

Weekly

Should parkland
make way for transit
improvements?

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AGAINST THE TIDE

Palo Alto joins regional fight
against algal blooms with
\$369 million wastewater
plant upgrades

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Stanford
MEDICINE

Health Care

Food for Heart

ANATOMY OF

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Upfront

Local news, information and analysis

Consultants: El Camino plan puts bikers at risk

Outside review suggests Caltrans plan fails to align with 'safe system' approach

By Gennady Sheyner

As the state Department of Transportation pushes ahead with its plan to remove parking spaces and install bike lanes along El Camino Real, project proponents insist that the project intends to minimize collisions and improve road safety.

But a new review of the Caltrans commissioned by the City of Palo Alto reaches a starkly different conclusion. Conducted by Fehr & Peers, the review concluded that the Caltrans proposal fails to address the high-speed conditions that would continue to exist on

El Camino and which would continue to pose "significant risks to vulnerable road users."

The review, which the firm released on March 11, suggests that the Caltrans plan would not be consistent with the "safe system" approach, which the agency has adopted and which the city is preparing to integrate into its new bike plan. The approach, the consultants write, "recognizes the role

of kinetic energy (speed and vehicle mass) and exposure as the root causes of severe injuries and fatalities, and requires a redundant, holistic, and proactive approach to address systemic risk.

"The core principles of the approach are to first reduce speed, and then to separate users in space and time consistent with the contextually appropriate speed," Steve David and Meghan Mitman of Fehr

& Peers wrote in the new report.

The bike lane plan, they argue, fails to do that. It does not address the high-speed conditions for vulnerable users in the corridor, which pose the greatest risk of injuries and fatalities. In particular, it retains the present number of lanes and the existing lane widths while removing the "friction" that

(continued on page 38)



Magali Gauthier

Getting back to the basics

Instructor Garth Harwood, right, introduces students to the common sow thistle during a foraging basics class at Hidden Villa in Los Altos Hills on March 9.

UTILITIES

Stemming the red tide

With its \$369M upgrade of the wastewater plant, Palo Alto joins regional effort to prevent algal blooms

By Gennady Sheyner

The concrete tank that overlooks the Palo Alto Baylands from Embarcadero Way resembles an industrial-sized Jacuzzi where ducks float through murky, bubbly water, seemingly oblivious to the lightly pungent, industrial scent of the processed sewage.

It is one of four aeration basins that are arranged in a giant square at the city's Regional Quality Control Plant, a sprawling industrial complex that receives and treats sewage from Palo Alto and its partner agencies of Mountain View, East Palo Alto Sanitary District, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and Stanford

University. Three tanks are currently filled, while the fourth basin sits empty as construction workers fortify its concrete base as part of \$369-million upgrade to the treatment plant on Embarcadero Road — the city's most expensive and most complex ongoing infrastructure project.

The effort, which the city kicked off in 2022 and which it plans to complete in 2028, is the biggest upgrade that the plant has seen since 1972, when these basins were initially installed, said plant manager James Allen. Its largest component is a \$193-million upgrade to the secondary treatment system, an industrial process that removes chemicals such as ammonia and nitrogen from sewage. Other ongoing components of the project include a new power distribution system and the rehabilitation of the primary sedimentary tanks, which are located just west of the aera-

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BUSINESS

Will chain stores make a comeback in Palo Alto?

To cure local retail blues, planning commissioners favor loosening retail rules

By Gennady Sheyner

Palo Alto leaders often profess their love of boutique shops and mom-and-pop businesses, but their attitude toward chain stores is far more complicated.

Even though the city boasts a variety of businesses that fall under the "formula retail" umbrella, including the CVS pharmacy on University Avenue, Peet's Coffee at Town & Country Village and the McDonald's on El Camino Real, council members rarely sing the praises of these establishments. In 2015, the Palo Alto City Council went as far as to ban any businesses from California Avenue that have 10 or more locations unless they receive conditional use permits, a process that can be lengthy and unpredictable.

But with the retail environment struggling, the city may now be changing its posture. As part of its ongoing effort to boost economic development, the city is now looking at revising a host of retail policies, including those that require ground-floor retail in commercial areas. Loosening restrictions on chain stores is on top of the list.

That's according to the city's Planning and Transportation Commission, which has been painstakingly reviewing in recent weeks a host of proposals from the city's business consultants, Streetsense and Michael Baker Associates. During its March 27 review, the commission generally



**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>

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

**MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024 5:30 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS & HYBRID**

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

SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY (5:30 - 5:55 PM)

1. Presentation from Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (Midpen) to City Council
2. Review List of Applicants for Board and Commission Openings and Select Candidates to Interview. CEQA Status - Not a project

STUDY SESSION (6:15 - 7:15 PM)

3. Study Session: Palo Alto Link One-Year Service Evaluation and Report; CEQA status – not a project.

CONSENT CALENDAR (7:15 – 7:20 PM)

4. Approval of Minutes from March 11, 2024 Meeting
5. Approval of Contract Amendment Number 1 to Contract Number S24190818 with Integrated Design 360 in the Amount of \$82,200 and Extension of the Contract Term through December 30, 2024 for development of a “One Margin” Reach Code. CEQA Status: Exempt Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15308
6. Approval of Amendments with Professional Account Management LLC, dba Duncan Solutions for Contracts C17164727 and C19171363A for a Combined Additional Amount of \$60,000 (Total not to exceed of \$860,000 and \$767,000 respectively) and to Extend the Contract Terms to December 31, 2024 (total term of eight and five years respectively), for Parking Permitting and Citation Management Services; CEQA Status – Not a Project.
7. Policy and Services Recommendation Regarding Use of Board and Commissions Demographic Data
8. SECOND READING: Adopt a Revised Interim Ordinance to Extend the Interim Parklet Program to July 31, 2024 (from March 31, 2024) and Phase-in Enforcement of the Ongoing Parklet Program through November 1, 2024; and Extend Parking Lot Eating/Drinking Uses to December 31, 2024; CEQA Status- Categorically Exempt (Sections 15301 and 15304(e)) (FIRST READING: March 11, 2024 PASSED 7-0)
9. SECOND READING: Adopt an Ordinance Increasing Council Member Salary From \$1,000/Month to \$1,600/Month, Effective January 1, 2025, as authorized by State law (FIRST READING: March 11, 2024 PASSED 6-1, Tanaka no)

ACTION ITEMS (Item 10: 7:45 - 8:30 PM, Item 11: 8:30 - 9:30 PM)

10. SECOND READING: Ordinance of the Council of the City of Palo Alto Amending Chapter 8.04 (Street, Trees, Shrubs, and Plants) and Chapter 8.10 (Tree Preservation and Management Regulations) (FIRST READING: January 16, 2024 PASSED 5-2, Lythcott-Haims, Tanaka no)
11. Discussion of Caltrans’ Repaving Project of El Camino Real, Including Replacing Existing Parking with Bicycle Lanes, and Potential Approval of a Resolution to Support this Project; CEQA status – categorically exempt.

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

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 broadcasted on Cable TV Channel 26. PowerPoints, videos, or other media to be presented during public comment are accepted only if emailed 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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QUOTE OF THE WEEK



We’re stronger as one community as opposed to being divided.



— **Ahmed Dato**, a tech entrepreneur and Palo Alto resident who gave a speech at the first city-sponsored community iftar last week. See page 11.

Around Town



Courtesy Kristin Meier

Dashiell Meier, a disability advocate from Palo Alto, spoke at the United Nations in New York on March 22 for the World Down Syndrome Day Conference.

CUBBERLEY STRIDES ...

After years of shifting plans, shattered dreams and bureaucratic disagreements, the Palo Alto **City Council** and the **Palo Alto Unified School District** may now be on the brink of a compromise over Cubberley Community Center, which the city has been hoping to upgrade and renovate for decades. The city and the school board released a joint statement on March 26 to say they have made “significant strides” in securing an agreement for the city to expand its share of Cubberley, which would be a precursor to the renovation. The statement notes that the city and the district have met seven times since December 2023 and are now in the “late stages of negotiation.” They had also agreed to hire a mediator to bridge the remaining gap on property terms and price. Council member **Julie Lythcott-Haims**, who heads an ad hoc committee of council members and school board trustees that has been working on the Cubberley project, said this week that the talks are now proceeding “expeditiously.” “While it would be inappropriate of course to give any details, as these negotiations are happening in closed session, I think we can evince a confidence around the expeditiousness and the desire to reach some kind of outcome with Cubberley,” Lythcott-Haims said.

SPARKING CHANGE ...

Palo Alto resident and disability advocate Dashiell Meier spoke in front of the **United Nations** on March 22 for the **World Down Syndrome Day Conference** to

call on doctors to do more to listen to patients with Down syndrome about their symptoms not related to their disability. The conference had attendees from over 20 countries. Meier’s advocacy started young, when he was in first grade and began speaking at Palo Alto elementary school classrooms about his experience with a disability, and has taken him to Sacramento, Washington, D.C., and now the Trusteeship Council Chamber at the UN’s Headquarters in New York.

LINK UP ...

This week, the **City of Palo Alto** announced its rideshare service **Palo Alto Link** will now offer free rides to select destinations for teens 13 to 18 years old. The rides will connect local teens to locations that offer mental health and community services, like the **Teen Center at Mitchell Park Community Center, all of Palo Alto’s libraries, Cubberley Community Center and Lucie Stern Plaza.** “I’m thrilled to see the City prioritizing teen health by providing an easy, free option for us to link to places and spaces with support and community connections,” said **Olivia Chiang, Palo Alto Youth Council** president. Apart from the free destinations, Link rides for teens are just \$1 each, and can be paid with cash or a card. For a full list of free locations for teens, visit www.cityofpaloalto.org/PaloAltoLinkTeen. **Palo Alto Link’s** hours of service are Mondays through Fridays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and rides are available via the app or by calling (650) 505-5772. ■

First candidate announces bid for city council

Human Relations Commission member Katie Causey wants to encourage more housing, start Pride parade

By Gennady Sheyner

Katie Causey, a Palo Alto resident and community organizer, became the first candidate on March 26 to declare candidacy for the Palo Alto City Council.

Causey, who serves on the city's Human Relations Commission, is known for her roles at various local nonprofits, including the Palo Alto Renters' Association, a group that was formed to assist local tenants and that was recently absorbed into the broader pro-housing nonprofit, Palo Alto Forward. Her full-time job is as a community organizer for the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition.

Causey said it was her experiences in helping the tenants who were facing eviction from Layne Court homes in 2022 — and the council's response to those evictions — that propelled her to run. The evictions at Layne Court were among the factors that prompted the council to pass a new law in February 2022 that expanded the types of housing that would be eligible for relocation assistance.

"I had just been talking with the community members, neighbor after neighbor, and they were largely seniors who had lived there for 30 years or more," Causey said in an interview. "They had nowhere to go."

"And I saw that overnight the

council was able to pass this policy and the difference that this made — how that slowed people's eviction and made a massive difference in people's lives."

Housing, she said, would be a top priority if elected. This means not just below-market-rate housing, which everyone on the council agrees is desperately needed, but residential development that targets higher income levels as well.

She also wants to focus on sustainability, which means fixing up sidewalks and making local roads safer for cyclists and pedestrians.

"That means we need roads that aren't too dangerous for neighbors who walk or bike along them; that we don't have narrow, cracked sidewalks preventing neighbors with wheelchairs or mobility aids from using them," Causey said in a statement. "When a road is safe for a 60-year-old in a wheelchair, it's safe for a 6-year-old on a bike. That's how we lead on combating climate change — with safe, sustainable infrastructure."

Causey said that as a council member, she would be committed to creating a more inclusive community. This includes, among oth-

er things, organizing Palo Alto's first LGBTQ+ Pride celebration. Currently, residents need to go to other cities to take part in pride celebrations, she said. Holding a downtown pride parade would not only make more people feel included but it would also enliven the city's commercial areas.

"Palo Alto is a diverse city; all our community members deserve to feel seen, safe, and celebrated," she said in her announcement. "Especially in light of rising loneliness, it's more important than ever that we invest in spaces for community members to come together and strengthen cultural bonds."

That means we need roads that aren't too dangerous for neighbors who walk or bike along them; that we don't have narrow, cracked sidewalks preventing neighbors with wheelchairs or mobility aids from using them. When a road is safe for a 60-year-old in a wheelchair, it's safe for a 6-year-old on a bike. That's how we lead on combating climate change — with safe, sustainable infrastructure."

Causey said she has been interested in volunteering since she was a student at Palo Alto High School, where she joined Key Club and partook in activities like Baylands cleanup days and playground repairs. She went on to George Washington University, where she earned a degree in women's studies.

She ran for a seat on the Palo Alto Unified School District Board of Trustees in 2020 and fell just short, finishing fourth in a race for three open seats.

She is the first candidate to announce a bid for a council that will see four seats up for grabs in November. Council members Lydia Kou and Greg Tanaka are both concluding their second consecutive terms this year and will term out. Mayor Greer Stone and Council member Pat Burt are both concluding their current terms but are eligible to run again.

Causey has already secured the endorsements of elected officials outside Palo Alto, many of whom have been on the frontlines of encouraging housing in their own communities. These include former Redwood City Mayor Giselle Hale, Mountain View council members Lucas Ramirez and Emily Ann Ramos, East Palo Alto Mayor Antonio Lopez and California State Board of Equalization Member Sally Lieber. ■

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



Katie Causey

Online This Week

These and other news stories were posted on Palo Alto Online throughout the week. For longer versions, go to www.PaloAltoOnline.com/news.

Caltrain seeks new space for headquarters

The popular commuter rail line that brings 20,000 riders to 28 points between San Francisco and San Jose, with extensions to Gilroy, has been sharing its headquarters with SamTrans since the 1990s. SamTrans, San Mateo County's bus system, is moving in 2025 to a new office space near the Millbrae Caltrain station. It has invited its roommate to co-locate, but Caltrain is shopping around first. (March 27)

Should parkland make way for a transit road?

As Palo Alto officials look for ways to add parks to accommodate new housing developments, they are also working with Stanford University on a project that appears to move in the other direction: converting a portion of El Camino Park into a roadway for buses. (March 25)

Police: Man with knife robs 7-Eleven

A man armed with a knife robbed a 7-Eleven in the Midtown neighborhood early Friday morning before running off with cash and a box of cigars, Palo Alto police said in a news release. (March 22)

Caltrain receives \$1M in federal funding for safety improvements

Caltrain received \$1 million in federal funding by congressmembers U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Menlo Park, and Kevin Mullin, D-South San Francisco, through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, according to a March 21 press release. (March 21)



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2024 Weekly Themes

Week 1 (6/17-18, 20-21)	MasterChef Junior
Week 2 (6/24 to 6/28)	Arts & Crafts
Week 3 (7/8 to 7/12)	Game Creation
Week 4 (7/15 to 7/19)	Mad Scientist
Week 5 (7/22 to 7/26)	Musical Theater
Week 6 (7/29 to 8/2)	Wonderful Water

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TRANSPORTATION

Plan to cut into El Camino Park for transit route faces resistance

Voters likely to weigh in as critics ask Stanford to dedicate new parkland to make up for the loss

By Gennady Sheyner

A proposal by Stanford University to convert a strip of land of El Camino Park into a roadway for buses received a mixed reaction from the city's Parks and Recreation Commission on March 26, with some members urging the university to replace the parkland that would be lost.

The plan, which Stanford and the Palo Alto city officials are looking to place on the November ballot, calls for "undedicating" about 0.33 acres of land at the park to create a direct connection on Quarry Road for buses between the Palo Alto Transit Center and El Camino Real.

Currently, buses need to rely on University Avenue and University Circle to get to El Camino, a route that takes more time and creates congestion for other road users, project proponents say.

Leslie Lowe, Stanford's director for transportation and environmental planning, said that buses currently take more than 1,200 daily trips on University Circle in both northbound and southbound directions. The Quarry Road link would reduce these trips by about 59%, she said, improving throughput on University Avenue and reducing emissions.

The change is expected to reduce bus trips by five to eight minutes, Lowe said. Some bus operators on the Marguerite system, which serves Stanford, would be able to take buses out of service

because of the time savings.

"The bus would be able to do the route so much quicker, so they wouldn't have to run as many buses," Lowe said. "It's huge savings."

But while Stanford and the city's Office of Transportation fully support the change, members of the parks commission had some concerns about losing parkland. Even though the roads would only take up about 0.24 acres in a largely unused portion of the 10.75-acre park, Shani Kleinhaus argued that these numbers downplay the project's impact.

Stanford is also hoping to include a buffer zone as part of the park "undedication," which would raise the amount of needed land to 0.33 acres. The location of the proposed road, she suggested, would also make a larger portion of the park inaccessible to visitors. The actual loss of "usable parkland" is about one acre, she said.

She argued that as part of the project, Stanford should find an acre of space elsewhere that would be dedicated as parkland to compensate for the loss.

"Even if you plant some trees and make it nice for connectivity, that is good," Kleinhaus said. "But we're losing parkland, which is really, really precious, and the city keeps trying to get parkland and we're losing parkland."

"Stanford should find a place to provide parkland — one acre."

Commissioner Jeff Greenfield

also called the loss of parkland a "big deal" in Palo Alto and suggested that finding land elsewhere could make the ballot initiative more palatable to voters. While undedicating parkland is extremely rare, it's not unprecedented. In 2013, voters undedicated 10 acres of land in the Baylands so that the city can explore the construction of a waste-to-energy facility, a project that never came to fruition. Kristen O'Kane, director of the city's Community Services Department, said this was the city's only park-undedication vote since 2000.

"If there are opportunities to do some sort of a swap to ... effectively barter some new parkland for the parkland we're undedicating, I think that would significantly help get this passed," Greenfield said.

But just like the 2013 measure created a rift between Palo Alto's environmentalists, the new proposal is raising questions over whether it's greener to preserve parkland or improve public transit circulation. Philip Kamhi, Palo Alto's chief transportation official, argued that the proposed transit road would bring environmental benefits because it would reduce the distance buses would have to travel.

He pushed back against suggestions that Stanford should provide parkland at another site and argued that the project would bring "an environmental benefit, a public transit benefit and a local congestion benefit."

"With the buses doing less travel in the area, the air quality actually improves, even with existing fleets," Kamhi said, noting that most bus operators will soon be required to go fully electric. "So this proposes a pathway with less vehicular travel, in particular for uses in this area, because they're doing less turning movements."

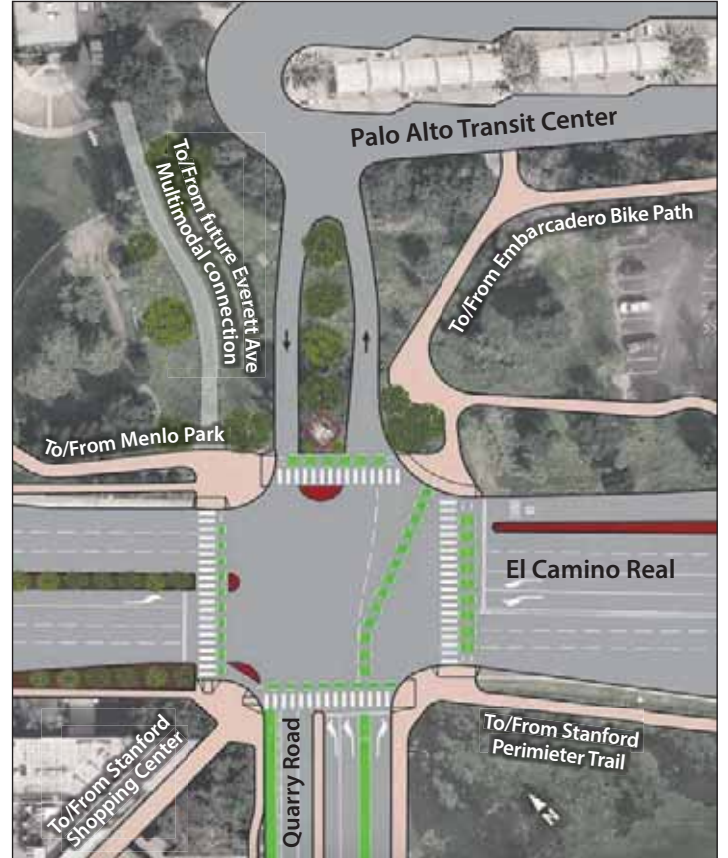
While the commission didn't take any votes on the project, most members acknowledged the project's benefits, including the proposed bike and pedestrian paths that would accompany the road improvements. Commission Chair Amanda Brown shared

Kleinhaus' concerns about the new road cutting off access to a larger part of the park but also touted the circulation improvements that the project would bring.

"Whether or not it's suitable or not, it does slice right in the middle of a site, so I understand the tradeoffs," Brown said. "It does provide more access to parkland, so that I'm all for."

The city has until Aug. 9 to place the measure on the November ballot. ■

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



Courtesy City of Palo Alto

Stanford's plan, illustrated here, would create a transit way between the Palo Alto Transit Center and El Camino real, extending Quarry Road.

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CITY HALL

New group to weigh higher salaries for Palo Alto council

Council members prepare to appoint seven-member citizens committee

By Gennady Sheyner

Fresh off approving higher compensation for themselves, Palo Alto City Council members charted on March 25 a path toward another salary hike.

By a 4-3 vote, the city council agreed to create a citizen committee that will be charged with evaluating whether the city should raise compensation for council members and, if so, by how much. The group will consist of seven members, four of whom would be former council members. It will not be able to independently pass raises, but would make recommendations for a potential voter-passed raise beyond the city's current limit.

In creating the new group, the council veered away from a recommendation from its Policy and Services Committee, which called for a 15-member group that broadly represents the community. Council members also rejected an earlier proposal from Vice Mayor Ed Lauing that all seven members of the committee be appointed by the mayor. It was Lauing and Mayor Greer Stone who last year authored a memo urging higher compensation for council members.

Instead, current council members will each get to appoint one person to the new committee.

Not every member, however, is eager to use this privilege. In a possible preview of a future election debate, Palo Alto council members sparred over the nature of public service and split over whether it's appropriate to approve salary increases in such quick succession.

Just two weeks ago, the council voted to raise its salaries from \$1,000 to \$1,600 per month, the maximum allowed under state law for a city of its size (the action will become finalized on April 1 after a "second reading"). As a charter city, however, Palo Alto doesn't have to follow this limit. While current local law pegs council salaries to the state limit, council can change that through a vote of the people.

The four council members who supported the new committee, Mayor Greer Stone, Vice Mayor Ed Lauing and council members Julie Lythcott-Haims and Vicki Veenker, had no problem with asking the committee — and ultimately, the populace — to weigh in on future salary increases. Much like at past discussions, they argued that raising council salaries is important to attract candidates who otherwise would not be able to afford to serve.

Lythcott-Haims estimated that a council member who spends 25 hours per week on city business get a salary that is equivalent to about \$10 per hour. For those who spend 40 hours, the pay is \$6.25 per hour, she said.

"The city has over 1,000 employees and seven make less than minimum wage," Lythcott-Haims said. "Therefore, the council is a position a person can't remotely contemplate going for if they have to earn a living to pay the bills."

The three council members who opposed the motion — Pat Burt, Lydia Kou and Greg Tanaka — pushed back against her characterization. Kou called serving on the council a "public service" and said it had never entered her mind that she would be drawing a salary. Burt said that's consistent with how most people have traditionally viewed council service.

"We had a longtime outlook that

these are volunteer positions and that we're public servants not politicians," Burt said.

Burt argued that raising council compensation should not be a council priority. In fact, just before the salary debate the council concluded adopting a list of 76 projects that it wants to work on in 2024 to support its priorities. Salary hikes, notably, was not on the list.

The timing, Burt suggested, is also less than ideal. In addition to raising monthly salaries from \$1,000 to \$1,600, the council is also preparing to approve in the coming months a stipend program that provides \$2,000 to each member for technology and

communication equipment.

If the issue ends up on this year's ballot — which may be a long-shot proposition given the looming August deadline and Palo Alto's passion for process — it would have to compete with two other possible measures: one that would make a strip of land at El Camino Park eligible for a new transit road and another that would allow Palo Alto residents to directly elect their mayor.

"I don't think this will have great support from the public, and I don't want it to undermine more important ballot measures going forward," Burt said. "Even if we have these guard rails to try to make it not appear self-serving, I'm concerned the voters will perceive it that way."

Tanaka, who has consistently opposed raising council salaries, also rejected the idea that council service should be treated like a job. The proposition to raise council salaries feels particularly off just after the council approved 60% raises for its members. The

planned ballot measure, he said, would potentially raise salaries to a higher level than has ever been contemplated in the past.

"It starts creating a professional political class and I don't know if it's served better that way or served better by people who have less financial interest in being on council," Tanaka said.

Those who supported the measure, however, wanted to keep open the possibility of getting the issue on this year's ballot. Lauing suggested that having the mayor appoint all members of the committee would expedite things and give the council a chance to make the August deadline. Lythcott-Haims agreed, though she ultimately modified the proposal to allow each council member to appoint someone to the new committee.

"In terms of timing of getting something on the ballot, an expeditious process serves us," Lythcott-Haims said. ■

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

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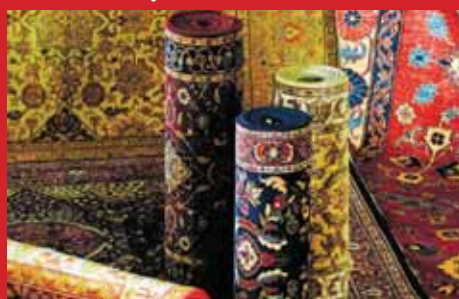


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Contract Name: GREENE MIDDLE SCHOOL POOL HOUSE CONDUITS
Contract No.: PAUSD-GMSPHC-24

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK: Installation of 300 lineal feet of conduit, traffic rated box, 400 AMP 3 Phase Breaker, 400 AMP 42 Circuit Panel, and trenching at Greene Middle School Pool House. See Contract Documents for full project description.

A **MANDATORY PRE-BID** conference will be held on **April 2, 2024, at 3:30PM, at 750 North California Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94303.**

Email bids to vmelero@pausd.org by 2:00 PM on **Tuesday, April 11, 2024.**

To bid on this Project, the Bidder is required to possess one or more of the following State of California contractors' license(s): **B**

The successful Bidder shall be required to furnish a 100% Performance Bond and a 100% Payment Bond if it is awarded the Contract for the Work.

The Bidder's license(s) must remain active and in good standing throughout the term of the Contract.

To bid on this Project, the Bidder is required to be registered as a public works contractor with the Department of Industrial Relations pursuant to the Labor Code.

The Contractor and all Subcontractors under the Contractor shall pay all workers on all Work performed pursuant to this Contract not less than the general prevailing rate of per diem wages and the general prevailing rate for holiday and overtime work as determined by the Director of the Department of Industrial Relations, State of California, for the type of work performed and the locality in which the work is to be performed within the boundaries of the District, pursuant to §1770 et seq. of the California Labor Code. Prevailing wage rates are also available from the District or on the Internet at: <http://www.dir.ca.gov>. This Project is subject to labor compliance monitoring and enforcement by the Department of Industrial Relations pursuant to Labor Code §1771.4 and subject to the requirements of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations. The Contractor and all Subcontractors under the Contractor shall furnish electronic certified payroll records directly to the Labor Commissioner weekly and within ten (10) days of any request by the District or the Labor Commissioner. The successful Bidder shall comply with all requirements of Division 2, Part 7, Chapter 1, Articles 1-5 of the Labor Code, and is required to be registered as a public works contractor with the Department of Industrial Relations pursuant to the Labor Code.

Bidders may examine Bidding Documents online at: <https://bit.ly/GMSPHC>

The District shall award the Contract, if it awards it at all, to the lowest responsive responsible bidder based on the sum of the base bid only.

The Board reserves the right to reject any and all bids and/or waive any irregularity in any bid received. If the District awards the Contract, the security of unsuccessful bidder(s) shall be returned within sixty (60) days from the time the award is made. Unless otherwise required by law, no bidder may withdraw its bid for ninety (90) days after the date of the bid opening.

All questions can be addressed to:
Palo Alto Unified School District
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Attn: Miles Cappello
Phone: (925)-446-2795
Email: miles@fs3h.com

COMMUNITY

City co-sponsors first annual iftar dinner

Attendees shared food, traditions and experiences navigating their Muslim identities

By Ashwini Gangal

Last week, the city of Palo Alto got together with its Muslim community to co-sponsor and co-host its first official iftar dinner at Lucie Stern Community Center. The event offered an opportunity to gather, volunteer and support one another during the month of Ramadan, when many Muslims fast for most of the day.

Among the 270 attendees at the event were Palo Alto Mayor Greer Stone, council members, school board trustees and community leaders.

The food was donated by several local Muslim-owned restaurants — Zareen’s, Mediterranean Wraps, Anatolian Kitchen, Cafe 220, Oklava Cafe, Arya Steakhouse, Meyhouse, Backyard Brew and Sultana Mediterranean. The musician for the evening was guitarist Brother Khalil Abdullah.

In the spirit of community service that is part of the Muslim faith, attendees helped create hygiene kits for the Ecumenical Hunger Program, an East Palo

Alto-based nonprofit that regularly provides food to low-income families in the area.

A few local students and their parents took to the stage to speak about Ramadan traditions, their personal experiences of embracing their Muslim identity, and the importance of inclusivity in classrooms.

“Many of us post October 7 felt scared to be Muslim in Palo Alto,” said Ahmed Dattoo, tech entrepreneur and Palo Alto resident, in a speech denouncing the rise of Islamophobia in the city in the wake of the Israel-Hamas war. He also spoke about the simultaneous rise of antisemitism and anti-Middle East and North Africa sentiments that feed the same cycle of hate.

“This notion of community and empathy gives us an obligation, a responsibility to speak up for injustice wherever it may happen,” he said. “We’re stronger as one community as opposed to being divided.”



Shengfeng Chien

Attendees receive food prepared by the community to start Palo Alto’s first official iftar dinner.

Dattoo, who was born in Tanzania, grew up in New Jersey and came to California as a Stanford student in 1991. Back then, he would break his Ramadan fast by himself in his dorm room.

“It just felt very, very lonely,” he said later in the evening, in conversation with the Weekly. “I feel heartened by coming here tonight and seeing so many different

Muslims, non-Muslims breaking bread together. Things have come a long way since I first got out here.”

Stone said he is eager to assuage feelings of mistrust within the community and contribute towards what he calls “a healing process,” that starts with multi-faith and multi-cultural events of this kind.

“I don’t think healing and community building is top-down; it has

to be bottom-up. Events like this allow us to break bread together, be reminded of our shared humanity, of our love of food and music, and be able to meet each other’s children,” Stone told the Weekly. “It’s nothing that council can do, or really anyone else; it’s going to be us as neighbors reaching out and opening up our hearts with each other and becoming friends again.”

Stone said he was particularly moved by a conversation he had with a 6th grader at the event who told him why the evening was special for her. “She talked about how she sees the Christmas tree at Christmas time and that she has never seen an event that celebrated her religion and her culture,” he said. “I apologized to her on behalf of the city and asked her — what can we do more to be able to make sure that she sees herself reflected in our community? I think we just need to engage people in more conversations.” ■

Email Contributing Writer Ashwini Gangal at ashwinigangal@gmail.com.

CityView

A roundup of Palo Alto government action this week

City Council (March 25)

Priorities: The council approved its objections for 2024 relating to community health, safety, inclusiveness and well-being. **Yes:** Unanimous

Salary: The council agreed to appoint a seven-member committee to consider salary raises for council members. **Yes:** Lauing, Lythcott-Haims, Stone, Veenker **Yes:** Burt, Kou, Tanaka

Parks and Recreation Commission (March 26)

El Camino Park: The commission heard a presentation on a proposal to construct a Quarry Road extension between the Palo Alto Transit Center and El Camino Real, through El Camino Park. **Action:** None

Planning and Transportation Commission (March 27)

Bicycles: The commission heard an update on the city’s pending update of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. **Action:** None

Retail: The commission discussed proposals to support retail, including modifying or removing the ground-retail protection ordinance. **Action:** None

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Retail

(continued from page 5)

agreed that the city needs to take a fresh look at the formula retail ban and make it applicable only to restaurants — if at all.

The recommendation to loosen the restrictions was also proposed by Streetsense, which surveyed the city’s business environment last year and found that the city has about 461,000 square feet in vacant retail. The number has grown in recent years thanks to the rise of e-commerce and decline of office workers, with more people switching to hybrid or remote work schedules. Consultants suggest that the loss of office workers brings a loss of retail demand equivalent to 111,000 square feet.

Other factors also undoubtedly play a role. High rents and disputes with landlords have pushed some long-time businesses out, including Gourmet Franks at Stanford Shopping Center and Printers Cafe on California Avenue, ac-

ording to the business owners. Property owners, meanwhile, claim that it’s not the rents that are driving the vacancies but grime and crime, which are deterring would-be tenants.

“I can’t tell you how many tenants we’re that want to come downtown, then they see our downtown and we lose them to Burlingame, to San Mateo, to Stanford,” Brad Ehikian, partner at Premier Properties, a major downtown property owner, said last week at a meeting of the council’s newly established Retail Committee.

The city council has taken notice and has recently directed staff to install new signs and better branding California Avenue and to do a better job in cleaning up downtown area. But while these efforts are advancing, the city is also plodding ahead with reducing regulatory hurdles to encourage businesses.

Commissioner Allen Akin, who serves on an ad hoc committee charged with looking at retail policies, said Wednesday that his

group has been receiving feedback from stakeholders about what the city should do, which falls primarily into three categories: simplify the rules, reduce uncertainty and relax restrictions.

There was also broad consensus, he said, that the city should look at three specific policies: removing some — or all — restrictions on formula retail; limiting the areas in which the city’s retail-preservation ordinance applies; and passing code changes that give property owners flexibility to switch to other uses if market conditions change.

The first of those ideas received the most support among commissioners. Chair Doria Summa suggested that the city’s existing formula-retail law, which is based on whether a business has 10 locations across the nation, feels “arbitrary.” She argued, however, that if the city moves ahead with such a change, it needs to make sure that the new businesses remain consistent with the neighborhood-serving nature of California Avenue.

“Any formula retail on

California Avenue would have to fit in with the rhythm and size of existing storefronts,” Summa said. “Just like McDonald’s — when they go into the Vatican or Paris or Rome, they don’t look like the McDonald’s on El Camino Real.”

Commissioners were somewhat less enthusiastic about revising retail-protection ordinance, a law that the council adopted in 2015 to bar conversion of ground-floor retail in commercial areas to other uses. The law, which applies city-wide, was enacted shortly after numerous long-time businesses — including Fraiche Yogurt, Jungle Copy and Zibbibo — departed the downtown area and were replaced by tech startups or other offices.

The Streetsense report concluded that the ordinance “discourages the rightsizing of the City’s overall retail footprint, resulting in retail in areas with weaker market conditions and spreading the City’s retail footprint thin.”

While the current proposal wouldn’t entirely remove the ordinance, it would apply it more

narrowly. The law would remain in effect in main commercial arteries such as University and California avenues. Other downtown streets, however, would no longer be bound by its restrictions. Commissioner Keith Reckdahl, who also serves on the retail committee, was among those who favored this approach.

“We may want to have different regulations for University and its side streets, or for California and Cambridge (avenues). If there are concerns about what you have on the main street, it doesn’t mean that you have to have the same concerns elsewhere,” Reckdahl said.

He acknowledged that removing the ordinance would be contentious. Some people love it, other people hate it, he said. But he suggested that allowing uses like dental offices on downtown streets outside University Avenue — for instance, Hamilton Avenue — would help support the retail environment because it would encourage people to come downtown for their medical appointments to stick around for the shopping and the dining.

The consultants had also recommended broader revisions to the city’s zoning code, which is riddled with overlay districts and inconsistencies about which types of uses are allowed in which district. The Streetsense study found that the existing layers of regulation “cause confusion among property owners, developers, and tenants when trying to understand what they are allowed to do on their property, which adds time to approval and permitting processes, increases risk, and may prevent improvements and/or occupancy entirely.”

“It is no surprise that the commercial districts experiencing the most difficulty recovering from the pandemic and experiencing the most vacancy include Palo Alto’s two most heavily regulated environments, Downtown Palo Alto and California Avenue,” the study found.

While this initiative is expected to take more time and resources than the prior two, a good start is to simply create a table of uses allowed in each district, said Dan Wery, a consultant with Michael Baker International. The effort should also include reducing redundancies in the zoning code and simplifying the rules, he said.

Rather than focus on what uses should be allowed in each area, the city could set a standard of whether business generates pedestrian activity, Wery said. Is the new business, for example, open to the public? Does it generate pedestrian traffic that may help other businesses? San Diego, for example, requires certain streets and districts to have “active street frontage” and provides some examples.

“Uses come and go, they evolve. Focus on the outcome that you want. You want activity. You want people going in and out of the door,” Wery said. ■

Email Staff Writer Gennady Sheyner at gshyner@pawebly.com.



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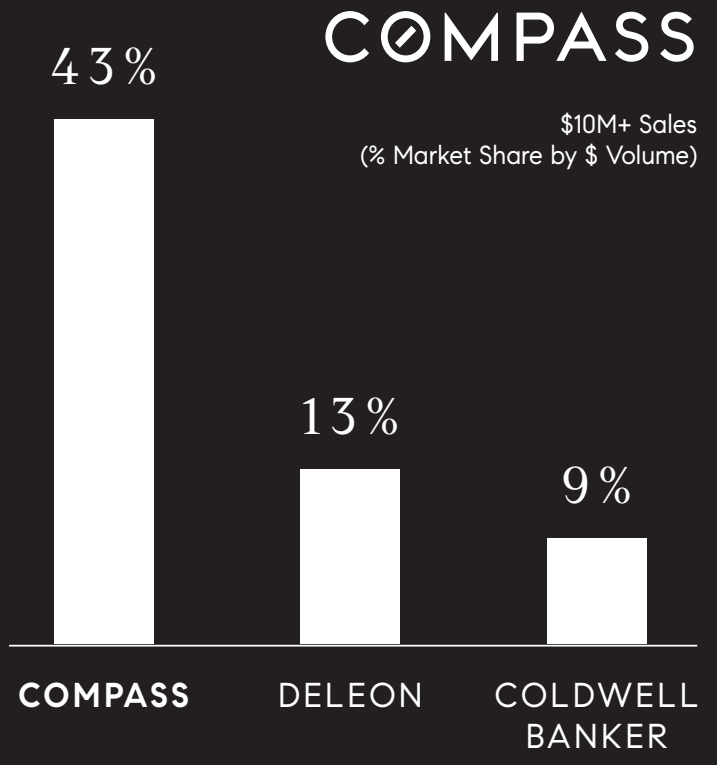
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R	A	R	E	C	O	L	L	E	C	T	I	O	N	S	
F	L	Y		A	T	A		J	L	O		S	T	Y	
				P	E	S		O	O	R	T				
A	I	O	L	I		S	P	E	C	I	A	L	K		
F	R	U	I	T	P	I	E		K	A	R	E	E	M	
A	I	R	F	O	R	C	E			L	O	D	G	E	
N	E	S	T	L	E	S			S	T	A	S	H		

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

Pulse

A weekly compendium of vital statistics

POLICE CALLS

Palo Alto
March 20-26

Arrests
Total people arrested 25

Violence Related
Middlefield Drive, 3/6 at 3:33 p.m.
Child abuse (misdemeanor)
El Camino Real, 3/6 at 7:59 p.m.
Robbery (felony)
Pasteur Drive, 3/17 at 1:14 p.m.
Battery (misdemeanor)
Hansen Way, 3/18 at 8:44 p.m. Sexual assault (misdemeanor)
Emerson Street, 3/19 at 6:33 p.m.
Child abuse (misdemeanor)
Ramona Stree, 3/22 at 9:08 p.m. Child abuse (misdemeanor)

Theft Related
Checks forgery 2
Credit card forgery 5

Financial elder abuse 2
Grand theft 9
Identity theft 3
Petty theft 2
Shoplifting 7

Alcohol or Drug Related
Driving under the influence 4
Possession of drugs 1

Vehicle Related
Abandoned auto 5
Auto recovery 2
Auto theft 5
Hit and run 5
Theft from auto 7
Theft of vehicle parts 1
Vehicle accident/injury 7
Vehicle accident/no injury 5

Miscellaneous
Counter Report 1
Court order violation 1
Death attended 1
Disorderly conduct 5
Disturbing/annoying calls 1
Found property 1
Lost property 4
Mental health crisis 1
Mental health evaluation 2
Missing person 2
Outside warrant arrest 4
Manufacture, sale or possession of dangerous weapon 1
Suspicious circumstances 4
Trespassing 2
Vandalism 1
Warrant arrest 1

Joan Hobstetter

December 22, 1950 – February 12, 2024

Joan Hobstetter passed away peacefully at home in the early hours of February 12, 2024, beside her beloved husband, Gary, her little dog Peet, and with her four children in the next room – her family all together, just as she liked it. Joan passed away after a devastating battle with Alzheimer's Disease.

Joan – Honey, Mom, Grammy, Joanie, sister, teacher – was born and raised in Lebanon, New Hampshire, daughter of Raymond and Margaret Kelly. Her lifelong grit and determination buoyed her as she became a single mother at age 16, persevered to the top of her class at Lebanon High School, and as she supported herself and toddler while working at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center.

No dream was too big for Joan, and in 1973 she decided to change her life. All at once, Joan sold her belongings, purchased a red Volkswagen Beetle convertible, picked up her daughter from preschool, and drove West. With the Bug transformed into a makeshift camper (replete with flower planters), she and Traci chased the California dream all the way from their small New Hampshire town to a new life in Palo Alto, California.

Joan enrolled at Foothill College while working at Stanford University's Math Department and moonlighting as a tart baker at the Renaissance Fair. She built a village of young single mothers and close-knit friends, and transferred to San Francisco State University, where she obtained a BA in Children's Theater and later a teaching credential. Joan's passion for children's education and the arts shaped the rest of her life.

Joan and Traci settled with their cat Angie in an apartment on Webster Street in Palo Alto. Everything changed when a sheltie named Stardust pawed at the door. Lovestruck neighbor, Gary – initially rebuffed, but knowing Joan was a dog lover – sent Stardust to Joan's door along with an invitation for tea. And so began their love story of more than 45 years. Joan and Gary married on the front deck of their apartment building and soon purchased a termite-infested, Stanford party house on Emerson Street, breathing new life into the brown house under the big oak. Joan created a home full of love and the best kind of chaos – children and their friends, sawdust and paint, paper mache and power tools, gatherings with tables stretched

through rooms, gratitude “love” circles, and a menagerie of animals. Joan's love of the outdoors and endless energy took Gary and Joan on many adventures, including trekking the Annapurna Circuit, exploring Europe and Mexico, completing seven marathons, creating the lakeside magic of Inwood, and taking frequent camping and road trips.

Joan was a beloved member of the Addison Elementary School community for more than three decades, first as a parent leader and Spectra Art teacher, and then as a Kindergarten teacher for 20 years. As a teacher, every inch of her classroom was filled with art and words. Joan had a gift for seeing each kinder's light, and through her work she impacted hundreds of students and their families.

Joan leaves behind a legacy of strength, silliness, epic dance moves, peace and presence in nature, piles of heart-shaped rocks, and a forever love that she poured fiercely into her family. That love will continue to nourish us and we will pass it on to her grandchildren.

Joan is survived by her husband Gary, her children Traci Herrin (Craig Herrin), Maggie Hobstetter (Graham Young), Kelly (Elizabeth Hobstetter), and Lauren Hobstetter (Jules Wurzel), grandchildren Emerson, Hallie, Isla, and Dillon, and siblings Eileen Bateman and Michael Kelly.

Throughout her battle with Alzheimer's, Gary centered Joan's joy and her continued connection to the world and her people. Our family is grateful for his devotion, and for the expert care provided by Joan's caregivers, Paula and Ahi, and their commitment to ensuring Joan's dignity through all stages of her disease.

A Celebration of Life will take place on April 27, from 11:00-1:00 at MacArthur Park (27 University Avenue, Palo Alto). The Hobstetter family has established Foothill College's first-ever scholarship for single parents, to honor Joan's legacy and invest in individuals chasing their educational dreams while also parenting. To give, please make checks payable to FHDA Foundation with Joan's name in the memo and mail to FHDA Foundation, 12345 El Monte Road, Los Altos Hills, CA 94022. You can also give online at <https://secure.donationpay.org/fhda/> and indicate the gift is in memory of Joan Hobstetter.



PAID OBITUARY

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Oliver Franklin Hook, 99, a resident of Menlo Park who was a World War II Navy fighter pilot and member of America's Greatest Generation and who was born in Kansas City, Missouri, and later was celebrated for his athleticism and academic achievements, leading to his induction into the Lee's Summit High School Sports Hall of Fame. He graduated with top honors from the University of Missouri, and had a successful 50-year career as a stockbroker in Palo Alto. Hook is survived by his two sons and four grandchildren. A graveside service is planned in Lee's Summit, Missouri.

Linda Caren, 82, a resident of San Jose, who was born in Corsicana, Texas, and who was a pioneering immunologist with degrees from Ohio State University and Stanford University and had a notable academic career, including teaching positions at Santa Clara University and California State University, Northridge, and conducted research in collaboration with NASA.

Michael (Mike) Mensick, 63, an almost life-long resident of Palo Alto, who was the son of the late John (Jack) and Lucia Mensick, brother to the late John (Chip) and Mark Mensick and who was married to Andrea Evans Mensick for 32 years. He was the father of Nicole Mensick and Michael Mensick, Jr. A Cubberley High School and Foothill College alumnus, Mike built a career in construction sales, contributing to significant projects like Oracle Park and the State Capital of Hawaii. He enjoyed fishing, golfing, and horses before he died.

Mary Roberta (Robin) Duggan, 74, of Mountain

View, who was known for her artistic talents, particularly in crafting and making artistic greeting cards and dedicated her life to her family, volunteering at her children's schools, and expressing her kindness and generosity through her art and hospitality and who graduated from Palo Alto High School, attended Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, and earned her teaching credential from the College of Notre Dame, Belmont. Robin is survived by her husband Kevin, her children Julie Pierron (Joseph) and Andrew (Chelsea), four grandchildren, siblings Linda, Marcy, Laurie, and Dan, and a wide circle of family and friends.

Jean Garrett, 101, of Palo Alto, who was a World War II veteran and breast cancer survivor, a committed peace activist and enjoyed walking in her neighborhood with her late husband, Paul, to whom she was married for 70 years until his passing in 2016. Born near Redding, California, in 1922, she met Paul during their military service and settled in Palo Alto to raise their two children. Known for her culinary prowess, Jean was a vegetarian and pescatarian, advocating for healthy eating and environmental causes, including meatless Mondays. She delighted in nature and animals. Jean's final months were spent enjoying chocolate, orchids, her cat Lovey, and visits from her family. She is survived by her children, Susan and Doug, their spouses, grandchildren Carlos, Megan, and Justin, and seven great-grandchildren.

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

Former Menlo School student Marco Troper remembered as radiant, sharp

By Jennifer Yoshikoshi

At the age of 19, Marco Troper, son of former YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki and Google executive Dennis Troper, passed away in his University of California at Berkeley dorm room on Feb. 13, 2024.

Marco was born in Palo Alto on July 24, 2004, at Stanford Hospital. He grew up in Los Altos and started as a student at Menlo School in Atherton in sixth grade. He shared an innate passion for math with his grandfather, Stanley Wojcicki, a former physics professor at Stanford University who passed away in May 2023. His aunts are also accomplished. His aunt Anne Wojcicki is CEO of 23andMe and his aunt Janet Wojcicki is an anthropologist and epidemiologist.

His love for math started as a young boy and carried into his first year in college as a mathematics major. At home, he and his oldest sibling were known for challenging each other with math problems, so much that a rule had to be made to have no math at the dinner table, said Susan.

"I was always in awe of how he would grasp very complex mathematical and physics problems that master's or Ph.D. students would study and he would grasp those concepts so well and would explain them with such ease," said Dennis as he reflected on his son's talents.



Courtesy Susan Wojcicki

Marco Troper was born in Palo Alto in 2004.

that others hadn't thought of before," Healy said. "He had a pioneer spirit to him and I think his teachers and peers really appreciated that about him."

Aside from math and science abilities, those who knew Marco describe his radiant personality as kind, warm, curious and happy.

"His kind soul left an indelible

mark on all who knew him, reminding us to embrace our true selves and live with unwavering compassion," said his best friend of three years, Drake Piscione. "Marco was brilliant and full of ambition, destined for greatness. What made our bond so special was our ability to laugh together, to find humor even in the toughest of times. As a person, he had a heart of gold that radiated kindness and warmth. Being with him was like being blessed with this incredible energy that just made life better."

Marco's kindness stretched to people across the world as he had a passion for adventure and immersing in different cultures, said Dennis.

During a few months in high school he attended The Island School in the Bahamas, meeting other students from different states and countries. Some flew from as far as Vietnam to attend his funeral in February.

"He was just a fun, curious, social, beautiful kid that would make anyone smile," said Dennis.

As the middle child of five kids, Susan and Dennis reflected on his kindness toward his siblings, especially his strong

relationship with his younger sisters. As the neighborhood babysitter, younger kids also enjoyed Marco's presence.

"Marco was that combination of kind and talented and the world will miss the positive contributions he would have made that would have helped make the lives of others better," Healy said.

On Feb. 21, friends and family gathered for a memorial service to celebrate Marco's life. During the service, his siblings sang the song "Yellow" by Coldplay, a nod to his favorite color being yellow as a child.

"Our family believes that he has been bringing all the

rainbows to the Bay Area," said Susan. "When we came home right after he died, we saw rainbows all over the road on the left, on the right, double rainbows that persisted throughout the week."

Dennis added: "We think it's a sign of Marco just looking after his siblings and after us."

Marco is survived by his parents, four siblings and his grandmother Esther Wojcicki. His parents plan to create math scholarships in his name.

As a message to others, Piscione said: "Follow Marco's example and live a life of no regrets. Life's too short not to pursue your passions and find happiness." ■



Donald Charles Creevy, MD

April 22, 1936 – March 3, 2024

After several years of declining health, Dr Don Charles Creevy, 87, died peacefully in his sleep on March 3rd, 2024. Don's life was enriched by a rewarding medical career, a devoted family, cherished friendships, much laughter, a lifelong passion for classical music and high-quality audio equipment, and a deep love for travel photography.

Don cultivated enduring friendships with nearly everyone he encountered, leaving a profound mark on their lives. At his retirement celebration in 2010, over 300 friends and family members gathered to honor his legacy and the deep connections he fostered, reflecting his widespread influence. With his compassionate listening ear and genuine warmth, Don touched the hearts of all who knew him.

Dr. Don Charles Creevy was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He earned his M.D. from the University of Minnesota Medical School and relocated to California to commence an OB/GYN residency at Stanford University, subsequently establishing his own private practice. Don facilitated the delivery of over 6,000 babies, consistently advocating for optimal birthing experiences for both mothers and infants. During the 1970s and 1980s, his pioneering efforts to integrate midwifery into hospital and birth center settings were unprecedented. As a trailblazer in his field, he played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Birth Place Resource Center and, later, The Birth Place, providing care for 1,200 mothers and newborns. Don's unwavering commitment to patient advocacy in childbirth and healthcare remained steadfast; many of the principles he championed during those formative years are now standard practice in the field.

Don is survived by his wife of 37 years, Ginger Hummer Creevy, his daughter and son-in law, Catherine Creevy and Aksel Fjaera, his daughter and son-in law, Kristin Creevy Lewis and Marc Lewis, his stepdaughter Nancy Niland and son-in-law Andrew Edwards, and his stepson Michael Hummer. He is also survived by his grandchildren Lauren Creevy Love, McKaila Lewis, Tessa Lewis, Sara and Bill Danielsson, Samuel Shatsky, Karijanne Pleifler and Adrian Haavik-Marthinussen. Don was preceded in death by his parents, Charles Donald Creevy and Alice Creevy, his son Jonathan Creevy, his former wife Anne Creevy, and his brother Mike Creevy.

Donations in his honor can be made to: TogetherWomenrise.org, Chapter 32. Don was a great supporter to Ginger who founded the local Portola Valley chapter in 2012 which donates funds to empower the poorest women and girls (families living on only \$2-4 per day) through health care programs, education, safety, financial literacy and gender equality worldwide.

PAID OBITUARY

'His kind soul left an indelible mark on all who knew him, reminding us to embrace our true selves and live with unwavering compassion.'

Drake Piscione, Marco Troper's best friend

In high school, Marco also published a math paper on Harris Graphs while studying graph theory during a summer program at the University of Michigan. He also qualified for the American Invitational Mathematics Examination, a challenging exam that only students who rank in the top 2.5% to 5% the American Mathematics Competition qualify for.

Menlo's head of school, Than Healy, recalls Marco's ability to take up difficult challenges and to approach them with an "innovative, entrepreneurial spirit."

He also played leading roles in clubs such as the school's hackathon and started the student Jewish Affinity Group.

"What he really enjoyed was figuring out how to explore and employ tools and systems in ways

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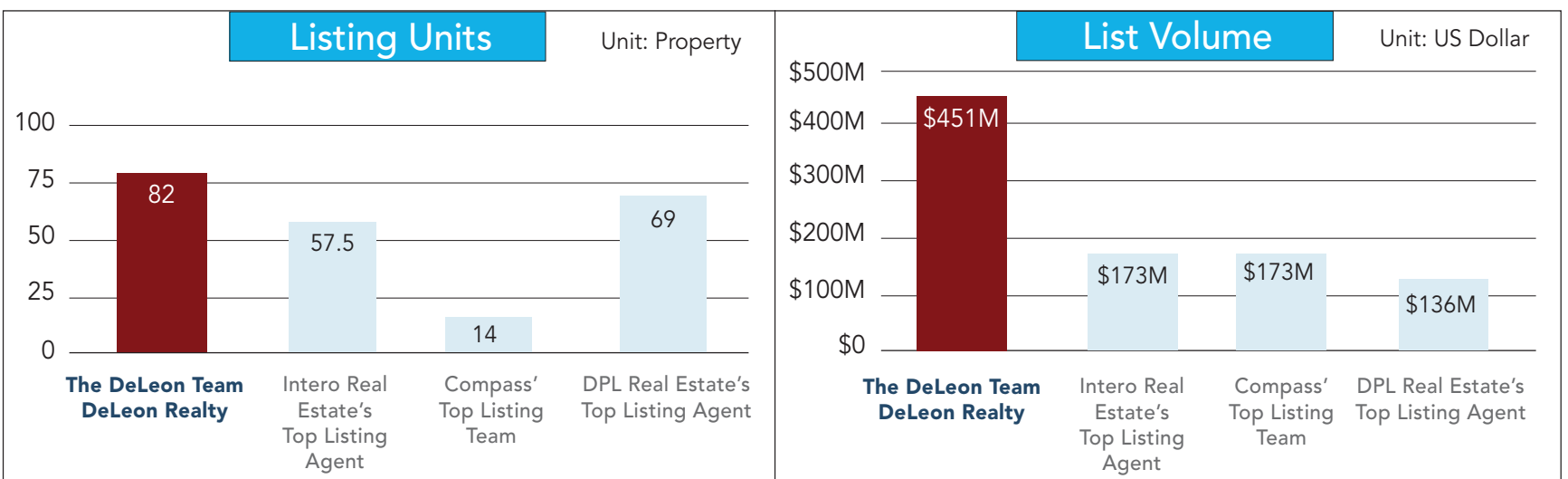
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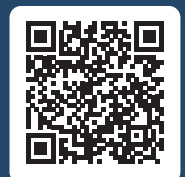
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Spectrum

Editorials, letters and opinions

Guest Opinion

Bike lanes for a better El Camino

By Amie Ashton

In the last decade, over 700 children have been involved in collisions on El Camino Real. In Santa Clara County, 30% of all collisions that occur on El Camino Real happen in Palo Alto. Once a month for the last decade, a person who walks or bikes is injured on El Camino Real in Palo Alto, usually a child or teen.



Anyone who walks, bikes, or drives along El Camino Real knows how dangerous it is, and it is time for a change.

Over the last two decades, government agencies have envisioned and planned for a better El Camino Real. A roadway with safer infrastructure that is a pleasant place to live, work, and shop — think of the “grand boulevards” of Europe. Tall apartment buildings above local businesses with outdoor dining, lush green space, street trees, wide sidewalks for people to wander, barriers protecting those who bike, and a slower road with space

for public transit. This is a road that is safe for all users.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), which owns El Camino Real, is beginning the first phase of making the “grand boulevard” a reality. Caltrans will be repaving El Camino Real and they are asking cities to approve removing parking to install better bike infrastructure, something Los Altos and Mountain View voted to do two years ago. This infrastructure will include green-colored pavement along bike lanes, painted “bike boxes” in front of intersections (to designate an area for cyclists), and plastic barriers to delineate the bike lanes. This is the first step in a vision for a grand boulevard, and almost all of the 19 cities along El Camino Real have been proactive in working with Caltrans to implement road improvements for people who walk and bike and to better accommodate public transit.

On April 1st, Palo Alto City Council has a once-in-a-decade opportunity to change El Camino Real for the better. They can make a decision that will save lives.

The City Council will be asked to

pass a resolution to remove parking on El Camino Real to install bike lanes. The current plan is far from perfect. As such, Council should frame this as a first step for a safer El Camino Real and begin (as other cities have) to plan for more to improve this initial infrastructure by including additional facilities in the city’s bicycle and pedestrian plan. Additionally, they should request that Caltrans collaborate closely with community partners and city and county officials to ensure that any Palo Alto residents living in their RVs or vehicles on El Camino Real get nearby safe parking locations. The city is expanding our safe parking program so we can work together to find a place for these neighbors in our community.

Investing in safer infrastructure for people who walk or bike on El Camino Real and throughout the city is a necessary action identified in the city’s Sustainability and Climate Action Plan (S/CAP). We are already behind in reaching our climate goals for 2030. New bicycle infrastructure on El Camino Real will help with that shortfall. This is also an essential climate action as homes are developed along El Camino Real. We need to ensure these new neighbors don’t just add to the congestion, but can choose to safely walk, bike, or take public transit.

The Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition members have surveyed over 200 local businesses on El Camino Real. All of them want El Camino Real to be a better retail environment; including a safer, slower road — something the proposed repaving project will do with the inclusion of narrower travel lanes and a bike lane. Yes, parking spaces will be lost, but there is a 9:1 ratio of parking spaces off of El Camino Real versus on El Camino Real. It is primarily employees who park on El Camino Real, so let’s further engage the businesses and find locations for alternative parking. We can continue to promote our city’s Transportation Management Agency’s Transit Program, because bike lanes increase the ability to use transit by extending its geographic reach.

Removing on-street parking also increases the visibility of commercial frontages, something businesses said they favored. Palo Alto’s own economic consultants have recommended improving infrastructure for those who walk, bike, or take public transit, to help support our local businesses. After a protected bike lane was installed in New York City, businesses saw a 49% increase in retail sales with fewer commercial vacancies. In Toronto, those who arrive by

bike or foot spend more dollars per month than those who arrive by car. And more locally, when new bike lanes were installed on Valencia Street in San Francisco, over 65% of merchants saw a positive increase in sales. We know that almost half of customers arrive at University Avenue by means other than a car, let’s strive for the same on El Camino.

You might be reading this and thinking, “But I would still never bike on El Camino Real.” You might never, but as collision data reveals, hundreds of people bike on El Camino Real every day, and we need to keep them safe. Let’s remember that those making the lowest incomes are the most likely to commute by bike — it’s service workers, food delivery drivers, teens, and new cyclists getting across Palo Alto by bike who end up on El Camino Real out of necessity or accident. Let’s make our city safe for them; reduce our climate emissions; provide a clear connection to jobs, homes, and adjacent cities; and take the first steps toward making El Camino Real the grand boulevard we all want it to be. ■

Amie Ashton is chair of the board of the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition. She can be reached at bikeloveramie@gmail.com.

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For more information, contact Editor Sarah Wright at editor@pawebly.com.

Letters

Questioning the Valley Water Censure

Editor:

The Valley Water Board censoring (Regional Politics, March 22) the District 7 representative raises important questions.

First is the immature squabble with the claim that speech, occurring once is discrimination. Really?

Second is the loss of the representative of District 7 from the San Francisco Joint Powers Authority. This is undemocratic. This creek flooded 25 years ago and measures to mitigate the potential problem have not been adopted. We need representation NOW.

Third is the division of this and other governmental agencies (SM & SC counties) into voting districts. If all seven “Directors” had been elected at large, all would bear responsibility and rely on votes from people throughout the Valley Water area. With districts, no other elected representative answers to voters in the other districts. So you can raise your concerns with all the representatives, but expect attention from only one. One rep has little chance of pushing any particular concern to a satisfactory

conclusion. With At Large elections, all reps would have to pay attention to your concern and better governance might be expected.

Raymond R. White
Whitney Drive, Mountain View

Open California Avenue to all traffic

Editor:

As a former retailer I have been reading the articles and letters re. California Ave in Palo Alto. Signage and beautification alone is not going to to the job to revitalize the area.

For retailers to fill the empty storefronts, they are looking for traffic. And traffic means pedestrians, bicyclists and cars.

Until and unless California Ave is opened up to traffic, things are not going to change much, and more businesses will be leaving the avenue. Very sad.

Jan Aarts
Webster Street, Palo Alto

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Palo Alto Online’s bloggers are writing about everything from innovation and politics to community service and family. Here are the latest posts from some of our bloggers.

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A New Shade of Green

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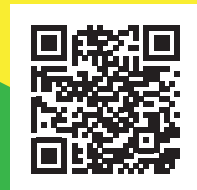
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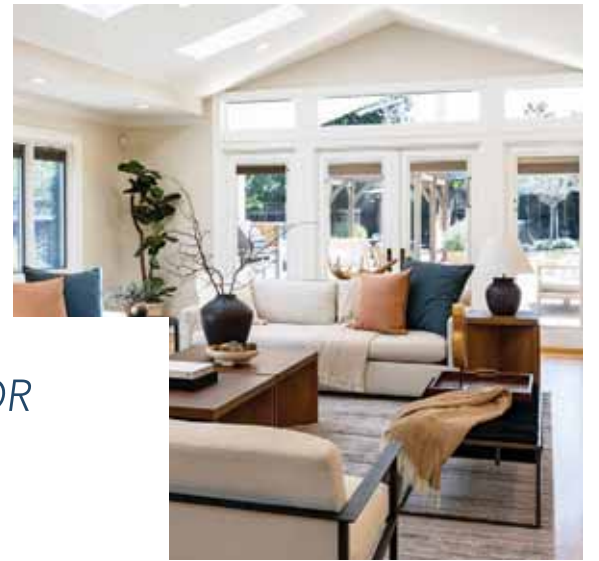


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Palo Alto Unified School District

Palo Alto Unified School District ("District") will receive sealed bids for the following project,

Contract Name: Nixon Elementary School Interior Painting Contract No.: NIP-24

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK: The project consists of an interior campus painting project to repaint the existing buildings at Nixon Elementary School. The project is located at 1711 Stanford Ave, Stanford, CA 94305.

NOTE: See Contract Documents for full project description of the scope.

A MANDATORY PRE-BID conference will be held on Tuesday, April 9, 2024 - 3:00 PM, at 1711 Stanford Ave, Stanford, CA 94305.

Email bids to vmelero@pausd.org by 2:00 PM on Thursday, May 2, 2024.

To bid on this Project, the Bidder is required to possess one or more of the following State of California contractors' license(s): A, B, or C-33 Painting Contractor licenses.

The successful Bidder shall be required to furnish a 100% Performance Bond and a 100% Payment Bond if it is awarded the Contract for the Work.

The Bidder's license(s) must remain active and in good standing throughout the term of the Contract.

To bid on this Project, the Bidder is required to be registered as a public works contractor with the Department of Industrial Relations pursuant to the Labor Code.

The Contractor and all Subcontractors under the Contractor shall pay all workers on all Work performed pursuant to this Contract not less than the general prevailing rate of per diem wages and the general prevailing rate for holiday and overtime work as determined by the Director of the Department of Industrial Relations, State of California, for the type of work performed and the locality in which the work is to be performed within the boundaries of the District, pursuant to §1770 et seq. of the California Labor Code. Prevailing wage rates are also available from the District or on the Internet at: <http://www.dir.ca.gov>. This Project is subject to labor compliance monitoring and enforcement by the Department of Industrial Relations pursuant to Labor Code §1771.4 and subject to the requirements of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations. The Contractor and all Subcontractors under the Contractor shall furnish electronic certified payroll records directly to the Labor Commissioner weekly and within ten (10) days of any request by the District or the Labor Commissioner. The successful Bidder shall comply with all requirements of Division 2, Part 7, Chapter 1, Articles 1-5 of the Labor Code, and is required to be registered as a public works contractor with the Department of Industrial Relations pursuant to the Labor Code.

This project is subject to prequalification review. Any bid submitted by a bidder who is not prequalified shall be deemed non-responsive and returned unopened to the bidder. The minimum threshold for prequalified bidders can be found in the project manual under the Notice to Bidders 00 11 16 and 00 21 13 Instructions to Bidders sections.

Bidders may examine Bidding Documents online at:

https://bit.ly/NIP-24

The District shall award the Contract, if it awards it at all, to the lowest responsive responsible bidder based on the sum of the base bid only.

The Board reserves the right to reject any and all bids and/or waive any irregularity in any bid received. If the District awards the Contract, the security of unsuccessful bidder(s) shall be returned within sixty (60) days from the time the award is made. Unless otherwise required by law, no bidder may withdraw its bid for ninety (90) days after the date of the bid opening.

Any and all questions can be addressed to:

Palo Alto Unified School District
25 Churchill Avenue, Building D Palo Alto, CA 94306-1099
Attn: AG Geaitar
Phone: (408)-413-8984
Email: ag@fs3h.com

Arts & Entertainment

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

Jazz composer and pianist *Marta Sánchez* to perform five Palo Alto shows

Earthwise Productions hosts musician for concerts April 1-5

By Karla Kane

For pianist and composer Marta Sánchez, one of the most appealing things about jazz is its creative freedom of expression, even when playing within a set program.

"The possibility of being different every time, depending on the people you are playing with," she mused. "The fact that you can create in the moment with other people, or by yourself."

The Madrid-raised, New York City-based Sánchez will come to Palo Alto April 1-5 to play a run of five concerts at the Mitchell Park Community Center (Sánchez's residency is part of a series of eight piano-centric shows in a row at that venue, all put together by Earthwise Productions).

Growing up in Spain, Sánchez studied classical music and began getting into jazz as a teenager. A teacher at her conservatory started giving her favorite recordings to listen to, she recalled, "and I started liking it more and more." Soon, she was training in jazz and contemporary music, touring jazz festivals around Spain and winning national and international awards. A 2011 Fulbright Scholarship brought her to New York University, where she earned a master's degree in music, and she's made herself at home among New York's creative scene, earning a reputation as an engaging and inventive musician. Keeping up a very busy international touring and performance schedule, she's also released several acclaimed records, most often with her quintet, including 2015's "Partenika," which the New York Times hailed as one of the 10 best albums of the year.

Despite her love of "the act of creation in the moment," she is also very deliberate and dedicated to each of her projects as a unique entity.

"I always write for a specific project — the music is very focused on that project," she explained. "For the way I write, I write very specifically for each instrument. I write based on who's participating."

Sánchez said she's very excited about her next upcoming release, which was recorded with her trio. That album, "Perpetual Void," is due out from Intakt Records on April 19 and features Sánchez on piano, Chris Tordini on bass and the Bay Area-raised Savannah Harris on drums.

She'll be playing solo, though, at her Palo Alto shows, with songs specifically written for solo piano.

"The way I normally compose is by creating independent layers that interweave with each other, creating the final tapestry. While writing for solo piano, I thought about how to generate different timbres within the piano," she explained. As she composed, she endeavored to prepare the piano to create these varied sounds, placing objects on or in between the strings to modify the tone.

"I use tape, magnets, paper, Blu Tack (adhesive putty), crystal rolls and paper clips distributed over the piano and that way I have different textures and colors within the same instrument," she said.

She started writing these pieces several years ago, while participating in an artist residency at New Hampshire's rural MacDowell colony (from which she received fellowships in 2017 and 2021), where the surrounding



Courtesy Marta Sánchez

Jazz pianist and composer Marta Sánchez performs in Palo Alto during the first week of April.

environment made its way into her music.

"Back then my main inspiration was the nature and the sounds around my cabin," she recalled, as the chilly winter wind blew, sometimes softly, sometimes violently. Later, new themes emerged.

"I finished the pieces during the pandemic, and the inspiration switched. Now it was more about dark thoughts and philosophical ideas."

And after her local performances, she'll also be spending some of her time in the Bay Area in the studio making her next record, consisting of this solo material.

"That's why it's great for me to play all these songs" during her time in Palo Alto, she said.

According to Earthwise's event listings, in addition to Sánchez, the bills will include other artists. Pianist and composer Ethan Iverson (best known, perhaps, for his work as a founding member of The Bad Plus) will

perform at the first two shows, on April 1 and 2, with Motoko Honda Group booked for April 3, Dick Fregulia and Dick Conte trios April 4, and Myra Melford and Ben Goldberg April 5.

Sánchez has performed in Palo Alto twice in recent years, as a duo and with her quintet, and said she's looking forward to her upcoming stay.

"I love the West Coast," she said. "I always love to be there. Nice weather, nice food, and more relaxed than New York." ■

Email Assistant Lifestyle Editor Karla Kane at kkane@paweb.com.

Marta Sánchez performs April 1-5 at Mitchell Park Community Center, 3700 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Tickets are \$5-\$18 for each show. For more information, visit eventbrite.com.

Dance company puts art in motion

Natasha Carlitz Dance Ensemble creates choreography from paintings and sculptures with 'Gallery'

By Heather Zimmerman

You could say that Natasha Carlitz Dance Ensemble's latest show is a bit of a museum piece — one that spans centuries and styles of art. "Gallery" is a series of vignettes that bring works of visual art to life through dance. The Palo Alto-based dance company presents

the show March 29-30 at Curblerly Theatre.

The ensemble's artistic director and founder, Menlo Park resident Natasha Carlitz, said she was looking to do a more diverse and varied show, following up an all-Mozart piece "In Parting," that was spurred by the death of a close

friend and focused on a singular subject.

"I don't remember exactly where the idea came from," she said, "but I thought, 'art is so different, and if I base works on different paintings and sculptures, they will take

(continued on page 30)



Courtesy Natasha Carlitz Dance Ensemble

Natasha Carlitz Dance Ensemble presents "Gallery," a show of works inspired by paintings and sculpture.

Gunn High School student creates artwork for orchestra concert

Golden State Youth Orchestra brings to life phantasmagoric 19th century symphony through music and art

By Ashwini Gangal

In 1830, lovelorn French composer Hector Berlioz wrote a symphony for the object of his obsession, actress Harriet Smithson. Titled “Symphonie Fantastique,” it tells the story of an artist whose unrequited love takes him down a dangerous, hallucinogenic path that ends in suicide by opium poisoning.

This controversial masterpiece from the Romantic era will be brought to life on stage, at the upcoming spring concert organized by the Golden State Youth Orchestra, in more ways than one. During the orchestra’s performance of this piece, original artwork inspired by the same symphony will be projected on a screen behind the musicians. The orchestra, formerly known as El Camino Youth Symphony, performs Berlioz’s work March 30 at Spangenberg Theatre.

The artwork has been created by Gunn High School senior Ethan Zhou, who is also a violinist in the orchestra. He has made five paintings, one for each movement or segment of the music.

“The symphony is almost autobiographical — that’s actually the composer (Hector Berlioz), with his signature closed eyes; it’s melodramatic,” said 17-year-old Zhou about the image that will accompany the first movement, which, as per Berlioz’s notes, represents daydreams and passions.

“It’s red because, I don’t know, I always imagined it’d be red, and I think red is a pretty passionate color. Also, orange is my favorite color so I’ve put a lot of orange around there,” he said about the warm tones used in the portrait. “I personally like a lot of big shapes and keeping things less smooth.”

Among the artists that Zhou counts as influencing his style

are Impressionist painter John Singer Sargent and contemporary digital artist Aaron Griffin. He created the five paintings for the concert digitally, using tools like Photoshop and PureRef. The device he paints on is a Wacom One tablet.

“In Photoshop you can draw strokes that are perfectly horizontal or vertical,” he said, amused that flawlessly straight lines like the ones created digitally are seldom seen in “real life.”

While Zhou said he found creating art digitally is easier than using actual paints, he also sees a flip side to it. While on the one hand, a digital artist doesn’t have to worry about things like paint supplies, on the other, the process affords disproportionate room for revision, something he thinks is not necessarily a good thing. On canvas, in contrast, an artist “has to be a lot more confident about every stroke,” he said.

“Digital artists are very spoiled,” he said. “It’s kind of cheating; you can just move things around, paint layers over things and under things, and get every color in the palette. And there are features that can change the colors to look more dramatic.”

“You have to also be a bit more responsible because you can undo anything with just two keys,” Zhou said. “That’s a pretty powerful tool.” He said that if he had more formal training in art he wouldn’t have to undo as much as he does while creating art digitally.

For Zhou, the second movement was the most difficult one to compose art for. “It’s more stylized than the first one — big shapes, unclear, not very defined features, because it’s a dream,” he said about this painting, which is an image of a woman.

For the third movement, his art represents an approaching storm;



Courtesy Ethan Zhou

A digital painting by Ethan Zhou portrays composer Hector Berlioz. The work is one of five pieces by Zhou that will accompany a performance of Berlioz’s “Symphonie Fantastique” by Golden State Youth Orchestra, of which Zhou is a member.

for the fourth, a guillotine; and bells for the fifth. All the art is in keeping with Berlioz’s own narrative, originally published in French, then translated into English.

“For any classical piece I try to find the history behind it, the story,” he said, admitting that he tends to obsess over every detail of his artwork. “I’m very particular ... I think every artist is overly critiquing of their own work.”

According to music director Yun Song Tay, Ph.D., who will be conducting the concert, Zhou’s art will provide a “visual handle” to the audience, especially those unfamiliar with classical music.

“The artwork is meant to supplement our performance and I believe our audience members will get more easily acquainted with the piece, especially since

so many of our students’ parents will be listening to the piece for the first time,” said Tay.

Berlioz’s original dramatic storyline that informs this symphony makes this collaboration of art and music compelling. “The composer gave specific details about the music and images for the audience members to imagine,” Tay said. “So on top of the program notes, which the audience members will receive in their program booklet, describing the music in words, they are also going to get to see a visual cue to better appreciate the music they hear.”

The artwork on display will change at the end of each movement. “There is a break in between and the slides will change then,” he said. “So there should not be any distractions during the performance.”

This is not the first time a student has created art for the

Golden State Youth Orchestra. Last year, Jessie Zhang made five original paintings, one for each movement of Beethoven’s “Pastoral Symphony.”

Besides Berlioz’s music, the program also includes works by Anna Clyne (“Masquerade”), Camille Saint-Saens (Piano Concerto No. 2) and Ernest Bloch (“Suite Hébraïque”).

Email Contributing Writer Ashwini Gangal at ashwinigangal@gmail.com.

The concert will take place on Saturday, March 30, 7 p.m. at Spangenberg Theatre at Gunn High School, 780 Arastradero Road, Palo Alto. Tickets are \$15-\$25. For more information, visit gsyomusic.org.

Art in motion

(continued from page 29)

me in different directions and they will be associated with different types of music and different types of movement. It’ll be fun for the dancers to get to do a lot of different things after being very classical in the Mozart piece.”

From a 16th century Dutch portrait to 1960s op-art, the show touches on many different artistic movements and styles.

Carlitz selected the art that inspired the choreography in a variety of ways. “There are a mix of pieces that I have loved my whole life, which were just really fun to work with, like making a deeper connection with an old friend,” she said.

Chief among those old friends is Matisse’s “The Snail,” which Carlitz said she “fell in love with” when she was just 4 years old. The

colorful painted collage enchanted Carlitz as a young child visiting London’s Tate gallery. Her family lived in England for a year and outings to the Tate would spark her imagination, she said.

She used favorite pieces as a jumping off point, but also included works by artists that she had never heard of before.

“I started seeking out new pieces of art — things that were new to me and sparked new ideas or were visually interesting to me. Some maybe four to six (pieces) are artists that I had not heard of before I started working on this project. All my YouTube and suggested links everywhere are now completely art-based, so I’ve just gone down some of those rabbit holes and learned new things,” Carlitz said.

Audiences will get to see the art that inspired the choreography projected behind the dancers during the show. In addition to Carlitz’s choreography, “Gallery”

also highlights pieces by two guest choreographers who are dancers in the company.

“There’s a prologue that introduces the artwork, and so I think that although the moods of the pieces are really different, it should feel kind of like entering a gallery and strolling through the rooms where there’s different art but you’re still in the gallery,” Carlitz said.

“And just for fun, for an inside joke, we’re using Mussorgsky’s ‘Pictures at an Exhibition’ for the prologue,” she added.

Selecting the music for each piece also led Carlitz down some illuminating paths.

“What I didn’t anticipate was how much fun it has been to choose the right music for each of the pieces because I got into researching the artists and their relationships with composers or their different connections, which are all described in the program notes,” she said.

For example, she noted that a piece inspired by French artist Sonia Delaunay is accompanied by the traditional jazz championed by the Hot Club de France, a music society co-founded by her son, Charles Delaunay.

Company composer-in-residence Mike Coffin contributed music to the show as well, with two original works, one based on a travel poster and the other taking inspiration from Edward Hopper’s famous painting “Nighthawks.”

“I was not allowed to hear it until it was complete, so I did not influence it at all,” Carlitz said of Coffin’s Hopper composition. “And then I worked with the combination of the painting and the music to try to bring out what I felt were stories in both of them. The piece is called ‘Four Stories.’”

While all of the pieces convey unique stories and emotions, from poignant tales to humorous moments, overall, Carlitz’s aim

for the audience’s experience is simple.

“Joy, that’s it. Yes, I just want to make people happy. If they start getting more immersed in art or thinking about the musical connections or something like that, that’s a plus. That’s like extra credit. But really, I want them to feel happy,” she said. ■

Email Arts & Entertainment Editor Heather Zimmerman at hzimmerman@paweekly.com.

“Gallery” takes place March 29-30 at Cubberley Theatre, 4120 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Tickets are \$15-\$45. carlitzdance.org.

Visit paloaltoonline.com/arts-culture to find more things to do this weekend.



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Eating Out

A taste of the wild

A local naturalist teaches how to forage for edible plants responsibly

STORY BY
KARLA KANE

PHOTOS BY
MAGALI GAUTHIER

On a Saturday morning in mid-March, a small group of hungry explorers met at Hidden Villa, the nonprofit farm, education center and nature preserve nestled in Los Altos Hills. They weren't there to pick up a CSA box of produce. Instead, the mission was to get a taste of the abundant wild plants growing in our area, under the expert tutelage of senior naturalist Garth Harwood. Over the course of two hours, they got a hands-on (and mouths-on) introduction to some of the edible greens all around us, including tips on how to identify and prepare them safely, courtesy of Harwood's

"Make a Wild Salad! Foraging Basics" class.

Why forage? For Harwood, "the real motivation is really about growing my relationship with different plant members of my community," he told this news organization in an interview preceding the class. There are other benefits, too: Wild-foraged plants can have high nutritional value, he said. Plus, foraging is just plain fun.

"You always feel like it's a bit of a treasure hunt, to learn that a plant you've known as a backyard weed your whole life turns out to be edible and delicious," he said. "And you can come across some exotic flavors and textures that

are generally not to be found in the produce aisle."

You don't need to stray far from home to forage. In fact, you may not even have to leave your own yard.

This time of year on the Peninsula, for example, it's hard to avoid the ephemeral, invasive carpets of yellow-blossomed oxalis, which children often call sour grass and which can make a tasty treat in small doses.

"It's delectable," Harwood said, "especially if you like sour things."

One of the best known edible wild plants in this area is *Claytonia perfoliata*. You may know it as miner's lettuce, although Harwood

steers away from that name out of respect for Indigenous communities. A mild-tasting, spinach-like supergreen that's packed full of vitamin C, it got its association with miners, Harwood said, when in the 19th century they learned from Native Californians that eating "Indian lettuce" would fight off scurvy and other nutritional deficiencies. *Claytonia* is among the easiest to identify, with its round leaves, smooth stem and tiny white flower sticking straight through the middle. With Harwood's guidance, students gathered handfuls, making it the base of their wild salad.

At first glance, thistles may not look like something you'd want to

put in your mouth. However, "most parts are edible, nutritious and often delicious, but a bit of a prickly endeavor," Harwood said of the spikey vegetation. The class encountered milk thistle, which is medicinal as well as edible, Harwood said, noting that he's seen milk thistle tablets selling for big bucks at pharmacies and grocery stores because of its association with liver-cleansing properties. It has even been used to help counteract poison, he said. The class was also introduced to sow thistle and Italian thistle along its foraging journey.

Other wild edible plants found that day included bur clover, which later in the summer you'll



Above: From left, milk thistle, bur clover and shepherd's purse were spotted during a foraging basics class at Hidden Villa in Los Altos Hills on March 9.
Top: Students in a foraging basics class pick and taste young wild oat.

Eating Out



Above: Lauren Rueth trims the tops off of shepherd's purse during a foraging basics class at Hidden Villa in Los Altos Hills on March 9. Top right: Instructor Garth Harwood, center, adds flowers from sour grass to students' salads. Bottom right: Harwood introduces students to Italian thistle.



likely be annoyed to find attached to your socks and sneakers but right now is perfectly digestible and comes with what Harwood called a “really big load of micro-nutrients;” shepherd’s purse, with its heart-shaped seed pods and peppery taste; cheeseweed mallow, named for its round leaves that resemble a wheel of cheese; chickweed; wild oats; and curly dock, which has a surprisingly citrus-like flavor.

Harwood will lead two more foraging basics courses in upcoming weeks: March 30 and April 6. The timing was chosen with both practicality and ethics in mind.

“This is the season of great abundance in the world of plant greens,” he said. Each season has its edible delights, but in late winter and early spring, there is an “almost infinite quantity of delectable young greens,” he said.

“Fall brings out the nuts and the berries, and those are a special kind

of treat in and of themselves,” he said, but those autumn favorites are more difficult to collect in quantity, and doing so has a bigger impact on the local wildlife who depend on them. “I don’t like to encourage high-volume collecting of fruits and nuts,” he said. “The wildlife have enough stresses on them as it is.”

In March and early April, the plants are new, tender and plentiful, which is when they are at their most palatable and “beginner-friendly,” he explained. They haven’t yet developed the robust defense mechanisms that can cause bitterness or toughness later on. “The plants are always at their best when they first emerge from the soil,” he said.

During the class, Harwood often thanked the plants as he harvested them. Rather than yanking them out by the roots, which would kill them, he instructed students to use scissors to gently snip off small amounts. He also

made sure they kept each plant in a separate container for safety so that it could be inspected before eating. When foraging, safe is always better than sorry.

For his entry-level foraging classes, “folks knowing the ABCs of how to identify plants, which is the first step in identifying hazardous plants,” is critical. Harwood’s general rule for students is that they identify a minimum of three convincing attributes of a plant before they plan to eat it.

“As a bottom-line safety measure they have to show it to me, every time,” he said.

Foragers should beware of hemlock, which is highly poisonous, Harwood said, showing the class a handful of it as an example. Hemlock is a member of the carrot family with similar-looking foliage, so he recommends avoiding that family entirely.

Stinging nettles are perfectly edible — Harwood recently ate

some on a pizza — but, as anyone who’s felt their painful sting knows, they must be dealt with carefully. Edible, he also pointed out, is also not the same as palatable, and the great variation in wild plants means that even something you’ve found scrumptious in the past might not taste the same the next time you try it.

“Where you gather is as important as what you gather,” he noted.

For example, foragers would do well to be mindful of poison oak and wash off what they pick before eating it (especially in areas well-trafficked by dogs). And foraging is not welcome everywhere. At Hidden Villa, public foraging is not permitted unless you’re part of a class. Most parks, too, have rules that should be checked beforehand. Sidewalks and vacant lots can be great spots to forage, but it’s advisable to avoid picking right near busy roads because of potential contaminants and pollution. Still, he said, “you shouldn’t lack for places to gather.”

Hidden Villa is a working farm, and Harwood said he’s happy to harvest plants that are often considered weeds around the property’s agricultural fields. “They see me weeding in my own way,” he laughed, noting that the farm crew might not always be thrilled that he doesn’t pull the plants out by the roots. “I want to see them regrow so I can come back and get another crop later,” he said.

As class member Lizzie Redford put it, the concept of a weed is sociological rather than botanical. Harwood agreed. It’s a matter of perspective, and a delicacy to one culture may be unappreciated in another. A weed, he said, is “a plant out of place.”

When you think about foraging, gathering mushrooms may be what springs to mind. However, Harwood does not include fungi in his foraging classes because, compared to plants, “the risk factors are



“You always feel like it’s a bit of a treasure hunt, to learn that a plant you’ve known as a backyard weed your whole life turns out to be edible and delicious. And you can come across some exotic flavors and textures that are generally not to be found in the produce aisle.”

Garth Harwood,
Senior Naturalist at Hidden Villa



Poison hemlock, left, is shown at the start of a foraging basics class to illustrate how similar it looks to other plants in the carrot family, like hedge parsley, center. No plants from the carrot family were picked by the instructor or students once foraging had begun.

(continued on page 34)

A taste of the wild

(continued from page 33)

infinitely higher. Probably close to half of all fungal species that occur in our region are of unknown toxicity," he said. "That's just playing with fire, even if you did your identification well."

There are ethical environmental considerations, too. The popularity of foraging for mushrooms "is so extreme right now that areas tend to be overharvested and many species are in retreat," he said.

Harwood, who has master's degrees in education and biology, grew up in Menlo Park, Mountain View and Pescadero, spending as much time as possible outside.

"I think it would have been fair to describe me as a feral kid," he said. Foraging, if you'll excuse the pun, came naturally. "I learned a lot about snacking on plants that grew in my neighborhood from my peers," he recalled.

In his 20s, still fascinated by the environment around him, he sought out more information about what local plants were good and safe to eat, and how to best find and harvest them. As a longtime naturalist and teacher, it's all the more important to him to continue to "cultivate (his) connection to the Earth and the living things around (him) by depending on them to some extent...and interacting with them in those most intimate ways," he said.



A salad made of foraged plants picked during a foraging basics class at Hidden Villa in Los Altos Hills on March 9.

Last year was the first in which he offered stand-alone foraging classes, but he's been incorporating elements of it in his teaching since he first started with Hidden Villa back in 1999.

He recommends that all would-be foragers consult and cross-reference resource guides for their local area. Some of his most trusted include "The Flavors of Home, a Guide to Wild Edible Plants of the SF Bay Area" by Margit

Roos-Collins and "The Bay Area Forager" by Mia Andler and Kevin Feinstein, along with the "The Foraged Foodie" blog (foragedfoodie.blogspot.com).

For the grand finale of the class, the collected greens were inspected again, rinsed and mixed. Harwood brought out some fragrant three-cornered garlic, along with oxalis blossoms to sprinkle as a garnish and a dressing of oil, vinegar and lemon juice.

Harwood said the sometimes intense flavors of wild plants can come as a shock to palates dulled by the grocery store, as cultivated crops are selected for their sweetness and sameness.


"Your taste buds may go, 'Whoa, I haven't been called upon to do this much identification in years!'" Harwood said, "But that's what they're designed for." ■

Email Assistant Lifestyle Editor Karla Kane at kkane@paweekly.com.

'This is the season of great abundance in the world of plant greens. In late winter and early spring, there is an almost infinite quantity of delectable young greens.'

Garth Harwood,
Senior Naturalist at Hidden Villa

The next foraging basics classes will be offered on March 30 and April 6 (\$30/person) at Hidden Villa, 26870 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. Visit tinyurl.com/hiddenvillaforaging to register.



PVI Presents the 33rd Annual

AUTHORS

Salon


Sunday, April 21, 2024 | Rosewood Sand Hill

Join PVI for the 33rd annual Authors Salon. A literary journey featuring New York Times Best Selling Author, actor, producer, and director, Henry Winkler. Guests will enjoy a delicious lunch at the beautiful Rosewood Sand Hill in Menlo Park.

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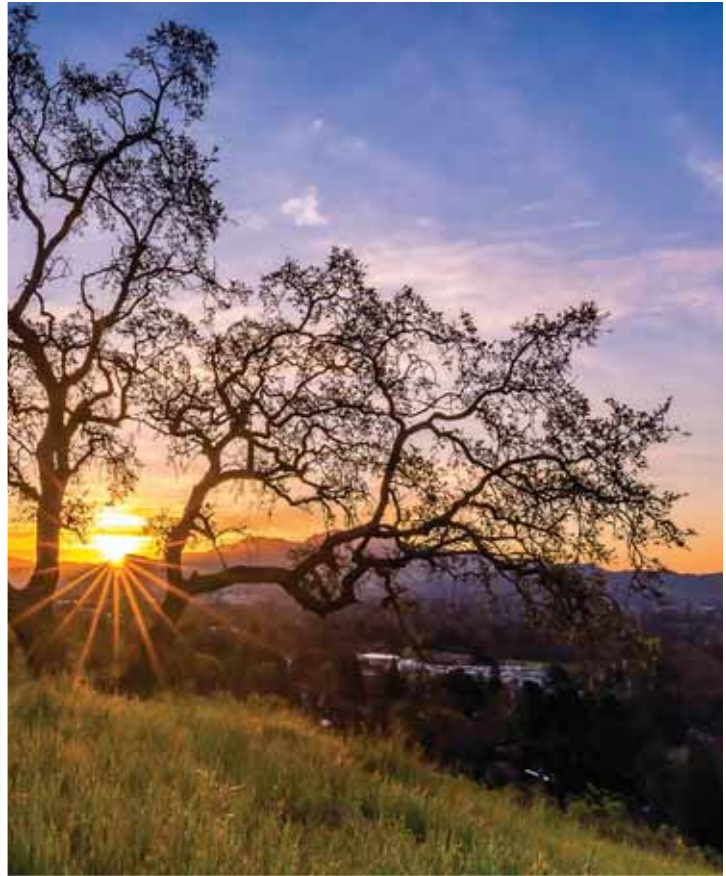
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Public Notices

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME

File No. FBN703456

The following person(s)/registrant(s) has/have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name(s). The information given below is as it appeared on the fictitious business statement that was filed at the County Clerk-Recorder's Office. FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME(S):

PALO ALTO WEEKLY
PALOALTOONLINE.COM
MOUNTAIN VIEW VOICE
MV-VOICE.COM
FOGSTER.COM
EMBARCADERO MEDIA
TRI-VALLEY MEDIA
THE ALMANAC
ALMANAC-NEWS.COM
PLEASANTONWEEKLY.COM
THE SIX FIFTY
THESIXFIFTY.COM

450 Cambridge Avenue

Palo Alto, CA 94306

FILED IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY ON:

06/12/2020

UNDER FILE NO. FBN666014

REGISTRANT'S NAME(S):

EMBARCADERO MEDIA
450 CAMBRIDGE AVENUE
PALO ALTO, CA 94306

THIS BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED BY A Corporation.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk Recorder of SANTA CLARA County on February 22 2024.

(PAW Mar 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2024)

SHARE & CARE SUCCULENT DESIGNS

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No.: FBN703871

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:

1.) Share & Care Succulent Designs, located at 4079 Park Blvd, Palo Alto, CA 94306, Santa Clara.

This business is owned by: an Individual.

The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):

SHARON LENEE GLASS

4079 Park Blvd,

Palo Alto, CA 94306

Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 03/07/2024.

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara on March 07 2024.

(PAW Mar 22, 29, Apr 5 and 12, 2024)

PALO ALTO WEEKLY

PALO ALTO ONLINE

MOUNTAIN VIEW VOICE

MOUNTAIN VIEW ONLINE

THE ALMANAC

ALMANAC NEWS.COM

REDWOOD CITY PULSE

THE SIX FIFTY

PLEASANTON WEEKLY

LIVERMORE VINE

DANVILLE SAN RAMON.COM

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No.: FBN703458

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:

1.) PALO ALTO WEEKLY, 2.) PALO ALTO ONLINE, 3.) MOUNTAIN VIEW VOICE, 4.) MOUNTAIN VIEW ONLINE, 5.) THE ALMANAC, 6.) ALMANAC NEWS.COM, 7.) REDWOOD CITY PULSE, 8.) THE SIX FIFTY, 9.) PLEASANTON WEEKLY, 10.) LIVERMORE VINE, 11.) DANVILLE SAN RAMON.COM located at 450 CAMBRIDGE AVENUE, PALO ALTO, CA 94306, SANTA CLARA COUNTY.

This business is owned by: a Corporation.

The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):

EMBARCADERO MEDIA FOUNDATION

450 CAMBRIDGE AVENUE

PALO ALTO, CA 94306

CA

Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/01/2024

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara on February 22 2024.

(PAW Mar 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2024)

SUGAR & ROSE BAKERY

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No.: FBN704330

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:

1.) Sugar & Rose Bakery, located at 1117 Lincoln Drive, Mountain View, CA 94040, Santa Clara County.

This business is owned by: an Individual.

The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):

KELLY HAMACHI

1117 Lincoln Drive

Mountain View, CA 94040

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 March 21 2024.

(PAW Mar 29, Apr 5, 12 and 19, 2024)

DEP BEAUTY LOUNGE

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No.: 703340

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:

1.) Dep Beauty Lounge, located at 250

University Avenue, Palo Alto, CA, 94301, Santa Clara.

This business is owned by: a Limited Liability Company.

The name and residence address of the registrant(s) is(are):

DEP BEAUTY LOUNGE LLC

20600 MURANO CIRCLE

Cupertino, CA 95014

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 16 2024.

(PAW Mar 22, 29, Apr 5 and 12, 2024)

IMPACTECH ADVISORY

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No.: FBN703689

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:

1.) Impactech Advisory, located at 387 Anna

Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94043, Santa

Clara County.

This business is owned by: an Individual.

The name and residence address of the

registrant(s) is(are):

JOEL SCOTT RICIPUTI

387 Anna Avenue

Mountain View, CA 94043

Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 02/28/2024

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara on March 01 2024.

(PAW Mar 22, 29, Apr 5 and 12, 2024)

BRIGHT MOON GLOBAL COACHING AND

CONSULTING

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

File No.: FBN703715

The following person (persons) is (are) doing business as:

1.) Bright Moon Global Coaching and

Consulting, located at 777-37 San Antonio

Road, 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):

AMY TANG

777-37 San Antonio Road

Palo Alto, CA 94303

Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 01/01/2024

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara on March 01 2024.

(PAW Mar 8, 15, 22 and 29, 2024)

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF

NAME SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA FOR THE COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA

Case No.: 24CV432533

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner: Yong Ching Chang filed a petition

with this court for a decree changing names as follows:

YONG CHING CHANG to TIMOTHY Y.C. CHANG

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: 05/21/2024,

8:45a.m., Probate 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: 03/06/2024

Le Jacqueline Duong

JUDGE OF THE SUPERIOR COURT

(PAW Mar 15, 22, 29 and Apr 5, 2024)

To place a legal notice visit

PaloAltoOnline.com/legal_notices/

Wastewater

(continued from page 5)

tion basins and which separate the sludge from the liquid.

When the city kicked off the project, its primary goal was to replace aged equipment, Allen said during a March 21 site tour. A long-term plan that the city approved for the wastewater plant in 2012 noted that much of the equipment at the plant is between 35 and 51 years old and shows significant signs of wear and tear.

But just as construction began, the project took on a second mission: preventing another red tide.

The clarion call for this new effort came in the summer of 2022, when an algal bloom killed more than 10,000 fish and turned water bodies connected to the bay a shade of reddish brown. The bloom, which first appeared near Alameda and then spread to South San Francisco Bay and San Pablo Bay, was the largest in recorded history, according to the California Ocean Protection Council.

State regulators have taken notice. The San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board, which regulates the region's 37 wastewater treatment plants, is scheduled to adopt this summer an updated watershed permit

that will set targets for reducing nutrients in wastewater. The current permit, which the board adopted in 2019, required wastewater plants to track and report their nutrient discharge into the bay.

The next permit is still under development, but it is expected to give agencies 10 years to meet new thresholds for reducing nutrient loads in the region, said Lorien Fono, executive director of the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies, an association that helps coordinate the efforts of the Bay Area's dozens of water control plants.

Fono, whose group has been discussing the new requirements with the water board, said the forthcoming watershed permit will create a nutrient limit that would be 50% lower than what the region experienced in the mid-2010's, when the nutrient levels were at their peak. They have since been reduced by about 10%, she said.

The effort will be neither easy nor cheap, she said. BACWA estimates that it will cost about \$11 billion to implement the needed improvements. This works out to about \$4,000 per household using the entire system, the agency estimated.

With the upgrade effort, the Palo Alto plant is methodically preparing for this new, nutrient-light world order. The Embarcadero Way facility has already been treating sewage for ammonia since 1980, Allen said. Once the plant upgrade is completed, the plant would also remove between 50% and 60% of the nitrogen in local wastewater, helping to meet the new standards.

"Ammonia is toxic to fish so we've been removing ammonia but we don't break down the nitrate — that goes out to the bay and it's converted to nitrogen gas out there," Allen said. "Now we have to take the nitrogen gas out here."

Fono said that meeting the requirements of the new permit would require Bay Area plants to make the largest investment in wastewater infrastructure since the 1970s, when cities across the country were upgrading their plants to comply with the Clean Water Act. But unlike at that time, when the federal government made billions of dollars available in grant funding, the agencies don't have any such funding sources.

Her agency is trying to coordinate the regional response. Its members include the five "principal members": Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, East Bay Dischargers Authority, East Bay Municipal Utility District, the City and County of San Francisco, and the City of San Jose. Palo Alto, which is the sixth-largest water control district, is one of 12 "associate members," while dozens of other cities and agencies, including the City of Mountain View, are affiliated members.

"This isn't going to be a contentious permit, but we want to see a thoughtful and strategic approach because this is going to be extremely costly," Fono said.

Local ratepayers will soon experience this firsthand. When the Palo Alto City Council adopts its



Palo Alto Unified School District

Palo Alto Unified School District ("District") will receive sealed bids for the following project,

Contract Name: PALY ALTO HIGH SCHOOL TENNIS COURT RENOVATION

Contract No.: PAUSD-PALYTENNIS-24

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK: Renovation and Resurfacing of seven (7) tennis courts and new windscreens at the Palo Alto High School campus.

A MANDATORY PRE-BID conference will be held on **April 9, 2024 – 2:00PM**, at 50 Embarcadero Road Palo Alto, CA 94301 (meet at the school tennis courts located along El Camino Real.)

Email bids to vmelero@pausd.org by 4:00 PM on **Thursday, May 2, 2024**.

To bid on this Project, the Bidder is required to possess one or more of the following State of California contractors' license(s): **A or C-12**

The successful Bidder shall be required to furnish a 100% Performance Bond and a 100% Payment Bond if it is awarded the Contract for the Work.

The Bidder's license(s) must remain active and in good standing throughout the term of the Contract.

To bid on this Project, the Bidder is required to be registered as a public works contractor with the Department of Industrial Relations pursuant to the Labor Code.

The Contractor and all Subcontractors under the Contractor shall pay all workers on all Work performed pursuant to this Contract not less than the general prevailing rate of per diem wages and the general prevailing rate for holiday and overtime work as determined by the Director of the Department of Industrial Relations, State of California, for the type of work performed and the locality in which the work is to be performed within the boundaries of the District, pursuant to §1770 et seq. of the California Labor Code. Prevailing wage rates are also available from the District or on the Internet at: <http://www.dir.ca.gov>. This Project is subject to labor compliance monitoring and enforcement by the Department of Industrial Relations pursuant to Labor Code §1771.4 and subject to the requirements of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations. The Contractor and all Subcontractors under the Contractor shall furnish electronic certified payroll records directly to the Labor Commissioner weekly and within ten (10) days of any request by the District or the Labor Commissioner. The successful Bidder shall comply with all requirements of Division 2, Part 7, Chapter 1, Articles 1-5 of the Labor Code, and is required to be registered as a public works contractor with the Department of Industrial Relations pursuant to the Labor Code.

Bidders may examine Bidding Documents online at: <https://bit.ly/PALYTENNIS-24>

The District shall award the Contract, if it awards it at all, to the lowest responsive responsible bidder based on the sum of the base bid only.

The Board reserves the right to reject any and all bids and/or waive any irregularity in any bid received. If the District awards the Contract, the security of unsuccessful bidder(s) shall be returned within sixty (60) days from the time the award is made. Unless otherwise required by law, no bidder may withdraw its bid for ninety (90) days after the date of the bid opening.

All questions can be addressed to:
Palo Alto Unified School District 25 Churchill Avenue, Building D Palo Alto, CA 94306-1099

Attn: Miles Cappello

Phone: (925)-446-2795

Email: miles@fs3h.com



Devin Roberts

Executive Director at Bay Area Clean Water Agencies Lorien Fono speaks during a tour of the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant on March 21.



Devin Roberts

Plant Manager James Allen at the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant on March 21.

new budget in July, it plans to raise wastewater rates by 15% to pay for the various capital improvements at the wastewater plant, which will add about \$7.30 to the average monthly bill, according to utilities department staff.

Ratepayers should also expect rate hikes of 9% in each of the next two years followed by 8% and 7% increases in each of the following two, according to a rate forecast from the department. The main drivers are the need to replace aged sewer lines, to refill depleted financial reserves and to pay for debt services on the capital projects at the wastewater plant, according to staff.

Palo Alto isn't the only agency that is investing in upgrades that aim to reduce nitrogen. The Oro Lomo Sanitary District in Alameda County, for example, recently completed an upgrade to its nutrient treatment process by installing a "sidestream treatment system" on its San Lorenzo plant. The process focuses on the nutrient-rich liquid that results from dewatering anaerobically digested biosolids, which involves microbes breaking down organic matter in the absence of air. Meanwhile, the Union Sanitary District is adding a process for biological nutrient removal at a cost of \$509 million, according to a letter that Fono submitted to the water board in January year.

Both the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission and Silicon Valley Clean Water, which is

based in Redwood City, are also pursuing sidestream treatment improvements, which are slated to be completed in 2026 and 2029, respectively.

Some districts, like East Bay Municipal Utility District, are trying to meet the nutrient mandate by updating existing infrastructure to maximize nutrient reduction, Fono said. Others are pursuing nutrient-reduction measures through projects that bring other benefits such as water purification. In these cases, the nutrient-reduction component is a happy byproduct that may be valuable but that isn't as conspicuous as the other benefits.

"Frankly, the advantages of these expenditures aren't going to be visible on a day-to-day basis by the community," Fono said of the nutrient-reduction measures. "Assuming we don't have perpetual algal blooms."

Palo Alto is in the third category of agencies: those that are already upgrading aged infrastructure and are including nutrient reduction as part of those projects. As part of the pending upgrade, the aeration basins will be divided with concrete walls to create different zones. Some of these would operate without oxygen and will treat nitrogen, allowing the wastewater plant to reduce the nitrogen that gets emitted into the Bay by about half, according to the city.

The plant upgrade, which is being funded by Palo Alto and its partner cities and agencies, is the city's first major foray into removing nitro-

gen, a nutrient that serves as food for the algal species *Heterosigma akashiwo*. Historically, the Bay region has seen relatively cloudy weather, which helps reduce algal blooms because plants need light to grow, Fono said. But thanks to a confluence of factors that include upstream dams and climate change, conditions have become clearer and more favorable to algal blooms, she said.

It's not entirely clear what exactly the "safe" threshold is for nutrients in wastewater, she noted. But the algal bloom events in 2022 and 2023 are a sign that the region needs to do more.

"For 10 years we have been studying the science to understand the impacts of nutrients in the Bay," Fono said. "This project is not complete. We know we want to start reducing nutrients but we don't know what the safe levels are now."

The aeration basin from which Allen describes the ongoing improvements represents the middle step in wastewater's journey from the household to the Bay. After getting flushed down the toilet into the sewer system, the wastewater moves through "bar screens" where bars act like filters to remove roots, rags and other solid items. Pumps then send the wastewater into sedimentation tanks where smaller solids like hair and grease get skimmed off while thick sludge settles at the bottom.

As bottom-feeding sludge thickens into cakes and gets trucked out, the wastewater moves through the plant's two "fixed film reactors," rusty two-story towers that would be instantly recognizable to anyone walking near Byxbee Park. Inside are films of microorganisms that feast on the organic matter in the wastewater before it moves on to the bubbly aeration basins. Once the renovation is complete, the city hopes to decommission the fixed film reactors and transfer the entire process to the aeration basin area.

The wastewater then goes through further filtering, where layers of anthracite coal and sand remove small particles, before getting disinfected by ultraviolet light and discharging into the San Francisco Bay.

The sheer amount of processes and equipment that is packed

into the plant makes the upgrade particularly complex, said Karin North, assistant director of the Department of Public Works. She and Allen likened the upgrade to keeping a patient alive during an open-heart surgery. Every time one aeration basin gets upgraded, the city has to move the pumps and shift the effluent into the other three tanks — a process that will take about five years to complete.

"Other treatment plants that have lots of open land may be able to do it more efficiently than faster than we can, but a lot of the plants in the Peninsula are constrained and it's one of the complexity aspects of removing a new pollutant," Allen said.

Allen called the \$193-million upgrade of the secondary-treatment process the "largest project in the city's history." North noted that it will have taken about 15 years from the point when the city began designing these improvements to their actual completion.

"We're in the middle of upgrading our facility while we're running and operating it at the same time," North said.

Critical to the process are the bubbles in the water, caused by pressurized air blowers about 15 feet below the surface and which prevent sludge from settling at the bottom of this tank. The air, according to the city, supports the microorganisms that remove ammonia and other dissolved solids.

In the future, Allen said, the

basin will be equipped with a serpentine path, with some sections with the air off (anoxic zone) and others with the air on.

"We'll be selecting for the different microorganisms in the different sections of the serpentine paths, in one section to break down ammonia ... and in the next section break down the nitrogen," Allen said.

Once the improvements are complete and the secondary treatment system is enhanced, the city expects nitrogen levels to drop by 50% to 60%. According to Allen, the plant discharged an average of just under 2,000 kilograms per day of total inorganic nitrogen between 2019 and 2023 during dry seasons, which go from May to November. That number has been rising, first to 2,181 kg in 2022 and then 2,277 kg per day in 2023, indicating nitrogen levels are currently rising.

Allen estimates that once the improvements are complete, the nitrogen levels are expected to go down to about 800 kg per day, well within the proposed threshold of the new permit.

"If we do our part, other agencies do their part, all the nitrogen in the Bay will drop and we won't be at a tipping point causing algae blooms," Allen said. ■

About the cover: Design by Douglas Young. Photos by Devin Roberts and courtesy Getty Images.



Devin Roberts

Senior Chemist Kyle Yang at the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant on March 21.

Public Agenda

A preview of Palo Alto government meetings next week

CITY COUNCIL ... The council plans to get an update on Palo Alto Link, the city's rideshare program. It will then consider an update to the tree protection ordinance and consider approving a proposal from the state Department of Transportation to remove parking spaces along El Camino Real and install bike lanes as part of its repaving project. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, April 1, 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.

UTILITIES ADVISORY COMMISSION ... The commission plans to discuss the city's cross-bore verification program; consider a power purchase agreement with Ameresco Half Moon Bay LLC for up to 60,000 megawatt hours per year of biogas energy. The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, April 3, 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: 966 9129 7246.

Bike plan

(continued from page 5)

is currently created by on-street parking, the review states.

The Caltrans plan also does not address turning movement speed at intersections where, according to Caltrans' data, the vast majority of El Camino collisions occur. The review also noted that the design includes some areas where bicycle lanes drop altogether, leaving no protected treatments for cyclists. High-stress conditions, the review found, "persist for bicyclists traveling the corridor and these weakest links lead to an overall high

stress condition that is likely to limit mode shift potential."

The proposed alignment will also create new conflict points between bicyclists and buses, particularly once bicyclists who currently used the sidewalk shift to on-street riding, the review states.

The review was performed just weeks before the Palo Alto City Council is slated to consider on April 1 a resolution to remove all parking spaces from both sides of El Camino Real to accommodate Caltrans plans. If things go as planned, Caltrans would complete the project next year.

Fehr & Peers didn't recommend scrapping the project. Instead, its

consultants proposed a slate of near- and long-term improvements for Caltrans to consider as part of the bike lane project. These include creating a design that allows buses to stop in the right lane and provide bicyclists with a designated lane to the right of the bus stops; adding "paint and plastic" protections at intersections, narrowing lane width for cars to accommodate wider bike lanes or buffer zones for cyclists; and reconfiguring intersections to shorten the distance pedestrians have to cross the street.

In the long term, the consultants say Caltrans should consider removing one travel lane in each direction and restoring on-street parking to slow traffic. Caltrans should also consider adding new midblock crossings "to serve desire lines for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling to key destinations in the corridor, including bus stops," they say.

To date, Caltrans' plan has generated a mixed reaction from the community, with some bicyclists praising the state effort as a much-needed improvement to a dangerous stretch and others arguing that the plan needs significant changes. Dozens of bicyclists and community members attended recent community meetings to thank Caltrans for advancing its plans. One speaker, Emil Abraham, said it would be an "absolute shame" if Palo Alto missed out on new bike lanes.

"I'm glad to have Caltrans on the side of a brighter and greener future and I hope Palo Alto is also on board," Abraham said at a March 13 hearing.

Others suggested that the current plans fall short and urged revisions. Alan Wachtel, who serves on the Palo Alto Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee, requested additional improvements at crosswalks and suggested at the March 13 meeting that bikeways could become "high-stress areas" if they involve conflicts with drivers at intersections.

Penny Ellison, community volunteer for Bike Palo Alto, requested Caltrans to integrate pedestrian refuge islands and other improvements at intersections to make conditions safer for people looking to cross El Camino. She



Gennady Sheyner

A cyclist prepares to cross El Camino Real in Palo Alto on March 18, 2024.

called the proposal currently on the table an "incomplete complete streets plan."

"I am overall dismayed by Caltrans' overall failures to use this paving opportunity to improve crossing on El Camino Real in every city on the corridor, not just PA, especially on school commute routes and transit crossings," Ellison said. "Paint, which is really all we're getting at the intersections — and plastic — is a prayer. It's not a safety plan for people of all ages and ability to have to cross this six or seven lane highway."

Sergio Ruiz, Caltrans' complete streets coordinator, said at a March 13 public hearing that the agency's decisions on El Camino were informed both the Caltrans policy on "complete streets" and existing regional plans such as the Grand Boulevard Initiative and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority Bike Plan, which underscore the important role of El Camino in connecting communities.

"One of the key findings that came about in reviewing all the planning documents is the desire and need for continuous bike facilities along El Camino Real, not just in Palo Alto, but in adjoining jurisdictions as well since it does provide the most direct connections and there is an need to have improved access to destinations on El Camino and not just parallel bike boulevards and bike routes that could be somewhat circuitous," Ruiz said.

The city's board and commis-

sions have not taken any positions on the Caltrans proposal, though at a recent hearing, some Planning and Transportation Commission members voiced concerns about the design elements of the new proposals. Commissioner Keith Reckdahl said during the March 13 discussion that Park Boulevard will remain a superior pathway for bicyclists, even if the new El Camino lanes are installed, and suggested that the city and Caltrans may be "rushing things" when it comes to the bike project.

"I love bike lanes — they are an asset to the community, but we have issues to solve and some of them we can perhaps mitigate, others we won't," Reckdahl said. "I think there's a lot of hope going on here that everything is going to work out, and I hope it does, because it has the potential for really helping out the community. But also there could be a lot of unintended consequences here."

Human Relations Commission member Mary Kate Stimmler was more sanguine about the El Camino project. While she concurred with Reckdahl that Park will remain a better north-south route, El Camino remains a critical thoroughfare with many destinations that will continue to attract riders.

"I think we have an opportunity to make it a cleaner, neater, safer street right now, which is pretty incredible," Stimmler said. ■

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



Palo Alto Unified School District

Palo Alto Unified School District ("District") will receive sealed bids for the following project,

Contract Name: PALY ALTO HIGH SCHOOL PAC DIESEL EXHAUST REPLACEMENT

Contract No.: PAUSD-PALYPAC-24

DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK: Replace diesel exhaust in the Performing Arts Center (PAC Center) at Palo Alto High School with Enerverx Powerstack Exhaust Material. See Contract Documents for full project description.

A MANDATORY PRE-BID conference will be held on **April 9, 2024 – 3:30PM**, at 50 Embarcadero Road Palo Alto, CA 94301.

Email bids to miles@fs3h.com by 2:00 PM on **Wednesday, April 17, 2024**.

To bid on this Project, the Bidder is required to possess one or more of the following State of California contractors' license(s): **B, C-4, C-20, C-36**

The successful Bidder shall be required to furnish a 100% Performance Bond and a 100% Payment Bond if it is awarded the Contract for the Work.

The Bidder's license(s) must remain active and in good standing throughout the term of the Contract.

To bid on this Project, the Bidder is required to be registered as a public works contractor with the Department of Industrial Relations pursuant to the Labor Code.

The Contractor and all Subcontractors under the Contractor shall pay all workers on all Work performed pursuant to this Contract not less than the general prevailing rate of per diem wages and the general prevailing rate for holiday and overtime work as determined by the Director of the Department of Industrial Relations, State of California, for the type of work performed and the locality in which the work is to be performed within the boundaries of the District, pursuant to §1770 et seq. of the California Labor Code. Prevailing wage rates are also available from the District or on the Internet at: <http://www.dir.ca.gov>. This Project is subject to labor compliance monitoring and enforcement by the Department of Industrial Relations pursuant to Labor Code §1771.4 and subject to the requirements of Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations. The Contractor and all Subcontractors under the Contractor shall furnish electronic certified payroll records directly to the Labor Commissioner weekly and within ten (10) days of any request by the District or the Labor Commissioner. The successful Bidder shall comply with all requirements of Division 2, Part 7, Chapter 1, Articles 1-5 of the Labor Code, and is required to be registered as a public works contractor with the Department of Industrial Relations pursuant to the Labor Code.

Bidders may examine Bidding Documents online at: <https://bit.ly/PALYPAC-24>

The District shall award the Contract, if it awards it at all, to the lowest responsive responsible bidder based on the sum of the base bid only.

The Board reserves the right to reject any and all bids and/or waive any irregularity in any bid received. If the District awards the Contract, the security of unsuccessful bidder(s) shall be returned within sixty (60) days from the time the award is made. Unless otherwise required by law, no bidder may withdraw its bid for ninety (90) days after the date of the bid opening.

All questions can be addressed to:
Palo Alto Unified School District
25 Churchill Avenue, Building D Palo Alto, CA 94306-1099
Attn: Miles Cappello
Phone: (925)-446-2795
Email: miles@fs3h.com



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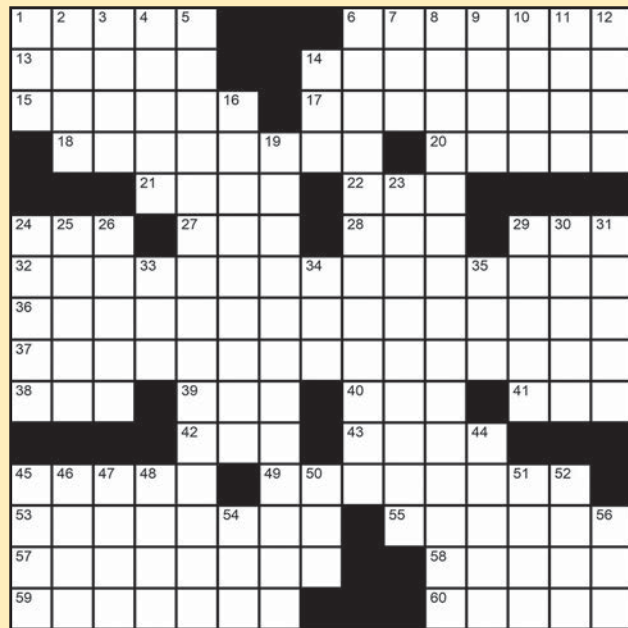
Across

1. Chain store with a cat-and-dog logo
6. Archipelago nation in the Indian Ocean
13. Collectively
14. Animated movie based on a Neil Gaiman novel
15. Actor Kevin of "Grey's Anatomy" and "Trainspotting"
17. Added fuel to, as a fire
18. Style of jeans with extra space around the thigh
20. Cast out from the body
21. Mario Party item
22. Home of Benny Beaver
24. Subj. with lab work
27. Grazed
28. Small sample
29. Aykroid of "Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire"
32. Played in turn
36. Advice to one holding tension
37. Library archives that may be in storage
38. Trout fishing lure
39. ___ loss
40. Super Bowl LIV halftime performer
41. "Animal Farm" structure
42. Gym classes, briefly
43. Dutch astronomer with a namesake "cloud"
45. Sauce for crab cakes, maybe
49. Cereal brand with a High Protein version
53. Hostess offering
55. Skyhook Foundation founder, familiarly
57. Focus of a Royal Canadian centennial on April 1, 2024
58. Apres-ski setting
59. Gets comfy
60. Squirrel away

Down

1. "Mr. ___ Passes By" (A.A. Milne play)

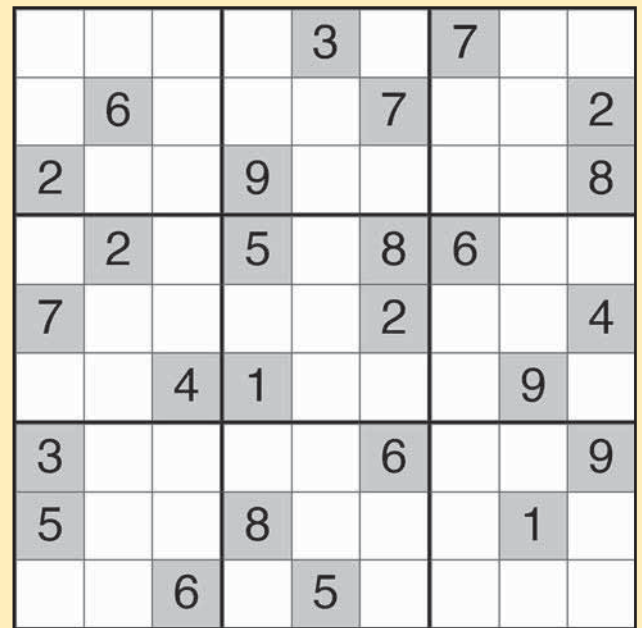
"Free Throw Line" — it's a themeless! by Matt Jones



Answers on page 16.

2. Env. stuffer
3. Wild-caught octopus, in a sushi bar
4. Awards in the ad biz
5. Historic building in Baton Rouge, LA or Springfield, IL
6. 1994 Eurodance hit based on an old American folk song
7. Los Juegos Olimpicos prize
8. TikTok offerings involving pencils, maybe
9. Couturier Cassini
10. Vehicle
11. Unpleasant obligation
12. Back-to-school mo.
14. Series with a short-lived "Cyber" offshoot

This week's SUDOKU



Answers on page 16.

www.sudoku.name

16. Manga featuring high school student Light Yagami and a mysterious black book
19. What Project Gutenberg offers, in e-book formats
23. When hands are up and down
24. Gargamel's prey
25. What extreme Dutch sportspeople try to jump with a pole
26. 1967 Stevie Wonder title lyric that's followed by "If you leave me sad and blue"
29. Places that may have a lot of kicks and trainers
30. ___-garde
31. Current events-related
33. Letter after ka in Spanish
34. Kraken org.

35. 3-D screening
44. What Balatro's "arcana packs" are themed around
45. "I'm not ___"
46. "Sweet," in Jamaica
47. Shared mine?
48. Shoe insert
50. ___-Chee All Season Portfolio (retro school folder)
51. "___ and the Swan" (Yeats poem)
52. Root beer dispensers
54. Positional start?
56. "I've seen better"

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