Police make arrest in Los Altos murder case

By Megan V. Winslow
Staff Writer/meganw@latc.com

Los Altos Police detectives have arrested a Redwood City man in connection with last week’s murder of Roberto Rivera, a mason who was shot to death while working at a south Los Altos home.

Officers arrested Edgar Lainez-Portillo, 25, Saturday and booked him into the Santa Clara County Main Jail, where he is being held without bail, the police department announced Monday afternoon.

“Thankfully, there have been few homicides in Los Altos in its history and it is with a sense of pride and purpose that we announce this arrest less than a week after this tragedy,” said Police Chief Andy Galea, according to a press release. “I am filled with pride at the response of our entire police department, from the initial patrol officers on scene, to the investigators that worked tirelessly to bring the suspect to justice.”

Galea said Lainez-Portillo was arrested on a homicide charge. Sean Webby, a spokesman for the Los Altos Police department, said he could not give more information about the case.

See SUSPECT, Page 4

Farmers’ Market reaps crowds, despite restrictions

Complete with handwashing stations, face masks sold by the Los Altos Village Association and caution tape, the Los Altos Farmers’ Market returned to State Street Thursday. Organizers now require shoppers to wear masks and urge them to shop alone, without family members. Strawberry quality engineer Torrance Magtoto, left, inspects fruit for P&K Farms of Monterey County, a vendor making its market debut. A woman shops for peppers, right.

Small-business owners seek guidance at webinar

A webinar last week aimed at small businesses affected by the coronavirus outbreak offered information on funding options and resources available at the local, state and federal levels.

Co-hosted by the city of Los Altos, the Los Altos Village Association, Los Altos Property Owners Downtown and the Los Altos Chamber of Commerce, the May 8 webinar drew approximately 30 participants.

Los Altos economic development coordinator Anthony Carnesecca and Silicon Valley Small Business Development Center director Dennis King and center members Allie Lopez and Kevin McClelland shared insight as well as survival tips for enduring the business environment in the age of COVID-19.

City efforts

Carnesecca reminded the business owners that while some sectors have resumed operations under the revised Santa Clara County shelter-in-place order in effect through May 31, retail stores are not yet permitted to reopen. The state has allowed retailers to begin offering curbside pickup and other services, but the county’s more restrictive order supercedes it.

The city of Los Altos is connecting small businesses with the organizations that hosted the webinar as well as the Town Crier to ensure that the city’s efforts and resources are well publicized.

In addition to small businesses, Carnesecca said the city is focusing on helping the community as a whole through morale campaigns, website and social media updates on county orders, virtual town halls with Mayor Jan Pepper and City Manager Chris Jordan and the city manager’s weekly newsletter.

See WEBINAR, Page 5
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#1 TEAM 2019
Mountain View police officers were among the first responders who rallied last week to thank nurses at El Camino Hospital for their service to the community. The Town Crier has been sharing local moments of joy amid the medical headlines, online as well as in print. If you’re not following us on Facebook, don’t miss our breaking news updates and – perhaps just as importantly – attention to beloved places around town where life continues, quietly. Suggested starting point: the commentary on last week’s livestreamed visit to the goat paddocks at Hidden Villa. Visit facebook.com/losaltostowncrier and click “follow” to see the good, the sad and the silly.

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The Town Crier is committed to sustaining independent local journalism as a public service – but we receive no public funding to do so. Our survival depends on each subscriber’s small but powerful commitment to support us fiscally. We have maintained extremely low subscription rates for local readers like seniors. If you are able, please consider increasing how you support us at losaltosonline.com/subscribe.
Sheltering in place in open space

Rancho San Antonio Open Space Preserve visitors stroll near Deer Hollow Farm Thursday. The preserve has experienced an uptick in visitors since the coronavirus lockdowns began, according to representatives of Friends of Deer Hollow Farm, the nonprofit organization that financially supports the farm. To discourage crowds from congregating to watch the goats and other animals, farm workers erected a privacy screen along the trail.

Reach code proposal pits green thinkers against those citing government overreach

Los Altos officials’ push toward all-electric homes in new construction has some touting a path toward cleaner energy and others decrying government overreach.

A city-sponsored informational webinar April 29 on reach codes underscored a conflict between those envisioning a future of all-electric homes and those objecting to a phase-out of natural-gas use.

Members of the city’s Environmental Commission support adopting codes that “reach” beyond minimum requirements for energy efficiency in building design.

Commissioners hope to implement the codes with city council approval this year. Adoption would result in two significant changes — all-electric construction and a requirement to accommodate electric vehicles.

The city’s environmentally conscious residents are vocal in their support of reach codes.

“Los Altos has a huge opportunity to reduce emissions by following 30 California cities in passing strong reach codes to ensure that new construction is powered by electricity rather than climate-destabilizing natural gas,” 35-year resident Cheryl Weiden wrote among several letters to the Town Crier in support. “Since these codes apply only to new construction, most residents are not affected.”

But opponents of the codes are expressing concern.

“I’m appalled,” said Los Altos resident Freddie Wheeler, who thinks supporters are trying to push the reach codes through the approval process without considering residents’ objections.

The webinar, Wheeler said, was blatantly biased and residents’ feedback was muted.

“This is a question that needs to go to the voters,” said Wheeler, who serves on the steering committee of the grassroots group Los Altos Residents.

“This is not asking for a revolution,” said John Sapp, a member of Silicon Valley Clean Energy, in an interview prior to the webinar.

Proponents figure the new reach codes would impact approximately 40 houses annually.

The nonprofit SVCE, which purchases and provides clean electricity to a consortium of Bay cities, including Los Altos, using PGE infrastructure — supports the changes.

Conflict of interest?

Wheeler, among others, said Mayor Jan Pepper should not be voting on the reach codes because she is CEO of Peninsula Clean Energy, which buys electricity for San Mateo County as SVCE does for Santa Clara.

This constitutes a conflict of interest, some residents said.

Pepper sees it differently.

“There’s no conflict of interest,” she said. “(PCE is) a government agency. We procure power and deliver it to the customer. There’s no monetary gain or loss for me if a city does or doesn’t (adopt reach codes).”

But Pepper favors adopting the codes.

See REACH, Page 7
Confusion, disappointment follow orders impacting local retailers

By Bruce Barton
Staff Writer/bruceb@latc.com

Conflicting shelter-in-place orders between Santa Clara County and the state have left local businesses confused over how – or if – they can operate.

The county’s latest order, issued April 29 and effective through May 31, allowed nonessential construction work, landscaping and nursery operations to conduct business once again. But it didn’t permit curbside pickup at small retail outlets, such as bookstores, florists and clothing boutiques — operations that Gov. Gavin Newsom’s revised state guidelines, announced May 4, do allow.

“We got all excited (when hearing the announcement), but then we went, ‘Wait,’” said Mary McMahon, events manager at Linden Tree Books on State Street.

Los Altos businesses were disappointed to discover that the county’s more restrictive order supersedes the state’s. That means most retailers are still limited to online sales and deliveries.

Ellen Biolsi, owner of Cranberry Scoop on State Street, said she was “a little confused” by the conflicting orders. She called Anthony Carnesecca, the city’s economic development coordinator, who clarified that the county’s rules prevail.

County officials responded to the confusion Thursday, clarifying that the current shelter-in-place directive does not allow for retail curbside pickup. “We will continue to study the indicators that tell us how the coronavirus is affecting our communities and amend the health orders as warranted in the best interest of community health,” officials with the county’s Office of Emergency Management said in a May 7 press release. “We share the urgency of health orders as warranted in the best interest of community health.”

Business leaders told webinar participants that it’s important to decide what type of funding is most appropriate for their businesses before applying. After that, formulating a step-by-step plan for reopening should be the owners’ main focus.

In response to a participant’s question, McClelland said developing a detailed plan for how employees and customers physically interact is the best way to prevent potential lawsuits in a “litigious society.” It also ensures that when businesses finally reopen, they can remain open, Carnesecca added.

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Selecting the right capital

Carnesecca pointed webinar participants to Facebook’s and Salesforce’s small-business grants and Silicon Valley Community Foundation’s small-business fund at the local level, the California GO-Biz iBank loan program and the Great Plates Delivered program at the state level and the Small Business Administration’s Economic Disaster Injury Loan and Paycheck Protection Program options at the federal level.

King, McClelland and Lopez expanded on the funding options, especially from the state and the federal government. King and McClelland both encouraged business owners to reach out to the Silicon Valley Small Business Development Center for free one-on-one mentoring, noting how the loan and grant programs are evolving as quickly as the shelter-in-place guidelines. They reported that the Paycheck Protection Program is “alive and well” and has approximately 40% of funds still to disburse to businesses in need.

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For more information on the city of Los Altos’ COVID-19 resources, visit bit.ly/2YRR2uZ.

For more information on the Silicon Valley Small Business Development Center, visit svsvd.org.
Wildlife ‘Warrior’: Longtime animal control officer retires

By Megan V. Winslow
Staff Writer/meganw@latc.com

In 1974, when William Warrior began working as a wildlife rescue volunteer at the Palo Alto animal shelter, a 6-foot-tall redwood fence encircled the Bayshore Road property. Staff members had yet to issue him a key, and they seemed to accept his habit of scaling the fence to gain entry. “The volunteer guidelines were pretty loose back then – or nonexistent,” said Warrior, a Mountain View resident. “Now it’s an 8-foot-high, barbed-wire fence with security cameras. Nobody’s climbing over it anymore.”

Warrior, who was hired in 1979 as an animal control officer, eventually earned his own key, but he turned it in with his badge late last month. After more than four decades of rescuing stray dogs from traffic, fishing wayward ducks out of swimming pools and administering aid to window-stunned birds, he retired from Palo Alto Animal Services April 30.

Warrior and his canine companion Lilly were a constant presence throughout Palo Alto and Los Altos Hills, and he will be missed, said lead animal control officer Cody Macartney, who worked with him for more than 17 years. “He’s just been drawn to helping animals,” Macartney said. “We all are, obviously, to do this, but to do this for so long definitely speaks to his love of animals.”

Warrior said he began thinking about retirement last year, when he felt he had reached a sort of physical and emotional plateau.

“I wasn’t missing or really failing on anything, but it just seemed around August to kind of hit me that I didn’t have a whole lot left,” he said. “So the last nine months, I was doing the best I could with whatever calls were coming my way. And I had some fun little rescues.”

They include coming to the aid of a kitten perched 30 feet off the ground in a downtown Palo Alto tree. By jury-rigging a telescoping fruit picker with a snare, Warrior was able to harness the kitten around its middle and lower it down to safety. The method worked so well that the city purchased similar tools for each Animal Services truck.

Warrior’s second-to-last shift spanned 12 hours and ended at 10 p.m. A Los Altos family called to report a severely injured raccoon drinking from their swimming pool. After a bit of a struggle, Warrior secured the animal and transported it back to Animal Services, where it was humanely euthanized.

“I felt like I was doing something valuable at the end, working a call like that and not having the raccoon linger and die somewhere in some kind of prolonged state,” he said.

Ambassador for animals

Palo Alto City Council members and staff May 4 recognized Warrior, the longest-serving employee in the 126-year history of the Palo Alto Police Department, with a proclamation read during their tele-conferenced weekly meeting.

“Over the span of his remarkable career, he has rescued and helped tens of thousands of stray, sick and injured domestic and wild animals, investigated countless tragic cases of criminal animal abuse and neglect and served as an ambassador and advocate for animals and wildlife through the mid-Peninsula,” City Manager Ed Shikada said. “He has been a trusted partner, a valued employee and a friend.”

Shikada read the proclamation at the end of the meeting, and Warrior waited five hours on standby to hear it at approximately 11 p.m. When it came time for him to respond, his connection failed and his voice came through as a high-pitched squeak no one could understand.

He later explained what he intended to say. “It was just to thank the city and the city council for giving me a career and a good living and putting up with me,” Warrior said. “At times, I’m sure, I was exasperating to deal with, and they would be clearly aware of those times.”

Ever-wary of becoming too idle, Warrior said he plans to stay active in retirement by continuing to serve as a volunteer docent at the Angel Island Immigration Center and rehearsing with the taiko drummers at the Palo Alto Buddhist temple, where he and his wife, Pam, are active members. And he’d like to attend as many San Francisco Giants games as possible.

“So putting in work of a sort that’s valuable to the community and balancing it out with some fun time as well,” he said.

For more information, visit Warrior’s website at roxanagraphs.us.
REACH
From Page 4

“The objective is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slow climate change,” she said. “Buildings make up 35% of those emissions (in Los Altos), and transportation (gas-powered vehicles) makes up the most at 58%.”

Proponents contend that all-electric homes are more environmentally friendly, less expensive to build and safer than homes using natural gas. Gas, they noted, presents the risk of explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning.

But reach-code opponents contend the effort is more about “virtue signaling” and symbolism than actually saving the environment. They cite what they see as the hypocrisy of banning gas indoors but allowing it for outdoor use. And they note that an all-electric home will cost more to run than one using gas-powered hot-water heaters, furnaces and stoves.

“I’m not against clean air, but I think anything needs to be looked at on a cost-benefit basis,” Wheeler said.

Kirk Ballard, the city’s building official, said net construction costs were on average $10,000 less for all-electric as opposed to adding gas. Costs were calculated in a cost-effectiveness study required by the state’s Energy Commission.

Although net operating costs were estimated at $7 more per month, Ballard added that the installation of photovoltaic or solar panels could mean an overall decrease of $5 monthly.

Skeptics weigh in

Still, written questions posed to commissioners at the webinar suggested residents had problems not only with the proposal, but with the process.

“The question is, if (all electricity) is so great, why would you have to shove it down someone’s throat with a government regulation?” Wheeler asked.

“Sometimes it takes an outside influence to get people to change a habit and adopt something new,” Commissioner Laura Tekles said at the webinar.

Los Altos Hills resident Robert Santor thinks reach codes for new construction would pave the way for more regulations that would go further to reduce gas use. The current proposal, he said, “is speaking for people who are not even residents yet.”

An engineer and skeptic of clean-energy agencies like SVCE, Santor said most electricity does not come from clean sources, is not reliable and is already three times more expensive in California than it is in other states. By contrast, he said “natural gas has never been less expensive than it is.”

But Sandor believes any arguments will fall on deaf ears. Despite opposition, the Los Altos Hills City Council in September adopted reach codes, as has Mountain View.

“This is a done deal,” Sandor said. “This has already been decided.”

Pepper refuted Sandor’s argument dismissing clean electricity.

“First of all, no coal is burned in California,” she said. “(The purchased electricity) is from either solar, wind, hydroelectric or geothermal. There are natural-gas power plants in California, but SVCE doesn’t (buy energy from) these plants.”

While some don’t want them all, Gary Heddern of the local nonprofit GreenTown Los Altos sees the current reach-code effort as not going far enough. He would like to see the all-electric requirement apply to major models, too, not just new construction.

“It’s about fighting climate change,” he said prior to the webinar. “We can see (an environmental disaster) coming.”

The city is gathering input via an online survey through the end of the month. To participate, visit losaltoscagov.com/community/page/open-city-hall.

RETAIL
From Page 5

Khatchig Jingirian, president of Smythe & Cross, a fine-jewelry store on Main Street. “We’re trying to stay in business, trying to stay relevant.”

Like Cranberry Scoop, Jingirian has been ramping up his store’s online presence, and he’s even made personal deliveries — making a point of sanitizing his merchandise.

“I’ve been at my wit’s end trying to figure out what we can and can’t do,” he said last week.

Still, Jingirian remained upbeat.

“I’m trying to stay away from the gloom and doom,” he said. McMahon said Linden Tree is doing “as well as can be expected. We are still doing online basically.”

Employees have been Face-timing with customers, showing them products so they can see before purchasing. McMahon is doing virtual storytime readings for children four times a week.

While the shutdown is hurting business, McMahon believes there’s an example to set as a store specializing in children’s books.

“We need to show patience,” she said, as parents teach their kids.

‘Devastating’ impact

Carol Garsten, owner of Nature Gallery on State Street, said her closed retail operation has been “devastating.”

“As soon as the shelter-in-place started, I instantly had one of my employees set up online shopping on my Nature Gallery website,” she wrote in a letter to the Town Crier. “I regularly send out emails to my clients. I provide free shipping and delivery of most of my online offerings.”

But it isn’t enough.

Garsten is hoping a $250,000 small-business relief fund the Los Altos City Council approved April 28 will help. Carnesecca said he is working on program guidelines that will be sent back to the council for approval.

In the meantime, owners of outdoor businesses initially allowed to continue operating in mid-March only to be shut down in April by a revised shelter-in-place order were relieved by the new order permitting them to reopen.

“I’m happy. I’m happy for all the nurseries,” said Brittany Sheade, owner of Yamagumi’s Nursery across from De Anza College in Cupertino. “It’s been a crazy, long process.”

Sheade fought to keep her business operational, working with county officials though her attorney. She managed to reopen April 25 under the condition that 25% of her floor space contained products were deemed essential. She collected 12,000 signatures on a petition to reopen, including support from Los Altos residents. She cited 400 emails over two days from customers wanting products.

“The demand is definitely out there,” she said. “They want to grow their own food, they want to work in the yard.”

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May 13, 2020 / Los Altos Town Crier
Nonprofits on the front line

What does it mean to be a nonprofit? Ultimately, it implies that such an organization is motivated by a goal for a greater good than making money. Many local nonprofit groups are providing a big boost to those hurt by the COVID-19 shutdown. While our healthcare workers deserve every bit of the praise they are receiving for their role in the coronavirus fight, nonprofits are doing important work on the front line as well.

Community Services Agency (CSA) and the Community Health Awareness Council (CHAC) are two such nonprofits. CSA, serving Mountain View, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, is helping hundreds put out of work by the pandemic by providing food and keeping them in their homes.

While stimulus payments and temporary stays on tenant evictions help, they don’t address needs that could stretch over months as people recover from an extended shelter-in-place period that still has no end in sight. Enter CSA.

Boosted by community support, CSA continues to meet needs — and plans to keep helping no matter what.

“We make it work,” executive director Tom Myers said in a May 5 letter to supporters. “I think this health crisis is underscoring the importance of the nonprofit sector in a way we’ve never seen before, as well as how much our employees contribute to the health and safety of the community.”

While not distributing food or paying people’s rent, CHAC plays an important role in keeping people sane.

Pivoting quickly from in-person school counseling to online appointments, counselors are working with adults and community traumatized by the health and economic threats of the pandemic.

Similar to the publicized surges of patients at hospitals, CHAC counselors are anticipating and preparing for a surge in the need for mental health services. CHAC has risen to the challenge and provides a social safety net as we all move forward in unpredictable times.

CHAC is offering hope, which we will all need plenty of to get through.

In defense of countywide travel ban

Members of our community certainly have been aware of the travel ban placed on Santa Clara County as a result of the COVID-19 national emergency. I urge everyone in Los Altos to diligently follow both the shelter-in-place and travel ban orders issued so that our community can recover faster.

While it is frustrating to miss out on life and loved ones, I remind anyone who was hoping to travel long-distance that the position of privilege many homeowners have does not extend to everyone.

Taking strict and serious action to “flatten the curve” is much more important in densely populated areas such as this.

There is a reason we have stricter limitations — we live in a higher-risk area than most and should act accordingly.

Simply put, if you are privileged enough to have to fuss about travel at the moment, please keep in mind any flight or drive out of the area could lead to someone else’s vacation straight to the hospital.

Letters to the Editor

Bill 35 (“Judge rules high-density downtown project can proceed,” May 6).

If built, this structure will be the beginning of the end of our quaint downtown as we know it. Other developers will attempt to do the same and before we know it, our downtown streets will look more like tunnels of office buildings instead of inviting sunlit streets. An old saying came to mind as we read the article: “Just because you can, doesn’t mean you should.”

Now that Judge Williams and SB 35 have taken away our city’s right to limit the height of downtown buildings, we’d like to appeal directly to the Sorensens: If you care about the city that has been so good to you for decades, please do not proceed with this building. Think of the potential floodgates you may be opening for developers who may only see profits and not streetscapes.

As strong advocates for property owners’ rights, we ask that you revert to a more reasonable building that blends in better with the existing structures. We believe the long-term goodwill gained will far outweigh the short-term profits.

Ken and Harriet Girdley
Los Altos

In 111, Frank Rathbun opened the first plumbing shop in Los Altos – F. L. Rathbun & Sons Plumbing Store on First Street, pictured above in 1929. The building, which has since been razed, had previously served as a restaurant for workers laying out the streets and sidewalks of the new downtown in 1908.
Thanks to support group, woman takes her power back

By Ruthven Darlene

This is the sixth and final part in a series on victims of domestic violence who must continue to live with their abusers during the quarantine.

The refrain kept echoing in Sara’s mind, “Not your fault. Never your fault. You never deserve to be abused. You deserve to live in peace and safety in your own home. It’s a fundamental human right.”

Thank God for her domestic violence support group, for her sisters helping her break through all his programming, the brainwashing, the lies. Sara was taking her power back secretly, silently, day-by-day, step-by-step. There was that ember inside her that stubbornly refused to die. Instead, it was slowly rekindling, thanks to all she had learned from her advocates and the group, the support they’d all given her, the books they’d suggested, the vocabulary she had now. They were pillars inside her, strengthening her core.

On the surface, everything looked the same. He must never know. The less he knew about the metamorphosis happening inside her, the safer she would be. Although her path to freedom had taken a serious detour, she could use this time to go inside herself, to pause, reflect, strategize, plan, while getting back in touch with her own mind, “Not your fault. Never your fault.”

See POWER, Page 10

Philanthropists step up in COVID fight

Los Altos foundation surpasses $500M in targeted giving

By Audrey Chang

Town Crier Editorial Intern

This is the first in a two-part series highlighting the work of the Heising-Simons Foundation and its expanding focus amid the global health crisis.

The Heising-Simons Foundation, based in Los Altos and San Francisco, has awarded more than $500 million in grants since 2007 but doesn’t usually fund health enterprises. That has changed since the coronavirus pandemic.

The family foundation recently granted UC San Francisco $2 million to establish a COVID-19 Response Initiative at the Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center. The money will fund improved transportation, testing, patient care and therapy development as a part of the foundation’s larger effort to mitigate the spread and impact of the coronavirus, according to the foundation’s website.

While funding such an initiative is new to Heising-Simons, its support of the community and beyond is not. The foundation is known for providing awards and grants to leading researchers and pioneers in the fields of climate and clean energy, science, early education and human rights. The foundation’s website reports that Heising-Simons awarded more than $113 million in 2019 and has surpassed $522 million since its inception.

Philanthropic roots

Board chairwoman Liz Simons and vice chairman Mark Heising started the foundation 13 years ago. The married couple both grew up in environments that emphasized the importance of giving.

“Thank you for your gift! It means so much to the UC San Francisco COVID-19 Response Initiative,” Heising-Simons Foundation board vice chairman Mark Heising wrote to Simons in a recent email. “We are very grateful for your support.”

Heising-Simons Foundation board vice chairman Mark Heising and chairwoman Liz Simons launched the foundation 13 years ago. The married couple both grew up in environments that emphasized the importance of giving.

“Things are very different ways (and) there are things that we can do to help people have better lives.”

As I got older, especially in the context of my being a teacher — and I worked in some communities that are definitely under-resourced I saw how much there was to do right here,” Simons said.

The concentration of philanthropic foundations in and around Los Altos has led to collaboration. Heising-Simons last year created the Early Educator Investment Collaborative, a group of early-childhood funders that also includes the Ballmer Group, the Bezos Family Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Ford Foundation.

See FOUNDATION, Page 10

Community Briefs

Stanford radio station seeks pandemic stories

Stanford University’s radio station, 90.1FM KZSU, seeks local participants for The Quarantine Chronicle, a virtual video-journalism project documenting people’s experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To share experiences, send a video narrative to the station’s “Modern Education” radio show, or request to be interviewed. Submissions will be included in the documentary or shared via KZSU’s social media and podcast platforms.

For more information, email QuarantineChronicle@gmail.com.

Museum chronicles outbreak experiences

To document the impact of COVID-19 on the community, the Los Altos History Museum seeks stories, photos, diary entries and other materials from residents of Santa Clara County. The material and online submissions will be archived for the museum’s permanent collection and preserved for future historians, researchers and visitors.

The museum has in its collection more than 8,000 photographs; 6,000 artifacts; many cubic feet of archival material including newspapers, deeds, maps and documents; and more than 200 oral histories of local residents. The materials have been collected over the past 50 years, and the museum still actively collects.

The deadline to submit to the collection is open-ended, as museum officials want to allow time for residents to process their thoughts.

For updates on the project, follow the museum on social media or sign up for its e-newsletter at losaltoshistory.org.

To contribute to the collection, visit losaltoshistory.org/ShareCovid-19stories.

Dog training moves online

The Deep Peninsula Dog Training Club offers online dog training.

See BRIEFS, Page 12
City cancels in-person programs in favor of online summer options

The city of Los Altos has canceled all in-person recreation summer offerings in favor of virtual alternatives.

In a May 6 statement, city officials said they made the decision for the safety of the community and city staff. Santa Clara County’s COVID-19-induced shelter-in-place order is extended through May 31, but observers predict limited or no permitted mass gatherings in the months ahead.

“After thoroughly evaluating the current situation and available resources, in-person special events, classes, day camps, and the production of the Summer Activity Guide, have been canceled through August 2020, until further notice,” the city’s announcement said. “City staff will continue to devote their time to deliver engaging digital experiences through the recently launched Virtual Recreation Center.”

According to Donna Legge, director of recreation and community services, the decision to cancel summer programs “was not taken lightly.”

“Recreation staff has worked exceptionally hard on compiling numerous virtual resources to engage the entire community, and we hope, with help from residents, to grow our Virtual Recreation Center to new heights,” she said.

Since the launch of the Virtual Recreation Center April 17, the recreation department has added several new categories to its list of digital classes, including fee-based classes, a dedicated Tiny Tot Tips page and Cooking with Bumblebee.

City staff members reported they are exploring additional opportunities for the remaining spring and summer seasons while assessing the community’s projected needs.

To share suggestions for digital classes or events through the city’s online Virtual Recreation Center survey, visit losaltosca.gov/community/page/open-city-hall.

For more information, call Legge at 947-2889 or email dlegge@losaltosca.gov.

ESSENTIAL HEROES TO US ALL

Our Heroes

“Thanking and recognizing those on the frontlines and those being kind and helpful in our community”

FRANK BERONILLA

The Los Altos Town Crier would like to salute Frank Beronilla of the USPS for his 32 years of service. Whether it’s dealing with the coronavirus, the weather, or smoke filled days from wildfires, Frank is on the job with a smile.

Kim Mosley

Kim Mosley, President, Los Altos Chamber of Commerce, is essential to our business community, especially now. Through social media, Kim ensures we know where and how to support them. Cheers!

POWER

From Page 9

inner voice, reassuring her that “this too shall pass.”

Through prayer, meditation and entries in her secret journal, Sara was keeping that inner voice alive, countering his gaslighting with her truth. She wasn’t fighting this alone anymore.

She had allies now, sister soldiers, an underground resistance movement comprised of survivors struggling to overcome the tyranny that had crept into their homes. Their rallying cry fueled her own determination to stay the course, keep following that call to freedom. It kept echoing within her, lifting her up, cheering her on, telling her that in her heart she was already free. He had taken so much from her – but not everything. Not yet. Here was her own determination to stay free. He had taken so much from her – but not everything. Not yet. Here was her own determination to stay free.

She kept repeating the mantra she had learned from her sisters: “No one ever deserves to be abused.” “Give the shame and blame back to the person it belongs to: the abuser, a small man, clearly, who must step on women and children to make himself feel taller.”

And one more, riffing on Thomas Paine: “Every abuser is a coward; for servile, slavish, self-interested fear is the foundation of abuse; and a man under such influence, though he may be cruel, never can be brave.”

The one who is truly brave is his partner, who must now defend herself every hour of every day against the very man who once vowed to protect her.

For those of you whose suffering has been compounded by being trapped 24/7 with your abuser, take heart, dear sisters, and stay strong. Know that where it matters most – in your mind, your heart, your spirit – you are already free. He is not the arbiter of your reality, thoughts, identity or worth. You are. Look out the window, see the mourning doves soaring overhead, messengers from the outside world.

Let them inspire you, cheer you on and point the way to freedom, reminding you that one day, this too shall pass. One day, you too will join them and fly free.

Sara is a composite portrait of several survivors, with identifying details altered to preserve confidentiality.

Ruthven Darlene is founder and executive director of WomenSV, a Los Altos-based nonprofit that supports women suffering from involvement with abusive partners. WomenSV relies solely on donations to sustain services, which are in greater demand as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

To donate and for more information, call (833) 966-3678 or visit womensv.org.
Bing Crosby in Los Altos: Lost photo unearthed after six decades

By Robin Chapman

Back in February, I reported on the forgotten connection between actor-crooner Bing Crosby and the Los Altos Youth Center. In addition to his spectacular, multimedia career, Bing, who died in 1977, was a quiet philanthropist who donated more than $1 million to youth centers all over California. In 1959, he wrote a check for $10,000 to help start construction of the Los Altos Youth Center, now known as LAYC.

The center opened a year later, and Los Altos scheduled its dedication for Sunday, Jan. 15, 1961. Bing planned to be in Pebble Beach that month for his golf tournament – now the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am – set for Jan. 19-22. His brother, publicist Larry Crosby, said Bing would attend the dedication, and Los Altos was abuzz with excitement. Students at Los Altos High created a “Welcome Bing” sign, and the city commissioned a commemorative plaque for the star, designed by resident Warren Ferris, a calligrapher and consultant to the Library of Congress.

But Bing did not appear that day. A small item in the Los Altos News showed unsmiling local leaders with the caption: “Mayors Show Crosby Plaque. Bing Not There to Receive It.”

After my story ran, I got a call from Los Altos native Jim Shattock, born in 1954, who had recently returned to live in his family home. In the summer of 1976, he had a job with the Los Altos Recreation Department, prior to starting his career as a firefighter. Looking for something in a tool closet at Hillview Community Center, he found a battered picture of Bing Crosby holding a plaque. It was on the floor, and the glass covering it was shattered. Jim recognized the plaque in the picture as the work of his great uncle, Warren Ferris, who lived on Rosita Avenue. He asked if he could take it home to show his mom, and supervisor Bob Workman said: “That old thing? Sure.” Jim took it home, showed his folks, and promptly forgot about it for 44 years.

Then he read my story. He was sure the Bing photo was still in the family home on Arboleda Drive, where his father, Art Shattock, had resided until his death three years ago at the age of 102.

“My mom and dad never threw anything away,” Jim sighed. He found the nearly 60-year-old photograph in a pile of old clippings. It shows a tired-looking star, still in golfing togs, posing alone. Stamped on the back is “Photo by Bill Early.” Bing did receive his plaque at some point and acknowledge it. He inscribed the photo: “To my friends in Los Altos. Gratefully, Bing Crosby.”

We still don’t know why he missed the event; so there is more to learn. But we now know he did his best to make amends.

Jim would like to return this piece of history to the people of Los Altos. We owe him our gratitude for unearthing it.

Robin Chapman is a journalist, historian and Los Altos native.
training classes for puppies, intermediate learners and senior dogs.

Participants need a computer or a phone with a camera, a helper who can take a video of the participant and dog, or a tripod if a helper is not available.

Professional instructors will teach dogs to obey commands – sit, down, wait, stay, off, stand – as well as attention skills and tricks.

Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and work through problems.

For more information, visit dpdtc.org.

**Kiwanis Pet Parade goes virtual**

The Kiwanis Club of Los Altos plans to hold its 73rd annual Kiwanis Pet Parade 10 a.m. May 30 – but the popular tradition will move online. Rather than a live parade through the center of downtown Los Altos, this year’s event will be a virtual parade, in the form of a YouTube video. The virtual parade will feature short video clips submitted by pet owners.

Kiwanis Club representatives encourage residents to submit 10-second videos and photos of themselves and their pets to be included in the virtual parade by May 17.

To enter and for more information, visit losaltoskiwanis.org.

**Museum offers teen docent program**

The Los Altos History Museum is accepting applications for its 2020-2021 Teen Docent Program.

Open to any student enrolled in a local high school for the 2020-2021 school year, the program offers teens the opportunity to interact with the community, fulfill volunteer hours for school, learn about history, connect with peers and work alongside museum professionals while gaining valuable employment skills to include on a college resume.

The museum will accept up to 15 students in the program. Applications are due through its website by May 29.

Following a one-week training seminar that runs August 3-7, participants become museum docents, working two to four hours per month from August through July 2021.

As docents, they greet visitors; lead tours of the museum’s exhibitions, grounds and historical J. Gilbert Smith House; and assist with activities and programs.

Applicants to the program will be notified in June.

To apply, visit losaltoshistory.org/TeenDocentProg.

For more information, email teenprogram@losaltoshistory.org.

**Techies reaching out with Helping Hands**

Los Altos residents looking for help with errands can enlist the assistance of Helping Hands, a new online and telephone service.

The nonprofit organization is the result of tech leaders wanting to help people disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 crisis, including shut-ins, seniors and people with compromised immune systems.

Using social media platforms, Helping Hands connects at-risk residents with local volunteers for support with errands like grocery shopping, enabling them to stay safe at home.

Helping Hands is recruiting volunteers and identifying those who need support. Recognizing that seniors may not be tech-savvy, or are offline altogether, Helping Hands also has launched a call center where requests for volunteer assistance are taken over the phone. The number is (415) 669-4357.

But for those with even minimal knowledge of computers, the process aims to be easy. The Helping Hands homepage features two options on which users can click: “Request help” or “I can help.” Helpers and requesters then go through the process by text or phone.

To volunteer and for more information, visit helpinghands.org.

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**2020 — VIRTUAL Kiwanis Pet Parade**

**To all the pets of our community**

We know you have been looking forward to this most important day of your year. Of course we won’t abandon you! The 73rd Annual Kiwanis Pet Parade WILL be held, VIRTUALLY, a couple of weeks later than usual —

**Saturday, May 30, 2020 at 10:00 AM**

But just as always, this parade is where you get to show off your stuff. It’s easy — please consult with your human, and have them help you create a fun 10 second video, and get yourself included in the Parade! Please provide a bit of written comment that will go well with your film clip. The deadline for submission is May 17, so get started now!

**Thanks!**

— Your Friends at Kiwanis —

For details go to LosAltosKiwanis.org

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Need a COVID-19 Test?

Contact your doctor TODAY to talk about your testing options.

NEW GUIDANCE

The County of Santa Clara Public Health Department recommends a test if you:

- Have any COVID-19 symptom(s)*
- Have known exposure to anyone testing COVID-19 positive
- Work in a hospital, long-term care facility, or other high-risk setting.

Talk with your doctor; you may also be recommended for testing if you:

- Are 60 years of age or older;
- Work at an essential service, such as a grocery store;
- Live with a chronic medical condition;
- Have a scheduled surgery or medical procedure; or
- Are worried about other severe symptoms.

* Some COVID-19 symptoms are:

- Cough
- Shortness of Breath
- Difficulty Breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated Shaking with Chills
- Body or Muscle Pain
- Headache
- Sore Throat
- Loss of Smell or Taste

Stay informed!

Protect yourself and our community. Visit sccgov.org/cv19testing for more information about testing.

For more COVID-19 information, visit www.sccgov.org/coronavirus
Thanks to a donation from Karen Druker, the Los Altos Hills Public Art Committee recently purchased several pieces of public art, including five ceramic birds that are now mounted in the redwood trees at Edith Park. The committee proposed the cheerful, nature-themed art to welcome visitors at one of the entrances to town, Edith Park, located at the corner of West Edith Avenue and Fremont Road. A dedication ceremony, which took place prior to the shelter-in-place orders, included attendees, from left, Erika Shapiro, Robyn Aber, Diane Brauch, David Milgram, Mayor Michelle Wu, artist Sally Diggory, Nicole Andrews and Stacey Newman.

Centenarian Jim Jensen, pictured with son Jay Jensen, still retains his sharp wit, pleasant smile and younger-than-looks energy, according to admirers. He celebrated his recent 100th birthday (pre-pandemic) with Jay and a crowd of family, friends and neighbors. Jim’s two daughters, Jan and Paige, planned the party for their father. Before the lockdown, Jim could often be seen getting his exercise by walking to DeMartini’s. He is one of the first residents of the Los Altos Parc Regent retirement community in downtown Los Altos.

Friends drove by Sally Slavin’s home May 7 to wish her a happy birthday. Some tied greetings on a lemon tree and others brought flowers. Everyone adhered to social-distancing protocols, wearing masks, standing 6 feet apart and staying for a short time.

Cruz Payan, right, a Mountain View resident since 1950, turned 96 years old May 3. She enjoyed a social-distancing-appropriate birthday celebration from the garage of her Dalma Drive residence, receiving numerous birthday wishes from people walking by and driving along her street during her one-hour appearance.

Los Altos offers helplines for crisis support

The city of Los Altos Recreation and Community Services department offers community helplines to provide Los Altos and Los Altos Hills residents with COVID-19 information and resources throughout the public health crisis. Through the Senior Connection and Community Connection helplines, city staff and volunteers are available to answer questions and connect residents with support services covering technical needs, transportation, food assistance and home activities.

Senior Connection, available to residents 50 and older, operates 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. weekdays at 947-2971. Community Connection, available to all residents, runs 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays at 947-2970.
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[1] stanfordhealthcare.org/emergencyready
The staff and management at the Los Altos Town Crier thank all of you who have stepped up to help us during this time of sheltering at home. You may have noticed that a number of our advertisers have stopped appearing in the paper because they have been forced to close. That means your support now is vital to keep us alive. Our reporters will continue to work hard bringing you the up-to-date information crucial during these ever-changing times.

We have been in print since 1947, and we hope to continue publishing throughout the duration of this unprecedented crisis. And we will, with the help of this wonderful community. Again, THANK YOU!

If you have not had a chance to support our independent local journalism, go to: losaltosonline.com/subscribe
Community

LAUNDRY
From Page 16

Last month, Liu and her family visited San Jose to check on the laundromats. “We were all in masks,” she said. “It was kind of in the middle of the whole virus thing, so we were just a little bit scared.”

She recalled seeing a man down the road who was lugging his laundry basket. The family approached him and told him about Free Laundry Friends and their fundraising efforts. The man was on the brink of tears at the news and took a picture with them soon after. Liu gave him $20 to do his laundry.

“I think it’s just those encounters, because a lot of times we don’t get proximate – we don’t actually see the people we are helping,” Liu said. “We live in Los Altos, so it’s kind of nice to actually see their faces and see them smile and talk to them.”

Teamwork

Liu’s husband, Ed Han, came up with the idea of Free Laundry Friends after he noticed that most low-income families use laundromats to wash and dry their clothes.

The idea became a reality after Liu discussed it with six other family friends who have been volunteering together for the past five years.

“Some families are baking brownies for free to handout, so it’s been an amazing experience,” she said. “I think it’s helped all of us cope with what’s going on better because we feel like we’re doing something to help. It’s definitely a win-win all across the board.”

Liu said the best part is hearing the stories of those who have benefited from the fundraiser. During a pandemic, the closest way to make an impact is to find creative ways to give back to the community, she added.

“It means so much that people are willing to just give us what they can because they really believe in the work we are doing,” Liu said. “I think we are all going to come out of this a little more kinder and a little more empathetic.”

To donate to Free Laundry Friends and for more information, visit gofundme.com/f/freelaundryfriends.

Doctor offers Los Altos Rotarians advice on staying safe amid pandemic

By Marlene Cowan
Special to the Time Crier

Dr. Paul S. Auerbach, emergency medicine physician and professor emeritus at the Stanford University School of Medicine, answered questions posed by Rotarians at the Rotary Club of Los Altos’ virtual Zoom meeting last month.

Following is a selection of members’ questions and Auerbach’s responses.

Q: Why do young, healthy-looking patients die from the COVID virus?
A: This virus has a predilection for tissue in the deep reaches of the lungs where essential oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange takes place. This particular coronavirus sometimes destroys certain lung tissues, allowing fluid to leak into the lungs, which causes pulmonary edema. We are learning that the coronavirus also might affect the kidneys and heart.

Q: When will the COVID crisis abate?
A: We still don’t know when, but we are beginning to get a better handle on the curves that define the spread and rise and fall of COVID-19 in persons of all ages should protect their lungs from the effects of smoking, vaping and bad-air days, such as are associated with wildland fires.

While a more serious clinical course is seen in elders and persons with chronic, significant pre-existing medical conditions, such as COPD and other forms of lung disease, young, healthy people can become infected and suffer.

See ROTARY, Page 20

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Byrne cancer treatment fund at El Camino Health helps single women

When Joanne Byrne was undergoing treatment for stage IV metastatic breast cancer, complementary healing programs such as massage, energy work, meditation and guided imagery provided enormous emotional and physical relief. She felt grateful that, as a single woman of limited resources, she could partake in the alternative therapies thanks to support from her family and friends and a grant from the U'lan'i Fund.

Byrne, who was born at El Camino Hospital in 1963 and was a lifelong resident of the Los Altos-Mountain View area, died of the disease at 47 in 2011, two and a half years after she was diagnosed. She had spent her life giving back to the community as a volunteer and as an employee of both the city of Los Altos and Los Altos Community Foundation.

As she was nearing the end of her life, Byrne and her sister, Mary Hernandez, discussed how wonderful it would be if other single women facing cancer could get financial help to access alternative healing activities they might not otherwise be able to afford.

"The holistic therapies Joanne found most helpful were not covered by insurance," Hernandez said. "When you have other bills to pay, you are less likely to try them because they just add to your financial burden when you aren’t feeling well."

Last fall, a gift to El Camino Health Foundation from the Joanne Byrne donor-advised fund at Los Altos Community Foundation established the Joanne Byrne Complementary Cancer Treatment Fund at El Camino Health’s Cancer Center. The fund will be available to single women facing their cancer journey alone who need help paying for complementary therapies such as nutrition counseling, psychosocial support, yoga, massage and mindfulness classes—programs designed to relieve side effects and help patients live their lives as normally as possible while undergoing cancer treatment.

"Joanne was a big believer in giving back," Hernandez said. "She would be very happy that another woman facing cancer is able to participate in some of the activities that provided such relief to her, and to be remembered in the process."

Hernandez, who was Joanne’s primary caregiver during cancer treatment, said she hopes the fund also will lessen the burden caregivers face in locating resources to ease their loved ones’ suffering.

“This gift exemplifies Joanne’s spirit," Hernandez said. "I am hopeful that people in this community where Joanne grew up will feel her presence through something that wouldn’t otherwise be here.”

For more information, visit elcaminohealth.org.
Pandemic exacerbates Cupertino’s budget woes

By Zoe Morgan
Staff Writer/zoem@latc.com

Large dependent on state funding, the Cupertino Union School District faces uncertainty about what the coronavirus pandemic could mean for an already grim budget outlook.

If state tax revenue is hit hard by the pandemic, schools may suffer deep funding cuts. Because of the way school funding is determined in California, Cupertino relies on per-student dollars from the state, unlike some other local districts that are largely funded through local property tax revenue.

“Every economist is predicting we’re heading into a recession,” Board of Education President Lori Cunningham said. “The question now becomes: How big is that recession going to be and how much of it will education be asked to bear?”

Even before confronting the pandemic’s long-term economic impact, the district is already experiencing the immediate costs of the crisis.

First came the cost of cleaning supplies, gloves and masks, as well as overtime for custodial staff, said Jeff Bowman, the district’s budget director. Once school closures took effect, the district lost revenue from

See BUDGET, Page 25

High school seniors mourn loss of graduation rituals

By Zoe Morgan
Staff Writer/zoem@latc.com

Walking across the stage clad in a cap and gown, looking out and seeing his parents in the crowd, receiving his diploma – these images have all been in Isidro Zuniga Vazquez’s mind since his freshman year at Los Altos High School. Now, the coronavirus pandemic has made that traditional graduation ritual impossible.

Zuniga Vazquez’s parents immigrated from Mexico and he and his brother are the first in their family to graduate from high school in the United States. His brother graduated from Los Altos High last year.

“Graduation has a lot of meaning to it,” said Zuniga Vazquez, vice president of the senior class. “Walking the stage and seeing my parents in the crowd, that just carries so much weight to it, so much meaning.”

The plan for graduation at Los Altos High is still being worked out. Students want a video featuring seniors in their graduation regalia with their diplomas and some socially distanced way of viewing that video together, Assistant Principal Suzanne Woolfolk said. Administrators are currently working to determine what will be possible.

For a while, Mountain View High student body president Julia Bennett held out hope things would be back to normal by graduation. However, as the shelter-in-place orders were extended, she said she came to realize they were going to have to make the best of a tough situation.

“It’s also hard, too, because it’s nobody’s fault, nothing can change it,” Bennett said.

It isn’t just graduation that’s changing – other senior events are also being reimagined or canceled outright. At Homestead High School, prom has been called off, but senior Amanda Arana had already picked out her dress – a long white spaghetti-strap gown with a beaded top.

Arana’s graduation plans also were upended. Her grandparents were planning to come from El Salvador to watch her and her cousins graduate. Now, that can’t happen. Homestead is planning to create a video for graduation, which will be posted online.

Graduation was of particular importance to Arana because her parents immigrated to the U.S. from El Salvador and she and her older sister are the first in the family to graduate from high school.

“It was really heartbreaking, because I was really excited about it,” Arana said. “I put so much work into graduating. And not being able to walk the stage, it was really sad.”

Of all the events that have been changed or canceled, Los Altos High’s senior class president Kayla Brinkman said graduation has been the hardest. The ceremony gives seniors a sense of closure, she added, and allows them to feel confident taking their next steps.

“It’s just such a special moment that you get to share with your friends and your family,” Brinkman said.

See SENIORS, Page 25

Putting the brakes on car parades

By Zoe Morgan
Staff Writer/zoem@latc.com

It was mere hours before the teacher car parade was set to begin – vehicles were already decorated and signs were made – when Homestead High School announced it was canceling the May 1 event.

Administrators had received word from the Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety that the planned car parade did not qualify as “essential travel” under Santa Clara County’s shelter-in-place order.

“While it was extremely disappointing, it was something we ended up having to cancel last minute,” Principal Greg Giglio said.

The school had planned to host a car parade, where teachers drive through the neighborhood, with students and families cheering them on from driveways and sidewalks. Similar parades have been hosted both locally and nationally in recent weeks, including at multiple Los Altos elementary schools.

However, new guidance from the county has clarified that these events run afoul of the health order. A list of frequently asked questions on the public health department’s website now includes information on car parades.

“Parades, ceremonies, and similar gatherings with people outside your household are not allowed, even if everyone stays in their cars,” the webpage reads.

The prohibition on car parades has existed since the initial March 16 health order, according to a written statement from the county’s media relations team.

“Car parades were never See PARADES, Page 23

Mountain View High School seniors participate in their 2017 graduation ceremony. This year, the coronavirus pandemic has made the traditional end-of-high-school rituals impossible.
Los Altos twins win grand prize at Synopsys science fair

By Renée Remsberg
Town Crier Editorial Intern

Anushka and Josh Sanyal have a lot more in common than just being twins. Both Los Altos residents are extremely passionate about STEM, have had their research published and became grand-prize winners at the Synopsys Science & Technology Championship. Anushka and Josh, juniors at Homestead High School, placed the highest in their categories – Biological Science and Engineering and Physical Science and Engineering, respectively – at the Santa Clara Valley Science & Engineering Fair Association event, presented virtually March 11 and 12.

“In the end, kids work so hard. … They really pour their heart and souls into these projects,” said Ruma Sanyal, the twins’ mother. “I’m very proud of them in terms of the work itself. They have done it completely by themselves.”

This made the siblings eligible for the annual Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair, which offers up to $5 million in prizes, but that event has been canceled this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Josh discovered his passion for mathematics as early as kindergarten and has been interested in a STEM-related career ever since. According to Anushka, her brother was known as a “big math hotshot” and as a result people began referring to her only as “Josh’s sister.” Determined to make a name for herself, she quickly began searching for her passion, only to discover it was in the same field. In middle school, the twins joined Science Olympiad, a team competition in which students participate in specific science discipline events. It was there that Anushka first realized she loved biology.

“Growing up with my twin brother, he was always more passionate about STEM,” Anushka said. “Watching him allowed me to figure out that I was also passionate about it, but in a different way.”

‘A twin thing’

In middle school, both the Sanyals became interested in pursuing independent research. Anushka, inspired by her volunteer work at a senior home, began looking into neurodegenerative diseases. Working in the memory unit exposed her to the effects of such diseases on people’s lives, and she became determined to find out more. Her project for the symposium ultimately focused on examining how cells can armor themselves against these illnesses as potential therapeutic applications for diseases such as ALS and Alzheimer’s.

“Pushing myself to understand the (scientific jargon) and slowly pursue my ideas was just an amazing process for me,” Anushka said. “Then having that be validated through events like the science fair … was just an amazing experience.”

Similarly, Josh’s project was inspired by his experience. In middle school, he began taking online courses and quickly became interested in machine learning. From there, he researched natural language processing and ultimately created a process that feeds medical notes, records and data into a model to predict breast cancer in patients one year in advance.

“It’s something that personally affects my family,” Josh said. “The project has huge implications (for other diseases) in trying to improve treatment and survival, which is often extremely low for people who are detected later on.”

Josh and Anushka worked on their projects in separate labs at Stanford University and agreed it was a vital component of their learning experiences. Additionally, both pointed to their mother as their biggest supporter, with assistance ranging from giving them rides to the lab several times a week to helping them with difficult problems.

“I’m really humbled by it. … I tried to support them pretty much unconditionally,” Ruma said.

Anushka and Josh hope to pursue STEM in the future, including additional research, as they explore the real-world implications of their findings. Additionally, both are grateful for the support of the other in achieving their goal.

“It was so nice to have this really close friend that I could talk to. … It’s a twin thing!” Anushka said. “I’m just grateful to have him in my life as someone I can rely on that way without any fear of judgment.”
Santa Rita keeps International Week tradition alive by taking it online

By Naomi Baron
Town Crier Editorial Intern

The coronavirus pandemic didn’t prevent Santa Rita School from hosting its annual International Week, a tradition celebrating the school’s diversity.

Santa Rita’s PTA came up with a creative way to hold the event while still obeying the shelter-in-place orders: moving International Week online.

The PTA used Facebook Live to stream presentations at noon each day beginning March 23. The videos – created by students and parents – also were uploaded to the PTA’s YouTube channel and available directly on the school’s website.

“We had all these parents and students who were ready to do presentations, so we said, ‘You know, what a shame that we’re not getting to do this for the kids, because they really enjoy International Week every year,’” PTA president Gayle Mujica said. “So we decided, ‘Well, why don’t we just broadcast these on Facebook Live? It would give something for people to do and to keep kids engaged outside of their classrooms.”

Each video received at least 200 views, according to Mujica, and most of them exceeded 300. Presentations shed light on some of the countries the students and/or parents are from, highlighting cultural elements such as traditional dances and food.

Mujica said that at first, she worried it would be difficult to recruit enough families to participate virtually, but that didn’t turn out to be a problem. The students were especially eager to take part.

“Kids have actually volunteered themselves,” she said. “The kids are really excited about kind of getting to share what they’re doing. I’ve actually had kids email me directly and ask to create a video themselves, and I’ve said, ‘Sure, you know, just get your parents to approve it and then we’ll play it.’”

Positive reviews

Yang Liu, a PTA member and the mother of two Santa Rita students, said her family loved the idea and looked forward to tuning in each day to see a new presentation.

“When we found out that our school is going to continue those events through Facebook Live, we were thrilled,” said Liu, whose children created a presentation about China. “Seeing all the familiar faces online made us feel so connected. Her family’s online presentation reached the entire school – way more people than the in-person presentation would have,” Liu added. Originally, each presentation was planned to be seen by only four classes.

Mujica deemed the online presentations a great success.

“The kids are seeing their classmates online, but they’re not necessarily seeing all the other kids in their grade or in the school. This is also letting the kids see others at their school,” she said. “The little kids are seeing the big kids do a presentation and vice versa, so they’re getting to feel a little bit more part of the school and not just engaging only with their class.”

Some of the liveliest presentations during International Week were usually the cultural dance performances held on campus.

“We have 12 different dances that are led by parents who taught the kids how to do Korean dance by Korean parents, Japanese dance by Japanese parents, Chinese dance by Chinese parents,” said Alice Lee, international liaison for the PTA’s executive board and coordinator of international events. “Because of the coronavirus, we had to make them virtual. We had some parents (dance), among them me, who did a Chinese dance with my daughter,” Lee said. “We also had a Russian girl sing a Chinese fishermen song.”

The online version of International Week proved so popular that it was extended two more weeks. The second week featured more presentations, and the third was dubbed “Cooking Week.”

“We had two girls who wanted to do a video for cooking week,” Mujica said. “They’re not in the same household, so they filmed a video where they each filmed different pieces at their respective homes and then spliced it together about making chocolate-covered matzo to celebrate the Jewish holiday of Passover.”

Virtual International Week set the framework to host more school events online. STEM Expo Week followed; a week devoted to sports, nature, art and music is also on the PTA’s agenda.

“I think (the events) were really successful,” Liu said. “Those events not only connected us as a community, but also gave kids incentives to do something fun besides schoolwork, given so many extracurricular activities were canceled as well.”
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SCHOOLS

SENIORS
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“It’s something we’ve been looking forward to forever.”

Beyond graduation, Los Altos High’s prom has been postponed to Aug. 7, with a backup date of Nov. 25. That could mean seniors end up celebrating prom over Thanksgiving break. Some events, like the annual senior picnic, have been canceled altogether. As it became clear that the rituals were going to be changed or lost, “a lot of tears were shed,” Brinkman said.

“All the changes happened so quickly, which was hard to take in,” she said. “The fact that we’re not really going to be getting the same closure that classes before us have gotten is a hard concept to deal with.”

Lior Kishinevsky, Homestead High’s student body president, similarly said it was a shock just how much things have changed. These last few months of senior year were meant to be a time when seniors come together to celebrate their time in high school, Kishinevsky said, and participate in communal events.

“Those are memories that we’ll never get to make,” he said. “That’s the thing that I’m most sad about.”

BUDGET
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after-school programs that pay to use district facilities.

If more employees need to take a leave of absence to care for themselves or family members, that also could cost the district. And if sheltering in place means staff don’t use up their vacation time, that will have to be paid out, Bowman said.

Providing free meals for students during the crisis is resulting in an approximately $20,000 daily loss for the district, even after accounting for federal and state reimbursements. Typically, students who pay full price for their food help cover the cost for those who qualify for free and reduced-price meals. However, with schools closed, the district is giving free meals to any student in the district.

The district also purchased Wi-Fi hotspots to connect students who previously lacked reliable home internet access.

All told, Bowman estimates the district is looking at a $1.4 million to $1.5 million loss this year.

The district also purchased Wi-Fi hotspots to connect students who previously lacked reliable home internet access.

BRAINKMAN

The district is looking to reduce the money allocated to school sites, as well as department budgets. Administrators also plan to stop leasing land for a district office and instead disperse staff among a few sites the district already owns. Currently, the district rents office space on South Mary Avenue in Sunnyvale. The office transition was already in the works, but the pandemic pushed the timeline up. According to Bowman, the goal is now to complete the move by December.

Looking ahead

Despite the immediate costs the district faces, the greater uncertainty lies in what the economic fallout could mean for the state’s budget, according to Bowman.

Unlike some other local districts, Cupertino Union relies largely on state funding.

California calculates a base funding level for each district based on attendance numbers. If a school district’s local property tax revenue is lower than the base amount, the state fills in the gap. However, if a district has excess property tax revenue, it gets to keep it.

Cupertino’s property taxes don’t hit the base level, so the state provides the missing funding. The lack of additional property taxes means that Cupertino ends up with less money per pupil than many other local districts.

If the state reduces how much money it allocates districts for each student, that could dramatically affect the Cupertino’s budget, Bowman said.

The state Department of Finance released an update last week estimating that in light of the pandemic, California will incur a $54.3 billion budget deficit. The expected decline in revenue would cause $18.3 billion in funding cuts for K-12 schools and community colleges.

Later this month, Gov. Gavin Newsom is expected to release a May budget revision. In the revision, Bowman said districts typically receive detailed guidance on the budget outlook, including the likely amount of the per-student allocation. Each July, the governor typically releases another update, once the state budget has been adopted.

According to Cunningham, one of the biggest causes for concern is whether the state will provide a cost-of-living adjustment. The district relies on that money to help cover the increase in salary costs that occur each year, she said.

In a presentation to the Board of Education last week, Bowman laid out potential areas where the district could save money. The possibilities include closing schools, increasing class sizes and having one principal cover two schools.

The cuts were already being considered before the pandemic to help address long-term funding issues in the district, but they may be needed more than ever in light of the current crisis. However, Bowman stressed that no action has been taken and that these are currently just options being considered.

Said Cunningham, “The bottom line is we’re very unlikely to achieve the kinds of cuts we are likely facing with any one solution.”
A standout on the field & the court
LHS senior Baher-Murphy to play 2 sports in college
By Pete Borello
Staff Writer/peteb@latc.com

When Evelyn Baher-Murphy joined the Los Altos High girls lacrosse team as a freshman, the fledgling Eagles were coming off an 0-17 season. So leading Saratoga by a goal at halftime of the 2017 season opener was a major accomplishment.

“I remember (co-captain) Katie Radcliffe saying, ‘We won our first half!’” she said. “We celebrated.”

The Eagles won that game by three goals and finished the year with an 8-12 record. They improved to 11-8 in Baher-Murphy’s sophomore season and last year made to the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League playoffs for the first time. She started on all those teams.

Baher-Murphy expected Los Altos to have even more success this spring. But after a 2-0 start, the coronavirus pandemic put an end to the season.

“I was pretty bummed – it’s my last season and this is the strongest team we’ve had,” said Baher-Murphy, who was in her third year as team captain. “We had a lot of experienced players coming back and a lot of us played club in the offseason. I was excited to see how far we could go.”

At least her lacrosse career will go on; Baher-Murphy has committed to play for Colorado College. A midfielder for Los Altos and her club team, the Tigers recruited her to play defender.

“I visited in June and met with the lacrosse coach and then went back in October and stayed with a player,” Baher-Murphy said of her interactions with the NCAA Division III college in Colorado Springs. “Everyone was super nice and outdoorsy. I enjoyed the community.”

She also liked the small private school’s class schedule.

“It’s really interesting,” Baher-Murphy said. “You take one class for 3 1/2 weeks and then you get four days off.”

But the Mountain View resident may not get many days off now that she’s decided to play a second sport. Baher-Murphy said she was invited to play for the women’s basketball team as well and last week committed to doing so.

While she acknowledged that “lacrosse is my main sport,” Baher-Murphy has played basketball even longer. She started at age 5, then added lacrosse in third grade and field hockey when she came to Los Altos.

“I’ve always enjoyed team sports,” she said, “because I like the people aspect.”

Baher-Murphy has played on plenty of them since arriving at Los Altos. She not only made the varsity lacrosse team as a freshman, but also played four years of varsity field hockey. She earned a spot on the varsity girls basketball team.

Los Altos High baseball player Leong overcomes concussion
By Pete Borello
Staff Writer/peteb@latc.com

It’s been more than four years since Matt Leong sustained a concussion that has altered his baseball career. A catcher since Little League, the Los Altos High junior last year was advised to switch positions to lower the risk of triggering his post-concussion syndrome.

“From age 10 or before, my passion was catching,” said Leong, injured during a backyard football game. “It was difficult to give it up, but I was having head problems again and the doctor said the best thing to do was to stop catching.”

Moving from the infield to the outfield this year, Leong was off to a stellar start when the Eagles’ season came to a premature end because of the coronavirus pandemic. After six games, Leong had eight hits — including two doubles — along with six RBIs. His .615 batting average ranked second among the team’s starters.

“I was probably having the best start to a season in my career,” he said.

It was supposed to be Leong’s second season on varsity, but everything changed after that visit to the neurologist last year. Just days after making the team as a catcher, the sophomore broke the news to head coach Gab Stewart.

“Catcher is the one spot on the baseball field where you don’t want to put a young man in that situation,” said Stewart, who acknowledged that he suffered a few concussions playing sports in his youth. “Even something inadvertent like a foul tip could put his future in jeopardy.”

They agreed that Leong would move down to junior varsity and learn a new position — second base. The transition went so well that Leong earned all-league honors at season’s end.

This year, Leong made another switch. “The coach said I wanted my bat in the lineup, so I tried left field,” he said.

Stewart wasn’t surprised Leong made what he called a “seamless transition.”

“Matt is one to put in the work and do whatever is necessary to succeed,” Stewart said. “He has extreme mental toughness. There was not one shred of doubt that if the coaches asked him to do something...
LEONG
From Page 26

within reason, he would do it.”

While Leong misses catching – his idol is San Francisco Giants catcher Buster Posey – he is happy to still be playing what he described as “my favorite sport since I was 5 years old.”

Leong never expected that concussion to impact how he plays the game today. It occurred at a Super Bowl party during a friendly game of football.

“A bigger kid knocked him over – it was just an accident – and he hit his head on the ground,” mom Tracey Leong said.

At first, the seventh-grader thought he was OK.

“I didn’t have experience with head injuries – it was new to me – and I didn’t really feel anything. I thought it was normal, and I went on with my day,” he said.

“The next day, I couldn’t think straight.”

A trip to the doctor revealed a concussion.

“I thought I was fine the next week or so, but it dragged on,” he said. “I missed five weeks of school.”

The headaches lessened over time but never went away completely. A year later, Leong contracted a virus that he said caused headaches that were “more painful than my concussion.” Doctors told him that his concussion made those headaches worse. He missed six more weeks of school.

The headaches eased over time, but there were days Leong had to miss Little League games and he stopped playing travel ball. Now Leong is back playing the game all-out.

“The only thing that scares me is a ball to the head while hitting,” he said. “Otherwise, I still slide, layout for a ball and dive for it. I have no worries about that at all.”

GWO
From Page 26

scheduled for mid-March.

This is not an easy feat, especially given the mental and physical strength it requires to handle the pressures of the competitions and focusing on several different events. For Gwo, the mental aspect is the biggest challenge.

“Mental preparation is always a work in progress,” Gwo said. “Pre-race I don’t normally think about the race. I just watch TV or chat with my friends and don’t really focus on what’s to come. That helps me not be nervous for the races.”

Gwo’s path to Columbia wasn’t a conventional one. He committed to UC Berkeley after graduating from Los Altos in 2016 but never enrolled there. After taking a year off, he joined the Lions.

“I really liked the culture of Columbia’s campus – I just felt included,” he said. “The swim program was pretty good, too – one of the better ones in the Ivy League – so I was happy about that, too.”

Gwo said he joined Palo Alto Stanford Aquatics (PASA) at age 10. He remained with the club through high school while also competing for Los Altos. He won the 50 free at the state championships his junior and senior years. Gwo also qualified for the U.S. Olympic Swimming Trials the summer he graduated from high school.

Gwo said he has grown as a swimmer since then, thanks in part to what the coaches at Columbia have instilled in him.

“We practice our habits,” he said. “Practice good sleeping habits, good performance habits and make sure when the meet comes, we have all these good habits lined up so they are like tools in our tool kit that we can use when the competition comes.”

The computer science major added that he’s also learned to better manage his time, finding enough hours in the day to swim, do schoolwork and socialize.

During the pandemic, however, Gwo and his teammates can’t lean on their coaches.

“They’re on their own,” Bolster said. “We’re not allowed to do any kind of virtual training. All the pools and beaches are closed anyway, so they don’t have access to water. Most are doing what they can on dry land.”

For Gwo, that includes yoga, Pilates and tai chi – activities the swimmer said he enjoys.

As for what the future holds for Gwo after graduating from Columbia, he’s not sure if it will include swimming.

“I wouldn’t say definitively yes or no,” he said. “I definitely have a strong interest in swimming. I enjoy it very much. I enjoy being with my teammates, and most of my closest friends are through swimming.”

BAHER-MURPHY
From Page 26

team as a sophomore and served as co-captain this year.

“The next day, I couldn’t think

Evelyn’s our motor – she’s our go,” Eagles basketball coach Jaclyn Brode said of the guard/forward after she helped the team beat rival Mountain View in January. “She is by far our leader vocally and energy-wise.”

Baber-Murphy led Los Altos in assists and steals this year, ranked second in rebounds and was the team’s third-leading scorer. Her efforts helped the Eagles make a smooth transition to the SCVAL’s upper division, the De Anza, in which they went 6-6 to finish fourth.

“We really surprised ourselves this season,” Baber-Murphy said of the Eagles, whose 12-14 overall record included a first-round win in the Central Coast Section playoffs. “We really came together.”

She noted that the team’s best victory of the season came Jan. 24 against Palo Alto, the eventual De Anza Division champion.

“That felt really good,” Baber-Murphy said. “We beat them by a good margin (46-37), so they couldn’t write it off as some fluke.”

Her lacrosse team won its two games this season by decisive margins as well. Although Baber-Murphy scored a career-high 10 goals in the Eagles’ March 6 opener against Willow Glen, she savored next day’s win over Carlmont even more.

Evelyn Baher-Murphy drives toward the basket.

“That was really fun,” she said of the 17-7 blowout, “because we got to sub in all the other players.”

Baber-Murphy isn’t the first lacrosse player in her family. Her mom played in high school and so did her uncle.

“My cousin had played one season and then somehow I ended up playing,” she said.

Baber-Murphy added that she likes the “physicality” of lacrosse and the camaraderie.

“The girls I’ve met through lacrosse are fun to be around,” she said.

She hopes that continues in college. While the shelter-in-place orders have limited the training Baber-Murphy can do to prepare for next season, she said, “I try to work out as much as I can.”

Her training regimen includes running in the neighborhood and practicing against a wall.

“I’ve also been doing some stick tricks,” she said. “They’re not practical, but they get me more comfortable with the stick.”

Gwo

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Quarantine cocktails
Recipes for spirits to lift the spirit

By Zoe Morgan
Staff Writer/zoe@latc.com

Creating community and finding ways to connect with her neighbors were already on Mountain View resident Nancy Pannikkat’s mind before the shelter-in-place orders took effect nearly two months ago. Then, the forced distancing spurred her to action.

Pannikkat took to Nextdoor, the neighborhood-based social networking site, and began sharing pandemic-themed cocktail recipes, dubbed “quarantinis.” Since she started, Pannikkat has posted more than two dozen cocktails and received numerous replies from local residents.

“I wanted a way to reach out to my neighbors,” Pannikkat said. “I wanted to bring joy, laughter.”

She was inspired by a sermon series on the “art of neighboring” at Palo Alto Vineyard Church, which has attended for 18 years. When school closures were announced March 13, Pannikkat thought back to the sermon series and decided that now was the time to connect with her neighbors, albeit virtually.

After seeing memes online about quarantine – just like a regular martini, but you drink alone – she decided to put her own spin on the idea. That Sunday, she posted a pear-based cocktail on Nextdoor, aiming to use a big bag of pears she bought at Costco. The post generated positive reactions and comments, encouraging her to keep going.

“(It) gives me a little something to look forward to,” Pannikkat said. It’s almost like a challenge of the day, so it helps my day be less monotonous.”

Often, the idea for a cocktail will come from the news of the moment.

After Gov. Gavin Newsom reported that schools would likely close for the remainder of the school year, Pannikkat made a lemon drop, a riff on using lemons to make lemonade.

After President Donald Trump suggested that ingesting household disinfectants could treat the coronavirus (an idea roundly rebuked by health experts), she made a martini with cucumber and lime, dubbed a “Sani-tini.” In the description she wrote, “Don’t drink Lysol. … Drink this instead!!”

For St. Patrick’s Day, she made a green cocktail using Midori that she said was in honor of all of the bar and restaurant owners missing out on business and the workers who have lost income.

Although some ideas come from other people, or are established cocktails, like the lemon drop, many of the recipes are her own concoctions.

“It’s like an artistic expression,” Pannikkat said. “I get inspired by something and that changes from day-to-day.”

Although Pannikkat said she doesn’t drink much herself, her husband is a fan of mixed drinks and the two used to go on dates up to San Francisco, trying different specialty cocktails. Often, they would visit places featured on “Check, Please! Bay Area,” a long-running show on KQED.

With the pandemic keeping them indoors, along with their two children and three cats, Pannikkat said coming up with the cocktails has been a fun way to be creative, experiment and make the best of a tough situation.

“If you can try to bring something good out of an experience and … give something good to other people, it really does help you to hold on – it gives you hope,” Pannikkat said.

See QUARANTINIS, Page 30
**Food & Wine**

**ROUNDUP**  
**From Page 29**

If affirming your well-being includes drinking less alcohol right now, consider visiting the world of aperitifs, as wine columnist Christine Moore discusses in the sidebar at right. Served over ice with sparkling water, bittersweet liqueurs such as amaros make lower-proof adult beverages swimmingly rich with flavor. The Napa-made Lo-Fi Gentian Amaro is inexpensive, widely available locally and a vividly hued pink place to start.

**For parents on the brink**

Because your cocktail hours now include young people whether you consent to their company or not, consider preparing a junior edition of the ritual end-of-day drink using a fancy cup and some variation on fruit syrup, vanilla extract, nonalcoholic bitters, crushed ice and milk or sparkling water.

If you want to craft your own theme quarantini as a tribute to the current state of parenthood, consider my own Mother’s Day selection: the citrus peel cocktail featured in New York Times reporter Gray Chapman’s ode to cooking with garbage, “How to Embrace Your Inner Trash Animal.” It sounds delicious as well as appropriately pathetic.

Perhaps you are already resprouting green onions from the roots and mastering your supply of sourdough starters from Little Sky Bakery and the Midwife and the Baker, both of which sell bread at the Mountain View Farmers’ Market, and now offer starters via online order. If so, share your new tricks in the comments of this column’s online version — I’ll be adding a recipe there, too.

And if you are laughing morbidly at the suggestion of baking while beset by children, you can hit up the now-open Los Altos Farmers’ Market — 4-8 p.m. Thursdays through September — to pick up shucking corn and shelling peas. Given a few big mixing bowls and space to make a mess in the backyard, preparing dinner can become the job of the younger generation.

Eliza Ridgeway is the Town Crier’s food editor. Email her at elizar@latc.com.

**Shelter in ‘Haus’**

Town Crier wine columnist Christine Moore sent a bulletin from her shelter-in-place sommelier activities in Mountain View: She’s been making a cocktail she’s calling Shelter in “Haus,” which features a California-made aperitif (learn more at drink.haus). Aperitifs are comparatively low in alcohol and loaded with complex botanical flavors, ready to sip alone or with bubbly water, and great in a cocktail with strong spirits.

**Shelter in ‘Haus’**
- 1 part Haus Citrus Flower
- Juice of 1 lime
- Healthy splash pomegranate liquor
- 3 shakes blood-orange bitters

Fill cocktail shaker with ice. Add all. Pour into glass and, Moore exhorts, “exhale and enjoy!”

**Don’t Make Me Blush-tini**
- 3 ounces blush rosé wine
- 2 ounces Svedka Strawberry Lemonade Vodka
- 1 ounce Limoncello
- 1 fresh strawberry

**Frangelico-Hell-If-I-Know-tini**
- 2 ounces Frangelico
- 3 ounces vodka
- Splash of Cointreau
- Drop of vanilla extract
- Juice of half a blood orange

**Blue (cuz you ain’t in) Hawaii**
- 2 ounces Blue Curacao
- 2 ounces vodka
- 1 ounce Midori
- 1 ounce Limoncello
- Splash of tonic water

**QUARANTINIS**

From Page 29

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The season will include the regional premiere of a hit Broadway play, another musical by acclaimed performer Hershey Felder, the regional premiere of a Jane Austen musical by Tony Award-nominated composer Paul Gordon, a high-stakes environmental drama, a timely Tony-winning musical, an onstage adaptation of a beloved holiday film, complete with live Foley-style sound effects, five nimble actors take on dozens of roles, immersing audiences in the iconic story of George Bailey as he considers suicide on Christmas Eve but discovers the impact of his life. Giovanna Sardelli directs.

• “Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters’ First 100 Years,” Jan. 13 through Feb. 7 at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts. Adapted by Obie Award winner Emily Mann from the bestselling memoir by Sarah L. Delany, A. Elizabeth Delany and Amy Hill Hearth, the drama features two centenarian sisters sharing the lessons they’ve learned over their exceptional century on Earth. Bearing witness to formative events from the Jim Crow era to the 1990s, the trailblazing sisters provide a vibrant and personal perspective on U.S. history. The Broadway play received three Tony nominations. Bond directs.

• “Sense and Sensibility,” March 10 through April 18 at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts. Featuring the Tony-winning score by Tom Kitt, the regional premiere of the musical adaptation of Jane Austen’s beloved novel, Sense and Sensibility, provides a vibrant and personal perspective on U.S. history. The Broadway play received three Tony nominations. Bond directs.

• “The Lifespan of a Fact,” late April through early May (exact dates to be announced) at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts. The regional premiere of the Broadway hit – written by Jeremy Kareken, David Murrell and Joel Zwick – is based on the book of the same name by John D’Agata and Jim Fingal. War is waged between fact and fiction when an eager journalism intern is assigned to fact-check a respected author’s groundbreaking essay for a top magazine and the piece’s “truths” don’t all align. In the current era of “alternative facts” and “fake news,” the comedy calls into question the importance of ethics versus artistic liberty. Bond directs.

• “Ragtime,” June 2-27, 2021, at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts. Featuring the Tony-winning book by Pulitzer Prize finalist Terrence McNally and the Tony-winning score by Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens, the musical is based on E.L. Doctorow’s best-selling novel. It paints a portrait of America at the dawn of the 20th century, interweaving the lives of three families – white, African-American and immigrant – finding their places and pursuing the American dream in a rapidly changing world. Kelley directs the production, which was originally scheduled to run last month.

Tickets are not yet available.

For more information, call 463-1900 or visit theatreworks.org.
Woman-led AI startup makes songwriting easy

By Jenny Huang

Research has shown that music reduces stress, stimulates memories, eases pain and soothes the soul. During this challenging time with COVID-19, music is an effective way to help people cope with the stress and anxiety that come with the lockdown. For some, it’s becoming an essential, therapeutic tool in keeping calm, activating the happy dopamine in the brain that brings relief to stressful moments in life.

WaveAI is a local startup whose ALYSIA app integrates music into our lives and makes it easier for us to create our own music with lyrics, top-line melodies and vocals, blending with audio background of our choosing, all using artificial and machine intelligence.

ALYSIA originally began as a research project brought to life by Maya Ackerman, co-founder and CEO of WaveAI. Together with her team of AI and machine learning researchers, who are also trained musicians, they hatched ALYSIA in the consumer space.

Ackerman was first exposed to music through singing and playing piano at a young age. She is an artificial and machine intelligence expert in addition to being an opera singer and producer. During her doctoral computer science studies, she began studying voice and tried to create original songs. Because of her own struggles with songwriting, Ackerman saw that creating ALYSIA would help not only herself, but also others with similar struggles.

Launched three years ago, ALYSIA to date has generated more than 30,000 songs by users mainly in the U.S. and U.K., with more California users than any other state, including users in Mountain View and across Santa Clara County.

Game changer

ALYSIA is currently the only platform providing assistance with the creation of vocal music through WaveAI’s one-of-a-kind AI technology. It’s a game changer both technologically and in the self-expression songwriting marketplace. Music is now more readily accessible to all. Music lovers everywhere can express themselves through their own original songs, without needing years of musical and vocal training.

“When a user enters the type of song that he or she likes, the app provides suggested lyrics for users to choose from. The melodies are generated in real-time, on demand, not from a database. Only background music is human-made,” Ackerman said. “Other software in the space focuses on creating backing tracks, with no lyrics or vocal components. No other songwriting software enables you to write lyrics with fitting melodies.”

According to Ackerman, ALYSIA started out by catering to novice songwriters with no previous musical experience. The app made it easy for users to write lyrics and add the top-line melody to existing audio tracks. By definition, a top-line melody is the main melody of a song that rides above the chord progressions, creating a through line that helps connect all the various sections of a song. The top-line melody is also the vehicle that carries the lyrics. Users can either employ ALYSIA's auto voice or record their own voices to go with lyrics in the song.

“Existing tools create music sheets without words,” Ackerman said. “Our focus, creating music with words, is much more challenging.”

After users create their songs, they can share them on YouTube, Facebook or any other social media channel. In the future, ALYSIA hopes to partner with known entities and encourage contest participation to pick the best album of the year, for example.

“Recently, a song created with our technology was named “Song of the Day” by See STARTUP, Page 40
Fitness studios, gyms find creative ways to retain students

By Melissa Hartman
Staff Writer/melissah@latc.com

Owners of local fitness studios and gyms face a loss of revenue during the pandemic while still expected to pay rent, overhead and maintenance fees.

Vera Szepesi, owner of Esprit de Core Pilates Studio in Los Altos, negotiated with her landlord while her studio is closed to defer April’s rent, but her other operating expenses were simply pushed to May.

“We have applied for (a Small Business Association) loan to help with those costs, but no funds have been distributed yet, so we are really on our own for now,” she said.

But Szepesi’s primary concern remains her clients. In addition to workouts, she and the owners of other fitness studios strive to instill a sense of community during a quarantine expected to last at least through the end of the month.

Szepesi, who is also an instructor at her studio, said personalizing fitness means no pre-recorded livestream classes, but she checks in with the 65% of her clients still receiving instruction via text, call or Zoom.

“Pilates is a great way for seniors and people recovering from injuries to stay active, and many of our clients are in those categories,” she said. “We believe that keeping classes small and interactive is important, both at the studio and in our virtual classes.”

Jen Donat of Transform Fitness in Mountain View said she tries to keep her clients engaged through impromptu services such as Zoom “Whine Wednesday” happy hours. She hosts games of quarantine bingo that feature fitness challenges to give people a sense of purpose while sheltering in place and encouraging activities like posting “quar-an-scene” photos – shots that are real and messy, not posed to look one’s best.

Each Transform Fitness instructor has his or her own method for checking in with clients, such as posing a question of the day.

“I find our instructors and members are all feeling stress in a different way,” Donat said. “We are not in the same boat at all. Our experiences and how we choose to deal with them are all very different and very personal. … Instructors are here to lift us up and remind everyone to be kind to themselves.”

Keeping spirits up

Reena Vokoun, owner of Passion Fit in Los Altos and a Town Crier columnist, offers free Instagram and Facebook Live classes for those worried about their finances and in need of stress-relieving strategies. In an Instagram Live session last week, Vokoun discussed feeling burned out during the quarantine and offered tips for working through it in one’s personal and professional lives.

“This is a tough time for everyone, but you’re not alone and we’ll all get through it and come out stronger together,” Vokoun told followers on her social media.

See FITNESS, Page 34

Remodeled Beauty in Exceptional Location!

205 Yerba Buena, Los Altos

4 Bed | 3 Bath | Offered at $4,250,000
Living: 2,868 Sq Ft* | Lot: 14,147 Sq Ft*
* Per County Records, unverified

This beautifully remodeled North Los Altos home promotes the appealing indoor/outdoor lifestyle with effortless transitions between interior and exterior spaces. The home enjoys a private resort-like setting with a refreshing pool, sunny patios, a barbecue area and a serene garden. The quiet cul-de-sac is just blocks to downtown Los Altos and outstanding public schools.

We invite you to visit this home virtually at 205YerbaBuena.com

Carol Carnevale and Nicole Aron
650.465.5958 | 650.740.7954
carol.carnevale@compass.com | nicole.aron@compass.com
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1527 Fordham Court, Mountain View 94040

Listed at $2,995,000. Sold, with four offers, for $3,115,000.
Living area 2,130 square feet; lot 8,054 square feet.
Four bedrooms, two-and-a-half baths.

Please see testimonial from the owner, below.

Recently we decided to sell our house in the Bay Area and move. This can be very stressful. We needed a realtor who could not just sell our house but help with all expected and unexpected issues. We chose to trust our house to Lana Ralston from Intero-Berkshire Hathaway’s Los Altos office. Lana has extensive experience serving clients in Santa Clara County and has lived here for a long time.

Lana impressed us the moment she arrived, and three months later, when the escrow has closed, we are impressed even more. We began with making a comprehensive schedule, which guided us in doing house and yard upgrades, packing and moving out, staging, putting the house on the market and taking offers. Lana helped decide with making the house and yard ready. She saved us time and money by helping to choose what made the property appealing, providing the contractors, and overseeing the work, so we could focus on moving.

We were in the middle of the move when the coronavirus hit. We left, leaving Lana in charge. She dealt with all difficulties and placed the house on the market right on schedule. She adjusted her marketing strategy to a new environment, and two weeks later all was done. This is amazing considering the tough conditions with which Lana had to deal.

In conclusion, we are very grateful to Lana for her support in these difficult times and being not just a highly professional realtor, but a great friend. We would not have been able to do everything without her.

2427 Burnham Way, Palo Alto 94303

Listed at $2,100,000. Sold, with four offers, for $2,202,000.
Living area 1,120 square feet; lot 6,241 square feet.
Three bedrooms, two baths.

Business & Real Estate

Transactions

**Los Altos**

808 Carmel Avenue, Hanley Trust to K. & K. Bagby for $2,330,000
2245 Deodara Drive, Shodiss Living Trust to T. & H. Traong for $2,650,000

**Los Altos Hills**

10520 Sundown Canyon Way, Rutner Trust to A. & R. Mohajer for $3,475,000

**For the full list of real estate sales, visit losaltosonline.com.**

**FITNESS**

From Page 33

F.I.T. owners Thom and Tracey Downing have created an entirely new website – Focused At Home – for customers during the lockdown that includes free online PE classes for kids, guided meditations for anxiety, resources with new workouts, activities and ideas for uplifting tasks to do. “Amidst everything going on, we want to ensure you have what you need to stay healthy and sane,” F.I.T.’s website reads.

The Downings also are holding virtual office hours, including a “hump day happy hour.”

Several other local studios are offering online classes, including Alkalign Studios, Barre3 and Yoga of Los Altos. Alkalign is conducting a four-week parenting program during the lockdown, and Barre3 is offering journal prompts to encourage students to maintain their mental as well as physical health.

Momentum Cycling in Los Altos remains closed.

**Overall**

**Los Altos**

Total sales: 2
Lowest sale: $2,330,000
Highest sale: $2,650,000
Average sale: $2,490,000

**Los Altos Hills**

Total sales: 1
Average sale: $3,475,000

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Sereno Group 1% For Good Charitable Foundation has given over $20,000 since the announcement of the SIP on March 16, 2020.

Here are the organizations that we’ve helped:

- Community Cycles of CA
- Community Serves Agency
- Downtown Streets Team
- Hunger At Home
- Momentum For Mental Health
- Santa Maria Urban Ministry
- Saratoga Area Senior Council
- Second Harvest
- Teen Kitchen Project
- Warming Center Program

Visit www.SerenoGroup.com/OnePercent to learn more about our 1% For Good COVID-19 Relief Fund.
Business & Real Estate

LOCKDOWN
From Page 32

after the quarantine is over.

Maison Alyzee owner Laurent Pellet fears that some customers don’t even know his Castro Street bakery is open. Pellet applied for a PPP loan the day the portal opened and has yet to hear back.

“We definitely need more support and more customers to survive,” he said.

Adjusting to the new normal

Sales are so low for La Scala owner Jan Unlu that he created a new to-go menu

and installed a drive-thru window at his restaurant on First Street in Los Altos, an incentive for those who are not interested in curbside pickup. Unlu has applied for SBA and PPP funding and does not know the status of either application.

“How are small businesses going to survive with no business, (soon expected to be) paying their rents or mortgages?” he wrote in an email to the Town Crier.

A few restaurants have found their footing amid the new normal.

Sales at Eureka on Castro Street in Mountain View are consistent, according to marketing director Alexia Penna. She said the eatery “really hopes” to stay open after the shelter-in-place restrictions are eased. The restaurant has not been able to secure small-business funding.

Lars Smith, owner of State of Mind Pizzeria and Public House on Plaza North in Los Altos, reported that business remains stable. He said he believes he will stay open over the long run and expects a PPP loan to be coming through soon from the second bank he’s worked with to obtain one.

“We have been brought to tears on multiple occasions during the (shelter-in-place) by the kind words and generosity of our customers,” Smith said. “We put our hearts and souls into this business, and it is an incredible feeling to be appreciated by so many customers.”

Even though State of Mind is holding its own, Smith and his fellow restaurant owners are calling on local leaders to continue their efforts in securing more funding for the small-business community as a whole.

“I hope city leaders have seen the value that small businesses add to the community and how fragile many are,” Smith said. “I hope moving forward that city governments and small businesses can have more amicable relationships and that when opening a small business, we may get more support (from) local leaders than we did before this.”

Many local restaurants are offering discounts and special promotions including family meals, new desserts, gift boxes and meal kits.

For the Town Crier’s lists of open eateries in Los Altos and Mountain View, visit losaltosonline.com.

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4218 A Rickeys Way, Palo Alto

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DRE 01490039

Virtual Tour

Regulars of Red Rock Coffee in Mountain View leave love notes— or, rather, love rocks— of appreciation.
THE NEW “NORMAL”

These are challenging times and I continue to send positive energy to everyone as we make this new normal work. I have been able to find a silver lining through all this for several families including these two that needed to sell while we shelter in place. I feel a huge sense of hope and gratitude as we all move through this together. Please reach out if I can help you.
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Kirk Mahncke
Broker Associate
650.245.5807
kirk@homesbykirk.com
DRE 00581857

26540 Conejo Court, Los Altos Hills
5 Bed 4.5 Bath 3,435 Sq Ft $3,700,000

Represented the Buyer of this secluded close-in renovated ranch-style residence featuring an open floorplan with five bedrooms and four and a half baths including the Additional Dwelling Unit. At the end of a peaceful cul-de-sac, this sunny and private site is ideal for gardening and easy entertaining. Ample solar power panels and abundant natural light make this a welcoming environment with Palo Alto Schools.

JUST SOLD

Kirk Mahncke
Broker Associate
650.245.5807
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465 Knoll Drive, Los Altos

5 Beds | 5.5 Baths | Pool House 480 Sq. Ft.
4,329 SF Interior | 26,136 SF Lot

Welcome to this elegant custom home with a desirable floor plan in close proximity to town. This home is situated primarily on one level with high ceilings, crown moldings and spacious bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms which are finished with natural stone. The large gourmet kitchen is equipped for the most discerning of chefs. There is an inviting foyer, dining room with built-ins and a living room with a fireplace which is ideal for hosting gatherings. There is a spacious office and a separate family room with spectacular views of the Western foothills. The home is complete with a three-car garage, an abundance of storage and an elevator. The private, beautifully landscaped pool area includes a sunny pool house and an outdoor fireplace and patio area perfect for relaxing or entertaining. Located on a quiet street in the unincorporated area of Los Altos, close to downtown amenities, the country club and commute routes. Welcome home.

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STARTUP
From Page 32

WaveAI's chief technology officer David Loker, from left, CEO Maya Ackerman and vice president of engineering Christopher Cassion have teamed up to create ALYSIA, the local startup's songwriting app.

She added that with a proven consumer version of ALYSIA, WaveAI is working on its next phase, focusing on professional songwriters and releasing a beta version of LyricStudio in May that will be available at no charge for a limited time.

For more information on WaveAI, visit wave-ai.net.

Know of a business or real estate story we should be covering?

Email Melissa Hartman at melissah@latc.com.

COURTESY OF WAVEAI
CREEKSIDER SETTING ON NEARLY AN ACRE

1760 Lantis Lane, Los Altos

A tranquil creek winds its way through the property totaling nearly an acre (per county), providing a glittering backdrop for this 5-bedroom, 3-bath home on a delightful cul-de-sac in sought-after South Los Altos. Bright, inviting spaces populate this 2,894 sq. ft. floorplan (per county), including the living room and family room both featuring a fireplace, as well as the chef’s kitchen with high-end appliances from Wolf and Sub-Zero. Superb privacy awaits in the expansive master suite, while the home’s four additional bedrooms provide comfort and convenience for the entire family. Enjoy al fresco delights in the large backyard, as well as the adjoining lot which leads to the nearby Stevens Creek, providing a picturesque setting to sit and relax while the soothing sounds of nature captivate the senses. Adding the finishing touch, this wonderful location is just moments to Grant Park, near Highway 85, and offers access to acclaimed Cupertino schools (buyer to verify eligibility).

Offered at $3,688,000

Easy access for potential buyers and Realtors® only, instant appointments between 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm on Saturday (5/16) and Sunday (5/17).

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

*As ranked by REAL Trends 2019 Team Volume Inc. Published in the Wall Street Journal in June 2019.

For virtual open houses & more photos, please visit: www.1760Lantis.com

Michael Repka | DRE #01854880 | 650.900.7000 | michael@deleonrealty.com
www.deleonrealty.com | DeLeon Realty, Inc. | DRE #01903224

中文諮詢請聯繫Audrey Sun 電話：650.785.5822 | DRE #01933274
CARL ERIC DAUGHTON

July 7, 1954 – May 1, 2020
Resident of Los Gatos

Our beloved brother and friend passed away unexpectedly following a surgery, at the age of 65.

Carl was born in Hagerstown, Maryland. He spent his first four years in Sotterley Heights, Maryland, while his father Albert (“Al”) worked at the Naval Air Station Patuxent River as an aeronautical engineer. In 1958, Al and Carl’s mother Betty joined the great engineering migration to what would become Silicon Valley.

The family lived in Los Altos. Carl graduated from Homestead High School in Cupertino. Carl swam competitively during high school and had a life-long love of outdoor sports, including mountain biking, golf, and skiing. In later years, he was slowed by some chronic injuries, but he persisted in spite of them.

Carl started his work life as a carpenter, and eventually found his own business as a general contractor. He was still supervising projects up until the time of his passing. Carl had high standards and took much pride in knowing how to do the job right. Friends and family alike have noted that Carl never hesitated to let you know his opinions on such matters.

Carl joined the Los Altos Masters swim team in the early nineties. At Covington Pool, he met many swimmers who are friends to this day. Los Altos Masters “morphed” into Fremont Hills Aquatic Masters, and Carl was a key and legendary member. Carl was known to friends and family as a larger-than-life personality with an even bigger heart. He was honest and fair, cantankerous and stubborn, and helped whoever and whenever he could.

For years, Carl and a group of Masters met on Fridays at Maltby’s tavern in Los Altos. Carl was a local at other haunts as well. His favorite drink was tequila, should you want to raise a glass in his memory. He is sorely missed.

- Consider contributing to Silicon Valley Mountain Bikers (http://www.svmb.org/) to commemorate Carl’s love of outdoor sports.
- Any future service will be determined after social distancing measures have been lifted.

Oblituary Notice
Modern Normandy Manor
552 Lincoln on Palm Avenue*

Virtual Tour: www.552LincolnAvenue.com

Virtual Open House on Sat. May 17, 2020 from 2:30 – 4:30 pm.

Clean lines punctuated with classic Normandy details define this stunning and newly constructed home situated in beloved Old Los Altos. Short distance to all downtown amenities.

4 full & 2 half baths plus study. * The front of the house faces Palm Avenue.

Attractively priced at $4,800,000

Visit www.ViviChan.com for more details and virtual open house access.

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Direct Line: 650.917.4211

* 552 Lincoln Avenue
552 Lincoln on Palm Avenue

Virtual Tour: www.552LincolnAvenue.com

Virtual Open House on Sat. May 17, 2020 from 2:30 – 4:30 pm.

Clean lines punctuated with classic Normandy details define this stunning and newly constructed home situated in beloved Old Los Altos. Short distance to all downtown amenities.

4 full & 2 half baths plus study. * The front of the house faces Palm Avenue.

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