

Palo  
Alto

Vol. XLII, Number 2 ■ October 16, 2020

# Weekly

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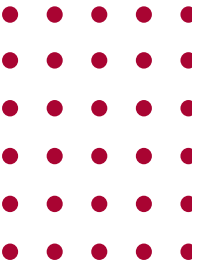
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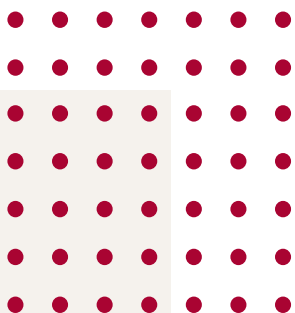
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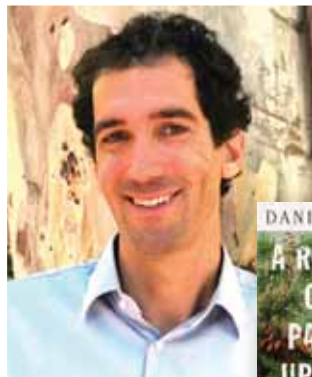
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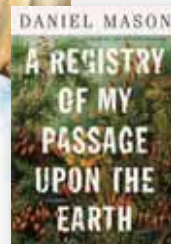
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## Youngest students return to school under new norms

District begins serving small cohorts of TK to first-grade kids alternating in mornings, afternoons

by Elena Kadvany

**H**oover Elementary School teacher Victoria Chavez spent the “first” day of school with a small class of first-grade students talking through new norms for in-person learning: no sharing of supplies, how to walk through the classroom while

staying 6 feet apart, why hugging is no longer OK. She showed them the designated area where they’re allowed to play outside during recess and reminded them to wash their hands after touching their faces.

Chavez had mixed feelings about

being back at work in person on Monday. She said she felt nervous about her and her students’ safety, but also excited.

“It’s been a long seven months,” she said. “At the same time, we’re still in the middle of a pandemic. I don’t think anyone feels completely safe right now.”

Chavez and her class were among the first Palo Alto Unified elementary students and teachers to return to their campuses in a

hybrid model on Monday, following weeks of heated debate among teachers, parents, administrators and school board members divided over the pace and safety of reopening. The teachers union had pressed the district to keep schools closed until January. But the Board of Education unanimously approved a phased reopening of elementary schools, starting this week with the district’s youngest students and adding the higher grades in the

coming weeks.

The parents of a little more than half of all transitional kindergarten, kindergarten and first-grade students opted to send their children to school (about 700) and about half chose to stay with remote learning, according to the district. Classrooms across the 12 elementary schools opened on Monday to serve small cohorts of

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Jean Lythcott looks at newly found photos of her late husband, George I. Lythcott II, from his 1939 graduation from Bates College at her home in Palo Alto on Oct. 15.

Megali Gauthier

### PUBLIC HEALTH

## County moves into ‘orange’ tier

COVID-19 restrictions loosen to allow some indoor activities

by Gennady Sheyner

**R**estaurants and congregations in Santa Clara County were allowed to reopen for indoor service on Wednesday under a revised public health order that loosens many of the restrictions that have been in place since March.

The revised risk-reduction order, which county leaders discussed at a news conference Tuesday afternoon, recognizes the county’s recent move into the “orange risk” level — also known as Tier 3 — in the state’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy. The “moderate” risk level allows more businesses to reopen, albeit with some restrictions to ensure social distancing.

In highlighting the revised order, both county Counsel James Williams and Health Officer Dr. Sara Cody emphasized that some of the activities that will now be allowed for the first time since March continue to pose a risk of COVID-19 transmission. To reduce the threat, the county is requiring restaurants to limit occupancy to 25% capacity or a maximum of 100 people, depending on which number is smaller.

The same restriction will be imposed on other indoor gatherings, including movie theaters, congregations and cultural gatherings, according to the county.

“It’s a really important limitation that we put in place to help try to reduce the density, to help try to reduce the risk for the

(continued on page 16)

### COMMUNITY

## Lost and found

Photographs in a donated album lead to search for a long-lost family connection

by Sue Dremann

**T**he old photograph album in a pile of donations looked like one of many Pat Blumenthal has come across in the past decade: maybe a little worn, its pages yellowed and empty, stripped of the old family treasures it once contained.

Blumenthal is manager of the Friends of the Palo Alto Library’s “Curious Books” section, which takes in and organizes the odds

and ends that defy identification: not fiction, medical, mystery or science or other easily identifiable categories. She has seen dozens of the old albums, which, in the digital age, no one wants anymore, she said.

On June 27, Blumenthal received four albums. As usual, the pages were blank, but something led her to flip through one. As she thumbed through, Blumenthal

made an unexpected find: two pages of small black-and-white photographs in the middle. Some had the year “1939” marked. They seemed to be of a college graduation.

All the people pictured were African American. The captions were written in black ink. One was by a different hand and in tiny handwriting: “Mother, Sister, Me, John, Mamie.”

Blumenthal looked more closely at the handwriting. “I noticed a name, George I. Lythcott II, and a place, Bates College in Lewiston, Maine,” she said by phone on Tuesday.

Blumenthal was intrigued. Acceptance of Black people into white colleges was rare in the 1930s and Lythcott graduated during the Great Depression, she said. She wondered how an African American man got into one of these colleges and what kind of person he might have been. (The 165-year-old Bates College was founded on the principle of accepting students without regard to race, religion, national origin or

(continued on page 42)



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Upfront

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“It’s not about PPE. It’s about ... “How safe do you feel?””



— Hyemin Cheung, a Fairmeadow special education teacher, on reassuring staff who’ve returned to campus. See story on page 5.

Around Town

**WAKING UP TO A NOBEL PRIZE ...** Oct. 12 will forever be etched in the memories of **Robert Wilson** and **Paul Milgrom** as the day they were awarded a **Nobel Prize**. The **Stanford University** economists and neighbors woke up early Monday to learn they had received the prestigious honor in economic sciences for their “improvements to auction theory and inventions of new auction formats,” according to a Stanford News Service article. It all started in the wee hours of the night when the Nobel committee contacted Wilson’s wife, **Mary**, soon after her husband had disconnected his home phone under the impression that he had received a spam call. Once they digested the good news, they headed across the street to Milgrom’s front door to share the news, according to the article. It took a few moments before Milgrom could utter the words, “Wow, yeah. Okay.” The life-changing moment was captured on Milgrom’s home security camera. The award includes 10 million Swedish kroner (equivalent to about \$1.1 million in U.S. currency).

**NEW MEDIA 101 ...** When Santa Clara County implemented a shelter-in-place order in March, Palo Alto’s libraries and artists confronted the same question that museums, zoos and art centers around the world continue to face amid the pandemic: How does one stay relevant at a time of social distancing? Like others, the city’s **Library Department**, the **Palo Alto Art Center** and the **Junior Museum and Zoo** tried to go digital by developing virtual programs, with mixed success. Now, the three local institutions are looking to double their virtual efforts and set an example for other museums and art centers across the nation. The city has just received \$128,286 in federal CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security) Act funding through a program administered by the **Institute of Museum and Library Services**. The goal of the federal grant program is to assist museums and libraries during the pandemic by allowing them to preserve jobs, plan for reopening and address the digital divide. The Palo Alto initiative, known as “From Onsite to Virtual:

Expanding Access to Community Learning Resources” calls for each of the three institutions to create a digital studio and to work with the **Midpeninsula Media Center** to develop an “extensive training program” focused on best practices for planning and implementing digital programs and events, according to the city’s grant application. The funds will also allow each of the programs to increase its digital offerings by 25% and allow the city to rehire some of the staff in the arts division whose positions have been eliminated through recent budget cuts. They will be responsible for promoting “multidisciplinary programming that links the arts, sciences and literacy, and supports more enhanced and sustained collaborations between these city programs into the future,” the city’s application states. The City Council is expected to approve the grant funding at its Oct. 19 meeting. With the money in place, staff will move ahead with training and start rolling out virtual school programs. The goal is to publish the how-to playbook for virtual exhibits in July, according to a report from City Manager **Ed Shikada**. The report notes that about 30% of community members have indicated in recent surveys that they plan to participate “mainly in virtual programming until a vaccine is widely available. This grant will allow city staff to improve and develop additional virtual programming for our community.”

**RECORD ON THE GREEN ...**

**Donna Lawrence**, an assistant vice president of development at Stanford University, achieved an unexpected feat earlier this month while playing at the university’s golf course: making two holes-in-one on back-to-back days, according to a San Francisco Chronicle article. “It’s very bizarre,” she told the publication. “Your eyes sort of pop out of your head.” The first one happened Oct. 3, when she shot 101, followed by the second on Oct. 4, when she shot 102. “In both cases, Lawrence didn’t see her ball find its way into the cup,” the Oct. 8 article states. Lawrence, who has played golf for 20 years, said there are times when she doesn’t keep score and doesn’t consider herself to be competitive. “It was a ton of fun,” Lawrence said. “The other good news: the bar was closed and I didn’t have to buy drinks.” ■

CITY HALL

# With new rules, council looks to tighten its grip over boards, commissions

*Proposed handbook to lay out policies on removing commissioners, creating work plans*

by Gennady Sheyner

For decades, Palo Alto's boards and commissions have fulfilled a variety of disparate functions: advising the City Council, gathering public input, serving as stepping stones for the politically ambitious and, at times, pushing back against council policies.

Now, it's the council that's preparing to push back. After nearly a year of exploration, the council plans to approve on Monday a new set of rules for boards and commissions that will, among other things, establish term limits, lay out a process for removing commissioners, restrict interactions between commissioners and the media and give the council more power to shape the commissions' agendas.

The proposed changes follow a period in which the council has found itself at odds with several of its volunteer advisers. In June, a member of the Parks and Recreation Commission resigned in frustration after the council repeatedly delayed action on the commission's proposal to expand access to Foothills Park to nonresidents on a trial basis. The former commissioner, Ryan McCauley, wrote in his letter of resignation that he "cannot abide the council majority's deliberate and politically calculated inaction."

The council has also been heavily criticized by former Human Relations Commission member Steven Lee, who concluded his term in August and who is now running for a council seat. Lee suggested in a June opinion piece that the council's decision to cut the number of seats on his commission from seven to five was an act of retaliation against him by the council "for speaking out against their status quo."

The council has also struggled in recent years to find answers to such questions as: How does one remove a commissioner? What kind of training should be provided to new members? Should subcommittees be allowed?

The council's new handbook will answer these, and other, questions. But as the handbook makes clear, the new rules will also create a system in which commissioners have less autonomy to defy council wishes or to pursue projects that don't have explicit City Hall approval.

If adopted, the new rules would effectively end the current system in which each board and commission operates by its own rules and has a distinct identity. The Parks and Recreation Commission, for instance, has been relying heavily in recent years on ad hoc committees to proactively push particular projects, whether constructing new dog parks or expanding Foothills Park access. The Human Relations

Commission has also emerged as a persistent advocate for more aggressive action, whether in revising police policies pertaining to excessive force or promoting projects that focus on diversity and inclusion.

The Planning and Transportation Commission has been more careful about hewing to council directions. It has also historically mirrored the council by splitting into two factions and engaging in lengthy, internal squabbles between those who tend to support more growth and those who favor more restrictions on development.

The council has been exploring changes to the commission system since last December, when then-Mayor Eric Filseth appointed an ad hoc committee to vet potential new rules. The committee, which consists of Vice Mayor Tom DuBois and Councilwoman Alison Cormack, has since surveyed past and present commissioners, looked at examples from other cities and issued a set of recommendations, which the council plans to approve on Oct. 19.

Over the course of the survey, Cormack and DuBois found that the city has no clear procedures for creating work plans for commissions and defining the roles of city staff that support boards and commissions. In a February memo that summed up their findings, Cormack and DuBois noted that some respondents have expressed concern about the "lack of clarity or involvement from the City Council." They also pointed to concern about how "a few board members and commissioners have treated staff and their colleagues over the years."

While the council currently doesn't have an established process for removing a commissioner, the new handbook makes it clear that the council can do so "at any time, for any reason" and that commissioners "are not entitled to any process in the event council removes them from service."

"The City Council may remove

a member by a majority vote of the City Council without cause, notice or hearing," the handbook states.

Absence from meetings would now constitute grounds for removal. Under a proposed policy, if a commissioner misses more than a third of the commission's meetings during a calendar year, the absences will be reported to the council. This may result in the commissioner's removal, the policy states.

"When reviewing commissioners for reappointment, attendance at commission meetings will be given significant consideration," the policy states.

The new rules also require each board and commission to submit an annual plan to the council, which would then vote to approve it. If a commission wants to add another priority, its chair would have to make a request to the council. Boards and commissions, the new policy states, "should refrain from expending their time and that of the staff liaison on items that have not been approved by the City Council."

Another proposed policy would limit board and commission members to two successive four-year terms. After that, the individual would not be eligible for appointment to the same board for at least two years after the last term's expiration.

The handbook also includes rules that restrict — though not entirely eliminate — the ability of commissioners to speak to the media. Even though commissioners are not employees of the city, the rulebook asks them to "route questions through the chair in collaboration with the city's chief communications officer."

This will effectively give City Manager Ed Shikada's office a role in shaping how commissioners respond to media inquiries.

To justify this policy, the handbook states with no evidence that a commissioner's actions and comments are "often interpreted to be



File photo/Gennady Sheyner

*Under a new set of rules for commissions that the Palo Alto City Council will consider on Oct. 19, the Planning and Transportation Commission, seen here in 2018, would not be split in two.*

that of the entire (commission), the staff, or the city." But while the handbook suggests that statements to the media "should generally be avoided," it also provides guidelines for commissioners to use when addressing them. This includes clarifying when someone is speaking as a private resident (rather than in their capacity as a commissioner); not making promises that are binding on the commission, staff or the council; and avoiding speculation.

In addition to establishing new rules, the council also plans to continue its ongoing effort to pare down commission seats. Having recently disbanded the Library Advisory Commission and reduced the number of seats on both the Public Art Commission and the Human Relations Commission from seven to five, the council now plans to do the same to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

At the same time, the latest recommendations from staff and the ad hoc committee veer away from some of the most dramatic changes that the city had considered earlier this year. These include proposals to establish a Senior Commission; split the Planning and Transportation Commission into two; and adopt a system in which every council appoints one commissioner to the planning commission to

represent his or her views.

Councilman Greg Tanaka, who supports having each council member appoint a planning commissioner, said at a Feb. 24 council meeting that doing so will increase the trust between the council and its most influential advisory panel. The council would then feel more comfortable adopting the commission's recommendations without rehashing all the issues that the panel had already debated.

"Until we are able to trust our commissions and board members, we will not necessarily take their recommendations," Tanaka said at the February meeting.

Cormack suggested at the time that adopting the new handbook would go a long way to addressing the problems that the council has experienced with its commissions. She noted, however, that these problems are relatively "small" and that most of the respondents to the ad hoc committee's survey reflected "how much pride people take in serving and how well most of our boards and commissions function."

"But that doesn't mean that just because we have norms, that we don't need some rules," Cormack said. ■

Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner can be emailed at [gsheyner@paweekly.com](mailto:gsheyner@paweekly.com).

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## Public Agenda

**A preview of Palo Alto government meetings next week**

**CITY COUNCIL ...** The council plans to meet in a closed session to discuss existing litigation from Julio Arevalo pertaining to his arrest in front of Happy Donuts and from a group that includes the ACLU and the NAACP pertaining to the city's policy of prohibiting non-residents from accessing Foothills Park. The council will then get an update on the city budget and economic recovery and consider adopting new policies to govern local board and commissions. The closed session will begin at 5 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 19. The rest of the virtual meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. or as soon as possible after the closed session. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 362 027 238.

**COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE ...** The committee plans to discuss the CalPers pension annual valuation reports. The virtual meeting will begin at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 19. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 992 2730 7235.

ELECTION 2020

## Your election questions — answered

*Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters details security measures, processes for ensuring integrity of November presidential election*

by Jocelyn Dong

One week after ballots were sent to Santa Clara County voters, early birds have already returned 38,000 of them to the Registrar of Voters.

It's a good start for what could turn out to be the largest election in county history, Registrar Shannon Bushey said Tuesday at a media event held in San Jose.

"We've received 38,000 ballots in the first week," Bushey said. "Definitely it's higher than previous elections' first week."

For the first time, the county has topped 1 million registered voters, or 83% of those eligible. That's up from just 67% of eligible voters who registered in July 2016, according to Bushey's office.

Whether those intentions to vote will translate into the most ballots ever cast remains to be seen, but Bushey says she's optimistic about the turnout.

"I'm definitely expecting it to be in the 80-something percent," she said.

Bushey acknowledged concerns that have been raised about election security because of unofficial ballot drop boxes set out by Republicans in other parts of the state and people's general fears of all manner of election fraud; however, she said that she has not seen any evidence of improprieties in Santa Clara County and that safeguards have been put in place to ensure the integrity of the election results.

"Everything is going very smoothly for this election. We're meeting our goals," Bushey said.

The November election is the

county's second in which every registered voter has received a ballot by mail, which can be completed at home and returned either by mail, through an official drop box or in person at a vote center. The system was implemented in the March primary under the county's new Voter's Choice Act.

That wasn't the only change to the county's election process this year. The elections office also debuted touch-screen voting machines in vote centers in March and ballot scanners that tabulated results on site. Those results, saved onto memory cards, were delivered to the Registrar's office and uploaded.

The difference in how quickly the ballot count could be completed because of the vote center tabulators was literally day and night.

"Before, we counted till 2 in the afternoon the day after (Election Day). During the last primary, we finished at 1 a.m.," Bushey said. "They're bringing back tabulated cartridges (from the vote centers). We have our results instantaneously."

In addition to expressing confidence in the election system, the registrars' staff say they are prepared to handle the volume of ballots, having added more than 400 workers to supplement the permanent staff of 90 employees. That doesn't include the 4,000 temporary employees who will staff the vote centers.

Given the anxieties over the election, Bushey, along with Public and Legislative Affairs Manager Evelyn

Mendez and Elections Division Coordinator Mike Fong, answered the following questions Tuesday about what voters can expect.

**Q: I mailed my ballot back. When will it be counted?**

Ballots received by the Registrar of Voters will be counted in batches, after their signatures have been verified and the ballots have been sorted by precinct. The ballots are not being held until Election Day to be counted.

**Q: Is the ballot that I put into a drop box being counted in the same manner as a mailed ballot?**

Yes.

**Q: I put my completed ballot in a drop box. How do I know it can't be tampered with before it's counted?**

The drop box itself has several security features, starting with the slot into which you deposit the ballot. It only opens about an inch, so no one can retrieve ballots through the slot. Also, there are three locks on the box doors. Each ballot box is also chained to the ground so that the box itself cannot be stolen. Ballots are picked up by Registrar of Voters workers in a team of two people and brought back immediately to the office for processing.

**Q: How do I know I'm dropping my ballot at an official drop box?**

Registrar of Voters drop box locations are posted on the registrar's website at [sccgov.org/sites/rov/](http://sccgov.org/sites/rov/). If



Santa Clara County's touch-screen voting system offers the ballot in multiple languages and multiple sizes of text as well as in audio for the visually impaired.

you encounter a drop box that is not at one of those locations, then it is not official. Do not place your ballot in there. The box should also be labeled with the Santa Clara County seal and the words "Official Ballot Drop Box."

**Q: How does the Registrar's office ensure that no one other than the registered voter filled out their vote-by-mail ballot?**

The voter's authenticity is determined by the signature on the back of the envelope. That envelope, when received at the Registrar of Voters, is scanned by a machine to capture the signature digitally. That signature is compared with one or more of your signatures that the elections office has on file, drawn from your voter registration card and from documents you've submitted to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

The sorting machine kicks out each ballot with a signature that doesn't match. Next, staff review the ballot signature side by side with the signatures on file. They look for common handwriting traits, such as the slant of the writing and the letters' ascenders and descenders. If the authenticity is still in doubt, the ballot is sent for review by management staff. Voters whose ballots cannot be confirmed as authentic will receive a mailed notification letter and will have until Dec. 1 to provide a signature that matches the file signature.

In the November 2018 election, 820 letters were sent to Santa Clara County voters because of mismatched signatures; 617 voters responded satisfactorily, ensuring that 75.2% of those questionable ballots were counted, according

(continued on page 41)

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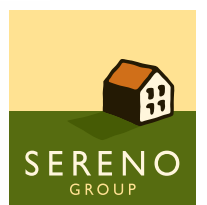
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DEVELOPMENT

# Former council members ask: Can 'rehabilitation' equal 'demolition'?

Trio alleges staff changed policy by allowing property owners to get density bonus

by Gennady Sheyner

When Karen Holman and Greg Schmid last served on the Palo Alto City Council, they often stood out among their colleagues for their staunch resistance to commercial developments and strict interpretation of zoning rules, which

occasionally clashed with staff recommendations.

Now, the former mayor and vice mayor are teaming up with another former mayor, Pat Burt, to formally challenge a decision from the city's planning director that allows a downtown developer

to completely demolish a building and replace it with a larger one by using a program intended for seismic rehabilitation.

The unusual challenge, which the council plans to consider later this month, could determine the fate of both the proposed development at 233 University Ave., and shape the future of the city's seismic rehabilitation program, which has been in place since 1986 and which provides incentives for property owners to upgrade vulnerable buildings.

It will also test the independence of the current council, which has faced criticism this election season from numerous candidates, including Burt, for being too deferential to staff recommendations.

The dispute here is over a simple question with wide ramifications: Can demolition be considered "rehabilitation?"

The three former council members assert that the clear answer is "no." The zoning code, they note, states that a building that is deemed seismically vulnerable and "is undergoing seismic rehabilitation" shall be allowed to increase its floor



Courtesy city of Palo Alto

Plans to demolish and reconstruct the building at 233 University Ave. have been appealed by three former Palo Alto City Council members, who protest the project's use of a density bonus.

area by 2,500 square feet or 25% of the existent building, whichever is greater, without having the increase count toward their density.

By suggesting otherwise and allowing the bonus to also apply to demolished buildings, city planners are effectively creating a new policy and changing the city code, the appellants assert.

"Demolished buildings by definition are not rehabilitated buildings," states the appeal, which Burt, Holman and Schmid filed in July.

The project, which the Architectural Review Board reviewed and approved in May 2019, had initially called for retaining two walls in the brick building near Ramona Street that currently houses The Tap Room, Mills Florist and Hookah Nites Lounge: the front wall and the wall that separates the building

from the neighboring structure, Stanford Theatre. Constructed around 1905, the building at 233 University Ave. is an example of an "unreinforced masonry" structure that the city deems to be particularly vulnerable to collapse in a major earthquake.

In seeking to rehabilitate rather than demolish the building, the Mills family was looking to get a 2,500-square-foot density bonus that it would use to build a second story and a terrace, according to project plans.

But after consulting with engineers, the property owner decided that it would be safer and cheaper to demolish, rather than preserve, both walls. In June, Planning Director Jonathan Lait approved the new

(continued on page 41)

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RECREATION

# Palo Alto's 'inclusive' playground excluded from reopening plan

City opts not to reopen popular recreational space, cites challenge of meeting safety restrictions

by Gennady Sheyner

Since its inception, the Magical Bridge has stood out as an exceptional place — the only Palo Alto playground where children and adults of all abilities can explore, exercise and play.

But as the city began to reopen its playgrounds last week after more than six months of closure, the popular Mitchell Park attraction is exceptional in another way: It is the only playground that the city plans to keep closed for the foreseeable future.

The city's decision to keep Mitchell Park closed is based in

large part on the playground's popularity. It's a regional attraction that drew about 25,000 monthly visitors before the COVID-19 pandemic. Ironically, its exalted status as a playground for everyone is also the main factor for why the city is keeping it closed.

"Recognizing this particular venue has been a regional attraction, in order to ensure our partners can maintain adequate social distancing, that will not be opened immediately," City Manager Ed Shikada said at the Oct. 5 meeting of the City Council,

where he announced the plan to reopen all the other playgrounds. "We're still working on a plan on when and how that will occur."

To date, the city has not given a timeline for reopening the Magical Bridge. When asked about the playground's reopening, the city's spokesperson Meghan Horrigan-Taylor said the playground would require a "much different approach" than the other playgrounds to meet state and Santa Clara County limitations on gatherings and other safety restrictions.

"Timing of reopening remains



Magali Gauthier

Indiana Persson, 4, smiles at her brother, Ellis Persson, 7, while they ride on the ground carousel at the Magical Bridge playground in Palo Alto on Jan. 19.

unknown at this time," Horrigan-Taylor said in an email.

The city's approach, she added, is to "learn from the reopening of existing playgrounds first before further development of a reopening plan for the Magical Bridge Playground."

"State and county restrictions also limit the opening of Magical Bridge Playground and relaxing of current crowd limitations will be needed before we can attempt to reopen," Horrigan-Taylor wrote. "We urge the community to select another playground at this time and stay safe by not trying to access the Magical Bridge playground while it remains closed."

For Charleston Meadows resident Yael Uziel Naveh, whose son has nonverbal autism, the city's decision is heartbreaking. It effectively means that some of the most isolated children in the community — those who don't have the option of participating in organized sports or using other playgrounds — will be denied a valuable resource.

"A playground is one of few places they can socialize with kids safely at the moment," Naveh told the Weekly. "They're being put last on the list again."

Naveh said that while her son is physically able to go to other playgrounds, the option is less than ideal because he is much bigger and older than most other playground users. Other children with disabilities may not have

that option at all, she said.

"Many of his friends have more physical limitations than he does," Naveh said. "Some of them have visional or physical disabilities that make regular playgrounds completely inaccessible to them."

She noted that some playground users have been flouting the rules during the pandemic and using the Magical Bridge playground despite the city's official policy. She has opted not to go that route, she said.

"I won't teach him to jump the fence. Kids on wheelchairs and who are visually impaired won't be able to jump the fence. The people who need it most are the least able to access it," Naveh said.

When Naveh expressed her concerns to Mayor Adrian Fine, he responded by saying that the city hopes to reopen the playground, but "probably not for a while." He noted that the city "cannot deploy staff at all hours to enforce social distancing and masks."

Fine also suggested that the Magical Bridge Foundation, a nonprofit that is working to create more inclusive playgrounds, is "strongly opposed to reopening for some of the above reasons."

But Jill Asher, co-founder of the Magical Bridge Foundation, says that's not the case at all. Her nonprofit is now working with

(continued on page 13)

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# CityView

A round-up of Palo Alto government action this week

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**City Council**  
The council did not meet this week.

---

**Board of Education (Oct. 13)**  
**COVID-19 testing:** The board approved a one-year partnership with Stanford Health Care to offer COVID-19 testing to district employees. **Yes:** Unanimous

---

**Council Policy and Services Committee (Oct. 13)**  
**Inclusion:** The committee discussed the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women as a component of citywide diversity and inclusion. **Action:** None

---

**Architectural Review Board (Oct. 15)**  
**Objective standards:** The board discussed revisions to its draft objective standards. **Action:** None

**Playground**

(continued from page 12)

Redwood City to open a new inclusive playground at Red Morton Park. The playground remains under construction but the Magical Bridge Foundation has been working with city leaders and the current plan calls for opening the space in late November, when construction is completed.

Redwood City's plan for opening the playground calls for city staff controlling crowds and ensuring that visitors wear masks (if they can), adhere to social distancing rules and stay 30 minutes or less, consistent with state guidelines for reopening playgrounds.

Asher said the foundation wants to see Palo Alto take a similar approach, rather than delay the reopening to an unspecified future.

"We absolutely want the playground to open now," Asher wrote to the council. "We want to be positive partners in the reopening. With that said, we only want it open if there is city staff (or a combination of staff and volunteers that are managed by the city) to control the number of visitors (like they do at Whole Foods and Trader Joes)."

Both Asher and Naveh acknowledged that safely reopening the Magical Bridge playground would require more

resources, a challenge for a council that has recently reduced expenditures by nearly \$40 million. But even with the recent cuts, the approved budget includes \$744,000 for addressing COVID-19 impacts that the council had not addressed in June, when it passed the budget.

The approved budget also includes \$404,050 for replacing the rubber and synthetic turf at the Magical Bridge Playground, funding that the council can redirect if it so chooses.

Asher suggested in an email to the council that the city's current approach to reopening playgrounds — which relies on signage rather than staffing — isn't working. Over the weekend, she said, more than 50 visitors had jumped the fence at the Magical Bridge playground and disregarded the signage, she said.

"We want to be a positive partner in reopening. We want to help in any way we can to train staff on how to meet and greet visitors — and really, be an extension of our Kindness Ambassador Program," Asher wrote. "We also believe this will be a wonderful way for city staff to positively engage with the community — especially for our disabled visitors and classes, who have nowhere else to go. (Your other city playgrounds do not meet their needs)."

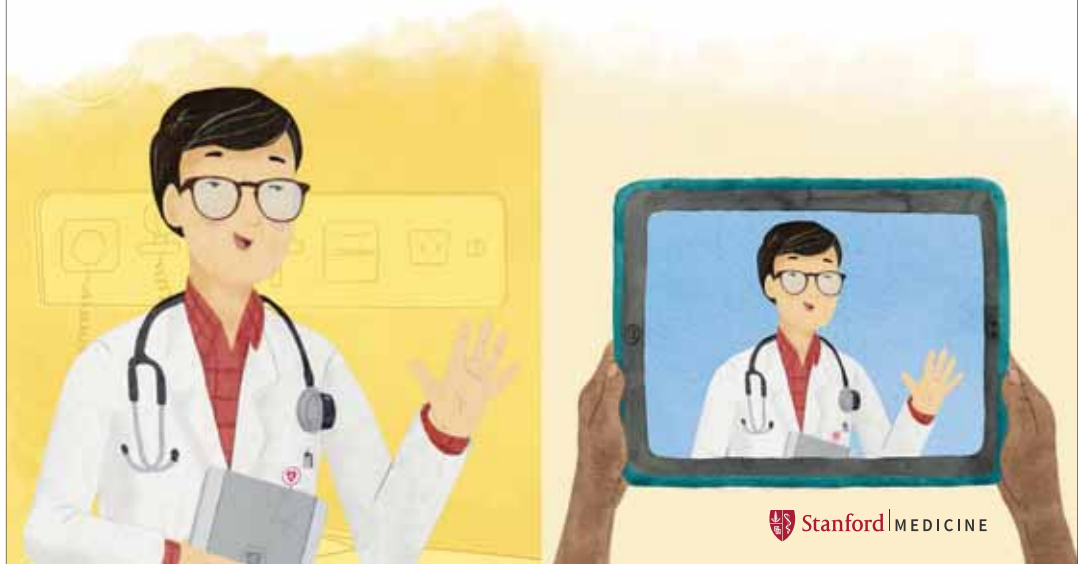
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Ingrid Lai

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# News Digest

## Gaines tapped to serve as deputy city manager

Chantal Cotton Gaines, a fixture in Palo Alto's recent efforts to launch the Office of Transportation and advance a new vision for the rail corridor, has been promoted to deputy city manager, City Manager Ed Shikada announced Tuesday.

Gaines, a 12-year veteran of local government service, has spent the past three years as assistant to the city manager, first under former City Manager James Keene and most recently under Shikada. Her recent projects include helping the city launch its Office of Transportation and facilitating meetings of the Expanded Community Advisory Panel, a citizen group that is aiding the city's selection of a preferred alternative for rail design.

Shikada said in a statement that the promotion is effective immediately. In her new job, she will have a greater role in furthering intergovernmental relations, managing the city's initiatives on race and equity (including public safety reform) and other citywide priorities, according to the announcement.

She will be stepping into a position that has been vacant since April, when Michelle Poche Flaherty resigned to become assistant city manager in Redwood City.

Before coming to Palo Alto, Gaines had spent four years with the city of Oakland, where she led the development of a \$25 million annual public safety and violence prevention initiative, according to the city.

Gaines, who lives in East Palo Alto, said in the statement that she is "grateful for the opportunity to serve the Palo Alto community in this new capacity."

"I am proud to have a strong family history with both Palo Alto and East Palo Alto, from my mother-in-law's previous business in Palo Alto to my husband being a proud Palo Alto Viking alum, and I am thrilled to continue to give back to the local community I call home," Gaines said. ■

—Gennady Sheyner

## Police disrupt attempted carjacking

Palo Alto police arrested a man who allegedly attempted to steal a car at Town & Country Village in Palo Alto early Sunday morning after the driver of the car left her keys in the unlocked car while she went to Peet's Coffee.

Emergency dispatchers received several calls about a woman shouting for help outside the coffee shop at the shopping center at 855 El Camino Real at around 6:30 a.m., according to police.

According to police, before the woman entered the store, she noticed a man in the driver's seat of her car. The woman ran back to her vehicle in an attempt to remove him — at one point kicking and yelling at him — but the man refused to leave the car.

Another bystander nearby tried to help the woman, but the man allegedly threatened to kill him, according to a police press release.

When police arrived, the 53-year-old man allegedly refused arrest. He then stepped out of the vehicle and moved toward the officer in an "aggressive manner," according to the news release.

The officer discharged his Taser once, hitting the man, before he was put into custody, police said. He was not injured, the statement said. The woman did not report any injuries.

The man was booked into the Santa Clara County Main Jail on suspicion of carjacking and resisting arrest. ■

—Lloyd Lee

## Two homes burglarized, one car stolen Monday

Police are investigating an overnight crime spree in a south Palo Alto neighborhood that occurred early Monday morning, Oct. 12, in which two homes were burglarized while residents slept inside and a car from a third home was stolen but recovered nearby.

The unknown perpetrators are at large, police stated in a press release.

One crime occurred in the 700 block of Gailen Avenue, just east of Mitchell Park. Two burglars forced entry into a residential garage at about 2:42 a.m. and stole two bicycles while a couple slept asleep inside the home. The second burglary occurred at a home in the 3700 block of Nathan Way, about a third of a mile away from Gailen Avenue. An unknown person entered the yard through an unlocked side gate and the home through an unlocked window. Inside the home, the suspect stole a purse from the kitchen table and then left. The residents were asleep at the time.

Follow-up investigation revealed that someone tried to use the victim's credit cards at a San Jose convenience store around 4:45 a.m.

While investigating the second burglary, police located an unoccupied Audi Q-7 in the 3800 block of Nathan Way that had been stolen from the 3800 block of Corina Way, which is also near Gailen. The owner had left the keys in the ignition.

Anyone with information about these incidents is asked to call the police at 650-329-2413. ■

—Palo Alto Weekly Staff




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Magali Gauthier

Customers grab a drink at Sun of Wolf on California Avenue in Palo Alto on Feb. 25.

## 'Orange' tier

(continued from page 5)

community," Williams said. "And we will be out there with our enforcement team ensuring that."

The order also allows outdoor activities with up to 200 people, consistent with state guidance, and specifies that there are no capacity limitations for malls and other retail businesses. It will allow college sports activities to resume, though they have to do so without fans and while following specific county protocols that require testing, face coverings and small cohorts. The order will also allow museums and zoos to open at 50% capacity.

The county's ability to loosen business restrictions reflects its recent success in containing the number of COVID-19 cases. The county's case count, Cody said at the Tuesday news conference, is now 3.7 cases per 100,000 residents, below the state's threshold of 4 cases per 100,000 for the orange tier.

The county's overall positivity rate is now 1.7%, well below the state benchmark of between 2% and 4.9% to qualify for the moderate tier. Cody also noted that residents in the county's most disadvantaged quartile have a positivity rate of 3.8%, which meets the state's new "health equity metric" criteria that requires a rate below 5.2% for this quartile.

The promising trends have allowed the county to be the first large county in California to

move into the orange tier, Cody said.

"I think what this says is that we have been working extraordinarily hard in our county for a long time," Cody said. "We were a bit stricter for a bit longer than many other jurisdictions, in particular the larger jurisdictions in southern California. And now that is paying off."

With the revised order, Cody said, the county is "switching from a strategy where we're controlling the environment by keeping a lot closed, to shifting the responsibility to each of us as individuals to do everything that we can to follow the core principles of wearing a mask, staying in a well-ventilated place and keeping a distance."

Williams said all businesses in the county will also be required to submit an updated social-distancing protocol within the next 15 days.

He called the county's move to the orange tier "significant" and said it will be up to residents and businesses, collectively, to adhere to the new safety protocols and ensure that the county doesn't relinquish its recent gains.

"If we fall back for just a couple of weeks, the state will move us back into the red tier," Williams said. "As a community, we've made tremendous progress but it's been slow and hard-fought progress." ■

**Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner can be emailed at [gsheyner@paweekly.com](mailto:gsheyner@paweekly.com).**

PUBLIC HEALTH

# Stanford launches COVID-19 study using a simple method: At-home tests

Researchers seek to estimate the virus' true prevalence

by Sue Dremann

**S**tanford University School of Medicine researchers have launched a new population study to track the spread of COVID-19 throughout the Bay Area.

The study, called the Community Alliance to Test Coronavirus at Home, or CATCH, would estimate the true population prevalence of the coronavirus by having people take a simple test at home, according to the study website. The project is led by Dr. Yvonne Maldonado, professor of pediatric infectious diseases and of health research and policy; Stanford's Quake Lab; and Lorene Nelson, associate professor of health research and policy.

The study uses a new technology called Vera, which was developed by Stanford University through a partnership with the Chan Zuckerberg Biohub, Microsoft and other organizations. Stanford also plans to offer Vera more broadly to institutions, schools, public health agencies and other groups to track the virus.

"The initial goal is to have thousands of people in the Bay Area order and collect their own specimens, then send them to labs that can perform the actual test," Maldonado said in a School of Medicine press release issued Sept. 30.

Unlike most nasal-swab tests performed at testing sites and medical facilities, individuals can swab the lower inside of their nose without having someone push the swab all the way up the nasal passage to the back of the throat.

Prospective study participants take a five-minute online survey and report of the state of their health. Those

who qualify place an order for a test kit shipped directly to their home usually within 24 hours and send their sample back for analysis. The tests are picked up by a medical courier after the participant marks on their online account that their sample is ready. The Stanford Clinical Virology Laboratory oversees the testing and results, which are available in 48 hours on average, according to the study website.

The test is free to the selected participants and is open to anyone 5 years or older in the San Francisco Bay Area, whether they have symptoms of COVID-19 or not.

tracing COVID-19 cases and the swab test kits.

"Vera could help schools and universities boost on-campus testing, allowing for active monitoring of the students' health and potentially helping administrators gauge when and if to reopen on-site learning," Nelson stated in the press release.

The platform could allow for more streamlined surveillance and tracking of COVID-19 cases, saving health care workers time and preventing them from possible exposure and from having to use valuable personal protective equipment, according to the School of Medicine's press release.

The low-cost technology allows for affordable testing of large numbers of people in any group or organization. It could also help public health departments speed up testing and monitoring of vulnerable populations.

Stanford plans to make the technology available to academic institutions, public health departments, laboratory providers and other institutions under noncommercial terms.

"Since the early days of this pandemic, Stanford has recognized how crucial testing is, and will continue to be, as we navigate the COVID-19 crisis," Dr. Lloyd Minor, dean of the Stanford School of Medicine, said in the press release. "The Vera platform is a step forward in our goal to support widespread testing to individuals not just in our community, but throughout the country."

The platform can also address testing inequities by reaching underserved populations that are at greatest risk for the SARS-CoV-2 infection, the virus that causes COVID-19, Vera program leader and CATCH study Director Patrick Arensdorf stated in the release. "These individuals often work in essential occupations and have difficulty accessing health care facility-based testing. Vera provides them a convenient and rapid home-based testing option," he said.

To sign up for the CATCH pilot study and find more information, visit [catchstudy.stanford.edu](http://catchstudy.stanford.edu). Anyone without internet access can also join by calling 833-971-2468. Institutions interested in the technology can find more details at [vera.stanford.edu](http://vera.stanford.edu). ■

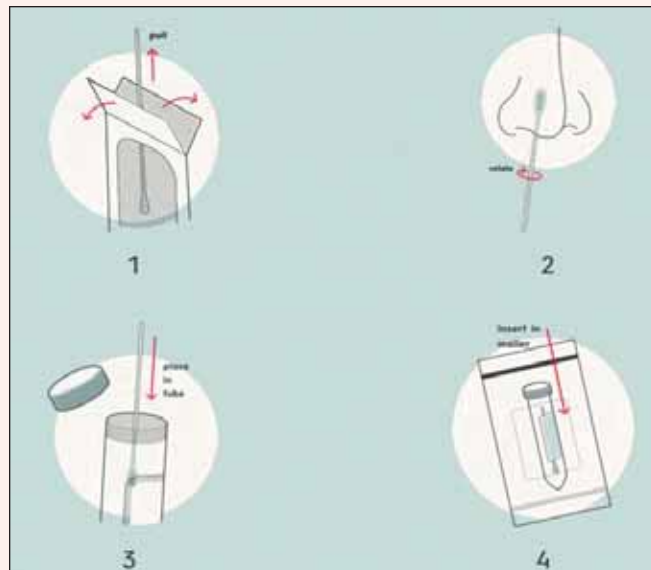
**Staff Writer Sue Dremann can be emailed at [sdremann@paweekly.com](mailto:sdremann@paweekly.com).**

***'The Vera platform is a step forward in our goal to support widespread testing to individuals not just in our community, but throughout the country.'***

—Dr. Lloyd Minor, dean, Stanford School of Medicine

The researchers hope to develop a better understanding of the differences between symptomatic and asymptomatic COVID-19 cases and learn how COVID-19 spreads within households and in communities.

The CATCH study is a pilot project, but the research team hopes to eventually have the program running across the country. Stanford wants to distribute the Vera technology platform broadly, which includes software for testing and



Courtesy: Stanford School of Medicine

A graphic shows how to use the at-home Vera kit.

# Marketplace

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# Pulse

A weekly compendium of vital statistics

## POLICE CALLS

- Palo Alto**  
Oct. 8-Oct. 14
- Violence related**  
**High Street**, 10/3, 12:53 p.m.; adult suicide.  
**Emerson Street**, 10/5, 4:39 a.m.; adult suicide attempt.  
**El Camino Real**, 10/6, 4:22 p.m.; strong arm robbery.  
**Ash Street**, 10/7, 7:59 p.m.; sexual assault.  
**Middlefield Road**, 10/10, 2:51 p.m.; child abuse/physical.  
**El Camino Real**, 10/11, 6:36 a.m.; robbery/car jack.  
**Cowper Street**, 10/12, 9:52 p.m.; domestic violence/battery.  
**3100 Stockton Place**, 10/13, 1:36 a.m.; arson.  
**Embarcadero Road/Emerson Street**, 10/13, 4 p.m.; strong arm robbery.
- Theft related**  
Commercial burglaries ..... 2  
Grand theft ..... 4  
Petty theft ..... 1  
Residential burglary ..... 3  
Shoplifting ..... 1
- Vehicle related**  
Auto theft ..... 3  
Bicycle theft ..... 9  
Parking/driving violation ..... 1  
Theft from auto ..... 9  
Vehicle accident/minor injury ..... 3  
Vehicle accident/prop damage ..... 1  
Vehicle tow ..... 2
- Alcohol or drug related**  
Driving under influence ..... 1  
Possession of drugs ..... 1  
Possession of paraphernalia ..... 3
- Miscellaneous**  
Casualty fall ..... 1  
Court order violation ..... 2  
Found property ..... 2  
Located missing person ..... 1  
Missing person ..... 1  
Psychiatric subject ..... 4  
Suspicious circumstances ..... 3  
Vandalism ..... 2  
Warrant/other agency ..... 1

- Menlo Park**  
Oct. 7-Oct. 13
- Violence related**  
**100 block Middlefield Road**, 10/8, 5:35 p.m.; sexual battery.  
**500 block Oak Grove**, 10/8, 12:58 a.m.; robbery.  
**200 block Bay Road**, 10/13, 3:24 p.m.; robbery.  
**600 block Santa Cruz Ave.**, 10/13, 2:41 p.m.; battery.
- Theft related**  
Burglary ..... 1  
Fraud ..... 3  
Grand theft ..... 2  
Petty theft ..... 6
- Vehicle related**  
Abandoned auto ..... 2  
Auto recovery ..... 1  
Auto theft ..... 1  
Bicycle theft ..... 2  
Carjacking ..... 1  
Driving w/ suspended license ..... 3  
Hit and run ..... 3  
Theft from auto ..... 1  
Vehicle accident/minor injury ..... 2
- Alcohol or drug related**  
Drunk in public ..... 1  
Possession of drugs ..... 1

## OBITUARIES

A list of local residents who died recently:

**Margaret Anderson**, 93, a public health nurse and Palo Alto resident for nearly five decades, died on Sept. 25.

To read full obituaries, leave remembrances and post photos, go to Lasting Memories at [PaloAltoOnline.com/obituaries](http://PaloAltoOnline.com/obituaries). ■

## Margaret "Maggie" Anderson

May 12, 1927 - September 25, 2020

Maggie was born and raised in Birmingham Alabama. She attended college and nursing school in Chicago and Minneapolis. In 1955 she joined her



soon-to-be husband Andy in Japan where he was stationed in the Air Force. The following year their first son Reed was born and they returned to the USA to live in Sacramento. Twin boys, Dennis and Neil, and daughter Beth were born there as Maggie began her career as a nurse. The family moved to Palo Alto in 1967, during which time Maggie enjoyed working as a Public Health Nurse for Santa Clara county (until retirement at age 59) She was a devoted member of the First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto. She loved reading & book collecting and was a volunteer for The Friends of The Library. Maggie also loved to garden, bird watch, watercolor and travel. Maggie and Andy moved to Chico, California in 2015 to be closer to family.

She is survived by son Reed and wife Karel, son Neil and wife Beverly, daughter Beth Chase and husband Tom, eleven grandchildren and six great grandchildren. She was predeceased by husband Andy and son Dennis.

A celebration of Maggie's life will be held at the home of Beth Chase in the near future.

PAID OBITUARY

# Employment

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## Imogene Smith Chancellor

1940-2020

Imogene passed away peacefully on September 28 at Woodside Mission Hospice in Redwood City.

Family, friends and the community mourn her sudden loss, but cherish memories of a life of optimism, caring and generosity of spirit. She was a homeowner and community leader in Palo Alto for 48 years, and was blessed with the love and friendship of many.

Imogene was born to Mary and Curly Smith in the coal-mining community of Logan County, West Virginia. She earned her Registered Nurse degree from St. Mary's School of Nursing in 1961, and completed post-graduate studies in nursing at Ohio State University and University of Colorado, Denver. She worked as a nurse at The Ohio State University Hospital, where she was the head nurse of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and the Premature Infant Outpatient Clinic. She met her husband, Frederick M. Chancellor, Jr., in February 1962 and they wed on June 22, 1963. The couple had two sons, Frederick III (Marland) and Brian.

After the family moved to Palo Alto in 1972, she devoted her efforts to raising her sons and to community service. In 1977, the family was overjoyed to welcome the addition of their daughter/sister, Stephanie. At the urging of a dear friend, Sam Webster, she earned her Real Estate license in 1981, and enjoyed a 32-year residential real estate career working with Coldwell Banker, Seville Properties and Alain Pinel brokerages, proudly partnering with her son, Brian, for 18 years and retiring in 2013.

The family suffered the devastating loss of Stephanie (22) to lymphoma in November 2000, and responded to their grief and the outpouring of community support by creating the Stephanie Ann Chancellor Foundation for Leukemia/Lymphoma Research, raising \$200,000 to aid research efforts at Stanford University Hospitals and Clinics.

Imogene also served on numerous community service committees and boards, including the Junior League of Palo Alto — Mid-Peninsula, YMCA of the Mid-Peninsula, Lifetimes of Achievement task force for the Senior Coordinating Council of the Palo Alto Area, PTA boards for both Frank Greene Jr. Middle School and Palo Alto High School, Family Service Association of America (Palo Alto Assoc.), and First Congregational Church of Palo Alto.

Imogene is survived by her husband, Frederick, son Marland and daughter-in-law Shannon (Olympia, Washington), son Brian and daughter-in-law Nana (Palo Alto), five grandchildren (Katherine, Sebastian, Rebecca, Oliver and Margot), sister Frances Winston and brother-in-law Earl Winston (Dayton, Ohio), sister-in-law Mary Chancellor, nieces, nephews, cousins and numerous loving extended family.

A virtual service will be conducted on Friday 10/16/2020 at 10:00 a.m. Please email [office@fccpa.org](mailto:office@fccpa.org) for details.

The family suggests that donations in Imogene's memory can be made to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society ([secure.nationalmssociety.org/Donate](http://secure.nationalmssociety.org/Donate)) and the Equal Justice Initiative ([eji.org](http://eji.org)).

PAID OBITUARY

Answers to this week's puzzles, which can be found on page 49.



2	3	8	9	4	5	7	6	1
9	7	6	1	3	2	5	4	8
4	1	5	6	7	8	3	9	2
7	6	3	5	2	9	1	8	4
8	5	2	7	1	4	9	3	6
1	4	9	8	6	3	2	5	7
6	2	4	3	9	7	8	1	5
3	8	1	2	5	6	4	7	9
5	9	7	4	8	1	6	2	3

# Spectrum

Editorials, letters and opinions

EDITORIAL

## Our election recommendations

by the Weekly editorial board



### U.S. Congress

Anna Eshoo (D)(inc)

### State Senate

Josh Becker (D)

### State Assembly

Marc Berman (D)(inc)

### County Board of Education

Melissa Baten Caswell

### Foothill-DeAnza College District Board

Peter Landsberger (inc)

Laura Casas (inc)

Gilbert Wong (inc)

### Palo Alto City Council

Pat Burt

Ed Lauing

Greer Stone

Lydia Kou (inc)

### Palo Alto Unified School District Board

Jennifer DiBrienza (inc)

Todd Collins (inc)

Jesse Ladamirak

## Local and state ballot measures

### Measure O - YES

*Palo Alto Unified School District Parcel Tax (requires two-thirds vote)*

Measure O extends a parcel tax that residents and businesses in the school district have been paying since 2001 to supplement the district's revenue from property taxes. With annual automatic 2% increases each year, and occasional large bumps when it has been renewed every five years, the parcel tax is now \$836 per parcel and generates almost \$16 million a year, or roughly 7% of the budget. It doesn't expire until next year, giving the district another chance to win voter approval if it should fail to win the needed two-thirds support.

The funds from this tax have, unfortunately, now become baked into the regular operating budget, so its defeat would mean cuts of \$16 million. The tax helps to keep Palo Alto's per-pupil spending among the highest in the state at around \$25,000. With the high property values in Palo Alto, an additional parcel tax shouldn't have become just another part of the district's revenue stream, but with voters repeatedly supporting it for almost 20 years there has been no effort to wean it from the budget during strong economic times. Seniors can obtain the usual exemption if they wish, making such a tax measure palatable to them.

The best reason for supporting Measure O is that its failure will force cuts to many of the strong programs that make this district so unique. At an uncertain time due to the COVID-19 crisis and the possibility of impacts on property tax revenues

ahead, voters should approve the continuation of the parcel tax to ensure stability of our finances

### Measure S - NO

*Santa Clara Valley Water District Parcel Tax (requires two-thirds vote)*

Measure S seeks to renew an existing parcel tax that isn't set to expire for eight years and modify it so it will continue indefinitely without any further voter approval. The current tax generates \$45 million a year. The water district and supporters argue that passage of Measure S is needed in order to be able to plan for projects that will extend beyond the 2028 expiration date of the current tax. Some Palo Alto residents in the San Francisco Creek flood zone are actively supporting it because they think its passage will increase the likelihood of there being sufficient funding to complete local flood control measures, including the replacement of the Pope-Chaucer bridge. But the measure contains no such commitment and is an attempt to permanently lock in a tax without any sunset date and therefore no accountability to the public. We strongly support flood control and clean water projects in the county, but this measure is not the answer. Let the district return with a new proposal that respects the voters by being more transparent and that is limited to a 15-year period, as the current tax provides.

### Measure RR - YES

*Caltrain Sales Tax Measure (requires two-thirds vote)*

The system under which Caltrain is managed and funded is a complete mess and needs a massive overhaul.

The pandemic has only added to the governance and financial problems. The system has never had a guaranteed source of funding and relies on voluntary contributions from San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties to supplement fare revenue, which is now a fraction of pre-pandemic levels. It's operated under a Joint Powers Agreement between the three counties but managed by the San Mateo County Transit District (SamTrans), and problems with this arrangement and the lack of accountability have been the source of conflict for decades.

Measure RR, which had to be approved by seven different agencies to get on the ballot, does nothing to fix the underlying governance problems, but it is necessary to ensure Caltrain's survival through and after the COVID-19 crisis. It will provide, for the first time, a secure source of funding through a 1/8 cent sales tax over the next 30 years. That's a huge step forward. We reluctantly recommend voters approve this measure, which requires approval by two-thirds of voters overall in the three affected counties.

## State propositions

### Prop. 14 - No

*Stem cell bonds*

Sixteen years ago, when voters approved \$3 billion in bonds for stem cell research, it was critical to the growth and development of a promising new field of research, largely because the Bush Administration had prohibited all federal funding. But there is now adequate federal government and private funding being invested in stem cell research. With all of the state's other needs there is no reason California should continue to fund the state's own program when there is ample national research being done.

### Prop. 15 - Yes

*Commercial property tax split roll*

It's long past time to end the property tax break to commercial property owners in California, whose taxes don't increase with the value of their property. Since commercial real estate turns over much less frequently than homes, the current system is grossly unfair and amounts to a giant subsidy to real estate investors. The most common argument against the measure is that property tax increases are often passed along to tenants, which include small businesses. Economic studies have repeatedly shown, however, that commercial rents are driven

by the market, not by tax rates. Owners of commercial buildings set rental rates based on what owners of similar space are charging and what tenants are willing to pay.

### Prop. 16 - Yes

*Affirmative action*

When voters approved Prop. 209 in 1996, they banned most affirmative action programs in public institutions, including the state college system. At a time when residents are awakening to the racial bias that still permeates our society, this proposed repeal of Prop. 209, adopted overwhelmingly by the legislature, will restore the ability for state and local agencies to consider race, sex, ethnicity and national origin in hiring decisions. Similarly, state universities will be able to consider these factors as part of their admissions process. Most private employers have active programs to diversify their workforce. It is wrong that public employers and schools are prevented from doing the same.

### Prop. 17 - Yes

*Parolees' right to vote*

This simple proposal, placed on the ballot by the legislature, would give those who have completed their prison sentence but who are still on supervised parole the right to vote. Parole is a period during which offenders are expected to reenter society, find gainful employment and contribute to society. Providing them with the right to vote gives them a stake in their future and comes at no harm to anyone. It's an easy way to give agency to a person trying to move on from the mistakes they've made.

### Prop. 18 - Yes

*17-year-olds vote in primaries*

This legislative proposal allows for a 17-year-old to register and vote in a primary or special election if they will turn 18 before the next general election. It makes good sense to allow a young person who desires to exercise his or her right to vote in a general election after turning 18 to be able to participate in the primary election that selects the top two candidates for that office. Anything that encourages interest in voting and the electoral process among young people is good for democracy.

(continued on page 21)

## Guest Opinions: Pro &amp; Con

## 'Yes' on Measure RR to save Caltrain

by Marc Berman

**W**e all miss certain activities that we took for granted before our lives were upended by the COVID-19 pandemic — cheering on the Giants at a crowded Oracle Park, catching up with colleagues in the office at lunchtime, or spending a Sunday in San Francisco or San Jose. For tens of thousands of us, these activities all had one thing in common: taking Caltrain to get to and from our destinations.

The good news is that this health pandemic will end eventually, and we will get back to doing all of the things we miss. The bad news is there's a real risk that Caltrain will not be there for us.

We have the opportunity to ensure that Caltrain continues to serve as the backbone of our public transportation system from



Marc Berman

San Jose to San Francisco. Measure RR, which is on the ballot in Santa Clara, San Mateo and San Francisco counties, is an eighth-cent sales tax to create a dedicated funding source for Caltrain operations. Caltrain has no stable source of funding and more than 70% of its revenue comes from fares. With most people working from home during the pandemic, ridership has dropped by nearly 95%, crippling Caltrain's finances.

Without Measure RR, Caltrain is facing a shutdown that will cost taxpayers at least \$155 million just to get the system back up and running. We can avoid that unnecessary expense by supporting Caltrain now. This will ensure that thousands of essential workers can continue to rely on its service during the pandemic, and it will preserve the system for when millions of us return to a more normal life sometime next year. A recent

survey of Caltrain riders showed that at least 70% plan to start riding again once the pandemic subsides.

Measure RR isn't just a stopgap measure to keep the trains running. It's a well-thought-out, long-term plan to make

**Measure RR ... is a well-thought-out, long-term plan.**

Caltrain a world-class public transportation system. Electrification is scheduled to go online in 2022, and Measure RR will pay for operations for this cleaner, faster system. Electrified, quieter trains will mean cleaner air and less noise pollution for our communities, reducing criteria air pollutant emissions by up to 97% and eliminating over 176,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions along the corridor each year.

Importantly, Caltrain's Board of Directors recently adopted an Equity Framework designed to make Caltrain more accessible to more of our communities who don't currently ride. They're piloting a 50%

fare reduction for lower-income riders that can be made permanent if Measure RR passes. The equity framework also proposes adding more trains to its schedule during off-peak hours, expanding access to station facilities and improving connections to other public transit routes.

An expanded Caltrain also provides a much-needed economic boost to the area. Projections show that Measure RR will add approximately 16,000 good paying jobs across the three counties.

Ensuring that Caltrain not only survives this pandemic but is in a position to thrive afterward is critical to our post-pandemic quality of life. Can you imagine if the tens of thousands of daily riders were to drive their cars instead? Join me in supporting Measure RR to support Caltrain and protect this critical transportation system for decades to come. ■

**Marc Berman is the state assembly member for the 24th District. He can be reached at marc.berman@asm.ca.gov.**

## Vote 'no' on Measure RR

by Michael Brady

**O**n the November ballot is a tax measure, Measure RR, which would create an additional sales tax for the benefit of Caltrain. Sensible voters should vote "no" on this measure; Caltrain is a bloated, mis-managed public works nightmare that doesn't deserve taxpayer help during these tough times.

For years, Caltrain has been engaged in a program to "electrify" its main line from San Jose to San Francisco. This has been, and continues to be, a financial disaster. Its original cost estimate was \$800 million; now it is up to *four times that* — or over \$3.2 billion! This is a prime example of government waste and profligacy that the voters hate.

In connection with this electrification project, Caltrain has to develop a



Michael Brady

sophisticated signaling system to prevent collisions. Knowing that a certain contractor had been found incompetent in Denver, Caltrain went out and hired the same contractor with disastrous results on the Peninsula and after spending untold millions of dollars.

Instead of the ruinous electrification project, Caltrain refused to consider modern Tier 4 diesel trains as an alternative; they cost one-quarter as much, are quiet and clean, and get you to San Francisco about three minutes later than an electric train. Is that "severe delay" worth putting up with to save billions? Another example of Caltrain bullheadedness.

Caltrain made an unholy alliance/marriage with the California High-Speed Rail Authority; Caltrain received \$745 million from HSR, and in return gave up control of its 50 mile right of way, agreeing to let HSR run 10 trains north and 10 trains south *every hour*, a little exercise

that will paralyze the Peninsula with the crossing gates coming down every three minutes. No one will be able to get to work on time, get the kids to school on time, get to the emergency room, and the merchants of the Peninsula will be severely hurt, as if they aren't already suffering enough from the pandemic.

*The Peninsula will be paralyzed* by this stupid move. And they did this with no money for grade separation, and their famous comment as to what they were about to impose was, "We'll see how things develop!"

Currently Caltrain's ridership is down 95%; yet have they furloughed or laid off employees and executives like private industry has had to do? No. They sit fat and happy with the CEO making more than \$500,000 a year! A recipe for disaster.

There is no long-term planning: For example, who says that people on the

Peninsula will return to work in San Francisco? Or will they stay home to work? Will all our work habits change, with limited commute traffic compared to before? Why aren't these issues being analyzed before any tax is imposed on the people?

Caltrain has also become a wealthy person's commute vehicle. The average household income for a rider is \$100,000 per year, according to a 2018 Caltrain ridership survey; this is scarcely a program for the poor and disadvantaged. But a sales tax is regressive and hurts the poor the most.

Measure RR is a bad financial decision for a badly run entity. Send Caltrain a message; vote "no" on Measure RR. ■

**Michael J. Brady is a graduate of Stanford University and Harvard Law School who has practiced law in Redwood City since the late 1960s and been active in litigating against the California High Speed Rail Project, trying to keep it off of the Peninsula. He has lived in Menlo Park and Woodside for more than 50 years.**

## Letters

## Politics of anger

Editor,

I wish to comment on Michele Lew and John Kessler's letter in last Friday's edition of the Weekly in response to Vice Mayor Tom DuBois' recent comments about how he took offense at city council ads that stated that three candidates in particular were "the only candidates who embody Palo Alto values."

Such a statement is wrong on its face and is offensive (at least to DuBois and me) and deserves to be called out for what it is, as DuBois did. It implies that the other seven candidates lack Palo

Alto values and, therefore, are not suitable for serving on city council. Don't vote for them, but vote for the only three candidates who have Palo Alto values — whatever that phrase may mean to the lesser-informed. That's inappropriate political advertising.

I want to address one other point made by Lew and Kessler, namely that "who lives in Palo Alto is an economic issue." I agree, but it's also an economic issue in Atherton, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Portola Valley, Woodside, etc. But it's not an economic issue created by the vast majority of people who live here. It's created by tech companies that have proliferated the area, the vast amounts of unbelievable personal wealth that people have, and by local governments

along the Mipeninsula that have allowed too much office space to be developed without requiring a commensurate amount of housing to be developed for people at all levels of personal income at the same time. Supply and demand has taken over, as it generally does, but that doesn't mean that residents, like myself, are racists if that is what Lew and Kessler were implying by also saying, "It's not solely an economic issue. Race matters."

Joe Hirsch

Georgia Avenue, Palo Alto

## Affordable housing in Palo Alto

Editor,

Palo Alto has resisted building low-income housing even for its

own city workers, let alone others in the larger community. Define the terms: "affordable housing" for whom? Palo Alto is an elite island where leadership rationalizes that other communities can build housing for an inclusive community. This amounts to a racist, and class-segregated city, where only the very wealthy, or those who have lived here for years, can afford to reside. We have a few lower-income apartment complexes built more than 50 years ago, but very few, and the rents in these apartments continue to rise. Low-income rent means no more than 25% of one's income. We need fewer studies and more action: Provide our fair share of low-income housing for stable, diverse communities (economically,

socially, racially, and ethnically). Support Black Lives Matter: Mandate that 15% of new low-income renters be African Americans.

So far, leaders "study" and "talk" about "affordable" housing. Twelve parking spaces for RV dwellers is pathetic. East Palo Alto, Redwood City and Mountain View provide hundreds of spaces for RVs. Stop the talk and take action so that we have a community that houses service-sector workers. Be bold, courageous. Act on your empty words. Here are some actions:

1. Put rent control in place now.
2. Survey the number of vacant houses in the city. Get these owners to rent their houses.

(continued on page 21)

## Guest Opinions: Pro &amp; Con

**'Yes' on Santa Clara Valley Water District Measure S**

by Thomas Rindfleisch

I was an author of a letter from Crescent Park residents supporting the passage of Measure S referred to in Sue Dremann's recent Palo Alto Weekly article. I continue my strong support.



Thomas Rindfleisch

Opponents claim that the remaining seven years of the current Measure B leaves time to complete flood protections. However, we have worked and waited 22 years for San Francisquito Creek flood repairs. After all those years, we still have nothing tangible to show for our work and planning to improve protection (especially upgrading Pope-Chaucer bridge) for the Crescent Park and Duveneck/St. Francis neighborhoods that were so heavily affected (\$40 million worth) in the 1998 flood.

This is not the fault of the Santa Clara Valley Water District (now called Valley Water). The project involves coordination among five local government jurisdictions, long negotiations with myriad government agencies, and delaying tactics by the same groups opposing Measure S.

Progress has been made, but seven years will evaporate quickly. Even if we are successful, there remain other longer-term challenges for adequate flood protection.

I participated for five years as a citizen adviser on a Stanford University study of the future of Searsville Dam. This is relevant because current flood control upgrade plans for San Francisquito Creek will protect against a 70-year flood (as happened in 1998), but we will still be short of the 100-year protection required by FEMA to remove flood insurance requirements on local properties and which would guard against future extreme weather events. The Stanford Searsville study recommended reconfiguring Searsville in a way that would dovetail with the downstream improvements to San Francisquito Creek and raise the flood protection to at least the 100-year level. This additional project is expensive and will require time, funding and cooperation to bring it to fruition.

Other long-term threats come from climate change. Sea level rise threatens to inundate many areas of the Bay shoreline, including areas of Palo Alto and other Santa Clara County communities. The effects will change the ecology in these

areas, the availability of water, and livability. Planning, design and execution of needed shoreline and infrastructure upgrades will require solid funding support and will last well beyond the seven-year

***The way to oversee and manage future performance is not through deferred funding but through effective citizen awareness, involvement and oversight using the ballot box.***

sunset of the current Measure B. Note that Measure S is not "double dipping" in that if approved, it will replace the older Measure B and will not impose new taxes — the near-term rate stays the same as the rate today.

A key concern of opponents seems to be: Can we trust the management of the Water District to use these funds wisely? After all, not all past projects have reached conclusion in a timely fashion. I

would argue that the way to oversee and manage future performance is not through deferred funding but through effective citizen awareness, involvement and oversight using the ballot box. The complex cluster of issues involved in Measure S, the strong headwinds and time needed to accomplish highly meritorious and doable projects, the increasingly pressing impacts of climate change, the amount of compromise that has already gone into crafting Measure S (that can hardly satisfy everyone), and the fact that there is no discernible "sunset" on the issues we face (devising solutions and maintaining them over the years), have convinced me we need to confront the future now as best we can. The cost of money in this environment is about as low as it can get, so we risk much higher costs in future economic conditions.

For these reasons, I strongly support the passage of Measure S as a reasonable compromise to continue the water district's stewardship of our water resources, infrastructure and environment. ■

*Thomas Rindfleisch is a senior research scientist, emeritus, at Stanford University. He can be reached at [tr.rindfleisch@gmail.com](mailto:tr.rindfleisch@gmail.com).*

**What Valley Water doesn't tell us about Safe, Clean Water**

by Trish Mulvey and Dave Warner

When you see a ballot measure with an attractive name like "Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection" and read a campaign mailer promising to "protect every drop without raising taxes," do you ever think to yourself, "I wonder what's missing?"

We did, and now we want to let you know who we are and what we found.

We are longtime Palo Altans. Trish Mulvey and her family moved to Kings Lane in Palo Alto in the spring of 1951. She discovered pollywogs in San Francisquito Creek in a shallow pool under the big buckeye tree next to the Newell Road Bridge and, in 1994, was a convening member of the San Francisquito Watershed Council. Dave Warner and his family moved to Palo Alto Avenue, across the



Trish Mulvey



Dave Warner

street from the creek, in 1995 and he has been active in neighborhood creek cleanup and restoration activities.

When looking for "what's missing?" in Measure S, we identified four areas of concern along with a reassurance. Here are the concerns. First is the lack of a sunset date — thus allowing the tax to continue

indefinitely and taking away our right to vote on new projects and programs.

Second is lack of accountability for poor performance on timely completion of flood protection projects and environmental stewardship key performance indicators for restoring wildlife habitat and providing open space.

Third is continuing a very regressive

***We oppose Measure S because voters deserve clarity, transparency and accountability.***

single rate, which taxes all single-family residential parcels up to and including one-quarter-acre the same — meaning if your home is in a neighborhood with eight units per acre, you pay twice as much per square-foot of your property as those with more spacious homes on quarter-acre lots.

Fourth is the remarkably misleading ballot language. No mention that the Valley Water Board can increase the tax rate by at least 2% annually or that taxes have already been raised from \$39 in 2000 to almost \$68 today. No mention that the independent citizen oversight committee is appointed by the Valley Water Board members who don't have to follow committee recommendations. No mention of selling \$300 million in bonds that will cost \$650 million to repay — meaning \$350 million of our tax dollars go to investors rather than to Safe, Clean Water priorities and local jobs.

While we recommend that you vote "no" on Measure S, we want to reassure you that the current Safe, Clean Water parcel

tax does not expire until 2028. Funding for all the current projects will continue — including the high priority Anderson Dam seismic retrofit.

There are updates in the September 2020 Valley Water draft Year 7 Annual Report regarding other projects of local interest.

Permanente Creek work was originally projected to be completed in 2016. Now, the final element is projected to be completed by April 2021 with construction of the Rancho San Antonio Flood Detention Facility. San Francisquito Creek flood protection was originally projected to be completed by last June; now the schedule has slipped to the end of 2023. For the upstream-of-101 reach, including the Newell Road and Pope Chaucer bridges, Valley Water continues to work in coordination with the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority on the 95% design document for channel constrictions. Construction is expected to begin in the summer of 2021.

We oppose Measure S because voters deserve clarity, transparency and accountability. A "no" vote now ensures that Valley Water will have the opportunity to respond with a better measure that includes a sunset date, a less regressive tax and truly independent citizen oversight — a new measure that we can all support in the next general election cycle. ■

*Trish Mulvey is a community volunteer and can be reached at [mulvey@ix.netcom.com](mailto:mulvey@ix.netcom.com). Dave Warner is a finance manager and can be reached at [dwar11@gmail.com](mailto:dwar11@gmail.com). Both live in Palo Alto neighborhoods that were badly damaged in the 1998 flood, and they wrote the ballot arguments on behalf of the Vote NO on Measure S Committee.*

**Food reporting you won't find anywhere else.**

**Peninsula Foodist**  
BY ELENA KADVANY

Sign up for the only food newsletter on the Peninsula at [PaloAltoOnline.com/express](http://PaloAltoOnline.com/express)

## Recommendations

(continued from page 18)

### Prop. 19 - Yes

*Transfer of tax base*

This measure would add new tax benefits to existing law for people 55 and older who sell their home and purchase a new one by enabling them to retain the property tax level of the home they sell. It's being pushed by Realtors and firefighters with \$42 million in campaign donations (versus almost no expenditures against). For those who have been in their homes at protected Prop. 13 tax levels for a long time, this is yet another unfair benefit to what they have already been enjoying by paying property taxes that are a fraction of what a new homeowner is paying. But until we have the courage to reform the entire property tax system, this measure will make a decision to move easier, and thereby help to increase helpful turnover of the housing stock.

### Prop. 20 - No

*Criminal justice reform rollbacks*

This initiative measure attempts to undo reforms in the criminal justice system that were passed in the last decade and were an important part of reducing the state's prison population in response to federal court orders. It would put more people back in prison, at great expense, and cut programs that are aimed at assisting offenders to successfully return to society. This measure would be a giant step backward and return us to a day when non-violent offenders were sentenced to long and unfair prison sentences.

### Prop. 21 - Yes

*Rent control at local level*

Current state law prohibits cities from enacting any measures restricting rent increases for single family homes, or any housing built since 1995. Even so, about 20 percent of California residents are living in pre-1995 units that are subject to rent control laws. San Francisco, Los Angeles,

Mountain View and many other cities are successfully using rent control measures to protect renters. Prop. 21 doesn't enact rent control, it simply gives cities back the ability to decide for themselves if some form of rent regulation is in the best interest of their community while addressing housing needs.

### Prop. 22 - No

*Gig workers as independent contractors*

Pressured by unions, in 2019 the California legislature hurriedly passed AB 5 to virtually prohibit the use of independent contractors, including drivers for Uber, Lyft and other ride-share and delivery services, freelancers and an array of other workers. Ever since it has been struggling to fix all the problems and inequities in the law but has refused to budge on drivers and many other categories. In June a court ordered Uber and Lyft to treat their drivers as employees, but the ruling is on hold until the outcome of the election. AB 5 was a badly conceived and written law that

needs a rewrite. But Prop. 22 is not the answer. It only addresses "app-based drivers" and amounts to a rescue of a few large companies. They should be working as part of a broad coalition to amend AB 5 to address its threat to all businesses impacted by it, not just solve their own needs.

### Prop. 23 - No

*Dialysis clinic requirements*

This is the second attempt by unions to organize kidney dialysis workers through passage of a confusing ballot measure that doesn't belong on a state ballot. It was defeated two years ago and should be again.

### Prop. 24 - Yes

*Data privacy*

Just two years ago the legislature passed a ground-breaking and controversial Consumer Privacy Act establishing rules allowing consumers to opt out from businesses with more than \$25 million in revenue or possessing data on more than 50,000 people from sharing data they collect on them.

Prop. 24 is intended to strengthen the 2018 law by clarifying some provisions and making enforcement easier through the creation of a new state agency, while reducing the number of businesses that are affected. Importantly, it will permit changes through the legislature (instead of voters) to further improve the law as long as they are consistent with the goal of increasing data privacy.

### Prop. 25 - Yes

*Cash bail referendum*

This measure seeks to uphold 2018 legislation that does away with the cash bail system so that poor defendants aren't forced to remain in jail pending their trial while wealthy defendants are released on bail. The implementation of the new law has been delayed due to the referendum. The bail system is highly discriminatory and should be replaced with the risk-assessment system contained in the 2018 law. A "yes" vote means you approve of the law passed to eliminate cash bail. A "no" vote means that law is stricken and cash bail will continue. ■

## Letters

(continued from page 19)

3. Use vacant office buildings for single-room occupancy housing for our homeless and low-income workers. Use hotel/motel rooms for family housing.

4. Freeze office, housing and expensive condo development until we have a balanced jobs/housing mix. Zone existing plots for low-income rentals.

5. Encourage modular units with incentives. Cut the outrageous salaries of several highly paid city staff and develop a housing fund for extremely low-income workers.

6. Modify restrictive zoning laws, increase height limits, especially around transit hubs.

7. Develop a business tax for low-income housing. Apply for CARES funding.

8. Monitor and control airbnbs. Monitor these rentals to serve our city workers, rather than well-heeled tourists. What are city rules? Who monitors these?

9. Survey city workers: How many can afford to live here, how many want to live here? One size doesn't fit all. Share the data.

Roberta Ahlquist  
Webster Street, Palo Alto

### A thriving community

Editor,

Palo Alto's jobs/housing imbalance (3:1) has aggravated traffic and housing availability, especially for people with moderate to low incomes. I like former Mayor (and current Palo Alto council candidate) Pat Burt's plan to balance new housing in key locations while moderating office growth.

Thriving communities need people of all income levels, good

jobs and housing, strong schools and services, a transportation system that works efficiently and safely for all. I believe Pat has a proven track record of studying and understanding local context and applying comprehensive planning to achieve a healthy balance.

We need proven leadership to make sure our growing community is vibrant, strong and balanced.

Penny Ellson  
El Capitan, Palo Alto

### Whose housing?

Editor,

During our bicycle rides from our home in College Terrace to downtown Palo Alto, we have observed a significant number of red-and-white realty signs for residences in the College Terrace and Palo Alto High School neighborhoods that are either available for sale or for rent to "qualified Stanford University faculty and staff." This means that these residences have been removed from the general housing market.

Is such discrimination legal? We appreciate Stanford's need to provide housing for its employees, but it should not be done at the expense of the general public seeking to reside in Palo Alto.

Jane Buechel and  
Zelek Herman  
College Avenue, Palo Alto

### Party time

Editor,

As a lifelong Democrat, too often I took the easy way out and voted the Democratic ticket. In 2016, I learned a hard lesson. In 2016, two long-term Democrats, Lydia Kou and Arthur Keller, both active in our community for years, were passed over in their bid for the Democratic endorsement for

Palo Alto's City Council.

Who did the Democratic party, Santa Clara Chapter, endorse? Two candidates, Greg Tanaka and Adrian Fine, a Republican and an independent, who switched their registrations in time to qualify for the endorsement. Why?

San Jose has roughly half of the County's population and dominates the county Democratic Party. San Jose Democratic officials support rapid growth and densification. In my opinion, the endorsement decision was made on who supported the "party line," and not who were the best candidates for Palo Alto.

Council member Kou has worked hard for, and supported, balanced growth, fiscal responsibility, accountability of city officials and long overdue transparency in our city government.

Kou has strongly opposed Sacramento's efforts to take away local control of zoning and housing from Palo Alto and other communities. And to whom is Sacramento giving this power to? For-profit developers.

No wonder Kou did not receive, and will never receive, the Democratic endorsement.

This year there are four open seats on Palo Alto's City Council. I urge every voter to read about the candidates and vote for those who will support the issues Palo Alto residents indicate are most important to them.

Please vote for candidates who will work on behalf of our community; not for themselves or special interests, including the Democratic party.

I ask everyone to join me and cast your vote for Lydia Kou (she is No. 10 on the long ballot), and for Biden-Harris. Thank you.

Rita Vrhel  
Channing Avenue, Palo Alto

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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

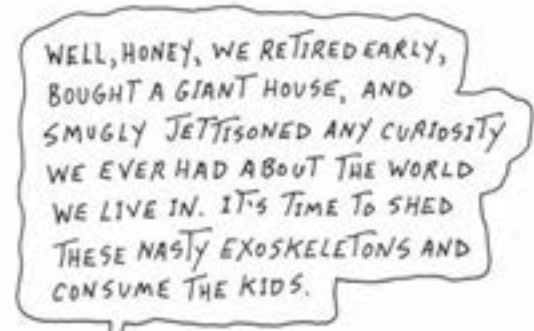


What concerns, if any, do you have about election security in Santa Clara County?

Submit letters to the editor of up to 300 words to [letters@pawebly.com](mailto:letters@pawebly.com). Submit guest opinions of 1,000 words to [editor@pawebly.com](mailto:editor@pawebly.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 [llee@pawebly.com](mailto:llee@pawebly.com) or 650-223-6526 or Editor Jocelyn Dong at [editor@pawebly.com](mailto:editor@pawebly.com).



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# 7 SEEK TO LEAD A CITY IN TRANSITION

## Three incumbents, four newcomers vie for three seats on East Palo Alto City Council

by Lloyd Lee

This fall, seven candidates running for East Palo Alto City Council not only want to tackle some of their community's more evergreen issues — which have worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic — but also

to set a promising path for a city that's in flux.

The incumbents — Lisa Gauthier, Larry Moody and Carlos Romero — are each seeking to secure a third term on the council to continue their work on affordable

housing, job opportunities and commercial development, among other issues.

But as the city grapples with one of the highest rates of COVID-19 cases in San Mateo County, some of its persistent issues — resident

displacement, job losses, supporting youth and seniors, and public safety and health — have become more urgent.

First-time challengers Stewart Hyland, Webster Lincoln, Antonio Lopez and Juan Mendez want to

ensure that residents are protected during the health crisis and are included in the city's future. They are all well-versed in the city's issues as well as its potential and hope to build upon the work of their predecessors, but with different solutions.

### LISA GAUTHIER

#### Shaping an East Palo Alto for her family

First elected in 2012, East Palo Alto City Councilwoman Lisa Gauthier is seeking a third term this fall.

Over the past eight years, she served as mayor in 2015 and 2019 and vice mayor in 2018. Like her veteran colleagues also seeking reelection, she believes that the solutions to the city's intersectional issues take time and another four years on the council is necessary to see some development projects through to completion.

"We're not a one-issue city," she said. "There are a lot of things that we're doing and a lot of the resources and answers we need takes money. If we don't have the money to do it right away, we can't get it done."

For Gauthier, the future of East Palo Alto is one that can accommodate all residents regardless of their income.

The city is an affordable housing community, she said. But she also suggested that current tenant

protections in the city such as rent stabilization, which allows for incremental rent increases each year, don't do enough to maintain that community.

"We can have affordable units, but once a tenant who is in an affordable unit moves out, that unit then goes to market rate, so it's affordable to whom at that point?" she asked. "Ideally, we need to figure out: How do we keep that rate from being raised to market rate?"

With earning levels of low-income residents at a plateau, and as rents continue to soar, Gauthier said she wants a portion of the city's housing to remain affordable, though she couldn't speak to a specific percentage.

Market-rate housing, on the other hand, is an issue that takes care of itself, she said.

One area Gauthier does feel the city needs to address more, however, is housing for "the middle" — the individuals who get their degree and a job that

pays around the median income, she said.

Gauthier sees mixed-use projects with retail and housing as the key to increasing the city's commercial development. She also wants to make more space for the kinds of small businesses that thrived decades earlier when the city was unincorporated and wasn't home to large corporations.

"If we're not saying, 'Look, we're going to make sure that there's space for you to develop your business' ... I think we're also doing our city a disservice," she said.

One of the more immediate threats to the city is the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately affects East Palo Alto, which has the highest case rate compared to the rest of San Mateo County. Part of the problem in Gauthier's perspective is effective messaging.

(continued on page 25)



Maggali Gauthier

### STEWART HYLAND

#### If there's a nonprofit, there's a way

Stewart Hyland doesn't have experience as a city councilman, but his work for the past two decades is deeply tied to one of the main pillars of the East Palo Alto community: its nonprofit organizations.

"I've always worked in nonprofits, either as a community organizer or as a union organizer," he said.

Because of his extensive work with groups such as One East Palo Alto Neighborhood Improvement Initiative, Faith in Action and, currently, the Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County, to name a few, Hyland said he already has an intimate knowledge of the council's process and the larger community concerns.

"(I) have an understanding of how folks are being affected by what policies that are in effect and also a little bit about budget work," Hyland said.

If elected to the council, Hyland said he wants to ensure East Palo Alto residents see the benefits of Measure HH, a

2018 voter-approved parcel tax on large office developments to fund career training programs and affordable housing; support the city with its Ravenswood/Four Corners TOD Specific Plan; and retain the city's current residents through affordable housing, while also inviting new tenants.

Hyland has called for a "broad-minded" approach when thinking about whom the city should serve through affordable housing. Though he's not the only candidate who has emphasized the creation of units for middle-to low-income earners, Hyland is the only one so far to openly address a specific subgroup of lower-income residents: the formerly incarcerated.

"I think single-room occupancy will be great for a lot of our folks that are returning from being incarcerated," he said.

At the same time, he stressed that it doesn't mean East Palo Alto can't accommodate an economically diverse community. The problem, Hyland suggests,

is finding the common ground among all types of housing and tenants.

"This economy is so out of whack, it doesn't make any sense to separate ourselves by class," he said. "We need to think more holistically."

One tool Hyland wants the city to look into its inclusionary zoning to create affordable housing alongside market-rate units and, as a result, help preserve the cultural diversity of the city.

On commercial development, Hyland said he wants to move forward with the city's existing Ravenswood/Four Corners TOD Specific Plan. (A couple years ago, Hyland gathered primarily Spanish-speaking parents for community discussions about what the development should look like.)

"I thought we laid out a good plan," he said, appreciating details like floor-area ratios, which dictate the size of the buildings that can go on plots of land, and

(continued on page 29)



Maggali Gauthier



## WEBSTER LINCOLN

## East Palo Alto's homegrown data scientist

Webster Lincoln, 33, has positioned himself as a homegrown data scientist who, if elected, will bring critical thinking and problem-solving skills and an understanding of the community's spirit, culture, history and challenges to his role on the East Palo Alto City Council.

"I'm new to politics, but I have strong and deep roots in this community," Lincoln stated in his campaign statement. "My goal as a council member is to improve quality of life, health, and housing security for all members of our community."

Born in Oakland, Webster was raised in East Palo Alto and attended Menlo-Atherton High School. He continued his education at San Jose State University, where he obtained his bachelor's degree in psychology, with a double minor in biological science and chemistry, and is pursuing a master's degree in biological science. He has had multiple bylines in biomedical journals during his career as a data scientist at various companies along the Peninsula, including his current role at Genentech.

"Regardless of the stigma that East Palo Alto had in the '90s ... there's success within the community," Lincoln said in a Facebook Live event he hosted on Oct. 4 on his campaign page. "I hope to inspire other people and make sure that East Palo Alto also remains a place, where regardless of your socioeconomic status or your skin color or where you live, there's always opportunities for people to make it."

Lincoln is seeking a seat on

the council to ensure that East Palo Alto's future accommodates its residents — something he believes the council hasn't always kept in mind when making policy decisions, especially those that could lead to gentrification. He points when the council set aside its long-standing first-source jobs rule of hiring to make way for Amazon in 2017.

"There's a big divide in the community," Lincoln said. "Some people say (Amazon) is good for revenue, but other people say, 'No, it causes displacement.'"

Lincoln hopes to bridge that divide by seeking policies and developments that are representative of East Palo Alto's residents.

When it comes to housing, for example, Lincoln said the city needs to focus on developments that increase access to affordable housing.

According to his campaign website, he would focus on inclusionary zoning ordinances, increase multifamily housing zones and provide incentives for homeowners to build second units on their property.

Lincoln also believes that the city needs to encourage mixed-use developments with housing as well as projects that can accommodate small businesses and startups.

The city has already made efforts to ensure new commercial office space will benefit the community through Measure HH — the 2018 voter-approved parcel tax on larger office developments, which will fund housing and job training programs. Lincoln said the measure,

however, is not enough.

"We need to focus on development that supports people and helps prevent displacement within our community," he said. "I want to move good development forward, but I don't want it to be at the cost of our residents and our diversity."

On top of affordable housing and equitable development, Lincoln is pushing for greener building standards.

By establishing a climate change task force, the city should start taking an emissions inventory to keep track of East Palo Alto's overall climate impact, he said. That data could then be integrated into all of the city's decision-making, including new developments.

Police reform is also a top priority in Lincoln's campaign.

"I think we need to take a step back and really look at what is policing," he said. "What's the need for policing? And what really should police be doing in our communities?"

Lincoln said he believes the city should create a task force to evaluate how many arrests and traffic stops are the result of racial profiling and other bias. He hopes to significantly reduce negative interactions between the police and local residents, partly by redirecting traffic enforcement duties away from officers and handing them to unarmed civilians. (The Berkeley City Council approved a similar proposal in July.)

Lincoln also supports reallocating some of the city's police budget into a "Restorative Justice

(continued on page 29)

## Lisa Gauthier

(continued from page 24)

The city needs to think beyond social media platforms, which many residents may not use, she said, and suggested the city use its police cars, bullhorns and even ice cream trucks to remind people to socially distance and wear a mask.

She acknowledged that many residents can't pay rent during this time and that the city is looking toward nonprofits such as Live in Peace, where Gauthier sits on the board, for rental assistance. But at the top of her mind is stopping the spread of the disease.

"The most important thing we can do right now: stop the spread of COVID-19; open up the economy; and allow people to get back to work," she said. "If we don't open up this economy, it's not going to just be the renters who are going to be in trouble."

In addition, Gauthier would focus her third term on the city's

youth by building "leadership development resources," according to her campaign statement. Gauthier said the city should hear more from younger people of the community by creating a youth commission, something she noticed other cities have established when she attended the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

"If you don't engage our youth, we're losing them and we don't want to lose them," she said. "We want them to know their voices are valued."

The East Palo Alto Police Department can also play a role in empowering the city's youth. Gauthier, who participated in a Black Lives Matter protest in the city on June 3, doesn't believe that some of the younger, progressive community members' calls for a complete defunding of the Police Department are realistic.

Instead, she sees an opportunity for a more collaborative relationship between residents and the Police Department, particularly with the youth community,

through programs like the Fitness Improvement Training zones, where locals and officers interacted while doing exercise.

Gauthier's pursuit for a third council term is also personal.

"I am a product of this community," she said.

Gauthier was 2 years old when she moved to East Palo Alto in 1967 and later enrolled in the Ravenswood City School District, attending Runnymede Elementary School (which has since closed), Brentwood Academy and Costaño Elementary School.

The councilwoman and government affairs manager for Study.com, an education tech company, is a single mother of three. She's not raising a family in the same East Palo Alto she grew up in, but she hopes they'll live in one that's better.

"Pretty soon I'll have a grandchild who will also be in this community," she said. "So the decisions that I make will impact my family and this community moving forward." ■



Courtesy Webster Lincoln

## Here's how you can vote in East Palo Alto

Three drop boxes are now available, and in-person vote centers will open Oct. 31

by Tyler Callister and Jocelyn Dong

Voting in the 2020 presidential election officially got underway last week in San Mateo County as the Elections Division mailed ballots to all registered voters.

Voters have several options for returning their completed ballots. They can mail them back in the postage-paid envelope to the San Mateo County Registration & Elections Division. It must be postmarked on or before Nov. 3.

Voters can also bring their ballots to any of 39 drop box locations in the county, including three in East Palo Alto. Those ballot boxes are at University Circle, 1900 University Ave. (the inside box is accessible during regular business hours); Ravenswood City School District Office, 2120 Euclid Ave. (the inside box is accessible during regular business hours); and the Government Center, 2415 University Ave. (the outside box is accessible 24 hours a day).

In addition, voters can go now to any of three in-person vote centers throughout the county, which will be open through Oct. 30, weekdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. These vote centers are located at the Redwood City Assessor-County Clerk-Recorder, 555 County Center; San Mateo Registration & Elections Division, 40 Tower Road; and the South San Francisco Main Library, 840 West Orange Ave.

Closer to Election Day, two in-person vote centers in East Palo Alto will be open from Oct. 31 to Nov. 2, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day, Nov. 3. These will be located at the Lewis and Joan Platt Family YMCA, Half Gym, 550 Bell St., and Saint Francis of Assisi Church, 1425 Bay Road.

One pop-up vote center will open on Nov. 2 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Nov. 3 from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the East Palo Alto Academy Multipurpose Room, 1050 Myrtle St.

At the vote centers, people will be able to get assistance with non-English language ballots, disability access and more.

Voters who are disabled or visually impaired can also use the county's Remote Accessible Vote by Mail System, in which voters can fill out a screen-readable ballot, print it out, and either mail or drop off the ballot at the San Mateo County Registration & Elections Division.

Anyone voting in person in San Mateo County will be asked to wear a face covering, maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance from others and use hand sanitizer before and after voting.

To track your ballot and find out when it has been counted, subscribe to "Where's My Ballot?" at [wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov](http://wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov).

For more information, visit [smacre.org/elections](http://smacre.org/elections). ■



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## 828 ILIMA COURT, PALO ALTO

### Bright and Peaceful in Barron Park

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For more information, video tour & more photos, please visit:

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Data from BrokerMetrics® based on MLS sales from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2019, in Palo Alto, residential properties, with no off-MLS sales included in the rankings.

Michael Repka, DRE #01854880 | 650.900.7000 | michael@deleonrealty.com

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## ANTONIO LOPEZ

### Uplifting the community, starting from the bottom

Antonio Lopez knows how to sound persuasive.

He talks as if he's spreading wisdom behind a lectern and waves his hands with flourish when he makes a point. It's a useful tool, or at least one he hopes is helpful, for convincing skeptical voters who question if a 26-year-old doctoral candidate in literature at Stanford University, with no formal background in local politics, is prepared to govern a city of around 30,000 people.

"If you have the desire to make an impact, no matter what your age, you can do that," said Lopez, explaining how he felt inspired to pursue a career in public service by his peers at Oxford University, where he was enrolled through the Marshall Scholarship program after completing his undergraduate degree at Duke University. "I felt very encouraged being in that environment."

He's a writer by background, the East Palo Alto native said. His first collection of poetry with the nonprofit publisher Four Way Books is set for release next year. Writing has always been his tool for social justice advocacy, he said — whether it's through

his poetry or through guest opinion columns at his college newspaper.

Coming back to the Gardens neighborhood from some of the most prestigious universities in the world, Lopez said he feels he's now in a position of privilege that he's obligated to use to guide a city that's improving but still has many vulnerable residents.

"It is absurd that we are in one of the wealthiest regions — not in the entire country but in the world — and we have people who are homeless," Lopez said. "It's just laughable that you can have extremely affluent companies in our midst, especially in the heart of the Silicon Valley, and can have these issues. To me, it is a horrible satire."

Lopez sets out more progressive actions compared to his fellow candidates when it comes to the issues of affordable housing and the city's efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

On his campaign website, which outlines a "10 Pt. Program," Lopez says he wants to put an end to East Palo Alto's single-family zoning and suggests building apartments in

those residential areas.

When asked how much affordable housing the city needs, Lopez said, "As much as possible."

He also proposes that the city seek out avenues beyond philanthropic efforts to provide low-income residents with "comprehensive rent forgiveness."

Resident displacement is an ongoing concern in East Palo Alto, but Lopez fears the problem may have worsened during the pandemic as many renters could be facing crippling amounts of debt with a creeping due date since the city's eviction moratorium expired on Sept. 30. (State Assembly Bill 3088, also known as the "Tenant Act," currently protects residents from evictions if they pay 25% of any missed rental payments between Sept. 1 and Jan. 31, 2021. East Palo Alto has a later repayment period that starts on March 1, 2021.)

"If Facebook donates a million dollars, that's admirable, but it's not enough," Lopez said. "And frankly, when we think about the dignity of this community, waiting for our wealthy tech

(continued on page 30)



Maggali Gauthier

## JUAN MENDEZ

### 'A new perspective'

Juan Mendez says he has been determined to give back to his community of East Palo Alto since high school. But it wasn't until he started studying public policy at the University of California, Berkeley that he learned about the real impacts he could make at a local level through city politics, veering him away from a pre-law track.

"Law school was about applying the law and not so much about creating it," he said.

Today, at 23 years old and having graduated from UC Berkeley this May, he's the youngest person to be running for a City Council seat this year in East Palo Alto.

Already, he's gained some government experience. As an alternate on the East Palo Alto Planning Commission, Mendez said he's acquainted with the drawn-out process of approving developments and is learning what commissioners and council members of other cities are doing about it.

"I've been more involved with the city and trying to understand where the city is right now, what it's missing and where it's heading," Mendez said of his work, which he started in May 2019.

As Mendez made that transition during college, East Palo Alto too was changing. In 2017, Amazon moved in. Then a wave of other developments, he

estimated about 27, started coming into the city.

His home was changing in real time. His interest piqued and he decided to meet the council at a special retreat in 2019 to get his foot in the door.

Then the COVID-19 health crisis hit — bringing more uncertainty for East Palo Alto residents — all but cementing Mendez's desire to get involved with the city and its future.

"I think, now more than ever, we need to be strategic with what we're doing," he said. "What can I do to ensure we are taking the rights steps?"

The first-generation college graduate is campaigning on four priorities: affordable housing, a greener East Palo Alto, education and traffic congestion.

From his vantage point on the Planning Commission, Mendez said that one of the city's current issues is that the process to build affordable housing takes too long: 18 months, he claims. That's if everything goes well, assuming the applications are on time and everything is approved by the commission — and that's part of the problem, Mendez said.

"In those 18 months, we lose residents on a monthly basis (because) they can't afford to live there, especially now with COVID impacting their income," he said.

Mendez proposes to expedite

the process, putting affordable housing as a top priority on his list of city development projects. For example, if there are any buildings the city already owns, primed for affordable housing, the council should have the power to shorten the timeline.

He also believes that the council could start pushing office developers toward building mixed-use developments and create a program that incentivizes homeowners to build safe accessory dwelling units on their properties.

"I don't have a specific percentage (of affordable housing), but the more the merrier," he said. "We need more affordable housing in East Palo Alto even though the city is already leading the way."

In thinking about low-income renters during the pandemic, Mendez said the city should extend its eviction moratorium, which expired Sept. 30. (State Assembly Bill 3088 bill, also known as the "Tenant Act," currently protects residents from evictions if they pay 25% of any missed rental payments between Sept. 1 and Jan. 31. East Palo Alto has a later repayment period that starts on March 1, 2021.) He also hopes to negotiate with landlords to reduce or erase tenants' debts.

Mendez is also making calls to revisit the city's Climate Action Plan, criticizing in particular



Maggali Gauthier

how the current goals such as the emission reduction were set in the early 2000s and are outdated.

"The city set a Climate Action Plan in that by 2020, they want to reduce 15% of our gas emissions," he said. "We're in 2020, we still haven't seen ... whether

we met that benchmark. ... If we have, let's set a new robust goal that reduces (emissions) by 25%."

Traffic congestion has become a growing concern for

(continued on page 30)

## LARRY MOODY

## Embracing East Palo Alto as a Silicon Valley city

In Larry Moody's words, the East Palo Alto City Council's work over the past eight years wasn't very "sexy," but it was necessary.

Having served as mayor and vice mayor since his election to the council in 2012, Moody points to a list of critical, but mundane tasks completed during his tenure — accomplishments he says have helped build the city's foundation: appointing new city staff, such as a new city attorney and a city manager, addressing East Palo Alto's water issues — "Oh we're good with water," he exclaims — and completing the city's general and specific plans, which guide development.

"As a city, we've agreed upon what the future is going to look like for us," Moody said.

Now, the father of four and employment specialist at JobTrain is seeking a third term on the council in order to build out an East Palo Alto that is every bit a Silicon Valley city. For Moody, part of that means creating a community with amenities that can attract local residents and surrounding neighbors, specifically eyeing the Ravenswood Business District — a 200-acre mix of existing businesses and land primed for redevelopment.

"I'm so opposed to anyone that thinks we need to revisit that plan," Moody said, referring to the 2013 Ravenswood/Four Corners TOD Specific Plan. "We know we want mixed-use; we want retail; we want food and entertainment options; (and) maybe a small grocery store."

It's not only an opportunity to keep dollars in the city — especially from young adults who might prefer to spend their disposable income in San Francisco or Oakland — and to create more

jobs in the service sector but also a reason for companies to invest in East Palo Alto, he said.

Moody believes that companies, specifically in the tech sector, should treat East Palo Alto the same way Facebook has treated Menlo Park or Google has Mountain View: They should provide community benefits and help build up the city's infrastructure, he said. But Moody qualified his statement by suggesting that it's incumbent upon the city to give these companies a reason to come to East Palo Alto in the first place.

"We haven't created an environment for them to invest into East Palo Alto," he said.

It's similar to his sentiment on why the city's first-source hiring ordinance, which mandates new businesses in East Palo Alto to hire local residents as 30% of its workforce, had no "teeth" when Amazon moved into the city.

Instead of depending on the city ordinance, Moody hopes to lean on Measure HH, a \$2.50-per-square-foot parcel tax on office developments that passed in 2018, which creates revenue for low-income housing and job training programs for local residents to enter into science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields.

"That's Larry's language," he said. "That's Larry's writing on HH."

Moody's push for East Palo Alto to embrace its Silicon Valley identity is different, however, from becoming "Silicon Valley's dormitory," as he put it during a recent candidate forum when asked about affordable housing.

Affordable housing remains a priority in the councilman's campaign for reelection, as it does for all the council candidates.

Moody said, for example, he has spent the last two years talking with faith-based organizations about the idea of building affordable housing on top of the city's many less-frequented church properties. "It's a tough subject to raise to churches," he said. He hopes to follow through with existing affordable housing projects on the agenda such as the 965 Weeks St. development, for which Moody said he helped secure funding from Facebook in 2017.

But East Palo Alto shouldn't be the only one bearing the responsibility for creating below-market-rate housing, he said, claiming the city is already leading the affordable housing front in the Bay Area.

"The goal for me ... is to find other pathways to develop affordable housing in East Palo Alto but also to encourage our neighboring cities to do their fair share," he said.

The youth community is also on top of Moody's mind — third on his priority list to be exact, according to the councilman, who says he was one of the first directors of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula.

With many youth recreational programs in the city, Moody sees a need and opportunity for East Palo Alto to "get back into the parks and recreation business." One of the main ways he plans to do this is by seeking a joint-use facility agreement with Ravenswood City School District.

"The city's school district is the largest landowner in the community," Moody said. "They have great athletic fields, but they're struggling with declining enrollment in the district."

Youth programs would help fill those empty fields, he said.



Margit Gauthier

The plan would generate facility-use revenue for the district, create jobs for more coaches and mentors, and possibly start a collaboration with the city's Public Works Department, which would take care of maintenance, Moody said.

Moody added that the district has a chance to get involved in the housing industry, especially to create housing for its workforce. One of the key issues being discussed by the district's Board of Trustees is where to build housing for its teachers.

Moody enters the race with an extensive resume of community

service, dating as far back as 1993 when he directed East Palo Alto's Midnight Basketball League for at-risk youth, according to his campaign website. He also served as a board member of Ravenswood City School District and the EPA Sanitary District and directed the city's Parks and Recreation Department.

"What happens for us right now is (a) critical opportunity to move forward ... to move forward with these relationships," Moody said. "If we make the mistake of placing first-time individuals in those (council) seats, their learning curve is going to be so high." ■

## Webster Lincoln

(continued from page 25)

Fund." His campaign website states that the fund would provide down payment assistance for displaced residents looking

to return to East Palo Alto; small business loans and grants; and support for science, technology, engineering and math education programs.

For traffic congestion, Lincoln acknowledges that it will likely require longer-term solutions

that will extend beyond a four-year term on the council. Still, he hopes he can push support toward a southern connection to the Dumbarton Bridge that would link the Bayshore Freeway south of the Embarcadero Road and Oregon Expressway in Palo Alto.

Another possible solution would be to extend public transit from the east bay, since most of the traffic isn't coming from East Palo Alto, Lincoln said.

"We really need people on the council who do their research, read the documents and are

forward thinkers," Lincoln said. "Right now, we're in a place where we can negotiate how this development is occurring and moving forward. At the end of the day, I'm running for City Council to represent and align with the people." ■

## Stewart Hyland

(continued from page 24)

the various proposals for mixed-use developments.

Hyland was also a huge proponent of the Measure HH parcel tax in 2018, rallying community support by knocking on residents' doors, he said. Hyland's next move is to ensure East Palo Alto residents see the fruits of the measure's career pathway and affordable housing components.

"It's just taking a long time to get that off," he said. "Especially

the career ladder piece — we haven't yet hired a consultant to do the research on what the best practices are."

In Hyland's vision for a job training program through Measure HH, prospective residents would be prepped for a job or internship before office construction projects are finished. That way, by the time the spaces are complete and a company is looking to accept workers, a cohort of East Palo Alto residents will be ready.

Hyland said one immediate action the city could take is to partner with nearby school districts

and community colleges to speak with companies considering a potential move to East Palo Alto about the best steps to develop a certain career path.

During the pandemic, Hyland has spent some time helping homeless individuals through the St. Vincent de Paul Society, closely interacting with those deeply impacted by the health crisis. He commends the city for having some of the strongest tenant protections in place for renters, but also knows, through his work at the Housing Leadership Council, that it's not enough for many residents and that the city

has requested money from Samaritan House to provide rental assistance.

When asked if the city should provide financial assistance to renters, Hyland said the city should continue leveraging its relationships with nonprofits and other donors for further assistance.

Hyland also belongs to the camp of East Palo Alto residents who believe the city has a strong relationship with its Police Department. There are changes he would also like to see, such as less harmful de-escalation tactics along with a more extensive

training curriculum for cadets.

In thinking about what role he would fill that is currently missing on the council, Hyland said his decision to run mainly came from dissatisfaction with the pace of decision-making, citing the city's progress on Measure HH.

"It's good to have a good understanding of what's going on, and I think I showed that," he said. "But the other side is (having) someone that's not comfortable with that pace that may want to move things along faster and be more responsive to what the community's needs are." ■

## CARLOS ROMERO

## Longtime activist sees city's potential beyond COVID-19

Carlos Romero, 63, has a resume of community service in East Palo Alto that spans almost four decades.

From joining the city's Rent Control Board in 1984 to serving on the East Palo Alto City Council since 2008, Romero is a frequent advocate for social and economic justice. He believes that his commitment to the community and professional work as an affordable-housing consultant make him a more effective leader for the city.

"That mixture of history and my professional background brings to the council a very important analytical piece that's necessary to help move the community forward," said Romero, adding that the wheels of government are slow and progress takes time.

Romero said that while he served on the council over the past decade, the city marked significant milestones: the new pedestrian bridge over U.S. Highway 101; the passage of the Measure HH parcel tax; bolstered tenant protections; a completed flood protection project; and funding for three housing developments with a total of 385 affordable units.

"Over the last 10 years, this has been one of the most active councils in terms of affordable housing," Romero said.

If elected for another four years, Romero said a large part of his work on the council will

be seeing through projects, programs and policies he's pursued in his previous terms, including the Measure HH parcel tax passed by voters in 2018, which has yet to be used to establish a concrete job training program or more affordable housing developments.

Romero anticipates that the city could initiate the planning or funding of two affordable housing development projects that could yield roughly 100 to 175 units with the annual revenue coming in from Measure HH.

But the immediate future of affordable housing is at risk, Romero said, with a city facing "a potential massive displacement of tenants" due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The last thing we want is a wholesale cleansing of low-income people of color because of the COVID crisis," he said.

Romero has proposed a tenant mediation program that would allow tenants and landlords to negotiate a moderate payment plan or a reduction in rent. Unlike similar programs in Palo Alto, San Jose and Mountain View, the city could couple it with its just-cause ordinance, which provides residents certain protections from eviction.

Romero believes the program could be effective since the consequences of mass eviction don't benefit renters or landlords.

Despite the pandemic,

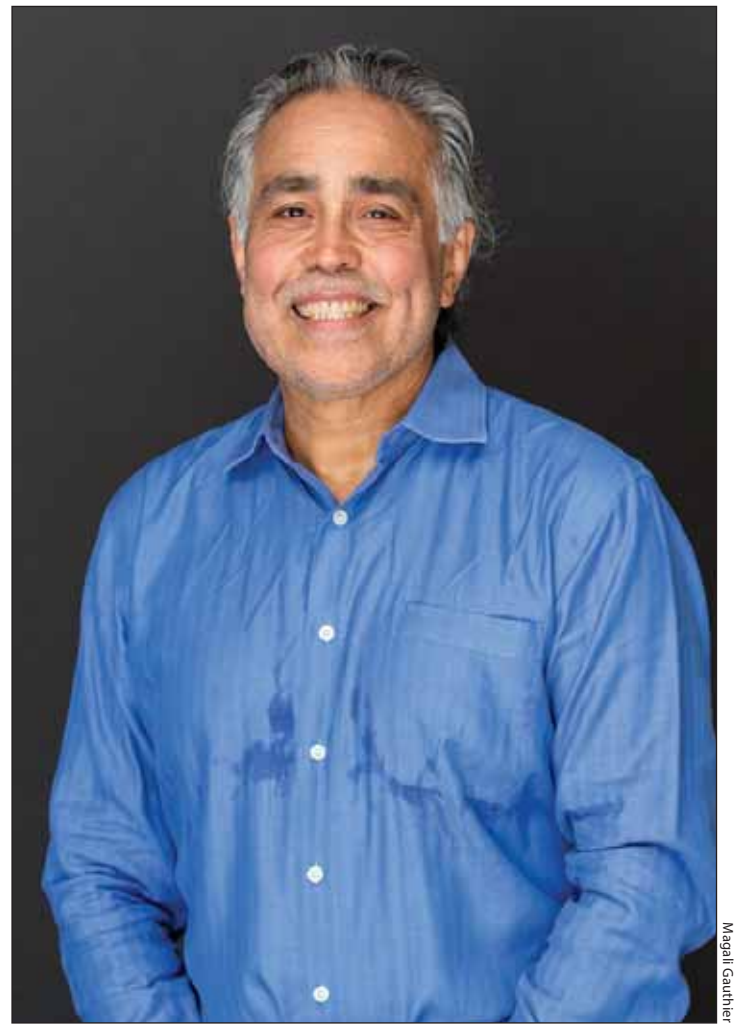
Romero said there's still a healthy interest among developers in pursuing commercial projects, particularly surrounding the Ravenswood Business District.

Romero said he's interested in revisiting the Ravenswood/Four Corners TOD Specific Plan to consider expanding development caps placed on office, retail, industrial and community-use developments.

It's the one area where Romero diverges from incumbent Larry Moody and challenger Stewart Hyland, who have both expressed that the specific plan already lays out exactly the type of developments they hope to see in the city.

Romero also sees an opportunity to finally realize the job training program that was promised to residents through the Measure HH tax parcel. This year, the city received \$1.7 million through the measure, he said. Part of that money will be funneled into career ladder programs to help train residents for higher-paying jobs.

The city recently hired Bright Line Defense, a policy-oriented nonprofit, to help create program options that comply with Measure HH in the next six to eight months, Romero said. He believes this will help strengthen the first-source hiring ordinance when it comes to higher-skilled jobs since the city can use the tax to possibly subsidize



Magali Gauthier

internships as long as a company agrees to create a program for East Palo Alto residents.

Romero is a 38-year resident of East Palo Alto but started working in the city 42 years ago when he was a freshman at Stanford University.

"I am by vocation ... a

consummate activist (and) organizer who believes that any city elected official needs to understand and have close connections to the community in order to effectively govern," he said. ■

**Editorial Assistant Lloyd Lee can be emailed at llee@paweekly.com.**

## Antonio Lopez

(continued from page 28)

companies to give us money, to me ... that's insufficient."

Lopez didn't offer concrete ways in which the city could pursue rent forgiveness, but he said it would need state and federal aid and that he would look into all other possibilities.

For the youth community, Lopez is determined to help set students on the same four-year college track he experienced. That could come in the form of city-sponsored internship programs, he said, or pushing for

more funding to local education nonprofits like the Thiebaut Method, according to his campaign website.

"When we think about uplifting our community, it starts from the bottom," Lopez said. "That's why this campaign is heavily about investing in our youth."

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when many seniors are homebound due to the health risks, Lopez suggested mobilizing the youth through a citywide program — which he would dub the City Ambassador Program — and create something akin to hotline centers, which seniors can contact if they need any

assistance in accessing services in the city or on the internet.

He also offers other community-oriented and -powered solutions — characteristic of a city like East Palo Alto, which relies on many nonprofits — when it comes to the issue of food insecurity and the city's lack of access to organic produce. (At a local farmers market hosted by the Fresh Approach nonprofit, several Latino residents said staple supermarkets in their city like Cardenas don't sell organic produce.)

"We need a community garden ... several community gardens quite frankly," he said.

Lopez pointed to vacant lots

and empty spaces throughout the city, such as the one at the end of O'Connor Street by the Baylands trail, which he claims is a "perfect site" for a community garden.

Another pillar of his campaign is making East Palo Alto's streets safer for pedestrians. Illegal parking on the city's sidewalks often pushes walking residents onto the street, according to his campaign website.

If elected to the council, Lopez said he would advocate for parking permits, one-way streets, speed bumps and the use of empty church parking lots as more residential parking space.

The writer acknowledges that he enters the race with no experience in local politics. But Lopez makes the case that as a young Latino, who came from a low-income family and experienced racial discrimination at his school, he will add an invaluable voice to the council.

"I applaud the work of the incumbents," Lopez said. "But I also think it's important to have that perspective of the next generations coming in line to say, 'Hey, I'm also part of this city. I also want to afford to live here,' and someone who has that direct experience ... is super important moving forward." ■

## Juan Mendez

(continued from page 28)

East Palo Alto residents for the past five years. Mendez lays the blame on regional development around the city rather than city growth through projects such as the University Avenue building that houses Amazon. It's why he makes the case for impact fees charged to regional projects and says East Palo Alto needs to be included more in

discussions around future regional developments.

In the meantime, Mendez said he's looking at Menlo Park's Willow Road overpass at U.S. Highway 101 as an example of the type of expansion he wants to make to East Palo Alto's current infrastructure, which could entail more lanes for cars and cyclists as well as sidewalks.

"We look at our (University Avenue) overpass, and it's like you're fighting for your life when you make that cross over that bridge," he said. "There's

residents dodging cars and ... I've seen way too many accidents happen there. So where are we with our expansion?"

Mendez was a student of the Ravenswood City School District and now plans to rebuild an alliance with the district as a city councilman in order to "properly fund" the city's education system, according to his campaign website.

The East Palo Alto Academy alumnus said the city is not short on resources or after school programs the youth community

can get involved in; however, he thinks major companies such as Facebook, Amazon or Google should create more opportunities such as internship programs that will be reserved for the city's youth.

"What we're missing is a new perspective, a new energy and new ideas on City Council," Mendez said. "I just feel like, as a city, we've had this mindset of complacency and just being OK with what the work that they're doing, when we need more people doing even a little bit more." ■

**About the cover:** With new development mixed with old, East Palo Alto is a city in transition. Photo by Magali Gauthier.

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Video interviews with each of the candidates will be posted on YouTube.com/paweekly soon.

# WATCH THE RAVENSWOOD SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES DISCUSS TOP ISSUES

*One incumbent, five challengers compete for two open seats in K-8 district*

by Elena Kadwany

Six candidates are running for two open seats on the Ravenswood City School District Board of Trustees.

The terms of trustees Sharifa Wilson and Marielena Gaona Mendoza are ending in November. Wilson is not running for reelection after 12 years on the board, while Gaona Mendoza is seeking a second term. The newcomers include a Ravenswood parent, two former district employees, a labor negotiator and a labor manager.

This year's election comes at a time of transition and rebuilding for the K-8 school district, which serves about 1,700 students in East Palo Alto and east Menlo Park. The district has a new superintendent, Gina Sudaria, in place after years of leadership and financial upheaval, and a comprehensive middle school to better prepare Ravenswood students for success in high school. The district is navigating the challenges of making sure students who lack sufficient support and internet access at home during distance learning don't fall behind. (Ravenswood school campuses are

remaining closed until at least late November.)

Whoever is elected to the board will also have to meet the challenge of the pandemic as well as Ravenswood's declining enrollment, which led to the closure of two elementary schools this year. At least one of the candidates opposes the Voluntary Transfer Program, which allows Ravenswood students to attend neighboring school districts, and another is a staunch opponent of charter schools, which have been criticized for taking students and funding away from the local neighborhood schools.

To get to know the candidates better and find out where they stand on top issues facing the district, watch video interviews the Weekly conducted with Bronwyn Alexander, Jenny Varghese Bloom, Zeb Feldman, Marielena Gaona Mendoza and Joel Rivera. (Candidate Julian Garcia did not respond to multiple interview requests, and candidate Mele Latu has halted her campaign for personal reasons.)

The videos are posted at [YouTube.com/paweekly](https://www.youtube.com/paweekly). ■



Bronwyn Alexander



Jenny Varghese Bloom



Zeb Feldman



Julian Garcia



Marielena Gaona Mendoza



Joel Rivera

All photos courtesy of the candidates

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# Arts & Entertainment

A weekly guide to music, theater, art, culture, books and more, edited by Karla Kane

## DRAGON THEATRE HOSTS A 'PARTY AT THE END OF THE WORLD'

ARTS ORG INVITES PATRONS TO TAKE PART IN AN IMMERSIVE ONLINE EXPERIENCE, WITH PLANS TO EXPAND

Courtesy Dragon Productions Theatre Company



by Karla Kane

Live theater and video games: When done well, both have the power to magically transport participants into another realm. For its next major project, Dragon Productions Theatre Company is combining these two media in “Party at the End of the World.” Its creators call it an “immersive online experience,” and the first chapter in what they hope is a bigger theatrical universe titled “All We Have to Fear.”

The initial idea for a video game/theater hybrid came to Co-Artistic Director Bora “Max” Koknar back in May, when it became apparent that live theater would not be returning to “normal” for quite some time. The Dragon team quickly adapted, utilizing technology to offer content to patrons and opportunities to artists from a distance. But Koknar had something even more ambitious in mind.

His goal, he said, was to address “our emotional reactions to things as a society that we often seem to pass off as logic.” He imagined “creating something mythical and comic book-like — which I believe is the mythology of our generation — to help us make sense of what’s going on,” he said in a recent interview, alongside co-creators Jacob Vorperian, Kimberly Ridgeway and Shelli Frew.

“This was the mission: How can we use fiction and a fictional experience to spark people wanting to commit acts of compassion in the real world?” he said. “Stories have power to motivate us and inspire us.”

What evolved from those initial thoughts is a true ensemble-driven piece, involving numerous writers, performers and technical wizards. Vorperian serves as all three.

As Dragon’s associate director and director of technology, “I’m responsible for all the bugs that will be plaguing you,” he said with a laugh. “I’m also performing ... and I guess I’m on the writing team too.”

Vorperian, who studied computer science in addition to having experience in immersive theater (in which some of the traditional boundaries between stage and audience are removed), has had an intense job, lending both his technical expertise and his creative eye to develop the “All We Have to Fear” universe.

“It’s been a monthslong research problem,” he said, of writing custom software, hosting the website, developing inventory lists and

more. The game, he said, consists of “very person- and actor-driven quests. It’s less about how to find a thing, more about a personal interaction with someone.”

Ticket holders (ideally with the Chrome browser, a webcam and a microphone) will be able to become townspeople in a fictional, keyboard-controlled 2-D world, where their avatars can meet and influence main characters (portrayed by live actors), go on “side quests” and down “rabbit holes,” communicate and collaborate with each other and generally explore during the show. (Those who are less inclined to directly participate can also opt to simply watch and hear the action unfold.)

Co-writer Frew, like Vorperian, has worked with Koknar on other immersive projects in the past, and was attracted to the project partially because of how it’s “pretty in the moment, the way that we’ve worked in what’s going on in the real world right now,” she said.

Ridgeway, a playwright and actor, comes from a more straight/traditional theater background. She brings what she called the “layman’s perspective” to the innovative format, not having much experience in the gamer world.

“I’m not a video-game person outside of Candy Crush. Once I got on the platform, that’s when it became a little more magical for me. It wasn’t easy to picture what we were doing until we were able to explore the space,” she said. “There are areas in which anyone who is going to be on the platform can come together and explore and go on this journey together. I think that’s the most fascinating thing for me. You don’t have to be an expert to completely be immersive in this situation.”

So what exactly *is* the situation? In the interview, the team was understandably reticent to offer much in the way of spoilers. What we do know: The storyline involves a creation myth, a pantheon of gods representing anthropomorphized emotions, humans as pawns in the global politics of immortals, and the titular party at which everyone’s gathered.

“Some of the characters you meet are just partygoers trying to survive the pandemic and feel something, and others have a little more going on,” Koknar said.

Immersive theater in general is challenging, both creatively and logistically. Writers,

actors and directors have to allow for enough flexibility to handle whatever curveballs audience interaction may throw, while maintaining the discipline to keep the storyline running smoothly. The experience, Ridgeway said, offers her a chance to stretch her skills.

“As a writer, I think it’s easier to adapt than as an actor, because I’m so used to having a script. There’s a level of improv to it,” she said.

“You can write all the scenarios you think are going to happen and then someone will do something out of left field,” Frew acknowledged, “Audience members will always throw a wrench in there.” Surrounding actors new to immersive theater with those accustomed to it can help. Sound and lighting cues, similar to those used in magic and circus shows, can help subliminally cue the audience — or directly cue performers — on what to do next.

The around-75-minute show is “set to a clock, and that’s how we are able to manage multiple things happening at the same time. In addition to the script, the improv and the audience, we have a floor show,” Koknar said. “Actors have their scenes timed to that chronometer so we can make sure the thing that is supposed to happen doesn’t happen in the wrong order.”

With the physical Dragon Theatre space in downtown Redwood City still closed, the team is spread out. Vorperian works off a

**“All We Have to Fear: Party at the End of the World”** runs on Fridays and Saturdays at 7 p.m., Oct. 17-Nov. 21 (no show Oct. 24). Tickets are \$15-\$30. More information is available at [dragonproductions.net](http://dragonproductions.net).

server in San Anselmo, while Koknar has converted an in-law unit in the backyard of his East Palo Alto home into a socially distant livestreaming station used by stage manager Rachel Nin. The actors and writers contribute from their respective headquarters around the Bay Area.

They’re all hoping “Party at the End of the World” is a prototype; the first piece of the ongoing “All We Have to Fear” puzzle.

“An episodic immersive piece has been my white whale for years now,” Vorperian said. “The reason we want to do that is the same reason why TV characters seem to be so much more richly developed than movie characters. You get to spend so much more time with them.”

It’s also part of the Dragon’s ongoing reckoning with how theater can and should evolve.

“What can theater look like for the future? We need experiences that connect us; there’s no reason not to try it now,” Koknar said. ■

**Arts & Entertainment Editor Karla Kane** can be emailed at [kkane@paweeekly.com](mailto:kkane@paweeekly.com).



**Top:** Dragon Productions Theatre Company’s “Party at the End of the World” is a true ensemble-driven piece, involving numerous writers, performers and technical wizards. **Above:** The show, which combines theater and gaming, allows patrons to join the story via an online game.



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Children may be scared of ghosts, but parents are scared of

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After obtaining his first law degree, Michael joined a law firm, where he counselled clients on the legal, tax, and procedural aspects of buying or selling homes. Following this, Michael worked at PricewaterhouseCoopers, focusing on mergers and acquisitions, and later at Baker & McKenzie, specializing in tax law. Michael then returned to real estate, first as a practicing attorney, and later as a broker.

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# Eating Out

## Chasing down Mister Softee on the Peninsula



How one Redwood City resident brought sweet nostalgia to the Bay Area

Story and photos by Elena Kadwany

It wasn't easy finding Mister Softee.

For someone used to food trucks with fixed locations, chasing one down was new to me. Sure, you can use the iconic East Coast soft serve company's smartphone app to track the trucks in real time, but they're constantly in motion. Every time I put in a location on Waze, by the time I arrived, the truck I was following had moved somewhere else, just out of reach.

Persistent (and in desperate need of soft serve), I drove in circles through a South San Francisco neighborhood, repeatedly refreshing the app. It didn't take long for my thoughts to start spiraling. Why is there no Mrs. Softee? Should I quit my job to start a competing feminist soft serve truck at the risk of violating federal trademark law? Will my tombstone read, "She tried, and failed, to find the Mister Softee truck; R.I.P."?

For those who grew up in pursuit of Mister Softee's creamy soft serve and sundaes, the name is synonymous with childhood nostalgia and the pursuit of something uniquely wonderful. The mere mention of Mister Softee to an East Coast transplant (including the editor who assigned this story) immediately elicits such enthusiasm that I had to try it for myself.

So, after several U-turns and some not-very-discreet stalking, I finally turned a corner and found the white-and-blue truck, emblazoned with the tuxedoed, elusive Mister Softee himself, smiling at me with the reward of a double soft-serve dipped in rainbow sprinkles.

"You had to be quick," said Felix Tarnarider, who grew up in Brooklyn, "otherwise the truck would leave before you could get there. It was a daily

ritual. All the kids did it in the neighborhood."

You can thank Tarnarider for introducing Mister Softee to the Bay Area. A Redwood City resident, he worked in tech for two decades before becoming Mister Softee's Northern California franchisee in 2016.

As a kid, the famed jingle that blares from the Mister Softee trucks was like a siren song. He'd rush to his parents to ask for enough cash for his go-to order (a cone with "crunchies," or chocolate sprinkles) and take the stairs three at a time to rush into the street.

"Eventually I decided that it would help build community and bring neighborhoods together just like it did in New

York City," Tarnarider said. "While the brand is not known like a Starbucks or McDonald's, the affinity for the Mister Softee name goes a lot deeper than

***'You had to be quick, otherwise the truck would leave before you could get there.'***

*—Felix Tarnarider, who grew up in Brooklyn*

those other brands. It's a part of the culture in a few areas of the country."

Two brothers, William and James Conway, founded Mister

Softee in 1956 in Philadelphia and moved its headquarters to New Jersey two years later, where it remains today. The company now operates about 450 trucks in more than a dozen states, many owned by individual operators.

Mister Softee currently deploys a fleet of seven trucks throughout Bay Area neighborhoods, including up and down the Peninsula. Tarnarider said they plan to add two trucks per year for the next several years.

Mister Softee — those trucks, the chocolate-dipped soft serve, the jingle — has remained largely unchanged since the 1950s, except for one thing. The company now relies on social media to disseminate the

trucks' whereabouts and drive sales. The company posts to Instagram and Facebook which cities the trucks will be in each day, but there's no set location or address. It takes commitment and the app to find the roving trucks. Diehards can also request a weekly stop in their neighborhood.

When you open the app, the truck's jaunty theme song plays. The jingle sounds innocent enough but has been embroiled in a surprising amount of controversy. New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg tried to ban the song in 2005 as part of a citywide crackdown on noise. It was also the subject of a federal trademark infringement case that prohibited a former franchisee who went "rogue," starting a competing soft serve business, from playing it on his trucks.

I didn't grow up with Mister Softee, but I strongly identify with the sense of nostalgia these trucks invoke. For me, it was the Choco Tacos and It's It I ordered from the truck that drove through my neighborhood, the Baskin Robbins mint chocolate chip ice cream cake I demanded for every birthday, the soft-serve-like frozen yogurt from the now-closed Yogurt Stop, whose parking lot was the setting for many formative teenage gatherings.

Standing on that corner with the Mister Softee truck, trying to make sure my melting treat didn't drip soft-serve tears down my wrists, reminded me of all those moments — simpler times we could all use more of right now.

Follow Mister Softee NorCal on Instagram or go to [mistersofteenorcal.com/](http://mistersofteenorcal.com/) for the local truck schedule. ■

Staff Writer Elena Kadwany can be emailed at [ekadvany@paweekly.com](mailto:ekadvany@paweekly.com). Check out her Peninsula Foodist blog at [PaloAltoOnline.com/blogs](http://PaloAltoOnline.com/blogs).



At top, a popular item is the double Softee with rainbow sprinkles. Above, Mister Softee's Bay Area migration has been a sweet surprise for East Coast transplants.

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## EDUCATION

# Amid ongoing reopening anxieties, school district to provide COVID-19 testing for staff

*Palo Alto Unified also plans to form task force to evaluate communication following criticisms*

by Elena Kadvany

**S**tarting next week, employees of the Palo Alto Unified School District will have access to free, biweekly COVID-19 testing to be provided on campus by Stanford Health Care.

The school board unanimously approved a one-year testing agreement with Stanford on Tuesday, the day after about 700 transitional kindergarten, kindergarten and first-grade students and their teachers returned to classrooms in person in a hybrid model.

The testing will begin at JLS Middle School on Oct. 21, according to the district. Stanford employees will help staff collect their first sample but afterward, staff can self-collect under the supervision of a trained health care worker provided by the district. They will use pooled sampling testing procedures on a biweekly basis. Employees who test positive will be called directly. The district can also request aggregated test results, according to the agreement.

Board members — who met in person with a small group of staff, all wearing masks, for the first time since March — described the testing as “essential” and encouraged teachers and staff to take advantage of the service. The testing will not be available to students, but they also urged families to get tested regularly at free sites in the community.

Superintendent Don Austin warned that because health care providers are picking up the bill for the testing, the district’s health care premiums will increase next year without some relief from the government. He’s lobbying the state to prevent districts from absorbing this financial burden.

Meb Steiner, president of the classified employees union, said testing is not only important from a public health standpoint but also to help employees, students and families “to feel more comfortable about (the) in-person return.”

Steiner and Teri Baldwin, president of the teachers union, continued to voice concerns about safety issues at the schools and employees’ ongoing anxiety about returning to work in person. Baldwin said teachers have been unable to take breaks because there weren’t additional staff provided to supervise students during recess and lunchtimes. And teachers who are teaching both in-person and distance-learning students need more support, she said.

Baldwin also asked that paper towels be available in all school bathrooms so students don’t have to touch air dryers and criticized plastic barriers at student desks as “flimsy” and distorting their vision.

“We have asked our teachers to go above and beyond and they have,” Baldwin said. “I just am afraid that the morale is going to get even worse and our mental health of our professionals is not going to be considered. It needs to be.”

Fairmeadow Principal Iris Wong told the board that reopening has been stressful, including for principals who are now

tasked with overseeing health and safety procedures while keeping staff morale up.

“I would do us a short service if I didn’t say it was stressful for everybody, including me right now — I’m very nervous talking,” Wong said. “This whole process for the last few months has been literally tears and sweat put (in) by everybody who’s had a part in opening day.”

The elementary schools are now preparing for the next phase of reopening, with second- and third-graders who opt in set to return on Oct. 26 and fourth- and fifth-graders on Nov. 9. Austin said he’ll bring to the upcoming board meeting the next steps on reopening the middle and high schools in January.

The concerns came despite the district’s efforts to make the initial phase of reopening as smooth and safe as possible, including purchasing commercial-grade air filters to improve air quality in classrooms, posting checklists to verify classrooms are safe to reopen and posting on the district website a new weekly report on any positive COVID-19 cases. (Three staff members have tested positive since August, according to the report.)

Board members said communication issues both internal and external are contributing to the disconnect between the district’s efforts and teachers not feeling safe. Board member Jennifer DiBrienza recently proposed the district hire a full-time public information officer to oversee communications, a position that’s been criticized in the past for lacking teeth, including by current board members.

Austin instead recommended on Tuesday that the district form a task force to determine where the gaps are with communication and how to best address them, a direction all of the board members supported.

“I’d like to know ... what problem we’re trying to solve before we jump in,” he said. “I think just slowing it down (and) putting some real targeted thought behind it might get us to a better outcome.”

While Austin pointed to the volume of communication the district has put out in the last seven months as evidence of effort in this area, board members said it’s not the quantity of information but rather making it more accessible to the public.

“In the past my concern was that the goal of the public information officer or PR person, which is what I preferred to call them at the time, was to burnish the district’s image in the media and with stakeholders,” board member Ken Dauber said. “I think that the right goal for this role ... is to communicate useful information effectively to stakeholders both internal and external ... in a way that’s relevant and easily consumable.”

The new communications task force will be led by staff and make recommendations to Austin at a future date. ■

*Staff Writer Elena Kadvany can be emailed at [ekadvany@pawebly.com](mailto:ekadvany@pawebly.com).*



*Kindergarten teacher Sara McNinch reaches over a Plexiglas desk guard to help one of her students on Oct. 12, the first day of in-person instruction at Fairmeadow Elementary School in Palo Alto.*

## Schools

(continued from page 5)

these students alternating in the mornings and afternoons. Parents were asked to drop their children off from their cars and are not allowed to come onto the campuses.

At Hoover, just four classrooms have reopened — three kindergarten classes and Chavez’s first-grade class. Chavez said most of her morning cohort of eight students seemed excited to be back and have so far adjusted well to a school day that looks vastly different than they’re used to. She said she was “impressed with how they’re taking it all in, realizing that this year is not going to be the same.”

After socially distanced snack and recess, her students lined up 6 feet apart and filed inside one by one to wash their hands before returning to their desks, separated by clear plastic barriers.

Because of the staffing necessary to make the hybrid model work, not all students were able to stay with their teachers — a chief concern among some parents who opposed reopening. Chavez herself is getting to know new students. She’s now only teaching four students from when the school year started remotely, and they’re spread out across two cohorts.

In some cases, there were also too few students to form a fully remote class at one school, so the district combined students from two schools to create a full distance learning class with a single teacher from one site.

“Our teachers and principals worked together to determine who was going into each assignment,” Superintendent Don Austin wrote in his weekly update on Oct. 9. “It doesn’t mean people aren’t anxious. It means the team worked together in the

interests of all students.”

Nearby at Fairmeadow Elementary School, just one kindergarten classroom and one first-grade classroom reopened on Monday. Students entered on the opposite sides of the campus using separate gates, each decorated with balloons. For kindergartners, Monday marked their first time coming to school.

The district is using an app to push out daily health screenings to parents the night before school. Any students whose parents didn’t fill out the form in advance were kept out of their classroom until the school’s secretary called their parents and completed the screening over the phone. (This reporter completed an online health screening using a QR code posted at the front office.)

Inside the first-grade classroom, masked students sat at desks under a large, colorful “welcome” banner. At the front of the classroom, a screen showed the faces of their classmates who are still learning from home. As students talked about their favorite foods, an industrial air purifier whirred loudly in the background. The district purchased \$400,000 worth of air purifiers from Georgia, according to Board President Todd Collins, for classrooms whose HVAC systems aren’t yet up to airflow standards.

In April, Palo Alto Unified also ordered 500 portable hand-washing stations for rooms that don’t have sinks, Collins said, but after learning they won’t be delivered until November, the staff sent an employee to Los Angeles to pick up a smaller number of stations to have ready for the early phase of reopening.

Taped to the doorway of each classroom

(continued on page 41)

## How would the candidates vote?

**A**s part of the Palo Alto Weekly’s election coverage, we will be asking the nonincumbent candidates running for the Palo Alto Board of Education how they would vote — and why — on significant issues that the board takes action on before November.

This week, the Weekly asked if the candidates would support the partnership with Stanford Health Care to provide biweekly COVID-19 testing to district employees.

**Katie Causey:** Yes. This testing is necessary for our employees’ safety. We must also continue to lobby for legislative relief so our staff does not face high premiums.

**Jesse Lodomirak:** Yes, I would

absolutely vote to approve the agreement.

**Matt Nagle:** I would have voted yes, but I would have done it in August when the Los Angeles Unified School District contracted with Stanford University. LAUSD is also testing students; why are we not?

**Karna Nisewaner:** I would vote yes. I think testing has a significant value for the peace of mind of teachers and staff, as reflected in Section VII of the tentative agreement with PAEA (Palo Alto Educators Association) that requires this to be offered. I understand there is a potential for a future increase in health care costs, but I think the value to teachers and staff outweighs this concern. ■



## Schools

(continued from page 40)

are new checklists, which the school board asked for, to show that the room's ventilation, personal protective equipment (PPE) stock and required COVID-19 protocols are being followed. The forms are updated every Wednesday to prepare for the next week. Another sheet documents each room's ventilation status, including filter type and cubic-feet-per-minute airflow rate. There's also a separate disinfection checklist, which the school custodians must check, sign, date and time stamp after cleaning all surfaces daily. (They're using new electrostatic spray devices, which charge antimicrobial liquid as it passes through a nozzle. The positively charged antimicrobial droplets are attracted and cling to negatively charged surfaces, allowing for more efficient cleaning, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.)

Fairmeadow Principal Iris Wong said she was thankful for the phased reopening plan, which will allow the schools to adjust and gain confidence as more students arrive. She, too, said her staff had "mixed emotions" about returning.

"I would be lying if (I said) staff weren't afraid or stressed out," she said, "but at the end of the day, everyone put their best foot forward."

Fairmeadow special education teacher Hyemin Cheung has been back in her classroom with students for two weeks. She said it took weeks of Zoom meetings and conversations to prepare and for her and her classroom aides to feel safe.

Cheung now works with four

students full time in-person and one who comes only in the afternoons. She said they seem happy and engaged being at school. While she's adjusted classroom activities to reduce contact as much as possible, some of the students can't wear masks due to their disabilities or need help washing their hands. Despite the safety concerns of close contact, Cheung said she knows distance learning wasn't working for these students. Zoom learning also left her feeling unsatisfied as a special education teacher.

"After all, we choose this profession because we love to work with the kids. We love to interact with the kids," she said.

For Cheung, communication is paramount to the success of reopening schools. She said she's constantly checking in with her classroom aides and keeping lines of communication open with administrators.

"It's not about PPE. It's about, 'How do you feel? How safe do you feel?'" she said. "Those comments or questions to ask each other, that will help open the school."

Second- and third-graders are set to return for in-person learning on Oct. 26 and fourth- and fifth-graders on Nov. 9. Under the current plan, middle and high schoolers will not go back to school until January.

For the first time since March, the school board resumed its work in person to coincide with the reopening of schools. The board approved a partnership with Stanford Health Care to offer district employees bi-weekly COVID-19 testing. ■

*Staff Writer Elena Kadvanj can be emailed at ekadvanj@paweekly.com.*

## Demolition

(continued from page 10)

plan and confirmed that the project can still receive the density bonus associated with rehabilitation.

In his June 29 determination, Lait also indicated that other projects can similarly get floor-area bonuses in instances where builders can demonstrate to the city's satisfaction that seismic rehabilitation is "infeasible."

Lait acknowledges in the finding that his determination deviates from the city's recent practice. While the city had in the past allowed developers to demolish seismically vulnerable buildings and claim the density bonus, planners have taken a more restrictive view in recent years and only allowed the additional density for rehabilitation projects. Lait noted that "a closer review of the municipal code ... suggests that to qualify for the bonus floor area, the building must be seismically rehabilitated, or retained and strengthened to contemporary structural standards."

In the case of 233 University Ave., however, Lait is suggesting that the city allow the demolition to move ahead and still grant the bonus. He cited the report from the applicant's structural engineer, Douglas Hohbach, who asserted in a letter to the city that demolishing the masonry walls would be "the most straightforward approach" to meet the intent of the zoning code and mitigate the risk of the collapse.

"None of the existing masonry walls are suitable for use as part of the new construction and if retained, will add seismic mass and

irregularity to the building," Hohbach wrote.

Lait concluded that the applicant had demonstrated that retaining the walls is "not practical" to the satisfaction of the city's chief building official. He also suggested that allowing the developer to proceed with the project will be more conducive to the city's goal of protecting seismically vulnerable structures.

"In this instance, the plain reading of the municipal code and floor area bonus does not provide sufficient incentive to encourage seismic strengthening of a building type known to be hazardous to building occupants and pedestrians," Lait wrote in the finding. "Allowing replacement of the building — new building construction — would remedy the seismic hazard."

Lait also noted that the project will retain the existing masonry, which will be restored and reapplied. This, he wrote, "preserves the look and character of the building."

The three former council members firmly reject this logic and contend that Lait's finding runs counter to code, with potentially serious implications for future projects. The planning staff, they contend, clearly believes that there needs to be a change in policy but has chosen to use "a ministerial tool" — the director's interpretation — to "establish policy, thereby bypassing the PTC (planning commission), City Council and public review."

"This interpretation also carries with it an inherent conflict regarding historic buildings that are in need of seismic retrofit," the appeal states. "Will the new 'Interpretation' extend to historic

rehabilitations and the President Hotel or the Post Office be vulnerable to the wrecker's ball if an applicant is successful in convincing the Building Official of some undefined 'financial infeasibility' or 'impracticality' if a similar Interpretation determines the fate of such buildings?"

The new proposal for 233 University Ave., the appeal states, is a "significant code change and should not be subject to a Director's Interpretation, resulting in an expensive appeal process rather than normal and proper public hearings for zoning code changes."

The appellants already won a small victory on Sept. 21, when three members of the City Council — Tom DuBois, Eric Filseth and Lydia Kou — rejected City Manager Ed Shikada's recommendation that the council uphold Lait's decision and reject the appeal. The council instead pulled the item off of its consent calendar — a list of generally noncontroversial items that get approved in bulk — and agreed to hold a special hearing on the appeal. The public hearing is tentatively scheduled for Oct. 26.

The Mills family, meanwhile, urged the council to allow the project to proceed.

"The fact is that a new building constructed to current code is seismically much safer than one that is seismically upgraded," building owners Leslie Mills, Rodney Mills and Susan Mills-Diggie wrote in a Sept. 14 letter to the council. "Such upgrades are merely a way of reducing the chance of full building collapse in an earthquake." ■

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## Election

(continued from page 8)

to a county election office report. (About 487,000 vote-by-mail ballots were cast during that election.)

**Q: How do you ensure a person doesn't vote twice?**

The ballot first received and verified by the elections office will be the only one counted. For example, if a person returns his or her mail vote-by-mail ballot in early October and then goes on Election Day to a vote center to try to vote again, the poll worker will be able to look up the person's vote status in an electronic poll book, which replaces the old ledger-style sign-in book and which has your information on file. Even if the voter is given a provisional ballot by the poll worker, when that ballot is processed at the elections office, it'll be rejected because the prior ballot for the voter has already been counted.

**Q: I'm thinking of voting in person, but how do I know it's COVID-19 safe?**

Vote centers, which will be open every day from Oct. 31 through Nov. 3, will be stocked with masks and gloves, which will be offered to voters who come unprepared. Gloves are not necessary but will

be given at the request of the voter. Voting stations will be cleaned after each use. Social distancing protocols will be enforced. (Note that a vote center is currently open daily at the Registrar of Voters, 1555 Berger Drive, San Jose.)

**Q: If I go in person to vote, I understand I'll be given a choice between a paper ballot and using the touch screen system. Why would I use a touch screen?**

The touch-screen voting system, which was implemented in March, offers the ballot in multiple languages and multiple sizes of text and also includes headphones for the hearing impaired. The voter will need to be capable of inserting a card the size of a credit card into a slot on the roughly 1-foot-by-2-foot electronic tablet and following onscreen instructions. When you've finished voting, the system will then print out a paper version of your completed ballot.

**Q: If I vote in person, how quickly will my ballot be counted?**

At the vote center, you'll feed your completed ballot into a scanner that immediately records your votes onto an internal memory card and drops the ballot into a secure bin. That cartridge is then delivered to the elections office and

the tabulated results are uploaded.

**Q: When the election results are released at 8 p.m. on Election Day, which ballots does that count include?**

That count includes all ballots that have been received and processed, whether mailed, put into a drop box or cast at a voting center.

**Q: I understand there are high-speed ballot counting machines that process the vote-by-mail ballots. How quickly can they count ballots?**

Ten high-speed ballot counting machines are used to tabulate the votes on the ballots that have been mailed in or returned via a drop box. A machine can count thousands of ballots per hour. The machines are housed in a room that is under constant video surveillance.

**Q: What happens when there's a mistake or confusing mark on a completed vote-by-mail ballot?**

If one of the ballot-counting machines cannot determine the intent of a vote, that ballot is sent to the election adjudicators, who sit in the room across the hall from the sorting machines. The adjudicators, working in pairs, may need to decipher the name of a write-in candidate or interpret an ambiguous mark. Each ballot that is audited

is marked with the number of the machine that sorted it, the names of adjudicators who reviewed it, and what the decision was.

**Q: How are elections offices ensuring that they're not sending ballots to people who are not at that residence — ballots that are then filled out by other people?**

According to Joe Holland, who is the president of the California Association of Clerks and Election Officials, voter rolls do indeed sometimes have the wrong information. It's often for one of the following reasons:

- Somebody died out of state and that information has not made its way back to that voter's county of residence.
- Someone moved out of the state or out of the country and the information has not been communicated to the registrar.
- A student stays home from college — a common occurrence during the pandemic — but is registered to vote near their campus.

However, as already noted above, voter authenticity is verified through the signature on the envelope. If the signature is not a match and the voter, when contacted, cannot provide a matching signature, then the ballot is rejected. (According to a recent study published by

the nonpartisan California Voter Foundation, 1.4% of all the vote-by-mail ballots cast in the state's March primary were rejected for various reasons, including mismatched signatures.)

**Q: What should I do if I get the wrong ballot?**

If a ballot is intended for someone else and it wasn't simply delivered to the wrong address by the U.S. Postal Service, you can help the county update its voter roll by writing "return to sender" or "no longer at this address" on the envelope and putting it back in the mail, according to Joe Holland.

**Q: If I suspect that election fraud is happening, what do I do?**

You can report it to the Registrar of Voters; however, because the registrar has no enforcement powers, her office will then refer cases to the District Attorney's Office or the Secretary of State's Fraud Unit.

*Got more questions? Post them on Town Square at PaloAltoOnline.com/square or email them to editor@paweekly.com, and we'll try to get them answered.*

CalMatters reporter Ben Christopher contributed to this article. ■ *Editor Jocelyn Dong can be emailed at jdong@paweekly.com.*

**Lost & found**

(continued from page 5)

gender, according to its website. It recruited former African American slaves, many from refugee camps during and after the Civil War.)

She recalled that a few months before, Karen DalColletto, another volunteer, discovered an album filled with singer Joan Baez's baby pictures. A Friends of the Palo Alto Library member delivered a note to Baez during a concert, and the singer and her baby pictures were later reunited, Blumenthal said.

Now Blumenthal wanted to reunite Lythcott's family with the long-lost pictures. She searched through phone books seeking the name Lythcott in Palo Alto and came upon two: writer Julie Lythcott-Haims and her mother, Jean Lythcott.

When the phone rang, Lythcott almost didn't answer it.

"So often I get calls from every

organization imaginable," she said of the landline.

The call came up with a name, however, "P. Blumenthal." Intrigued, she answered.

"Before I say anything else," Blumenthal said. "I need to ask you: 'Do you know a George I. Lythcott II?'" Lythcott recalled.

"I know him well. He's my husband!" Lythcott said.

**'Taking a picture was a big deal when we were growing up.'**

—Jean Lythcott, resident, Palo Alto

Blumenthal invited Lythcott to her home to discuss the discovery.

"It's incredible. It was astonishing," Lythcott recalled upon seeing the photos of her late husband for the first time.

George Lythcott II, a prominent New York City pediatrician and

medical educator, died in 1995. They met in Ghana, Africa, when he was doing medical research in pulmonary diseases and was a regional director for five years in a U.S. assistance program helping 19 African countries fight smallpox and measles. Jean Lythcott, who holds a degree in botany with chemistry and is a native of England, was teaching science in Ghana and arrived there just two months after he did.

The two fell in love. They married in 1966. He was 20 years older; she was born the year he graduated from Bates, she said.

George Lythcott was asked to be one of four sprinters who paced Jesse Owens when he trained for the 1936 Olympics. He worked in West Africa as an American member of a team for the World Health Organization to eradicate smallpox in the 1960s. President Jimmy Carter appointed him head of the Health Services Administration and as assistant surgeon general in



Margali Gauthier

One of the photos discovered in the donated album has George Lythcott's handwritten caption: "Mother, Sister, Me, John, Mamie."

the 1970s. He was a New York City assistant commissioner in charge of the health department's Bureau of Schoolchildren's and Adolescent Health, and he held prominent positions at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and the University of Wisconsin.

The women talked for two hours, discovering overlaps between George Lythcott's career and that of Blumenthal's father, Dr. Sidney Blumenthal.

"They were both pediatricians in New York City at the same time. George was a dean at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons while my father was teaching there. President Carter appointed George to head up the Health and Human Services Administration; my father was the director of the Heart Division at the National Institutes of Health. It is when he was in that position that Jean told me she recognized his name," Blumenthal said.

Lythcott was not familiar with the photographs in the album, she said during a phone interview on Monday. She's baffled by how the photographs came to Palo Alto, since she doesn't know of any relatives who live in the area. She had moved to Palo Alto in 1999 to be near her daughter and family after her husband died. Now 81 and retired from a long teaching career that took her across the globe, she wants to meet the person who donated the photo album.

Already, she said, "I started to do some sleuthing."

She contacted her husband's three surviving children from a previous marriage, but none knew of the photographs, nor did they know of anyone who would have possessed them. The photograph with five people at the Bates graduation had to have been sent by her husband to someone he knew fairly well, she said.

"It's highly probable that they had only known George when he was really young and would not have recognized him," she said.

Lythcott said she has many questions.

"How did (the album) get to California? Who received them? What hand did that person have in terms of receiving it? Why would they have emptied (the album) except for the Lythcott photos? It feels like whoever received the photos kept them until now. Perhaps the people with any connection to the photos

just died," she said.

One story offers a plausible explanation, she said. When her husband was about 2 years old, his mother died in the 1918 influenza epidemic. Agatha, an unmarried aunt who lived in Guyana, was summoned to New York to take care of the young boy. His father, who was also a physician, had gone to Oklahoma to work. When George II was about 8 years old, his father married a Cherokee-African American woman. They summoned Agatha and the boy to live with them, Lythcott said.

She didn't last long in the undeveloped state in the 1920s. One day Agatha walked down the dusty dirt road to a nearby church, dressed entirely in white from her hat to her shoes.

"Everything was covered in red-brown dust. She said she couldn't stay there," Lythcott said. Plus, it was clear she could not share responsibility for raising George II with his new wife, Corrine. Agatha returned to New York. A niece also lived there, Lythcott said. It's possible that George II sent the photographs to Aunt Agatha and somehow they passed down through her.

Memories fade as families and friends die, but Lythcott wonders about who might have kept the photo album until now and if they knew his history. Photographs were rare when she and her husband were young, Lythcott said.

"Taking a picture was a big deal when we were growing up. During the Methodist holiday Whitsuntide, we always had a photo taken, so there was one picture a year of me," she recalled.

Those rare photographs couldn't capture the many stories of a person's life the way pictures do today, with thousands of digital images shared on social media and stored on thumb drives and laptops. But Lythcott thinks there's something about people living longer and being healthier that propels an interest in the stories of the past and "the notion that someone would want to know your story," she said.

The old photographs and the mystery surrounding them reminded her of one of her favorite lines from the musical "Hamilton," she said.

"Who lives? Who dies? Who tells your story?" ■

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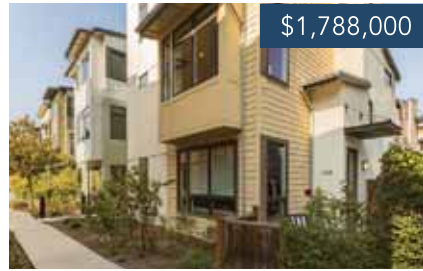
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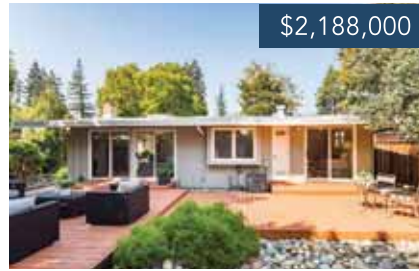
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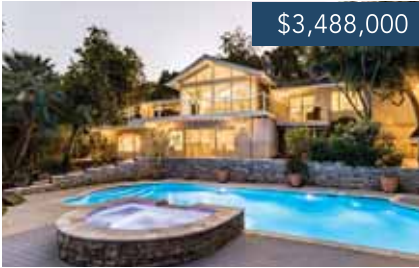
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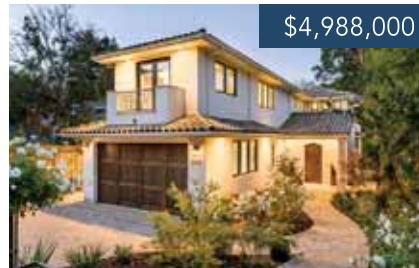
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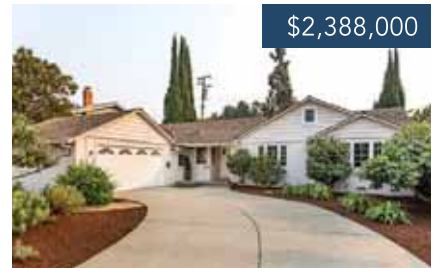
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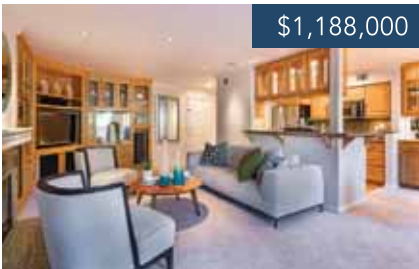
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[www.1515ToparAve.com](http://www.1515ToparAve.com)



\$2,388,000

1015 Katrina Way, Mountain View  
4 Bd | 2 Bth  
[www.1015Katrina.com](http://www.1015Katrina.com)



\$1,188,000

20 Willow Rd. #15, Menlo Park  
3 Bd | 2 Bth  
[www.20Willow15.com](http://www.20Willow15.com)



\$1,498,000

582 Manzanita Avenue, Sunnyvale  
4 Bd | 3 Bth  
[www.582Manzanita.com](http://www.582Manzanita.com)



\$1,798,000

2801 San Simeon Way, San Carlos  
3 Bd | 2 Bth  
[www.2801SanSimeon.com](http://www.2801SanSimeon.com)



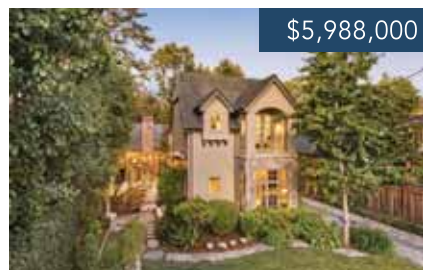
\$1,988,000

1752 Hawkins Drive, Los Altos  
4 Bd | 3 Bth  
[www.1752Hawkins.com](http://www.1752Hawkins.com)



\$6,288,000

11491 Old Ranch Rd, Los Altos Hills  
6 Bd | 6.5 Bth  
[www.11491OldRanch.com](http://www.11491OldRanch.com)



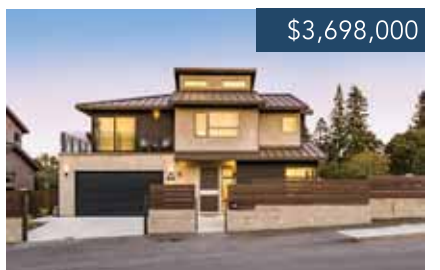
\$5,988,000

925 Lincoln Avenue, Palo Alto  
4 Bd | 4 Bth  
[www.925LincolnAvenue.com](http://www.925LincolnAvenue.com)



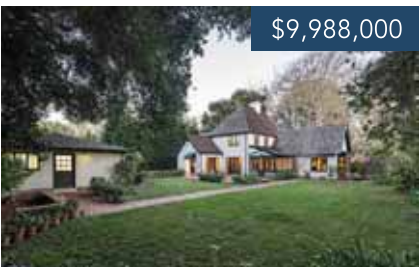
\$39,998,000

27500 La Vida Real, Los Altos Hills  
5 Bd | 12 Bth (7 full, 5 half)  
[www.27500LaVida.com](http://www.27500LaVida.com)



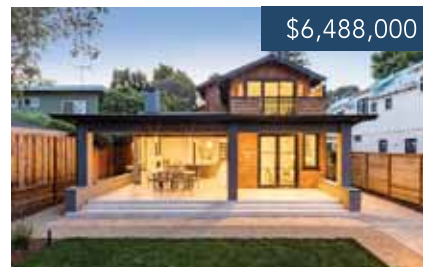
\$3,698,000

2087 Sharon Road, Menlo Park  
4 Bd | 4.5 Bth  
[www.2087Sharon.com](http://www.2087Sharon.com)



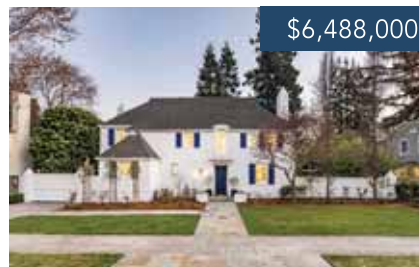
\$9,988,000

435 Santa Rita Ave., Palo Alto  
4 Bd | 3.5 Bth  
[www.435SantaRita.com](http://www.435SantaRita.com)



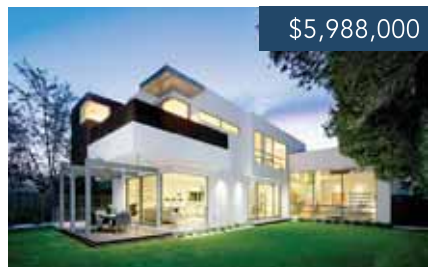
\$6,488,000

734 Channing Ave., Palo Alto  
6 Bd | 5 Bth  
[www.734Channing.com](http://www.734Channing.com)



\$6,488,000

1290 Pitman, Palo Alto  
4 Bd | 3.5 Bth  
[www.1290Pitman.com](http://www.1290Pitman.com)



\$5,988,000

848 Southampton Drive, Palo Alto  
5 Bd | 6 Bth (4 full, 2 half)  
[www.848SouthamptonDr.com](http://www.848SouthamptonDr.com)

Michael Repka | 650.900.7000 | DRE #01854880  
[michael@deleonrealty.com](mailto:michael@deleonrealty.com) | [www.deleonrealty.com](http://www.deleonrealty.com) | DRE #01903224



**COMMITTED TO TRANSPARENCY**

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



## 19 Prado Secoya Street, Atherton

### Modern Colonial Masterpiece on Over One Acre

Supreme luxury awaits at this prestigious home built in 2013, offering remarkable privacy, unparalleled build quality, and every conceivable modern amenity. With 7 bedrooms, 8.5 bathrooms, and over 9,100 square feet of living space, including a beautiful guest home, this Colonial-style masterpiece rests on a pristine lot of over an acre populated by colorful plantings and specimen trees. Soaring ceilings and excellent use of glass create a bright and inviting ambiance, highlighting high-end appointments including Herringbone flooring and elaborate moldings. Spacious, sophisticated living areas are ideal for both entertaining and everyday living, including the fireplace-centered living room, and the chef's kitchen that opens fully to the comfortable family room. Arranged over three levels with elevator convenience, this home also includes a library, a lower-level entertainment area with a wet bar and wine room, and five bedroom suites, including the incredible master suite with a romantic fireplace. Resort-like grounds include sweeping lawns, a sparkling pool, a sports court, and a built-in barbecue patio. Adding the finishing touch is a location just moments to both downtown Menlo Park and Palo Alto, with access to acclaimed Menlo Park public schools, and within walking distance of Sacred Heart and Menlo School (buyer to verify eligibility).

For virtual open houses & more photos, please visit:

[www.19PradoSecoya.com](http://www.19PradoSecoya.com)

Offered at \$16,988,000

**Easy access for potential buyers and Realtors® only.**

**Listed by Michael Repka of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties**

Data from BrokerMetrics® based on MLS sales from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2019, in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties combined, residential properties, with no off-MLS sales included in the rankings.

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



**COMMITTED TO TRANSPARENCY**

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



## 925 Lincoln Avenue, Palo Alto

### Classic Charm, Modern Living in Community Center

Presenting a masterful blend of timeless Palo Alto allure and the best of modern amenities, this beautiful 4-bedroom, 4-bathroom Tudor revival offers comfortable spaces, superb ambiance, and an unbeatable location on well over one-quarter acre in Community Center. Gleaming hardwood floors extend throughout much of the home's 3,100+ square feet of living space, and appointments including arched entryways and coffered ceilings evoke classic charm. A gas fireplace in floor-to-ceiling stone centers the living room, the kitchen includes appliances from Viking, Sub-Zero, and Bosch, the family room features outside access, and the detached offices allows you to work from home in style. Enjoy a location that puts you one block to Eleanor Pardee Park, a short trip to University Avenue, and within a mile or less of top-ranked Palo Alto schools. Plus, this home enjoys a rich history steeped in Silicon Valley lore. This is Palo Alto living at its finest – welcome home.

For virtual open houses & more photos, please visit:

[www.925LincolnAvenue.com](http://www.925LincolnAvenue.com)

Offered at \$5,988,000

**Easy access for potential buyers and Realtors® only.**

**Listed by Michael Repka of the DeLeon Team, the #1 Team in Palo Alto.**

Data from BrokerMetrics® based on MLS sales from January 1, 2019, to December 31, 2019, in Palo Alto, residential properties, with no off-MLS sales included in the rankings.

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



# Public Notices

## 995 Fictitious Name Statement

APPLY  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: FBN668296  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
Aptly, located at 1931 Old Middlefield Way, Suite K, Mountain View, CA 94043, Santa Clara County.  
This business is owned by: A Limited Liability Company.  
The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):  
SOPHOS PRODUCTIONS LLC  
1931 Old Middlefield Way, Suite K Mountain View, CA 94043  
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 September 11, 2020.  
(PAW Sep. 25; Oct. 2, 9, 16, 2020)

DeLeon Realty Platinum  
DeLeon Platinum Realty  
DeLeon Realty Team  
DeLeon Platinum Team  
DeLeon Team Platinum  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: FBN668571  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
1.) DeLeon Realty Platinum, 2.) DeLeon Platinum Realty, 3.) DeLeon Realty Team, 4.) DeLeon Platinum Team, 5.) DeLeon Team Platinum, located at 1717 Embarcadero Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303, Santa Clara County.

This business is owned by: A Corporation.  
The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):  
DeLeon Realty, Inc.  
1717 Embarcadero Road  
Palo Alto, CA 94303  
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 September 18, 2020.  
(PAW Oct. 2, 9, 16, 23, 2020)

ZHUANGZI LI AND ASSOCIATES  
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT  
File No.: FBN668871  
The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:  
Zhuangzi Li and Associates, located at 4023 Villa Vista, Palo Alto, CA 94306, Santa Clara County.  
This business is owned by:  
A General Partnership.  
The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):  
ZHUANGZI LI  
2901 La Vista Ave.  
Corona, CA 92879  
FRANKLIN MARK SCHELLENBERG  
4023 Villa Vista  
Palo Alto, CA 94306  
Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on Oct. 6, 2015.  
This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara County on September 30, 2020.  
(PAW Oct. 16, 23, 30; Nov. 6, 2020)

## The Palo Alto Weekly is adjudicated to publish in Santa Clara County.

Public Hearing Notices Resolutions • Bid Notices • Lien Sale  
Trustee's Sale • Notices of Petition to Administer Estate

**Deadline is Tuesday at noon.**

Call Alicia Santillan at 650-223-6578 or email [asantillan@pawweekly.com](mailto:asantillan@pawweekly.com).

## Open a Home Equity Line of Credit and get

# 2.25% APR\*

FOR THE FIRST 12 MONTHS

**No Cost HELOC up to \$250,000!**



Enjoy a **Prime minus 1.00% rate for the first 12 months** of your new HELOC. Use the funds for a remodeling project or pay off debt—there are no payments until you actually use the line of credit.

- ◆ Easy application and approval process
- ◆ No points, no annual fee, no origination fees, and no closing costs
- ◆ 10-year draw period and 10-year repayment period
- ◆ Refinance an existing HELOC to Stanford FCU
- ◆ California properties only



Visit [sfcu.org/HELOC](http://sfcu.org/HELOC) for more information or to apply.

\*HELOCs funded on or after October 15, 2020 will receive the introductory rate of Prime minus 1% for the first 12 months, then revert to Prime + 0% for the remainder of the loan term. Offer and rates are subject to change without notice. There are no origination fees or closing costs for HELOCs up to \$250,000. An Early Closure Fee of \$500 will apply if the HELOC is closed in the first three years. California properties only. Membership eligibility required.

The HELOC rate is variable and subject to increase during the loan term. Rate is based on the Prime Rate as published in The Wall Street Journal Money Rates Table ("Index"). The floor rate is equal to the Index published at the time of loan application. The lifetime maximum variable APR is 15.00%. Equity lines have a 10-year draw period and a 10-year repayment period for a total term of 20 years. Payments during the 10-year draw period are interest only.

The rate example shown here is based on an owner-occupied single-family detached house located in the state of California with a maximum LTV of 80%. The actual interest rates and APRs available to you may vary based on your credit score, LTV ratio and other factors, and may be higher than the one displayed here. Rates, closing costs and points may vary by property location, loan type and borrower credit and income. All loans and terms are subject to credit approval, and not all applicants will qualify. Some restrictions may apply.

Federally Insured by NCUA | Equal Housing Lender | NMLS #729643

### Across

- 1 Last half of a ball game?
- 5 Used (to)
- 15 She uses a bird to sweep the house
- 17 Computer overhaul
- 18 Gridiron measurements (abbr.)
- 19 Little bite
- 20 Gold, to Guatemalans
- 21 "Who Wants to Marry a Multi-Millionaire?" network
- 22 Bodybuilder's units
- 24 Word before Earth or City, in computer games
- 27 Drab shade
- 29 She was Dorothy on "The Golden Girls"
- 30 Org. that listens for alien signals
- 31 It's obsolete
- 35 Jovial question from someone eager to help
- 36 It covers Miami, Montpelier and Montreal
- 37 SOPA subject
- 38 Opera follower?
- 39 New Year's, in Hanoi
- 40 Mandolin relative
- 41 Robin Meade's network
- 42 Southwest sch. whose mascot is King Triton
- 44 Daily grind
- 45 Guy to say "Sup?" to
- 46 "\_\_\_ Ho" (Best Original Song Oscar winner of 2009)
- 47 The D in OED
- 50 Easy lunch to prepare
- 56 Insider's knowledge
- 57 Viktor Bout or Adnan Khashoggi
- 58 Dark form of quartz

### Down

- 1 Off-kilter
- 2 Messed with the facts
- 3 World Series precursor, for short

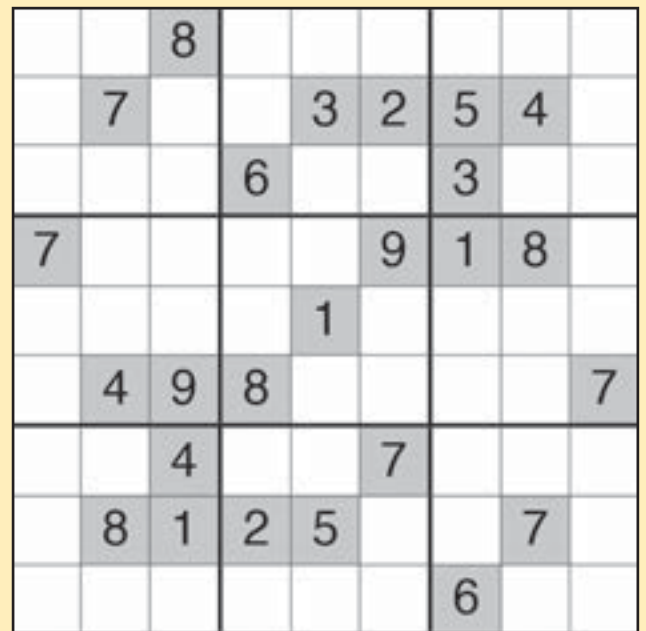
## "Stretch Those Quads!"--a hardcore freestyle workout. [#570, May 2012]. By Matt Jones



Answers on page 17.

- 4 "As I see it," in chatrooms
- 5 Tack on
- 6 Shorten nails
- 7 Smoke
- 8 Palindromic prime minister of the 1940s-60s
- 9 Leather sharpener used in old-timey barber shops
- 10 Old rulers
- 11 Chemist Hahn
- 12 "Excusez-\_\_\_ ..."
- 13 Roxy Music name
- 14 Room for board games, perhaps
- 16 Person with a booming voice, often
- 21 Donut shop option
- 22 Upgraded

## This week's SUDOKU



Answers on page 17.

[www.sudoku.name](http://www.sudoku.name)

- 23 Fail spectacularly, like a skateboarder
- 24 \_\_\_ Saga (David Feintuch series of sci-fi novels)
- 25 "No need to pay"
- 26 Bishops' wear
- 27 Grain alcohol
- 28 Put someone in their place
- 29 Some hats worn on The Oregon Trail
- 30 Lose your composure, in junior high-speak
- 31 "Anchors \_\_\_"
- 32 Senator Jake who flew on the Space Shuttle Discovery
- 33 Heart location?
- 34 Ophthalmologist's concerns
- 42 Implored
- 43 Richard who played Don Barzini in "The Godfather"
- 44 Vacation time, in slang
- 45 \_\_\_ the Younger (Arthurian knight)
- 46 Director Campion
- 47 Zoologist Fossey
- 48 Disgusting
- 49 Cereal with gluten-free varieties
- 50 Org. that bestows merit badges
- 51 "Love, Reign \_\_\_ Me" (The Who)
- 52 420, for 20 and 21 (abbr.)
- 53 "Just as I suspected!"
- 54 "On the Road" protagonist \_\_\_ Paradise
- 55 "Never heard of her"

© 2012, 2020 Matt Jones



**SUNNYVALE** | \$1,599,000  
Single-family 2 bd, 2b home w/ 1 bd, 1ba apartment over detached garages.

**Dana Willson**  
650.917.4256  
dwillson@cbnorcal.com  
CalRE #01292552



**EL GRANADA** | \$1,400,000  
3BR/2.1BA sunny home near the marina. Main level integrates the gourmet kitchen, dining and living room with expansive windows and a courtyard entry.

**Grant Walters**  
650.867.0482  
grant@coastside.net  
CalRE #01063248



**REDWOOD CITY** | \$1,298,000  
3br/1ba turnkey elevated split-level home. Open concept w/remodeled kitchen. Elevated covered deck. Low maintenance yard. 2 car garage w/storage.

**Douglas Andrew Gonzalez**  
650.465.8930  
dgonzalez@cbnorcal.com  
CalRE #00895924



**MOUNTAIN VIEW** | Price Upon Request  
Our Seller was thrilled with the price we got for this MV condo. We can get YOU a great price too! Call us today if you're thinking about Selling!

**Dafna Mizrahi**  
650.949.8173  
agents@teammizrahi.com  
CalRE #00605924



**SAN JOSE** | Price Upon Request  
2br/2ba upstairs unit features views of the Golf Course & Foothills w/approx. 1,152 sq. ft. of livable space.

**Bill Senter**  
408.455.1901  
bill.senter@cbnorcal.com  
CalRE #01844580



**SACRAMENTO** | Price Upon Request  
3br/2ba home close to Regency Park. Spacious kitchen & living room w/ fireplace. Master bedroom w/ walk-in closet. Low maintenance rear patio & yard.

**Judah Kent**  
916.241.3933  
Judah@kentfamilyhomes.com  
CalRE #01998324



**REDWOOD CITY** | \$2,398,000

4br/3ba multi-level home. The entryway immediately beckons you to the open-concept kitchen, dining and living rooms with soaring ceilings and expansive windows. The spacious master suite features sloped ceilings, a unique fireplace and a built-in bed. The hidden wine room is finished with redwood and kept naturally cool by the hillside. You can enjoy the outdoors from the multiple decks on three levels.

**Douglas Andrew Gonzalez**  
650.465.8930  
dgonzalez@cbnorcal.com  
CalRE #00895924



**MOUNTAIN VIEW** | Price Upon Request

Stunning Summerhill home only 3 years young! Open floorplan, stylish kitchen. 3 bd 2.5 ba. Oak floors, plush carpet & high end finishes throughout.

**Manju Bhatia**  
408.644.9100  
manju.bhatia@cbnorcal.com  
CalRE #01399514



**SANTA CLARA** | \$1,239,000

Pending! This lovely single-family home is situated in central Santa Clara. Main home consists of 3 bd, 2 ba + detached bonus room on backside of the property. Fireplace in the living room and laminate floors. Large sliding door in the dining area leads you to beautiful Japanese garden. Kitchen features granite counters and white cabinetry. Spacious guestroom has a large window overlooking the garden.

**Masako Takemura**  
650.847.7272  
Masako@cbnorcal.com  
CalRE #01763865



**PORTOLA VALLEY** | \$22,000,000

This magnificent vineyard estate is the ideal place to escape from the fast daily pace of Silicon Valley. The peaceful grounds of approx. 41 acres enjoy top-of-the-world San Francisco Bay views. Outside, the grounds are equally compelling with exceptional front and rear terraces, a pool, spa, pool house and tennis court, intertwined with beautiful landscaping and sweeping Bay views.

**Ginny Kavanaugh** 650.400.8076

CalRE #00884747

**John Kavanaugh** 415.377.2924

CalRE #02058127



**LOS ALTOS** | \$4,649,000

This home features a formal living room & dining room w/dramatic architecture for entertaining. The chef's kitchen & the family room boast slab granite counters, stainless steel including a six burner range, wine cooler & Sub-Zero refrigerator. The family has a fireplace & entertainment center & wet bar. The master features a fireplace, walk-in closet, a bathroom w/in-floor heating & a steam shower.

**Dana Willson**

650.917.4256

dwillson@cbnorcal.com

CalRE #01292552



**LOS ALTOS** | \$3,388,000

This stunning, new custom 3BR/2.5BA home, lives larger than its square footage with open floor plan, chef's kitchen w/island and light filled rooms.

**Linda Takagi**

650.303.2972

ltakagi@cbnorcal.com

CalRE #01280638