The story of
an artist

Mitchell Johnson’s vivid work, sought by collectors worldwide, on exhibit in Palo Alto

Page 23
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Palo Alto makes big move to expand fiber network

City Council approves plan to build out fiber-optic backbone, bring municipal internet to all neighborhoods

By Gennady Sheyner

After nearly two decades of debate, Palo Alto took a monumental step Monday toward transforming the city’s fiber-optic network from a small system that mostly serves critical city facilities and large commercial customers to one that could deliver high-speed internet service to every local home and business.

By a unanimous vote, the City Council advanced a work plan for gradually expanding the city’s existing fiber ring to all areas of the city — a project that over the years has been referred to as Fiber to the Home or Fiber to the Premises. The expansion would take place in at least two phases, with the first one focusing on building out the fiber backbone to make it available to more city departments and the second one targeting neighborhoods throughout Palo Alto.

The idea is far from new. City leaders have long considered expanding the fiber network, which was established in 1996 and which now serves about 220 commercial customers and generates about $4 million in annual revenues. To date, however, the journey has been filled with false starts, half-measures and disappointments.

In 2009, the city’s prospective proponents of Fiber to the Home mounted a convincing case for building the network to all neighborhoods. Efforts to build it, however, stalled when the city’s fiber network collapsed because of the economic downturn. Since then, city officials have been considering different models for the fiber expansion and commissioning numerous studies in the process, only to return to step one.

This time, city leaders and proponents of Fiber to the Home believe things are different. The council voted 6-1, with council member Greg Tanaka dissenting, to approve a new eight-and-a-half year, $40.9 million contract with GreenWaste for hauling and disposing of the city’s trash. The contract also will officially spell the end of the city’s longstanding partnership with Sunnyvale and Mountain View at SMaRT Station, a recovery station in Sunnyvale.

“The agreement also comes with an ethical question mark that is making some local environmentalists uneasy. While the city may have a clear idea about where the garbage is being diverted from, it has far less insight into where it’s going. The trash hauler, GreenWaste, has far less insight into where it’s coming from. The trash hauler, GreenWaste Recovery, has been unable to clearly answer that question, despite explicit direction from the council in January 2019 that required the company to track the traveling trash and avoid, to the extent possible, its shipment to nations with less-than-stringent environmental standards.

Despite some reservations, the council voted 6-1, with council member Greg Tanaka dissenting, to approve a new eight-and-a-half year, $40.9 million contract with GreenWaste for hauling and disposing of solid waste. The contract also will officially spell the end of the city’s longstanding partnership with Sunnyvale and Mountain View at SMaRT Station, a recovery station in Sunnyvale with trash from the three neighborhoods.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Employers must record workers’ vaccination status

Business owners raise questions over privacy, enforcement, compliance

By Lloyd Lee

A new Santa Clara County public health mandate has many business owners concerned about privacy, enforcement and compliance. By June 1, employers will have to obtain a record of their workforce’s COVID-19 vaccination status or face a $5,000 fine per day.

On Monday, The Silicon Valley Organization (formerly The San Jose Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce) hosted a 30-minute Q&A session on Zoom with county Counsel James Williams to field questions about the new mandate. Nearly 300 participants, including college deans, members of various chambers of commerce, city officials and businesses small and large — from day care facilities to tech giants like Amazon — were among the digital audience, seeking clarification.

One point was emphasized early on by Williams during Monday afternoon’s session: The mandate is not a requirement for anyone to go and get vaccinated.

“There’s nothing in the order that says all personnel must get vaccinated,” Williams said.

The order also does not require businesses to disclose the information to the broader workforce within the company, to the public or to the Public Health Department, he added. It only requires employers to keep track of the vaccination status of their personnel.

www.PaloAltoOnline.com • Palo Alto Weekly • May 28, 2021 • Page 5
QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Vaccination is the name of the game right now.”

— James Williams, Santa Clara County counsel, on new COVID-19 health mandates. See story on page 5.
Vaccination

continued from page 5

Complying with the order entails asking employees for their vaccination status. An employee who is considered “fully vaccinated” has reached the two-week mark after receiving the second shot of the Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine or the single shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Employees may respond with “I’m fully vaccinated” or “I decline to answer.”

“Companies’ personnel” consist of all workers who regularly come to a work site in the county. This can include volunteers or unpaid interns. For contract workers, Williams clarified that the responsibility falls upon the vendor of the contractor to record the employee’s vaccination status. However, employers will still have to check that the vendor has done so.

The order does not apply to tenants, visitors to a work site or customers. If an employee declines to answer, then employers should assume that he or she did not get vaccinated, according to Williams. Employers have to follow up with those workers 14 days later, along with anyone who was only partially vaccinated.

Some participants at the Zoom session questioned the point of the order, if businesses are not required to report the data to the county or to their own larger workforce.

Williams said one of the main reasons is because public health rules differ for those who are fully vaccinated and for those who are not. Knowing who is vaccinated will help employers to apply those rules accordingly.

In the draft of new regulations put in place by the state’s workplace safety agency Cal/OSHA, if everybody in a room is vaccinated, then no one will have to wear a mask indoors, and physical distancing and other requirements can be more relaxed, Williams said.

More broadly, Williams suggested that the new order is an effort to encourage more workers to get vaccinated.

“It’s because vaccination is the name of the game right now,” he said. “It is the best tool that we have available to us to prevent us (from) having a resurgence of viruses we’ve seen in other countries.”

Still, some participants of Monday’s Q&A session remained concerned.

A few business owners, for example, were troubled that asking about one’s vaccination status would violate the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). In this case, Williams said, HIPAA is not applicable since the law only concerns “health plans or health care providers with respect to their patients or clients.”

Others were worried that asking the question every two weeks may make some employees feel like they’re being harassed and that the order based on one’s vaccination status would be a form of discrimination.

“It’s a very simple question that should take folks no more than 15, 20 seconds to be able to answer,” Williams said in response. “Provided that you’re just asking folks to answer that question and move on, that should be a complete nonissue.”

Robert Lindo, the vice president of Casino M8trix in San Jose, of the Silicon Valley Organization, who moder-ated Monday’s session, asked how can employers make sure they’re complying and not get fined?

While violating a health order is a misdemeanor, Williams said, it could lead to a complaint for violating a COVID-19 health order.

“As we’re just looking for people to be acting in good faith,” he said. “If we receive a complaint, you have to be able to, if asked, show that you demonstrated good faith in implementing things.”

CityView

A round-up of Palo Alto government action this week

City Council (May 24)

Trash: The council approved a new contract with GreenWaste Recovery for trash hauling services. The $430.9-million contract has a term of 8 1/2 years.

Fiber: The council directed staff to move ahead with a proposed work plan to complete engineering work and undertake a community engagement effort for expansion of the city’s fiber network and ultimate adoption of Fiber to the Home.

Yes: Unanimous

Council Finance Committee (May 25)

Budget: The committee recommended adoption of the fiscal year 2022/23 budget and several impact fees and funds from the Stanford University Medical Center development agreement to support the rehabilitation of the Roth Building. Yes: Cormack, Sheyner, No: Burt

Board of Education (May 25)

Support: The board approved a comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services plan for redomestication to the state Department of Education. Yes: Unanimous

Union初始化: Staff writer Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@paweekly.com.

Public Agenda

A preview of Palo Alto government meetings next week

CITY COUNCIL … The council plans to discuss the future format of City Council meetings, consider a community development agreement to support the rehabilitation of the Roth Building, and hear a report on the Stanford University Medical Center development agreement to support the rehabilitation of the Roth Building. Yes: Cormack, Sheyner, No: Burt

UTILITIES ADVISORY COMMISSION … The commission plans to select its executive director and chairman and vice chair. The MYCPAUL Customer Portal and the 2021 community survey. The virtual meeting will begin at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, June 1. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 659-900-8663 and using Meeting ID: 362 027 238.

CITY COUNCIL … The council will hold a closed session to discuss recruitment of the next city clerk. The virtual meeting will begin at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, June 2. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 659-900-8663 and using Meeting ID: 362 027 238.
La Comida seeks new site

Amid growing demand and a pandemic that has upended the organization’s communal dining service, La Comida is confronting yet another dilemma — finding a new site for its nutrition program.

In October, the nonprofit, which serves about 1,700 meals to seniors every week, learned that the Masonic Hall in downtown Palo Alto won’t be extending its agreement with the organization for use of its space as a distribution point for prepackaged meals. Bill Blodgett, co-president of La Comida’s board of directors, told the Palo Alto City Council during its May 17 meeting that the nonprofit is looking for a new downtown location that could accommodate the hundreds of seniors who live in north Palo Alto and rely on its program.

Since that meeting, the organization has received some good news. Blodgett told this news publication that La Comida has reached an agreement with the First United Methodist Church on Hamilton Avenue to use the church’s courtyard for meal distribution. But while the partnership will allow La Comida to continue to distribute its meals in a downtown location, it does not solve its long-term issue: the need to find space for congregate dining in northern Palo Alto.

The ideal solution, Blodgett said, is Avenidas, the nonprofit that provides a host of senior services out of its recently renovated downtown headquarters on Bryant Street.

Kari Martell, an Avenidas spokesperson, said in an email that her organization doesn’t have the space to accommodate the lunch program. It has instead suggested three different ideas with which it could help act as a distribution site for La Comida meals: include a La Comida meal option at the on-site cafe; or use the Avenidas transportation program to drive seniors to the La Comida dining site.

Convict arrested for assaulting man in his 70s

A 34-year-old man was arrested for allegedly beating and robbing a man in his 70s at the downtown Palo Alto Caltrain station on the morning of May 21, Palo Alto police said Tuesday.

The older man told officers that he had been assaulted and robbed at the station, located at 95 University Ave., while he was getting ready to sleep on the train platform at about 1:40 a.m., according to a police press release. The suspected assailant approached him and accused him of stealing his cellphone before kicking him in the leg and punching him in the head. He also removed his belt and used it to strike the older man in the face, police said.

The alleged perpetrator stole the man’s backpack, which contained an iPad and blankets, and fled on foot. The older man and a witness chased the reported robber, but lost sight of him as he ran east on Lytton Avenue. The victim had no visible injuries, police said.

The suspect was later located around 3:30 a.m. outside the downtown 7-Eleven store at 401 Waverley Street by a patrol officer. He was placed into custody after resisting arrest and refusing to comply with the responding officers’ instructions.

The man, an Oakland resident, was booked into the Santa Clara County Main Jail on suspicion of robbery and elder abuse — both felonies — and a misdemeanor of resisting arrest. He is currently on parole for a prior robbery conviction. Police also placed a parole violation hold on him at the direction of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Man dies in East Palo Alto shooting

Police are investigating the death of a man who was shot in East Palo Alto on Sunday night, nearly three weeks after another man was killed a block away. The San Mateo County Coroner’s Office identified the victim on Wednesday as 19-year-old Sebastian Anguiano of Redwood City.

Officers dispatched to the 1800 block of Woodland Avenue at about 10:20 p.m. found a Hispanic male suffering from gunshot wounds. They attempted life-saving measures before fire personnel and paramedics arrived. He was taken by ambulance to a hospital; he died a short time later, police said.

 Relatives have set up a GoFundMe page to help with Anguiano’s funeral expenses.

The fatal shooting is the second in the Woodland area on the city’s west side in almost three weeks. On May 4, Christian Garcia-Torres, 25, also of Redwood City, was found shot in a parking structure at an apartment complex a block away in the 1700 block of Woodland Avenue. He later succumbed to his wounds at a hospital, police reported at the time.

COVID-19 vaccines are free for those who live or work in Santa Clara County.

To schedule an appointment, go to: elcaminohealth.org/getvax

Vaccination appointments must be scheduled in advance.

If you need assistance scheduling an appointment online, please call 408-871-7460, Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Para asistencia en Español, llame al 408-871-7460, y oprima el numero 5. Avisele al programador de citas que necesita ayuda en Español, y un intérprete le ayudará programar su cita.

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A big congrats to our giveaway winners who received gift cards to La Bodeguita del Medio.

Thank you again to every one of you who made the first Peninsula Restaurant Week nine days to savour!
COVID-19 pandemic, they argued Monday, has demonstrated both the critical value of having reliable high-speed internet and the shortcomings of existing providers in meeting local demand. And a new study from the firm Magellan Advisors, which has worked with dozens of municipalities to develop municipal fiber networks, makes a case that a municipal fiber system would not only enhance all sorts of city services — from traffic management to emergency preparedness — but also generate money.

The study estimated that it would cost about $22 million for the city to roughly double the fiber network in the first phase, an endeavor that could be paid for in large part through the fiber utility's existing revenue stream of nearly $35 million. This would create a 44-mile fiber network that would flow through neighborhoods and business districts and include dedicated cables for the city's utility operations, for every other city department and for commercial users.

The new network would also set the stage for Fiber to the Home, a much more ambitious project with an estimated price tag of about $96 million. The city also has the option of teaming up with private companies — which would reduce both the city's costs and its control over the network. Under that scenario, the system would cost about $86.5 million and shift some of the risk away from the city.

The council largely rejected that approach. Instead, the majority agreed that it would like to see the city build and operate its own system, much like the 63 other cities across the nation that currently provide direct internet service to their customers. Mayor Tom DuBois, a longtime champion of Fiber to the Home, said the municipal system would "pay for itself."

"It’s going to generate money for the city," DuBois said. "It’s going to save our residents a lot of money, and it’s going to enable businesses."

The operation does, however, come with some risks — namely, stiff competition from the two incumbent providers, Comcast and AT&T, as well as smaller boutique providers. In other jurisdictions, Honker said, existing telecommunications firms "took a shotgun approach" and launched negative campaigns against municipal offerings.

"They spent marketing dollars to try to dissuade each of the cities from building out. They lobbied commissions; they lobbied the city managers. They did everything they could until the point that the project was green-lighted, and then it was just a matter of competing," Honker said.

"It’s stiff competition because they are established companies," he added. "But they don’t have good reputations, and the reputations that they have are one of the biggest challenges that they face when going up against municipal providers."

Despite that risk, council members agreed to follow the direction of its Utilities Advisory Commission and staff and to move ahead with a massive buildout of the fiber system. The council directed staff and Magellan to create a detailed engineering design for both the near-term expansion of the fiber backbone and the eventual Fiber to the Home system, as well as to create a business model for turning the city into an internet service provider, which could entail outsourcing some of the functions.

The city is also moving ahead with a more detailed risk analysis and a community survey designed to gauge local interest in municipal fiber. The council's timeline calls for having Fiber to the Home in place within five years.

Andy Poggio, a longtime proponent of the citywide system, was among those who urged the council on Monday to advance the effort.

"We all know the advantages of the municipal fiber system for Palo Alto: attracting startups and new businesses, improving age-in-place, enabling better work from home, keeping Palo Alto a uniquely desirable place to live," Poggio said. "Let’s take this opportunity to build a 100% Palo Alto fiber to the Home now."

The pandemic has only strengthened the case for municipal fiber, said Loren Smith, a member of the Utilities Advisory Commission.

"Our children and our community were forced overnight to switch to a work-from-home, school-from-home, life-at-home quarantine space, all of which significantly increase the demand on our existing broadband networks — most to unsatisfactory levels," Smith said. "As children and parents all jumped online, existing broadband services were crippled and buckled under the strain."

Council members largely agreed, even as they expressed some concerns about issuing debt or relying too much on the Fiber reserve fund to pay for the expansion. Greg Tanaka, the council's staunchest fiscal conservative, suggested looking into an "open access" model in which private providers help the city build the network and then are allowed to use it to provide services (Honker suggested that such a model is unlikely to succeed in Palo Alto because telecoms are unlikely to invest in capital costs for the city-owned system).

But Tanaka, who struggled with his own...
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Trash (continued from page 5)
cities has been sorted for the past 30 years. With the new contracts, the council’s participation in the Sunnyvale facility will conclude at the end of this year. Local trash will then be hauled to Green- Waste’s material recovery facility in San Jose. Where it goes after that is less clear. After China moved in January 2018 to effectively close off its market to foreign waste, cities across the U.S. and elsewhere have scrambled to find other options, in many cases shifting to Vietnam and Thailand. Concerned about the environmental damage that local waste might be causing in these nations, the council approved a new contract with GreenWaste in January 2019 and explicitly required the firm to track “envi-
ronmental and social implications” associated with the full life cycle of Palo Alto’s recyclable materials.
GreenWaste has struggled to fulfill this requirement. While its 2020 report lists some of the companies that purchase alumi-
num cans, plastics, mixed paper and other materials discarded by Palo Alto and other area jurisdic-
tions, most of these partners fail to disclose the secondary market for local trash.
One thing is clear: Much of it goes abroad. One of the compa-
nies that receives local plastic and mixed paper, Berg Mill Supply Co., is listed as dealing exclusively with international partners. Another company, CellMark, which also buys mixed paper and plastics from GreenWaste, reported hav-
ing international and domestic partners, though it did not list the nations where it ships the waste. OGO, which receives mixed paper, reportedly sends it to Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia and Taiwan.
According to a memo from Public Works staff, GreenWaste has shipped about 40% of the materials it has received from the various jurisdictions to domestic partners, which includes all alu-
numinum cans, foil, tin and glass, as well as 90% of polyethylene tere-
phthalate (PET) and polypropylene (PP) type used in single-use plastic water bottles. The remaining 60% went abroad, a shipment that includes almost all rigid plastic, film plastics, mixed paper and cardboard. (Palo Alto makes up about 17% of the firm’s recyclable materials.)
Paula Borges, the city’s solid waste manager, suggested Monday that GreenWaste is the best choice for meeting the city’s climate ac-
tion goals, given its commitment to diverting at least 50% of local waste and up to 70%.
The SmartA/R Station, by contrast, diverts about 30%, though it has a goal of get-
ting to 45%.
While council members agreed that they’d like to see more local trash diverted to domestic proces-
sors, which are subject to a host of environmental regulations, Borges noted that the domestic market for mixed paper and some forms of plastics remains very limited. And once the trash goes abroad, the city has little ability to track its envi-
nronmental impact.
“We’re making progress—we’re going in the right direction—but we don’t have enough in-
formation. And short of conduct-
ing the field trip overseas ... there

Marilyn Howarth
May 20, 1928 – April 5, 2021

Passed away peacefully at home on April 5th, 2021 in Palo Alto, California. Marilyn Lewis was born May 20th, 1928 in Ann Arbor Michigan, she was 92 years old. Marilyn was the youngest daughter of Rev. Dr. Henry and May Lewis. Rev. Dr. Lewis was the town’s Episcopal Minister, and later a Minister at St Marks in Palo Alto.
She was athletic in her young years and loved playing tennis and figure skate-
ning more than anything. A talented figure skater, she hoped to join a professional skating group. She trained under skating coaches in Lake Placid and Colorado Springs, and competed in State and Regional championships.
But things changed when she decided to head west to at-
tend Stanford University. She joined the rally squad as one of the “Dolles”, the women’s tennis team, and met her future husband, Tom Howarth. She received a degree in Elementary Education from Stanford University in 1950.
Marilyn married Tom in 1950 in Ann Arbor, honeymooned in Carmel, and 10 days later Tom shipped out for the Korean War. He was stationed in Tokyo, Japan, so Marilyn got on a troop ship two months later to join him. While there, she taught English to the local children. After sixteen months, she was able to return and meet her husband, Tom. Together, they would spend 65 years before he died in 2015. Mimi will always be remembered as a strong, caring, athletic and patient woman (had to be raising 4 boys) who put her family first. Mimi is survived by her loving sons Dave (Ann) Carmel, CA, Jeff (Brenda) Carmel, CA, Matt (Joan) Sonoma, CA, Tim (Sandi) Auburn, CA, five grandchildren, four great grandchild-
s, and her older sister Katherine Bulley, with whom she laughed with every day. She will be missed — especially on the first of every month when she called each son to wish them good luck with “Rabbit Rabbit.”
The family is grateful for the compassionate care provided by Josie Helu. A private family celebration of life will be held later in the year. In memory, donations may be made to the Arthritis Foundation (www.arthritis.org).
POLICE CALLS
Palo Alto
May 20-May 26
Violence related
Waverley Street 5/5, 7:41 p.m.; child abuse/sexual
Ararat Road 5/7, 7:34 p.m.; child abuse/physical
Los Robles Avenue 5/10, 6:56 p.m.; child abuse/physical
Welch Road 5/18, 5:55 p.m.; family violence
University Avenue 5/21, 1:41 a.m.; strong arm robbery
Swain Way 5/22, 10:34 p.m.; assault w/deadly weapon
Evergreen Drive 5/24, 4:30 p.m.; family violence
El Camino Real 5/25, 8:35 a.m.; domestic violence/battery

Theft related
Commercial burglaries .......................... 1
Fraud ........................................... 1
Grand theft ....................................... 4
Identity theft ...................................... 1
Petty theft ....................................... 1
Proxler ........................................... 5
Shooping ....................................... 2

Vehicle related
Auto theft .......................................... 3
Bicycle theft ....................................... 7
Driving w/suspended license .................... 3
Hit and run ......................................... 1
Stolen catalytic converter .......................... 1
Theft from auto .................................... 5
Vehicle arson ....................................... 2
Vehicle accident/prop damage .................. 4
Vehicle impound ................................... 4
Vehicle tow ....................................... 2

Alcohol or drug related
Driving under influence ............................ 3
Drunk in public ...................................... 1

Miscellaneous
Found property ..................................... 5
Lost property ...................................... 4
Misd. Penal code violation ......................... 3
Outside investigation ............................... 3
Psychiatric subject ................................. 1
Susicious circumstances .......................... 4
Vandalism ......................................... 1
Warrant/other agency ............................... 5

Mento Park
May 18-May 25
Violence related
500 block El Camino Real, 5/22, 5:29 p.m.; assault w/deadly weapon
700 block Oak Grove Avenue, 5/25, 2:06 p.m.; assault

Theft related
Burglary ........................................... 1
Fraud ........................................... 2
Petty theft ....................................... 3

Vehicle related
Auto recovery ...................................... 3
Bicycle theft ....................................... 1
Driving w/suspended license .................... 1
Stolen catalytic converters ........................ 2
Theft from auto .................................... 2
Vehicle accident/no injury .......................... 1

Miscellaneous
Business check .................................... 4
Disturbance ........................................ 1
Lost/stolen personal property ..................... 1
Vandalism ......................................... 1
Warrant arrest ................................... 4

OBITUARIES
A list of local residents who died recently:
Marilyn Howarth, 92, a Palo Alto resident and former Atherton resident, died on April 5.
Donald L. Hammond, 93, longtime Palo Alto resident and former director of Hewlett Packard Labs, died on April 8.

To read full obituaries, leave remembrances and post photos, go to Lasting Memories at PaloAltoOnline.com/obituaries.

Geraldine Steinberg
May 30, 1925 - May 22, 2021
Environmentalist Geraldine Steinberg
Championed Green Foothills, Legal Aid Services

Pioneering environmentalist Geraldine Steinberg, the first woman appointed to the Santa Clara County Planning Commission, the first woman elected to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, and among the first women to graduate Stanford Law School, died Saturday. She was 95.

Steinberg chaired the Santa Clara County General Plan Commission that resulted in rezoning the foothills as open space, earning her accolades from state conservation groups, while supporting managed growth in the flat lands, winning her the support of the development community.

“She was a mediator,” her daughter Joan Laurence Steinberg said. “She went into a man’s world with her feminine influence and made peace between factions that were at odds.”

As county supervisor, Steinberg encouraged the purchase of open space adjacent to a small county park, creating the Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve. Among her greatest joys, she said, was driving down Interstate 280 and viewing the beauty that all can enjoy.

Steinberg married her husband, renowned regional architect Goodwin B. Steinberg, at the age of 18, on May 7, 1944, after a year at Vassar College. When he enlisted in the United States Air Force, she persuaded Vassar to allow her to matriculate as a married woman to complete her studies. With six months left on her husband’s tour of duty, Steinberg returned to her parents’ home in Evanston, Illinois, where she audited a course at the local Northwestern University that would change her life: Constitutional Law. When her husband enrolled in architectural school at the University of Illinois, she decided she too would go back to school, completing two years of law school.

The Steinbergs left the Chicago suburbs for the Bay Area in 1952, when by then with two children. They were part of a brash, entrepreneurial cadre of Midwestern transplants whose ambition and ingenuity was the DNA that spawned Silicon Valley.

It was not until 1960, by then a mother of three, that Steinberg returned to law school, at Stanford. She was one of just four women in her class.

Steinberg’s involvement in county government began in 1970 when she served as deputy county counsel, following completion of her law degree at Stanford University in 1963. When she passed the bar, her children remember a gaggle of reporters gathered at the doorstep, and the newspaper headline that followed: “Local housewife passes state bar.”

In 1967, she went into private practice, but her interest in land use issues brought her back to the public arena. Watching the Permanente Cement Company mine the hillside near her home in Los Altos Hills in 1970, Steinberg worked with county and corporate leaders to successfully limit the exca-vation. Her efforts impressed Supervisor Victor Calvo, who nominated her for a seat on the Planning Commission — the first woman to be appointed. Through her work, she demonstrated her balanced commitment to the environment as well as planned growth to ensure the region’s long-term economic vitality.

In addition, Steinberg served on the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and was a strong advocate for mass transit.

“She was refined and dignified, a woman of a different era,” her son Robert Steinberg said. “She was soft-spoken and modest, but unflappable, with an inner fortitude that did not bow to external pressures.”

When Calvo won a seat in the state assembly in 1974, the board of supervisors appointed Steinberg to replace him. She became the first woman elected to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors in 1976.

Shattering another glass ceiling, she would become the first woman to chair the board as well. Widely regarded as balanced, deep, wise, thoughtful, and very caring, Steinberg was considered for appointment to the superior court and municipal court in the late 1970s, but continued to serve as supervisor.

Steinberg left political office in 1981 to work as an attorney and spend more time with her family.

She would go on to join a real estate development firm founded by her daughter that, among shopping center and residential development, assisted public school districts in maximizing the income from surplus school sites in the 1980s.

She also founded the East Palo Alto Community Law Project, now known as Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, offering low or no-cost legal services to those who could not afford them. She served as its first executive director.

With a trained operatic voice, Steinberg was a founding member of Congregation Beth Am. She sang in the congregation’s choir for many years. She also served as president of the New Seed Foundation.

Frequently called upon to mediate between parties with intersecting interests but competing end goals, Steinberg negotiated multiple issues between Stanford University, Palo Alto and Santa Clara County. Known for her high standards of integrity, divergent representatives trusted what she said and her ability to negotiate successful solutions.

This integrity did not originate in a vacuum. Steinberg embarked on a course of Jewish study with her son Tom at the age of 90. Arleyah discussed the personal attribute of honesty. Tom recalls his mother told him, “I haven’t lied since I was 11.” She went on to tell him that the punishment for her lie — having her mouth washed out with soap — made such an impact that she never again spoke a mistruth aloud.

After her husband of 66 years passed away in 2010, Steinberg found new love at the age of 86 in John Thompson, who lived in the apartment beneath hers at the Vi, a senior living community in Palo Alto. Together they enjoyed golf, travel, and their families.

She is survived by her children Joan Laurence of SF, Israel; Robert (and Alice) Steinberg of Palo Alto; and Thomas (and Shaindel) Steinberg of Jerusalem, as well as numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Donations may be made to the New Seed Foundation in Gerry’s honor. The New Seed Foundation program, "One People One Heart", helps women and children in crisis to rebuild their lives. Gerry was the founder and served as the President of the Board for thirty years. Donations can be made online at www.newseedfoundation.org or checks sent to the New Seed Foundation, POB 61186, Palo Alto, CA 94306.

A private service was held on Wednesday, May 26.

The community may participate by livestreaming at Betham.org/livestreaming.
501 BERKELEY AVENUE, MENLO PARK

Extensively and thoughtfully remodeled in 2011, this beautiful 5 bedroom/3 bath home is surrounded by a gated private setting.

The dramatic entry hall with its soaring 2-story ceiling establishes the open, airy ambiance felt throughout. Huge windows and French doors on the light-filled lower level harmoniously blend indoor/outdoor living.

The family kitchen was designed for the busy home chef with generous slab counters, a large island with sink, and professional grade appliances. The nearby mud room has workspace, cabinets and cubbies. The lower level also has a bedroom/office and full bath.

The upper level is comprised of 4 bedrooms including the romantic primary suite with open beam vaulted ceiling. A sky-lit dressing room with custom built-ins leads to a luxurious bath with Jacuzzi tub, an over-size multi-head shower, dual sinks and 2 walk-in closets.

Living Area: 3,170 Sq. Ft.  Lot Size: 12,876 Sq. Ft.
(Per County Records, unverified)

Offered at $4,498,000 | 501Berkeley.com

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Sited on one of the City’s most charming tree-lined streets this 6 bedroom/3.5 bath home is just 6 blocks to Downtown Palo Alto with a diverse array of restaurants and local boutiques.

Originally built at the turn of the century, the home has been authentically restored to include modern infrastructure while retaining its charm and character.

The remodeled family kitchen features honed stone counters, top of the line stainless appliances and a huge marble island, perfect for informal dining. A huge butler’s pantry adds extra space and accommodates the entertainment-size refrigerator/freezer. The adjoining room with corner window is ideal for relaxation overlooking the peaceful garden. The living and dining rooms provide elegant spaces for entertaining.

Family living takes place on the upper levels. A “club-like” family room with a quaint hammered copper hood fireplace is a comfortable place to unwind or work from the adjoining office area with built-ins. The owner’s suite and 3 family bedrooms are on the second level, and there are 2 huge bedrooms on the 3rd level.

Living Area: 3,595 Sq. Ft. *    Lot Size: 9,218 Sq. Ft. **

(*Kimberly Townsend, Certified Appraiser | **County Records | Unverified)

Offered at $8,000,000 | 1115Ramona.com

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Come & see this beautiful updated 3br/2ba single-story Midtown home nestled on a large lot near the border of Old Palo Alto. Only one owner, this home was built in 1973 by Woolworth of Los Altos. Enjoy the private and beautifully landscaped approximately 7,200 square foot lot. The front courtyard offers a welcoming yet private home entry. Enjoy a peaceful backyard w/patio, lawn & gardens.
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clara.lee@cbnorcal.com
CalRE #01723333

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Stunning views of Edgewood Park! This Contemporary 4 bedroom, 2.5 bath home was built in 1992 and is located on a tranquil street in Emerald Hills. High ceilings, 2 gas fireplaces, granite kitchen. The use of mixed materials gives the feeling of bringing the outside in. This is truly an oasis in the heart of Silicon Valley just moments from Woodside, SFO, Half Moon Bay, San Francisco and San Jose.
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glaubert@pacbell.net
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* St. Jude patient Pepe
Letters

City bureaucracy

Editor

Your article on the rigid-ity of Palo Alto municipal ser-vices echoes what the residents of “Christmas Tree Lane” and Sale from Middlefield to Newell have experienced with the Traffic De-partment. For years, we have tried to get the bureaucrats to cease privileging some abstract map of stop signs over the repeated and appalling near-fatal experiences of residents. Motorists increasingly avoid the Middlefield-Embarcadero intersection by speeding through our streets, where no stop signs or calming devices slow them down. When the inevitable tragedy oc-curs, the blame will lie squarely with bureaucratic rigidity and dis-regard for the safety of the city’s residents.

Carolyn Lougee
Fulton Street, Palo Alto

A gutted Palo Alto

Editor

According to a recent article by Derek Thompson in The Atlantic (“Why Manhattan’s Skyscrapers Are Empty”), approximately half of the luxury condos that came on the market in the past five years are still unsold while 80,000 New York City residents are homeless. Same thing is happening here. The 5,000-square-foot, $6 million resi-dence at 264 Oxford Ave., built by a speculator, has been on the mar-ket for more than a year while the Bay Area homeless population bur-geons. For heaven’s sake, in such a wealthy country, we should have no homelessess.

As the refusal to allow for density housing and the stubborn adoration of R-1 zoning has done is incentivized the building of larger and larger and more elabo-rate housing aimed at wealthier and wealthier people. On the surface, Palo Alto may look the same, but on a psychic, emotional and spiri-tual level, the city has been gutted.

My dentist is gone. My veterinarian is gone. The Palo Alto school dis-trict is losing it’s best teachers. The arts community disappeared years ago. The houses may be pretty, but the elements of civil society that make life worth living in Palo Alto have been destroyed by the prepon-derance of Palo Alto residents who feel the city should stay frozen in time.

Deborah Goldeen
Birch Street, Palo Alto

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The Palo Alto Weekly encourages comments on our coverage or on issues of local interest.

Should employers be required to record workers’ vaccination status?

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For more information, contact Editorial Assistant Lloyd Lee at lle@paweekly.com or 650-223-6520 or Editor Jocelyn Dong at editor@paweekly.com.
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abilitypath.org

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Palo Alto | Mountain View | Burlingame
The current exhibition at the Pamela Walsh Gallery, “Mitchell Johnson, Color Continuum,” may be perfectly timed to usher in a hopeful, post-pandemic era. The survey show, which features selected paintings by the Menlo Park artist dating from 1988 to 2021, is a bright, colorful and uplifting experience with the added benefit of taking the viewer, vicariously, to scenic spots around the world. The idea for the show came after Johnson visited Walsh’s Ramona Street gallery to see her Nathan Oliveira collection. A subsequent visit to Johnson’s light-filled studio inspired her to suggest an exhibition that would showcase his latest large-scale works but also include paintings from earlier in his career.

“The dialogue between these pieces showed a remarkable progression in Mitchell’s evolution as a painter,” Walsh said. “A large survey exhibition tells the story of an artist in a way that words cannot, and Mitchell has arrived at a very important moment in his career.”

The show is a combination of new work and early paintings from Johnson’s private collection, as well as works borrowed from museums and private collectors.

“Mitchell and I spent quite a bit of time in his studio going through paintings and thinking about the narrative. We are showing the arc of 30 years and how his work has evolved, so we were careful to include paintings that illustrate different time periods,” Walsh said.

Johnson was born in 1964 and his childhood involved frequent relocations due to his father’s military career. In a recent email interview he explained, “I am sure I started painting and making things as a way to be grounded amidst the constant change. The interest in color was always there.” After graduating from Randolph-Macon College in Virginia, he found employment in the computer industry and took art classes in the evening. He saved enough money to attend Parsons School of Design in New York City, earning a Master of fine arts degree in 1990. Although stimulating, New York was prohibitively expensive for a young artist. A call one day from his brother Ed in California would set him on a new life path.

Abstract expressionist painter Sam Francis, who lived in Palo Alto, needed a part-time assistant. Johnson moved west and continued to paint while working for Francis. It proved to be a transformative experience.

“Working for Sam made me realize that every artist decides what their work will look like and be about but also how they will build a career. Careers in the art world are cobbled together in unique ways; galleries don’t run people’s lives or careers and they certainly don’t provide consistency or stability,” said Johnson.

Johnson’s early work, expressionistic landscapes of California, soon found an audience. But, perhaps because of the transient quality of his upbringing, Johnson sought out other venues in order to explore his passion for color and shapes. Soon he was traveling to Cape Cod, Italy, France and Asia (often with wife Donia and son Luca) in order to find new inspiration. His works, sometimes done en plein air (outdoors), but more often from memory in the studio, are not the stereotypical renditions of scenic locations. Two lawn chairs on a beach, the rooftops of Cape Cod cottages and a lone picnic table are more likely to draw his attention because they are opportunities to pursue his quest for “colors and shapes that feel complex and challenging.”

In the rear of the Walsh Gallery, a narrow corridor provides an intimate space in which to view very early examples of Johnson’s work. One can see that, as a student, he was working in a soft, impressionistic manner of representation, as in “Green Car, Palo Alto” from 1992. Moving around the gallery, the canvases become larger, brighter, with more attention to the geometry of shapes. Johnson said that he views the canvas as “a stage where shapes and colors perform together.”

These stages include places where we all have been, perhaps, or have wanted to go.

“I think the subjects of Mitchell’s paintings allow people to access the work and are universally pleasing, but that is why they are great,” Walsh said.

His 2015 painting “North Truro” is an Edward Hopper-esque scene, a white clapboard cottage on the ocean’s edge. Strong lines define the architectural features of the corner of the house, its roofline, open screen door and paned window. But it is the color that draws our attention. Is the roof really green? Is the doorstep really purple and is the ocean ever that deep, deep blue? It doesn’t matter because it all works and the overall feeling is one of warmth and nostalgia. Walsh said, “His true genius is his understanding of color; people are magnetically drawn to color.”

Johnson’s paintings also capture a moment in time, and they are usually not defined by having people as main characters. In “Yellow Table” from 2021, for example, the composition could not be simpler. A bright yellow picnic table are more likely to draw his attention because they are opportunities to pursue his quest for “colors and shapes that feel complex and challenging.”

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Artist
(continued from page 23)

Mitchell Johnson has long been his art,
126 Lowell Avenue, Old Palo Alto

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Eating Out

Craft cocktails without pretension?

Bar Zola says it has the recipe

Story by Zack Fernandes  |  Photos by Magali Gauthier

Months after delays brought about by construction permit challenges and the COVID-19 pandemic, Bar Zola, the companion of French restaurant Zola, is now open on Bryant Street in Palo Alto. The bar features a beverage program which aims to fill a void of craft cocktail bars in the city.

“We’re gonna be the best cocktail bar on the Peninsula,” owner Guillaume Bienaime said.

Opening a bar connected to a well-established restaurant like Zola can be a complex affair, requiring chefs and bar managers to collaborate and decide on the role cocktails will play as part of the dining experience and how their flavors might support the food menu. Bienaime threw this complexity out the window when he decided that the mission of Bar Zola would be simple: “I’ve always thought there’s nowhere for you to drink a cocktail in Palo Alto. And so that’s our first goal, to just create a place to drink cocktails.”

Though both Zola and Bar Zola share the same food menu, kitchen and owner, the bar feels like a distinct entity. When Bar manager Duncan Harrison first began working with Bienaime in the early days of the bar’s construction, he proposed a concept cocktail list to complement the restaurant’s classical French bistro dishes. Harrison imagined serving cocktails in Zola’s beef bourguignon, featuring mostly French spirits, aperitifs and herbs like tarragon. When Harrison proposed this to Bienaime, who was born in France, Bienaime said. “We’re gonna be the best cocktail bar in Palo Alto. The bar features a beverage menu, Harrison’s love of tiki has also informed the “sirred and boozy” drinks like the Rude Boy, which he describes as an “old fashioned in a Hawaiian shirt.” The drink is made with a base of both Barbancourt and Plantation Caribbean rum for sweetness and complexity (in place of whiskey), and gets its tiki twist from Bittermens Elemakule Tiki Bitters, which lend cinnamon and allspice flavor, as well as orange bitters and gomme syrup (a sugar syrup thickened with gum arabic) for body and texture.

Where Bar Zola may stand out amongst many other craft cocktail bars on the Peninsula is in Harrison’s approach to thoughtfully crafted cocktails made with low or no alcohol. “If you come in and spend the money on something that doesn’t have liquor in it, it should be interesting,” Harrison said, noting that most non-alcoholic cocktails he samples at bars are merely reproductions of classic cocktails made with non-alcoholic distillates. Harrison has also considered the modified drinking habits of customers during the pandemic, and his bar offers drinks in a non-alcoholic version of the restaurant’s pre-pandemic menu, Harrison says that the team at Bar Zola will always be able to recommend a well-made classic cocktail like a daiquiri for between $10 and $12.

Though that price point will be a welcome one to budget-conscious drinkers, Harrison says offering drinks in that range is also about giving more options to the bar’s regulars. “Our staff is going to be intimately trained on our spirits list and what would work best in the classics,” he said, adding that a Bar Zola regular who always drinks from the menu should be offered the chance to branch out and try something else for the same price, or less than that of the house cocktails, depending on the customer’s choice of spirit.

While Zola remains closed for dine-in service, Bar Zola will serve an abbreviated version of the restaurant’s pre-pandemic menu, which diners can enjoy inside, or in a newly constructed parklet. Bienaime has combined a number of small bites like olives, salmon tartine and tuna tartare with larger entrees of Hokkaido scallops cooked in a carrot-truffle nage with shitake mushrooms, or steak au poivre served with pommes frites.

Bar Zola will be open Thursdays through Saturdays, from 5 p.m. until late, 585 Bryant St., Palo Alto; 650-521-0651.

Email Freelance Writer Zack Fernandes at hello@zackfernandes.com.

Top: Bar Zola’s Speak Low cocktail is made with grapefruit juice, muddled celery and hibiscus tea blended with cashews and strained to make a floral nut milk and lime juice. Center: Bar manager Duncan Harrison crafted a drink menu to complement Zola’s French bistro dishes. Below: Bar Zola recently opened its doors in downtown Palo Alto.
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