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University, Cal Ave will stay car-free through September

By Gennady Sheyner

City Council to consider design changes for commercial strips to support dining scene

Palo Alto's popular experiment with car-free downtown streets will stretch at least until the end of September after the City Council rejected Wednesday a proposal to reopen California and University avenues to cars sooner.

Bowling to overwhelming resident demand, the council turned down a proposal from City Manager Ed Shikada to reopen University and California avenues to cars on July 7 and Sept. 6, respectively. In voting 6-0, with Mayor Tom DuBois absent, the council members also signaled their desire to take a broader look at redesigning the popular commercial strips in the coming months and consider the optimal alignments for both streets, as well as for a half-block segment of Ramona Street between Hamilton and University avenues that also has been closed to traffic.

For many, the closure of University and California avenues, which the council approved a year ago to facilitate outdoor dining, has been a rare success story during a bleak period. More than 400 residents have submitted letters to the city in recent weeks urging the city to keep the streets closed to cars, while just six urged the city to open them back up. And more than 95% of responders to city surveys indicated in April that they would like to extend the closures.

As drought persists, redwoods face a precarious future

By Sue Dremann

This summer could start years of decline for redwoods in the Bay Area

Looking more like candidates for tinder than the stately evergreens emblematic of California, the line of coast redwoods along Alma Street near the Palo Alto Caltrain station appear to be drying. Their branches are bare and dessicated, with broken limbs and sparse, drying leaves.

They aren’t the only dying redwoods in town. A scraggly skyline of flagging and dead redwoods stand in stark contrast to the verdant canopy at the Palo Alto Square center on El Camino Real and Page Mill Road.

This year is the second in what fire officials and climatologists have said is a severe drought. Historically, this May was Santa Clara County’s ninth driest in 127 years, according to National Integrated Drought System data.

“As summer progresses, we’ll start to see more (redwoods dying) as it gets hotter and drier,” new city Urban Forester Peter Gollinger said during a joint interview with outgoing forester Walter Passmore earlier this month.

The decline of the redwoods is not a huge story — yet. Passmore said. But if drought persists, it could be. It generally takes three to five years or more before drought affects healthy redwoods. Weakened trees and those without irrigation would be the first to go.

Gollinger said redwoods make a poplar stand in stark contrast to the verdant canopy at the Palo Alto Square center on El Camino Real and Page Mill Road.

As the city’s cash reserves and increasingly optimistic revenue projections, a divided council approved a budget for fiscal year 2022 that restores most of the cuts that had previously been considered. It also increases funding for local nonprofits and creates a $500,000 “uncertainty reserve” that the council will be able to tap into over the course of the year to address unforeseen issues.

To avoid the types of cuts that Shikada had proposed, the council majority agreed to balance the budget in part by tapping into the city’s Cash Reserves and in- net as it gets hotter and drier,” new city Urban Forester Peter Gollinger said during a joint interview with outgoing forester Walter Passmore earlier this month.

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Gollinger said redwoods make a striking contrast to the verdant canopy at the Palo Alto Square center on El Camino Real and Page Mill Road.

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I think we should use this crisis as an opportunity to make change.

— Alison Cormack, Palo Alto council member, on keeping downtown streets car-free. See story on page 5.

**QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

**Around Town**

Council meetings, departing City Clerk Beth Minor this week found herself in the spotlight for a change. Minor, who has spent the past five years as city clerk and who is concluding her term at the end of July, received a round of virtual applause from the council and a special resolution of appreciation from the city. Several City Council alumni, including state Assembly member Marc Berman and Karen Holman, a member of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District board of directors, lauded Minor for her positive attitude, patience and ability to stay neutral. Council member Alison Cormack called her “gracious and unflappable.”

“Even COVID-19 didn’t ruffle you and—POOF!—here we were on Zoom ahead of everyone else.” Minor thanked council members with whom she interacted over the years and said she has enjoyed working with the public and the city. “I was able to play Switzerland and be neutral throughout, and that passed on to my employees also,” Minor said. Shortly after passing the resolution, the council approved a contract with Lesley Milton, who will take over for Minor as city clerk in late July.

**BEST OF THE BEST**

Five teams of local real estate agents and 13 individual local salespeople were among the top-selling 250 teams and 250 agents nationwide that made the “The Thousand” list for their work this past year, according to RealTrends, a private communications company that publishes the annual list. Brent and Mary Guillixon of Compass Menlo Park were No. 5 among small teams for volume, with annual sales of $380,136,000. The Troyer Group of Intero in Palo Alto was ranked No. 30, with sales of $344,950,813. At No. 21, Judy Citron of Compass Menlo Park was the top local individual seller by volume with sales of $308,103,679. The Dreyfus Group with Golden Gate Sotheby’s International Realty in Palo Alto was ranked No. 30 for highest sales by volume with sales of $225,974,125. A complete listing of all the rankings can be found at realtrends.com/the-thousand.
Enjoying Foothills Park after dark

By Kate Bradshaw

Back at camp, it became evident that the other party the ranger had told me would be arriving was a show. It was just me, alone in this 1,400-acre space, until early morning hours. I had to look to the right to make sure the lights were on before venturing off to nonresidents — not the most welcoming of vibes.

Trying not to let my anxious mind get the better of me — though the thought that this could be the perfect setting for “Get Out 2: Rise of the NIMBY Zombies” did still cross it — I cooked dinner and did some reading. Then, I saw something that really freaked me out: a long row of white lights lined up across the sky. Luckily, there was enough internet signal for me to learn that the lights were just a parade of SpaceX’s Starlink satellites, not an imminent alien invasion.

After a fitful night’s sleep — Willa kept thinking she belonged inside the sleeping bag, too — at 6 a.m. sharp Willa repeated her favorite camping routine of pawing at the tent door. Not fearing that we might annoy someone by breaking camp so early, I took down the tent and we set off for a trail run along the Los Trancos Trail.

Out on the trails, my anxious mind calmed as I relished the beauty of the open space I had all to myself.

Upon leaving the park, I returned the key at the entrance kiosk, picked up some coffee and muffins at Kon-diyne, and made it back for my 10 a.m. staff meeting.

It was the perfect weeknight microadventure — a term coined by British adventurer and author Alastair Humphreys to mean an overnight outdoor adventure that is “small and achievable, for normal people with real lives” — and one I’d highly recommend to anyone looking for some outdoor summer fun.

How to camp at Foothills Park

Start by making a reservation on the city’s website.

Reservations for the camping season, which runs May 1 to Oct. 31, have to be made at least a week in advance, and can be made up to a year in advance. They must be made by an adult 21 years or older. Reservations for holidays must be made through one of the community centers, such as Lucie Stern (650-463-4900). Same-day reservations are not accepted.

Enjoying Foothills Park after dark

Outdoors reporter Kate Bradshaw and her dog, Willa, take a selfie while on a trail run at Foothills Park in Palo Alto.
STATE GOVERNMENT

Palo Alto hopes to hone its lobbying efforts in Sacramento

City Council supports targeting fewer bills, providing deeper engagement

By Gennady Sheyner

Palo Alto has plenty of opinions when it comes to state legislation and a stack of letters to prove it.

Since March, the city has taken formal positions against Senate Bill 9 and Senate Bill 10, housing bills that would, respectively, allow duplexes in single-family zones and permit cities to add building density in areas close to transit. It has also supported a bill to allow teleconferencing for council meetings and opposed another bill that would limit a city’s rights to deny permission to telecommunication companies to install small wireless facilities on street poles.

On Tuesday night, the City Council added to the tally when it voted to support four bills pertaining to police accountability: SB 16, which expands the categories of police documents that impact the cities on many levels; AB 26, which requires police departments to immediately report excessive force by an officer; and AB 718, which requires departments to release the findings of investigations into officer misconduct even if the officer leaves the department.

“The city’s propensity for taking public positions, particularly when it comes to opposing housing mandates, has won it plenty of friends and foes throughout the state. Council member Lydia Kou, who chairs the council’s Police and Services Committee, has been the city’s most fervent opponent of SB 9 and SB 10. In recent months, she has participated in community meetings and distributed newsletters where these bills are characterized as an attack on local government control. Her recent petition in opposition to SB 9 bears the title, “Goodbye, single-family neighborhoods.”

Kou suggested Tuesday that the city should do more to influence Sacramento lawmakers.

“My main concern is that the state Legislature has been inundating cities with so many bills, which impact the cities on many levels,” Kou said during the council’s discussion of the city’s lobbying efforts. “And so, I kind of felt like we needed more exposure to some of these bills so that we can learn more about their impacts.”

It’s not clear, however, how effective the city’s lobbying efforts have been. Palo Alto was one of many cities and organizations that opposed SB 50, a bill from Sen. Scott Wiener that would have increased housing density near transit corridors and in jobs-rich areas and that fizzled in 2020. Yet SB 9 and SB 10 face better odds. Both have already sailed through the state Senate and both cleared the city’s lobbying efforts in the Assembly’s Housing and Community Development Committee.

To determine which bills to weigh in on, the city generally relies on its legislative guidelines, which prioritize issues such as public transportation, improvements to the rail corridor and environmental sustainability. On housing, the guidelines call for “supporting reasonable housing and land use policies that recognize local autonomy and create reasonable ratios between jobs and housing” and “opposing attempts to remove from localities the ability to determine their own land use policies or stymie the local political process.”

Deputy City Manager Chantal Gaines said city staff had identified 179 state bills in the current legislative session that are related to issues in the city’s guidelines. Of those, 159 have cleared the Senate Appropriations Committee and are in various stages of the legislative process. Staff and the city’s lobbyist, Townsend Public Affairs, has also narrowed the pile of bills down to about 25 that warrant special attention. On those, Gaines said, staff is preparing to work with bill sponsors and others involved in the legislative process to make sure Palo Alto’s position is heard.

While Kou and some of her colleagues supported increasing the city’s advocacy efforts in Sacramento, most council members agreed that when it comes to lobbying, less may achieve more. Nicoleo De Luca, senior director at Townsend Public Affairs, referred to the practice of some cities to engage in widespread commenting as “papering the capital” and suggested that it may not be the best way to achieve legislative goals.

“When you paper up the capital, it’s good to get your thoughts out there. But what I’ve seen more effective for cities is to weigh in thoughtfully and thoroughly,” De Luca said Tuesday. “If there is a piece of legislation we don’t like, we express that we have opposition, but we also like to propose amendments or propose suggestions or highlight what has been done successfully in Palo Alto.

“If we’re going after so many bills, it would spread everyone so thin that it would be a challenge to weigh in with some of those thoughtful comments.”

De Luca also emphasized the importance of face-to-face meetings with key lawmakers in Sacramento and encouraged council members to partake in an “advocacy day” in the Capitol, where they can meet lawmakers and discuss issues of local importance.

Council member Alison Cormack, who had participated in an advocacy day before the pandemic, concurred and suggested that if the city wants to have an impact on Sacramento, “active advocacy” would be required.

“I’d like to see us collectively spend more time advocating for what we want, as opposed to opposing things that we’re concerned about,” Cormack said.

Others felt more comfortable in the role of the opposition. Vice Mayor Pat Burt said he believes it is “entirely appropriate” for the city to advocate both for and against bills. Opposing a bill, he (continued on page 12)
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$50K in handbags taken during heist

A man has been arrested for a series of burglaries in which a group of seven men stole about 20 handbags with a total value of more than $50,000, police said.

Santa Clara County leaders announced on Monday that they are rescinding a May 18 order that regulated COVID-19 vaccination data and other requirements for businesses and offices.

The RealReal became the latest store targeted in a string of express thefts in the area. Palo Alto police said on Monday after a coordinated group of seven men raided the retailer's downtown store, police said Tuesday.

A security guard at the 379 University Ave. store called police on June 21 shortly before 6 p.m. to report the theft, which took place while the luxury consignment store near Waverley Street was open. Officers responded immediately but the men had already fled, Palo Alto police said in a press release.

Five men entered the store and began ripping handbags from security cables, according to police. The store's on-duty security officer, who is in his 30s, attempted to block their exit, but the group pushed him out of the way.

The security officer followed them out of the store, where he was confronted by two other men who had stayed outside during the theft. One man demanded the other to “pull the gun” and the second man allegedly told the security officer, “Don’t make me pull the gun.” The security officer didn’t see a weapon, police said.

The seven men ran east on University Avenue. The security officer reported hearing tires screeching from vehicles on Waverley Street but didn’t see them.

Employees estimated the group stole about 20 handbags with a total value of more than $50,000, police said.

Palo Alto officers are working with regional law enforcement agencies to find out if the same group of individuals might be connected to similar thefts in other cities, police said.

Anyone with information about Monday’s theft is asked to call the department’s 24-hour dispatch center at 650-329-2413.

— Sue Dremann

Unmasked diners eat outside by the strip of restaurants on University Avenue on June 27, 2020.

Car-free

(continued from page 5)

their capacity for more people to enjoy. Suddenly these streets have become cool destinations within Palo Alto that bring people out.

But while most residents see the closure as a positive development, business owners along University have been quick to point out that the benefits of the closure are very uneven. Downtown retailers, including lululemon Athletic, Footwear etc., and b8ta, have reported that their Palo Alto locations have seen sluggish sales when compared to their stores in other cities. Meanwhile, restaurants outside University have argued that the street’s closure gives their counterparts on the main thoroughfare an unfair advantage.

Gaelle Bienaime, owner of Zola, a restaurant on the corner of Bryant Street and Hamilton Avenue, concurred.

“Really, when we say we’re all in this together, I think the people on University and California are in it together and the rest of us are left behind,” Bienaime said.

Major downtown developers also have requested that the closed thoroughfares be reopened. Roxy Rapp, speaking on behalf of a group of developers that includes John McNellis, Charles “Chop” Keenan and John Shenk, called the closure of University to cars “di-sastrous” and urged the council to consider other options such as parklets to facilitate outdoor dining.

“We’ve got to give back the roads to the cars in Palo Alto,” Rapp said.

Other business owners see things starkly differently. Nancy Coupal owns two Coupa Café shops, one on the closed stretch of Ramona Street and another on Lytton Avenue, which is open to cars. Her Lytton location has fared far worse than her Ramona one. Forcing restaurants back off of the streets, she argued, would simply bring fewer people downtown.

“The people need a safe place to go to hang out, to bring their families, to bring their children, to be able to work safely, to not have cars zooming by as they dine, because nobody likes that,” Coupal said.

The majority of the council shared Coupal’s views. Council members Alison Cormack and Greer Stone both cited the positive response they’ve been getting from businesses.

Megan Kawkab, owner of The Patio, an Emerson Street bar and restaurant, was among the business owners who spoke out against the ongoing closure of University, which she argued helps out certain businesses at the expense of others.

Kawkab said her phone has been lighting up in recent months with texts, photos and videos of people enjoying the new downtown.

It’s critical, she said, for the council to take the expressed preferences of visitors and residents into consideration.

“I think we should use this crisis as an opportunity to make change,” Cormack said.

While the council’s direction extends the closures for now, it stops short of making the change permanent. Council members Lydia Kuo and Greg Tanaka both said they would like to see more data about the impact of street closures on retailers before implementing any long-term changes.

The city would also need to move ahead with an environmental review before approving the street closures on a permanent basis.

DuBois, who attended the bulk of the discussion but left the meeting ahead of the council’s vote, pointed to the importance of University as a commute route and leaned toward adopting Shikada’s recommendation to reopen University to cars on July 6, notwithstanding the popularity of the closures among the general public.

“It goes down to fairness,” DuBois said. “There are some people who have taken a huge amount of street space. We heard from businesses that are not on the closed streets. They’re basically competing with someone who has gotten a large amount of free real estate.”

Kou, however, suggested that because restaurants have already made significant investments in constructing tents and parklets, the city should support them by letting them keep these structures in place at least until the end of September.

“These businesses have invested a lot into getting their business in a different model,” Kou said. “I kind of want to help them. I think that as a city we should be helping them help each other a little bit ... before we yank it from them.”

While approving the short-term extension of the street closures, council members stressed that the city should consider broader and more lasting changes for the commercial streets. Vice Mayor Pat Burt urged the city to work with the local chapter of American Institute of Architects and the city’s Architectural Review Board to consider improvements to California Avenue, including establishment of performance spaces. That proposal moved ahead by a 4-2 vote, with council members Eric Filseth and Kou dissenting.

“I think it’s premature getting architectural designers until we’ve given direction and agreed as a council on what direction we want that to go,” Filseth said.

Like others, however, Filseth acknowledged the popularity of the city’s nascent outdoor-dining program and suggested that he would like to see it remain in some form.

“I think there is enough demand and enough interest in the community for outdoor dining in our downtown areas that I think we need a strategy for it,” Filseth said.

— Email Staff Writer Gennady Kou, ghkou@paweekly.com.
The shared fire pits at the Towle Campground at Foothills Park offer a space to visit with other campers.

Camping (continued from page 7)

Sites are $40 per night.

In keeping with Foothills Park’s dog policy, dogs are only permitted in the park on weekdays, so dogs are not permitted camping on Friday, Saturday or Sunday nights.

Each tent-only campsite has a picnic table, water, fire bucket, charcoal barbecue, food storage locker and pad for tents. Each tent pad holds two four-person tents.

The group sites have two pads for up to four four-person tents. There are two campfire circles with benches for use by all campers, but people must bring their own firewood. Fires may also not be permitted depending on fire weather and/or drought conditions.

Campers have to be parked a half-hour before closing time, and anyone not spending the night is expected to exit the park before closing time.

Portable toilets and zero-waste dumpsters (for recycling, compost and landfill) are in the parking lot.

For more information, visit cityofpaloalto.org.

Email Staff Writer Kate Bradshaw can be emailed at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com.

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**No Fireworks Zone**

East Palo Alto, Atherton, Menlo Park and Unincorporated San Mateo County.

**Board of Education (June 22)**

*Settlements:* The board voted to approve two settlement agreements regarding a special education student and employee. *Yes: Unanimous*

*New business:* The board voted to approve an addendum to LPA Architects for schematic design services for Hoover Elementary School in the amount of $204,342. *Yes: Unanimous*

*DiMarco, Ladomirak, Dharap, No: Daniel Collins*

*Budget:* The board voted to adopt the 2021-22 budget proposal. *Yes: Unanimous*

*Bond:* The board voted to authorize staff to enter into a contract with fsi/Hodges to continue bond program management services for 2021-22. *Yes: Unanimous*

*A/C: The board voted to approve issuing an addendum to LPA Architects for design services to add air conditioning to several buildings at Greene Middle School in the amount of $139,950. *Yes: Unanimous*

**City Council (June 22)**

*Street closures:* The council voted to extend the closures of University and California avenues to traffic until Sept. 30 and to end the city’s “state of emergency” on July 1. *Yes: Burt, Cormack, Filseth, Kou, Stone Absent: DiBrienza*

*Lobbying:* The council supported the city’s shift to a lobbying model in which the city focuses on fewer bills and takes a more active approach to influence legislation on issues of interest. *Yes: Unanimous*

*Telework:* The council approved a deal with Tesla for installation of 19 superchargers in the city’s garage at Bryant Street and Lytton Avenue. *Yes: Unanimous*

*Fireworks:* The council voted to approve two settlement agreements. *Settlements:*

**City Council (June 21)**

*Budget:* The council voted to approve the city budget and utility rates for fiscal year 2022. *Yes: Burt, DiBrienza, Kou, Stone No: Cormack, Filseth, Tanaka*

*Tesa:* The council approved a deal with Tesla for installation of 19 superchargers in the city’s garage at Bryant Street and Lytton Avenue. *Yes: Unanimous*

*Impact fees:* The council directed the planning director to approve a feasibility study for offering transferrable housing impact fees for commercial developments. *Yes: Burt, Cormack, DiBrienza, Filseth, Kou, Stone No: Tanaka*

*Buildings:* The council discussed a request from council members Burt, Kou and Stone about the rehabilitation of the Roth Building at 300 Homer Ave. to establish the Palo Alto Museum. The council directed staff to negotiate a lease with the Palo Alto Museum for the building. The council voted 6-1 to move ahead with the lease but split 4-3, with Cormack, Filseth and Tanaka dissenting, on a portion of the motion directing staff to continue a partnership with the museum for “mutual long-term success of the project.” *Yes: Burt, Cormack, DiBrienza, Filseth, Kou, Stone No: Tanaka*

**Board of Education (June 22)**

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Residents have been concerned about a rare Dawn redwood that is on USPS property and is imperiled due to lack of care.

Redwoods

(continued from page 5)

up 1% of Palo Alto’s street tree population. There are 925 redwoods under the city’s direct care, and about 1,500 private trees that the city prunes to keep utility lines clear. Many more redwoods are located on private property, and he said the city doesn’t know about their health.

Looking toward a drier and hotter future, over time, the city’s treescapes is likely to change inalterably. The drought and climate change likely “won’t wipe out but will diminish the population of redwoods to pre-development Palo Alto. There were very few (naturally occurring) redwoods; El Palo Alto is a notable exception,” Passmore said.

Palo Alto and the Bay Area have always been marginal places for redwoods to survive, given that they didn’t occur naturally here. Seeds from the city’s namesake tree, El Palo Alto, likely floated from the Santa Cruz Mountains down San Francisco Creek and deposited in the fertile soil bank. Fed and watered by nutrients and creek flow, the young tree was able to flourish and put down roots that took advantage of the moisture.

Today, a less robust El Palo Alto is still holding its own, Passmore said. But it now sports a mister at the top to help spray its leaves with water, a necessary man-made dew fall.

Adapted to coastal environments, the trees rely heavily on fog and dew fall for their water source, making them less resilient to climate change, Passmore said.

In a three-year study of redwood forests in coastal California, UC Berkeley biologist Todd Dawson found that redwoods capture tremendous quantities of moisture from fog.

For their own hydration, the redwoods used about 13% to 45% of the fog water for their annual transpiration, according to Dawson’s 1998 paper in the journal Oecologia.

With climate change and hotter and drier winds and less rainfall, the redwoods may not be able to adapt to situations slowly. Any quick change is difficult for trees to adapt to,” he said.

The redwood’s local survival is due in large part to irrigation. PASSMORE: said all trees adapt to their sites by storing water in their root systems. At Palo Alto Square, the trees are confined to restricted soil spaces and are less able to store water, Passmore noted. Then add drought into the mix, and the trees start to die.

“Even a minor drought will diminish their root systems. Trees adapt to situations slowly. Any quick change is difficult for trees to adapt,” he said.

The redwood’s local survival is due in large part to irrigation. Passmore said all trees adapt to their sites by storing water in their root systems. In suburban landscapes, they will grow their roots into irrigation systems and collect water that way. They can use the stored water to compensate for persistent drought.

The city is slowly converting its urban forest to more drought-tolerant trees. To replace the stately redwoods, it is looking to use trees that will maintain a similar stature and form to the redwoods, such as the incense cedar, but which are more drought-tolerant.

There is a way to prolong the redwood’s life and help it through an extended drought on residential and commercial properties. Gollinger and Passmore recommend slow, deep watering at the tree’s drip line during the summer months: about 30 to 60 minutes of watering each week and additional mulch if the tree is in bare earth, they said.

Email Staff Writer Sue Dremann at sdremann@paweekly.com.

Schools

(continued from page 7)

Regarding a claim on behalf of a special education student, whose name is being withheld due to standard confidentiality practices, as well as another settlement, as well as another settlement agreement of an undisclosed amount regarding an employee “discipline.dismissal/release” matter.

Both items were approved during a closed session.

The board also adopted the district’s 2021-22 budget, which was first discussed in a meeting on June 8.

In it, the district projects a $277.6 million in revenues. Though local property taxes are robust, with a $4.6 million increase over the previous fiscal year, the new budget represents a decrease of $17 million due to many one-time payments that were made to the district during the pandemic.

When looking purely at the recurring revenue coming into Palo Alto Unified, board member Todd Collins said previously in an interview that the district remains in “very solid financial conditions.”

Some board members on Tuesday, however, brought up concerns about what the financial implications might be if the neighboring Ravenswood City School District is designated as a basic aid school district, which means the district would be funded through local property taxes and receive only limited funding from the state. According to Chief Business Officer Carolyn Chow, “supplemental property taxes” is largely pushing the district into that category.

“There are some nuances to that,” Chow said, explaining that Ravenswood might be a case where the district “flips” in and out of the basic aid category.

Austin said he was surprised by the new designation and that it creates a “serious issue to collectively solve.” However, he and Chow later agreed they were “optimistic.”

Chow said she and Austin had a meeting on Monday that included district leaders of San Mateo County, including Nancy McGee, county superintendent of schools, that led them to believe that the district will come to a resolution that will “alleviate some of the budget concerns for all of the districts involved.”

Further details on that Monday meeting were not disclosed during Tuesday’s board meeting.

Email Editorial Assistant Lloyd Lee at lle@paweekly.com.

www.PaloAltoOnline.com • Palo Alto Weekly • June 25, 2021 • Page 13
Expert craftsmanship and luxurious interiors brimming with high-end appointments highlight this spacious and inviting 3-bedroom, 2.5-bathroom townhome located in The Willows neighborhood of Menlo Park. A beautiful staircase and deck made of clear heart redwood welcomes you, while oak floors, fine millwork, and finishes of walnut, porcelain, and marble create a stylish feel from the moment you step inside. Over 1,400 square feet of interior space includes the living room with a 2000w color-changing LED fireplace, the granite kitchen with cherry cabinetry and stainless-steel appliances, and the dining room with backyard access. Comfortable accommodations include the master suite with a stunning en suite bathroom, and a bedroom that easily converts to an office and features its own fireplace. Plus, this home is an entertainer’s dream, with an attached garage that can double as an entertainment room, a private backyard with a lush lawn and large clear heart redwood deck, and incredible, color-changing LED lighting features throughout the home that add to the ambiance. Topping it all off is a location that puts you just moments to both downtown Menlo Park and Palo Alto, Stanford University, and US 101, with access to top-ranked Menlo Park schools (according to My School Locator Menlo Park, buyer to verify eligibility).

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Offered at $1,198,000

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3719 HERON WAY
PALO ALTO

ECO-FRIENDLY URBAN TOWNHOME-STYLE LIVING

Stylish, sustainable living awaits in this contemporary, eco-friendly townhome that puts you close to everything Silicon Valley has to offer. High ceilings give the home a sense of openness, and tremendous natural light highlights beautifully refinished maple floors that extend throughout the gathering areas as well as the guest bedroom. Over 1,200 square feet of modern living space includes the sizable living room and dining room, plus a granite-appointed kitchen with stainless-steel appliances from Bosch and LG. The master suite with a private balcony highlights the home’s 3 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms, while the 2nd bedroom features an en suite bathroom for added comfort and convenience for friends and family alike. Adding to the appeal, this home features a laundry closet, and a 2-car garage with ample built-in storage. This green-point rated, award-winning complex is sure to appeal to eco-friendly sensibilities with energy efficient features including roof-mounted solar panels and a top-of-the-line Rinnai tankless water heater. Plus, this incredible location puts you close to major tech firms including Facebook and Google, convenient to beautiful parks such as Ramos and Mitchell, and a short drive to major commute routes including US 101 and Highway 85, with access to top-ranked Palo Alto schools (buyer to verify eligibility).

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Managing Broker: Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | www.deleonrealty.com | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224
Long time Palo Alto resident, Crystal Diete Gamage, passed away at her home on February 18, 2021 with her daugh-
ters by her side. She was 101 years and 7 months old. Her family is grateful that she had a long full life filled with family, many
accomplishments and good friends in a community she loved.

The Palo Alto Weekly interviewed Crystal in 1996 and said “It is hard to find anything in Palo Alto that has not
benefited from the involvement of Crystal Gamage in some way.” She was involved in a wide variety of groups and said “The
things I did I liked” and the Weekly said “She became president of nearly every group she joined”. She also felt it was
important to make sure you encouraged and mentored people “you were bringing along, making them enthusiastic, because
you don’t want to be president forever”.

Crystal was born in Chicago, Illinois to Edith Beyer Diete and Ernest A. Diete on July 12, 1919. Her bother, Richard, was
born the following year and they joined a large and supportive extended family in active family summer activities at their cot-
tage on the Fox River. Crystal was an active youth doing extremely well in academics and in sports - especially swimming. She
said her “parents encouraged her to do her best but there was no pressure to come in first but just to do her best”.

Crystal swam breaststroke for the Lake Shore Athletic Club and won many Chicago and Illinois titles. At the age of 16
she was selected as an alternate to the 1936 US Olympic Swim team. A few weeks later she received a telegram saying a breast-
stroker was sick and she should leave for Berlin (where the 1936 Olympics were held) but she could not get there in time in
time to compete as transportation was only by water and train!

Later that year she won the Illinois State Women's fencing title which she attributed not so much to her fencing technique but to
the great fencing experience she developed thru her swimming.

She graduated first in her class at Chicago's Senn High and was awarded a scholarship to Northwestern University where she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Mortar Board and graduated Summa Cum Laude. She was on the Northwestern swim team as well as president of the campus YMCA and the German Literature Club. She also trained as a Red Cross nurse's aid and volunteered in local hospitals during the
war years. Her years at Northwestern demonstrated a pattern of excellence and community involvement that she would follow through her life.

Crystal married Walt Gamage in 1943. In 1944 they headed to Washington State when they stopped in Palo Alto to visit a
friend who was graduating from Stanford. Walt worked in sales offices and was introduced to the editor, Eleanor Cogswell, who hired him on the spot to be the
sports editor - and Palo Alto became their life long home.

Crystal immediately got involved in the community by volunteering at the Palo Alto Hospital (Hoover Pavilion),
and joining the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and League of Women Voters (LWW) - she served as
the President of each of those local groups and went on to become the Vice President of the state LWV and head of their policy
committee on California water. Later she served on the Santa Clara Water Board. She also worked at the Hoover Institute for
the group that trained Navy officers to manage Japan after the surrender.

By 1950 Crystal and Walt had three young daughters. The family was active in the First Presbyterian Church - Crystal
taught Sunday school and played the piano for the children. Walt was on the building committee for the new church building and Crystal raised pledges for the
patio. The church had a wonderful 100th Birthday for Crystal in 2019.

Crystal was active in her daughter’s activities including PTA, Brownies, Girl Scouts, and being a welcoming mother
to her daughter’s friends. Hearing of her passing several of her daughter’s friends said she was like a second mother to them
which was the ultimate compliment!

In the summer the family spent time at Lake Tahoe and Fallen Leaf Lake - where Crystal would swim across the lake.

Over the years Crystal expanded her community involvement to include the Palo Alto Historical Foundation- she served as
President, she was one of the founders of Friends of the Palo Alto Library, she was a charter member of 1972 La Comida, the
senior nutrition program, she served on the Avenidas Board (Senior Center), she served on the board of the Channing
House for 20 years, was a director of the Museum of American Heritage, she served on the Santa Clara Grand Jury (the only
woman at the time) and was a member of the United Way Board for 10 years, coordin-
atating the corporate giving program as a volunteer. She was a board member of Foothills-De Anza Community College
Foundation, and a member of the Flood Control Advisory Board of the Santa Clara Valley District. She once said that she
liked solving problems and that is why she would get involved with an organization. She would not stay on a Board if she did
not think she could be helpful.

When her daughters were in high school, she had several high profile jobs. One of her favorites was director of Downtown
Palo Alto from 1969-1976. She especially liked working with the merchants and on the urban design project that planted
Sycamore trees on University Avenue. She said they brought a touch of the ‘Champs Elysees’ to University Avenue. The trees are still there!

She was the United Way from 1976-
1989 as director of allocations and special gifts for the United Way. When she retired the United Way director said they were replacing her with 3 people!

Crystal enjoyed supporting Stanford Athletics by awarding the Walter Gamage Scholarship each year. She appreciated the
dedication of Stanford athletes to their sport as well as to their studies - as she did at Northwestern. She followed a variety of sports and could tell many back stories because of her husband’s long involvement with sports in California.

Her friends were far and wide…with so many in Palo Alto over the years. She enjoyed playing bridge and being a “Life”
group, Gamble Gardens and the Palo Alto Garden Club. Zoom connected her to some groups but she missed the per-
sonal connections. She still followed the PaloAlto City Council!

She had friends of all ages as that is how she lived her life…engaging with people because of who they were, not about their age,
race or religion. She loved her church and being involved in the community.

Her accomplishments were vast but her love of her family was always the most important to her. Her family will tell you
how important her support and encour-
gement was to them. She is survived by
her three daughters and their spouses, Crystal Gray, Carol and Phil Ferris and Cynthia Gamage. She was blessed with 4
grandchildren, Chris Gray (Susan Gray), Heather Ferris Basso (Greg Basso), Tracey Ferris Morgan (Kevin Morgan), and Brian
Ferris (Audra Ferris). In addition, she is survived by 8 great grandchildren 14 years old and younger – Jack and Travis
Gray, Abby and Emerson Morgan, Grace and Michael Basso and Walter and Duke Ferris.

When she reached 100 years she told one of her daughters “I do not feel young nor do I feel old. I feel like a human of indeter-
minate age and that feels freeing”.

She was loved by many and will be
missed by all.

The family will hold a remembrance in the fall when all our great grandchildren have been vaccinated. Please email cyn-
thetaigamage@gmail.com if you would like to be notified.

If you would like to remember Crystal consider supporting:

- La Comida www.lacomida.org
- Garden Club of Palo Alto www.gardenclubofpaloalto.org
- Gamble Garden www.gamblegarden.org
- Palo Alto Historical Association www.pahistory.org
- Walter Gamage Scholarship Fund-Stanford University, (650) 725-4360

Crystal D. Gamage
July 12, 1919 – February 18, 2021
Peter Quarré
July 10, 1930 – June 9, 2021

Peter Quarré passed away on June 9th after a long battle with Parkinson’s disease. Our Dad was a friendly, happy, fun-loving guy. We miss him tremendously.

Peter was born in San Francisco, CA to Oxnard and Catherine Quarré and was the fourth of five children. He was reared in San Francisco and went to Catholic school until just before high school when his family moved to Paicines, CA. The Quarré ranch grew walnut trees and raised livestock.

Peter enlisted in the US Air Force in 1949. He was a staff sergeant and worked as an aircraft mechanic and flight mechanic on the C-54 aircraft.

Shortly after Pete completed his Air Force commitment, his cousin arranged a date for him with her beautiful fellow grade school teacher, Rita Bettini. The attraction was instant.

Pete and Rita were married in 1955 at the Church of the Nativity in Menlo Park, CA and soon had three sons, Richard, Bill, and Steve. They raised their children in Menlo Park with extended family nearby. The Quarré home was always celebrating something and filled with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and neighbors. Pete was happily involved with the boys, helping coach Little League baseball, fishing and camping trips, and leading Cub Scout outings.

During his working years, Pete worked at his brother-in-law’s gas station before beginning a 20 year career as an aircraft mechanic for United Airlines at their maintenance base in San Francisco.

He developed an interest in all forms of transportation, including airplanes, trains, trucks, farm equipment, ships, motorcycles, and bicycles. Later, he would instill his interest in flying in his eldest son and grandson. This photo of Pete was taken on a flight he enjoyed with his grandson, Ross Quarré. Though Pete enjoyed all things mechanical, his true passion was sailing and boating.

While his boys were growing up, Pete acquired his Coast Guard captain’s license. He crewed numerous charters, including two of his first two stints with IBM. In 1969, he was co-founder of Scientific Time-Sharing Corporation, and in 1972 he co-wrote one of the first worldwide email systems, “Mailbox.” For his work implementing APL, Larry was one of three recipients of the Grace Murray Hopper Award in 1973, which recognized significant contributions from those under age 30. The Computer History Museum, Mountain View, CA, will be a place of honor for Larry’s contributions, especially regarding APL, so significant in the history of computing.

Larry assisted the team installing Christo’s “The Umbrellas” in Southern California in 1990, and “The Gates” in Central Park, N.Y., 2005. The inventiveness of his youth flourished in the artistic triumph of “The Chaotic,” the longest-enduring art installation at Burning Man besides the “Man” itself. His eloquent essay, with a magnificent photo of his creation, can be found online under “Larry Breed, The Chaotic.”

After his first Burning Man experience in 1995, Larry (aka “Ember”) initiated the 1996 build of city C’s Black Rock’s “Trash Fence,” a mile-long structure of black netting which effectively kept wind-borne debris, MOOP (“matter-out-of-place”), from escaping onto the playa. Having attended one year with Larry, daughter Emily and son Nick Baban joined him for four more years at Burning Man in their capacity as Black Rock Rangers. Instrumental in the “Leave No Trace” training of the Earth Guardians at Burning Man, Larry became a “Master of the Chaotic,” the longest-enduring art installation at Burning Man besides the “Man.”

Larry’s 3rd place win in Mathematics at the National Science Fair won him a four-year scholarship to Stanford, where he created the first computer animation language and system to simulate running automobiles for Stanford’s football games in 1961 while an undergraduate. In 1965, having moved into the nascent field of computer science, he completed his M.S., a member of the first class in that new endeavor at Stanford.

Larry’s work on APL (A Programming Language) and its implementation was a third field for many years, including his first of two stints with IBM. In 1969, he was co-founder of Scientific Time-Sharing Corporation, and in 1972 he co-wrote one of the first worldwide email systems, “Mailbox.” For his work implementing APL, Larry was one of three recipients of the Grace Murray Hopper Award in 1973, which recognized significant contributions from those under age 30. The Computer History Museum, Mountain View, CA, will be a place of honor for Larry’s contributions, especially regarding APL, so significant in the history of computing.

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While his boys were growing up, Pete acquired his Coast Guard captain’s license. He crewed numerous charters, including two lengthy trips. On one trip, he sailed a large sailboat from Hawaii to the West Coast, and on another outing, took a motor yacht through the Panama Canal.

In 1990, both Pete and Rita retired and moved to Washington State to be closer to their son’s families. They settled in Kirkland where both made friends and found volunteer opportunities. Pete offered years of service to the Kirkland Police Department and Holy Family Parish.

Pete and Rita traveled often and enjoyed trips to Alaska, Mexico, Europe, Australia, Central America, the East Coast, and many road trips across the United States. They especially loved the summer months spent boating and vacationing with the grandkids on beautiful Lake Chelan.

Pete’s greatest dedication in life was to his family: his beloved wife and life’s companion and soulmate, wife Beverly Radin; daughter Emily Moser Breed and Nick Baban; brother Charles Everett (Chett) Breed and Suanna; sister Lucinda Breed Lenich and Rob; and cousins, nieces, and nephews.

Donations in Larry’s memory may be made to Avenues Rose Kleiner Center, Palo Alto; Mission Hospice, San Mateo; or to the charity of your choice.

A Celebration of Larry’s life is planned for September 12 at 1:00 p.m. at the Computer History Museum, 1401 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View.
In response to ‘Divided City Council approves budget, avoids service cuts’
Posted June 22 at 9:23 a.m. by Phil Carmody, a resident of Barron Park:
“The libraries at Rinconada and Mitchell Park should open seven days a week with afternoon Sunday hours. The Downtown and College Terrace libraries are too small to be taken seriously and a bookmobile would suffice in those two areas. It is about time the Palo Alto City Council took a stand against City Manager Ed Shikada’s tight-fisted authoritarian management style, and besides, city managers come and go. They are replaceable. And speaking of the police force ... it is easily replaceable as well, and the current officers should consider taking a pay cut given that they don’t do a whole lot around here.”

In response to ‘Toll collection for U.S. Highway 101 express lanes in San Mateo County to start at year’s end’
Posted June 21 at 11:02 a.m. by Andrew Boone, a resident of Woodside community:
“Widening Highway 101 from eight to 10 lanes in new toll lanes in San Mateo County will only make car traffic congestion worse, not better. Every single highway expansion that has ever been constructed in the Bay Area (and almost everywhere in the world except places with drastic population declines such as Detroit) has had the same result — more car traffic and more congestion. The reason is induced demand — if you build more highway lanes, more people will drive on the highway and more often — thus negating the small increase in traffic capacity the new lanes provide. This has been understood by transportation experts for nearly 100 years, ever since the first highways were constructed in New York by Robert Moses.

Watch and see how (Belmont Mayor) Charles Stone and (San Mateo County Supervisor) Dave Pine have wasted $600 million of our taxpayer dollars with these new ‘Lexus’ lanes. That’s a lot of public money that could have been invested in transit improvements and safety fixes to enable more people to walk and bike. For that much money, we could’ve built level boarding platforms at every Caltrain station, doubled SamTrans bus service and more. Instead it was wasted on generating more car traffic, more air pollution, more car crashes and more serious injuries and deaths. This was the most incompetent transportation decision made in San Mateo County in over a decade. Remember that when these career politicians run for higher office, they would do even more damage if elected.”

In response to ‘Opinion: Robust connectivity is critical to Palo Alto’s future’
Posted June 19 at 3:10 p.m. by Laurian Decker, a resident of Stanford:
“Though 5G coverage has yet to be fully expanded (with the possible exception of the T-Mobile network), it is the wave of the future and Palo Alto should allow as many 5G cell towers as it can reasonably accommodate. The tin hat carcinogenic theorists and cell tower noise sensitives can either go back to using a landline or a payphone (if one is even accessible).

Just don’t hold up technological progress.”

In response to ‘Shifting politics boost Palo Alto’s quest for a history museum’
Posted June 19 at 9:54 a.m. by Ariel Fleming, a resident of Crescent Park:
“Palo Alto would not have become a noteworthy town had Leland Stanford built his university elsewhere. There would have been no Stanford University (Electrical Engineering) Department and thus no former graduates like Hewlett and Packard starting a company in a Palo Alto garage. And subsequently no future Silicon Valley as many other early electronics pioneers and entrepreneurs also graduated from the Stanford EE program.

And there would have been no Dr. Shumway performing revolutionary heart transplants because there probably wouldn’t have been a Stanford Hospital and various research facilities. The full credit for Palo Alto’s emergence belongs to Stanford University. Without Stanford, the history of Palo Alto consists of an old worn-down tree, the original Ohlone inhabitants and Gaspar de Portola passing through on his way to Menlo Park.”

In response to ‘Facing division over Ventura plan, Palo Alto delays action’
Posted June 15 at 4:41 a.m. by Cedric de La Bausajdier, a resident of Barron Park:
“Throughout the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP) process I’ve advocated for a particular land-use design pattern, which I think would satisfy many of the criteria for a successful plan. I have modeled this design pattern in the hopes that it may provide the council and community with a successful resolution of the NVCAP challenge. In a nutshell, I modeled a few multi-family residential and mixed-use buildings in a form I call the Garden Apartment and arranged them within the North Ventura area. The design is pedestrian oriented, humanist and ecologically beneficial. It brings significant additional housing and park space to the area along with a mix of retail, commercial and community space, all within a human-scale envelope, which respects adjacent single-family residences.

The essential form of the Garden Apartment is a building terraced such that every occupant has access to roof-top gardens. Its animating principle is that every person should have a home and access to nature.

This proposal is midway between the medium- and high-density alternatives and has a much reduced impact, particularly on neighboring single-family residences. It offers more than 1,400 bedrooms, 1 million square feet of residential space, 1 million square feet of open space and 334,000 square feet of commercial space (a net decrease of 50,000 square feet from existing uses). It preserves the most historically significant and visually interesting portions of the historic site: the section of the cannery building with the monitor roofs and the ranch house on Ash Street and Portage Avenue. From a bird’s-eye view, most surfaces are naturalized open space.

Keep in mind that the dimensions, spacing and distribution of residential vs commercial could be adjusted to best meet the community’s needs.”

Letters

Merchants should weigh in on music
Editor,
My husband and I recently went to California Avenue to enjoy a meal at La Boheme as we do often. When we came out of the underpass to walk up to the restaurant, we were met with the sound of what we thought was a marching band and looked for a parade of some sort. But no, it was the sound of a drum band set up directly across from the restaurant in the middle of the day while people were eating lunch at both our restaurant and Joanie’s Cafe next door.

The noise was very loud, and talking through it was impossible. La Boheme was almost deserted and the manager, Marie, told us that the band had started up at noon. She said it had come from the city of Palo Alto, although no one consulted her. She also said that she had already hired a French musician to play appropriate lunchtime music for the restaurant but that the drum band made it impossible, and the musician had left. After enduring an hour of the drum band, they stopped but announced they would be back at 5 p.m. to play for the dinner crowd.

Don’t you think, that after the infamous tree affair, city hall would have learned that consultation with the local merchants on California Avenue is essential before making decisions about the street? We do not know who chose this band but wonder at the decision and politely request that it not happen again during lunch on a weekend.

Brigid Barton and Rob Robinson
Webster Street, Palo Alto

More bikes, fewer cars
Editor,
I had to make a stop on Cali- fornia Avenue this afternoon and noticed to my amazement as I was biking up it that every single bike rack has a bike locked to it! I was over the moon. The city has been trying for decades to do all that it can to enable cycling, but more often than not, those bike racks stand empty.

I’ve also noticed that the bicycle-pedestrian underpass is full of bikes and pedestrians at all times of the day and night. This is astounding. In my half century of residence, it’s never been like this. I think it’s because of California Avenue being closed to cars. All the bustling of people and activity and humanity out on the streets is, hands down, the best thing that has happened in Palo Alto in my long, long residence here.

With the new, humongous parking garage on Sherman Avenue, stopping and shopping, (even with a car) should be easy. Add some electric rental scooters and you will have, oh, my God, dare I say it, a good quality of life.

Deborah Golden
Birch Street, Palo Alto
Showcasing the perfect blend of contemporary and traditional architectural elements, this stylishly remodeled three bedroom, one bathroom cottage also offers a fully equipped separate studio with a bathroom and kitchenette. Light and bright with a crisp white palette, open floor plan and designer finishes throughout, this home and studio have been completely transformed for the way we live, work and entertain today. The setting is divine with thoughtfully designed drought tolerant gardens that provide beauty and ease of maintenance, mature perimeter trees and modern fencing for privacy, artificial turf for fun-filled play, planted herbs and veggies for the casual chef and a terrace for outdoor entertaining. Located in the popular Willows neighborhood, this inviting retreat is in close proximity to excellent Menlo Park schools, convenient commute routes, the shops and restaurants of downtown Palo Alto, Stanford University, leading tech companies like Facebook, and Zoe’s Cafe, a neighborhood favorite, just down the street!

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STYLISH RETREAT IN THE WILLOWS
A sense of belonging

Short Story Contest authors reflect on unconventionally formed bonds forged in unexpected moments

Whether or not influenced by the abrupt and widespread isolation people around the globe experienced during the past year, the first-place winners of this year’s Palo Alto Weekly Short Story Contest all submitted pieces that examine the need for people to feel connected to the world around them. Each of the writers draws upon their personal experiences and those of people around them to weave together stories that uncover the things around us — people, nature and objects — that provide comfort and meaning in our lives.

From the two siblings accustomed to bouncing from home to home who finally find a sense of belonging when a colony of bees nest outside their bedroom to the socially awkward high school loners who form unexpected friendships, the stories and biographies of all winners and honorable mentions can be found at PaloAltoOnline.com/short_story.

Winners

**Young Adult:** 15-17 years old
First place: “Not The Unusual,” by Claire Xu
Second place: “Sweaty Hands,” by Skylar Hedblom
Third place: “Memento,” by Jessica Wang

**Teen:** 12-14 years old
First place: “The train to Nowhere,” by Aaminah Memon
Second place: “Flying,” by Eirie Youn
Third place: “Too Far,” by Elise Chang

**Adult:** 18 years and older
First place: “The First Time,” by Inna Tsirlin
Second place: “No Place Like Home,” by Sylvia E. Halloran
Third place: “Stones,” by Cary Kelly

Judges for the Adult and Young Adult categories

**Meg Waite Clayton**
Meg Waite Clayton, a New York Times and USA Today bestseller and book club favorite, is the author of seven novels. Her most recent, the Jewish Book Award finalist “The Last Train to London,” is a national bestseller in the U.S., Canada and the Netherlands, and is published or forthcoming in 19 languages. Her screenplay for the novel was chosen for the prestigious Meryl Streep- and Nicole Kidman-sponsored The Writers Lab.

**Debbie Duncan**
Debbie Duncan has been reviewing children’s books for the Palo Alto Weekly since 1997. She is the author of the Benjamin Franklin Award-winning picture book “When Molly Was in the Hospital,” as well as a book for parents, “Joy of Reading.” She also contributes to the Perspectives series of commentaries on KQED radio. When she isn’t reading books to find the best share with Weekly readers, she’s writing her own middle-grade novel or hanging out on Twitter, @debbieduncan.

**Nancy Etchemendy**
Nancy Etchemendy’s novels, short fiction and poetry have appeared regularly for the past 40 years, both in the U.S. and abroad. Her work has earned a number of awards, including three Bram Stoker Awards and an International Horror Guild Award. “Cat in Glass and Other Tales of the Unnatural,” her collection of short dark fantasy, was named an ALA Best Book for Young Adults. Her most recent work is “Odd Company,” an online publication about compassion and conversations between people who disagree (free to the public at nancyetchemendy.substack.com). Etchemendy lives and works in Palo Alto.

**Marjorie Sayer**
Marjorie Sayer writes books with a multicultural and interdisciplinary perspective. Her middle-grade novel, “The Girl Mechanic of Wanzhou,” is a winner of the Scholastic Asia Book Award. Her nonfiction for adults has appeared in O’Reilly Media, and her recreational math books have been used in clubs throughout the country. She enjoys bicycle travel, her family and the friendship of her cats. She blogs about her interests at marjoriesayer.com.

**Caryn Hubberman Yacowitz**
Caryn Hubberman Yacowitz is the author of children’s books and plays. Her picture books are widely anthologized and included in the Junior Great Books and Junior Library Guild selections. “Baby Moses in a Basket” (Candlewick Press) is her newest picture book. During the pandemic, she’s been recording her misadventures in Hebrew school and caring for a Norwegian Forest Cat. For more information, go to carynyacowitz.com.

**Tom Parker**
A well-known, local fiction-writing teacher and coach, memoirist, co-author and developmental editor, Tom Parker is an O. Henry Prize-winning short-story writer and author of the novels “Anna, Ann, Annie” and “Small Business.” His work has appeared in Harper’s and has been reviewed in The New Yorker. He has taught at Stanford, the University of California, Berkeley, and Foothill and Cañada community colleges. His website is tomparkerwrites.com.

Thank You

The following businesses co-sponsored the 35th Annual Short Story Contest, providing prizes for winners in all categories.

1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park

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536 Emerson St., Palo Alto

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The Palo Alto Weekly thanks all of the writers who submitted stories for this year’s contest; the judges for the Adult and Young Adult categories, Tom Parker, Meg Waite Clayton and Debbie Duncan; and the Teen category judges Caryn Hubberman Yacowitz, Marjorie Sayer and Nancy Etchemendy.

Lastly, the Weekly extends its gratitude to the contest co-sponsors, Bell’s Books of Palo Alto, Kepler’s Books of Menlo Park and Linden Tree Children’s Books of Los Altos.
The black leather boot was poking Sasha's side painfully as the gray morning settled in, but Miron pressed it tightly to his body. Its sole was full of dry mud, and pieces of it chipped off and crumbled all over the bed sheets, speckling the whites with gray and brown. The police had brought back the boots and clothes yesterday afternoon. Pastora T-shirt, old acid-wash jeans, mismatched socks, a gray one with navy stripes and a brown one with a hole on the big toe, and the boots. These boots were a cause for envy among all Sasha's classmates. Dr. Martens, a generous gift to Miron from his cousin who immigrated to the U.S. two years ago. Miron swore he will get Galina a pair when she finally goes to visit his cousin in New York. Now, one of the boots lay on the floor by the wall, a useless piece of shaped leather, and the other was poking Sasha's ribs, as if trying to kick him in the heart.

Yesterday morning Sasha woke up at 5am. He stayed quietly in his bed, not to disturb Mom in the adjacent room, and thought about how the day was going to unfold. It was going to be a slow day at school, only math, Russian and gym, and a group of them had been planning to ditch after the first double period. Miron and the others were going to hang out by the Nameless Lake and try to catch some fish. Sasha and Lenka to come along. But they had other plans. Better plans. Sasha felt an emptiness in his stomach and that of the others, staring up at Lenka's image in his mind. Lenka had soft ash blond hair with an uneven fringe and an edgy body, as if it were constantly at war with her young lover's chisel, waiting to be refined. Her eyes were the dark gray of St. Petersburg's winter sky. She was a beloved of the neighborhood's strays and the homeless with her casual kindness and pockets full of dog snacks, cigarettes and small change. Sasha imagined her leaning over him with her bangs pricked into his mouth, smiling with her full lips, as Lenka pretended to be a little dry from the warmth of the room. They will do it today. Sasha clenched his fists tight, pleasure filling his body, almost painfully.

The others had finally reached the lake and were now sitting on an old chequered blanket by the water. In the summers, the narrow gravel beach was packed with gray-faced people, escaping their wall-papered apartments for coveted sunlight. But it was snowing inside and the sense of dread is palpable to the reader even as Sasha and Miron remain oblivious engaged with their friends. And the tragedy that results is convincingly, gorgeously and movingly delivered. No pair of Dr. Martens will ever look the same.

— Debbie Duncan, Meg Waite Clayton, Tim Parker
Stylish living awaits in this bright, updated, 4-bedroom, 2-bathroom home that enjoys a convenient location close to top tech companies, great shopping and dining options, beautiful parks, and eco-friendly public transportation. The gated courtyard leads to the front door, and inside, hardwood floors extend throughout the traditional floorplan of over 1,200 square feet. A beamed, paneled ceiling crowns the living room with a centerpiece fireplace, the kitchen features new quartz countertops and a suite of new stainless-steel appliances, and the dining area includes outdoor access. Comfortable bedrooms are highlighted by the master suite with a private outdoor entrance and renovated bathroom, while the backyard offers great space for outdoor enjoyment with patio space and a newly planted lawn. Plus, this home features an attached 2-car garage. Just moments to Google, this home is also convenient to numerous parks including Monta Loma and Rengstorff, and The Village at San Antonio Center is approximately 1 mile away. And for Bay Area commuting, this location is just a short trip to Caltrain, and it provides easy access to Highway 85 and US 101.

**OPEN HOUSE: SATURDAY & SUNDAY 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM**

**www.2523Betlo.com**

Offered at $1,888,000

Listed by Audrey Sun of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in Santa Clara County

Data from BrokerMetrics® based on MLS sales from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, in Santa Clara County, residential properties, with no off-MLS sales included in the rankings.

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Managing Broker: Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | www.deleonrealty.com | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224
14100 BERRY HILL LANE
LOS ALTOS HILLS

EXPANSIVE AND STYLISH ON OVER AN ACRE

The peaceful, verdant backdrop of Los Altos Hills provides the perfect setting for this luxurious home set on a lot of over an acre. Introduced by a gated paver driveway, this home welcomes you with a striking brick portico, while luxurious appointments including marble finishes, inlaid hardwood floors, and fine millwork craft a stylish ambiance from the moment you step inside. Over 3,900 square feet of interior space includes highlights such as 5 total fireplaces, expansive formal rooms scaled for entertaining, the family room with a wet bar and backyard access, and the granite-appointed chef’s kitchen with appliances from Viking and Sub-Zero. The home’s 4 bedrooms and 5 total bathrooms feature a privately located guest suite, plus the incredible master suite with a spa-like bathroom. The entertainment options continue outdoors, where the backyard offers ample patio space, colorful plantings, and a sparkling pool and spa. And for added convenience, this home features a 3-car garage along with plenty of parking for guests. Moments to numerous nature preserves, this home is also a short trip from downtown Palo Alto, Stanford University, and downtown Los Altos, and provides convenient access to Interstate 280 for Bay Area commuting. Plus, this home is served by acclaimed Palo Alto schools (buyer to verify eligibility).

OPEN HOUSE: SATURDAY & SUNDAY 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM
www.14100BerryHill.com
Offered at $4,788,000

Listed by Michael Repka of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in Los Altos Hills

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3732 LAGUNA AVENUE
PALO ALTO

BRIGHT AND SPACIOUS IN BARRON PARK

On an expansive corner cul-de-sac lot in the sought-after neighborhood of Barron Park rests this light-filled 4-bedroom, 3-bathroom home of almost 2,200 square feet. Gleaming hardwood floors extend throughout the traditional floorplan highlighted by the living room with a centerpiece brick fireplace, the formal dining room catered from the eat-in kitchen, and the inviting family room with a fireplace all its own. The master suite provides a private retreat, while the home’s additional bedrooms all offer comfort and convenience for friends and family alike. Outside, the sizable courtyard patio offers great space for entertaining, while colorful plantings and fruit trees populate the grounds. Plus, this home includes a large detached garage that can be used as a fitness center, music room, or office space to work from home in style. Just down the street from beautiful Bol Park, this home takes full advantage of Barron Park’s peaceful, private feel while still being a short drive away from downtown Palo Alto and Stanford University. And, acclaimed Palo Alto schools Barron Park Elementary, Fletcher Middle, and Gunn High are all just minutes away (buyer to verify eligibility).

OPEN HOUSE: SATURDAY & SUNDAY 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM
www.3732Laguna.com
Offered at $3,188,000

 Listed by Alexandra Wilbur of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in Palo Alto

Data from BrokerMetrics® based on MLS sales from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, in Palo Alto, residential properties, with no off-MLS sales included in the rankings.

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Managing Broker: Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | www.deleonrealty.com | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224
170 HAWTHORNE AVENUE
PALO ALTO

This beautifully renovated Craftsman home offers modern, stylish living space and an incredible location just blocks from the exciting amenities of University Avenue. Handsomely appointed with rich hardwood floors and impeccable millwork, the traditional floorplan offers plenty of space for entertaining and everyday living, beginning with the expansive living room centered by a fireplace, and continuing into the dining room that opens to the chef’s kitchen with stainless-steel appliances and a breakfast bar. The lower level offers office space allowing you to work from home in style, as well as a convenient kitchenette. Friends and family alike will find comfortable accommodations in the home’s 4 bedrooms, including the spacious master suite with a private entrance, while the detached studio includes a kitchen, bathroom, and laundry. Just moments to chic downtown eateries and boutiques, this home is also close to beautiful parks, as well as Stanford University, Stanford Shopping Center, Caltrain, and acclaimed schools Addison Elementary, Greene Middle, and Palo Alto High.

OPEN HOUSE: SATURDAY & SUNDAY 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

www.170HawthorneAve.com
Offered at $3,488,000

Listed by Michael Repka and Alex Wilbur of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in Palo Alto

Data from BreakBot Inc. based on MLS sales from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, in Palo Alto, residential properties, with no off-MLS sales included in the rankings.

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Managing Broker: Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | www.deleonrealty.com | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224
‘Not the Unusual’

By Claire Xu

Claire Xu

First-place winner, Young Adult category

Claire Xu is a sophomore at Gunn High School and lives in Palo Alto. As a writer, she hopes to use her stories to start conversations about issues she cares about. Besides writing, Claire devotes her time to various student clubs at Gunn. She serves as an officer of Gunn Business and is a member of the Green Team and a Science Olympiad. She also enjoys programming, playing music and drawing. The inspiration for “Not the Unusual” came to Claire last April when a hive of bees decided to move into the HVAC system of her house. “I still remember pulling up the window shutters and just staring in awe at the swarm flying around our balcony. Of course, we had to call in people to have the bees relocated, but instead of being relieved after the bees left, I found myself feeling a little sad, like I didn’t want them to go. Eventually, I decided to capture these emotions in a story and write about impermanence, as well as explore what it means to belong and have a home.”

Judges’ comments

In “Not the Unusual,” two siblings, who are forever being moved from one home to another, find fascinating comfort in a colony of bees. The story is strong and uses fresh prose and wonderful dialogue to bring Mags and Oleander alive and into our hearts.

— Debbie Duncan, Meg Waite Clayton, Tom Parker

I

started with bodies in the bathroom. Then, the humming
began. Mags noticed it first, as she was the only one still fully awake. She sat at the desk with her chin propped up on her hand, reading the open pages of “What IT?: Serious Scientific Answers to Absurd Hypothetical Questions” while Oleander lay on the bed with a borrowed coding textbook, about to nod off.

The heaviness of summertime quarantining was upon them. It spilled in from the windowsill of their new apartment and pooled around their bodies, so thick and viscous that even lifting an arm became an arduous task. Oleander could feel the weight on his eyelids, and the book fell slack in his hands. He felt that he could finally rest without worrying, now that they had a place to stay.

“Ollie!”

Mag’s tone was urgent. It was the same voice that his parents used when ushering them out in the middle of night before the landlord came the next morning to demand the rent.

“You?”

Did something happen?”

“Do you hear that?” asked Mags.

The world swam in front of him as he sat up, blood suddenly rushing out of his head. He tried to listen for it.

“Hear what?”

“That noise,” she said. “Sounds like Dad’s old leaf blower.”

As he sat up Oleander discerned it: a low, buzzing noise that seemed to rise and fall as it circled through crescentos and decrescendos. Its spontaneity indeed reminded him of the leaf blower his father had bought at a local flea market, back when they were living in their rental

in Oakland. Although the machine was quite old and practically falling apart, and it seemed on the curb just to get to<br/>splat to life, his father would still go out whenever he could to clean the leaves from the following lawn in front of their house.

“You and Mags have something nice to play,” he’d said as he stood hunched over, preparing to pull the cord again, “and it’s the least I can do to make our house look nice.” Afterward, he sat on the porch and watched Mags. Mags held fallen tree branches in their hands, pretending the chain link fence that surrounded them was a castle wall, knights ordered to protect it. “Be
gone!” they shouted, brandishing their makeshift swords. “This is our home!”

It almost seemed to Oleander later on that they weren’t just playing, but were also trying to fend off the invisible enemy — unemployment and economic downturns — that would drag them away each time they settled into a new place. They were even more adamant in protecting that Oakland, as it was the only house they’d ever lived in. In the past, they would just move from apartment to apartment, finding remnants of previous tenant’s lives stained into the carpet or etched on the wall, or left in forgotten tubes of toothpaste in the bathroom drawers. Nothing had ever felt like theirs until they rented that place.

“We’d understand that, right?”

“Yeah,” Oleander said quietly, “but they don’t belong in the city either.”

“They don’t have anything better,” Mags retorted. “Don’t you remember when we were living in Oakland? And the old little house that we loved, with the fence around it and the yard? Then the landlord booted us out after eight months because we couldn’t pay. Do you really want to do that to them?”

She gestured toward the door. When Oleander didn’t respond, she turned and reached for the door handle of the balcony.

“What are you doing?”

“Going out,” she replied nonchalantly.

“With a million of those? Are you crazy?”

“There aren’t that many,” she said, “but if I get stung, I’ll come back in.”

He knew he couldn’t stop her. Mags was always the first to report a rodent infestation by holding a live mouse in her hand, or a cockroach problem by coming into the living room covered in them and laughing. “They’re Madagascar hissing cockroaches,” she had giggled, almost proudly, as their mother frantically tugged her outside to smack off each bug one by one. There was simply no way to tell Mags what to do and what not to do. Once she was set on doing something, she did it, no matter how many times Oleander pleaded otherwise.

Now, he watched as Mags shut the door and gazed up at the wall of dusty bodies, gold and brown stripes shimmering under glassy wings as they slipped into the hole in the side of their apartment. A few flew around her, but she didn’t seem to mind it at all, not even when one settled onto her outstretched palms, or when more landed on her bright yellow shirt. It was as if her fingers were the curled petals of a flower, and Mags a strange-looking plant, that the bees were drawn to. Oleander wanted to call out “We don’t even know if you’re allergic yet!” But, he only stood there silently as the bees gathered on his shirt and hung in clumps from her hair, and she smiled when they realized she in fact was not a flower and began to fly off.

After she’d gently nudged the remaining few from her hand, she came inside.

“Somewhere, you didn’t get stung,” Oleander said, shutting the door behind her. “I thought they’d be mad at us for the dead ones in the bathroom.”

“The bees that came in from the vent, got stuck, and then died because they couldn’t get out!”

“Yeah,” he let out the breath he’d been holding. “Can bees be mad though? Do they have feelings?”

“Either way,” said Mags, “we can’t let Mom and Dad find out. They’re our secret.”

For the rest of the week, the bees were on their minds constantly. They kept the curtains open during the day but closed them immediately when their parents got home. But as long as the bees were there, and they could hear the faint buzzing in the background, they felt comforted.

The morning a week after their discovery, someone knocked at the door. Oleander awoke to the sound of voices down the hall. It wasn’t an unusual thing to wake up to. It was either his parents arguing over the bills they had to pay or a landlord giving them their last warning and rent. He got up quietly, trying not to wake Mags, and made his way to the living room, where his mother was standing in the doorway talking to a man dressed in a white beekeeper suit.

“What’s going on?”

His mother sighed. “We have a bee infestation.”

Oleander feigned a look of surprise.

“The landlord called people over to remove them,” she continued, “They’re here now to do that.”

Mags emerged from the bedroom. When she saw the beekeeper, her face went white.

They watched as the beekeeper walked across their living room, his suit making a whirring sound and his equipment dragging behind him. He went onto the balcony to set things up, and before long, they could see him using his equipment to suck the bees into a container.

“I feel sick,” Mags whispered.

“Why?”

“It feels like that time we went to Grandma’s place, and were waiting in the car while Dad talked to her. Do you remember the look on her face?”

(continued on page 29)
M eg, Andrea, Riley and Zeke wake up in a train compartment — they were never sleeping, yet their eyes flicker open, and they all stumble groggily to their feet as if just woken from a deep slumber. They are on a train — but it isn’t the right train.

This train is wide and spacious, open and eerie. Silence creeps through the room and fills it like a living being. The stained-glass windows reveal a dark purple sky splattered with glowing white stars. Which doesn’t make any sense, Zeke notes, given just a second ago, it was very clearly day.

But the sky above them is very obviously a night sky. Which doesn’t make any sense. The windows reveal a dark purple sky with stars. The Conductor says. “A title. It holds no meaning.”

Silence. Once again, fills the train compartment — they’re never sleeping, yet their eyes are wide open. The Conductor hasn’t spoken in a split second, so they remain in a deep slumber.

Zeke had been walking down the train’s crowded hallways. Andrea had just stepped onto the train.

Riley had been running toward the train, scrambling, having forgotten to set her alarm — again. Riley’s mother hadn’t understood how she could be so stupid — Riley didn’t understand, either. No one answers Meg’s question. None of them can. Meg waits.

Silence, once again, fills the train compartment — they’re never sleeping, yet their eyes are wide open. The Conductor hasn’t spoken in a split second, so they remain in a deep slumber.

Zeke was sleeping, but again, she was never sleeping. She smiled so large it didn’t quite fit on her face. “Eldritch,” It repeats.

It’s someone else’s, and Andrea doesn’t like it. The current happiness isn’t hers. It’s a fake happiness, nothing like the one hand, the constant whirlwind of negative emotions that always tries to drown her is gone. On the other hand, the happiness feels fake, artificial, nothing like true happiness. Riley wants real happiness, not these imposter feelings.

Andrea simply doesn’t like it. She’s not reading, Aaminah Memon enjoys spending time with her family and friends. Aaminah was inspired to write this story after observing how unawake people can become of the things around them. “Nowadays, especially in light of the pandemic, it’s very easy to get caught up in your own life, so much so you’re completely unaware of the people and the world around you. I’ve seen plenty of instances of this in my own house — times when I myself am so caught up in homework or even my own writing that I keep forgetting there are other people than just me in my home and around the world.”

Riley is in the same boat. On the one hand, the constant whirlwind of negative emotions that always tries to drown her is gone. On the other hand, the happiness feels fake, artificial, nothing like true happiness. Riley wants real happiness, not these imposter feelings.

Andrea simply doesn’t like the thought of someone messing with her head, her emotions, her feelings. Those were hers and hers alone. Even when she’s sad, that sadness belongs to her. The current happiness isn’t hers. It’s someone else’s, and Andrea doesn’t like it.

(continued on page 28)
Train to Nowhere
(continued from page 27)

Meg speaks up.
"Where do you think we're going, anyway?"

"That — that thing said we were going where we needed to be," Riley reminds her.

"And what's that supposed to mean?" Andrea asks.

"I don't know," Riley admits.

Meg doesn't like not knowing. Meg knows things. She always knows what she wants — like she knows everything. She knows how to solve the most challenging math problems. She knows how to take care of her dog and little sister. She knows how to turn on the lights. She knows how to make a sandwhich thing to cry about, but that doesn't make Zeke want to cry any less.

"Let's be friends," Zeke says abruptly, halting his tears.

"Huh?" Meg repeats.

"Well, we all go on the same train to the same school, and we see each other every day, so we should be friends." Andrea, Meg, and Riley stare.

"If you guys want to, that is," he adds as a afterthought. "I don't have many friends.

And that's quite true. Zeke doesn't have many friends. In fact, he doesn't have any friends. Zeke is kind and caring, but he doesn't have the time to make friends — at school, he must focus on his studies. He never has time to hang out after school — he has to help with his mom at the restaurant or take care of his younger siblings. Zeke has three of them. On the weekends, Zeke is always working. Zeke doesn't complain, though, because he knows his family is trying its best.

"We're in a bad place right now," his mom would say. "If I get better, I promise.

It hasn't gotten better yet. Zeke is always lonely. And so is Andrea, And Riley, And Meg. They're all lonely. In Andrea's opinion, it's better to be lonely together than lonely alone.

"That's a good idea," Andrea says. "Let's be friends.

"Can you just do that?" Riley asks. "Just declare that you're friends with someone? Does it work that way?"

Riley wouldn't know. She doesn't have any friends either. Riley is blunt and abrasive, but struggles with her words, struggles to explain how she feels. Riley doesn't have the best control of her anger, and she can't control the emotions that she's always swamped with. She doesn't have good grades — she can't ever focus in class, always up and moving. Her parents are always disappointed in her, and so are her teachers. She spends all her time struggling with her homework — at home or in detention. No one wants to be friends with the troubled child who can't do math.

"If we want to it work that way, it can," Andrea says. "Who can say otherwise?"

Andrea likes the thinking of making a choice for herself. Something in her life that she has control of. Andrea doesn't have any control over her life. Everything in her life thus far has been somebody else's decision. When she makes her choices, she bases them on what other people would think.

Andrea likes the idea of making a friend just for the sake of it.

"What really is a friend?" Meg asks. That's another thing she doesn't know, another thing she doesn't understand. Meg hates not understanding. Maybe these people will help her understand.

"A friend is — well, a friend," Zeke stumbles over his words.

"Really?" Riley mutters dryly. "I never would have guessed.

"A friend is someone you hang out with," Andrea says with a laugh.

"Someone you talk with," Zeke suggests.

"Someone who helps you," Meg adds.

"Someone who understands you," Riley chimes in.

"Someone who judges you," Andrea adds.

"A friend who ends? Are we friends?"

"I guess," Riley says. Andrea and Meg nod in agreement.

"Good," he says with a satisfied smile.

Zeke smiles back at him. And Andrea smiles, too.

Riley doesn't smile often. She smiles anyway.

There's a chuckle from the doorway, and there the Conductor stands, materializing from nowhere. "We are reaching the End," it says.

"The End?" Andrea exclaims, panicked. "That doesn't sound good.

The Conductor stares at Andrea.

"All good things come to an End," it says. "But worry not, for your end won't be coming anytime soon. We are approaching our destination."

"Our destination?" Zeke repeats.

"Where is that?"

"The End," Zeke states.

"We've arrived," it says. The train doesn't feel like it's stopped. To Meg, the train never felt like it was moving in the first place. Meg doesn't question this. She accepts the fact that the train to Nowhere is filled with things she doesn't understand and quite possibly new and materializing from nowhere. "We are reaching the End," it says. "But worry not, for your end won't be coming any time soon. We are approaching our destination."

"Our destination?" Zeke repeats.

"Where is that?"

"The End," Zeke states.

"We've arrived," it says. The train doesn't feel like it's stopped. To Meg, the train never felt like it was moving in the first place. Meg doesn't question this. She accepts the fact that the train to Nowhere is filled with things she doesn't understand and quite possibly new and materializing from nowhere. The Conductor moves toward the train doors.

"Would you like to leave?" The Conductor asks.

"I would always stay here. It is an option."

"Where do the doors lead?"

Zeke asks, gesturing to the door.

"Forward," the Conductor says.

"Where does the train go?"

"I've already told you," the Conductor says with a toothy smirk.

"Nowhere.

"I want to move forward," Meg says suddenly, standing up. She looks to Riley, to Zeke, to Andrea. Meg doesn't want to stay on the train, alone. Meg wants to move forward with her friends. "What's what they are now — friends.

"I want to keep going."


Riley is the slowest to respond. "I guess I'll come, too.

The four friends exchange glances. "Let's go, then," Zeke says.

The Conductor offers a sharp-toothed grin as they approach the door. "And leaving here will take us forward, into the unknown."

"You are choosing the path forward," the Conductor repeats simply. "It will take you on..."

Zeke smiles. "On we go.

The train doors slide open.
The First Time (continued from page 21)

The half-empty tequila bottle and poured it in hard plastic cups he took from his backpack.

"Non-alcoholic? Fancy!" Galina exclaimed "We are like the royals!"

She smoked and drank and sang and repeated. One couple got up quietly and disappeared into the forest. The sun was climbing higher and the air was getting warmer. Miron tore off his jacket and offed up his pants.

"It’s not that warm, you're making it look like it's July," Galina told him.

"Is it July in my soul? I’ll prove to you!" he got up, and started undressing.

"What are you doing, you imbecile?" Galina laughed, "You are going to blind the ducks with your blue tans!"

Miron stripped to his underwear and jumped into the water, disturbing the quiet lake with a giant splash.

"S---!" Miron screamed, popping out of the lake like a jack-in-the-box, "It’s freezing!"

Gotta keep moving!" He dove in and swam toward the foggy outline of the other shore. He was an OK swimmer but was self-conscious around Galina, with her regional glory. Galina looked on, a slight frown on her face as Miron's head moved farther away. She turned and walked to grab a box of cigarettes and rummaged through the pile of clothes and bags, looking for the lighter. She finally found it and sucked in the smoke, closing her eyes for a minute. Her heartbeat slowing down, her muscles were spasming, her breath. She tried to concentrate, regain her breath and get up close. Stroke, stroke, breathe. She could see him. Still popping up above the water, but they were too far away and her muscles were about to explode, her teeth chattering. She collapsed at the water's edge and they pulled her out onto the gravel and covered her with jackets.

Back in the dusty old apartment Sasha did not want to let go. His arms were wrapped around Lenka's toasted torso, her head on his chest, their legs intertwined like twin trees. They were lying there, two halves of a whole, their dream like centuries. Lenka tapped her fingers on his chest.

"Is this the Turkish March?" he asked.

"Aha," she smiled, "I feel victorious." She raised her head and kissed him, "And I love you. But also, this was weird! Wonderful and very weird," she added, planting many little kisses on his lips and nose and chin. Just then they heard the phone ring.

"That," afternoon the police brought Miron’s body to the morgue. Galina was taken to the hospital on a heart attack watch. She was derezzed like centuries. Lenka tapped her fingers on his chest.

"Let go," he mouthed. "Let go.

Tears streamed down Galina's face into the freezing water. On the shore, the other couple were getting into the water and shouting, but they were too far away and too drunk and none of them were any good in the water. Galina felt Miron pushing her arms away. She loosened her hold and he started to sink. His cropsed crown slowly disappeared into the water. Galina was paralyzed now, tears clouding her eyes, heartbeat slowing down, body slowly freezing.

"Galina, Galina, come back! Come back! I beg you!" Veronika bellowed, pushing further into the water, falling and getting up. Her shrill screams echoed over the lake and woke Galina up. She turned around and swam. Her right leg was not working anymore, but her arms were strong enough to pull her toward the shore. The others were running toward her, their wet clothes spread around them like tentacles, their faces white with cold, their teeth chattering. She collapsed at the water's edge and they pulled her out onto the gravel and covered her with jackets.

The First Time

"No Mama, God! How could God let it happen?" Sasha said looking straight in front of God. "Miron was pure. He was gold. He was the best of us."

"Sashenka," she said quietly, eyes welling with tears - "This is horrible. It should not happen ever, to anybody. To Nobody! But it just does."

There is no justice. Mama, there is no meaning in any of this! --- God!" Galina shouted and threw one of the boots across the room, where it met the wall and fell down with a loud thump. This seemed to take away all the last bit of his strength as he collapsed onto the bed, curling around the other boot, pressing it into his body. His mom continued to sit on the bed, her arm around her son, listening to Sasha whisper "Forgive me, forgive me, forgive me..."

About the cover: The winning stories from this year’s Short Story Contest look at the need for people to feel connected to the world around them. Cover illustration by Douglas Young.

Honorables mentions

Adult:
Eileen Skidmore, "The Flower Lady"
Bill Jansenes, "Teens"
Cathy Broderick, "The Out House Crooner"
MaryAnn Saunders, "A Single Time Life"
Jacob Halabe, "Please Remember Ron Nicholas"-Juliette Kijorie, "A Storm of Color"

Young Adult:
Sky Upernder, "The Beautiful Monster Within"
Devon Shih, "The Light of Leftover Storms"
Karl Tali, "The Glimpse Before"
Terence Chang, "My Dad's Dad"
Jack Poon, "Lunar New Year's Dinner"
Michael Zhang, "Walking Forward"
Anelia Kingtonberg, "Escape for a Moment"
Rebecca Kapiloff, "COVID Killed My Friendship"
Kaitlyn Chen, "This Is How It Ends"
Aiyda Deli, "Sour Purple Pomegranates"
Claire Sun, "Grandma Horsey's Almond Butter"
Naomi Jones, "Violent and the Time Machine"
Mei Knutson, "Wexco's Flying Machine"
Benjamin Wu, "Second Rate Life"

Teen:
Anika Nair, "A Messy Stitch"
Modern, luxurious living awaits in this newly completed West Menlo jewel, which offers an enticing blend of stylish finishes and modern amenities. Beautiful European oak floors extend throughout nearly 2,800 square feet of open living space, with high ceilings and excellent use of glass crafting a bright, airy ambiance. At the heart of the home lies the spectacular great room that begins with the expansive family room featuring a linear fireplace and built-in Bose surround system. From there, the dining room with wet bar opens to the gourmet kitchen with quartz countertops, custom cabinets, and a suite of Thermador appliances. Plus, folding La Cantina doors open completely to the backyard ipe wood deck for true indoor/outdoor living and entertaining. The home’s 5 bedrooms and 4.5 bathrooms include the palatial master suite with a private balcony and spa-like bathroom, as well as 2 bedroom suites ideal for guest accommodations or work-from-home space. And the gorgeously landscaped backyard provides a peaceful retreat with tall trees, lawn, and planter boxes. This convenient location is just moments to downtown Menlo Park, downtown Palo Alto, and Stanford University, with easy access to Interstate 280 for Bay Area commuting, and provides access to the top-ranked Las Lomitas school district (buyer to verify eligibility).

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Nestled on over one-half acre amidst the rolling hills of Portola Valley rests this luxurious, light-filled French Chateau designed by renowned architect Roger Kohler. Stylish appointments greet you at every turn, from walnut floors that extend throughout most of the home’s almost 4,400 square feet of interior space, to intricate ironwork and millwork, to chic divided light windows, and to detailed ceilings that crown expansive spaces scaled for entertaining. Highlights include the eye-catching fireplace that centers the living room, the media room with a ceiling-mounted projector, the gourmet kitchen with appliances from Wolf and Miele, and the handsome office with excellent work-from-home space. Accommodations for friends and family include 5 bedrooms and 3.5 bathrooms, the crown jewel of which is the incredible master suite with a marble-appointed bathroom. And for outdoor enjoyment, the truly spectacular, multi-level backyard offers a retreat-like setting, with a lush lawn, fire pit, built-in grill, and sports court. Located on a peaceful, flat cul-de-sac in the close-knit Ladera community, this home takes full advantage of its setting and is just moments from the Ladera Recreation District where kids and adults can enjoy activities including swimming, tennis, yoga, and more. Plus, you will be just a short drive from downtown Palo Alto and Stanford University, and have access to the acclaimed Las Lomitas school district (buyer to verify eligibility).

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The Pear returns to live theater with an intellectual, romantic puzzle

Christopher Chen’s ‘The Late Wedding’ is playing indoors, outdoors and via livestream

By John Orr

The stated locations change from a living room with a Scrabble board to a spaceship to a rudimentary boat with no oars, food or destination in mind, as the couple inside it struggle to understand each other.

In a way, it is fascinating, even admirable, although I did not find it entertaining. It is indeed fractured, and more an intellectual puzzle than a play.

The Pear is delivering “The Late Wedding” in three ways, in order to accommodate patrons’ various comfort and access levels: On Friday evenings and Saturday mornings, it is performed inside the theater. A livestream of the Friday night show is available to people who want to watch from home (not available on demand). For Saturday and Sunday matinees, it is performed outdoors, on a stage tucked away in the side parking lot of the Mountain View theater space.

I saw the opening-night livestream, which offered some cleverness — no doubt thanks to Director Sinohui Hinojosa — and some technical sloppiness.

The sound mix was tragically bad, ranging from deafening loudness to weak levels that made dialogue very difficult to hear. The camera framing was mostly good, helped by effective lighting, but often the top of the frame stopped just under actors’ noses. Those weaknesses may be cleaned up by the next shows.

The good cast does well in delivering the cerebral maze of the script. Tyler Jeffreys, Carissa Ratanaphanyarat and John S. Bolen were the most solid in their various roles.

Annamarie MacLeod, as narrator, gets a few good jokes, and comes out early to welcome the audience by thanking everybody for getting vaccinated and wearing their masks, saying she is “proud to be part of the first live, in-person play at The Pear after the pandemic shutdown.”

Well, welcome back.

“The Late Wedding” runs Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. through July 18 at 1110 La Avenida St., Mountain View, and streams online Friday evenings.

Tickets are $30-$40. More information is available at thepear.org. Email Contributing Writer John Orr at johnorr@regardingarts.com.

Everyday life becomes history in new mural celebrating Los Altos

‘200 Main Street [fan inventory of time and place]’ explores the personal side of the historical

By Heather Zimmerman

The mural looks at local history, but not in the expected linear way, instead offering a personal take, exploring how different people over time have experienced living in Los Altos.

“I wanted this composition to be both symbolic and informative, so the symbolism is about how living in a city, living in a house, living on this planet is about sharing space and coexisting, cohabiting spaces — living through various layers of history, and becoming part of that history as it happens,” Sakellariou said.

Even when approaching the Los Altos History Museum’s resource, Sakellariou was drawn to the more personal elements, such as the furnishings and fixtures in the museum’s Gilbert Smith House.

“The photographs and most items are contributed by Los Altos residents or found in the museum archives. The door and window were photographed at the Gilbert Smith House; the outdoor image of the Juana Briones house is a historical 1903 picture from the Palo Alto Historical Association archives. I didn’t make up anything, I only created a space for all of these things to coexist. And it was really important for me to compose this space with original items from the community and the local museum,” she said.

Longtime Los Altos resident Claudia Meyer contributed a handful of items that appear in “200 Main Street,” among them a photo of children standing in front of a house after a rare snowfall and a pair of riding boots and helmet.

“In 1962, it snowed in Los Altos and I’m in that picture with my little sister and a neighbor boy. We had just built a snowman,” she said of the photo’s snowy scene. Meyer’s family came to the area in 1953 and the following year moved into a newly constructed
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WITH MICHAEL REPKA

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Mural (continued from page 33)

house that would end up being the family home for over 60 years. She has memories of a childhood in a more rural community of orchards and pastures that offered plenty of space for horseback riding. Along with the riding boots and helmet, she said she was her daughter’s, she also contributed a photo of the place on Springer Road where she used to keep her pony. “There used to be a barn, a little farm there, and that’s where I kept my pony. And (Sakellaris) really enjoyed this picture of me with my pony,” she said. “The artist not only photographed residents’ contributions for inclusion in mural, but also developed a relationship with locals, Meyer said. “I was just fascinated by the process, and how she combined the old with the new. There’s many of us that grew up here and just to watch the progress of what evolved was really special. Getting to know her made the mural even more meaningful to me,” Meyer said.

The mural itself is an amalgam of old and new. While many of the objects pictured are historical, the photographs were assembled digitally and the mural, rather than being painted onto the wall, was printed on vinyl wrap, which was then affixed to the wall with a heat gun. The material is durable, offering permanence, but can also easily be removed, McBurney said — perhaps fitting for a piece that explores the passage of time. Meyer said she’s been encouraging friends and family to go visit the mural. She pointed out that one of the photos featured in the mural, seen through a window, is of an apricot orchard. Given the significant role of agriculture in the town’s development — even today Los Altos City Hall is located in an apricot orchard — Meyer said it meant a lot to her to see such images included.

Though she joked that the mural makes her “feels old,” she said “it also makes me so thankful that I grew up here.” “200 Main Street [an inven- tory of time and place]” can be seen at the corner of Third and Main streets in downtown Los Altos. For more information, visit artslosaltos.org.

Email Assistant Editor Heather Zimmerman at hzimmerman@paweekly.com.
By Heather Zimmerman

South bay delivery service Locale offers the chance to do both

South bay-based Locale offers weekly deliveries of fresh produce and groceries as well as meal kits and prepared items from Bay Area restaurants, merchants and farms. The delivery service was founded early in the pandemic, as stay-at-home orders ushered in a new era of eating at home.

When Locale launched in May 2020, the delivery service initially focused on businesses in Los Gatos, where co-founders Jonathan Friedland and Chris Clark live. Relying on word of mouth, the service grew quickly and now boasts nearly 50 partnerships with eateries and businesses from around the Bay Area, including in San Francisco and Santa Cruz — with the one stipulation that businesses should be locally based, at least within the greater Bay Area. Its customer delivery area covers the Peninsula as far north as San Bruno, along with the South Bay and Santa Cruz, and charges a flat $5 delivery fee.

According to Friedland, Locale got started with the aim of giving customers the chance to order from multiple businesses while allowing restaurants the flexibility to sell small-ticket items, that wouldn’t necessarily be as easy to offer through large delivery companies like DoorDash or UberEats, due to the extra cost to the customer of delivery fees and tip.

“We wanted to create a way that customers could order from more than one business at a time and still keep that delivery fee really low,” Friedland said in an interview.

Rather than charge its partner businesses a delivery fee, Locale buys items from its vendors at wholesale (negotiating the wholesale price with the vendor depending on their margins), and charges a markup to customers, according to Friedland. For instance, the retail price for a carrot cake muffin from Manresa Bread is $3 purchased directly from the bakery and $6 purchased from Locale. In giving customers the ability to purchase items from multiple businesses in one order, Locale looks to fill a different niche from the big players in food delivery, as its offerings and delivery schedule demonstrate. With its selection of ingredients and meal kits sourced from local businesses, Locale is more akin to an upscale online grocery store or farmers market. Shoppers can place orders throughout the week, but all deliveries are made on Saturdays.

Friedland also noted that curation is key to Locale’s offerings. “What we’re trying to do is create a sense of trust with our customers so that if we list a sourdough bread or pasta sauce, our customers can trust that we’ve vetted this product and it’s the best and most high quality for a reasonable price in the area,” he said.

The fact that Locale’s offerings are curated also seems likely to help ensure the service’s staying power as more restaurants reopen and customers are less restricted to their homes.

Locale launched last spring offering just a few grocery items: avocados and berries, as well as sourdough bread from Manresa Bread, which is the bakery spin-off of the triple-Michelin-starred Los Gatos restaurant. Far beyond those initial loaves, Locale now offers an array of local produce, dairy and meats, baked goods and specialty grocery items, in addition to meal kits and some prepared items from restaurants.

A small sampling of current offerings include: meal kits from Palo Alto Georgi- an restaurant Bevri, dumplings from Cupertino-based Temujin Foods, mar- gorita pizza kits from Pizzeria Delfina, cheeses from Cowgirl Creamery and organic cold-pressed juices from juice co. LG in Los Gatos. To brighten up the ambience of dining at home, there are also flowers from Los Gatos florist Bunches. Meal kits are a major component of the delivery service’s offerings, many of which are items exclusive to Locale that were developed with partner businesses. One of Locale’s most recent additions are meal kits from Oren’s Hummus. The service previously carried Oren’s packaged hummus and dips, but expanded to meals, working with one of the restaurant’s founders to create Locale-only meal kits, according to Friedland. Likewise, though Manresa Bread has been a partner from the start, Friedland said that Locale recently revamped its menu to include the bakery’s entire selection.

“When any type of pastry that you can find in the store, we carry that on Locale,” Friedland said.

Locale’s once-a-week deliveries won’t satisfy an immediate craving but do give customers a way to help plan meals — and a little something to look forward to. The Saturday delivery schedule was designed to allow restaurants adequate time to plan and prep meal kits during lulls in business, according to Friedland. Deliveries are made within a five-hour window each Saturday, although customers wanting more predictability can pay an extra $3 to narrow that window to two hours.

Locale aims to continue expanding in the Bay Area with new partners. The service also refreshes its current offerings periodically. “Our service is more about trying new things, so we always try to switch things up at least once every two months or so just to keep things new,” Friedland said.

For more information on Locale and how to order, visit shoplocale.us. Email Assistant Editor Heather Zimmerman at hzimmerman@almanacnews.com.

Top, Locale offers a variety of local produce and grocery items, as well as prepared meals from Bay Area businesses. Above, shoppers can place orders throughout the week on the Locale website, and all deliveries are made on Saturdays.

Locale co-founders Jonathan Friedland (left) and Chris Clark started the delivery service as a way to allow customers to get food — including groceries and prepared meals — from multiple local businesses in one order. Photos courtesy Locale.
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I n the summer of 2019, Mountain View author Simone de Muñoz began writing a science fiction thriller that became unexpectedly relevant by the time it hit bookstores on March 6. “Manflu,” de Muñoz’s debut novel, is about a virus that is deadly to the male population. The book focuses on vaccine researcher Morgan Digby as she struggles to defeat the virus amid interoffice meddling, corporate conspiracy and forbidden romance. The book explores how society might change if women held the reins of political power and cultural change.

De Muñoz pointed to Margaret Atwood’s “The Handmaid’s Tale” as a source of inspiration. She said she did a fair amount of research about viruses and pandemics to make the premise of “Manflu” as plausible as possible — not knowing at the time that she would be living through a global pandemic firsthand just months later.

De Muñoz said she watched the six-part Netflix docuseries “Pandemic,” which premiered in January 2020, before COVID-19 was widespread in the US. She also consulted at length with one of her closest friends, pediatrician Dr. Veronica Lois, a Stanford Medical School graduate. They discussed how a virus that primarily affected men might work. As she was working on her fictional book, COVID-19 hit.

“Spring of 2020 was an intense time for me,” said de Muñoz, who is a wife, a mother of two young children and chief analyst for the nonprofit Community Services Agency of Mountain View, which provides food and shelter to those in need. “I was researching pandemics and writing about a pandemic while trying to keep my family safe and serving massive numbers of people newly in need.”

Coming home from helping in the food pantry, de Muñoz would “sanitize absolutely everything.”

“Like many people, my anxiety was through the roof,” she said. “Even though the book related to a pandemic, writing it was therapeutic because writing is stress relief for me.”

“Even though the book related to a pandemic, writing it was therapeutic because writing is stress relief for me.”

—Simone de Muñoz, author

(continued on page 46)
Welcome to this gorgeous home in the heart of downtown San Jose. This three bedroom, three bath home has recently been renovated with new floors and appointed with modern finishes and fixtures for contemporary living. This two level condo has a separate entrance for the Master Bedroom suite on the top floor and is exceptionally large. The downstairs bedroom looks out over a gorgeous balcony which is perfect for relaxing and enjoying the peaceful location of this perfectly situated unit far from the hustle and bustle of street noise because of its location within the building. Near San Pedro square, SAP center and Japan Town. This home is refreshingly bright and beautiful. Be close to everything and still nestled on a quiet and peaceful tree lined corner of this ideal location

**Offered at $988,000**

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Olivia Pintz
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TIMELESS CHARM IN DOWNTOWN PALO ALTO

This enchanting, light-filled bungalow emanates timeless Palo Alto charm and enjoys a location just blocks to the excitement of University Avenue. Beautiful hardwood floors highlight the home’s comfortable living space, while divided light windows add a stylish touch. Craft delicious meals in the kitchen that features Shaker-style cabinets, a built-in ebony dining table, and stainless-steel appliances including a Bosch dishwasher. Two bedrooms provide inviting accommodations, served by a renovated bathroom with Grohe fixtures. And for peaceful outdoor enjoyment, the backyard offers ample heated patio space. Find yourself mere moments to both Johnson Park and El Camino Park, a short trip to Stanford University, and convenient to the shops and eateries of downtown Palo Alto and the Stanford Shopping Center. Plus, both Caltrain and US 101 are within easy reach, and children may attend acclaimed schools Addison Elementary, Greene Middle, and Palo Alto High (buyer to verify eligibility).

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Managing Broker: Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | www.deleonrealty.com | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224
A modern downtown lifestyle awaits in this remarkably stylish 2-bedroom, 2.5-bathroom condo located just a block away from University Avenue. Gorgeous hardwood floors extend through almost 1,100 square feet of dynamic, open living space beginning in the light-filled living room with a fireplace in floor-to-ceiling stacked stone. From there, the dining area flows into the remodeled kitchen with top-of-the-line appliances from Wolf, Bosch, Fisher-Paykel, and Liebherr. Two spacious bedroom suites include one with a private entrance from inside the complex, and the master suite with a spectacular spa-like bathroom. For indoor/outdoor living and entertaining, this home offers a sun-soaked front balcony and private backyard patio, while an in-unit laundry closet, attic storage, and carport parking provide added convenience. Just moments to the incredible boutiques and eateries of downtown Palo Alto, this home is also just around the corner from beautiful Heritage Park, and it is convenient to Stanford University, the Stanford Shopping Center, and Caltrain.

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out the character of Morgan Digby, her scientist protagonist, who doesn’t always take the safest path through life. When Morgan has an affair with a younger man never exposed to the virus, she isn’t prepared for the repercussions.

“She had to have flaws,” de Muñoz said. “Some of the readers are outraged by her irresponsible behavior, but if you have a character who’s doing everything perfectly, that’s a pretty boring story. So I had to show that she was a bit of a dreamer and a bit distracted and flawed.”

Set in the near future, “Manflu” depicts the possible consequences of the losing most of the planet’s male population. The novel posits that climate change isn’t as significant an issue after such an abrupt decline in population and associated greenhouse gases.

Also, wealth is distributed more fairly in de Muñoz’s near-future.

“One of the things that comes up in the book is if there’s less military spending, then we can re-purpose that money for other policy priorities, like infrastructure or care-giving support,” de Muñoz explained.

According to de Muñoz, who graduated from MIT in 2002 with a bachelor’s degree in Economics and later worked at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., for two years conducting policy research before earning a master’s in Public Policy, military spending in the U.S. is a huge amount of the budget. “It’s over 50% of discretionary spending. The interest on the national debt is a huge amount of the budget. So I think people may not realize that if those numbers are reduced, there’s just a world of possibility in running the country in a different way.”

Even though her book is about a pandemic, de Muñoz said “it’s actually escapist. It’s about imagining a different world. I think it’s timely, while also having that quality of something a little bit fun. I’m hoping people will see it that way.”

Email Contributing Writer Michael Berry at mikeberry@mindspring.com.
MENLO PARK | $2,395,000
This totally remodeled 3br/2ba contemporary-style home features a great room with spacious kitchen, stainless steel appliances; separate sitting areas for entertaining and television viewing and a large dining area. French doors open to a redwood deck and a lush backyard with gas fire pit and pergola covered patio. The large master suite includes a walk-in closet with organizers and a luxurious bath.

Elaine White
650.465.4663
ewhite@cbnorcal.com
CalRE #0182467

SAN JOSE | $1,049,000
Beautiful 3br/3ba townhome in the Copperwood Community. This home features tons of natural light & vaulted ceiling in the living room & master bedroom. Enjoy cooking in the clean kitchen complete w/ample cabinets & granite tile countertops. You will love the master suite that displays views of surrounding mountains. The good size, private backyard is great for entertaining & has mature orange & lemon trees.

Saruul Barrios
415.828.8304
saruul.barrios@cbnorcal.com
CalRE #01925631

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CalRE #01906391

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