OMICRON IS HERE

SCHOOL DISTRICT BRACES FOR DISRUPTION, URGES WIDESPREAD TESTING  PAGE 5
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**Upfront**

**Local news, information and analysis**

**Schools prepare for surge of omicron cases**

Superintendent: ‘It’s going to be disruptive’

By Zoe Morgan

The line of teachers and staff waiting to get tested at the Palo Alto Unified School District office on Monday morning was long, stretching in front of the building and around the corner. Parents and students stood in similarly lengthy lines at Cubberley Community Center, with one man having the foresight to bring a lawn chair.

School restarted this week after the holiday break, and administrators are facing the prospect of trying to keep campuses open as case counts seem sure to rise due to the highly transmissible omicron variant.

Superintendent Don Austin said the district is going to do everything in its power to minimize the spread of the virus in schools, including providing Monday’s testing to staff and students, but recognized that a spike in cases is inevitable.

“What’s pretty predictable is we’re going to have large numbers (of cases),” Austin said during an interview at the Monday testing site. “Anyone who’s going to pretend that that’s not the case is just lying.”

Sure enough, the district has seen cases rise in the first few days that classes have been back in session and expects to have over 100 cases this week alone. Austin told the Weekly on Thursday, Jan. 6. The spike led the district to abandon sending close contact notification letters to families each time their student is exposed to a positive case. Instead, Austin is instructing parents to assume their student is being exposed to the virus daily and to get tested each week.

“With numbers at this level, families would receive contact letters every day without adding value and predictably creating confusion,” Austin wrote in a

(continued on page 16)

**HOLIDAY FUND**

**A pathway to success**

Palo Alto nonprofit Pursuit of Excellence offers college grants, mentors to teens in need

By Linda Taaffe

The likelihood of Zulema Garibo going to college seemed pretty slim: English was not her native language. No one in her family had ever attended college. And her status as an undocumented immigrant meant she was ineligible for federal student aid and other scholarships.

“I always had that dream of being able to graduate college. My parents put it in our heads that we came to this country to have a better life,” said Garibo, who moved to the Midpeninsula with her parents and two siblings from Mexico when she was 6 years old.

Despite the roadblocks, Garibo refused to give up on her dream. When high school teachers told her advanced English classes would be too challenging for her, she enrolled in advanced science and math classes and showed them she could succeed. She stayed in the classroom during lunch and after school to hone her language skills and did whatever she thought needed to be done to improve her chances of being accepted to college.

But even with a 4.1 GPA, she said college seemed as if it would be an impossibility if she couldn’t afford the tuition.

During her senior year at Woodside High School, Garibo learned about Pursuit of Excellence, a Palo Alto nonprofit that awards scholarships to financially needy students from Peninsula high schools. She jumped at the chance to apply and was able to enroll at the University of California, Santa Barbara, right out of high school. Through the program, Garibo received $30,000 in grant money distributed over the years she was an

(continued on page 15)
Answer: Answers to this week’s puzzles, which can be found on page 23.
A
fter more than four months on trial, former Silicon Valley CEO Elizabeth Holmes was found guilty of four counts of defrauding investors of nearly $145 million through her failed Palo Alto blood-testing startup Theranos.

The verdict in the federal case was reached by jurors who had deliberated since Dec. 20 and who had announced Monday morning that they were deadlocked on three of the 11 charges of wire fraud and conspiracy to commit wire fraud that had been brought against Holmes by the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

Though U.S. District Judge Edward Davila sent the jury back to try to reach unanimous agreement on those three counts, which turned out to be related to three transfers of millions of investors’ dollars, they again notified Davila in the afternoon that they were hopelessly deadlocked. Davila then allowed the jury to cease deliberations and to return its verdict.

The jury also found Holmes, 37, not guilty of four charges, three of which related to fraud committed against patients whose blood had been submitted for testing by Theranos.

As the verdicts were read in the U.S. District Courthouse in San Jose, Holmes, her family and partner displayed no reactions. Holmes sat still as she had prior to the reading of the verdict.

The jury reached the verdict after a 14-week trial that captivated the nation and put the thriving Silicon Valley’s no-holds-barred entrepreneurial culture on trial.

Decision comes after a 14-week trial that captivated nation and put Silicon Valley’s no-holds-barred entrepreneurial culture on trial

By Lloyd Lee, Jocelyn Dong and Jamey Padoino

Elizabeth Holmes verdict: Guilty of four counts of defrauding investors through failed blood-testing company

Elizabeth Holmes, former CEO of Theranos, arrives at the federal courthouse in San Jose on Oct. 1, 2021.

from the company’s Edison devices, among other issues. Those offering testimony included former lab directors Adam Rosendorff and Kingshuk Das and former lab associate Erika Cheung.

Investors testified to the millions of dollars they put into Theranos with the understanding that the fingerstick blood-testing technology worked, and patients and doctors spoke to inconsistent results, including one case involving a pregnant woman.

The intense interest in the case drew crowds of journalists from around the world as well as Holmes’ groupies in black turtleneck sweaters, who lined up for hours for the chance to get inside the courthouse.

The majority of the council, however, agreed that Burt is the perfect choice for the job, given his lengthy experience in local policymaking. First elected to the council in 2007, Burt served for two consecutive terms, which included stints as mayor in 2010 and 2011.

Council veteran chosen for top position for third time

"I don’t think representation is really important," Tanaka said. “I think that’s been a long time since we had an Asian American mayor.”

"If we had not elect Lydia Kou as mayor, it will be a minimum of 10 years since we had an Asian American in this role," Cormack said.

The election of Burt, a vice mayor in 2021, to the council’s top leadership position was largely a foregone conclusion given the city’s tradition of elevating vice mayors to the central chair on the dais. But even as most of his colleagues supported hewing to this tradition, two council members, Alison Cormack and Greg Tanaka, favored electing Lydia Kou as mayor.

"I think representation is really important," Tanaka said. "I think that’s been a long time since we had an Asian American mayor.”

The company gained from American political and business luminaries, who’d been drawn in by the pie-in-the-sky vision of diagnostic lab tests done with a single drop of blood.

Holmes was indicted in June 2018 for the alleged multimillion dollar scheme surrounding the blood-testing technology of the company that she founded. She ultimately stood trial on 11 fraud charges: Seven counts pertained to investor-related wire fraud and the remaining four counts were tied to wire fraud against patients.

During the trial, federal prosecutors questioned numerous witnesses, most notably former U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis, who served on Theranos’ board of directors, and journalist Roger Parloff, whose June 2014 cover story in Fortune magazine propelled Holmes and Theranos to fame.

Past employees called to the stand described quality control problems and complaints surrounding the blood test results that turned out to be related to fraud committed against patients.

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Give back locally
with a gift to the Holiday Fund

Last Year’s Grant Recipients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Child Care Grants</td>
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</table>

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Grant application and guidelines at PaloAltoOnline.com/holiday_fund
Application deadline: January 14, 2022

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As of December 30, 296 donors have contributed $664,152 to the Palo Alto Weekly Holiday Fund.

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- Saturday, Jan 22nd: 11:30am-2:00pm
- Sunday, Jan 23rd: 3:00pm-5:00pm

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News Digest

Developer proposes 70 apartments downtown

Embodiled by a positive response from the Palo Alto City Council, a developer has filed a formal application to construct a four-story building with 70 apartments and ground-floor office space on University Avenue. Of the apartments, 20% would be rented out as affordable housing.

Smith Development has filed a formal application for 660 University Ave., a project that calls for consolidating three lots near the intersection of University and Middlefield Road and demolishing two single-story office buildings, including the present location of Palo Alto Dental. The dental practice plans to relocate to another location within the city.

The project is advancing under the council’s “planned home” zoning process, which allows builders to exceed the city’s development standards in exchange for providing housing. The process also gives the council greater discretion to accept or reject proposals.

In discussing the project during a “pre-screening” last October, most council members generally lauded the Smith plan for bringing housing to downtown, but suggested that the developer provide more apartments for low-income individuals.

In a nod to the council’s feedback, Smith agreed to revise the income categories for the below-market-rate units in the development. Under the new plans, 14 of the 70 apartments would be designated as affordable housing. Of those, six would be designated for the “moderate” income category, four for the “low” income category and four for the “very low” income category.

The project will now have to go through Palo Alto’s typical approval process, which will involve hearings before the Architectural Review Board, the Planning and Transportation Commission and the council.

— Gennyash Sheynner

Mayor

(continued from page 7)

2016, the final year of his second term. Burt returned to the council in 2020 after winning the most votes in the council election. Burt’s elevation to mayor became cemented after Kou declined Cormack’s nomination and moved to nominate Burt. Kou lauded Burt’s wealth of experience as both a council member and as an advocate for transportation and environmental protection at the regional level. She also suggested that his experience as a policymaker will serve the city well as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“As the pandemic continues, health and safety are at top of the mind, and Pat has always been a step ahead in recommending ideas and solutions,” Kou said.

The council voted 6-0 to elect Burt as mayor, with Tanaka abstaining. With that number of support, he looks forward to leading the council in the next year as it tries to address its priorities relating to environmental protection and economic recovery.

“This has been the biggest disruption to our community in decades,” Burt said, referring to COVID-19. “We’re not through yet but we’re on a path to recovery. We’re currently facing a new rough patch in the road with the omicron, but the indications are that we’ll be moving past that pretty rapidly and we’ll then continue to proceed on addressing the challenges that the council has set as a beginning of the year. Kou, meanwhile, will likely have a chance to serve as mayor in 2023. Immediately after electing Burt as mayor, the council, which previously chose Kou as vice mayor for the coming year. Council member Greer Stone, who nominated Kou, lauded her for her fairness in running meetings and for being a “fierce advocate for issues such as sustainability, affordable housing and always offering a truly passionate voice for our city’s residents.”

“I think her abilities to be able to look at the complex issues, to be able to examine those issues, to be able to listen to residents and stakeholders and nonprofits and corporations and be a true coalition builder is going to mean a lot for our community ... to be able to strive forward,” Stone said.

Unlike Burt, a political moderate who often wields the swing vote, Kou is a stalwart of the council’s “residentalist” political camp, which favors slow-growth policies. She has been a fierce critic of recent state laws to encourage more housing — including last year’s Senate Bill 9 and Senate Bill 10 — and of regional mandates on housing. She has also been a passionate advocate for strengthening the city’s policies to protect rent-ers, for addressing airplane noise and for expanding Palo Alto’s tree-planting program.

Kou was elected to the council in 2016 and was reelected in 2020. Kou said that as vice mayor, she intends to work closely with Burt, the council and staff to achieve the community’s “shared vision of a livable Palo Alto.”

“I believe there is consensus in the community around addressing our transportation and traffic issues, sensible housing growth that addresses the cost of living here while respecting the trees and the natural environment and resources,” Kou said.

— Email Staff Writer Gennady Sheynner at gsheynner@pawweekly.com.
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Don Remsen

Don Remsen was born in Buffalo, NY on May 11th, 1944. His early years were spent on a dairy farm, milking cows in the morning before school. He later attended high school in Silver Creek, where he won recognition in cross-country running, swimming, and acting in school musicals. Early at University of Michigan, he dreamed of writing the “Great American novel”, but pivoted to earn a BS in electrical engineering and continued his education.

Don’s career included consulting, finance, management, and M&A. While living outside New York City, he grew his career from McKinsey to PepsiCo to Exxon. In 1979, Don joined Signetics, a semiconductor company, and moved with his family to Palo Alto. He remained at Signetics (later acquired by Phillips) for the remainder of his career, eventually retiring with more than 30 years of service. He enjoyed experiencing other cultures via his international business travel, spending time in Japan, Singapore, and the Netherlands.

After retirement, Don enjoyed biking, sailing, and attending symphony and theater. Don and Kay traveled extensively, including boat and bicycle trips in Spain and Italy, and a tour of Cambodia and Thailand. Family and friends remember Don’s fervent discussions of politics and history, and his wonderful humor and stories. He loved his children, inspiring them in them a lifelong love of building, learning, and a healthy disregard for the status quo. He loved his grandchildren, taking them to watch bulldozers on construction sites and dancing to Patsy Cline songs.

Don’s passing will be a celebration of Don’s life on February 12th, please contact the family for information. Please do not send Don’s casket. There will be a celebration of Don’s life on February 12th, 2022 Popp, a former chair of the city’s Architectural Review Board, declined to comment.
undergraduate student to help defray annual tuition costs. Garibo said the scholarship program, which also provides mentorship and internships opportunities, changed her life.

“Pursuing college definitely gave me the motivation and extra support that I needed. They were there for me emotionally and financially during my difficult moments,” said Garibo, who is now 25, during a telephone interview in mid-December after wrapping up final exams at the University of Southern California, where the second-year graduate student is earning her master’s degree in teaching. She plans to become a college counselor.

Garibo is among the nearly 700 students who have received grants from Pursuit of Excellence (POE) since Palo Altans Richard and Marjorie Smallwood launched the program in 1985 with a single $2,000 scholarship awarded to a graduate of Sequoia High School. Over the past 36 years, the nonprofit has distributed approximately $57 million in scholarships — all raised through fundraising efforts — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Palo Alto, Gunn, and five high schools in the Sequoia Union High School District, as well as students from its chapter in Washington, D.C.

Because POE is an all-volunteer organization, 98% of donations go directly to students, said the Smallwoods’ daughter, Carol Mullin, who stepped up as president of POE in 2010.

Mullin said the program’s goal is to help motivated but undererved and financially needy students, many of whom are first-generation college applicants, earn a degree by providing them between $500 and $8,000 in financial aid every school year until they graduate.

The program targets high school seniors for whom the funds can make a difference by giving them the ability to attend school, she explained. Preference is given to students who needed to work during their high school years.

“We’re not trying to jump on the bandwagon for the kid who has a 4.0, who’s going to an Ivy League, who everybody knows is going to be a great success because we know we’re not going to make a difference there,” Mullin said. “We’re looking for students who are well-prepared for higher education (and financial need), and maybe they haven’t done as well in school because they’re working 20 hours a week. Maybe they have a 3.2 grade point average or a 2.8 grade point average, but they would have had much better grades if they had been helping support their families.”

Along with financial aid, each student is provided with a mentor as well as workshops, enrichment opportunities, such as workshops and internships. Grant money is adjusted annually to fill any financial gaps in college expenses so that a recipient might experience.

Mullin said the program does not cover personal expenses, which students are expected to cover through work.

Mullin said once a student is accepted into the program, they’re in it until they graduate.

“One of you’re, you’re in, and we will do whatever we can to get you through college,” she said. “It’s a mentor that, for two years, that’s amazing. If it takes them eight years, that’s still fine.”

Mullin said POE’s graduation rate has been about 88% to 90% over the past few years, compared to the national average for lower-income, first-generation students of 21%. (These rates are based on students who have earned a bachelor’s degree within six years.)

Marcela Lopez, a POE recipient from Woodside High School who graduated from the University of California, San Diego with a bachelor’s degree in neuroscience last spring, said having access to a mentor is a huge benefit, especially for first-generation students: “It’s a way to navigate an unfamiliar process.”

“So many students are just so much more prepared. ... Their parents might not know what a master’s or a Ph.D.s, so they know exactly what classes they need to take and why,” said Lopez, who moved from Mexico to Redwood City when she was 15 years old and became the first in her family to attend college in the United States. “That’s the hardest part. Nobody tells you that you need to volunteer or do any leadership positions if you want to go to grad school, or what happens if you drop out of class.

“I knew my parents weren’t a resource, not because they didn’t want to be but because they had to work. They worked 20 hours a week. I had the burden of proof on charges that the school needed to get you through the verdict of the deed. She was inadvertently in school because they’re working through work.

Mullin said “we’re here for you the entire time,” and she’d give me advice. She’d say, ‘Don’t lose your momentum. Keep going. (It’s) impressive,” Mullin said.

Along the same lines, Gerardo Lopez, a POE recipient from Woodside High School, said she had been placed at her high school and was given advice from other students on how to navigate their studies.

“Without the programming, I don’t think I would have graduated,” Lopez said. “I would have been lost.”

Mullin said that people who have been patients of POE in the past have given back to the program in a variety of ways — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools — to students from 14 high schools on the Midpeninsula, including Gunn and Palo Alto high schools.

Garibo said the scholarship program’s mission is to “encourage students to know they have the support of their teachers, their ongoing encouragement.”

In 2010, Mullin launched a scholarship program to provide more job placement opportunities with local companies.

Mullin said POE also has partnered with LinkedIn to host online workshops, as well as Palo Alto University to provide students free mental health telesevices long term.

Mullin said POE is currently working on expanding its internship program to provide more job placement opportunities with local companies.

Katherine Sonett Kahrs
January 3, 1926 – December 24, 2021

Katherine Sonett Kahrs passed away peacefully on Christmas Eve, 2021. Born in Brooklyn, NY, she was the daughter of Hungarian immigrants Erwin and Meta Sonett. She grew up in Los Angeles and graduated from Hollywood High School. After graduating from UC Santa Barbara, Garibo said she had an unplanned pregnancy and was prepared to drop out of school.

“It was all going downhill. I felt so embarrassed to reach out to Carol and Tracy,” she said.

But they’re response surprised her.

“They said, ‘Don’t stop going to school. Just because you got pregnant doesn’t mean that we’re not going to stop offering you help. We’re here for you the entire time, whether it takes you four years, five years or six years. The goal is that you finish.’

Those words are forever in my heart because that’s what I needed to hear once again in order for me to keep pushing and going through with college.”

Garibo moved back home, attended community college and then transferred to San Jose State University, where she graduated in four years. She is now paying off her college loans and looking into graduate school courses through a student loan.

Since the pandemic, Mullin said that POE has had to navigate ongoing challenges to address some of the unexpected challenges that have popped up.

Within the first two weeks of the pandemic, POE developed a new workflow to set up an emergency COVID-19 relief fund, which included a $20,000 grant from the Sequoia Union High School District. By the end of October, Davila updated the trial schedule to make up for lost time. Holmes was not remedied into custody Monday, though prosecutors asked the judge to set a secured bail bond. She faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, a fine of $250,000 and restitution for each count of wire fraud and for each conspiracy count, the U.S. Attorney’s Office stated in a press release.

The average sentence in Cali- fornia for federal fraud in 2019, however, was 25 months, according to 2019 data from the United States Sentencing Commission.

Bay City News Service contributed to this report, Email Editorial Assistant Lloyd Lee at llee@paweekly.com.
Students, parents and community members wait to get tested for COVID-19 at Cubberley Community Center on Monday.

In response to questions from this news organization, Santa Clara County’s COVID-19 media relations team said in a statement that the county is aligned with the state’s safety guidance for schools.

“The district has changed its quarantine rules for staff, in keeping with new Centers for Disease Control Guidance. Employees who test positive can return to work after five days if they test negative on the fifth day and are asymptomatic.

Beyond the classroom, competitive team sports are likely to face particular hurdles, Austin warned, because both teams have to be able to play for a game to occur.

“I think it’s going to be massively disruptive to high school athletics,” Austin said. “I’ll be shocked if we make it through the season.”

Austin raised concerns about what he characterized as a lack of guidance from Santa Clara County on how schools should respond to the omicron variant, including questions about what the school closure metrics will be.

“The county has been oddly quiet for about a month,” Austin said, adding that it feels like the beginning of the pandemic, when school officials were scrambling for answers.

“One of us are health experts. We’re just being told ‘keep schools open,’” Austin said. “We can’t answer all the questions that people have — it’s just not possible.”

A closure could happen for two reasons: at the state or county’s behest due to high case numbers or because staff absences make it impossible to operate classes. The second, Austin said, appears more likely.

“I think the state and county are really going to try their best not to close schools, but there could be a day when we just can’t staff them,” Austin said.

Local schools, like many industries nationwide, have been struggling with staffing shortages in recent months. Finding substitute teachers has been particularly difficult, and the need may be greater as more teachers have to quarantine.

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“One of us are health experts. We’re just being told ‘keep schools open,’” Austin said. “We can’t answer all the questions that people have — it’s just not possible.”
It was the best of films, it was the worst of times. 2021 was a terrible year for humanity, but — cold comfort though it may be — a wonderful year for cinema (perversely, alas, not for cinemas).

COVID-19 continued to play cat and mouse with the populace, the consequences of climate change intensified and U.S. institutions repeatedly failed. And so it was when Adam McKay’s apocalyptic tragicomedy “Don’t Look Up” (Netflix) entered the conversation and, incidentally, sparked a renewed conversation about whether film critics have any idea what they’re talking about. That, dear reader, remains for you to decide.

“Don’t Look Up” begged the question, “Once apocalypse is undeniable, how will our art reflect it?” Other films have gone there (mostly documentaries and sci-fi thrillers, but notably Paul Schrader’s searing 2017 drama “First Reformed”), but surprisingly few in 2021 even acknowledged a pandemic-transformed world, much less extinction-level climate disaster. McKay furiously validated, for many, their perception of the world we’re actually living in, complete with masked characters, corrupt national and local “leadership,” angry school board meetings, and a censorious culture…

The top 10 films of 2021

10. ‘Procession’ & ‘Strip Down, Rise Up’ (both Netflix)

Two of the most powerful films of the year documented alternative group therapy. Robert Greene’s ‘Procession’ gathers six middle-aged American men, survivors of childhood rape within the Catholic church, and proposes that they work together to make short films that exercise their experiences through art. Michèle Ohayon’s ‘Strip Down, Rise Up’ shadows a group of American women in a pole-dancing class geared towards banishing the demons of sexism, abuse and body dysmorphia. During dark days of unprecedented trauma and mental illness, both films movingly focus on the healing process.

9. ‘The Lost Daughter’ (Netflix)

Actor Maggie Gyllenhaal makes her directorial debut with this compelling adaptation of Elena Ferrante’s novella about the dark side of mothering. Olivia Colman (in another devastating and original performance) and Jessie Buckley (fiercely commanding “crushing responsibility” of motherhood. In flashbacks) share the role of an anxious, mood-swinging woman haunted by the past. Sarsgaard and Ed Harris bolster Gyllenhaal’s fine assists from Dakota Johnson, Peter Sarsgaard and Ed Harris bolster Gyllenhaal’s investigation of the shame of regretful parents and those thoughts you’re not allowed to say out loud.

8. ‘Licorice Pizza’ (in theaters now)

Paul Thomas Anderson again proves the master of his domain with this sophisticated, breezy comedy that keenly evokes the San Fernando Valley of the 1970s. In a town full of hustlers, an irrepressible, self-possessed 15-year-old child actor/entrepreneur (Cooper Hoffman, son of the late, great Philip Seymour Hoffman) befriends and pitches woo at a 25-year-old woman (Alana Haim) still in search of herself. Patiently observing the unconventional central relationship, Anderson also tells takes us out of school about the waning days of Old Hollywood.

7. ‘Red Rocket’ (in theaters now)

Sometimes a film comes along that’s just plain note perfect. With “Red Rocket,” director/co-writer Sean Baker (“The Florida Project,” “Tangerine”) demonstrates that his docudramatic style and commitment to telling stories of the American underclass are the gifts that keep on giving. An ex-porn star (powerhouse Simon Rex) returns to his depressed Texas hometown and immediately sets to manipulating his ex-wife, her mother and a teenage donut shop worker. This wildly entertaining comedy is funny because it’s true in capturing the charm and poison of malignant narcissism.

6. ‘In the Same Breath’ (HBO Max)

In narrating her new documentary, Nanfu Wang (“One Child Nation”) personalizes the story of the global pandemic while incisively diagnosing the institutional rot that has allowed COVID-19 to run free. Most devastatingly, Chinese-American Wang compares and contrasts the responses of the Chinese and U.S. governments and populaces, calling out the Chinese secrets-and-lies campaign that delayed an effective response, and the U.S. misinformation crisis that has overshadowed our presumptive advantage of free speech.

5. ‘A Hero’ (Amazon Prime Video starting Jan. 21)

Two-time Oscar winner Asghar Farhadi (“A Separation”) contrives to keep you guessing...
Year in Film
(continued from page 17)

The Japanese director and screenwriter released two sublime films this year: "Wheel of Fortune and Fantasy" and "Drive My Car," adapted from Haruki Murakami’s short story. Unfolding over three hours, the quietly moving drama patiently accumulates emotionally unsparing intimacy to explore the communion between people bonded by like-minded pain or by art: most notably, a stage production of Chekhov’s "Uncle Vanya" that lends "Drive My Car" the legendary playwright’s philosophical grandeur and template of achingly naturalistic characterization.

4. 'The Green Knight' (4K Blu-ray, Blu-ray, DVD and video on demand)

With a sure hand, writer-director David Lowery adapts the 14th-century poetic fable of Sir Gawain (a never-better Dev Patel). Gorgeous, dreamy, painterly, sumptuous, with an exceptional score by Daniel Hart and pitch-perfect performances all around, "The Green Knight" investigates honor, the entropy of life and the peripherally terrifying inevitability of death. Such, as this exquisite-ly realized medieval period piece captures equally well the ways we’re living now, writ- ing large the immutability of human nature and the elusive courage to live honorably in spite of existential fears.

3. 'Drive My Car' (in theaters now)

Ryusuke Hamaguchi is having a moment.

The Silicon Valley REALTORS® Charitable Foundation in 2021 presented $46,395 in grants and donations to non-profit organizations that help the homeless and low-income individuals and families, including scholarships to youth in Silicon Valley. The Charitable Foundation is a trust that makes grants available to organizations from contributions from REALTOR® and affiliate members of the Silicon Valley Association of REALTORS® (SILVAR).

The 2021 Charitable Foundation grant recipients are Adolescent Counseling Services, Animal Assisted Happiness, East Palo Alto Kids Foundation, Jeremiah’s Promise in Palo Alto, Mental Tutor Connection, and West Valley Community Services. The Charitable Foundation also presented $1,500 scholarships to 18 graduating seniors from participating schools in Stanford, Menlo Park and Palo Alto areas. Marking its 22nd year, the Charitable Foundation is a trust that makes grants available to organizations from contributions from REALTOR® and affiliate members of the Silicon Valley Association of REALTORS® (SILVAR).

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A memoir of WAR

In ‘Letters Home,’ Palo Alto rabbi recounts his year as an Army chaplain in Vietnam

By Chris Kenrick

Above, Sheldon Lewis and his wife, Lorri, look over old letters he wrote home while serving as an Army chaplain during the Vietnam War. Left, Sheldon and Lorri Lewis, shown here on their wedding day, were married one month before he was deployed to Vietnam.

At Lewis throughout his two years of military service, the second of which was in Vietnam. The 28-year-old, newly ordained rabbi had been married just one month when he was deployed to Nha Trang, South Vietnam, in June 1970 to tend to the spiritual needs of about 500 Jewish service members widely scattered over the Central Highlands. His memoir is drawn from the daily letters he exchanged with his wife, Lorri, who was living in Seattle.

Lewis carried his “chaplain’s field kit” — including prayer books, candle holders and a miniature printed scroll of the Torah — as he traveled by all manner of aircraft and troop carrier to reach the sometimes extremely isolated Jews in his territory. In one “desolate post,” there were only four Jews out of 1,016 men.

He quickly realized this service was “a pretext for the main event — an opportunity to gather and be fully present with one another. Conversations might begin with small talk but soon might touch on serious personal issues and feelings and the need for advice or intervention,” he writes.

Within weeks of arriving, Lewis was summoned to conduct a memorial service for 32-year-old Richard Pearl, a married man and two Filipino secretaries to his Hanukkah party. At Passover, he held a Seder meal for his Christian colleagues. When the weekly Friday night observance of Shabbat took place at every major base.

“The scene was a graphic picture of how Jewish observance of Sukkot, which requires the construction of a temporary hut, he was assisted by Catholics, Protestants and even a career U.S. soldier, who had been born in Germany and had served in the Luftwaffe during World War II.

At Christmas, Lewis attended his first midnight Mass. That same week, he welcomed Protestant and Catholic chaplains and two Filipino secretaries to his Hanukkah party. At Passover, he held a Seder meal for his Christian colleagues. “Having the opportunity to witness each other’s special days was so characteristic in the military,” he wrote. “We worked together so closely that it is natural to be included in each other’s sacred occasions.”

But he was heart sick over the suffering of the Vietnamese people, the many orphaned children created by the war and “the pervasive culture of sex and drugs among the GIs ... as soldiers sought relief and comfort.” Returning one evening from dinner with fellow chaplains, Lewis’ jeep passed the entrance to an Army barracks where young Vietnamese men were openly offering women for the U.S. soldiers to choose among.

“The scene was a graphic picture of how our military presence corrupted both the GIs and Vietnamese families,” he wrote. “It’s incredible how many whores the war has produced and how much the men use them. ... I often wonder what the Vietnamese men must think of GIs and the U.S. when we have done so much damage to the women.” Sexually transmitted diseases were rampant.

In lamenting the U.S. soldiers’ general lack of knowledge and sensitivity toward the Vietnamese culture, he writes, “Many feel themselves to be unavoidably ugly Americans.”

When his Vietnam duty ended in 1971, Lewis arrived home to a nation in such turmoil over the war that returning service members were not welcomed. “Of course, I relished being reunited with my newlywed wife and family. Yet, in the atmosphere of war protest, I was greeted with silence,” he writes.

He served for decades as rabbi at Palo Alto’s Congregation Kol Emeth before feeling it was time to speak of his Vietnam service. “Now it is different,” he told the Weekly. “The moral assessment of the war has not changed, but those who served, especially during a period of the draft, are treated belatedly with respect. ... I no longer hesitate to wear a hat which identifies me as a Vietnam vet.

But 50 years have not softened Lewis’ view that the war was immoral. “I am not a pacifist when there is a need to defend oneself from harm,” he said. “Yet this was a war that should have been avoided.”

Contributing writer Chris Kenrick can be emailed at ckenrick@paweekly.com


A 2020 Zoom reunion with the couple

A monthly special section of news & information for seniors

Living Well

www.PaloAltoOnline.com • Palo Alto Weekly • January 7, 2022 • Page 21
Aging isn’t always easy. Maybe you are having caregiving and caring problems and you are not sure what to do. You are not alone. Avenidas is here to help by bringing in experts to address your questions and concerns.

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## Calendar of Events

### January 2022

- **Jan 3**  
  Avenidas winter class session begins. Visit www.avenidas.org for the current class schedule.

- **Jan 4**  
  Tuesday Walks, every Tuesday, 10 am. Email tmccloud@avenidas.org for details and location.

- **Jan 6**  

- **Jan 7**  
  Book Club: The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton 2:30-4pm, Avenidas@450 Bryant. Space is limited. RSVP, proof of vapor, and mail required. Email register@avenidas.org.

- **Jan 8**  
  Avenidas Village Coffee Chat 10am via Zoom. Email dgreenblat@avenidas.org to register. Free.

- **Jan 10**  
  Tutoría táctica con voluntarios de Verízom (11.1 tech support in Spanish), 10-11 am. For info or to register, email rsvp@seniorplanetavenidas.org. Free.

- **Jan 11**  
  Short Story Discussion Group via Zoom 11 am-12 pm, on Tuesdays. RSVP required. For info, email rsvp@seniorplanetavenidas.org. Free.

- **Jan 12**  
  Webinar: “Every Bird Has a Story,” with local photographer Judy Kramer 1:30-2:30 pm via Zoom. RSVP for log on info or to register. www.avenidas.org or 650-269-5400. Free.

- **Jan 13**  
  Info Session: ClearCaptions Advanced Telephone Captioning 11-12 pm via Zoom. RSVP for log on info or to register. www.avenidas.org or 650-269-5400. Free.

- **Jan 14**  
  Men’s Walking Group (virtual platform meeting) 7-8 pm via Zoom. RSVP required. Email register@avenidas.org or 650-269-5400. Free.

- **Jan 16**  
  Advanced Telephone Info Session: ClearCaptions Advanced Telephone Captioning 11-12 pm via Zoom. RSVP for log on info or to register. www.avenidas.org or 650-269-5400. Free.

- **Jan 17**  
  Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Avenidas closed

- **Jan 18**  
  Wonder Women Lesbian Social Group via Zoom 7:30-9pm via Zoom. Email lgbtq@avenidas.org for info and to register. Free.

- **Jan 19**  
  Aging Wisely Town Hall Series: “Revitalizing Elder Care Services,” presented by Dr. Joanne Lynn 11 am-12:30 pm via Zoom. Email register@avenidas.org or 650-269-5400. Free.

- **Jan 20**  
  Avenidas Village Coffee Chat 10am via Zoom. Email dgreenblat@avenidas.org to register. Free.

- **Jan 21**  
  Senior Planet @ Avenidas Speaker Series on Technology and Privacy 1-2 pm via Zoom. Email info@seniorplanetavenidas.org or 650-269-5400. Free.

- **Jan 22**  
  Social Group via Zoom 1-2 pm, on Mondays. RSVP required. Email lgbtq@avenidas.org for more info and to register. Free.

- **Jan 23**  
  Book Club: The God of Small Things: A Novel by Arundhati Roy 2:30-4pm via Zoom. Email register@avenidas.org to register. Free.

- **Jan 24**  
  Song Appreciation Group 3-4pm via Zoom. Email info@seniorplanetavenidas.org or 650-269-5400. Free.

- **Jan 25**  
  Avenidas Village Coffee Chat 1pm Avenidas@450 Bryant Street. RSVP, proof of vapor, and mail required. Email dgreenblat@avenidas.org to register. Free.

- **Jan 26**  
  Legacy Podcast Discussion Group 2-3 pm, on Wednesdays. RSVP required. Email rsvp@seniorplanetavenidas.org.

- **Jan 27**  
  Book Club: The God of Small Things: A Novel by Arundhati Roy 2:30-4pm via Zoom. Email register@avenidas.org to register. Free.

- **Jan 28**  
  Verizon: True Work Experience 9-10 am via Zoom. For info or to register, email rsvp@seniorplanetavenidas.org. Free.

- **Jan 31**  
  Apple Tech Talks (11:1 tech support) 1-2 pm, on Mondays. RSVP required. Email rsvp@seniorplanetavenidas.org. Free.
The property information herein is derived from various sources that may include, but not be limited to, county records. It is believed to be accurate, but it is not warranted and you should not rely upon it without personal verification.

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ColdwellBankerHomes.com guiding you home since 1906

MENLO PARK | $1,900,000
Townhome in gated community offers a private entry, foyer, kitchen, formal dining room, living room w/ fireplace, primary suite & enclosed back patio.

The DeLario Team
707.486.1005
delario@cbnorcal.com
CalRE #01206513

REDWOOD CITY | $1,529,000
3br/2.5ba in small complex w/low HOA fees. Light & bright, skylights, 2-car attached garage, storage, yard w/patio for entertaining, indoor laundry.

Tory Fratt
650.619.3621
Tory.fratt@cbnorcal.com
CalRE #01441654

Across
1 “This ___ really happening!”
5 “Beavis and Butt-Head” spinoff
11 It can be scrambled
14 ___ York (NYC, to some residents)
15 Monarch’s domain
16 Former “Great British Bake Off” cohost Perkins
17 Computer character set that’s mostly rainbows and macadamias?
19 Back-of-a-jigsaw hue
20 Evaporating Asian sea
21 Indicator that a new pope has been selected
22 Reactor part
23 Tripod part
24 Blokes
25 Time off, briefly
26 1990s Super Nintendo racing game (often on “top Nintendo games of all time” lists)
28 “Brave” princess
29 Special attention
34 Onetime owner of the Huffington Post
35 Inadvisable activity traveling down the slopes of Mt. Vesuvius?

Down
1 Equally split
2 Public radio journalist Ray with the podcast “Going for Broke”
3 2000s Nintendo controller named for a 2000s “SNL” alum?
5 “In the Heights” Tony winner ___, Manuel Miranda
6 Friends of France
7 He wrote “The Fox and the Lion”
8 Oven shelves
9 “Would ___ to you?”
10 Friend of France
11 From Tartu or Tallinn
12 Snarly protector
13 Vague army rank?
14 “Well, sorta”
15 Matchbox toy
16 “Straight Outta ___” (2015 biopic)
17 “Um, Actually” host Trapp
18 “My Dinner With Andre” director Louis
19 Back-of-a-jigsaw hue
20 Evaporating Asian sea
21 Indicator that a new pope has been selected
22 Reactor part
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Answers on page 6.

This week’s SUDOKU

Answers on page 6.
Your Palo Alto Experts.

Properly preparing your property for sale is more important than ever.

Properties in move-in or current condition are in high demand. Talk to us about what we can do to prepare your property for sale to get you a premium price and a quicker sale.

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Channing Ave, Palo Alto · Offered at $8,850,000

Sutter Ave, Palo Alto · Offered at $6,995,000

Ramona St, Palo Alto · Offered at $3,850,000