

*Palo
Alto*

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Twice spurned, Palo Alto pitches new housing vision

City Council prepares to re-adopt its Housing Element

By Gennady Sheyner

Palo Alto received a stark reminder last year about the high cost of not having a legally certified housing plan. Shortly after the city, like many others, missed the Jan. 31, 2023, deadline for having its

Housing Element certified by the state Department of Housing and Community Development, requests started coming in from developers pitching “builder’s remedy” projects that exceed local zoning regulations — in

some cases, dramatically.

Seven such applications have come in to date, with the most ambitious one featuring a 17-story, 177-foot residential tower in the heart of California Avenue. Three others, each featuring more than 300 apartments, target a single corridor along El Camino Real, just south of Page Mill Road.

City officials continue to question the legality of these builder’s

remedy projects, which can only be filed in jurisdictions that don’t have a state certified Housing Element, a document that lays out a city’s vision for meeting its state-imposed housing mandate. But even if some of these projects ultimately don’t advance, planners and council members acknowledge that the process of getting the state’s approval for the new document has taken a high

toll, requiring extensive consulting work, substantial revisions to the zoning code, and long meetings by the Palo Alto City Council and the city’s Planning and Transportation Commission, with little guarantee of success.

The most significant of these conversations will unfold on April 15, when the council and the

(continued on page 12)



Abigail Van Neely

Teacher Tamara Wallace works in the garden on Feb. 29, at Fletcher Middle School, which adopted a sustainability-focused curriculum last fall.

EDUCATION

At Fletcher, even middle schoolers can learn to live more sustainably

The school’s sustainability focus asks its students to get creative about tackling global problems locally

By Abigail Van Neely

Students in Fletcher Middle School’s sustainability elective start class by brainstorming local actions they can take to protect their little piece of the planet:

What if the cafeteria served cubes of cheese at lunch, instead of plastic wrapped cheese sticks? What if everyone biked to school? Borrowed books

instead of buying them?

“We can start little. We can start right here: your school, your home, your lunch,” their teacher, Tamara Wallace, says. “If it’s a big problem, but you can tackle a piece of it, then why not?”

The idea that everyone, even middle schoolers, can contribute to combating climate change on

a local level echoes throughout the school. Last fall, Fletcher adopted a schoolwide sustainability theme after unanimous approval by the Palo Alto school board, making it the first middle school on the Peninsula with a sustainability choice program. Any student in the Palo Alto Unified School District can apply for enrollment, even if

Fletcher is not the school they’re zoned for.

The new “Sustainability for All” program started, in part, as an attempt to increase enrollment at Fletcher, which is smaller than the district’s other two middle schools and is located in the Green Acres neighborhood of Palo Alto. Now, however, teachers say their focus is on experimenting with ways to help students better learn about the environment.

“We’re pleased with the interest and we’re happy to invite other Palo Alto families to come and join our work,” said Wallace, who is designing the sustainability elective curriculum. She hopes Fletcher’s

(continued on page 38)

ELECTION 2024

Two request recount in race for Congress

Separate calls for election results reviews raises questions

By Gennady Sheyner

The dramatic race to succeed U.S. Rep. Anna Eshoo in Congress took another twist this week when two individuals requested a recount, a development that threatens to knock one of the remaining candidates off the November ballot.

The requests were filed separately by Dan Stegink, a former candidate for San Mateo County supervisor, and by Jonathan Padilla, who works at the data company Snickerdoodle Labs and who is supporting former San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo in the congressional race. They submitted the requests to the registrars of both San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, portions of which make up the 16th Congressional District.

Liccardo, who finished more than 8,000 votes ahead of any other candidate in the 10-person primary, is in no danger of falling off the November ballot after the recount. The same cannot be said of his two opponents, Santa Clara County Supervisor Joe Simitian and state Assembly member Evan Low, who ended up tied with 30,249 votes each. A single vote switch could thus cost either of them an opportunity to compete in the general election.

Stegink hopes that this is exactly what happens, he told this publication in an interview. His

(continued on page 37)

Answers to this week's puzzles, which can be found on page 39.

S	P	E	C	S	T	A	C	T	S	L	A	B		
A	L	E	R	T	A	L	I	A	N	A	T	O		
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2	5	1	3	9	7	4	8	6
8	6	7	1	5	4	2	9	3
7	1	5	9	4	8	6	3	2
6	2	8	5	1	3	9	7	4
9	3	4	6	7	2	1	5	8



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Upfront

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



It is getting harder to find locations that organically become part of the community life.



— Greig Scott, a frequent visitor of Printers Cafe, which closed for good this week after more than three decades on California Avenue. See page 7.

Around Town



Courtesy Children's Health Council

Garfield Byrd is set to be Children's Health Council's new CFO.

TRANSITIONS AFOOT ... Children's Health Council announced its new **Chief Financial Officer Garfield Byrd**, who will succeed **Terence Boyle** amid his retirement after 12 years in the position. Byrd makes the move from the **Allen Institute for Artificial Intelligence**, where he also served as CFO, following stints at the **Kipp Foundation**, the **Wikimedia Foundation**, and other local organizations. A press release says Byrd and Boyle will work together until June to facilitate a smooth transition. "I am honored to join **Children's Health Council** and contribute to its vital mission of supporting the mental health and learning needs of youth in the Bay Area," Byrd said. "I look forward to collaborating with the CHC team to drive strategic initiatives and further enhance the organization's impact in our community."

CUBBERLEY STATION ... Despite years of negotiations and recent assurances that a deal is just around the corner, Palo Alto's plans for **Cubberley Community Center** remain hazy. But as the city and the **Palo Alto Unified School District** continue their negotiations for swapping land at the jointly owned center, one high-profile tenant is preparing to move in: the **Palo Alto Fire Department**.

Later this spring, the city is preparing to build a temporary fire station at Cubberley, a structure that will remain at the center for two years while the permanent station at Mitchell Park is getting rebuilt less than a half a mile away. Once completed, the new structure will replace the existing Fire Station 4, which city officials had deemed to be undersized and unable to accommodate modern equipment. It will include two drive-through bays and a stand-by bay, living quarters for firefighters, a captain's office, a watchroom office and public restrooms. The temporary station at Cubberley will be somewhat less fancy. The modular building will stand on the southwest parking lot of Cubberley, with easy access to Middlefield Road and Nelson Drive. It will occupy the site for 24 months under a \$244,850 lease agreement that the City Council approved last month with **Mobile Modular Management Corporation**. The temporary station will include three sleeping quarters, an office, two accessible restrooms, a kitchen, an open living area and accessible ramp and stairs, according to a report from **Public Works Director Brad Eggleston**. It is scheduled to be installed this summer. Eggleston noted that the city had considered three options for a temporary station but ultimately rejected the ideas of using nearby hotels or the parking lot at the Mitchell Park Library for a temporary station. The hotels posed logistical challenges because they lacked storage space for critical firefighting gear or charging stations for equipment. The library option would have required displacing 30 parking spaces. The effects, Eggleston wrote, "would greatly impact the library's circulation, add to an already congested site, and displace occupant vehicles to street parking." The Cubberley option was determined to have "the smallest impact on the community, be large enough to accommodate a modular trailer, department vehicle, and equipment and, importantly, to meet the fire response area requirements. ■

STANFORD

Tara VanDerveer, who set NCAA record for wins, announces retirement

Stanford University coaching legend credited with transforming women's basketball

By Gennady Sheyner

Tara VanDerveer, who over the course of her storied coaching career led Stanford University's women's basketball team to three national championships and became the winningest coach in college basketball history, announced on April 9 that she is retiring.

According to the university's announcement, she will continue to work as an adviser to the university's Athletics Department after her retirement, which is slated for May 8, the 39th anniversary of her original hire.

VanDerveer had spent 45 years as a college coach, which included stints at the University of Idaho and Ohio State University before she arrived at Stanford in 1985. In her 38 seasons, she established herself as a preeminent NCAA coach, leading the Cardinal to 14 Final Fours and to college championships in 1990, 1992 and 2021.

Between 2001 and 2009, the team won nine consecutive Pac-10 tournaments. She was recognized as the conference's coach of the

year 17 times during her run at Stanford.

VanDerveer took a break from the university in 1996 to coach the United States women's national basketball team in the Summer Olympics in Atlanta. The team went undefeated and won the gold medal.

She hit another career milestone on Jan. 21, when she picked up her 1,203rd victory in a win over Oregon State University and passed former Duke University coach Mike Krzyzewski for the most wins in college basketball history. She retires with 1,216 victories.

"Basketball is the greatest group project there is and I am so incredibly thankful for every person who has supported me and our teams throughout my coaching career," VanDerveer said in a statement. "I've been spoiled to coach the best and brightest at one of the world's foremost institutions for nearly four decades.

"Coupled with my time at Ohio State and Idaho, and as head coach of the United States National Team,

it has been an unforgettable ride. The joy for me was in the journey of each season, seeing a group of young women work hard for each other and form an unbreakable bond. Winning was a byproduct. I've loved the game of basketball since I was a little girl, and it has given me so much throughout my life. I hope I've been able to give at least a little bit back."

The university announced that Kate Paye, who played under VanDerveer from 1991 to 1995 and who had spent 17 seasons as a member of her staff, will be VanDerveer's successor. Bernard Muir, the university's director of athletics, lauded VanDerveer's four decades of service and said in a statement that women's basketball would not be what it is today without her pioneering work.

"She has been devoted to this campus for 40 years and a servant to all the student-athletes who have come through her program," Muir said. "Tara built one of the sport's iconic programs almost immediately upon her arrival at Stanford, and then maintained



Courtesy Stanford Athletics/Don Fera/ISI Photos

Tara VanDerveer coaches the Stanford Cardinal at the close of the 2018-19 season with a 71-50 win over the Arizona State Sun Devils at Maples Pavilion in Palo Alto.

that standard for nearly four decades.

"An energetic and positive teacher, a Hall of Famer, a trusted friend and mentor, Tara's impact is simply unmatched, and I don't think it's a stretch to characterize her as one of the most influential

people to ever be associated with this university. We will look forward to finding the appropriate ways to honor her deep impact and legacy here at Stanford." ■

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

BUSINESS

As Printers Cafe shutter, patrons lament end of an era

Planning commission greenlights Palo Alto Fit's proposal to occupy building at 320 California Ave.

By Gennady Sheyner

Despite a last-minute push for leniency and an outpouring of support from the community, Printers Cafe officially closed shop this week after more than three decades on California Avenue.

The building at 320 California Ave. was completely hallowed out of furniture, decor and equipment on Tuesday morning. Its outdoor dining area, a popular gathering place for visitors to the city's "second downtown," was cleared of tables and chairs.

The cafe, which began as a book store, shut down to accommodate a proposal for a new Palo Alto Fit, a gym whose owners last year bought the buildings at 310 and 320 California Ave. The new gym would take over the space that is currently occupied by Performance Gaines, another gym, as well as Printers Cafe building.

Two subtenants of Printers Cafe, Gallery House and Moods Wine Bar, have already found new locations in other cities.

But while the departure of

Printers is now a done deal, the future of Palo Alto Fit is somewhat less certain. The gym needs a conditional use permit to operate on California Avenue. The process of getting such a permit is frequently routine, subject to approval from the planning director. But given the high interest in preserving Printers Cafe, Planning Director Jonathan Lait deferred to the Planning and Transportation Commission and the City Council to rule on the permit, a process that creates an opening for delays and increased public scrutiny.

The planning commission voted unanimously on April 10 to recommend approving the conditional use permit. Though members lamented the loss of Printers Cafe, they generally agreed that the new gym and cafe proposed by Nguyen are consistent with the city's vision for California Avenue.

"Even though I'm very sad to see individual businesses leave, it's the nature of what happens," Vice Chair Bryna Chang said. "Unfortunately, some businesses

are no longer profitable. It's a problem that all of Palo Alto faces — that retail conditions change."

Meanwhile, dozens of residents had been urging to step in and preserve Printers Cafe and its subtenants in the weeks before the cafe's closure. Greig Scott, a frequent visitor to Printers, was one of about 60 residents to submit a letter to the city in recent weeks lamenting the planned closure of Printers, a development that he called "incomprehensible."

Scott said the cafe "filled a unique place in the fabric of Palo Alto." As a resident of Park Boulevard and employee of Stanford University, he said he watched the cafe be "at times a place that allowed quiet solitude for remote work, and at others a beehive of activity, a center of community life on California Ave."

"It is getting harder to find locations that organically become part of the community life" Scott wrote. "Printers Cafe has been

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HOUSING

Teacher housing project ekes out passing grade

Despite reservations about affordability, Palo Alto commission advances 44-apartment project

By Gennady Sheyner

In theory, the proposed development at 3265 El Camino Real has all the qualities and amenities that Palo Alto leaders like to encourage.

It is located in a central corridor in Ventura where the city is hoping to attract more housing. Even though the five-story building would exceed Palo Alto's 50-foot height limit by 15 feet, it is far shorter, less dense and with less neighborhood opposition than other projects in the area, including the "builder's remedy" proposals that have been popping up over the past year just south of the site. And it's a rare example of a 100% affordable housing project that did not require an infusion of public funds.

Most importantly, the 44-apartment project is geared toward a population that does more than most to raise Palo Alto's youth and property values: teachers. The developer, Half Dome Capital, has signed an agreement with the Palo Alto Educators Foundation

to give local educators the right of first refusal on the units, once built.

Yet as the project went in front of the Planning and Transportation Commission for its first review on April 10, some wondered whether the development will achieve its goals of housing teachers or whether it is "affordable in name only," as Vice Chair Bryna Chang put it.

The commission ultimately voted 5-2, with Chair Doria Summa and Chang dissenting, to advance the project through the development pipeline. As part of the city's lengthy and highly discretionary "planned home zoning" process, it will next go to the Architectural Review Board before returning to the planning commission and then proceeding to the Palo Alto City Council for final approval.

The biggest concern from Chang and others are the proposed rents. The developer, Jason Matlof of Half Dome Capital, is proposing to offer 20% of the



Rendering by Trachtenberg Architects/City of Palo Alto

The five-story development proposed for 3265 El Camino Real would include 44 apartments for educators.

total units at "low" income level, which is 50% to 80% of the county's area median income and 80% of the units at "moderate" level, which is defined by state law as 81% to 120% of area median income. The developer has also indicated that it will voluntarily cap affordability levels of the higher income units at 110%.

The average rent will be about \$3,150, according to the applicants, though the exact amount would vary widely by unit type and affordability category. The building will include 24 studios and 20 one-bedroom apartments. At the lowest end is a studio with a monthly rent of \$2,000; at the highest is a one-bedroom

apartment with a \$4,000-per-month rent, according to current estimates.

But if you build it, will they come? Chang and Commissioner Alan Akin both suggested that the answer might be no. Chang pointed to the salary schedule in the Palo Alto Unified School District, where salaries range from \$76,000 to \$154,000.

The new apartments, she argued, would only be accessible to a tiny portion of the teacher population.

"My concern overall is that this is being called affordable housing and is technically affordable housing according to our law but in practice, given the area median

income and given what PAUSD teacher salary schedule shows, these units are not really affordable to them," Chang said.

Summa agreed and said that she does not consider the project affordable housing because "the people it's intended for can't afford to live there" based on salary schedules and income data.

"I can't reconcile the good intent of this building with the fact that it's not doing what (the applicant) said it's going to do, that it is really, truly market rate, out of reach of almost everybody."

But while Summa and Chang both supported requiring the applicant to perform more analysis before returning for another hearing, their colleagues agreed that the benefits of the project far outweigh its shortcomings. Commissioner Cari Templeton pushed back against the idea that the project is not "affordable housing" and noted that it meets both the technical definition of the term and the city's own guidelines for projects seeking planned home zoning designation. Palo Alto law only requires applicants to designate 20% of their units as affordable to qualify for the process.

"It is complicated to build affordable housing without grants and outside funding, and I applaud the efforts," Templeton said. "So I think we should encourage

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Courtesy Santa Clara County Fire Department

As the FCC proposes restoring national standards of net neutrality and consumer protections, county firefighters stand to gain from the reclassification move.

COUNTY NEWS

County firefighters back plans to restore net neutrality

Policy change would restore internet communication protections at a national level

By Emily Margaretten

Six years ago, the Santa Clara County Fire Department was battling one of the largest wildfires ever to break out in California, the Mendocino Complex fire. With thousands of firefighters on the front line, county officials needed to coordinate fire suppression efforts at multiple points.

But they ran into a major roadblock. Their wireless internet had slowed down to a crawl, making it virtually impossible to send or receive emergency communications. Verizon had throttled the internet speed to a fraction of what it was before and then refused to restore it unless the county upgraded to a more expensive data plan, after it had reached its data cap.

To put an end to these practices, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is proposing a policy change that would restore national standards of net neutrality and bring back more consumer protections, reliability and security to broadband connections.

"I think this is an issue that makes sense to most people who have ever been online. They want to go where they want, and do what they want. They don't want their broadband provider making decisions for them or relegating them to a slow lane and making others pay up for a fast lane," said FCC Chair Jessica Rosenworcel, who spoke at a news conference at the McCormack Training Center in Campbell on Monday, April 8.

The proposal to restore net neutrality rests on the reclassification of broadband internet access service as a telecommunication service. In 2017, under the Trump administration, the FCC abdicated its authority over broadband by classifying it as an information

service. Since then, there has been limited federal oversight of internet service providers, leaving some states, like California, to establish their own net neutrality laws.

But it has not been enough to keep the internet open, fast and fair for everyone, Rosenworcel said. As a telecommunication service, broadband would fall under the Tier II level of the Communications Act of 1934, once again giving the FCC authority over internet service providers. The FCC plans to vote on the policy change later this month in Washington, D.C.

For Stanford University Law Professor Barbara von Schewick, net neutrality is an equity issue at its core. Without regulatory oversight, there is little the FCC can do to ensure that people have equal access to the internet. "These kinds of policies have implications beyond just, you know, can we all watch Netflix and have crystal clear quality," she said.

Video streaming on mobile devices is notoriously bad, not because of technology, but because of different-tiered data plans designed to maximize profits, according to von Schewick. It is particularly burdensome for lower-income households that are more likely to use mobile cell phone plans as their only internet connection. Access to job, health and educational opportunities are limited by these inferior service plans, she said.

Dane Jasper, co-founder and CEO of Sonic, an internet and telecommunication company, also supported the net neutrality proposal, and provided a candid assessment of how service providers

(continued on page 36)



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

This is a summary of tentative City Council agenda items.
The agenda with complete titles including reports can be viewed at the below webpage:
<http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/gov/agendas/default.asp>

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

MONDAY, APRIL 15, 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 - 5:45 PM)

1. Proclamation Honoring National Animal Control Officer Appreciation Week - April 14-20, 2024
2. Proclamation Honoring National Public Safety Telecommunicators' Week - April 15-19, 2024

CONSENT CALENDAR (6:20 - 6:25 PM)

3. Approval of Minutes from the March 18, 2024 and March 25, 2024 Meetings.
4. Approve the Reliability and Resiliency Strategic Plan as Recommended by the Utilities Advisory Commission; CEQA Status: exempt, not a project
5. Approval of Construction Contract C24190225 with Graham Contractors, Inc. in an Amount Not-to-Exceed \$1,594,195 and Authorization for the City Manager or Their Designee to Negotiate and Execute Change Orders for Related Additional but Unforeseen Work that may Develop During the Project Up to a Not-to-Exceed Amount of \$159,420 for the Fiscal Year 2024 Streets Preventive Maintenance Project, Capital Improvement Program Projects PE-86070, and PO-11001; CEQA status - exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301(c)
6. Staff Recommends Increasing the Budget for the Advanced Heat Pump Water Heater Pilot Program by \$846,000 to Increase Participation with Higher Rebates, and Amend the Fiscal Year Budget Appropriation for the Gas Fund; CEQA Status: Not a Project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5)
7. Approval of Contract No. C24189918 with BKF Engineers, through December 31 2025, in an Amount Not to Exceed \$109,583, for Professional Design and Engineering Services for the Foothills Nature Preserve Improvements Project (PE-21000); CEQA Status - Exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301
8. Approval of a Blanket Purchase Order With Eaton (Cooper Power Systems, LLC) for the Purchase of Pad Mounted Electric Equipment for the Utility's Electric Distribution System Not to Exceed \$750,000 per Year, for a Total Not-To-Exceed Amount of \$5,250,000 for 7 Years; CEQA Status - Exempt Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301
9. Approval of Professional Services Contract Number C24189405 with Tetra Tech, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$300,000 for On-Call Emergency Management Support Services for a Period of Six Years; CEQA Status - Not a Project.
10. Approval of Contract Amendment Number 2 to Seven On-call Consulting Contracts to Increase in the Amount by \$500,000 to a Total Not to Exceed to \$3.5 Million and Extend Term by Three Months to Provide Expertise for Long Range Planning Projects, Application Processing, Environmental Review, and Other Planning Analysis in the Planning and Development Services Department.
11. Approval of: (1) Contract No. 4524000393 with StarChase, LLC for GPS Vehicle Tracking Implementation for a three-year term in an amount not to exceed \$224,657; and (2) StarChase GPS Vehicle Tracking Technology Surveillance Use Policy; CEQA status - categorically exempt.
12. Authorization to Execute Amendment to Legal Services Contract S24189355 with Allen, Glaessner, Hazelwood & Werth to Increase Amount by \$50,000 for Total Not-to-Exceed Amount of \$135,000; CEQA Status - Not a Project.

CONVENE CITY COUNCIL and PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION MEETING

ACTION ITEMS (6:50 - 9:00 PM)

13. Joint City Council and Planning and Transportation Commission Meeting to Adopt a Resolution Amending the Comprehensive Plan by Adopting a Revised 2023-31 Housing Element. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): The City Council adopted a Revised Addendum to the Comprehensive Plan Final Environmental Impact Report on December 18, 2023 that, in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan Final EIR, fully analyzes the impacts associated with adoption of the Revised 2023-2031 Housing Element.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

RAIL COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2024 2:30 PM COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM & HYBRID
<https://zoom.us/join> Meeting ID: 863 8814 2528 Phone: 1(669)900-6833

VERBAL UPDATE ON INTERAGENCY ACTIVITIES

- A. Caltrain
- B. VTA
- C. City Staff

ACTION ITEMS

1. Review of the Grade Separation Alternatives for Churchill Avenue, Meadow Drive, and Charleston Road Crossings, including Consideration of Caltrain's Staff Comments; Provide Feedback and Direction to Staff; and Recommend that Council Advances (or Eliminates) Specific Alternative(s) for Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Documentation Phase. On March 19, 2024 the Committee received Presentations and Public Testimony; the item was continued to April 16, 2024 for Committee Deliberation and Action - No Public Testimony Will be Heard on April 16, 2024.
2. Review additional analysis to evaluate the merits of the Kellogg Avenue and Seale Avenue Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossings, and discuss next steps in providing a recommendation from the Rail Committee to the City Council for a Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing location associated with the Churchill Avenue Underpass Alternative.

RETAIL COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 2024 9:00 AM COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM & HYBRID
<https://zoom.us/join> Meeting ID: 858 4554 4145 Phone: 1(669)900-6833

STAFF UPDATES

1. California Ave Business District 9:15 AM - 9:55 AM
 - a. Stakeholder Engagement Update
 - b. Updates from 3/26 Workshop on place identity, visual identity, and wayfinding/signage
 - c. Updates on near-term improvement activities
 - d. El Camino Real Re-paving Impacts
2. Downtown Business District 9:55 AM - 10:20 AM
 - a. Near-Term Improvements Update
 - b. Stakeholder Engagement Update
 - c. Update on pre-approved parklet design
3. Midtown Business District 10:20 AM - 10:25 AM
 - a. Stakeholder Engagement Update

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.

LAND USE

Palo Alto council to rule on conversion of movie theater to office space

As plans advance to convert Palo Alto Square theater, zoning dispute continues to complicate project

By Gennady Sheyner

When the owner of Palo Alto Square declared its plans in 2016 to shutter the CinéArts movie theater and convert it to office space, the proposal was greeted with both sadness and skepticism from the Palo Alto City Council and the broader community.

More than 1,600 residents signed a petition urging the city to preserve the theater, while council members and neighborhood leaders lamented the looming loss of another community treasure and questioned whether the property owner, Hudson Pacific Properties, can legally remove the theater, which was long known for screening foreign and independent movies.

The theater was, after all, part of the “planned community” ordinance that the city had approved in 1969 to enable the construction of the centrally located commercial complex at 3000 El Camino Real. Removing the theater, city planners argued, would violate the ordinance and, as such, would

require a zoning amendment.

While tensions temporarily ebbed in 2016 after the city and Hudson reached a deal to keep the theater in place for two more years, the proposal to convert the theater to office space is back on the table and is moving through the city’s planning process. According to the application filed last May by Jared Willis, director of construction at Hudson Pacific, the intent is the same as it was in 2016: to “convert an unused movie theater into a vibrant Class A office space.”

The plan would infill the sloped theater seating floor of Building 6, as the theater building is known, and add windows to its currently windowless walls.

“The theater’s lobby will be the new entry lobby for the office, flanked by conference rooms,” the plans state. “An open collaboration space will greet visitors and office users, which leads to the double height open office, filled with light from the new windows on three sides,” the plans state.

But while Hudson’s plans haven’t really changed since 2016, the city’s stance is no longer as fixed as it was when the project was initially proposed. Planning Director Jonathan Lait told this publication that planning staff had initially considered the movie theater as a public benefit that would have required an amendment to the Planned Community zoning to remove and replace it with offices.

“However, after reviewing the administrative record, staff has not been able to substantiate this conclusion,” Lait said in an email.

While city staff continue to process the application, Lait said they intend to refer the final decision to the council given the “extensive public interest.”

“Ultimately the City Council will have an opportunity to consider the administrative record and make a determination about the PC amendment,” Lait said in an email.

While the application remains



Rendering by Brick./city of Palo Alto

Building 6 of Palo Alto Square, best known as the location of a movie theater, would be converted to an office building under a proposal from the property owner, Hudson Pacific Properties.

incomplete, the current discussions between Hudson and the city’s Department of Planning and Development Services are focused on details like traffic circulation, landscaping, parking, tree protection and public art. The broader question of whether the theater — which has been shuttered since the pandemic — needs to remain as part of Palo Alto Square is still unresolved.

Lait said staff will continue to process the architectural review board application without the need for an amendment to the planned community ordinance.

At the heart of the dispute is the changing nature of the “planned community” zone, a tool that allows developers to propose projects that exceed zoning regulations and provide public benefits. When the city approved the Palo Alto Square ordinance more than 50 years ago, council members saw the development as a way to promote economic growth and raise tax revenues. While the theater was included in the list of allowed uses, along with a hotel, a barber shop and a newsstand, the ordinance did not indicate that any of these uses are actually required.

At that time, projects approved through the planned community process were viewed as public benefits themselves. The process later involved requiring

developers relying on this process to explicitly list “public benefits” in order to get their projects approved. Over the years, public benefits have included grocery stores, public plazas, public art and preservation of historic structures.

In the past decade, however, Palo Alto has reverted to the old model in which approved developments are seen as the benefit, without the need to attach other amenities. Unlike in the past, the newly rebranded “planned home zoning” applies only to residential projects.

Hudson isn’t the first property owner to suggest converting the movie theater to office space. In 1997, the city successfully prevented an attempt by the prior property owner, Equity Partners, to shutter the movie theater after negotiating an extension. It did so again in 2001, when Equity once again proposed closing the theater. This time, however, city officials argued that the theater is a requirement of the zoning ordinance.

“We do know that it has to be a theater that goes there because of zoning,” Susan Arpan, who served as the city’s manager of economic resources, told the Weekly at that time. ■

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

Palo Alto Citywide



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CityView

A roundup of Palo Alto government action this week

City Council (April 8)

Public safety building: The council met in a closed session to discuss claims against its contractors for the construction of the public safety building and to consider next steps for hiring a city auditor. **Action:** None.

Policy and Services Committee (April 9)

Legislation: The committee recommended that the city adopt a position of support on Assembly Bill 2485, Senate Bill 903 and Senate Bill 915. **Yes:** Unanimous

Planning and Transportation Commission (April 10)

Teacher housing: The commission voted to advance a proposed 44-apartment project for educators at 3265 El Camino Real to the Architecture Review Board. **Yes:** Akin, Hechtman, Lu, Reckdahl, Templeton **No:** Chang, Summa

ELECTION 2024

Abe-Koga and Lieber move ahead in District 5 Board of Supervisors race

Campaign strategies will mostly stay the same in lead-up to November election

By Emily Margaretten

With the primary election certified, it is now official that Mountain View City Council member Margaret Abe-Koga and California State Board of Equalization member Sally Lieber are locked in to compete in a run-off election for the District 5 Board of Supervisors race.

Abe-Koga took a decisive lead in the March 5 election, with 37,172 (41.9%) votes, while Lieber followed behind with 21,962 (24.76%) votes, according to the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters on April 4.

Since no candidate received a majority of the vote, the top two have moved ahead to the November general election.

The primary election whittled down the five candidates to just the top two vote-getters, with Abe-Koga and Lieber once again facing off for the chance to represent the North County. Both announced their intentions to run last spring, long before the other three candidates jumped into the race. Since then, their campaigns have taken different paths, which will continue as they head into the run-off election.

“We’re going to stick with the same plan, the same strategy. I’ve always believed in a strong ground campaign,” Abe-Koga said, adding that she walked 130 precincts in the lead up to the primary election.

Early in the campaign, Abe-Koga pulled ahead with financial contributions from hundreds of individual donations, and raked in support from local unions and political action committees. Late independent expenditures by the California Apartment association, amounting to over \$150,000, also flowed into the race in support for Abe-Koga.

Lieber, who has also served on the Mountain View City Council, committed to a corporate-free campaign and said she would not accept donations from developers or big landlords. She plans to stick with this strategy. “I want to continue to raise the issue of special interest money in local politics,” she said.

Lieber intends to keep campaign expenditures low too, whereas Abe-Koga nearly hit the voluntary expenditure limit of \$250,000 in the primary election.

The two candidates also had different takes on voter turnout in the primary and what this portends for the general election. Abe-Koga swept the majority of

precincts in the North County, including Mountain View, where she has the most name recognition as a city council member. “In Mountain View, the residents see me at work. And so, I think that helps that they’ve known what I’ve been doing, and they’ve been supportive of that,” she said.

But Lieber noted that overall voter turnout was low, which tends to be the case for primary elections. This year, 383,110 ballots were cast in Santa Clara County, accounting for about 37% of total registered voters. For the District 5 race, there were 88,712 votes cast, according to the county register.

Reaching out to people who didn’t vote was a priority for her, Lieber said. “Every voter who’s going to cast a ballot in this election has a choice to make, and it’s important to reach as many as possible,” she said.

The run-off election also provided an opportunity to get to know voters better and hear their concerns, the candidates said.

Abe-Koga said her message of public safety, homelessness and fiscal responsibility resonated with residents because she took the time to listen to them while walking the precincts and knocking on doors. “I think it’s important to reach the voters and hear from them (and) what’s on their minds. It keeps the job real, I like to say, so we’ll continue to do that,” she said.

Lieber said she saw the lead up to the November election as another chance to learn more about what voters considered the most important issues at the grassroots level. Already, Lieber has identified strengthening the county’s response as a social safety net provider for lower-income and working families as a top priority, she said.

But for now, both Abe-Koga and Lieber said they were taking a breather from hitting the campaign trail, at least until after the election results were certified. They also did not expect their campaigns to change much from the initial months when they were the only two in the race.

“I think that we are very different candidates in terms of our experience and our priorities. So I think it’s going to go back to just what it was like in the early months of the campaign,” Lieber said.

Abe-Koga said she planned to stay the course and campaign hard, just like before.



Magali Gauthier

Mountain View City Council member Margaret Abe-Koga (left) and California State Board of Equalization member Sally Lieber (right) will compete for the District 5 Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors seat in the November general election.

“I’ve always run my own race, my own campaign, regardless of how many other candidates or opponents there are, so I don’t

envision it to be that different. I think you just have to work hard and get out to the voters, and that’s what I’ve done and will

continue to do so,” she said. ■
Email Staff Writer Emily Margaretten at mmargaretten@mv-voice.com.

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Housing

(continued from page 5)

commission are set to hold a joint meeting to once again adopt the city's Housing Element, a document that will lay out the city's vision for adding 6,086 housing units between 2023 and 2031.

If things go as planned, the state Department of Housing and Community Development will receive the newly adopted document in May and certify it over the following 60 days, officially bringing to an end what has been a grueling, expensive and often frustrating multi-year exercise.

To date, however, very little has gone as planned. In March 2023, the HCD rejected the city's initial submission, which it concluded does not go far enough in identifying local constraints to housing construction. It also concluded the city has not sufficiently analyzed past patterns of discrimination in housing nor demonstrated that many of the proposed sites can actually become suitable for residential use in the future. While the council made some revisions in response to these comments before adopting the document in May 2023, the state agency issued another rejection in August and requested additional analysis of non-vacant sites as well local laws that may constrain housing production, including the city's tree protection ordinance and its requirement for ground-floor retail in commercial areas.

Yet Palo Alto officials are confident that they'll get the nod of approval this time around. City staff have held numerous meetings with their HCD reviewers in February and March, according to a new report from Planning Director Jonathan Lait. Based on these conversations, planning staff believe that the revised document



Embarcadero Media file

Palo Alto's Housing Element lays out the city's vision for adding 6,086 housing units by 2031.

fully responds to HCD's prior comments and "meets all statutory requirements."

"Accordingly, staff believe the revised Housing Element is appropriate for adoption and are hopeful that HCD will certify this version," Lait wrote.

City Manager Ed Shikada also told the council that he believes the city's recent conversations with the HCD have raised the odds of approval.

"We don't have any guarantee that that consultation will result in an approval, but staff believes this significantly improves the likelihood of having approval by the HCD," Shikada said at the Feb. 26 meeting.

The new draft contains changes big and small. The city has beefed up the section of the document that explains how the city will address past patterns of housing discrimination by "affirmatively furthering fair housing" and analyzes racial disparities when it comes to housing, schools, transit and jobs. It provides additional justification for why the city believes nonvacant sites in commercial and industrial areas around San Antonio Road could accommodate an influx of nearly 2,000 dwellings and it includes more

discussion about local zoning laws and development standards that constrain new development.

Perhaps most significantly, it revises the list of housing sites to include the newly created "El Camino Real focus area," a corridor between Page Mill Road and Matadero Road where the council agreed in December to relax height and density standards and allow projects. Residential projects in this area can now have heights of up to 85 feet, well above the city's historical 50-foot height limit.

Mayor Greer Stone highlighted the city's efforts to meet the state's housing targets last month during his "State of the City" speech and alluded to recent initiatives such as easing density restrictions near transit hubs and launching a specific plan for the San Antonio Road area, where the city hopes to convert office and manufacturing sites into residential hubs.

"As a community, we're going to have to acknowledge the inevitability of change to be able to comply with the incessant stream of state mandates with very little financial support from the state," Stone said. "Noncompliance would entail relinquishing local control, a consequence that we have to avert."

While planning staff is

confident that the new draft will pass state muster, not everyone is so sure. Scott O'Neil, who serves on the board of the nonprofit group Palo Alto Forward, told this publication in an interview that many of the changes in the new draft read like justifications of the city's past approaches, which the HCD has already rejected.

O'Neil said he supports the zone changes that the council has adopted over the past year, including the new El Camino housing focus zone and its move in January to upzone sites elsewhere in the city that are listed on the housing inventory. But these actions, while laudable, don't go far enough to enable housing projects that would be economically feasible, O'Neil said.

O'Neil argued that the city should demonstrate its commitment to affirmatively further fair housing by relaxing zoning in major corridors throughout the city, not just around El Camino and San Antonio. This could include broadening the application of the city's "housing incentive program," which relaxes zoning standards and creates a streamlined approval process for residential projects. To date, the program has only applied to San Antonio Road and El Camino Real, areas that O'Neil noted make up only a tiny portion of the city but that are expected to absorb most of its housing demand.

The most viable solution to addressing the state's concerns is to build more apartment complexes in other parts of Palo Alto, he said.

"It's very critical that get a lot of apartments and that they are spread throughout the city," O'Neil said.

Palo Alto is far from the only city still seeking state certification. In Santa Clara County, just eight of the 16 jurisdictions that have submitted drafts to the state have received a finding

of "substantial compliance." Cupertino, Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Santa Clara, Santa Clara County, Saratoga and Sunnyvale are all still seeking state approval, according to HCD data.

In San Mateo County, nine jurisdictions — Atherton, Belmont, Daly City, Half Moon Bay, Pacifica, San Bruno, San Carlos, San Mateo County and Woodside — are still working to secure an HCD finding of substantial compliance. They were joined by a tenth last month, when Portola Valley became the first town to have its Housing Element certified and then de-certified because the town did not implement the required zone changes to further its vision.

Palo Alto, for its part, can point to some tangible accomplishments since its last rejection. According to the revised Housing Element, its development pipeline now includes 1,118 housing units that have either already been entitled or are now going through the review process, with final action expected this year.

Stone noted in his speech last month that 517 of the units in the pipeline projects are designated for affordable housing, an area in which Palo Alto has historically struggled to meet its state targets. Despite all of the criticism that the city has been getting, the city has a "storied legacy of prioritizing inclusive development," Stone said.

"As we witness fruition of our reforms, I'm optimistic that our future plans will continue to propel positive development, fostering a community where affordable housing abounds," Stone said. ■

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

About the cover: Photos by Devin Roberts. Design by Douglas Young.

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THE DREYFUS GROUP
650.485.3476 LICENSE# 01121795



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GLORIA YOUNG
650.380.9918 LICENSE# 01895672
JOHN YOUNG
650.862.2122 LICENSE# 02036387



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LUCY BERMAN
650.208.8824 LICENSE# 01413627



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LORI ORION
650.539.5674 LICENSE# 01883566



303 Robin Way, Menlo Park
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DULCY FREEMAN
650.804.8884 LICENSE# 01342352



570 Menlo Oaks Drive, Menlo Park
OFFERED AT \$6,495,000

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DOWNSIZING: Preparing for Senior Living & Navigating Capital Gains Tax

Tuesday, April 16th 1:30PM - 3:30PM

Join us for an informative seminar designed to guide you through the process of downsizing and transitioning into a senior living community, while also providing valuable insights on navigating capital gains tax.

Discover expert tips, strategies, and resources to make your move smoother and more financially savvy. Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable knowledge and prepare for your next chapter with confidence.

Learn how to:

- Declutter, sort, pack, and move
- Set up a new residence
- Prepare your home for selling
- Sell your home
- And let's talk about CAPITAL GAINS TAX!

Our special guest speakers:

Mani Mortezaei is a well respected professional in the senior real estate field and the Marketing Director of Tailored Transitions, a full service senior real estate company that helps its clients with planning, packing, relocating, unpacking, downsizing, and estate liquidation services.

Brent Mardesich is the founder of Tailored Transitions, Inc. Brent has a true passion for serving others, and a desire to make a difference in the world. In charge of the day to day operations, Brent helps lead Tailored Transitions to being the leader in the Senior Relocation Industry.

Melvin "Mel" Honda: Preparing for that next step in life isn't always easy. A combination of experience, professionalism and access to a wide variety of products and services, Mel can help, and assist meet financial goals, estate strategies and the like.

Refreshments will be served. Valet Parking available.

CALL 650-320-8626 TO RSVP BY APRIL 12TH


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POLICE CALLS

Palo Alto

April 4-9

Arrests

Total people arrested 16

Violence Related

Park Boulevard, 3/30 at 1:21 p.m.

Domestic violence (Felony)

Arastradero Road, 4/6 at 10:45 a.m.

Sexual assault (Misdemeanor)

Theft Related

Burglary 11

Grand theft 8

Petty theft 6

Retail theft 3

Alcohol or Drug Related

Driving under the influence 3

Possession of paraphernalia 1

Vehicle Related

Auto theft 1

Hit and run 3

Vehicle accident/no injury 1

Vehicle accident/injury 2

Parking/driving violation 7

Miscellaneous

Disorderly conduct 2

Found property 5

Lost property 3

Mental health evaluation 1

Outside assist 1

Outside warrant arrest 4

Suspicious circumstances 2

Trespassing 3

Vandalism 3

Court order violation 1

Cross Report 1

Threats 1

Barbara Jackson

July 7, 1941 – March 27, 2024

A Celebration of Barbara's life is planned on June 22, 2024 at the Lanai at Dinah's Garden Hotel, 4261 El Camino Real, Palo Alto from 2pm to 5pm. All are welcome!

Barbara Lecky Jackson passed away on March 27, 2024.

She was born in Miles City, Montana on July 7, 1941. She moved to Seattle, and Portland before graduating from high school. She received a degree from Whitworth College and a Masters in Language Education from Stanford. She taught Spanish for several years at Sequoia High School in Redwood City.

She married Robert Jackson in 1964 and they moved to Palo Alto in 1968. She had sons Carl and James. She remained active in the Parent Teachers Associations for the schools that her children attended. After they completed school, she returned to teaching for the Adult School for the Palo Alto school district, specializing in English as a Second Language courses.

Barbara especially enjoyed meeting her Adult School students and maintained many friendships with them after their classes completed. She attended numerous gatherings with current and former students and relished different cultural experiences.

She was passionate about her children. She cooked, cleaned, chauffeured, dropped off, picked up, fixed, waited, shopped, watched, protected, encouraged, educated, accompanied, supported and loved, for her children. She always welcomed the friends of her children into her home; often letting them stay for entire summers. She always had a laugh and a smile and tried hard to be kind. Friendships were important to her and she nurtured them with care. Her great joy was talking with other people, learning from them and sharing experiences.

She is survived by her husband Robert; son Carl and his wife Judy and son Benjamin, and son James, his wife Valerie, and children Ethan and Liam.



PAID OBITUARY

OBITUARIES

Local residents who died recently include:

Larry P. O'Neill, 89, a Menlo Park resident, who was director of golf at the Stanford University Golf Course, a Navy Veteran, and known for his remarkable storytelling abilities, weaving captivating tales that held his listeners spellbound, and for his "never give up" attitude, on March 10, 2024.

Susie Perkins, 78, a Mountain View resident, who was a medical technician who cloned blood cells at Stanford Medical Center and worked on publications that were at the forefront of monoclonal antibody research, who loved jigsaw puzzles and ballet, who was a prolific cookie baker known for doing Tai Chi in goofy cow slippers, and who loved singing quirky lyrics for birthdays and special occasions, on March 9, 2024.

Patricia McEwen, 100, a native Californian and former longtime resident of Palo Alto, who formerly owned Felix, a giant tortoise who eventually escaped and made a new life for himself at the fire station on Embarcadero Road, who played Snow White in the Palo Alto Children's Theatre's first production in 1932 and eventually served on the organization's board, who earned a bachelor's degree from Stanford University, a member of the Palo Alto Historical Association, who was an avid reader and researcher, on March 16, 2024.

Lambert Dolphin Jr., 91, who worked at SRI International (formerly Stanford Research Institute) in Menlo Park for almost 30 years, who was voted "Most likely to succeed" in high school, who studied physics and electrical engineering in graduate school at Stanford University, and who was a member of Peninsula Bible Church in Palo Alto, on Jan. 1, 2024.

Rosie Cole, 87, a former Menlo Park resident, who graduated from Stanford University, who was involved with Peninsula Volunteers, Inc. for many years, who was a former Wells Fargo Bank employee, who was a skilled seamstress, a talented craft maker, gift wrapper, home decorator, cook, and gardener, and ballroom dance teacher, on Dec. 29, 2023.

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

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Earth Month Sustainability Celebration

3215 Porter Drive
Palo Alto

Tuesday, April 16
4 – 6 pm

Parking at nearby 3210 Porter Drive



Discover, learn, and be inspired by those making efforts toward environmental sustainability right here in our community.

Join us for an immersive experience, featuring:

- Sustainable Stanford and Stanford Conservation
- Palo Alto Utilities and GreenWaste of Palo Alto
- SPCA Wildlife and Santa Clara Bee Guild
- Palo Alto Link (PAL), VTA, and other sustainable transportation providers
- and more...

Enjoy live music by The Song Gardeners and complimentary refreshments as we learn about local contributions and ways we can take action for a more sustainable way of life. We'll have activities and giveaways for attendees as well.

The Hub at Stanford Research Park | 3215 Porter Drive | April 16 | 4 – 6 pm



OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY & SUNDAY: 1:30 – 4:30 PM



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PALO ALTO

\$2,988,000 | 4 Bd | 2 Bth
3241Greer.com

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\$6,988,000 | 6 Bd | 7 Bth
538Rhodes.com

449 ADDISON AVENUE
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ESTATE SALE



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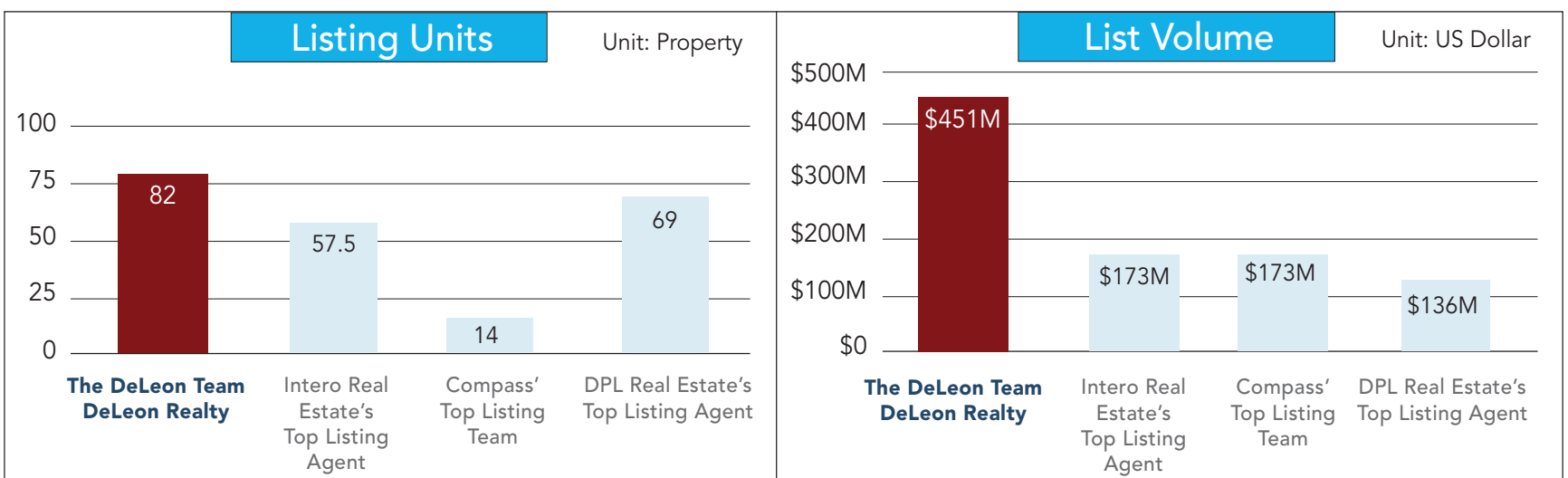
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Ranking	#1	#2	#3	#4
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Listing Units	82	57.5	14	69
List Volume	\$451,675,623	\$173,614,694	\$173,160,000	\$136,691,840

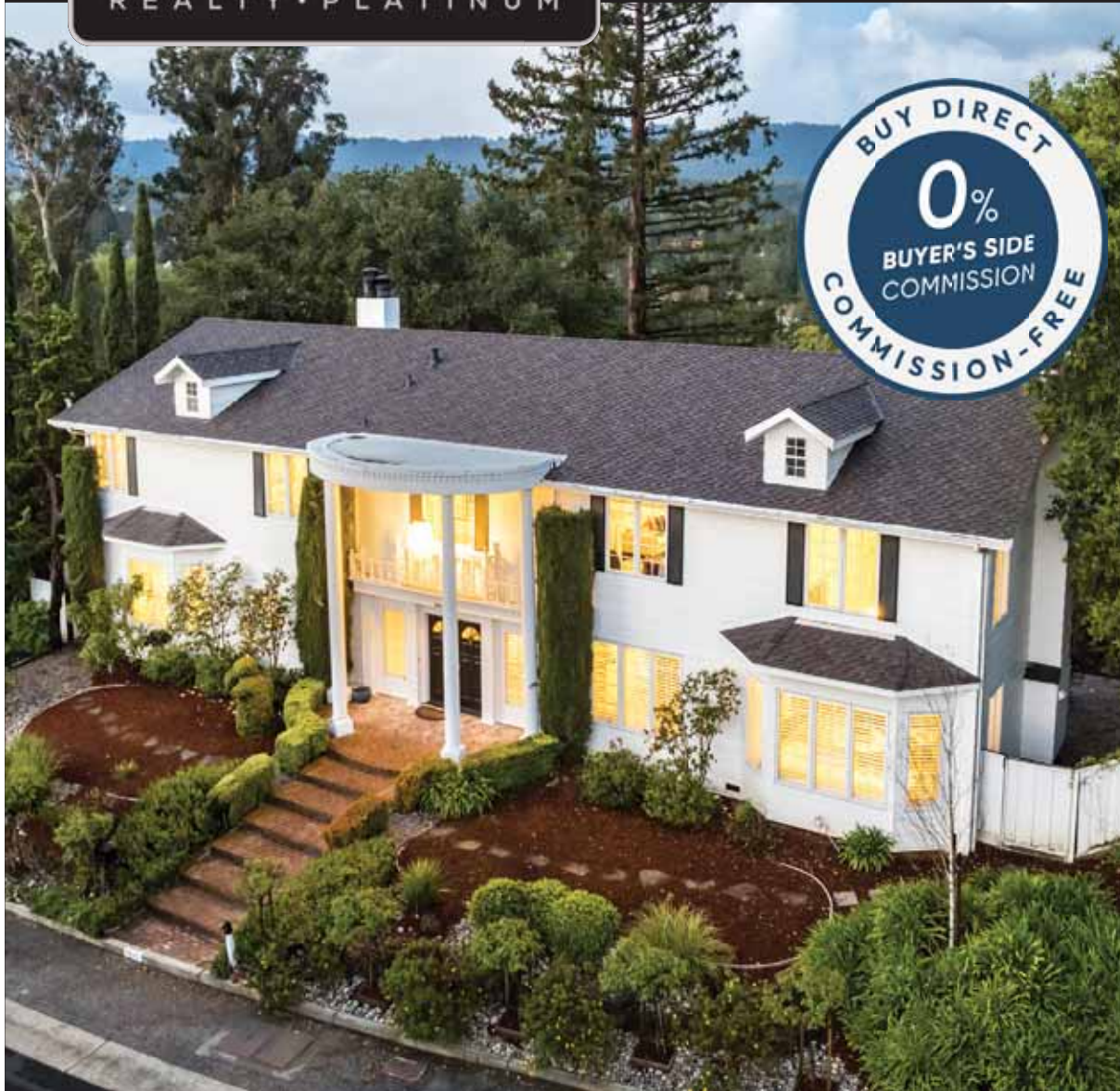


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1045Lassen.com

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Spectrum

Editorials, letters and opinions

Guest Opinion

Struggling to rent in Palo Alto

By Cally Wong

As the executive director of a nonprofit and a resident of Palo Alto, I've traversed the intricate web of housing affordability and tenant rights issues firsthand. Relocating here during the pandemic, my family was drawn by the promise of top-tier schools and a safe community. However, our hopeful beginnings quickly unveiled the harsh realities confronting numerous families in the Bay Area.



My ordeal began with a grueling daily commute to San Francisco, which consumed over two hours daily. I have an increased appreciation for people who face super-commutes every day to get to cities like Palo Alto with a severe jobs-to-homes imbalance.

The challenges escalated with our rental property, where a broken hot water tank received a sluggish response from the

management company in Los Gatos, and advice to "boil water to bathe the kids." Fortunately, I received assistance from then-Palo Alto Mayor Lydia Kou and County Supervisor Joe Simitian. Still, our tight rental market and inadequate renter-protection laws often place tenant welfare secondary to property management interests.

Our plight escalated when seeking permission to install an electric vehicle charging station (EVSE). Instead of cooperating, we faced disrespect from our landlord, culminating in an abrupt non-renewal notice to prep the property for sale. The landlord's demand for an exorbitant \$5,000 for an EVSE installation when it should have cost \$1,000, left us reeling. Despite our reasonable requests for lease extensions and termination options, our efforts at compromise were met with rejection.

This thrust us into a fiercely competitive housing market mid-school year, resulting in an additional \$2,250 monthly rent burden and a school change for our 10-year-old. The Palo Alto

Unified School District does over 300 address changes yearly, often due to the housing instability of too many students' families. My family quickly signed a new lease because we wanted to avoid the risk of waiting another month with potentially fewer options available. I requested mediation from the City of Palo Alto, but my landlord and property manager have ignored all attempts.

As if our ordeal wasn't enough, the property management company further exacerbated our situation. With a history of disciplinary action from the California Department of Real Estate, including mishandling funds leading to a license suspension, they levied inflated move-out costs. From \$150 for a single light bulb replacement to an outrageous \$650 charge for a new lawn (when they have been responsible for paying the gardener), their billing practices were nothing short of predatory. Adding insult to injury, they billed \$365 for hauling and cleaning — to haul away items that came with the house. They also demanded \$1,500 to refinish

the dining room for a minor scratch.

Unfortunately, this is the norm for many Palo Alto renters. There are too few properties available and too many renters, resulting in an imbalance of power that creates even more obstacles to a healthy housing market.

The Bay Area's housing market is notoriously challenging, with Palo Alto exemplifying this crisis. Rents are sky-high, and affordable options are scarce, including for middle-class families like mine, which are dependent on nonprofit sector salaries. This situation isn't isolated but reflects a broader, systemic regional issue. And this is not getting better anytime soon unless we change our housing policies. California's stringent zoning regulations and complex permitting processes have significantly contributed to a housing shortage that costs the state between \$143 billion to \$233 billion in lost economic output, exacerbating the crisis of affordability and accessibility.

To confront these challenges, I propose the following reforms:

1. **Tenant Empowerment:** Enable tenants to manage essential repairs, such as hot water tank failures, with the option to deduct these costs from rent.

2. **Eviction Protections for School-Age Children:** Implement specific eviction protections for families with school-age children within the Palo Alto Unified School District or any California school district. This will prevent families from switching schools mid-school year and avoid learning loss and educational disruption.

3. **Priority Affordable Housing:** Prioritize affordable housing for essential community members, including educators, city workers, first responders and nonprofit employees.

4. **City-Funded Tenant Services:** Establish city-funded tenant services to offer effective support and recourse for tenants.

5. **Absence of Hidden Landlords:** Ensure landlords provide direct contact information for emergencies and escalations, preventing them from hiding behind property managers.

6. **Security Deposit Protections:** Better regulations and accountability for landlords' spending of renters' security deposits are needed.

These measures aim to enhance tenant experiences and preserve our community's diversity and vitality. The current situation in Palo Alto and across the Bay Area is unsustainable, pushing families to the brink. Policymakers and community leaders must recognize the urgency of this crisis and act decisively.

But most importantly, we also need to build more housing locally. Tenant protections are essential, but building more housing of all types is the only real way to solve the availability and affordability issues families and individuals face in our community. ■

Cally Wong is a third-generation Bay Area native. She currently serves as the executive director for the Asian & Pacific Islander Council of San Francisco and is a Palo Alto resident. Cally can be reached at callysim@gmail.com.

Letters

Don't rule out bikes on El Camino

Editor:

There has been a lot of discussions recently about bicycle lanes on El Camino Real, with some people saying the bicycles shouldn't be on that road. This ignores the obvious: you have to use El Camino Real to reach businesses and other destinations along it. In addition, sometimes El Camino Real can be the only viable road to use. As an example, once, before we had cell phones and Google maps, I went to a party in Tiburon, just north of the Golden Gate bridge. In the late afternoon, I decided to get there by bicycle, leaving around 4 PM: without any maps. I used El Camino to get to San Francisco, then headed west to the coast and followed that around until I reached the Golden Gate Bridge. An interesting experiment for anyone who thinks bicycles should not use El Camino Real is to try to reach the Golden

Gate bridge by car without maps, without GPS, and without using a freeway or El Camino Real.

While bicycle lanes on El Camino Real would make some people feel safer, these lanes do not prevent accidents caused by right-turning drivers cutting bicyclists off, and El Camino has a lot of driveways. Protected bicycle lanes can be a problem when bicyclists have to make a left turn — they can prevent one from crossing several lanes of traffic when there is a large gap in traffic. There is also a question of what to do for businesses that do not have sufficient off-street parking. Unfortunately it may not be possible to please everyone.

Bill Zaumen
Clara Drive, Palo Alto

Consider sidewalk widening on El Camino

Editor:

The proposal to eliminate parking along El Camino to accommodate bike lanes is troubling, both for the loss of parking spaces in front of small businesses, and also for the unsafe conditions for

bikers along such a busy road.

One possible solution to both problems might be something I have seen in cities in Germany, where many people routinely bike to work. The sidewalk is widened by narrowing the parking strip, and a designated bike lane runs right next to the pedestrian lane. This keeps the bicyclists separated from the vehicular traffic by the curb, and also doesn't affect the parking along the street.

Shaila Sadrozinski
Churchill Avenue, Palo Alto

No to a new gym on California Avenue

Editor:

The expansion of a gym on this California Ave corner that caters to a minority of the community is outrageous! I walk by the gym at least twice a week and see only one or two people there. Makes no sense. This is NOT the appropriate place for a gym which, in this case, damages the character of the neighborhood.

Suesan Taylor
Esplanada Way, Palo Alto

SHARE YOUR OPINION

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

Submit letters to the editor of up to 400 words to letters@pawebly.com. Submit guest opinions of 750 to 950 words to editor@pawebly.com. Include your name, address and daytime phone number so we can reach you.

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

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



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7edu.org **(408) 876-2144**

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EmersonMontessori.com **Emerson: (650) 424-1267**
Hacienda: (925) 485-5750

Harker Summer Programs **San Jose**

Harker summer programs for preschool - grade 12 children include opportunities for academics, arts, athletics and activities. Taught by exceptional, experienced faculty and staff, our programs offer something for everyone in a safe and supportive environment. Register as soon as possible.

Harker.org/Summer **(408) 553-5737**

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LydianAcademy.com/Admissions/Summer-at-Lydian/ **(650) 405-1312**

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Pinewood.edu/SummerPrograms



ACADEMICS

STANFORD EXPLORE: A Lecture Series on Biomedical Research **Stanford**

Explore biomedical science at Stanford through lectures from Stanford professors and graduate students about diverse topics in biomedical science including bioengineering, neuroscience, immunology and other topics. July 8-26 Registration begins March 1st. The program is virtual.

Explore.Stanford.edu **explore-series@stanford.edu**

Summer@Stratford **Palo Alto/Bay Area**

Stratford infuses its STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) curriculum into an innovative and enriching summer camp experience. Younger campers engage in hands-on learning projects, while elementary-age students collaborate to tackle real-world problems. At the middle school level, individual subject-based enrichment classes are offered and tailored for each grade level.

StratfordSchools.com/Summer **(650) 493-1151**

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Camp.Integem.com **(408) 459-0657**

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Join us for 5 fun-filled weeks of dance! CDBN's summer camps are designed for dancers ages 4-12. Email for 12+ intensives. Campers will learn dance techniques in ballet, jazz, tumbling, lyrical, hip-hop, and musical theater. Camps are filled with excitement, games, arts & crafts, weekly performances, and more!

CaptivatingDanceByNona.com/Summer-2024 **(650) 339-0034**

Castilleja Summer Camp for Girls **Palo Alto**

Casti Camp offers girls entering grades 2-6 a range of age-appropriate activities including athletics, art, science, writing, crafts, cooking, drama and music. Leadership program available for girls entering grades 7-9.

Castilleja.org/SummerCamp **(650) 470-7833**

City of Sunnyvale **Sunnyvale**

Offering 100+ camps for ages 2-17 featuring traditional, visual arts, performing arts, theater, sport and STEM camps. Full and half day options run June 10 - Aug. 9. Check out swim lessons for all levels also starting in June and enjoy recreation swim at our aquatic facilities.

Sunnyvale.ca.gov/Activities **(408) 730-7350**

Community School of Music and Arts **Mountain View**

40+ creative camps for ages 5-15! Drawing, Painting, Ceramics, Wearable Art, Digital Art, Musical Theater and more! One and two-week sessions; full and half-day enrollment. Financial aid offered. After Camp available.

Arts4All.org **(650) 917-6800 ext. 0**

Hidden Villa **Los Altos Hills**

Hidden Villa is a 1,600 acre refuge in Los Altos Hills and home to an organic farm, gardens, beautiful hiking trails, and farm animals. Our Summer Camp program blends nature, farming and social justice, while encouraging a diverse, compassionate, and eco-conscious youth community in a fun and age-appropriate environment.

HiddenVilla.org/SummerCamp **(650) 949-8650**

ARTS, CULTURE & ENRICHMENT

Oshman Family JCC Camps **Palo Alto**

At J-Camp, we build a spirited community where campers are immersed in joyful camp activities and develop meaningful relationships with others while engaging in individual personal growth. Our exciting day camp offers programming for incoming grades K-10.

OFJCC-JCamp.com **(650) 223-8622**

Riekes Center **Menlo Park**

Explore all your interests this summer with Riekes Summer Camps! Enrolling now for camps in Nature, Music, Art, and Digital Media. There's something for every camper! For ages 5-18 with locations across the Peninsula.

RiekesSummerCamps.org **(650) 364-2509**

Stanford Jazz Workshop **Stanford**

Stanford Jazz Workshop week-long jazz immersion programs for young musicians in middle school (Giant Steps Day Camp, starts July 8), High School (Jazz Camp, starts July 14 or July 21), and adults/advanced teens (Jazz Institute, July 28). All instruments and vocals. On the Stanford campus!

StanfordJazz.org **(650) 736-0324**

Ventana School Summer Camp **Los Altos**

Keep your child inspired all summer long at Ventana's Elementary Summer Camp! With engaging week-long themes, campers will immerse themselves in hands-on activities that will boost their creative confidence and stimulate their minds. Join us for one or all of the following weeks: Masterchef Junior, Arts & Crafts, Game Creation, Mad Scientist, Musical Theater and Wonderful Water. Open to students who will have completed K-5th grade by the summer.

VentanaSchool.org/Elementary-Summer-Camps-2024 **(650) 948-2121**

ATHLETICS

Bald Eagle **Bay Area**

The first camp ever approved by *The Positive Coaching Alliance* for message and *Development Zone* programming. We offer 4 camps: Non-Traditional MultiSports (TK-5th), Sports Leadership & Field Trips (6th-8th), Basketball Camp (3rd-8th) and Coach In Training (free, 9th-10th). Extended Care 7:30 am - 6 pm.

BaldEagleCamps.com **(888) 505-BALD**

Maccabi Sports Camp **Atherton**

Maccabi Sports Camp is an overnight Jewish sports camp. We welcome campers entering grades 3-11 with programs dedicated to building strong character and Jewish community through sports.

MaccabiSportsCamp.org/wp **(415) 997-8844**

Spartans Sports Camp **Mountain View**

Spartans Sports Camp offers a wide variety of sports and academic enrichment camps for kids entering grades 1-9. Experienced staff ensures everyone has fun. Daily on-site swimming is offered for all camps. Camps run weekly from June 10 - August 2 at Mountain View High School. The camp is run by MVHS coaches and student-athletes and all proceeds benefit the MVHS Athletic Department. Lunch and extended care are available.

SpartansSportsCamp.com **(650) 479-5906**

Stanford Water Polo Camps **Stanford**

New to water polo or have experience, we have a camp for you. Half day or full day options for boys and girls ages 7 and up. All camps provide fundamental skills, scrimmages and games. Session 1 - June 10-13, 2024. Session 2 - June 17-20, 2024.

StanfordWaterPoloCamps.com **(650) 725-9016**

To advertise in print and online, call (650) 326-8210.

Arts & Entertainment

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

Where to celebrate Earth Day on the Peninsula

Celebrate the Earth and learn how to help take care of the planet at these local events

By Julia Brown

Although April 22 is officially Earth Day, many Earth Day-themed events now take place all throughout April, making it Earth Month — and why not? — the planet could always use some extra love. Here's where to find Peninsula cities and community groups celebrating our big blue marble and highlighting the ways we can help the Earth.

Love Our Earth Festival, East Palo Alto

350 Silicon Valley hosts this event featuring a home electrification showcase, clean vehicle expo highlighting new and used electric vehicles, electric motorcycles, bikes and more, a market of plant-based food and drink, community groups sharing their expertise, crafts and activities for families, including a live reptile encounter, plus live music and performances.

April 13, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at Bloomhouse, 2555 Pulgas Ave., East Palo Alto; free admission. [eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com).

San Mateo county libraries: ongoing

The San Mateo County Libraries mark Earth Month with activities at various branches,

including an online event on food preservation (April 13), a story-time and sunflower seed planting (April 23, Woodside), Earth Day-themed escape rooms (multiple dates and locations), a craft workshop to make plantable paper seed balls (San Carlos, April 23) and a trash-to-art competition (Foster City, April 27).

Throughout April at various county library locations. smcl.bibliocommons.com.

Stanford, ongoing

Stanford University hosts a variety of events to celebrate Earth Month, including Earth Tones, a day of music, food and speakers at O'Donohue Family Farm (April 23); film screenings (April 24 and 25) talks on activism and a service day in the Arizona Cactus Garden.

Throughout April at various Stanford University campus locations. sustainable.stanford.edu.

Sunnyvale Earth Day Festival

The city of Sunnyvale marks Earth Day with the grand opening of its new civic center in an event that features family-friendly, sustainability-focused activities and information from local



Lizzy Myers

Peninsula resident Sally enjoys the festivities at Mountain View's 2023 Earth Day Celebration.



Lizzy Myers

Participants register for Mountain View's 2023 Earth Day Celebration. The city of Mountain View is combining its Arbor Day and Earth Day celebrations at an event taking place April 20 at Rengstorff Community Center.

organizations. Activities include sustainable arts and crafts for kids, a cooking demonstration from the Zero-Waste Chef, Anne-Marie Bonneau, live entertainment, guided urban canopy tours, a display of electric vehicles and info on home composting from master composters.

April 20, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Sunnyvale Civic Center, 456 W. Olive Ave., Sunnyvale. sunnyvale.ca.gov.

Arbor and Earth Day Celebration

The city of Mountain View combines its celebrations for Arbor Day and Earth Day into an event that features booths with Earth-friendly resources and information, workshops, an electric vehicle showcase, live music and animal programs, kids' activity area and rock-climbing wall, plant-based food, tree walks and a group bike ride and a tree planting by the mayor.

April 20, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., at

Rengstorff Community Center, 201 S. Rengstorff Ave., Mountain View. mountainview.gov.

Earth Day Author Event: Heather Ferranti Kinser

The Palo Alto Library hosts author Heather Ferranti Kinser who reads from her new book "In a Cave" at this event geared for toddlers and young children. Visitors can take part in a craft activity as the author demonstrates entertaining cave props.

April 20, 3-4 p.m. at Mitchell Park Library, 3700 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Free, but registration is required at tinyurl.com/EarthDayAuthorPA.

Atherton Earth Day Festival

The town of Atherton celebrates the planet and promotes sustainable living with an event featuring green technology demonstrations, plant-based food, exhibits and activities.

April 21, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., at Holbrook-Palmer Park, 150 Watkins Ave., Atherton. ci.atherton.ca.us/625/Earth-Day.

Palo Alto Earth Day Festival

Families can join the city of Palo Alto for a celebration with live animal encounters, pollinator garden tours, eco-bingo, a live cooking demonstration and an upcycled art show. Plus, city staff will be on hand with games, giveaways and resources to help residents make their homes and daily lives more sustainable.

April 21, 1-4 p.m., Rinconada Library, 1213 Newell Road, Palo Alto. cityofpaloalto.org.

CuriOdyssey's Earth Day Celebration

Kids' science museum and zoo CuriOdyssey hosts a day of eco-activities for kids of all ages that

(continued on page 33)



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Back with 'Burner'

Peninsula author Mike Trigg's second novel combines technology, politics and internet culture with a star-crossed love story

By Ashwini Gangal

I'm not sure yet if this is a memoir or a manifesto, a love letter or a suicide note." That's the first sentence of Mike Trigg's new novel "Burner," a thriller set in San Francisco that captures the present day zeitgeist of political unrest, wealth inequality, social media addiction and high tech.

The ethos of the present era is brought out through a tragic love story between Shane, the leader of a populist movement run amok and Chloe, a tech billionaire's daughter who is abducted by the same group.

While the opening line came to Trigg in what he calls "a fever dream," the idea to write this book is something he has lived with for many years. Before he became an author, he spent over two decades in the tech industry, prior to which he worked for several years on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

"I was there during a very tumultuous time in the early '90s — it was the rise of right-wing radio, it was the rise of Newt

Gingrich's 'Contract With America', the 'Unabomber' happened around then, the Oklahoma City bombing happened around then, we had ricin mailed to the Capitol around then," he said. "It was sort of the first time in contemporary politics where we really saw the seeds of what has become even more extreme politics in our country."

That's when his interest in the subject began to grow. "I've been very fascinated, in a good and bad way, with the intersection of technology and politics, how technology platforms have been used and abused for driving political polarization, driving extremism," he said about his inspiration for the book.

After percolating through his consciousness for years, the idea crystallized on Jan. 6, 2021, when a riotous mob of Donald Trump's supporters attacked the U.S. Capitol building.



Mike Trigg

"When that happened, I think it was a wake up call for everybody — both on the left and the right, I hope — about the dangers of populism untethered," he said, about toxic realities that eventually formed the basis of his fiction. "What happens to democratic society when you don't have a common definition of the truth?"

The core question we wrestle with in America right now is 'what are the limits of free speech?'"

Trigg feels strongly about the sway that wealthy individuals and foreign governments have over the democratic process and is disturbed by the way social media platforms are exploited for propaganda.

"When I wrote the book, I thought it would be a retrospective critique," he said. But in the run up to this year's elections, as he pointed out, a lot of the same issues are being discussed in the news every day.

"I have tremendous anxiety about the 2024 elections," he said. "I worry about that for our country, I worry about that for our children. That was a big inspiration for the book."

"Burner" will publish on April 16. This is Trigg's second literary endeavor. His first novel, "Bit Flip," which was published in August 2022, is a Silicon Valley-based satire of local tech culture.

"My lane as a writer is contemporary thrillers that examine the impact of technology on modern life," he said, classifying his books as "cautionary tales."

While his work is crafted to entertain readers, it also bears a stamp of his personal brand of activism. "Both books very much have a message to them," Trigg said. He is genuinely concerned about the potentially toxic side to technology.

His concern is not unfounded. Social media connects people but also creates virtual alter egos with fractured identities. The internet

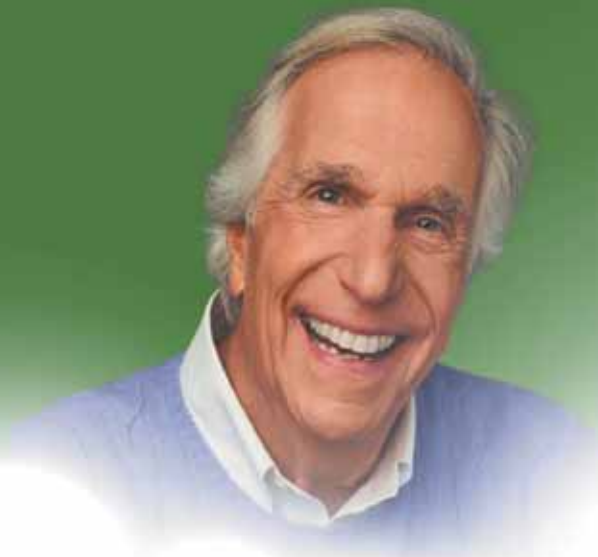


Courtesy Mike Trigg

"Burner," a novel by Mike Trigg, is set to publish on April 16.

has a wealth of information but also brings with it the dangerously murky dark web. "This is kind of why I became an author — to affect the conversation, to offer my opinions," he said.

(continued on page 33)



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Peninsula Volunteers, Inc.



Sammy Dallal

A service day to help weed and clean up Stanford's Arizona Cactus Garden on April 24 is among a variety of Earth Month events taking place on the Stanford University campus.

Earth Day

(continued from page 29)

also features Earth Day vendor market, music, food from Satay on the Bay and Mozzarella and a chance to learn about conservation at CuriOdyssey and get ideas and information on how to team up to help take better care of the planet.

April 21, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., at CuriOdyssey, 1651 Coyote Point Drive, San Mateo. curiodyssey.org. ■

Find more Earth Month events at paloaltoonline.com/arts-culture.

Email SixFifty Editor Julia Brown at jbrown@embarcaderomedia.org.

'Burner'

(continued from page 32)

He's happy expressing his views through his fiction. "Having been in the tech industry for 20 plus years, I was there. I saw first hand how these things spawned, not in a nefarious way; just that there've been so many unintended consequences to these platforms and bad actors who've been able to exploit them," he said.

While writing "Burner," he spent a lot of time researching cases of domestic terrorism and consulting experts such as FBI agents and prison wardens. The book begins with one of his central characters narrating his side of the story from prison. "I always had this epistolary framework in mind," he said, referencing literary tools like court transcripts and newspaper articles that pepper the narrative.

The book lends itself readily to being adapted for screen. "It does have a cinematic quality to it," he said in agreement with the critique. "It hasn't been optioned yet."

The audiobook version is nearly complete, though. The process of bringing his characters to life, he said, was very gratifying.

Trigg has finished writing his third novel, a story about an internet and mobile phone outage. "It has a lot of the same notes

— technology, politics," he said about his next thriller.

He reads novels at the staggering pace of a book a week. "I read 52 books a year," he said. Books he enjoyed in recent times include "Wellness" by Nathan Hill, "Wandering Stars" by Tommy Orange and "Chain-Gang All-Stars" by Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah.

Actively participating in the literary world is an important part of Trigg's life as an author. He is part of International Thriller Writers, an honorary society of writers from this genre. The group organizes an annual conference in New York called Thrillerfest. They also give away an annual book prize for which Trigg judges the e-book competition. ■

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

"Burner" is published by Sparkpress. On April 18, 6:30 p.m., Trigg will appear at a book launch event at Books Inc. Palo Alto, Town and Country Village, 855 El Camino Real #74, Palo Alto, where he will discuss the book with renowned author Chris Yeh. For more information, visit booksinc.net.

Worth a Look



Courtesy 3rd Thursday

Bluegrass musician Jack Tuttle performs at 3rd Thursday on April 18.

3rd Thursday

For the April edition of California Avenue's 3rd Thursday event, Palo Alto's own Earthwise Productions is presenting an evening with a "Latin and local" theme and featuring eight musical acts on three stages. Artists include Jack Tuttle and Friends Quintet; Harvey Wainapel's ALEGRIUDE: Midtown Dreamers; the Stanford student-run salsa group Cien Mil Mangos de Estanfor; Roberta Donnay Rainforest trio; Beti Masenq; Keith Lawrence Quartet; and members of Los Panaderos. A photo booth, an art-sharing table, 3rd Thursday swag, and special offers from local businesses are also being offered, according to 3rd Thursday's website.

April 18, 6-9 p.m., California Avenue between El Camino Real and Birch Street, Palo Alto; 3rdthursday.fun.

'The Skin of Our Teeth'

Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize-winning play "The Skin of Our Teeth" follows the archetypal Antrobus family, representing humanity throughout history, as it deals with disasters such as climate change, plague and war. The comedy broke theatrical conventions when it debuted in 1942 and involves farce, burlesque, satire and elements of the comic strip, according to a press release by Los Altos Stage Company, which is offering its take on the evergreen-yet-timely classic, directed by Chris Reber.

Through May 5, 97 Hillview Ave., Los Altos; \$22-\$45, losaltosstage.org.

Cubberley Open Studios and ART for ALL Family Day

Take a peek into the workspaces of Palo Alto's Cubberley Artist Studio Program artists, who open their doors to the public twice annually to show and discuss their projects and artistic processes, including on Saturday, April 13. And on Sunday, April 14, hands-on art activities for kids and families, gallery conversations and live music outdoors are offered for visitors of all ages during Stanford University's next ART for ALL Family Day, held between the Cantor Arts Center and its

next-door neighbor Anderson Collection, both of which will be open for visiting.

Cubberley Open Studios, April 13, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Cubberley Community Center (E, F and U wings) 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto; cityofpaloalto.org.

ART for ALL Family Day, April 14, activity sessions run 10 a.m. to noon and 1-3 p.m., Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Drive, Stanford; eventbrite.com.

Manchester Collective with Abel Selaocoe

Britain's Manchester Collective and South African cellist Abel Selaocoe join forces to present "Sirocco," described by the collective as a celebration of folk traditions around the world. The high-energy program includes original South African music and new takes on Western traditional and classical tunes, featuring Selaocoe's standout cello solos. Manchester Collective was formed in 2016 with the goal of pushing classical music's boundaries and has released three albums. Selaocoe, a rising star, is also a boundary pusher, crossing genres with his cello and aiming to bring classical music to more diverse audiences.

April 13, 7:30 p.m., Bing Concert Hall, 327 Lasuen St., Stanford; \$32; live.stanford.edu.

Eating Out



Loretta

Bistro Vida's owner is ready for an encore – opening a new cocktail bar in a spot made famous by the Grateful Dead

By Adrienne Mitchel
Photos by Devin Roberts

Our fourth annual Peninsula Restaurant Week is almost here! From April 19-27, celebrate the Peninsula's restaurant scene with special prix fixe menus and offers at dozens of local eateries. I'm catching up with three restaurateurs participating in Peninsula Restaurant Week. This is the first interview in this year's series.

For more information on Peninsula Restaurant Week, go to peninsularestaurantweek.com.

After 26 years since opening Bistro Vida, owner Ali El Safy is “having a new baby.” The due date is in June, and El Safy has already picked out her name: Loretta.

“I want next door to be a little bit more free, more casual, fun,” he said. “Bistro Vida is like my oldest son — he went to Cornell, he’s academic. My youngest son goes to (University of) Oregon — very free and hippie personality. So I based this identity of the two places on my two sons.”

El Safy opened Bistro Vida in downtown Menlo Park in 1998, specializing in classic French dishes like cassoulet de toulouse and boeuf bourguignon. Running Bistro Vida is not just about food for El Safy — it’s also about community. El Safy has given back to the fire district, local schools and more, started a weekly outdoor French market that’s been operating since 2021, and state Sen. Josh Becker and the California Small Business Association recognized Bistro Vida as the Small Business of the Year in 2021. Now, El Safy is looking forward to adding more nightlife in Menlo Park with a bar connected to Bistro Vida called Loretta in the former Harvest Furniture space next door.

“There’s really no place to go for younger people when you think about it,” he said. “This was also for everybody to come and really enjoy it. Even the kids who have grown

up and moved away and come home for the holidays, sometimes there’s nothing for them to do.”

While El Safy doesn’t know anyone named Loretta and said he picked the name for its old, classic feel, he visualizes Loretta like this: “Natural-looking hair, very earthy, very hippie, easy-going, maybe vegan, maybe vegetarian...She’s just free.”

Slated to open in June, Loretta will offer classic cocktails as well as seasonal specialty cocktails, beer, wine, snacks, tapas and charcuterie, said El Safy. Guests will be able to order food from Bistro Vida and use Bistro Vida’s outdoor seating. While Loretta will not be offering happy hour, El Safy says he aims to keep prices affordable, with a typical cocktail priced around \$15-\$16.

“I see some places now charge \$20 for drinks,” he said. “That’s too much. Most of

the drink is ice.”

El Safy’s two sons will also be involved with Loretta, he said, with his older son helping on the business side and the younger son managing as the head bartender.

“He can stay up late because maybe I like to go home early, so he can close,” El Safy said.

El Safy plans to have Dead Night on Wednesdays, when the playlist will be entirely that of the Grateful Dead, who began their career in the same building as Loretta at Magoo’s Pizza Parlor. On other nights, music will depend “on the mood,” El Safy said.

“I could play the Eagles,” he said. “I could play Fleetwood Mac. I could play hip-hop. It can be anything.”

Loretta is currently undergoing construction, with workers laying down hardwood floors, installing a marble bar countertop

and hanging chandeliers. The largest undertaking was plumbing, El Safy said, as the original building only had one toilet. Bistro Vida and Loretta are now connected via two large doors, and the dishwashing areas are also connected. Loretta’s tentative hours will be Wednesday through Sunday from 4 p.m. to 1 a.m., El Safy said.

“The vibes are very loungey, kind of chic city, but casual neighborhood-y, comfortable seating, a comfortable place to go,” El Safy said.

El Safy grew up in Egypt and attended French school. At 15 years old, he left for London by himself despite barely speaking English. He didn’t like London, so he took the train to Paris and started a job making pomme frite.

“I was around potatoes all day long,” he said. “Sacks and sacks of potatoes.”

He worked in restaurants in Paris for four years before moving to New York, where he continued to work in the restaurant industry. When asked why he left Paris for New York, he said, “A woman.” Why he left New York for California? “A woman,” he said.

He worked in restaurants in San Francisco before heading south to work at La Tour, a French restaurant on University Avenue in Palo Alto. While working at Il Fornaio in Palo Alto, he often would eat at a Mexican restaurant in Menlo Park called La Luna. The owners wanted to retire and asked El Safy if he would buy the restaurant, so he and a friend at Il Fornaio decided to take over in 1994. They kept the name but introduced tapas and live Spanish music.

“We took over the whole sidewalk, and we threw parties every night,” he said. “It was crazy. And people were smoking cigarettes



Top: French onion soup will be part of Bistro Vida’s prix fixe menu for Peninsula Restaurant Week. Above: Diners peruse the menu at Bistro Vida in Menlo Park prior to construction of Loretta.

Bistro Vida, 641 Santa Cruz Ave., Menlo Park; 650-462-1686, Instagram: @bistrovidamp. Open Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and 5-9 p.m. and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and 5-8 p.m.



From left to right: Owner Ali El Safy at his French restaurant Bistro Vida in Menlo Park. The bar at Bistro Vida in Menlo Park. The interior of Bistro Vida in Menlo Park prior to the construction of two doors connecting Bistro Vida and Loretta.

so there were cigarette butts everywhere. And then people complained to the city. It was fun.”

Not long after taking over La Luna, El Safy came across nearby ice cream and hot dog shop Stanford Ice Cream. The owner was ready to retire, and El Safy decided to take over the place, transforming it into Bistro Vida.

“I always wanted to do something really French,” he said. “When people think about romance and they think about food, they always think about Paris.”

El Safy decided to focus entirely on Bistro Vida and sold La Luna, which is now Singaporean restaurant Shiok. The two most popular dishes at Bistro Vida are the moules frites (mussels with French fries) and the French onion soup, said El Safy.

“Our mussels are really nice and plump because the Italian family in San Francisco who I buy my fish from, they hand-pick

them for me,” he said. “We make the best French onion soup because it’s actually a recipe that I got from a chef friend when I was living in Paris.”

For Peninsula Restaurant Week, Bistro Vida is offering a prix fixe menu for \$40 a person. Diners have the choice between French onion soup and salad laitue for the appetizer, moules frites, boeuf bourguignon (beef stewed in red wine with mashed potatoes) and risotto aux saint jacques (scallop risotto) for the entree and tarte tatin (caramelized apple tart) for dessert.

After Loretta, El Safy said he’s not planning on having any more “daughters.”

“(I plan to) run the business and continue until I lose interest and I don’t have the energy for it anymore,” he said. “Do other things, but not golf. I don’t golf. Definitely not golf.” ■

Email Food Editor Adrienne Mitchel at amitchel@pawekly.com



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Public Notices

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 LENESE 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)

SHORELINE OPTOMETRY
 FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
 File No.: FBN704746

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

1.) SHORELINE OPTOMETRY, located at 419 N. Shoreline Blvd, Mountain View, CA 94043, Santa Clara County.

This business is owned by: a Corporation.

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

JENIFER E.L. WEBB, O.D., INC
 419 N. Shoreline Blvd
 Mountain View, CA 94043

State of Incorporation: California

Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 04/01/2024

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara on April 03 2024.

(PAW Apr 12, 19, 26 and May 3, 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)

ALTO PREDICT LLC
 FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
 File No.: FBN704745

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

1.) Alto Predict LLC, located at 978 Blair Ct, Palo Alto 94303, Santa Clara County.

This business is owned by: a Limited Liability Company.

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

ALTO PREDICT LLC
 978 Blair Ct
 Palo Alto, CA 94303

State of Incorporation: California

Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 10/27/2017

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara on April 03 2024.

(PAW Apr 12, 19, 26 and May 3, 2024)

LIGHTNING BUG STUDIO
 FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
 File No.: FBN704576

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

1.) Lightning Bug Studio, located at 817 Tolman Drive, Stanford, CA 94305, Santa Clara County.

This business is owned by: an Individual.

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

LINDA GAIL BAKER
 817 Tolman Drive
 Stanford, CA 94305

Registrant began transacting business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above on 03/28/24

This statement was filed with the County Clerk-Recorder of Santa Clara on March 28 2024.

(PAW Apr 5, 12, 19 and 26, 2024)

HEYALPACA.STORE
 FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
 File No.: FBN704723

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

1.) HEYALPACA.STORE, located at 517 Columbia Ave San Jose, CA 95126, Santa Clara County.

This business is owned by: an Individual.

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

ROGER ALEXANDER AGUILAR
 517 Columbia Avenue
 San Jose, CA 95126

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 April 03 2024.

(PAW Apr 12, 19, 26 and May 3, 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)

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

The deadline is Monday at 11:59 pm.

Visit PaloAltoOnline.com/legal_notices/

Teachers

(continued from page 8)

this kind of proposal more and more and not slow it down.”

Commissioners Bart Hechtman and George Lu both said they were enthusiastic about the new proposal. Lu said it’s “generally in line with what we wanted in this area, or exceeds it, in affordability requirements.” Hechtman lauded the developer for its agreement with local teachers but suggested that the addition of housing would be valuable even without this deal.

“This is housing that would be useful to us even without that arrangement,” Hechtman said. “The fact that it’s going to teachers is so much the better. I would be supportive of this concept without it.”

The development received a boost last September, when the city council got its first look at the proposal and liked what it saw. In its informal pre-screening hearing, council members encouraged Half Dome to submit a formal application, which it did shortly after the review. The issue of affordability came up then as well, with Mayor Greer Stone pointing to a disparity between teacher pay and the proposed rents.

“They’ve earned the right to live in the community that they teach if they so choose,” said Stone, himself a public school teacher.

“I’m just worried these rents will be prohibitively expensive for a majority of those teachers.”

But teachers and school board members have argued that every bit of housing helps. Teri Baldwin, president of the Palo Alto Educators Association, noted in a letter to the city that most of the union’s 850 teachers “cannot live in the community we serve.” Some teachers commute from Gilroy, Morgan Hill, Aptos and Dublin.

“Palo Alto is known for its excellent schools and education, but the fear is that we are going to lose great teachers and struggle to recruit new ones because teachers can’t afford to live in this area,” Baldwin wrote.

Jennifer DiBrienza and Jesse Ladamirak, chair and vice chair of the school district’s Board of Trustees, called the project an “outstanding opportunity to make a small dent in the thousands of housing units Palo Alto must add.”

“It is housing for some of the hardest workers in Palo Alto, near transit, jobs, and services — which will reduce cars on the road and greenhouse gas emissions,” DiBrienza and Ladamirak wrote in a letter. “It’s a win for all of us. Please fast track this and make it happen!”

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

Net neutrality

(continued from page 9)

exploit customers, particularly in situations of a market monopoly.

“I think in a monopoly or duopoly environment. It’s clear that a carrier can further monetize customer behavior through limiting the speeds of service to charge more for higher speeds, limiting the capacity to charge more for overage or additional use, or by favoring certain applications that benefit their bundled services,” he said.

Net neutrality would protect consumers from these kinds of practices, Rosenworcel said, and restoring federal oversight will bring other benefits too. It would require companies to address internet outages, increase data privacy protections and bolster cybersecurity standards.

But for Santa Clara County Fire

Chief Suwanna Kerkaew, ensuring public safety was the number one reason to back net neutrality. Since the Mendocino Complex fire, the county has strengthened its communication network with the adoption of FirstNet, a high-speed wireless broadband network created specifically for first responders. Still, more work needed to be done to ensure that firefighters would have the best infrastructure and technology available to them, covering all locations, she said.

“We go where the fires are. And if they’re in Idaho, we’ll go there. If they’re in Montana, if they’re in Texas, it doesn’t matter, it’s neighbor helping neighbor ... The goal to strive toward is to have the same connectivity here, everywhere,” Kerkaew said.

Email Staff Writer Emily Margaretten at mmargaretten@mv-voice.com.

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Recount

(continued from page 5)

motivation for requesting the recount was not to aid any candidate but to prevent a three-way race in which a candidate can win by getting just over a third of the votes.

Stegink, who lives in Pacifica, said that he has neither endorsed nor contributed money to any of the three candidates. He has filed the request on behalf of both the Simitian and Low campaigns. He also specified that if the counties were to only deem the request valid if it's filed on behalf of a single candidate, he is filing it on behalf of Low — purely for alphabetical reasons.

"I'm agnostic on the candidates and my aim is solely to end up with a candidate whom at least 50 percent of the people like," Stegink said.

Stegink called the result of the primary election "unprecedented" and suggested that the U.S. Constitution never intended for residents to choose leaders that have only received support from about a third of the voters, which could be the case if three candidates advance to the November primary.

Though he is not formally supporting any of the three candidates, Stegink has a clear stake in the outcome. If the recount results in the election results changing in favor of the candidate he is filing on behalf of, he would not have to foot the bill. In Santa Clara County, which makes up the vast majority of the district, the cost can range from about \$80,000 for

a machine recount to more than \$300,000 for a manual recount.

Stegink said he is opting for the machine recount. He has asked both counties to begin their recounts in precincts with the largest number of valid ballots before moving on to those with fewer ballots.

"The No. 1 thing is it should be transparent and reproducible," Stegink said of the election result. "I'm betting it's not reproducible."

The request from Padilla, meanwhile, calls for a manual recount. A letter that Padilla's attorneys submitted to the registrars of both counties on April 9 states that the request is being made on behalf of Low. It also specifies that Padilla is "not coordinating or communicating with any candidate or candidates' agents."

But Padilla's past affiliation with Liccardo has led to conjectures that the recount request is meant to help Liccardo by knocking out one of his opponents. Padilla had worked on Liccardo's mayoral campaign in 2014 and he has donated \$1,000 to Liccardo for his Congress bid, federal records show.

In his letter, Padilla requested an opportunity to examine unvoted ballots, vote-by-mail envelopes, provisional ballot envelopes, audit logs and other data relating to the primary election. He is also requesting a chance to review all voter registration records in District 16 from May 1, 2023, to March 5, 2024.

Matthew Alvarez, an attorney with Rutan & Tucker who is representing Padilla in the recount request, did not respond to

questions about the request on Wednesday afternoon.

By law, residents have five days from the certification date to request a recount. In this case, the deadline was April 9. The registrar is then required to start the recount within seven days of the request, said Steve Goltiao, associate communications officer at the Santa Clara County Registrar's Office. This means the recount would have to begin no later than April 16.

A machine recount is expected to take about five days, Goltiao told this publication, while a hand recount to take about 10 days, possibly longer if there is a need to accommodate broader information requests. The registrar's office is still reviewing both recount requests, he said, and there remains a possibility that they get switched from manual to machine count or vice versa.

San Mateo County is also gearing up for a manual recount. Jim Arizarry, the county's chief assistant elections officer, said his office plans to start the recount on April 16.

"That is subject to receiving the necessary deposits to start pulling the ballots," Arizarry said.

The effort will be conducted by five recount boards, each with four members, he said. They will be charged with reviewing roughly 40,000 ballots, a process that he expects to take about 10 days.

Arizarry noted that under the election code, if more than one person requests a recount and one of them requests that this recount be manual, the manual recount

would count as the official recount. Because Padilla requested a manual recount, that's the process that the county will follow.

The recount effort will get triggered as soon as the individuals requesting the recount submit their deposits, Arizarry said. He expects it to cost between \$80,000 and \$85,000.

While the registrar's offices do not conjecture about the motivations of those who request recounts, Goltiao noted that the law allows the process to move ahead even without support or opposition from the candidates involved.

"A candidate doesn't necessarily have to condone or promote or endorse any recount request by another party that's not part of their campaign," Goltiao said. "At the same time, they can't deny a request either."

Orrin Evans, Liccardo's campaign spokesperson, told this publication that the campaign did not coordinate with Padilla and was not behind the recount request. That said, he argued that every vote should be counted, which is why recounts are part of the state's process to ensure accuracy.

Evans also noted that in Santa Clara County, more than 100 ballots were not included in the final tally because voter signatures could not be verified before the certification or because they had other issues.

"We understand why, under these extraordinary circumstances, there would be an effort to make sure these votes are fully considered," Evans said.

Low's campaign told this publication Wednesday that it is unequivocally opposed to the recount request and that it stands firmly behind the certified results. It also released a statement Tuesday suggesting that Liccardo is behind the recount request.

"This is a page right out of Trump's political playbook using dirty tricks to attack democracy and subvert the will of the voters," a spokesperson for the campaign said in a statement. "Sam Liccardo, who does not live in the district, did not file a recount himself. Instead, he had his former staffer do it for him. What's he afraid of?"

He also called Padilla's declaration that he is requesting a recount on behalf of Low's campaign "simply disingenuous" and slammed Liccardo for "hiding behind a former staffer who's mounting an extremely expensive and time-consuming recount for political gain."

"The apparent coordination raises more questions than it answers," the Low spokesperson said. "Voters are sick of these cynical games and deserve a representative with integrity."

The Simitian campaign took a more wait-and-see approach to the recount requests.

"Eventually, this process will work itself out," Simitian said in a statement. "My job is to stay focused on how I can best represent the folks in our district. And that's what I'm doing." ■

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

Printers

(continued from page 7)

one of these places."

Many others shared this view. Terry Shuchat, whose camera store Keeble and Shuchat was once a California Avenue fixture, urged the city to do what it can to retain both Printers Cafe and Moods. So did Yousef Vazir, an Old Palo Alto resident and longtime patron of Printers. He called the cafe "an asset to the community and a safe gathering place for the residents of this area and visitors."

"Palo Alto city government needs to do more to preserve such assets that enhance the character of the city," Vazir wrote.

Associate Planner Nishita Kandikuppa noted in her report to the commission that most of the public communication that the city received from patrons of Printers Cafe and Moods Wine, people who have "utilized the cafe space for social and professional gatherings, community meetings, and leisure for over 40 years."

"In addition to the loss of family-owned business, many are concerned about the pedestrian appeal and walkability of California Avenue. They prefer to have a vibrant cafe space on a downtown strip that is inviting to all as opposed to a gym that is targeted towards a select few who

are members," Kandikuppa wrote.

A notable dissent came from David Landferman, the attorney representing Palo Alto Fit owners Nina Nguyen and Mirco Horst. He called Lait's decision to defer the approval of the conditional use permit "unfounded and hasty" and characterized the departure of Printers Cafe as a "private lease issue" in which the city should not get involved. The cafe's lease has already been terminated, Landferman said, and the denial of a conditional use permit will do nothing to change that.

Al Ghafouri, owner of Printers Cafe, told this publication that he agreed last summer to shorten the length of cafe's lease in response to the new building owners' proposal to raise rents to \$22,000 per month. His cafe had been granted a rent reduction during the Covid-19 pandemic and he believed the reduced rent of \$18,000 would remain in place until the end of the year.

Ghafouri said that prior to that point, he had been talking with the new property owners about extending the lease for another three to five years. While his prior lease was set to expire in October 2025, he ultimately agreed to limit the lease to April 6 in exchange for keeping the rent from rising. But after he agreed to the new termination date, Horst and Nguyen indicated that they were no longer

interested in a lease extension, he said.

Ghafouri emphasized in a February letter to Horst that the rent reduction was the only reason he accepted the earlier termination of the lease.

"You left me no choice, since our business had not recovered from Covid and we could not afford to pay pre-Covid rent," Ghafouri wrote.

In their correspondence with city planners, Palo Alto Fit owners wrote that the parties "mutually agreed" to reduce rent during the Covid pandemic and for a time afterwards. When the original rent was set to be reinstated, Printers Cafe "indicated a preference to shorten the lease term in exchange for a reduced rent for that shortened time." The new termination date, they wrote, was requested by Printers Cafe.

Landferman argued that neither city staff nor the public should "act under the misconception that the delay or denial of the CUP approval would somehow prevent the already-agreed termination of the lease."

"Accordingly, Mr. Ghafouri and his supporters should recognize and accept the fact that opposing or trying to delay the CUP application is not the way to try to restore or reinstate Mr. Ghafouri as a tenant at these properties," Landferman wrote. "To the



Gennady Sheyner

Printers Cafe closed down this week after its lease expired, paving the way for a gym to take over the building at 320 California Ave.

contrary, such actions simply impede and delay our clients' efforts to improve the properties so as to be able to continue to provide the types of great coffee, food, and ambience that the community has long enjoyed at this location."

With the building now vacant, Nguyen and Horst are hoping to both expand the gym and set up a new cafe. In a letter to the city, Nguyen wrote that her team is "dedicated to promoting sustainable lifestyle changes that will contribute to the long-term

wellness of the community." They are also preparing to open a new cafe under new ownership, Nguyen wrote.

"This cafe will offer a refined selection of great coffees and healthy food items," Nguyen wrote. "Designed as a healthy retreat, it will provide the community with a space to convene for relaxation and enjoyment in an inviting ambience." ■

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

Fletcher

(continued from page 5)

initiative will be informative for the district and other schools looking to implement their own programs.

Students can opt in to different levels of engagement with the sustainability theme. Everyone is welcome to attend assemblies and join field trips that explore everything from habitat restoration in Pearson-Arastradero Preserve to a water treatment plant. All sixth graders sample Wallace's sustainability elective. Then, in seventh and eighth grade, they can choose to take her longer, project-based, sustainability elective. Those who want to get even more involved can volunteer or take on student leadership roles in the garden club.

Community partnerships

Community partnerships help make Fletcher's program possible. Wallace said she often works with organizations aimed at connecting educators to environmental literacy resources and offering service learning opportunities for students.

At PAUSD Sustainable Schools Committee meetings, representatives from local schools, the city of Palo Alto and the school board discuss how their schools can move forward on sustainability issues.

"(It) has been really inspiring to figure out how a middle schooler can also learn about

(sustainability) work and grow in this area," Wallace said.

She's found that students resonate most with material that is grounded in their daily lives and personal experiences. A 13-year-old isn't thinking about buying an electric car. But they may be interested in planting native plants or growing more vegetables at home.

In an effort to implement a near zero-waste lunch program, students collaborated with the Palo Alto Food Service. They tracked their food waste through surveys and learned to analyze the findings with spreadsheets. Now, the cafeteria serves salads packaged with washable plastic and milk in stainless steel cups. This semester, they are working on school-wide awareness campaigns.

Meanwhile, guest speakers help connect big topics to things kids can do at home. On Feb. 29, Anu Ramamurthy, the founder of eco-educational initiative Kat Kid Adventure, talked to Wallace's students about global climate change inequality and policy. The organization hosts educational workshops and creates sustainable products.

"If you need people to take action on an issue, you need them to care about the issue," Ramamurthy said. "For that, they need to first understand it. If we, as people who believe in climate change, don't talk about it, people are not going to know about it," she told the class.

When Ramamurthy asked how everyone had experienced climate change in their lifetimes, there were many answers: heavy rain



Abigail Van Neely

Teacher Tamara Wallace encourages her sustainability class to collect plastic to recycle for Earth Day at Fletcher Middle School on Feb. 29.

during last year's atmospheric river, orange skies following the 2021 wildfires, air conditioning becoming a necessity over the summer. It was then time to turn to action.

For the rest of class, students wrote postcards to city council members. They were prompted to highlight Palo Alto's current climate solutions and suggest what more could be done.

"The fact that you are exposed to environmental and climate issues right now, and have an understanding of it right now, is fantastic," Ramamurthy said. "So talk about it. ... Share with your local officials not just what more you want but what you already care about and are grateful for in your own city."



Abigail Van Neely

A Fletcher Middle School student reads a newspaper provided by eco-educational initiative Kat Kid Adventure on Feb. 29.

Schoolwide sustainability

Fletcher's sustainability theme also extends beyond science classrooms. In math, students calculate the percentage of countries' energy that comes from renewable sources. For an art competition, students submitted a cartoon

about an endangered Bengal tiger, the school mascot. In eighth grade English, where the focus is "living together," a unit is dedicated to studying how people and the environment interact.

English teachers Deanna Jones and Ander Lucia hope their students will begin to challenge preconceived notions about how they

should talk about climate change. In addition to academic conversations about environmental justice, they encourage discussions about identity and collective action.

For their final project, students get to be creative while designing "planetary PR" posters that raise awareness in their communities.

"It's not just a theoretical idea around sustainability, but (a) more practical and actionable (approach)," Jones said.

Fletcher's teachers recognize that middle schoolers may still be too young to know for sure what their career goals are. But planting the seed of sustainability, they hope, will help their students grow into more conscientious community members.

"I would just love to be able to create these meandering and diverse pathways for kids," Wallace said. "Maybe they're really interested in biodiversity. Maybe they're really interested in electrification. Maybe they're really interested in innovation and engineering. There's so many different pathways to sustainability work and it is very unique to each child's context and what's possible." ■

Abigail Van Neely is a former Editorial Intern.

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.

EPA police investigate homicide

East Palo Alto police launched a homicide investigation after an officer found a resident with a fatal wound on April 8 near the intersection of Newell Road and West Bayshore Road, according to a Police Department news release. (April 9)

Yemenite-Israeli cafe opens in Palo Alto

The Ma'lawah Bar, an Yemenite-Israeli cafe specializing in jachnun and malawah, opened March 20 along El Camino Real in Palo Alto. Founded by Santa Clara resident Doreet Jehassi, The Ma'lawah Bar is fully vegetarian and dairy-free. (April 9)

Police: Burglar broke into Barron Park home

Palo Alto police are investigating a burglary of a Barron Park home that occurred on the night of April 9 while its residents were asleep, according to a news release. (April 10)

Public Agenda

A preview of Palo Alto government meetings next week

CITY COUNCIL ... The council plans to meet in a joint session with the Planning and Transportation Commission to discuss and approve the revised 2023-2031 Housing Element. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, April 15, 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.

COUNCIL RAIL COMMITTEE ... The committee plans to consider eliminating options for grade separation and to discuss possible bicycle underpasses at Seale and Kellogg streets. The meeting will begin at 2:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 16, in the Community Meeting Room at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 863 8814 2528.

COUNCIL RETAIL COMMITTEE ... The commission plans to discuss proposed near-term improvements in the California Avenue and downtown business districts. The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, April 17, in the Community Meeting Room at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 858 4554 4145.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD ... The board plans to meet at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 18, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 965 6189 1491. The agenda was not available by press deadline.

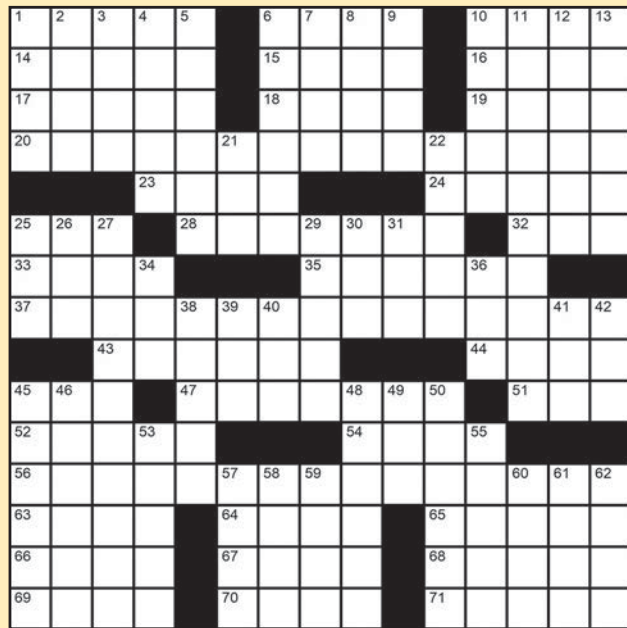
CITY/SCHOOL LIAISON COMMISSION ... The commission plans meet at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 18, in the Community Meeting Room at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 862 8046 0108. The agenda was not available by press deadline.

PUBLIC ART COMMISSION ... The commission plans to meet at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April 18, in the Community Meeting Room at City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave. Those wishing to participate by Zoom can do so by dialing 669-900-6833 and using Meeting ID: 886 2784 1441. The agenda was not available by press deadline.

Across

- 1. Design details
- 6. Savoir-faire
- 10. Hunk of marble
- 14. Danger signal
- 15. Inter ___ (among others)
- 16. Intl. defense alliance
- 17. "M*A*S*H" setting
- 18. "___ and the Real Girl"
- 19. Other, en español
- 20. Social media message that a percussive off-Broadway show is getting a movie deal?
- 23. Palindromic magazine title
- 24. Toyota's luxury division
- 25. "Carte" or "mode" preceder
- 28. Moldova's landmass
- 32. "Gangnam Style" performer
- 33. Computer music format
- 35. Company that merged with Minolta in 2003
- 37. Nab some showy jewelry from jail?
- 43. "Brigadoon" lyricist Alan Jay ___
- 44. Mononymous Irish singer
- 45. Seattle setting, briefly
- 47. Like lost files
- 51. Talking bear film-turned-TV show
- 52. Analgesic's targets
- 54. "Pale" drinks
- 56. Trash talk about a doctor handing out phony cold remedies?
- 63. "You've Got a Friend ___"
- 64. Bear up there
- 65. Bellybutton type
- 66. PFC superiors
- 67. Call it ___
- 68. Cornball
- 69. Frobe who played Goldfinger
- 70. Curt agreements
- 71. Frequently

"Sounds Like a Deal" — onomatopoetic justice. by Matt Jones

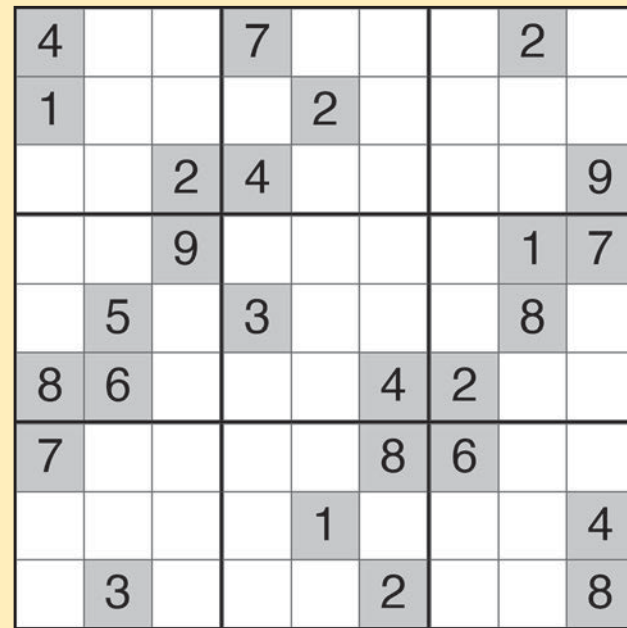


Answers on page 6.

Down

- 1. "Fifth Avenue" store
- 2. Novel storyline
- 3. Architect Saarinen
- 4. Cadbury egg filler
- 5. Corner fastener
- 6. Like Penn, vis-a-vis Teller
- 7. Jai ___ (fast-moving game)
- 8. Newspaper sales no.
- 9. Item on a list
- 10. Longtime Maine senator Olympia
- 11. Quick-drying coat
- 12. Agamemnon's father (and Electra's grandfather)
- 13. 1970s funkmeister Collins

This week's SUDOKU



Answers on page 6.

www.sudoku.name

- 21. It might give you the chills
- 22. Michigan congresswoman Rashida
- 25. Guitarist's hookup
- 26. ___ Nas X
- 27. It's definitely not popsicle-stick jokes
- 29. "Rashomon" director Kurosawa
- 30. Branch of a family tree, maybe
- 31. Sign, as a contract
- 34. Curling surface
- 36. Cavaliers, on the scoreboard
- 38. "___ Groove" (1985 hip-hop movie)
- 39. TV debut of 1980
- 40. "___ Miserables"
- 41. Science guy Bill
- 42. Josh of "Frozen II"
- 45. Tempo of a play's dialogue
- 46. Torch bearer
- 48. Times off, slangily
- 49. Tundra wanderer
- 50. Mississippi River explorer Hernando
- 53. Discharge, as perspiration, scientifically speaking
- 55. Papa or Brainy
- 57. Docking station?
- 58. Language that gave us "khaki"
- 59. Right away
- 60. Busy
- 61. Quote as reference
- 62. Not dull

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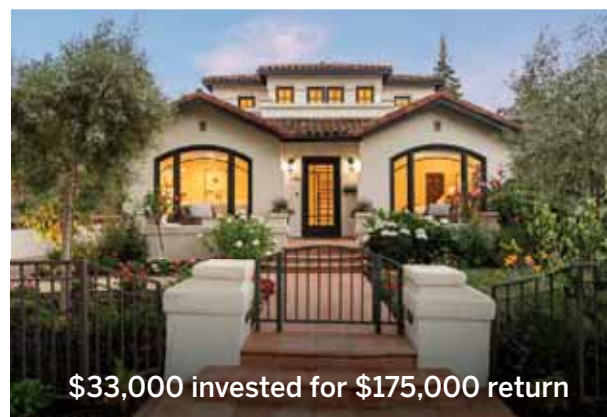
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