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A Fresh Approach

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COMPASS
Ravenswood head put on paid leave

School district’s assistant superintendent refuses to take over for boss
by Elena Kadvany

Gloria Hernandez-Goff, the embattled superintendent of the Ravenswood City School District in East Palo Alto, was suddenly placed on paid leave on Wednesday, effective immediately.

Board of Education President Tamara Sobomehin confirmed this shortly after sending out an email to all staff notifying them on Wednesday evening. Sobomehin declined to elaborate.

Hernandez-Goff could not be reached for comment.

The superintendent, who was hired in 2013 with high hopes for turning around an underperforming school district, has faced mounting pressure in recent years from teachers, staff and parents critical of her leadership. Teachers signed a vote of no confidence and called for her immediate resignation in 2017, citing concerns about lack of communication, transparency and a “hostile and draining” work environment.

They were particularly critical of what they said was her failure to involve teachers in the development of the district’s first-ever comprehensive middle school, which opened that fall.

Former and current district employees also accused Hernandez-Goff of nepotism, financial mismanagement and creating a hostile work environment.

The school board renewed her two-year contract last spring after reaching for comment.

(continued on page 8)

TRANSPORTATION

Seniors chafe at planned bus cuts
Residents, leaders: City is being targeted by San Jose-dominated transit agency
by Gennady Sheyner

A controversial plan by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) to save money by reducing bus service in Palo Alto has left some riders and city leaders fuming and questioning the agency’s commitment to the northern part of county.

These concerns and frustrations spilled out during a Tuesday night hearing of the City Council’s Policy and Services Committee on the VTA’s proposed transit plan, which the agency plans to roll out later this year as part of an effort to reduce costs. The plan calls for reducing the service on Route 22, which currently runs all night but which under the new plan would not operate between 1-4 a.m. The change would affect about 120 people who ride the bus during the late-night hours, including about 40 who use it for shelter.

The plan also calls for eliminating or reducing service on several VTA Express routes; and reducing service on Routes 88, 88L and 88M, which would more closely align with the schedule of Gunn High School. By contrast, Express bus 522 on El Camino Real would run more frequently.

The plan comes at the same time that another developer, Sand Hill Property Company, is proposing a 605-apartment development adjacent to University Circle, of which 445 would be senior housing.

The plan follows a request by East Palo Alto city staff to add a bike path that would link East Palo Alto’s planned University Avenue bike-pedestrian overpass and the existing bike lane on University Avenue. Bathrooms in existing buildings would be retrofitted to offset water consumption at the new building.

(continued on page 10)

DEVELOPMENT

Project could bring in up to 900 workers

Neighbors: University Circle addition will contribute to traffic jams
by Sue Dremann

East Palo Alto is considering a six-story building for up to 900 workers at University Circle business park, according to developer Columbia Property Trust.

The 180,000-square-foot University Circle Phase II development near the Palo Alto and East Palo Alto border would be located in the same complex as three existing six-story buildings and the 200-room Four Seasons Hotel. Those structures were built in 2003 on the site of the former Whiskey Gulch retail district.

The new building on the southwest corner of the property, at the corner of University and Woodland avenues, would be similar in size and architectural design to the existing ones, according to the developer. Currently a parking lot, the corner would include a three- or four-level underground parking garage with 691 stalls, Columbia representatives said during a Feb. 7 public meeting.

The proposal follows a request by East Palo Alto city staff to add another structure to the University Circle campus so the city can increase tax revenue, representatives for the developer said.

Staff from Chang Architecture said the potential number of new employees would depend largely on whether the building is leased by a law firm or tech company. The latter, which would be more densely populated, could bring in 900 workers, they said.

The development proposes to add a bike path that would link East Palo Alto’s planned University Avenue bike-pedestrian overpass and the existing bike lane on University Avenue.

Bathrooms in existing buildings would be retrofitted to offset water consumption at the new building.

The plan comes at the same time that another developer, Sand Hill Property Company, is proposing a 605-apartment development adjacent to University Circle, of which 445 would be senior housing.

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(continued on page 11)
Looking for the Palo Alto City Council agenda for Monday night’s meeting?

To save $20,000 a year your city government has discontinued publishing its meeting agendas and other public notices in the Palo Alto Weekly.

For more information: https://bit.ly/2WjHlp

GABBIN’ WITH GAVIN ... Palo Alto High School journalism students crowded around Gov. Gavin Newsom when he visited their classroom on a whim on Feb. 21. The state’s 40th governor was dressed up in a dark-colored suit and purple tie as he met with the teens at the school’s Media Arts Center and answered questions, according to Palo student features publication Verde Magazine. The hour-plus-long meeting covered several topics, including California’s high-speed rail project, which will be scaled back to the Central Valley as Newsom announced in his State of the State address on Feb. 15; regulations on greenhouse gas emissions; housing teachers; the achievement gap; the 2020 presidential election (he’s announced his support for U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris); and the state’s influence on the nation. Why did he come to Palo in the first place? “I have all these staff that are graduates from here (Paly), which is crazy,” he told Verde. “My deputy chief of staff, my chief legal advisor, the head of OPR — which is my Office of Planning research, which is responsible for linking transportation, economic development and global warming issues.”

CAP AND TIRADE ... A decision by four members of the Palo Alto City Council to repeal the long-standing downtown cap on non-residential development became official this week, when the council voted 4-3 to approve the zoning change on a “second reading.” The step is typically a formality and, given the council’s formality and, given the council’s voting history, was expected to pass. But the vote was not a foregone conclusion. Even so, several residents appealed to the council to reverse its earlier decision and asked that it use some of their concerns. Loudly and clearly, they came back every year saying ‘housing and parking’ problems, and the council will only exacerbate those concerns and do nothing to address them. The arguments did not sway the council members who voted to repeal the cap, with Alison Cormack and Liz Kniss joining fine and Tanaka in moving the repeal along (Mayor Eric Filsesh and council members Tom DuBois and Lyndia Kou dissented).
 Abilities United merging with larger nonprofit

Abilities United, a 65-year-old Palo Alto nonprofit serving people with disabilities, will merge with a larger Redwood City-based organization as soon as this June, the nonprofit announced this week.

The merger would allow Abilities United and the larger, nearly 100-year-old Gatepath to reduce their administrative and payroll costs, cover two counties and position the organization to become a top-tier nonprofit capable of attracting additional grants and funding for services in both locations, leaders said.

The new organization would not cut services, both agencies confirmed. They share a mission of providing services to children and adults with disabilities, including early intervention and training, inclusive education, physical and occupational therapy and community integration through jobs and housing, the officials said.

Gatepath has 11 program sites spanning from Daly City to Sunnyvale and Abilities United has two locations in Palo Alto at 3864 Middletown Road and 525 E. Charleston Road.

Gatepath CEO Bryan Neider said under preliminary calculations only about six positions might be cut. Abilities United is working to find other positions outside of administration for employees who face layoffs. All but the two compares won't be implanted until the end of the current fiscal year ending June 30, the agencies expect to begin the transition in April, he said.

——Sue Dremann

District defends decision on accused harasser

The Palo Alto school district is asking a judge overseeing a thorough sexual harassment case to uphold a district decision to allow the accused student to participate in robotics, a move defended in court filings as a “good faith exercise of discretion” that protected both students’ rights.

An attorney filed in court on Monday the district’s response to a legal motion from a female Gunn High School student, whose parents turned to the courts last month to keep the male Gunn student — who was found to have sexually harassed her — from participating in the school’s robotics team, to which they both belong. Both students are 16 years old and had dated briefly.

After determining last fall that text messages and verbal comments from the boy constituted sexual harassment, the district took numerous steps to keep the students separate at school, including banning him from robotics. But then the district reversed that decision in January as part of a settlement negotiated with his family, court documents show. The boy receives special-education services for a speech disability and is now alleging that the district violated his rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in its attempt to protect the girl’s gender-equity law Title IX.

Monday’s court filings illustrate how the district, which has been working to improve after years of criticism and legal findings related to Title IX, grappled with its legal obligations in this case.

The district’s response details measures they put in place to protect her after last fall’s case. The school is actively working to keep the two students separate, including providing additional supervision if both want to attend a school dance this Friday, court documents state.

The girl’s attorneys are set to file their own response brief this Friday. Judge Helen Williams is scheduled to hear the case on March 8.

——Elena Kadvany

Downtown to see more roof-decks

In a broad expansion of its original plan, the City Council passed on Monday night an ordinance that would allow downtown buildings that are too tall to comply with current height limits to build rooftop areas. In doing so, the council agreed to go well beyond the initial staff proposal, which would have limited the new law to seven buildings that exceed the city’s current 50-foot height limit.

Instead, by a 5-2 vote, the council voted to broaden the law so that it applies not only to buildings that are too tall to comply with the current development standards but also to those that are too dense. The revision expands the number of downtown buildings that can apply for roof-decks from seven to more than 110, according to city planner Graham Owen.

In passing the law, the council generally agreed that roof-decks are a desirable amenity, particularly in the downtown area. That view is shared by Houzz, the interior-design company that asked the city in 2017 for a permit to construct a roof-deck at 285 Hamilton Ave., directly across the street from City Hall. The request, which was denied in November 2017 and which won the Planning and Transportation Commission’s support last October, received the council’s long-awaited blessing on Monday night.

——Gennady Sheyner
Ravenswood
(continued from page 5)
working 12+ hour days and cannot absorb additional responsibilities.”
Morales-Ellis said she did not immediately return a request for comment.
When reached Wednesday night, district spokesperson Roland do Bonilla, said he was unaware the superintendent had been placed on leave.
An “employee dismissal/discipline/release” item was posted on the board’s closed session agenda for a budget study session on Monday evening. Sobomehin said the board did not take any reportable action in closed session.
Hernandez-Goff was not present at the meeting as she had recently been out for medical leave.
Another “employee dismissal/discipline/release” item was scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 28, after the Weekly’s press deadline.

Staff Writer Elena Kadvany can be emailed at ekadvany@pawweekly.com.

Difficult budget decisions are looming for the Ravenswood City School District, which is projecting potential layoffs and the school board is turning to a national nonprofit for help scrutinizing its finances.

Budget concerns for the East Palo Alto district came to a head last year, when several years of deficit spending and declining enrollment prompted a threat of fiscal insolvency and close oversight from the San Mateo County Office of Education. The school board approved last spring $5 million in budget cuts, including layoffs that affected more than 80 classified staff. Ravenswood’s total budget this year is about $43 million.

At a budget study session on Monday, the board’s third since January, Chief Budget Officer Steve Eichman presented multiyear budget assumptions that include the potential — not yet recommended or approved — elimination of 10 full-time teachers, one principal and five classified positions in the next school year. The cuts total just under $2 million.

The district currently employs seven principals, 143 teachers and 177 classified staff, according to the district. Certificated and classified salaries make up about half of this year’s budget, according to a district budget report.

For the 2020-21 school year, the assumptions include cutting five full-time teachers and two classified positions for about $762,600 in savings.

Sheila Vickers, the vice president of School Services of California, a company that provides financial and management support to districts and whom the district asked to facilitate Monday’s study session, reminded the trustees that most of the district’s budget is allocated to personnel and that they will be “required to make some difficult choices when it comes time to balance your budget.”

Vickers said that the financial pressures Ravenswood faces — declining enrollment, increasing pension costs, fluctuations in the governor’s budget and others — are impacting school districts across the state. Ravenswood’s student population has dipped by more than 1,000 in recent years, from 3,537 students in 2012 to current enrollment of about 2,393. The district attributes the decline, which it expects to continue, to an increasing number of families leaving East Palo Alto due to unaffordability and more students choosing to attend charter and private schools. This has serious financial implications as Ravenswood receives the lion’s share of its funding from the state based on student-attendance rates.

As Ravenswood’s student population shrinks, the board must take action to adjust the district’s staffing levels accordingly, Vickers noted.

“The longer you wait, the more you have to cut. The earlier you take action, the less harmful it will be on your employees and your student programs,” Vickers said. “The whole idea to taking action is to stabilize programs for the long run and have as much stability as you can for your student population.”

The board must issue preliminary layoff notices to staff by March 15. While those notices can be rescinded, the district cannot legally issue more notices after that date.

As the newly constituted five-member board grapples with how to effectively evaluate the budget given the time and staff constraints, Vice President Stephanie Fitch pitched a new idea on Monday: accepting assistance from Education Resource Strategies, which helps school districts “transform how they use resources (people, time, and money),” the nonprofit’s website states.

Fitch told the Weekly that Michelle Boyers, who works with the Ravenswood Education Foundation (REF), connected her with Education Resource Strategies. Fitch said the nonprofit could provide an “outside, unbiased and experienced” perspective on the district’s finances. She hopes the nonprofit could help the district “streamline prioritizing our budget’s highest needs” and especially cut down on outside consultants.

“I know it may seem hypocritical to hire a consultant to cut down on consulting costs, but REF is working on funding the costs for us, so their work won’t actually cut into our budget like some unnecessary or redundant consultants might currently be doing,” Fitch wrote in an email.

“Consultant costs have been brought up a few times by members of the community, so as their representative I want to make sure we look into it.”

Having an outside organization evaluate the budget also eliminates the possibility of “potential biases that people within the district might possibly have due to personal relationships with people,” Fitch said.

Rhonda White, president of the Ravenswood Teachers Association, urged the board on Monday to actively include teachers, staff and parents in discussions about budget cuts.

Eichman said he would present the district’s second interim budget to the board on March 14, the day before the layoff notice deadline. Board member Ana Pulido urged him to bring recommendations for budget cuts to the board sooner. “If we reach that March 15 date and three (board) members feel like they can’t make that decision, it’s going to be a burden for the district to carry.”

The board has scheduled a fourth budget study session for Monday, March 4, at 6 p.m. at the district office, 2120 Euclid Ave., East Palo Alto. Staff Writer Elena Kadvany can be emailed at ekadvany@pawweekly.com.

Education

Consultant: Staffing cuts ahead for Ravenswood
Board member suggests calling in fiscal experts to help district with budget woes
by Elena Kadvany

Ravenswood School District Superintendent Gloria Hernandez-Goff, right, listens as Chief Business Official Steven Eichman discusses the school district’s proposed budget for next year during a press conference on Dec. 12.
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VTA cuts (continued from page 5)

geo-dually central areas, where it can generate more rev-

enue. The shift away from a "cov-

erage" model to a "ridership" model calls for fewer routes but more frequency on those routes, said Adam Burger, the VTA's se-

happy routes, he said, the VTA's effi-


cient routes, he said, the VTA 's se-


ty more frequency on those routes, 


to the VTA's "protect south county," Burger ex-


plained that this referred to areas 


that would have no transit services 


at all if the VTA moves its buses away.

Barbara Bowden, a Channing House resident, called on the VTA to increase, not reduce, bus

service in Palo Alto.

"It just seems unconscionable that they're in taxes and get in service," Bowden said.

Patty Irish, a member of the Stevenson House board of direc-


tors and also a resident of the "cov-


ering House," noted that Palo Alto 


already has a large — and grow-


ing — senior population.

"For a lot of seniors, it isn't even a choice whether they 


can use a car," Irish said. "A lot of seniors have to give 


up their cars, and they need public transportation."

Some on the council shared the residents' frustrations. Coun-


cilman Greg Tanaka repeatedly 


pointed to a VTA route map, which showed a density of routes 


in San Jose and a relative paucity 


of them in north county. Noting that Palo Alto provides roughly 7 percent of the sales tax revenues 


that the VTA relies on, Tanaka said he believes the city doesn't 


seem to be getting a "fair share for transit."

Tanaka added that to the 


city's "ridership" representation of the VTA board, which includes 


among its 12 voting members 10 council members — five of whom 


are from south county and the San-


ta Clara County supervisors. Palo 


Alto, by contrast, has no represen-


tation. The north county has 


one rotating seat, which is currently 


occupied by Mountain View City 


Councilman John McAllister. 


Tanaka asked whether the city 


can "opt out" of the VTA and lik-


ened its treatment of Palo Alto as 


"taxation without representation."

Palo Alto, he argued, should not 


be spending its money to subdi-


vide bus services in San Jose.

"We have to fix the representa-


tion issue," Tanaka said. "We can't be 


outvoted by San Jose every day. 


We have to figure out how to keep 


dollars here in Palo Alto to serve 


the people in Palo Alto."

Councilwoman Liz Kniss, a former VTA board member and 


chair of the Policy and Services 


Committee, signed off on a let-


ter to the VTA that questions 


the agency's decision to cut 


services.

"We highlighted Palo Al-


to's role as a major employment 


center and noted that many em-


ployees come from other commu-


nities within the VTA service area.

"We have been working with 


large employers in our community 


to be innovative around the way 


that their employees get to and from work in Palo Alto," Kniss' letter states. "Our goal is to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips by continuing to expand available transit services in our community and not to contract them."

"While we broadly understand VTA's financial situation, we also do not want to constantly be sub-


ject to service reductions every time VTA needs to make a cut."

The VTA's need to find a more sustainable business model accel-

erated over the past year, as the agency found itself facing a $50 million budget shortfall. About half of the gap is expected to be filled with revenues from Senate Bill 1, according to the VTA. Even so, the agency still has a budget gap of about $25 million, which prompted the agency's board of directors to seek about $14.7 mil-


lion in savings from service cuts.  


Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner can be emailed at gsheyner@paw.


weekly.com.
H unpered by sky-high housing prices and tight labor market, Palo Alto is struggling to fill critical positions in the Utilities Department, a challenge that local leaders expect will get steeper after an expected wave of retirements in December.

The challenge is particularly pronounced in the city’s electric operation, where 18 of the 68 positions are currently vacant, according to department staff.

This includes all three electrical assistant positions, according to an organizational chart presented on Feb. 6 to the Utilities Advisory Commission. Of the department’s 15 electrical lineworker positions, which are critical to maintaining the city’s transmission system, five are currently vacant.

The city is now recruiting for 32 utility positions, eight of which have proven to be particularly difficult to fill, David Yuan, Utilities strategic business manager, told the commission. For positions like a lineworker or system operator, which require a very unique skill set, the recruitment process has stretched for more than six months at times, for several years, he said.

“We are reaching a critical point in electric operation where we can no longer staff our daily operations and our emergency response,” Yuan said.

Tommas Marshall, assistant director of utilities, noted that certain positions require up to 10 years of training, apprenticeships and close supervision before the employee can master the duties — and competition for these workers is fierce.

The city’s recruitment challenges aren’t unique to the Utilities Department. Palo Alto still has vacancies in key leadership positions, including chief transportation and traffic officer, city auditor, community services director and fire chief (these positions are either open or occupied on an interim basis).

And despite vigorous recruiting, the Police Department has had more than a dozen vacancies for the past two years, a situation that Chief Robert Jonsen has described as the new normal.

The Utilities Department is anticipating numerous people will be leaving the department at the end of the year as well, Marshall said.

While Marshall himself plans to retire, others in the organization are leaving for familiar reasons: higher pay, lower costs of living and shorter commutes.

Many employees have to commute from far outside Santa Clara County. At least one lives in a car throughout the week, Marshall told the commission.

“We have people who come in every day from Lodi and other places,” Marshall said. He expressed concern that, if a disaster were to strike, it could take three hours for some of the critical employees to get to the city.

Palo Alto’s situation is not unique, said Mary Ann Blanch, the city’s assistant director for Human Resources. Other cities that run their own utilities — including Roseville, Santa Clara and Alameda — all have vacant utility positions, she said. Santa Clara, however, is offering higher salaries for those positions.

“It’s difficult to keep up with the market,” Blanch told the commission. “As soon as we negotiate a new salary, our competitors do the same. We’re fighting to recruit and retain people.”

The topic of utility salaries has been an increasingly thorny one in Palo Alto, where dozens of utility managers formed a union in 2009 to improve their negotiating position — a move that the city unsuccessfully challenged in court.

Last December, after five years of tense negotiations and litigation, the city approved a 12 percent raise for all utility managers, as well as additional raises for critical positions whose salaries were below the market median.

A similar discussion is now taking place in regard to the Service Employees International Union, Local 521, which represents the bulk of the Utilities Department workforce and which is currently in negotiations with the city over a new contract. On Monday, as the City Council was discussing its status of negotiations with the SEIU, the union released a statement highlighting the growing number of vacancies, a trend that it said has “put unfair and unsustainable burdens on our staff, many of whom are working overtime without adequate rest to continue to deliver city services.”

The union pointed to the department’s loss last December of two veteran compliance technicians, who left one technician to perform the work of three. Palo Alto is also trying to deal with the employee shortage.

The department has recently recruited employees from Long Beach and Hayward, and has hired more contractors to fulfill functions traditionally performed by in-house staff. Marshall said the department has a $4.5 million three-year contract in place with a contractor to do the work that formerly required a crew of three to complete.

Commissioners offered a few other ideas for recruiting. Vice Chair Judith Schwartz suggested that staff recruit from PG&E, which has recently filed for bankruptcy. She also suggested that the council consider ways to provide housing to critical workers. Having them close by, she said, would benefit the entire city.

She also raised concerns about the various new utilities initiatives that the city is pursuing, including the proposed extension of the municipal fiber-optics system to certain areas.

“If we can’t staff what we’re doing, how can we staff a new function that could be labor intensive?” Schwartz asked.

Others shared her concern. Commission Chair Michael Danaher said it’s important for the city to recognize the problem and ensure that the city doesn’t have “overly strict financial restrictions” on utilities staffing.

“If we’re not in an emergency situation, we’re one or two steps away from being in an emergency situation from staffing,” Danaher said.

Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner can be emailed at gsheyner@paweekly.com.

Critical utilities-department positions go unfilled

City of Palo Alto Utilities struggles with employee recruitment, retention

by Gennady Sheyner

be rented at market rate and 160 would be under the city’s rentcontrol ordinance.

Some nearby Palo Alto residents are opposed to the proposed development.

“This project is of considerable interest to the residents of Palo Alto because the new building would create new visual impacts on neighboring parcels,” Crescent Park Neighborhood Association President Norman Beamer said in an email to the Weekly.

More importantly, it would significantly add to the traffic at the intersection of University and Woodland, and U.S. Highway 101 exits, aggravating already intolerable backups on University and chaotic cut-through traffic on the cross streets, which often trap people in their homes, he said.

In 1988, the Crescent Park Neighborhood Association and the city of Palo Alto filed a lawsuit against the University Circle developers DeMonet Industries and University Circle Ltd. and the city of East Palo Alto and its redevelopment agency because of the massive scope of the project that was proposed at the time.

In 1991, the parties reached a settlement agreement that limited the total square footage to 665,000 and the height to 185 feet, along with other provisions, which greatly scaled back the original plans and included measures to limit new traffic. The agreement expires on Dec. 15, 2023.

A second community meeting was held yesterday, Feb. 28.

A Staff Writer Sue Dremann can be emailed at sdremann@paweekly.com.

EPA project (continued from page 5)

A round-up of East Palo Alto government action this week

City Council (Feb. 26)

Roof decks: The council voted to allow downtown buildings that exceed development standards on height and density to build roof decks. Yes: Cormack, Filstich, Fink, Kniss, Tarabila No: Duvall, Kou

Boulware Park: The council voted to direct staff to make a bid for a property at 3350 Birch St., which would allow the city to expand Boulware Park. Yes: Unanimous

Board of Education (Feb. 26)

Cubberley priorities: The board approved a potential new school, teacher/staff housing and a new district office as priorities for the Cubberley Community Center master plan. Yes: Unanimous

Council Policy and Services Committee (Feb. 26)

Bus service: The committee heard a presentation from Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority about proposed changes to bus routes, including service reductions in Palo Alto. Action: None

Parks and Recreation Commission (Feb. 26)

Pickleball: The commission heard an update about a staff plan for dedicated pickleball courts. Action: None

Rinconada: The commission discussed the Rinconada Park improvement project. Action: None

LET’S DISCUSS: Read the latest local news headlines and talk about the issues at Town Square at PaloAltoOnline.com

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2021.

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In 1991, the parties reached a settlement agreement that limited the total square footage to 665,000 and the height to 185 feet, along with other provisions, which greatly scaled back the original plans and included measures to limit new traffic. The agreement expires on Dec. 15, 2023.

A second community meeting was held yesterday, Feb. 28.

A Staff Writer Sue Dremann can be emailed at sdremann@paweekly.com.

EPA project (continued from page 5)

A round-up of East Palo Alto government action this week

City Council (Feb. 26)

Roof decks: The council voted to allow downtown buildings that exceed development standards on height and density to build roof decks. Yes: Cormack, Filstich, Fink, Kniss, Tarabila No: Duvall, Kou

Boulware Park: The council voted to direct staff to make a bid for a property at 3350 Birch St., which would allow the city to expand Boulware Park. Yes: Unanimous

Board of Education (Feb. 26)

Cubberley priorities: The board approved a potential new school, teacher/staff housing and a new district office as priorities for the Cubberley Community Center master plan. Yes: Unanimous

Council Policy and Services Committee (Feb. 26)

Bus service: The committee heard a presentation from Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority about proposed changes to bus routes, including service reductions in Palo Alto. Action: None

Parks and Recreation Commission (Feb. 26)

Pickleball: The commission heard an update about a staff plan for dedicated pickleball courts. Action: None

Rinconada: The commission discussed the Rinconada Park improvement project. Action: None

LET’S DISCUSS: Read the latest local news headlines and talk about the issues at Town Square at PaloAltoOnline.com

www.PaloAltoOnline.com • Palo Alto Weekly • March 1, 2019 • Page 11
Public Agenda

A preview of Palo Alto government meetings next week

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION ... The commission plans to hold a retreat at 11 a.m. on Monday, March 4, in the Community Meeting Room at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave.

CITY COUNCIL ... The council plans recognize the student winners from the 2018 Synopsis Science Fair and of the 2019 Palo Alto City Library Kids and Teens Writing Contest. The council will then go into a closed session to discuss the written liability claim against the city by Komuna Capital and to consider the existing litigation, Miriam Green v. City of Palo Alto. Then, in an open session, the council will discuss and consider accepting the 2020-2029 Long Range Financial Forecast. The recognition ceremonies will be held from 5:15 to 5:30 p.m. on Monday, March 4, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave. The closed session will follow. The rest of the meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. or as soon as possible after the closed session.

STATE OF THE CITY ... Mayor Eric Filseth is scheduled to give the State of the City address at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, in the El Palo Alto Room at Mitchell Park Community Center, 3700 Middlefield Road.

UTILITIES ADVISORY COMMISSION ... The commission plans to discuss the new online customer portal, consider adopting the 2020 Wastewater Collection Financial Plan; and hear staff updates on fiber and "advanced metering infrastructure" (AMI) planning. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 6, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD ... The board plans to discuss 375 University Ave., a request for improvements and modifications to the former Cheesecake Factory building; consider a request for rehabilitation of and addition to a single-story structure at 233 University Ave.; and review a proposal for facade improvements for Pacific Catch at Stanford Shopping Center. The meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 7, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave.

Information & Registration:
peninsulacontest2019.artcall.org

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MAR. 25

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Joe Simitian
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INVITE YOU TO A

TOWN HALL MEETING
Stanford General Use Permit Application

Thursday, March 14, 2019
6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
Palo Alto City Hall
250 Hamilton Avenue
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Come learn about the proposed conditions of approval and final environmental impact report for Stanford University’s application to grow its campus development by 2,275,000 square feet plus 550 units of housing and 2,600 student beds.

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To see more about the General Use Permit Application, please visit:
www.sccgov.org/sites/dpd/Programs/Stanford/Pages/Stanford.aspx

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Erika Nord Richards

Erika Nord Richards arrived in the United States by steamer alone with only $10 in her pocket after fleeing the Nazis in Hamburg when she was 20.

“It didn’t oc-
cur to me to be frightened
but when I saw
the Statue of
Liberty, I broke
down ... and
all of a sudden
I was fright-
ened,” she told
an interviewer a decade ago.

That was the way she felt that day, said her daughter Ev-
elyn Richards. From that moment, Richards set out to build her life from the ground up, embracing America and its opportunities. She earned a physical therapy certi-
ficate from Northwestern University, then worked at St. Luke’s Hospital in Chicago, became an American citizen and joined the U.S. Army in 1944 as a physical therapist. Two years later, she was discharged as a First Lieutenant. The longtime Midpeninsula resident spent the rest of her life entrenched in the community, donating her time and skills to the people and places around her.

Richards died on Feb. 13 at Vi Independent Living community in Palo Alto, just seven weeks shy of her 103rd birthday. She was the oldest resident at the independent living section of the community.

Richards settled in Los Altos in 1966 with her husband, Richard K. Richards, a physician and phar-
maceutical writer who was attracted by the research and teaching opportu-
nities at Syntex and Stanford’s School of Medicine. After settling in the area, she became a lifetime member of the League of Women Voters and initiated the process of offering voter registration to newly naturalized U.S. citizens. She con-

continued to work part-time as a physi-
cal therapist, primarily in conva-

sescent hospitals in Los Altos and Mountain View and volunteered at the Palo Alto Cultural Center and El Camino Hospital in Mountain View for 20 years. She was a mem-
ber of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto. During this time, she continued her parents’ philanthropic endeavors by endow-
ing a chair in her and her husband’s name at Stanford Medical School.

In 2005, Richards became one of the inaugural residents of the Vi retirement community (then called Classic Residence) in Palo Alto. While there, she helped create the new library.

Richards was born on April 7, 1916, in Berlin to Walter and Herta Nord. She is survived by her daughter, Evelyn; son-in-law, Greg Pickrell; granddaughter, Liana Pickrell; brother, Helmut; and nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband of 36 years, Richard K. Richards and her brother Achim.

A celebration of life is scheduled for Thursday, March 21, at 2 p.m. at the Vi, 620 Sand Hill Road, Palo Alto.

The Almanac, an award-winning community newspaper and online news source that covers the towns of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside, is looking for an enterprising full-time news reporter with a passion for local journalism.

The ideal candidate will have experience covering local government and community news, and the skills to dig up and write engaging news and feature stories for print and online. Our reporters produce monthly cover stories that highlight issues and people in our community.

We’re seeking someone who is motivated, eager to learn, able to quickly turn out finished copy, and who lives in or near the Almanac coverage area. Social media skills are a plus. This is a fully benefited position with paid vacations, health and dental benefits, profit sharing and a 401(k) plan.

To apply, send a cover letter, resume, and three samples of your journalism work to Editor Renee Batti at editor@AlmanacNews.com.
Editorial

A new Cubberley in sight

After decades of neglect and failed planning efforts, a plan is rapidly emerging

T he former Cubberley High School site at 4000 Middlefield Road, close to Palo Alto’s southern border and likely the most valuable piece of publicly owned real estate in the city, has been waiting a long time for the dawning of a new day.

The campus was closed by the school district in 1979 when decreasing enrollment led to the decision to downsize to two high schools. Since then, in a complex lease agreement between the city of Palo Alto and the school district, more than $150 million has been paid by the city to the school for the use of the site as a community center and in exchange for the district’s agreement not to sell off any more of its school sites.

It stands as a shrine to government ineffectiveness — a 65-year-old set of deteriorating buildings that is the equivalent of an old shed occupying a residential parcel in Old Palo Alto.

In late 2014, the city wisely used its leverage to begin weaning the school district from the cash cow that Cubberley had become by limiting the lease’s renewal to just five years and requiring that a plan be developed for the future of the site.

Now, thanks to that pressure, there is finally momentum behind a comprehensive plan for development of the 30-acre site, which includes the construction of a new 45-acre residence (the 35 acres associated with the old high school plus seven acres of the adjacent Greenell School and a school site at 525 San Antonio Road currently leased to the private Athena Academy). The city owns eight acres of the site (the tennis courts and the sports field) while the school district owns the remainder, including the playing fields.

But with the lease, the city operates the entire 35-acre Cubberley site.

Many discussions have taken place over the years, including a 2012 effort by a citizens committee that produced an 800-page report. That ended in failure because of a combination of a school board incapable of making a decision beyond wanting to keep all options open for reopening Cubberley as a school, a school district with little interest and no appetite for forcing the issue.

Instead, the decaying buildings have been subleased by the city to a wide variety of programs and individuals and occupied by city staff.

Now, thanks to that pressure, there is finally momentum behind a plan for development of the site.

Last June the city of Palo Alto and the school district agreed to share the cost of a $600,000 planning process led by Louisiana-based Concordia, the firm that in nine months developed the plan for rebuilding New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

In less than a year, Concordia has accomplished more than what previous attempts have failed to do in decades. Hundreds of Palo Altans have participated in one or more of three planning meetings conducted in September, November and January — more people than have engaged on any public process in memory.

The Concordia process, which uses hands-on small-group exercises designed to suss out ideas and build consensus, is moving at a speed and pace that previous attempts have failed to do in decades. Hundreds of Palo Altans have participated in one or more of these planning meetings. It’s time for the city to move forward with the plan.

The Concordia process has been designed to suss out ideas and build consensus, is moving at a speed and pace that previous attempts have failed to do in decades. Hundreds of Palo Altans have participated in one or more of these planning meetings. It’s time for the city to move forward with the plan.

In Longmont, CO, residents have participated in a similar process, moving at a speed and pace that previous efforts have failed to do in decades.

The Concordia process gives the city a road map for development of what’s being called a “shared village” where facilities such as gyms, a pool, theater, a health and wellness center and studios would be located in the middle of the campus, where they could be shared by a potential future high school or middle school, if needed, and by the community. Some form of affordable, subsidized multi-story housing, for teachers or others, is expected to be included. The large outdoor spaces and playing fields would remain and the usable space would be increased by constructing two-to-four story buildings and putting parking underground or in the garage.

A “final” meeting on May 9 will seek to get public feedback on design work now being done by the consultants, after which review will shift to the City Council and school board.

If there is a danger in this fast-moving process, it is that it risks focusing too much on input from the several hundred people who have had time to be involved thus far. They tend to be older, retired residents who are neighbors of or currently utilize the Cubberley facility.

It is important to hear from younger families who will be the primary users of this new campus by the time it is completed and from other community members who don’t wish to or can’t attend meetings.

Implementing any plan will require broad community support. In Longmont, CO, residents who signed up for municipal FTTIP when it was first available in their neighborhoods get 1-Gbps (symmetrical) internet service for only $49.95 a month.

The very least, the Council should demand some sort of briefing about the information provided to Google, and what the procedure might be which the City would follow in the future should a similar situation occur requiring the City to provide data to a possible enterprise partner.

I urge people to read Susan Crawford’s new book, “Fiber: The Coming Tech Revolution — and Why America Might Miss It.” She talks about how America’s approach to telecommunications is a disaster. While we should be very careful about what the City gives to Google, and what is wrong with city-owned fiber, the public — and possibly Council as well — remained in the dark until Google’s 02-19-14 announcement.

As a teaser, check out Crawford’s new book, “Fiber: The Coming Tech Revolution — and Why America Might Miss It.” She talks about how America’s approach to telecommunications is a disaster. While we should be very careful about what the City gives to Google, and what is wrong with city-owned fiber, the public — and possibly Council as well — remained in the dark until Google’s 02-19-14 announcement.

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WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What if any changes should be made to the staffing of the City Auditor’s office?

Submit letters to the editor of up to 300 words to letters@paweekly.com. Submit guest opinions of up to 1,000 words to editor@paweekly.com. Include your name, address and daytime phone number so we can reach you.

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For more information, contact Editor Alison Bailey at baileyal@paweekly.com or 650-229-6520 or Editor Jocelyn Dong at editor@paweekly.com.

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Guest Opinion

Stanford’s commitment to Palo Alto schools

by Martin Shell

S trong public education is deeply valued in Palo Alto. The Palto Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) and Stanford University have a long and close history together, reflecting our shared commitment to education as the key to society’s health and advancement.

At Stanford, we intend to build upon that history of partnership and to support our local schools as part of our future land use plans. Stanford is currently seeking a new long-term land-use permit, called a general-use permit (GUP), from Santa Clara County, which is responsible for overseeing land use on Stanford’s academic campus. This permit will authorize the next generation of academic facilities and housing at Stanford over the next 17 years.

The permit will allow the university to add facilities that adapt to changes in existing fields of study and the emergence of entirely new fields, along with much-needed additional housing at Stanford’s academic campuses. This permit will also support our local schools, as part of our joint commitment to Palo Alto.

Recently, there has been substantial discussion in the community about the potential impacts on Palo Alto schools from new students generated by the on-campus housing development proposed in the general-use permit. As students generated by the on-campus housing development will be one of the topics addressed through the development agreement, the draft negotiations will be included in the public approval process when county decision-makers consider the general-use permit application in the coming months.

Talks with the county are ongoing and we are not yet permitted to publicly share details while that process continues.

Stanford intends to offer additional support for Palo Alto schools through this development agreement. The form that support will take will be one of many subjects negotiated between the county and Stanford. But PAUSD is already informing the discussion. Stanford and PAUSD administrative leadership began a series of meetings last summer, continuing into the fall, in an effort to examine the potential effects the general-use permit might have on Palo Alto schools.

As those discussions were ongoing, the PAUSD board passed a resolution in November outlining its requests for consideration in our talks with the county and seeking a decision directly from the supervisors. Since November, we have attempted to continue exchanging information with school district administrative leadership on general-use permit topics, including a meeting as recently as Feb. 9.

We understand that our inability to discuss specific proposals right now is causing anxiety among some members of the community, which we deeply regret. We look forward to being able to share in more detail how Stanford proposes to support our local schools as soon as we are able to do so.

In the meantime, I want to share a few pieces of context that I hope will help build awareness and constructive community conversation on this very important issue.

First, according to Santa Clara County’s independent environmental analysis, Stanford’s proposed on-campus housing is estimated to produce no more than 275 additional students enrolled in Palo Alto K-12 schools over the next 17 years. Stanford has not proposed any housing configuration that would produce 1,446 students in Palo Alto, a figure that many have been.

The 275 students is a conservatively high estimate, as the student-generation rate used in the county’s analysis is higher than has actually occurred in similar housing elsewhere on Stanford’s lands.

Separately, the county conducted a theoretical analysis of what would happen if Stanford built much more housing than we have proposed. That is the source of the 1,446 number.

It’s also important to note that PAUSD enrollment declined in the current school year, more than the total number of K-12 school-age students projected to come from new Stanford housing over the next 17 years. Additionally, Santa Clara County’s environmental analysis concluded that there is sufficient capacity in existing schools to accommodate Stanford’s estimated new students from on-campus housing.

That doesn’t end the discussion, but it’s an important factual foundation for our community to have.

Second, while some of Stanford’s land is exempt from property tax because it is used for academic purposes, similar to other California universities and nonprofits such as Palo Alto Housing, as a whole Stanford lands provide high tax revenues to PAUSD compared to the relatively small number of K-12 students living on university lands.

In 2018, Stanford lands generated 6 percent of PAUSD student enrollment, with more than three-quarters of those students residing in homes that pay property tax. Meanwhile, the property-tax revenue from Stanford lands, both commercial and residential, generated approximately 17 percent of total property-tax revenue — worth $30 million. That level of support will increase in the future as existing commercial properties, such as those in the Stanford Research Park, are regularly redeveloped.

Stanford treasures its more than century-long relationship with families and schools in our local community. As an academic institution whose primary mission is to advance knowledge and learning, Stanford supports a range of programs that serve local educators and K-12 students. These include afterschool enrichment programs; professional development for local teachers; summer programs for teachers and students; placing teachers in neighboring communities; and free art museums.

As Stanford plans for its future, we are doing so with a renewed emphasis on our partnerships with Palo Alto schools and our shared goal that every student can thrive. We will continue to support our local schools, and we look forward to the ongoing conversation about how we can best do that.

More information can be found at gup.santaclara.edu/sites.

Martin Shell is vice president and chief external relations officer of Stanford University.

Letters

City auditor debate

Editor,

I believe the city council made a huge mistake in voting 6-1 to hire a consultant instead of a new city auditor. I was a senior performance auditor in the office of the city auditor for about seven years in the mid-2000s. I believe the debate about the future of the office over the last year has been a sham and an attempt to force out longtime employees because the most recent city auditor did not like them.

I have worked with two employees in the office and can vouch for their credibility and professionalism as auditors. They worked in the office many years, and there were no complaints about their competency. The suggestion on the Town Square (discussion forum) that staff caused prior city auditors to leave is simply false:

No prior city auditor cited staff competency or efficiency as a problem.

A few days after I spoke at the finance committee meeting in May, a City Council member asked me why the staff hadn’t simply come to council members.

I explained that city staff members are told it is inappropriate and out of protocol to speak directly to council members.

We should understand that our inability to discuss specific proposals right now is causing anxiety among some members of the community, which we deeply regret. We look forward to being able to share in more detail how Stanford proposes to support our local schools as soon as we are able to do so.

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Martin Shell is vice president and chief external relations officer of Stanford University.

When Palo Alto Utilities sells you clean energy, what they really do is pay particular power plants. Less environmentally friendly plants contribute to the power grid too. Unfortunately, the atmosphere does not respond to whom you buy back energy from — what goes into the air.

During the evening, the wind tends to die down and (obviously) there is no sunlight after. If there are not enough geothermal and hydroelectric power plants (batteries, flywheels, etc.) to make up the difference, what is left will be ones that use fossil fuels. The efficiency of these is typically under 40 percent. As a result, you may end up dumping as much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere as you would if you used an efficient gas-powered water heater.

The decision depends on the time of day during which these appliances are used and where these appliances would be located.

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Check Out Town Square!

Hundreds of local topics are being discussed by local residents on Town Square, a reader forum sponsored by the Weekly at PaloAltoOnline.com/square. Post your own comments, ask questions or just stay up on what people are talking about around town!
Cubberley Lecture Series presents:
The Neurodiversity Challenge: How Passion Drives Learning for All Students
An evening with Ron Suskind
Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, author and father

Ron Suskind will share an emerging view in the neurodiversity movement about these and all special needs children, with a message to meet them where they are, celebrate them as they are, and think differently about the nature of individualized education, achievement, and a meaningful life for us all.

Wednesday, March 6, 2019 | 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Hauck Auditorium, David & Joan Traitel Building
435 Lasuen Mall, Stanford University

Reception, 5:00 p.m. | Traitel Pavilion

Keynote followed by a conversation with

- Heidi M. Feldman
  HS, PhD; Edward C. Beach Professor in Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, Stanford School of Medicine
- Zina Jawadi
  BS ’16, MS ’18; Founder, Stanford Disability Initiative, President, Hearing Loss Association of America, California
- Elizabeth Kolaski
  EdD; Dean’s Scholar for Teaching and Learning, Stanford Graduate School of Education
- Maricela Montoya-Wilson
  BA ’08, MA ’09 – Stanford Teacher Education Program; Principal, Aspire East Palo Alto Charter School
- Marciela Monday-Wilson
  BA ’16, MA ’16 – Stanford Teacher Education Program; Principal, Aspire East Palo Alto Charter School
- Bill Koski
  J.D. ’03, Eric and Nancy Wright Professor of Clinical Education and Professor of Law, Stanford Law School

Tickets are required for this free event.
Register at ed.stanford.edu/alumni/cubberley-lecture/2019
Ticket Information:
Stanford Ticket Office
(650) 725-2787
A weekly guide to music, theater, art, culture, books and more, edited by Karla Kane

The Medium Is The Medicine

by Chriissi Angeles

According to sculptor and musician Lonnie Holley, art is a healing form of storytelling. On March 8, in conjunction with Stanford University’s Cantor Arts Center exhibition “The Medium is the Message: Art Since 1950,” which includes four of his pieces, Holley will speak about his work and perform some of his original music, giving attendees the chance to experience his storytelling in person.

In a recent interview with the Weekly, he compared his memories to a carousel, vivid recollections of his experiences growing up African-American in the deep south during the Jim Crow era spinning through his mind. One of 27 children in his Birmingham, Alabama, family and sent to the brutal Alabama Industrial School for Negro Children at age 8, the self-taught Holley’s life as an artist began when he carved tombstones to comfort his sister after beatings and neglect and hardship.

Today, his works articulate his views on themes including the environmental impact of human overconsumption, social and economic inequality, and the challenges that he, his family and many other African-Americans have faced over the past century.

“I think art is a therapy for everybody,” he said. “The thing about the human brain (is that) it has to rely on some type of comfort. That’s what art has been, not only for me but if you go back through the ages you’ll find out that is what allowed a lot of the artists to do some of their greatest work.”

Thanks to the attention and investment of art broker/collector William Arnett, Holley at age 69, is now receiving national recognition for his art, including previous exhibitions at the Smithsonian and Charleston, South Carolina, where slaves entered the United States to be sold. Inspired by his visit, Holley created the song as a metaphor for African-American transcendence, using himself as the leading character. The song describes Holley as a captured slave on a ship, who escapes through his imagination and witnesses the next 400 years as an ominous spirit floating above the ship.

Based on the song, Holley created a short film, which was highlighted at Sundance Film Festival in January. The 20-minute film chronicles a day of Holley’s life, with Holley’s song as the soundtrack. Multiple cameos of his art are in the film, including a wire headdress worn by Holley during a boat ride. Until the last minute, the film has no spoken dialogue.

“It’s a hard film to explain because when it premiered at Sundance, the people at Sundance, who I guess saw 9,000 short films before selecting it, said, ‘It wasn’t like any of the other films we’ve seen.’” Arnett said. “It’s so familiar, and so powerful and so moving. Like his music, when you hear it or watch it, you say, ‘I don’t know what it’s like.’ It’s singular in its approach. It is (continued on page 21)

What: “Lonnie Holley: Conversation and Concert.”
When: Friday, March 8, at 5:30 p.m.
Where: Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive, Stanford.
Cost: Free.
Local teens on the big screen

‘The Edge of Success’ lets Palo Alto students speak for themselves

by Karla Kane

The documentary “The Edge of Success,” screening this month as part of the annual Cinequest Film & Creativity Festival in Redwood City and San Jose, takes an intimate look at the stressors faced by Palo Alto teenagers. For locals, it’s an all-too-familiar story. Growing up in Palo Alto, kids are afforded an abundance of opportunities, with highly rated schools and a high-achieving community. While the affluent, innovative Silicon Valley environment offers benefits, by the time they reach high school, many teens are overwhelmed by pressure to meet expectations of academic perfection and “success” in a world dominated by Stanford University and tech giants such as Facebook and Google. Two teen suicide clusters, in 2009-2010 and 2014-2015, made Palo Alto the focus of grim national and international attention and in the subsequent years, local schools have expanded their mental health efforts.

“The Edge of Success” follows six high schoolers over the course of two school years as they discuss their experiences navigating adolescence following the second suicide cluster. It also includes interviews with their parents, teachers and other community members, such as Palo Alto Unified School District Board of Education member Ken Dauber, “How to Raise an Adult” author/former Stanford dean/PAUSD parent Julie Lythcott-Haims and Challenge Success President Keisha Haims and writer Liza Meak of Redwood City, a documentarian and mother of three daughters, including a current high schooler, who shared her own personal story. “I actually identify with a lot of their experiences. This has always been a place with certain characteristics...it breeds this culture of success. People have always held themselves to a very high standard,” she said.

When she moved back to the area after college, around the time of the first suicide cluster, she felt that while the tragedies were receiving a lot of media attention, she wasn’t hearing much from the teen community itself. “There wasn’t a lot of student voice, allowing them to actually influence anything that was being done about it. That was how I got interested in this project, trying to tell the story from the student perspective,” she said. She eventually connected with co-director and writer Liza Meak of Redwood City, a documentarian and mother of three daughters, including a current high schooler, who shared her interest in the topic and passion for giving teens a platform. “Meak and I reached out to students, meeting with them for coffee at Philz and gaining their trust as they shared their stories. “What solidified our relationships with these kids is the idea that we weren’t just going to talk to them one time and be done. It wasn’t going to be one interview, one snapshot of who they are at one given moment,” Meak said. “We really were going to follow them for two years. They liked and appreciated that opportunity.”

In the film, students describe the scorn they are faced with if they don’t sign up for enough AP classes or show sufficient interest in the topic and passion for giving teens a platform. “It’s hard to feel like what you’re doing is adequate or enough because everyone around you is doing so much more,” one student states. Over the course of the film, though, they also gain insights, form bonds and open up about their mental health. The documentary also explores some of the attempts at improving the socioemotional
Holley’s own unique thing.” Each song created by Holley is considered a work-in-progress to build upon as inspiration strikes. Because he never performs the same piece of music twice, his audience can expect a completely unique, off-the-cuff presentation where you look one way to everyone else but deep down you’re feeling a different way was really eye-opening,” she said. Holley plans to create a one-of-a-kind improvisational music experience after a public conversation with curator Aleesa Alexander. Through his work (some of which is on view at the Cantor after a public conversation with curator Aleesa Alexander. “I’m a proud mother hen over these kids,” Meak said. “The reason they wanted to be part of the film is they all wanted to make a difference in any way they could for other kids. To make the high school experience a little easier for other people.”

“The Edge of Success” screens at Century 20 in Redwood City on Sunday, March 10 at 3:00 p.m. and Sunday, March 17, at 11 a.m. and at the Hammer Theatre in San Jose on Saturday, March 16, at 11:30 a.m. For more information on the film, go to edgeofsuccessmovie.com. Cinequest runs March 5-17. For complete schedule, list and descriptions of films, theater locations and more, go to cinequest.org.

Freelance writer Chrissi Angeles can be emailed at chrissiangeles@gmail.com.

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FRI, MAR 15
7:00 PM & 9:00 PM
BING STUDIO

Canela y Limón: Germán López and Antonio Toledo


**Average Sales Price***

<table>
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<tr>
<th>DeLeon Realty</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alain Pinel Realtors</td>
<td>$1,900,689.98</td>
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**Average DOM (Days On Market)**

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<td>29 Days</td>
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**Integrity Matters**

In a recent ad published on February 15, 2019 in the Palo Alto Weekly, Alain Pinel Realtors (“APR”) falsely claimed that “[they have] the highest average sales price in the nation.” This is simply untrue. In fact, it is not even close, and they cite no source whatsoever. As reflected above, DeLeon Realty’s average sales price is significantly higher than APR’s.

Additionally, on average DeLeon Realty spends over 5 times as much preparing and marketing each of our listings when compared to APR. We also have a higher list price to sales price ratio, shorter days on market, higher price per square foot ratio, and we pay to stage all of our listings - whereas APR does not. Also, DeLeon Realty is the only major local brokerage that does not take commission from both sides of any transaction.

When selecting an agent, it is important to get all the facts. When you do, we are confident that you will select DeLeon Realty.

*Source: BrokerMetrics, 02/01/2018-1/31/2019, Santa Clara & San Mateo counties. All property types.

**Save More with Our 3% Model**

When the DeLeon Listing Team receives an offer from a DeLeon buyer agent, or any buyer not represented by an agent, DeLeon Realty will waive all of the buyer’s side commission if the offer is accepted. Our sellers have saved over $5.7 million since this program started in April 2017. To learn more about our 3% model, please contact us.
### Sales Volume of the Top Listing Agent or Team

at Palo Alto Top Real Estate Brokerages

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>#1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Brokerage</td>
<td>DeLeon Realty’s Top Listing Team</td>
<td>Golden Gate Sotheby’s Top Team</td>
<td>Compass Top Listing Team</td>
<td>Keller Williams Palo Alto Top Agent</td>
<td>Intero Real Estate Services Top Listing Agent</td>
<td>Zane MacGregor’s Top Listing Agent</td>
<td>Alain Pinel Realtors’ Top Listing Agent</td>
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<td>Top Listing Agent or Team at the Brokerage</td>
<td>Michael Repka</td>
<td>Compass</td>
<td>Keller Williams</td>
<td>Intero Real Estate Services</td>
<td>Zane MacGregor</td>
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<td>96.72%</td>
<td>105.2%</td>
<td>99.82%</td>
<td>105.57%</td>
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**Listings Units**

- Michael Repka: DeLeon Realty’s Top Listing Team
- Golden Gate Sotheby’s Top Listing Team
- Compass Top Listing Team
- Keller Williams Palo Alto Top Listing Agent
- Intero Real Estate Services Top Listing Agent
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**List Volume**

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- Compass Top Listing Team
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Eating Out

A bridge to Japan

Nijiya Market in Mountain View offers a trove of Japanese specialties

Story by Elena Kadvany  |  Photos by Veronica Weber

Nijiya Market’s origin story is a familiar one. Longing for the flavors of one’s homeland, an immigrant creates a space — a grocery store, a restaurant, a street food stand — filled with native foods, a taste of the familiar in an unfamiliar place.

Tsujino, who died in November, 1986. “Niji” means rainbow and “ya” means store in Japanese; the store’s rainbow icon represents a bridge between Japan and America, according to Mountain View store manager Akira Shibuya.

In this case, Saburomaru Tsujino came to the United States in 1965. Yearning for Japanese food and chafing against a diet of heavy American hamburgers and steaks, he started ordering favorite products from Japan. He realized the potential of selling the imported goods and opened the first Nijiya Market in San Diego in 1986. “Niji” means rainbow and “ya” means store in Japanese; the store’s rainbow icon represents a bridge between Japan and America, according to Mountain View store manager Akira Shibuya.

Tsujino, who died in November, took providing Japanese immigrants with a taste of home and educating others about Japanese food culture to the next level. Nijiya growth to a dozen locations, providing a rainbow of imported goods and opening the first Nijiya Market in San Diego in 1986. “Niji” means rainbow and “ya” means store in Japanese; the store’s rainbow icon represents a bridge between Japan and America, according to Mountain View store manager Akira Shibuya.

11
11

Nijiya Market in Mountain View offers a trove of Japanese specialties

Story by Elena Kadvany  |  Photos by Veronica Weber

Nijiya Market in Mountain View offers a trove of Japanese specialties

Story by Elena Kadvany  |  Photos by Veronica Weber

with fresh noodles, thin slices of chashu and an egg. The broth recipe is a secret that Shibuya won’t reveal, even if you ask nicely. At $5.50, the sansai soba bowl — assorted pickled vegetables served over a tangle of fresh soba in a cleansing broth — is perhaps one of the Peninsula’s best lunch deals. Nijiya also serves curry soup, kakiage (seafood tempura over noodles), karaage and curry rice. Extra toppings like green onion, nori, and togarashi are humbly offered in self-service tubs with plastic silverware.

Next to the deli is a heavenly cold-food section practically overflowing with fresh sushi, both rolls and nigiri; chirashi; katsu and tamago sandwiches; onigiri; and bento boxes. Nijiya grows and harvests its own rice in the Sacramento Valley.

If you’re unfamiliar with Japanese foods, pick up a free copy of Gochiso, Nijiya’s glossy food magazine, packed with more than 100 pages of recipes, explanations of ingredients and Japanese history. The 2017 edition includes a history of soba, a feature on the precious Karaimo sweet potato cake and ideas for how to cook with goya, a bitter, bright green, oblong-shaped melon.

Shibuya has worked for Nijiya for a decade, first in Los Angeles and then Northern California. There are Nijiya markets in San Mateo, San Jose and San Francisco; throughout Southern California; and two in Hawaii. The Mountain View store is its own community, he said, particularly for families with young children in the area.

Shibuya grew up in Osaka, Japan, listening to American music (his parents loved The Beatles) and watching American films. He wanted to come to the United States ever since watching a movie about California — he doesn’t remember now what it was called — and decamped for the Golden State after graduating from university at 26 years old.

There are few Japanese foods he misses, he said, because most of them are available at Nijiya Market.

“We have, I think, everything,” Shibuya said. Staff Writer Elena Kadvany can be emailed at ekadvany@paweweekly.com.

Nijiya Market, 143 E. El Camino Real, Mountain View; 650-691-1600; nijiya.com

Hours: Monday-Sunday, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Amhat Chattamanokul, a cashier at Nijiya Market in Mountain View, takes customers’ lunch orders.

Nijiya Market sells a range of fresh produce, including from its own 25-acre farm.

Nijiya Market’s ramen with chashu, green onions, egg and nori.
Flying off into the sunset

*How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World*

The DreamWorks Animation trilogy has always been something special, an out-of-left-field surprise that prioritized artfully telling a good story rather than bowing to the presumptions of what makes a hit animated family picture.

The third and final installment stays true to form, satisfactorily wrapping up the story of characters in whom audiences have become invested. The films’ human hero, Hiccup (Jay Baruchel), now reigns as chief of Berk, responsible for the safety of its human and dragon cohabitants. When a new threat emerges in dragon killer Grimmel the Grisly (F. Murray Abraham), Hiccup recalls tales his father (Gerard Butler) told him of a “hidden world.”

Hiccup determines that this hidden world represents the best chance of long-term survival for the Berkians, and so begins a quest that promises big changes for everyone, but especially Hiccup and his loyal dragon Toothless.

The “boy and his dragon” dynamic remains front and center, although challenged by both spreading their wings in maturity. Toothless’ animalistic instincts and independence threaten the bond between the dragon and Hiccup. Add the formidable, Disney-style villain who just wants Toothless dead, and the picture has plenty of rooting interest and the setup for an emotional payoff.

Part of what has always made the “Dragon” movies distinctive is its commitment to grounding the reality of its universe: The aesthetic remains largely photorealistic (with costumes and designs that have drifted ever closer to a geek-pleasing “Game of Thrones” look) and the majestic dragons defiantly non-anthropomorphic. Thrillingly designed action and John Powell’s dynamic score contribute to the story’s epic sweep. Fans will have no doubt weep at this heartfelt conclusion to the trilogy, although its coda promises at least the opportunity for a new trilogy to come.

For now, though, the little franchise that could is all grown up and ready to leave the nest, so wipe that tear away and say goodbye, kids. Rated PG for adventure action and some mild rude humor. One hour, 44 minutes.

— Peter Canavese

OPENINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOVIES NOW SHOWING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

* Skip it ** Some redeeming qualities

America Ferrera and Jay Baruchel star in “How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World.”


* Skip it ** Some redeeming qualities

A good bet +++++ Outstanding

Aquarius: 430 Emerson St., Palo Alto (For recorded listings: 327-3241) tinyurl.com/Aquariuspa
Century Cinema 16: 1500 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View tinyurl.com/Century16
Century 20 Downtown: 825 Midfield Road, Redwood City tinyurl.com/Century20
CineArts at Palo Alto Square: 3000 El Camino Real, Palo Alto (For information: 433-0128) tinyurl.com/Pasquarie
Guild: 549 El Camino Real, Menlo Park (For recorded listings: 506-6367) tinyurl.com/Guildmp
ShowPlace Icon: 2575 California St. #300, Mountain View tinyurl.com/ShowPlaceIcon
Stanford Theatre: 221 University Ave., Palo Alto (For recorded listings: 324-3701) Stanfordtheatre.org

Find trailers, star ratings and reviews on the web at PaloAltoOnline.com/movies

www.PaloAltoOnline.com • Palo Alto Weekly • March 1, 2019 • Page 25
A new, state-of-the-art enrichment center for older adults in downtown Palo Alto opens its doors to the public Monday, April 1.

The 22,000-square-foot center, called Avenidas@450Bryant, combines the senior service agency’s carefully renovated historic home in Palo Alto’s former police headquarters with a newly constructed contemporary section, representing a doubling of the previous space. Though separate in structure and design features, the old and new buildings share plumbing and heating systems and are seamlessly connected by a corridor. The additional space will support an abundance of new programming for seniors that was in high demand but simply not possible to accommodate in the old building, said Avenidas CEO Amy Andonian.

“We’re going to be able to really focus on health and wellness,” Andonian said. “We’ll have the opportunity to do more evidence-based programs in partnership with groups like Stanford, Palo Alto Medical Foundation and El Camino Hospital. We want to be a community hub where people can come to access any program or service or resource to age successfully.”

For yoga and Pilates buffs, a soft floor with a walnut finish in the new fitness studio replaces the concrete one where classes previously were held in the old building. The new center has dedicated spaces for art classes, technology, reading, discussion groups, game playing — even separate rooms for massage and podiatry consultations.

There’s also office space

The senior services agency Avenidas will continue some of its programs in the I Building of Cubberley Community Center, which served as its headquarters for 18 months during the construction and renovation of the Avenidas downtown headquarters.

The public is invited to a free open house Saturday, March 23, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. to preview programs that will be offered at newly named Avenidas@Cubberley center. Programs will include bridge, tax advising, jewelry making, vocal training, dance fitness, Avenidas Blooms — which recycles, rearranges and distributes floral arrangements to those in need — and a new culture club designed to provide classes and activities for a culturally diverse population, initially focusing on Mandarin speakers. The culture club will offer Tai chi, brush painting, pingpong and Mahjong.

Activities and classes officially begin at Avenidas@Cubberley on Monday, April 1.

— Chris Kenrick

The newly renovated Avenidas@450Bryant is a mix of old and new. The center features the historic architecture of the original Birge Clark building as well as a new and modern 11,000-square-foot Wellness Center, which are connected by a pedestrian bridge. The top of the new wing can be seen on the right, behind the Birge Clark building.

The new Wellness Center wing at Avenidas includes a third-story balcony that looks out onto downtown Palo Alto. The space will provide outdoor lounge space that also can be used for special events. Photo by Veronica Weber.
A large art piece made by artist Martin Webb hangs in the rear entrance to the Wellness Center at the newly renovated Avenidas building.
# MARCH 2019

## Calendar of Events

### Mar 1
Wine Tasting
“Rated Wines from France,” 3-5pm, Avenidas@Cubberley. Bring your own glass. RSVP required. Call 650-289-5400. $12/15

### Mar 2
Avenidas Blooms and Avenidas@Cubberley. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 3
Avenidas@Cubberley. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 4
Advanced Health Care Directive
Appts available, Avenidas@Cubberley. Call 650-289-5400 for appt. Free.

### Mar 5
Parkinson’s Support Group
1pm, Cubberley Community Center. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 6
Senior Adult Legal Assistance
Appts available, Avenidas@Cubberley. Call to schedule 650-289-5400. $30

### Mar 7
“Bringing the Art to You” w/ Palo Alto Art Center
Teen Leadership
Slide show on current exhibit, discussion, art project, and reception, 5:30-7pm Avenidas@Cubberley. RSVP required by 12 noon 3/5. Call 650-289-5400. Free

### Mar 8
AARP Tax Counseling
Every Friday during tax season, Avenidas@Cubberley. Appointment required. Call 650-289-5400. Free

### Mar 9
Open House at Avenidas
450 Bryant Street. 9-11am for members and 12-2 for the public. Check out our new Enrichment Center!

### Mar 10
Avenidas Village Coffee Chat
2pm, Avenidas@450 Bryant. Space is limited. RSVP required. Call 650-289-5405. Free

### Mar 11
UNA Film Festival
La Americana, 3-4:30pm @ Channing House. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 12
Tinnitus Support Group
6:45-8:15pm, Avenidas@Cubberley. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 13
Avenidas Hikers
Every Thursday. 6:30-7:30pm, Avenidas@Cubberley. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 14
Avenidas Hikers
Every Thursday. 6:30-7:30pm, Avenidas@Cubberley. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 15
Club Aveneedles (Needlework Club)
Every Friday, 2-4pm, Avenidas@Cubberley. Bring your own project. Light instruction only. Drop-in, free

### Mar 16
Senior Adult Legal Assistance
Appts available, Avenidas@Cubberley. Call to schedule 650-289-5400. $30

### Mar 17
Social Bridge
Every Friday, 1-4pm, Avenidas@Cubberley. Call 650-289-5436 for more info. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 18
Avenidas Hikers
Every Thursday, 6:30-7:30pm, Avenidas@Cubberley. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 19
Avenidas Village Coffee Chat
2pm, Avenidas@450 Bryant. Space is limited. RSVP required. Call 650-289-5405. Free

### Mar 20
Mindfulness Meditation
Every Wednesday, 2:30-3:30pm, Avenidas@Cubberley. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 21
Tinnitus Support Group
6:45-8:15pm, Avenidas@Cubberley. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 22
Social Bridge
Every Friday, 1-4pm, Avenidas@Cubberley. Call 650-289-5436 for more info. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 23
Cubberley Day
Avenidas Blooms and Avenidas Culture Club Open House, 11am-1pm, Cubberley Community Center. Call 650-289-5436 for more info. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 24
Blood Pressure Screening
9:30-10:30am, Senior Friendship Day@Cubberley, Building M. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 25
Senior Friendship Day@Cubberley, Building M. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 26
Workshop: “Pole Walking for Balance, Exercise and Mobility” by Jayah Faye Paley, CPT/Mobility Coach 9am-12pm, Avenidas@450 Bryant. Pre-registration required. Call 650-289-5400. $35

### Mar 27
Book Club – The Feather Thief: Beauty, Obsession, and the Natural History Heist of the Century by Kirk Wallace Johnson 2:30-4pm, Avenidas@Cubberley. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 28
Avenidas@450 Bryant. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 29
Tuina class
Every Friday, 10-11:30am, Avenidas@Cubberley. Drop-in, free.

### Mar 30
Financial Conference
8:30am-3:45pm, Mitchell Park Community Center. Call 650-289-5445 to register. $45/$55.

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SeniorsAtHome.org

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### Avenidas
**2019 Financial Conference**

“Knowledge Pays Dividends”

*Saturday, March 30
8:30am-3:45pm*

Mitchell Park Community Center, 3700 Middlefield Rd, Palo Alto

For complete schedule or info about Avenidas events, call 650-289-5400.
Living Well

Virtual Reality Care Training ... The home care company Care Indeed has launched Virtual Reality Dementia Training, a program aimed at teaching caregivers and community members skills needed to establish cooperative, caring relationships with people with dementia. The three-dimensional training environment provides many of the same benefits of training in a physical environment, but without the safety risks, the company said. The 3D training, powered by the virtual reality training company Strivr, is available to the general public as well as to Care Indeed clients. For more information, go to careindeed.com.

Music in the Afternoon ... The Community Tuesdays program of the Oshman Family Jewish Community Center presents Tangos, Romantics and the Jewish Connection on Tuesday, March 5. The Capriccio Trio will play selections from piano trios composed by the Russian masters Tchaikovsky and Arensky and there will be a short lecture explaining the connection between Russian Jews and the Argentinean tangos. The concert will be from 1:30 p.m. in the Schultz Cultural Arts Hall of the JCC. $15 at the door. No reservations necessary. For more information, contact Michelle Rosengaus at 650 223-8616 or mrosengaus@paloaltojcc.org.

Immigrant’s Journey ... The United Nations Association Film Festival presents the 2008 documentary "La Americana," on Monday, March 11. The movie follows the journey of Carmen, an undocumented immigrant, from Bolivia to New York City and back. Her story is woven into the current immigration crisis in the United States. Produced and directed by Nicholas Bruckman the 85-minute documentary will be shown at 3 p.m. at Channing House, 850 Webster Street. Free and open to the community.

Meet Golda ... Historical impressionist Peter M. Small will present a portrait of Golda Meir, Israel’s prime minister from 1969 to 1974, on Tuesday, March 12. Small, a history teacher who lived in Israel for six years where he was a reservist in the Israeli Defense Forces, has performed nationally for a variety of audiences and venues, including the presidential libraries of Ronald Reagan, Richard Nixon, Herbert Hoover and George H.W. Bush. His costumed performances have included roles as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Edison, Harry Truman, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Theodore Roosevelt. The performance will be from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Schultz Cultural Arts Hall of the Oshman Family Jewish Community Center. $15. For more information contact Michelle Rosengaus at 650 223-8616 or mrosengaus@paloaltojcc.org.

Brain Health ... Aging experts will discuss aspects of brain health, including prevention of cognitive decline, healthy eating, sleeping and socializing in a six-part series coming to Avenidas this spring. The lectures will be Tuesdays, beginning May 7 and ending June 11, from 11 a.m to noon, at Avenidas@450Bryant. Lecturers include Stanford psychologist and professor of research Dolores Gallagher-Thompson, and Ann Ellbrey and Rita Ghatik of the Optimal Aging Center. The lectures are free but space is limited and pre-registration is required.

Items for Senior Focus may be emailed to Palo Alto Weekly Contributing Writer Chris Kenrick at ckenrick@pawweekly.com.

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It’s a startling statistic: The California monarch butterfly population has dropped 86 percent since last year. This was the information provided last month by the Xerces Society, a science-based organization focusing on the conservation, protection and restoration of invertebrate habitats. During the society’s annual Western Monarch Thanksgiving count, it was reported there were only 28,429 monarchs in the state.

The count, which was completed in November 2018, had approxi-mately 100 volunteers counting monarchs across 213 sites throughout California. Although some of the loss in butterfly num-
bers may be attributed to massive wildfires throughout the state last year and climate change affecting the world, the truth is that the monarch butterfly population has been steadily declining since the 1990s.

“In the ’90s, a lot of scientists and lovers of monarchs realized the numbers were down, so there has been an effort for the last 25 years to tag the monarchs, try to figure out where they’re going, try to get everybody to plant milkweed and track migrations,” said Palo Alto Garden Club Conserva-
tion member Eleanor Laney, who is one of the leaders of the garden club’s Monarch Butterfly Project. The project encourages residents to create butterfly-friendly gar-
dens. Last year, the project successfully released 100 monarchs, which may not seem like very many, but Laney said that butterfly eggs are “considered caviar” to other insects and only one of ev-
ery 100 eggs completes its growth cycle to become a butterfly.

Another person doing her part to protect monarch populations is landscape designer Rebecca Schoenenberger, who owns Cal-
ifornia Nativecapes. As a UC master gardener, Schoenenberger said that there’s still much to learn about the monarch butterfly popula-
tion, and although scientists are still studying this much-loved in-
sect, the decline in population is alarming.

“There are a lot of things we don’t know about monarchs,” she said. “What we do know is that population counts have dropped dramatically over the last couple of years. There’s not really spe-
cific evidence pointing to any single factor. It’s probably multiple factors as to why that’s happen-
ing, including pesticide use and habitat loss and destruction. Only certain habitats are protected and there are only a handful of those in California.”

There also has been a slight surge in recent years of homeowners installing non-insect-friendly landscapes, which eliminates a food source for monarch butter-
flies. Another problem, Laney said, is the use of pesticides, par-
ticularly those with glyphosate, which kills milkweed plants.

“The problem now is the only thing that the monarch will lay her eggs on is milkweed,” said Laney. “If there’s no milkweed, there are no monarchs.”

To increase the amount of milk-
weed in people’s yards, the Mon-
arch Butterfly Project encourages Palo Alto Garden Club members and their neighbors to plant na-
tive milkweed (as opposed to the tropical type) in their gardens in an effort to create a birthing center for monarchs, who die after laying their eggs, and a food source for caterpillars after they hatch.

Both Schoenenberger and Laney are adamant about the need to plant the right kind of milkweed, the native form, rather than non-
native strains found in some murs-
eries, which are toxic to monarchs. “A big problem is the tropical milkweed,” said Schoenenberger.

“It’s usually what’s available at the nursery and often from Mexico. It doesn’t go dormant in the winter and will build up a parasite that is deadly to monarchs. It’s like junk food or drugs. It builds up with this parasite and the parasite hosts inside the monarch when it’s a lar-
vae. It prevents the monarch from growing.”

Laney said the tropical milk-
weed has pretty orange and yel-
low flowers.

“People love it,” she said. “And, the monarchs love it” even though it’s not good for them.

Laney encourages those who want to plant tropical milkweed to cut it back throughout the winter.

“That way you have cut off all of the potentially infected leaves,” she said.

Another important part of a but-
terfly-friendly landscape are nec-
tar plants, which provide food and energy when monarchs emerge from their cocoons and prepare to continue on their journey north.

Ideal for these plants also will be California natives.

“A garden that supports mon-
arch has nectar plants and native milkweed plants and a couple of types of milkweed,” said Laney. “Milkweed is a nursery plant for the monarch,” said Schoenenberger. “It provides food for the caterpillars, and flowers provide food for the butterflies. The num-
bers are telling us we’re at a criti-
cal point with the monarchs and our numbers are telling us that we have to do something.”

Melissa McKenzie is a freelance writer for the Weekly. She can be emailed at melissa.m.mckenzie@gmail.com.

**Butterfly gardens**

Local garden club aims to create safe havens for monarchs

**by Melissa McKenzie**

PLANT SOME SEEDS ... Go to Hidden Villa on Saturday, March 9, at 1 p.m., for a 45-minute activity on “Simple Seed Planters.” Make your very own seed planter using just a few recycled materials and then hunt for wild seeds on the farm. Pour seeds in the new planter and take it home. To register, go to hiddenvilla.org.

**JAPANESE MAPLES 101 ... Join experts at Sunnyservices Nursery in Palo Alto for a free class on how to plant Japanese maples on Sunday, March 10. With more than 1,000 varieties of Japanese maples, the selection process can seem daunting. In this 30-minute seminar, garden experts will discuss selection, planting and care. Sunnyservices Nursery is located at 725 San Antonio Road, Palo Alto. To register, go to sunnyservicesnursery.com.

**Japanese maples:** Sunnyservices Nursery in Palo Alto

**Five ways to attract butterflies to your garden**

1. Select your native milkweed. According to the Xerces Society, California native milkweeds include California milkweed (asclepias californica), purple milkweed/heartleaf milkweed (asclepias cor-dofoila), woolly pod milkweed/Indian milkweed (asclepias eriocarpa), narrow-leaved milkweed (asclepias fascicularis), showy milkweed (asclepias speciosa).

2. Plant your milkweed, which is drought tolerant and requires mini-
mal care, in the sun and near nectar plants. Laney believes a mini-
malist butterfly nursery should contain a minimum of three native milkweed plants and two pollinating plants.

3. When choosing your nectar, Laney recommends the following plants: verbena, clarkia, yarrow, tithonia, California buckwheat and woolly sunflower. Schoenenberger said she keeps zinnias and dahlias in her summer garden because they’re big, bright flowers for butterflies to land on.

4. Get your neighbors to plant butterfly-friendly habitat plants to give migrating monarchs more options.

5. Do not use any pesticides, as even organic pesticides can be fatal to butterfly colonies.

—Melissa McKenzie

**This artist’s rendering shows pale pink milkweed flowers, which provide food for monarch butterflies. “Milkweed is a nursery plant for the monarch,” master gardener Rebecca Schoenenberger said.**

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DRE #01854880
California Housing Affordability Improves Slightly in Q4 2018

With lower home prices, more Californians could afford a home purchase in the fourth quarter of 2018 compared to the previous quarter, but the California Association of REALTORS® reports higher interest rates lowered affordability from the previous year for most counties.

According to C.A.R.'s Traditional Housing Affordability Index, the percentage of homebuyers who could afford to purchase a median-priced, single-family home in California in fourth-quarter 2018 edged up to 28 percent from 27 percent in the third quarter of 2018, but that percentage was down from 29 percent in the fourth quarter a year ago.

The index, which is considered the most fundamental measure of housing well-being for homebuyers in the state, has been below 30 percent for six of the past seven quarters. California’s housing affordability index hit a peak of 56 percent in the first quarter of 2012.

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PAC-12 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Stanford looks to touch the wall first again
Eastin, Ruck lead another talented group

by Rick Eymer

The top-ranked Stanford women's swimming and diving team would be satisfied if this year's Pac-12 championships in Federal Way, Wash., turn out the same way as last year's event.

It would mean a third consecutive conference title, something no team has done in 10 years. Stanford last won three straight from 1997-99, part of a 13-year streak.

There aren't many teams who can lose two Olympic gold medalists in one year and still feel confident they can compete for not only a conference title but a national title as well.

With Katie Ledecky and Simone Manuel, the past two NCAA titles seemed rather easy. It's never easy, of course, and this year may prove to bear that out.

Ledecky and Manuel allowed Stanford to dominate the freestyle events. That won't be the case this year.

Still, the roster is full of swimmers with international experience and senior team captain Ella Eastin, the Pac-12 Scholar-Athlete of the Year, is at the top of the list. She owns eight Pac-12 titles, is a 14-time All-America and 10-time national champion, including the 400 individual medley the past three years.

Eastin holds four American, NCAA and school records and is the reigning NCAA Championships Swimmer of the Meet.

Eastin, with freshman Taylor Ruck, a two-time Olympic medalist with Canada, helped Stanford open the conference meet the same way they did last year; with a pair of seconds in the 200 medley relay and the 200 free relay.

The Cardinal finished second in the 800 freestyle relay with another A qualifying time of 6:51.69. Ruck opened with the fourth-fastest 200 free in school history at 1:42.80 and was followed by Eastin (1:42.55) and Katie Drabot (1:43.01) to automatically qualify for the NCAA meet.

In the 200 IM, Cardinal freshman Alix Rieb, Drabot and Forde qualified for the championship final, with seniors Kim Williams and Zoe Bartel reaching the B final.

Castilleja grad Natalie Tuck, who scored in two events for Cal in last year's meet, also swam in the 200 IM.

Ruck is the only Stanford swimmer to reach the A final of the 50 free while Cal had three qualifiers.

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NORCAL PLAYOFFS

Pinewood seeks a repeat performance

Pinewood girls basketball coach Doc Schoppeur would love to bottle the way his Panthers played in their NorCal Open Division playoff opener against St. Mary's of Stockton, a 79-47 victory at home, and take it to the East Bay on Saturday.

Pinewood's offensive execution Wednesday night was about as good as it gets.

"We were 19 of 22 on 2s and 12 of 26 on 3s," Doc Schoppeur said. "Nobody can beat us when we do that, Nobody.

The third-seeded Panthers (25-3) play No. 2 Carondelet (26-4) at 6 p.m. Saturday. Carondelet got the higher seed over Pinewood on the strength of a head-to-head win, 67-59, on Jan. 9.

"I feel we'll play better than the first time we played them," Pinewood's Kaitlyn Leung said. "We usually don't when we play with a chip on our shoulder."

St. Mary's had been burned by Pinewood's 3-point shooting in the last two postseason matchups between the teams. So the Rams came out with the game plan to try to take the 3 away.

In response, the Panthers made the decision to take the ball to the hoop. And oh boy did they ever.

Pinewood initiated the evening's proceedings with a layup

(continued on page 42)

Fullerton Friday.

open a three-game series at Cal State Fullerton. Brandon Wofford, hit two home runs and drove in four. His second blast cleared the trees and landed on Stanford Field Hockey's Varsity Turf. Kyle Stowers had a season-high three hits, Maverick Handley was 2-for-4 with two runs and Duke Kinnamon drove in a pair as part of Stanford's six-run fifth inning ...

Stanford women's basketball coach Tara Vanderveer is one of 16 coaches named as late season candidates for the 2019 Werner Ladder Naismith Women's College Coach of the Year. The Atlantic Tip Off Club announced Wednesday. She previously won the award in 1990 and 2011 ...

Future Stanford student-athlete Lia Anderson of Redwood High School in Larkspur was named the 2018-19 Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Runner of the Year on Wednesday. Anderson was surprised with the trophy immediately following his AP English Literature Composition class, surrounded by teammates, friends, family and coaches.

OF LOCAL NOTE ...

Cardinal Corner ...

... The 11th-ranked Stanford baseball team beat visiting USF, 8-3, Wednesday at Sunken Diamond. The Cardinal (7-1) open a three-game series at Cal State Fullerton Friday. Brandon Wofford, hit two home runs and drove in four. His second blast cleared the trees and landed on Stanford Field Hockey's Varsity Turf. Kyle Stowers had a season-high three hits, Maverick Handley was 2-for-4 with two runs and Duke Kinnamon drove in a pair as part of Stanford's six-run fifth inning ...

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drill. Basket after basket on drives to the rim and beautifully-executed pinpoint passes to backdoor cutters and roared to a 42-19 halftime lead.

And just to emphasize, Pinewood’s performance took place in the NorCal Open Division quarterfinals against, by definition, one of the six best teams in Northern California.

As the Panthers successfully attacked the rim, the 3-point shot started becoming available. Eight of their 12 3-pointers came in the second half, five in the fourth quarter. Pinewood shot 57 percent overall for the game.

Leung led Pinewood with a career-high 23 points. Normally more of an unsung hero, a complementary player, a passer and defensive hustler, Leung was looking for her shot Wednesday and had four 3-pointers among her nine field goals.

“I just wanted to do my part,” Leung said. “Get open and hit my shots.”

Stanford-bound Hannah Jump scored an easy 20, making two 3s, and Courtyni Thompson had 17, with three 3s, in a seemingly flawless outing.

Jump also had 11 rebounds, recording her second double-double in the past three games.

Point guard Annika Decker didn’t score, but had a great game passing to open teammates, finishing with seven assists. She went down with an ankle injury in the fourth quarter. Pinewood, which already lost one point guard, Una Iovonovic, to a knee injury, can’t afford to lose Decker.

She was hobbling around using a crutch after the game to keep her injured foot from touching the ground, but in a good mood.

“I’ll probably just tape it up,” she said. “Adrenaline will take care of the rest.”

Folashade Akinola
MENLO-ATHERTON
WRESTLING

The senior won the CIF State Girls Wrestling title at 189, recording pins in all five of her matches. Akinola, a runner-up last year, helped the Bears finish second, the school’s best showing.

Honorable mention

Katie Aufricht
Menlo soccer

Evelyn Calhoon*
Menlo-Atherton wrestling

Caitlyn Caricone
Sacred Heart Prep soccer

Stella El-Fishawy
Menlo soccer

Ila Lane*
Priory basketball

Charlotte Levison
Sacred Heart Prep basketball

James Beckwith*
Menlo-Atherton basketball

Max Colowick
Menlo soccer

Parker Isaacson
Sacred Heart Prep baseball

Justin Nam
Menlo baseball

Alexi Stavropoulos
Sacred Heart Prep soccer

Marvin Zou
Palo Alto basketball

*Previous winner

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ON THE AIR

Friday

College women’s swimming: Stanford at Pac-12 Championships, 10:30 a.m., Pac-12 Networks

College softball: Northwestern at Stanford, 4:45 p.m., Stanford Live Stream

College women’s basketball: Stanford at Washington State, 7 p.m., Pac-12 Networks

College softball: Montana at Stanford, 7 p.m., Stanford Live Stream

Saturday

College beach volleyball: Stanford at Pac-12 South Invite, 11:45 a.m., Pac-12 Networks

College beach volleyball: Stanford at Pac-12 South Invite, 2:15 p.m., Pac-12 Networks

College softball: Montana at Stanford, 4:45 p.m., Stanford Live Stream

College women’s swimming: Stanford at Pac-12 Championships, 6:30 p.m., Pac-12 Networks

College softball: North Dakota State at Stanford, 7 p.m., Stanford Live Stream

College men’s volleyball: BYU at Stanford, 7 p.m., Pac-12 Networks

Sunday

College beach volleyball: Stanford at Pac-12 South Invite, 10:30 a.m., Pac-12 Networks

College softball: North Dakota State at Stanford, 11:15 a.m., Stanford Live Stream

College men’s basketball: Washington at Stanford, 1 p.m., ESPN2

College softball: Cal Poly at Stanford, 1:30 p.m., Stanford Live Stream

College women’s basketball: Stanford at Washington, 2 p.m., Pac-12 Networks

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From The Palo Alto Weekly

ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

Folashade Akinola
MENLO-ATHERTON
WRESTLING

The senior won the CIF State Girls Wrestling title at 189, recording pins in all five of her matches. Akinola, a runner-up last year, helped the Bears finish second, the school’s best showing.

Isaiah Saams-Hoy
EASTSIDE PREP
BASKETBALL

The senior scored 54 points in the semifinals and finals of the Central Coast Section Division V tournament, helping the Panthers win their first CCS title in 10 years. He scored 33 in the final.

Honorable mention

Katie Aufricht
Menlo soccer

Evelyn Calhoon*
Menlo-Atherton wrestling

Caitlyn Caricone
Sacred Heart Prep soccer

Stella El-Fishawy
Menlo soccer

Ila Lane*
Priory basketball

Charlotte Levison
Sacred Heart Prep basketball

James Beckwith*
Menlo-Atherton basketball

Max Colowick
Menlo soccer

Parker Isaacson
Sacred Heart Prep baseball

Justin Nam
Menlo baseball

Alexi Stavropoulos
Sacred Heart Prep soccer

Marvin Zou
Palo Alto basketball

*Previous winner

Pinewood coach Doc Sheppler talks strategy with his team.
Menlo-Atherton grad Mia Paulsen competes in the 3-meter diving event on Friday.

Stanford

(continued from page 41)

Volpenhein for the “C” final. Pitzer recorded the fourth-fastest time in the prelims but swam as a non-qualifier.

Menlo-Atherton grad Mia Paulsen got her first chance to compete in the 1-meter diving event for the Cardinal, along with junior teammate Haley Farnsworth. Utah’s Clare Greenlow, a Menlo Park resident, also competed.

The four-day championship meet continues through Saturday inside Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center.

Friday’s events include the 400 IM, the 100 fly, the 200 free, the 100 breast, the 100 back and the 400 medley relay, historically one of Stanford’s strongest days.

There’s also 3-meter diving (with Paulsen and Greenlow).

Eainst, Forde and junior Allie Szekely are the top three seeds in the 400 IM and Kukurugya, Stevens, Raab and Glavinovich are also seeded among the top 12. Taic scored in the event last year.

Fackenthal, as a seventh-seed, is the lone Stanford competitor in the 100 fly, USC has four of the top seven seeds in the event.

Zhao, Zoe Bartel, Williams and Raab are all seeded among the top 11 for the 100 breast. Ruck, Nordman and Voss are among the top seven seeds in the 100 back.

Saturday’s events are the 1,650 free, the 200 back, 100 free, 200 breast, 200 fly, 400 free relay and platform diving.

Byrnes will be looking to three-peat in the 1,650. She won the event in 15:49.38 last year. Stevens is seeded third and Tanker- sley ninth.

Ruck, Eainst, Voss and Nordman are all capable of giving Stanford its first 200 back conference champion since Olympian Maya DiRado in 2012. They are the top four seeds. Szekely is seeded sixth.

Bartel, Forde, Szekely, Zhao and Raab are among the top seven seeds in the 200 breast.

Eainst has the nation’s second-best time this year (1:52.07) in the 200 fly and Drabot ranks sixth (1:53.38). Eastin has won the previous three Pac-12 titles in the 200 fly, swimming a 1:49.51 last year. She’s not entered this time around.

Drabot will carry the torch, with Forde and Kukurugya also in the mix. Campbell could also score.

Across

1 Kiefer, to Donald

4 Aggy. concerned with ergonomics

8 Upside-down V

13 It shares a key with @

14 “... like ___ of bricks”

15 Language family of Czech and Polish

17 Like some bazookas or missiles

19 2001 A.L. MVP ___ Suzuki

22 The Blue Demons of the NCAA

2747 Park Blvd, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

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Answers on page 25.

40 “Ballers” network

44 “No problem!”

46 ___ de gallo

50 “Everything’s fine!”

54 Showed disapproval

60 NASDAQ rival

62 “The Ice Storm” director Ang

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Answers on page 25.
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