridor Initiative, created by Woodside Circulation Committee member Walker Wells, are also trying to spread the word on the Oct. 20 town hall to people who have lost family members to crashes on the highways. It will be held from 6-7:30 p.m. at the Mountain Terrace, 17285 Skyline Blvd., Woodside.

The town hall will also be livestreamed and recorded. To RSVP for the event, visit berman.asmdc.org/events. ■

Email Staff Writer
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Thomas Hoffman, MD



Michael Molcsan

The intersection of Skyline Boulevard and La Honda Road in Woodside, known as Four Corners.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Tree planting in Belle Haven

Canopy will be hosting a tree-planting event with Belle Haven Elementary School and All Five Preschool from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 17, at 1333 Almanor Ave. in Menlo Park.

Volunteers are invited to help plant new trees to bring more greenery to school communities in the area. Sign up at canopy.org/volunteer-signup.

Halloween Hoopla in Menlo Park

The city of Menlo Park is hosting its annual Halloween Hoopla and carnival from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 24, at Fremont Park. The parade will go down Santa Cruz Avenue and start in the parking lot behind Cheeky Monkey toy store at 640 Santa Cruz Ave.

This year, the city is introducing "Howl-o-ween Walker" so attendees can bring their furry friends to participate in the parade.

Trick-or-treaters will receive a free bag to use when visiting downtown stores to collect treats. The carnival will feature jumpers, prizes, candy, balloons and temporary tattoo artists. The Fremont Park stage will have performances by Lori and RJ, who will be hosting an interactive party with music, dancing, puppets, magic and more.

For more information visit tinyurl.com/HalloweenHoopla2026.

—Jennifer Yoshikoshi



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Courtesy San Francisco SAR

As part of a celebration of the United States' 250th anniversary on Oct. 18 in Portola Valley, the San Francisco Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution will present a colorguard procession. The event also features an organ concert.

Local groups celebrate nation's 250th in Portola Valley

By Heather Zimmerman

To celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States, it seems fitting that a group of very different organizations are coming together to present a concert hailing this milestone year.

The Palo Alto/Peninsula Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, the El Palo Alto Chapter of the Daughters of the

American Revolution, the San Francisco Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution and Christ Church Portola Valley and Woodside are presenting an "All-American Organ Recital," Oct. 18. The afternoon performance will take place at Christ Church in Portola Valley.

Organist Barbara Baird will perform a wide-ranging program of works, all by American composers.

Audiences will recognize some of the works on the program as familiar patriotic songs, such as the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Concert Variations on the Star-Spangled Banner."

The program also offers selections that are more contemporary or offer new spins on traditional works, including "Partita on 'Simple Gifts,'" which features composer Noel Goemanne's treatment of a 19th-century Shaker tune and Joe Utterback's jazz-tinged take on the hymn "Shall We Gather at the River." "We Shall

Oct. 18, 3 p.m., Christ Church
Portola Valley and Woodside, 815
Portola Road, Portola Valley; \$20
suggested donation; papenago.
org.

Overcome: A Suite for Solo Organ" by composer Sharon J. Willis pays tribute to the civil rights movement.

Baird recently retired as a professor from a post at the University of Oregon, where she taught for nearly 40 years, and she is also the longtime organist at First Congregational Church, Eugene, Oregon. She has recorded four albums, largely focusing on baroque music.

The event will also feature a Sons of the American Revolution color guard procession, with members dressed in Revolutionary War uniforms. ■

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Menlo Park looks to outside law firm to defend against high-rise developer's lawsuit

City Council approves contract with Goldfarb & Lipman for 80 Willow Road litigation

By Hannah Bensen

The Menlo Park City Council voted to approve an outside law firm on Oct. 13 to assist the City Attorney's Office in its legal dispute with the developers of a high-rise project at 80 Willow Road, on the former Sunset Magazine campus.

Oakland-based Goldfarb & Lipman LLP specializes in housing law and works with cities across the state, according to a city staff report.

On Oct. 2, the owner and developer behind 80 Willow Road — a large mixed-use commercial and residential project — filed a lawsuit alleging that Menlo Park illegally delayed the approval of the development, which was proposed under the builder's remedy. The city of Menlo Park has refuted these allegations.

City officials have been clear-eyed about the potentially high costs of litigation, with Mayor Betsy Nash warning in September that the city may need to cut services to defend the suit. Attorneys at Goldfarb & Lipman

have hourly rates ranging from \$405 to \$525, depending on the seniority of the employee, according to the rate schedule. Law clerks and project coordinators charge \$360 an hour.

The contract was approved unanimously on the council's consent calendar, which is for routine items. The council had to vote on the agreement because the costs could exceed the city manager's signing authority of \$100,000.

The firm told the city that attorneys Barbara Kautz and Dolores Bastion Dalton, a partner at the firm, will be overseeing the firm's work with the city. Kautz was previously San Mateo's assistant city manager and community development director.

The 80 Willow team is represented by Allen Matkins, a law firm with expertise in real estate. ■

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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COMPASS

FORUM

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much-anticipated commercial center envisioned. He called for a walkable shopping area and said additional housing could help attract a grocery store by providing customers nearby.

Rohr said older residents need better access to everyday necessities. He advocated looking for another location for a grocery store and suggested a farmers market, if a full-service grocery store proved impractical.

“We need to have a closer area for our aging population to be able to deal with things that are daily needs for them,” Rohr said.

Both candidates also raised concerns about the city’s 2-year-old Belle Haven Community Campus. Rohr cited problems with temperature control, flooring and pool design, saying future projects needed more scrutiny before construction. Lee credited the work that went into the campus but pointed to pool equipment failures and reductions in operating hours.

In the District 2 race, Velagapudi advocated looking to Meta, the largest employer in the city, for ways to work together to benefit Menlo Park

and potentially, as a source of additional tax revenue.

“They’ve walked away from (the Willow Village) commitment but we should have tried to find a way to get them to actually help us,” Velagapudi said. “I think there’s a way we can actually now negotiate with Meta on the business license tax, among other things. They need good PR. There’s a deal to be done and we need somebody that could actually go and knock on the door of Meta and have the conversation.”

Because Combs works for Meta as a compliance director, he is required to recuse himself from discussions involving his employer. Combs rejected the suggestion that his recusals from Meta-related council decisions had diminished District 2’s representation and pointed to neighborhood improvements during his two terms and his engagement with residents.

Combs cited a recent council consideration of a Meta lobby remodel as an example.

“I don’t think that District 2 residents are diminished by the fact that I didn’t get to comment on the color scheme in Meta’s lobby,” Combs said.

Velagapudi urged voters to choose new leadership to address the city’s housing,



Seeger Gray

Menlo Park City Council candidates for Districts 1, 2 and 4 fielded questions at The Almanac forum on Oct. 8.

budget and traffic challenges, while Combs emphasized the city’s public services and record of improvements.

“That doesn’t mean that there isn’t work ahead, because certainly there is,” Combs said.

Candidates were given one minute to answer questions on topics ranging from housing and development to the environment and equity. The forum was held in the Menlo Park City Council chambers and was moderated by The Almanac’s editor Andrea Gemmet and

reporter Arden Margulis. The crowd in the Chambers included current Councilmembers Jeff Schmidt, Cecilia Taylor and Betsy Nash.

Taylor, who represents District 1, and Nash, who represents District 4, are not seeking reelection.

The Almanac’s 2026 Voter Guide includes candidate comparisons and coverage of local races and ballot measures. ■

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

FILMING

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“jaded billionaires, psychiatrist-gurus, bio-hacked tech bros, AI labs and disillusioned teens being optimized in elite private schools,” according to the company.

Park is played by Billy Magnussen and Felder is played by Sarah Goldberg. The show also features Zach Galifianakis, who hosted “Between Two Ferns” and starred in “The Hangover.”

The first season premiered April 12 on AMC and AMC+, and production on the second season began in June. The show is filmed primarily in Vancouver, Canada, but a few scenes will be shot in Woodside, according to the notice.

Season 1 of the show is available to stream on AMC, Netflix and Prime Video.

The production is staging vehicles and staff at the Filoli estate to avoid impacting coveted parking in the town center.

AMC is not the only company launching shows about Silicon Valley’s unique culture. “Cupertino” premiered on CBS on Oct. 8. ■

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



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Stanford professor wins Nobel Prize for research on consumer behavior

Robert E. Hall recognized for contributions to hypothesis used to craft fiscal policies, stabilize worldwide economies

By B. Sakura Cannestra

Robert E. Hall, a Menlo Park resident and professor emeritus at Stanford University, was awarded the 2026 Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences this week for developing macroeconomic models of consumer behavior.

Hall, who serves as a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, taught at Stanford from 1978 to 2024, and a press release from Stanford describes him as an applied economist whose research focuses on a wide range of topics, from employment to market competition to technology. Alongside his teaching and research, Hall served the field of economics in a variety of roles, including as president of the American Economic Association in 2010 and as a research director for the National Bureau of Economic Research.

"This is a wonderful surprise," Hall said in a statement. "I've spent my career trying to understand how the economy works, following interesting



Courtesy Patrick Beaudoin/Hoover Institution
Robert E. Hall

questions wherever they led."

Hall was born in Palo Alto and now lives in Menlo Park with his wife, Susan Woodward, who serves as chairperson of Sand Hill Econometrics and whom he thanked in the statement as his "coauthor."

Hall received the award for his contributions to theory on how consumers decide the amount they spend in an economy. He developed these models alongside fellow pioneering Columbia University economics professor Michael

Woodford, with whom he shares the Nobel Prize.

This consumer theory, known as the "permanent income hypothesis," was first developed by the historic economist Milton Friedman and states that consumers weigh more than just their current funds when deciding to spend; they also consider factors such as the expected future revenue. This hypothesis challenged the broadly accepted simple Keynesian theory and has helped inform fiscal policies and better predict how the economy might react to certain stimuli, according to the Nobel announcement.

"The laureates' work has provided us with a stable theoretical foundation for the models that are now used by central banks and governments around the world. With them, we are better equipped to deal with shocks in the economy, such as energy crises or sudden changes in how much households consume," John Hassler, chair for the prize in economic sciences' committee, said in the Nobel's press release.

Hall originally articulated these additions to the permanent income hypothesis in the 1970s. Valerie Ramey, deputy director of research for the Hoover Institution, said the recognition is notable now that this model has been proven helpful to banks and governments around the globe.

"The analogy I make is, doctors need to understand how the human body works before they can tell you what kind of medication or what procedure you need," Ramey told this news organization. "The better your understanding, the better your prescription will be, and it's the same thing with economic policy."

Hall was one of Ramey's professors when she attended Stanford University as a graduate student in the 1980s. She was Hall's research assistant for four years and teaching assistant for one quarter, and he advised her dissertation — she described him as a great educator who balanced teaching specific details alongside the big picture. She said they kept in contact as she continued in

the field and it was "an absolute delight to overlap" at the Hoover Institution.

While Hall is being recognized for his contributions specifically to the permanent income hypothesis, Ramey highlighted how he's been a pioneer on a variety of topics. Hall notably penned "The Flat Tax" alongside Hoover Institution colleague Alvin Rabushka, advocating for a simple, uniform income tax rate.

Ramey said many researchers in the field eventually retire from publishing, but Hall never did. She lauded him for his persevering "intellectual curiosity" and staying "at the frontier" of the field.

"We always considered him one of the front runners for the Nobel Prize for many years," she told this news organization. "It was just wonderful to hear the news this morning that he finally received it because it was long deserved." ■

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Person fatally struck by train in Menlo Park Wednesday morning

Caltrain experiences major delays, cancels trains; police ask motorists to avoid area

By Arden Margulis

All roads are open following a pedestrian fatality on Wednesday morning, Oct. 14, near Alma Street and Sherwood Way after police closed the intersection and a nearby train crossing.

The Menlo Park Fire Protection District said its first responders were called to the scene at 9 a.m. by police who

Help is available: Any person who is feeling depressed, troubled or suicidal can call 988, the mental health crisis hotline, to speak with a crisis counselor. People can reach trained counselors at Crisis Text Line by texting HELLO to 741741.

reported a pedestrian had been hit by a train, but that the individual was pronounced dead before they arrived.

Menlo Park police closed streets near the intersection of Alma Street and Sherwood Way until shortly before 11:30

a.m., and had advised people to avoid the grade crossing heading at eastbound Ravenswood Avenue and westbound Laurel Avenue, according to an alert. At 10:42 a.m., westbound lanes were reopened followed by the

eastbound side almost an hour later, police said.

A passenger on a stopped train at San Antonio station said Caltrain announced that trains were single-tracking through the affected part of Menlo Park. She said a number of passengers got off the train and were seeking alternate transportation.

Caltrain canceled several trains and warned of delays of

over an hour across the corridor. Caltrain spokesperson Dan Lieberman said shortly before 11 a.m. that the affected train was released from the scene and that rail traffic was moving in both directions.

The San Mateo County Coroner's Office said its investigation was ongoing. ■

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PHONE BAN

continued from page 7

introduced a voluntary practice for teachers who wanted to implement a phone restriction in the classroom, according to Woodside High principal Karen Van Putten.

During the 2024-25 school year, the policy became school-wide and cell phone pockets for storing devices were distributed to all classrooms. Van Putten said that in the following year, school officials finally began to see positive results of the phone ban and a shift in campus culture.

"When we create a system that gives (students) some safeguards and gives them some

choice, we have found during passing period(s), lunch and brunch, that for the most part, our students are doing the right thing and they are self-monitoring," said Van Putten.

She added that after three years, she sees more students interacting with each other during lunch and passing periods, and if they are using their phones, they're using them to play collaborative games or to make social media videos together.

School board members also observed during campus visits that the number of students on their phones during transitional periods was minimal.

Trustees Mary Beth Thompson and Amy Koo said

they would like to better understand the ongoing enforcement issues that teachers are facing. Koo asked for more information on the current enforcement practices and what lessons the district can learn from Woodside's experiences. Assistant Superintendent Bonnie Hansen said district staff will collect more information about it.

On Nov. 18, district staff will be presenting a recommendation on a revised board policy to implement for the 2027-28 school year, if approved by the board. ■

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FLOOD PARK

continued from page 5

Crawford said that the department hopes newly planted trees may provide shade for the play structure.

Crawford said that once the slide opens, parents and kids should use the five-second rule: If someone can comfortably hold their hand against the slide for five seconds, it is safe to use. "It's really a wonderful playground, and we can't wait to see kids enjoying it," she added.

The playground is the second phase of a broader renovation of the 21-acre, county-owned Flood Park, located at 215 Bay Road in Menlo Park. In 2014, the county determined

that the park, which opened in 1937, needed a comprehensive overhaul. The project was later dubbed "Reimagine Flood Park."

The first phase, estimated to cost \$11.5 million, opened in 2025. It included new basketball, sand volleyball, tennis and pickleball courts, a bike pump track and renovated picnic areas.

Then-Parks Director Nicholas Calderon described the Flood Park renovation as the largest known and most comprehensive renovation of a county park.

The first phase was funded by Measure K, a half-cent county sales tax. ■

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TREE

continued from page 1

are many that she makes herself or with the help of her boyfriend. The recent back-to-school tree included ornaments with the logos of local schools, and the tree topper was a huge pencil.

As many residents who live nearby will tell you, the tree's decorations seem to magically change overnight — people say no one has ever seen it in the process of being adorned. That's all part of the plan.

"I decorate under cover of darkness. I wait until most people are sleeping and there are very few cars on the road. Most of the time, it's after 1 a.m. on a weeknight. If a car comes, I duck behind the tree or walk over to the curb where my car is parked and wait until it passes," she explained.

She wears a dark jacket and a black baseball cap to obscure her efforts, but that doesn't mean no one has ever noticed her. She said she has been caught several times, including by the local police. One officer drove around the block, then returned to see what was going on.

"I explained we lived nearby and were just changing the decorations on the tree. He asked us if we were crazy, wished us well, and drove away," she said.

On another occasion, a police officer stopped, confirmed that she was the tree decorator and agreed to keep her secret. He told her that his daughter "loved the tree and would be excited to see the new decorations in the morning."

What does her own family think of her nocturnal tree decorating? "They think it's great," she said. "If they are in town, they sometimes help put up or take down lights."

Her two daughters often make suggestions for new decorations and her boyfriend enjoys the challenge of engineering the decorations to make sure they can be seen from the street.

She said there has been very little theft. "I try to use decorations that are not expensive, so I won't be disappointed if something disappears."

"The Tree Fairy," who recently retired from a position in the financial services industry, said that she does not have an art or design background. That might surprise her fans, given the charming and imaginative designs she has produced. As the tree has grown and filled out, the decorations and lighting effects she uses have increased.

"Decorating in the dark in the middle of the night has its challenges," she said. "This is especially true as the decorations and lighting have become more elaborate." She said that she often decorates tree over several nights.

This month's Halloween theme



Photos by Seeger Gray

A Menlo Park resident who anonymously decorates trees at night, and declined to share her name, poses for a portrait with a tree she covered in Halloween decorations on the corner of Orange Avenue and Avy Avenue in Menlo Park.

features witch hats, giant spiders and small ghosts, all of which are handmade. She added store-bought skeletons, skulls and ravens to enhance the spooky mix. Shiny orange garland snakes around and through the green branches and solar-powered twinkling lights, installed at the base of the tree. The whole thing is topped off with a large, diaphanous ghost that lights up.

Although she has taken great pains to remain anonymous, she has gotten some feedback about her efforts.

"I enjoy hearing and reading comments from neighbors about the decorations and how seeing the tree brightens their day. Several people have left notes on the tree expressing their gratitude for my commitment and creativity."

Does she worry about the little tree, which has grown and filled out considerably, getting too tall for her to decorate? She admits

to doing a little pruning and also uses a step-stool to reach the top. "I have no plans to stop decorating any time soon," she said.

When asked if she might want some recognition for all of her efforts, she replied, "I think the secrecy and anonymity add to the fun."

But she did want to explain why she continues to offer this unique aesthetic experience to everyone who passes by what has now become a neighborhood fixture.

"I'm glad others in the community like the tree. Some people have commented that it's nice to see someone take the time to work on something everyone can enjoy. This is especially true with all the controversy that exists in our society today," she said. "If the tree makes people feel good, I'm happy to continue. It's important to me to contribute in a positive way." ■

Email Contributing Writer
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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING BY THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Public Hearing will be held for the Woodside Fire Protection District Board of Directors to consider enacting the following proposed ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT OF SAN MATEO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA AMENDING THE SCHEDULE OF FEES ESTABLISHED BY ORDINANCE NO. 26-01

The proposed ordinance is also identified as Ordinance 26-02.

All interested persons are invited to attend the Public Hearing and be heard on this matter. The Public Hearing will take place on October 27, 2026 at 6:00 PM at 808 Portola Road, Portola Valley, CA 94028. This meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format, and the public may also attend this meeting virtually. Details on participating by Zoom or other virtual format will be available on the published October 27, 2026 agenda for the Board of Directors meeting.

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE: Ordinance No. 26-02 amends the District's Fire Prevention fee schedule adopted by Ordinance No. 26-01 on May 26, 2026, as follows:

- Reduces the Public Records Act request fee from \$374 to \$0.10 per page.
- Adds a Pyrotechnic and Special Effects Permit fee of \$627.
- Adds a Fences Permit fee of \$283.
- Adds a Pre-Licensing Inspection fee for Institutional, Residential, and Day Care Occupancies of \$478.
- Adds a Fire Marshal cost recovery hourly rate of \$311 per hour.
- Adds an Expedited Plan Review fee, billed at actual outside consultant cost or in-house overtime cost.

The purpose of the ordinance is to establish updated fees, as defined in the California Constitution, that are no more than necessary to cover the reasonable costs of Fire District governmental activities, and that the manner in which those costs are allocated to a payor bear a fair or reasonable relationship to the payor's burdens on, or benefits received from, the Fire District's governmental activities. The fees established by the Ordinance are authorized pursuant to Health & Safety Code section 13916 and any other applicable provisions of California statutes and regulations.

All other fees adopted under Ordinance No. 26-01 remain unchanged. If adopted, the ordinance will take effect 30 days after passage.

All interested parties are encouraged and invited to submit written comments regarding the merits of the proposed ordinance prior to the hearing or participate in the public hearing. Reasonable accommodations will be made to individuals with disabilities. To submit comments electronically, please forward them to Kimberly Giuliani, Fire Marshal at kgiliani@woodsidefire.gov. To submit comments via U.S. Mail, please forward them to the Woodside Fire Protection District Fire Marshal to arrive no later than 5:00 p.m. one day prior to the meeting at the following address: 808 Portola Ave. #C, Portola Valley, CA 94028.

Please note that any challenge of the proposed action in court may be limited to addressing only those issues raised at the public hearing described in this notice, or in written correspondence submitted to the Fire Marshal at, or prior to, the public hearing.

The proposed Ordinance 26-02 will be made available for review online at <https://www.woodsidefire.org/our-district/fire-prevention-division/prevention-ordinances-and-resolutions> at least ten days before the October 27, 2026 meeting and will be available in the agenda packet for the October 27, 2026, meeting.

A certified copy of the proposed Ordinance 26-02 will also be available, at least ten days before the October 27, 2026 meeting, upon request by contacting the District Office, at (650) 851-1594, 808 Portola Rd. #C, Portola Valley, CA 94028.

The data indicating the amount of cost, or estimated cost, required to provide the service or the cost of enforcing any regulation for which the fees are charged, and the revenue sources anticipated to provide the service or the cost of enforcing any regulation, including general fund revenues, will be available for public inspection at the District Office, 808 Portola Rd. #C, Portola Valley, CA 94028, at least ten days before the October 27, 2026 meeting.

Run Dates: October 9 and October 16

PUBLIC NOTICE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS SUMMARY OF ORDINANCE 26-03 (previously identified as Ordinance 26-02)

At its regular meeting on October 27th, 2026, the Board of Directors of the Woodside Fire Protection District ("District") will consider adopting the following ordinance:

Ordinance 26-03 (previously identified as Ordinance 26-02). "AN ORDINANCE OF THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT, ENACTING AN INFORMAL BIDDING ORDINANCE GOVERNING THE SELECTION OF CONTRACTORS TO PERFORM PUBLIC PROJECTS PURSUANT TO PUBLIC CONTRACT CODE SECTION 22034."

The Ordinance is also identified as Ordinance 26-03 (previously identified as Ordinance 26-02).

SUMMARY OF THE ORDINANCE: On August 25th, 2026, the Board adopted Resolution No. 26-08 which elected that the District become subject to the uniform construction cost accounting procedures set forth in Public Contract Code section 22010, et seq., and may utilize the bidding procedures set forth in Public Contract Code section 22030, et seq. when contracting for "maintenance work," as defined in Section 22002, or when contracting for any other work which does not fall within the definition of "public project," as defined in Section 22002.

Pursuant to that election, Public Contract Code section 22034 requires that the District enact an ordinance governing the selection of contractors to perform public works projects utilizing an informal bid process pursuant to Public Contract Code section 22032(b).

Pursuant to these statutory requirements, Ordinance 26-03 establishes an informal bid process for public works projects of more than \$75,000 but do not exceed \$220,000. Public works projects of \$75,000 or less may be performed by employees of the District by force account, by negotiated contract, or by purchase order. Public works projects of more than \$220,000 shall, except as otherwise provided by law, be let to contract by formal bidding procedure.

CEQA DETERMINATION: The Board of Directors will consider adopting findings that Ordinance 26-03 is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the reasons stated in the proposed ordinance.

A FULL AND COMPLETE COPY OF THE TEXT OF THE ORDINANCE IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT <https://www.woodsidefire.org/our-district/fire-prevention-division/prevention-ordinances-and-resolutions>, AND A CERTIFIED COPY OF THE FULL AND COMPLETE TEXT OF THE ORDINANCE IS AVAILABLE AT THE WOODSIDE FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT OFFICE, 808 PORTOLA ROAD, PORTOLA VALLEY, CA 94028.

Run Date: Friday, October 16th, 2026

STORMS

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Multiple structural improvements have been installed over the past few years in the hopes of preventing or lessening the creek's flood risk. The authority's "Reach 1" project was finished in 2019 and included widening the creek and building levees along the stretch of creek from Highway 101 to where it feeds into the bay. Palo Alto began renovations on the Newell Road bridge in May that are meant to increase the amount of water that could flow through it.

East Palo Alto residents have experienced similar floods on the opposite side of the creek, though council member Mark Dinan said the city is much less prepared for this winter's storms than he would prefer. Dinan, who sits on the creek authority's board of directors,

said he's unsure of the city's specific emergency plans, including how residents might evacuate if necessary or what'll happen if the city's power goes out for long stretches of time.

"If it all comes at once, we could be in a situation that is just tremendously damaging, disruptive, costly and just terrible for the region," Dinan said. "This will hit differently for the working-class folks who are living paycheck to paycheck and really can't afford to lose their car and can't afford to be flooded out of their apartment."

Dinan said he's working with East Palo Alto's city staff to better prepare residents. That includes opening a second sandbag distribution site on the city's west side.

In Palo Alto, Vice Mayor Greer Stone said preparations began early this year to educate residents on the region's flood risks and give more time to

gather resources like sandbags and drinking water. Stone, who chairs the creek authority's board of directors, encouraged residents to check if they're in a high risk flood zone and develop an emergency plan.

"We need to prepare now rather than waiting until a major atmospheric river is on top of us," Stone said. "In recognition of the higher likelihood that we see a significant atmospheric event, we are taking extraordinary precautions and moving up our typical preparations this year."

While the authority was able to complete Reach 1's downstream improvements to the San Francisquito Creek, Stone said the authority is still struggling to secure funding to work on "Reach 2," which would include improvements to the creek from Middlefield Road to Highway 101. This project includes improvements to the Pope-Chaucer bridge — a spot which Rindfleisch and others say is the creek's main chokepoint.

Stone said he hopes concern around this year's winter storms renews state and federal interest in supporting these types of local infrastructure projects. Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency around the potential El Niño storms in late September to bolster preparedness efforts.

"Overall preparedness is what protects residents this winter, and infrastructure is what will change the risk for future winters," Stone told this news publication.

Palo Alto residents can pick up sandbags at Mitchell Park (600 East Meadow Drive), the Palo Alto Airport Terminal (1925 Embarcadero Road) and the Rinaconda Tennis Courts (corner of Newell Road and Hopkins Avenue). The city is also hosting an open house on storm preparedness at Fire Station 3 (799 Embarcadero Road) on Oct. 29.

Menlo Park residents can pick up sandbags at the Burgess Park parking lot (corner of Burgess Drive and Alma Street) and Fire Station 77 (1467 Chilco Street).

East Palo Alto residents can pick up sandbags at the Public Works Corporation Yard (150 Tara Road). ■

Email Staff Writer
B. Sakura Cannestra at
scannestra@almanacnews.com.

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, October 27, 2026, at 7:00 PM**, to consider:

831 Glencrag Way

APPL2026-0002

Applicant: Munish Manrao / Appellant: John Clark

Planner: Sage Schaan, Planning Director

Review of an Appeal (APPL2026-0002) of the Planning Commission's decision to deny an Appeal (APPL2026-0001) of the Planning Director's decision to approve a Stable Permit Exception (XSTA2026-0001) to the private stable standards allowing two (2) horses on a property that is approximately 19,794 square feet, when 1-acre (43,560 square feet) is required for two horses, based on a recommendation of approval from the Livestock and Equestrian Heritage Committee. The appellant requests that the appeal be upheld by the Town Council and that the Stable Exception be denied.

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

The application materials are available for public review by contacting Sage Schaan at sschaan@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.

★ ★ ★
2026
ELECTION
CENTER

Get informed with our **2026 Election Center** — your one-stop shop for all things election. Dive deep into local election news, learn more about the candidates and ballot propositions, and on race night see up-to-the-minute race results.



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BILL DRAPER

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In an interview in 2017, Draper noted that “Palo Alto was a little town ... Mountain View and Sunnyvale . . . were mostly orchards . . . very informal,” back in the 1950s.

“We ... rented two Pontiacs, and we both went out and knocked on doors in the orchards because venture capital was not a known term, literally, at all,” according to his oral history. “It was a lot of fruit orchards in Sunnyvale, in Santa Clara, and we’d go look for doors to knock on that looked like they (the company) had to do with some kind of technology or electronics.”

Draper recalled how he and his partner, Pitch Johnson, appeared on the cover of the now-defunct Palo Alto Times, looking over a checkweigher they had invested in. The equipment knocked underweight food packages off

the assembly line.

“We never made much money on it, but we didn’t lose any,” Draper said. “It was exciting, and we had a lot of fun. We never felt we were wasting our time.”

Three years later, he founded Sutter Hill Ventures.

In 1967, he waded into politics with a run against actress Shirley Temple Black for Congress. He contributed to local political campaigns in Atherton and other causes, and hosted political fundraisers.

“Town staff and council extend our sincere condolences on this profound loss. Our thoughts are with all who mourn their passing,” Atherton town officials said in an Oct. 13 statement.

From 1981 to 1986, Draper served as president and chairman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

Draper’s venture capital work remained a family affair. His son Tim Draper followed in

his footsteps, becoming a well-known venture capitalist who co-founded Draper, Fisher, Jurvetson. His granddaughter, Jesse Draper, is also in the VC space.

“We were so lucky to have him with us as long as we did,” wrote his son Tim, in a post on X. “I know he touched many of your lives.”

Draper, whose family members referred to him as “Pops,” had breakfast with his grandson Adam at Buck’s restaurant in Woodside twice a month over the last nine years.

“To some he was larger than life, to others a best friend,” wrote Adam in a Sept. 24 Substack post. “He was constantly dressed in a suit looking like James Bond, which contrasted wonderfully with my T-shirt and orange pants situation during our breakfasts.”

In 2011, Draper authored “The Startup Game: Inside the

Partnership Between Venture Capitalists and Entrepreneurs,” which included firsthand stories of the successes of California-based companies he invested in such as Skype, the Apollo Computer, Hotmail and OpenTable.

“Drive, determination, leadership qualities, intelligence and vision paired with unyielding integrity were the traits Bill Draper looked for in every founder he backed — and the very qualities he exemplified throughout his historic career,” according to a statement from the National Venture Capital Association. “He believed deeply in humility and founder partnership, often reminding peers that the entrepreneurs sweating long hours are the true heroes carrying progress forward.”

In 2013, the San Mateo Historical Association honored Draper and his peers for their

groundbreaking work in venture capital.

Outside of venture capital, Draper pursued philanthropic interests for many decades. He founded what would later become the Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation. It has made over 280 early-stage investments in information technology in India and the U.S. over the last 30 years. He headed the United Nations Development Program from 1986 to 1993, where he oversaw almost 10,000 international aid projects. In 2018, he helped found The Mission Within, a therapy program that provides supervised psychedelic therapy to veterans.

Draper is preceded in death by his wife of almost 65 years, Phyllis. He is survived by his three children, Polly, Tim and Rebecca; his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. ■

Angela Swartz is a Contributing Writer.

Public Notices

JOYA SUPERMARKET 2
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304845
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) JOYA SUPERMARKET 2 , located at 388-390 GRAND AVE., SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94080.
Registered owner(s):
JOYA SUPERMARKET 2 INC
388-390 GRAND AVE.
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94080
State of Incorporation/Organization:
CALIFORNIA
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 08/01/2026.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 02, 2026.
(ALM Sep 25, Oct 2, 9 and 16, 2026)

YADI'S LEARNING SERVICES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305025
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) YADI'S LEARNING SERVICES , located at 180 Buckingham Ave, APT 105, Redwood City, CA 94063.
Registered owner(s):
ADA YADIRA AYALA HEREDIA
180 Buckingham Ave, APT 105
Redwood City CA 94063
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 09/28/2026.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 28, 2026.
(ALM Oct 16, 23, 30 and Nov 6, 2026)

HAYWARD
HAYWARD BUILDERS CENTER
HAYWARD BUILDING SYSTEMS
HAYWARD DOOR AND WINDOW
HAYWARD HOME DESIGN CENTER
HAYWARD LUMBER AND HOME SUPPLY
HAYWARD LUMBER CO.
HAYWARD SERVICE CENTER
HAYWARD LUMBER
HAYWARD LUMBER COMPANY
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305003
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) HAYWARD , 2.) HAYWARD BUILDERS CENTER, 3.) HAYWARD BUILDING SYSTEMS , 4.) HAYWARD DOOR AND WINDOW , 5.) HAYWARD HOME DESIGN CENTER, 6.) HAYWARD LUMBER AND HOME SUPPLY , 7.) HAYWARD LUMBER CO.

, 8.) HAYWARD SERVICE CENTER, 9.) HAYWARD LUMBER , 10.) HAYWARD LUMBER COMPANY , located at 2511 Garden Road, Suite A300, Monterey, CA 93940. Mailing Address: PO BOX 16009 Monterey, CA 93942.
Registered owner(s):
HOMERT T. HAYWARD LUMBER CO.
2511 Garden Road, Suite A300
Monterey, CA 93940
State of Incorporation/Organization: California
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/01/2013.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 24, 2026.
(ALM Oct 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2026)

ENHANCE PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304995
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) ENHANCE PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES , located at 899 Santa Cruz Ave., Suite 200, Menlo Park, CA 94025 .
Registered owner(s):
ENHANCE PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, PC
899 Santa Cruz Ave., Suite 200
Menlo Park, CA 94025
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/05/2026.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 23, 2026.
(ALM Oct 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2026)

DAISY'S FLORALS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304721
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) DAISY'S FLORALS , located at 2853 Holland St., San Mateo, CA 94403.
Registered owner(s):
GISELLE ESPINOZA HERNANDEZ
2853 Holland St.
San Mateo, CA 94403
CASSANDRA SANCHEZ
2853 Holland St.
San Mateo, CA 94403
MICAHA EUNICE DAYAG
2853 HOLLAND ST.
San Mateo, CA 94403
This business is conducted by: a General Partnership.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 02/03/26.
This statement was filed with the County

Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on August 20, 2026.
(ALM Sep 25, Oct 2, 9 and 16, 2026)

INDIA GROCERY OUTLET
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305050
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) INDIA GROCERY OUTLET , located at 336 Alden St, Redwood City, CA 94063. Mailing Address: 4021 Pacific Blvd San Mateo, CA 94403
Registered owner(s):
MANUBHAI TANDEL
4021 PACIFIC BLVD
San Mateo CA 94403
State of Incorporation/Organization: Califronia
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 01, 2026.
(ALM Oct 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2026)

BISHOP CONSTRUCTION & CONSULTING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305118
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) BISHOP CONSTRUCTION & CONSULTING , located at 12970 Skyline Blvd., Redwood City, CA 94062.
Registered owner(s):
GARY LEE BISHOP
12970 Skyline Blvd.
Redwood City, CA 94062
SUSAN MARGARET BISHOP
12970 Skyline Blvd.
Redwood City, CA 94062
This business is conducted by: a Married Couple.
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 October 07, 2026.
(ALM Oct 16, 23, 30 and Nov 6, 2026)

FEDORA FIDUCIARY
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304875
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) FEDORA FIDUCIARY , located at 3341 Melendy Drive, San Carlos, CA 94070.
Registered owner(s):
SHANNON L. KAMPA
3341 Melendy Drive
San Carlos, CA 94070
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 08, 2026.
(ALM Sep 25, Oct 2, 9 and 16, 2026)

HEXMONGER
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-304939
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) HEXMONGER , located at 17 Almedral Ave, Atherton, CA 94027.
Registered owner(s):
NATHANIEL VOO RHIES
17 Almedral Ave
Atherton, CA 94027
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on September 15, 2026.
(ALM Sep 25, Oct 2, 9 and 16, 2026)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 26-CIV-07084
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Soujanya Kedilaya Akirebari filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
SOUJANYA KEDILAYA AKIREBARI TO SOUJANYA KEDILAYA
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: 11-19-2026, 9:00 AM, Southern Branch of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo County located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063. A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: 09-16-2026
Hon. Stephanie G. Garratt
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Oct 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2026)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 26CIV05602
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Elizabeth Herrick and Ian Sachs for Minors filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
ELOISE BROOKS SACHS to ELOISE BROOKS SACHS HERRICK
PIA LILIANA SACHS to PIA LILIANA SACHS HERRICK

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: November 23, 2026, 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: September 21, 2026
Stephanie Garratt
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Oct 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2026)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 26CIV07085
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Brooke Williams Kvingedal filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
BROOKE WILLIAMS KVINGEDAL to BROOKE ALAINE WILLIAMS
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: 11/18/2026, 9:00, 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: 9/16/2026
Stephanie Garratt
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Oct 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2026)

To place a legal notice visit
AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/

Pro and con: Portola Valley's Measure N

On the Nov. 3 ballot, 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 five-member Town Council unanimously placed the local funding measure before residents, aiming to provide Portola Valley with a reliable stream of revenue to address the town's ongoing budget deficit. The Almanac invited representatives on both sides of Measure N to make their cases to our readers.

Pro: Portola Valley should vote yes on Measure N

By Jeff Aalfs and George Savage

Measure N creates a Home Rule Charter for Portola Valley and enacts a 1% tax (\$10 per \$1,000 of value) on all home sales. We are writing in support of Measure N.

As a long-time member of the Portola Valley Town Council and chair of the town's Finance and Audit Committee, we are very familiar with the details of the town's finances, and to be blunt, the town's financial position has been deteriorating for years. While bookkeeping failures and audit delays have made the problem harder to address, the budget deficits confronting us are structural problems. Put simply, our expenses have grown much faster than our revenues.

The disproportionate growth in expenses is largely driven by increases in the cost of our contract with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office, which is our largest single budget line item. Town employee costs, both salaries and benefits like health care and retirement, have also grown. Recruiting employees has become more difficult as the local cost of living has escalated. In response, the town has been compelled to offer better salaries to recruit and retain staff. We have worked to improve the efficiency of both our law enforcement coverage and the work of our own employees, but we are already lean on staffing in both areas, particularly in the face of numerous unfunded state mandates — cutting back is simply not an option.

On the revenue side, our biggest source of funding is property tax receipts. Our property tax income grows as home prices increase and properties are reassessed after sale, but we receive only a small allocation of the total revenues (7 cents of every tax dollar) from San Mateo County. Importantly, one of the main reasons that our property tax revenues are limited is that, since its inception in 1964, Portola Valley has maintained

a policy of limiting development to residential buildings, with minimal business and infrastructure: We don't host hospitals, significant business areas or hotels. This has been a deliberate choice for generations, and it has resulted in the bucolic atmosphere we all enjoy, but it has come at a cost.

Perhaps more importantly, if Portola Valley were to dissolve, the decisions about future land use would revert to San Mateo County, which could ultimately decide to locate community infrastructure on land here in town. Passing Measure N is, in no small part, a tool for maintaining local control over our town.

By raising revenue from a real property transfer tax, Portola Valley can minimize the burden on current residents, particularly those living on fixed incomes, as opposed to a parcel tax which would fall on everyone, every year. We don't like paying taxes any more than anyone else, but our homes have appreciated dramatically in value while we've lived here, in no small part because of the environment that the Town of Portola Valley has maintained through its policies; paying 1% of our eventual sales proceeds, if and when we choose to sell, is a small price to pay for the benefits, financial and personal, that we have received over the course of our home ownership. To enact this tax under law, we must convert Portola Valley to a charter town. The only practical implication of this change in status is that we can impose this tax; all other town operations will remain the same.

Like all of you, we love living in Portola Valley; Measure N is a key tool in maintaining the town we all call home, and we urge you to vote yes. ■

Jeff Aalfs served as a Portola Valley Council member from 2011 to 2024.

George Savage chairs the Portola Valley Finance and Audit Committee.

GUEST OPINION

Con: Measure N property transfer tax is wrong for Portola Valley

By William Urban and Danna Breen

New taxes should only be levied when absolutely necessary. Portola Valley's effort to close a \$700,000 annual structural budget deficit has morphed into an excessive, \$2 million-plus new annual revenue grab, in order to fund an extra annual \$1.3 million-plus in annual spending that has not been fully reviewed and vetted by the Portola Valley Finance Committee or Town Council. Despite the town's stated values of community and equitable taxpayer treatment, the council has directed the entire tax at homeowners who are selling real estate.

Only the 2% to 3% of residents who are selling properties each year would pay a 1% sales tax, or \$45,000 or more for a median-priced home sale, while the non-selling 97% to 98% residents pay nothing while still capturing 100% of the benefits. Buyers who share the cost of the tax would also face a significant jump in annual property tax when their properties are reassessed at the purchase price.

One fairness principle of taxation policy is matching the incidence of a tax to those who benefit from the revenue — all those living here, not those selling and leaving Portola Valley. Taxes supporting general town-wide purposes should be shared. That's not what this tax does. Over the next 10 years, only the departing or arriving 20% to 25% of total town residents would exclusively bear the burden of a collective \$20 million-plus of new taxes.

Another fairness principle: Assess taxes among those best able to bear them. Proponents apparently view resident property sales as liquidity events demonstrating greater wealth and ability to pay than non-sellers. Wrong. Selling creates no wealth, nor is it a wealth-revealing event. It's an exchange of real property for cash of equivalent value. Would other liquidity events that most of us will experience, like annual 401(k) or IRA required minimum distributions, Social Security benefits, private pension payments, or sales of securities justify new local taxes?

This tax is financially equivalent to giving the town a mortgage on your house equal to 1% of its value. No monthly payments are due — it's worse. The mortgage amount actually increases with your home's appreciation and is due on sale. Your home equity immediately drops by that amount. You can't simply price your home 1% higher, not in a competitive marketplace with homes selling in neighboring towns without transfer taxes.

The town has no data or mandate to assess home-sellers' wealth, net home equity, or income as a basis for a transfer

tax. There are no exemptions for sellers purchasing a replacement property in town, subjecting them to a second transfer tax, plus a tax basis step-up to purchase price. The buyer of their former property also suffers a tax basis step-up. There are no exemptions for those suffering forced distressed sales due to fire or natural disaster.

The Town Council directed the Finance Committee to research and develop alternative tax proposals, but then specifically told them not to make any recommendation on the amount or type of tax. No documented spending proposal or schedule justifying the tax was vetted. Even the targeted 1% tax rate is miscalculated. A Finance Committee analysis found a smaller 0.75% tax rate would raise equivalent revenue if inflation was properly applied to recent five-year sales history, instead of the outdated 15-year sales history, not adjusted for inflation, used by the Town Council in setting the 1% rate.

Dismiss the council's hints they'll learn and adjust tax provisions after passage — that rarely happens, and the current Town Council cannot legally bind future councils.

Ignore alarmist predictions of loss of town autonomy if charter town status and this tax measure fail. Financial collapse is not a credible risk, as evidenced by town's broadly publicized financial projections through the 2030 fiscal year. Disincorporation hasn't happened anywhere in California since 1973, and then only for a single Southern California town.

Reject this measure, Portola Valley. Better, fairer alternatives have already been identified by your Finance Committee. ■

William Urban is a 24-year member of the Portola Valley Finance Committee, and a member since 2016 of two Citizen's Oversight Committees for bond and parcel taxes for Portola Valley School District. Danna Breen is chair of Architecture Site Control Commission.

What's on your mind?

Tell us what's on your mind by sending your letters to letters@AlmanacNews.com. Or snail-mail them to: The Almanac, 2345 Yale St., 1st floor, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

Letters should be no longer than 300 words.

Questions? Email editor@AlmanacNews.com, or call 650-223-6537.

Voters should choose their representatives — not the other way around

By Jim Lawrence

Every 10 years, San Mateo County redraws the boundaries of its five supervisorial districts. Those lines determine which communities vote together, who represents us, and whose voices are heard in county government for the next decade.

This November, San Mateo County voters will have an opportunity to change who has the final authority to draw those lines. Measure U would amend the County Charter to require that supervisorial districts be redrawn after each federal decennial census by an independent redistricting commission governed by applicable provisions of California law.

I had the honor of chairing San Mateo County's Supervisorial District Lines Advisory Commission following the 2020 Census. That experience convinced me that it is time for San Mateo County to establish a truly independent citizens' redistricting commission.

Our 14-member commission took its responsibility seriously. We received training on the U.S. Constitution, the Voting Rights Act, California redistricting law, population equality, communities of interest, geographic continuity and other requirements governing fair district boundaries.

We then listened to San Mateo County residents.

We heard from people concerned about East Palo Alto, Belle Haven, North Fair Oaks, the Coastside, cities, neighborhoods and unincorporated communities. Residents and organizations explained why certain communities should remain together and why others should not be divided.

The commission reviewed demographic information, population changes, public testimony and dozens of proposed maps.

After completing that work, we recommended two maps to the Board of Supervisors.

The board adopted neither.

Instead, the supervisors unanimously approved a different map, known as the "Communities Together" map.

The larger issue is not whether that particular map was good or bad. The issue is the process, and who should have the final say.

Why should elected officials have final authority over the boundaries of the districts from which they were elected to serve? That creates an inherent conflict — or, at minimum, the appearance of one.

Voters should choose their representatives. Representatives should not choose their voters.

San Mateo County should establish an independent citizens' redistricting

GUEST OPINION

commission before the next redistricting cycle. The commission should reflect our county's geographic and demographic diversity, operate transparently, receive appropriate legal and technical training, conduct extensive public outreach, and have meaningful authority over the final district map.

Independence would not guarantee that everyone agrees with every boundary. Redistricting will always involve difficult choices between population equality, voting rights requirements, communities of interest and other considerations.

But removing final mapmaking authority from the officials whose districts are being drawn can give residents greater confidence that the process is focused on representation rather than the interests of incumbents.

Redistricting may sound like an issue that matters only once every 10 years. It does not. The boundaries drawn during that process shape political representation and accountability for an entire decade.

San Mateo County can create a system that gives residents greater confidence in how those boundaries are established.

This isn't about Democrats or Republicans. It isn't about any individual supervisor or candidate. It is about

a fundamental democratic principle: Who should have the final authority to draw the districts from which our representatives are elected?

On Nov. 3, San Mateo County voters will answer that question through Measure U.

Support for Measure U

Supervisor Speier, Supervisor Gauthier, The Leagues of Women Voters of San Mateo County, the ACLU San Mateo County Chapter, San Francisco Peninsula People Power and Belmont Neighbors Against Racism support Measure U and the establishment of an independent redistricting commission for San Mateo County.

Voters should choose their representatives — not the other way around. ■

Jim Lawrence is a civic leader in San Mateo County best known as the board chair of the advocacy group Fixin' San Mateo County. He chaired the 2021 San Mateo County Supervisorial District Lines Advisory Commission and served on the county's 2026 Charter Review Committee.

Editor's note: There is no organized campaign opposing Measure U.



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UPWARDLY MOBILES



Vivian Cromwell

Alexander Calder's "Little Yellow Panel" (1936), at left, shares a gallery with Georgia O'Keeffe's "Jonquils No. 2" (1936), at center, part of the "Calder | O'Keeffe" inaugural exhibition at Hauser & Wirth in Palo Alto. The gallery officially opened on Oct. 3.

International blue-chip gallery Hauser & Wirth makes grand entrance in Palo Alto with 'Calder | O'Keeffe'

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

For a small town, Palo Alto has an impressive number of art galleries. There are five in the immediate downtown area, with the venerable Palo Alto Art Center, located just a mile away, bringing the count to six. The total was increased on Oct. 3 with the opening of the Hauser & Wirth Gallery, located in the renovated historic post office building on Hamilton Street.

The Swiss-based, international powerhouse gallery certainly knows how to make an entrance. The gallery opened with a block party that included food trucks, an ice cream vendor, plus performances by Stanford Taiko and Cardinal Calypso and DJ sets that kept the atmosphere lively. The actual formal opening of the gallery doors was preceded by the call of traditional alpenhorns, played by folks in lederhosen and dirndls.

A long line of interested art lovers formed around the block and waited in the hot sun to see the inaugural exhibition, "Calder | O'Keeffe." It was a smart choice for the gallery's first show — who doesn't like the playful and airy mobiles and sculptures by Alexander Calder? And Georgia O'Keeffe is an American original, with her instantly recognizable renditions of the desert Southwest.

Combining the work of these master artists was inspired by a photograph, said Curatorial Senior Director Alexis Lowry. "I noticed a photograph of O'Keeffe's bedroom in her Ghost Ranch, New Mexico home where there was a Calder mobile hung above her bed. In another picture, it had been moved to a living room in her Abiquiu home."

Lowry said she was struck by how the artist felt the need to include the Calder piece in her

otherwise very stark decor and how his work seemed to be in "direct dialogue" with her own.

Although there is not much information about the Calder/O'Keeffe friendship, it is clear that they shared similar ideas about incorporating objects such as rocks or animal skulls found while walking in their immediate environs, a sort of moving meditation that informed their art.

In the exhibition catalog's essay, Lowry said that although the two artists were aligned with different movements (Calder with European traditions and O'Keeffe with American modernism), they supported each other when possible. O'Keeffe attended Calder's 1943 retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and Calder created a special brooch for O'Keeffe using her initials. (A copy of it can be seen in a display case with other fabulous examples of Calder's foray into jewelry-making).

Entering the gallery, the viewer is immediately treated to an untitled Calder mobile, gently swaying in the air currents and hanging at a very low level. Lowry said she was very intent on displaying the mobile at a height that would be more accessible, a feat accomplished after some negotiations with the Calder Foundation. The placement allows the visitor to move around the mobile and to see through it to the stunning O'Keeffe landscape directly behind it. "From a Day with Juan I" is boldly simple, with a large sand-colored rectangle in the center, offset by a sky-blue border. It instantly calls to mind a walk in the New Mexico desert.

Juxtapositions like this occur throughout the show, and the dialogue between the pieces is sometimes very striking. "Black Spot, No. 2" by O'Keeffe has dreamy, abstracted organic shapes in soft pastels that are bisected by a strong, diagonal black rectangle.

Calder's "Thin Black Stable" echoes the upward projection, created in sheet metal and paint.

Lowry said she wanted to include art works by O'Keeffe that people were not as familiar with, so there are several paintings that veer away from the desert scenes and more toward abstraction, like "Waterfall I" and "Pink Abstraction." For those of us who love her signature work, there is "Pelvis with the Moon — New Mexico" and "Dark Iris No. 2."

One wall is devoted to small-scale work by both artists, and their shared inclinations are clear to see. O'Keeffe's exuberant "Red Canna," in which every petal of the glorious flower is rendered in detail, is countered by Calder's "Untitled," a stabile also painted red, with wire, string and wood that has an organic lightness. Similarly, the very rudimentary-looking "Little Yellow Panel" by

See **MOBILES**, page 21

The Bard goes Broadway in ‘Something Rotten’

Woodside Musical Theatre stages show spoofing musicals, Shakespeare’s greatest hits

By Heather Zimmerman

They say you have to break a few eggs to make a musical — at least you might have to if you happen to be fame-seeking second-fiddle playwrights staging “The Tragedy of Omelette,” alongside the tap-dancing rockstar bards, unreliable soothsayers and starry-eyed Puritans that make up the realm of “Something Rotten.” Woodside Musical Theatre is presenting the musical through Oct. 17 at Woodside Performing Arts Center.

The show, with book by John O’Farrell and Karey Kirkpatrick and music and lyrics by Karey and Wayne Kirkpatrick, mashes up Will Shakespeare’s greatest hits with Broadway musical tropes, and is stuffed with in-jokes for theater fans, but lots of laughs for regular civilians as well. It opened on Broadway in 2015.

“It’s a very silly show, but it has some sincere moments in it. It’s very much a Renaissance Shakespearean style, but with modern humor. There’s actually a little bit of something for everyone in there,” said San Carlos-based actor Adam Weaver, who plays Nigel Bottom.

Nigel is one half of a playwriting duo, along with his brother Nick, who enlist soothsayer Thomas Nostradamus, (nephew of the famed forecaster), to divine the future of theater in the hopes of

finally outdoing the enduringly popular William Shakespeare.

“Nigel is the less confident (brother). He’s more nervous and overall less confident about himself, but in reality, he is actually incredibly talented when it comes to writing, and so a lot of his character throughout the show is realizing that he actually is capable of achieving great writing,” Weaver said.

Nostradamus the younger mixes up a few things as he advises the Bottom brothers, thus a certain gloomy Danish prince’s name (Hamlet) gets swapped for “omelette,” but it looks like he might be onto something when he tells the surprised theater folk of the 1590s to try singing and dancing on stage.

“He can view into the future to see what’s coming. Nick Bottom asks Nostradamus to look into what the future of theater will be, and Nostradamus finds out that it’s going to be musicals, so that leads into the great number, ‘A Musical,’” said Pacifica actor William Rhea, who plays the seer.

No one in the 16th century knows what a musical is, but the show must go on as they figure it out.

Of course, every musical also needs a good romance, and that’s where Nigel and Puritan ingenue Portia cross paths.

Actor Mia Faillace, who’s from Burlingame, describes

the character, whose father is a preacher, as “a hopeless romantic” and “very sheltered.”

Meanwhile, the Bottom brothers’ professional rival is one of the biggest ever names in showbiz, but even so, he doesn’t have his act together as much as it seems.

Alexander Reyes, from Cupertino, plays Shakespeare, who, while loving the rockstar attention he gets from everyone, is secretly insecure because he also knows that it’s a fickle business.

“Deep down, he does have good intentions, but at the same time he understands how difficult it is to be a writer. So that’s why he acts (like) ‘Oh, I’m the best. No one can touch me,’” he said.

Fittingly, this Bard tap dances, something that Reyes said was a challenge for him in working on the show, noting tap-dancing proved to be a good workout.

“I’m doing very much technical things. I’m doing technical moves that I would have otherwise not learned if it weren’t for this show,” he said.

The scope of the show is demanding and also exciting, the actors said. “Something Rotten” may have a silly tone, but the Woodside Musical Theatre cast took the work to heart.

“It’s such a beast of a show — there’s so much to be looking at all times. There’s so much choreo. There’s so much singing, and putting it all together in such a short



Courtesy Woodside Musical Theatre

With the help of Nostradamus’ nephew, some ambitious 1590s theater folk invent the musical in “Something Rotten,” at Woodside Musical Theatre.

amount of time definitely has been the most challenging, but the most rewarding,” Faillace said.

“I honestly just think it’s rarer nowadays to be able to work with such a big cast, especially in community theater spaces, the fact that this cast has all worked so hard together,” Rhea said. “Even in the off times, people are off practicing different bits of choreography or refreshing lines or doing stuff. Everyone really, really wants the show to succeed, and you can feel that in the way that they bring that energy to the room.”

Things may not have unfolded in the theater world exactly as this Nostradamus predicted, but “Something Rotten” seems to have nailed a very important role

that a musical comedy can play in the world.

“I think we’re in such an interesting time in our country and in our world, and so (audiences can) bring away some joy, getting to step away from all of that for two and a half hours, and really just bask in the fun and the joy that our company brings,” Faillace said. ■

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

“Something Rotten” runs through Oct. 17 at Woodside Performing Arts Center, 199 Churchill Ave., Woodside; \$28-\$55; woodsidetheatre.com.

MOBILES

continued from page 10

Calder is as bright, fun and uplifting as O’Keeffe’s “Jonquils No. 2.”

In the catalog essay, Lowry explains the affinity between the two artists. “Both artists, in distinct yet unexpectedly aligned ways, engaged with abstraction as a means of translating and conveying the embodied experience of the built and natural world. O’Keeffe channeled the shifting skies and lithic hills of the Southwest into distilled, vibrating imagery, condensing landscape and organic form to essential structures charged with tactile sensation. Calder, by contrast, invited the forces of the world — air currents, gravity, motion — directly into the creative process.”

The exhibition fills the main room, a large space divided into three separate display areas by moveable walls. Architect Luis Laplace retained the high ceilings, making the area seem even larger and more open. Street-level windows allow for some natural lighting, and avoid the often closed-in feeling of many museum galleries.

The 2,600 square feet of exhibition space includes a side gallery, off limits to the public, where VIP clients will be shown work by artists from the Hauser & Wirth roster.

The white walls and lack of signage encourage the viewer to focus solely on the art, but helpful desk staff are happy to provide an exhibition checklist. More information about Hauser & Wirth venues all over the world (there are a total of 18) can be found in the sleek Ursula Magazine, published quarterly by the gallery. Lucky visitors to the opening received one in a promotional swag bag.

Beatrice Shen, a native Palo Alto, has played a central role in bringing the gallery to the West Coast (there are two Hauser & Wirth galleries in Los Angeles) and will serve as director here. She shared future plans for the Palo Alto space.

“Like the Los Angeles galleries, we will have three exhibitions per year in the main space that will remain on view for around three months. We have found that this works well in the L.A. galleries and allows enough time

for people to visit the exhibitions.”

In addition to the display spaces, the gallery encompasses an adjacent bookstore that was filled from floor to ceiling with shelves of art books, most of which are from the mega gallery’s publishing arm. The gallery also has plans to offer talks, events and “educational initiatives” that will complement the exhibitions and provide outreach into the community.

Although this debut exhibition had no labels or price tags, it is clear that Hauser & Wirth is a commercial sales gallery that represents blue-chip artists whose work can sell in the millions. This outpost is here because of wealthy high-tech collectors like Larry Ellison, Laurene Powell Jobs, Komal Shah and Gaurav Garg, and Marc and Laura Arrillaga-Andreessen (all of whom were cited by ArtNews Magazine in 2025 as important Bay Area collectors). There is also, no doubt, the hope that the emerging crop of AI investors will want to collect art.

A gallery press release stated it this way: “Perched in its prime spot on the edge of the Pacific



Vivian Cromwell

Hauser & Wirth partner and executive director James Koch, left, and Calder Foundation president Alexander S. C. Rower look up at a Calder mobile during the opening day festivities of Hauser & Wirth gallery.

Rim and populated by generations of astute and ambitious patrons of the arts, the Bay Area is a place where we are proud to be creating a new space, an energy center for our artists and the community.”

Time will tell, but in the meantime more aesthetic experiences, in the form of sophisticated exhibitions by internationally known artists, can only enhance the reputation of Palo Alto as a forward-thinking, culturally aware place to live and work.

See more photos of Hauser & Wirth’s opening day at almanacnews.com/arts-culture. ■

Email Contributing Writer Sheryl Nonnenberg at nonnenberg@aol.com.

“Calder | O’Keeffe” is on view through Jan. 24 at Hauser & Wirth, 201 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto. hauserwirth.com/hauser-wirth-exhibitions/calder-okeeffe.

Food & Drink

Cooking With Persimmons

*Peninsula chefs share recipes to make
the most of persimmon season*

By Adrienne Mitchel

Persimmons are essentially a form of currency in Silicon Valley. Beginning in October, the vibrant orange fruit becomes a talking point on Nextdoor and a bartering tool to procure Facebook Marketplace finds. If you're lucky enough to have a persimmon tree, you'll often find yourself with too many persimmons to eat and may even tire of snacking on the fruit.

The two most common persimmon varieties along the Peninsula are Fuyu and Hachiya. A Fuyu looks somewhat like a mini pumpkin or tomato and can be eaten when it's firm or soft, while a Hachiya resembles a large orange acorn and must be completely ripe before eating.

The Peninsula Foodist asked four local chefs for persimmon recipes to make the most of the abundant fall fruit. David Nayfeld of Che Fico Parco Menlo and Bubbelah shares his recipe for pickled persimmons, Stan Kwon of Restaurant Gish offers a persimmon ice cream recipe, Debby Wang of Tong Sui reveals how to make persimmon coconut pudding and Julie Cablay of Wild Onion Bistro and Bar shares a caramelized persimmon upside-down cake recipe. ■

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

Pickled Persimmons

"I love persimmons, but their season is way too short. To make the most of their delicious flavor, I pickle them so I can enjoy them throughout the winter. The pickled fruit is great in salads, on cheese and salumi boards, or paired with mozzarella on a skewer as an hors d'oeuvre. The pickling liquid is just as versatile: It takes on the flavor of the persimmons and can be used in salad dressings or in a sauce to accompany whatever you're cooking." — David Nayfeld, chef-owner of Che Fico and Bubbelah in Menlo Park

Yield: 1 quart

Ingredients:

1 pound (500 grams) Fuyu persimmons, peeled, quartered and cored
¾ cup + 1 tablespoon (200 grams) white balsamic vinegar
2½ tablespoons (30 grams) sugar
1½ tablespoons (20 grams) water
1 whole star anise
½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground allspice
½ teaspoon (3 grams) black peppercorns

1½ teaspoons (7 grams) whole cloves
1½ teaspoons (7 grams) ground cinnamon
1½ teaspoons (3 grams) fennel seeds
1½ teaspoons (7 grams) kosher salt

Instructions:

Prepare the persimmons: Peel the persimmons, cut each into quarters and remove the center core. Place them in a clean heatproof container or jar.

Make the pickling liquid: Add the white balsamic, sugar, water, star anise, allspice, black peppercorns,

cloves, cinnamon, fennel seeds and salt to a saucepan.

Bring the mixture to a full boil, stirring occasionally to dissolve the sugar and salt.

Pour the hot liquid over the persimmons, making sure they are well covered.

Let the persimmons and liquid cool to room temperature.

Once cooled, chill the container over ice briefly, then transfer it to the refrigerator.

Refrigerate until well chilled and the flavors have developed, at least two hours but ideally overnight.

Persimmon Coconut Pudding

Tong Sui, a Sunnyvale-born coconut pudding chain with eight Bay Area locations (and more to come), offers a yearly persimmon series using fresh Hachiya persimmons. If you want to try making Tong Sui's signature persimmon coconut pudding at home, chef-owner Debby Wang provides the recipe at right. The base is a lightly sweet, jiggly coconut pudding, and it's topped with a persimmon puree.

Yield: 5 8-ounce jars

Ingredients:

1¼ cups (300 milliliters) coconut milk
1¼ cups (300 milliliters) fresh coconut water
½ cup (100 milliliters) coconut cream
¾ cup (200 milliliters) organic whole milk
¼ cup (50 grams) organic cane sugar
1 tablespoon (10 grams) agar agar
Hachiya persimmon puree, for topping

Instructions:

Prepare the persimmon purée using fully ripe, very soft Hachiya persimmons. Remove the stems and skin, scoop out the flesh and blend until completely smooth. Refrigerate until needed.

Mix the dry ingredients. Thoroughly mix the

cane sugar and agar agar together in a separate bowl. This helps distribute the agar evenly and reduces clumping.

Add coconut milk, fresh coconut water, coconut cream and whole milk to a pot. Whisk until combined.

Gradually whisk the sugar-and-agar mixture into the liquid until evenly dispersed. Heat over medium heat, stirring regularly.

Bring to a gentle full boil. Once boiling, continue cooking for approximately 1-2 minutes, stirring continuously to completely dissolve and activate the agar.

Remove from heat and stir well. Pour



Courtesy Tong Sui.

Persimmon coconut pudding
from Tong Sui.

Continued on next page

Persimmon Ice Cream

“My grandmother’s hometown is known for its chestnuts and persimmons, and my fondest childhood memories of visiting her are closely tied to this fruit. Every autumn, her town transforms into a stunning landscape of gold and amber, dotted with bright orange persimmons. During the harvest, she would save perfectly ripened persimmons for me and dry them for winter snacks. Even in the summer, she kept persimmons in the freezer so I could enjoy them as a sweet, cold treat.

“My favorite aspect of persimmon season is how humble yet generous this fruit

is. Persimmons are a true symbol of abundance. I created this dessert at Restaurant Gish to share these cherished memories and stories with our guests.” — *Stan Kwon, chef-owner of Restaurant Gish in Santa Clara*

Note: This recipe calls for both dried persimmon (for the ice cream) and hongsi persimmon (for the sauce). Hongsi persimmon is a Korean term used to describe a fully ripened persimmon that’s soft, sweet and a deep red-orange color.

Ingredients:

For the persimmon creme anglaise:

- 1¼ cups (300 grams) whole milk
 - 1¼ cups (300 grams) heavy cream
 - 1 vanilla bean
 - 1 teaspoon (5 grams) salt
 - 1 cup (200 grams) sugar
 - 5 (90 grams) egg yolks
 - ⅓ cup (50 grams) dried persimmon
 - ¼ cup (50 grams) cognac
 - ½ cup (100 grams) water
 - ½ cinnamon stick
 - 1 star anise
- For the persimmon sauce:
- 2 hongsi persimmons (see note)
 - 2 teaspoons (10 grams) lemon juice

Instructions:

Combine cream and milk in a pot. Cut vanilla bean lengthwise and scrape the inside of the bean. Add both scraped vanilla and shell into the milk mixture. Bring it to a simmer.

Cream egg yolk, sugar and salt together until the mixture becomes light in color.

When the milk mixture reaches around 180°F, carefully add the egg yolk mixture while constantly whisking.

Continue whisking until the mixture (creme anglaise) reaches 180°F again. Pick out and discard the vanilla bean shell. Transfer mixture to a container and let it chill overnight.

Dice the dried persimmon and soak it into cognac, water, cinnamon and star anise overnight. The next day, pick out the cinnamon and star anise, then blend the dried persimmon and liquid.

Combine creme anglaise and dried persimmon puree and churn in the ice cream maker.

Peel hongsi persimmons and add lemon juice to taste.

To serve: Spoon hongsi sauce over a scoop of ice cream. Serve with a slice of go



Ice cream with persimmon sauce at Restaurant Gish in Santa Clara. Photo by Seeger Gray.

Continued from previous page

approximately 175-180 milliliters (about 6 ounces) of pudding mixture into each 8-ounce jar. You should get approximately five jars.

Allow jars to cool, then refrigerate for at least 2-3 hours or until completely set and cold.

Once the coconut pudding is fully set, add approximately 45-55 milliliters (1.5-2 ounces) of Hachiya persimmon purée on top of each pudding. Spread evenly to create a clean orange layer. Close the jars and keep refrigerated until serving.

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

Caramelized Persimmon Upside-Down Cake

“As for persimmons, it is one of my favorite fall fruits. It pairs well with warm spices, creamy cheeses, nuts and savory ingredients.” — *Julie Cablay, executive chef of Wild Onion Bistro and Bar in Palo Alto*

Ingredients:

- 8 tablespoons (113 grams) unsalted butter
- 1 cup + 2 tablespoons (362 grams) maple syrup
- 1½ cups (180 grams) flour
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) baking powder
- ½ teaspoon (3 grams) baking soda
- ½ teaspoon (3 grams) salt
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon (0.5 gram) ground nutmeg
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 1 large egg yolk, room temperature
- ⅓ cup (157 grams) buttermilk
- ½ cup (50 grams) chopped roasted pecans
- 2 ripe Fuyu persimmons, cut into slices ¼ of an inch thick

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

Over low heat on the stovetop, melt 2 tablespoons of butter and 2 tablespoons of maple syrup in a 10-inch skillet. It should not get hot or bubbly. Remove the pan from heat.

In a bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and

nutmeg. Set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat the remaining 6 tablespoons of butter and 1 cup of maple syrup over medium low until they are thoroughly combined, about 2 minutes. Scrape down the bowl with a spatula, add in the egg and egg yolk, and beat for another minute.

Add in half the flour mixture and beat for 10 seconds. Add in the buttermilk and beat for 10 seconds more. Add in the rest of the flour mixture, beat for 10 seconds, scrape down the bowl and beat for 20 seconds more.

Stir in the pecans, scraping down the bowl in the process.

Take the pan and swirl the butter-syrup mixture to make sure the sides and bottom of the pan are thoroughly coated, taking care if the pan is still hot. Pour the mixture into a 10-inch cake pan. Set one slice of persimmon in the middle of the pan, then layer persimmons in outward-moving concentric circles, overlapping them as necessary to cover the bottom of the pan completely.

Pour the batter over the fruit and smooth out the surface. Bake on the center rack for 45-50 minutes, rotating the pan about 20 minutes into baking. The cake will brown slightly and is done when it tests clean in the middle.

Remove pan from the oven. Allow it to cool until it can be handled safely without oven mitts (anywhere from 20 minutes to an hour or more).

Using a thin butter knife or an icing spatula, gently loosen the sides of the cake. Place a large serving plate inverted on top of the pan. Bracing the plate against the pan with one hand, flip the cake over and out of the pan and onto the plate. If there is another set of hands to help with the heavy pan, all the better.

Allow the cake to finish cooling on the plate. While the cake is cooling, make the maple cream. Whip the cream, maple syrup and cinnamon together to form soft peaks. Keep refrigerated until the cake is ready to serve.

Serve slices of cake warm with big dollops of maple cream.



269 Oak Grove Avenue, Atherton



NEW LISTING



ADU Cottage

Lindenwood Estate with Resort Grounds & Luxury ADU Cottage

Prestigious Lindenwood location with a gated circular driveway
English Modern manor with elegant architectural detailing
Beautifully landscaped grounds with lawns and mature trees
Gracious formal living and dining rooms with fine hardwood floors
Gourmet kitchen with dual marble islands and premium appliances
Luxurious primary suite with private balcony and spa-inspired bath
Main-level office, wellness room, and guest accommodations
Spacious upstairs family lounge with fireplace and balcony
Detached luxury ADU with full kitchen, media lounge, and glass atrium ceiling
Resort grounds with pool, spa, putting green, and expansive recreation terrace
Versatile outdoor recreation area for pickleball, tennis, and basketball
Control4 automation, two staircases, new Class A fire-rated roof, and attached 3-car garage

7
BEDS

8.5
BATHS

8,322
TOTAL SQ FT

1.001
ACRE LOT

\$15,000,000

269OakGrove.com



Private showing available via email request



CITRON

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#2 Small Team SILICON VALLEY, 2026
#8 Small Team CALIFORNIA, 2026
\$3B+ SOLD

COMPASS