

# Weekly

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**City considers shift from armed police officers**

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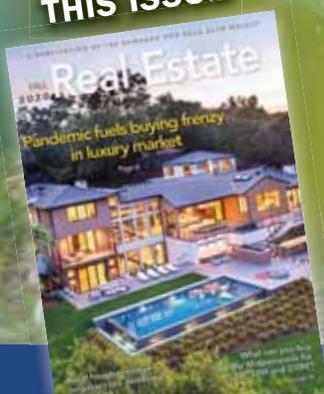
## When will I see

*you again?*

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**Daylight Saving Time is ending**



Set your clocks back one hour at 2 a.m. this Sunday.

## Palo Alto looks beyond armed police officers

*Pursuing reform, city prepares to add community service officers, partner with behavioral-health workers*

by Gennady Sheyner

**A**s Palo Alto prepares to enact police reforms, an idea that continues to gather momentum on the City Council is to shift some of the Police Department's workload from sworn officers to social workers and other unarmed employees.

But despite general support for the idea, council members and department leadership have yet to reach a clear consensus on what type of model to adopt.

The agency is looking to join Santa Clara County's Psychiatric Emergency Response Team

(PERT) program, which partners a county clinician with a police officer for calls that involve mental health issues. Some members of the council, meanwhile, believe the city should go even further and explore removing certain types of calls from the department's purview altogether.

The council debated the various options Monday night for police reform, a topic sparked by the May 25 killing of George Floyd by a

Minnesota police officer. The issue will return to the spotlight on Nov. 2, when council members are set to approve various revisions to the department's use-of-force policies. The changes include an explicit prohibition on techniques that restrict blood and air flow to the head or neck and a more robust section on de-escalation techniques.

On Monday, the council wrestled with broader questions pertaining to police accountability and the

department's service model. Members generally supported expanding the scope of the independent police auditor and shifting some responsibilities away from armed officers, though the council didn't take any formal actions at the meeting.

Assistant Police Chief Andrew Binder said the department is already going through the process of

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### DEVELOPMENT

## Fewer events, more enforcement

*City proposes conditions for Castilleja expansion*

by Gennady Sheyner

**S**eeking to bridge the yawning gap between Castilleja School, which is looking to rebuild its Bryant Street campus, and a vocal group of neighbors who vehemently oppose the school's plan, Palo Alto city staff is proposing a compromise that would allow the project to advance while imposing stricter limits on school events and traffic.

If approved by the Planning and Transportation Commission, which began its review of the proposed conditions on Wednesday night, the permit would allow Castilleja to meet the main goals of its ambitious project: modernizing the campus, constructing an underground garage and gradually raising enrollment from the current level of 426 students to 540 students.

It would also require Castilleja to reduce the number of events it holds on its campus, a topic that has generated significant neighborhood concerns. The school has already proposed lowering the number of annual events on its campus from more than 100 to about 90. Staff is proposing a limit of 70 events, despite Castilleja's assertion that it would need to hold at least 74 to accommodate its academic and social interests.

If approved by the commission and, ultimately, the City Council, the conditional use permit would also require regular monitoring of vehicle traffic around the school.

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Marall Gauthier

Shounak Dharap and his daughter, Aarchi, play together in the backyard of their Palo Alto home. The COVID-19 crisis has prevented his wife's family from seeing their newborn in person, but it also has enabled him to spend more time with Aarchi while working from home.

### COVID-19

## When will I see you again?

*Many pandemic-separated families cautiously adjust; a few take bold action*

by Sue Dremann

**T**he birth of a baby is normally cause for a large family celebration. In early February, Shounak Dharap expected his extended family to travel from India to Palo Alto to meet his new daughter, Aarchi. But then the COVID-19 crisis hit and turned the family's plans upside down.

Even his wife's parents who live in town can't hold their new granddaughter, he said.

Weddings and births, the holidays and family gatherings, the ability to touch and hold a dear family member — even routine visits — have all been disrupted by the pandemic.

As the deadly virus's spread continues to quash expectations of when life might return to normal, some residents said they worry when — or if — they will ever see their loved ones in person again. Three Palo Alto

families discussed how they are adapting to the new reality.

### An infant born into a pandemic

**D**harap and his wife, Laura Jefferson, hope Aarchi will grow up surrounded by the loving caresses of doting grandparents, playing face-to-face with playmates and joyfully celebrating all of life's

milestones with their family. But so far, Dharap and Jefferson have had to contain their lives in a small family bubble.

Being new parents, they had already expected some isolation and were taking precautions against exposing their daughter to others in the first months of her life.

But they had plans. Both work full time, and when Aarchi was born on Feb. 3, Dharap was on parental leave.

"I was supposed to go back to work on March 16; the shelter-in-place went into effect the next day," said Dharap, an attorney and the vice president of the

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## Families

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Palo Alto Unified School District Board of Education.

Dharap's parents and his sister, who live nearby, care for Aarchi part time, but Jefferson's parents, who live in the same Fairmeadow neighborhood as his parents, cannot have physical contact with their granddaughter due to their age and higher risk for severity of COVID-19, he said.

***'It took months to shake out what a sustainable schedule that works looks like.'***

— Shounak Dharap, Palo Alto resident

"We're not even seeing them. We didn't include them in our bubble. We had expectations and were looking forward to having grandparent help," he said. "So we do drive-bys" instead.

The separation is disconcerting, he added.

"I'm concerned that physically she gets time with my parents but not with Laura's," he said.

Meanwhile, Aarchi's family sphere is growing in the only way it can — through a computer screen, he said.

"My extended family is in India, and 10 to 15 people planned to come to meet the baby. Now we have weekly or monthly calls through Zoom," he said.

It's not the way the couple envisioned raising their child, he said. They always thought they would limit her screen time as she grows. But Dharap finds it fascinating to watch Aarchi when she meets family on screen.

"She reacts to people on Zoom in the same manner as if they were in person. With some people, she makes a 'gimme, gimme, gimme' motion with her hands.

"She's developing a shocking familiarity with the camera app on the phone. She knows something special is happening. When the camera goes on, she sits up. Everybody says she's a lot like me — a ham," he said.

When the holidays arrive, the family will also miss some of their traditions. Nov. 14 begins the five-day Hindu celebration of Diwali, the "festival of lights," symbolizing the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. But the virus will put a damper

on their plans this year, he said.

"Diwali is a big celebration at my parents' but it's not happening this year. It's a little sad. A baby's first Diwali is a big deal. We'll do a little something at home," he said.

While they try to give their daughter more social exposure, Dharap and Jefferson's own social isolation as new parents is compounded by COVID-19.

"You hear about reprieves new parents get such as to go out on a date night," he said, but he and Jefferson can't bring in a sitter or a family member to watch the baby, and there aren't many places they can go anyway.

Like many people, most of their social interactions come from work, although most of that is virtual, along with a few game nights on Zoom, he said.

In January, the couple plans to re-evaluate and possibly expand their social bubble. One thing to consider: child care. Because of his work with school reopenings through the school district, Dharap said he has a greater comfort level about child caregivers than does Jefferson, an operations manager at a startup.

For now, his parents care for Aarchi four hours a day on Mondays through Thursdays when he goes to court for cases or takes depositions.

"It took months to shake out what a sustainable schedule that works looks like," he said, adding that he accommodates an 11- to 12-hour workday starting at 4 a.m., and in the afternoon, he can work at his computer with one hand while holding his daughter with the other or pick up additional work time after she is asleep.

If COVID-19 has any silver lining, Dharap said he is able to have a better work/life balance — and to spend more time with his daughter.

"Being able to be at home with my baby for the last eight months is an absolute joy," he said.

### Living alone

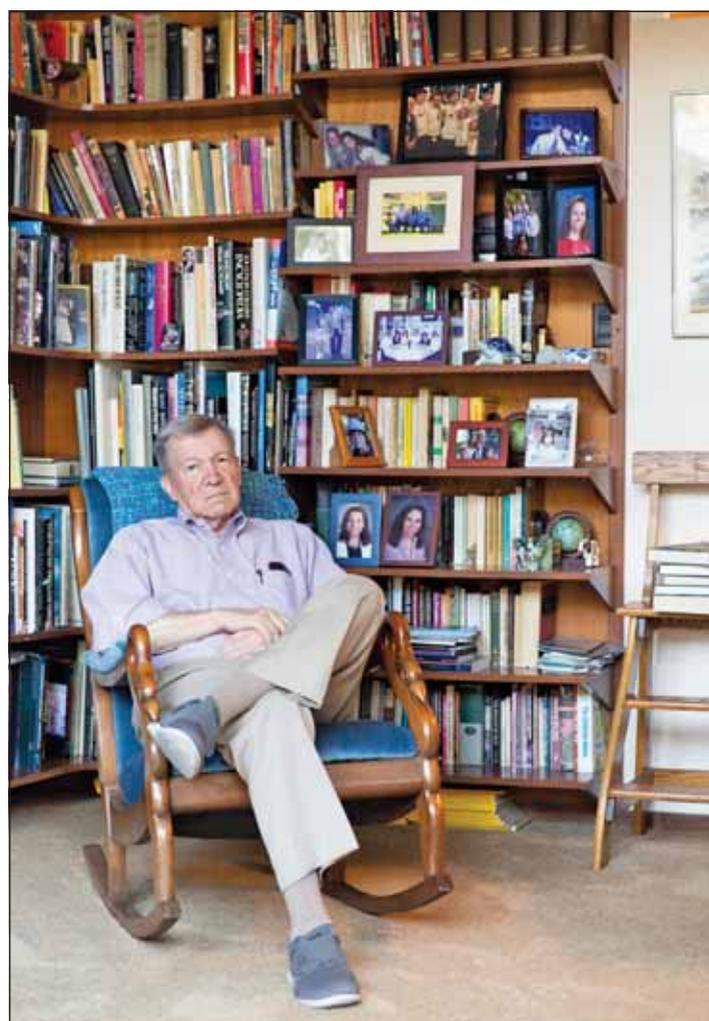
Palo Alto resident Chuck Sieloff hadn't seen his daughter and her family who live in Paso Robles for months, he said.

Before the virus, he would visit her every month or two, but after the coronavirus struck, all of his visits were through FaceTime. This past weekend, however, they finally reunited in person.

The intervening months were rough on his daughter's family. One of his college-age grandsons brought the coronavirus home to Paso Robles. Sieloff's daughter and a granddaughter became infected and were sick for a couple of months, he said.

"What's kind of weird is I'm supposed to be the one who is vulnerable. In fact, it's my kids," Sieloff, 78, said. "I feel almost a survivor's guilt. I'm the one who's supposed to be vulnerable and coddled."

He has also not seen his other daughter's family often, who



Chuck Sieloff sits in front of family photos in his Palo Alto home. The 78-year-old said all but one of his visits with family have been over FaceTime since the COVID-19 outbreak in March.

live locally, due to concerns over spreading the virus. When they do meet every few weeks, it's in controlled settings, such as on the patio, he said.

As Thanksgiving approaches, he isn't sure whether he'll be celebrating with his family in person.

"We've not really talked about it yet," he said. "We're feeling a little more comfortable, but we're still tentative. We still have to be cautious."

***'I feel almost a survivor's guilt. I'm the one who's supposed to be vulnerable and coddled.'***

— Chuck Sieloff, Palo Alto resident

Sieloff has also found connecting with other family members around the country challenging. He has three brothers-in-law and using Zoom has proven difficult, he said.

Plans were scrapped for a large, first-ever family reunion this autumn during a niece's wedding on the East Coast. Instead, people plan to drink a toast to the bride and groom over Zoom and to hold the reunion next year, he said.

Sieloff said he's getting along fine on his own. He's known most of his neighbors for a long time and he's not particularly concerned for his own health. He goes to the farmers market and to

the grocery store once a week; his walking group wears masks and can socially distance and there are many Zoom-based activities he enjoys through Avenidas Village.

Sieloff does worry about other people, though. People he knows joined continuing-care communities so they would have the companionship of others and activities. Since COVID-19, they've had a rude awakening, he said.

"It's very difficult. They're confined to their rooms and there are no socializing spaces available. It's not what they signed up for," he said.

### Bringing family together

Susannah and Jyllian Halliburton had to come up with a solution to their mother's isolation at The Sequoias, where she received 24-hour care. Their plan: move her out and all live together under one roof.

Jyllian Halliburton lives nearby, and Susannah Halliburton had a life in Washington state. Their brother makes the East Coast his home. Being close by meant that Jyllian took on the caregiving responsibilities in the past until the work became too much and then she hired caregivers.

When the COVID-19 epidemic took root, she could only see her mother, Mary Ann Halliburton, from afar at The Sequoias.

"It was really stressful. I used to be able to give her a hug and give her a kiss. Now a caregiver brings her down to a checkpoint," she said in late August.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

## About those holiday get-togethers ...

County, state and CDC guidelines discourage family gatherings but offer advice on minimizing risk

by Palo Alto Weekly staff

Despite the pull of family celebrations over the upcoming holidays, such as Diwali, Thanksgiving, Rosh Hashanah and Christmas, public health authorities strongly discourage bringing members of different households together because of the potential to spread the coronavirus.

"Indoor gatherings are particularly risky, and gatherings should be held outdoors to the greatest extent possible," Santa Clara County's latest Risk Reduction Order states.

However, the state as of Oct. 9 does allow outdoor private gatherings of no more than three households, providing attendees follow public health rules of maintaining social distance, wearing masks, practicing good hygiene and more.

Gatherings should also be kept short — two hours or less, according to the state's guidelines.

Anyone who is feeling sick with COVID-19-like symptoms, has been exposed to someone with the coronavirus recently, has been tested for COVID-19 and either not yet received the results of the test or tested positive should stay home, multiple health guidelines state.

The U.S. Centers for Disease

Control (CDC) notes that several factors contribute to the risk of getting infected or infecting others with the virus, and family members need to consider those before planning to celebrate together. Those include the levels of COVID-19 in the communities in which they live and to which they're traveling; the behaviors of other family members prior to the gathering (people who engage in risky behaviors endanger those who practice preventative measures); and the numbers of people who will be at the event — fewer is better.

Taking what may seem like extreme precautions can also help ensure that the holiday is a happy one — both during and afterward. The CDC advises people who decide to attend an in-person holiday gathering to strictly avoid contact with people outside of their household for 14 days before the event.

It does not mention getting tested for the coronavirus before the holiday, perhaps because the test doesn't detect antibodies in people who are very recently exposed, although in combination with a 14-day pre-holiday quarantine, a negative test result could only increase people's peace of mind. ■

She tried to take her mother special things for her birthday and holidays: Easter eggs in a basket; cake and candles for her birthday. Everything went through the checkpoint.

“It was disheartening,” said Jyllian, Avenidas senior center’s director of community engagement and the Door-to-Door transportation/delivery program.

**‘We drove up there and the 3-year-old was waving at her: ‘Gammy — we’re here to get you out.’”**

*—Jyllian Halliburton, director of community engagement, Avenidas*

During prior quarantines at The Sequoias, she knew that frail seniors often declined due to isolation, including her mother.

“I saw that even with short quarantining what they would do to her,” she said, noting her mother is an extrovert. “Personally and professionally, I had a bad feeling.”

Starting about June or July, she saw a marked decline in her mother. Her geriatricians at Palo Alto Medical Foundation “are all saying the same thing about their clients. They’re seeing a massive decline and people passing away. ... They think nobody cares,” she

said.

The three siblings decided to remove their mother from The Sequoias. Susannah gave up her job as a child care director in Seattle to rent a house in Palo Alto with her three sons and care for their mother. They would bring in caregivers for additional help.

“I felt the need to do it now. She could pass away and we would never see her again. In Sequoia you can’t visit. You drive up and wave from the car,” Susannah said.

“It was so hard to talk to her on the phone. She doesn’t understand. COVID-19 made things harder to connect. We drove up and we’d be 20 feet away and wave at her. Her caregiver would bring her out in her wheelchair,” she said.

Coming to Palo Alto felt right, she said.

“It was nice to see the kids seeing her too. We drove up there and the 3-year-old was waving at her: ‘Gammy — we’re here to get you out.’”

The Halliburtons planned to move their mother on Aug. 26, but the timeline was moved up due to another disaster: the CZU Lightning Complex wildfire.

“The smoke was very severe up there (and) they encouraged voluntary evacuation if family was nearby,” Jyllian said in a follow-up email.

When their grandmother arrived on Aug. 23, the boys were thrilled to see her up close and



Mary Ann Halliburton holds her dog, Honey, during a family portrait taken in her Palo Alto backyard. Her daughters, Jyllian, center, and Susannah, second from right, moved her from The Sequoias to live with them during the COVID-19 crisis. Now, she is able to spend time with her daughters and grandchildren Hayden, Lio and Abe, pictured above.

gave her hugs and flowers they had picked, Susannah said.

“Ever since that day, she has been steadily improving both physically and cognitively. It just confirms our suspicion that so much of healing is emotional and psychological. Having her grandsons around has made a huge difference in her overall demeanor. We feel so fortunate to be able to do this for her when so many

seniors are isolated and most likely declining rapidly, as in her case,” she said.

“The best part of it to me is that she has started to talk again. When she first came, she was so soft spoken I couldn’t make anything out and it took so long to produce just one word. Now, she’s speaking at a more normal volume in full sentences and even making jokes.” ■

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**About the cover:** Shounak Dharap plays with his daughter, Aarchi, in the backyard of their Palo Alto home. Photo by Magali Gauthier. Design by Douglas Young.

**ON MARKET**



**PRIVATE 2.2 ACRE LOT—WEST ATHERTON**  
358 WALSH ROAD, ATHERTON

**NUMBERS**

- Offered at: \$8,495,000
- 4 Bedrooms
- 4 Bathrooms
- 1 Pool Bathroom
- House: 4,500 sf
- Lot: 2.2 acres

**OVERVIEW**

- 1 Story Modern Ranch House
- Open Floor Plan
- Den
- Wine Room
- Wet Bar
- Extremely Private Location
- Gated Property
- Sylvan Setting
- Pool, Spa, and Sauna

**AMENITIES**

- Prime Atherton Location
- Approx: Downtown Menlo Park and Stanford Shopping Center

**SCHOOLS**

- Los Lomitas ES
- La Entrada MS
- Sequoia Union HS

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