Palo Alto County may loosen rules on indoor gatherings

Page 5

Upfront  Retired cop charged with 2018 assault  Page 5

Eating Out  New restaurants spice up dining scene  Page 39

Community  Moonlight Run goes global, virtual  Page 41
different world, safer care

“We now know a lot more about the virus and how it’s transmitted. We are confident that we can deliver great care, without risk of infection, and get back to routine procedures.”

—W. Ray Kim, MD | Chief of Gastroenterology & Hepatology, Stanford Medicine

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HERE’S LOOKING TO THE FUTURE....

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Former police sergeant charged with assault

Footage shows Wayne Benitez slammed suspect’s head into a windshield

Former Palo Alto police Sgt. Wayne Benitez has been charged with the assault of a Buena Vista Mobile Home Park man during an incident two years ago. Benitez, 62, has since retired.

He was seen on a home-surveillance video slamming the face of Gustavo Alvarez, who was handcuffed, against the windshield of Alvarez’s car on Feb. 17, 2018. Benitez also allegedly filed a false police report, the Santa Clara County District Attorney’s Office said Tuesday in a statement.

All businesses must continue to do their jobs from home whenever possible. Employees can only go to the workplace for tasks they can’t complete remotely.

However, the county would keep in place “red tier” (or Tier 2) requirements that restrict indoor dining and gatherings to 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer.

Outdoor gatherings of up to 200 people would be allowed under the revised order. Businesses must also complete and submit a social distancing protocol for each of their facilities. Previous social distancing protocols must be updated within 14 days of the revised order’s start.

If convicted of assault under the order, all businesses would face up to two years in jail, the District Attorney’s Office said. Peace officers who use more force than necessary hurt more than the person they are trying to arrest. They damage the deservedly excellent reputations of the vast majority of officers who work every shift to help people. And they strain the bonds with their communities that we expect and deserve that police officers will protect and serve them fairly and professionally,” District Attorney Jeff Rosen said in the statement.

The case was reviewed by the District Attorney’s newly formed Integrated Violence Team.

Footage shows Wayne Benitez slammed suspect’s head into a windshield

by Sue Dremann

Public and Law Enforcement Integrity Team.

Benitez was among a group of officers who had arrived as

(continued on page 10)

ELECTION 2020

Schools parcel tax on the ballot

Measure O would extend tax for six years

Before the school board voted this summer to place a parcel tax renewal on the November ballot, a consultant warned that mounting a significant advocacy campaign would be crucial to its passage given the high-stakes distractions of the coronavirus, school closures and a presidential election.

The board decided to put Measure O on the Nov. 3 ballot partially out of concern that it might not pass the first time. This gives the district one more shot — though a risky one — at approval in spring 2021, just months before the $836 per parcel tax is set to expire in June.

If approved, Measure O would extend the tax for six years at the same rate. It provides about $15.6 million annually to the district to support hiring and retaining teachers, keeping class sizes small, offering a wide range of electives and employing mental health counselors and reading specialists, among other areas.

The “Yes on O” campaign team has been attending Zoom PTA meetings and distributing lawn signs and mailers in the hopes of getting the word out about what’s at stake, particularly to voters without children in Palo Alto public schools, if the parcel tax doesn’t pass.

According to the campaign, if the parcel tax fails, about 100 teachers, as well as counselors and other staff, could be laid off.

“Palo Alto Unified schools would look unrecognizable next year without it,” said parent Robyn Rosen.

by Elena Kadvany

Schools parcel tax on the ballot

(continued on page 14)

www.PaloAltoOnline.com • Palo Alto Weekly • October 9, 2020 • Page 5
The fact that you are able to do something doesn’t mean that you should.

— Dr. Sarah Cody, county public health officer, on the reopening of indoor activities. See story on page 5.

A familiar Palo Alto public art project offers comforting and inspiring messages that many of us could hear six months into the COVID-19 pandemic. "Love is everywhere, look for it." "Keep moving, Keep playing, Keep dreaming." "Take more chances. Make more friends." These are the phrases included in artist Susan O’Malley’s “Community Advice” project installed Sept. 30 outside of the Palo Alto Art Center along Embarcadero Road. The power of public art to stimulate what discussion and bring communities together at this difficult time cannot be underestimated," Public Art Program Director Elise DeMarzo stated in a press release. “We hope that viewers will connect with O’Malley’s uplifting work and ask themselves what advice they might give to others and why. The work is hard to miss — three oversized posters are plastered with bright colors that radiate positivity. As part of the project commission in 2012, O’Malley posed the following question to 100 people in Palo Alto: “What advice would you give your 8-year-old self? What advice would you give your 80-year-old self?” O’Malley previously said that hearing advice from other people helps form a bond that can bring a renewed sense of connection, which can be hard to find in Silicon Valley, according to the release. “I wanted to create this project because I think it’s easy to forget how wise we can be," she said. "We resist our internal wisdom because of fear, fatigue, inconvenience, or any number of reasons." O’Malley, who died in 2015, was a Bay Area-based graphic novelist whose comic books were plastered with bright colors and electrified. To take the tour, visit www.paloaltoartcenter.org. The Palo Alto Art Center released guidelines that allow outdoor performances to reopen with safety measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Leading up to the phased reopening, the city’s parks teams cleaned the structures, conducted safety checks and added new signs. Visitors will be required to wear a face covering if they are over 2 years old. They’re also encouraged to maintain physical distance from people outside of their household, wash their hands and stay home if they’re not feeling well or show symptoms of COVID-19. The one popular open space that will remain closed for now is the Magical Bridge Playground at Mitchell Park due to its limited space and an expected high number of visitors (when open, the attraction typically draws in more than 25,000 people per month). The public is also advised to not bring food, drinks or toys if they visit a playground. Anyone who sees someone violating health order violations is asked to call the city’s 24/7 dispatch line at 650-329-2413.

ALL ABOARD … Caltrain is allowing the San Francisco-Milpitas-Santa Clara line to reopen with safety measures in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Leading up to the phased reopening, the city’s parks teams cleaned the structures, conducted safety checks and added new signs. Visitors will be required to wear a face covering if they are over 2 years old. They’re also encouraged to maintain physical distance from people outside of their household, wash their hands and stay home if they’re not feeling well or show symptoms of COVID-19. The one popular open space that will remain closed for now is the Magical Bridge Playground at Mitchell Park due to its limited space and an expected high number of visitors (when open, the attraction typically draws in more than 25,000 people per month). The public is also advised to not bring food, drinks or toys if they visit a playground. Anyone who sees someone violating health order violations is asked to call the city’s 24/7 dispatch line at 650-329-2413.

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Eager to encourage the construction of more affordable housing, Palo Alto’s elected leaders signaled in February that they’d be willing to compromise on height limits, density, parking requirements and other zoning rules for certain residential projects.

But as the City Council considered on Monday the latest such proposal, a mixed-use project in the Ventura neighborhood, some members made it clear that their tolerance for zoning exemptions is extremely limited.

The proposal from Menlo Park-based Acclaim Companies for 2951 El Camino Real would combine five parcels — three zoned for commercial use and two zoned as single-family residential between Pepper and Olive avenues near Page Mill Road — for a five-story building with 119 apartments, 5,000 square feet for offices and 1,000 square feet of retail space. Twenty-four of the apartments would be rented at below-market rates.

Acclaim is seeking significant zoning exemptions, saying they would make the project financially possible. Acclaim is proposing a terraced five-story building that is about 56 feet tall on the El Camino Real side and about 37 feet tall in the rear, abutting a single-family residential zone.

The proposed height exceeds the city’s 35-foot limit in areas within 150 feet of single-family-zoned properties.

Acclaim is also requesting significant density bonuses from the city. It proposes to nearly double the floor-to-area ratio in the project, from the current limit of 1.5 to the proposed level of 2.8. The project also proposes a residential density of 108 dwelling units per acre, far exceeding the city’s usual limits of 30 or 40 units per acre, depending on the zone.

With a mix of studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments, the project would provide an average of 425 square feet of space per unit.

Gary Johnson, managing partner at Acclaim, noted Monday that the development will have ample parking in its underground garage. The height limit, Johnson told the council, is necessary to make the project financially feasible.

“The highest land values in the country, combined with the highest construction costs in the country here in Palo Alto, make it very difficult for multifamily developers like us to build,” Johnson said during the council’s study session.

“For housing projects in Palo Alto, the details really matter,” Acclaim’s project is the latest to apply under the city’s new “planned housing” zone — a designation that allows builders to request zoning exemptions in exchange for housing. A descendant of the city’s contentious “planned community” zone, under which developers could bargain with the city over zoning exceptions and public benefits, the planned housing zone explicitly names housing as the primary benefit.

To date, the new zone has been generating some interest, though no takers, Planning Director Jonathan Lait said Monday that the city has been speaking to property owners from all over the city, with the various proposals adding up to about 1,000 housing units.

During Monday’s discussion, the council split into familiar factions, with those favoring more city growth touting the project’s benefits — namely, 119 units of housing — and their three slow-growth colleagues focusing on the costs of significant height and density concessions.

Several council members said they’d like to see Acclaim move ahead with a formal proposal for development. Mayor Adrian Fine announced that the city’s only other planned-home zone project, a mixed use development of 187 apartments proposed by Sand Hill Property Company, is now not moving ahead. He urged his colleagues to be flexible.

“That project is not going forward as the developer thought we were too strong in our criticism,” Fine said. “That’s 187 housing units lost in Palo Alto, that we aren’t going to see. And we’re going to end up with an office building and a parking lot.”

Councilwoman Liz Kniss shared his view.

“I don’t know how many of these we’ll turn down before finally anyone who wishes to develop will not come to us any longer,” Kniss said. “I hope at some point there will be some agreement among the council about what’s acceptable and what could be built. If not, in the years to come we’ll be way behind — on the amount of affordable housing that gets built, should it ever get

(continued on page 8)

Clariification

In today’s cover story, a response from candidate Matt Nagle about teacher housing on page 28 implies that Superintendent Dan Austin receives a $1.5 million housing loan. He does not, though past superintendents have received it.
To keep police accountable, city eyes larger role for independent auditor

Council members suggest expanding scope of recently revised contract with auditor

By Gennady Sheyner

S
ince Michael Gennaco began his stint as Palo Alto’s independent police auditor in 2008, his firm has examined Police Department incidents in which officers used Tasers, faced citizen complaints and — in some cases — filed complaints against one another.

One such investigation occurred in 2009, when a male officer, allegedly suspended, according to email. The officer was report-edly suspended, according to the audit, which referred to the incident as a “poor attempt at humor.” But as Gennaco and his colleague Stephen Connolly began their 12th year, the job description changed, thanks to the council’s decision last December to remove internal conflicts from the purview of the firm, OIR Group. Instead, the city decided to have these cases handled exclusively by the Human Resources Department, where they would be shielded from public disclosure.

On Monday, Gennaco told the council that of all the agencies that his firm works with, the Palo Alto Police Department is the only one in which investigations of internal complaints are excluded from the auditor’s scope.

Gennaco’s update came as part of the council’s broader discussion about ways to improve police oversight and promote racial equity in the community. Several council members agreed that as part of this effort, the city should consider revising the auditor’s scope of work for the second time in the past year — this time with an eye toward expanding it.

The city’s December decision came shortly after the firm received from an outside source a complaint against a white officer who allegedly used a racial slur when talking to a Black officer. While the audits don’t name officers, the OIR Group reported Capt. Zach Perron and former Officer Marcus Barbour, according to a complaint that was first publicized by the Palo Alto Daily Post and that was corroborated by this publication.

As agreed to a March 2020 report from the OIR Group, the firm received the complaint in September 2018 and was pre-pared to include recommendations and relevant findings about that case, as well as three other human-relations-related incidents, in a semiannual draft report that was due to be released in April 2019.

As part of the auditing process, OIR Group shares its find-ings with the City Attorney’s Office, the Police Department and Palo Alto Police Officers’ Association. While the auditor is nominally “independent,” in this case city staff asked the auditor not to publicize the report while the city considers whether personnel issues within the department should fall under the purview of the auditor. The
City Council (Oct. 5)

2951 El Camino: The council held a pre-screening session to consider a proposed development that includes 119 housing units, 5,000 square feet of office space and 1,000 square feet of retail. Action: None

ADU: The council approved various changes to the zoning code pertaining to accessory dwelling units. Yes: Unanimous

Public Art: The council agreed to continue the city’s “percent-for-art” program rather than suspend it for two years. Yes: Unanimous

Parking: The council agreed to make permanent the recently implemented Residential Preferential Parking Program in a section of Old Palo Alto. Yes: Cormack, Dubois, Filseth, Kou, Tanaka. No: Fine

Utilities Advisory Commission (Oct. 7)

Natural gas: The commission recommended that the city continue the Carbon Neutral Gas Plan without a provision that called for authorizing up to a 10% premium for offset projects developed in California. Yes: Unanimous

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**CityView**

A round-up of Palo Alto government action this week

**City Council (Oct. 5)**

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**LET’S DISCUSS:**

Read the latest local news headlines and talk about the issues at Town Square at PaloAltoOnline.com/square

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**FREE COVID-19 TESTING**

No-cost COVID-19 testing funded by the El Camino Healthcare District is now available for those who live, work or go to school within the District.*

To schedule your appointment online or for more information, visit elcaminohealth.org/covid19testing

You may also call 650-940-7022 and select Option #4 to schedule your test.

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*The District’s cities include most of Mountain View, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills; a large portion of Sunnyvale, and small sections of Cupertino, Santa Clara and Palo Alto.
In December, the City Council approved a new three-year contract with OIR Group that includes a clause that “complaints and investigations of internal personnel or human resources matters are not part of these Independent Police Auditor Services.”

City Manager Ed Shikada maintained at that time that the new contract represents a “continuation of services” and merely clarifies that personnel issues don’t fall under the auditor’s purview (notwithstanding that prior internal conflicts, such as the ones described earlier in this story, had been reviewed by the OIR Group).

In January, the city council took up reports on this issue. The recommended contract makes no changes to the types of reports under the contract that has taken place for years. Shikada told the council in December, shortly before the council unanimously voted to reduce the scope of the auditor’s services.

But as Gennaco made clear this week, his firm’s scope of work in Palo Alto is now narrower compared to other jurisdictions, even if internal conflicts are excluded. Currently, OIR Group only investigates Taser deployments, shootings by police officers and use-of-force incidents that involve complaints. If there is no complaint, the incident does not undergo an investigation.

“That cuts out a large swath of use of force that is used by a Police Department but that we never see,” Gennaco said. “If a canister is deployed by an individual, we don’t look at that unless a person complains. If a baton is used on an individual, we will not investigate unless there is a complaint. Pepper spray, takedowns, control holds ... all that force is something we would not see as part of our ordinary responsibilities unless a complaint is filed.”

Several council members agreed that the city should re-visit the scope for the second time in a year. Councilwoman Lydia Kou said she would like to expand the auditor’s scope to “where it was previously, so that we further the transparency and accountability in this.”

Vice Mayor Tom DuBois and Councilwoman Alison Cormack both suggested possibly including more types of use-of-force incidents in the auditor’s purview. Cormack said she would also like to better understand how the city’s auditing compares to that in other jurisdictions.

Others suggested that the council take a more active approach to police oversight. Councilwoman Liz Kniss noted that the council’s current role is “passive,” effectively receiving reports with no ability to take any actions on them.

DuBois suggested that the council could benefit from regular updates directly from the police auditor. Councilwoman Liz Kniss noted that the council’s current role is “passive,” effectively receiving reports with no ability to take any actions on them.

Gennaco additionally noted that when his firm began working with Palo Alto in 2008, it offered regular reports to the city’s Human Relations Commission. That, he said, can be resurrected.

Police Chief Robert Jonsen said that it’s rare for a police agency the size of Palo Alto to have an independent police auditor. The auditor, he said, “makes us better.” Yet he also warned that the area of police reform is full of moving parts, including state legislation and recent reforms announced by the Santa Clara County District Attorney’s Office, which include (among other changes) the creation of a Public and Law Enforcement Integrity Team focused on excessive use of force by police officers.

Jonsen warned against having too many agencies performing the same kind of reviews.

I hope it’s well-thought out and coordinated and that we have all aspects of the Police Department looked at by appropriate agencies,” Jonsen said. • Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner can be emailed at gsheyner@paweweekly.com.

**WHAT’S AT ISSUE**

- In December, the City Council voted to remove internal police conflicts from review by its independent police auditor, OIR Group. These cases are now handled exclusively by the city’s Human Resources Department and shielded from public disclosure.
- On Monday, Michael Gennaco of OIR Group said that of all the agencies with which his firm works, Palo Alto is the only one for which he does not investigate internal complaints. Councilwoman Lydia Kou said Monday she would like to expand the auditor’s scope to “where it was previously, so that we further the transparency and accountability in this.”
- Vice Mayor Tom DuBois and Councilwoman Alison Cormack both suggested including more types of use-of-force incidents in the auditor’s purview.
- DuBois also said the council could benefit from regular updates made directly from the police auditor. (Reports currently go to the City Attorney’s Office, the police department and the police union first.)
- In response, Police Chief Robert Jonsen warned that reforms, including those at the county and state levels, are all happening at once now. He cautioned against having too many agencies performing the same kind of reviews.

Shyner can be emailed at sdreman@email.com.

**Assault**

(continued from page 5)

backup for another officer and took Alvarez into custody on suspicion of driving with a suspended license. Police kicked in the door to Alvarez’s home after he refused to exit upon their command. A security camera outside the residence captured Benitez’s body-worn microphone and radio activated. The video and audio did not come to light until the following year, however, the District Attorney’s Office said.

Alvarez, 39, was charged on suspicion of driving under the influence, driving with a suspended or revoked license and resisting arrest. The charges were later dismissed by the District Attorney’s Office. The city of Palo Alto paid Alvarez $752,500 in a settlement for the incident in November 2010.

Palo Alto police did not return a request for comment as of Wednesday morning. • Staff Writer Sue Dremann can be emailed at sdreman@paweweekly.com.

**Upfront**

A Palo Alto Police Department vehicle heads down Hamilton Avenue.
VOTE Gilbert Wong on November 3 for Foothill-De Anza College Board

Endorsed by:
Los Altos Town Crier

Paid for by Gilbert Wong for Foothill-DeAnza Community College Trustee 2020. PPC # 1382149.

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COVID-19 (continued from page 5)

using a new template the county will soon make available. Businesses must also report confirmed COVID-19 cases to the Public Health Department within four hours and ensure their workers alert them if they test positive.

Santa Clara County is currently in the state’s red tier. If a downward count of COVID-19 cases continues, the state could assign the county to the less restrictive orange tier as early as Oct. 13. The county order would go into effect the next day, County Counsel James Williams said.

After Cody issued the original March stay-at-home order, the county averaged 45 new cases a day between April and June 15. When some of the restrictions were lifted to allow retail businesses to reopen, positive COVID-19 cases skyrocketed to a high of 269 per day by July 17, a six-fold spike in one month.

After reversing some of the reopening allowances this summer, the seven-day average of new cases per day fell to 102 cases as of Monday, a good trajectory, but one Cody still wants to see lowered.

“It took two-and-a-half months to bring it down,” she noted. “We can get into trouble very fast, but it takes a long time to get out of it.”

Cody said it’s imperative that everyone continue to practice precautions to keep the number of infections down.

“The fact that you are able to do something doesn’t mean that you should. The public’s commitment, both businesses and our residents, to wearing face coverings and maintaining social distancing and testing is what will help us move forward to the next tier in the state’s COVID-19 blueprint,” she said.

If infections rise again, the county could be pushed backward into more restrictions, Cody noted.

“This is why we urge all residents to be cautious, stay home when possible, minimize interaction with anyone outside their household ... and move activities outdoors when possible,” Cody said in a statement.

People older than age 50 and those with serious underlying medical conditions are at greater risk for serious illness from COVID-19. Indoor dining and indoor gatherings are particularly high-risk activities, according to the county.

Cindy Chavez, president of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, encouraged people to continue to adhere to the health officer’s guidelines for safety.

She was asked about recent comments made by President Donald Trump that played down the threat of the virus in spite of his own positive diagnosis and treatment for what have been described by multiple news outlets as serious symptoms.

She noted that not every American will receive the same treatment and care as the president.

“It is incredibly irresponsible to tell people that a disease that is deadly is nothing to care about,” she said.

Supervisor Dave Cortese noted during the press conference that even a few deaths should be a cause for serious concern.

From Sept. 25 through last Friday, 20 people in the county died of COVID-19, he said.

“If 20 people died in a year from anything in a prior year, all of you would be asking us: ‘What happened?’” he said.

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

COVID-19 (continued from page 5)

University AME Zion Church singers and musicians perform “Glorious Day (Living He Loved Me)” by Casting Crowns on the livestreamed Easter Sunday service in the Palo Alto church’s sanctuary on April 12.

Magali Gauthier

CITY TOLD TO INCREASE HOUSING

10,058 UNITS BY 2031

The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), an unelected bureaucratic body, is finalizing a housing mandate that will require Palo Alto to increase its housing stock by 36% by 2031.

10,058 units, 5 times the number of units allocated to Palo Alto for the prior 8-year planning period, is unprecedented in scope and would dramatically reshape Palo Alto.

This completely unrealistic mandate:

• Is based upon a dynamic jobs growth model that would lead to the urbanization of Palo Alto with high-rise housing throughout the city;
• Would dramatically alter the character and livability of Palo Alto’s single-family residential neighborhoods;
• Has been developed without open discussion of the consequences of such housing;
• Disregards that working from home will increase dramatically in the future; and
• Disregards the legal requirement that ABAG disperse jobs throughout the region.

Lydia Kou, Ed Lauing and Greer Stone (all of whom have been endorsed by the Palo Alto Weekly) will work toward a more reasonable balance of jobs and housing in Palo Alto and throughout the Bay Area. We need to have them on City Council to present the views that the majority of Palo Alto residents favor.

VOTE FOR CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Lydia Kou • Ed Lauing • Greer Stone

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Saturday, October 17, 2020
2:00pm-4:30pm Zoom Conference

Join us for an inspirational, FREE, online conference designed for members, friends and supporters of the LGBTQ Community!

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“Staying Sane in these Crazy Times”

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Magali Gauthier
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- Details about Stanford Health Care Advantage plans available in your community
- How Stanford Health Care Advantage plans give you access to Stanford Medicine and Sutter Health-affiliated doctors, specialists, and hospitals

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For accommodations of persons with special needs at meetings call 1-855-200-9227 or, for TTY users, 711. *You may reach a messaging service on weekends from April 1 through Sept. 30 and holidays. Please leave a message, and your call will be returned the next business day. Stanford Health Care Advantage is an HMO plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in Stanford Health Care Advantage depends on contract renewal. Stanford Health Care Advantage complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.
The council has no meetings scheduled this week.

CITY COUNCIL ... The council has no meetings scheduled this week.

BOARD OF EDUCATION ... The school board will meet in person to discuss physical safety and reopening procedures, career-themed pathway, a budget update, and report on A-G graduation requirements, among other items. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 13. The meeting will be broadcast on Cable TV Channel 28 and midpenmedia.org. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by going to paused.zoom.us/90788948129 or dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 949 9734 9249.

COUNCIL POLICY AND SERVICES COMMITTEE ... The committee plans to discuss the status of recommendations from the Community Services Department Fee Schedule Audit and discuss the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women as a component of the citywide initiative on inclusion and diversity. The virtual meeting will begin at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 13. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 946 1874 4621.

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION ... The commission plans to discuss the conditional-use permit for the Bryant St. It will also receive an informational report about Plan Bay Area 2050 and the Regional Housing Needs Allocation process. The virtual meeting will begin at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 14. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 959 2402 4700.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD ... The board plans to hold a study session to discuss draft objective standards. The virtual meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 15. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 974 7651 5801.

CITY/SCHOOL LIAISON COMMITTEE ... The committee plans to hold a virtual meeting at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 15. The agenda was not available by press deadline.

Measure O (continued from page 5)

Reiss, a Measure O campaign committee member. “The class sizes would balloon. Lots of electives would be cut. It would just feel like a different district.”

Polling conducted this summer suggests that the parcel tax’s path to approval could be rocky. Interviews conducted in June for the district by Gene Bregman & Associates, a public opinion and market research firm, showed that 62% of voters would support renewing the parcel tax — short of the two-thirds (66.7%) required to pass. That percentage rose just above the two-third threshold (70%) when voters were told the reasons to support the parcel tax and dropped to 67% when they were then told reasons for opposing the measure.

The official rebuttal against Measure O, filed as in past years by the Silicon Valley Taxpayers Association, argues that “This is not the time for ‘taxation as usual.’ Individuals, households and businesses have all had to adapt to this crisis by cutting costs and being more careful about spending their limited funds on only the most essential activities.”

School boards need to do their share by focusing their efforts on controlling costs and by prioritizing only the most essential things, the rebuttal states.

School board President Todd Collins, who has been campaigning for Measure O in his personal capacity, said if Measure O fails in November, the board will immediately have to decide whether to mount the parcel tax again in either March or May. There would also likely be debate over whether the decision should be delayed until whoever is elected to the board takes office in December, he said.

Both of the ballot options — in March and May — butt up against the district’s budget adoption timeline in ways that would put pressure on both staff and the board, Collins said. Any staff members who may be laid off have to be notified with pink slips by March 15. If the parcel tax is on the early March ballot, pink slips might not have to be sent out but the board would still have to prepare budget cuts in case the measure failed. If the parcel tax is on the May ballot, pink slips would have to be sent out to teachers and staff members in March.

“If we miss in the fall, the board’s going to spend its time not figuring out what to do after we start recovering from COVID but instead figuring out how to cut $16 million from the budget,” Collins said. “That’s an all-consuming task, not just for the board but for the whole organization.”

If the parcel tax fails, the board would be tasked with considering whether to draw down on reserves or to adjust the budget to a lower level of funding, with consequences for class sizes, support services and non-core courses like art and music that Collins called “drei.”

“Everything would be on the chopping block and much of it would be cut back,” he said.

Some community members have questioned why the parcel tax is needed at this level when enrollment is declining in the district. Enrollment has declined about 5% in the last five years.

Collins said the district decided to keep the rate the same for this exact reason; past parcel tax renewals came with increases of about 20%.

With less than a month until Election Day, Measure O has surpassed its fundraising goal with about $112,100, including pledged donations.

If approved, Measure O would continue an optional exemption for seniors ages 65 and older and low-income people with disabilities. It would also continue the 2% annual inflation increase. The measure requires annual audits by an independent oversight committee.

By law, parcel tax funds can only be used for voter-approved purposes, which in this case doesn’t include administrator salaries. Palo Alto voters first approved the parcel tax in 2001 and renewals in 2005, 2010 and 2015. The parcel tax has failed once, in 2004, when it coincided with a general election and the district asked for a significant increase.

Staff Writer Elena Kadvany can be emailed at ekadvany@paweekly.com.
News Digest

Two Palo Altans vie for county school board
Santa Clara County Board of Education incumbent Grace Mah and challenger Melissa Baten Caswell are running for Trustee Area 1, which represents the Palo Alto Unified, Los Altos, Mountain View Whisman and Mountain View-Los Altos Union High school districts. Both are Palo Alto residents and longtime school volunteers. Mah has served 13 years on the county board and is seeking her fourth term. Baten Caswell is nearing the end of her third term on the Palo Alto Unified School District Board of Education. The election comes amid heightened tensions on the county board, driven by differing opinions on charter schools as well as the controversial, split-vote censoring of Trustee Joseph Di Salvo for alleged gender discrimination. (Mah and two other board members cast the minority opposition vote.)

Campaign contributions in this race further underscore the charter school divide; with Mah receiving significant support from pro-charter organizations and Baten Caswell receiving large amounts from vocal critics of Bulls Charter School in Los Altos, whose next renewal will come before the board in 2022. The county board is made up of seven members who represent 31 school districts across the county, Trustees and the Superintendent, Mary Ann Dewan, and a $308 million board. The board authorizes charter schools, of which there are currently 21 in Santa Clara County. Read profiles of the two candidates at paloaltoonline.com (search “Multi candidates for Santa Clara County Board of Education.”)

—Elena Kadvany

Channing House reports uptick in COVID cases
As health leaders warn of a potentially dangerous fall and winter that could lead to new cases of COVID-19, recent outbreaks at long-term care facilities in Palo Alto highlight how difficult controlling the coronavirus can be.

Channing House has had 13 COVID-19 cases in the past two weeks: six cases among residents and seven among staff, CEO and Executive Director Rhonda Bekkedahl confirmed on Oct. 1. In total, 10 residents and 17 staff members have tested positive for the virus since the pandemic began. One contracted caregiver also tested positive. The cases are all in the assisted-living section, Bekkedahl said in an email.

The long-term care facility isn’t the only one with cases. Vi at Palo Alto and Palo Alto Commons also had cases within the past 14 days, according to data posted on a Santa Clara County Public Health Department public dashboard. In the past 14 days, Vi Palo Alto had fewer than 11 cases among staff and Palo Alto Commons had fewer than 11 cases among residents, according to data reported by the county on Tuesday. Lytton Gardens had three cases among residents in early and mid-September. As of Oct. 6, all but one of the residents have fully recovered and the other two are doing well, according to Mary McMullen, chief strategy and advancement officer at Covia Communities, Lytton Gardens’ parent company.

The Public Health Department declined to state how many cases specifically are at long-term care facilities. They said when a facility has less than 11 cases they don’t release the exact number due to “patient privacy.”

—Sue Dremann

Measure S would extend water tax
Should an existing property tax that has eight more years to go be extended indefinitely? This is the question being placed before voters on Nov. 3 by Santa Clara Valley Water District’s Measure S.

The district would fund the Bay Area Resilience Flood Protection program, which protects the drinking-water supply and dams from earthquakes and climate change and reduces pollution, toxins and contaminants in waterways, including San Francisco Bay. In Palo Alto and the wetlands of San Francisco Bay. Measure S would raise approximately $45.5 million annually, with a qualifying senior exemption, annual audits and independent citizen oversight.

In 2012, 74% of voters approved the district’s Measure B, a $67.67 per residence parcel tax, which is expected to raise $548 million by 2026 for the Clean Water program. Measure B only funds these projects through 2028, however. Measure S would provide additional funding annually until voters rescind the tax. If approved, Measure S would provide $263 million for flood-control projects, $54 million for seismic upgrades to Anderson Dam, $51 million for removing trash and homeless encampments from creeks, $155 million for creek restoration and wildlife enhancements and $53 million for environmental education and conservation grants. The measure requires a two-thirds majority approval to pass.

—Sue Dremann

Under Santa Clara County’s Voter’s Choice Act, all registered voters were sent mail-in ballots for this election starting on Oct. 5. Below you’ll find plenty of resources for educating yourself about the candidates and measures on the ballot as well as information about the process of voting between now and Nov. 3.

Where can I find information about the candidates and measures?

The Weekly’s Election Guide 2020 is posted on PaloAltoOnline.com (search for “Election Guide 2020”) and includes the information you need to make up your mind in the races for Palo Alto City Council, Palo Alto Unified School Board of Education and regional offices, plus local and regional measures. This Election Guide 2020 includes candidate profiles, explainers, videos, guest opinions and the Weekly’s editorial endorsements. It will continue to be updated as the election approaches, with the profiles of the candidates for East Palo Alto City Council and Ravenswood City School District Board of Trustees posted next week.

Are there videos I can watch of the candidates?

Yes, the Palo Alto Weekly conducted half-hour interviews with each candidate for City Council and school board and also held two, two-hour-long debates. These videos can be viewed at Youtube.com/paweekly

In addition, videos of debates and interviews conducted by local civic organizations, including the League of Women Voters and environmental, transportation and neighborhood groups, are available on the Midpeninsula Media Center website: midpenmedia.org/government/santa-clara-county/

How do I return my ballot?

The ballot comes with a pre-paid envelope so you can send it back. Mail-in ballots must be postmarked by Election Day.

For people who do not trust that their ballot will be delivered through the U.S. Postal Service, the Registrar of Voters has deployed at least 90 drop boxes throughout the county. County staff, not the Postal Service, will collect those ballots and bring them back to be counted.

In Palo Alto, the drop boxes are outside at the following locations: Palo Alto High School, 500 Embarcadero Road; Rinconada Branch Library, 1213 Newell Road; Palo Alto City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave.; and Mitchell Park Library, 3700 Middlefield Road.

For people who drop off their ballots in person at one of about 100 vote centers in the county, which will open on Oct. 31 for four days, up to and including Election Day. The hours will be Oct. 31 to Nov. 2 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Nov. 3 from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The vote centers in the Palo Alto and Stanford are at Cubberley Community Center — Gym A (inside), 4000 Middlefield Road; Mitchell Park Community Center — Adobe Room (inside), 3700 Middlefield Road; Ventura Community Center — Activity Center (inside), 3990 Venture Court; Palo Alto Art Center — Auditorium (inside), 1313 Newell Road; Rinconada Library — Embarcadero Room (inside), 1213 Newell Road; Stanford University Tresidder — Oak Lounge (inside), 459 Laguna Drive, Stanford.

People also can come to the vote center in person if they’ve misplaced their mailed ballots, need language assistance or require accessible accommodations.

After you cast your vote, you can track the whereabouts of your ballot by signing up at the “Where’s my ballot?” website at california.ballottrax.net/voter/

What if I didn’t get a ballot?

If your ballot has not arrived or it’s gone missing or you need a replacement, complete the Vote by Mail Ballot Application Replacement Request Form available on the Registrar of Voters website at eservices.sccgov.org/rov/tovaballot. The last day to request a Vote by Mail Ballot replacement by mail is Oct. 27.

What if I’m not yet a registered voter?

The last day to register to vote is Oct. 19. Register online at register.­sccgov.org or it’s gone missing or you need a replacement, complete the Vote by Mail Ballot Application Replacement Request Form available on the Registrar of Voters website at eservices.sccgov.org/rov/tovaballot. The last day to request a Vote by Mail Ballot replacement by mail is Oct. 27.

For more information, go to the Registrar of Voters’ site at sccgov.org/sites/rov.
PALO ALTO
2020 DEMOCRATIC VOTING GUIDE

Vote for Democrats up and down the ballot.

The ONLY candidates endorsed in these races by the California Democratic Party.

☑ ANNA ESHOO
U.S. CONGRESS DISTRICT 18

☑ JOSH BECKER
STATE SENATE DISTRICT 13

☑ MARC BERMAN
STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 24

The ONLY candidates endorsed in these races by the Santa Clara County Democratic Party.

COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

☑ MELISSA BATEN CASWELL

PALO ALTO CITY COUNCIL

☑ STEVEN LEE

PALO ALTO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

☑ KATIE CAUSEY

☑ RAVEN MALONE

☑ JENNIFER DiBRIENZA

☑ CAROLYN “Cari” TEMPLETON

☑ JESSE LADOMIRAK

Remember to Vote by Tuesday, November 3rd!

PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISING

Paid for by: Anna Eshoo for Congress FEC# C00258475, Josh Becker for Senate 2020 FPPC #1409764, Marc Berman for Assembly 2020, FPPC #1414419, Melissa Baten Caswell for Santa Clara County Board of Education 2020 FPPC ID #1426505, Jesse Ladomirak for School Board 2020 FPPC #1428450, Raven Malone for City Council 2020 FPPC #1428361, Cari Templeton for City Council 2020 FPPC ID #1427052, Steven Lee 2020 - A Progressive Democrat for City Council FPPC ID #1427868.
Margot Lippert

Margot was born in San Francisco on June 12, 1934. She was the only child of Leo and Anne Foley English. Margot went to St. Anne School and then on to Convent of the Sacred Heart on Broadway for high school. From there she went to Stanford University from which she received a bachelor's and a master's degree. Then she met the love of her life John, whom she married in Saitama, Japan, they were married for 61 years. Their first home in the US was in Millbrae and then in Menlo Park, CA. Her family was the center of her life. The family grew to include four children, Paul (Sam), Lisa Clancy (Terry), Timothy (Joni) and Alison (deceased) and grandchildren Jack and Anna Lippert, Joseph (Claire), Daniel and Liam Clancy, William, Henry and Emily Lippert.

Margot taught kindergarten at Philips Brooks School for many years and loved it! She spent many years as a volunteer at the Allied Arts Shop in Menlo Park with the Menlo Atherton auxiliary of Children’s Hospital at Stanford; at Filoli as a nature docent; and at her church, St. Denis, but the volunteering she loved best was the time spent with the children and parents at Lucille Packard Children’s Hospital Stanford.

In her later years she suffered from Alzheimer’s disease but was always that gracious and loving wife, mother and grandmother.

Private services are being planned.
**Propositions**

1. **Federal Capital Gains Tax**
   - Proposed increase in federal capital gains tax rate from a max of 23.8% in 2020 to a max of **43.4%**

2. **Proposed increases to California’s max ordinary income & capital gains tax rate of 13.3% to 16.8%**
   - Thus creating a potential max combined capital gains tax rate of 60.2% (up from 37.1%)

3. **Real Estate related propositions dealing with:**
   - Prop 15 - Property tax – partial repeal of Prop 13
   - Prop 19 - Property tax – transferring tax value
   - Prop 21 - Rent Control expansion

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**Michael Repka**

DeLeon Realty CEO & Managing Broker

In addition to running the top listing team in Silicon Valley, Michael Repka is also the Chief Executive Officer and General Counsel of DeLeon Realty. Michael has two law degrees, including an advanced law degree in taxation (LL.M) from NYU School of Law, the #1 tax program in the nation. Prior to joining DeLeon Realty, Michael was a practicing real estate and estate-planning attorney.

After obtaining his first law degree, Michael joined a law firm, where he counselled clients on the legal, tax, and procedural aspects of buying or selling homes. Following this, Michael worked at PricewaterhouseCoopers, focusing on mergers and acquisitions, and later at Baker & McKenzie, specializing in tax law. Michael then returned to real estate, first as a practicing attorney, and later as a broker.

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

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3787 Woodside Road, Woodside

Supreme Privacy, Timeless Luxury on 3.15 Acres in Woodside

Nestled on a verdant 3.15-acre lot (per county) in peaceful Woodside, this stunning estate presents superb privacy, timeless luxury, and incredible space for entertaining on a grand scale. Lofty ceilings craft an airy atmosphere throughout the home and tall, wide windows allow an abundance of natural light. Expansive formal rooms enjoy elegant appointments, the superb kitchen is sure to inspire your inner Top Chef, the handsome office can meet all work-from-home needs, and the lower level includes a theater for fantastic movie nights. Offering 6 bedrooms, 5.5 baths, and 7,168 sq. ft. of living space (per county), including a 1-bed, 1-bath guest house, this home will have you feeling a million miles away from the frenetic pace of Silicon Valley thanks to extraordinary grounds that include a pool, barbecue patio, and pathways that wind their way to the serene banks of Bear Gulch Creek, yet you will still enjoy the convenience of being just a short drive to the amenities of the Town of Woodside, and be close to Interstate 280 for Bay Area commuting. Adding the finishing touch, children may attend the acclaimed Woodside Elementary School (buyer to verify eligibility).

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Listed by Michael Repka of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties*

Data from BrokerMetrics® based on MLS sales from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2019, in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties combined, residential properties, with off-MLS sales included in the rankings.

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

中文諮詢請聯繫Audrey Sun, DRE #01933274 電話: 650.785.5822 | www.deleonrealty.com | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224
DiBrienza, Collins, Ladomirak for school board

by the Weekly editorial board

T he Santa Clara County Board of Education is one of those obscure elected bod-
ies that rarely attract much pub-
lic interest or candidates. Seven
members, each representing a
geographic district, oversee the
county Office of Education, which
runs programs and special schools
such as those serving incarcerated
youth and students who have been
expelled from their local schools.
More importantly, it also approves
and monitors the performance of
charter schools in the county.

After 13 years on the Palo Alto
school board, Melissa Baten Cas-
well is looking to extend her in-
volvement in local education by un-
seating 12-year incumbent Grace
Mah, also from Palo Alto. The re-
gion comprising “Area I” extends
from Palo Alto to Sunnyvale and
includes the Los Altos School Dis-
ctrict. It served as the base for
her 2008 campaign to replace
Grace Mah, who won her seat by
a narrow margin.

Baten is running again in 2020.
After making to do with
pre-existing staff, she is
moving into the
leadership role
in her role as
district chair.

According to
her, she has
worked exten-
sively with
classroom teach-
ers on
identifying
the unique
needs of
students
in her
district.

Mah has served
for more than
100,000
in
two
charter
school
PK-12
students
since
Mah’s
reelection
in
2018.

by the Weekly editorial board

Baten Caswell for County Board of Ed

in

conflict
between
Bullis
and
the
school
district,
mostly
relating
to
issues
of
educational
equity,
the
siphoning
of
students
out
of
the
public
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system
and
the
rea-

duests
imposed
on
the
district
to
provide
facilities
for
the
charter
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in
her
district.

After
Mah
lost
her
reelection
in
2018,

Baten
Caswell

has
received
more
than
$100,000

from

two

charter

PK-12

schools

since

her
2018
reelection.

Baten
Caswell’s
extensive
work
with
charter
school
leaders
in
her
district
suggests
her
commitment
to
educational
equity
and
fair
processes.

by the Weekly editorial board

Edward Caswell for County Board of Ed

With
13
years
on
the
Palo
Alto
school
board,
Edward

Caswell
is
seeking
reelection.

Caswell

is

a

school

board

member

who

believes

in

providing

up-to-date

information

to

parents

and

community

members.

He

also

supports

inclusivity

in

education

and

recognition

of

diverse

needs.

He

believes

in

the

value

of

community

participation

in

school

planning.

by the Weekly editorial board

Karna Niwasekar and Matt Nagle

For

the

third

seat,

we

recommend

Karna

Niwasekar

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Matt

Nagle

for

their

valuable

service

on

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Palo

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Niwasekar

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Nagle

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Guest Opinion

Dare to clean up part of Prop. 13? Vote ‘yes’ on Prop 15

by Nancy Shepherd

In 1978, Palo Alto voted against “The Peoples Amend- ment to Control Taxation” a.k.a. Proposition 13. This historic con- stitutional amendment passed by 73% of the electorate. It put a cap on the amount of property tax increases that local governments could levy, or revalue property at a maximum of 2% per year. By eliminating the parallel base year valuation methodology, the initiative was targeted at helping senior citizens remain in their homes and govern- ments to control public spending. Yet, it was unpopular with Palo Alto voters, who worried about funding for schools and public services. Sure enough, it dropped revenue by more than half.

Times have changed, and today Proposition 13 homeowner protections are popular, even in Palo Alto.

Existing inequalities were strengthened and expanded by Proposition 13. For example, I pay about one quarter in property taxes than my nextdoor neighbor. Our house is assessed at about $500,000 because our base value began in 1984. Our neighbors, who have school- age children, purchased their home 10 years ago for about $2 million.

Inequities between commercial property base valuations and market values are greater than 2-3%. This correction, which is not on the ballot, will correct this loophole. Santa Clara County will not change, a simple majority of voters can correct this loophole. Santa Clara County Assessor Larry Stone promotes a different correction to Proposition 15 by changing the tax rate for commercial properties from 1% to 2-3%. This correction, which is not on the November ballot, would require support from a super majority of voters (67%).

The argument made by opponents of Prop- osition 15 — that this loophole correction will harm small businesses, has been invalid- ated. A study commissioned by Silicon Valley Community Foundation found that Proposi- tion 15 “will not impact small business own- ers, including triple net lease tenants” and that “the burden will fall on the state’s largest corporations and highest-value properties.”

In Jennifer Bestor’s Aug. 21 Guest Opinion column, titled “Where did the other $713 million go?” she identified the mechanics of how new revenue for education will be allo- cated. Sadly, most of the inequalities of school funding will not be resolved. These inequalities escalated when Proposition 13 was enacted in the late 1970s. Jerry Brown was governor and ordered each county to create a formula to distribute property tax revenue between counties, municipalities, districts and schools. No two counties have the same formula. For example, San Francisco is a city and county, whereas Santa Clara County is populated by neighboring municipalities and special districts. Proposition 15 will distribute equally to each school based on student population.

This is not a tax initiative. Since the tax rate will not change, a simple majority of voters can correct this loophole. Santa Clara County Assessor Larry Stone promotes a different correction to Proposition 15 by changing the tax rate for commercial properties from 1% to 2-3%. This correction, which is not on the November ballot, would require support from a super majority of voters (67%).

The League of Women Voters, city of Palo Alto and Santa Clara County support Propo- sition 15 and encourage Palo Altans to vote “yes.” This is a small but vital step to restore revenue for our public services and invest in our future.

Nancy Shepherd is president of the League of Women Voters Palo Alto, former mayor of the city of Palo Alto and advisory board member for Evolve, a coalition partner of Proposition 15. She can be reached at nlshep@pacbell.net.

School board

(continued from page 20)

Letters

Paradise or parking lots?

Editor,

I am channelling Joni Mitch- ell’s 1970 hit Big Yellow Taxi as I read about Palo Alto’s plans for accelerated urban growth: “Pave paradise, put up a parking lot” resonates like an alarm. While daily articles in the mainstream media describe the exodus of families from urban centers to suburban areas in search of a better quality of life, we appear to want to move in the opposite di- rection toward increased density. For multiple reasons, including the coronavirus pandemic, economic uncertainty and so- cial isolation, many are considering the move from large cities to more sparsely populated areas. As WFH (work from home) becomes the norm and more people are leav- ing dense urban centers that they find expensive, stressful and not where they want to raise a family.

Real estate listing site Real- tor.com found that in the second quarter of 2020, half of the home searches by urban residents in the country’s 100 largest metros zoomed in on nearby suburbs. A Harris Poll from April 2020 provides some additional data:

• 39% of urban dwellers said the COVID-19 crisis has prompt- ed them to consider leaving for a less crowded place.
• Space now means something more than square feet. The vi- rius is forcing urbanites to consider social distancing as a lifestyle.

Palo Alto residents inherited a great place to live from prior generations. We should not be asking ourselves, “What will we leave behind for the next generations?”

Politics of anger

Editor,

In a recent blog post, Palo Alto Vice Mayor DuBois took umbrage at language in a campaign mailer, calling it offensive and gross. His now- edited blog ironically became a negative and offensive mes- sage itself, harshly criticiz- ing the multiple candidates he opposes. He did not respond to a request for an individual Zoom dialogue.

Vice Mayor DuBois’ original blog exemplified what he him- self deems distasteful: politics of anger. Politics of division. He wrote toward the end, “In Palo Alto, we can and will do better.” We urge the vice mayor to lead by example and do bet- ter. Taking the high road should be a universally embraced Palo Alto value.

In the spirit of good govern- ance, we encourage the vice mayor to listen with humility and seek to understand residents’ perspectives and values that differ from his own views. He is in a role where he can lead by build- ing bridges. His inflammatory rhetoric that the five candidates he dislikes have ill-pledged to eliminate basic aid, and that our city’s financial distractions, each other, and will take the high road and will be a universally embraced Palo Alto value.

In the spirit of good govern- ance, we encourage the vice mayor to listen with humility and seek to understand residents’ perspectives and values that differ from his own views. He is in a role where he can lead by build- ing bridges. His inflammatory rhetoric that the five candidates he dislikes have ill-pledged to eliminate basic aid, and that our city’s financial distractions, each other, and will take the high road and will be a universally embraced Palo Alto value.

The Schools and Communities First Initia- tive will raise an estimated $12 billion across the state once deployed. In fact, research identifies that 10% of California commercial property will raise about 92% of the new rev- enue. When fully implemented, an estimated $1 billion of new revenue will flow to our county.

These new revenues are split between schools and communities. When families go to municipalities, special districts, and the county. The city of Palo Alto will receive an estimated $2 million annually, the Midpen- dencia Regional Open Space District about $9 million.

I was on Palo Alto City Council dur- ing the Great Recession, and staffing basic school community services like fire and police was challenging. Schools doubles as employees arrive at our business centers, staffing and equipment for first re- sponders is a large part of the city’s budget, yet annual revenue from commercial prop- erty roles was among our revenue sources.

Proposition 15 directs the remaining 40% of new revenue, estimated at about $4 bil- lion, to distribute equally to each basic-aid districts like Palo Alto Unified.

In Jennifer Bestor’s Aug, 21 Guest Opinion column, titled “Where did the other $713 million go?” she identified the mechanics of how new revenue for education will be allo- cated. Sadly, most of the inequalities of school funding will not be resolved. These inequalities escalated when Proposition 13 was enacted in the late 1970s. Jerry Brown was governor and ordered each county to create a formula to distribute property tax revenue between counties, municipalities, districts and schools. No two counties have the same formula. For example, San Francisco is a city and county, whereas Santa Clara County is populated by neighboring municipalities and special districts. Proposition 15 will distribute equally to each school based on student population.

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Katie Causey

Katie Causey has wanted to run for a seat on the school board since she was 15 years old. She was a Palo Alto High School student at the time, surrounded in many ways by turmoil: deaths by suicide of teenage classmates, a national recession and, in her own world, a report of sexual harassment that she said was mishandled by the school district.

Causey, a 26-year-old Paly graduate, is still very tied to the student experience. She campaigns prominently on Instagram, where she also posts explanations of the role of a school board member, seeks student feedback on major school issues — and also talks about voting, seeing a therapist and sexual assault. In response to the coronavirus shutdown, Causey and her campaign team organized a list of local alumni to whom current students can reach out for support — a list she hopes is an early version of a formal alumni-student mentorship program she would create if elected. She’s advocated for lowering the voting age to 16 years old in local school board elections and wants to create student advisory groups on specific issues.

“IT means a lot to me to help give students a voice and to support community members during this time,” she said.

Causey is the sole candidate to receive the endorsement of the teachers union, despite the fact there are three seats up for grabs. Unlike the majority of the candidates, she has taken a firm stance against reopening schools this fall, in alignment with the union.

“I cannot ask our students, staff and broader community to be exposed to a virus we’re still learning so much about. If a staff member, student or member of PAUSD becomes severely ill, faces permanent health issues or worse as a result of COVID-19, we cannot recover from that,” she said.

(continued on page 26)

Todd Collins

Todd Collins ran for school board in 2016 on a commitment to data-driven decision making. Four years later, he sees major improvement in that area in changes both tangible and cultural, such as his push to include Palo Alto Unified’s performance on the California School Dashboard in the district’s “PAUSD Promise” plan. The dashboard shows data broken down by student group in areas such as academics, chronic absenctism and graduation rates — a color-coded reminder of the persistent gap between the district’s highest-performing students and its struggling ones.

“Without that we can always tell ourselves we’re doing a great job because without a yardstick you never knew if you grew,” Collins said. “Putting that in place and getting everyone to agree that those are important metrics to look at and measure our overall success is a big step. We never did that before.”

Collins, an investment manager, longtime schools volunteer and current president of the board, believes the school district is more stable, better managed and effective than in recent history but that there is still progress to be made on key issues, particularly as the district navigates reopening schools.

He acknowledged that the district fell short when schools first closed, both educationally and in terms of communication, but said the experience this fall has vastly improved. He said he considered in the spring whether the board should increase communication by hosting town halls with the city’s mayor about COVID-19 forums he and the city manager were holding but decided against it.

(continued on page 27)
Cover Story

Jennifer DiBrienza

Jennifer DiBrienza's four years on the school board have been marked by enormous turmoil: the departure of former Superintendent Max McGee and hiring of Don Austin, a report of campus sexual assault at Palo Alto High School that roiled the community in the wake of a yearlong federal Title IX investigation, and senior leadership's failure in 2017 to notify the unions that it planned to cancel a year of raises, costing taxpayers $6 million.

She believes she and her colleagues have gotten Palo Alto Unified to a better place, with a less-siloed district office and a culture of legal compliance and transparency. Before the coronavirus, she felt like the district was finally on the cusp of making real progress on closing the achievement gap, a top priority of hers. But the end of her first term will now largely be defined by the board's handling of a single, controversial issue: reopening schools.

DiBrienza voted to start reopening schools this month and said that her priority since schools closed “has been for us to get back in person when it was safe to do so,” particularly for students without reliable internet or consistent support at home or for whom the school closures have created gaps in learning. She hopes to send her own elementary-aged son to school in the hybrid model. DiBrienza is troubled by the disconnect between teachers who don’t feel safe going back to work in person and the district’s work to provide the planning, personal protective equipment and assurances to get more teacher buy-in.

She’s now advocating for hiring a full-time communications officer to help district leadership improve communication with teachers as well as parents and the broader community.

DiBrienza believes she’s uniquely qualified for the school board as a current member, district parent and former educator. She began her career as a kindergarten teacher in the New York City public school system and went on to teach early elementary grades before she became a staff developer for kindergarten through eighth-grade classrooms.

In 2001, she moved to San Francisco with her now husband and began a doctorate program in education at Stanford University. Her advisor was Jo Boaler, a well-known math professor and researcher. DiBrienza worked as an elementary math specialist with Boaler’s YouCubed at Stanford, which seeks to make research and resources on math instruction more widely available to teachers and parents. Since she completed her dissertation in 2008, DiBrienza has worked as an education consultant for public and private schools as well as education-technology companies.

Over the last four years, she’s prioritized equity and mental health, particularly during this time of surging needs. She’s championed a different approach to closing the achievement gap — one that puts the failure to do so squarely at the feet of the school district.

“If year after year your system gets the same outcome, it seems the system is set up to get that outcome,” she told the Weekly. “We need to change the system and not focus on what we have to do to change the kids. It’s a failure of our district to do its fundamental job, which is to serve all children.”

DiBrienza wants the district to bring in outside experts to complete an equity audit that she hopes, despite the district’s years of surveys, analysis and investment in this area, would shine a new light on specific, structural can use, and for every student who is made feel safe by a police officer, there is another student who is terrified.”

She is also against laning courses as a practice, which she described as a systemic structure of “bias” that negatively impacts underserved students and their mental health.

Causey is currently unemployed but has spent her adult years volunteering in the community and working on political campaigns. Causey is a member of the League of Women Voters, through which she’s worked on issues including sustainability, school meal plans and gun legislation, according to her LinkedIn page. She recently was a chair of the Junior League of San Francisco’s, a nonprofit women’s organization that promotes volunteering, where she oversaw budget and fundraising.

If students can’t see themselves in our curriculum, if they can’t see themselves in our leadership, then that’s something that impacts … how you build student trust,” she said.

Causey opposes the use of school resource officers, or police officers assigned to school campuses, stating that “police are a resource that not every individual use.”

Democratic women run for office

In college Causey studied Title IX, the federal civil rights law that Palo Alto Unified was found to have violated numerous times in cases involving both student and staff sexual misconduct. She said the district has improved when it comes to Title IX policy and procedures but still has work to do on more entrenched climate and culture issues. She noted that there are two Instagram accounts dedicated to Palo Alto Unified students sharing stories of sexual violence and harassment, both launched this summer. Causey thinks the district should make consent education mandatory and that the district should put information for how to report sexual misconduct on the back of student ID cards, much like it added mental health resources several years ago.

Causey identifies as bisexual and believes if elected, she could possibly be the first member of the LGBTQ+ community to hold this office.

Causey was born and raised in Palo Alto. She attended Ohlone Elementary School and J.S. Middle School before graduating from Paly in 2012.
Jesse Ladomirak looks at the current makeup of the school board — with only one board member with children attending the district, and sees a gap she wants to fill. Ladomirak has four children and a family friend who sent her a note about the open seat, and during a board meeting, whom she calls the “vocal range of constituents, beyond that she reaches out to a more diverse board member who proactively pledged to be a deeply accessible for school board. That person was involved herself in school politics until this year, when she was part of a group of parents looking for someone who is committed to issues of educational equity to run for school board. That persons ended up being her.

Ladomirak has repeatedly pledged to be a deeply accessible board member, and what she actually reaches out to a more diverse range of constituencies, beyond those who speak at board meetings, whom she calls the “vocal minority.”

Her website includes Spanish and Mandarin translations of her candidate statement. She wants to form student task forces and make them part of the board’s governance structure so the district stops relying on annual surveys as its primary source of student feedback.

“I want to really be seen as a partner,” she said. “A student who will listen,” Ladomirak said. “I can’t promise that I’ll always agree but I can promise that I’ll see your opinion as valuable and I’ll bring it to the table. I’m running to be that voice that … a lot of people in the spring were starting to feel.”

Ladomirak was born and raised in Palo Alto and graduated from the school district. She practiced as an attorney for several years before she and her husband unexpectedly became co-owners of Teegan, a remod-eling company in San Francisco, where she works as general man-ager and chief financial officer.

She likens the decisions she has to make as a small business owner — particularly around resuming operations during the pandemic — to ones she’d have to make on the board if elected.

Ladomirak said her employees were initially “split passionately” on reopening the business, including one group that saw it as choosing between reopening or staying closed and everyone still getting paid. She had to clarify that if they chose to stay closed and be able to pay people or to stay closed and implement layoffs.

“By defining the problem, any anger that we were fore-cing people to work dissipated, and everyone united around not wanting to go out of business and the talk turned to how to reopen safely,” she said. She said she’s learned in the business world to underpromise and overdeliver to earn clients’ confidence.

“We say to our employees, ‘If clients are calling you 100 times a day it’s because they feel like they have to manage the proj-ect,’” she said. “That’s a little bit what’s going on right now. Par-tents feel like we have to manage the project because the district hasn’t for whatever reason gotten people to trust that this is being taken care of.”

Ladomirak supports the district’s reopening plan and said she will send her elementary-aged children back to school in person this fall. Even with “multiple adults at home to sup-port them, a quiet space to work, reliable internet, outdoor space to run around at recess, they are struggling both academically and emotionally,” she said.

The district should shed its longterm, insular culture of “we know all the answers” and look to other districts or organizations for best practices on reopening, she said.

Ladomirak has made reversing the district’s “decades of failure” on closing the achievement gap central to her campaign. If

(continued on page 30)
In their own words: Where the candidates stand on the issues

by Elena Kadvany

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>KATIE CAUSEY</th>
<th>TODD COLLINS</th>
<th>JENNIFER DIBRIZENZA</th>
<th>JESSE LADOMIRAK</th>
<th>MATT NAGLE</th>
<th>KARNA NISEWANER</th>
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**Public input:** Do you support or oppose the board’s two-meeting rule, which requires that agenda items are presented at a first meeting for discussion and a second time for action? Support. It gives more opportunities for engagement from community members who do not have the time to closely follow board meetings.

Support. Difficult decisions deserve community input and agendizing and voting on those issues in one meeting often preclude us from having adequate input from a wide variety of stakeholders.

Support. As a busy parent myself, I know that often it takes an issue showing up on the board agenda to mobilize people. Eliminating the two-meeting rule will further skew the overrepresentation of people already “in the know” about PAUSD issues and undermine both meaningful transparency and robust community input.

Support. I believe it’s important to present an issue to the public, explain the analysis and decision making and get feedback from the public before moving forward. Palo Altans are smart and engaged and want a chance to ask questions and offer their ideas and criticisms; I think we should have a process that takes that seriously.

**Housing:** Should the district build teacher housing at Cubberley Community Center? Why or why not?

Yes in the long term, but in the short term, focus on connecting educators with our rising number of ADUs. The teacher who connected me to the arts when our community was struggling often slept in her classroom to avoid a long commute; teachers are a part of our community, and if they live here we will see better performance and greater involvement in our students’ lives.

No. Cubberley is needed as a long-term school site; housing there is incompatible with that. Also, the district is not having trouble attracting or retaining teachers — candidate pools are strong and turnover is low — which are the main reasons to consider teacher housing.

The district should build housing for teachers, or at the very least begin to plan for it. Let’s get rid of the $1.5 million loan for the superintendent because it has proven to be unnecessary. Let’s invest that money into teacher housing, and let’s reserve a unit for the superintendent.

**Communication:** Would you vote to hire a full-time public information officer for the district? Why or why not?

Yes. The district has struggled to navigate the influx of information, changing guidelines and questions during the pandemic. We need structured communication now whether through staff directed to specifically oversee communication or a public information officer.

Yes. I have the feeling for this position since we let the last PIO go, and I convinced the board to agendize this at the last board meeting. We are a district that would always benefit from someone whose sole focus is to make sure information is being communicated to all stakeholders in effective ways, but during COVID especially, the quantity of information is at an all time high and the need for clear communication is imperative.

I think everyone agrees that the district’s communication is confusing, incomplete, and disorganized, and I do not think hiring a public information officer will fix what I believe is a cultural and organizational problem. The district needs to adopt a culture of transparency and accountability and I would be happy to lead a communication committee if elected to investigate the root cause of the poor communication and propose a plan to improve it.

**Achievement gap:** Do you support laring, the practice of placing students into different academic lanes based on achievement level, in the secondary schools? Why or why not?

No. Laring has a negative impact on marginalized communities and student mental health, but we are not removing laring anytime soon. Instead we need to set a deadline for the equity scorecard that defines our goals for the coming years in regards to laring and work with educators to create options where every student gets the strongest education possible.

Laring is a standard feature of almost every U.S. high school, and I don’t see PAUSD taking a different path. I expect teachers will continue to look for best practices in setting up lanes to meet the students’ diverse needs. Getting rid of lanes for its own sake does not make sense to me.

Laring is a standard feature of almost every U.S. high school, and I don’t see PAUSD taking a different path. I expect teachers will continue to look for best practices in setting up lanes to meet the students’ diverse needs. Getting rid of lanes for its own sake does not make sense to me.

I have worked and studied in secondary schools that are completely de-laned and have seen them work extremely well. However, community support, teacher buy-in, specific pedagogies and extensive professional development are necessary in order for this to be successful, and I do not think PAUSD is a good candidate for such a radical change at this point.

Yes. My daughter, Anais, was not in the top math lane at Terman (now Fletcher) in 2012, and because she was a Mexican-American girl, her mom and I did not feel that she would succeed in math in PAUSD. At my new school in West Marin, she took geometry in eighth grade and eventually got onto a new path to Yale (University). Some laring is fine in secondary schools, but it is more important to provide all students rigorous instruction and challenging material.

All parents I’ve spoken to want an excellent education for their child. While an excellent education can be provided in many ways, including creating laring that separate students by aptitude or differentiated learning within one level, I believe the most effective way to support students is by creating lanes.

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Cover Story

Page 28 • October 9, 2020 • Palo Alto Weekly • www.PaloAltoOnline.com
In their own words: Where the candidates stand on the issues

KATIE CAUSEY

Student health: The district moved the middle and high schools to later start times and aligned school bell schedules during distance learning. Should those changes be permanent?

Yes, if community members support it and it is feasible for our families. We should always do what we can to improve student sleep schedules.

Later start times should be tried. There's lots of evidence that more sleep is good for students and for learning. It's less certain how later start times impact teen sleep and the other aspects of students' lives.

Yes, I, and some other board members, have long advocated for later start times and aligned schedules. We were thrilled that this challenging year gave us the opportunity to implement both, and I support making the changes permanent.

Yes, Some minor modifications might be necessary for in-person learning, but one of the few positives during COVID-related school closures has been secondary students finally getting enough sleep.

The extra sleep has been beneficial to my Gunn freshman and my college junior, and I think most teenagers would benefit from a permanent change. Let's try that out for two to three years, and then look at the data on student wellness, including the feedback and narratives from students and parents. Doing so demonstrates that we really value the wellness of our kids over hyper-competitiveness.

Reopening: Should the district pursue livestreaming classes as a negotiated item with the teachers union this school year? Why or why not?

Only if it is feasible and practical for educators to apply without being spread thin during hybrid learning or harming student privacy.

Absolutely. Livestreaming is a promising tool that can work in many settings. I don't support a “one size fits all” approach that dictates how every class will be taught.

The complications around bringing secondary, which is not set up in a cohort model, back in person require us to consider all possibilities. Livestreaming seems to be working in some other California districts and should definitely be considered as a possible way to maintain class schedules/teacher assignments and to encourage students to stay home when they aren't feeling well without missing significant content.

Yes. Particularly for secondary schools where many classes involve more lecture-based instruction, livestreaming or recording classes could help provide continuity in a hybrid-learning schedule and alleviate concerns about not completing a full year's curriculum.

We have plenty to negotiate with the teachers already; why add one more unpopular item to the mix? Livestreaming in theory is awesome. In reality, distance learning has made it painfully obvious that there are too many things that go wrong to make livestreaming reliable, equitable or reasonable.

Livestreaming appears to be an easy way for distance learners to get access to the same content that in-person students receive and is something that other school districts are implementing. If the teacher’s union is willing to propose a livestreaming amendment that would be worth pursuing, but I do not think the administration should reopen negotiation of the MOU because this could just delay opening schools.

Budget: With a lean budget expected next year, what expenses should be the first to cut?

All cuts should be made as far away from the classroom as possible and we should never cut from classified staff members without making equal cuts at the administration level.

As always, expenses should be cut furthest from the classroom — the district office and staff who don’t work directly with students. Teachers, students and families should be involved to make sure choices reflect their priorities and ideas.

With aligned secondary schedules, I'm hoping we can find more efficiencies in teaching some classes across the schools, I expect our first cost reduction will be raising the minimum number of students needed to enroll in a class in order for it to run.

Given PAUSD’s strong financial reserves and budget savings from last fiscal year, if Measure O passes budget cuts should not be necessary. If Measure O does not pass, PAUSD should first scrutinize all aspects of district operations for new, creative efficiencies, such as the recent transition to electronic files, in an effort to minimize the loss of personnel in and out of classrooms.

I would target reducing administrative positions through a strategy of attrition, then a review of what positions could be cut with minimal impact, and I certainly would not add new positions in the current economic climate.

Cutting costs forces you to focus on core educational programs, I would approach cuts by asking: “What expense cuts will have the least impact on the classroom?” “Are there programs that are ineffective?”

Youth well-being: Are you concerned there’s still a problem with academic stress in the district, and how specifically should the board address it?

Yes, I believe connecting students with recent alumni will help relieve stress by helping students navigate college applications and decisions with their postsecondary careers, as well as continuing to strengthen and integrate our social emotional curriculum and continuing to adapt to the CDC guidelines for a trauma-informed approach to education during the current crisis.

Academic stress is a problem in most high schools, and Palo Alto is no exception. The biggest source of anxiety is lack of information — about the college process, about what matters in college admissions, about the different paths that students can take to success. We need to provide more and better info to students and families so that they can make choices they feel good about.

I am definitely concerned with academic stress in the district and believe we have more work to do in evaluating the role the district itself may be causing in elevating that stress. I believe we also have to continue education about post-secondary paths our alumni take and the realities of those varied paths.

Yes, I am concerned, but defining the problem as academic stress is an oversimplification. Student mental wellness begins with the culture and climate of our schools.

Yes, it is still a concern, enough so that we should not add to it. Let's continue to make progress reducing the homework load by enforcing the homework policy. The board should consistently message our community that too much homework, or disconnected homework, does little to advance academic achievement.

I think there is a general issue with mental health, particularly with the isolation caused by the need to socially distance, and we need to be aware of the impact that social media, bullying and academic pressure can put on students. I think that the wellness centers at Gunn and Palo are a great first step in destigmatizing mental health issues and supporting students, and the centers and the programs they sponsor should continue to be supported.
MATTHEW NAGLE

Matthew Nagle is a long-time educator with deep ties to Palo Alto Unified, including as a current parent and the spouse of a teacher, who believes his experience is badly needed on the current school board.

He’s also a harsh critic of the district and in particular argues the schools are still largely failing minority and low-income students, who are at the center of his campaign. He said these students are “ignored by the current board.”

“They see them as a data score. They see them in a deficit, damaged model,” Nagle said. “They don’t know their story. They don’t go to their homes. They go to their neighbors’ homes with the Tesla in the garage, but they don’t go to the folks that are working at Safeway.”

If elected, Nagle said he would focus on more personal, direct engagement with minority and low-income students and their families, including using surveys and creating a confidential form on which to report racial bias and discrimination. He also wants the district to focus on diversifying its own ranks, from teachers all the way to the superintendent.

“We can’t really say as a district we’re for diversity if we’re not hiring that way at the top levels, the highest paid levels,” he said.

Nagle opposes Palo Alto Unified’s current reopening plan, which he’s described as “half-baked.” The plan has personal ramifications for him as the spouse of an Escondido Elementary School teacher and parent of a Gunn High School freshman.

“In its current form that plan has not convinced the employees or the public that this is a good plan and we’re ready to pull the trigger right now,” he said. “I want to get my son back as fast as possible and I want to be as safe as possible for my wife ... and right now it’s not safe enough. It will never be fully safe but it has to be safe enough.”

Nagle said during the teachers union forum that he agrees with their position that schools should remain in full distance learning until at least January. Nagle has sharply criticized district communication during the pandemic, but he doesn’t support the hiring of a full-time communications officer, arguing that money would be better spent elsewhere.

During the Palo Alto Weekly school board debate, Nagle said that he expects administrators to communicate well with the public.

On his campaign website, Nagle said he believes that the functioning of the board has improved since he last worked in the district but that there’s still work to do.

“The board’s role is as simple as voting ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ and directing and evaluating the superintendent to lead the district. I don’t meddle. I don’t micromanage, and I evaluate only one employee, the superintendent. However, a board member must also lead, and that means engaging with all the stakeholders, not just the most powerful,” his wrote.

Nagle started his career as a teacher in the 1990s, following a lifelong kindergarten teacher. (He has said he’s been spurred to address the achievement gap and racial inequities in part by his single, Mexican American mother and other members of his family.)

Nagle worked as an elementary school principal in Saratoga and San Jose before arriving at Juana Briones Elementary School, where he was principal from 2009 to 2012. He said he was proud of bringing a “resurgence and a rejuvenation in energy” to the school. His tenure was controversial. Respondents described a “hostile, unprofessional conduct” that he had “upset the status quo of Marin County”.

Nagle said he was reassigned from Juana Briones to a district position in 2012 but chose not to take it, citing turmoil in the district office and a desire to continue working as a principal. He left Palo Alto for Marin County, where he served as principal at West Marin Elementary in the Shoreline Unified School District for six years.

Nagle’s departure from West Marin Elementary was also controversial. He sued the district, alleging he was demoted in retaliation for running against the county’s superintendent of schools. He had been reassigned to a teaching position after losing his bid to unseat Superintendent of Schools Mary Jane Burke. During the campaign, he was critical of her and her response to closing the achievement gap, according to news articles.

Nagle told the Weekly he “upset the status quo of Marin County” and alleged the school board had colluded with Burke against him. The district settled with him earlier this year for $700,000, according to a Point Reyes Light article.

In 2015, Nagle also ran for a seat on the Tamalpais Union High School District Board of Trustees and lost narrowly in a recount.

In Palo Alto, Nagle is running a somewhat non-traditional campaign. He did not file an official statement, is not accepting campaign donations (he’s instead asking people to donate to nonprofits) and his high school-aged son is serving as his campaign manager.

Nagle is currently a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership for Social Justice program at California State University, East Bay.

LADOMIRAK (continued from page 27)

elected, she said she would push for an equity audit that would bring in outside experts to identify where the district is failing minority and low-income students. She also believes the district needs to “rethink the focus on support programs, such as tutoring and classroom interventions, has not addressed the root causes — which Ladomirak sees as embedded within the district’s operational structures rather than in students themselves. (She also thinks anti-racism training should be mandatory for all teachers, aides, administrators and students.)

“It requires us to accept that this is a structural issue and not a matter of being able to pile more and more supports on the families,” she said. “We can’t fix kids and families. We need to fix education.”

She wants to take a similar approach to addressing student mental health. While services like wellness centers and therapy are worthwhile, she said they don’t go to the heart of addressing the school climate that’s causing stress and anxiety. Ladomirak also rejects the premise that academic excellence and student wellness are separate issues, a false dichotomy that she said fuels unhealthy pressure among students and families.

“She’s not against course lanning but wants to make sure that the district’s most advanced students in higher lanes are also hearing the message that “failure is OK” and that there are multiple definitions of success. Ladomirak has long worked with children, which she said nurtured in her a passion for social justice. During college and into her adult years, Ladomirak worked at child development nonprofits in New Haven, Connecticut; a Head Start program in rural Pennsylvania; at the Opportunity Center in Palo Alto, where she tutored homeless and low-income youth; and for the last six years with All Students Matter, a nonprofit that connects volunteers to Ravenswood City School District teachers and students.

Ladomirak has two biological children and two adopted children of color, three at Addison Elementary School and one at Greene Middle School.

About the cover: Six candidates compete for three seats on the Palo Alto Unified School District Board of Education. Photos by Magali Gauthier. Design by Douglas Young.
Like many parents this spring, Karna Nisewaner felt lost, watching her second-grade son slip back in reading and writing and feeling unsatisfied with the school district communicating with families during the school closures. “I just felt like this is not good enough for me,” she told the Weekly. “I also felt like I can’t just say, ‘I understand this isn’t good enough. I need to do something more.’”

So she decided to run for a seat on the school board primarily by concerns about the state of the school district during the pandemic.

Nisewaner believes her personal and professional experiences make her a needed voice on the board during this time. Nisewaner’s two children attend Addison Elementary School, where she serves on the site council. A lawyer by profession, she currently works as vice president and deputy general counsel at Cadence Design Systems, an electronic design company in San Jose, where she leads a team focused on intellectual property, litigation, employment and transactions. She also manages a budget larger than the school district’s and oversees investigations into workplace complaints, such as sexual harassment and bullying.

Nisewaner believes that paying closer attention to school issues several years ago when she joined the board of directors of Palo Alto Community Child Care (PACCC), which provides after-school care at Palo Alto Unified elementary schools. She was the chair for the task force in March, put in place by the district communications, that exist and that a summary at the top that links out to different sections

The district can learn from deficiencies at all levels of the district, such as a middle school policy that students with outstanding library fines can’t attend school dances or field trips.

“You can imagine who has those outstanding fines and who then gets further left out of feeling like a part of the community. There are things like that all over the district that exist and that a district that is largely led by white administrators maybe don’t see,” she said.

Though overshadowed by the pandemic, the district is continuing work in this area, she said. She’s pointed to the creation of an assistant superintendent for equity position, the investment in full-time elementary school reading specialists, anti-bias professional development that took place this summer, and the general use permit (GUP). DiBrienza served as board president in 2019, notably when the district grappled with the potential impact of Stanford University’s ambitious expansion plan, and the general use permit (GUP).

DiBrienza has three children: a Palo Alto High School sophomore, Ohlone Elementary School fourth-grader and an eighth-grader attending private school.

Before she was elected to the board, she served on Ohlone’s PTA executive board for two years as vice president of parent education, as well as two years on the school’s site council, including a year as chair. She is also a member of the district’s LGBTQ+ committee and sits on the math advisory board for Dreamcatchers, a tutoring nonprofit for underserved Palo Alto middle school students. She’s active politically, serving as an Assembly District 24 delegate to the California Democratic Party and as a member of both the Woman’s Club of Palo Alto and the League of Women Voters of Palo Alto.

During the achievement gap, Nisewaner favors support for underserved students. “We will be effective in getting kids who need that next level so that they are aligned with the rest of the kids,” Nisewaner said.

Nisewaner grew up in Millbrae and has lived in Palo Alto since 2007. As a teenager, she worked as a special education instructional aide and also taught computer programming in Singapore after college. She started her legal career at the Palo Alto branch of intellectual property law firm Finnegan and went on to work in legal roles at Intuit and IBM before her current job. • Staff Writer Elena Kadavany can be emailed at ekadvany@pawweekly.com.
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Just completed last year, and boasting tremendous build quality along with top-of-the-line luxury, this 5-bedroom, 5.5-bathroom home offers nearly 3,600 square feet of refined living space on a 6,000 square foot lot in sought-after Midtown. High-end finishes are everywhere you turn, including European white oak floors, Italian cabinetry, and dual-waterfall quartz countertops, while large gathering spaces are perfect for entertaining and everyday living. A striking linear fireplace centers the living room, the spectacular kitchen features a suite of Thermador appliances, the family room includes a wall of glass that opens completely to the backyard, and the office allows you to work from home in style. The large recreation room is catered from a wet bar, and the convenient fitness center includes a fully mirrored wall. Five bedrooms are assorted over three levels, including the master suite with a spa-like bathroom and private balcony. Find great outdoor space in the backyard with a patio and lush lawn. Adding the finishing touch is a location within walking distance of great Midtown shops and restaurants, multiple parks, and top-ranked Palo Alto schools.

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The 23rd United Nations Association Film Festival takes you around the world, via the internet

by Peter Canavese

E ven in a global pandemic, the nonprofit United Nations Association Film Festival endures, presenting entirely online this year (its 23rd) a program of 60 documentaries over 11 days, beginning Oct. 15. UNAFF Founder and Executive Director Jasmina Bojic continues to think globally and act locally with this year’s array of offerings, including several films with a local connection as well as opportunities for discussion and networking via Zoom panels, salons, and outreach to schools and libraries, kids, seniors and veterans.

In a useful change, films will be available to screen any time during the day on which they’re scheduled. Organizers hope that flexibility will also encourage festivalgoers to digitally mosey over to the fest’s daily 6 p.m. Zoom sessions, where filmmakers and their subjects, as well as other special guests, will mingle amongst audience members for a combination of the day’s highlights, Q&A and informal chit chat.

Of course, the real draw of the festival remains the films themselves. UNAFF 2020 — with its theme “The Power of Empathy” — covers ground ranging from A to V, Afghanistan to Venezuela. For a subject that’s close to home, virtual attendees can begin with any of the festival’s German arm in the hour-long “The Invisible Line: America’s Nazi Experiment.” Former Cubberley history teacher Ron Jones and several of the students from his 1967 sophomore World History class sit for new interviews recounting the work-long experiment Jones developed on the fly to answer an American student’s never-more-relevant question: how did the German citizenry just allow fascism to claim their country? Jones’ experiment proved all too effective, instructing students and teacher alike about the corrupting appeal of power and all-too-easy submission to self-preservation instincts.

Menlo Park residents may recognize the beloved yoga teacher of “Lolly Font, Yoga Rebel.” This 14-minute short from director Liz Cane finds the cheery and spry octogenarian recounting how she discovered yoga at Big Sur’s Esalen Institute and how she subsequently became “married to yoga” for life. To supplement the interview with Font, Cane talks with the teacher’s starry-eyed pupils and takes us inside Font’s yoga studio to audit her class.

The story of Cubberley High School’s infamous “Third Wave” lesson gets a fresh retelling in “The Invisible Line: America’s Nazi Experiment.” With her 4-minute, 16mm black-and-white tone poem “Susana,” produced in Stanford’s documentary film M.F.A. program, Laura Gamse artfully examines the impact of ICE on the immigrant community as well as the determination of one woman to protect the vulnerable. Former slaughterhouse worker Susana returns to her erstwhile workplace — the American job site most frequently targeted by ICE — as she follows her heart (and sets an example for her teenage daughter) by protesting animal abuse and slaughter. UNAFF 2020 also features Palo Alto medical professionals in “Why Doctors Write: Finding Humanity in Medicine,” a half-hour short examining the push to use writing as a tool of support and communication in clinical care.

The fest’s most high-profile selection this year takes its message of empathy on a time-travel trip to the 1960s. Judith Ehrlich’s “The Boys Who Said NO!” — presented in collaboration with the Mill Valley Film Festival — concerns anti-Vietnam War activism, serving us a brief history of the government’s war strategies overseas and at home but more so as a humanizing account of conscientious objectors and the various forms resistance took: passive-resistance protest (including burning draft cards) as well as more aggressive activism (The Weather Underground, destroying government files). Prominently featured are Woodside resident and folk-music icon Joan Baez, whose presence on the scene kept spirits high by words and music, and her then-husband David Harris, who served a federal prison stretch for draft resistance that largely kept him apart from Baez and their newborn child.

Baez will be honored with this year’s UNAFF Visionary Award, and a laborious way for dedicated organizers — never more so than during our current moment of multiple national crises. UNAFF is a Peninsula institution: use it or lose it. Losing it will leave us sitting in the dark, with only the memory of the projectors that used to help us see the light.

For ticket, schedule and access information, go to unaff.org.

Freelance writer Peter Canavese can be emailed at pcanavese@bcp.org.
925 Lincoln Avenue, Palo Alto

Classic Charm, Modern Living in Community Center

Presenting a masterful blend of timeless Palo Alto allure and the best of modern amenities, this beautiful 4-bedroom, 4-bathroom Tudor revival offers comfortable spaces, superb ambiance, and an unbeatable location on well over one-quarter acre in Community Center. Gleaming hardwood floors extend throughout much of the home’s 3,100+ square feet of living space, and appointments including arched entryways and coffered ceilings evoke classic charm. A gas fireplace in floor-to-ceiling stone centers the living room, the kitchen includes appliances from Viking, Sub-Zero, and Bosch, the family room features outside access, and the detached offices allows you to work from home in style. Enjoy a location that puts you one block to Eleanor Pardee Park, a short trip to University Avenue, and within a mile or less of top-ranked Palo Alto schools. Plus, this home enjoys a rich history steeped in Silicon Valley lore. This is Palo Alto living at its finest – welcome home.

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11491 Old Ranch Road, Los Altos Hills

Luxury and Comfort in the Countryside

Enjoy comfort in the countryside in this bright, spacious home set on over an acre of verdant land (per county) in Los Altos Hills. Offering 6 bedrooms, 6.5 bathrooms, a resort-like backyard, and over 6,600 sq. ft. of luxury living space (per county), this magnificent home presents sumptuous appointments at every turn and is well-suited for a modern family. Expansive formal rooms invite entertaining on a grand scale, the kitchen includes high-end appliances plus a fun pizza oven, the dining room converts into a home theater for movie nights, and an office provides work-from-home space, while multiple flexible-use rooms can meet a variety of lifestyle needs. Appreciate the convenience of a second living area with its own full kitchen, plus access to a private balcony for al fresco delights. And enjoy the great outdoors in the spectacular backyard with a sparkling pool. Adding the finishing touch, this home enjoys a peaceful location that still puts you close to everything Silicon Valley has to offer, with access to acclaimed Los Altos schools (buyer to verify eligibility).

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**Eating Out**

**FIVE NEW RESTAURANTS TO TRY RIGHT NOW**

Where to get squid ink dumplings, enormous tacos and Singaporean breakfast

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**Asian Street Eatery, Sunnyvale**

Asian Street Eatery opened on El Camino Real in Sunnyvale last week with a massive menu inspired by China and Southeast Asia’s “legendary” street food stalls. Normally a menu this large — including dim sum, bao, mantou, customizable banh mi sandwiches, noodle soups, braised meats and build-your-own stir fries — would be a red flag, but the food here is worth exploring.

The restaurant comes from the same owners of Ginger Cafe in Sunnyvale, Fu Kee in San Jose, and Rice + Noodles Asian Kitchen in Campbell. You’re greeted by large, touch-screen kiosks on which you place your order — no need to come within 6 feet of a human — and you can opt for takeout or to eat your food on a large outdoor patio.

Do try the squid ink dumplings, filled with sweet, oceanic lobster and corn encased in a dumpling shell that you would find on the beach. And don’t miss the zha bing, a massive layered Chinese pancake wrapped around teardrop dumplings. If you want to experience a shell you would find on the beach and don’t miss the zha bing, a massive layered Chinese pancake wrapped around teardrop dumplings. If you want to experience a shell you would find on the beach, you can watch employees making the dumplings by hand.

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**Killiney Kopitiam, Palo Alto**

Singaporean restaurants are few and far between on the Peninsula. Perhaps that explains why people waited up to an hour to eat at Killiney Kopitiam when it opened in downtown Palo Alto last week, prompting the cafe to close for two days to regroup.

This is the first U.S. location of Singapore’s oldest cafe, known for its coffee and charcoal-grilled toast spread thick with kaya and pats of butter. At the Palo Alto restaurant, you can watch employees making the toast and pouring coffees from long-spouted metal kettles through a window into the open kitchen. (Get the toast. The subtly sweet kaya layered with pats of salty butter on humble Pullman bread is a delicious lesson in the “less is more” adage.)

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**Bandi Biryani, Sunnyvale**

You might miss Bandi Biryani, tucked between a barber shop and Popeyes in a Sunnyvale strip mall, unless you’re seeking it out. Owner Kanagalakshmi Nagarajan, a former software engineer, opened the South Indian restaurant in July with chef John Annachi. Annachi is also behind other local Indian restaurants, including Annachakadai in Mountain View and Star Udupi Cafe in Santa Clara. Both owner and chef are originally from Tamil Nadu in South India.

Bandi Biryani serves several kinds of biryani and curries as well as some Indo-Chinese dishes. Nagarajan suggested I try the chicken biryani, aromatic and filled with pieces of bone-in chicken, and the mirchi bajji, which she warned are “hot, hot” (eat them and you understand why she used the word twice). Here, mirchi bajji are halved jalapenos that are fried and then stuffed with diced red onion, peanuts, coriander, chilis and cilantro. They are indeed “hot, hot” but you can temper the heat by dipping them into a yogurt sauce on the side.

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**La Cocina de la Abuela, Redwood City**

Every time I bite into a fresh, handmade tortilla I instantly regret all the inferior fast-food counterparts I’ve consumed. This was the case at La Cocina de la Abuela, a new Redwood City restaurant from the owner of the nearby La Casita Chilanga. Jose Navarro’s latest restaurant, opened since August, is inspired by Mexico City fare cooked by the women of his family — hence the name, which means “grandmother’s kitchen” in Spanish. The pliant, charred tortillas are the anchor for excellent tacos. I had to try the restaurant’s specialty, tacos los mamalones, which comes on a single large tortilla that’s been lightly charred on the plancha. It’s filled with breaded steak, sauteed potatoes, nopalitos (cactus) and salsa on a bed of melted cheese. More the size of a burrito, this dish is not for the faint of heart — or stomach. The dollop of sour cream, however, is what elevates this. Stay for the cochinita pibil. Navarro márimates the incredibly flavorful Yucatan-style pork overnight with achiote and other spices and cooks it in banana leaves using his mother’s recipe. The pork comes on a fresh, pliant tortilla, topped simply with pickled red onions and a squeeze of lime. Make sure to ask for extra servings of the restaurant’s “grandma’s sauce,” a spicy, slightly acidic and nuanced hot sauce. I wish they sold whole bottles of it.
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36TH ANNUAL PALO ALTO WEEKLY MOONLIGHT RUN & WALK

Fundraising event a virtual success in 2020

by Palo Alto Weekly Staff

For the first time in its 36-year history, the annual Palo Alto Weekly Moonlight Run & Walk did not take place at the Palo Alto Baylands. Due to the pandemic, the fundraiser, which would have been held under the full-harvest moon on Oct. 2, went virtual this year.

Runners and walkers in Palo Alto, New York and even Germany, participated in the 5K walk, 5K and 10K runs, and half-marathon events anywhere and any time they chose over the past two weeks, submitting their race times virtually. Hundreds of participants and the event’s 10 sponsors raised thousands of dollars through race registrations and donations to help support the Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund, which awards grants to nonprofits that serve children and families in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Last year’s fund collected $458,525, the largest amount since its launch in 1993. This year’s event is expected to raise in excess of $50,000.

Registration ended Oct. 2 and participants had until Sunday, Oct. 4, to finish the race.

Runners and walkers from around the world submitted photos of themselves, shown above and on the proceeding pages, participating in the event. A full list of photos can be found at bit.ly/VirtualMoonlightRun.
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[Link: stanfordhealthcare.org/emergencyready]
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Proud to be a corporate sponsor of the Moonlight Run 2020

MOONLIGHT RUN & WALK

The Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati Foundation was created by the members of the firm as a commitment to the community we serve.

CITY OF PALO ALTO • PALO ALTO WEEKLY
We proudly support our community’s well-being as a corporate sponsor of the 2020 Moonlight Run.
There was no pack of tense runners crowding the starting line, waiting for a buzzer under the full-harvest moon during this year’s Moonlight Run & Walk. There was no free Hobee’s coffee cake at the finish line, and no police officers directing traffic away from blocked off streets near the race routes at the Palo Alto Baylands.

Instead, there was Andrew Dimock, running alone at midnight under an almost-full harvest moon. There were Mirjam and Rolf Koerber, completing the 5K walk in the bustling city center of Berlin. And there was Austin Johnson, who recruited his roommate to join him for a half marathon route through the Baylands.

They were among the 677 runners and walkers from 13 states and six countries who participated in the 36th annual fundraising event that moved from its longtime home at the Baylands to parks and streets in neighborhoods near and far after going virtual due to the pandemic. The annual event, organized by the Palo Alto Weekly and city of Palo Alto, which would have typically kicked off with a 5K walk followed by a half marathon, a 5K run and a 10K run under a full moon at the Baylands on Oct. 2, took place whenever and wherever participants chose over the past two weeks and raised more than $50,000 to support the Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund, which awards grants to nonprofits that serve children and families in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties.

For some runners and walkers, the year’s unconventional format opened new opportunities. Dimock, who always runs with his daughter, was able to attempt the half marathon for the first time.

“I ordinarily have to skip the longer races so I can do the 5K with my now 14-year-old daughter,” he wrote via email. “In this virtual setup, I can go the half, she the 5K, and we can still race ‘together.’”

Although fire smoke ultimately thwarted their tandem run, Dimock still completed the half marathon on his own under a reddish-orange moon at the Baylands.

In Berlin, Germany, the Koerbers completed their first ever Moonlight Run in the city center after their friends in Woodside invited them to join. “We were absolutely thrilled by the international openness and wanted to show our closeness with the people of California,” they said via email.

Johnson, who completed his first-ever half marathon at last year’s Moonlight Run, said he was committed to running his race no matter what — even if he was only able to train sporadically because of wildfire smoke and trail closures due to restrictions from the pandemic.

“I can count on one hand how many times I ran in the past six months,” Johnson said.

Johnson, a second-year medical student at Stanford University, signed up to run this year with 20 of his classmates, all of whom volunteer at Stanford’s outpatient clinics serving low-income families.

With social-distancing rules, training...
Facebook Business Resource Hub

Small businesses are critical to our economy, yet they are experiencing unexpected challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Facebook is committed to supporting the business community during this unprecedented public health challenge.

To help businesses and local communities navigate this period of uncertainty, we have launched a Business Resource Hub that includes:

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We are also supporting businesses like yours with Facebook Blueprint eLearning: free, self-paced courses that help owners and employees use Facebook and Instagram as part of their digital marketing strategies.

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MISSION

Coastside Hope’s mission is to offer basic life necessities with dignity and hope to all San Mateo County mid-coast residents living in Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, and Half Moon Bay.

ABOUT

Coastside Hope has served the Coastside community since 1976. We help more than 14% of the Coastside population each year. Coastside Hope serves the entire community, including the working poor, low income seniors, veterans, residents with physical disabilities, single parents, the unemployed and the homeless.

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, we are able to offer the following services:

- Rental and Utility Assistance
- Emergency Food Pantry
- Food Stamp Applications (CALFRESH)
- Bi-Weekly Senior Brown Bag Food Distribution
- Monthly Family Harvest Food Distribution
- Christmas Adopt-A-Family
- Shelter Referrals
- Free Income Tax Preparation
- Forms Assistance (Unemployment, etc.)
- Immigration Assistance
- Free Citizenship Classes
- Service Referrals

COVID-19 and Fire Relief

We are here to serve the community during these difficult times by keeping our doors open during the pandemic and supporting our neighbors during the CZU Lightning Complex fire.
Moonlight Run
(continued from page 45)

and running became a solitary endeavor, he said. Johnson tried to stay in shape by lifting weights but said that in the months leading up to the half marathon, he struggled to maintain a running regimen: Much of his time was taken up moving home to Colorado, after Stanford administrators asked undergraduates to vacate the campus in March due to the pandemic, and then moving back at the start of fall quarter.

“I did an entire quarter of medical school online,” he said. “We learned about cardiology and the lungs while I was in my old bedroom that I lived in for 20-plus years.”

When he got back to the Bay Area, the air was filled with wildfire smoke for a solid month. “Since I’ve been back here, I think I’ve run maybe four times,” he said prior to running the half marathon. Johnson said he was excited and ready when he heard that the Moonlight Run was still taking place this year. He wouldn’t be setting any personal records, but his time wasn’t the most important thing to him, he said.

“The more people I meet, the more I realize that people just need to hold on to a sense of normalcy … to still take part in a tradition that stays strong no matter what’s going on,” he said.

“I think that Cardinal Free Clinics and the Moonlight Run collectively are the experiences that have given me the most invigorating memories of my first year in medical school,” he added.

Johnson and Dimock both said that while they enjoy running and walking, it’s the spirit of the event and the nonprofits it supports that keep them coming back year after year, and it’s why they laced up and pounded the pavement in the face of unprecedented obstacles.

“The other races I participate in, it’s more been just personal goals, making sure I’m fit and what not,” Johnson said. “But here, I think there’s something bigger than that, and I’m not going to let that get taken away.”

Johnson, who ended up competing in the race with his roommate, submitted the fastest time in this year’s half marathon.
Thanks to you, PVI’s Critical Senior Care programs continue uninterrupted!

PVI is onsite and now online!

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Fall is upon us and the COVID-19 pandemic continues to reshape our lives and profoundly upend all we have known. Peninsula Volunteers, Inc.’s essential services for seniors are more critical now than ever. We are here for you, your loved ones and your neighbors.

We hope that you and your families are staying well and safe throughout this extraordinary time. Even with California’s tiered blueprint for counties and the criteria for the safe progression to resume business and activities, COVID-19 remains a daily concern for you and those you know and love.

This is the season for giving thanks and we are deeply moved by your generosity which makes it possible for us to sustain our vital services to seniors. Our dedication to our mission is enduring - provide daily, nutritious meals, adult day care for those with Alzheimer’s and dementias, and vital health and wellness activities to seniors living on the Peninsula.

Thank you! Your impact is being reflected in new and better ways!

PVI is onsite and also online for older adults and others who rely on us for their well-being. You have made this possible. Thank you! We have gone virtual with two of our core programs to ensure current and new participants and their families are still able to connect, be active, stimulated and safely supported.

PVI’s Meals on Wheels onsite program continues uninterrupted and with contactless delivery and safety protocols in place in its daily mission to provide more nutritious meals and supplemental care packages than ever before. We are doing all we can to meet the skyrocketing needs of those who cannot shop or cook for themselves, including personal wellness, social and resource need check-ins. Microwave ovens are supplied to those who need them.

PVI’s Little House, Senior Activity Center: New virtual online health and wellness classes are open for you or a loved one. Book online personal training, sign up for Pilates, Yoga, Tai Chi, Zumba and other exercise classes, or join audio book club series and memoir writing classes and more. Ongoing client wellness and check in calls relieve isolation and loneliness.

Rosener House, Adult Day Services for Alzheimer’s: New virtual online activity and support programming, client and caregiver check-ins and activity package deliveries serve seniors and their caregivers at home. Clients and the community can participate in a variety of vital stimulating music, art, travel, tango, brain games and other activities for those with dementia, as well as ongoing group support for caregivers.

PVI’s enhanced on demand transportation services provide rides to seniors for medical appointments and grocery store visits with protective protocols in place, supporting healthcare and food access and for other daily supplies.

We are grateful for the remarkable support of our communities. PVI’s COVID-19 Critical Care Fund continues so that we can support seniors during this extended site closure period and beyond. Your gift will help us sustain our vital programs in the new environment. For more information visit [www.penvol.org](http://www.penvol.org) and [www.penvol.org/donate](http://www.penvol.org/donate)

“It’s because of PVI’s support programs that I feel like I’m being watched after during this crisis.”

— (tears) Diane, 92 years old

Peninsula Volunteers, Inc. LITTLE HOUSE, THE ROSLYN G. MORRIS ACTIVITY CENTER, MEALS ON WHEELS/SAN MATEO COUNTY, ROSENER HOUSE

For more than 70 years, Peninsula Volunteers, Inc., duly recognized non-profit, 501 (c) (3), has demonstrated a profound legacy of caring for seniors, a commitment of providing high quality and nurturing programs so seniors are engaged, cared for and respected as vital community members. PVI’s three core programs, Meals on Wheels, Rosener House Adult Day Care for those with Alzheimer’s and other dementias and the venerated Little House, The Roslyn G. Morris Activity Center address the most pressing issues of aging adults by offering critical services to sustain their daily physical, nutritional, emotional and mental health while achieving dignity and independence in their lives.
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However, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.

A HEARING on the petition will be held on October 28, 2020 at 9:01 a.m. in Dept.: 13 of the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, located at 191 N. First St., San Jose, CA 95113.

If you object to the granting of the petition, you must appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person, or by your attorney.

If you are a creditor or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk. Attorney for Petitioner: Adam W. Ferguson
SAN JOSE, CA 95126
(408) 758-4200

A hearing is required of the court to administer the estate. The personal representative may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.

If you object to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing. Your appearance may be in person, or by your attorney.

If you are a creditor or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you may file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court with the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58 (b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law. You may examine the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk. Attorney for Petitioner: Mark A. Gonzalez, Lead Deputy County Counsel
373 West Julian Street, Suite 300
San Jose, CA 95113
(408) 758-4200
(PAW Sep. 25, Oct. 2, 9, 2020)

NOTICE OF PETITION TO ADMINISTER ESTATE OF:
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Case No.: 20PR18652
All heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of SYNTHESIS PRODUCTIONS LLC may file a claim with the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 58 (b) of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law. You may examine the file kept by the court. If you are a person interested in the estate, you may file with the court a Request for Special Notice (form DE-154) of the filing of an inventory and appraisal of estate assets or of any petition or account as provided in Probate Code section 1250. A Request for Special Notice form is available from the court clerk. Attorney for Petitioner: Adam W. Ferguson
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www.3787Woodside.com

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37 Willow Road, Menlo Park
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www.27360Sherlock Rd.com

391 Belmont Ave, Redwood City
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Please visit our website (DeLeonRealty.com) to see the Virtual Tour of the homes, or call 650.900.7000 to schedule a showing.

Michael Repka | 650.900.7000 | DRE #01854880
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2087 SHARON ROAD, MENLO PARK

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Data from BrokerMetrics® based on MLS sales from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2019, in Menlo Park, residential properties, with no off-MLS sales included in the rankings.

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1586 MAGPIE LANE, SUNNYVALE

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For more information, video tour & more photos, please visit:
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For more information, video tour & more photos, please visit:
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Small businesses, we’re giving away advertising to help you reopen.

Small, independent businesses are the heart and soul of our communities. To help meet the challenges we all face to getting back on our feet, we’ve committed to giving away up to $200,000 in print and online advertising over the next three months.

Our matching grants of up to $2,500 per month enable you to double your advertising at no cost.

Working together, we can start bringing customers and employees back to work.

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Handsome 6-bedroom, 4-bathroom Tudor in Old Palo Alto designed for the elegant entertainer. This spacious home boasts a flexible floor plan that accommodates various types of gatherings. Enjoy the well-appointed, light-filled eat-in kitchen; dine al fresco on the expansive rear patio under a pergola; and gather for a holiday meal alongside the fireplace in the large dining room. A generous first floor bedroom, currently used as a family room, offers direct access through French doors to the large and private rear yard. The upstairs showcases a beautiful primary suite with a custom walk-in closet, as well as multiple bedrooms perfect for family members, as remote office/school spaces, and for guests. The home of 2,770 sq. ft. is nestled on a generous 7,500 sq ft lot that includes a 2-car detached garage and an abundance of fruit trees. Fantastic location, close to Stanford University and downtown Palo Alto, and excellent schools (Walter Hays Elementary, Greene Middle, and Palo Alto High).