Families create pandemic pods as learning alternative

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News  New policies restrict police use of force  Page 5
Arts  Filoli unveils outdoor sculpture exhibit  Page 22
Eating Out  Nut House calls it quits, for now  Page 26
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Crews work round-the-clock to control wildfire

With tens of thousands of residents evacuated, battle to contain CZU Lightning Complex fire continues 24/7

by Kate Bradshaw and Jocelyn Dong

From the start, fire crews trying to battle the CZU Lightning Complex wildfires faced a stacked deck. A freak lightning storm in the wee hours of Sunday, Aug. 16, had sparked 22 separate fires in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Whipping winds quickly spread five of those brush fires to several hundreds of acres each. Because of the mountainous terrain and dense forest, firefighters couldn’t even reach numerous blazes that were growing unchecked.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, known as Cal Fire, had just 350 personnel to deploy to a fire that officials soon started calling “unprecedented.”

“This fire is historic for an area like San Mateo-Santa Cruz. We have not seen fires burn like this in this unit for many, many years, and those fires were much smaller than what we have in front of us today,” said Ian Larkin, chief of the San Mateo-Santa Cruz unit of Cal Fire, on Aug. 20. “I want to thank all the firefighters out there doing their job today. They’re working extremely hard. There are some heroic efforts out there to save people and property every minute this fire is burning.”

With hundreds of wildfires across the state, stretching firefighting resources thin, Cal Fire chiefs immediately assigned their limited crews strategically to protect the communities in highest risk first.

Typically, there would be 10 to 20 times the current number of personnel dispatched to fight a fire of this magnitude, Cal Fire Operations Section Chief

(continued on page 29)

City backs restrictions on police use of force

New policies to emphasize de-escalation

by Gennady Sheyner

With the shooting of Jacob Blake in Wisconsin spurring a fresh wave of protests against police brutality, the Palo Alto City Council agreed on Monday to revise the Police Department’s policies on use of force and vowed to pursue broader initiatives to promote racial justice.

By a unanimous vote, the council endorsed a set of revisions to police policies that largely comport to recent recommendations from the city’s Human Relations Commission. The goal was to better align the city’s official policies with those in the 8 Can’t Wait platform, a project of Campaign Zero, a nonprofit that focuses on reducing police violence.

The campaign calls for a ban on chokeholds and requirements that officers prioritize de-escalation, provide warnings before shooting, intervene when they see excessive force, avoid shooting at moving vehicles, follow a use-of-force continuum and report all incidents of force.

In debating the changes to police policies, the council at times struggled to reconcile the recommendations of the Human Relations Commission, which supported broader restrictions on use of force, and those of department leadership, who urged the council

(continued on page 35)
CRUSHING IT ... An online dating network that recently launched at Stanford University aims to help students overcome an obstacle many people face when it comes to finding love: the fear of rejection.

Unlike Tinder, Bumble or OkCupid, which connect strangers with one another with the help of user profiles, Johan Gandhi’s Link works within a preexisting community. Gandhi hopes to establish his network at 100 colleges and universities across the U.S. and have a quarter-million users this time next year. As of Wednesday afternoon, 2,250 Stanford students were signed up. The rising sophomore’s idea for the app came through conversations with friends who had crushes but lacked the confidence to pursue them. Gandhi, a computer science major, started working on Link after classes ended earlier this year while in his hometown of London and rolled out the app earlier this month. Using their Stanford email address, students can fill out a form with their name and the names of up to three romantic interests once a month. Any two students whose names match up on the app receive an email. (The first round of matches were sent out a week after the app rolled out.) Users also have the option to include their crush’s email address, and Link will send that person a message.

An algorithm connects students whose names are a match on the app and no human ever looks at the data, Gandhi said. The app comes at a time when more people are spending most of their time at home and leveraging social connections. Gandhi has secured a $50,000 investment through the father of a friend he met through the university’s Blockchain club that will help pay server costs and expand the dating network that recently launched at Stanford University to redesign four rail crossings, residents can now attend community meetings on the complex project without leaving their homes. The city recently unveiled a Virtual Town Hall that allows residents to enter a digital version of Mitchell Park Community Center, and view presentations, videos and fact sheets about each of the nine options currently on the table for grade separation (the physical separation of the railroad tracks from streets at rail crossings). Participants can toggle between the eight design options (no information is available on the ninth option for Churchill Avenue), watch narrated video simulations of the alternatives and provide feedback to the city. The virtual town hall will remain in place until Sept. 7. The city also plans to hold a live, Virtual Town Hall Q&A session on its YouTube channel on Sept. 3 at 4 p.m., which will focus on the Meadow Drive and Charleston Road alternatives. The virtual room is designed to bring community members up to date and enabled to weigh in on our planning effort.” City Manager Ed Shikada said in a video presentation at the Virtual Town Hall, “You will literally be able to walk through, at a pace and in a setting you choose, to take a look around, get information, come back again if you’d like to, on demand, when it is convenient for you,” Shikada said. The pandemic has slowed down the effort and forced the stakeholder group, Expanded Community Advisory Panel, to cancel numerous meetings before holding virtual gatherings. Visit the Virtual Town Hall at vrpaloalto.com.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU ... Are you missing your loved ones during the pandemic? COVID-19 has limited the ability for many in our community to see and be with their loved ones. How has this affected you and your family? Do you find yourself thinking, “When will I see you again?” If you’re willing to share your experiences and concerns for an upcoming story, please contact Weekly Staff Writer Sue Dremann at sdremann@paweekly.com.
PUBLIC HEALTH

Flu season ramps up amid COVID-19
Clinics to change how vaccines are given during the epidemic

by Sue Dremann

A double-whammy of CO-
VID-19 and the upcom-
ing flu season has health
professionals worried there will be a large surge in hospitaliza-
tions and we may see people contract both diseases.

They are urging people to get vaccinated for influenza, while preparing to administer the vac-
cines in ways they haven’t done before.

“It’s never good to have two infections circulating at the same time that affect the lungs,” Dr. Yvonne Maldonado, Stanford professor of pediatric infectious diseases and health research and policy, said during a recent inter-
view. “Clearly, we are worried. It’s a pretty significant health problem.

“This is a year when you clearly want to get a vaccine,” Maldo-

nado said.

This fall and winter “are go-
ing to be probably one of the most difficult times that we’ve experienced in American pub-
lic health,” Robert Redfield di-
rector of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Preven-
tion warned during a July web-
in with the Journal of the

American Medical Association.

At Palo Alto Medical Founda-
tion (PAMF), Dr. William Isen-
berg, chief quality and safety offi-
cier for parent organization Sutter Health, said teams are tracking the flu virus. There is cause for concern when two major viruses attacking similar body systems converge.

“Flu always affects the respira-
atory system and COVID-19 mostly does. Either one can lower the immune system and will be a setup to have a weakened immune system,” he said.

There is evidence that people can contract both diseases. Very early in the pandemic, a patient in the Philippines had contracted COVID-19, influenza and pneumo-

nococcal disease, he said. And anytime someone is hospital-
ized, the risk of contracting an-
other infectious disease goes up, he said.

Isenberg said that’s why it’s critical for everyone to be vac-
cinated this year. To that end, PAMF’s pharmacy ordered influenza vaccines as soon as they were available and is well-
stocked. He cautioned people not to get their vaccinations too early, however, which would cause people to lose immunity later when the flu season is still active.

PAMF plans to start rolling out its vaccinations sometime af-
fter Labor Day. The best time to get that shot is from September through December.

To keep people safely socially distanced, PAMF will be han-
dling its flu-shot clinics by ap-
pointment, Cecilia Aviles, op-
erations executive for Sutter’s Peninsula care centers, said. Ap-
pointment can be made either by phone to set up a visit with a pa-
tient’s physician or by filling out a form online.

Depending on the location, some vaccinations will be given in parking lots and other outdoor locations.

The clinics are also scaling up to meet the greater demand. They are gauging how many patients they can see in an hour while maintaining social distancing.

“It’s also a dress rehearsal for when COVID vaccines become available,” she said.

“We have looked at if vaccina-
tion rates were to increase 10%, 20%, 30% and how to meet those numbers. We could be open lon-
ger; we would be available from

8 a.m. to 6 p.m. or on weekends or later, even,” she said.

The clinics will have contact-
less consent forms. When patients arrive, they can also use their smartphones to check in through

a new app, HelloPatient, which is accessible through their My Health Online account, she said.

Contrary to some rumors, the

(continued on page 9)

PUBLIC HEALTH

ELECTION 2020
Seven candidates run for East Palo Alto City Council
Three seats are up for grabs in this year's election

by Lloyd Lee

S seven candidates, includ-
ing three incumbents and vac-
ancies left by competitors in-
coming in this year’s East Palo Alto City Council election on Nov. 3, according to filing statements.

Council members Lisa Gauthier and Larry Moody and Vice May-
or Carlos Romero are all seeking a third term on the council, while Stewart Hyland, Webster Lincoln, Antonio Lopez and Juan Mendez are challenging them for their seats.

Among the list of issues can-
didates hope to prioritize are af-
fordable housing, displacement of residents, youth community development, employment op-
portunities and traffic manage-
ment—some of which may have been more exacerbated by oth-
ers by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has cratered the economy nationwide and continue to dis-
proportionately impact low-in-
come as well as Black and Latino communities.

As government affairs manager for Study.com, an online learning platform, and a longtime

resident of East Palo Alto, previ-
ously served as the city’s mayor in 2014 and again in 2018. She was also elected vice mayor in 2017 and hopes to continue her

work on the council.

“There’s still a lot of work to be done,” she said in an interview.

“We have a lot of development that’s coming in that we need to monitor and manage within the community.

On top of addressing transpor-
tation issues and developing and protecting affordable and “mid-

dle-class” housing, Gauthier list-

strenuously expanded economic develop-
ment through small businesses and middle-class jobs; improv-
ing public safety; and enhancing residents’ quality of life through neighborhood beautification and more cultural programs as some of the main focuses in her campaign.

Moody, an employment

specialist and job developer at JobTrain, a nonprofit employment agency, served as East Palo Alto’s mayor in 2013. In an interview, Moody said that during the past eight years, the city’s foundation — through projects including improving the city’s water supply and its infrastruc-
ture — in order to lay the ground-

work for more housing and job development.

“I really feel that the work that we’ve done over the last eight years wasn’t very sexy... (It was) doing a lot of dirty work,” Moody said.

Now we’re at a place where we actually can do some really futuristic projects that are going to be job-creating for our local residents. It’s going to enhance our morale; and it’s really going to allow us to be seen as a differ-

ent community than we have over the last few decades.”

Moody said, that with a clearer

picture of what East Palo Alto’s future will look like, he not only hopes to create more housing and jobs, but also make the city become a more attractive social and cultural hub — whether that means opening more eateries or bars after the pandemic subsides; introducing dog parks; or opening

up school campuses as commu-
nity hubs.

Romero is a development and land-use con-
sultant who was first elected to the City Council in 2008 and be-

came East Palo Alto’s mayor in 2011. In an interview, Gauthier and Moody, Romero said he sees this third term largely as an opportunity to continue the work he’s accomplished in the past decade.

In the next four years, Romero said, he will pursue development projects for affordable housing, commercial spaces and city infra-
structure, like a pedestrian bridge on University Avenue. In addition, he hopes to bring more in-house jobs while alleviating traffic through city ordinances, secure funding for youth and senior rec-

reational activities, create a better library facility and help make the city’s decisions on its budget more transparent to the community.

“The wheels of government... can be somewhat slow at times,” he said.

“I think in order to be ef-
fective, you have to have a con-
stant pace in terms of working on the issues that you want to get implemented.”

Vying for the seats of the cur-
rent council members are Hyland, an organizing director for the

nonprofit Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County; Lincoln, a data scientist at bio-
tech company Genentech; Lopez, a Stanford University doctoral student and writer; and Mendez, a recent University of California at Berkeley graduate and current planning commissioner alternate for East Palo Alto.

Hyland, who moved to East Palo Alto in 1982 may not have ever served on the council but the majority of his career has been rooted in nonprofit orga-
nizations — a sector that Hyland says has a “big interlink” with city government, given the sheer num-
ber of nonprofits that exist in the community and the outsized role they often play.

“A lot of my organizing work meant that I had to understand how the City Council and even county government worked,” he said.

Hyland was also a union organi-

izer with the Service Employees International Union at Stanford University and a project coordina-
tor for Faith in Action Bay Area, a faith-based nonprofit group.

Hyland said that he wants to focus on bringing jobs into the community. One point of concern

(continued on page 36)

www.PaloAltoOnline.com • Palo Alto Weekly • August 28, 2020 • Page 7
Math tutor accused of molesting teens

On Tuesday, Palo Alto police arrested a man who they say molested seven teenage girls at his home. Some of the incidents happened several years ago and recently came to light.

Mark Allan Hodes, 74, was taken into custody at his Palo Alto home in the 4100 block of Manuela Avenue, just off the intersection of Foothill Expressway and Arastradero Road. Investigators said the residence is where the alleged molestations involving seven separate girls took place between 2002 and 2016, according to a press release issued Thursday morning.

The investigation began on June 9 of this year when two women in their 20s contacted Palo Alto police to report that they were each sexually molested by a private math tutor years earlier while they were teenagers, police said.

Detectives identified a total of seven girls who were between 14 and 17 years old when the alleged molestation occurred. Hodes allegedly touched the girls inappropriately during tutoring sessions, according to police.

Detectives took the case to the Santa Clara County District Attorney’s Office and a Superior Court judge issued an arrest warrant for nine felony counts of lewd acts with a minor aged 14 or 15 years old, the press release states.

Hodes’ LinkedIn profile shows he has owned Peninsula Tutoring Service in Palo Alto since 1970. He tutored students who attended Castilleja School, Palo Alto High School, Gunn High School and Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School, though it’s possible he tutored students from other local schools, according to police.

Any other victims or anyone with information related to the case is asked to call the department’s 24-hour dispatch center at 650-329-2413.

—Weekly Staff

Special ed students allowed back to school

Small groups of special education students could soon return to school in person under new, much-anticipated guidance issued by the California Department of Public Health on Wednesday.

The guidance, which applies to public and private schools as well as nonprofits, child care programs, recreation camps, before- and after-school programs and youth groups, allows schools whose counties are still on the state’s watchlist — meaning their schools can’t fully reopen yet — to serve select students in “controlled, supervised, and indoor environments.”

Schools do not need approval from their local health departments to provide this small-group, in-person instruction, the Department of Public Health said.

“The purpose of this guidance is to establish minimum parameters for providing specialized services, targeted services and support for students while schools are otherwise closed for in-person instruction in ways that maintain the focus on health and safety to minimize transmission,” a FAQ on the guidance reads.

Don Austin, superintendent of Palo Alto Unified School District, said he’s encouraged by the guidance.

“We want to go as fast as we can reasonably move,” he said on Wednesday. “I don’t think we have to have every single part of the plan dialed out before we start bringing back some students.”

—Elena Kadvany

Ex-Uber exec charged in cover-up

Federal law enforcement authorities have charged former Uber Chief Security Officer Joseph Sullivan with obstruction of justice and misprision (deliberate concealment of a felony) in an attempt to cover-up the 2016 hack of millions of drivers’ and users’ data, the U.S. Attorney’s Office announced Thursday.

Sullivan, 52, of Palo Alto, served as the ride-sharing company’s chief security officer between April 2015 and November 2017. During this time, two hackers contacted him by email and demanded a six-figure payment in exchange for silence.

The hackers revealed they accessed and downloaded an Uber database containing personally identifying information of approximately 57 million Uber users and drivers. Sullivan allegedly took deliberate steps to conceal, deflect and mislead the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) about the breach, according to the criminal complaint.

Federal prosecutors claim he sought to pay off the hackers by funneling the payoff through a bug bounty program, in which a third-party intermediary arranges payment to so-called “white hat” hackers who point out security issues but have not compromised data. Sullivan also sought to have the hackers sign nondisclosure agreements, the U.S. Attorney’s Office alleges.

—Sue Dremann

News Digest

LET’S DISCUSS: Read the latest local news headlines and talk about the issues at Town Square at PaloAltoOnline.com/square
Santa Clara County’s public health leaders on Wednesday put their foot down against changes in federal COVID-19 testing guidelines and urged the public to continue to be tested for the deadly coronavirus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with a positive case.

Calling the changes “bizarre,” county Health Officer Dr. Sara Cody said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s new guidance “undercuts our very basic tenets of how we control an infectious disease.

“Having individuals know their (coronavirus) status is foundational to our ability to control and contain an infectious disease and certainly to our ability to control an infectious disease. The basic tenets of how we control an infectious disease.

The CDC’s new guidelines state that anyone with mild symptoms “may wish” to be tested and may be tested, which conflicts with local guidance and the county’s order that anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested right away, Cody said.

The CDC’s guidelines also state that anyone who has come in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 does not necessarily need a test.

“This is the part of the guidance that frankly felt the most bizarre. The truth is, if you’ve been in contact with someone who is infectious with COVID, you absolutely need to get a test,” Cody said.

The county’s health order requires health care facilities to test contacts of people who’ve tested positive for the virus. Testing is a way our society can get out of the pandemic and the way back to opening the economy and schools, she said.

“Since the very beginning of the health crisis, adequate testing has been an Achilles’ heel for our country and for our county in getting us out,” she added.

“It’s absolutely foundational. Here in our county we are going to continue to work with our health care partners to continue to offer testing.”

Dr. Marty Fenstersheib, head of the county’s testing program, said the county has improved from running just 1,000 tests per day to conducting 6,000 to 8,000 tests per day. Up to 35% to 40% of cases may be asymptomatic, he said.

“We need to follow the science. … I respect the CDC — always have throughout my career. However, I believe that these changes in the testing guidance have not come from the CDC. I believe these changes have come from further up the chain in the federal government, from the White House, and they are totally misdirected. Failing to test is not going to end this pandemic. Failing to test will not make the virus go away.

“Lacking a strong testing program, I think nationally, has been one of the greatest failures of our nation’s response to this pandemic.”

Dremann can be emailed at sdremann@sandiego.org.

Flu

(continued from page 7)

flu shot will not lower a person’s immune system response to COVID-19, Maldonado said. Stanford also has “a pretty aggressive flu program” for vaccinating its employees, and it tracks and sends data on vaccinating its units to the state.

Like PAMF, Maldonado said Stanford will use more spacing to allow for social distancing and is currently working out plans to be more creative with its clinics.

This year’s flu season could turn out to be weaker than in prior years. Influenza strikes the southern hemisphere about six months before it spreads north, and so far reports show there aren’t many cases, Maldonado said. But that could also change as the virus moves north, she said.

Social distancing, quarantines and wearing masks against COVID-19 might be contributing to the lower number of flu cases.

“We’re starting to wonder if masks are having an impact. Does it make a difference if there is only a small inoculum of the virus that gets through? So far I feel it’s a good deterrent, but not 100%. Most likely, it is reducing a degree of the disease,” she said.

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

Santa Clara County Health Office Dr. Sara Cody explains a new county health order during a press conference in San Jose on July 2.

Dr. Cody said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s new guidelines “undercuts our very basic tenets of how we control an infectious disease.

Inadequate testing has been an Achilles’ heel for the health crisis, adequate testing is a way our society can get out of the pandemic and the way back to opening the economy and schools, she said.

“Since the very beginning of the health crisis, adequate testing has been an Achilles’ heel for our country and for our county in getting us out,” she added.

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Flu

(continued from page 7)

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Staff Writer Sue Dremann can be emailed at sdremann@paweekly.com.
mid a steep rise in COVID-19 cases in Santa Clara County, local hospitals are violating a county health order requiring them to provide free tests to residents at higher risk of contracting the virus.

County leaders in recent weeks have pressed some of the largest health care providers in the state, notably Kaiser Permanente and Sutter Health, on an apparent failure to ramp up testing several months into the pandemic. Large hospitals have been ordered since June 10 to provide tests to residents who are at increased risk of exposure to the virus — regardless of whether they show any symptoms — yet the county has received numerous reports of hospitals flouting the public health mandate. Hospital leaders say that their hands are tied and that a chronic shortage of testing supplies and reagents means COVID-19 tests must be triaged only to those who need it most. But county Supervisor Joe Simitian said that’s not an excuse and that more can and must be done to increase testing capacity if there’s any hope of controlling the virus. “What’s baffling to me is why this is even a question,” Simitian said. “The public health officer issued the order more than two months ago, and yet we continue to get reports and complaints from people who cannot get a test from their provider.”

Starting June 10, Santa Clara County Health Officer Dr. Sara Cody announced in an order, all acute-care hospitals in the county must provide free COVID-19 testing to a broad range of residents. Anyone who is showing symptoms of COVID-19 has been exposed to someone with a confirmed case, or is “at increased risk of exposure” is entitled to a test.

A push for more tests

It’s that third “higher risk” category that vastly expands the eligibility for getting tested and is causing consternation among hospital leaders. It includes people who take public transit, first responders, pharmacy employees, food service workers, grocery store clerks, delivery workers and anyone who has frequent face-to-face interaction with the public.

The county’s testing order is asking a lot of hospitals, well above what is required by the California Public Health Department and other counties across the state, said Jo Coffaro, regional vice president of the Hospital Council, which is the trade organization representing northern and central California hospitals. While there’s a desire to expand COVID-19 testing as much as possible, she said there’s a “pipeline” problem with testing supplies, including difficulty in getting swabs, specialized printing equipment and reagents. “We may have two or three of those things on hand, but we don’t have one — maybe a reagent or a testing cartridge — so the whole test can’t be completed,” she said.

During the week of Aug. 10, Santa Clara County’s own public health system conducted 15,963 COVID-19 tests, vastly outperforming private hospitals including Stanford (3,239), Sutter (1,836), Kaiser (4,708) and El Camino Health (910). Since the start of the pandemic, the county has done more tests than all of the private health care providers combined.

The test counts are disappointing to Simitian, who has been a staunch advocate for increased testing since March. Simitian said he and other county leaders have had repeated conversations with hospital personnel about voluntarily ramping up COVID-19 testing and complying with the public health order, but he is not optimistic that it’s going to happen. Some of these organizations clearly have the scale and the resources to comply but have yet to make it a priority, he said. “These are not mom-and-pop operations. Kaiser is the largest HMO in the country; Sutter has 24 hospitals and 200 clinics just in Northern California,” Simitian said. “If the county can manage to build it, buy it or pool tests — and the county has done all three — I think these organizations can do the same if the will is there.”

A push for more tests

In normal times, Dr. Ahmad Kamal is a gastroenterologist with Santa Clara Valley Medical Center. But during the worst global pandemic in more than a century, he shifted gears to become the county’s director of health system preparedness, assisting hospitals in safely taking care of COVID-19 patients and coping with the sudden demand for more tests.

While Kamal said he sympathizes with the challenges that private hospitals face, he said there is a clear contrast in the way that private hospitals are responding compared to Santa Clara County’s health system. In July when cases were surging, he recalled a disastrous situation in which the company Holologic, which provides COVID-19 testing equipment, couldn’t make a shipment because it was completely tapped out.

County staff began frantically calling testing labs across the country and within a couple of days, were able to farm out samples to prevent a backlog. Top-of-the-line, premium testing machines that required proprietary reagents were swapped out for open platforms, which Kamal said are more labor intensive and required overtime and additional staffing.

Another strategy used by the county was to “pool” samples, running a COVID-19 test on multiple people’s samples batched together. With pooling, limited resources can be stretched much further — four or even eight people’s samples can be combined in one test. If the pooled test comes back positive, everyone in the group has to be individually retested.

Kamal said the same hustle has not been seen at the private hospitals, despite the important public health role they play in controlling the virus. When faced with missing reagents, Kaiser and others simply stop testing large numbers of people, he said, taking the ill-advised approach of testing only those who are showing symptoms. “To say you have to wait to get sick in order to get a COVID test is absolutely the wrong approach,” Kamal said.

There have been some slivers of hope. Kamal said Stanford has been approved for pooling tests by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and El Camino Hospital is setting up drive-thru testing sites that are convenient for people. Stanford has also sought help from 3D printing companies to fabricate some of the most-sought-after materials. But in the case of Kaiser, he said there have been continued complaints of doctors dissuading residents from getting a test or outright refusing to provide one in violation of the health order.

When asked for comment, Kaiser officials said they are currently prioritizing residents most in need of tests, including those with symptoms, frontline health workers, first responders and patients prior to undergoing surgeries and certain procedures. Irene Chavez, the vice president and area manager of Kaiser’s San Jose Medical Center, said the organization is “marshaling all of the resources and influence we can bring to bear” in order to increase testing capacity.

“We’re optimistic that we will be able to double the number of tests we are doing by end of September,” Chavez said. “As our capacity grows, we will expand...
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**972 Amarillo Ave, Palo Alto**
Representing sellers
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**842 Marshall Dr, Palo Alto**
Representing buyers
In a multiple-offer situation

**1320 Flower Ct, Cupertino**
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**1107 Interlaken Ter, Sunnyvale**
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**980 Monte Rosa Dr, Menlo Park**
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**19359 Titus Ct, Saratoga**
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We celebrate the life of Nancy Tang Francis, age 84, loving wife, mother, daughter and sister, who lived a full and wonderful life with her family and friends in both the Far East and her adopted country of the United States. She passed away from complications of stroke at her residence in Palo Alto on July 8, 2020. Nancy was surrounded by her children, friends and caretakers during her final days.

Born in 1936 in Wuxi, China, Nancy attended high school in the United States. Nancy graduated from the University of California, Berkeley where she met the love of her life, Arthur Berrill Francis. Married in California in 1957, the couple lived in the Far East until 1980 when they put permanent roots in the Bay Area. The couple enjoyed many hobbies together including traveling, tennis, and gardening. During her later years, Nancy enjoyed bicycle rides with her "Biker Gang", trips to Gamble House Gardens, winning at Mahjong, socializing with her friends at the Vi and going out to dinner with her companion, Bruce.

She is survived by her children Sabrina and Brian, her grandchildren Clayton, Arthur, Brandon, Nathan and Nolan, and her siblings Constance Fong and Oscar Tang.

Nancy lived a wonderful and fulfilling life, and left this world in peace and happiness to join Arthur and her family in eternity.

Due to covid restrictions on travel/gathering, there will be a service at Skylawn in about 5 months time.

In lieu of flowers, if you wish to honor Nancy, please make a donation to Gamble Gardens in Palo Alto, or a charity of your choice.

For more information, please contact Sabrina Francis Hodgett, 137 Heather Dr., Atherton, CA 94027.

Nancy Tang Francis
March 21, 1936 – July 8, 2020

Aina (Bumanis) Hewitt passed away on July 8, 2020, following her beloved husband Harry by four months. Her three children were by her side. Aina was born on April 10, 1938 in Riga, Latvia and lived there until she was six, when her family was forced to flee their country during World War II. Her family lived in what was then Czechoslovakia before they were relocated to a Displaced Persons Camp in Germany, where they lived for five years. In 1950, when Aina was 12, the family was sponsored by the Lutheran Church and they settled in Palo Alto.

She quickly learned English as she attended Palo Alto High School. At UC Berkeley, she majored in liberal arts. After graduation, on her first day of her job as a librarian at Stanford’s Biology Library, she met Stanford Research Institute employee Harry Hewitt and they had their first date, marrying in 1963. They bought a house in Palo Alto, where they lived for over 50 years and lovingly raised their three children.

Aina adored bicycling all over Palo Alto and could also be seen on daily walks with her myriad friends. She and Harry also loved RVing together with their golden retrievers. The couple attended innumerable Stanford lectures, local concerts, book readings, and plays. After Harry retired, they could be found almost daily enjoying coffee and reading the newspaper at various Midtown cafes or at Cafe Borrone or taking day trips to local beaches.

Aina is survived by their three children and five grandchildren: Lisa Dashe (and son-in-law Jeremy and their two children: Zachary and Juliette) of Bainbridge Island, WA; Alan Hewitt of Davis, CA; and Eric Hewitt (and daughter-in-law Lea and their three children: Trevor, Bradley, and Natalie) of Davis, CA. She will be missed very much by her children and friends.

Aina Hewitt
April 10, 1938 – July 8, 2020

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Menlo Park
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Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | 650.900.7000 | michael@deleonrealty.com

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Palo Alto School Board
CANDIDATES DEBATE

Wednesday, September 30 from 7 – 9 p.m. via Zoom

Featuring the six candidates running for three seats on the Palo Alto Unified School District Board of Trustees:

- Katie Causey
- Todd Collins
- Jennifer DiBrienza
- Jesse Ladomirak
- Matt Nagle
- Karna Nisewaner

PANEL: Jocelyn Dong, Editor, Palo Alto Weekly
Elena Kadavy, Reporter, Palo Alto Weekly
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TO REGISTER: PaloAltoOnline.com/pausd
We invite you to submit questions in advance to: editor@paweekly.com

City Council Candidates Debate

Thursday, September 24 from 7 – 9 p.m. via Zoom

Featuring the ten candidates running for four seats on the Palo Alto City Council:

- Pat Burt
- Rebecca Eisenberg
- Lydia Kou
- Ed Lauing
- Steven Lee
- Raven Malone
- Greer Stone
- Greg Tanaka
- Cari Templeton
- Ajit Varma

PANEL: Jocelyn Dong, Editor, Palo Alto Weekly
Gennady Sheyner, Reporter, Palo Alto Weekly

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This week on Town Square

Town Square is an online discussion forum at PaloAltoOnline.com/square

Editorials, letters and opinions

In response to ‘Hungry for housing, Palo Alto seeks to lure developers to San Antonio Road’

Posted Aug. 14 at 10:42 a.m. by Suzanne Kehm, a resident of Barron Park:

“Incredible, we keep doing the same thing, expecting a different result! So 16 units that will be (Below Market Rate) out of 104. We do not need market rate housing, we NEED housing for all kinds of workers in the many service industries, for teachers, etc. What is with our Planning Commission — their priorities are wrong and ‘more of the same.’”

In response to ‘Saved becomes savior: Man who once nearly drowned pulls struggling child out of Boronda Lake’

Posted Aug. 21 at 11:04 a.m. by Becky Sanders, a resident of Ventura:

“Great Job, Mr. Frisk. Stuff like this can happen in the blink of an eye. I was saved by my alert cousin who saw me struggling in a pool that was full of rollicking kids. My mom and sister were right there. There was a lifeguard on duty. My mom carried her attention lapse around with her the rest of her life. That kid at Boronda was not expecting to bike off the dock. What a kid thing to do, just like I hadn’t meant to end up in the deep end while playing with some kids. That’s why it really takes a village. We need to look out for one another. Great Job, Mr. Frisk. This story gave me a boost on a smoky, pandemicicky Friday morning! And thank you Lloyd and PAW for bringing us the good news as well as the bummers of the day!”

In response to ‘As Target eyes former Fry’s building, Palo Alto rethinks its housing plan’

Posted Aug. 12 at 11:32 a.m. by Samuel Jackson, a resident of Evergreen Park:

“Building a Target alongside extensive new housing and other improvements? Sure, why not. Building a Target INSTEAD OF building new housing? A tragic injustice which should haunt everyone involved until the end of their days. This would mean cowardice won over the city and a lack of any civic-minded creativity with the property owners. The community doesn’t need more giant signal flares to the world that it can’t solve its own problems. It just needs to stop them by building housing. A lot of it.

The site is so big we can all have our cake and eat it too, especially if we embrace transportation options that reduce the need for massive (empty) parking lots. Want to preserve the building? I work inside it and don’t know about its historical value — I think that’s at least half NIMBY — but, sure, there is enough room. Want to build a Target? Guess what, there’s room if you eliminate parking and empty space and build up. So, let’s do it all, if that’s the only way to get it done.”

In response to ‘Black and brown residents describe layers of racism they’ve faced in Palo Alto’

Posted Aug. 20 at 11:31 a.m. by Kaloma Smith, a resident of Palo Verde:

“It is a shame when people are in a position of privilege and are so certain about others’ reality. I would encourage you to read the interviews this paper did earlier in the summer with long-term Black residents in the city, read the stories in Julie Hames Lythcotts latest book, watch the video from Juneteenth March in Palo Alto as speakers spoke about their pain (organized by Black Palo Alto High School students), watch the video from the Human Relations Commissions’ July meetings as several people came forward and shared their stories and watch the Midpen Media Center’s special programming on this issue. The greatest gift we can give our fellow humans is cultural humility to listen and empathy to understand their pain. The common refrain I have heard from Black and brown (residents) in the city is that they have been saying the same thing for years and no one listens to them or does anything. ... They are tired.”

In response to ‘Palantir moves headquarters from Palo Alto to Denver’

Posted Aug. 20 at 10:13 a.m. by Norman Beamer, a resident of Crescent Park:

“Goodbye to another arrogant ‘Master of the Universe.’”

In response to ‘Councilman Greg Tanaka faces complaint over campaign contributions’

Posted Aug. 19 at 2:13 p.m. by Tom DuBois, a resident of Midtown:

“This is between Greg, the Fair Political Practices Commission and the voters of Palo Alto. I do want to comment on what is typical for an elected official in terms of ‘regular’ expenses. Having been on Council for six years, there is no need to raise funds continuously as a local elected representative. This isn’t the US Senate. Expenses outside of campaigning are very minimal even to maintain an online presence and host sessions on Facebook or YouTube, which are largely free. As an example, if I received a $10,000 donation for non-campaigning uses, I could fund my expenses for about 50 years.

Letters

Eyesores

Editor,

Pal Alto used to be a beautiful city. You could not tell that now by looking at the classic United States Postal Service grounds on Hamilton Avenue or at the trash strewn around the corner near the bus stop on Waverley Street. And not a trash can in sight. What can we do as a city and as citizens to clean up these eyesores?

John Hyde
Center Drive, Palo Alto

Questionable cover page

Editor,

I was both surprised and disappointed (to put it mildly) by the illustration on the 8/14 Weekly front page, with its menacing and draconian figure of ... what? Justice? Tyranny? And to have that image looming over a desperate, panicky figure clutching his money — what kind of message is this? If you feel that fines for failure to wear a mask are an overreach, then have the honesty to say so in an editorial. Don’t just ask readers to weigh in and tell you what to think.

For myself, I think wearing a mask is a very small effort on the part of citizens who are taking care of us, but the reluctant feel any better about a requirement to wear a mask which is a very minor discomfort in a very major pandemic. I do want to comment on what is typical for an elected official in terms of “regular” expenses. Having been on Council for six years, there is no need to raise funds continuously as a local elected representative. This isn’t the US Senate. Expenses outside of campaigning are very minimal even to maintain an online presence and host sessions on Facebook or YouTube, which are largely free. As an example, if I received a $10,000 donation for non-campaigning uses, I could fund my expenses for about 50 years.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What do you think of pandemic pods as an alternative to distance learning?

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For more information, contact Editorial Assistant Lloyd Lee at lleewww@paweekly.com or 650-225-6526 or Editor Jocelyn Dong at editor@paweekly.com.
759 MIDDLE AVENUE, MENLO PARK

Stylish Living in Allied Arts

Conveniently located just steps from Nealon Park, within walking distance of downtown Menlo Park, and just over one mile to downtown Palo Alto, this bright and inviting 4-bedroom, 3.5-bathroom home offers nearly 2,100 square feet of comfortable living space, set on a corner lot of 5,600 square feet. Light, bright, and stylishly appointed, this home features an inviting living room, a chef’s kitchen with a suite of Jenn-Air appliances, a large family room with outside access, and a detached garage with cooling that can be used as office space or a fitness center. Four bedrooms comprise the accommodations, including the master suite with a marble-appointed en suite bathroom. Find outdoor enjoyment on the peaceful grounds, which feature a large deck, patio space, a hot tub, and an abundance of colorful plantings. Adding the finishing touch, children may attend acclaimed schools including Oak Knoll Elementary and Hillview Middle (buyer to verify eligibility).

For more information, video tour & more photos, please visit:

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1356 CLOUD AVENUE, MENLO PARK

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Boasting a great location just moments to both downtown Menlo Park and Palo Alto, this bright and spacious home offers 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, and nearly 2,900 square feet of living space, all set on a lot of 7,000 square feet in the coveted Central Menlo neighborhood. Built in 2004, this home presents fantastic build quality and high-end appointments at every turn, including gleaming hardwood floors and elaborate moldings. Large gathering areas are perfect for entertaining guests, the kitchen features appliances from Thermador and Bosch, and a main-level bedroom doubles as an office to work from home in style. Highlights include two gas fireplaces, a marble-appointed bathroom in the comfortable master suite, and a peaceful backyard with a lawn and patio space. Find yourself close to Stanford University, the Venture Capital firms of Sand Hill Road, and Caltrain, while top-ranked schools including Las Lomitas Elementary and La Entrada Middle are less than a mile away. This home checks all the boxes for outstanding Silicon Valley living.

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12733 Dianne Drive, Los Altos Hills

Peaceful and Private with Spectacular Views
Set on a private lot of over an acre in beautiful Los Altos Hills, this stylish custom home offers contemporary spaces, modern conveniences, and a peaceful setting. Built in 2016, with over 6,000 square feet of living space, this home takes full advantage of its beautiful surroundings, as excellent use of glass creates a bright ambiance throughout and showcases incredible views that stretch for miles. Spectacular build quality and high-end appointments are hallmarks of this home, while highlights include three gas fireplaces, rich hardwood floors, onyx art installations and bathroom countertops, and a wine cellar with room for over 2,500 bottles plus a nearby wet bar for tastings. Entertain guests in expansive gathering spaces, craft delicious meals in the chef’s kitchen, and work from home in style in the office. 5 bedrooms, 5 bathrooms, and 3 half-baths comprise the accommodations, including the large master suite, and a convenient guest suite. Topping it all off is a great backyard with a pool, outdoor kitchen, and an elevated patio for al fresco enjoyment. Convenient to Interstate 280, this home also offers access to acclaimed Los Altos schools (buyer to verify eligibility).

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Masterfully blending timeless luxury with the best of modern conveniences, this 4-bedroom, 3.5-bath home stands ready to meet the needs of a contemporary lifestyle. Offering 2,378 sq. ft. of living space (per county) set on a 6,270 sq. ft. lot (per county), this home boasts luxurious appointments including engineered white oak floors and stunningly detailed ceilings, while excellent use of glass creates a bright, light atmosphere. The open floorplan flows from the fireplace-warmed living area into the chef’s kitchen, where a suite of Thermador appliances are sure to help cater gatherings of any size. An office offers work-from-home convenience, the master suite presents a relaxing retreat, and an additional bedroom suite is perfect for family or overnight guests. Topping it all off, this home enjoys a coveted address in the Midtown neighborhood, putting you close to everything Palo Alto has to offer, near U.S. 101 for Bay Area commuting, and with access to acclaimed Palo Alto schools (buyer to verify eligibility).

For more information, video tour & more photos, please visit:
www.3433Cowper.com
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Filoli’s summer sculpture exhibition features new work
by Bay Area artist Kristine Mays

by Sheryl Nonnenberg

Filoli House and Garden, the historic 654-acre estate in Woodside, which has been part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation since 1975, has always been a welcome respite from the frenetic pace of Silicon Valley life. With its restored Gilded Age mansion and acres of carefully tended gardens and trails, Filoli is a favorite for nature and history aficionados. Luckily, for those of us missing art museums and galleries, Filoli is also the backdrop for a fascinating exhibition of sculpture by San Francisco artist Kristine Mays. Titled “Rich Soil,” this installation of figurative works constructed out of wire is on display in the gardens through Nov. 9.

For the past several summers, Filoli has hosted sculpture exhibitions, either by groups or individual artists. Erika Frank, Filoli’s director of education and interpretation, explained how Mays was selected for this year’s show.

“We reached out to her a year ago after seeing her art online because we felt her work would be great for Filoli. She had never shown her sculptures in an outdoor setting.”

As can be imagined, there are a multitude of considerations in placing art in formal gardens: traffic patterns, weather, health of the plantings, etc. Frank worked with the horticulture staff closely but had a strong feeling that Mays’ work would fit right in.

“One of the things we love is that guests can walk right up to the sculptures, touch them and pose for pictures,” she said. “It is important that our guests feel that they are part of the place.”

Mays had similar feelings about how her art would work at Filoli. After being contacted by Frank, she visited the estate for the first time and was immediately inspired.

“I wanted my work to emerge from the scenery and to compliment it in a harmonious way.”

Mays describes herself as a self-taught artist who has always enjoyed sketching the people she would see while traveling on buses in San Francisco. She holds a degree in arts administration from DePaul University and worked at a nonprofit organization while making jewelry on the side. After losing her job, she began devoting more time to creating and soon found that she could make a living as a full-time artist. A chance encounter with wire at a bead store led her to try working with it alone. After experimenting with various techniques, she discovered a way to hook and overlap pieces of heavy gauge steel wire together. If this sounds a bit like the work of another San Francisco artist, Ruth Asawa, it is — to a degree. Mays explained that she grew up seeing Asawa’s murals and public sculptures but discovered her wire work much later. “She’s more of an inspiration to me now than ever before,” said Mays.

Unlike Asawa, whose hanging sculptures often mimic organic shapes, Mays works in a figurative mode.

“My sculptures are created from hundreds of pieces of metal wire, looped and hooked together to create a form that reveals an invisible occupant, a soul, a life. I often say that I am ‘breathing life into wire.’ I love the idea of creating work where the focus reveals the essence of a person and that speaks to humanity as a whole.”

For this exhibition, which took a full year of preparation (each sculpture requires anywhere from 60 to 100 hours to complete), Mays decided to create seven installation areas, each with multiple figures. Although Mays does not use models or molds, she has successfully captured bodies (some full figure, some partial torsos) in motion. That sense of movement was inspired, specifically, by “Revelations,” a highly regarded dance performance choreographed by Alvin Ailey. Like the real dancers, Mays’ figures twist, turn, gyrate and seem to rise, ethereally, from the landscape.

She explained, “The idea of dancing came forth with the notion of being released from the struggle of this earthly life. I wanted the dancers to have a certain soulful way about them and I knew the landscape called for the sculptures to be placed together and for the work to communicate in groups.”

Mays further enhances the meaning of each installation area by providing a short narrative statement and title, each of which was inspired by African American sayings, culture and folklore. In “All Night Worship Service,” for example, the figures each reflect a moment of joyous exultation. Near the sunken gardens, six dresses, each a different style, swirl and sway to music that exists in the visitor’s imagination. In the walled garden area, five figures rise up from the impatients, poppies and salvia mix, as though they have always been a part of nature’s plan.

Mays’ ability to form and fold the wire into different patterns on each garment is amazing. One dress even has words woven into the bodice and skirt. She explained that it is a quote from Maya Angelou: “There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.” Mays said that she liked the idea of “a message hidden in plain sight, and also that you have to take time to search and discover, in order to decipher it.”

One of the reasons that the figures blend so naturally into the various garden sites is Mays’ careful choice of palette. “My greatest concern was how the sculptures would look as they weathered. In anticipation of this process, I coated each piece in a copper-colored paint so that, when the rust eroded, it would look as they weathered. In anticipation of this process, I coated each piece in a copper-colored paint so that, when the rust eroded, it would look as though the work is ‘healing on many levels.’”

“In the exhaustion, the grief, the reckoning with oneself in the midst of this very turbulent time I hope that people will visit Filoli for a reprieve, for a chance to breathe, reflect and simply be. My hope is that people will leave feeling full, having experienced something (I dare say) extraordinary.”

All of the sculptures are for sale.

Artist Kristine Mays created a series of figurative sculptures for “Rich Soil,” an installation on Filoli’s grounds. The sculptures, created from thousands of pieces of intertwining wires, draw inspiration from a work by legendary choreographer Alvin Ailey.

Visitors to Filoli must make an online reservation in advance, wear a mask and adhere to safe distancing instructions.

Freelance writer Sheryl Nonnenberg can be emailed at nonnenberg@aol.com.
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Mark your calendars. Food events of note are happening on the Peninsula in the coming weeks, from a French pastry delivery to a series of exciting pop-ups in Palo Alto (Quesabirria! Fried chicken! Smashburgers!). Read below for more details.

**Pop-ups at Salvaje**

Palo Alto natural wine bar Salvaje recently started turning its kitchen over to local pop-ups on the weekends. You can still order wine during the pop-ups and dine outside or take the food to go. (If you’re a local cook interested in using Salvaje’s kitchen or want to suggest a pop-up, email owner Karin Syed at drinksalvaje@gmail.com.)

Below is the lineup at Salvaje (369 Lytton Ave.) for the rest of August and September.

- **Het Say**: The couple behind San Jose pop-up Het Say will bring their Vietnamese food back to Salvaje on Saturday, Aug. 29, 5-9 p.m. The menu will include grilled beef wrapped in betel leaf, goat in coconut caramelized onions and a secret sauce on Martin’s potato rolls, will return on Friday, Sept. 4, at 6 p.m. Look out for a new vegetarian option inspired by his Indian roots: a crispy potato tikki topped with a tamarind sauce, green chutney and chiwda (a fried Indian snack mix) served on a Martin’s roll.
- **Tacos Los Gemelos**: This Redwood City taqueria will be serving up quesabirria with consommé on Saturday, Sept. 5, 5-9 p.m.
- **Hermanita**: Nicole Marin Tellez of the Hermanita pop-up serves Baja California food inspired by her childhood in Mexicali, Mexico, from people and barbecue to halal and tostadas. She’ll be cooking at Salvaje on Saturday, Sept. 12, 5-9 p.m.
- **QBQ**: Syed also runs QBQ in downtown Mountain View. Salvaje will feature off-menu items from the barbecue-and-bourbon-focused restaurant on Saturday, Sept. 19, 5-9 p.m.
- **Samara Southern Creations**: This Oakland pop-up, run by Tamara White and Sarah Earring, serves Southern, Creole and Cajun fare, like short ribs and grits and bananas foster chicken and waffles. They’ll be cooking at Salvaje on Saturday, Sept. 26, 5-9 p.m.
- **Tono Coffee Project**: Bryan Chiem of Tono Coffee Project continues to serve coffee at Salvaje Wednesday-Sunday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., along with a small selection of Love for Butter pastries.

**Tarts de Feybesse at Camper**

Monique and Paul Feybesse will be bringing their exquisite French pastries and bread to Camper in Menlo Park (898 Santa Cruz Ave.) on Sunday, Aug. 30. Preorders have sold out but some items will be available for purchase on Sunday from noon to 3 p.m.

The couple, both professional cooks, has built a following on Instagram for their brightly colored eclairs, gorgeous stone fruit tarts, Parisian flan, choux puffs, brioches and other fare.

For more information, go to instagram.com/monicafeybesse.

**The Ma’lawah Bar cooking class**

Doreet Jassah of The Ma’lawah Bar in Santa Clara will demonstrate how to make Yemenite dishes, such as jachnun (a pastry) and ma’lawah (her namesake flatbread), in this free virtual cooking class and conversation on Sept. 15, 6:30 p.m. Register by going to jewishlosaltos.com and searching for “Evening in Yemen.”

**Palo Alto’s last dive bar calls it quits for now**

_‘We just can’t afford it anymore,’ owners of beloved Nut Houses_  
by Elena Kadvany

 Barely two months ago, the 49-year-old Antonio’s Nut House reopened triumphantly after a monthslong closure with a new outdoor patio, new chef in the kitchen and hope for a reimagined future that included food pop-ups. But the economic losses of the pandemic and uncertainty about when the California Avenue dive bar will be able to serve people inside, the owners have decided to close the Nut House again, at least for now.

The Nut House’s last day of business for the foreseeable future was Saturday, Aug. 22.

“We’re losing a lot of money. It’s just too difficult to conform to all the regulations and maintain our pricing,” said Jess Montooth, who took over the dive bar with his siblings after their father, Tony Montooth, died in 2017. “Our only hope of retaining the business is if indoor dining or indoor bars are approved. Other than that, we’re done.”

Montooth said outdoor dining has been going OK but that business has fallen due to the summer heat wave (and now, poor air quality). Construction work on a parking lot behind the bar also negatively impacted business, he said. They ran through a $80,000 federal loan through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) quickly, he said.

When the dive bar reopened in late June, the owners brought in Darius Johnson, a self-taught chef and Palo Alto native, to run the kitchen. Johnson, for his part, said he’s going to go back to selling food out of his home, which he did before getting the gig at the Nut House.

The lease on the 321 S. California Ave. bar expires in December. The Montooth siblings had been hoping they would extend the lease or find a new home for the Nut House before then, but the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic feels too great.

“If we knew in three months you can open back up, we’d stay open,” Montooth said. “We need the money. Just with the forecast being, no answers for anybody of how it’s going to play out. That’s why we’re losing that community, that water hole. They don’t want to lose that community, that watering hole, a place to go.

“There’s nothing else like it anymore,” she added. “This is the man last standing and the community really wants it to survive.”

Currently lacking an angel investor, however, the Montooths confirmed this week that they will await the return of indoor dining and make a decision then about whether to reopen.
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Mark Brunton said at a press conference.

Evacuation orders for tens of thousands of residents in southern San Mateo and northern Santa Cruz counties started rolling out by the hour on Tuesday, Aug. 18, and into early the next morning. As the separate fires joined together into larger conflagrations, dozens of deputies from the Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties’ sheriff’s offices jumped in to make sure people were getting out as quickly and safely as possible, Santa Cruz County Sheriff chief deputy Chris Clark said at an Aug. 19 press briefing. Cal Fire Incident Commander Billy See said that the decision was made to evacuate people well before they were actually in harm’s way.

“(We are) aggressively moving residents out way ahead of this fire front. Today we saw growth of the fire of approximately 700 to 1,000 acres per hour. That’s a dangerous rate of spread,” See said on Aug 20. “This is a dangerous situation for everyone involved. We’ve got an increase in personnel and resources, but it’s still not enough. We’re still drastically short for a fire of this size.”

Within four days, the fire had grown to 40,000 acres, with zero containment. Over the course of the next few days, 77,000 people — more than the population of Palo Alto — were evacuated from the mountains.

Firefighters were working around the clock battling the blaze, often with little to no rest, Cal Fire reported. Members of one crew made up of inmates in orange jumpsuits ended up sleeping on the hard asphalt road one night, a photo posted on social media showed.

They’ve also had to rescue residents who didn’t leave the area when orders were issued, Cal Fire chiefs said.

Amid the stress of trying to make progress on the frontlines, some firefighters — residents themselves of the mountain communities — lost their own homes in the blaze, according to reporting by the San Jose Mercury News. And with looters coming into the fire zone to steal from the residents, according to a Los Angeles Times article. Amid the smoke and falling ashes, they used their chainsaws, bulldozers and shovels to create empty swaths that could stop the progress of the wildfire. They also put out small fires at one neighbor’s house three times, one man said.

Fire personnel from units throughout the western United States have also arrived to help, with numbers involved in the CZU Lightning fire swelling from the initial 350 to 1,982 personnel as of Thursday, Aug. 27.

Firefighters from Menlo Park, Palo Alto and Mountain View have also been deployed to fires in the region, including the SCU Lightning Complex, where they stretched hundreds of feet of hose up and down 30- to 45-degree slopes, created fire breaks and participated in “bump and runs,” a tactic in which firefighters go from house to house, knocking down fires in rapid succession, according to the city.

One week into the firefight, the stress levels ratcheted up, as a second thunderstorm with dry lightning and gusting winds was predicted to arrive on Sunday night, potentially sparking new fires and fanning the existing one. To the relief of firefighters, that weather event didn’t materialize.

Along with human evacuees, distressed livestock and pets also have been moved out of the mountains. Volunteers have stopped forward to help. From chickens to donkeys to rabbits, cats, dogs and even llamas, more than 800 animals displaced by raging fires are getting free shelter from organizations and individuals.

Large Animal Evacuation Group, an all-volunteer crew of qualified large animal handlers, and the Peninsula Humane Society have rescued hundreds of head (continued on page 30)
NATURAL DISASTER

Wildfire puts Palo Alto Hills residents on edge

For more than a week, residents have worried about when and how they’d evacuate

by Sue Dremann

T he massive wildfire in the Santa Cruz Mountains that started raging on Aug. 16 seemed to get a little bit closer last weekend to residents of Palo Alto Hills after Cal Fire issued an evacuation warning on Sunday, Aug. 23, for the Foot-hills Park area.

Nested between Palo Alto foothills Park and Araratredro Preserve, the neighborhood of 77 residences is surrounded by nature’s beauty and danger. Nervous residents wondered how they would get out quickly and safely was on everyone’s mind.

Residents know that if fire were to come, the neighborhood has only one exit route, resident Jan Terry told the Weekly — the narrow and winding Page Mill Road. City crews have made it a priority to clear brush so that the fire cannot jump across the road. If the fire does jump, fleeing residents should find themselves trying to drive through a tunnel of flames, fire personnel have said.

At a neighborhood meeting with city Emergency Operations Services Chief Ken Duiker and fire Chief Geo Blackburn last summer, the pair warned residents the road could also become clogged with fire equipment and emergency vehicles, preventing evacuating cars from getting through. A tremendous amount of smoke could also reduce visibility; ash and heat could cause cars to stall, Terry recalled they said.

During last year’s devastating fires in California, “95% of those who died out of Paradise were caught by the fire while evacuating or were trapped in the house,” Terry said. “That’s very sobering. Cars don’t run that well in that heat and could be poking along the road at 3 to 4 mph.”

The neighbors have another potential exit route: A city park ranger gave the neighborhood a key to a locked gate so people could flee across city public open space if necessary, she said. But Terry warned last Friday against complacency. People should not expect the city — nor the neighborhood — to tell them when to leave.

“People think, people are on their own. We’re not going to organize an evacuation. You evacuate when you feel it’s best,” she said. That means using good judgment and paying attention to when it feels right.

“Last year, Ken (Duiker) said, ‘If you are at Araratredro and you see billowing smoke and flames, don’t wait. When it’s really bad, don’t wait for us,’” she recalled. That scenario was well documented in one of the nation’s most devastating fires. The Great Fire of 1910 in the Bitterroot Mountains of Idaho and in western Montana killed numerous firefighters who took refuge from the burning forests in caves and mine shafts. Some died of asphyxiation; the lucky ones survived if they’d found a small pocket of air near the ground to breathe, according to the book “The Big Burn” by Timothy Egan.

On Wednesday, Nadim said that thick smoke blanketing the Country Club and the surrounding neighborhood made him realize it would not be a safe place if fire came. The golf course would be a good refuge in a major earthquake, however, he said. Nadim said he’s continually spreading the word to prepare. He has received numerous text messages and emails from San Mateo County and Santa Clara County residents. “I keep forwarding them to the neighbors,” he said.

Nadim last week emailed residents a checklist of items that should be in their “go bag,” Terry said she planned to put some paper copies of the list on residents’ doors.

On Wednesday, neighbors were feeling less stressed after Cal Fire lifted the evacuation warning, Terry said. She’d gotten her “go bag” together, though — it took longer than she thought it would — and she’d photographed all of the rooms in her home in case the fire swept through. She stowed flashlights and water if they still have to go. At any rate, she’s now prepared for an earthquake, if that should come, she said.

On Aug. 21, the city posted instructions for residents on its website stating that in the event of spreading fire, it would send a pre-evacuation warning through the Nextdoor app, Nixle alert system, Twitter and Facebook. The county would send an official evacuation warning through the AlertSCC system to affected residents, the website stated.

In an evacuation tip sheet, the city stated that it is imperative that residents “promptly evacuate along the prescribed route and promptly follow all instructions of emergency personnel. Do not linger to see what happens. These fires are moving much faster than you might think possible; for example, on August 20, the CZU Complex was expanding at a rate of 700 to 1,000 acres per hour.”

Winds from destructive fires don’t usually blow in the direction of the Santa Cruz Mountains. But last year, fire professionals, including Blackburn, expressed concern that weather and vegetation conditions could lead to exactly the kind of situation the mountain communities are experiencing now.

Decker told the Weekly on Aug. 21 that his agency was keeping a close eye on developments.

“The city’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is continuing to monitor and coordinate with the County EOC and other agencies. Our Emergency Services Volunteers (ESV) have been contacted and may be asked to assist,” in the event of an evacuation or if the fire moves close to Palo Alto, he said.

Terry said she’s picked out her evacuation place: the Courtyard by Marriott in Los Altos. But she worried about her neighbors.

“My biggest fear is people aren’t going to be prepared to leave,” she said. “We’ve not had a fire in 50 years.”

For more information about the wildfires, see the city’s website at cityofpaloalto.org for regional fire status information and resources.

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

Wildfire (continued from page 29)

of cattle and horses, nearly 100 goats and even llamas, a camel and pot belly pigs. Some are being housed at the Cow Palace. The Peninsula Humane Society set up two evacuation centers for pet owners, one at Half Moon Bay High School and one at the San Mateo County Event Center.

Private individuals all over the Bay Area are helping evacuees with their pets and livestock. Ranch owner Beth Killough of Morgan Hill is temporarily housing 40 horses whose owners were forced to flee their homes in the fires. “We’re a very connected,” Killough said. “When people need help, the word spreads faster than the fires.”

Restaurants also have jumped in to give aid during the crisis. Andy Kerr, co-owner of Alice’s Restaurant in Woodside, has been loading up his truck three times a day to deliver food to people who need it, including first responders and firefighters.

While some food donations have come directly from Alice’s, he said, a number of community members and loyal patrons of Alice’s have donated money, enabling the restaurant to provide at least 200 meals since the fire began. By Sunday evening, Aug. 23, the restaurant had raised about $25,000, according to a Facebook post. (See story on page 31, “It’s eerie.”)

Other people have shown their support by posting signs, leaving notes and sending cards of encouragement to the firefighters.

“Thank you for saving all of us. We appreciate it a lot,” said one, written in crayon.

“You are loved,” another said. Drawings of fire helmets, rainbow and flames being put out adorn the cards.

San Mateo County Det. Rose- merry Blankswde said on Aug. 26 that the messages have been seen and appreciated.
**NATURAL DISASTER**

'It's eerie': Behind the frontlines of the CZU Lightning Complex fires

**Andy Kerr of Alice's Restaurant in Woodside makes daily deliveries to firefighters and holdouts in the wildfire zone**

by Kate Bradshaw

**Upfront**

*Photo by Magali Gauthier*

**San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office** said its deputies are also participating. After making the delivery at the Williams’ home, Kerr moved on to his next destination: the fire station in Loma Mar. He deftly navigated the many turns of Pescadero Creek Road, which were covered in thick white haze. The smoke made it difficult to see farther than about 50 feet ahead — far worse conditions than he’d experienced the previous day, when the road was clear. Kerr and I feel deep ties to their homes and land. Some are felling trees and clearing debris on the ground to protect their properties.

Firefighting a century ago, Bradshaw and Weekly Editor Jocelyn Dong can be reached at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com.

“We’re surrounded by fires,” she said. **Staff Writer Kate Bradshaw writes for the Almanac, the Weekly’s sister publication, and can be reached at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com.**

The CZU Lightning Complex as of Thursday encompassed 81,335 acres in San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties, according to a report from Cal Fire. Containment of the fire increased to 21%.

The fires have destroyed 445 homes, one multi-unit residential structure, 50 commercial structures and 150 minor structures. They have also damaged 46 homes, seven commercial structures and 16 other minor structures. A total of 23,136 structures are at risk that are likely to lose everything. Damage inspections are 60% complete. Two residents have died; one apparently of natural causes.

Thanks to a strong containment line and the work of crews to put out the fire along the northeastern edge of the wildfire perimeter, closest to the Palo Alto border, Cal Fire is moving into “ mop up” operations in that area.

“Mop up” status means that the fire in the referenced area is knocked down and the burned area is evaluated by fire crews to make sure that all fires and embers are extinguished,” the city stated on its website.

In other areas of the wildfire zone, Cal Fire chiefs are starting to talk about allowing residents to return home in phases as the fire becomes more contained and conditions become safe. They warn about rushing in, however, as burned and damaged trees are still falling, creating ongoing hazards.

Because of the nature of wildfires and the embers that continue to smolder inside trees such as redwoods, the actual fire suppression effort is likely to continue for months, Brunton said at an Aug. 26 press briefing. **Almanac Staff Writer Kate Bradshaw and Weekly Editor Doug Young.**

The CZU Lightning Complex fires are a report of their own making. The CZU Lightning Complex as of Thursday encompasses 81,335 acres in San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties, according to a report from Cal Fire. Containment of the fire increased to 21%.

With wildfire smoke blanketing the Santa Cruz Mountains, a heavy fog, Andy Kerr, co-owner of Alice’s Restaurant, located at the junction of State Route 84 and Casa Grande, loaded up his truck three times a day and ventured beyond the road closure signs near his restaurant to deliver food to people who need it.

On Sunday morning, he brought breakfast burritos to volunteers stationed at the La Honda Fire Station, checked on La Honda residents who have chosen to stay behind rather than evacuate their homes, and ventured through the smoke-choked and winding roads to Pescadero to bring provisions to coastside firefighters. Kerr and his brother Jamie both used to volunteer with firefighters with the Skykonda fire station, just down the street from Alice’s. He described the CZU Lightning Complex wildfires as apocalyptic, agreeing with what fire officials have been saying over the past week. These fires are apocalyptic.

“I was born and raised here, and I’ve never seen anything like this. This is 10 times worse than anything I’ve ever seen,” he said.

Kerr’s first stop was the La Honda Fire Station. There, he delivered 13 breakfast burritos to volunteers, who promised to return at lunch with 20 of the restaurant’s famous Harley Ice’s employee who lives down the street from the restaurant, said her parents were keeping a close eye on the evacuation orders, but hadn’t received any notices to leave yet.

A few customers came for brunch — taking advantage of the restaurant’s reputation for providing essential items to those who have been affected. She said the restaurant’s reputation for staying open through trying circumstances — while others were there for a short respite from the chaos the fires have wrought.

In the restaurant’s hazy parking lot, Suzanna Pierce said she lives near Felton in Santa Cruz County and had evacuated multiple times, first leaving her home to stay at home because of their deep ties to their homes and land. Some are felling trees and clearing debris on the ground to protect their properties.

Firefighting a century ago, the restaurant’s reputation for staying open through trying circumstances — while others were there for a short respite from the chaos the fires have wrought.

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able to communicate that to my child. This is what we’re doing this year.” Haydel said. “I can’t guarantee it’s going to be perfect or smooth but I’m not really worried about that. I want him to feel safe and I want there to be some predictability. I need that for myself, too.”

As the new school year starts this fall, the pandemic is among a booming number of parents forming a separate but parallel educational experience on the Peninsula: learning pods, or small groups of students meeting in person for private instruction or supervision. Some parents are doing so out of frustration with the quality of their school’s distance learning, hiring teachers for as much as $250 an hour to provide a pod designed around their children. But others are working parents desperate for shared child care or safe social activities while schools remain closed. The fast-growing trend quickly gained traction earlier this year as exasperating gaps between the have and have not — gaps that are already deepening during the school shutdown — are getting flooded with requests. One local Facebook group devoted to linking up parents and teachers has grown to nearly 2,500 members who share resources, tips and connections for pods. The page reads like an educational match-making service, with posts like “looking for imaginative kids, and families who are very concerned about COVID.”

Since April, Haydel has devoted extensive time to researching homeschooling curriculum, reading parenting articles, drafting and editing documents and getting legal advice on forming a pod at her home. Her youngest son was set to start kindergarten at Encinal School in Atherton in the fall, but after spending weeks writing on the ward with the pandemic, she started preparing for the likelihood that he wouldn’t be doing so in person.

Locally, the world of pandemic pods has exploded in recent weeks. Tutoring companies that saw business drop off during the school shutdown are getting flooded with requests. One local Facebook group devoted to linking up parents and teachers has grown to nearly 2,500 members who share resources, tips and connections for pods. The page reads like an educational match-making service, with posts like “looking for imaginative kids, and families who are very concerned about COVID.”

The success of a pod depends on finding the right parents to team up with and setting clear expectations from the start. Mother Sophie Zugoni, who created separate pods for each of her children, a first-grader who attends school in San Carlos and a third-grader who goes to school in Redwood City. As a working parent, she sought out support for both education and child care.

“If you gather a random group of four parents to design, and build a car, it will take everyone that time, as everyone has their own preference, and if the differences are too wide, you will never have a car ready. Zugoni said. Medium post, “7 Steps to Create a Pod in 10 Days,” documenting her pod experience. “Say once built, it turns out to be a Toyota Prius. You will attract folks who are, for example, budget and environment conscious. Those who are on a budget can’t go for fancy Lexus. You do not need to join.”

Zugoni eventually found families who agreed on how to structure the pods, the budget, academics and tolerance of coronavirus risks. They hired a retired teacher for instruction in younger children and are taking turns watching the kids in the afternoons.

“In a way, we feel so privileged. We’re getting a teacher ratio for four kids,” Zugoni said.

“But we’re forced to be put into this situation. We’d rather go to school. For a lot of us, we don’t want to be in this situation, but we feel like we have no other choice.”

A Kindergarten buddy
It’s 8:21 a.m. on Monday morning. The minutes before the start of the virtual school day — and mother Bridget Stolee just got off the phone with her pod manager. Skyping again after being down district-wide. She has that much time to get her kindergarten-aged daughter settled and in front of a computer before they are set to go — her pod is set for 18 children’s faces, some of them paired up with other students as part of pandemic pods.

Stolee, whose daughter attends Escondido Elementary School in Palo Alto, recently formed a pod with five friends and their children. Stolee and her husband work full time: she’s a psychotherapist and he’s a chemical engineer — so finding help with for help with Zoom supervision as well as socialization. They tested it out a day during the first week of school, with the two kindergarteners sitting side by side during online classes, sharing crayons and running through social stories for recess. At some points, the kids seemed more engaged in the online learning together, Stolee said. “The children were distracted by each other.”

Stolee and her husband are trading off supervising the girls — alternating shifts; she sits with them from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. and then her husband takes over so she can work, and they continue throughout the day. They hope all the other parents will soon share in the supervision.

This doesn’t feel like a sustainable thing to do for a year. But I guess I thought that when we started this pandemic ... and now we’re six months in,” she said. “I think this is all about pushing and survival. Everyone is emotionally at our wits’ end.”

Professionally, as a child and adolescent psychotherapist, Stolee said that without social connections they usually get at school. While most pods are made up of younger children who need more help to stay focused on online learning, she advocated for forming them at the high school level.

“We’re very focused on young kids for podding for social emotional support but we’re forgetting how hard it already is for high school students here. The majority of them are quite anxious and 10 of us together for hours may not be the solution this is not making it easier,” she said. “I think that disconnect that they’re feeling is only going to get harder over time.”

Questions about equity
Depending on its structure, creating a pod can be an extensive — and expensive — under taking. One parent likened it to forming an entire school with human resources and accounting departments. The families in Haydel’s pod, for example, have agreed to pay about $135 per week to fund the teacher, who’s being paid as an independent contractor with bonuses, time off and sick pay. For Zugoni, it’s about paying $250 an hour for a pod for school supplies and snacks. (They have offered that any family who can’t afford the fee to be let in, at Zugoni’s request, will be asked.) They created a school calendar for the year with extra time off after Thanksgiving in case families travel for the holidays and need time to quarantine.

They’ve all agreed to strict health guidelines — including temperature checks, periodic coronavirus testing for the families and a requirement that any child with symptoms must be cleared by a doctor before coming back to the pod. To further limit potential exposure, they only allowed children who aren’t participat ing in any other in-person group program — and whose siblings were home schooling — to participate. Zugoni narrowed down the number of kids who could participate.

Families using private resources are finding that online learning have been hotly criticized for deepening socioeconomic and racial inequities. The success of pods has made efforts to include a low-income or minority student in their pods, which critics say doesn’t address the root issue. “If we’re going to create more diverse, inclusive, equitable pods then we will have to have low-income and minority students in our network because we have created communities that are segregated,” said Angie Evans, a Palo Alto parent and community organizer who has been offering free Zoom calls on pods and equity. “We’re not going to be building a diverse and equitable white class while kids do in the pandemic. We are going to be judged in Palo Alto by how we allow kids who are low-income and minority kids to participate in the pandemic — and we should be.”

(The Tinsley or Volunteer Trans fer Program allows students who attend East Palo Alto public schools to attend Palo Alto public schools.)

Evans started hosting the Zoom calls after noticing that no East Palo Alto parents were participating in Partner Pods, the popular Facebook group and website for creating local pods. Zugoni said she understands why some people take issue with the idea of pods as fueling inequity — pods are essentially a way for richer families to reach out to others at risk to form pods to reach outside their social circles and to consider including students in need at no cost. South Bay Educational Support, a new Palo Alto tutoring business started by a Palo Alto High School graduate taking a gap year and working with upper school students, is go ing to start allowing families to sponsor students who can’t afford to hire a private tutor.

Dianna Ng, a Palo Alto High School graduate and Partner Pods, said she encourages conversations about equity in the group, including sharing lesson plans and resources on diversity. But she doesn’t think it’s
fair to castigate pandemic pods for deep-rooted educational inequities.

“The pods in general are not that much different than what was going on before, if you think about it. Everybody is in their own neighborhood. Everybody is in their own grade. You might get a sprinkling of other children from other neighborhoods but in general this is the way that the public school district and to some extent private schools have been formed,” she said. “This is the norm.”

Haydel, who works as a parent educator at Parent’s Place in Palo Alto, recently started leading virtual workshops on pods in response to demand from parents. Her next workshop, on Sept. 4, is focused on addressing racial inequality in pods.

“My hope is that it will create a shift in our pod culture where people are talking about this,” Haydel said. “It’s getting a bad rap for creating a bigger divide. I’m hoping to keep the conversation going on how we can be more supportive.”

Zugoni also urged compassion for all families finding their own way through the stress and weight of a radically different school experience.

“We’re put in this situation that nobody expected, this unprecedented pandemic,” she said. “My ask is that people don’t judge one another but really to be empathetic to everybody’s situation. People have different needs.”

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

Answers to this week’s puzzles, which can be found on page 39.

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Health care
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testing to more categories of those at risk of exposure."

Kaiser’s website does not say that Santa Clara County residents are entitled to a test if they meet the public health order’s criteria. And while there’s a clear divergence between which patients are theoretically entitled to a test and which ones are actually getting tested, Coffaro sent a letter to the Board of Supervisors on July 21 stating that “all hospitals and health care systems offer COVID-19 testing to their patients in accordance with this order.”

In an interview, Coffaro said the June 10 order is no longer realistic. The spread of the virus and new COVID-19 cases were on the decline when the order was issued, but times have changed and supplies are again running thin. The state’s testing requirements have changed significantly since June and have been fluid based on the supply shortage, she said, yet Santa Clara County’s requirements have remained constant.

“We want to test every person who needs a test, but in reality it’s a matter of availability of supplies, personnel and lab equipment,” Coffaro said. “It’s very hard to be accountable to something that we just can’t get.”

Sutter representatives declined to comment, instead referring inquiries to the Santa Clara Medical Association and the Hospital Council. An Aug. 11 letter to the county by the Santa Clara Medical Association suggested that the public health order would lead to “dire consequences” and threatens to divert tests away from those who need it most.

Help from the private sector

Under the public health order, Santa Clara County can start penalizing hospitals for failing to provide tests. On top of civil fines approved earlier this month, violations can also be enforced through the criminal system, carrying a misdemeanor charge.

So far, county leaders have taken a softer touch, attempting to work behind the scenes to gain compliance from private hospital systems. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the hospitals and the county is currently in the works to determine just how bad the flouting of the public order has to get before fines are imposed.

After talking with hospital officials over Zoom on last week, Simitian said he is not optimistic that the MOU will increase the volume of testing. While nobody wants to go down the route of penalizing hospitals, he said it’s essential to get these major health care providers to comply if there is any hope of getting a handle on the virus. Kaiser serves anywhere from 30% to 40% of the county’s entire population, he said, while Sutter covers a large portion of his constituents through the Palo Alto Medical Foundation. Both need to step up and do their share, he said.

“Testing is the necessary precondition to working our way out of the condition we’re in,” Simitian said. “Without testing, you can’t do contact tracing, which means you can’t ask people to isolate and quarantine, which means people are going to be out there moving the virus around.”

Kamal said the county has a symbiotic relationship with these large health care systems and must rely on them to scale up COVID-19 testing. What’s really needed, he said, is for these private hospitals to follow in the footsteps of the county and take emergency measures to ramp up testing capacity, responding to the global health crisis with a commensurate response.

“The mobilization we need to see is the type of mobilization we had during World War II, and that’s what we need from our health care partners,” Kamal said. “We need them to pitch in and take care of their patients.”

Staff Writer Kevin Forestieri is a reporter for the Mountain View Voice, a sister publication of the Weekly. He can be reached at kforestieri@mv-voice.com.
Reform
(continued from page 5)

not to adopt any policies that would hinder officers’ ability to protect themselves during dangerous situations.

The Rev. Kaloma Smith, who chairs the commission, observed that the conversation feels particularly urgent in the aftermath of the shooting of Blake, which sparked protests in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on Sunday and Monday. A video of the incident showed a police officer shooting Blake seven times at close range as he was entering his vehicle. Blake was in stable condition in an intensive care unit on Monday night, according to multiple news reports.

“This moment was sparked by the killing of George Floyd, and last night we watched Jacob Blake get shot in the back seven times by officers,” Smith said. “This makes this conversation more of a priority right now because we don’t want to end up in this position.”

The Police Department has already adopted some new restrictions, moving in June to ban the carotid hold and agreeing to make the existing ban on chokeholds and strangleholds more explicit in its policy manual. Police Chief Robert Jonsen and Assistant Chief Andrew Binder also agreed with the Human Relations Commission that they should expand the department’s de-escalation policy to list the types of techniques that officers should use to avoid violence, including effective communications, self-control and requesting additional resources such as crisis intervention team members to decrease the need to use force.

The council agreed that the policy on strangleholds should go even further and supported the Human Relations Commission’s proposed change, which also bans “lateral vascular neck restraints, chest compressions” and other moves that restrict airflow.

“What everybody agrees on is that what happened to George Floyd or Eric Garner can’t be allowed to happen in Palo Alto,” Councilman Eric Filseth said in discussing the proposed change.

While Smith similarly argued that the city needs to send a clear message that the types of moves that resulted in the deaths of Floyd and Garner (who was killed by a New York City officer in 2014) should be banned, Jonsen and Binder countered that the proposed restrictions are too broad. Jonsen suggested that implementing policies that outright ban certain actions “could have a detrimental effect, not only to officers’ safety but to the public at large.”

Binder agreed.

“If an officer is so concerned with avoiding being on someone’s chest, back or neck during a fight because they don’t want to be out of policy and afraid they will restrict the person’s airflow, then they’re not concentrating on the most important task at hand, which is taking this person into custody in the most safe manner, both to the subject and the officer,” Binder said.

To address this concern, the council agreed to specify that “intentional tactics” that restrict blood flow to the head or neck are prohibited. Binder and Smith both supported the compromise, which carves out an exception for accidental impediments to air flow.

“If someone falls on someone’s chest at a fight, that’s an accident,” Smith said. “But we’ve seen nationally, across the country, where now the mantra for many marchers is ‘Hands up! I can’t breathe!’ and the reality is — we are asking that the intentional tactics are listed out and put there.”

The council also requested that the Police Department expand and clarify its use-of-force policy and that it adopt a requirement that “all options would be exhausted before shooting.” It also supported a policy that bans shooting at vehicles unless the driver poses a “deadly threat.”

Jonsen and Binder each argued against an outright ban on shooting at moving vehicles and pointed to situations in which someone may be trying to drive into a crowded demonstration or an outdoor dining area.

“The one predictable thing about police work is that it is unpredictable,” Binder said. “We can pass a policy measure tonight that says, ‘No doing that,’ and there could be a demonstration in Foothills Park where someone decides they’re going to drive into the crowd and that officer doesn’t have the ability, based on totality of circumstances, to stop that threat with their firearm because they’ve been restricted by policy.”

The council and the commission agreed that Monday’s changes are just a small, early step in the city’s campaign to revise police policies. The council is also moving ahead with the Human Relations Commission recommendations and align the Palo Alto Police Department with 8 Can’t Wait.

Assistant Chief Andrew Binder also agreed to make the existing ban on chokeholds supported the Human Relations Commission, observed that the conversation feels particularly urgent in the aftermath of the shooting of Floyd, which sparked protests in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on Sunday and Monday. A video of the incident showed a police officer shooting Blake seven times at close range as he was entering his vehicle. Blake was in stable condition in an intensive care unit on Monday night, according to multiple news reports.

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“If an officer is so concerned with...
for him is making sure the job-training fund component of Measure HH, the “Commercial Office Space Parcel Tax for Affordable Housing and Job Opportunities” that passed in 2018, actually ends up serving the city’s residents. Hyland also hopes that he can help maintain the city’s diversity and mix of cultures.

Lincoln came to East Palo Alto in the early 1990s but says his family lived in the city as far back as the 1950s. He’s a “home-grown scientist,” Lincoln wrote in his campaign statement, with a background in neuroscience, hoping to finally give back to his community.

“In science there’s a process of testing, experimenting and using critical thinking to navigate gray areas and solve difficult problems,” Lincoln said in an interview. “I’m bringing not only my expertise and knowledge of the current situation to East Palo Alto, but also my critical thinking skills and my own Latino communities, to help change the city for the better.”

Affordable housing, homelessness and poverty are the main issues Lincoln wants to address as a city councilman.

Lopez, born and raised in East Palo Alto, is participating in Stanford’s Modern Thought & Literature interdisciplinary program. He graduated from Duke University in 2012 with a double major in global cultural studies and African American studies, pursued a master’s degree at Rutgers University and received a Marshalls scholarship to study at Oxford University. Lopez is also set to publish his first collection of poetry, “Gentrification,” with Four Way Books, next year.

Through he has no formal experience in politics, Lopez believes that politics is an extension of the work he’s done to advocate for change in his own communities through writing.

“My writing has always been political — it’s always about raising awareness particularly in African American communities, Polynesian communities and my own Latino communities,” he said. “To me, writing was a platform where I can say, ‘Hey, we’re overlooking ... what the actual stories are, what the actual experiences of people who haven’t been to college or haven’t been in editorial rooms are’.”

On his website, Lopez lists potential partnerships with existing organizations that could address what he sees as some of the core issues in his communities: inequality of education opportunities, “in-sufficient opportunities for youth development,” accessibility to city services and a housing crisis.

Joining the race straight out of college is Mendez, who graduated from UC Berkeley this May with a degree in legal studies and a minor in public policy. He’s an East Palo Alto native (“a product of the Ravenswood School District,” he writes in his campaign statement) and, at 23 years old, has over a year of experience working with the city as its planning commissioner alternate.

“I’ve always had an interest in giving back to my community and getting involved ever since high school,” Mendez said. Now, as the community deals with a pandemic, Mendez said he wants to make sure the council is taking the necessary steps to ensure that current residents are not being displaced and that some of the tensions coming from unemployment or unpaid rent are being alleviated.

In addition, Mendez said, he hopes to streamline the arduous process of building affordable housing, alleviate some of the traffic congestion in the city and move towards a “greener East Palo Alto.”

Although I might be the youngest candidate running for City Council, I feel really proud about it,” Mendez said. “I feel more motivated to try to empower others that they can do it too. I think we are the future of East Palo Alto and we need someone representing from our age group on (the) City Council.”

Editorial Assistant Lloyd Lee can be emailed at lle@pawekly.com.

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- Carrie M.

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Greer Stone

Greer Stone serves our community in multiple roles. He teaches Social Studies at Gunn, fights for social justice as the Vice Chair of the Santa Clara County Human Rights Commission, and cares for his neighbors as a Block Preparedness Coordinator.

During this pandemic, he has delivered groceries/prescriptions for the at-risk, organized community Zoom meetings to promote emotional well-being, wrote an inspiring guest opinion for the Palo Alto Weekly, all while continuing to teach our children.

Submitted by: Arthur Keller
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