Are the kids alright?

After a year in isolation, teens speak out about the emotional toll

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New skate park proposed in Palo Alto

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Palo Alto Weekly

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75 apartments, plus offices, proposed near Cal Ave

City Council to consider Smith Development’s plans for 123 Sherman Ave.
by Gennady Sheyner

After years of struggling to promote housing development, Palo Alto is now awash with proposals — nearly all of them targeting the rapidly changing area near the California Avenue business district.

The City Council has already approved two residential developments: a “workforce housing” project with 57 apartments at 2755 El Camino Real, on the busy corner of El Camino and Page Mill Road, and 59 apartments known as Wilton Court for low-income families and adults with disabilities.

And over the past few months, council members gave favorable reviews to plans to build 119 apartments at 2951 El Camino Real through the city’s new “planned housing” zone and to Santa Clara County’s teacher-housing project proposed for 231 Grant Ave., which consists of 110 apartments.

Now, the council is preparing to review another proposal. Smith Development, which owns numerous properties around California Avenue and in the nearby Ventura neighborhood, is hoping to merge three properties, demolish the small office buildings currently there and construct a mixed-use development with 75 apartments and 35,996 square feet of office space near the California Avenue Caltrain station. The properties are at 150 Grant Ave., 123 Sherman Ave. and 2501 Park Blvd.

Much like the 119 apartments proposed by Acclaim Companies for 2951 El Camino, the proposal from Smith would require a zone change to “planned community” (PC), a designation... (continued on page 10)

RECREATION

Despite budget crunch, Palo Alto may explore building new skate park

Two council members say city should consider expansion of Greer Park ‘bowl,’ other locations
by Gennady Sheyner

Does Palo Alto need a new skate park?
For Sam Kaplinsky and the roughly 2,000 people who signed his petition, the answer is a resounding “Yes!” Since last August, the Palo Alto High sophomore and his growing coalition have been encouraging the City Council to take skateboarding in Palo Alto to the next level by either constructing a new skate park or improving its existing one at Greer Park.

The council is scheduled to consider his proposal, backed by two council members, this Monday.

Kaplinsky became immersed in skateboarding about a year ago when, inspired by YouTube clips, he picked up an old board and went out to learn some tricks, he told the Weekly. It didn’t take long for him to realize that Palo Alto doesn’t have any great places for beginners like himself to train. The city’s only skateboarding facility, the “bowl” at Greer Park that was built in 1991, favors experienced skateboarders over newcomers.

It also favors “transition skateboarding” — which involves doing tricks by going from a horizontal surface to a vertical one (think of professional skateboarder Tony Hawk on a half-pipe) — over “street skateboarding,” which relies on obstacles such as stairs and rails.

To learn tricks, Kaplinsky found himself going to skateboard parks in other cities, including Sunnyvale and Milpitas. Then, last fall, he and other skateboarders made their pitch to the council.

At a Sept. 14 meeting, Kaplinsky said it’s time for an updated park with rails, stairs and ledges where children can learn how to skate, ride scooters or perform

(continued on page 32)

Mayor makes a pitch for stronger ties
Tom DuBois advocates forging new relationships inside and outside the city
by Gennady Sheyner

Creating a critical need for improved connection and collaboration as Palo Alto recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, Mayor Tom DuBois used his “State of the City” address on March 4 to advocate for expanding the city’s fiber network, improving public discourse and launching a new “sister city” program that would bridge the gap between blue and red sections of America.

In a virtual event that featured musical performances by Palo Alto students, the mayor recapplied for the viewers some highlights from one of the most bizarre and disruptive years in Palo Alto’s history and presented his plans for the rest of 2021, as the city continues to cope with the pandemic’s devastating impacts.

He focused particularly on four areas in which he said he wants to make progress in the coming months: transparent and productive discourse, responsive government, speedy recovery and real progress on climate change.

He also decried growing extremism in political discourse and made a plea for moderation and compromise.

Civility at public meetings has... (continued on page 35)

Daylight Saving Time begins
Set your clocks ahead one hour at 2 a.m. this Sunday.

Axel Hilding comes out of the bowl at the skate park at Greer Park in Palo Alto on March 10.
Michael Repka  |  CEO & Managing Broker  |  DRE #01854880

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BIDDING FAREWELL ... Antonio’s Nut House may have permanently closed after four rowdy, peanut-
shelled decades on California Avenue, but you can still take home a piece of dive bar history. Clars,
auction gallery in Oakland, is auctioning off a collection of Nut House items on Sunday, March 21,
including a neon “Pabst Alto” sign, the famous nut-shaped tables, bar stools and a roulette wheel.
“It’s an honor to represent this collection at auction,” Cristina Campon, associate director of the
Furniture and Decorative Arts Department at Clars, said in a press release. “There’s a wide range
of treasures that will certainly appeal to those who have fond memories of the Nut House.”
The one popular item that won’t be up for auction is the fake gorilla that stood in a cage that was
stocked with roasted salted peanuts for bar patrons. The beloved figure was accidentally taken to the
gallery along with other items from the dive bar. It was rescued last month by resident Jeff Daj, who hopes
to include the gorilla in the future Palo Alto History Museum. Bidding for the online auction is available by
phone, absentee bid and online at Live.Clars.com.
FORCED OUT ... Palo Alto’s efforts to enforce its 72-hour limit on parking permits will stumble this week from numerous residents, who urged the city to show some leniency when it comes to residents
who live in recreational vehicles along El Camino Real. While the trend of people living in RVs along
the main thoroughfare precedes the COVID-19 pandemic, critics contended at Monday night’s
City Council meeting that the city should suspend its enforcement during the health crisis. Angie
Evans, a Crescent Park resident, argued that by notifying residents that their RVs will be toed if
they don’t move them, the city is depriving those residents of a safe place to live and pushing them
to the streets or shelters. “It’s not OK to push people onto the streets ever and it’s really, really
heinous to do that in the middle of a global pandemic,” Evans said.
Ebru Hartitaoglu, a junior at Palo Alto High, agreed. “So many people are losing their jobs. ... Let’s not
make this tough time worse for them by removing them from their homes and towing the RVs,” she
said. While numerous speakers referred to the city’s actions as an “excision” of residents, City
Manager Ed Shikada rejected that characterization. “That is a regular recurring activity that our
Police Department undertakes,” Shikada said at the meeting. The city has, however, stepped up its enforcement efforts since January. According to a March 10 blog post from the city, the
Police Department had placed low warning flyers on 450 vehicles between Jan. 1 and March 10. The
majority of those who received them have voluntarily complied and moved within the 72-hour period, according to the post. The department had issued 16 parking violations and towed three vehicles (two RVs and one trailer), all of which were unoccupied and were not “actively lived in,” according to the city.

In the best interest ... Small businesses that have faced financial hardships in Santa Clara County during the COVID-19 pandemic were given some relief Tuesday by the Board of Supervisors, which approved a proposal to establish a fund to reduce their permit fees for one year. It applies to restaurants, personal care services, gyms or fitness facilities, grocers and retailers that have fewer than 50 employees, according to a staff report. County staff also noted that businesses owned by minorities have been challenged by the pandemic. “Small businesses have payroll, bills and fixed debts so every cent we can reduce or waive as we begin to economically recover from the pandemic will help,” said Supervisor Cindy Chavez, who worked on the proposal with Supervisor Susan Ellenberg. “Their stability means the economy’s broader stability,” Ellenberg said at today’s board meeting. Eligible businesses can expect to see the waiver applied on their next invoice. County administrators plan to transfer $5.5 million from the General Contingency Fund to cover funds the Department of Environmental Health would lose from the waiver. Small businesses could also be eligible for temporary permit and license fee waivers from California under a legislative package Gov. Gavin Newsom signed last month.

We really are in a race between emergence of these variants and our ability to get our population vaccinated.
— Dr. Sara Cody, county health officer, on the vaccine shortage. See story on page 10.

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Emotions run high as council launches review of Castilleja’s growth plan

Dozens of Palo Altans weigh in for and against school’s proposed redevelopment

by Gennady Sheyner

A n error in tabulating the size of Castilleja School's existing classroom buildings could add months of delay to the school's contentious plan to redevelop its campus and expand enrollment — a proposal that the Palo Alto City Council is due to review on Monday after nearly five years of passionate community debate.

Dozens of speakers, including students of the all-girls' private school, along with parents, neighborhood residents, teachers, community members and a host of watchdogs came out to speak for and against the project during the Monday hearing, which was intended primarily to solicit public feedback. The council is scheduled to make some tentative decisions on the project on March 15, though any hope that Castilleja had of securing the city's final approval this month dimmed on March 4, when the city's planning staff released a memo recommending that the project be remanded to the Architectural Review Board for additional revisions.

The main reason for the staff recommendation was an error that a resident had found in Castilleja’s building plan and brought to staff’s attention last fall. Because of an oversight in interpreting a handwritten diagram on the margin of a 1965 microfiche, Castilleja and the city had initially determined that the school’s existing buildings at its campus in the 1300 block of Bryant Street totaled 84,572 square feet. The number, however, included a 7,000-square-foot basement, which should not have been counted as gross floor area.

Without the basement, the buildings' total gross floor area is 77,572 square feet. Given that Castilleja has vowed not to add more square feet of building space as part of its redevelopment, the revision means that the school will have to reduce 4,370 square feet from its replacement building, which was slated to be 81,492 square feet.

"The amount of gross floor area to be removed is significant in area but a small percentage relative to the overall development," the memo from the Department of Planning and Community Environment stated. "Adjustments to the classroom building adjacent to Kellogg Avenue is expected to introduce more building relief and modulation that may serve to further reduce building mass."

Lorraine Brown, director of communications and community relations at Castilleja, said that the school had researched "hundreds of city permit documents and submitted copies," including an approved building plan from 1965, which was photographed and stored on microfiche. When Castilleja submitted its application in 2016, they failed to notice that 7,000 square feet of one of the buildings had been designated as a "basement" in handwritten notes in the corner of the building plan, Brown said.

"We were surprised to learn about this oversight; it was an honest mistake that we regret," Brown said in a statement.

The discovery of the microfiche marginia is expected to delay the council’s decision on the project, which was initially slated for March 15. Now, Castilleja will have to reduce its building by 5% and return to the Architectural Review Board for fresh approval.

The school, Brown said, is "committed to complying with all city regulations."

"We will reduce square footage appropriately if the city decides it’s necessary after reviewing the errant calculation," Brown said. "Throughout this process, our mission has remained constant: to modernize Castilleja’s facilities and expand opportunities for a world-class education to more young women."

Nanci Kauffman, head of Castilleja, said Monday she hopes this "minor change" will only require a review from an Architectural Review Board's subcommittee, rather than the full board.

In introducing the project on Monday, Kauffman stressed that the campus redevelopment plan is built upon "years of productive compromise."

"To increase opportunities for girls and to enhance our programs in math, science, languages, athletics and performing arts, we are seeking permission to gradually increase enrollment to a maximum of 540 students without increasing traffic," Kauffman said.

The latest procedural hiccup follows a five-year process that has already featured three hearings in front of the Architectural Review Board, six hearings in front of the Planning and Transportation Commission and a review from the Historic Resources Board. While the project has already seen some major changes along the way, including design revisions that added the underground garage and that reduced the number of trees that need to be removed, the Monday meeting underscored the wide gap that remains between supporters and opponents of the project.

Each side was represented by more than 50 people on Monday, with dozens of others submitting letters of support or opposition.

(continued on page 33)
The hotel will have a new color palette with forest greens, stone blues, touches of terracotta orange and a blend of neutral tones, according to a hotel press release.

The biggest changes will be made to the interior layout. The lobby, which sat on the second floor of the Garden Court hotel above open-air stores, will now be on the first floor. A two-story glass solarium with a second-floor tapas bar will replace the old lobby.

Other changes include an upgraded event space called “The Library,” which features a boardroom table, lounge space and rooms equipped with video conferencing capabilities. In total, the hotel will offer 6,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting and event space.

The rebrand marks the end of an era for the luxury boutique hotel that received four stars from Forbes Travel Guide and was consistently voted Best Hotel in the Weekly’s annual Best Of edition. During its 35-year operation, the hotel hosted many notable figures from local tech CEOs to New York Times and Washington Post writers and publishers to high-level government officials — one of whom needed a direct line to the White House, according to Barbara Gross, who served as general manager at the hotel from 1999 to 2015.

“The hotel telephone switchboard had to be reengineered to be able to have direct access to the White House,” Gross said. “And it was all done through the Secret Service.”

Gross played a major role in transforming the hotel into a community destination by providing nonprofits, schools and other local institutions space to hold their events at very low rates and subsidizing the remaining costs.

Stanford Health Care Community Partnerships, Peninsula Stroke Association, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley and several East Palo Alto elementary schools and organizations, including Foundation for a College Education, Dream Catchers and the East Palo Alto Tennis and Tutoring, were among the organizations hosted by the hotel.

“This property has such a nostalgia and such a cemented place in the community and people’s hearts,” he said. “It would not do us any service to move away from that.”

Gosling said the hotel is slated to open sometime in late summer.

Editorial Assistant Lloyd Lee can be emailed at llee@pawEEKLY.com.
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State's vaccine rollout plan comes up short for Santa Clara, San Mateo counties

Blue Shield program ignores communities most in need, local health leaders say

C alifornia’s new vaccine rollout program through Blue Shield is threatening to derail efforts to equitably distribute doses in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, county health leaders told their respective boards of supervisors on Tuesday. The state is directing 40% of vaccines for low-income and minority groups in more than 400 ZIP codes, but none of those will be going to either county’s most vulnerable communities, county leaders said.

Concerns over the diminishing number of vaccine doses has both counties looking at ways they might opt out of the state system. Santa Clara County is preparing to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter regarding its concerns and is likely to write state officials a letter.
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Dr. Barbara B. (Ebright) Varenhorst, Ph.D.
June 4, 1928 - February 23, 2021

With loving family by her side, Dr. Barbara B. (Ebright) Varenhorst, Ph.D. of Portola Valley, slipped peacefully into the arms of her Lord on Tuesday evening, February 23, 2021. Barbara was born in Omaha, Nebraska on June 4, 1928 to Oak Wood and Mary Louise (Davidson) Ebright.

As the daughter of a Lutheran minister, Barbara grew up in a strong Christian family, shaping her purpose in life and desire to help others. She attended schools in Kansas and Nebraska, graduating from Lincoln High School in 1946. She conducted her undergraduate work at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, graduating in 1950. A fellowship at Syracuse University allowed her to continue her education, and ultimately earn her master’s degree in 1952. Required to read extensively about youth counseling and guidance, Barbara attributed the clear vision that she would later develop about peer counseling to her time at Syracuse University. While at Syracuse she would also meet her future husband, Vernon D. Varenhorst.

Barbara and Vern were married in 1953 in Pasadena. They moved to the Palo Alto area, where she began teaching and counseling in the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD). In 1964, she earned her Ph.D. from Stanford University in Counseling Psychology and returned to PAUSD as a counseling psychologist for two high schools. While there during the early 1970s, Dr. Varenhorst began to recognize that students were looking to their friends and peers, rather than the adults in their lives, when they needed help in decision making or problem solving. This was her inspiration for developing her Peer Counseling curriculum, to train and collaborate with young people to be more effective in helping their peers.

Dr. Varenhorst always felt that the most important aspect of her career was developing the Palo Alto Peer Counseling Program. In the years since, thousands of young people across the country have been trained in communication skills, human dynamics, and when to seek assistance from caring adults through Peer Helping programs, Peer Ministry, and other programs that came from this original work. Dr. Varenhorst has been acknowledged as the “Mother” of the peer helper movement and a founding member of the National Peer Helpers Association. Her impact has been far reaching and will continue to touch others for years to come.

In addition to her work in the Palo Alto Unified School District, Dr. Varenhorst was a visiting instructor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Stanford University, California Polytechnic State University, San Francisco State University, University of Victoria, and Johns Hopkins University. Her publications were extensive and well-regarded, including the book Real Friends: Becoming the Friend You’d Like to Have (1983).

She was especially proud of her roles as Co-Founder and Past President of the National Peer Helpers Association, and held affiliations with the California Association of Peer Programs, the Board of Regents at St. Olaf College, Search Institute, and the College Board. Dr. Varenhorst was also elected to the Vesper Society Board of Directors in 1977. She served there in many leadership positions, including interim president from 1996-1999. Barbara and Vern joined Valley Presbyterian Church in the mid 90’s where Barbara served as an Elder, founded and nurtured an Adult Education program and made many strong friendships.

Barbara will be remembered not only for the impact she had on countless youth, but also as a mentor and friend. She was known for her kindness and generosity, and her beautiful, bright smile. Even after a stroke four years ago caused her to transition away from independent living, her compassion, curiosity, and kindness towards others continued unabated. Her warm smile always remained the same.

Barbara was survived by many longtime friends, who were like family, as well as her sister-in-law, Virginia Barrows, and several nieces, nephews, great-nieces, and great-nephews, all who loved their Aunt Barb dearly. She was preceded in death by her parents, and her nephews, all who loved their Aunt Barb dearly. Our family would like to express our sincere thanks to the nurses, doctors and caregivers at the Healthcare Center at The Forum for the loving care they gave Barbara these last four years. We’d also like to thank her many kind friends, who visited her regularly and sent her cards and letters with warm, caring thoughts.

Because of the pandemic restrictions in place, a Celebration of Life will be planned for a later date when friends and family are able to safely travel and gather together. Skyllawn is in charge of her arrangements. Memories of Barbara may be shared at their website, Skyllawn.com. In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to The Barbara and Vernon Varenhorst Fund, Search Institute, 3001 Broadway Street NE, Suite 310, Minneapolis MN 55413 or at www.search-institute.org/donate. The Vernon and Barbara Varenhorst Endowed Scholarship at St. Olaf College, either by check to St. Olaf College, 1520 St. Olaf Avenue, Northfield, MN 55057 or at https://wp.stolaf.edu/giving; or a charity of choice.
Marion Lewenstein, early tech journalist and Stanford professor, dies at 93

Her work chronicled the early companies that established ‘Silicon Valley’

by Lloyd Lee

Marion L. Lewenstein, a Stanford University professor, restaurateur and journalist who covered Silicon Valley before the tech beat was ubiquitous at media outlets, died on March 6. She was 93. Her son, Bruce, said she died from complications of heart and circulatory disease at her home in Vi at Palo Alto retirement center.

During her more than two decades as a journalist, Lewenstein’s coverage varied widely. She wrote about home furnishings and women’s fashion before sliding into science, technology and medicine, despite her lack of a technical background or a college degree.

Lewenstein helped chronicle the early days of Silicon Valley as a lance reporter and a freelance writer for Electronic News in the 1950s — a trade paper credited for coining the name of the tech region.

The other half of her career, according to her son, began in 1975 as a journalism professor at Stanford University. She was one of the few women professors in the communications department. “She was very demanding,” said Donald Roberts, professor emeritus of the Stanford communication department. “But every student that I ever knew that took a course from her just adored her.”

She was awarded the Lloyd W. Dinkelspiel Award for Distinctive Contributions to Undergraduate Education in 1978 and named Outstanding Journalism Educator in Four-year Colleges by the California Newspaper Publishers Association in 1981.

Sticking true to her early beginnings as a local reporter, Lewenstein helped expand news coverage of her Palo Alto backyard by becoming one of the 30 original shareholders for Embarcadero Media, where Bill Johnson launched Palo Alto Weekly in 1979. She also served on the company’s board of directors between 2006 and 2015.

Born Marion Marcus on Oct. 15, 1927, in Cleveland, Ohio, Lewenstein was the youngest of four children, growing up head-first into the Great Depression. In 1955, she married Harry Lewenstein, an electronics engineer, and moved to Palo Alto in 1964.

She took a brief detour into the restaurant business with her friend and local food writer Jan Nix. They opened Mediterranean Sandwich Shop on Palo Alto’s Ash Street in 1972 out of their mutual love for falafels. Lewenstein has been described as a trailblazer by some of her colleagues, though she never characterized her own life in those terms, her family said.

Lewenstein is survived by her son, Bruce; her daughter, Bailey Merman, of New York; Nix’s daughter, Bailey Merman, of Roseburg, Oregon; three grandsons and a great-grandson. Her husband, Harry, died in 2010.
Marion Lewenstein, one of the first journalists to cover "Silicon Valley," died on March 6, 2021, of complications of heart and circulatory disease. She was 93. Later in her career, Lewenstein became a journalism professor at Stanford University (despite never receiving a college degree). She also helped create the first falafel restaurant in Palo Alto. Her son confirmed her death.

From the mid-1950s, Lewenstein reported for Electronic News, first on staff and then, after her children were born, as a freelancer. Lewenstein played "a pioneering role covering the technology beat in the San Francisco Bay Area," said Henry Lowood, curator of Stanford University's History of Science & Technology collection. By the 1960s, he said, "she had established a reputation for covering science and technology in the region that became 'Silicon Valley.'" Lewenstein also wrote for Time, Fortune, Postgraduate Medicine, and other publications. In 1969, she did the background research and wrote the initial copy for a story that traced the lineage of electronics companies founded by people who had worked at Fairchild Semiconductor. Versions of the original lineage chart continue to circulate today.

In 1972, Lewenstein and her friend Jan Nix, a local food writer, created the first falafel shop in Palo Alto. Lewenstein had tasted the food during a 1968 family trip to Israel, and Nix had tasted it while living with her family among international expatriates in Japan. Lewenstein had dreamed of owning her own restaurant since working as a waitress at Howard Johnson's while in high school. The Mediterranean Sandwich Shop, located just off California Avenue on Ash Street, was open only at lunch and served outdoor furnishings or women's wear," she told her employer. She convinced her employers to let her start covering small stories and then they hired her as a reporter for Home Furnishings Daily and Women's Wear Daily.

In 1955, Marcus married Harry Lewenstein, http://bit.ly/HarryLewenstein, an electronics engineer who worked in technical marketing. She asked her employer to transfer her to their new publication, Electronic News, "so I'd have something to transfer her to their new publication, Electronic News, "so I'd have something

Lewenstein had intended to quit when her first child was born in 1957 (a second came in 1962), but her employers asked her to continue as a freelancer. Though she said she rarely thought of herself as a trailblazer, others later praised her as a role-model for women wanting to combine family life with careers. In the early 1970s, she contributed two chapters to a book called Second Careers for Women, sponsored by Stanford as part of a movement recognizing the changing workplace.

In 1997, Lewenstein and her husband were cycling across southern Portugal when her husband fell off his bike and broke his neck. He was a quadriplegic until his death in 2010. "I learned to be a, which I didn't know I could do," she reflected.

Lewenstein is survived by her son Bruce, her daughter Bailey Merman, three grandsons and a great-grandson.

The family requests that donations in lieu of flowers be made to Planned Parenthood or Mar Monte. A public memorial service will be announced at a later time.

Bruce E. Crocker
November 21, 1942 – February 22, 2021

Bruce Crocker passed away in Palo Alto on February 22, 2021 due to complications sustained over the past decade from cancer radiation treatments in 2009.

Born on November 21, 1942 in Greensburg, PA, Bruce was the son of John and Madeline Crocker. He spent his formative years in Glens Falls, NY and Needville, TX and later moved to Houston, TX where he attended Spring Branch High School. He was active in the Boy Scouts, earning his Eagle Scout award his senior year. He received his BS and MS degrees in Chemical Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he was president of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity. He moved to San Francisco in 1965 to work as a process design engineer at Chevron Research. He met his future wife, Suzanne Moore, in San Francisco and they were married in 1967. In 1979, they moved to the Peninsula where Bruce attended the Stanford Graduate School of Business and in 1972 they established their residence in Palo Alto.

After getting his MBA degree, Bruce had a diverse and interesting 45-year career in San Francisco and Silicon Valley. From 1988 to his retirement in 2010, Bruce was a venture capitalist focused on investment opportunities in Israeli technology and healthcare companies. He was a managing director and co-founder of Eucalyptus Ventures in 1997, a firm that merged in 2000 with another Israeli-based fund to form Pitango Capital, Israel’s leading venture firm where he was a general partner leading the firm’s US office.

From 1988 to 1997, Bruce was a Managing Director at Hambrecht & Quist, a San Francisco investment bank focused on technology and healthcare companies, where he led teams in more than 30 IPOs and M&A transactions. Prior to that, Bruce spent a number of years as an operating manager in Silicon Valley before, as Suzanne says, "he stepped into a phone booth and came out an investment banker." He was president and CEO of Exploration Systems; president of Geometrics, a geophysical instrument manufacturer; and VP manufacturing at IVC (the original inventor of VHS video equipment); and VP at Leslie Salt Company. Earlier in his career, Bruce was a management consultant at McKinsey & Company.

His philanthropic work included serving on the UCSF Ophthalmology Department support board, That Man May See; the University of Montana Foundation Board of Trustees; Fallen Leaf Lake Homeowners Association Board; and Fallen Leaf Lodge Associates Board. He also was an instructor and mentor for a Stanford Graduate School of Business entrepreneurship course.

Beyond his family and career, Bruce’s greatest passion was Fallen Leaf Lake. Bruce and Suzanne started going to Fallen Leaf in the 1970s, and were one of the founding families that established the Fallen Leaf Lake Community. Bruce gave countless hours to the project over the past 40 years, and his vision of establishing a wonderful family cabin for future generations came true as his children and grandchildren have developed a shared passion for Fallen Leaf Lake. Bruce loved spending time with family hiking in Desolation Wilderness and skiing in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Bruce and Suzanne also enjoyed annual trips with friends to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and were fortunate to travel abroad widely and often. He especially enjoyed trips to Scotland to see family there.

A loving husband and father, Bruce is survived by his wife Suzanne, son Patrick (Erin) of Hillsborough, daughter Katie (Rob) of Burlington, grandchildren Will Crocker and Jack Storey, granddaughters Caitlin Crocker and Samantha Storey, and sister Marilyn Crocker of Berkeley. His greatest joy was seeing his children grow up and succeed in life, and to watch, nurture and interact often with his beloved grandchildren.

On Saturday, March 20, at 11 am, a celebration of Bruce’s life will be held virtually. For contributions in his memory, the family suggests the American Cancer Society (cancer.org) or the Fallen Leaf Lake Fire Department (checks can be mailed to P.O. Box 9415, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96158).
Tucked away off a tree-lined street in Crescent Park, this Spanish Mediterranean-inspired villa is centrally located to outstanding schools, children’s museum & library, shops, restaurants and parks. Compelling and timeless, the two-story floor plan is filled with hardwood flooring, natural sunlight through picture windows & skylights. Boasting California indoor/outdoor lifestyle, the outdoors offer a front terrace, a gated flagstone patio, a private backyard with mature foliage, a raised veggie garden, and a detached studio and full bath (approx. 235 sf**) - Ideal for home office, kids play area, or gym.

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- A welcoming living room features a cast iron fireplace, & picture views of front grounds
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Letters

911 insurance?  
Editor,

I find the idea of paying extra insurance to protect firefighters trying to save the lives of Palo Alto’s citizens extremely discouraging. That the insurance should contribute to the services the firefighters provide is the most cynical of all solutions related to public health issues in Palo Alto in the 20th century. Have they considered that not all people living in Palo Alto have extra income? Have they considered that this solution will pretty much charge elderly adults this infamous insurance, because, after all, we, people above 60, are the ones who potentially might use the services?

We continue justifying the skyrocketing prices of public health in this country, without effective solutions for the 21st century. Sadly, the survey the fire department sent to us, as it is written, is crafted to support this initiative. It does not ask for opinions or more flexible answers.

Nowadays, we cannot even vaccinate people over 60 years old in Palo Alto yet! The more I live in this town, the more I am feeling this sharp, acute elitist-insensitive environment where health is a business, not a right.

Please reject more insurances and premiums. The insurance should be paid by insurances at the right price, and if the firefighters need money (which they probably do), the insurance should contribute for the service. What will be the next request: insurance for police calls?

Alejandra Chaverri

Louis Road, Palo Alto

Castilleja’s ‘scofflaw’ approach

Editor,

I believe that of the numerous exaggerations and misrepresentations over the proposed expansion of Castilleja, the greatest and most troublesome is the attempt to paint opponents of the project as anti-education and opposed to the progress of women. While I prefer to support co-educational education, largely as a result of attending public school as a child and teaching in public schools for 30 years, as well as solidly supporting the Equal Rights Amendment during my 40-year political career.

I think that the opposition to the plans on the table is based on what Castilleja seeks to do and how it has gone about trying to do it. Two persistent rules in the process of educating youths are inculcating the principle that a school is an institution governed by rules and that those involved in this process model appropriate behaviors. On both of those specifics, the current plans and actors fall short.

Castilleja has chosen its scofflaw approach and comply with the conditions of its use permit as the precondition for applying for changes. The public has no obligation to respond to an entity out of compliance and that willingly ignores assessed penalties and the complaints of many of its neighbors.

The Palo Alto City Council, city planning commissioners and council-appointed officers are obligated to enforcement, not avoidance, and those who cannot oblige to the rules should be removed from their public duties. A general rebuff is called for in this case.

John Karl Fredrich
La Para Avenue, Palo Alto

Discriminatory tactics

Editor

It is probably fitting that the opponents of Castilleja School’s expansion are now turning to the intricacies of R-1 single-family zoning to stop this project. This discrimination tool has had a century of success against ethnic minorities. It remains to be seen if R-1 zoning will be successful in obstructing women’s education as well.

We should probably remember that Castilleja was there long before R-1 zoning in Palo Alto, or anywhere else. The specter of a dangerous precedent has been set by granting Castilleja an effective Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of .41 is ridiculous. My house, supposedly governed by R-1 zoning, has a FAR well over 1.0 simply because it is a historic structure built long before anyone dreamed up discriminatory zoning, just as with Castilleja.

R-1 zoning was ignominiously invented in the Bay Area in 1916 in Berkeley, which was the first city in the U.S. to adopt this zoning for its Elmwood neighborhood, according to a Bloomberg City Lab report. Berkeley had a problem, “Early zoning codes often were explicitly racist,” Jessica Trounstine, a professor at the University of California, Merced, wrote. But explicitly racist zoning was in front of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1916, and was obviously going to be declared unconstitutional, which it was in 1917. So the challenge was to find a way to perpetuate housing segregation without mentioning race. Berkeley did, and R-1 zoning was born. “Modern zoning has its roots in Berkeley, and racial exclusion and real estate profits were among the primary reasons for its development,” according to a study published by the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society. The negative social impact of these discriminatory zoning policies is beyond dispute.

I hope the council will read and consider this history in their decision.

Roger L McCarthy
Waverley Street, Palo Alto

No underground garage

Editor

The City Council should reject a new underground parking garage proposal in the Castilleja School expansion plan. Operation of the school with more than 300 students plus staff bordered by a major hard hat construction project presents serious safety and liability issues. Major earth removal equipment and excavation operations would be done on the border of a busy school with arrival/drop-off traffic and large construction deliveries all constrained by Embarcadero Road traffic, the Bryant Street bicycle route and the relatively narrow neighboring streets. If the “big dig” is to be approved, the city should require a qualified on-site authority to oversee the construction from a safety perspective and who has the authority to halt the project if safety issues arise. Proactive monitoring by the city cannot be done from an office at City Hall. The usual practice of one or more contractor employees with orange vests making traffic control is insufficient. A better solution is to give the scale and complexity of construction activity. This has the singular responsibility for establishing safety rules and procedures governing the interaction between school operations and the ad hoc mix of cars and trucks?

In the (very unlikely) event of a serious incident, is the city morally and financially liable for the consequences?

It is an urban myth that Castilleja’s “listened” to the neighbors who purportedly originated the idea of an underground garage. In the hours of the Architectural Review Board and Planning and Transportation Commission public comment, no neighbors who took part in early school/neighbor discussions recalled such discussion.

On the contrary, early participants state they were surprised when the garage idea surfaced as part of the school’s early plans.

The Council should approve Castilleja’s objective to modernize but reject its “car”-driven garage plan.

Wallace Whittier
Bryant Street, Palo Alto
Guest Opinions: Pro & Con

Who is being served and who is being harmed?

by Andie Reed

As I reflect on Castilleja's 114-year history in Palo Alto, the eight years we've spent refining our plans have become a brief chapter in a much longer story. Yet, as I consider Castilleja's future educating young women to become compassionate leaders with a sense of purpose, this period has been vital, productive and filled with compromise.

Over these years, we incorporated input from neighbors, members of the broader community and city staff and officials — listening, revising, listening and revising again — in order to create the best path forward for everyone.

Though our plans have evolved, we hope we will have remained true to three goals: replacing our aging facilities with a sustainable building; gradually increasing our high school enrollment by 30% without increasing traffic; and reducing impacts to improve quality of life in our neighborhood. The first two goals had not only approval from the city, but the last was one we could embrace immediately. In 2013, we implemented more robust Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and since then reduced daily trips by up to 31%. We also limited hours of operation, reduced deliveries, restricted street parking, and limited the number and size of events.

Meanwhile, our plans surpass the ambitious goals laid out in Palo Alto's Sustainability Climate Action Plan, including fossil-free and net-zero energy operations. Through an iterative process with over 60 community meetings, we've created a building with lowered rooflines, increased setbacks, decreased noise and light, and no square footage addition. After public hearings, we made further changes to reduce the massing, refine landscaping and improve aesthetics. We realize that we may need to further reduce our square footage by up to 6% to ensure no increase, and we will comply with that change and conversely with the Architectural Review Board if needed.

Knowing the importance of trees to our community, we've worked with arborists in compliance with the Palo Alto Tree Technical Manual and will remove only 14 of the 152 trees on campus, including the 108 drought-resistant redwood and oak trees. This forward-looking plan serves the future, ensuring a healthy canopy for generations to come.

At the request of a group of neighbors, we added underground parking because we understood their desire to move cars below grade and away from view. Incorporating feedback from other neighbors, we reduced the parking capacity by 30%, moved the exit and changed the footprint to preserve homes and trees. The improved site design is supported by the Environmental Impact Report over surface parking, and permissible with an issue for some. Since I reported our over-enrollment in 2012, the city responded with a reduction schedule, which we have faithfully followed. For our enrollment, our schedule and our TDM results prove our good faith. However, for those who remain skeptical, our proposed CUP limits us and mandates severe consequences.

With no increase in Palo Alto High School, no square footage and no traffic impacts, this proposal is not about growth; it is about careful evolution for the future. Granting this CUP will enrich Palo Alto, known for excellent educational opportunities. Residents, students, and the City Council's priorities for 2021 include climate change, economic recovery and social justice. Our campus sets a new bar for sustainability; modernizing is a capital investment in Palo Alto's infrastructure and economy as Castilleja employs and educates Palo Altans; and Castilleja's commitment to social justice dates back to 1907, when opportunities for girls were scarce. Now, that commitment includes financial aid for one in five students and a four-fold increase in first-generation college students.

This proposal was born from compromise. As we learn from the past with an eye toward the next generation, strong schools will play a pivotal role for our collective future.

Compromise toward a better future for all

by Nancy Kaufman

The school is not reliable, the city is unable to enforce, and the neighbors become the watchdogs.

Garage

Castilleja proposes digging a highly polluting underground garage that destroys mature redwoods and oaks, a virulent part of our city's canopy and anathema to Palo Alto's sustainability goals. The entrance is planned for Bryant Bike Boulevard, full of bikes, cars and pedestrians going to school and work, near Embarcadero Road, one of the busiest streets in Palo Alto. The exit on Emerson Street requires entering Embarcadero at an extremely dangerous corner, with cars coming up from under Alma Street and around a curve. This boondoggle garage adds only 22 more parking spaces than exist today.

The city could mandate Castilleja shuttle their out of town students. This is what a conditional use permit is for and what "working with the neighbors" means.

Variance

The school is asking for an exception to the floor area rules to build excess above-grade floor area, claiming the size of the lot as a "hardship" despite being specifically denied the right to use size as a hardship for a variance above-grade parking will not increase traffic because our new conditional use permit (CUP) caps our daily trips at current levels. If our traffic increases at all, we will not be permitted to enroll more students.

This brings me to the most nuanced of our goals — a gradual increasing enrollment by up to 25 students per year for five years, reaching a total of 540 students, only if traffic remains level. As we open this opportunity to more girls, we cannot increase the number of cars coming to campus. Making this commitment, we realize trust remains an issue for some. Since I reported our over-enrollment in 2012, the city responded with a reduction schedule, which we have faithfully followed. For our enrollment, our schedule and our TDM results prove our good faith. However, for those who remain skeptical, our proposed CUP limits us and mandates severe consequences.

With no increase in Palo Alto High School, no square footage and no traffic impacts, this proposal is not about growth; it is about careful evolution for the future. Granting this CUP will enrich Palo Alto, known for excellent educational opportunities. Residents, students, and the City Council's priorities for 2021 include climate change, economic recovery and social justice. Our campus sets a new bar for sustainability; modernizing is a capital investment in Palo Alto's infrastructure and economy as Castilleja employs and educates Palo Altans; and Castilleja's commitment to social justice dates back to 1907, when opportunities for girls were scarce. Now, that commitment includes financial aid for one in five students and a four-fold increase in first-generation college students.

This proposal was born from compromise. As we learn from the past with an eye toward the next generation, strong schools will play a pivotal role for our collective future. Castilleja seeks to invest in Palo Alto's greater infrastructure and support sustainable campus and educating more young women to become leaders. We need them more than ever before.

As from the past with an eye toward the next generation, strong schools will play a pivotal role for our collective future.

by Andie Reed

The school is not reliable, the city is unable to enforce, and the neighbors become the watchdogs.

Enrollment

Why doesn't Castilleja consider educating even more deserving young women by keeping this historic site for some portion of the school while utilizing a satellite campus to accommodate growth? Castilleja Foundation has a vast array of resources to expand without overwhelming their neighbors, degrading the neighborhood and costing the city of Palo Alto years of officials' and employees' time and effort to appease their needs.

They are on sites with significant acreage, which invites more traffic and then applying for more. Why doesn't Castilleja consider rebuilding and earn increases in enrollment by proving it. We are not against the school growing moderately, reducing traffic and then applying for more students.

We neighbors appreciate the opportunity to express our side of the controversial Castilleja School expansion. We live in a great town, are lovers of education for girls and boys, and support schools of all kinds. I can truly say I've never heard a neighbor say that Castilleja should not rebuild and modernize their school.

The issue is, of course, the size and scope of the expansion. I'm a retired CPA; my husband grew up in Palo Alto and we moved back five years ago. We are lucky to be able to retire here.

When we neighbors first heard about Castilleja's plans in June 2016, there was significant shock and disbelief: a demand for a 30% enrollment increase, building a super-sized building, and digging an environmentally unfriendly underground garage, which invites more traffic into a tightly packed neighborhood of mostly small, older homes on narrow streets.

We are used to having school kids in and around the neighborhood, as we live between Castilleja and Palo Alto High School. Public schools are local to their families; their students can bike and walk. They are on sites with significant acreage and are zoned for Public Facilities. Castilleja's private school population is 75% from out of town. Its current enrollment makes it twice as dense as any public or private school in Palo Alto. It is 75% from out of town. Its current enrollment makes it twice as dense as any public or private school in Palo Alto. Its current enrollment makes it twice as dense as any public or private school in Palo Alto. It is 75% from out of town. Its current enrollment makes it twice as dense as any public or private school in Palo Alto. Its current enrollment makes it twice as dense as any public or private school in Palo Alto. It is 75% from out of town. Its current enrollment makes it twice as dense as any public or private school in Palo Alto.

The school bought residential lots on El Camino Real. Castilleja is on 6 acres, Menlo School shares 62 acres with Menlo College, and they are both on El Camino Real. Castilleja is on 6 acres in tight quarters.

Variance

The school is asking for an exception to the floor area rules to build excess above-grade floor area, claiming the size of the lot as a "hardship" despite being specifically denied the right to use size as a hardship for a variance because they increased their own site. The school bought residential lots on Melville and got the city of Palo Alto, in 1992, to abandon the 200 block of Melville Avenue to them. The site increased and the neighbors of Melville ceased. Castilleja could rebuild within the rules; they choose not to do so.

The city needs to stand up to this tax-exempt organization, which pays no income or property taxes and serves 110 Palo Alto residents while the other 65,000 of us adjust our lives to it and underwrite their city services.

Castilleja can step back and submit a code-compliant project compatible with the neighborhood. They don't need an underground garage to educate girls. We ask that our elected officials respond to these demands, and stop a private school's steamroller push for their interests to trump the residents.'

Andie Reed is a neighbor and a leader of Preserve Neighborhood Quality of Life. She can be reached at andiezreed@gmail.com.

Nancy Kaufman

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line months into the global pandemic, Riley Capuano told a grid of faces on a Zoom screen why she and her peers needed schools to reopen.

“I’ve never seen this many students struggling with mental health,” the Los Altos High School junior said during a virtual school board meeting on Dec. 14. “Being cooped up in your home all day is really, really tough. I’m a pretty happy kid usually but I’ve never struggled more than I have this year because of being fully online.”

Capuano said she’d hit a low point last fall, just before Thanksgiving break. She felt lost. She stopped running, even though she loves cross country and hopes to compete in college. She was going to bed late for no reason.

“I felt like I was just tired of waiting for it to end. I lost all interest in any schoolwork. I didn’t find anything good on the horizon. She said, but like there just ‘wasn’t anything good’ on the horizon.

“Being cooped up in your home all day is really, really tough. I’m a pretty happy kid usually but I’ve never struggled more than I have this year because of being fully online.”

Capuano is one of a vast many local teenagers who have been feeling this way since their lives in the last year have mostly shrunk to the walls of their homes and computer screens. Normally motivated students have become withdrawn and disconnected, and parents and health experts have been increasingly concerned about youth well-being as the coronavirus pandemic has kept most local schools closed for months longer than anyone anticipated. Desperate parents have called into school board meetings, describing children of all ages who are listless and disengaged.

In February, one Palo Alto parent told the school board her children are “empty, zombie-like shells of what they once were.”

From April to October 2020, hospitals across the U.S. saw a 31% increase in the proportion of mental health emergency visits by youth ages 12 to 17, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Locally, Santa Clara County’s suicide prevention hotline saw a significant increase in calls from young people last year, particularly from those between 15 and 25 years old. In 2020, there were about 34,500 calls from youth to the hotline, compared to about 27,000 in 2019 — a 28% rise, according to data provided by the county.

“At the beginning of the pandemic we could still tell them, ‘Hang in there. Eventually we will get out of this.’ ... but now it seems endless,” Suicide and Crisis Services Manager Lan Nguyen, who is often on the other end of the line with teens calling into the hotline, said in January. “They say, ‘When is this going to go away?’ Will I be able to see my friends again? When can I go back to school? When is it going to end?” And unfortunately we can’t answer that question for them.”

While local schools are slowly starting to reopen this spring, life for teenagers is still far from normal, and many of them are still grappling with the ripple effects of sheltering in place for a year.

Turning to advocacy

As her high school’s student school board representative, Capuano has assumed the role of spokesperson for her peers. She’s consistently advocated for reopening campuses even as some of the adults in the room, including the president of the teachers union, have taken the opposite position. When the district lacked students’ opinions on the prolonged shutdown, she and the Mountain View High School student board representative conducted their own survey on student engagement and mental health during distance learning.

Of the roughly 270 students who responded, over 60% rated their motivation as lower during online school, though about 18% said the opposite — that they’re more motivated with distance learning.

About 58% of students rated their current mental health at a one or a two on a scale of one to five, while about 20% of students said their mental health is better now than when they’re attending school in person. Students reported both positive aspects of distance learning — waking up late, more independent work and school from bed — as well as the downsides, including too much screen time, difficulty paying attention and connecting with teachers, and “feeling cooped up at home.”

Gunn High School senior Andrew Kim’s personal struggles during the shutdown also spurred him to action. Kim is the vice president of Advocacy Through Art, a student-led nonprofit that uses art to raise awareness about issues like mental health and race.

The group organized a webinar this month featuring health professionals and teens and is hosting artist workshops in May to give students an opportunity to express themselves — and destress — through art.

“We want to help lessen the stigma of youth mental health during the pandemic,” said Emily Chan, a junior at Castilleja School and president of Advocacy Through Art. “We’ve been stuck at home with our family and we’re using Zoom eight-plus hours a day. I feel like it’s affected our outlook.”

Before the coronavirus, Kim was an outgoing teenager. Social interactions — meeting up with friends, casual conversations in the hallways between classes and at lunch — were a given in his day-to-day life. Since last March, though, socializing has required more effort than he often can.
There were moments where I felt very exhausted and stressed — especially because it was the start of the new year and I already went through a lot in 2020. ’’—Monica Reyes Lopez, Los Altos High School junior

Menlo School. “Everybody is going through new things right now, but I think people are feeling really scared to reach out and admit it. For me, that’s definitely been hard — not only to admit to other people that I’m struggling but to admit to myself I’m not in a good place right now.”

Like Kim and Capuano, Devgan has also channeled her struggles into advocacy. She’s on the youth board at SafeSpace, a youth mental health organization in Menlo Park. With SafeSpace, she helped to produce a film documenting teens’ quarantine experiences and a podcast featuring student conversations about well-being.

Greater hardships

Moana Kofotua’s difficult pandemic journey landed her in the hospital.

When school moved online last spring, Moana Kofotua went from being a passing student to a failing one nearly overnight.

Then a sophomore at Menlo-Atherton High School, she had a hard time navigating Zoom. Without a computer and WiFi at home, she relied on a laptop and hotspot from the school, but the hotspot internet was patchy. She, too, lost motivation and focus. It was hard to get out of bed, much less participate in classes. An after-school support program that was helpful pre-pandemic just wasn’t the same over Zoom.

“I couldn’t function, going online,” Kofotua said.

She didn’t feel supported by her teachers, who contacted her only when she didn’t turn in assignments. In December, she fell ill from anemia and was hospitalized. While there, she was also diagnosed with depression.

Kofotua doesn’t feel comfortable talking about depression with her parents, both recent immigrants who don’t understand mental health, she said.

“I had to go through it on my own,” she said.

In February, Kofotua transferred to Redwood High School, a small continuation school where she’s been able to attend classes in person. She feels more welcome there and has also found a support system at Youth United for Community Action (YUCA), a grassroots community organization for youth of color in East Palo Alto. Kofotua and her brother go to YUCA to do homework and participate in conversations around restorative justice.

“We’ve opened up the space for students who don’t feel safe or comfortable at home and want to come and do homework here,” YUCA Program Director Kenia Najar said. “We see the difference between them being on Zoom with us versus being in person.”

The shutdown has been challenging for all teenagers but disproportionately so for those who lack the resources at home and, without being at school in person, are at risk of falling through the cracks. School closures have deepened the achievement gap — many private schools reopened before public schools did.

“Educational inequities have the potential to translate into a lifelong barrier and a staggering number of life years lost,” a group of UCSF mental health professionals wrote in an open letter in January calling for the reopening of schools. “School districts around the country are reporting higher rates of students failing classes, a phenomenon which has been disproportionate — seen among low-income Latinx and African American children.”

The coronavirus itself has also infected Hispanic persons to a greater magnitude, and the extra burden of caring for ill parents has fallen on local teenagers like Moana Reyes Lopez, a junior at Los Altos High School.

Over the holidays, both of her parents contracted the virus. Her father is a landscaper who continued working in person, and they think he may have been infected first. Her mother stopped going to work, so Reyes Lopez had to balance school with taking care of her mother. She’d get up early, before her classes, to make her mother breakfast and bring her medicine. She’d put a mask on and crack open the door to check on her mother. She didn’t tell any of her teachers what was going on at home, and only told one friend. She felt guilty and like she’d be blamed for getting infected.

When the anxiety and stress got to be too much, she’d go to the garage and break down.

Reyes Lopez recovered, but her mother’s health worsened. Second semester started and her father went back to work, so Reyes Lopez had to balance school with taking care of her mother. She’d get up early, before her classes, to make her mother breakfast and bring her medicine. She’d put a mask on and crack open the door to check on her mother. She didn’t tell any of her teachers what was going on at home, and only told one friend. She felt guilty and like she’d be blamed for getting infected.

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Her mother eventually recovered. Reyes Lopez again feels productive and proud of her schoolwork, though her anxiety still ebbs and flows.

She knows her experience is just one of many among her peers, whose voices she feels like have gotten lost in the heated debates among adults over reopening schools.

(continued on page 25)
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Children’s Health Council in Palo Alto, which has seen a 150% rise in calls during the pandemic, is already preparing for the next phase in teens’ emotional recovery. The slow reopening of schools and the relaxation of public health restrictions, while positive, won’t be a silver bullet for mental health challenges, Chief Clinical Officer Ramsey Khasho said. For some teenagers — especially those with social anxiety, who are on the spectrum or have been bullied at school — distance learning has been a respite.

“Hopefully, what this pandemic has taught us, because none of us have gotten out of this unscathed, is to really focus on our wellness and mental health.”

— Ramsey Khasho, Children’s Health Council chief clinical officer

“While we’re excited about the reentry, we’re also a little concerned that people are seeing this as a panacea for youth wellness,” Khasho said. “In fact we feel like there’s going to be a pretty jarring reentry and recalibration period that’s going to impact kids.”

The long-term effects of the pandemic on teens remain unknown, but experts’ best guess at this point is that it will linger in trauma-like symptoms, Khasho said.

He anticipates mental health providers will see upticks in requests as schools reopen, both from students adjusting to campuses that don’t function like they used to and from teachers and coaches who notice issues in kids they may have only interacted with online.

He encourages parents to reach out to CHC if they have any concerns. CHC requires no evaluation or commitment of the family to services.

To meet current and future demands, CHC is using a new $2.5 million grant from Jack Dorsey’s COVID-19 relief initiative to hire more providers (CHC has already hired seven new clinicians in the last seven months) and to bolster financial aid and free counseling services provided in communities like East Palo Alto.

“Hopefully, what this pandemic has taught us, because none of us have gotten out of this unscathed, is to really focus on our wellness and mental health,” Khasho said. • Staff Writer Elena Kadvany can be emailed at ekadvany@pawweekly.com.

About the cover: Students at Palo Alto High School socially distance while eating lunch on campus. Photo by Magali Gauthier. Design by Douglas Young.
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The future of the past

Taube Family Carriage House Museum will be a major addition to downtown Redwood City

by Maggie Mah

S

ometimes, getting in touch with the past can help make sense of the present and even provide a sense of stability for the future. With that in mind, a new cultural destination is being planned for downtown Redwood City that organizers hope will bring history alive in multiple ways and provide plenty of enjoyment in the present.

The San Mateo County Historical Association is finalizing plans for the Taube Family Carriage House. Named for the project’s keystone donor, Woodside philanthropist and businessman Ted Taube, the carriage house will be the showcase for San Mateo County’s collection of historic horse-drawn vehicles and much more. The new building will include areas for revolving exhibits and public events.

Just as the 2006 renovation of the historic domed courthouse (present home of the San Mateo County History Museum, which has a planned reopening date of March 24) and the adjacent public square played a major role in changing downtown Redwood City from “Deadwood City” to the lively and attractive cultural hot spot that it is today, the carriage house will add a new dimension to the area.

The planned three-story, 14,000-square-foot building will be located at the corner of Marshall Street and Middletown Road, adjacent to the courthouse and to the newly relocated Lathrop House. Designed by Woodside architect Adolph Rosekrans, the striking carriage house will sit on what is now a small parking area.

“It’s hard to believe we could put something like that up there,” said Taube.

The building will feature glass walls on every level, providing passersby with lighted views of the interior all hours.

What inspired this ambitious addition to the San Mateo County Historical Association’s collection? Long before Silicon Valley started making billionaires, San Mateo County was a favorite destination for people with high net worth to escape the grit and chill of San Francisco. By the 1880s, there were more large country estates on the Peninsula than in any other place west of the Mississippi.

Being seen was important to the top tier of society, and fine carriages were not just the way to get around but also the way to communicate one’s wealth and status.

Carriages made by Brewster and Company in New York were considered the finest in the world at the time and owning at least one was de rigueur for wealthy residents.

Fast forward to 1975, when Lurline Matson Roth donated her 650-acre Woodside estate, Filoli, to the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Roth’s stunning collection of Brewster carriages, however, was given to San Mateo County. Although a few of the carriages have been on display in the San Mateo County History Museum’s galleries, the rest of the Roth collection and a number of other fine examples of horse-drawn vehicles (29 in all) have been stored for more than four years in a climate-controlled warehouse out of public view.

Mitch Postel, San Mateo County History Association president and executive director since 1985, said he has been dreaming for years of a place where the public could enjoy these reminders of our equestrian past.

Postel provided a perspective on the “upstairs-downstairs” aspect of Peninsula society in the late 1800s.

“San Mateo and Burlingame were like villages in the European tradition,” he said. And although most of the vehicles in the collection were once owned by the wealthiest and most prominent residents of the area, Postel is adamant that it’s not just about them.

“Sure, you might have been a rich cat with lots of money but many people made their living by working for the carriage trade. This is really our heritage — this is us! It’s who we were,” he said.

Taube has been involved in the San Mateo County Historical Association for a number of years and received the organization’s History Maker Award in 2017. He first became aware of the carriages about two years ago and after a visit to the warehouse, said he knew he had to make something happen.

“When I saw them, I thought, ‘My God, this is really a treasure!’ I immediately reacted that we had to bring this to the world,” he recalled.

Taube and Postel set out to find a new home for the carriages near Courthouse Square. The original idea was pretty straightforward — a simple structure on the order of a single-story, garage-type building — but rapidly evolved into something far grander.

“We concluded that the only way to do justice to these carriages was to create a showplace. Of course, a showplace involves money,” Taube said. To date, the Taube Carriage House Campaign has raised over 78% of the $11.5 million price tag, all of which has come from private pledges and donations.

Construction of the carriage house is expected to take approximately two years, with preliminary site improvements set to begin this spring.

With the museum fast becoming a reality, Taube said, “Anybody who has seen the carriages has to get excited about the possibility that people are going to be able to enjoy them.” Plans are well underway for what visitors will experience.

On the ground floor will be a gallery devoted to rotating exhibits featuring special display boxes. Possible themes include vehicle collections from local car aficionados, historical perspectives on the role of vehicles and other vehicles from the county’s collection, including a remarkable Standard Oil delivery wagon. Said Postel, “I would love to do a display of lowriders.”

The second-floor gallery will feature a permanent display of the county’s 10 prized Brewster carriages and a rotating display of other carriages, all of which will be shown with the museum’s collection of textiles and vintage gowns from the period. Interactive features include the opportunity to experience what it was like to drive a horse-drawn vehicle and to observe craftsmen at work restoring and maintaining carriages in the conservation area.

Plans also include an entire wall of magnificent gilded mirrors from several of the Peninsula’s great estates.

The crown jewel of the carriage collection is the 17-passenger Brewster Standard Light Park Drag. With its metal frame painted a cheerful but tasteful yellow, the carriage was designed for fun. Owners and guests were seated on top for the best views of sporting and social events, while an assortment of servants rode below, pointing to the lined and fitted compartments for bottles and glasses in the rear of the carriage, Postel chuckled. “This was the ultimate tailgating vehicle.”

The original purchase price of the Park Drag was $2,800. In today’s dollars, that would be about $82,000 or similar to the price of a new Tesla Model S. Actually, this comparison isn’t quite accurate. Despite the quality of both vehicles, the carriage by itself wouldn’t have gotten you anywhere without four fine, perfectly matched horses turned out in polished, monogrammed harnesses, an assortment of servants and grooms in matching uniforms and a clean-shaven coachman.

The carriage house’s third-floor rooftop terrace will be an open, airy space featuring a central skylight and large expanses of glass on the exterior walls. The facility, which has been designed for gatherings of up to 300 people and includes catering areas, will be available for rent to the public for post-pandemic events such as meetings, conferences and receptions.

In addition to the carriage house, a new natural history area will be created through construction of a passageway connecting the new building with the courthouse. A diorama will feature the complete 14-foot cast of the skeleton of a paleoparadoxia — a rare aquatic mammal that inhabited the area of what is now Menlo Park in the Miocene period, approximately 12 million years ago. Murals by Burlingame artist Fred Sinclair, Jr. will depict the ancient elephants, horses, saber-toothed cats and rhinoceroses that once roamed the Peninsula.

Interactive exhibits will provide kids the opportunity to experience what it’s like to be a paleontologist or archaeologist.

Meanwhile, project architect Rosekrans, who will turn 90 this year, can personally attest to the power of things from the past. As an avid collector of antique farm implements, he recently accompanied San Mateo County Historical Association Curator Dana Neitzel to look at a carriage that was being offered to the county by History San José. He did not know that the errand was about to reconnect him with his childhood. Rosekrans remembered that his mother, Alma Spreckles, had owned several carriages and remembered riding in them on Runnymede, her Woodside family’s 650-acre estate.

“I don’t know what had become of them,” Rosekrans said. The carriage being offered was a Brewster Brougham (pronounced “broom”) from the late 1890s and was showing its years. Rosekrans and Neitzel went about inspecting the vehicle and, “when I put my hand on the handle, it felt very familiar,” Rosekrans said. A subsequent check of the carriage’s serial numbers determined the original owner. “It turned out to be my great-grandfather, Claus Spreckles,” he said. The handle was the very one he had gripped as a child.

The Spreckles carriage, which for now is back at Runnymede, will be the first restoration project. With the Taube Family Carriage House plans rolling along, locals can look forward to making more connections to San Mateo County’s past — and creating new memories.

More information is available at historysmc.org. ■

Contributing Writer Maggie Mah can be emailed at maggiemah@me.com.

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Palo Alto JCC launches kosher food hall with Yemeni breads, sushi and more

by Elena Kadvany

A 1,600-square-foot kitchen at the Oshman Family JCC in Palo Alto is now home to four businesses that will bring a range of kosher food and coffee to the local community.

The eateries are Holy Sushi, which serves kosher sushi; The Ma’lawah Bar, a former cottage food operation that specializes in Yemenite-Israeli breads; Caffe Mediterraneum, an Italian espresso bar with pastries and lunch fare; and Matriarch Cafe, a Jewish deli-inspired food operation.

Until now, Izzy’s Brooklyn Bagels on California Avenue was the only kosher, full-service establishment in Palo Alto, said Rabbi Joey Felsen, founder and executive director of the Jewish Study Network, who teaches classes at the JCC and brought in the vendors to fill the vacant kitchen.

“The Jewish community in Palo Alto has been underserved in terms of kosher offerings relative to most other communities in the United States,” he said. “For years the community has wanted more and for us it was a natural assumption that the Jewish community center could be a place where that could be offered.”

All four businesses at 3921 Fabian Way will be open to the public. Holy Sushi and The Ma’lawah Bar are already open, and Matriarch Cafe and Caffe Mediterraneum will debut this spring. For now, all food must be ordered online for pickup, though there are tables and chairs for outdoor seating.

Holy Sushi

Meira Academy, an all-girls private Orthodox Jewish high school located at the JCC, started Holy Sushi in 2014 to bring kosher food to the campus. (Felsen is also the founding board president of Meira Academy.)

The kosher sushi eatery closed nearly 50 years). He plans to serve puddings and family recipes were passed down through generations. "The koshers from her mother would influence the birth of The Ma’lawah Bar. Jehassi said she wanted to pay tribute to her heritage and demonstrate that there’s more to Jewish cuisine than matzo balls.""With all due respect, it’s delicious food, but there’s Jewish food beyond European food. There’s Moroccan and Sephardic and Turkish and Yemenite and Ethiopian Jewish foods," she said. "I wanted to show diversity. I wanted to expose that.”

Yemeni-Israeli cooking revolves around wheat, one of the few ingredients persecuted Jews had access to, Jehassi said. They baked jachnun for hours in aluminum pots in underground charcoal ovens, a technique Jehassi now replicates in her 21st-century kitchen using baking dishes to ensure consistency (though when she’s cooking for her family she still uses the Yemenite pot). Making jachnun from start to finish takes 18 hours, including resting the dough overnight, laminating it and facilitating the low, slow bake that caramelize the sugars.

Jehassi also sells kubah, a flufy, yeasted pull-apart bread that Jehassi describes as “the other challah.” She adds katzach, or nigella seeds, to her version, which also happens to be vegan and is the ideal vessel for soaking up soups and sauces. For dessert, she makes basbousa, a semolina cake that’s soaked in syrup and topped with coconut.

Jehassi believes she’s the only Bay Area business serving Yemenite-Israeli food. All of her recipes were passed down through family members, taught by feel and soul rather than in her family to write them down.

As The Ma’lawah Bar grew, it quickly took over her home kitchen, so she spent the last year searching for a kosher commercial kitchen. Her dream is to get her frozen products and condiments into retail stores, like Whole Foods. She’s heartened to see foods like schug, labneh and shakshuka sold at mainstream markets.

The Ma’lawah Bar held a soft opening last weekend for pickups only.

For more information, go to the-malawahbar.com.

Caffe Mediterraneum

Earl Hartman will be opening his homage to Caffe Mediterraneum, the iconic Berkeley cafe, at the Oshman Family JCC this spring. Hartman worked as a barista there, as well as a translator.

Hartman worked as a barista there, as well as a translator. Now 69, Hartman is opening his new Bay Area business serving Yemenite-Israeli family. Growing up on Long Island, I was very different from others. I always longed to find my roots,” she said.

At 18 years old, she moved to Israel — a journey known as “making aliyah.” She lived there for 12 years. Decades later, her time in Israel and learning Yemenite recipes from her mother would influence the birth of The Ma’lawah Bar. Jehassi said she wanted to pay tribute to her heritage and demonstrate that there’s more to Jewish cuisine than matzo balls.

Matriarch Cafe

Spencer Brodie has been cooking since he was 11 years old, growing up in Belmont. As a business student at San Jose State University, he said he’s worked nearly every job in the hospitality industry — server, cook, bartender — and started his own kosher catering company, Neshama Foods. He never planned to open his own cafe, but when the opportunity presented itself at the JCC, he jumped.

Brodie’s Matriarch Cafe will be his take on a Jewish deli, with dishes like a pulled brisket sandwich (made from a family recipe, with his own adaptations), shawarma sandwiches and a lamb burger with Israeli spices. Eventually he’ll serve a New York-style pastrami sandwich. And even though Matriarch Cafe will be kosher, “we’re going to be doing a lot of things that make you forget it’s kosher,” Brodie said, like serving bacon made from beef.

Brodie named the cafe in honor of the female influences in his family: his mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

While Matriarch Cafe won’t be open until after Passover, the Palo Alto JCC will be a pickup location for Neshama Foods’ Passover menu, including brisket, matzo ball soup, tzimmes, potato kugel and chocolate-coconut macaroons (a secret family recipe). Check the Neshama website at neshamafoods.com/passover for ordering information. Staff Writer Elena Kadvany can be emailed at ekadvany@paweeekly.com. Check out her Peninsula Foodist blog at PaloAltoOnline.com/blogs.

Doreet Jehassi makes malawach for the Ma’lawah Bar, which she operates out of her home kitchen. Courtesy Doreet Jehassi.

Holy Sushi serves kosher sushi.

Matriarch Cafe

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

Holy Sushi

Meira Academy, an all-girls private Orthodox Jewish high school located at the JCC, started Holy Sushi in 2014 to bring kosher food to the campus. (Felsen is also the founding board president of Meira Academy.)

The kosher sushi eatery closed nearly 50 years). He plans to serve a New York-style pastrami sandwich. And even though Matriarch Cafe will be kosher, “we’re going to be doing a lot of things that make you forget it’s kosher,” Brodie said, like serving bacon made from beef.

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Attractive duplex has a 2 bedroom/1.5 bath unit (1171) and a 2 bedroom/1 bath unit (1169). Both have been tastefully updated throughout. Stainless steel appliances and granite counters in the kitchen. Unit 1171 also has an attached sun/bonus room for extra living space. Each has its own private fenced yard area and separate 1-car attached garage.

Neighborhood schools include Vargas Elementary, Sunnyvale Middle and Homestead High (Buyer to verify placement with school district). Convenient location is just a few blocks from Washington Park and close to a diverse selection of shops and restaurants.

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**When:** Mar 14, 2021 02:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

**Register in advance for this meeting:**

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.
Skate park

(continued from page 5)

tricks on BMX bikes. The COVID-19 pandemic, he suggested, has further reinforced the need for outdoor activities.

“Skateboarding and BMX biking and scootering is a great way for kids to find a community to support them that they might normally find in school, that they aren’t getting right now,” Kaplinsky told the council.

He’s not the only one who feels this way. As of this week, 1,996 people signed his petition advocating for the new facility. Some have also submitted letters or spoke out at public meetings to advocate for a skate park.

Josh Balogh, a skateboarding instructor, told the council in September that skate parks receive much more use than baseball fields, tennis courts and tennis courts due to their ability to accommodate more people at once. He also predicted that skateboarding will become even more popular because of its recent designation as an Olympic sport. (Its scheduled debut as such in the Summer Olympics in Tokyo Japan last year was postponed because of the pandemic.)

“It is something healthy people can do to engage their physical flow state as well as artistic and athletic ability without the rules or judgment from referees or coaches,” he said.

Kaplinsky is similarly bullish about the future of skateboarding. The sport has waxed and waned, however, far from a sure thing. Kaplinsky’s petition comes at a time when the city is facing sharp revenue declines and the council is reassessing its infrastructure priorities to save money. The city has dozens of projects on its capital improvement plan, including updates to Ramos, Cameron and Rinconada parks. The construction of a new skateboard park is not one of them.

Despite the budget crunch, some council members believe the city should consider ways to advance the project. Council members Allison Cormack and Greg Tanaka penned a memo making a case for the new skate park and urging their colleagues to refer the project to the Parks and Recreation Commission for vetting.

The memo notes that while the bowl at Greer Park was once considered great, “layers of graffiti have led to slippery surfaces, and the newly evolved forms of skateboard/bMX biking, scootering, etc. have surpassed the conditions that the bowl at Greer Park can adequately support.

“Many other cities on the Peninsula, around the country, and elsewhere in the world, have already created new skateparks to provide safe and supportive environments for their community, and we need to catch up,” the memo states.

Cormack and Tanaka acknowledge that the city will need to do significant community outreach before the council approves any funding. The memo states, “To the extent that other locations beyond Greer Park are considered, the staff effort required for community outreach could be considerably greater and would need to be prioritized among other park planning efforts,” the memo states.

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

News Digest

State reopens stadiums, amusement parks

For the first time in roughly a year, Bay Area residents will be able to enjoy sports and amusement parks at limited capacities, state officials announced March 5.

The state’s new guidance for large events would allow up to 20% capacity for sports stadiums and up to 15% capacity for amusement parks once the county in which a stadium or park sits is out of the purple tier of the state’s pandemic reopening system.

State health officials say that may have occurred at St. Francis was due to a mistake in the facility as proposed by the council’s Council Appointed Officers Committee. The state has not reported any communication issues on March 5.

While the council’s Council Appointed Officers Committee was scheduling to appoint the recruiting firm Peckham & McKinney to assist with the process of finding Minor’s successor. The firm will be paid up to $37,000 for the services, according to a memo released Wednesday by city Human Resources Director Rumi Portillo.

City clerk plans to retire in July

Palo Alto City Clerk Beth Minor, who joined the city in 2007 and who has served as the main liaison between the public and the City Council for the past five years, has announced her plans to retire at the end of July.

Minor served as assistant city clerk for eight years before getting appointed city clerk shortly after the retirement of her predecessor, Donna Minor. The city clerk told the council Wednesday that she wanted to take step down so she can spend more time with her family. While she has been able to serve as clerk remotely over the course of the pandemic, Minor also said she did not look forward to resuming the routine of working through long council meetings and then having the long commute home. Her younger brother, she noted, is unable to walk and she wants to spend more time at home with him.

Minor had wanted to give the council early notice about her decision to retire so that council members have ample time to recruit the next city clerk and facilitate a smooth transition. The city clerk position is one of only four at City Hall that is appointed directly by the council.

On Wednesday, the council’s Council Appointed Officers Committee was scheduled to appoint the recruiting firm Peckham & McKinney to assist with the process of finding Minor’s successor. The firm will be paid up to $37,000 for the services, according to a memo released Wednesday by city Human Resources Director Rumi Portillo.

— Lloyd Lee

— Gennady Sheyner

Upright
Many speakers lauded Castilleja for being a good neighbor, praised its mission of educating young women and urged the council to support the project, which includes demolition of existing buildings, construction of five new ones, the addition of an underground garage and the relocation of an above-ground swimming pool to an underground location.

But while supporters suggested that the project will further enhance a valuable local treasure, opponents characterized the project as a zone-busting giveaway to a wealthy property owner at the expense of the neighborhood. Many residents scoffed at the school’s recent finding that Castilleja’s underground garage is in fact not a garage but a “basement” — a conclusion that conflicts with Castilleja’s underground garage because underground garages typically aren’t allowed in single-family zoning districts while basements are. They also suggested that the school’s plans are too ambitious and were skeptical of Castilleja’s assertion that it can add students without worsening traffic.

Several speakers alluded to Castilleja’s history of flouting its enrollment cap of 415 students, which resulted in the city issuing the school a $265,000 fine in 2013. “Why would the city of Palo Alto allow this private institution to control its own future enrollment limits when they have a history of noncompliance?” Andie Reed, a member of the neighborhood group Preserve Neighborhood Quality of Life, now asked. “Why should the residents take on all the risk? If the school is so confident they can control traffic, then let them rebuild and earn enrollment increases by proving it.”

Leila Moncharsh, an attorney representing many of the opponents, questioned the school’s findings and urged the council not to approve the various variances Castilleja needs to continue to expand its campus, as long as it abandons its plans for a new garage and settles for a more modest enrollment increase — a number along the lines of 450 students.

Diane Rolfe, who lives on the corner of Emerson Street and Kellogg Avenue, near the school, called Castilleja’s plan “poorly designed” and “highly controversial” and suggested that the school’s history of exceeding its enrollment limit had made it a “mockery of city rules and regulations.”

“To enable our neighborhood to be livable and to enable Castilleja to continue to provide outstanding quality education for girls, the present plan needs to be abandoned or changed significantly,” Rolfe said.

But Jim Fitzgerald, who supports the project, said the school had already modified its plans to cut back on the number of moves going from the neighborhood — only to encounter fresh criticism.

This project has epitomized the mess of creating new goals, one has to ask if the opponents will ever really be satisfied,” Fitzgerald said.

The Palo Alto Weekly published a Virtual Town Hall on the key issues about the Castilleja School redevelopment proposal on March 15, Thursday, March 11. The video of that forum will be available on Palo Alto Online’s YouTube page of the Virtual Town Hall.

Staff Writer Gennyd Sheyner can be emailed at gsheyner@pawpkey.com.

Castilleja (continued from page 7)

Valley. Several residents noted that the city’s proposed conditions of approval for the Castilleja project prevent the school from worsening area traffic under penalty of having its enrollment increases suspended. They also observed that Castilleja has already reduced its car trips by 31% since it adopted a stringent “transportation demand management” program that includes carpools and a policy barring staff from solo commuting more than twice a week.

Roy Wang, who lives several blocks from the school, said many of his neighbors support the school’s plans, including the underground garage.

“Castilleja’s actions have proved to me that they deserve our trust and support,” Wang said. “So while we’re debating the technical details here, let’s not lose sight of the big picture: Castilleja is a treasure in our neighborhood and we need to support it.”

Most of those who oppose the project in its current form said they have no objections to seeing Castilleja grow its campus, as long as it abandons its plans for a new garage and settles for a more modest enrollment increase — a number along the lines of 450 students.

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plunged over the course of the pandemic, he said, as COVID-19 has “made people change their minds.”

“We need to work together on the same team and can’t afford to create sides by attacking each other, particularly in this year of recovery,” DuBois said.

Economic recovery, he said, is and will remain the council’s top priority and has been the focus for those who have taken up the majority of staff and council time. Last spring, as the city’s hotel- and sales-tax revenues held stable, the city reduced its budget by $40 million. Many of those cuts, DuBois said, “won’t be felt by residents until we end the shelter-in-place.”

“It’s going to take a long time to recover and restore many of the services our residents expect and appreciate,” DuBois said.

Even so, DuBois highlighted several ambitious new initiatives for this year and urged residents to embrace the changes that the pandemic has shown are possible. Citing the spike in telecommuting over the past year, DuBois voiced support for the city’s plans to propose a new plan to expand the municipal fiber ring to all residences and businesses in the city. While the city has been considering expanding the fiber network for more than 20 years, DuBois argued that now is the ideal time to finally advance the project and, in doing so, reduce driving in the city.

“All the things that are happening right now are creating a new, different momentum,” DuBois said. “There’s an opportunity for us to make this city a little bit more sustainable.”

In discussing the city’s plans to cut greenhouse gas emissions, DuBois also advocated for the launch of a pilot program this year that would provide incentives for residents to switch from gas water heaters to electric alternatives.

The program is among those that the city has been considering expanding as part of its broad plan to reduce emissions by 80% from the 1990 level by 2030.

“Cities and states have led on the bad uplink on Zoom,” DuBois said. “We have the opportunity to create a new city utility and deliver superior service to our residents.”

In recapping Palo Alto’s past year, DuBois noted that the city has done relatively well at managing the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the rest of Santa Clara County.

“We had lower rates of infection and more people getting tested, and I’m proud to say we now have over 80% of our people 65 and older vaccinated, which is top in the county,” he said.

At the same time, the event served as a reminder that the battle against COVID-19 is far from over. Normally a community celebration with food, live music, socializing and mingling, this year’s “State of the City” event was conducted like all other public meetings over Zoom. Unlike other government meetings, it featured several musical performances, including a song performed by 400 students from choirs at Fletcher, Greene and JLS middle schools and Palo Alto and Gunn high schools.

Vice Mayor Pat Burt alluded to the unusual circumstances early in the ceremony, when he thanked the viewers for attending “what we hope will be the first — and only — virtual ‘State of the City’ address ever.”

“This is one of the few days when a number of us get to find out whether we still fit into our business suits. With this infor- mality, it looks like we won’t get to know that this year, but we’ll find out soon enough, when we hopefully start to normalize,” Burt said.

Watch a recording of the “State of the City” address at youtube. be4WUB6x8t0.

City Council (March 8)

Student liability claims: In closed session, the board voted to reject the liability claim Student vs. PAUSD (PAUSD-GC-20-2101) Yes: Dauber, Dharap, DiBrienza, Lodomirak No: Collins

Employee non-reelection: In closed session, the board voted issue a notice of non-re-election to a probationary certificated employee.

Yes: Dauber, Dharap, DiBrienza, Lodomirak No: Collins

Second interim budget: The board approved the second interim financial report. Yes: Unanimous

COVID-19 testing MOU: The board approved a MOU with Predictive to offer COVID-19 testing to employees and students. Yes: Unanimous

Policy Council and Services Committee (March 9)

Mental health: The committee heard a presentation about emergency mental health programs in Santa Clara County and expressed support for having the city participate in the county’s Community Mobile Response Unit. Yes: Unanimous

Planning and Transportation (March 10)

Ventura: The commission discussed the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan and recommended approval of Alternative A, which includes up to 2,100 units of housing. The commission also supported increasing the percentage or below-market units offered for sale in this alternative from 10% to 20% and considering an increase in park space in the 60-acre plan area. Yes: Alchech, Hochman, Roopnaray, Tampelon No: Lauring, Summa

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Across
1 Havana's home
5 Herb with leaves used in Japanese cooking
10 Classic Ford models
14 Like some arguments
15 Complete
16 On vacation
17 Meyer of the "Saw" movies
18 How to view the alternate answers crossing the circled squares
20 Expert's offer
22 Artist's stand
23 Army creature?
24 Dinner table basketful
26 Troubled outburst from Scooby-Doo
28 Charlie of the 1960s Orioles
30 Indigenous New Zealanders
33 Denounces
34 Performance style at UCB and Second City
36 '50s Ford failure
38 Baked Italian dish
39 "___ Up" (Violent Femmes song)
41 "Here's ___ from me to you ..."
45 ""Rudolph the Red-___ Reindeer" (or the other way, Japanese audio company)
47 "Barber Shop Chronicles" playwright
Inua ___ (or the other way, letter used to abbreviate "forte")
49 Encouraging words
52 *Athlete running 5,280 feet (or the other way, second run of crew practice)
54 "Call Me ___" (Mayim Bialik sitcom)
55 Inter, as a pharaoh
57 Marry in haste
59 "Nightswimming" band
60 "Blue Ribbon" beer maker
63 Cool, once
66 It helps clean the word in the circled squares (as well as the alternate version)
69 100 centesimi, pre-euro
70 Like jungle foliage
71 Cheap instrument
72 Done
73 Suffix for kitchen
74 FBI operative
75 Freshman, usually

Down
1 Classical conclusion
2 "Armageddon" author Leon
3 Wheel of Fortune wedge to be avoided
4 Texas shrine to "remember"
5 "Fingers crossed"
7 "___ Sin" (HBO Max miniseries)
8 "Je ne ___ quoi"
9 Farther along
10 Edinburgh boy
11 Like some biceps exercises, e.g.
12 Suddenly occur to
13 Electronic keyboards, casually
19 Outwit, in a way
21 Red Muppet
25 "As and pahquoe, for two (or the other way, like military fleets)
27 Designation at an Arabic meat market
28 '30 Rock' character Lemon
29 "Where ___?"
31 *"___-toed boots (or the other way, more unusual)
32 "The Last King of Scotland" name
35 "Octopus's Garden" singer
37 *___-wip topping (or the other way, half of those pairs of boots)
40 "DNC member (or the other way, married)
42 Dave Brubeck standard
43 "___ complete mess"
44 Eugene clock setting, for short
46 Vitality
48 "Battlefield Earth" author ___ Hubbard
49 Dr. Seuss title turtle
50 Early inning statistic
51 Fullest extent
53 *"Reveals one's true feelings (or the other way, pater ___)
56 Russian rum cake
58 Cockpit figure
61 Be immodest
62 Financial advisor Orman
64 Maple, for instance
65 Intricate story
67 Chance ___ Rapper
68 Super-spicy

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Answers on page 35.

This week's SUDOKU

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