

Weekly

Mobile homes make way for Buena Vista apartments

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NEED A LIFT?

Move over, Uber Pool:
City to launch its own
on-demand shuttles

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Read up-to-the-minute news on PaloAltoOnline.com

- **Upfront** New drug could limit COVID hospitalizations Page 5
- **Upfront** Study shows racial disparities in child-abuse reports Page 10
- **Eating Out** These chocolatiers can sweeten your Valentine's Page 22

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City's new shuttle service is a departure from the past

Palo Alto Link eschews fixed routes in favor of on-demand model

By Gennady Sheyner

Palo Alto's new shuttle system is almost ready to launch.

Starting on March 7, residents and visitors will be able to summon through an app or a phone

call a shuttle service called Palo Alto Link, which for a fee of \$3.50 will pick them up and drop them off near their chosen locations. Boosted by a \$2.5 million grant from Measure B, the 2016

transportation tax measure, the program will be in place on a pilot basis for 18 months.

By prioritizing flexible over fixed and fee over free, Palo Alto Link represents a stark departure from the Palo Alto Shuttle, the free bus system that the city discontinued in the early days of the pandemic as part of a broad

round of budget cuts.

The old shuttle system had two routes, the Crosstown and the Embarcadero, and it served about 550 riders per day, many of them students and seniors, according to staff from the Office of Transportation. Rides were free for all.

In its form and function, the

new iteration of the shuttle system will resemble ride-hailing services like Uber and Lyft more than a traditional public bus service. With a fleet of seven vehicles (with two more in reserve), the shuttles will circulate throughout the city, picking up and dropping

(continued on page 12)



Magali Gauthier

A walk along the water

Two pedestrians walk a dog at Lake Lagunita at Stanford University on Feb. 1. The man-made lakebed, which has been dry for years, filled with water from the storms around New Year's, to the delight of students.

HEALTH CARE

Study: Promising drug could cut COVID hospitalizations by half

One dose dramatically reduces hospitalizations in Stanford Medicine-led trial

By Sue Dremann

A new drug requiring only a single injection could be a game changer in keeping people with COVID-19 infections out of the hospital, research by Stanford Medicine has found.

A single, under-the-skin shot of a biologically based antiviral medication given to patients

within seven days of the onset of COVID-19 cut the likelihood of hospitalization in half. Patients who were treated within three days of showing symptoms fared even better. Side effects were no greater than those reported by placebo recipients and tended to be far less than those of other

types of medications that use interferons (transmitting proteins that help the body's immune system), the researchers said. The drug was given to more than 3,000 people in trials and was well-tolerated.

What's more, the drug, pegylated lambda-interferon, or

PEG-lambda, proved effective against all tested COVID-19 viral variants, including omicron, during the international trial.

PEG-lambda is a synthetic version of lambda-interferon, a naturally occurring protein secreted by infected cells as a first line of defense against viral infection. Interferons are secreted by cells that sense invasion by a virus. Different interferon types use different receptors — molecules inside or on the surface of a cell that bind to a specific substance and have a specific effect in the cell — and their distribution in the body

(continued on page 16)

FRAUD

Bakery settles federal lawsuit

La Baguette submitted fraudulent Paycheck Protection Program claims

By Sue Dremann

A Palo Alto bakery has settled a lawsuit with the federal government for making false claims to acquire \$430,000 through a program designed to help struggling businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Justice said on Feb. 3.

La Baguette, a French bakery located at 170 Stanford Shopping Center, unlawfully applied for and received two loans through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and later asked for and received loan forgiveness for both, leaving the Small Business Administration on the hook to cover the costs to the lenders.

The program was established through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security ("CARES") Act, enacted in March 2020 to provide emergency financial assistance to Americans suffering economic effects caused by the pandemic. It also authorized forgivable loans to small businesses for employee payroll and certain other expenses.

Participating lenders received processing fees from the Small Business Administration for handling the PPP loan applications. The lenders funded the loans, which were 100% guaranteed by the SBA, after application approvals.

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**PALO ALTO CITY COUNCIL
CIVIC CENTER, 250 HAMILTON AVENUE**

This is a summary of tentative City Council agenda items. The agenda with complete titles including reports can be viewed at the below webpage:

<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/agendas/default.asp>

**SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2023 3:30 PM
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER**

<https://zoom.us/join> Meeting ID: 362-027-238 Phone: 1(669)900-6833

CALL TO ORDER

SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY (3:30 - 3:35 PM)

1. Recognition of the Palo Alto Library as a Five Star Library

CONSENT CALENDAR (3:35-3:40 PM)

- Approval of Minutes from the January 28, 2023 and January 30, 2023 City Council Meeting
- Adoption of a Resolution Adopting Updated Guidelines for the Submission and Tabulation of Protests in Connection with Rate Hearings Conducted Pursuant to Article XIII D, Section 6 of the California Constitution and Repealing and Replacing Resolution 8815; CEQA status—not a project.
- Approve and Authorize the City Manager or Designee to Execute Contract No. C23185369 With Manesco Corporation in an Amount Not-to-Exceed \$633,932.24 to Conduct Annual Walking and Mobile gas Leak Surveys and Annual Resurveys of Existing gas Leaks for a Six-Year Term to Begin March 2023 Through February 2028; and Approve a 10% Contingency of \$63,393 in Addition to the Contract Amount. The Total Not-to-Exceed Amount is \$697,325.24
- Approval of a Purchase Order with Interstate Truck Center in an Amount Not to Exceed \$297,244 for the Purchase of Two 2023 International CV Chipper Body Trucks, Utilizing a Cooperative Purchase Agreement, Funded by Capital Improvement Program Project VR-23000

CONTINUED ACTION ITEM FROM FEBRUARY 6, 2023 (3:40 - 5:10 PM)

AA1. Approval of the 2023 City Council Priority Focus Areas, and Objectives Areas, Objectives, and Respective Major Projects for Calendar Year 2023

STUDY SESSION (5:10 - 8:10 PM)

- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update and Study Session
- Buena Vista Mobile Home Park Update from the Santa Clara County Housing Authority

ACTION ITEMS (8:50 - 10:45 PM)

- Review and Accept the FY 2023 - FY 2032 Long Range Financial Forecast (LRFF) and FY 2023 Budget Development Guidelines
- Discuss the FY 2023 Mid-Year Budget Review and Approve 1) FY 2023 Budget Amendments in Various Funds, and 2) Amendments to the FY 2023 Table of Organization to add 5.25 full-time and 2.43 part-time Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Positions
- Discussion and Possible Revision to 2023 Standing Committee Topics Removed From Consideration

ADJOURNMENT

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

RAIL COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 15, 2023 Community Meeting Room & Hybrid 1:00 PM

<https://cityofpaloalto.zoom.us/j/86388142528> Meeting ID: 863 8814 2528
Phone: 1(669)900-6833

VERBAL UPDATE ON INTERAGENCY ACTIVITIES

- Caltrain
- VTA
- City Staff

ACTION ITEMS

- Rail Committee to review and provide direction for the development of the 2023 Rail Committee Workplan.

CITY SCHOOLS LIAISON COMMITTEE

Thursday, February 16, 2023 8:30 AM

Community Meeting Room 250 Hamilton Ave, Palo Alto
<https://cityofpaloalto.zoom.us/j/86280460108> Meeting ID: 862 8046 0108
Phone: 1-669-900-6833

CALL TO ORDER

- Selection of Committee Chair
- Virtual Meeting Practices and Connection Information

REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Open Forum/Public Communications
- Approval of Minutes
- Report of City Manager
- Report of Superintendent of Schools
- Report of City Council Meeting
- Report of PAUSD Meeting
- Future Business

**CITY COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS
ARE HELD IN-PERSON AND BY TELECONFERENCE**

Pursuant to Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-29-20, as amended through order N-08-21, City Council meetings will be held as hybrid meetings with the option to attend by teleconference/video conference or in person. To maximize public safety while still maintaining transparency and public access, members of the public can choose to participate in the meeting from home or attend the meeting in person.

Public Comments will be accepted both in person and via Zoom. Written public comments can be submitted in advance to city.council@cityofpaloalto.org and will be provided to the Council and available for inspection on the City's website. Please clearly indicate which agenda item you are referencing in your email subject line.

The meeting will be streamed live on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/c/cityofpaloalto>, and Midpen Media Center <https://midpenmedia.org> and broadcast on Cable TV Channel 26. PowerPoints, videos, or other media to be presented during public comment are accepted only if emailed to mail to: city.clerk@cityofpaloalto.org at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. Once received, the City Clerk will have them shared at public comment for the specified item. To uphold strong cybersecurity management practices, USB's or other physical electronic storage devices are not accepted.



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Upfront

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



There's been a lot of talk to the effect that COVID's over. I don't think the virus got that memo.



— Dr. Jeffrey Glenn, director of ViRx@Stanford, on developing a pioneering treatment for COVID-19 infections. See story on page 5.

Around Town



Courtesy Samantha Muljat/Sacks & Co.

AND THE GRAMMY GOES TO ...

Palo Alto-raised **Molly Tuttle**, 30, and her band, **Golden Highway**, won the **Best Bluegrass Album** category at the 65th annual Grammys on Sunday, Feb. 5. "Making **'Crooked Tree'** felt like throwing a big jam session with so many musical friends and heroes," Tuttle said Monday in an Instagram post featuring a photo of herself holding the gramophone trophy. "I was incredibly honored to feel the love back from the bluegrass community." The album also snagged her a nomination for **Best New Artist**, one of the Recording Academy's Big Four categories (the others are Album of the Year, Record of the Year and Song of the Year). While the award ultimately went to jazz singer **Samara Joy**, Tuttle said in a post-show interview with the **Recording Academy** that she was grateful to be up for the coveted award. "I never expected to be in one of the general categories making this bluegrass album last year, so it was a really wonderful surprise for me," she said.

EYES ON FLETCHER ...

Ellen Fletcher Middle School was named a "School to Watch," as part of an award program led by the **California League of Schools** and **California Department of Education. Schools to Watch** is a national program that recognizes middle schools for being "academically excellent, developmentally responsive and socially equitable," according to the California Department of Education. To be selected, Fletcher had to submit a detailed application and undergo classroom visits from California League of Schools committee members, Superintendent **Don Austin** said in

a weekly message to parents. In a press release, Palo Alto Unified credited the recognition in part to Fletcher's plans to implement a sustainability choice program next school year. Fletcher has seen its enrollment decline in recent years and in an attempt to attract more students, plans to adopt a campuswide environmental sustainability theme next school year. Middle schoolers from throughout the district will be able to apply to attend.

HITTING THE SWEET SPOT ...

Marvel Cake, a Campbell bakery best known for its spiral croissants, has a new Palo Alto location currently expected to open in mid-March. The bakery is a family business started by **Maryam Menbari**, according to her husband, **Reza Mirzadeh**, who also works for the bakery along with their son. It began back in 2009 when Maryam was looking for a fondant cake for Reza's birthday, but couldn't find one to purchase that she liked. So she made her own. "It came out really well," Reza said. She continued to bake for friends and family, but it wasn't until 2019 that the family got serious about building the baking into a business. They opened Marvel Cake in Campbell in early 2020. The bakery's signature pastry is the cream-filled spiral croissant, made popular on TikTok. Additional offerings include cupcakes and custom cakes. The bakery often sells out of the spiral croissants within the first hour of opening, Reza said, and customers have come from as far as Sacramento to pick them up. The new Palo Alto location won't have a full kitchen; it will operate mainly as a retail outpost with the bulk of the baking continuing in Campbell, he said. ■

At new Victoria Ballet, classes celebrate the power of art

California Avenue studio offers dance and art lessons to people of all ages

By Grace Doerfler

Victoria Lee remembers seeing ballet dancers for the first time as a child growing up in South Korea. She watched through a window during her sister's dance lesson and was amazed to see what people could do.

"They were like angels, coming and going, just flying," she recalled.

She begged her mother to sign her up for ballet classes too. Now, Lee is no longer the student but the teacher — imparting to her students at Victoria Ballet the same techniques, discipline and elegance that she discovered as a child.

Lee taught at a ballet studio in Korea until her family moved to the Bay Area for her husband's work in 2015. A couple of years later, at her daughter's urging, she opened up the first location of Victoria Ballet in Campbell. Since then, the ballet studio has grown in size and popularity, and last year, Lee began looking at the building at 370 California Ave. that now houses the ballet school's second location and a new venture, Victoria Art Studio. The building opened for classes in January.

At the new ballet studio, students from age 4 to adult are learning the art of dance from Lee and the other dance faculty, Cynthia Drayer and Andre Reyes. Both Drayer and Reyes danced professionally, including as principal dancers in the San Francisco Ballet, before turning their skills to teaching at ballet schools around the country. The classes offered include all experience levels — from beginners who have never stepped up to the barre to pre-professional dancers.

Lee said teaching ballet is not just about training her students in the proper techniques — it's about teaching them how to cultivate a lifestyle of strong relationships and attention to beauty.

She sees overlap between the emphasis on respect in Korean culture and the history of ballet in royal courts, and her classes share aspects of Korean and ballet cultures alongside the pirouettes and pliés.

"In the Korean culture I have, respect is very important," Lee said. "So I just teach them, you have to respect your parents first, you have to respect your friends first. Better technique, worse technique, older or younger, it doesn't matter.... Manners are just original ballet culture."

Lee said one of her goals with Victoria Ballet is to make ballet less intimidating. It's as accessible as gymnastics or Pilates classes, she said — a form of art and exercise that anyone can try.

"People come in and they always say, 'I'm not flexible; this



Grace Doerfler

Students practice in an upper-level class at Victoria Ballet and Art in Palo Alto on Jan. 27.

is my first time to do the ballet — can you accept me?" she said. "Everyone can do it."

A hallmark of Lee's approach to teaching is keeping class sizes small so that teachers can pay attention to every dancer. She caps classes at eight students, which allows every ballet dancer to develop proper technique.

"I never give up on my students," she said.

The students at Victoria Ballet put on an annual performance of the Nutcracker, and they have won numerous awards at dance competitions around the Bay Area.

Next door to the ballet studio, Victoria Art Studio hosts art classes for children ages 5-12 and a weekend oil painting class for adults. In the children's classes, students can try a range of media, including painting, drawing and sculpture.

"Our goal is to create a fun and supportive environment for kids and adults to express themselves and grow as artists," said Chelsey Eom, the studio's director.

Like the ballet classes, the art

classes are kept small so that children receive plenty of individual attention, Eom said. She trained as an artist in South Korea and San Francisco, and now, she said she wants to give her Palo Alto students a well-rounded art education.

Lee sees classes that foster creativity as being especially important here in STEM-heavy Silicon Valley, where she said people are often busy and driven at the expense of making time for art. That's why she calls Victoria Ballet a "life-changing project."

"The kids have to learn not only ballet but why we need art and rest time, how to relax and enjoy art," she said.

Eom said she saw similar value in children being able to take art classes and explore their creative talents.

"I have seen firsthand how art can help students develop their creativity and self-expression," she said, "as well as a sense of achievement and satisfaction." ■

Email Editorial Intern Grace Doerfler at gdoerfler@pawebly.com.

CityView

A round-up of Palo Alto government action this week

City Council (Feb. 6)

Leaf blowers: The council unanimously agreed to specify that a property owner, property manager and operator of a gas-powered leaf blower can all be cited for violating the city's ban on such leaf blowers in residential areas. Council members also unanimously agreed to explore a future expansion of the city's prohibition on gas-powered leaf blowers to city-owned properties and commercial areas. And by a 5-2 vote, council members moved to raise fines and waive the five-day notice period for citing violations of the city's ban on gas-powered leaf blowers. **Yes:** Burt, Kou, Lauing, Lythcott-Haims, Stone **No:** Tanaka, Veenker

Planning and Transportation Commission (Feb. 8)

Chair and Vice Chair: The commission voted 4-0 to elect Doria Summa its chair. The commission then voted 4-0 to elect Bryna Chang as its vice chair. **Yes:** Chang, Hechtman, Reckdahl, Summa **Absent:** Roohparvar, Templeton **SB9:** The commission voted to approve a permanent ordinance amending the zoning code to implement state housing legislation, including Senate Bill 9. **Yes:** Chang, Hechtman, Reckdahl, Summa **Absent:** Roohparvar, Templeton

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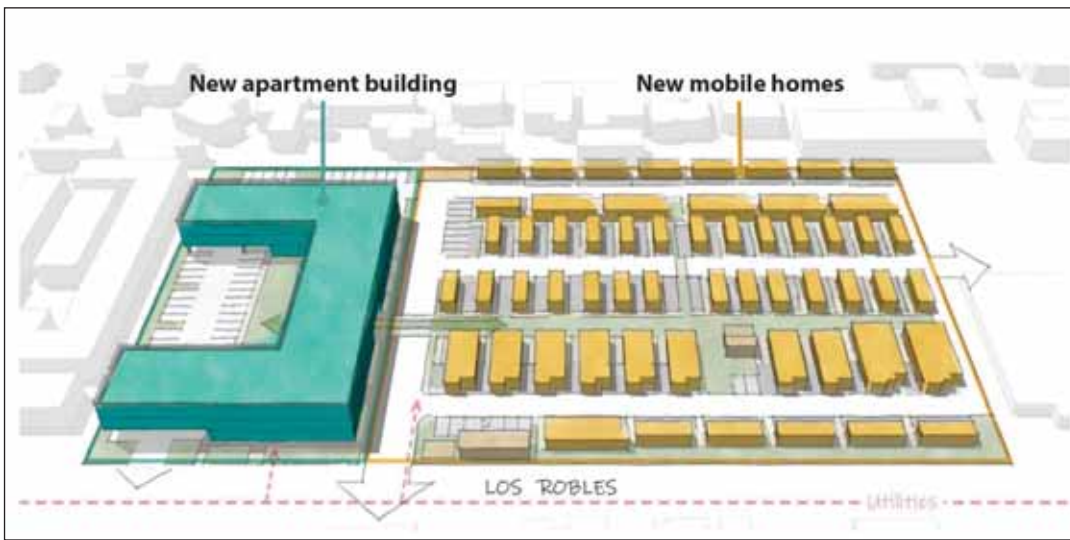
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Site plan courtesy Santa Clara County Housing Authority

The Santa Clara County Housing Authority has proposed an apartment building at the site of the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park and replacing some of the existing mobile homes with new ones.

HOUSING

Plans underway to redevelop Buena Vista Mobile Home Park

Housing Authority looks to construct apartment building, replace aged dwellings at Palo Alto's only mobile home park

By Gennady Sheyner

When the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park was on the verge of being razed and replaced with a luxury housing development six years ago, the Santa Clara County Housing Authority stepped in and bought the El Camino Real property, preserving it as one of Palo Alto's few bastions of low-income housing.

Now, the housing authority is moving ahead with its own redevelopment plan for the park at 380 El Camino Real, one that would replace mobile homes, community buildings and a motel on the west side of Buena Vista

with a new apartment building. The authority also intends to replace existing mobile homes on the remainder of the site with new ones, according to a report that the agency issued ahead of a Feb. 13 meeting with the Palo Alto City Council to unveil the proposal.

The housing authority will solicit feedback about the new plan from Buena Vista residents and other stakeholders until June, after which it will submit plans with the city of Palo Alto and state Department of Housing and Community Development, according to a memo from the

agency. If things go well, construction would begin at the end of this year or early next year.

For Buena Vista, the new proposal would represent the biggest transformation since the housing authority took ownership of the 4.5-acre property from the Jisser family in 2017. At that time, the county Board of Supervisors and the Palo Alto City Council each kicked in \$14.5 million to help prevent the park's closure. The Housing Authority contributed \$12 million to purchase and another \$19.9 million to renovate the residential community, a process that included replacing Buena

Vista's aged utility systems and bringing mobile homes up to code.

The agreement involved a mutual understanding by the funders that the Housing Authority would upgrade the mobile home park and preserve it as low-income housing for decades to come. To date, however, things have moved much more slowly than some residents had hoped for. When the park operator, Caritas, concluded its work at Buena Vista in 2019 and the John Stewart Company took over, residents complained at a public meeting about the lack of improvements.

Since then, some mobile homes have been demolished and some residents have left. The park today has about 270 residents, according to the Housing Authority, down from about 400 at the time of the purchase. The 117 households in 2017 dwindled to 93 in 2019 and to 77 now, with a variety of income levels, housing types and family sizes.

The Housing Authority did not respond to questions from this publication about Buena Vista and its planned development, but its new report touts the upgrades that it has made. In 2020 and 2021, it reportedly brought in 18 new recreational vehicles and manufactured homes to replace existing mobile homes, a program that it claims "created better quality housing for 61 park residents." The agency has also reportedly cleaned out trash and abandoned cars, repaired homes, installed new electrical and gas utilities, replaced aged sewer and water lines and created new spaces for resident services and the community's afterschool program, according to the report.

The state agency and the John Stewart Company have also been inspecting units and bringing them up to health and safety

standards, issuing compliant leases and certifying income levels, according to the memo. That work continues to this day.

The Housing Authority also acknowledged that its original plan to launch renovations shortly after purchasing the park and installing an operator has not gone as expected.

"Unfortunately, this plan was impacted greatly by the difficult realities of the park's condition, including the state of the infrastructure systems, the physical condition and age of the units, a significant relocation project within the park, and the varying degree of barriers facing each household," the report states. "While not insurmountable, these difficult realities have slowed down our efforts significantly."

The goal, according to the memo, "continues to be the preservation and improvement of the park, and the stability and success of its residents."

According to a report from the office of City Manager Ed Shikada, the upcoming council discussion will be part of a broader outreach effort by the Housing Authority, which will also include a meeting with the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. The authority also held a meeting with about 45 residents last month, the report states, with future plans to meet individually with residents to hear their concerns.

The Housing Authority told residents in a Jan. 23 notice that its long-term plan is to replace all mobile homes with new units and that the new apartments will replace the dwellings that were previously on site. The company also informed residents that there will be "significant onsite activity" and that those who will be required to temporarily relocate will get financial assistance from Poco Way HDC, the Housing Authority's affiliated nonprofit.

"The Housing Authority and Poco are working diligently to maintain long-term, safe, high quality affordable housing for the residents of Buena Vista," the notice states. ■

Email Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@paweekly.com.

"For decades, Silicon Valley housing production has not kept pace with residents' needs, pushing housing costs beyond the average household budget. To make our region more affordable for everyone in the future, we need to take advantage of more local housing opportunities, like Stanford Research Park's Mayfield Place."

— Elaine Uang, Affordable Housing Architect & Advocate

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News Digest

Businesses 'red-tagged' after Midtown fire

Palo Alto's building inspectors have determined that three of the four businesses that were damaged in a blaze on Middlefield Road last week are no longer safe to enter or occupy, a ruling that means the buildings face an extensive remodel or reconstruction.

The fire, which began late at night on Feb. 1 and spilled into the early hours of Feb. 2, caused extensive damage to a shopping plaza in the 3100 block of Middlefield Road, near Loma Verde Avenue. The fire is believed to have originated at AJ's Quick Clean Center, which is in the middle of the property, and spread to Bill's Café, which is adjacent to the laundromat. Both businesses have been tagged with a red placard, indicating they are not safe to occupy. Philz Coffee, which is on the other side of the laundromat, sustained less damage from the fire but was also red-tagged, according to the city. Firefighters said the fire had spread through the building's shared attic above Philz before they were able to knock it down.

The fourth business on the site, Palo Alto Fine Wine & Spirits, was tagged with a yellow placard, which allows entry to secure products and prevent further damage, the city's Chief Communications Officer Meghan Horrigan-Taylor said in an email. ■

— Gennady Sheyner

Higher leaf-blower fines backed

Spurred by popular demand, the Palo Alto City Council voted on Monday to ramp up enforcement of the city's long-standing and often-ignored ban on gas-powered leaf blowers in residential areas.

The council voted 5-2 to raise fines for violation of the leaf blower ban and to eliminate an existing rule requiring the city's code enforcement officer to observe a violation twice, at least five days apart, before issuing a citation. In a separate vote, the council unanimously agreed to specify in the zoning code that it's not just the operators of the noisy devices but also the homeowners and property managers who hire them that can be subject to penalties.

The Monday votes were the latest effort by the city to respond to years of complaints by residents about the air- and noise-pollution impacts of gas-powered leaf blowers, which have been illegal in residential neighborhoods since 2005. The ban had been largely left unenforced until last year, when the city added a code enforcement officer position dedicated to addressing the problem.

Council members indicated that they would be willing to consider a citywide ban on gas-powered leaf blowers and unanimously agreed to direct the council's Policy and Services Committee to explore a potential ban. ■

— Gennady Sheyner

City sued for housing plan delay

Two pro-housing groups are asking a court to limit Palo Alto's control over approving development applications because it has not adopted a plan for adding more than 6,000 new dwellings by the state's Jan. 31 deadline.

The city has not yet received any feedback from the state Department of Housing and Community Development on its draft Housing Element, which the city submitted on Dec. 23. The document lays out the city's plan to add 6,086 new dwellings by 2031.

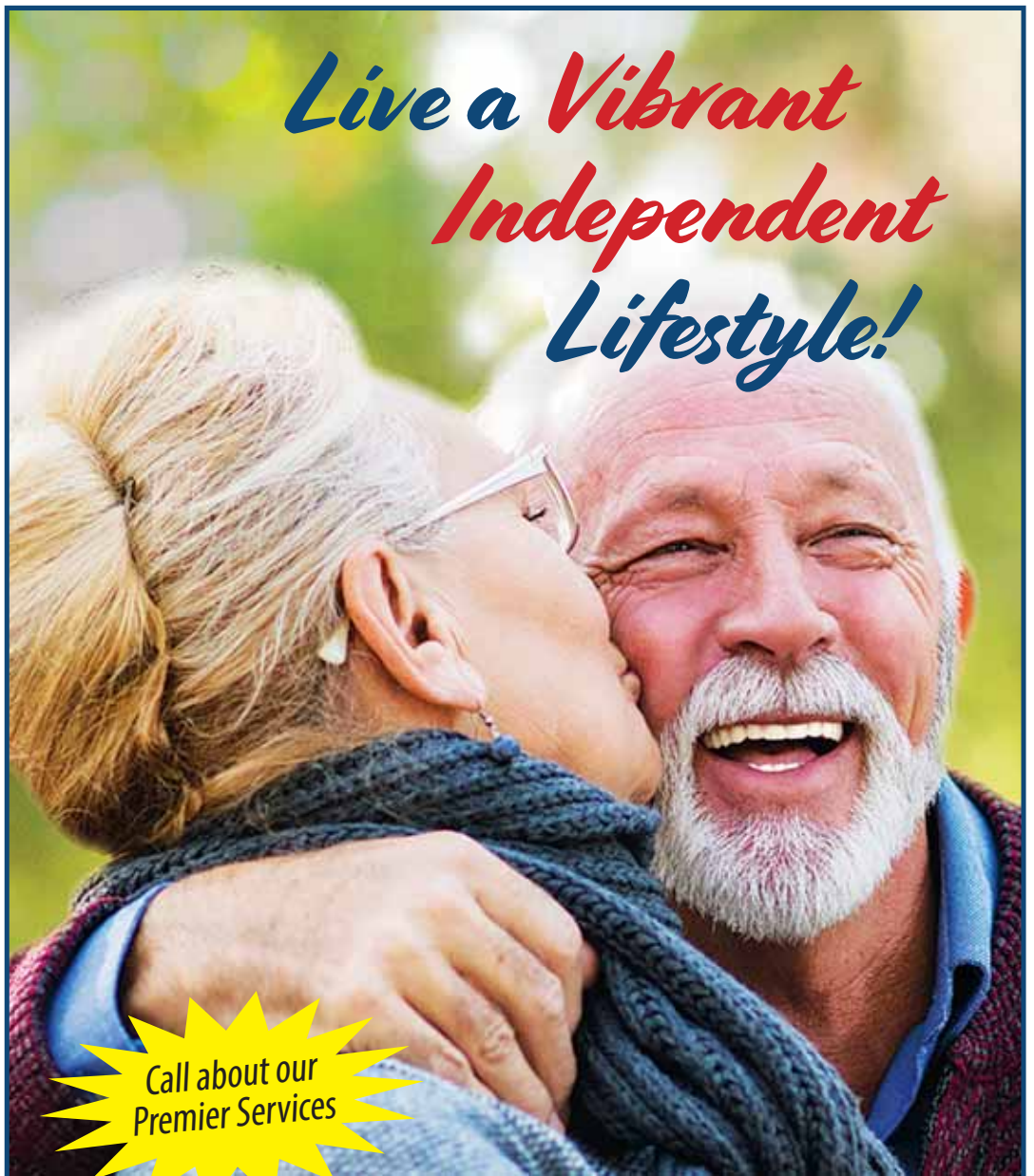
The lawsuit was filed in the Santa Clara County Superior Court on Feb. 2 by the nonprofits Yes In My Backyard (YIMBY) and the California Housing Defense Fund. The two groups point to a provision in the Housing Element Law that restricts the ability of cities with drafts that are not in "substantial compliance" with the law to disapprove housing developments that have an affordability component.

The two nonprofits claim that they sent the city a letter in December informing them that they would forego litigation if city officials acknowledged in writing that they would "not be in substantial compliance" by Jan. 31 and that they would be "prohibited from rejecting any (affordable) housing development" based on the Housing Accountability Act. The city reportedly did not submit a response.

The nonprofits' petition asks the Santa Clara County Superior Court for a writ of mandate requiring the city to adopt its new Housing Element in accordance with the state schedule.

The petitioners also are asking that the court order the city to rezone sites according to the accelerated schedule and that it be barred from relying on code provisions to disapprove of housing projects or make such projects infeasible. ■

— Gennady Sheyner



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HEALTH

Stanford Medicine finds racial disparities in child-abuse reporting

Study: Black children overreported to authorities compared to other races due to racial bias among hospital staff

By Sue Dremann

Black children who are injured because of suspected child abuse are reported to Child Protective Services more frequently than are white children and those of other races, a new Stanford School of Medicine study has found.

Parents and other caregivers rarely admit to injuring their children, so reports rely in part on providers' gut feelings, which can be influenced by unconscious, systemic bias, the researchers said. Medical caregivers are "mandated reporters" who must alert authorities when they think children might be victims of abuse.

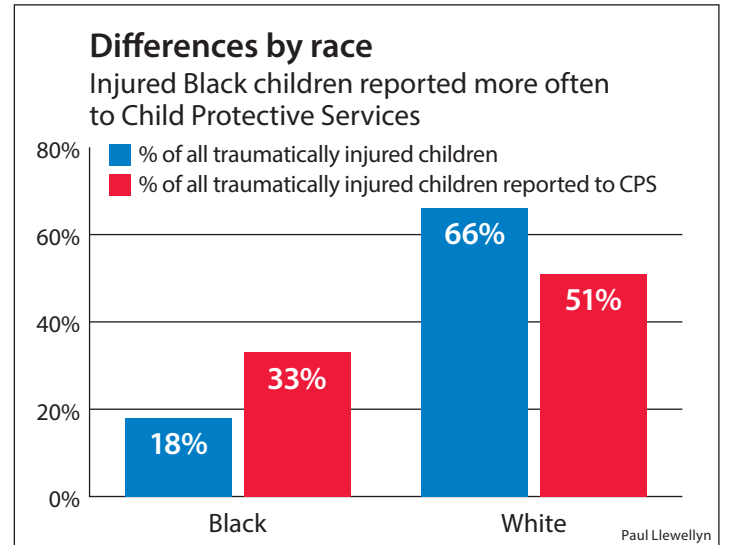
The potential for bias in doctors' and nurses' decisions about which injuries should be reported to Child Protective Services can lead to more investigations of Black families and potentially more episodes of abuse for white children whose cases are not referred to the authorities.

The research also found that Black children's injuries were still disproportionately reported as suspected abuse regardless of whether the children were poor. Poverty is considered a risk factor for abuse. The Stanford study examined whether children had public or private insurance as a

marker for family income.

The researchers used two sets of data of nearly 800,000 traumatic injuries to children ages 1 to 17 from 2010 to 2014 and from 2016 to 2017, taken from the National Trauma Data Bank, which is maintained by the American College of Surgeons. The data showed 1% of the injuries were suspected to be caused by abuse, based on medical codes used to report different types of abuse.

The outcomes for children of abuse are grim. Compared to the general population of children with traumatic injuries,



suspected child abuse victims were younger (a median age of 2 years old versus 10 years), more likely to have public insurance (77% versus 43%) and more likely to be admitted to the intensive care unit (68% versus 48%). The suspected child abuse victims also were 10 times more likely

than the general population of children with traumatic injuries to die of their injuries in the hospital, with 8.2% of suspected abuse victims versus 0.84% of all children with traumatic injuries dying during hospitalization, the study found.

Among suspected child abuse victims, 1% were Asian, 0.3% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 2% American Indian and 12% other race, with the proportions of children in the suspected child abuse group and in the general population of injured children being similar, the researchers said.

But Black patients were disproportionately over-identified among suspected child abuse victims. They comprised 33% of suspected child abuse victims and 18% of the general population of traumatically injured children. White children comprised 51% of suspected child abuse victims and 66% of the general population of traumatically injured children.

Some experts have argued that disproportionate reporting of injured Black children reflects only that their families tend to have lower incomes, not that medical professionals are subject to bias, the researchers said, but the Stanford study did not find that to be true.

"Even when we control for income — in this case, via insurance type — African American children are still significantly over-represented as suspected victims of child abuse," senior study author Dr. Stephanie Chao, assistant professor of surgery at Stanford Medicine, said.

Black children's injuries also were reported to authorities when they had lower injury-severity scores, meaning there was more suspicion for Black children with less-severe injuries, Chao said.

The reverse was true for white victims of child abuse. Medical professionals overall had a higher threshold for suspecting white families of abuse and a lower threshold for suspecting Black families. Yet white children in the suspected abuse group were more likely than Black children to have worse injuries, and they were more likely to have been admitted to the intensive care unit, the researchers found.

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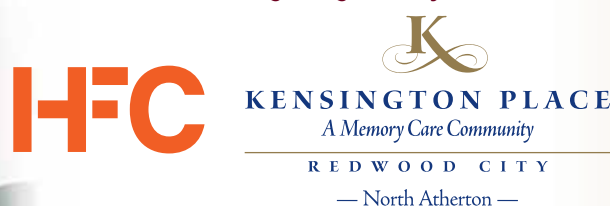
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(continued on page 16)

PEOPLE

Greenmeadow resident celebrates 108th birthday

Meeting Barack Obama among Elise Martin's memorable moments

By Elizabeth Lorenz

In more than a century, one of Elise Martin's most memorable highlights has been the time she stood face to face with then-Senator Barack Obama during his first presidential campaign in 2008 when she was captain of her voting precinct in South Carolina. Martin put her finger in his chest and told him, "You can do this."

Martin was 93, and there's a photo to prove the encounter.

Not long after, "Mama Lise," as she is called by her grandchildren, moved to Palo Alto to live with her daughter. Now, 15 years later, she still picks up the phone to talk politics with former council members, mayors or other key political players from her hometown in South Carolina.

On Feb. 7, Martin, who lives in Palo Alto's Greenmeadow neighborhood with her daughter Loretta Green and son-in-law, Bill, celebrated her 108th birthday surrounded by family, including her son Montez Martin Jr., who traveled from Charleston for the milestone.

"People ask her, 'What's your secret?'" Green said in a telephone interview on her mother's birthday. "She says, 'If I knew, I would bottle it and sell it.'"

Martin was born in 1915 in the small town of Hartsville, South Carolina. Her parents, along with Elise and her four siblings, were struck with the 1918 Spanish flu. Her father died, as did a younger sister. Her mother, a talented seamstress, took on the mending and wardrobe-making for three wealthy families to support her children.

At the encouragement of her mother, Martin went to cosmetology school as a young adult and became the owner of Elise Beauty Shop in the then-segregated South. Her baby daughter, Loretta, took up residence in a playpen in the second-story shop as Martin served Black women, who came for miles, even on Saturdays, lining her stairway for walk-in hours. She shampooed hair and used hot curling irons — heated on gas stoves — to



Courtesy photo

Palo Alto resident Elise Martin, shown here during her 107th birthday party in 2022, will mark her 108th birthday with a neighborhood celebration on Saturday, Feb. 12.

ready women for work or Sunday morning church. Martin eventually earned her teaching credential and taught cosmetology at the local high school.

Meanwhile, Martin's husband, Montez, worked unloading trucks with boxes of tiles for Sears Roebuck after the company refused him a position as tile-layer because he was Black, Martin's family said. He ended up learning how to lay tiles from co-workers

on the side and eventually opened his own company.

To this day, Martin is passionate about schools offering students courses in "the trades."

"She feels strongly that schools should," said Green, a retired journalist and columnist who wrote for the Palo Alto Times Tribune and the San Jose Mercury News.

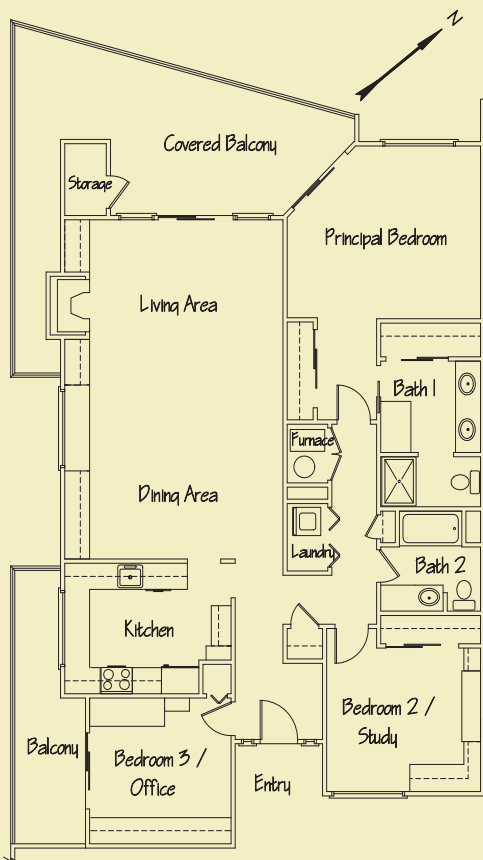
Green said her mother "thrives on people. She's a person who can

work the room. She loves talking to people."

To help Martin mark her birthday, a drive-by celebration (to keep Mama Lise COVID-free) is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 12, from noon to 12:45 p.m. on Greenmeadow Way. Residents are encouraged to drive by and give Martin a birthday shoutout. ■

Email Contributing Writer Elizabeth Lorenz at elizabeth_lorenz@yahoo.com.

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Shuttle

(continued from page 5)

off passengers based on algorithms that group people who are traveling in the same direction.

Though the new shuttles will be emblazoned with the city logo, they will be operated by Via, a transportation company that currently provides services to public agencies such as Mountain View, Cupertino, BART and private companies such as Google and Genentech. Some will be hybrids, others will be electric vehicles.

‘Not only is it a completely different system but now it costs money as well.’

— Jonathan Erman, critic of the planned on-demand shuttle

While the shuttle system has yet to make its debut, reviews from residents are already mixed. Some favorably recalled the old shuttle service. Resident Herb Borock noted that the former system, with its fixed times and routes, focused on “activity points” where residents without cars wanted to go and stopped near areas where they lived. The new system, he suggested, is mainly motivated by the fact that “there is a bunch of money to spend.”

Resident Jonathan Erman lamented the fact that unlike the old system, which was free, the new one charges a fee that is \$1 higher than a ride on a Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority bus.

“Not only is it a completely different system but now it costs money as well,” Erman said during a Monday public hearing on the new shuttle service. “So we used to have a free shuttle, but now you have to pay money, and in fact the full price for adult fare is more than a VTA fare. I can ride VTA to San Jose for \$2.50 but to go across Palo Alto apparently a full-price adult fare is \$3.50.”

Winter Dellenbach, however, said she was stoked about the new shuttle system, which she said will make it easier for her and other residents to go about their businesses when they don’t have a car available to them.

“This is a fix and it’s low-cost and the difference between this and the freaking bus is you can ... get this service easily and then it takes you right where you want to go,” Dellenbach said. “And this is fantastic, and the bus doesn’t do that.”

The council was generally enthusiastic about the new service, even as members acknowledged some of its limitations. One is its hours of operations. The new service will only be available Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Council member

Julie Lythcott-Haims suggested that the city consider expanding the hours to better match Caltrain peak commute times, which are 6-9 a.m. and 4-7 p.m. She noted that one of the objectives of the new program is to provide a last-mile option for commuters into the city.

‘It takes you right where you want to go. ... The bus doesn’t do that.’

—Winter Dellenbach, supporter of the planned on-demand shuttle

“I’m not sure our stated hours fully align with those particular goals,” Lythcott-Haims said.

Lythcott-Haims also said she was concerned that the city is becoming a “pay-to-play city” and suggested enhancing marketing efforts to attract more ridership so that prices can be lowered further. But Philip Kamhi, Palo Alto’s chief transportation official, noted that Palo Alto Link already represents a bargain when compared to other on-demand services. For low-income residents, riders with disabilities and youths, the price per ride is only \$1.

Kamhi gave the example of Avenidas, the nonprofit that provides services to local seniors. When a senior needs to get to an appointment, Kamhi said, they

often have no way to get there through public transportation and require someone from Avenidas to arrange a Lyft ride for them each way.

“So you can imagine how much that costs. This is now a \$1 trip for them each direction,” Kamhi said. “It’s hard to compare to traditional transit service, but it does typically reflect higher costs.”

But the program remains an experiment. Kamhi pointed out that the old shuttle system saw its ridership drop every year since 2016 and it remains to be seen how big the demand will be for the new service. After 18 months, it will be up to the council to decide whether to continue the system and, if so, how to fund it.

“They are very different types of models,” Kamhi said. “Ultimately, we’ll have to make a decision at the end of this pilot program about what type of service we want to continue with.”

To sweeten the deal, staff is preparing to offer the first month of rides for free and to create weekly and monthly passes that will cater to regular commuters. The Office of Transportation is discussing with Stanford Research Park a possible partnership, with Stanford providing funding and the city offering the service to its tenants. Nathan Baird, the city’s transportation manager, suggested that the city may also look at ways to add hours in the future.

“We do know some of the supercommuters who come here and folks who come here and need to go to other places really could use additional evening services or even weekend service,” Baird said. “So we’re looking at ways to expand that as we can.”

—Email Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner at gsheyner@paweekly.com.

If you’re interested ...

- The shuttle service will start March 7
- The one-way cost will be \$3.50; youth, disabled and low-income riders will pay \$1
- Rides will be free for the first month
- Passengers will be able to purchase weekly and monthly passes
- Rides can be booked on a website, app or phone (more information will be available closer to the launch date)

About the cover: Starting on March 7, Palo Alto residents and visitors will be able to summon the city’s new on-demand shuttle service through an app or phone call. Cover illustration by Douglas Young.

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Veronica Weber

People order from La Baguette in Stanford Shopping Center in 2011.

La Baguette

(continued from page 5)

In April 2020, La Baguette, through principal owner Scott Brunello, submitted an application for a PPP loan to a lender. La Baguette certified that from Feb. 15, 2020, through Dec. 31, 2020, the company hadn't and wouldn't receive another loan under the PPP. La Baguette received \$214,700 from the lender by electronic transfer.

But while that loan was still pending, La Baguette submitted an application for another PPP loan to a second lender claiming that it hadn't and wouldn't receive another loan through the program during the same time period. The second lender loaned La Baguette \$215,000 through an electronic funds transfer. The bakery knowingly kept the funds from, and received forgiveness for both loans, the government said in its settlement agreement with La Baguette.

Under its settlement agreement, La Baguette and Brunello agreed to pay the government \$430,000, of which \$215,000 is restitution. The settlement does not protect against any liability under criminal or Internal Revenue Service codes.

Two other Bay Area businesses also agreed to settlements, the Department of Justice said. Dynamic Integrated Solution

Inc., an industrial equipment supplier located in Santa Clara, has also agreed to pay \$50,000 in civil penalties to settle allegations that it received and retained a duplicate PPP loan. The company agreed to repay the lender the approximately \$985,000 loan.

A third company, Priority Acquisitions Inc., a Castro Valley licensed general contractor, has agreed to pay \$50,000 in civil damages and penalties to settle allegations that it received and retained a duplicate loan. The company agreed to repay the lender for the full loan of approximately \$200,625.

The cases were filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California under whistleblower provisions of the False Claims Act by J. Bryan Quesenberry. He will receive a portion of the settlements totaling approximately \$80,000, the Department of Justice said.

Tips and complaints from all sources about potential fraud affecting COVID-19 government relief programs can be reported to the Civil Division's Fraud Section at justice.gov/civil/report-fraud. Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can also file a report by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at 866-720-5721. ■

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

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COVID

(continued from page 5)

varies widely from one interferon type to another. Interferon molecules can also make their way into the bloodstream and contact more distant cells, having identical antiviral effects on the cells they latch onto — but only those cells that have receptors for them.

Receptors for lambda-interferon are largely limited to the linings of the lungs, airways and intestines — the main places where SARS-CoV-2 strikes — and the liver.

Viruses, including SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, have evolved and found ways to shut down interferon production in the cells they infect, but they can't impact cells' interferon receptors. Therefore, injected interferons are able to trigger potent antiviral activity, the researchers said.

"This drug would have saved millions of lives if we'd had it at the beginning of the pandemic,

and it could still save millions of other lives," said Dr. Jeffrey Glenn, a co-principal investigator and director of ViRx@Stanford, a Stanford Medicine program devoted to discovering and developing novel antiviral agents to prepare for pandemics.

"There's been a lot of talk to the effect that COVID's over. I don't think the virus got that memo. Meanwhile, lots of people are still unvaccinated, and this drug showed profound benefits for vaccinated and unvaccinated people alike," he stated in the press release.

Glenn founded Eiger BioPharmaceuticals Inc., a biotechnology company that acquired the rights to lambda-interferon to develop it as a drug for hepatitis D some years ago. When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, the company turned its attention to the new pathogen. Researchers from the company along with others from Cardresearch, Platform Life Sciences, RainCity Analytics and the Together Network

joined Stanford Medicine in the study. The research was funded by FastGrants, the Rainwater Charitable Foundation, the Latona Gates Foundation, and Eiger BioPharmaceuticals Inc.

The Phase 3 drug trials (the last step before submission to the Food and Drug Administration for approval) included more than 2,000 patients in Brazil and Canada with an average age of 43. Slightly more than half were women. About 95% were mixed race and only 3% were white. About 85% had been vaccinated for COVID-19, the researchers said.

Overall, of the roughly 930 patients who received the single subcutaneous dose of PEG-lambda, only 25 (2.7%) were hospitalized or were placed under observation in an emergency clinic within four weeks of testing positive for COVID-19 compared to 57 patients (5.6%) who received the placebo.

Among vaccinated patients treated with PEG-lambda within seven days of the onset of symptoms, 51% fewer were hospitalized compared to those who received



Courtesy Stanford Medicine

Dr. Jeffrey Glenn, director of ViRx@Stanford, is co-principal investigator of a new drug, PEG-lambda interferon, which is proven to dramatically reduce COVID-19 hospitalizations.

the placebo, the researchers said.

Administering the drug earlier had even more significant results.

Among unvaccinated patients treated within the first three days of symptom onset, 89% fewer were hospitalized compared with placebo group — the same 89% reduction observed with Pfizer's Paxlovid, another antiviral drug

that is administered in the early stages of COVID-19 infection, the researchers said.

Only 11 (1.9%) of those 567 patients treated with PEG-lambda within the first three days after symptoms wound up in the hospital within four weeks of getting the shot, versus 28 (3.1%) of the 590 who received a placebo injection within three days of symptom onset.

There were no deaths among patients treated with PEG-lambda within three days of symptoms' onset compared to four COVID-19-related deaths in the placebo group.

Glenn said the need for effective COVID-19 therapies is paramount, given vaccine-induced immunity wearing off more rapidly than has been hoped, new SARS-CoV-2 variants constantly striving to outwit the immune system, and people declining repeated rounds of vaccination due to fear of side effects both real and imagined or due to vaccine fatigue.

The study was published online Feb. 9 in the New England Journal of Medicine. ■

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

Peter A. Kline

1948 – 2022

Peter A. Kline of Palo Alto, CA died peacefully in his sleep on December 27, 2022.

Peter was born to Paul and Renee Kline in New York City on June 24, 1948. Along with his older brother, Victor, Peter walked to elementary school in Manhattan, where his father had a dermatology practice and his mother worked in the English department at NYU. His family moved to Princeton, NJ, where he completed elementary school at Princeton Country Day School before attending high school at Deerfield Academy in Deerfield, MA. Peter played hockey and lacrosse at Deerfield, and he carried his prep school sensibilities through life, with loafers and striped ties a lifelong staple. Peter graduated from Rutgers University in New Brunswick, NJ with a bachelor's degree in Sociology and was a member of the Theta Chi fraternity and the Rutgers hockey team.



Upon graduation, Peter moved to California for marriage, children, and law school at the University of San Francisco (USF). Peter commuted to USF from Palo Alto in his cherry red, 1966 MGB, and after graduating cum laude, began his successful career as an attorney in San Jose with Miller, Morton, Caillat, and Nevis. He remained with the firm for over 40 years, ultimately serving as managing partner. Peter married Brooke Roberts of Palo Alto in 1984, and together, raised their family in Palo Alto.

Peter was a loving husband, father, grandfather, and friend. He was known for his jocular sense of humor, and in his free time, was an avid golfer, coached his children's athletic teams, and was a master of his backyard grill. He was a loyal supporter of the San Jose Sharks, holding season tickets dating to their inaugural season, and he was on the board and served as President of the Boys & Girls Club of Santa Clara. Peter is survived by his wife, Brooke, his brother, Victor, and his three children, P. Matthew, George, and Kaitlin. Peter was also a proud and loving grandfather of George Jr., Elyse, Wyatt, and Rose.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks donations be made to the Parkinson's Foundation or the Michael J. Fox Foundation. A celebration of Peter's life will be held at the San Jose Country Club on Saturday, February 25th from 5-8 pm.

PAID OBITUARY

Child abuse

(continued from page 10)

Although white suspected child abuse patients were more severely injured and had an in-hospital mortality of 9% compared to 6% among Black patients, Black suspected child abuse patients were hospitalized longer, despite controlling for insurance type.

Chao said such medical bias based on race is injurious to both Black and white children.

"If you over-identify cases of suspected child abuse, you're separating children unnecessarily from their families and creating stress that lasts a lifetime. But child abuse is extremely deadly, and if you miss one event — maybe a well-to-do Caucasian child where you think, 'no way' — you may send that child back unprotected to a very dangerous environment. The consequences are really sad and devastating on both sides," Chao said.

To combat racial bias, Chao and her colleagues designed a universal screening system, in use at Stanford Medicine Children's Health since 2019, which evaluates every time a child younger than 6 years old has an injury sustained in a private home. The electronic medical record automatically sends an alert to the organization's child abuse team. Pediatricians and social workers with specialized abuse-detection training check the medical record for other indications of abuse. If the medical record shows any red flags, the staff who admitted the patient to the emergency department or hospital is alerted to consider if further examination or a Child Protective Services report is warranted.

This more equitable method of screening injured children helps

to safeguard against decisions made primarily by medical providers' gut feelings, Chao said.

She is also working with Epic, the nation's largest electronic medical record company, to include an automated child abuse screening tool in its system. The tool will be tested at several medical institutions later this year.

"Everyone means well here, but

the consequences of getting these reports wrong are pretty dire in either direction. If we don't recognize bias and always chalk it up to something else, we can't fix the problem in a thoughtful way. Now, I hope we can recognize it and work toward a solution," Chao said. ■

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

Public Agenda

A preview of Palo Alto government meetings next week

CITY COUNCIL ... The council plans to hold a study session on economic development, discuss the planned redevelopment of the Buena Vista Mobile Home Park; consider budget amendments as part of the fiscal year 2023 mid-year budget review; and discuss revisions to standing committee topics. The meeting will begin at 5 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 13, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 362 027 238.

BOARD OF EDUCATION ... The board plans to hear its ad hoc committee's recommendations for the district's bell schedules, review a draft of budget assumptions, get presentations on early literacy and state data dashboard results, and receive a report on plans to restructure the elementary school special education program. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 14, in the district's board room, 25 Churchill Ave. View the full agenda and get instructions on how to participate by Zoom at go.boarddocs.com.

COUNCIL RAIL COMMITTEE ... The committee plans to hear updates from Caltrain, the Santa Clara VTA and city staff and to discuss development of the 2023 Rail Committee Work Plan. The meeting will begin at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 15, in the Community Meeting Room at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 863 8814 2528.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD ... The board plans to meet at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, Feb. 16, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 965 6189 1491. The meeting agenda was not available by publication deadline.

PUBLIC ART COMMISSION ... The commission plans to discuss the painting of new murals in the California Avenue business district and consider approving maintenance funds for "Birdie" at the Palo Alto Golf Links Course and for "Wild" at Hoover Park. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 16, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 886 2784 1441.

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Magali Gauthier
VISUAL JOURNALIST

Hear from visual journalist, Magali Gauthier

I'm Magali Gauthier and I'm the staff visual journalist for Embarcadero Media, the small local news organization on the Peninsula that covers news for the Palo Alto Weekly, the Mountain View Voice, The Almanac, and Redwood City Pulse.

During the recent string of storms in early January, our newsroom covered power outages, downed trees and flooding across all our coverage areas, from Mountain View to Woodside. On some days, I was on the ground with reporters at the San Francisquito Creek speaking with local residents about how floods had impacted their homes and what they were doing to protect them from further damage. At the same time, other reporters were in touch with city officials and public works departments to give you all the most up-to-date news on power outages and impacted roadways. On other days, I was driving around Woodside and Portola Valley, in constant communication with reporters about downed trees and street closures to photograph and film. All the information and visuals we gathered were then sent to our editors who were updating stories online. It was a really collaborative and time-consuming effort. But we knew it was important to tell and show our readers how current events were impacting them as quickly as possible.

This type of localized and extensive coverage would not be possible without our members' support. Countless people in our newsroom took part in bringing it to you. If you want to see more stories that provide you with information that helps you make decisions about your everyday life, please consider becoming a member.

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Transitions

Births, marriages and deaths

Former Palo Alto school board member Melissa Baten Caswell dies

Longtime elected official and volunteer
is remembered for her commitment to community

By Zoe Morgan

Melissa Baten Caswell, a former Palo Alto Unified School District board member and longtime community volunteer, died on Monday, Feb. 6, from pancreatic cancer. She was 58.

Baten Caswell's involvement in local schools spanned decades, including 13 years serving on the Palo Alto Unified board starting in 2007 and an unsuccessful bid for the Santa Clara County Board of Education in 2020.

Born in White Plains, New York, Baten Caswell and her husband, Lee Caswell, moved to Palo Alto in 1990, where they made their home and raised two children.

She earned her undergraduate degree from Dartmouth College and an MBA from Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business, where she met her husband. After moving to Palo Alto, Baten Caswell worked in marketing roles for tech companies, including Apple and Sun Microsystems.

She left tech to spend more time with her children, according to a family obituary, but soon took on leadership roles in local schools, including serving as PTA Council president. She was also a founding board member of the nonprofit Youth Community Service.

According to Caswell, his wife's interest in education was focused on how to create a passion and love of

learning in students, as well as finding ways to get Palo Alto residents working toward common goals.

"She was really invested in how to go and bring the communities together," Caswell said.

News of her death sparked an outpouring of support and condolences from the community, including more than 60 comments left on a message that her husband posted on the website CaringBridge announcing her death.

The Palo Alto City Council held a moment of silence for Baten Caswell on Monday and adjourned its meeting in her honor. Council member Julie Lythcott-Haims cited Baten Caswell's many years of public service.

"We've lost a cherished member of our community," Lythcott-Haims said.

Council member Pat Burt noted her courage in the face of declining health.

"For those who have known her and followed her struggles in recent years with her battles, she was just incredibly courageous throughout this entire period of time, maintained a very positive approach and was a real inspiration," Burt said.

While serving on Palo Alto's school board, Baten Caswell helped lead the district through periods of upheaval, including a federal Title IX investigation into sexual

misconduct, teen suicide clusters, the renaming of two middle schools and the early days of the coronavirus pandemic.

At the beginning of her time on the school board, she worked to develop a strategic plan for the district, bringing in the management consulting firm McKinsey & Company to help develop the document.

"That was a huge lift when she first came in, and she was very proud of that," Caswell said.

She also served as president of the Santa Clara County School Boards Association and was a member of the California School Boards Association, California Association of Suburban School Districts and Schools for Sound Finance.

What stood out for Heidi Emberling, who served with Baten Caswell on the school board from 2012 to 2016, was the way that her colleague was able to keep the interests of families at



Melissa Baten Caswell and her husband, Lee Caswell.
Courtesy Lee Caswell.

the center of her work.

"She was always optimistic. She always looked for the way forward," Emberling said. "If there was a barrier, she looked for ways to dismantle it."

The two stayed in touch after Emberling left the board and became close friends. Sigrid Pinsky similarly met Baten Caswell when they both served on the PTA Council, but stayed close afterward. Pinsky was struck by Baten Caswell's dedication to hearing what people were experiencing and finding ways to provide support.

"She paid attention and brought up issues and fought hard for what she cared about," Pinsky said. "Our children benefited greatly. Our teachers benefited greatly."

In her personal life, Baten Caswell had a love of art and cooking. According to Caswell, his wife was an accomplished painter, focusing on watercolors and oil painting, as well as charcoal. She also created

her own jewelry, including making her husband's wedding ring. Baten Caswell served as a board member of the Palo Alto Art Center Foundation.

She also loved trying to make new foods, including various pastries, Caswell said. A favorite of family and friends was the sherry cake that she would hand out around the holidays, he said.

"She built lifelong relationships and was always there for her family and friends," an obituary from the family said. "She was a source of strength and inspiration with a smile and energy that could move mountains."

Baten Caswell is survived by her husband; their children, Lainie and Cas Caswell; her sisters, Amanda Baten and Blythe Witt; and her mother, Susan Jill Baten.

The family requests donations to Adolescent Counseling Services at acs-teens.kindful.com in lieu of flowers. ■

OBITUARIES

A list of local residents who died recently:

Helga Newman, 93, a longtime resident of Palo Alto who was known for her work with the National Council of Jewish Women and the League of Women Voters, died on Jan. 27; **Robert Howard Vierra**, 96, a former resident of Palo Alto who worked at PG&E, died on Jan. 27; **Stanley Charles Kazul**, 88, a former resident of Palo Alto who served in the U.S. Air Force and practiced law for more than 30 years, died on Jan. 13; **Leo Dreyer**, 88, a longtime resident of Atherton who served in the U.S. Navy and started his own company, Heritage House Tableware in Redwood City, died on Jan. 11; **Ruth Liebes Shavel**, 90, a former resident of Atherton who was known for her volunteer work, died on Jan. 9; **Katharine "Kay" Wallace Thompson**, 96, a longtime resident of Woodside who was known for her volunteer work and as president of the Mother's Club at Castilleja School, died on Dec. 30; and **Bear Capron**, 72, a longtime resident of Mountain View who taught drama at Castilleja School, died on Dec. 22.

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

Pulse

A weekly compendium
of vital statistics

Lost property	11
Missing person	2
Suspicious circumstances	2
Vandalism	13

Menlo Park Feb. 1-7

Violence related Bayfront Expressway/University

Avenue, 2/1, 9:26 a.m.; arson
1500 block Laurel Place, 2/1, 12:41 p.m.; spousal abuse
500 block Central Avenue, 2/1, 4:21 p.m.; robbery
200 block Van Buren Road, 2/3, 11:28 a.m.; child abuse
1400 block Woodland Avenue, 2/5, 3:15 p.m.; battery
500 block Oak Grove Avenue, 2/6, 11:34 p.m.; robbery

Theft related

Burglary 2
Fraud 4
Grand theft 1
Petty theft 6

Vehicle related

Driving w/ suspended license 1
Theft from auto 2
Vehicle accident/injury 1
Vehicle accident/no injury 1
Vehicle tow 1

Alcohol or drug related

Driving under influence 2
Drug activity 1
Sale of liquor to minor 2

Miscellaneous

Business check 2
CPS referral 1
Disturbance 1
Found property 3
Gang validation 1
Info. case 3
Lost property 2
Meet citizen 1
Mental health evaluation 2
Outside assistance 1
Resist arrest 1
Sex registrant 1
Suspicious circumstances 1
Town ordinance violation 1
Vandalism 2
Warrant arrest 2
Welfare check 1

POLICE CALLS

Palo Alto Jan. 28-Feb. 3

Violence related

Ferne Avenue, 11/22/2021, 12 a.m.; lewd or lascivious acts w/child under 14 years

San Antonio Road, 1/21, 8:36 p.m.; inflict corporal injury on spouse/cohabitant/dating relationship

Mosher Way, 1/27, 11:08 a.m.; inflict corporal injury on spouse/cohabitant/dating relationship

Middlefield Road, 1/27, 1:01 p.m.; robbery

El Camino Real, 1/28, 3:52 p.m.; robbery

Theft related

Burglary 2
Credit card forgery 1
Grand theft 7
Identity theft 2
Petty theft 17
Shoplifting 4

Vehicle related

Auto recovery 1
Hit and run 7
Theft from auto 38
Theft of vehicle parts 18
Vehicle accident/injury 6
Vehicle accident/no injury 10

Alcohol or drug related

Driving under influence 2

Miscellaneous

Adult Protective Services referral 1
Court order violation 1
Disorderly conduct 4
Elder abuse 1
False imprisonment 1

Gina Marie Alexander

Gina Marie Alexander, 63, of Menlo Park, passed away on December 20th, 2022 at Stanford Hospital surrounded by loved ones. Gina was born in Ottawa, Canada and moved to Menlo Park with her family in 1972 where she resided for the rest of her life. A graduate of Woodside High School, she spent many years doing volunteer work and working in the customer service industry. A resident of a close-knit neighborhood in Menlo Park, Gina will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved her. Gina was a deeply devoted daughter to her father Ronald Alexander, who preceded her in death in May 2017, and her mother Carmelia Alexander, who passed away in February 2000. She is survived by her brothers Dohn and Paul, as well as many loving friends and extended family. In lieu of flowers or gifts, those wishing to make a donation in Gina's memory can do so at The Buxton National Historic Site & Museum, Children's Health Council, or a charity of their choice.



PAID OBITUARY

Spectrum

Editorials, letters and opinions

Guest Opinion

Why energy prices are so high this winter — and how to get help

By Dean Batchelor

The prices that the City of Palo Alto Utilities (CPAU) and other utilities in the region pay for natural gas and electricity delivered to customers rose significantly this winter. Most residents will see the effects of these increased prices on their bills in the first few months of 2023. The city is urging people to save energy to avoid surprisingly high utility bills and offering several ways for customers to get help paying bills if needed.



As Palo Alto's municipally owned utility, CPAU works hard to keep rates low for residents and businesses, while prioritizing green energy sources and infrastructure to bolster the resiliency of the city's power supply.

This winter, unusually cold temperatures boosted demand for heating even as regional prices for gas hit historic highs. Gas commodity prices for January this year were five times higher than last January's gas prices, which could triple customers' gas bills. Gas bills are tripling instead of increasing over five times because the commodity price is only one component (about 40%) of a gas utility customer's bill. The rest is for the cost of transporting gas to

customers and environmental fees, which have not increased significantly compared to last year. A gas customer's volumetric charges will vary based on the volume of gas used in any given month. We now have a new tool on our website at cityofpaloalto.org/ReadYourBill to help you calculate your gas bill.

The February 2023 gas rate is lower than January 2023, declining from about \$4 per therm in January to \$1.26 per therm in February. However, most customer bills in February will remain high, possibly higher than January, as the consumption and charges will be reflective of January usage and rates. Thankfully the declining costs in February will offer some relief for gas bills in March and beyond.

Meanwhile, the cost of electricity also has risen sharply. The recent drought reduced the supply of energy available from hydroelectric sources, pushing prices higher as a result.

Like other utilities, CPAU does not mark up the prices it pays for gas and electric power for our customers. But soaring energy prices mean residents and businesses across California will face higher gas and electricity bills.

As CPAU's director, I know high bills are a tough hit for many in our community, especially right after the holidays. That's why I want to personally encourage Palo Alto residents and businesses to take advantage of our programs and

payment plans set up to help you save this quarter.

I also want to assure you that we are doing everything in our power to minimize the impact on your bills, while continuing our focus on delivering safe, reliable, cost-effective, and sustainable services. We are closely monitoring the situation with energy prices and working hard to provide you with the most competitive rates available. We also are collaborating with our legislators and partners, the Northern California Power Agency (NCPA) and California Municipal Utilities Association (CMUA) to seek long-term solutions for keeping energy costs low.

Immediate ways to save on energy and get help with your bills

Free energy advisory assessments: The city is providing free assessments from our home energy advisor, the Home Efficiency Genie, to help people reduce consumption and save money. You can call for a free phone consultation at 650-713-3411 and schedule a home assessment appointment online at cityofpaloalto.org/efficiencygenie.

Free business efficiency service: Businesses can also get a free onsite assessment and customized efficiency recommendations through CPAU's Business Energy Advisor program at cityofpaloalto.org.

org/businessenergyadvisor or by calling 650-761-6417.

Extended payment arrangements: The city is offering payment arrangements for those who need extra time to pay their winter gas bills as well as other financial assistance measures. Payments can be extended for 6-8 months. Contact Utilities Customer Service at 650-329-2161, visit our Utilities Customer Service page at cityofpaloalto.org/Departments/Utilities/Customer-Service or email UtilitiesCustomerService@cityofpaloalto.org for more information.

Online energy efficiency steps to take now: There are many daily activities all of us can take to reduce our energy use. Visit cityofpaloalto.org/efficiencytips for immediate no-cost and low-cost ways to save energy now and help keep utility bill costs low.

When it comes to saving energy, every kilowatt counts — but this year, especially, your bank account will thank you.

Taking climate action

There's another reason to start making energy efficiency improvements right now. Climate change is a key driver of severe weather, such as what we have seen this winter. This winter our region saw much colder temperatures earlier in the year than we historically experience. Although winters in the U.S. overall are seemingly getting

shorter and warmer, climate change also creates conditions for big swings in temperature and severe weather, including extreme cold and heavy snowfall, severe rainfall and flooding, and extreme heat and drought that fuel wildfires.

Palo Alto isn't standing by, but is acting now to reduce the city and community's greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change 80% below 1990 levels by 2030. Last month, the City Council named "Climate Change and the Natural Environment: Protection and Adaptation" as a top priority for 2023.

As the impacts of our changing climate, such as extreme weather patterns, become more evident, we must work together individually and collectively to make our 80 x 30 vision a reality. Steps you take right now to reduce your energy consumption and power bill will also move Palo Alto closer to achieving our community's bold commitment to measurable climate action.

CPAU is ready to help you every step of the way.

Learn more about rates at cityofpaloalto.org/ratesoverview and find out about other programs and services available to residents and businesses at cityofpaloalto.org/waystosave. ■

Dean Batchelor, director of City of Palo Alto Utilities, can be reached at Dean.Batchelor@cityofpaloalto.org.

Letters

Let the sun set on natural gas

Editor,

The science is clear: To slow down climate change, we must stop burning natural gas. Residential gas appliances generate twice the emissions of all California gas-fired power plants, combined (according to data from the Sierra Club). Accordingly, local climate and faith organizations asked the Palo Alto City Council to set a sunset date for natural gas in Palo Alto.

Studies from Stanford, UCLA and Harvard universities show significant health impacts from burning gas. "Natural" gas is a

toxic mix of methane and carcinogens such as benzene. Burning methane releases nitrogen oxides, which pose acute health risks --including asthma, diabetes, premature mortality and cancer -- to children and older adults.

Using gas when the power goes out can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning. Instead, rely on new battery technology to keep critical items powered on. Check out "power stations," 1000+ watt hour batteries that can power a fridge, hot plate, electric kettle, etc. and recharge using standalone solar panels or a 12 volt car "cigarette lighter" plug. Many electric vehicles offer ways to tap into the electricity in their batteries. Power walls are another option.

For sure, our electric grid needs an upgrade; it needs

more capacity in some areas of the city. The grid also needs to monitor and manage electricity flow, minimizing costs while maximizing reliability and resiliency. Palo Alto will begin grid updates in 2024, with a projected end date of 2030, but with some neighborhoods ready much earlier.

Setting a sunset date now enables residents and businesses to plan proactively when to switch out their gas appliances, avoiding purchases of gas-powered appliances that will need to be decommissioned too early in their life cycles.

Setting a gas sunset date in Palo Alto will help us make for a smoother and more equitable transition to electricity.

Hilary Glann
Ilima Way, Palo Alto

This week on Town Square

Town Square is an online discussion forum at PaloAltoOnline.com/square

In response to 'Former Palo Alto school board member Melissa Baten Caswell dies'

Posted Feb. 7 by Chris Dewees, a resident of Leland Manor/ Garland Drive:

"I met Melissa as a freshman in college. Her dorm was adjacent to mine, and I have many memories of her happy, bubbly personality during a chaotic, fun and challenging college transition year. Somehow, decades later, we ended up in the same community where, although we were never friends, I was happy to cheer her accomplishments as we moved through middle age. Very, very sorry to learn she has passed."

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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

For more information, contact John Bricker at jbricker@paweekly.com or 650-223-6517 or Editor Jocelyn Dong at editor@paweekly.com.

Public Notices

RENINGER
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
 File No.: FBN691776
 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
 1.) Reninger, located at 817 Colorado Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94303, Santa Clara County.
 This business is owned by: an Individual.
 The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):
 JARMILA KOVARIK
 817 Colorado Avenue
 Palo Alto, CA 94303
 Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/19/2023
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara on January 19 2023.
 (PAW Jan 27, Feb 3, 10 and 17, 2023)

MANSOOR FINE JEWELERS
SYNERGETIC CONSULTING
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
 File No.: FBN692252
 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
 1.) Mansoor Fine Jewelers, 2.) Synergetic Consulting, located at 530 Ramona St., Palo Alto, CA 94301, Santa Clara County.
 This business is owned by: a Corporation.
 The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):
 KIMARIE DESIGNS, INC.
 909 Marina Village Pkwy, Ste 143
 Alameda, CA 94501
 CA
 Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 10/01/2018
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara on February 01 2023.
 (PAW Feb 10, 17, 24 and Mar 3, 2023)

GMG LANDSCAPING GARDENING SERVICE
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
 File No.: fbn691358
 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
 1.) gmg landscaping gardening service, located at 290 ventura ave 2 Palo Alto ca 94306, Santa Clara.
 This business is owned by: an Individual.
 The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):
 JOSE GUSTAVO IGLESIAS
 290 ventura ave 2
 Palo Alto ca 94306
 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 on January 05 2023.
 (PAW Feb 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2023)

TACOS AND EGGS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
 File No.: FBN691191
 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
 1.) TACOS AND EGGS, located at 1505 S Winchester Blvd., San Jose, CA 95128, Santa Clara County.
 This business is owned by: an Individual.
 The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):
 MIGUEL ANGEL CRUZ MORALES
 1969 Tate St. Apt. #C103
 East Palo Alto, CA 94303
 Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 12/29/2022
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara on December 29 2022.
 (PAW Jan 20, 27, Feb 3 and 10, 2023)

VISTA.AI
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
 File No.: FBN692419
 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
 1.) Vista.ai, located at 431 Florence St. Suite 100, Palo Alto, CA 94301, Santa Clara County.
 This business is owned by: a Corporation.
 The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):
 HeartVista, Inc
 431 Florence St. Suite 100
 Palo Alto, CA 94301
 CA
 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 on February 6 2023.
 (PAW Feb 10, 17, 24 and Mar 3, 2023)

CREATRIX INSTITUTE
C STUDIOS
FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
 File No.: FBN691725
 The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:
 1.) Creatrix Institute, 2.) C Studios, located at 134 Brenton ct., Unit A 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):
 CREATRIX INSTITUTE LLC
 134 Brenton Ct Unit A
 Mountain View, CA 94043
 CA
 Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 11/17/2022
 This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara on January 18 2023.
 (PAW Feb 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2023)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA
 Case No.: 22CV408877
TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:
 Petitioner: Caroll Eugene Smith filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
 CAROLL EUGENE SMITH to CARROLL EUGENE SMITH
THE COURT ORDERS that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted.
 Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING: 04/25/2023, 08:45 a.m., Dept. 13 of the Superior Court of California, County of Santa Clara, 191 N. First Street, San Jose, CA 95113.
 A copy of this ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county:
 PALO ALTO WEEKLY
 Date: 12/22/2022
 Jacqueline Arroyo
 JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT
 (PAW Feb 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2023)

NOTICE OF INTENT TO SELL REAL PROPERTY
 In the Matter of the Estate of ANTHONY MERLO,
 Decedent,
 Case No. 22PR192531

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on or after **February 16, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.**, Mary Ann Warren, Public Administrator of the County of Santa Clara, as Administrator of the Estate of Anthony Merlo, intends to sell at private sale, to the highest net bidder, all of the Estate's right, title and interest in and to certain real property located at 2430 Bryant Street, Palo Alto, CA 94301, which property is more particularly described as follows:
 Lot 12, in Block 203, as shown on that certain Map entitled "South Court Addition", which Map was filed for record in the Office of the Recorder of the County of Santa Clara, State of California on June 17, 1929 in Book "X" of Maps, at Pages 42 and 43.

APN: 132-17-04
 ARB: 132-17-04

The sale may be subject to confirmation by the above-entitled court. The real property will be sold subject to current taxes, covenants, conditions, restrictions, reservations, rights, rights-of-way, and easements of record, with any encumbrances of record to be satisfied from the purchase price.
 The real property is to be sold on an "as is" basis except for title.
 Written bids or offers for the purchase of the real property are hereby invited. For additional information about submitting bids or offers please contact the listing agent, George Montanari, Compass, 750 University Ave., Ste. 150, Los Gatos, CA 95032; (408) 497-2213.
 All bids or offers must be accompanied by a ten (10) percent deposit by wire transfer, with the balance of the purchase price to be paid in cash upon close of escrow.
 Taxes, rents, operating and maintenance expenses, and premiums on insurance acceptable to recording of conveyance, transfer tax and any title insurance policy shall be at the expense of the purchaser or purchasers.
 Mary Ann Warren, Public Administrator of the County of Santa Clara, as Administrator of the Estate of Anthony Merlo, reserves the right to reject any and all bids or offers.
 All written bids or offers will be opened remotely during an online meeting held **at 2:00 p.m. on February 16, 2023**. For information on the remote online meeting please contact the listing agent.

Date: 01/18/2023
 /s/ _____
 MARY ANN WARREN (or designee)
 Public Administrator of the County of Santa Clara,
 Administrator

JAMES R. WILLIAMS
 County Counsel
 /s/ _____
 MARK A. GONZALEZ
 Lead Deputy County Counsel
 Attorneys for Administrator
 (PAW Jan 27, Feb 3 and 10, 2023)

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

- Fictitious Business Name
- Abandonment of Fictitious Business Name
- Name Change
- Partnership Withdrawal or Dissolution
- Petition to Administer Estate - Probate Hearing
- Notice of Bulk Sale
- Legal Summons
- Trustee Sale

The deadline is Monday at 11:59 pm.

Visit PaloAltoOnline.com/legal_notices/
 For assistance email LegalNotices@pawebly.com.

Answers to this week's puzzles, which can be found on page 23.

B	A	L	M		S	C	A	T		A	J	A	R	
A	C	A	I		C	I	R	C	A		S	A	V	E
S	H	I	N	E	R	B	O	C	K		K	N	E	E
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5	6	3	8	1	7	9	4	2
4	1	2	9	8	5	7	3	6
9	3	5	4	7	6	2	8	1
7	8	6	3	2	1	4	9	5

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Arts & Entertainment

A weekly guide to music, theater, art, culture, books and more, edited by Heather Zimmerman

A Tuscan reverie

Pamela Walsh Gallery presents a collection of Italy-inspired paintings by Andrew Faulkner

By Sheryl Nonnenberg

If all this cold and wet weather has made you pine for warmer climes, consider a visit to the Pamela Walsh Gallery in Palo Alto, where the work of Marin-based painter Andrew Faulkner is on view. This solo exhibition, the third for Faulkner in this gallery, is made up of 20 oil-on-canvas paintings that resulted from a trip to Italy last year. “*Tuscan Light*,” a landscape series that will take you vicariously to sunny Italy, is on display through March 4.

Walsh, who is celebrating three years in her Ramona Street space, said that the idea for the show was conceived last summer when she learned that Faulkner was traveling to Italy in order to study with famed Spanish colorist Carlos San Millán. “It was just an idea,” she said. “In concept, you hope that the idea generates creative inspiration that will ultimately become paintings worthy of an exhibition. It doesn’t always work out that way, but when it does, it is exhilarating.”

Faulkner, in remarks at the exhibition opening, said that Italy has always held a special place in his heart. A childhood trip with family ignited his interest, which led to a stint as a foreign exchange student in Rome when he was in high school. The opportunity to study with Millán, known for his mastery of color and abstracted landscapes — in a 1,000-year-old villa in Tuscany — was too good to pass up. When asked what the biggest takeaway was from the workshop, Faulkner replied, “Think more, paint less.” How this translated into the paintings in this series is “pausing for more considered strokes and color mixing choices.” In addition, he began using larger palette knives. “This has simplified some of my larger color areas.”

Walking around the gallery, there is no doubt that these are views from Tuscany, both in Florence and the countryside. Recognizable sites like the Ponte Vecchio bridge, Brunelleschi’s Duomo cathedral, the Campanile of Giotto and the Uffizi Gallery are represented in the glorious, golden light that is so characteristic of this region. The artist also traveled into the outlying

countryside, where rolling hills and cypress trees are hallmarks of this celebrated wine-growing landscape. Faulkner worked in plein air but did not create the paintings on site, instead utilizing his skills as a graphic designer to make preliminary digital sketches.

“I had a design studio for 30 years and Adobe Software was one of my largest clients,” said Faulkner. “I became an expert in using creative digital tools.” Most of the pieces in the show were sketched digitally and then painted in oils. Upon his return from Italy, all 20 paintings were executed in a three-month period. Said Walsh, “There is a freshness to his approach and palette that was definitely emboldened by his trip to Tuscany.”

That boldness is evident in Faulkner’s treatment of the Ponte Vecchio (“Ponte Vecchio Revisited”). Yes, there is depiction of the famous span in its entirety, but then he hones in on just a small portion of the structure for a close-up, enlarged view. He explained that this was a method of “deconstruction” born out of curiosity. “I am always looking for ways to abstract the landscape and distill a sense of light to its most base level.” The result is like adjusting a camera lens to see one area in more detail, while the surrounding area becomes blurred. All of this is rendered in lush strokes of ochre for the structure that are countered by cool tones of blue and green for the waters of the river Arno.

“I think color is like a chemistry set. If you add too much or too little into a mixture, it can throw it out of balance. My work is all about experimenting with colors, light/dark, cool/warm, bold/subtle,” Faulkner said of his color choices.

That experimentation is on full view in “Tetti” (rooftops), where mainly rectangular blocks of color create, in the sparest manner, structures that abut and overlap each other. The warm oranges and yellows are offset and balanced by areas of aqua and turquoise, all leading the eye to a pale blue sky. The artist made reference to the “earthiness” of the country, as he has depicted in “Cipressi”



Courtesy Pamela Walsh Gallery

The “*Tuscan Light*” show at Pamela Walsh Gallery features 20 paintings by artist Andrew Faulkner that capture scenes from his travels to Italy, where he studied with famed Spanish colorist Carlos San Millán.

and “Sul Lago.” But he is clearly not out to make literal representations of these scenic places, as can be seen in several paintings that are totally abstract like “Luccicare (Shimmer).” Often, however, there is just enough of a familiar landmark, like the steeple in “Lucia della Citta,” to root you in this atmospheric setting.

Back in Florence, a tourist destination that is usually crowded at all times of the year, Faulkner chose to depict a tranquil scene on a street leading to the Duomo. In “Passeggiata” (a casual stroll usually taken in the evening), a solitary figure strides towards the cathedral. Flanked by buildings rendered loosely in tones of burnt orange (with an occasional pop of

blue), the man is blissfully alone and all is still and quiet under the Tuscan sun. It’s a charming scene and unusual for Faulkner, who rarely includes figures in his landscapes. “I thought this man added a sense of scale and some movement to the piece,” he said. Look carefully at the right side of this painting and you will see a crudely incised drawing of a chair. It is not your imagination but, said the artist, a signature of sorts. “It represents the primitive stroke a child would make, embracing the primitive nature of innocent and imperfect marks.”

Faulkner said in an email interview that he has really embraced the idea of travel providing a focus for a body of work. “As a

contrast to the creamy/warm light of Tuscany, I am considering a trip to Japan to see what sort of color palette could be developed.”

Walsh believes that the leap of faith she took in offering Andrew Faulkner a show, before even seeing the paintings, paid off nicely. “There is some magic that he has conjured to transport you to a place,” she said. And what a lovely place to be transported to.

“*Tuscan Light*” is on view through March 4 at Pamela Walsh Gallery, 540 Ramona St., Palo Alto. pamelawalshgallery.com. ■

Email Contributing Writer Sheryl Nonnenberg at nonnenberg@aol.com.



Courtesy Pamela Walsh Gallery

The paintings “*Luce della Citta*,” left, and “*Piccolo Universo*” are part of the “*Tuscan Light*” show at Pamela Walsh Gallery.

Eating Out

The gift of chocolate

From vegan truffles to salted bourbon caramels, find your fill of Valentine's Day treats at Peninsula chocolatiers

By Kate Bradshaw

It's almost Valentine's Day, and while there's no shortage of chocolates from name-brand companies dotting the aisles of local grocery store chains, the Peninsula is home to a number of small businesses focused on the craft of making chocolate. Here are 10 chocolatiers around the region where you can find Valentine's Day gifts for a special someone or satisfy your sweet tooth at any time of year.

Alegio Chocolate, Palo Alto

Palo Alto's Alegio Chocolate distinguishes itself for its global flavors, drawing on founder Claudio Corallo's background in coffee cultivation in Africa and Latin America. Many options available online come in bars with unique flavor combinations, like 70% chocolate with crystallized orange peels or crystallized ginger, or grapes in pear distillate.

Alegio Chocolate, 522 Bryant St., Palo Alto; 650-324-4500, alegio.com.
Instagram: @alegio_chocolate.

Fleur de Cocoa, Los Gatos

Fleur de Cocoa, a French patisserie and chocolate maker, offers handcrafted chocolates made in small batches, so flavors may vary from week to week. Among the chocolates served are the "Monkey Barr" made with dark chocolate and banana; "Chloe" made with white chocolate, violet and blackcurrant ganache; and "Paris," dark chocolate with a signature tea ganache.

Fleur de Cocoa, 39 North Santa Cruz Ave., Los Gatos; 408-354-3574, fleurdecocoa.com.
Instagram: @fleur.de.cocoa.

Go to Chocolate, San Carlos

San Carlos-based wholesale chocolatier Go to Chocolate has a wide selection of unique chocolate products, including a collection of vegan chocolate offerings and fruit- and flower-based gel and ganache fillings. These include: apricot truffles in dark chocolate, agave truffles, white chocolate truffles with lemon zest and cinnamon infused cream, rose petal gel in dark chocolate and an avocado mint meltaway. They don't have a storefront you can visit, so the best way to pick up their goods is to place an online order or catch them at the College of San Mateo farmers market held on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Go to Chocolate, 765 Old County Road # A, San Carlos; 650-339-1900, gotochocolate.com.
Instagram: @gotochocolate.

Shekoh Confections, Palo Alto

Shekoh Moossavi of Shekoh Chocolates in Palo Alto trained at l'École Valrhona and adds global flavors to her chocolate craft. Visitors can customize their boxes in person or online. Chocolates come in brightly colored mirror glazes and include flavors like Grand Marnier, saffron, mezcal, orange blossom, bergamot and yuzu in addition to dessert-inspired combos like s'mores and milk 'n cookies.

Shekoh Confections, 2305 El Camino Real B, Palo Alto; 650-384-6322, shekohconfections.com.
Instagram: @shekohconfections.

Snake & Butterfly, Campbell

Campbell's Snake & Butterfly is an organic chocolatier specializing in caramels and truffles in innovative flavors and bright colors, along with single-origin chocolate bars. Flavors include bacon caramels, Mexican coffee truffles, blueberry balsamic truffles and salted bourbon caramels. They also sell treats like peanut butter cups and mixed nut turtles.

Snake & Butterfly, 191 East Campbell Ave., Campbell; 408-508-4788, snakeandbutterfly.com.
Instagram: @snakeandbutterfly.

SWEET55, Half Moon Bay and Palo Alto

Swiss chocolatier SWEET55 offers intricately decorated chocolates at its two shops in Half Moon Bay and Palo Alto, including specialty confections highlighting chocolates from different parts of the world like the African Nights chocolate, which comes with a mocha ganache made with Sao Tome 75% chocolate, caramel and a dark shell, while the California Republic chocolate is made up of dark ganache, olive oil, Meyer lemon and rosemary flavors. While the original chocolate shop is in Half Moon Bay, last year owner Ursula Schnyder opened a shop at Palo Alto's Town & Country Village.



Photo by Michelle Le

Above: Co-owner Adams Holland fills the display case with candy at Timothy Adams Chocolates on Feb. 6, 2018. Left: A heart-shaped chocolate is among the sweets available at Sweet55. Photo by Magali Gauthier.



SWEET55, 855 El Camino Real Suite 123, Palo Alto, 225 CA-1 Suite 104C, Half Moon Bay; 650-618-6525, sweet55.com.
Instagram: @sweet55swiss.

Sweet Shop, Los Altos

For more kid-friendly fare, consider the candy store Sweet Shop, tucked away in a residential corner of Los Altos offering bulk gummy and sour candies alongside chocolate items like malt balls. As an added bonus, 5% of proceeds go to local schools.

Sweet Shop, 994 Los Altos Ave., Los Altos; 650-941-7467, sweetshoplosaltos.com.
Instagram: @sweetshoplosaltos.

Timothy Adams Chocolates, Palo Alto

Bursting with vivid pinks and blues and a signature running rabbit logo, Timothy Adams Chocolates has chocolates adorned with beautiful decorations and packed with flavor. Many chocolates are single-origin and come with unique flavors like a sour cherry marzipan, absinthe and cognac. The shop offers chocolate and champagne tastings, boxes to go and workshops teaching visitors how to make chocolate bonbons.

Timothy Adams Chocolates, 539

Bryant St., Palo Alto; 415-755-8923, timothyadamschocolates.com.
Instagram: @timothyadamschocolates.

tinyB Chocolate, South San Francisco

Chocolatier Renata Stoica is offering Brazilian brigadeiros — bite-size fudgy truffle balls — made with sweetened condensed milk, semisweet chocolate, butter and cocoa powder and with flavor blends including pistachios, almonds and coconut. The chocolate shop is also selling Valentine's Day kits to make your own brigadeiros.

tinyB Chocolate, 1 S Linden Ave. Unit #5, South San Francisco; 415-854-0344, tinybchocolate.com.
Instagram: @tinybchocolate. ■

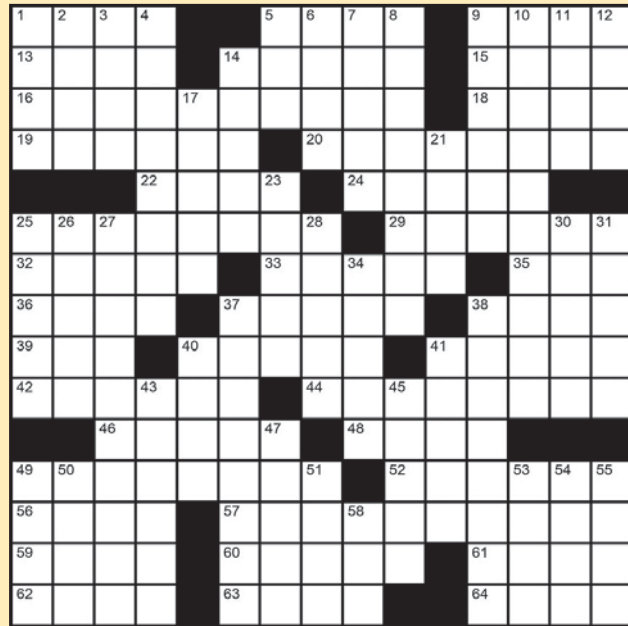
Email Associate Digital Editor Kate Bradshaw at peninsulafoodist.com or embarcaderopublishing.com.

Dig into food news. Follow the Peninsula Foodist on Instagram @peninsulafoodist and subscribe to the newsletter at almanacnews.com/express/foodist to get insights on the latest openings and closings, learn what the Foodist is excited about eating, read exclusive interviews and keep up on the trends affecting local restaurants.

Across

1. Aromatic ointment
5. Fitzgerald forte
9. Like some doors
13. "Superfood" berry
14. Approximately
15. Put on the hard drive
16. Flagship brew of what's now Spoetzl Brewery, named for the town in Texas
18. ACL's joint
19. Tea holder
20. Sweater style
22. Tongue-in-cheek entertainment
24. "The game is ____"
25. Side-to-side skid
29. Surpass in smarts
32. Shaw on the jazz clarinet
33. Peculiarity
35. Suffix with ethyl and propyl
36. Pager sound
37. Like some 1940s pinups
38. Clamors
39. Web connection co.
40. Invoice words before a date
41. Assume as a fact
42. Not these or those
44. Circle segments, in some circles
46. Peeved
48. Do some karaoke
49. Term for a long streak of championships (last achieved in major pro sports by the 1980s New York Islanders)
52. Deeply dismayed
56. ____ Kadabra (enemy of the Flash)
57. 1977 four-wheel drive coupe that sorta resembled a pickup
59. Type of skateboarding that includes inclines
60. Birthplace of the violin
61. Egg, in Paris
62. "Game of Thrones" heroine Stark
63. Foam football brand
64. Knit material

"In the Wurst Way"— find the missing links. Matt Jones



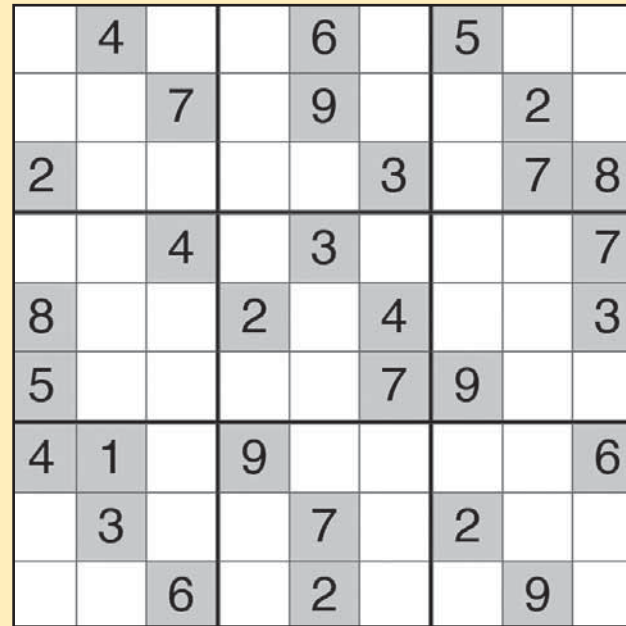
Answers on page 20.

Down

1. Enjoy the limelight (or sunlight)
2. Bruise symptom
3. Cafe au ____
4. Ice cream flavor that's usually green or white
5. Blood relation, slangily
6. "Peter Pan" critter
7. African capital on the Gulf of Guinea
8. Become... something
9. Beginning of a JFK quote
10. Former Sleater-Kinney drummer who also worked with Stephen Malkmus and the Shins
11. "Voulez-vous coucher ____ moi?"
12. Smell real bad
14. Espresso foam

17. Bring delight to
21. "The Caine Mutiny" author Herman
23. Arouse, as one's interest
25. Italian model who graced many a romance novel cover
26. "____ my case!"
27. Superstar who holds records for most three-pointers in a career, season, and NBA finals
28. Pyramid-shaped Vegas hotel
30. Belly button type
31. Students' challenges
34. New York college and Scottish isle, for two
37. Brings en masse to an event, maybe
38. Pillsbury mascot (whose name is Poppin' Fresh)
40. Roller coaster feature

This week's SUDOKU



Answers on page 20.

www.sudoku.name

41. Stop-motion kids' show set in Antarctica
43. Literary misprints
45. Daily record
47. Pan-fry
49. Broad bean
50. "Remote Control" host Ken
51. Ski resort transport
53. Rectangle calculation
54. Dino's end?
55. Initialism from "Winnie the Pooh" specials that predated text messages
58. TV alien who lived with the Tanners

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2327Olympic.com

303 ATHERTON AVENUE
ATHERTON

\$16,900,000 | 7 Bd | 8.5 Bth
303AthertonAve.com

485 FERNE AVENUE
PALO ALTO

\$3,488,000 | 4 Bd | 2 Bth
485Ferne.com

75 ISABELLA AVENUE
ATHERTON

\$26,580,000 | 2.56 Acres
75Isabella.com

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