When will I see you again?

Separated by the pandemic, some families cautiously adjust, others take bold action

City considers shift from armed police officers

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FEATURING
Palo Alto Weekly Editor Jocelyn Dong
Former Palo Alto City Councilmember Vic Ojakian
East Palo Alto Media Center Director Henrietta Burroughs
Live interviews with candidates

WHERE TO WATCH
YouTube.com/paweekly
MidpenMedia.org
Cable Channel 30

A joint production of Palo Alto Online and the Midpen Media Center
Pursuing reform, city prepares to add community service officers, partner with behavioral-health workers

By Gennady Sheyner

As Palo Alto prepares to enact police reforms, an idea that continues to gather momentum on the City Council is to shift some of the Police Department’s workload from sworn officers to social workers and other unarmed employees.

But despite general support for the idea, council members and department leadership have yet to reach a clear consensus on what type of model to adopt.

The agency is looking to join Santa Clara County’s Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) program, which partners a county clinician with a police officer for calls that involve mental health issues. Some members of the council, meanwhile, believe the city should go even further and explore removing certain types of calls from the department’s purview altogether.

The council debated the various options Monday night for police reform, a topic sparked by the May 25 killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer. The issue will return to the spotlight on Nov. 2, when council members are set to approve various revisions to the department’s use-of-force policies. The changes include an explicit prohibition on techniques that restrict blood and air flow to the head or neck and a more robust section on de-escalation techniques.

On Monday, the council wrestled with broader questions pertaining to police accountability and the department’s service model. Members generally supported expanding the scope of the independent police auditor and shifting some responsibilities away from armed officers, though the council didn’t take any formal actions at the meeting.

Assistant Police Chief Andrew Binder said the department is already going through the process of (continued on page 29)

Fewer events, more enforcement

City proposes conditions for Castilleja expansion

By Gennady Sheyner

Seeking to bridge the yawning gap between Castilleja School, which is looking to rebuild its Bryant Street campus, and a vocal group of neighbors who vehemently opposed the school’s plan, Palo Alto city staff is proposing a compromise that would allow the project to advance while imposing stricter limits on school events and traffic.

If approved by the Planning and Transportation Commission, which began its review of the proposed conditions on Wednesday night, the permit would allow Castilleja to meet the main goals of its ambitious project: modernizing the campus, constructing an underground garage and gradually raising enrollment from the current level of 426 students to 540 students.

It would also require Castilleja to reduce the number of events it holds on its campus, a topic that has generated significant neighborhood concerns. The school has already proposed lowering the number of annual events on its campus from more than 100 to about 90. Staff is proposing a limit of 70 events, despite Castilleja’s assertion that it would need to hold at least 74 to accommodate its academic and social interests.

If approved by the commission and, ultimately, the City Council, the conditional use permit would also require regular monitoring of vehicle traffic around the school.

(continued on page 34)

When will I see you again?

Many pandemic-separated families cautiously adjust; a few take bold action

By Sue Dremann

W e d d i n g s  a n d  b i r t h s ,  t h e  h o l i -

days and family gatherings, the ability to touch and hold a dear family member — even routine visits — have all been disrupted by the pandemic.

As the deadly virus’s spread continues to quash expectations of when life might return to normal, some residents said they worry when — or if — they will ever see their loved ones in person again. Three Palo Alto families discussed how they are adapting to the new reality.

An infant born into a pandemic

Dharap and his wife, Laura Jefferson, hope Aarchi will grow up surrounded by the loving care of doting grandparents, playing face-to-face with playmates and joyfully celebrating all of life’s milestones with their family. But so far, Dharap and Jefferson have had to contain their lives in a small family bubble.

Being new parents, they had already expected some isolation and were taking precautions against exposing their daughter to others in the first months of her life.

But they had plans. Both work full time, and when Aarchi was born on Feb. 3, Dharap was on parental leave.

“I was supposed to go back to work on March 16; the shelter-in-place went into effect the next day,” said Dharap, an attorney and the vice president of the

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I don’t think we want to muzzle our commissioners.

— Greg Tanaka, Palo Alto City Council member, on proposal to restrict media communications. See story on page 5.
**ELECTION 2020**

**Tune in for local election results, analysis**

**Live broadcast set for 10 p.m. on election night**

Midpeninsula residents can watch local election results next Tuesday night during a live, one-hour broadcast co-produced by Palo Alto Online, The Almanac and the Midpen Media Center.

The special news program will be livestreamed simultaneously on the Palo Alto Online YouTube channel at YouTube.com/pal-o-alto-almanac and the Midpen Media Center’s website at midpenmedia.org and local cable channel 30. It will feature updated results and analysis of selected races and measures on the ballot in Palo Alto, Menlo Park, East Palo Alto, Atherton and Mountain View.

The broadcast will be hosted by Palo Alto Weekly Editor Jocelyn Dong and will feature commentary from former Palo Alto City Council member Vic Gregor and Henrietta Burroughs, director of the East Palo Alto Media Center and host of the “Talking with Henrietta” cable show.

Along with a summary of election results as they are released by the Registrars of Voters in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, selected candidates will be interviewed throughout the hour by Palo Alto Weekly and Almanac reporters.

— Palo Alto Weekly staff

**EDUCATION**

**For district’s older students, choice of hybrid or distance learning**

District does not recommend livestreaming for middle, high schools

by Elena Kadvany

Palo Alto Unified is not recommending that its middle and high schools reopen with livestreaming in January, which would allow students learning from home to remotely watch classes as they are happening in person.

On a survey of secondary teachers this week, 64% of those who responded said they are “strongly against any form of livestreaming in any circumstance.” About 36% disagreed with that statement, and 24% said they would be willing to simultaneously teach students in person and over Zoom. Of 447 secondary teachers, 330 have responded to the survey, according to the district.

Seventy-three percent of secondary students and families, meanwhile, said on a survey that they see livestreaming as a “viable option” for distance learning.

Some high school teachers who called into Tuesday’s school board meeting said livestreaming would place an undue burden on teachers and that the district hadn’t provided enough information to teachers about how it would work on the ground.

“Teaching via Zoom, as we are currently, takes all my attention and skills,” Gunn High School Spanish teacher Elizabeth Matebitt said. “I think I’m doing it pretty well given its limitations, but I earnestly desire to be with my students. ... However, the very thought of trying to do both simultaneously makes my head spin.”

Superintendent Don Austin said that livestreaming should remain on the table as a potential option but that he’s not recommending it right now for the middle and high schools.

“We’re very much in favor of continuing with the same distance approach that we have currently,” he said. “I feel like there’s anxiety around something that we’re not proposing.”

Teachers also criticized the survey they received as binary, “biased” and lacking explanation of specific proposals and the opportunity to provide open-ended comments.

Palo Alto High School English teacher David Cohen, speaking on behalf of the teachers union, said that sending a survey out to students and families about the viability of livestreaming before it had been fully discussed with teachers is “like offering restaurant patrons a daily special without checking with the chef about what’s available.”

Paly parent Deb Whitman said if teachers are worried that livestreaming is too big of an ask, “We should be asking them, ‘What do you need to make livestreaming work?’”

The district is moving forward with a tentative plan that would continue distance learning as is for the middle and high schools but add the option of a hybrid model that was proposed several months ago, with two groups of students alternating coming to campus two

(continued on page 30)
Facing community backlash, the Palo Alto City Council reversed course Monday and nixed contentious proposals that would have restricted the ability of local commissioners to talk to the media while giving the council more power to remove these volunteers at any time and for any reason.

The council also pulled back from its prior plan to reduce the Parks and Recreation Commission from seven seats to five after members generally agreed that the commission’s broad scope and overwhelming opposition to the proposed downsizing warrants retaining the status quo.

The council opted to shift gears after two public hearings in which residents and numerous commissioners voiced objections to a new handbook that council members were scheduled to adopt. The handbook, which was crafted by Vice Mayor Tom DuBois and Council member Alison Cormack, seeks to address inconsistencies in how the various boards function and to better align the commissions’ work with council directions.

Proposed policies in the new handbook would require the council to approve the work plan of each commission, institute animal ethics training for each member and require commissioners not to miss more than a third of meetings, among other changes.

The most controversial proposals, however, had to do with the removal of commissioners and limiting their abilities to speak to the media. While the handbook did not expressly forbid commissioners from speaking to the media, it advised members that “statements to the media should generally be avoided” and that inquiries should be routed through the city’s chief communications officer.

The council agreed to reconsider the proposed media policy, which several commissioners suggested infringes on their First Amendment rights. Council member Greg Tanaka shared that view and called the proposal to discourage media responses “a little bit weird.” If anything, the city should be encouraging commissioners to do more community outreach, he said.

“I don’t think we want to muzzle our commissioners,” Tanaka said.

DuBois said the intent of the policy wasn’t to “muzzle” commissioners but rather to make sure that when they’re speaking, they are making it clear that they are representing themselves and not the commission or the city. Commissioners, he said, should not serve as “opposition” to the council or a “shadow cabinet.”

While his colleagues agreed with that objective, they directed DuBois and Cormack to revise the proposed policy and make it less restrictive.

“I think board and commission members should feel free to speak with the press,” Mayor Adrian Fine said. “They should just be explicit about who they are representing.”

Several past and present volunteers objected to the proposed policy for removing commissioners. Former Mayor Pat Burt, who is also a former Planning and Transportation Commission chair, urged the council to “avoid the politicization of the appointment and removal process.” While a removal may be appropriate, it should not be arbitrary, he suggested.

“It should be based upon ethical or legal violations or patterns of absences or misconduct to staff or a colleague or the public, or other things that undermine the trust of the council or the commission, but not arbitrary reasons,” Burt said.

The majority of the council agreed. Council member Liz Kniss said she was troubled by the proposal to allow removal of commissioners for “no reason,” as the handbook allowed.

“I can imagine a time when ... a new council sits down, takes a look at the planning commission and says, ‘Two or three people don’t work for us. Here’s a way to get rid of them,’ and just votes them off without reason. I’d really object to that,” Kniss said.

Fine similarly opposed the new policy on the removal of commissioners and argued that this would stifle their independence.

“I really want us to have board and commission members who serve independently, who have different opinions and can push back and challenge council,” Fine said. “I think that’s extraordinarily important and I’d be really, really disappointed if we allow removal without a reason or without a hearing.”

The council stopped short, however, of requiring a public hearing to remove commissioners. Some members suggested that removing a commissioner shouldn’t be a difficult process.

“Does the council have the power to remove commissioners or not? If it goes to a public hearing and so forth, maybe the council doesn’t have that power. If the council does have that power, why are you constraining the council to jump through hoops for it?” Council member Eric Filseth asked.

The council also generally agreed that it would like to standardize the recruitment process so that all commission seats are filled early in the year and that

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COMMUNITY

Former foster youth launches a new kind of mentorship

Big Homie Project inspires Black teens by connecting them with Black mentors

by Elena Kadvany

For recent Palo Alto High School graduate Makayla Miller, having someone with whom she could relate to for college advice or simply text when she’s having a bad day has been vital.

Miller connected with Jazmine Brown, a clinical psychology doctoral student in San Diego, through the local nonprofit Big Homie Project. Both women are Black, and Miller, a psychology major, is interested in going into the same field as Brown. They formed a bond through weekly video calls, shared family backgrounds and conversations about mental health.

“It’s really important for kids to have role models to look up to that look like them and are doing the things they want to do,” Miller said. “Especially in lower income communities — having someone you can talk to, someone you can relate to ... is really important for flattening out or minimizing the achievement gap, getting more kids into college (and) getting more Black and brown youth into positions of power.”

These are among the goals of the Big Homie Project. Palo Alto resident Jacqueline Diep started the nonprofit to connect Black teenagers in East Palo Alto with Black mentors working in careers they’re interested in pursuing.

Diep sees herself in the teens she works with. She was a foster youth who went on to prove the statistics about foster youth underachieving wrong. She graduated from college and got her Master of Business Administration from the University of Southern California. She credits much of her success to mentors who recognized and supported her at a young age, including a social worker and high school teacher.

“It’s the opportunity, network and equity gap,” she said. “If you don’t provide opportunities for these kids, they’ll never ever make it out. I speak so passionately about it because I was that kid.”

Diep has leveraged her professional and personal networks to bring in all kinds of Black mentors, from Stanford University surgeons and Silicon Valley venture capitalists to professional athletes. (The nonprofit also works with athletes to host basketball clinics for youth in East Palo Alto.) The mentors check in with their teen mentees once a week or every other week to provide career advice and support. They use their connections to expose the young adults to opportunities in their fields that they might not otherwise have access to.

Miller is in her freshman year at Louisiana State University. She grew up in East Palo Alto and attended Palo Alto Unified schools through the Voluntary Transfer Program. The first Big Homie Project mentor she worked with was a Stanford surgeon. They had the same taste in music and went rock climbing together pre-coronavirus.

For the last few months, she’s worked with Brown, a foster youth who went to a majority white high school where there was one Black teacher. Few of Brown’s family members attended college and she didn’t grow up in a community where education was valued. She eventually went to community college and then transferred to a four-year college, but struggled with the economic and familial pressure to pursue a lucrative field rather than the one she was passionate about.

“A lot of times, even unintentionally, parents, family members, the community put people down. Like, ‘A surgeon? You know how expensive that is? You know how smart you have to be?‘” Brown said, whereas the Big Homie Project is amplifying the message that “You can do whatever you want to.”

They talk about which classes Miller should take, whether she should join the LSU dance team, and in recent months, the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement. Miller helped organize a Juneteenth rally in Palo Alto this summer that was attended by hundreds of people. She spoke to the crowd about racism at Palo Alto High School and the isolation of “being Black in a school full of white.”

Brown often talks with Miller about her emotional well-being, working to loosen the stigma attached to mental health in Black communities. After Floyd was killed while in custody of Minneapolis police this summer, sparking protests across the country and intense debate about race in the United States — all against the disruptive backdrop of a global pandemic — she reminded Miller that it’s OK to not be OK.

“We talk about how Black girls, Black kids don’t seek therapy because our parents are like, ‘Deal with it; suck it up; you’re going to be fine’... and how anxiety and depression are normal things but we just don’t define them as that and our parents don’t define them as that,” Brown said.

Armnani Barnes, who also graduated from Palo Alto High this year, is a first-generation college student and in recent months, the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement. Miller helped organize a Juneteenth rally in Palo Alto this summer that was attended by hundreds of people. She spoke to the crowd about racism at Palo Alto High School and the isolation of “being Black in a school full of white.”

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COMMUNITY

Philippe Rey honored with Kiwanis Angel award

Nonprofit director talks about youth mental health during the pandemic, spike in demand for services
by Elena Kadvany

P hilippe Rey, executive direc-
tor of nonprofit Adolescent Counseling Services (ACS), has won the ninth annual Kiwanis Angel Award for his de-
cades of work supporting youth mental health in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. The Kiwanis Angel Award, sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Palo Alto, honors an individual who has had a significant, positive impact on children and youth and provides a $2,500 contribution to the recipient’s organization. It will bestow the award on Rey in a vir-
tual award reception on Nov. 12.

Rey, a native of Switzerland with a doctorate in clinical psychology with a concentration in child and family therapy, first joined Adoles-
cent Counseling Services in 1998 as director of the Caravan House, a now-closed group home for teen girls. He went on to become as-
sociate director and has been the agency’s executive director since 2004.

Adolescent Counseling Services, located in Redwood City, provides therapy, specialized support groups and other mental health resources to local youth, parents and schools. (Previously headquartered in Palo Alto, the nonprofit worked with Palo Alto Unified for years but now serves districts in East Palo Alto and Menlo Park and in other area schools. All teens regard-
less of school can access the non-
profits’ services.) The nonprofit also runs an adolescent substance abuse treatment program and Out-
let, a longtime LGBTQ+ support program.

The critical mental health needs among youth was already much pro-
nounced before the pandemic. One out of five individuals ages 10-25 are struggling with a major men-
tal illness, and suicide is the sec-
ond leading cause of death among people ages 10-34, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These numbers have increased during the pandemic, Rey said in an interview, with schools closed and teenagers grap-
pling with isolation and other chal-
enges. ACS has seen an increase in substance use among teenagers and a spike in demand for Outlet’s services.

“Since March we’ve actu-
ally seen a deterioration of men-
tal health and an increase in the struggles, especially with that age group,” he said.

At the start of shelter-at-home order, Adolescent Counseling Ser-
vices immediately switched to a tele-therapy model to serve teens remotely, which has brought both challenges and unexpected ben-
efits. Some teenagers, without the prompting of someone at school or a watchful parent, wouldn’t show up to virtual appointments or group ses-
sions — particularly in the sub-
stance abuse program, where virtu-
al therapy proved less effective. The nonprofit has since brought those youth and families back for in-people of clients it serves annually, from 5,000 youth to 10,000 by 2021.

“Kids have a true gift for leader-
ship, compassion, innovation and collaboration,” Emily O’Connell, a former Mountain View-Los Altos High School district teacher and community volunteer, said in the Kiwanis award announcement. “He has chosen to focus his com-
mitment on a disturbingly under-
served population, a largely voice-
less and vulnerable demographic: adolescents (teens, tweens, and young adults) in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.”

The virtual award reception will be held on Nov. 12 from 5-6:30 p.m. via Zoom. Attendance is free, although a donation to support the work of the Kiwanis is requested. Register for the event at kiwani-
sangeward.org/registration.

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

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Endorsed by The Weekly:
“... she has focused on the educational experiences of students in the classroom and on addressing educational equity and student well-being.”

Endorsed by community leaders: Monica Yeung Arima, Annie Bedichek, Zack Bodner, Nana & Brian Chancellor, Baldwin Cheng, Gina Dalma, Amy Darling, Catherine Crystal & Jon Foster, Sheri Furman, Elizabeth Gardner, Evan Darley, Julie Lythcott Haims, Walt Hays, Mary V. Hughes, Emily Jaquette, Claire Kinzer, Nancy Krop, Ginnie Noh, Elizabeth Osweiler, Daron Owen, Robyn Reis, Diane Rolfe, Susan & Nate Saul, Christina Schmidt, Allan & Mary Seid, Laura Stark, Tammy Truher, Randolph Tsiens, Lisa Van Dussen, Sara Woodham, and hundreds more!

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Suzanne Elizabeth Williams
January 6, 1926 – October 11, 2020

Suzanne lived a loving and giving life. To love and to give, to build community, and to encourage was her joy. She was born to a loving home in Chicago in 1926. She was raised in a modest one room apartment on the South Side and never knew she came from modest means. They were happy. She loved her four years of college at The University of Dubuque where she became senior class president. Happy, hardworking years. She attended the annual reunions for many years. After living in Detroit for her first job, marrying and delivering her two children, Suzanne and family moved to Palo Alto in 1961.

Suzanne was the Founding Director of First Congregational Nursery in 1961. This nursery continues successfully today and many of the local children have benefited from the program that Suzanne initiated. In 1966 Suzanne started her career as a Kindergarten teacher for the Palo Alto Unified School District. Many children and families will remember Mrs. Korecky at Hoover, Palo Verde, and Walter Hays. Her name changed towards the end of her 20-year tenure so during her final years at Walter Hays, she was called Mrs. Williams. It seems every child remembers the name of their Kindergarten teacher and many in Palo Alto remembered Suzanne. Everywhere she went, adults would approach her to remind her that they had been her student. It was a constant reminder of a joyous professional time.

Suzanne was the ringleader for many social and community efforts. She participated actively in the organization and administration of the First United Methodist Church of Palo Alto. She created wonderful neighborhood events on Stone Lane where her family home is. Any event she planned included an “ice-breaker” to get people talking and interacting. She loved people and loved to help people connect, to understand themselves, and to participate with others. On Holidays she was called Mrs. Williams. It seems every child remembers the name of their Kindergarten teacher and many in Palo Alto remembered Suzanne. Everywhere she went, adults would approach her to remind her that they had been her student. It was a constant reminder of a joyous professional time.

Suzanne passed peacefully at home on Stone Lane in the early hours of October 11, 2020.

Suzanne had a great love of life, her family, and her community. She is survived by her son, Kevin Korecky, her daughter, Kathleen Korecky Sedeki, six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

A celebration of Suzanne’s life will be planned when it is safe to gather in person. Donations in her name may be made to the Scholarship Fund at The University of Dubuque. Suzanne herself gave to this fund every year of her life starting with the year she graduated in 1948. Any contributions will be received with much appreciation. University of Dubuque, Office of Advancement, 2000 University Avenue, Dubuque, IA 52001 or online at www.dbq.edu/invest (please note Suzanne Williams Memorial).
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3765 KLAMATH LANE, PALO ALTO

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

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3545 RAMONA STREET, PALO ALTO

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Set on a spacious corner lot of 8,500 square feet in the desirable Midtown neighborhood, this 3-bedroom, 1-bathroom home offers bright interiors, a great backyard, and a location close to everything Palo Alto has to offer. Contemporary styling and a well-manicured front yard give this home outstanding curb appeal, while inside, new paint, walls of glass, and vaulted ceilings create a fresh, inviting atmosphere. Enjoy the expansive living room, craft delicious meals in the kitchen with stainless-steel appliances, and entertain guests with ease in the backyard with a deck and lush lawn. Just steps to Mitchell Park, this home is also within walking distance of top-ranked schools Fairmeadow Elementary and JLS Middle. Plus, you will be just a short drive to the excitement of California Avenue, The Village at San Antonio Center, and US 101 for Bay Area commuting.

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Local and state ballot measures

**Measure O - Yes**
Palo Alto Unified School District Parcel Tax (requires two-thirds vote)

**Measure S - No**
Santa Clara Valley Water District Parcel Tax (requires two-thirds vote)

**Measure RR - Yes**
Caltrain Sales Tax Measure (requires two-thirds vote)

State propositions

Prop. 14 - No Stem cell bonds

Prop. 15 - Yes Commercial property tax split roll

Prop. 16 - Yes Affirmative action

Prop. 17 - Yes Parolees’ right to vote

Prop. 18 - Yes 17-year old vote in primaries

Prop. 19 - Yes Transfer of tax base

Prop. 20 - No Criminal justice reform rollbacks

Prop. 21 - Yes Rent control at local level

Prop. 22 - No Gig workers as independent contractors

Prop. 23 - No Dialysis clinic requirements

Prop. 24 - Yes Data privacy

Prop. 25 - Yes Cash bail referendum

In response to ‘Plummeting revenues threaten planned public safety building’

*Posted Oct. 20 at 11:39 a.m. by Carol Scott, a resident of Evergreen Park:*

“The residents of Evergreen Park and the local businesses argued their case of public financing of the new garage near California Avenue for a reason — to provide adequate parking for the local business community and their patrons and to get the commercial, all-day parking of employees out of the residential neighborhood. Now you want to give it back to developers? No way. We want the city to have control over the garage so that it can be used for the benefit of everyone — not a special interest group. The city has already taken out many parking spaces on California Avenue and surrounding lots to support the Summer Streets program. The public and these local businesses need the parking — it should not be a freebie for developers who do not want to hurt their profits by including parking in their projects. Traffic and commercial employees will be back — and they will need to park somewhere. If they don’t park in the garage, they will park in my neighborhood. Can’t anyone see beyond the next 30 days?

Second, I find it astonishing that Alison Cormack and Liz Kniss are now questioning the spending of funds on public infrastructural projects. They were the primary council members arguing for spending on public projects — like the bike bridge, like public art, etc. — and not on public services in the previous budget discussions. Now, they very disingenuously say we shouldn’t be building large structures. The Public Safety building is a public safety issue and has been needed for years. These people are for their projects, but not for other people’s projects. They don’t even acknowledge their part in prior budget discussions.”

In response to ‘Facing a lawsuit, Palo Alto plans to permanently expand Foothills Park access’

*Posted Oct. 22 at 7:09 p.m. by Roland Luo, a resident of Green Acres:*

“In order to access Foothills Park, checking (driver’s license) and paying a nonresident entrance fee should still be required. This is to protect those in the park and pay for park ranger protection and park maintenance. Palo Alto residents don’t need to pay since we’ve already been pay taxes since day one to purchase and maintain such a wonderful place.”
Guest Opinion

A place to call home: Vote ‘yes’ on Measure V
by Ofelia Bello

After experiencing homelessness three times in the several years prior, Leonora Martinez purchased a house from East Palo Alto’s PAHALI Community Land Trust (“Preserving Affordable Housing Assets Long-term, Inc.”) in 2011. Martinez, her husband and their six children finally had a place they could confidently call home.

In the years after she purchased the home, Martinez and her family have experienced their fair share of turbulent times. First, Martinez lost her husband to an unexpected illness. Later, her teenage son was involved in a serious bike accident, requiring Martinez to become his full-time caregiver.

While these devastating events might have flung the family into turmoil and resulted in displacement and homelessness, the home she purchased from PAHALI Community Land Trust provided them with a sense of stability and a place of refuge during those difficult times.

The community land trust model employed by PAHALI — which means the trust owns the land while the family owns the actual structure — has kept their home affordable even as so much else has changed for the Martinez family. And Measure V can help create more affordable housing opportunities for families like the Martinez family.

Measure V is a modest 2% increase on East Palo Alto’s transient occupancy tax (“TOT”), which is currently 12% and has not been raised since it was passed in 1998. The tax is paid by out-of-town guests staying in East Palo Alto hotels and short-term rentals of 30 days or less.

The city estimates that, if passed, Measure V would raise nearly $400,000 a year dedicated specifically to affordable housing acquisition, redevelopment and rehabilitation. In this new era of economic uncertainty wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic, Measure V can help provide security for vulnerable community members who are concerned about their homes and their place in East Palo Alto.

East Palo Alto is no stranger to the potentially devastating effects of economic pressure. During the Great Recession, many East Palo Alto residents were displaced of the largest source of their wealth — their homes — via foreclosure and were forced out of the community. East Palo Alto lost longtime families and small businesses, destabilizing the community. In 2009, 419 homes were lost in East Palo Alto due to foreclosures, and another 434 were lost between 2012 and 2017.

In years following the Great Recession, the second-wave tech boom has fueled cut-throat speculation, intensifying pressure on the local housing market. As a result, we have seen rising rents, accelerating gentrification and further mass displacement of longtime residents. Between 2011 and 2016, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment increased 60% countywide. In this context, 324 eviction notices for non-payment of rent were issued in East Palo Alto in a two-year period from 2012 to 2014.

Over the past year at several community meetings and study sessions, the City Council carefully considered this ordinance and how the revenue from Measure V should be spent. The members landed on affordable housing acquisition, redevelopment and rehabilitation because there are countless benefits associated with the preservation of housing.

Several recent reports, including Enterprise’s “Preserving Affordability, Preventing Displacement,” and Karen Chapelle and Y-PLAN’s “Investment and Disinvestment as Neighbors: A Study of Baseline Housing Conditions in the Bay Area Peninsula,” have noted both individual and community benefits of acquisition and rehabilitation of older, lower-cost homes (including single-family and multifamily units).

For our community at-large, housing preservation advances racial and economic equity, increases civic engagement and investment, and contributes to permanent affordability and community stabilization. For individuals and families, preserving affordable housing increases emotional and physical well-being, bolsters autonomy and empowerment, and stabilizes the familial unit.

These studies and others also have touted the importance of collaboration between city governments, local community land trusts and nonprofit developers as a vital component of affordable housing preservation. In East Palo Alto, PAHALI Community Land Trust, of which I serve as the volunteer chair, is an existing community resource with the knowledge and experience necessary to support the work of housing acquisition and rehabilitation.

PAHALI Community Land Trust already works closely with the city, and other key stakeholders like EPACANDO, Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto and Youth United for Community Action. These entities will formally collaborate as part of the Partnership for the Bay’s Future, a regional collaborative effort to produce and preserve affordable housing for residents of all races and backgrounds and support protections for renters across the Bay Area. The revenue from Measure V will serve to boost PAHALI’s capacity to expedite acquisition/rehab projects, with support from the city and Partnership for the Bay’s Future.

Measure V revenues will help tenants purchase, with assistance from the city and local nonprofits, the house or apartment building about to be sold out from under them. Ultimately, Measure V will help build our community’s capacity to undertake affordable housing acquisition/rehab projects and to preserve our families’ lower-cost homes. Vote “yes” on Measure V on Nov. 3 because everyone deserves a place to call home. For more information, go to EPAforV.com.

Ofelia Bello is the executive director of Youth United for Community Action and the chair of PAHALI Community Land Trust. She can be emailed at ofelialbello@youthunited.net.

Letters (continued from page 16)

level to the C-suite. It found that not only are mothers doing way more at home than fathers during the pandemic, but mothers are also more than twice as likely as fathers to worry that their performance is being judged negatively because of their caregiving responsibilities.

So, I ask that people have a little more empathy/sympathy and compassion for working women/mothers during this time. I’ve been deeply touched by the pouring out of support from local friends and colleagues. I’m taking some time off to recharge my batteries, but I’m still leaning in — to work, to my family, to my community and to health. We can’t get through this pandemic alone: We all need to lean in to each other as community members to survive these next several months.

Amy Andonian
President & CEO, Avenidas

Letters

Housing density
Editor,
We live in a semi-arid climate where water conservation should be mandatory even during wet years. Yet the Association of Bay Area Government’s housing figures don’t appear to have factored in the prospect of ever-increasing droughts. The extreme effects we’ve endured during previous dry spells will be overshadowed by even longer and more severe ones as predicted by climatologists. Our very survival is linked to water and yet the Association of Bay Area Government continues to encourage more population density.

In addition, the pandemic has already resulted in a reduced jobs-to-housing ratio in Palo Alto, and these new work habits could remain permanent for many workers. As a result, the agency’s housing quotas are most certainly based on outdated data and the city should refuse to comply until its rationale for increased density is fully addressed.

Irv Brenner
Byron Street, Palo Alto
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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
Pandemic fuels buying frenzy in luxury market

Page 6

Local housing market surpasses pre-pandemic benchmark

page 21

What can you buy on the Midpeninsula for $3M, $8M and $10M?

page 31
Navigate this uncertain market with experience, education and skill.
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1100 Cañada Road, Woodside
4 BD  4.5 BA  4,250 SF  3+ Acres
$8,750,000

Central Woodside 3-acre estate! Walking distance to downtown and Woodside Elem. Build a dream estate on the 3-flat acres or move right into the 5-bdrm home. Stable, turnouts, riding ring and sparkling pool.

340 Kings Mountain Rd, Woodside
3 BD  2.5 BA  2,480 SF  3+ Acres
$4,998,000

Amazing western hills views from this great 3-acre property! Main house, guest house and “Vintner’s cottage” can all be rebuilt plus 500 sq ft ADU to each structure. (*Confirm with Town)

Sean Foley
650.207.6005
sean.foley@compass.com
DRE 00870112
Woodside Retreat with Uninterrupted Western Hill Views

489 W Maple Way | Woodside | Offered at $5,250,000 | www.489WMapleWay.com

HOME: 4 bedrooms & 3.5 baths; the perfect private spa to ride out the pandemic
• Approximately 3,926 square feet of living space with recently added second story
• Classic Spanish Mission Revival style, recently upgraded with designer touches
  – Expanded high-ceilinged family room & kitchen with Western Hill views
  – Updated kitchen with granite counters, top-of-the-line appliances, pull-out pantry
  – Three large upstairs bedrooms, including Master Suite with stunning views
  – Downstairs bedroom configured to double as home office
  – Oak hardwood floors, new carpeting & recently added Sonos system

PROPERTY: Approximately 1.1 acres located in less-traveled pocket of Emerald Hills
• Sweeping views of Western Hills & adjacent open space; stunning sunsets
• Recently added solar-heated sunny pool, outdoor shower & shaded cabana area
• Pergola-covered outdoor entertainment area with built-in kitchen & BBQ
• Large, flat rear fenced playing field with nearby fully irrigated gardens
• 200-vine Bordeaux-blend vineyard; detached infrared sauna & workout studio

Attached 2-car garage with electric car charger, double work sink, built-in storage, refrigerator
Easy drive to acclaimed Woodside School (pre-K to 8th), Town Center shops & restaurants

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PANDEMIC FUELS BUYING FRENZY IN LUXURY MARKET

As home buyers seek bigger properties, mega-homes see multiple bids, record sales

BY DAVID GOLL
Some of the same tribulations that have made 2020 a seemingly endless ordeal have caused a boom in the Midpeninsula’s high-end housing market.

Sprawling, spacious abodes — valued anywhere from $8 million to $40 million — with plenty of property and amenities are providing welcome refuge for buyers looking to escape a world buffeted by a global pandemic, economic uncertainty, social unrest and political tumult.

Local Realtors said multiple offers on the priciest properties are not uncommon this year, with sales of multi-million-dollar homes reaching “record levels” in some of the region’s most affluent neighborhoods.

The number of high-end luxury homes that sold in the cities of Palo Alto, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside was higher during both June and July than in any month dating back to August 2018, according to Compass Real Estate. More than 60 homes sold for above $5 million during those two months.

Some of the highest-priced sales since the shutdown in mid-March, according to monthly sales transactions provided by California RESource, include a home in Old Palo Alto that sold for $39.9 million; three homes in Atherton that sold for $36.75 million, $23 million and $20 million respectively; a home in Woodside that sold for $22.5 million; and a Los Altos Hills home that sold for $13.5 million.

“The high-end market this year has been fueled by our shelter-in-place orders,” said Michael Repka, CEO, managing broker and general counsel for Palo Alto-based DeLeon Realty. “When we are sheltering, we tend to more readily notice things about our home environments. Since we are living, working, educating and playing at home these days, people are looking for bigger and nicer places to spend their time.”

And buyers aren’t looking just anywhere. Cities, towns and neighborhoods that had fallen a bit out of favor in recent years — as the majority of homebuyers put a priority on walkability, nearby urban amenities and shorter commutes — have become in vogue again. Sales of homes in more rural, low-density communities such as Woodside, Portola Valley and Los Altos Hills began to heat up when the pandemic-induced industry shutdown of last spring started loosening up in May. Some of those properties had sat on the market for a year or two before being snapped up this year by space-hungry buyers.

In addition, new speculative home construction on smaller lots in Atherton and Menlo Park is also attracting a great deal of interest.

“These are a number of factors here fueling this market,” said Hugh Cornish, Menlo Park-based Realtor for Coldwell Banker Real Estate. “The NASDAQ is at an all-time high, which is related to Silicon Valley and the high-tech industry. We also have a strong IPO (Initial Public Offering) market. It has generated a lot of money in this area.”

Affluent buyers, some of whom are fleeing dense urban environments like San Francisco during these socially distancing times, view top-flight Midpeninsula properties as “an excellent diversity play” for their financial portfolios, Cornish said.

Not to mention a nice place in which to live and work.

“There is a big migration from San Francisco to the Midpeninsula by young people working for tech companies like Google who went up there 10 years ago for the city living experience,” he said. “They have kids now and are moving here for the schools and for more space in the pandemic era.”

Palo Alto, which has comparatively smaller lots than surrounding high-demand rural areas, still enjoyed brisk home-selling activity this past summer. In July, 47 transactions occurred compared to 27 in July 2019, according to Michael Dreyfus, a Palo Alto-based Silicon Valley President for Sotheby’s International Realty. Dreyfus had his own $22.5 million deal this year for a home on a six-acre parcel of land in Woodside.

“There has been a big run this year in Woodside,” Dreyfus said.

He noted the “home as a resort” trend also powering the pricey home market in 2020. Swimming pools have become highly prized by prospective buyers, as have tennis courts, basketball courts and space for home gyms that can provide exercise options in lieu of the restricted operations of local gyms and health clubs.

Having space that can accommodate massage, and even more elaborate spa services, has also become a huge selling point for properties.

“All of these elements of exercise and entertainment are very important when you think of your house as a resort, of sorts,” Dreyfus said.

“Home now is the center for work, school and play,” said Kelly Griggs, branch manager in Coldwell Banker’s Palo Alto office. She said her office has struck deals during recent months in the $20 million range. “Having space and facilities capable of accommodating a personal trainer is important to some of our buyers.”

Buyers have had more properties to consider in recent months. Sotheby’s Dreyfus said more sellers decided to jump into the market during summer and early fall after many on the Midpeninsula sat tight last spring amid the uncertainty of the market at the start of the pandemic. Some inventory has opened up as older, long-time homeowners, in particular, have decided to cash in on their equity and leave the Bay Area behind, he said, heading to Lake Tahoe and other less-expensive parts of California, as well as neighboring states.

Though buyers in this lofty residential strata are mostly from the Bay Area, it’s drawing from other parts of the U.S., and overseas, as well.

Dreyfus said he has worked with buyers from other large cities around the country, including Los Angeles and New York. And while affluent Asian buyers make up a smaller percentage of prospective buyers of Midpeninsula real estate in 2020 than a few years ago, there are no shortage of potential buyers from both Hong Kong and mainland China seeking local residences, Cornish said.

Contributing writer David Goll can be emailed at david.w.goll@gmail.com.

About the cover: Luxury homes like this one, which is no longer on the market, have seen an uptick in sales since May, especially in more rural, low-density communities such as Woodside, Portola Valley and Los Altos Hills. Courtesy Michael Repka.

Sprawling, spacious homes with sports courts, home theaters, spas and plenty of outdoor space are providing welcome refuge for buyers looking to escape a world buffeted by a global pandemic, according to local real estate experts.
“We highly recommend Erika for local real estate transactions. She has a long and deep knowledge of the area and is closely tied to the community. Her understanding of a client’s needs and best course of action is top-notch!”

– H. & A. G.

Erika’s 2020 Year-to-Date Sales**

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<th>PENDING</th>
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<td>410 Golden Oak, Portola Valley</td>
<td>$8,210,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 Moore Road, Woodside*</td>
<td>$9,950,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>308 Olive Hill Lane, Woodside*</td>
<td>not available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Represented Buyer ** List price shown

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Private two-story 1-bedroom, 1-bath guest house

Approximately 11,595 total square feet

Main house features formal living and dining rooms both with fireplace, office, commercial-style kitchen, family room, wine cellar and attached 3-car garage

Guest house with living/dining room, kitchen, bedroom, and bath; lower-level 3-car garage

6-stall barn with tack room, upstairs home gym, recreation room, wine cellar, home theatre, and large workshop/office

Resort-inspired recreation complex with infinity-edge pool, bar, linear gas fire pit, large heated pavilion with media, and outdoor kitchen

Excellent Las Lomitas schools

*Mailing address is in Atherton; per county records, property resides in Town of Woodside

For a private showing of this extraordinary property, please contact:

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hcornish@cbnorcal.com
CalRE#00912143

STEPHANIE ELKINS
650.400.2933
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The Wall Street Journal, 2020

Over $2.5 Billion in Sales

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This masterfully built home was coined “California Tudor” for its homage to the Classic Tudor Revival Style, yet updated for the 21st Century Silicon Valley lifestyle. At the heart of the design are 2 guiding principles: an extraordinary use of light and locally sourced materials. For a seamless transition, the interior was designed with 4 materials; straight-grain Douglas Fir, slate, limestone, “Absolute Black” granite. The fir adorns the ceilings, cabinetry & millwork in every room. Venetian plaster walls add a lustrous finish while adding softness with round edges. The result is warm and inviting with a wonderful flow of spaces for entertaining or everyday living on 3 levels. Enjoy your backyard paradise...all year! Swim in your 16 x 50 salt water pool. Dine “Al Fresco” using your new Lynx Bar-B-Q & well equipped outdoor kitchen.

5 Bedrooms  +  6 Baths

Entrance & Foyer
Arched Portico
Gallery Hallway
Between LR & Great Room Slate & Nana doors for both side & rear patios
Chefs Kitchen
Upscale appliances
Island & casual dining

Living Room/Library
Dramatic 2 story Vaulted ceiling w/ balcony overlook from 2nd floor library
Great Room
Adjoining kitchen Gas fireplace
Formal Dining defined by elevated translucent glass roof

Dedicated Office
Fully equipped plus fiber optics
Main Level
Bedroom + Bath w/ side patio
Tudor Style
Pool house
Two car detached garage

$16,380,000

Please visit: www.1995Waverley.com for video, photos, floorplans & drone views

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DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE HOME INCLUDE:

• 4 Bedrooms, 3 1/2 Bathrooms
• Sophisticated living room with wood paneling, marble framed fireplace and built-in shelving
• Chef’s kitchen with top of the line appliances, spacious center island
• Living area: 3,130 sq ft per architects plans
• Lot Size: 8,016 sq ft per City of Palo Alto Parcel Report
• Top-Rated Palo Alto Schools (Fairmeadow Elementary, JLS Middle School, Gunn High- buyer to verify enrollment)

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$150 MILLION
SOLD
in 2020 Year-to-Date

Menlo Park

631 Harvard Avenue
3 beds, 3.5 baths
$2,950,000  |  631Harvard.com

Menlo Park

36 Parker Avenue
5 beds, 3 baths
$3,395,000  |  36Parker.com

Menlo Park

1050 Trinity Drive
4 beds, office, 4 baths
$4,798,000  |  1050Trinity.com

Atherton

2 Sutherland Drive
5 beds, 5.5 baths
$10,750,000  |  2Sutherland.com

Atherton

36 Parker Avenue
5 beds, 3 baths
$3,395,000  |  36Parker.com

Atherton

80 San Mateo Drive
5 beds, 4 baths
$5,200,000  |  80SanMateo.com

Menlo Park

1165 Klamath Drive
5 beds, 4.5 baths
$6,175,000  |  1165Klamath.com

Menlo Park

36 Parker Avenue
5 beds, 3 baths
$3,395,000  |  36Parker.com

Menlo Park

80 San Mateo Drive
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The lure of bigger properties draws buyers away from Palo Alto

Home prices and demand are trending below neighboring cities

by Xin Jiang

T he only thing that can be expected in 2020, thus far, is the unexpected. After facing months of sheltering at home, kids taking online classes every day, wearing facial masks in the hot summer months, and last, but not least, orange skies that made us wonder if we’d moved to Mars without notice, this year has increased the importance of home to an unprecedented level: It’s become the place where we work, learn, exercise and relax. It’s become the place where we’ve faced the challenges of the pandemic and the potential sellers, when the market to be swung by cyclical factors to working, even as many others seem to be working, it has become even more critical to work with a local professional who can help set realistic expectations.

Xin Jiang is a real estate agent with Compass in Palo Alto. She can be emailed at xin.jiang@compass.com.

What, then, triggered the weakness of the Palo Alto housing market?

Palo Alto homes tend to have a 15%-20% premium over neighboring Midpeninsula cities, especially when comparing the per square foot price. This means for the same budget, you can get a bigger house and a bigger yard in Menlo Park or Los Altos. As the importance of space increases, buyers may find more value outside of Palo Alto.

Palo Alto also may have the wrong supply for today’s buyers. A majority of the housing supply in Palo Alto is inheritance-related trust sales. Many of those properties are small, old homes with many years of deferred maintenance — not exactly fitting today’s lifestyles. The inferior condition of homes is not necessarily reflected in the price, and the burden to upgrade is largely on the buyers. During the pandemic, when personal interaction is restricted and parents are so tied up with their kids’ Zoom learning at home, as well as the potentially prolonged permitting process due to the staff reduction at the city, not many buyers welcome home improvement projects.

The lack of foreign buyers due to a prolonged trade war on the tech front between the U.S. and China, as well as global travel restrictions, has further reduced our buyer pool.

Despite the horrible state of the real world, the tech economy is booming. The pandemic has made all of us realize just how important technology is in our daily lives. This reflects not only in many tech companies’ earnings but more in stock valuation. The prices of tech stocks are much higher than their pre-March levels. This new wealth directly flows into the Midpeninsula’s ultra-luxury market. Two homes in Palo Alto have sold for more than $15 million so far this year compared with three homes in the range of $11 million to $13 million last year. Los Altos Hills had three sales over $10 million, which is more than the past two years combined. There were 13 sales in Atherton over $10 million, putting the town on track to its past annual average of 17 such sales.

The most common question when we move toward the end of the year is always about timing. Should sellers put their homes on the market now? Should buyers wait after the election? The last election year in 2016 also was a weak year for home prices in Palo Alto. The median home price dropped for the first time since 2009. Then, in 2017, the market experienced a big 13% rebound after the uncertainty cleared — no matter the election result.

The uncertainties that we’re facing now are unprecedented. One thing that seems clear, however, is that the majority of things that have reshaped our lives because of the pandemic are only cyclical. For buyers with real needs, this may be excellent timing to be a contrarian and buy close to work, even as many others seem to be swung by cyclical factors and believe that they’ll be working from home indefinitely. For potential sellers, when the market is as tricky as it is now and much of the conventional wisdom is not working, it has become even more critical to work with a local professional who can help set realistic expectations.

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1111 Woodland Avenue, Menlo Park

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3 Bed | 3 Bath | 1615 Sq Ft home | 3,500 Sq Ft lot

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Charming Green Gables Home in Palo Alto
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Spaces for everyone! A stunning contemporary private oasis behind the gates in West MP. Amazing living spaces on two levels plus additional 600 SF finished garage. Main level features High ceilings, a large Living Dining Kitchen area w/FP, reading/music nook and powder room. Main level mast suite plus 2 en-suite bedrooms w/built in desk areas. Attached 2 car garage w/seating area plus additional area for extra refrigerators, bicycles, toys etc. Finished lower level features an amazing custom wall mural by Ian Ross (ianrossart.com), clerestory windows, additional full kitchen, 2 bedrooms w/2 full bathrooms, large family room, additional large room for office, exercise or for your personal preference and laundry area. Add'l storage, steam room & roof solar. Patio is designed for entertaining with built-in fire pit and large outdoor dining area. Backyard features an artificial putting green plus grass play area. This home has spaces for every conceivable activity.

900 Olive Street, Menlo Park
5 Beds | 6 Baths | 5,610 SqFt | 10,863 Lot SqFt
Built in 2008 | Res. Single Family | Detached | $5,975,000

Stunning two year new construction in prime location with Menlo Park Schools. Formal entry, elegant living room with fireplace and formal dining area. The gourmet kitchen has Thermador appliances and a generous Waterfall Quartz center island with seating areas. Kitchen opens to spacious family room with fireplace and vaulted ceilings, ceiling and family entertainment area. Main level Bedroom with en-suite bath plus guest half bath. Large Skylight floods the staircase in sunlight. Second floor features a large master retreat suite with vaulted ceilings and large picture windows, two additional bedrooms with shared hall bath, an upstairs laundry room and additional built in cabinets for storage. Fenced backyard has an amazingly large lawn area, plus perimeter fruit trees, and BBQ area. Dual zoned heating plus two a/c units. All the beautiful features of a two year new home. Due to Covid-19, CAR PEAD-V for all In-Person Visits.

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2,825 SqFt | 9,000 Lot SqFt | Built in 2018 | $3,995,000

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Carolyn comes with more than a decade of personal experience selling real estate, expanding on her deep family roots in the business. She maintains close ties to the Palo Alto community where she grew up watching her father do business — a well respected broker in Palo Alto for thirty years.

Building and connecting to community have always been important to Carolyn. She has an intense desire to help her clients find what they are looking for, providing them with a smooth, comfortable experience as they explore to communities that may be new to them.

How can Carolyn put her expertise to work to help you? Call her to get started!

Carolyn w her father, Jan at the Gamble Garden in Palo Alto.
Destination Properties

Sotto Il Monte
Montecito, CA  ·  $39,750,000
2845SycamoreCanyon.com

Bates Ranch Vineyard
Gilroy, CA  ·  $13,200,000
BatesRanchVineyard.com

Classic Riviera Style Oceanfront Estate
Solana Beach, CA  ·  $8,995,000

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Despite a global pandemic, historic fires, economic upheaval and a presidential election of unprecedented controversy, local real estate experts say the Midpeninsula is going into a strong fall housing market.

Low interest rates, flat prices, a strong tech economy and, surprisingly — all the turmoil — are pushing the market in a positive direction, with single-family homes in all price ranges seeing a bump in activity, agents said.

“Ther e is definitely strong buyer demand this fall,” said Judy Citron, a Menlo Park-based Realtor for Compass Real Estate. “In these extraordinary times, people are realizing the value of a home more than ever before.”

Citron and many of her fellow Midpeninsula real estate agents are largely optimistic about the season’s prospects. There are a few flies in the ointment — primarily concerns about the impacts of larger national and international events, such as contested presidential election results or a bigger resurgence of COVID-19. Most contend that the dynamic of pent-up demand from the spring shutdown that fueled an unusually active summer season will likely continue through October and November.

Brian Chancellor, a Palo Alto-based Realtor for Sereno Group, described the fall market as good — if not red hot — but sounded some cautionary notes.

“The high-end market continues to be insulated from larger world events,” he said, adding the market for primary residences in Woodside and Portola Valley, described the fall market as good — if not red hot — but sounded some cautionary notes.

“The high-end market continues to be insulated from larger world events,” he said, adding the market for primary residences in Woodside and Portola Valley, and vacation homes at Lake Tahoe and in neighboring states are thriving. “But, it is a very divisive time in this country politically. The COVID-19 pandemic continues. Recently, we’ve experienced these extraordinary fires. It all is throwing people off. They’re trying to find some balance in their everyday lives.”

Along with the thriving luxury market of $5-million-plus homes across the region, strong activity is also expected in the local entry-level market of single-family homes priced between $2.5 million and $3 million in Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Mountain View, according to Leannah Hunt, a Palo Alto-based Realtor for Sereno Group.

“The ‘trade-up’ buyers are really pushing the market,” Hunt said. “People who need and want more space — that’s the big factor driving families with children, especially, into the market.”

Inventory in most housing categories — which is often quite limited on the Midpeninsula — looks fairly healthy this fall, Hunt said. Serious buyers have a sufficient number of new and existing luxury properties to scout in Woodside, Portola Valley, Atherton, Menlo Park and Palo Alto, as well as smaller, less-expensive detached homes further south in Mountain View and Sunnyvale, she said.

The market for condominiums in more densely packed residential developments, however, has softened considerably as more buyers prioritize larger spaces in and around their residences during this time of social distancing, she added.

Though condos and apartments with outdoor spaces like patios and terraces are still drawing

(continued on page 24)
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**Trends**

(continued from page 21)

interest, she said.

“Condos and townhouses are often viewed as transitional housing,” said Denise Welsh, Los Altos-based Realtor for Compass Real Estate. “Many buyers today are looking for more long-term housing options in the single-family market.”

And, Welsh said, younger tech workers who often fuel the condo market, are largely staying on the sidelines this year. They’re often even returning home to live with parents or other relatives as a way to save money during uncertain times.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only shifted interest away from condos and townhouses, it also has dramatically changed the landscape for Realtors, buyers and sellers alike. Dating back to the six-week shutdown from mid-March to early May, traditional open houses that welcome all visitors have remained off limits. Attendance at property showings are still limited to agents and small numbers of prospective buyers from the same household.

And masks, gloves, frequent cleanings of surfaces and wide-open doors and windows during the tours are still required by local and state Realtor organizations.

As a reaction to restrictions on in-person interactions, prospective buyers are increasingly turning toward the use of online resources to screen properties.

Elaborate, multi-dimensional videos of luxury properties have become very popular, according to Michael Repka, CEO, managing broker and general counsel of Palo Alto-based DeLeon Realty.

His company has spent up to $10,000 to show off premiere properties in detailed, extravagantly produced videos for internet consumption.

High-end buyers tend to do extensive online due diligence to target desirable homes for in-person visits, Repka said.

“This trend was occurring before COVID-19, but the pandemic has made producing sophisticated online videos an even more important screening tool for buyers,” Repka said. “This is a great market for agents who can produce these high-quality videos. Top agents are thriving this year.”

Less well-established agents are facing greater challenges in this pandemic-affected market, Repka said.

Whatever the local, national or international calamity, the Midpeninsula remains an exceptional magnet for people the world over, Chancellor said.

“This is still a phenomenal place, a draw for people from all over to its world-renowned business community and educational institutions,” he said.

Contributing writer David Goll can be emailed at david.w.goll@gmail.com.

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What can you buy on the Midpeninsula?

Under $2 Million

PALO ALTO
Address: 296 Waverley Street
List price: $1.38M
Bedrooms: 2
Bathrooms: 2
Interior: 906 sq. ft.
Year built: 1973
Description: This condo provides a rare opportunity to live within walking distance to downtown Palo Alto while enjoying the wide open space of Johnson Park, which is located right off the front balcony. The condo features granite countertops and stainless steel appliances in the kitchen, wood floors throughout and glass sliding doors that lead out to the balcony.

Under $3 Million

LOS ALTOS HILLS
Address: 3849 Page Mill Road
List price: $2.98M
Bedrooms: 4
Bathrooms: 4
Interior: 5,008 sq. ft.
Lot size: 10 acres
Year built: 2006
Description: Set on 10 acres, this Craftsman-style home provides privacy and amazing views of the San Francisco Bay and surrounding mountains from every window. This three-level home features a library, theater, sewing room, rec room and array of high-tech amenities.

Under $4 Million

PALO ALTO
Address: 1420 Emerson Street
List price: $3.2M
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2
Interior: 1,663 sq. ft.
Lot size: 5,000 sq. ft.
Year built: 1923
Description: Located in Old Palo Alto, this 1920s bungalow has been renovated and expanded. The open family kitchen features honed white stone counters with a subway tile backsplash and stainless steel appliances. A huge center island expands work space and provides a dining bar for informal meals. The home also features a mudroom and vaulted ceilings. A brick patio with a pergola overlooks the rear garden, which includes a detached garage that can be used as a home office.

Under $2 MILLION

Mountain View
Address: 264 Ariana Place
List price: $1.22M
Bedrooms: 2
Bathrooms: 3
Interior: 1,245 sq. ft.
Lot size: n/a
Year built: 2020
Description: This newly constructed home located in the North Whisman neighborhood near downtown is move-in ready. It features an open-concept design with a great room, kitchen and powder room on the second level and bedrooms, including a master suite with spa-style bathroom and second bedroom on the third level.

East Palo Alto
Address: 2290 Pulgas Avenue
List price: $1.28M
Bedrooms: 4
Bathrooms: 3
Interior: 1,780 sq. ft.
Lot size: 5,100 sq. ft.
Year built: 1991
Description: This newly renovated family-friendly home includes fresh interior and exterior paint, a brand new kitchen, renovated bathrooms, and two en suite bedrooms — one on each floor. The backyard features a spacious patio for entertaining and a flex-use garage. The home is just a short drive to major companies such as Facebook and LinkedIn, has easy freeway access and is close to downtown Palo Alto.

Menlo Park
Address: 807 Bay Road
List price: $1.39M
Bedrooms: 2
Bathrooms: 1
Interior: 900 sq. ft.
Lot size: 4,917 sq. ft.
Year built: 1923
Description: Situated within blocks to Castro Street’s shops and restaurants, this remodeled home has vaulted ceilings in the living and family rooms. The master bedroom includes a study nook that features French doors that open into the backyard. The property is landscaped with mature trees and features a brick patio with an arbor and has enough space to add an accessory dwelling unit if desired.

(continued on page 34)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Lot Size</th>
<th>Year Built</th>
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<tr>
<td>711 Mayview, Palo Alto</td>
<td>$3,750,000</td>
<td>5 BD, 3.5 BA, House +/- 2795 sq.ft.</td>
<td>8360 sq.ft.</td>
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<td>Premiere address in Old Palo Alto</td>
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<td>6938 Chantel Ct, San Jose</td>
<td>$918,000</td>
<td>2 BD, 2 BA, House +/- 997 sq.ft.</td>
<td>Lynbrook High School</td>
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<td>201 Folsom St #6H, San Francisco</td>
<td>$1,100,000</td>
<td>1 BD, 1 BA, +/- 851 sq.ft.</td>
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<td>74 New Montgomery St #212, San Francisco</td>
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<td>3 BD, 2 BA, House +/- 1360 sq.ft.</td>
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<td>642 Bryson Ave, Palo Alto</td>
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<td>3843 Louis Rd, Palo Alto</td>
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<td>307 Quinnhill Rd, Los Altos</td>
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</tbody>
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2019 Wall Street Journal Real Trends Bay Area Leading 100

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Under $6 Million

WOODSIDE
Address: 320 Family Farm Road
List price: $4.85M
Bedrooms: 5
Bathrooms: 3
Interior: 3,395 sq. ft.
Lot size: 3.58 acres
Year built: 1957
Description: This home is located in a private setting with spectacular views of Jasper Ridge and Windy Hill preserves. The home was rebuilt in 1995, with improvements that include a rear brick patio with a “floating cube” water feature, custom planting shed, bocce ball court, an upgraded kitchen and attic storage. The site is large enough to add additional ancillary structures such as a horse facility or pool with guesthouse.

Under $8 Million

WOODSIDE
Address: 140 Dean Road
List price: $7.9M
Bedrooms: 6
Bathrooms: 4
Interior: 5,464 sq. ft.
Lot size: 1.5 acres
Year built: 2004
Description: This estate, located on 1.5 acres in Woodside, features nearly 5,500 square feet of luxury living space and offers expansive gathering spaces for entertaining on a grand scale. The master bedroom suite includes a fireplace as well as a spa-like bathroom. There are high ceilings, skylights and walls of glass throughout. The property also includes a guesthouse, pool and outdoor fireplace.

UNDER $3 MILLION

Los Altos
Address: 1405 Cedar Place
List price: $2.7M
Bedrooms: 3
Bathrooms: 2
Interior: 2,300 sq. ft.
Lot size: .28 acre
Year built: 1975
Description: This newly remodeled home is move-in ready and includes an additional 400 sq. ft. multi-purpose room with a full bath that can be used for a home office, distance learning, in-law suite or au pair. The updated kitchen includes custom cabinets, a Viking cooktop and Thermador double ovens. The master suite features a remodeled bath, walk-in closet and exterior deck for quick access to the pool and spa. There also is a large garden area with four raised boxes with irrigation ready for planting.

UNDER $4 MILLION

Menlo Park
Address: 2097 Camino De Los Robles
List price: $3.29M
Bedrooms: 4
Bathrooms: 4
Interior: 2,900 sq. ft.
Lot size: 9,278 sq. ft.
Year built: 1922
Description: Located on a tree-lined street in the University Heights neighborhood, this home features an open-concept kitchen and family room for formal and informal entertaining. A home office is tucked behind the dining room. The master bedroom suite features a new hot tub.

UNDER $6 MILLION

Palo Alto
Address: 925 Lincoln Avenue
List price: $5.98M
Bedrooms: 4
Bathrooms: 4
Interior: 3,110 sq. ft.
Lot size: 28 acre
Year built: 1920
Description: This Tudor revival offers comfortable spaces, superb ambiance and an unbeatable location in the Community Center neighborhood. The home features hardwood floors, arched entryways, coffered ceilings, and a stone fireplace. The kitchen includes appliances from Viking, Sub-Zero and Bosch.

UNDER $10 MILLION

Palo Alto
Address: 2189 Webster Street
List price: $9.99M
Bedrooms: 6
Bathrooms: 8
Interior: 5,347 sq. ft.
Lot size: 8,555 sq. ft.
Year built: 2020
Description: The brand-new French-style home is located in Old Palo Alto and features a detached studio, a living room with large rounded picture windows and fireplace, a home theater, large recreation and game rooms and wine cellar.

UNDER $20 MILLION

Los Altos
Address: 10718 Mora Drive
List price: $17.5M
Bedrooms: 6
Bathrooms: 11
Interior: 8,870 sq. ft.
Lot size: 2.71 acres
Year built: 2016
Description: Situated in a private cul-de-sac, this contemporary home includes an 8,870-square-foot main house and a separate 800-square-foot guesthouse with open floor plans that flow seamlessly for indoor/outdoor living. The heart of the home is the living room with 24-foot ceilings, walls of glass and an abundance of natural light. Fleetwood doors and windows connect the inside to expansive outdoor decks with a breathtaking panoramic view. The property also features an elevator, home theater, executive office, 1,500 bottle wine cellar, fitness studio, putting green and a four-car garage.

Atherton
Address: 97 Ridge View Drive
List price: $16.2M
Bedrooms: 5
Bathrooms: 7
Interior: 9,107 sq. ft.
Lot size: 2.16 acres
Year built: 1981
Description: This French Normandy-style house, remodeled approximately 12 years ago, includes a one-bedroom, one-bath in-house apartment and a spacious detached guesthouse. The home includes a paneled library and executive office with stained- and leaded-glass windows, crystal chandeliers, gilded accents and custom wall coverings; a steam and sauna; a recreation room; Old English bar, Parisian wine cellar; a large pool with swim thru grotto; a tennis court with pavilion; and cascading nine-tiered waterfall at the courtyard entrance. The property provides sweeping views of the western hills.

UNDER $30 MILLION

Atherton
Address: 96 Isabella Avenue
List price: $34.96M
Bedrooms: 6
Bathrooms: 8
Interior: 8,090 sq. ft.
Lot size: 1.78 acres
Year built: 1965
Description: This West Atherton estate was extensively remodeled, expanded and landscaped using the guiding principles of Japanese aesthetics. Large windows and sliding doors with pocket shoji screens open to the exquisite landscaped grounds and seamlessly integrate the interior spaces with the property’s Japanese gardens. The formal rooms are arranged to function as a large unified space for grand entertaining or as intimate salons demarcated by sliding shoji panels. The property includes an authentic Japanese tea house surrounded by slate pathways that curve through groves of bamboo, sweeps of raked gravel and stone slab footbridges that arch over a koi pond.
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28110 Story Hill Lane, Los Altos Hills

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For more information contact: Audrey Sun, DRE #01931274 電話: 650.785.5822 我們精通國語和粵語
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Pacific Art League goes ‘Beyond 2020’ with new exhibition

Venerable Palo Alto arts organization celebrates its 99th anniversary despite pandemic restrictions

by Sheryl Nonnenberg

For most nonprofit visual arts organizations, staying afloat is challenging even in the best of times. A pandemic presents even more difficulties, as venues remain closed and interaction is limited. The Pacific Art League (PAL) has decided to brave the storm and hold its annual anniversary exhibition while finding innovative ways to work around COVID-19 restrictions. The result is “Beyond 2020,” a juried competition encompassing work in a variety of media that can be viewed, until Dec. 31, on the organization’s website and in the League’s windows in downtown Palo Alto.

This year marks 99 years that PAL has been in existence. Anniversary committee chair Kay Culpepper described the process that led to the decision to hold the show. “As the virus wore on, it became apparent that we needed this exhibition more than ever before. Now came the task of ‘How to do it in the midst of a pandemic?’

Our amazing committee made up of members, artists, instructors, board members and staff all working together made it feel possible.”

As with previous competitions, staff got the prospectus circulated via call-to-artists listings and notifications to other arts organizations. Culpepper said that word of mouth was also a powerful communication tool. The exhibition was open to Bay Area artists who could hand-deliver their work if they wished to compete for space at the onsite gallery. Artists also had the option to submit JPEG files. Artists had to pay a submission fee, as the event is a fundraiser for the organization, but Culpepper believes that this year’s show offered even more benefits than usual. We had two amazing jurors, 10 prize awards, three full months of viewing time, offers of submission sponsors and 60% of sales going directly to the artists.

In addition, the artist behind this year’s ‘Best of Show’ (Katherine Flice for her ink on paper “Memory April”) will have a monthlong solo show in the main gallery once the building reopens.

The jurors selected for this year’s competition have years of experience as artists, instructors and curators. Ric Ambrose works in large-scale drawings and has curated numerous museum exhibitions. Chun-Hui Yu is a painter and has taught Chinese brush painting and calligraphy at San Jose City College and at PAL. Both said that they were impressed with the high quality of submissions. Ambrose explained that the goal was to accept 100 works of art, which was roughly half of the total number submitted. Ambrose and Yu separately selected works then met, via Zoom calls, to compare their choices. They continued to call the list until reaching the desired number. Award winners were reviewed in person and announced at a virtual opening that took place on Oct. 2.

Yu shared her criteria for selecting art. “The first part is objective and includes technique, composition, color and light. The second part is subjective: creativity, imagination, emotion and feelings.”

She added that she feels that competitions like this are important, “to promote art and artists, encourage artists to create and inspire and support the community through these times.”

A scroll through the online gallery reveals that the show has something for everyone. Enjoy the sunny landscapes of Early California art! Check out David Stonesifer’s bucolic “Saratoga History Orchard” or the rolling hills in Jack Culpepper’s “Goldleaf State.” The cool stillness of Edward Hopper is mirrored in Mara Catherine Sipp’s painting “Lights Out.” And if the chiaroscuro contrasts found in the photography of Edward Weston intrigue you, Marj Green’s “Seeing the World Through Curtains” is sure to please. Joan Hancock’s “Safe” is a portrait of a woman against a patterned background, reminiscent of Henri Matisse.

The intricate work of Dutch Masters is reflected in Nicole Golk’s stunning still-life “Oranges and Poppies.” And if abstraction is more your thing, Ken Brenner’s “Cascade” is a splash of complementary colors with a push/pull motif, similar to the work of Hans Hoffman. For those of us who cannot afford blue-chip prices, exhibitions like this offer a way to acquire affordable art as well as to support local artists and venerable teaching organizations like PAL.

There is also an opportunity to see some of the art in person, even though PAL remains closed. Throughout the course of the exhibition, art will be installed on wall panels inside the perimeter windows. Currently, the display includes the award winners but, in future, the displays will change every two weeks so that all of the selected pieces can be seen. It is a clever way to work around the shuttered building and enlivens the neighborhood, as the windows are illuminated at night. As Culpepper noted, “We had to find a way to think outside the box and outside the building.”

Having surmounted the obstacles presented by the pandemic this year, PAL can look ahead to next year and their centennial commemoration. Culpepper expressed optimism for the future, based on how “Beyond 2020” came together. “For the Art League itself the greatest reward is having art again online and outside, lighting up our windows on the world. But we hope our gift to the community is re-warding as well — beautiful art for the public to view, enjoy and celebrate.”

The Pacific Art League is located at 668 Ramona St., Palo Alto. For more information and to view the online exhibition, go to pacificartleague.org. Freelance writer Sheryl Nonnenberg can be emailed at onnenberg@aol.com.
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.

For virtual open houses & more photos, please visit:
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Modern Colonial Masterpiece on Over One Acre
Supreme luxury awaits at this prestigious home built in 2013, offering remarkable privacy, unparalleled build quality, and every conceivable modern amenity. With 7 bedrooms, 8.5 bathrooms, and over 9,100 square feet of living space, including a beautiful guest home, this Colonial-style masterpiece rests on a pristine lot of over an acre populated by colorful plantings and specimen trees. Soaring ceilings and excellent use of glass create a bright and inviting ambiance, highlighting high-end appointments including Herringbone flooring and elaborate moldings. Spacious, sophisticated living areas are ideal for both entertaining and everyday living, including the fireplace-centered living room, and the chef’s kitchen that opens fully to the comfortable family room. Arranged over three levels with elevator convenience, this home also includes a library, a lower-level entertainment area with a wet bar and wine room, and five bedroom suites, including the incredible master suite with a romantic fireplace. Resort-like grounds include sweeping lawns, a sparkling pool, a sports court, and a built-in barbecue patio. Adding the finishing touch is a location just moments to both downtown Menlo Park and Palo Alto, with access to acclaimed Menlo Park public schools, and within walking distance of Sacred Heart and Menlo School (buyer to verify eligibility).

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Built in 2014 and situated on prestigious Walsh Road in Atherton, this Craftsman style home offers the best of California living.

With designer finishes throughout and a spacious main level open floor plan, this home is perfect for any gathering. The lower level has a media area, an office/bedroom, and full bath, ideal for guests and work from home. Experience a backyard oasis with gardens and space for lounging and entertaining. Steps from highly acclaimed Las Lomitas Elementary School.

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Craving a new voice in Peninsula dining?

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**Fighting Out**

**Coronavirus forces more restaurant changes**

The owners of Selby’s, the upscale Redwood City restaurant known for its swanky dining room, have decided to temporarily close until spring 2021 due to declining business during the pandemic. Photo by Sammy Dallal.

**Swanky Selby’s goes on hiatus, Shalala moves on**

by Elena Kadavy

Last week brought good news about more than a dozen eateries opening up on the Peninsula. This week, there’s news of two closures in the local dining scene, one temporary and one enabling a pivot to a new venture in the South Bay. Swanky Selby’s restaurant is riding out the pandemic by closing until spring, while the popular Shalala Ramen shuttered for good, one of several recent closures in downtown Mountain View.

Selby’s closes — temporarily

Since March, the Selby’s dining room — with moahar walls, custom chandeliers and table-side martini service — has remained dark, while the kitchen focused instead on translating that experience into takeout and delivery.

The upscale restaurant, opened by Bacchus Management Group last summer on the border of Atherton and Redwood City, will now go on temporary hiatus until next year. The restaurant’s last service at 3001 El Camino Real was Sunday, Oct. 25.

“Selby’s restaurant was designed and built for the purpose of gathering people together to celebrate and enjoy a delicious meal in each other’s company,” Bacchus said in a statement.

“With winter approaching and the ongoing shelter-in-place orders limiting indoor dining, we have made the thoughtful decision to temporarily pause service until spring 2021.”

Bacchus billed Selby’s as a return to the food and glamour of 1930s and 1940s Hollywood, with dishes like lobster thermidor and a $50 truffle-topped burger. The restaurant group completely gutted and rebuilt the two-story, 10,000-square-foot space. They hoped to win a Michelin star and Wine Spectator Grand Award, the magazine’s highest honor.

Selby’s had all the bells and whistles — martini carts, two kitchens, private dining rooms, a back staircase for VIP diners — but lacked outdoor dining, which has become a lifeline for many restaurants. The location doesn’t allow for eating outdoors, Bacchus said, and the 25% cap on indoor capacity in San Mateo County wouldn’t be sustainable.

In July, Bacchus Management Group permanently closed one of its other local restaurants, Mayfield Bakery & Cafe in Palo Alto. The group also operates The Village Pub and The Village Bakery in Woodside and Spruce in San Francisco.

After Selby’s closes, the staff will support The Village Pub and Spruce, Bacchus said.

Selby’s will still offer special holiday menus for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s Eve and is taking inquiries for private events.

**Shalala Ramen leaves Mountain View**

After a decade of serving tonkotsu and spicy miso ramen in Mountain View, Shalala Ramen is permanently closing. Owner Nobu Iwahashi is opening a new, takeout-only concept in San Jose.

Shalala Ramen’s last day at 698 W. Dana St. was Monday, Oct. 26.

Iwahashi said he had thought about leaving Mountain View before but that the decision was accelerated by the impact of the pandemic. Shalala’s sales are still down 50%. With only two outdoor tables, he’s had to sustain the business mostly on takeout while competing with other downtown restaurants that have more outdoor seating. He said his landlord deferred rent for two months, but staying afloat was still a challenge.

“I’m looking at the future, that the coronavirus is going to be (here for) a couple more years. That’s why I want to do something new,” Iwahashi said.

His new venture, called Fugetsu, will sell packaged Japanese food, such as bento boxes, onigiri, okonomiyaki and kushikatsu. There will be no restaurant service; it will instead operate as a pickup operation.

Fugetsu is opening at the Sara-toga Avenue shopping center that also houses the Japanese Mitsua- wa Marketplace. Iwahashi hopes to open in November.

Shalala is not the only closure in downtown Mountain View. Flights on Castro Street has closed permanently, owner Alex Hult confirmed. The closure followed Hult’s Mountain View landlord suing him this summer for back-rent payments. The lawsuit has since been settled, Hult said.

HeyO!Eats, which served vegan fare inside Ava’s Downtown Market & Deli, is also no more, a market employee confirmed.

**Staff Writer Elena Kadavy can be emailed at ekadvany@paweekly.com. Check out her Peninsula Foodist blog at PaloAltoOnline.com/blogs.**

Nigel Siri makes a drink at Selby’s restaurant shortly after the restaurant opened in 2018 as an upscale gathering place.

GOJARNA OPENS AT STANFORD ... Southern California-based jewelry brand Gojarna has moved into the space next to Tommy Bahama at Stanford Shopping Center, according to the mall’s website. The retailer, which announced in April 2019 its plans to expand into at least three locations in the Bay Area by 2020, according to multiple media reports, opened its first area store at San Jose’s Westfield Valley Fair Shopping Center for about a week before the state implemented shelter-in-place restrictions, forcing it to temporarily shut down. The opening of the Stanford store coincides with the company’s roll out of its new fine jewelry collection, which includes its first 14K and 18K pieces. Since its launch in 2014, the company has gained popularity from its signature casual, “California cool” aesthetic, the jewelry line that incorporates colorful gemstones, textile elements and a gold finish. Company founders Gojarna Reidel and her husband, Jason Griffin Reidel, built up the company from a wholesale business, selling to boutiques, yoga shops, spas and resorts, to an online and brick-and-mortar operation, according to its store magazine. The jewelry brand can be found in more than 1,000 retail stores nationwide, as well as the brand’s own retail sites, which the company has been aggressively expanding since 2016. – L.T.

LEVI’S OPENS FIRST NEWSTOCK STORE ... Levi’s opened its first North American NextGen store at Stanford Shopping Center on Sept. 29. Located next to Tender Greens, the reimagined store isn’t just about transactions, it’s about a commitment to sustainability. According to a company press release announcing the store’s opening, the new store features a tailor shop where shoppers can customize their T-shirts with graphics, craft their own unique creations with patches, embroidery, colored rivets and other elements of their choice or sit down with an experienced tailor to bring their vision to life. The fitting rooms also have been redesigned to be more open and useful in helping customers find the perfect fit. Customers can try on select fits and finishes not carried in the store and order items through an in-store stylist. The new store also offers a more flexible retail shopping experience. Customers can buy items online, pick them up in store or curbside or make an in-store personal shopping appointment. – L.T.

TOKYO’S FAMED AFURI RAMEN COMING ... Tokyo’s Afuri Ramen + Dumpling, famed in Japan for its yuzu shio ramen, is opening a new location in downtown Mountain View. A sign for Afuri is now hanging above the entrance to 124 Castro St. This space has seen numerous restaurants turn over in recent years, including Crawfish Bop, Chop & Pub, East Street Tapas, East Street Tacos and Shiel Shock. Afuri opened its first California location in Cupertino last fall. Afuri started in 2003 as a single ramen shop at the base of Mount Afuri in Japan. Founder Hiroto Nakamura took inspiration from the pristine water that flowed down the mountain (it was considered a sacred place where people prayed for a good harvest) and served a light, clear and cloudy tonkotsu style. Afuri’s chicken broth is slow cooked, never boiled, with “natural” umami (no MSG) from niboshi (dried sandines), bonito flakes, katsuobushi and vegetables. Afuri eventually expanded throughout Japan and arrived in the United States in 2016 with a location in Portland, Oregon. The Afuri Ramen + Dumpling menu centers around the yuzu shio ramen but also includes several other kinds of ramen (including a vegan broth made from hazelnuts), gyozo, gohan (rice with toppings like karaage, chashu pork, bamboo shoots, slow-cooked egg and togarashi) and small plates. During the coronavirus shutdown, the Cupertino restaurant also started offering meal kits with all the ingredients necessary to make Afuri’s ramen at home as well as cocktail kits. – E.K.

Compiled by the Weekly staff, this week’s puzzles can be found on page 35.
CRIME

Police step up patrols as six homes targeted for burglaries

Residents have been at home asleep when attempts or break-ins have occurred

by Palo Alto Weekly staff

News of recent burglaries and attempted burglaries has left residents to come forward to report someone tried to enter their homes during the early morning hours on Sunday, Oct. 25, police said.

The two new incidents bring the city’s total to six burglaries or attempted burglaries that have happened within a two-week span, police stated in a press release Tuesday.

In response, the agency announced plans this week to increase overnight patrols in marked and unmarked vehicles in residential neighborhoods.

One of the attempted burglaries happened sometime between 3:15 and 4:15 a.m. in the 700 block of Channing Avenue, just off Middlefield Road in the Community Center neighborhood. A man said he woke up to sounds of a house breaking in, which caused his young child to wake up and cry, according to police.

He walked around his home and found a living room window slightly open. The man then comported his child and went back to sleep, according to police.

After he learned about the recent overnight burglaries, the resident contacted police on Sunday. Palo Alto detectives indicated that a would-be burglar tried to pry open the locked window but a security rod blocked the burglary from entering the home, according to the announcement.

Police were alerted to another attempted home burglary on Tuesday around 8:20 a.m. in the city’s St. Claire Gardens neighborhood. An elderly woman told police of suspicious circumstances at her home in the 3300 block of South Court early Sunday.

Around 3:15 a.m. that day, she woke up to light coming from her backyard and went back to sleep when she didn’t hear any noise. Later that morning, she found her unlocked side yard gate was open and a screen had been removed from a bathroom window which was partially open, police said. No one gained access inside.

She decided to report the incident to police after a family member informed her of recent overnight burglaries in the city, the police stated.

No video from home surveillance systems was available for either attempted burglary, police said.

The residents whose homes were or nearly were burglarized haven’t come face to face with whoever carried out the crimes, police said. There’s no evidence that the burglar or burglars stepped into bedrooms as people slept.

The other attempted burglary happened at 5:23 a.m. Sunday in the 1100 block of Fulton Street, just a few blocks from the 700 block of Channing. A woman in her 70s reported a “rattling” noise from her back door and heard someone running from her side yard, according to police.

Detectives are also investigating three early morning home burglaries that happened earlier this month. Two homes in the Adobe Meadow neighborhood were burglarized on Oct. 12, one on Galien Avenue, where two bikes were stolen, and another on Nathan Way, where a purse as taken, police said. The third crime took place on Thursday at a Hamilton Avenue residence in the Crescent Park neighborhood, where a couple’s electronics and car keys were stolen, though no vehicle was taken.

The Police Department said overnight residential burglaries “extremely rare,” though it noted the recent incidents are exceptions.

The agency recommends the public take precautions to prevent their homes from getting burglarized, such as locking side yard gates and leaving a spare key with a neighbor instead of in a hidden place outside of their home. More crime prevention tips can be found at cityofpaloalto.org/StopCrime.

Anyone with information about the recent burglaries and attempted burglaries is asked to call the department’s 24-hour dispatch center at 650-329-2413. Anonymous tips can be emailed to paloalto@tipnow.org or sent by text message or voice-mail to 650-383-8984. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through the police’s free mobile app, downloadable at bit.ly/PAPD-Amp or bit.ly/PAPD-Play.

Brian O'Byrne

Crime

continued from page 5

... I want us to think broadly about how that might be structured.”

The Monday discussion marked the council’s transition from the “data gathering” phase of the complex effort to a new stage in which the members identify gaps and flaws in existing policies and programs. The council is scheduled to formally adopt changes to some of these policies on Nov. 16.

One idea that the council has already discarded is to combine the police and fire departments into a single Department of Public Safety. Several council members, most notably Greg Tanaka and Liz Kniss, expressed some enthusiasm for such a model in June, though after further exploration they concurred with staff that such a change would not be suitable for Palo Alto, which is one of few cities in the area that runs its own ambulance service.

According to a report from City Manager Ed Shikada, the Fire Department’s medical transport service “does not lend itself to easily consolidating public safety line level staff.”

Several council members also said Monday that they would like to expand the scope of the city’s independent police auditor, OIR Group. Currently, OIR Group reviews only those use-of-force incidents in which an officer shoots someone, deploys a Taser or is involved in an incident that leads to a complaint. Palo Alto is also the only city on OIR Group’s list of clients that excludes internal conflicts within the department from the auditor’s scope, auditor Michael Gennaccio told the council on Sept. 28.

While the council didn’t specify on Monday what kind of changes it wants to see in the auditor contract, Vice Mayor Tom DuBois suggested having the OIR Group conduct annual performance audits on department operations, while Kou recommended having the auditor review the city’s agreement with its police unions.

DuBois and Cormack also had previously supported expanding OIR Group’s contract to involve more types of force, including incidents that don’t involve formal complaints.

DuBois has also been working with Council member Eric Filseth on reviewing the department’s policies on transparency and account-ability. Both said they had some concerns about how well officers are complying with a department policy requiring them to report incidents in which they witness a colleague using excessive force.

Each alluded to the 2018 arrest of Gustavo Alvarez at Buena Vista Mobile Home Park, which led to a $572,500 settlement from the city. Surveillance footage from the arrest showed Sgt. Wayne Benitez slamming Alvarez’s head on the hood of a vehicle. Neither he nor any of the other officers involved in the incident had reported that force was used during the arrest (Benitez, now retired, is currently facing misdemeanor assault charges relating to this arrest).

“I don’t think either of us believes there’s a systemic culture of violence in our Police Department or anything like that, but the Alvarez case is concerning. ... Had it not been for this video that surfaced months later, no one would have even known about it,” Filseth said. “We’d like to understand, how do we make sure that was a one-off thing and an outlier, and not something that goes on every week?”

Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner can be emailed at gsheyner@pawekly.com.
Big Homie Project (continued from page 9)

and gave her access to research projects he’s working on.

Wilcox grew up in Maryland, where he didn’t see any Black doctors. He now has two younger siblings attending medical school. He realized that having someone in their family who had already blazed that path helped them do so, too.

“Being able to see someone close to you, it helps motivate people behind you ... but if you don’t have that direct access to someone, it’s hard for you to believe that or to have faith in yourself,” he said.

The power of the Big Homie Project relationships, no matter the field or profession, Wilcox said, is empowering Black youth through the feeling that “I can do that, too.”

With many schools still closed due to the coronavirus and a renewed national conversation about racial injustice, DiEp sees the Big Homie Project’s work supporting Black youth as more critical than ever.

“We’re collectively doing the work in real life in hopes to drive change and also encourage other people to take action in real life,” she said. “It’s going to take more than just being upset or angry about the state that we’re in for real change to happen.”

For more information about the Big Homie Project, go to bighomieproject.org.

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

Distance learning (continued from page 7)

days a week and learning remotely three days a week. Palo Alto Uni-
fied teachers, rather than a third-party vendor, will continue to pro-
vide online instruction, which the district had considered.

If asked to make a decision today, 61% of students and families who responded to the survey said they would choose the hybrid model and 59% said full distance learning. But nearly half of respondents said they didn’t have enough information to make that decision.

Austin has been a firm advocate for reopening schools as soon as safely possible, particularly for students who struggle with remote learning and need face-to-face support, despite the fact that the quality of distance learning has improved since schools first closed in the spring.

“There’s a difference between being vastly improved and nowhere near the experience of attending a high school,” he said. “I just don’t want to confuse those two things. You cannot replicate interactions.”

In response to a question from Gunn student board representative Thomas Li about whether teachers who don’t want to come back to work in person will be forced to, Austin said the district’s top focus is student needs. (Employees who have gone through a formal process with human resources for staying at home, such as those with an underlying health condition, will be prioritized, he said.)

Li also told the board that some high school students who plan to choose full distance learning are worried they’ll be behind their peers who return to school in person.

“They want equal access to teachers and to course options, instructional hours, synchronous learning,” he said. “A lot of students are worried they’re going to be indirectly penalized for choosing distance learning because resources or attention will be diverted to hybrid students at their expense.”

Meanwhile, Jennifer Di- Brienza asked whether the district is preparing for the increased risk of COVID-19 because of families traveling over Thanksgiving and winter break and then students coming to campuses in person. Austin said other school districts are asking families who are traveling for the holidays to self-quaran-
tine for a certain number of days before students return to schools.

The board will discuss a final version of the reopening plan for secondary schools at its next meet-
ing on Nov. 10. Families will be asked to choose between the hybrid model and committing to full distance learning the next day, on Nov. 11.

—Staff Writer Elena Kadvany can be emailed at ekadvany@paweekly.com.
HAPPY HALLOWEEN
Families

(continued from page 5)

Palo Alto Unified School District Board of Education.

Dharap’s parents and his sister, who live nearby, care for Aarchi part time, but Jefferson’s parents, who live in the same Fairmeadow neighborhood as his parents, cannot have physical contact with their granddaughter due to their age and higher risk for severity of COVID-19, he said.

“We didn’t include them in our bubble. We had expectations and were looking forward to having grandparents come to meet the baby. Now we have weekly or monthly calls through Zoom,” he said.

“It’s not the way the couple envisioned raising their child, he said. They always thought they would limit her screen time as she grows. But Dharap finds it fascinating to watch Aarchi when she meets family on screen.

“She reacts to people on Zoom in the same manner as if they were in person. With some people, she makes a ‘gimme, gimme, gimme’ motion with her hands. She’s developing a shocking familiarity with the camera app on the phone. She knows something special is happening. When the camera goes on, she sits up. Everybody says she’s a lot like me — a ham,” he said.

When the holidays arrive, the family will also miss some of their traditions. Nov. 14 begins the five-day Hindu celebration of Diwali, the “festival of lights,” symbolizing the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. But the virus will put a damper on their plans this year, he said. “Diwali is a big celebration at my parents’ but it’s not happening this year. It’s a little sad. A baby’s first Diwali is a big deal. We’ll do a little something at home,” he said.

While they try to give their daughter more social exposure, Dharap and Jefferson’s own social isolation is new and overwhelming this year. “You hear about reprieves new parents get such as to go out on a date night,” he said. “But we can’t. Jefferson can’t bring in a sitter or a family member to watch the baby, and there aren’t many places open yet.

Like many people, most of their social interactions come from work, although most of that is virtual, along with a few game nights on Zoom, he said.

In January, the couple plans to re-evaluate and possibly expand their social bubble. One thing to consider: child care. Because of his work with school reopenings through the school district, Dharap said he has a greater comfort level about child caregivers than does Jefferson, an operations manager at a startup.

For now, his parents care for Aarchi four hours a day on Mondays through Thursdays when he goes to court for cases or takes deposition.

“It took months to shake out what a sustainable schedule that works looks like.” – Shounak Dharap, Palo Alto resident

“We’re not even seeing them. It goes to the farmers market and to live locally, due to concerns over spreading the virus. When they do meet every few weeks, it’s in controlled settings, such as on the patio, he said.

As Thanksgiving approaches, he isn’t sure whether he’ll be celebrating with his family in person.

“We’ve not really talked about it yet,” he said. “We’re feeling a little more comfortable, but we’re still tentative. We still have to be cautious.”

It’s not what they signed up for,” – Chuck Sieloff, Palo Alto resident

Chuck Sieloff sits in front of family photos in his Palo Alto home. The 78-year-old said all but one of his visits with family have been over FaceTime since the COVID-19 outbreak in March.

Meanwhile, Aarchi’s family sphere is growing in the only way it can — through a computer screen, he said.

“My extended family is in India, and 10 to 15 people planned to come to meet the baby. Now we have weekly or monthly calls through Zoom,” he said.

It does not mention getting tested for the coronavirus before the holiday, perhaps because the test doesn’t detect antibodies in people who are very recently exposed, although in combination with a 14-day pre-holiday quarantine, a negative test result could only increase people’s peace of mind.

Sieloff was doing every once in a while, he said. “It was really stressful. I used to be able to give her a hug and give her a kiss. Now a caregiver brings her down to a checkpoint,” she said in late August.

PUBLIC HEALTH

About those holiday get-togethers ...

County, state and CDC guidelines discourage family gatherings but offer advice on minimizing risk by Palo Alto Weekly staff

Despite the pull of family celebrations over the holidays, such as Diwali, Thanksgiving, Rosh Hashanah and Christmas, public health authorities strongly discourage bringing members of different households together because of the potential to spread the coronavirus.

“Indoor gatherings are particularly risky, and gatherings should be held outdoors to the greatest extent possible,” Santa Clara County’s latest Risk Reduction Order states.

However, the state as of Oct. 9 does allow outdoor private gatherings of no more than three households, providing attendees follow public health rules of maintaining social distance, wearing masks, practicing good hygiene and more.

Gatherings should also be kept short — two hours or less, according to the county guidelines.

Anyone who is feeling sick with COVID-19-like symptoms, has been exposed to someone with the coronavirus recently, has been tested for COVID-19 and either not yet received the results of the test or tested positive should stay home, multiple health guidelines state.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) notes that several factors contribute to the risk of getting infected or infecting others.

1. The number of people who engage in risky behaviors endangered those who practice preventative measures; and the numbers of people who will be at the event — fewer is better.

Taking what may seem like extreme precautions can also help ensure that the holiday is a happy one — both during and afterward. The CDC advises people who decide to attend an in-person holiday gathering to strictly avoid contact with people outside of their household for 14 days before and after the trip.

It does not mention getting tested for the coronavirus before the holiday, perhaps because the test doesn’t detect antibodies in people who are very recently exposed, although in combination with a 14-day pre-holiday quarantine, a negative test result could only increase people’s peace of mind.

“Indoor gatherings are particularly risky, and gatherings should be held outdoors to the greatest extent possible.” – Chuck Sieloff, Palo Alto resident

Chuck Sieloff has also found connecting with other family members around the country challenging. He has three brothers-in-law and his wife who live in Paso Robles for months, he said.

Before the virus, he would visit her every month or two, but after the coronavirus struck, all of his visits were through FaceTime. They finally reunited in person.

The intervening months were rough on his daughter’s family. One son and his wife work became too much and then she hired caregivers.

“Being able to be at home with my baby for the last eight months is an absolute joy,” he said.

Living alone

Palo Alto resident Chuck Sieloff hadn’t seen his daughter and her family who live in Paso Robles for months, he said.

Before the virus, he would visit her every month or two, but after the coronavirus struck, all of his visits were through FaceTime. They finally reunited in person.

The intervening months were rough on his daughter’s family. One son and his wife who decided to attend a wedding in November 2019 brought the coronavirus home to Paso Robles. Sieloff’s daughter and a granddaughter became infected during a niece’s wedding, and he was unable to see her for a couple of months, he said.

“What’s kind of weird is I’m supposed to be the one who is vulnerable,” Sieloff said. “I’m not the one that’s supposed to be vulnerable and cuddled.”

Chuck Sieloff, Palo Alto resident

Sieloff has also found connecting with other family members around the country challenging. He has three brothers-in-law and two sisters-in-law who live in Washington state. Their brother makes the East Coast his home. Being close by meant that Jyllian took on the caregiving responsibilities in the past until the work became too much and then she hired caregivers.

When the COVID-19 epidemic took root, she could only see her mother, Mary Ann Halliburton, from afar at The Sequoias.

“It was really stressful. I used to be able to give her a hug and give her a kiss. Now a caregiver brings her down to a checkpoint,” she said in late August.

Upfront

‘I feel almost a survivor’s guilt. I’m the one who’s supposed to be vulnerable and coddled.’ – Chuck Sieloff, Palo Alto resident

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‘It took months to shake out what a sustainable schedule that works looks like.’ – Shounak Dharap, Palo Alto resident

“We’re not even seeing them. We’ve not really talked about it yet,” he said. “We’re feeling a little more comfortable, but we’re still tentative. We still have to be cautious.”

‘I feel almost a survivor’s guilt. I’m the one who’s supposed to be vulnerable and coddled.’ – Chuck Sieloff, Palo Alto resident

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When the COVID-19 epidemic took root, she could only see her mother, Mary Ann Halliburton, from afar at The Sequoias.

“It was really stressful. I used to be able to give her a hug and give her a kiss. Now a caregiver brings her down to a checkpoint,” she said in late August.
She tried to take her mother special things for her birthday and holidays: Easter eggs in a basket; cake and candles for her birthday. Everything went through the checkpoint.

“It was disheartening,” said Jyllian, Avenidas senior center’s director of community engagement and the Door-to-Door transportation/delivery program.

“During prior quarantines at The Sequoias, she knew that frailer seniors often declined due to isolation, including her mother.

“I saw that even with short quarantining what they would do to her,” she said, noting her mother is an extrovert. “Personally and professionally, I had a bad feeling.”

Starting about June or July, she saw a marked decline in her mother. Her geriatricians at Palo Alto Medical Foundation “are all saying the same thing about their clients. They’re seeing a massive decline and people passing away. ... They think nobody cares,” she said.

The three siblings decided to remove their mother from The Sequoias. Susannah gave up her job as a child care director in Seattle to rent a house in Palo Alto with her three sons and care for their mother. They would bring in caregivers for additional help.

“I felt the need to do it now. She could pass away and we would never see her again. In Sequoia you can’t visit. You drive up and wave from the car,” Susannah said.

“It was so hard to talk to her on the phone. She doesn’t understand. COVID-19 made things harder to connect. We drove up and we’d be 20 feet away and wave at her. Her caregiver would bring her out in her wheelchair,” she said.

Coming to Palo Alto felt right, she said.

“It was so hard to talk to her on the phone. She doesn’t understand. COVID-19 made things harder to connect. We drove up and we’d be 20 feet away and wave at her. Her caregiver would bring her out in her wheelchair,” she said.

Coming to Palo Alto felt right, she said.

“It was nice to see the kids seeing her too. We drove up there and the 3-year-old was waving at her: ‘Gammy — we’re here to get you out,’” Susannah said.

Mary Ann Halliburton holds her dog, Honey, during a family portrait taken in her Palo Alto backyard. Her daughters, Jyllian, center, and Susannah, second from right, moved her from The Sequoias to live with them during the COVID-19 crisis. Now, she is able to spend time with her daughters and grandchildren Hayden, Lio and Abe, pictured above.

“The best part of it to me is that she has started to talk again. When she first came, she was so soft spoken I couldn’t make anything out and it took so long to produce just one word. Now, she’s speaking at a more normal volume in full sentences and even making jokes.”

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

About the cover: Shounak Dharap plays with his daughter, Aarchi, in the backyard of their Palo Alto home. Photo by Magali Gauthier. Design by Douglas Young.

UPFRONT

PRIVATE 2.2 ACRE LOT—WEST ATHERTON
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Gated Property
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AMENITIES
Prime Atherton Location
Approx. Downtown Menlo Park and Stanford Shopping Center

SCHOOLS
Los Lomitas ES
La Entrada MS
Sequoia Union HS

ZANE
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**Commissioners (continued from page 8)**

It would like to see more youth voices represented on local boards. Cormack and Kniss each supported having a student representative on some of the commissions, with Cormack pointing at a recent surge of support among local teenagers for a new skatepark in Palo Alto as a good example of local youths providing useful feedback.

The council also agreed to retain seven seats on the Parks and Recreation Commission, with several members pointing to the commission’s broad purview and heavy workload. Council member Lydia Kou, who along with Burt and Tanaka is vying for election in their responsibilities, said that reducing the number of seats to five — as the council had recently done with the Human Relations Commission and the Public Art Commission — would spread the commissioners too thin in their responsibilities.

While the council did not formally enact any of the proposed changes on Monday, Cormack and Dalloso both made their response to Kou that they will not advance the prior proposal to pare down the Parks and Recreation Commission.

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

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**Castilleja (continued from page 5)**

If Castilleja exceeds the permitted trip level on two measured thresholds — average daily traffic and freeway peak hour — the school could be required to pay fines or institute more stringent rules. If Castilleja misses these targets and generates more than 1,296 daily trips and 440 morning peak trips to its campus over three consecutive reporting periods, it would have to reduce student enrollment in the following academic year. There would be two to three reporting periods a year, according to the conditions.

The list of conditions also includes a suite of transportation-demand-management (TDM) programs that Castilleja would have to adopt as part of its proposed expansion, including shuttle services, a carpool program, mandatory ride-sharing and events that encourage bicycling. Chief Planning Official Amy French called the proposed “one of the most comprehensive programs that the city has considered for TDM.”

To ensure that Castilleja complies with the enrollment limit, the city’s proposed conditional use permit would require annual reviews by an independent auditor who would submit written reports to the city attesting to the number of students enrolled for that academic year.

“The city’s conditions aim to address many of the concerns that the project’s opponents have cited over the past four years, which the city has not been able to resolve. Some of the project’s opponents, including members of the neighborhood group Preserve Neighborhood Quality of Life Now (PNQLNow), have urged the city to limit Castilleja’s enrollment increases, reject its proposal for an underground garage, and require it to launch a robust shuttle program for students, obviating the need for additional parking.”

Some indicated Wednesday that the city’s proposed compromise is inadequate. Leila Moncharsh, an attorney representing PNQLNow, suggested that the conditional use permit drafted by city staff attempts to manage the school while not doing enough to address its impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. Some of the proposed conditions, she said, are too specific, while others are too vague or fail to actually account for impacts.

To be challenged, for example, the city’s decision to measure special events by the number of attendees, rather than the number of cars that these events bring to the neighborhood. The city’s proposed permit allows up to 70 special events (which, by the city’s definition, would involve more than 50 attendees) and specifies that 37 of these can have more than 100 attendees.

The city’s proposed rules also limit Saturday events to five per year and ban Sunday events altogether.

“This is about how the school and the neighborhood is going to coexist,” Moncharsh told the commission. “And ‘coexist’ doesn’t mean coming back to the city consistently with complaints and problems for the city to use its expensive process for solving.”

The city released the conditions last Wednesday and there was one of many speakers who supported delaying the decision to give residents more time to review the materials. The majority of the commission shared that view. Led by Commissioner William Riggs, the commission agreed by a 6-1 vote, with Commissioner Bart Hechtman dissenting, to limit the Wednesday hearing to public comments and to defer most of its deliberations to Nov. 4.

In discussing the conditions, both the city and the project’s critics pointed to the school’s less-than-stellar history in following local regulations. In 2013, the city fined Castilleja $265,000 for exceeding its enrollment cap of 415 students. The school was also ordered to gradually reduce its enrollment from 448 to 415, which it has been doing since then.

That violation continues to cast a shadow over the protracted and highly polarizing approval process. French noted Wednesday that a lack of trust and the city’s history of enforcement against Castilleja have prompted more involvement by community members in suggesting conditions of approval, leading to a more stringent proposal.

Nancy Kauffman, Castilleja’s head of school, also acknowledged that trust between the school and neighbors remains an outstanding issue and pointed to the school’s recent efforts to mitigate the impacts of its operations.

“Actions speak louder than words, and I’m keenly aware that trust is not quickly re-established,” Kauffman said. “As such we have gone beyond the requirements of our current CUP by reducing events each year and by decreasing traffic by 31% as a way to show good faith and to succeed with trip reduction.”

Yet despite these efforts, we know that trust is not enough. To that end, we will be an under-performant microscope, including electronic monitoring, to make sure we comply with stringently specified conditions and ensure compliance by a third party.”

Many attendees at the virtual meeting urged the commission to support Castilleja. Some praised Castilleja as a responsible neighbor, others emphasized the high quality of its education, while others spoke more broadly about the need to support STEM education for women.

Glowe Chang, a Bryant Street resident who opposes the project, said that the street from Castilleja, called the school an “incredible neighbor” that has “succeeded in running an outstanding school while others spoke more broadly about the need to support STEM education for women.”

Jason Stinson, who lives near Palo Alto High, also said he supported the project and suggested that some of the city’s conditions — including its demand that the school reduce its enrollment by 2% and go to a limit far. (Kauffman said the list of events includes parent-teacher conferences, dance recitals and shootings of student projects.)

“This seems like an undue burden to place on a well-established school that’s already done so much to reduce neighborhood impacts,” Stinson said.

But other residents suggested that the proposed enrollment number was too high and urged the city to take a harder line with the school. Under Castilleja’s phased plan, the number of students for 2020-21 would go from 448 to 415, and 385 to 415. A similar increase was involved with PNQLNow, said most members of his group wouldn’t object to a more modest enrollment increase. The school’s existing conditional use permit, which dates back to 2000, allowed an 8% increase in enrollment, bringing enrollment from 385 to 415. A similar increase today would bring the school up to 448 students, he noted.

“We lived with that before; we can live with that again,” Sousa said.

Hank Sousa, a neighbor who is involved with PNQLNow, said most members of his group wouldn’t object to a more modest enrollment increase. The school’s existing conditional use permit, which dates back to 2000, allowed an 8% increase in enrollment, bringing enrollment from 385 to 415. A similar increase today would bring the school up to 448 students, he noted.

“We lived with that before; we can live with that again,” Sousa said.

Sousa and other neighbors also suggested that Castilleja consider a program in which parents drop off and pick up their children in parking lots and allow shuttles to bring them to school.

“It would knock off 600 to 800 cars a day (daily peak period), to really make the neighbors happy and reduce the whole environmental impact,” he said.

**Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner can be emailed at gsheyner@pawweekly.com.**
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“Cool, Cool” — another door opens. [#984, Apr. 2020] by Matt Jones

Answers on page 28.

This week’s SUDOKU

Answers on page 28.

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Inviting Green Gables Neighborhood Home

75 Tulip Lane, Palo Alto

3 Bed 6,050 Sq Ft Lot
1 Bath $2,499,000
1,093 Sq Ft Home

Enjoy all that Palo Alto has to offer in this cheerful Green Gables neighborhood home. Gather with family and friends in front of the fireplace or share a meal in the comfortable living / dining main room.

Explore new recipes in the remodeled and beautifully designed kitchen overlooking the backyard. Walk, bike or drive to all of the attractions nearby that make Palo Alto such a great place to live, including Rinconada Park, Lucie Stern Community Center, Palo Alto Main Library and Stanford University.

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