The Almanac

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Booze, ballots and an uncertain future for downtown Menlo Park

Neither side could immediately claim victory in measure that mandates voter approval for parking lot development

By Arden Margulis

Election night results show Menlo Park's Measure P — which would require voter approval to redevelop eight city-owned downtown parking lots — trailing by more than 300 votes, with 47.8% in favor (3,474 votes) to 52.2% against (3,799 votes) on election night.

The measure grew out of a citizens' initiative campaign by Save Downtown Menlo, a group of business owners and residents opposed to the city's plan to build affordable housing and parking garages on three downtown parking lots, saying it would devastate the business community.

Menlo Together, in partnership with the Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo, organized the "No on P" campaign around the slogan "Downtown needs people. People need homes."

With many votes still to be counted, neither side is claiming victory. The election night results include all in-person ballots and mail-in ballots received by Oct. 30. Results from mail-in ballots received after Oct. 30 will be released Nov. 5.

"While it is too soon to say whether Measure P passed, this process has shown that the people of Menlo Park care deeply about their downtown," Measure P proponent Alex Beltramo said in an election night statement. "Everyone is doing what they believe is right. Whatever the outcome of Measure P, we hope that everyone will treat each other as what we are: neighbors."

After seeing earlier wins by national Democrats, the crowd sipping margaritas and beer at the "No on P" election night party at Mama Coco's was optimistic ahead of the first release of Menlo Park results after 8 p.m.

Then the mood shifted, not because Measure P was winning — the first results had Measure P at 47.9%, short of passing by 232 votes — but because Menlo Park voters had previously handily defeated two previous citizens' initiatives that would block development.

On top of many of the seasoned advocates' minds was Measure V — decisively rejected by 61.8% of voters in 2022 — the citizen's initiative to require a citywide vote on zoning changes to single-family areas as a way to block an affordable teacher housing development near Flood Park.



Karina Patel

Alex Beltramo, one of the main proponents of Measure P, talks with community members at the Yes on Measure P watch party at Dutch Goose in Menlo Park on Tuesday, Nov. 3.

"I'm frustrated we keep having to do this," Lydia Lee said before the results came in.

But the Measure P opponents still had a lot to celebrate.

"I'm really proud of everyone who has come together to support housing in the city," housing advocate Will Oursler said, who estimated that members of the "No on P" campaign spoke with 15% of the electorate and knocked on almost every door.

"A lot of new people came together," said Karen Grove, who

See **MEASURE P,** *page 17*

Portola Valley Measure N is headed for approval

Charter town initiative allows town to institute a property transfer tax to boost its revenues

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Measure N, Portola Valley's charter town initiative, appears to be headed for approval. Early results show that it is leading with a 63% yes vote in the final election night tally, while no votes are trailing with 37%.

The Town Council placed Measure N on the ballot to decide whether Portola Valley would become a charter town and authorize a real property transfer tax. It will establish a tax of $10 per $1,000 of a property's sale price.

"It's excellent news," said Mayor Craig Taylor. "I'm pleased it's ahead. It definitely shows that there's a deep love for Portola Valley from the residents and it's an opportunity to get our financial situation in order."

He explained that the town is currently facing a $700,000 annual deficit that is projected to grow. If the measure passes, "the hard work is to make sure we spend the money wisely and we spend it in the right places," Taylor said.

The Town Council unanimously voted to place the local funding measure on the Nov. 3 ballot in hopes of boosting the town's revenue in the midst of an ongoing budget deficit.

Town staff have clarified that becoming a charter town does not negatively impact Portola Valley's autonomy, but it does allow the town to establish a locally controlled funding source while preventing San Mateo County from taking over the town's zoning and planning services.

The election night results reflect all vote-center ballots but only vote-by-mail ballots received by Oct. 30. Results from mail-in ballots received after Oct. 30 will start to be released daily on Nov. 5, which is after The Almanac's print deadline. Ballots postmarked by election day must arrive by Nov. 10 to be counted.

If Measure N passes with a majority of votes, the funds from the real property transfer tax would be allocated toward townwide maintenance needs on storm drains, vegetation management, wildfire prevention and maintaining its level of police services from the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office. ■

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

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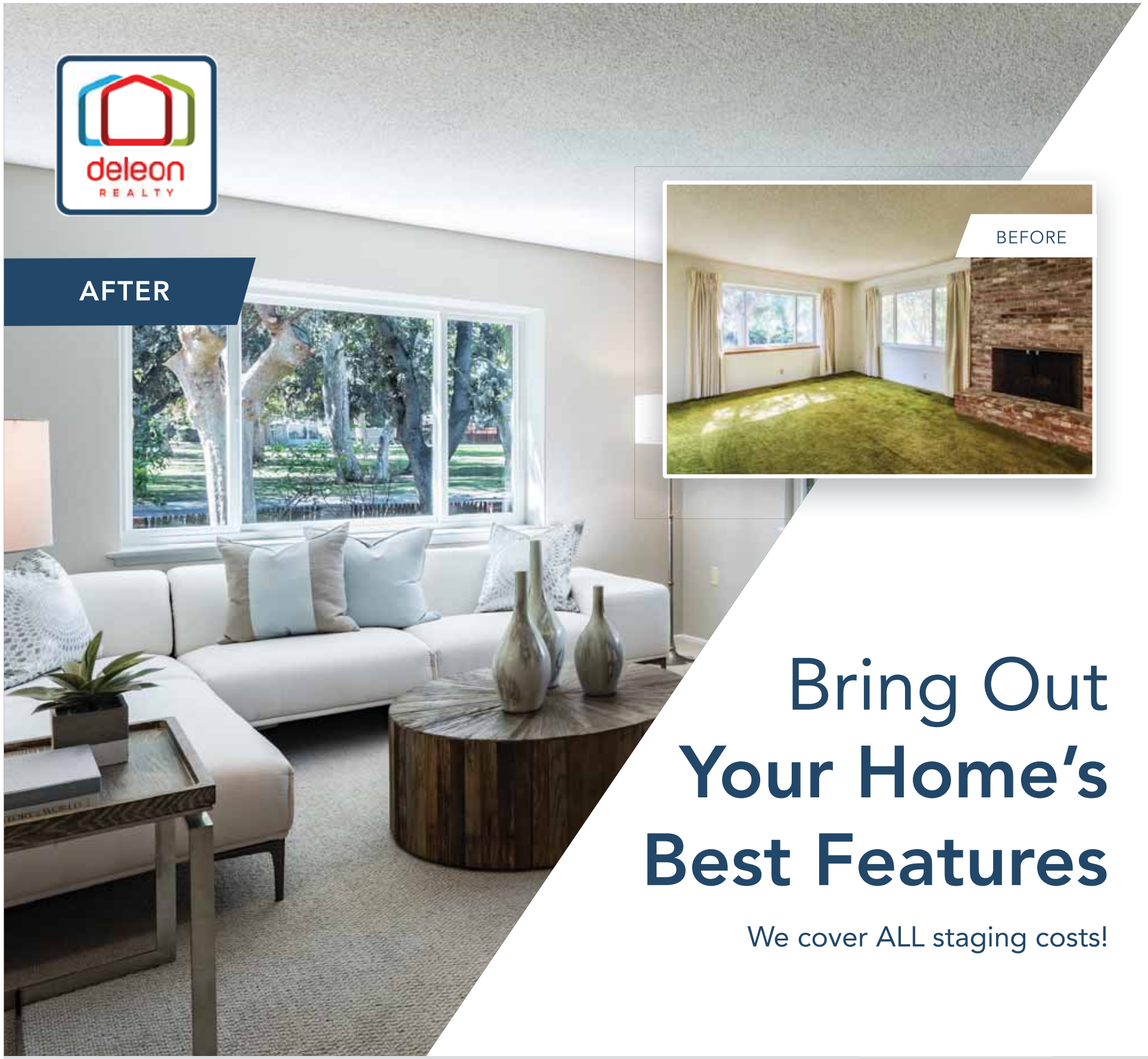
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Visit The Almanac's website for initial election results of other local races and measures, which will be updated over the next several days.



Michael Molcsan

Sarah Manrao, 16, opens a gate for her horse, Bling, on Glencrag Way in Woodside on July 20.

Woodside neighbors' dispute over horse permit inspires town to take new look at its equestrian rules

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

A long-running dispute between neighbors about the number of horses on a half-acre property could lead to a positive change for Woodside's backyard barns.

On Oct. 28, the Woodside Town Council allowed Glencrag Way resident Munish Manrao to keep his horses on his property by unanimously denying his neighbor's appeal, which asked the town to take away a stable exception.

Woodside municipal code requires a minimum of 1-acre of land for two horses on a property, requiring Manrao to get an exception for his 0.45-acre home. It also notes that stable exceptions are not transferable when a property changes hands.

Manrao had been boarding his palomino horse Bling on his property for three years under the former homeowner's stable exception. He wasn't aware that stable permits were not transferable until his neighbor brought them up, he told The Almanac previously.

It wasn't until he applied for a stable exception for his second horse Billie, that Manrao said he uncovered the hidden issues behind Woodside's equestrian codes.

His neighbor and appellant, John Clark, said he appealed

See **HORSE PERMIT,** *page 16*

Menlo Park Council: Tight race between Combs and Velagapudi in District 2

By Arden Margulis



Drew Combs



Vamsi Velagapudi

Incumbent Drew Combs is neck-and-neck with Vamsi Velagapudi for the District 2 seat on the Menlo Park City Council, according to election night results released in the early hours of Wednesday, Nov. 4.

Velagapudi had 50.3% (721 votes) to Combs' 49.7% (712 votes), a lead of nine votes.

Combs, 49, has represented District 2 — which includes the Willows, Flood Triangle, and Lorelei Manor neighborhoods — for the past eight years, after he unseated two-term incumbent Kirsten Keith in 2018.

"It's close," Combs said. "We'll see whether it stays close or whether a gap begins to emerge between me and Vamsi."

"I'll have more evolved thoughts as it becomes more clear the situation we are dealing with... We have probably another 1,400 or so votes that are out there in this race," Combs added.

Velagapudi did not respond to requests for comment on the tight race.

The initial results only reflect vote-by-mail ballots received by Oct. 30. Throughout the night, the San Mateo County Elections Office released vote center ballots hourly until the wee hours of Wednesday. Results from mail-in ballots received after Oct. 30 will start to be released daily on Nov. 5. Ballots postmarked by election day must arrive by Nov. 10 to be counted.

As Menlo Park confronts a structural deficit, a controversial skyscraper proposal at the former Sunset Magazine campus and challenging state housing mandates, Velagapudi, 47, has pitched himself as a fresh voice for District 2. A retired consultant, he said his experience working with organizations around the globe would help him build consensus and shape council discussions. He also wants to reform the city's business tax and work more collaboratively with large companies based in the city.

Combs, a compliance director at Meta, said he sought reelection to continue bringing pragmatic, transparent leadership to the city. He cited the Willow Oaks Park remodel and safety improvements to Coleman Avenue as examples of how he has delivered for District 2.

Velagapudi said that Combs contributed to delays in certifying

See **DISTRICT 2,** *page 15*

Late influx of ballots slows down San Mateo County election count

Plenty of votes still to count; winners in close races may take several days to identify

By Arden Margulis

San Mateo County voters may have to wait several more days for answers in close races after an influx of mail ballots and ballots with unclear markings slowed down the election-night count.

The county's election night results, finalized at 2 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 4, included all votes cast at vote centers and mail ballots received through Oct. 30, rather than Nov. 1 as expected. Assistant Chief Elections Officer Jim Irizarry said that the volume of ballots arriving in the final days, combined with the need for additional review of some ballots, slowed processing.

The count left two close contests unresolved in Menlo Park on Wednesday. Measure P, which would require voter approval for changes to downtown parking lots, was trailing by more than 300 votes, with 47.8% in favor and 52.2% opposed.

The race for Menlo Park City Council District 4 was even closer. Challenger Vamsi Velagapudi led incumbent Drew Combs by nine votes, 721 to 712, erasing Combs' narrow lead earlier in the evening.

See **BALLOTS,** *page 18*



Seeger Gray

Voters check in at a voting center at the Belle Haven Community Campus in Menlo Park on Election Day on Nov. 3.

Wonman Lee has decisive lead in election for Menlo Park City Council District 1

By Arden Margulis

Wonman Lee has a significant lead over James Rohr in the Menlo Park City Council District 1 race, according to election night results released by 2 a.m., Nov. 4.

Lee leads with 74.5%, (510 votes), compared with Rohr's 25.6% (175 votes).



Wonman Lee



James Rohr

Lee, a software engineer who serves on the city's Parks and Recreation Commission, and Rohr, a retired cybersecurity professional, are vying to replace Councilmember Cecilia Taylor in District 1, which includes the Belle Haven and Bayfront neighborhoods. Taylor endorsed Rohr.

"Honestly, when I'm looking at it, it's still up for grabs, and we don't know yet," Rohr said on election night. Lee also said that he was still evaluating the early results.

"Thank you to everyone in District 1 who voted. I'm honored by your trust," Lee said. "There are still votes to be counted, so I want to wait until every last one is counted before giving a full statement."

The results released so far include all in-person ballots but only vote-by-mail ballots received by the San Mateo County Elections Office by Oct. 30. Mail-in ballots postmarked by Election Day must arrive by Nov. 10 to be counted and will be released daily starting Nov. 5.

The results for only 685 votes among the 3,297 registered voters in District 1 have been released so far.

District 1 is one of three Menlo Park districts electing a City Council representative this year. Council members in the city's five districts serve four-year terms that begin in December, after the vote is certified. Newly elected candidates are scheduled to be sworn in at City Council Chambers on Dec. 8.

Both Lee and Rohr said they want to ensure that Belle Haven gets a full-service grocery store and a pharmacy.

Lee supports increased development citywide, especially near transit. Rohr, on the other hand, does not want additional multifamily housing built in Belle Haven and wants to ensure new development does not displace longtime Belle Haven residents in single-family homes. He also wants the city to increase legal and financial support for renters

Both candidates feel that Menlo Park does not distribute resources fairly across all five districts. ■

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

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Laura Melahn takes a commanding lead for Menlo Park City Council District 4

By Arden Margulis

Laura Melahn has a significant lead over Charlotte Reed in the Menlo Park City Council District 4 race, according to the election night tally released at 2 a.m. Wednesday.



Laura Melahn

Melahn leads with 968 votes, or 63.7%, compared with Reed's 552 votes, or 36.3%.

Reed, a singer and communications professional, is running against Melahn, a venture capitalist and finance and audit commissioner, to replace Mayor Betsy Nash as the representative for District 4, which includes Allied Arts, downtown Menlo Park and parts of central Menlo Park.

The initial election night results include all in-person votes but only vote-by-mail ballots received by Oct. 30. It may take several days to determine the winner because vote-by-mail ballots postmarked by Election Day can be received through Nov. 10.

"The results are still coming in, but no matter the final outcome, I feel so proud of this movement that we created with our campaign, and I don't think that energy ends tonight," Reed said in an interview shortly after 8 p.m.

Melahn had a measured reaction to her lead, given how early it is the vote tabulation process.

"Ballots are still being counted, and I'll let the county do its job. Whatever the result, I had a blast," Melahn said.

District 4 has 4,505 registered voters. Voters in Districts 1 and 2 are also electing City Council representatives.

Reed said she is running to unify Menlo Park after a divisive fight over building affordable housing on three downtown parking lots. Reed supports the plan, which more than 150 downtown businesses oppose.

Melahn has put forward an alternative proposal to meet Menlo Park's affordable housing mandates without using the city-owned parking lots. Her plan would have the city subsidize affordable housing at two proposed projects: one at the former headquarters of SRI International and another at the former U.S. Geological Survey campus.

Melahn said the parking lot development, which needs tens of millions of dollars in additional city funding to cover the cost of replacement parking, is not viable and that the city needs to change course to stay on track with housing production. Melahn's proposal would also require significant city funding.

Also on the ballot is Measure P, which would require voter approval to repurpose any of the eight downtown parking lots. Save Downtown Menlo, a group of residents and businesses opposed to the housing plan, placed the measure on the ballot.

Reed opposes Measure P and said it threatens the city's ability to comply with state law. Melahn is the only council candidate in all the three districts who did not take a position on it, instead saying she was "Team Menlo Park." Melahn was endorsed by Save Downtown Menlo. ■

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

Menlo Park's mayor reaches out to AG Bonta a third time, seeking meeting over Willow Road high-rises

No reply to mayor's previous outreach attempts over builder's remedy mega-project

By Hannah Bensen

Menlo Park Mayor Betsy Nash isn't giving up on state Attorney General Rob Bonta. On Oct. 29, she sent a third letter inviting him to visit 80 Willow Road and learn more about the controversial mega-project.

Nash's letter is the latest effort to sway Bonta's hardline approach to Menlo Park's processing of the development application, in which the state accused the city of violating state housing law in a July 29 letter.

Nash sent the letter to Bonta and three staffers on Oct. 29, and said she had not heard back as of Monday evening, Nov. 2. She also received no reply to her previous two invitations to visit the site, which she sent to Bonta on Oct. 16 and Aug. 25. Nash struck a similar tone in her latest letter.

"We are deeply disappointed that your office never asked the city about the background of the development application, and met with the city for only one hour just the day before sending the July 29 letter," she wrote. "The city believes it has processed the application in accordance with all applicable state laws."

The Attorney General's office did not reply to a request for comment by press time.

The development at 80 Willow Road, known by its developer as Willow Park, would include a 130-room hotel, more than 300,000 square feet of office space, 665 housing units, a preschool, retail space and buildings as high as 39 stories, or 458 feet tall. It would replace the former Sunset Magazine campus on the Palo Alto border.



Rendering courtesy N17

California Attorney General Rob Bonta accused the city of Menlo Park of violating state law by delaying the Willow Park development at 80 Willow Road.

The Attorney General's office July 29 letter said Menlo Park likely violated state housing laws during the project's application process by deeming the project ineligible for streamlined approval and for builder's remedy protections, among other alleged violations.

Since then, N17, the project's San Francisco-based developer, has filed a lawsuit against Menlo Park using a similar legal rationale as that of the Attorney General's office. Menlo Park officials have repeatedly maintained that the city complied with state housing law in a lengthy response letter refuting the allegations, at City Council meetings and in all three of Nash's letters.

Nash's Oct. 29 letter says the city has not received any communication from the attorney general's office except for a reply to a city-initiated public records inquiry. The city's Sept. 24 public records act request asks the state Department of Justice for records that match search terms for 25 people and entities connected to 80 Willow Road. The names will be familiar to Almanac readers

See **HIGH RISES,** *page 16*

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Two incumbents and one newcomer in line for seats on Menlo Park school board in early returns

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

The last results posted on election night for Menlo Park City School District school board show newcomer Maya Herstein and incumbents Sherwin Chen and Jed Scolnick leading the race to fill three open seats, with Andrew Barnes trailing by hundreds of votes.

As of 2 a.m. Wednesday morning, Herstein received 3,700 votes, or 30.1%, Chen had 3,294 votes, or 26.8% and Scolnick had 3,038 votes or 24.7%, while Barnes received 2,274 votes, or 18.5%.

"I'm honored to have received so much support from MPCSD voters so far," said Herstein. "I'm looking forward to seeing the rest of the results come in. I'm hopeful that I get the opportunity to serve this wonderful community."

Herstein is the parent of three students in the Menlo Park City School District. She has served on the district's Local Control and Accountability Plan committee, co-chaired Hillview's service team and volunteered with the Parent Teacher Organization.

Her priorities for the school board include student safety, academic excellence, responsible budgeting and support for teachers, according to her candidate statement.

Chen is seeking reelection to his third term. He is the parent of two MPCSD graduates, a retired finance professional and a Menlo Park resident for over 20 years. He thanked voters in the school district for their support and said he looks forward to working with the community if he is elected.

Since being elected in 2018, Chen said he has been involved in the students' return to campus during the COVID-19 pandemic, ending years of budget deficits and introducing a parcel tax that stabilized district finances.

Chen said he aims to strengthen academic excellence, student well-being, fiscal discipline, as well as completing campus-wide construction projects on time and on budget.

Scolnick previously told The Almanac that he hopes to continue working with the district to deliver Measure U-funded projects transparently, protect long-term financial health and address declining enrollment in the district.

During his campaign, Scolnick told The Almanac that he was inspired to serve another term to provide "steady leadership." Throughout his first term, he

See **SCHOOL BOARD,** *page 18*

Amy Koo and Michael Dekshenieks poised to prevail in Sequoia races

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

With two seats up for grabs on the Sequoia Union High School District school board, incumbent Amy Koo is leading the race for the Area A seat by a landslide against her opponent Alon Shiran. Michael Dekshenieks, who is running against an incumbent who dropped out of the race, appears to have a lock on the Area D seat.

Area A includes Redwood Shores, Belmont, San Carlos and parts of Redwood City. Area D covers central Menlo Park, North Fair Oaks and Atherton.

The last results released on election night showed that Koo had 5,545 votes, or 64.25%, while Shiran has received 3,086 votes, or 35.75%. Dekshenieks received 5,840 votes, or 89.34%. Sathvik Nori, who dropped out of the Area D race and endorsed Dekshenieks in August, received 697 votes, 9.7%.

Koo told The Almanac that she feels good about the early election night results. She said she was knocking on doors up until the day before the election and was hopeful about the voters' support.

As she heads toward another term, Koo said she looks forward to initiating district-wide artificial intelligence policies, evaluating cellphone bans and ensuring every student is ready to graduate with their future goals in place.

Koo is the parent of two Sequoia Union High School District students and was first elected to the school board in 2022. She told The Almanac that her priorities for her next term remain the same: Improving communication and operational and fiscal responsibility, recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers and creating a safe and inclusive environment.

Shiran said he entered the race hoping to serve the high school district that his three children will eventually attend. His goals are to make changes that will increase opportunities and academic success for students.

Shiran's priorities are restoring academic excellence with honors and advanced courses;

See **SEQUOIA,** *page 10*

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Dan Druker and Lyle Weaver elected to Woodside Town Council

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Woodside residents living in Districts 2 and 3 will have new representatives on the Town Council. In an uncontested race, Lyle Weaver and Dan Druker were elected to serve the next four years on the council, replacing Mayor Brian Dombkowski and Councilmember Dick Brown on the dais.

The town decided to continue with the election despite there being two candidates running unopposed "because there is always a chance for a write-in candidate," said Interim Town Manager Pam Antil.

This has been a tradition since former Councilmember Chris Shaw won as a write-in candidate in 2015, making him the second person in Woodside history to do so. For this mid-term election, there was no write-in candidate.

Weaver and Druker will be sworn into their new roles as councilmembers in early December, according to town officials.

Lyle Weaver

Weaver was elected to the District 2 seat, succeeding Dombkowski, who has served on the council for eight years. As a planning commissioner, Weaver told The Almanac hopes to apply his engineering background and logical decision-making skills to his new role on the Town Council. As a future councilmember, his focus is on transparency, he said.

"It's a great responsibility. ... My goal in this is not with any personal agenda, but to do what I think is best for the entire town," Weaver said. "I'm elected by one of five districts in Woodside, but I intend to do what I think is best for the entire town, even if it necessarily isn't the best thing for my particular district."

Over the last two months, Weaver said he has been getting out in the community to hear about residents' concerns and being transparent about his goal to do what is best for the town overall.

"Going forward, it would be good if the new council made a concerted effort to keep things as transparent as possible, and to give the residents of Woodside an assurance that they have full transparency into seeing the council in action," Weaver said.

As an active community member, Weaver said he has been tuning into Town Council meetings for many years. Looking ahead, Weaver said he is prepared for conversations about the town's automated license plate reader contract and is aware of the recent discussions around reckless driving on highways 84 and 35.

Living in the Western Hills neighborhood on a dead-end street, Weaver said emergency preparedness and evacuation is a struggle that his family faces. He would like to prioritize working with local fire agencies to increase awareness among the community on how to stay safe during wildfires, floods and other emergencies.

Dan Druker

The 14-page whistleblower report released by former Town Manager Jason Ledbetter, accusing incumbent council members of corruption and workplace hostility, has stirred up the community for months. As the town continues to navigate the contentious aftermath of the report, Druker said he wants to focus on getting positive things done for the town.

Druker, a Woodside Circulation Committee member, will be replacing Brown for the District 3 seat. Days before the election, he said he's feeling excited about joining the council.

"I have found my public service in Woodside to be really rewarding. In a small town like ours, you can really make a difference, and you can make a difference quickly," Druker

See **WOODSIDE COUNCIL,** *page 16*

KENSINGTON PLACE PRESENTS

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Assistant Clinical Professor of Neurology
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Dr. Golnaz Yadollahikhales
Assistant Professor of Neurology
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SEQUOIA

continued from page 8

fiscal discipline and transparency; offering a future-ready curriculum; and providing community engagement and accountability.

Dekshenieks is a parent of two Menlo-Atherton High School graduates and assistant coach for Menlo-Atherton High School's girl's lacrosse team. He will be replacing Sathvik Nori, a one-term incumbent who appeared on the ballot but dropped out of the race for the Area D seat and endorsed Dekshenieks in August.

In his campaign, Dekshenieks said that his priorities are improving community engagement, student safety, data-driven policymaking and financial leadership. Dekshenieks said he's been a strong advocate for restoring ninth grade honors courses and preserving academic excellence across all of SUHSD campuses.

The initial results reflect only vote-by-mail ballots received by Nov. 1. Throughout the night, the San Mateo County Elections Office will release vote center ballots hourly until all are counted. Results from mail-in ballots received after Nov. 1 will start to be released daily on Nov. 5. Ballots postmarked by election day must arrive by Nov. 10 to be counted.

Visit The Almanac's website for initial election results of other local races and measures, which will be updated over the next several days. ■

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



A Mid-Century Modern Gem in Monta Loma

2318 Jane Lane, Mountain View

3 BD | 2 BA | 1,395 SF | 5,000 SF LOT | $2,198,000

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A private entry courtyard sets the stage for this beautifully expanded three-bedroom, two-bath contemporary home in Mountain View's beloved Monta Loma neighborhood. Classic mid-century architectural elements define the light-filled interior, where a vaulted, beamed ceiling, walls of glass, a central fireplace, and thoughtfully designed open floor plan create an inviting sense of space and warmth. The beautifully remodeled kitchen features custom cabinetry, quartz countertops, Miele appliances, and an expansive center island, opening seamlessly to the great room to create an ideal setting for both everyday living and entertaining. A separate family room offers exceptional flexibility for a home office, wellness space, or playroom. Hardwood floors extend throughout, adding warmth and continuity, while the remodeled primary and hall bathrooms reflect the home's fresh, contemporary aesthetic. Nearly every main living space enjoys views of and direct access to the rear patio and beautifully cultivated garden, creating a wonderful connection between indoors and out and capturing the essence of California living. Just around the corner from Monta Loma Elementary School, the home is also conveniently close to vibrant downtown Mountain View, with its diverse collection of restaurants, shops, and amenities, as well as leading Silicon Valley employers.



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Portola Valley Town Council incumbents elected to another term

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

In an uncontested race, three incumbents will be returning to the Portola Valley Town Council for another four years. Mayor Craig Taylor and councilmembers Mary Hufty and Judith Hasko said they are committed to maintaining the town's progress toward financial stability in their new terms.

Portola Valley couldn't cancel its Town Council election because it had placed Measure N on the ballot, said Town Manager Darcy Smith.

With the town facing a structural deficit, councilmembers are relying heavily on the approval of Measure N, which establishes Portola Valley as a charter town and creates a property transfer tax to boost town revenues.

Craig Taylor



Craig Taylor

When Taylor first ran for a seat on the council in 2022, he said he noticed a lack of civility between councilmembers and the public. Over the last four years, Taylor said he's proud to see that the relationship between the council and residents has been restored and he hopes to maintain that in his next term.

"We're back to a place where we can have debates, we can disagree, but we're doing it civilly," said Taylor.

He also acknowledged the town's progress in hiring more staffers after struggling with shortages. The town appointed Town Manager Darcy Smith last summer.

While some problems have been addressed, Taylor said he remains concerned about the town's meager reserves and impact of budget cuts.

"The council has already, because of our financial situation, cut things that I find unacceptable in the long run. ... It's like owning a home," said Taylor. "You can skip your maintenance for a while, but if you keep on that path, your expenses don't get less, they get much higher because things really start to fall apart."

In 2022, Taylor's campaign focused on financial stability, wildfire preparedness, supporting transparent governance and honoring the town's commitment to open space. He said those priorities remain, however, four years ago, he wasn't aware of how deeply troubled the town's finances were.

Heading into his next term, Taylor said his primary focus is on stabilizing finances while also prioritizing public safety and wildfire preparedness.

"I'm certainly proud to serve," said Taylor. "Portola Valley is special because we've made it special, and it's intentional. The general plan talks about being family-oriented. It's fundamental at the core of what Portola Valley is, and that's reflected in our physical environment."

See **PV COUNCIL,** *page 19*

County voters back Measure J, doubling deadline to replace officials

By Alise Maripuu /
Bay City News Service

Voters in San Mateo County signaled support for the Board of Supervisors getting extra time to figure out how to fill a seat in an elective office when it becomes vacant. Measure J, which would double the current 30 days, pulled out to a big lead in early results announced on election night, with 73.35% voting in favor to 26.65% opposed.

The preliminary results include only mail-in ballots received by Friday, Oct. 30. The next update to the vote count is set for 5 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 5, according to the San Mateo County Elections Office.

Currently, whenever a vacancy occurs in an elected position, the board has 30 days to either make an appointment or call for a special election. Measure J on the Nov. 3 ballot proposed doubling the time limit to 60 days and also requiring the board to hold at least one public meeting prior to appointing someone.

The measure was placed on the ballot by the board, as 30 days may be too much of a time crunch to find qualified candidates, interview them and get public feedback if the board decides to fill a vacancy through appointment.

The board experienced the reality of the 30-day timeframe a year ago when it ousted former Sheriff Christina Corpus over misconduct and abuse of authority. Supervisors had to quickly decide whether to appoint her replacement or hold a special election.

Once the board decided to fill the vacancy through appointment, county staff and the board had to take an all-hands-on-deck approach to craft and post the job opening, identify qualified applicants, interview candidates in several rounds, and hold public meetings in a rushed process in order meet the 30-day deadline.

No opposing arguments for Measure J were submitted to the county's Elections Division. ■

This story was updated with election results by Embarcadero Media staff.

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14123Tracy.com



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ATHERTON

$29,988,000 | 5 Bd | **7.5** Bth
276Atherton.com



1037 DEL NORTE AVE
MENLO PARK

$2,595,000 | 4 Bd | **2** Bth
1037DelNorte.com



66 STEVENSON LANE
ATHERTON

$34,988,000 | 2.33 Acre Lot
66Stevenson.com



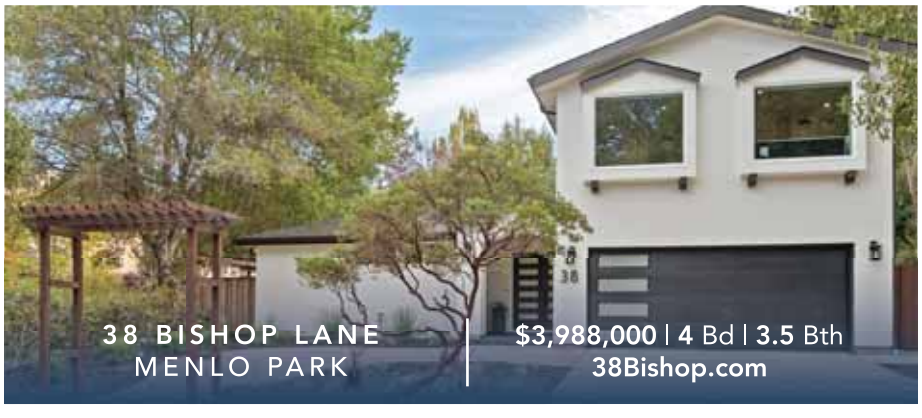
285 ESCOBAR ROAD
PORTOLA VALLEY

$5,488,000 | 5 Bd | **3.5** Bth
285Escobar.com



61 OAK HAVEN WAY
WOODSIDE

$4,588,000 | 4 Bd | **3.5** Bth
61OakHavenWay.com



38 BISHOP LANE
MENLO PARK

$3,988,000 | 4 Bd | **3.5** Bth
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County's redistricting Measure U takes commanding lead

By Alise Maripuu / Bay City News Service

San Mateo County voters are set to hand a decisive victory to Measure U, a ballot measure that would establish an independent redistricting commission charged with drawing up the boundaries for the county's five districts instead of the Board of Supervisors itself.

In early returned reported after midnight on election night, Measure U had 105,692 yes votes, or 80.6% of the vote. The preliminary results include only mail-in ballots received by Friday, Oct. 30. The next update to the vote count is set for 5 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 5, according to the San Mateo County Elections Office.

The county is divided between five supervisorial districts that change every 10 years based on population shifts after each federal census so that each supervisor represents about the same number of constituents. While the county used an advisory commission for the 2021 redrawing made up of residents that made suggestions on redrawing district maps, the board still has the final say over the district lines.

Measure U would instead give redistricting authority to an independent body.

District 1 Supervisor Jackie Speier, District 4 Supervisor Lisa Gauthier and the presidents of the League of Women Voters chapters in San Mateo County submitted an argument in support of Measure U. They argued that the supervisors' decisions on district mapping could be made to serve a personal interest since they can ultimately decide the areas and populations they represent.

"The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors has final authority over district boundaries," the argument reads. "But this is a self-interested group that has, most recently, overridden the recommendations of citizen members."

In 2021 when maps were being redrawn, the board did not adopt the recommended maps drawn up by the citizen advisory commission. At the time, some members on the board saw flaws in the proposed maps, saying the district lines were unbalanced and could result in representation on the board that does not reflect the communities a supervisor would serve.

The board instead adopted a different map with minimal changes to the prior one.

Giving an independent redistricting commission the authority over district lines could eliminate any potential conflicts of interest, Measure U supporters say.

No ballot arguments opposing Measure U were submitted to the Elections Division. ■

This story was updated with election results by Embarcadero Media staff.

TOWN OF ATHERTON

NOTICE OF ORDINANCE
ORD NO. 681
ADOPTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE TOWN OF ATHERTON

The City Council of the Town of Atherton, California, at its meeting of **October 21, 2026,** adopted Ordinance 681, an Ordinance of the City Council of the Town of Atherton, State of California, Chapter 15.40.152 making amendments to the Construction Management and Operations Plan.

The full text of the proposed Ordinance is available for review in the City Clerk's Office at 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, California 94027. For more information, you may contact the City Clerk's Office at (650) 752-0529.

The Ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days following adoption.

The Atherton City Council voted to adopt Ordinance 681 as follows:

AYES: Lane, Widmer, Lewis, DeGolia, Holland

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

/s/ Anthony Suber
City Clerk
Town of Atherton
Dated: October 22, 2026

TOWN OF ATHERTON

NOTICE OF ORDINANCE
ORD NO. 680
ADOPTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE TOWN OF ATHERTON

The City Council of the Town of Atherton, California, at its meeting of **October 21, 2026,** adopted Ordinance 680, an Ordinance of the City Council of the Town of Atherton, State of California, Chapter 5.20 making minor amendments to the soliciting and canvassing requirements applicable to creation and maintenance of a "Do Not Solicit" list.

The full text of the proposed Ordinance is available for review in the City Clerk's Office at 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, California 94027. For more information, you may contact the City Clerk's Office at (650) 752-0529.

The Ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days following adoption.

The Atherton City Council voted to adopt Ordinance 680 as follows:

AYES: Lane, Widmer, Lewis, DeGolia, Holland

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

/s/ Anthony Suber
City Clerk
Town of Atherton
Dated: October 22, 2026

Public bristles at San Mateo County's call for violent crime data on immigrants

By Miranda de Moraes



Miranda de Moraes

Hundreds of protesters took over El Camino Real on Jan. 9 to protest U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement after the shooting of Renee Good.

More than two dozen people addressed the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday to oppose the board's request for data on violent crimes in the county committed by those targeted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The speakers at the Nov. 3 meeting said producing this data could weaken the county's non-cooperation with ICE ordinance.

"This request is rooted in anti-immigrant sentiment and in the myth that the justice system, especially here in San Mateo County, is fair and blind to race and class," said Charisse Domingo, a member of Silicon Valley Debug, a nonprofit focused on community-based justice. "ICE says they're going after the most 'dangerous,' but that's exactly the opposite."

The criticism comes after the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors approved in Oct. 20 a request for data on violent crime convictions by those requested by ICE to be detained. While the decision to gather data does not change the county's ordinance, opponents worry it could. At the meeting, Corzo warned that doing so would open a "can of worms" and take "steps toward amending our existing ordinances around these reports and our non-collaboration with ICE projects."

Mueller defended the request for data, saying "there's not any ultimate decision being made" and that the board doesn't "even know" what information will be in the report.

At the meeting, supervisors heard a report on immigration detainers from the Sheriff's Office, which showed that ICE made 1,666 requests from March 2025 to September 2026 to the county jail and probation department, and that none were acted upon.

Supervisor Jackie Speier asked the Sheriff's Office to gather data on individuals whom ICE requested to detain, and how many have had criminal convictions and violent felonies, what the felonies were and whether the individual committing them was a repeat offender.

At least some of the data has already been publicly reported by the Deportation Data Project, a program at UC Berkeley and UCLA that uses public records litigation to obtain, post and analyze U.S. government immigration enforcement data.

The project found that of 754 requests between January and August 2026 made by ICE to San Mateo County jails to hold a person on a detainer or for a notification of their release date and time — six were convicted of a violent crime.

Two convictions were for a robbery, one in 2006, one in 2010; two were for aggravated assault with a weapon, one in 2024, the other against a public officer in 2022; and two were for assault involving bodily force, both in 2021.

Debate over data

During the Oct. 20 meeting, Corzo said she thought the board should wait to make decisions related to ICE data until the county sheriff and the fifth supervisor, David Canepa, were in the room.

The initial non-cooperation with ICE ordinance was enacted in 2023. At the time, Supervisor Ray Mueller was the only dissenting voice, arguing that the county should amend it to allow cooperation in cases that involve rape, murder and child molestation.

The immigration detainer report is a newer requirement that supervisors added on Dec. 2, 2025, under which the Sheriff's Office must share civil immigration detainer requests and any communications related to

See **VIOLENT CRIME,** *page 15*

Portola Valley School District superintendent will retire

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

After eight years, Portola Valley School District's Superintendent Roberta Zarea will be retiring. In an email to the community, she announced that she is leaving due to recent health developments in her family. Her last day will be on Aug. 6, 2027, after the end of the school year.

"Thank you for your trust, your friendship and your partnership over these past eight years," said Zarea. "I will forever cherish the memories we've shared and the incredible work we've accomplished together."

Zarea plans to retire after 30 years in public education. Prior to joining PVSD in 2019, she was the assistant superintendent of education services for the Saratoga Unified School District and was a principal, vice principal, coordinator of special projects and elementary school teacher in the Union School District.

Zarea was named "Superintendent of the Year" for San Mateo and San Francisco counties in 2021 by ACSA Region 5, a regional organization representing 25 Bay Area school districts.

During her tenure, the district received recognition for academic excellence. Ormondale and Corte Madera received California Distinguished School designations, and the district received several San Mateo County Kent Awards for educational innovation.

The school board also recognized Zarea's leadership in the district's early adoption of the science of reading, a research-based literacy curriculum, and the development of AI literacy policies and practices. The district was also able to finish campus upgrades for both of its campuses funded by Measure Z bonds on time and under budget, according to the school board.

"As we look to the future, the Board of Trustees has complete confidence in what lies ahead," said the school board in a letter. "Thanks to Roberta's leadership, the Portola Valley School District stands in a position of remarkable educational and fiscal strength."

Zarea told The Almanac that she hopes her successor will ideally have skills in academic program oversight, fiscal management, safety and risk management, and labor operations.

Zarea added that she looks forward to the next superintendent being resilient and steady under pressure, adaptable, financially disciplined and skilled in data-informed decision-making and coalition building. She said she hopes for a leader who engages with the community, evaluates system performance and metrics, and aligns with local partners.

In the remaining months, Zarea said her "primary focus will be supporting a thoughtful, seamless transition so our momentum continues without missing a beat."



Sadie Stinson

Superintendent Roberta Zarea will retire from Portola Valley School District on Aug. 6, 2027.

"Given the strength and reputation of our district, we are confident we will attract an outstanding successor to lead PVSD into its next chapter," the school board wrote.

The school board announced that it will begin the search for its next superintendent immediately. ■

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

VIOLENT CRIME

continued from page 14

immigration authorities quarterly.

The supervisors voted 3-1 to request additional violent crime data on Oct. 20, with Corzo dissenting and Canepa absent.

At the start of the meeting, Speier requested the report on immigration detainers be pulled from the consent agenda because she was "really quite alarmed" by its findings. She later asked Sheriff's Capt. Bill Fogarty whether any people named in ICE requests had been convicted of violent felonies. Fogarty said some have been charged with violent felonies, but not convicted.

Mueller said he wanted to see the data too and clarified that it would just involve those convicted of serious and violent felonies under the law.

California state law classifies 46 kinds of serious felonies, which include murder, rape, robbery, arson and selling methamphetamine to a minor.

Supervisors respond

This news organization asked Mueller and Corzo questions about the board's discussion on Oct. 20. Speier could not be reached for comment.

In response to the concern that the data could be used to reinforce allegations by President Donald Trump's administration that undocumented immigrants are dangerous, Mueller noted the board's efforts to protect the county's undocumented community, and that "good governance starts with having accurate, complete facts."

"We should never try to hide the truth from ourselves or our constituents," he added.

Corzo said she is concerned about the fear and harm caused by the president's so-called "deportation machine," and his focus on immigrants of color specifically.

She called the timing of the board members' request "extremely problematic and tone deaf" as it was two weeks before an election and during "a surge" in ICE presence in California. She also said she doesn't think gathering the data is a good use of the Sheriff's Office's time, and that any discussion of violent crime data should be broader, rather than focused exclusively on immigrants.

Corzo focused on what she considers to be the unfairness of "double punishment," in which an immigrant might commit the same crime as a citizen and serve the same sentence, but the citizen gets to "go home and continue to provide for their family," whereas the immigrant could get deported and leave their family without a breadwinner.

Public reaction

On Nov. 3, public commenters urged San Mateo County supervisors to rethink the request for data. Ghassan Shamieh, an immigration rights attorney who represents county residents, said, "Once we make an exception" to the non-cooperation agreement, "that line becomes a negotiation."

Paul Bocanegra, who advocates for youth in detention, said the board's request for data on violent immigrants "will be coming primarily of people of color."

"This is the community that continues to be vulnerable when we unjustly exercise certain powers," Bocanegra said. "I'm asking the board to please reaffirm its [non-cooperation] position and protect its families, all families, equally."

Rooted Together, a San Mateo County advocacy group, put out a petition calling for supervisors to rescind their request for this data.

"The focus on immigrant individuals and violent crime mirrors narratives that have been used nationally to dehumanize, stoke fear, and justify expanded immigration enforcement that has terrorized their communities," the petition stated. ■

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

DISTRICT 2

continued from page 5

the city's housing element, which caused a skyscraper to be proposed using a state loophole at 80 Willow Road, the former headquarters of Sunset Magazine. Combs said that throughout the housing element process, he repeatedly voiced concerns about lack of outreach to business owners about the city's plans to build affordable housing on three downtown parking lots.

Following certification of the housing element, business owners and residents organized in opposition to the city's plan for the parking lots. Through a citizen's initiative, they put Measure P, which would require a citywide vote on plans to redevelop all eight city-owned parking lots downtown, on the Nov. 3 ballot. Early returns show Measure P losing.

While both candidates publicly oppose Measure P, Combs received an endorsement from Yes on P. Velagapudi has criticized Combs for not advocating more strongly for the project. Combs said he advocated for a measured approach, which would have had more public support.

In addition to District 2, voters in Districts 1 and 4 are also electing their City Council representatives. Combs is the only incumbent councilmember to seek reelection. ■

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

TOWN OF ATHERTON

NOTICE OF ORDINANCE
ORD NO. 683
ADOPTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE TOWN OF ATHERTON

The City Council of the Town of Atherton, California, at its meeting of **October 21, 2026,** adopted Ordinance 683, an Ordinance of the City Council of the Town of Atherton, State of California, Chapter 15.41 making amendments to the Construction Time Limits

The full text of the proposed Ordinance is available for review in the City Clerk's Office at 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, California 94027. For more information, you may contact the City Clerk's Office at (650) 752-0529.

The Ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days following adoption.

The Atherton City Council voted to adopt Ordinance 683 as follows:

AYES: Lane, Widmer, Lewis, DeGolia, Holland

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

/s/ Anthony Suber
City Clerk
Town of Atherton
Dated: October 22, 2026

HORSE PERMIT

continued from page 5

Manrao's exception out of concern that the town is not following its own policies and allowing residents to bypass proper permitting processes. Clark called for the council to approve his appeal in accordance with the town's written codes or to formally reduce the minimum property requirements for everyone.

"Approving two horses tonight opens a can of worms that might turn out to be highly problematic," Clark said. "This precedent would effectively change the law in the town of Woodside and make Woodside Municipal Code 115 obsolete."

Manrao argued that the 1-acre rule is antiquated. Trails Committee member Rick DeBenedetti said it was developed after hillslides began to slide after winter storms between the 1960s-80s due to horses being kept in small areas and destabilizing slopes.

About a dozen members of the local equestrian community shared their support for the stable exception.

Woodside resident Maggie Mah said that there are many properties that are less than an acre that have had horses on their properties with established permits and stable exceptions. Manrao's case is not a "unique situation," she added.

Mah, who serves on the Trails Committee, added that the town also has a flawed recordkeeping process.

"The town does a lousy job of keeping track of these (stable) permits," said Mah. "We never know how many horses there are in Woodside or who has a stable permit."

Manrao said the current system creates fear in the horse community, forcing some residents to renew and maintain their stable permits even when they don't have horses, out of concern that they might lose their permit if it lapses.

The Town Council agreed that the dispute highlights underlying issues and complications with existing equestrian codes —preventing Woodside horse owners from easily keeping their equine friends on their property.

Councilmembers directed the Livestock and Equine Heritage Committee and Planning Commission to review changes that can be made to encourage more people to keep horses in Woodside.

"When I started on the council eight years ago, I was told that Woodside at one time had 800 horses or more," said Councilmember Dick Brown. "What I've been told lately (is that) we're down to 500 or less. To me, that is a disaster for a town that calls itself the home of horses."

Horses are herd animals and need to be kept with others to prevent negative impacts to their psychological wellbeing, some community members said during public comment.

"We should be rewarding horse ownership in a town that claims to promote the equestrian community, not make it difficult," said equestrian trainer Nicole Fava.

Councilmember Jenn Wall said she thinks this is an opportunity for the town to make updates and improvements to its codes with the expertise of the town's committees and Planning Commission.

"Last night was bigger than our family and two horses," said Manrao on Oct. 28. "We now have the opportunity to review and update the stable permit and transfer rules so they are better aligned with the town's general plan and support the equestrian heritage we want to preserve for future generations." ■

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

HIGH RISES

continued from page 7

who have followed the saga and include Oisín Heneghan, the Irish founder of N17; Willow Park LLC, the Delaware-based shell company to which 80 Willow Road is registered in San Mateo County records; Vitaly Yusufov, the Russian businessman with Kremlin ties who reportedly owns the property; Sunset Magazine, which was formerly headquartered on the property; and Deutsche Bank, which reportedly flagged the sale of the property to Yusufov, but later approved it.

The city's records request is currently in bureaucratic limbo, according to documents provided by city spokesperson Kendra Calvert.

In an Oct. 21 response to the city, a spokesperson for the DOJ declined to "conduct a comprehensive search for 'all' records containing any of the 25 keywords listed above over an unspecified timeframe." However, the DOJ wrote that it had commenced a "reasonable search for records" containing those search terms and anticipated to provide a response to the city by Nov. 6, 2026.

On Oct. 26, 2026, City Attorney Nira Doherty pushed back, arguing that the DOJ's decision not to conduct a comprehensive search was inconsistent with the California Public Records Act. She requested a "prompt" response to all 25 search terms, covering records held by Bonta and three other top officials in the Attorney General's Office. Doherty noted that the city was compiling records for its ongoing lawsuit with N17 and that the Attorney General's Office "plays a central role" in the litigation.

The lawsuit between Menlo Park and N17 is ongoing.

In a newsletter to community members on Oct. 31, Nash shared a timeline for the lawsuit which she specified is subject to change: N17 is expected to file its main written argument by Nov. 18, the city's written reply by Dec. 1 and the developer's final reply a week later. A court hearing is expected on Dec. 14, and the judge is expected to issue a decision in January 2027.

A ruling in N17's favor could expose the city to financial penalties, potentially totaling more than $6.6 million, in accordance with AB712, the state law Menlo Park is accused of violating.

While the Attorney General's office has stayed mum on the 80 Willow Road issue since sending the July 29 letter, a different state office weighed in on another controversial Menlo Park issue just days before the Nov. 3 election. On Oct. 30, the California Department of Housing and Community Development sent a letter to Menlo Park warning that the city would need to amend its state-approved housing plan — known as the housing element — if voters pass Measure P.

Measure P, which was on the Nov. 4 ballot, would require voter approval for major changes to eight downtown parking lots, blocking the city's current plan to lease three of the lots for affordable housing development and replacement parking.

Read Nash's Oct. 29 letter to the Attorney General's office at AlmanacNews.com. ■

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.

WOODSIDE COUNCIL

continued from page 10

said. "I'm super action-oriented, really outcome focused."

He told The Almanac that his top priorities as a council member is to push state legislators to pass a bill allowing speed cameras on highways 35 and 84 and improve recreational trails and paths for public safety.

Druker said he is also inspired by Dombkowski's efforts to engage residents in philanthropic projects to fund infrastructure improvements across Woodside. In January, the town received a donation of $2.5 million from anonymous donors to fund a beautification project on Woodside Road.

The Town Center Area Plan update, outdoor dining and supporting Woodside's equestrian culture is also at the top of his list. Druker said he's also thinking ahead about the growth of the town as the state continues to increase its mandated housing requirements. With the lack of sewers across Woodside homes, infrastructure projects are a challenge that he anticipates as higher density housing becomes necessary.

In preparation for his new role, Druker said he has been reading up on the town's municipal code, attending Town Council meetings and meeting with residents, business owners and employees to hear about what they would like to see from the council.

"There's so many positive things going on in the town. I think helping to remind people of that is also really important," said Druker, "There's been so many really great things going on in the town, and I think as we deliver more things for our residents, the noise in the background will calm down, and I think trust will come back." ■

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

Employment

The Almanac offers employment advertising.

The deadline is Sunday at 11:59 pm.

Visit AlmanacNews.com/employment_ads/.

For assistance email LegalNotices@AlmanacNews.com.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Learn how to build an owl box

The Woodside Environment and Open Space Committee is hosting an event on how to build owl boxes with guest speaker John Gallagher at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 15, at Independence Hall, 2955 Woodside Road in Woodside.

Gallagher will be guiding guests on the process of building an owl box and share about owl habitats and how they benefit in reducing the rodent population.

Portola Valley sandbag station open

The sandbag station is open at Portola Valley Town Center for residents only to prepare for winter storms and flooding. The self-serve station is first-come, first-served and is located along the southern driveway from Portola Road, across from the basketball courts. Bags, sand, funnels and shovels are provided.

More information can be found on tinyurl.com/PVsandbag. For questions call 650-851-1700 or email towncenter@portolavalley.net.

— Jennifer Yoshikoshi

Holbrook-Palmer playground reopening

Atherton will celebrate the reopening of the renovated playground at Holbrook-Palmer Park (150 Watkins Ave.) from noon to 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 14.

The event will include a ribbon-cutting ceremony, children's activities and light refreshments. Families can explore the new play structures and other upgrades, including slides, climbing equipment, shaded seating and new surfacing.

Residents can RSVP at atherton.news/HPPPlayground.

— Arden Margulis

MEASURE P

continued from page 1

is no stranger to housing advocacy in Menlo Park since founding Menlo Together in 2018. "There's a sort of happenstance that brings people with similar values and energy together."

For longtime locals, the Beltramo family name is more closely associated with its now-closed wine business than local politics. But through Save Downtown Menlo, Alex Beltramo (who declined an interview) and other residents and business owners organized a citizens' initiative that put the future of eight city-owned parking lots before voters.

Measure P grew out of opposition to affordable housing planned for three of those lots. Residents and business owners were concerned that the 345-unit housing development, while it includes replacement parking, would harm downtown Menlo Park and make it harder for local businesses to stay open. Save Downtown Menlo also has threatened a lawsuit to block the development.

Gathered in the Moroney Room of the Dutch Goose on election night, the mood of the pro-Measure P gathering was subdued. The dozen or so supporters drank beer at the local sports bar and closely watched the county's election site. For some, it was their first local campaign and questions swirled about what had been counted, and what hadn't.

Many attendees were motivated by early returns in the District 4 City Council race, which showed Laura Melahn with a sizable lead over Charlotte Reed.

While Melahn did not take a stance on Measure P, Save Downtown Menlo endorsed her and has supported her proposed housing amendment which she said offers the city a way to meet state housing mandates without building below market rate units on the downtown parking lots.

Even if Measure P fails, the city still has a long way to go before affordable housing on the parking lots becomes a reality. While Menlo Park originally did not expect to need to financially support the development beyond offering a long-term, $1 ground lease for the valuable land, the three proposals the city received from developers have funding gaps ranging from $19 million to $45 million.

In September, the Menlo Park City Council began considering how to close that gap, including through new revenue sources such as a sales tax increase, a municipal bond or special tax districts. All would require voter approval.

Grove of "No on P" said Menlo Together is ready to continue supporting the parking lot development in Menlo Park.

"We bring people together around common values, around common goals," Grove said. ■

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

Public Notices

MENLO PARK INTELLIGENCE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305061
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) MENLO PARK INTELLIGENCE , located at 31 Willow Rd, Menlo Park, CA 94025.
Registered owner(s):
THE AI AND CYBERSECURITY INSTITUTE
31 Willow Rd
Menlo Park, CA 94025
State of Incorporation/Organization: Delaware
This business is conducted by: a Corporation.
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 01, 2026.
(ALM Oct 23, 30, Nov 6 and 13, 2026)

CALIFORNIA CLEANING CREW
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305193
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) CALIFORNIA CLEANING CREW , located at 612 MAPLE AVE, SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94080.
Registered owner(s):
SEBGHATULLAH AHMADI
612 MAPLE AVE
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94080
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 19, 2026.
(ALM Oct 30, Nov 6, 13 and 20, 2026)

JILL LEE EDUCATION CONSULTING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305320
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) JILL LEE EDUCATION CONSULTING , located at 2151 Camino de los Robles, Menlo Park, CA 94025.
Registered owner(s):
JILL VICTORIA WILEY LEE
2151 Camino de los Robles
Menlo Park, CA 94025
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 07/01/2024.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 30, 2026.
(ALM Nov 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2026)

SIGONA'S FARMERS MARKET
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305241
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) SIGONA'S FARMERS MARKET , located at 2345 Middlefield Rd, Redwood City, CA 94063.
Registered owner(s):
BROTHERS PRIDE PRODUCE, INC.
2345 Middlefield Rd
Redwood City, CA 94063
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 12/27/1984.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 23, 2026.
(ALM Oct 30, Nov 6, 13 and 20, 2026)

EGC COLLECTIVE
GUSTAVE WORKS
GUSTAVE COLLECTIVE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305177
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) EGC COLLECTIVE , 2.) GUSTAVE WORKS , 3.) GUSTAVE COLLECTIVE , located at 1970 Alden St, Belmont, CA 94002.
Registered owner(s):
ERIC GUSTAVE CARL
1970 Alden St
Belmont, CA 94002
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 16, 2026.
(ALM Oct 23, 30, Nov 6 and 13, 2026)

MOMENTUM STRATEGY CONSULTING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305144
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) MOMENTUM STRATEGY CONSULTING , located at 2151 Camino de los Robles, Menlo Park, CA 94025.
Registered owner(s):
MALCOLM HOBBS
2151 Camino de los Robles
Menlo Park, CA 94025
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 01/01/2000.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 13, 2026.
(ALM Oct 30, Nov 6, 13 and 20, 2026)

ROSALIND BAKERY
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305255
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) ROSALIND BAKERY , located at 450 Manor Plaza, Pacifica, CA 94044.
Registered owner(s):
ROSALIND BAKERY LLC
450 Manor Plaza
Pacifica, CA 94044
State of Incorporation/Organization: CA
This business is conducted by: a Limited Liability Company.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/24/2017.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 26, 2026.
(ALM Nov 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2026)

LUMA MENTIS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305202
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) LUMA MENTIS , located at 626 Jefferson Av, Redwood City, CA 94063.
Registered owner(s):
ORLY EITAN
626 Jefferson Av
Redwood City, CA 94063
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 20, 2026.
(ALM Oct 30, Nov 6, 13 and 20, 2026)

DG EVENTS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305181
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) DG EVENTS , located at 1901 Kentfield Ave. , Redwood City, CA 94061.
Registered owner(s):
DEBORAH GORDON
1901 Kentfield Ave.
Redwood City, CA 94061
This business is conducted by: an Individual.
Registrant has begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 09/25/2026.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of San Mateo County on October 16, 2026.
(ALM Oct 30, Nov 6, 13 and 20, 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)

NAUGHTY GOAT BODY SOAP
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
FILE NO.: M-305180
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
1.) NAUGHTY GOAT BODY SOAP , located at 3110 Woodside Road, Woodside, CA 94062.
Registered owner(s):
FIONA MARGARET RYAN
3110 Woodside Road
Woodside, CA 94062
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 16, 2026.
(ALM Oct 23, 30, Nov 6 and 13, 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)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 26CIV06835
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Sarah Nicole Perlroth Thomson filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
SARAH NICOLE PERLROTH THOMSON to NICOLE PERLROTH THOMSON
SARA NICOLE PERLROTH to NICOLE PERLROTH THOMSON
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: 11/30/2026, 9:00am, Southern Branch of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: October 1, 2026
Stephanie G. Garratt
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Oct 23, 30, Nov 6 and 13, 2026)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Case No.: 26CIV06841
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
Petitioner: Sarah Nicole Perlroth Thomson, on minor behalf filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
HOLMES OLIVER THOMSON to HOLMES OTTO TRISTAN THOMSON
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: 11/30/2026, 9:00am, Southern Branch of the Superior Court of California, County of San Mateo located at 400 County Center, Redwood City, CA 94063.
A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
ALMANAC
Date: 10/1/2026
Stephanie G. Garratt
JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
(ALM Oct 23, 30, Nov 6 and 13, 2026)

The Almanac is adjudicated to publish in San Mateo County.

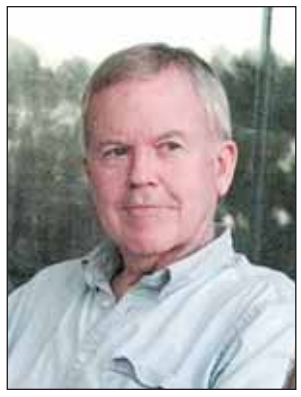
- Fictitious Business Name
- Abandonment of Fictitious Business Name
- Name Change
- Partnership Withdrawal or Dissolution
- Petition to Administer Estate - Probate Hearing
- Notice of Bulk Sale
- Legal Summons
- Trustee Sale

Visit AlmanacNews.com/legal_notices/

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

Anthony Edward Wynne

1948 - October 23, 2026



Anthony Edward "Tony" Wynne passed away peacefully in his Atherton home on October 23, 2026. Born in 1948, he was the third child of Joseph Aloysius Wynne and Barbara Whalen Wynne, then residents of San Mateo, later Palo Alto, finally Atherton. Tony lived the rest of his life within two miles of that Atherton address.

Tony's early education at St. Thomas Aquinas/St. Albert the Great school in Palo Alto was followed by four formative years at the Woodside Priory, a high school founded by Hungarian Benedictine monks, refugees of the Communist regime. He earned a BA (Major in English) in 1970 at Stanford University and received his Juris Doctor degree from the University of California Hastings College of Law in 1973. He practiced law for 16 years before entering the insurance business. He eventually acquired the agency co-founded by his father: Dorsey, Hazeltine, and Wynne. His professional journey reflected both his legal training and his entrepreneurial spirit. Beyond business pursuits, he served on the board of the Life Legal Defense Foundation for 23 years and was an active member of the Atherton Rail Committee.

Tony's Catholic faith was central to who he was and to the values he carried with him. An altar server himself, he trained others according to the Missal of 1962. He read deeply and attended conferences about the issues facing the Church. And for three decades he lived his faith in service with monthly visits to the residents of Sharon Heights Care and Rehab until it closed and then Kensington Place Memory Care, entertainment hours listed on the schedule as "Adventures with Tony."

He was passionate about family history, traveled several times to ancestral towns in Ireland, received Irish citizenship, and published a family history, "The Wynnes of Old Leighlin and Leighlinbridge." He studied Gaelic, played the banjo, polished his public speaking through Toastmasters, and was immersed in the history of the Old West. He even panned for gold. He loved horses and birds. He kept pigeons, both racing homers and rollers, for the joy of watching them fly. Among many lessons he taught his nieces and nephews was: "There are two kinds of people in the world: those who notice birds, and those who don't."

Tony had a deep appreciation for the outdoors and adventure. He loved hiking and ocean swimming, enjoying both nature and the challenges it offered. He traveled the world, to Brazil, Tahiti, and Fiji, and hitchhiked across the Australian outback, accumulating the material for tall tales - some of them almost true - with which he entertained nieces and nephews around the family beach week bonfire. He cherished old friends, Dr. David Lewis and others, and was honored to be a godfather several times over.

Preceded in death by his parents, Tony is survived by his eight siblings: John (Maxine), Joseph (Colleen), Mary, Mark, Anne Gribbin (William), Barbara Carrescia (Philip), Catherine Short (William), and Margaret – and 21 nieces and nephews, their spouses, and their children, an expanding circle for Tony's legacy of adventure, creativity, wit, and faith. May he rest in eternal peace, and may his memory be a blessing to all of us who loved him.

Tony's family wishes to express deep gratitude to Faye, Juliette, and Malia for their tender care of and affection for Tony during his last months of life.

Visitation will be held on November 9th from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at Crippen and Flynn Woodside Chapel, 400 Woodside Rd, Redwood City, 94061. Rosary at 7:00 PM.

A Requiem Mass will be celebrated on November 10th at 10:00 AM at Church of the Nativity, 210 Oak Grove Avenue, Menlo Park 94025, followed by interment at Holy Cross Cemetery in Menlo Park.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that donations may be made to Institute of Christ the King (4467 Illsley Court, San Jose, CA 95136), Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (1800 Lantana Street, Corpus Christi, TX 78407), or Church of the Nativity.

PAID OBITUARY

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Charles Troglio, 83, a Los Altos resident who was born in San Francisco and moved to Menlo Park as a child, who graduated from the University of Santa Clara with a bachelor's degree in business management, who served as a platoon sergeant in the Army National Guard and then spent 35 years at the California Department of Transportation, and who loved to travel the world, work on his yard and restore vehicles, died on June 30.

Marjorie Trainer, 86, a San Francisco native who lived in San Carlos and Redwood City, who graduated from University of California, Berkeley, with a bachelor's degree in education, who taught math and art in public schools and later transitioned to training new math teachers, and who retired in Paradise, California, died on Oc. 22.

Mary Martinson, 81, a Palo Alto resident who was grew up in Santa Cruz, who attended college at the College of Notre Dame in Belmont, then taught at Bayside Middle school for 32 years, who volunteered at the Palo Alto Food Kitchen and at St. Albert the Great Church, who loved sports and closely followed Stanford University women's basketball, the 49ers and, more recently, the Valkyries, died on Oct. 14.

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



Charles David Troglio

October 30, 1942 – June 30, 2026

Charles David Troglio and his twin sister, Gloria Troglio Walker were born in San Francisco on October 30, 1942. The family moved to Menlo Park in 1947 and were part of the Italian American community. Their father worked in construction and Charlie learned trade skills and the value of an honest day's labor early on, working full time during his summer breaks from the age of 13. In 1964, he graduated from the University of Santa Clara with a BS in Business Management, but with the Vietnam War at peak, he enlisted in the Army National Guard, becoming Platoon sergeant over the 6 years he served. In 1965 he tested to work for the California Department of Transportation where his career spanned 35 year and his colleagues deemed him "Negotiator Emeritus." Though he loved to travel the world with his wife, Doni, his home base remained the South Bay throughout his life, including 48 years in his Los Altos home until his passing June 30, 2026. His yard was his passion, with blooming plants always refreshed because, "I love the color." His garage was a work space where he restored multiple vehicles, including the 1961 Ford Truck his father drove for work. With the early death of his father, Charlie became the head of his family at 24 years old and fully understood that responsibility, assuring that his mother with Alzheimer's and his wife with ALS received the best care and attention. Gloria passed unexpectedly on December 27, 2023 and Charlie was forever changed after enduring each successive family loss. He was devoted to his Silky Terrier, Bella, loved red wine in the company of friends, and didn't tolerate fools. Please visit and add to his online memorial page at Charles-David-Troglio.ForeverMissed.com

A future celebration of life will be posted via Charles-David-Troglio.ForeverMissed.com.

PAID OBITUARY

SCHOOL BOARD

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said he was proud of his work in pioneering San Mateo County's first districtwide e-bike safety policy, ensuring oversight of Measure U-funded bond projects and representing MPCSD in labor negotiations while supporting teachers and maintaining a stable budget.

Barnes entered the race hoping to support the district that supported his son, who is a former Laurel School and Hillview Middle School graduate. He is the chairman of the Citizen's Bond Oversight Committee for Measure U and currently works for the County of Santa Clara's Facilities and Fleet Department, managing acquisitions and building improvements.

Barnes' campaign focused on pushing forward Measure U-funded infrastructure projects and helping the district with development projects across MPCSD campuses. ■

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

BALLOTS

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The county's next results update is expected Thursday, Nov. 5, after The Almanac's Wednesday afternoon press deadline. Irizarry said the county would not release results Wednesday since election workers worked until 2 a.m. He did not know how many ballots would be included in Thursday's update.

Longtime election workers described the flood of ballots in the finals days of the election as the largest they had seen, according to Irizarry.

The count was also slowed by adjudication, a process in which two workers examine unclear markings to determine a voter's intent. Ballots with an extra bubble filled in, a race crossed out or other marks are set aside for review before they can be counted, Irizarry said.

The workload also strained the county's computer system. Irizarry said the volume nearly overwhelmed some servers used for adjudication, though the issue was resolved by the end of election night. ■

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

express
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PV COUNCIL

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Mary Hufty

Hufty said she was inspired to run for another term to keep up the town's progress and direct Portola Valley in the right direction. She said she believes it's important to set up the town for long term fiscal sustainability.



Mary Hufty

"I have a deep commitment to our current staff and to our town. We've gone this far to clear our records to get a certain amount of financial visibility and accessibility, and we have actually got the mechanisms in place to turn the ship around," said Hufty.

In order to address other town-wide issues such as building affordable housing and infrastructure improvements, finances need to be in order, she added.

"I'm just hoping that in these next four years we can get enough momentum so that the ball will keep rolling. But everybody's going to have to keep pushing at it," Hufty said.

Emergency preparedness is another key concern in the community, which Hufty said also requires funding. She emphasized the need for the town to sustain an emergency reserve.

"The things that you have to have money to do are infrastructure, and if your culverts are not clear and they're all broken down and rotted out, you are not going to be safe in either an earthquake or a flood because they are cumulative," Hufty said. "We have to be self-reliant because nobody's going to come save us."

Hufty said she is driven by the challenges she faces every day, meeting people and building community, and she encourages the community to keep volunteering to support the town.

Judith Hasko

While Hasko said there is value in new voices and perspectives on the council, she also acknowledged that the town's current circumstances would be difficult and "unfair" for someone new to navigate. That's why she chose to run for another term, she said.

"I decided that if I could be helpful to the town in setting up for a better financial position, that I should stay and do that and see what the next steps for our town are," said Hasko.



Judith Hasko

Along with finances, she is focused on ensuring the town can maintain its strong volunteer participation across its various committees.

Like her colleagues on the council, Hasko said finances are a top priority for her next term, something that she didn't fully understand when she was first elected in 2022. The housing element and compliance with the state Department of Housing and Community Development's requirements are also priorities, Hasko said.

Prior to the election, Hasko also acknowledged that there is work to do on emergency preparedness but said that funding depends on the approval of Measure N, which was leading in election night returns.

Hasko said she is hopeful about making improvements to the town, continuing efforts to regain the community's trust and working toward stabilizing finances.

"We all really want to make a positive difference toward the community, and look forward instead of looking back, because a lot of the first term was looking back at how we got where we are and what needs to be fixed," said Hasko. ■

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

TOWN OF ATHERTON

NOTICE OF ORDINANCE ORD NO. 682 ADOPTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF ATHERTON

The City Council of the Town of Atherton, California, at its meeting of **October 21, 2026**, adopted Ordinance 682, an Ordinance of the City Council of the Town of Atherton, State of California, Chapter 15.40 making amendments to the Construction Regulations.

The full text of the proposed Ordinance is available for review in the City Clerk's Office at 80 Fair Oaks Lane, Atherton, California 94027. For more information, you may contact the City Clerk's Office at (650) 752-0529.

The Ordinance shall become effective thirty (30) days following adoption.

The Atherton City Council voted to adopt Ordinance 682 as follows:

AYES: Lane, Widmer, Lewis, DeGolia, Holland

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

/s/ Anthony Suber
City Clerk
Town of Atherton
Dated: October 22, 2026



Studying the classics

Palo Alto resident funds unique oil painting program for teens at Pacific Art League

By Angela Swartz

Since the summer, 12 Bay Area high school students have been gathering in a room at Pacific Art League in Palo Alto to learn classical oil painting. Instructors began with gesture drawing, observational techniques and the fundamentals of working with oil paint.

The free, 15-week-long atelier, which began in July, is a unique opportunity rarely available to teens. The classical methods of oil painting instruction are generally difficult to access without moving to Florence, Italy or New York City, said painter and atelier instructor Dustin Adamson. This program changes that.

He said that the word atelier, which refers to a private workshop or studio of a professional artist, can have stuffy or exclusive connotations.

"The word atelier is kind of a loaded thing in the artist community because it specifically references French academic methods of the 18th- and 19th-century," said Adamson, who himself trained at the Florence Academy of Art US. "It (the atelier) looks back at the past tradition of art, but makes it accessible for people, and it lays a good foundation for artists. Classical training does not mean they have to paint in a classical aesthetic. It just means they have the skill set to go on to do any sort of creative endeavor."

To join the atelier, students did not need to have previous oil painting experience. They were required to submit essays describing their interest in art as part of the application. They also needed to demonstrate willingness to commit to attending the entirety of the program.

As part of the program, the students, who are 14 to 17 years old, could bring home a full palette of paints, paintbrushes and a portable easel. Instructors began the program by teaching students to create a copy of a master painting. This practice allowed the students to gain still-life skills and "strengthen their understanding of composition, color, light, shadow and form," according to a class description. They then moved on to landscapes, followed by portraits.



Courtesy BeBe Khue Jacobs

Students paint at tabletop easels arranged around a shared worktable during an oil painting class at the Pacific Art League on Oct. 18.

Palo Alto resident Yumiko Tsumura, a longtime donor to the Pacific Art League, has made the atelier possible, funding instructor pay and class materials.

"I wanted to create something that does not exist anymore in the entire Bay Area," said Tsumura, who has published her own books of poetry and practiced Japanese Shodō calligraphy. She holds a master of fine arts in poetry and translations from the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. "Oil painting can be prohibitive to get into and you don't get anywhere with one lesson."

Learning classical oil painting can be costly. For example, a four-day long classical figure-painting class can cost nearly $800 in the Bay Area.

Tsumura said there are few people in Silicon Valley willing to invest in music, art and poetry, so she felt the need to step in. She noted that there have been significant cuts to funding in these areas. She plans to fund the atelier long term, she said.

She said the program is also a way to honor her late husband, physicist Paul Mathews, who was an oil painter.

Tsumura also sees the atelier as an opportunity for art teachers to earn extra income.

"This program really represents what Pacific Art League is all about: giving people

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Courtesy BeBe Khue Jacobs

Palo Alto resident Yumiko Tsumura visits the oil painting atelier for teens that she funded at the Pacific Art League



Courtesy BeBe Khue Jacobs

Pacific Art League's new atelier introduced students to portrait and figure painting, as well as still-life and observational work. Students work on portraits. animal, still-life and landscape painting during a class on Oct. 18.

Journalist Alexis Madrigal to appear at Stanford

The KQED Forum host and author of 'The Pacific Circuit' discusses his works at free Nov. 12 event

By Heather Zimmerman

The cranes at the Oakland Seaport are far more than just industrial landmarks we see as we drive by on Highway 880. In his 2025 book, "The Pacific Circuit," journalist Alexis Madrigal explored how they are testaments to the powers of globalization, with international shipping a key force that shifted our culture during the 20th century and left an imprint on a key port like Oakland.

Madrigal has lived in the Bay Area for the better part of 20 years. He has covered the region in reporting for a variety of media, gaining a broad perspective on the area and the many forces shaping it.

He will appear Nov. 12 in a discussion at Stanford University in conversation with humanities professor and journalist Adrian Daub.

In a very different way, Stanford has had its own transformative effect on the Peninsula, and Bay Area in general. While Stanford's main "export" is students who make their careers all over the globe, as a center of learning and thought, there's a wealth of ideas at the university that sometimes need a helping hand out of the ivory tower to find wider audiences. Stanford Public Humanities aims to offer that help, said Natalie Jabbar, the program's associate director.

The program works with academics at any stage in their careers, from a freshman to a professor emeritus.

''How do we help them learn how to translate their work and their ideas for the public sphere, for an audience beyond the academy, for somebody who's not a colleague in their subfield who has the same set of jargon and the same interests, but for a broad and diverse audience that could really learn from or be inspired by their work — whether it's medieval studies or environmental humanism or like sociology about immigration," she said.

Stanford Public Humanities got started around 2020 and has seen over 5,000 attendees to its various events, as well as offering seed grants to Stanford faculty. Over 50 grants have funded everything from exhibitions to digital tools to documentaries.

Madrigal will appear at Stanford Public Humanities' flagship speaker series, called "What is a Public Intellectual Today?" As Jabbar notes, and the title implies, there isn't a set rubric or definition for the idea. Previous talks in the series have featured, among others, poet and essayist Hanif Abdurraqib, writer and educator Tressie McMillan Cottom, writer Jia Tolentino, and essayist and novelist Alexander Chee. Jabbar notes that Madrigal will be the series' first speaker from the Bay Area.

Madrigal has a long background in journalism, including work at WIRED and as editor-in-chief of Fusion. He co-hosts KQED's current affairs show Forum and is a contributing writer for The Atlantic, where he was a co-creator of the COVID Tracking Project. He is also the author of the book "Powering the Dream: The History and Promise of Green Technology."

Asked for his own thoughts on the term, "public intellectual," and what guests can expect from the Nov. 12 talk, Madrigal said via email: "Well, I was raised by a Mexican intellectual, who saw cultural, political, and social life as deeply intertwined. When I think of my own role in this world, I see myself as a connector between different types of people and different networks of ideas. There are so many brilliant people and projects out in this world and so many people who are hungry for that kind of sustenance. Maybe I aid in that discovery process.

I think audiences can expect a wide-ranging conversation that connects topics and ideas that had previously been in distinct spheres. And they can expect brilliance from my conversation partner, Adrian Daub, who I have had the pleasure of interviewing about his work, too."

Ahead of his appearance at Stanford, Madrigal answered some questions about his work and life in the Bay Area.

Almanac: What brought you to the Bay Area? How long have you lived here?

Alexis Madrigal: The first time, I came for work. I moved to San Francisco in 2004 for a job, which I hated, so I quit. That sent me out of the city for a few years. When I came back in 2007, it was for love. I met my now-wife in Seattle and she was moving to San Francisco, so I tagged along. Outside of a terrible 18 months in Washington, DC, I've been here ever since.



Courtesy Alexis Madrigal

Journalist Alexis Madrigal will discuss his works Nov. 12 in a talk presented by Stanford Public Humanities.

Almanac: You have covered the Bay Area in a variety of media, including in books, podcasts, your One Good Thing newsletter. How has that work shaped your perspective on the Bay Area? What have you learned about the region that surprises you?

Madrigal: I think I'm deeply aware of the eccentricity of the land and the water. This is not just any place on earth. We're the opening of the largest estuary on the Pacific coast of the Americas. We're a node in the tectonic system of the globe. And most of the capital G Great things that have come out of this place are a result of our position between the rest of the USA and Asia. From the great efflorescence of Bay Area culture in the 50s through the 1970s to the technology industry that defines us today, we are in the lucky position of straddling continents.

Almanac: You're a co-owner of the Oakland community space Local Economy. How did that project come about? How has the space evolved?

Madrigal: I am! Local Economy was our response, I think, to the sense that *the planet* is in crisis. On that scale, we are helpless. But as every AI must have its data center, we all experience the world through one specific set of coordinates, one patch of land. So: we could start here and now to build local resilience by creating a community hub. And that's what we've been doing. We moved into a vacant storefront a little over a year ago. We've done 200 events. Thousands of people have come through. And we are supported by an incredible crew of 700 members. It's a dream project and a model that I think has real potential across the region and country.

Almanac: What projects do you have in the works?

Madrigal: For a while, I was working on a short book about trail running and phenomenology, based around a run I did between Mt. Diablo in the East Bay and Mt Tam (about 58 miles, the way I did it). But most recently, I've been working on a new piece of fiction — my first writing love — that I plan to publish with a still-under-wraps project by novelist (and good friend) Robin Sloan.

Almanac: Anything else you would like to mention?

Madrigal: Any time you get the chance, it's important to shine the light on other people's creative work. And I just read a jaw-droopingly brilliant novel, *Female Life on Planet Earth*, by Laleh Khadivi, who teaches creative writing at the University of San Francisco. It is (nominally) a book about mothers and daughters, but it reminds me most of David Foster Wallace's book, *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men*. We get to listen in on a series of fascinating, hilarious, and shocking conversations, mostly between women. Khadivi's book is deep, real, and if it was about a different topic, reviewers would be falling all over themselves to call it "a novel of ideas." So let me say: that's precisely what it is, as well as the most inventive, unusual, and powerful book I've read in a long, long time. ■

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Nov. 12, 6:30-8 p.m., free; Tresidder Union, 459 Lagunita Drive, Stanford; events.stanford.edu

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opportunities to explore art, learn new skills, and connect with others through creativity," said Aly Gould, the organization's executive director.

"Especially now, when so much of the conversation is about AI (artificial intelligence) and technology, I think there's something really valuable about going back to the traditional skills of artists and artisans," she said in an email. "Oil painting takes patience, practice, and a willingness to make mistakes."

The students have made significant progress since their first lessons, Tsumura said.

"I'm proud I made it possible for these talented youth to get exposure (to oil painting) and make progress without the price," she said. "It's money well spent."

Sophia Tanphaichitr, a sophomore at Palo Alto High School, is part of the atelier's first cohort and said she has enjoyed the variety of things she learned to paint. Tanphaichitr previously took an art class at the Pacific Art League and her mom thought she'd enjoy the new atelier for teens after reading about it on the nonprofit's website.

"Because it is free, it can be very helpful to those who don't want to spend a lot of money on the supplies, or really want to, but can't," she said in an email. "The class is structured in a way where independence in art is encouraged in a low-stress environment, but the instructors still offer plenty of help and guidance. ... Getting to have my art be in the Art League exhibition in November is super cool!"

The deadline to apply for next year's atelier program is Dec. 15, 2026. Learn more at pacificartleague.org/atelier. Tsumura said the upcoming program, which will be 12 weeks long and starts in January 2027, is worth $1,000. Weekly sessions will be two and a half to three hours long. ■

Angela Swartz is a Contributing Writer.

Students will exhibit their final projects at the Pacific Art League's 105th Anniversary Exhibition, at 668 Ramona St. in Palo Alto, from Nov. 6 to Jan. 12, 2027. The opening reception is Nov. 6 from 5:30-to 8 p.m. Find out more at pacificartleague.org/105-anniversary-and-fundraiser.

Correction

The Oct. 30 story "Author and doctor Abraham Verghese to discuss his works at Kepler's"incorrectly named the Tennessee town where Verghese worked. The town was called Johnson City.

Cook's closes

Abrupt closure of 98-year-old Cook's Seafood rattles Menlo Park community



By Adrienne Mitchel

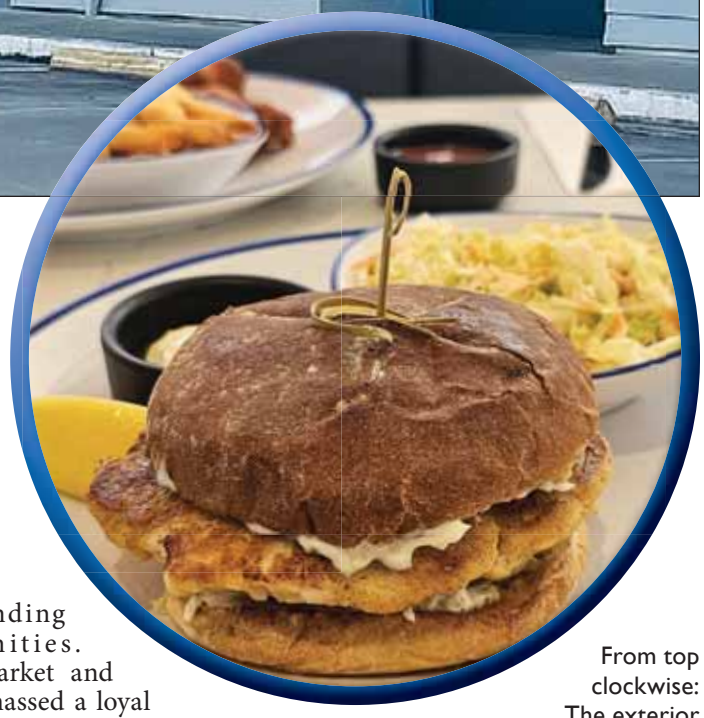
When a regular customer known as Mrs. Hockey walked through the doors at Cook's Seafood in Menlo Park Oct. 28, long-time employee Steve Whitaker was thrilled. He hadn't seen her in a few years, and she was in her 90s. Whitaker couldn't wait to tell his colleague, Dan Dowler, a veteran who'd been with Cook's for 55 years.

"I just looked so much forward to seeing Dan that Friday and just telling him," said Whitaker, a Cook's employee for 44 years. "I knew it would tickle him."

But Friday's shift never came. Around 3 a.m. on Oct. 29, Cook's Seafood staff received a group text message stating that both Cook's Seafood locations in Menlo Park and Pleasanton had closed and all employees had been terminated.

"We are sad to inform you that after 98 years, we have closed all Cook's Seafood locations Wednesday, Oct. 28, 2026," the text message, sent by owner Roy Crumrine Jr., read. "Our family thanks you for all your years of service, and we're sorry for saying this so late tonight. But we don't want you to drive to work tomorrow, as the building is closed. We'll send out more updates later today."





From top clockwise: The exterior of Cook's Seafood in Menlo Park. Courtesy Linda Hubbard/InMenlo.com. Salmon burger at Cook's Seafood in Pleasanton. Photo by Deborah Grossman. Cioppino at Cook's Seafood in Pleasanton. Photo by Deborah Grossman.

Whitaker woke up that morning unaware of the text message. Despite it being his day off, he was still planning on going to Cook's to receive a shipment of salmon roe. But at 7 a.m., he received a call from Moises Bucio, former manager at Cook's Seafood Pleasanton. Cook's was closed.

"It definitely felt like the rug was being pulled out from under you to have it come down like that," Whitaker said. "I'm disappointed. I'm shocked."

For 98 years, Cook's Seafood provided fresh fish and seafood to Menlo Park and surrounding communities. The fish market and restaurant amassed a loyal customer base with its sizable selection of seafood and its knowledgeable and friendly staff. Its abrupt closure came as a shock to both patrons and its roughly 45 employees across the two restaurants who lost their jobs without advance notice.

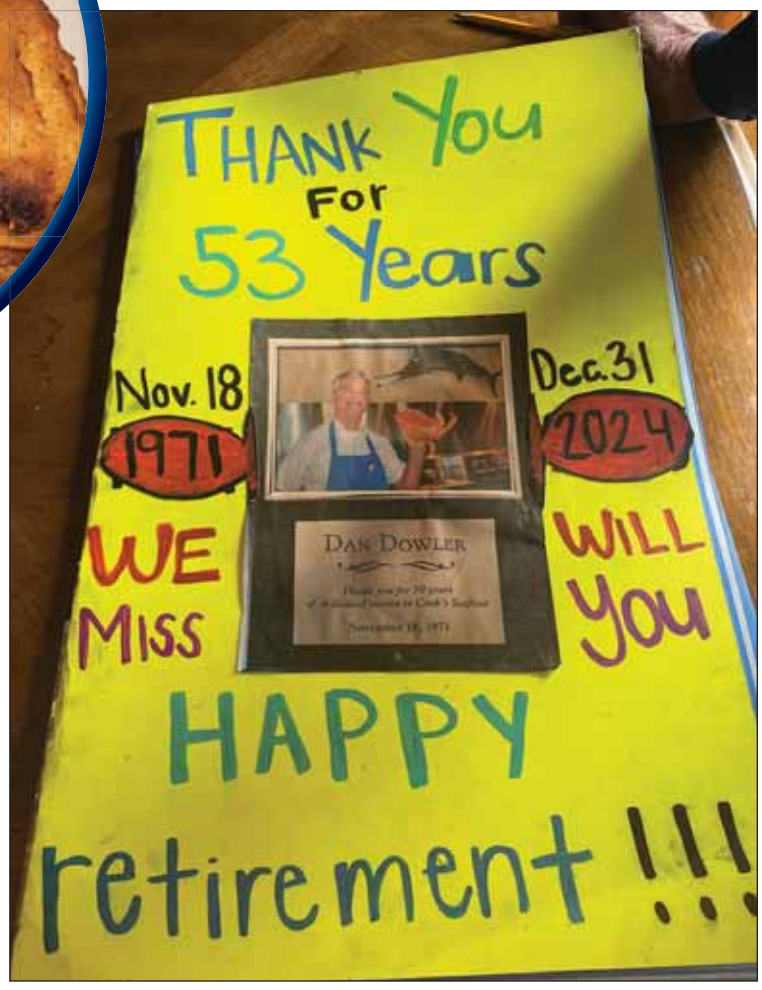
Both Whitaker and Dowler, who were close with the Crumrine family, said the closure came as a complete shock and that there were no indications that Cook's would close. Business was consistently good, they said.

"We're starting to go into our busy season, especially during the holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc." Dowler said. "And









Top left: The interior of Cook's Seafood in Pleasanton. Photo by Chuck Deckert. Top right: Manager Moises Bucio holds up live crabs at Cook's Seafood in Pleasanton. Photo by Deborah Grossman. Bottom right: A poster celebrating Dan Dowler's 53 years at Cook's Seafood. Dowler returned to work at Cook's on a part-time basis for another two years. Courtesy Dan Dowler. Center: Fried cod, halibut and French fries at Cook's Seafood in Pleasanton. Photo by Deborah Grossman.

of course, January and February are pretty good months too, because of Easter."

Roy Crumrine Jr. and his brother Tony Crumrine did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

Close to a century of history

Bill Cook, a policeman turned entrepreneur, founded Cook's Seafood in Menlo Park in 1928. He sold the business to Robert Rahe in the 1940s. In 1955, a 15-year-old Roy Crumrine began working at Cook's as a dishwasher, according to a 2001 Almanac article.

Roy Crumrine thought of Rahe as a father figure, Dowler said, and after Rahe had a heart attack and died, his widowed wife sold the business to the then 23-year-old Roy Crumrine.

The Rahe family still owns the land under Cook's Seafood, according to Whitaker and Dowler. Dowler said leases for Cook's in Menlo Park and Pleasanton don't end until 2028, and both were eligible for two five-year extensions.

Roy Crumrine and his son Mike Crumrine ran Cook's Seafood together until Roy Crumrine's death in 2018. Mike Crumrine is now retired and lives in Florida, and his brother Roy Crumrine Jr. had been running Cook's in recent years.

In 2025, Cook's Seafood expanded to Pleasanton after first filing permits with the city in 2017. Two managers from the Pleasanton location, Moises Bucio and Ramalah LaBang, declined to comment on the closure.

While Whitaker and Dowler are taking an-earlier-than-expected retirement, the closure has resulted in financial uncertainty for younger employees. Maria Leon, the partner of a Cook's Seafood employee who asked to remain anonymous, said that reading the 3 a.m. text message "was gut-wrenching." Her partner had worked at Cook's for 14 years, and they share two young children.

"As business owners, you held the livelihoods of families in your hands," Leon said of Cook's Seafood. "Your staff depended on those paychecks to feed their children and pay their rent. To pull the rug out from under them without warning, or even the decency of a face-to-face explanation, shows a profound and hurtful lack of empathy."

> 'It definitely felt like the rug was being pulled out from under you to have it come down like that.'
>
> Steve Whitaker,
> Cook's employee of 44 years

As of Monday morning, Leon's partner had not received any additional information beyond the 3 a.m. text. It's still unclear when employees will be able to collect personal belongings locked inside Cook's Seafood or when PTO will be paid, she said.

A shock to the community

For regulars, the sudden closure was also a shock. Tom Gibboney, who purchased seafood from Cook's for two decades, said that he was "stunned."

"It was just really a sad day," he said. "We drove up expecting to get some seafood (on Oct. 29), and it was shut with a note on the door. We had no idea this was happening."

Buz Walters said he would go to Cook's three to four times a week, noting that it sold reliably fresh fish and staff was knowledgeable and helpful. If the business had been struggling — which Walters saw no indication of — he wishes that the Crumrine family had asked for community support.

"There are a number of prominent people in the Atherton area that said, 'I wish they had done a GoFundMe,'" he said, noting that Kepler's Books and The Guild Theatre were both saved through community support.

Chris Dowler, the son of Dan Dowler, said that he would like to find a way to take over Cook's Seafood and keep it going.

"It's iconic. It's historic," he said. "So to have this vanish from the community is kind of a tragedy."

Whitaker said that he had hoped Cook's would make it to 100 years.

"I'm very proud of what Cook's Seafood was and was to the community for many different reasons," he said. "We put our heart and souls into that place, and it rewarded us and it rewarded the community. There'll never be another place like Cook's Seafood, ever." ■

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Rare restoration opportunity on ~7.1 acres
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63 RIDGE COURT, WOODSIDE

4 beds close to Town Center & Woodside Elementary
Offered at $3,489,000 | 63RidgeCt.com



FOR SALE

103 TOYON COURT, WOODSIDE

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180 FARM ROAD, WOODSIDE

~4.33 acres, 4 beds, 3.5 baths, ~7,545 sf
Offered at $21,995,000 | HiddenValleyEstate.com



PENDING SALE

1 REDBERRY RIDGE, PORTOLA VALLEY

~1.29 acres, 5 beds, 6+ baths, ~7,735 sf
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JUST SOLD

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