Officers sue city over Black Lives Matter mural

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DRIYING UP
WATER AGENCIES GRAPPLE WITH DEEPENING DROUGHT. URGE PUBLIC TO CONSERVE NOW

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As dry spell continues, state expands drought emergency

Newsom calls for conservation in Santa Clara, San Mateo counties

By Sue Dremann

As drought throughout California deepens, the state announced on Thursday that it is extending its April drought emergency to include additional counties, including San Mateo and Santa Clara, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced. He called for a voluntary 15% reduction in residential and commercial water use. The announcement follows weeks of rising concern among water resources agencies.

Gavin Newsom announced. He called for a voluntary 15% reduction in residential and commercial water use. The announcement follows weeks of rising concern among water resources agencies.

The announcement followed weeks of rising concern among water resources agencies. Members of local and state water resources agencies delivered a “scared straight” message regarding Santa Clara and San Mateo counties’ future water supplies on July 1, pointing to the deepening drought and predictions of more challenging months ahead.

Armed with U.S. Drought Monitor maps showing nearly the entire state in a blaze of red, and bar graphs of dwindling reservoir water levels, representatives said the time for the public to conserve the precious supply is now. The Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWS-CA), Valley Water, the California Department of Water Resources and the California Water Service discussed the worsening drought at a July 1 community meeting, which was sponsored by state Assemblyman Marc Berman.

The drought has already extended into its second year, and this year is predicted to become one of the driest in terms of water runoff in the state’s historical record. Last year’s water year — from Oct. 1, 2019 to Sept. 30, 2020 — ranked as the 13th driest in statewide precipitation and the fifth driest in statewide water

(continued on page 12)

Cops sue city over BLM mural

Officers claim harassment, discrimination, retaliation

By Gennady Sheyner

When Palo Alto invited Bay Area artists a year ago to paint a “Black Lives Matter” mural in front of City Hall, the city had hoped to signal its commitment to racial justice and equity in the aftermath of the May 2020 killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer.

In doing so, however, the city also attracted criticisms and a legal threat from its own police ranks, with several officers expressing concern about the mural’s depiction of Joanne Chesimard, a civil rights activist in the Black Liberation Army. Chesimard, known as Assata Shakur, was convicted in 1977 of killing New Jersey State Trooper Werner Foerster. She subsequently escaped from prison and fled to Cuba.

She was depicted in the second “E” of the 16-letter mural, along with the phrase, “We must love each other and support each other.” The letter containing Shakur’s image was created by Oakland-based painter Cece Caprio, one of 16 artists whom the city selected to develop the mural. The project was completed on June 30, 2020, and the mural remained on Hamilton Avenue for four months before the city removed it.

Five Palo Alto police officers — Eric Figueroa, Michael Foley, Robert Parham, Julie Tannock and Christopher Moore — filed a

(continued on page 15)
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Upfront

PUBLIC HEALTH

As outdoor entertainment ramps up this summer, indoor venues slower to reopen

Despite state’s reopening, many event venues are eyeing August to resume indoor offerings

By Karla Kane, Gennady Sheyner, Heather Zimmerman and Jocelyn Dong

Late last Friday afternoon at the Century Cinema 16 in Mountain View, fewer than 50 seats in one of the nearly 200-seat theaters were filled, but for moviegoers watching “The Boss Baby: Family Business,” it was a moviegoers watching “The Boss Baby: Family Business,” it was a moviegoers watching “The Boss Baby: Family Business,” it was a moviegoers watching “The Boss Baby: Family Business,” it was a moviegoers watching “The Boss Baby: Family Business,” it was a moviegoers watching “The Boss Baby: Family Business,” it was a moviegoers watching “The Boss Baby: Family Business,” it was a...<br>Public Health

How to spur more backyard housing — and make it affordable to rent?

Commissioners debate incentives for homeowners to build accessory units specifically for lower-income renters

By Gennady Sheyner

Ever since Palo Alto began to gradually relax zoning rules for accessory dwelling units five years ago, it has seen dozens of little homes spring up in backyards across the city.

Last fall, the city’s planning staff reported that it had received about 200 applications for the small dwellings and issued close to 150 permits for construction between 2015 and 2020, a sharp increase from the city’s historic trend averaging about four per year. In October, as the City Council approved the latest batch of zoning changes pertaining to accessory dwelling units (ADUs), members acknowledged that these little homes are now playing a major role in the city’s ability to comply with regional mandates for residential development.

“We’re counting on ADUs to meet our housing targets,” council member Eric Filshtet said during the Oct. 5 discussion.

But when it comes to solving the city’s most difficult housing problem — the dearth of affordable homes — Palo Alto leaders fear that accessory dwelling units may be falling short. Even though their small size makes them inherently more affordable than most local homes and apartments, the city’s real estate market still allows owners to charge rent that is well out of reach for residents with modest incomes, including employees in the service and hospitality industries.

To that end, the council agreed last year that the city should explore ways to encourage homeowners to build “affordable” ADUs — ones that would be deed-restricted to charge rent at below-market-rate levels.

The idea of a deed-restricted accessory dwelling unit isn’t new. San Diego, for example, recently implemented a policy that empowers anyone who builds a deed-restricted accessory dwelling unit in the city’s transit-priority area to construct an additional dwelling on their property.

Palo Alto is unlikely to go that far. At its June 30 meeting, members of the Planning and Transportation Commission summarily smacked down the San Diego approach, which was among the most ambitious incentives in a menu that planning staff presented for deed-restricted ADUs.

Commissioners generally agreed that because many residential properties are comparably small and because new state laws already allow up to three dwellings on any residential property (the main home, an ADU and a junior accessory dwelling unit, which is an independent living space carved out of an existing dwelling), allowing additional units is a bridge too far.

The Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts (MVCPA) at 500 Castro St. has reopened, with live shows having recently resumed in its outdoor ParkStage space, which can accommodate up to 300 with lawn seating, and its small, indoor SecondStage space, which has a capacity of 200.

As of June 25, the city of Mountain View venue was not yet offering tickets to any productions on its 600-capacity MainStage, where arts companies like TheatreWorks perform, but Marketing and Public Relations Manager Shonda Ramson said she hopes MainStage events will resume in August. She directed the public to check online for updates at the city’s website.

As of June 25, all staff and volunteers at MVCPA are wearing masks and maintaining physical distance where possible. No masks or distancing are required for fully vaccinated attendees, the website states, while unvaccinated attendees are required to mask and distance.

At Stanford University, outdoor concert venue Frost Amphitheater reopened at less than 5% capacity, 400 attendees per event, on April 29 to show movies. As of Wednesday, Stanford Live has added concert and ballet performances to its lineup at Frost and increased audience capacity to 20%, or 1,600 people, for July, with larger audiences allowed in August.

Citing the latest state, county and university guidance as of July 2, audiences at the Frost Amphitheater will not need to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test or...<br>Public Health

As accessory dwelling units like this one become more common in Palo Alto, the city is exploring ways to encourage builders to make them more affordable.

Commissioner Doria Summa said she was concerned that permitting additional dwellings could exacerbate parking problems and result in the removal of trees. Her colleagues generally concurred, with Commissioner Ed Lauing noting that the city and the state have only just begun to allow the new dwellings and that it may take some time for any problems to materialize.

“We don’t have a lot of experience yet,” Lauing says. “But there’s no experience, you know, without any experience, you know...<br>
Two friends from Stanford build a business around selling dusty adventure gear

Duo broadens outdoors access in the process

By Kate Bradshaw

The friendship of Alex Friedman of Menlo Park and Sasha Landauer of New York City — started with a series of outdoor misadventures. The first expedition that Alex Friedman of Menlo Park and Sasha Landauer of New York City started as Stanford sophomores was a “terrible” surfing trip where Landauer said she almost drowned in Pacifica. Novices, they picked a challenging day to try surfing at Linda Mar and got yelled at by other surfers and roughed up by the waves.

Later, they went backpacking together, and one of them forgot a sleeping bag.

It wasn’t until a couple of years ago, when they both became frustrated at the limited options for selling and reselling gear, that the seeds were planted for what would become Switchbackr, a new online platform for selling used outdoors gear.

At the time, Friedman said he was looking for somewhere to sell extra camping gear and buy a bike and couldn’t find any online platform where he could easily do both. And Landauer, who used to work at the rock climbing gym at Stanford, said that she observed that selling gear among under-grads was a messy process that involved blasting emails to large numbers of students asking if anyone was interested in a size 30 pair of climbing shoes, for example.

From there, Friedman started working on the online platform that would become Switchbackr, receiving guidance from the Palo Alto-based Peer VC accelerator program for student entrepreneurs. The week the pandemic triggered shelter-in-place orders and Stanford sent students home last March was the week the company got its first investment, and the two took a leave of absence to develop Switchbackr. (Since then, Landauer has graduated from Stanford, so only Friedman can claim the illustrious Silicon Valley title of dropout startup founder, the two joked.)

Fast forward a global pandemic and the startup is growing. They’re a lean team of five, including two gap-year students who will be Stanford freshmen and a marketing employee.

Their business so far has two elements: an online platform where people can sell high-quality used outdoor gear from anywhere, and the “GEARage” program, which is being piloted locally.

With the GEARage program, Switchbackr collects high-quality used outdoors gear from nearby garages, sells it on the platform and then ships the items on behalf of the customer. They take a 40% cut of each sale.

Friedman said he wanted to start the pilot in his hometown for several reasons.

Born at Stanford Hospital and a graduate of Laurel, Encinal and Menlo-Atherton High schools, Friedman said he decided to test out the GEARage program in Menlo Park and its nearby communities, including Palo Alto, Atherton and Portola Valley — representative of a relatively dense urban area with a big market of potential sellers, and an area where people are generally outdoorsy but not a supermajority of residents are (un)like other communities that were considered like Park City, Utah, or Big Sky, Montana. The theory is that if the GEARage model works in the Bay Area, it could work in most metro areas of the U.S., they said.

Friedman said lots of Bay Area folks are not just outdoorsy but very busy. Some likely have high-quality gear, some of which they don’t use frequently. And they’re probably too busy to sell it, but still want to get some money from it, so it ends up sitting in the garage.

Instead of having the hassle of putting the item up for sale on Craigslist, coordinating with people to buy it and haggling over the price, Switchbackr’s GEARage program is trying to “completely eliminate that friction,” Friedman said.

“Sellers get rid of stuff, and they still make a little money off of it,” he said.

As a result, he said, the program is helping people clear out their garages, keeping unwanted items out of landfills, lowering the price of outdoor goods and extending the lifespans of the gear.

So far, the local pilot for the GEARage program mostly has involved Friedman driving around the Midpeninsula in his Subaru picking up used gear from all

A new development proposal calls for 49 condominiums at 300 Lambert Ave., in the Ventura neighborhood.

HOUSING

Developer proposes condominium project in Ventura

City Council to consider 49 residences on a Lambert Avenue property

By Gennady Sheyny

As Palo Alto continues to reconsider the future of the Ventura neighborhood, which most city leaders see as ripe for change, a developer has come forward with a plan to build a five-story condominium complex in the planning area.

Roger Fields has proposed a 49-condominium proposal at 280 and 300 Lambert Ave., a property within the 60-acre area that the city is evaluating as part of the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan. He is the fourth property owner in the plan area to step forward with a housing project in recent months. The Sobrato Organization, which owns the property at 340 Portage Ave. that formerly housed Fry’s Electronics, has proposed an 85-residence townhome development at a nearby site at 200 Portage. Smith Development, which also owns numerous properties in the Ventura area, has proposed a project with 75 housing units and 35,996 square feet of commercial space at 150 Grant Ave., 123 Sherman Ave. and 2501 Park Blvd.

The boldest plan to date is a 113-apartment project proposed by Acclaim Companies for 2951 El Camino Real. In an informal hearing in January, the City Council indicated that it would be willing to support the Acclaim project and encouraged the developer to file a formal application.

Much like the Smith and Acclaim projects, the Lambert project is relying on the “planned housing zone,” a new zoning mechanism that allows for 100% residential density and exceeds development standards such as height and density limits. As proposed, the project would exceed both the city’s 50-foot height limit and the typical density restrictions that would normally apply at the site’s “service commercial” zone. The zoning typically allows residential floor-area-ratio (FAR) of 0.60; the project is requesting a residential FAR of 2.07.

The new housing complex would consist of two major elements. The front portion would consist of 10 townhouse-style condos. It would be three stories high, with a height of 35 feet. The remaining 39 condominiums would be in a complex at the rear of the property, which would be 55 feet high. The project would offer 20% of the residences at below market rate, according to the plan, though the application did not specify what income levels these residences would target.

In a letter accompanying the application, Jeff Galbraith, principal of Hayes Group Architects, states that the additional 5 feet of building height “allows for the construction of an additional floor of residential units which makes a significant difference in the financial viability of the project, specifically the ability of the project to offset the cost burden of the 20% affordable requirement.”

In making the pitch for “planned home zoning,” Galbraith notes that under existing zoning, the site would be limited to a maximum of 18 residential units, though would “most likely result in 12 or so units due to practical realities.”

Application of PHZ (planned housing zone) regulations would allow for roughly a four-fold increase in unit count as illustrated in the attached plans,” the letter states. “The proposed residential use is compatible with the surrounding as there are parcels designated R-1 and RM-30 in the immediate vicinity, and Lambert street marks the transition from the more commercial area of the North Ventura neighborhood to the more residential South Ventura neighborhood.”

The “planned housing zone” gives the council full discretion on whether to approve or deny the project. Fields’ first test will come during the council’s “pre-screening” session for the development proposal, which is expected to occur sometime shortly after the council returns from its summer recess.

The council also plans to resume this fall its discussion over the North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan, which aims to come up with a new land use vision for the 60-acre area.

Email Staff Writer Gennady Sheyny at gsheyny@pawweekly.com.
**This is a Real Pepper-Upper!**

Fabulous designer/cook’s kitchen opens to large deck for year-round enjoyment. Spacious primary bedroom has cathedral ceiling plus large bath with separate tub, shower, dual vanity and skylight. From the street—you might never guess this small house would be a big wow!

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Venues (continued from page 7)

full vaccination. Masks are op-
tional for vaccinated patrons and
required for those unvaccinated.

Stanford Live has also sched-
uled its first indoor performance
of the year at Bing Concert Hall
for Aug. 25-29, the premiere of
“The No One’s Rose,” a co-
production from Stanford Live,
Philadelphia Baroque Orchestra
(PBO) and the American Modern
Opera Company.

The show combines music,
dance, and theater incorporating
the work of Paul Celan, a poet and
Holocaust survivor. Leading up to
the premiere, the artists will par-
ticipate in a two-week residency
at Stanford Live.

Masks will be required for all
patrons at indoor shows, accord-
ing to the Stanford Live website.

For sports fans, cheering on the
Cardinal this fall should feel fa-
miliar: Stanford Athletics is plan-
ing to welcome fans to its indoor
and outdoor competition venues
with no capacity limitations, and
football tailgating is also expected
to be permitted. The university an-
nounced this week.

The first football home game
will be against UCLA on Sept. 25.
“We are excited to be back at
Stanford Stadium this season
and playing in front of our stu-
dents, fans and alumni,” David
Shaw, Bradford M. Freeman
director of Football, stated in a
press release. “We have one of
the toughest and most exciting
schedules in the nation.”

All home athletic events will op-
erate in compliance with state
public-health guidelines, as well
as county and campus directives,
the university stated. Specific
protocols will be announced clos-
er to the start of the season. More
information is posted at gostan-
ford.com.

Editor Jocelyn Dong at jdong@paweekly.
...

Public Agenda

A preview of Palo Alto government meetings next week

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

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION . . . The commission plans to discuss proposed bike projects in south Palo Alto, including improvements along East Meadow Drive, Felton Avenue and the Entübrey Street multi-use path. The virtual meeting will begin at 6 p.m. on

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD . . . The board plans to discuss the proposed façade changes and signage for Peloton at Stanford Shopping Center. The virtual meeting will begin at 8:30 a.m. on

City View

City Council

The council did not meet this week.

Advisory Utilities Commission (July 7)

Water: The commission discussed the objectives, scope and community engagement for One Water Plan; Action: None

LET’S DISCUSS: Read the latest local news headlines and talk
about the issues at Town Square at PaloAltoOnline.com/square

Bicycle (continued from page 5)

in November, evaluates three dif-
ferent possibilities for separated
bikeways that would stretch along
the Peninsula. After consider-
ing other routes, including Alma
Street and Middlefield Road, the
study concludes that a proposed
route on El Camino, despite the
massive challenges it would entail, “repre-
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A Gardener’s Delight!

This 3 bedroom, 2 bath home is surrounded by flowers, fruit trees, and a flourishing vegetable garden. Included in the artistic “farm-to-table” setting is a chicken coop, compost bin and rainwater collection system. Located ½ block from Eleanor Pardee park and close to Rinconada Park, schools, shopping and commute routes.

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Drought (continued from page 5)

runoff. Much of the low precipitation occurred in the northern half of the state, which supplies the majority of the state’s water supply.

The paucity extended into the 2021 precipitation year, which ended June 28, 2021. Nearly the entire state has received only about half of average annual precipitation, said Jeanine Jones, California Department of Water Resources interstate resources manager. The cumulative effect has plunged the state into an extreme drought, according to data from the Western Regional Climate Center.

The water storage system that supplies most municipalities in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties is at 72.9% of its maximum capacity. Normally, the total storage averages 91% of this time of year, Nicole Sandkulla, CEO and general manager of BAWSCA, said on Wednesday during a phone interview.

Although the system’s water bank, Hetch Hetchy Reservoir in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, is currently at 99.1% of its maximum storage capacity, looks can be deceiving.

“Clearly, it’s down,” Sandkulla said of the total system, adding that people need to start conserving water voluntarily.

More consistent with the amount of precipitation feeding the water system. The years 2020-2021 were the second lowest on record since Hetch Hetchy was completed in the 1930s. The lowest was the 1976-1977 drought, Sandkulla said.

“It’s very close; 1976-77 had 39.14 inches of precipitation; 2020-21 had 39.28 inches,” she said.

Jones noted that statewide overall reservoir levels have been dropping and are about 64% of average. Individual reservoirs such as those in the large federal Central Valley Project and California State Water Project, which serve parts of Santa Clara County, have dropped even lower. San Luis Reservoir, for example, is at 33% of capacity or 54% of its historical average, she said.

A ‘canary in a coal mine’?

Closer to home, Santa Clara Valley Water District, also known as Valley Water, is the poster child for how quickly a water system can become vulnerable to drought.

Water storage rates in Santa Clara County’s 10 reservoirs are currently 16% in Guadalupe and Stevens Creek; Lexington, Chesbro, Coyote and Uvas are in the 20%-25% range; and Calero and Almaden at 45% and 54% respectively. Only Vasona is at near capacity at 94%, according to the Valley Water Surface Water data portal.

Anderson Reservoir, the district’s largest, is at 4% capacity; however, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ordered the district to drain the reservoir over seismic concerns due to its age. Located near Morgan Hill, Anderson is Valley Water’s largest reservoir and stores half of the water in its system. The reservoir will stay empty for the next decade, depriving the county of 25% of its water supply until a rebuild of its dam can be completed, Valley Water Board Vice Chair Gary Kremen said.

Cottle Reservoir, the district’s second-largest, is also currently limited in its current surface water storage due to limits imposed by the California Department of Water Resources Division of Safety of Dams, according to a staff memo to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors.

Valley Water, which supplies some water to the city of Mountain View, gets about 30% of its supply from its reservoirs and the groundwater aquifer. Another 50% is imported (40% through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and 10% from Hetch Hetchy); 5% is from wastewater treatment and advanced purification and 15% comes through residential and commercial/agricultural conservation, according to the district.

“Increased conservation is also necessary to protect local water supplies and guard against groundwater overdraft, subsidence and dry domestic wells, especially if the drought extends into next year,” Valley Water Board Chair Tony Estremera said in a June 9 statement.

The Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors ratified the emergency order on June 22 and stated in a press release, “Reservoirs are so low, the water level is inadequate for agriculture, wildlife and urban needs.” The order applies to unincorporated parts of the county and calls for customers to voluntarily use 15% less water as compared to their 2019 water usage. The order stays in effect until Aug. 21.

Given the statewide drought, Valley Water is also finding it difficult to find much water for sale. The water district is a member of a water-banking exchange through the Semitropic Groundwater Banking Program in Kern County, which is supposed to help manage variability in Valley Water’s supplies from the State Water Project and the Central Valley Project. Semitropic is a member district of the Kern County Water Agency, the second largest State Water Project contractor, according to Valley Water’s website. Yet, Valley Water is having trouble accessing its share, Kremen said.

The district has banked about 425,000 acre-feet of water in Semitropic over a 20-year period and has withdrawn about 190,000 acre-feet during dry years, but it must retrieve the banked water by exchange with other State Water...
The district has no emergency pumps or storage systems that can provide emergency backup and protect water supplies across the state, Kremen said. “We’re not going to conserve our way out of this problem,” Kremen said.

“The state legislature on June 28 approved a $3 billion water resilience drought package to expand and protect water supplies across the state, Berman noted at the July 1 meeting.

But Tom Francis, BAWSCA’s water resources manager, said that the projects that could help bolster the water capacity for the future could take more than 10 years to move forward. A project at Crystal Springs Reservoir in San Mateo County would add treated and portable wastewater to the Crystal Springs supply, which comes from Hetch Hetchy, he said.

San Mateo County’s three reservoirs, Upper and Lower Crystal Springs and San Andreas Lake, provide emergency back-up and supply for northern San Mateo County and the city and county of San Francisco. Sandkulla said that both are being kept full to provide emergency use in the event of another wildfire such as last year’s CZU Lightning Complex fire in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

For now, BAWSCA’s 26 member agencies, which include East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Redwood City, Stanford University, Purissima Hills Water District, which supplies water to Los Altos Hills, and California Water Service’s Bear Gulch District, which covers parts of Menlo Park, Atherton, Portola Valley and Woodside, aren’t under a mandate to conserve water, but that could change this fall if there’s no precipitation when the rains should begin, Sandkulla said.

In the meantime, BAWSCA and Valley Water are offering incentives, tips and rebates to help people save water so the area can bank enough water if the drought continues into next year, and hopefully, to create a water-saving culture. BAWSCA is offering rebates through programs such as Lawn Be Gone, which offers residents up to a $4-per-square-foot rebate to replace their lawns with drought-tolerant native plants, up to $300 for planting a “rain garden” of native plants with deep root systems, and a rain barrel rebate.

Valley Water is offering customers up to $400 to install a greywater laundry-to-landscape system. On July 1, it kicked off a landscaping rebate increase to $3,000 for residential sites and up to $50,000 for multi-family properties of five or more units.

To learn more about the water-saving tips and rebates for water-wise landscaping, visit bawscawater.org.

About the cover: Lexington Reservoir in Los Gatos is at 25% capacity. Photo by Magali Gauthier. Cover design by Douglas Young.

— Palo Alto Weekly Staff

Foothill to bring back most in-person classes

Most classes remain online for the summer quarter that started last week at Foothill-De Anza Community College District. A short list of classes, including athletic courses, Spanish and theater, are all back on campus, along with medical training and certification programs that have been back for in-person instruction for more than a year.

But, as part of a phased approach to gradually return to normal, school officials say that the Fall 2021 quarter will look much different. At Foothill College, the plan is to be aggressive and bring back more than 400 in-person classes. It won’t be a complete jolt back to 2019, but it’ll be pretty close, said Simon Pennington, the school’s associate vice president of college and community relations.

“We are offering a much more robust selection probably than most community colleges in the area,” Pennington said.

Classes returning in the fall include chemistry and biology courses, which often involve labs that are hard or impossible to conduct over Zoom. Certain art classes that benefit from face-to-face instruction also are slated to return, Pennington said, including ceramics, which had to ditch throwing wheels in favor of online hand-building classes.

But plenty of courses are still online only, which has some students frustrated. Kathryn Krajewski, an incoming freshman at Foothill College, said she’s looking to enroll in 20 units and was disappointed to see only five will be offered in person. She said she’s not majoring in public health major, yet one of the foundational classes kicked off her college career — Intro to Public Health — is an asynchronous online class.

Other classes are offered on a hybrid basis, meaning students attend class on some days of the week, but Krajewski said there’s a catch: Almost all of them are packed between the hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., which is awful for working students and almost guaranteed to overlap.

The plan at Foothill College is to fully return to a normal balance of in-person classes for the Winter 2021 quarter.

— Kevin Forestieri

Man charged in beating death of woman

A 42-year-old man made his initial appearance in court Tuesday to face a murder charge for allegedly beating a woman with a baseball bat and strangling her at a home in East Palo Alto last week, San Mateo County prosecutors said.

Jason Dixon is accused of killing 48-year-old Marielos Martinez, who officers found after responding around 3:15 p.m. on July 2 to the 200 block of Verbena Drive, where a neighbor heard glass breaking and a woman screaming, according to the District Attorney’s Office.

The officers ordered anyone inside to come out, and Dixon came out with blood on his clothing and said there had been an argument. Police then went in and found Martinez on the floor of the garage. She was pronounced dead about 30 minutes later, prosecutors said.

Dixon did not enter a plea at his initial court appearance Tuesday. He remains in custody with bail set at $10 million, prosecutors said.

— Bay City News Service
Housing (continued from page 7)

feet when there are two bedrooms), under the current rules, to 1,200 square feet. Ultimately, the commission voted 3-2, with Vice Chair Giselle Roohparvar and Commissioner Michael Alcheck absent, to reject the recommendation. Commissioners Luing, Summa and Cari Templeton all opposed increasing the maximum size, with Templeton and Summa both suggesting that allowing homeowners to build large accessory dwellings is akin to allowing a second main residence on a single-family zoned property.

Large accessory dwellings can also create tensions between neighbors, particularly in areas where lots and homes are comparatively small and where accessory dwelling units would be larger than many of the homes, Templeton said.

“I’m concerned about how this will affect some of our lower-income neighborhoods,” Templeton said. “It may be implemented in a way that exacerbates some of our lower-income neighborhoods,”

Chair Bart Hechtman and Commissioner Bryna Chang both spoke in favor of increasing the cost barriers to enjoying outdoor recreation sites, mostly in the Bay Area.

Templeton said. “It may be implemented in a way that exacerbates some of our lower-income neighborhoods,”

Ultimately, even the compromise duration of 15 years failed to get the needed three votes. Commissioners also discussed issues of diversity and inclusivity and reaching communities that aren’t traditionally represented in the outdoor industry.

They also strive to strike a balance between low-cost goods and high-quality items that are currently restricted to items in very good condition that are well-maintained and no more than 8 years old. Items sold through the website also come with what’s called an “Iron Lotus” guarantee that covers items if they don’t arrive as described or are damaged.

And much of the gear for sale comes from outdoor consignment shops across the U.S. that have an interest in offering good customer service, Friedman said.

Looking ahead, the duo is hoping to build out a platform that promotes recommerce — a term describing the industry of rehauling and reselling used items — and builds community, Friedman said. They’re looking to become a platform where people can resell or rent gear, and also share trail reviews and outdoors experiences.

“We really want Switchbackr to be the go-to place for the outdoors, period,” he said.

More information about Switchbackr is available at switchbackr.com and the GEARage program at switchbackr.com/gearagesale.

Email Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com.

Gear (continued from page 8)

to make the dwellings rentable by those who want to consign sleep- 

kinds of households, including a Palo Alto grandmother who wanted to consign sleeping bags she’d gotten for her grandchildren, the parents of one of his classmates and the parents of one of his classmates

argued that making the duration too short would create problems for residents who depend on the lower rent. Others suggested that making it too long would deter homeowners from participating.

Summa suggested a deed-restriction period one-third as long.

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Email Kate Bradshaw at kbradshaw@almanacnews.com.
Police

(continued from page 5)

complaint in Santa Clara County Superior Court against the Police Department and city last month, claiming that they have suffered discrimination and harassment because of their opposition to some of the imagery in the “Black Lives Matter” mural.

The officers are specifically objecting to the city’s failure to promptly remove the image of Shakur, who was designated by the FBI as a “domestic terrorist” after her prison escape. The five officers are also taking issue with the mural’s depiction of a portion of a logo that they say is attributed to the New Black Panthers, a political organization that was founded in 1989 in Texas. The Southern Poverty Law Center has described the New Black Panthers as “virulently racist and anti-Semitic” and noted its former Philadelphia chapter head talked about his hatred for white people in a 2009 documentary. (“You want freedom? You’re going to have to kill some crackers,” said King Samir Shabazz, according to the Law Center.)

Notwithstanding the allegation, however, the image of the black panther, which is visible in the letter “P” on the mural, is an element in the emblems of both the original Black Panther Party, which the Law Center did not call racist and anti-Semitic, and the New Black Panthers.

The complaint argues that Palo Alto police officers, including the plaintiffs, were “forced to physically pass and confront the mural and its offensive, discriminatory and harassing iconography every time they entered the Palo Alto Police Department.” The officers, the complaint states, reported to their supervisors in the department that the mural and its iconography are “discriminatory and harassing.” The police union also submitted two letters to the city expressing concern about the images, according to the suit.

The officers argue in their complaint that the city violated provisions in the Fair Employment and Housing Act pertaining to discrimination, retaliation and harassment. Each of the five officers had filed a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing and subsequently received right-to-sue letters from the department.

Neither the law firm representing the five officers nor the president of the Palo Alto Police Officers’ Association responded to the Weekly’s questions about the lawsuit. And while court records show that the attorneys filed the complaint in Santa Clara County Superior Court on June 4, the city has not been served with a law-suit as of Tuesday, City Attorney Molly Stump said.

According to court records, the two sides in the lawsuit are scheduled to meet for a case management conference in October.

In making their case, the five officers claim that the city not only allowed the “harassing and discriminatory iconography” to exist in the workplace, it also encouraged and paid for it. And the city further discriminated by failing to “disapprove of and enjoin the underlying harassing and discriminatory conduct,” the complaint states.

“Failure to abate the harassing and discriminatory conduct in and of itself is a form of retaliation for raising such issues,” the complaint states.

The complaint also accuses the city and the Police Department of subjecting the officers to “adverse employment actions,” including refusing to investigate the complaints from the officers about the mural imagery.

The complaint doesn’t specify how much the five officers are seeking from the city, though the complaint states that the damages are in excess of $25,000. The officers, according to the filing, have “suffered and continue to suffer losses in earnings and other employment benefits, as well as past and future noneconomic injury.”

“This has caused damage to their professional reputation, their ability to promote, their ability to be selected for other units, and their ability to work,” the complaint states. “Moreover, it has adversely affected their personal health and well-being, including medical expenses, that are anticipated into the future and may force an early retirement.”

The officers are not the first critics to express concerns about the mural’s depiction of Shakur. The Peace Officers Research Association of California, a lobbying group for police officers, issued a letter to the Palo Alto City Council last August stating that “the inclusion of Assata Shakur’s image and quote in the mural is counterproductive” to restoring the trust between police officers and local residents.

“Regardless of whether the mural is protected free speech or creating a hostile work environment for your officers, to commit to a course of inaction would squander an opportunity to bridge that divide,” states the letter, which is signed by Brian Marvel, the association’s president.

The National Police Association, a nonprofit group that solicits donations and lobbies for conservative criminal justice policies, also took note of the mural last July, when it circulated a petition last year describing the depiction of Shakur in front of Palo Alto City Hall as an “atrocity.”

“For law enforcement required to enter the building is there any description other than a hostile work environment?” states the petition from the National Police Association, an organization that has been disavowed — and, in some cases, characterized as a scam — by numerous police departments, according to a 2019 investigation by the Indianapolis Star.

City Manager Ed Shikada’s office acknowledged the controversy over the mural in a July 9, 2020, blog post. “In no way does the mural take away from the value we have in our police officers who serve our community every day.”

“Temporary art is a means of expression on difficult issues and the Black Lives Matter mural is thought-provoking and spurs conversation,” Shikada’s office wrote.

Email Staff Writer Gennady Sheynet gsheynet@paweekly.com.

Music@Menlo

CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL AND INSTITUTE

2021 SUMMER FESTIVAL

GATHER

JULY 16—AUGUST 1

MENLO SCHOOL,

ATHERTON.

THREE WEEKENDS OF LIVE CHAMBER MUSIC

INDOOR & OUTDOOR CONCERTS

EIGHTEEN WORLD-CLASS ARTISTS

TWO FREE AFTERNOON PERFORMANCES

WE MUST LOVE EACH OTHER AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER

The letter “E” in the Black Lives Matter mural outside Palo Alto City Hall has generated controversy because it contains a depiction of Assata Shakur. Shakur escaped prison in 1979 while serving time after being convicted for the 1973 killing of a New Jersey State Police trooper.
SPACIOUS, UPDATED HOME ON NEARLY ¼-ACRE

Stylish updates and a bright, inviting ambiance highlight this spacious home of 2,200 square feet, set on an expansive lot of nearly one-quarter acre. Wide-plank white oak floors extend throughout open gathering spaces including the living room with fireplace, the modernized kitchen with high-end appliances, and the family room with its own fireplace plus outdoor access. The comfortable master suite highlights the home's 3 bedrooms and features a walk-in closet as well as a sliding glass door to the sizable backyard, where outdoor enjoyment awaits thanks to ample patio space, multiple fruit trees, and a solar-heated pool. Numerous updates to the home include new crown molding and baseboards, a remodeled laundry room, a brand new electrical panel and hot water heater, new doors throughout, updated fireplaces, and E.V. charging capabilities, while a 2-car garage and circular driveway provide plenty of parking. Plus, you will enjoy a location that puts you in the middle of a warm, welcoming neighborhood that is just around the corner from Cuesta Park, a short trip to the Rancho Shopping Center, convenient to major commute routes, and served by top-ranked Los Altos schools (buyer to verify eligibility).

OPEN HOUSE: SATURDAY & SUNDAY 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM
www.1884Miramonte.com
Offered at $2,488,000

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.

2.5% Commission Paid to Buyer’s Agent • Waived if DeLeon Buyer’s Agent

For more information contact: Audrey Sun, DRE #01933274 電話: 650.785.5822 我們精通國語和粵語
Managing Broker: Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | www.deleonrealty.com | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224
1074 MOFFETT CIRCLE
PALO ALTO

REMODELED EICHLER WITH A CONVENIENT LOCATION

Stylish updates blend seamlessly with timeless mid-century details in this bright 4-bedroom, 2-bathroom Eichler located on a peaceful street in Midtown. Characteristic Eichler details such as vaulted, paneled ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows create an inviting ambiance and fill nearly 1,500 square feet of interior space with tremendous natural light. Beautiful engineered hardwood floors extend throughout the open floorplan that begins in the living room with a fireplace in floor-to-ceiling brick, and continues into the remodeled kitchen with new countertops, a new backsplash, and a breakfast bar with seating. The sizable primary suite enjoys outdoor access, and both of the home’s bathrooms have been completely remodeled and updated. Enjoy indoor/outdoor living in the sun-soaked backyard that features a trellis-covered deck and lush lawn, as well as a convenient storage shed. Plus, this home also includes a laundry room, and covered carport parking. This great location is just moments to Greer Park, the Midtown Shopping Center, and US 101, a short drive away from downtown Palo Alto and Stanford University, and it offers access to top-ranked schools Palo Verde Elementary, JLS Middle, and Palo Alto High (buyer to verify eligibility).

OPEN HOUSE: SATURDAY & SUNDAY 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM
www.1074Moffett.com
Offered at $2,488,000

Listed by Michael Repka and Alex 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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For more information contact: Alexandra Wilbur, DRE #01926475 | 650.459.3888 | alex@deleonrealty.com
Managing Broker: Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | www.deleonrealty.com | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224
Answers to this week’s puzzles, which can be found on page 30.

Public Notices

995 Fictitious Name Statement
VINTAGE STAPLES
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No.: FBN676372
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
Vintage Staples, located at 21779 Congress Springs Lane, Saratoga, CA 95070
The name and residence address of the registrant(s) (vias):
ANGELA KARAN
21779 Congress Springs Lane
Saratoga, CA 95070
Registrant has not yet begun to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara County on June 24, 2021. (650) 625-1477

997 All Other Legals
NOTICE TO PETITIONER-ADMINISTRATOR
ESTATE OF: DOUGLAS KROES
Case No: 21PR 00385
To all heirs, beneficiaries, creditors, contingent creditors, and persons who may otherwise be interested in the will or estate, or both, of DOUGLAS KROES.
A Partition of Probate has been filed by: SHARON M. REED in the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara.
The Petition for Probate requests that: SHARON M. REED be appointed as personal representative to administer the estate of the decedent.
The petition requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. (This authority will allow the personal representative to take many actions without obtaining court approval. Before taking certain very important actions, however, the personal representative will be required to give notice to interested persons unless they have waived notice or consented to the proposed action.) The independent administration authority will be granted unless an interested person files an objection to the petition and shows good cause why the court should not grant the authority.
A HEARING on the petition will be held on September 2, 2021 at 9:01 a.m. in Dept. 13 of the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, located at 191 N. First St., San Jose, CA, 95131.
If you object to the granting of the petition, you should appear at the hearing and state your objections or file written objections with the court before the hearing. Your appearance may be in person or by your attorney.
If you are a creditor or a contingent creditor of the decedent, you must file your claim with the court and mail a copy to the personal representative appointed by the court within the later of either (1) four months from the date of first issuance of letters to a general personal representative, as defined in section 9052 of the California Probate Code, or (2) 60 days from the date of mailing or personal delivery to you of a notice under section 9052 of the California Probate Code. Other California statutes and legal authority may affect your rights as a creditor. You may want to consult with an attorney knowledgeable in California law.
To read full obituaries, submit a photo, go to Lasting Memories at PaloAltoOnline.com/obituaries.

OBITUARIES
A list of local residents who died recently:
Ranna Kitanidis, 65, a longtime Stanford resident, died on June 13.
To read full obituaries, leave rememberances and post photos, go to Lasting Memories at PaloAltoOnline.com/obituaries.

Lasting Memories
An online directory of obituaries and rememberances. Search obituaries, submit a memorial, share a photo.

PaloAltoOnline.com/obituaries

Memorial Service for
Sarah Johnson

We lost Sarah to Covid-19 in Kirkland, Washington on April 18th, 2020. Dick Johnson and family invite you to join them at First Presbyterian Church Palo Alto (where they were long time members) for a celebration of her life. There will be a service of music, prayers, and stories of her life and of those who were touched by her life. A reception will follow the service.

Date and time
Sat., July 17, 2021
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Location
First Presbyterian Church
of Palo Alto
1440 Cowper Street
Palo Alto, CA 94301

Church COVID-19 Guidelines
For inside gatherings we request that participants wear masks, maintain physical distancing, and seek consent before engaging in any physical interaction. All staff and volunteers will wear masks. We will refrain from communal singing with or without a mask. Color-coded bracelets, nametags and stickers will be available to indicate people’s preference for interaction.

Palo Alto Weekly
My 63rd transaction in the Willows!!

315 Concord Drive | Menlo Park

678 Webster Street | Palo Alto

Both properties will be open Sunday, July 11th 1:30-4:30pm
PEACEFUL WOODSIDE HILLS RETREAT ON 1.4+ ACRES

Quintessential Woodside grounds filled with towering trees and colorful plantings encircle this spacious home set on a gated lot of over 1.4 acres. The home's 2,800 square feet of living space takes many cues from the brilliant natural surroundings, as high ceilings create a sense of airy openness and excellent use of glass fills the interior with natural light and brings the outside in. Beautifully refinished hardwood floors extend throughout expansive spaces perfect for entertaining, beginning in the living room with a fireplace, built-in entertainment center, and a stunning wall of windows overlooking the backyard. From there, the dining room leads to the granite-appointed chef's kitchen teeming with high-end appliances from Sub-Zero, Thermador, and Miele, while the nearby family room offers inviting space to relax and unwind. Find comfort and convenience in the home's 4 bedrooms and 4 bathrooms including the master suite with a spa-like bathroom, plus additional guest suites perfect for family or overnight guests. And for true indoor/outdoor living, numerous points throughout the home open to the incredible, sprawling backyard with a pool, outdoor kitchen, patio space, and a walking trail that leads past newly planted grass. Though you will feel far removed from the often frenzied pace of Silicon Valley, you will still be just moments from the shops and restaurants of Woodside Plaza, a short drive to downtown Redwood City, and have easy access to Interstate 280 for Bay Area commuting.

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

www.135Woodside.com
Offered at $3,988,000

Listed by Michael Repka of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in San Mateo County
Data from BrokerMetrics® based on MLS sales from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, in San Mateo County, residential properties, with no off-MLS sales included in the rankings.

2.5% Commission Paid to Buyer's Agent • Waived if DeLeon Buyer’s Agent

Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | 650.900.7000 | michael@deleonrealty.com
Audrey Sun, DRE #01933274 電話: 650.785.5822 | www.deleonrealty.com | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224
PEACEFUL WEST ATHERTON ESTATE WITH STUNNING JAPANESE AESTHETICS

Nestled on an expansive lot of nearly an acre in perfect harmony with its peaceful surroundings, this West Atherton estate showcases spectacular Japanese design aesthetics and offers supreme privacy. Sharing the same architect as Larry Ellison’s Atherton compound, this estate is introduced by a gated motor court, and inside, over 5,400 square feet of combined interior space enjoys beautiful hardwood floors, paneled, beamed ceilings, and expansive spaces that embrace the simplicity of Japanese design while offering fantastic venues for both entertaining and everyday living. Both the living room and office are centered by a fireplace, with the living room also enjoying a concealed wet bar. The bright, expansive dining room is catered from the kitchen, which includes granite countertops with full height backsplash, plus appliances from Viking, Thermador, Sub-Zero, and Bosch. Accommodations in the main home consist of 4 bedrooms and 5 bathrooms, highlighted by the palatial master suite with two en suite bathrooms, while the detached pool house includes a fantastic lap swimming pool, sauna, and an additional bedroom and bathroom. Plus, multiple rooms in both buildings open to the incredible grounds that evoke the feel of a Japanese garden, with multiple decks, seating, and vibrant, colorful plantings. Just moments to downtown Menlo Park and the Menlo Circus Club, this estate is also convenient to downtown Palo Alto and Stanford University, with top private schools close at hand.

OPEN HOUSE: SATURDAY & SUNDAY 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM
www.33Barry.com
Offered at $12,988,000

Listed by Michael Repka of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in Atherton
Data from BrokerMetrics® based on MLS sales from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, in Atherton, residential properties, with no off-MLS sales included in the rankings.

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Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | 650.900.7000 | michael@deleonrealty.com
中文諮詢請聯繫Audrey Sun, DRE #01933274 | 電話: 650.785.5822 | www.deleonrealty.com | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224
“Over these past 15 years, Sereno held firmly to the belief that a small group of people can change the world and that a for profit company can do good things and not lose its soul. This spirit is held in the hearts and minds of our people and we have great faith in what the next 15 years will bring.”

— CHRISS TRAPANI, CO-FOUNDER

“I have always maintained that Sereno’s greatest strength is its people and for the past 15 years, that belief has held true and allowed us to create a real estate practice with meaning. The fact we are here and thriving 15 years later speaks to the success of our brokerage. Today we honor the individuals, both inside and outside Sereno, who have supported our vision along the way.”

— RYAN IWANAGA, CO-FOUNDER

Follow our stride at sereno.com
Letters

Keep streets car free
Editor,
California Avenue should permanently stay a car-free restaurant and pedestrian zone as it has been during the pandemic. California Avenue has never been more attractive and inviting than it is today: outdoor diners, people gathering and milling about, lights and live music in the evening. The restaurants are pulling this off on shoestring budgets, in the teeth of a pandemic recession and on a temporary basis. Imagine how much better it’d be if they (and the city) could invest in the street scene, knowing it’d be permanent.

Why would the city let California Avenue return to the rather drab and nondescript way it was before? Residents overwhelmingly do not want that: In the city’s survey, 96% of respondents said that California Avenue should stay car free. So what’s the issue? We’re told that local businesses want to move at a whim and not be held accountable for other deep concerns.

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In response to ‘As state drought persists, local redwoods face a precarious future’
Posted July 4 at 9:22 a.m. by Efren Morales, a resident of East Palo Alto:
“As a professional tree climber and arborist, I cut down trees and trim branches every day for a living.

When trees pose a hazard or obstruct views, they must come down or be cut back severely.

Would you prefer to have a useless and messy sequoia tree in your backyard just for the sake of having one when it could come crashing down on your home during a heavy storm?”

In response to ‘Developer proposes condominum project in Ventura’
Posted July 1 at 5:39 p.m. by William Hitchens, a resident of Mountain View:
“Better pricey, medium density condos with adequate onsite parking (two cars per condo), than high-density apartments with inadequate parking or ultra-high-density ‘so-called affordable housing units’ with no off-street parking. People who purchase their condos and who face financial risk if the community deteriorates are far more responsible citizens than those who can move at a whim and not be held accountable for supporting policies that destroy property values. They have ‘skin in the game,’ to use a gambling term — and these days, real estate is in a huge gambling bubble.”

In response to ‘East Palo Alto’s RV Safe Parking program provides services for residents in transition’
Posted June 27 at 9:34 a.m. by Larry Costa, a resident of Charleston Meadows:
“Palo Alto could take a cue from East Palo Alto and Mountain View in proactively dealing with the homeless problem.

But no. Some residents are too concerned with expensive handbag thefts, watering their personal sequoia trees, closing off University and California avenues for added dining-out options, establishing an insignificant history museum and other deep concerns.”

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

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Can accessory dwelling units help solve the city’s affordability crisis?

Submit letters to the editor of up to 300 words to letters@paweekly.com. Submit guest opinions of 750 to 950 words to editor@paweekly.com. Include your name, address and daytime phone number so we can reach you.

We reserve the right to edit contributions for length, objectionable content, libel and factual errors known to us. Anonymous letters will generally not be accepted. Submitting a letter to the editor or guest opinion constitutes a granting of permission to the Palo Alto Weekly and Embarcadero Media to also publish it online, including in our online archives and as a post on Town Square.

For more information, contact Editorial Assistant Lloyd Lee at letters@paweekly.com or 650-223-6526 or Editor Jocelyn Dong at editor@paweekly.com.

www.PaloAltoOnline.com • Palo Alto Weekly • July 9, 2021 • Page 23
11801 FRANCEMONT DRIVE
LOS ALTOS HILLS

MEDITERRANEAN OASIS IN LOS ALTOS HILLS

Boasting timeless Mediterranean style and top-of-the-line luxury on a private lot of 1.1 acres (per county), this beautiful estate represents the best of Los Altos Hills living. Lofty ceilings and expansive windows create a light, bright ambiance in this 5,326 sq. ft. home (per county), which offers 5 bedrooms, 6 full and 2 half-baths, and a convenient office. Spacious formal rooms with designer appointments invite entertaining on a grand scale, the kitchen has everything needed for the home chef, and the family room includes a projector and screen for at-home movie nights. Experience true indoor/outdoor living with glass doors that open to grounds fit for a five-star resort, with a patio, outdoor kitchen and pizza oven, and a sparkling pool. Feel a million miles away from it all, yet be just moments to Interstate 280 for Bay Area commuting, and a short drive to shopping and dining at Rancho Shopping Center, all while enjoying access to acclaimed Los Altos schools (buyer to verify eligibility).

OPEN HOUSE: SATURDAY & SUNDAY 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM
www.11801Francemont.com
Offered at $6,488,000

Listed by Michael Repka of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in Los Altos Hills
Data from BrokerMetrics® based on MLS sales from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2020, in Los Altos Hills, residential properties, with no off-MLS sales included in the rankings.

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Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | 650.900.7000 | michael@deleonrealty.com
中文諮詢請聯繫Audrey Sun, DRE #01933274 電話: 650.785.5822 | www.deleonrealty.com | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224
With ‘The Black Index,’ Palo Alto Art Center explores representation

‘We resist confinement and will be part of the future,’ says curator Bridget Cooks

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

W hen printed photographs became available to the public in the mid-19th century, the phrase “the camera never lies” was coined, largely because the photograph was considered a faithful representation; a precise and infallible record of persons or events. We now know that the medium of photography is open to any number of manipulations and distortions. The current exhibition at the Palo Alto Art Center, “The Black Index,” seeks to, according to a press release, “question our reliance on photography as a privileged source for documentary objectivity and understanding,” especially as it pertains to Black subjects.

The show, guest-curated by Bridget Cooks, an associate professor of African American studies and art history at the University of California at Irvine, consists of the work of six Black artists working in a variety of media. The exhibition could not be more timely, but it was actually planned several years ago. Palo Alto Art Center Director Karen Kienzle and Cooks were former colleagues at Santa Clara University. When Kienzle heard about the exhibition, and the fact that it would be available to travel, she immediately sought to have it shown in Palo Alto.

“We knew this show would be important, but the reckoning around race and equity that took place over the past year made it more important than ever,” Kienzle said. “The presentation of the exhibition coincided with the release of the city of Palo Alto Human Relations Commission’s report on the experiences of Black and brown people in Palo Alto and their subsequent focus on facilitating 100 conversations on race in the community.”

Cooks said the inspiration for the exhibition came in 2017 when she first saw a work by artist Whitfield Lovell. Here, he is represented by “The Card Pieces,” executed in charcoal pencil on paper. These 24 portraits of ordinary, working-class men and women are beautifully rendered and very expressive. At the bottom of the portrait an actual playing card has been affixed, perhaps to make a statement about how our lives are often impacted by the luck of the draw. In the accompanying wall label, Lovell stated that he wanted to portray Black Americans like everyone else because, “They have lives, hopes and dreams. They have families.”

Also included in the main gallery is the work of Bay Area artist Lava Thomas. In 2018, she did a series of 12 portraits entitled “Mugshots: Women of the Montgomery Boycott.” Three of these large-scale drawings, made with graphite and Conte crayon on paper, are included here. Thomas was taken by the fact that women were, in large part, responsible for the organization behind the famous boycott. Although Rosa Parks is well known for the stance she took, Thomas wanted to celebrate the other women who worked quietly and effectively behind the scenes. Many of them, she said, had long histories of activism and, when they were arrested, wanted to “take control of their representation” by formally dressing for their mugshots. These carefully drawn portraits, which took more than three years to complete, portray the women with profound and defiant expressions. Thomas explained that the choice to use pencil on paper (a very laborious process) was deliberate because, “The act of drawing is accessible; everyone has used a pencil and paper. My drawing technique is detailed and precise — each pencil stroke is visible — which draws the viewer in and invites them to look closely.”

The decision to make the drawings slightly larger than life-size was also a conscious one because, “hung at eye level, it allows the viewer to have a one-to-one engagement with them.” There is a feeling of connection made with these three women that would not have been the same with a black-and-white photograph. Thomas added, “My objective was also to take the mugshot, a photograph designed to depict criminality, and transform it into a commemorative portrait, lovingly created, to honor the labor and leadership of these women.”

Thomas’ work can also be seen in the adjacent Glass Gallery, where her “Looking Back” portraits are installed. This is an ongoing project for the artist, inspired by an archive of family photographs. These depictions of women, some in formal attire, are framed within cameos, which the artist explained was a common device for early 20th-century portraits. In these works, Thomas said that she wanted to honor “the resilience of my ancestors and women in the South.” Their direct gaze and quiet, calm dignity mask the often difficult and troubling circumstances, Hinkley said.

Cooks hopes that by presenting the exhibition in a largely white, wealthy demographic like Palo Alto, viewers will see that, “Black people have value. We are not disposable. We are more than something to be feared. We are beautiful and complex. We live, we feel joy and sorrow. We resist confinement and will be part of the future. This may be news for mainly white viewers. For Black people, the exhibition will be a validation.”

“The Black Index” also includes work by Dennis Delgado, Alicia Henry and Titus Kaphar. Kaphar and San Jose artist Diana Pumppelly Bates will join Cooks for an online conversation on Black creativity and the importance of mentorship on July 16 at noon.

The exhibition is on view through Aug. 14 at the Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Road, Tuesday-Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. More information is available at tinyurl.com/PAarts-bi.

Email Contributing Writer Sheryl Nonnenberg at nonnenberg@aol.com.
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UPDATE Due to high demand, we have stopped registration for in-person tickets to Michael’s upcoming seminar; however, you can still join us on Thursday, July 15th at 6:00 PM via the DeLeon Realty livestream!

Scan the QR code to watch the livestream
Eating Out

Flavors close to the heart

The Mandarin, Roost & Roast bring personal touch to menus

By Sara Hayden

The Mandarin, Roost & Roast bring personal touch to menus

The Mandarin

The pandemic may have expedited Lau’s plans to pursue his dream of opening a restaurant, but when it comes to executing his vision at The Mandarin in Menlo Park, it’s all about slowing down — some of the restaurant’s meticulously prepared dishes can literally take days to make.

Lau said his eight treasure duck, for example, must be ordered at least two days in advance. Preparation includes the delicate business of deboning a duck and stuffing it with glutinous sticky rice, peanuts, black mushroom, dried shrimp, scallops and salted egg yolks — all while ensuring the skin stays intact.

The tea-smoked duck needs to be brined for 72 hours, stewed and simmered, and finally dried and smoked.

Lau gives a heads-up to those who order the whole fish in spicy bean sauce, which also requires a lot prep time — and patience. The rock cod requires 30 minutes to simmer so that the flavor can permeate to the bone, he explained.

“People say location, location, location, but for me, it’s quality, quality, quality,” Lau said. “I’d rather have a customer wait than rush a dish that’s not perfectly done yet.”

At The Mandarin, specialties like eight treasure duck and golden crab appear alongside a mix of comfort foods like General Tso’s chicken, Mongolian beef, crab Rangoon and fortune cookies.

“So people ask, ‘Why are you doing fortune cookies?’ You know what? People like it. And fortune cookies (are) something I like,” Lau said. “I want to do pan-Asian.”

Lau plans to eventually expand the menu to include more Cantonese and Japanese items that reflect the dishes he was exposed to while growing up working in restaurants and traveling across China while

Eating Out

Setting the table: Our stories, our food

Introducing the new Peninsula Foodist

by Sara Hayden

As a kid, I loved when my family brought home giant bags of “unfortunates.” That’s what we called the fortune cookies that were broken or otherwise failed to be perfect — perfectly formed shells. Very few, if any, contained actual paper slips foretelling lucky numbers or future wisdom. In fact, most of them were flat circles. They were delightful — pancakes in crunchy cookie form emanating a waft of sugar and vanilla.

But somehow down the line, I got self-conscious about enjoying them, and even their more fortunate counterparts. Fortune cookies have a complicated (and interesting) history, likely starting in Japan. The tea house in Golden Gate Park’s Japanese Tea Garden might have just been the first U.S. restaurant to serve them.

Finding out that fortune cookies weren’t of Chinese origin made me question my relationship with them. I also started to get hung up on what was true to my heritage, and what wasn’t.

All these years later, I appreciate new restaurant owner Nee Lau’s straightforward take on the cookie. In an interview, he told me he’s incorporating them at The Mandarin in Menlo Park, right alongside Cantonese and Szechuanese specialties.

“Some people ask, ‘Why are you doing fortune cookies?’ You know what? People like it,” Lau said. “And fortune cookies (are) something I like.”

You know what? I like fortune cookies too!

What I love best about food is that it reveals both personal experiences and broader cultural narratives. Every dish and even a single cookie has a story to tell, delivered by the infinite web of people involved in its creation.

As the new Peninsula Foodist, I’m looking forward to sharing these stories, and breaking bread (or fortune cookies) with you to learn more about who we are.

See you at the table.

Catch up with Sara Hayden, the Peninsula Foodist, at paloaltoonline.com/blogs. Or sign up to get her free newsletter about the dynamic, under-the-radar food scene around the Peninsula, published every other week, by going to paloaltoonline.com/express. Got tips, comments or recipes? Email Sara at peninsulafoodist@paloaltoonline.com.
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Eating Out

working in the high-tech industry. In the kitchen, Lau has enlisted the help of chef Rui Young, who trained in China and specialized in Szechuan cuisine at San Francisco’s Sichuan Home and Z&Y Restaurant. He also plans to bring chef Ming Li from Milpitas’ Koi Palace and San Jose’s Mayflower Restaurant on board.

Lau started in the restaurant industry as a dishwasher in Redwood City at age 14, just after his family immigrated from the Guangdong Province of southeast China. By the time he was 18, he was managing the nearby Juban Restaurant on board. Lau says he came to appreciate all sorts of food, and crispy. Barbecue and popcorn chicken are also on the menu. “Trust me,” Lau said, “I eat a lot.”

He wants customers to also be able to try things that are new to them. “If people want to eat dishes they haven’t eaten before and they can’t get it, come talk to me,” said Lau, who recently held a soft opening for his new restaurant, located at 1029 El Camino Real in the former home of Black Pepper, which closed during the pandemic. This month, Lau is aiming to secure a beer and wine license and hold an official grand opening.

“There’s tradition, and there’s a new generation. And they can work together very well,” Lau said. “With food, there’s no boundaries.”

The Mandarin, 1029 El Camino Real, Menlo Park; 650-391-9811. Open Tuesday to Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Roost & Roast aims to change that. The restaurant, which opened at Palo Alto’s Town & Country Village shopping center last month, specializes in making Hat Yai fried chicken, named for the southern Thailand city where the dish originated. Available as a meal with sides or à la carte, the batter is made with potato starch, resulting in a texture that’s airy and crispy. Barbecue and popcorn chicken are also on the menu. Roost & Roast also serves up (continued on page 30)
Eating Out

(continued from page 29)

Flavors

Poon said the inspiration for the menu came from street food he tried in Thailand while visiting the town where his mother lived after immigrating there from Cambodia. Many of the restaurant’s menu items are based on his mom’s recipes, Poon said.

Though Poon just recently opened Roost & Roast, this isn’t the first restaurant venture for him or his family. In Mountain View, Poon previously operated Buffalo burger bar on Castro Street. His parents ran Express 7, a “ma-and-pa Chinese restaurant” on East Middlefield Road that Poon later rebranded as the fast-casual Asian eatery Srasa Kitchen.

The family operated a restaurant at the Middlefield location for 17 years before the COVID-19 pandemic prompted them to refocus their business model.

Poon said sales they had counted on from tech workers dropped precipitously during the pandemic. They received a COVID-19 relief grant, but “it wasn’t quite enough for us — we still had to walk away,” Poon said.

Ramping up for a new restaurant means going “back to square one,” Poon said.

“We built a successful business in the past. ... It’s a new set of challenges, but it’s doable,” he said.

Rather than serving 700 customers a day as they did pre-pandemic, the family business now serves about 100. Starting out now, that’s to be expected, Poon said.

“It’s just learning to start over again that’s the biggest challenge. ... This is our attempt to come back,” he said.

They’re finding a flow. Some days the food sells out, and on others, there’s a minimal number of customers. Hiring is especially difficult as the restaurant industry faces a labor shortage. “Right now, it’s just hard to find staff. It is a true family business. I’m working, my father’s working, my mom’s working,” Poon said. “It’s a true small business going on right now while we try to figure everything out.”

Roost & Roast’s arrival in Palo Alto marks a homecoming for the Gunn High School grad and his family.

“T’s nice to finally have a business in the area where we grew up,” he said.

Roost & Roast at Town & Country Village, 855 El Camino Real, Suite 161, Palo Alto; 650-485-2395. Open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. ■ Email Associate Digital Editor Sara Hayden at peninsulafoodist@paloaltonline.com.

Answers on page 18.
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