

Grant from county closes funding gap for Tiburon mural honoring Portuguese dairies

By DEIRDRE McCROHAN
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Marin has awarded a \$10,000 grant to the Tiburon Peninsula Foundation for its tile mural project celebrating the town's Portuguese dairy heritage, set to be installed along Old Rail Trail within the next year.

Supervisor Stephanie Moulton-Peters, who represents Southern Marin, requested the grant be added to the county's annual budget, which was approved on June 22. The funds will come from the county's Nonprofit Community Partners Program.

"That means that we're now 100-percent funded, and we even have some left over to maintain the wall going forward," said Vasco Morais, the Bel Aire resident who suggested the art-history project and has been responsible for the fundraising and logistics.

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CORRECTION

"Richardson Bay agency to offer buy-back program," June 29, front page: The article misstated the first name of the head of the Richardson Bay Special Anchorage Association; it's Louis Tenwikel.

The Ark strives to be accurate, fair and complete in its coverage, and it is our policy to correct errors of fact and to clarify potentially confusing statements. Request corrections or clarifications by contacting Executive Editor Kevin Hessel at editor@thearknewspaper.com or at 415-435-2652.

Tiburon has new face on police force

Fresh from academy, Petaluma woman is chief's first new officer

By KATHERINE MARTINE
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Talisa Azevedo has shed her cap and gown for a uniform and badge, joining the ranks of the Tiburon Police Department on June 13 as its newest officer.

Azevedo, who began as a Santa Rosa Junior College Police Academy student and trainee in May, is now part of the department's field-training program for at least 18 weeks. During that time, she'll ride along with field-training officers who will show her the ropes and evaluate her performance in the field on patrols and responding to calls. The process also includes the application of state and local laws and ordinances as well as departmental policies and practices.



ELLIOT KARLAN / FOR THE ARK

Azevedo will also work on community engagement by walking around downtown

Tiburon police Officer Talisa Azevedo is seen at the Police Department on June 30, two weeks into her field training after graduating from the academy and being promoted from trainee to officer.

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Sam's sees early success in NFT presale

Servino's will also join restaurant in offering digital-token membership benefits

By KATHERINE MARTINE
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Sam's Anchor Cafe, the bayside eatery that's been serving up meals since 1920, is now serving up pieces of the blockchain to offer lifetime special-privilege memberships — making VIPs from NFTs.

The restaurant has sold more than 100 of its \$2,000 apiece Sam's Genesis NFTs, or nonfungible tokens, since launching its presale in May. Owners will get exclusive access to events and a planned concert series, line and reservation privileges, as well as gift cards and merchandise. Sam's co-owner Conor Flaherty says he plans to announce the concert lineup in the coming weeks and to mint up to 244 of the unique



VIA JON FISHER, VICINFT

Like many other NFTs representing unique digital art, Sam's Anchor Cafe's is of the likeness of restaurant founder Sam Vella (left) participating in various activities. Ownership comes with a lifetime of exclusive benefits.

programming as cryptocurrency, such as Bitcoin, and are essentially digital records "minted" on the blockchain, a decentralized ledger of digital transactions. But while both digital and analog currency are fungible, where the asset is divisible and non-unique, NFTs are like a deed of ownership to a one-of-a-kind item. They were invented in 2014, in part to financially support digital artists and grant them more control: Artists could

tokens this summer.

NFTs are built using the same kind of

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COMPASS

Ukraine, *continued from page 21*

Serendipity in Moscow

Añon, a Paradise Cay resident since 2013, first came to the U.S. by way of Moscow in 1991.

Ukraine was still under the control of the USSR in the late 1980s when she enrolled at the prestigious Moscow Financial Academy, where she studied international economic relations for three years. When a group of American professors and educators toured the academy, she met lecturer David Dilkes of Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Ore., who asked if she'd like to study in the U.S.

She was amazed. "The idea of going to the U.S. was like going to Mars," she says.

Dilkes, now deceased, and his wife offered

her a partial scholarship to Umpqua, and the couple provided her with room and board. After a year of credits to supplement those from Moscow, she was able to gain admittance to the University of Kansas and earned a master's in accounting and information systems.

She took a job with Ernst & Young in Washington, D.C., transferred to its Manhattan office after a year and then worked in the London office for a year.

When she returned to the U.S., she moved out west, earning an MBA from Stanford University's Graduate School of Business in 2001 and founding Stanford's Ukrainian Students Association.

While at Stanford, Añon won a competition with her business plan for a startup, then proceeded to use the plan to launch and win investor funding for her first company, Lohika Systems, a software-development

firm named for the Ukrainian word for logic. Lohika organized hubs of programmers that would take on software projects for other companies.

Añon and the investors parted company after a few years, leaving with stock, but she soon started her next venture, Svitla Systems — this time without investors. She has served as CEO for 19 years.

"Three years in a row — 2020, 2021 and now this year — our company made Inc. magazine's 5,000 fastest growing private companies in the U.S," she says, noting that Svitla works with a lot of startups as well as large companies in a variety of sectors, including pharmaceuticals, lodging and retail. Clients have included Stanford, Monster.com, Ancestry.com, Houston-based data-center software maker BMC and payment-systems developer Ingenico.

She also is an investor in the firm Altus

Equity Group, a Rohnert Park-based firm that offers "alternative investment assets" focused on multifamily real-estate complexes in southern states.

She and her husband, Juan Añon, who she met at the San Francisco Opera during a Stanford alum social event, have three children in the Reed Union School District. Her parents live in Corte Madera.

Añon says interactions with Russians in the Bay Area have been encouraging.

"The majority of Russians that are here are very apologetic, but that's mostly at rallies," she says. "They ask for forgiveness. We tell them, 'There's one thing you can do, call home to Russia and tell them what's going on.'"

Reach Tiburon reporter Deirdre McCrohan at 415-944-4634.

NFT, *continued from page 5*

sell a work to someone who could then prove they owned the original and not an identical digital copy, while built-in "smart contracts" can earn the artist a royalty on every resale.

For Sam's, each NFT represents a specially drawn photo of "Sam" that features unique traits relating to the restaurant's history, with each owner having access via their digital wallet. Sam was a real person, Sam Vella, a Prohibition-era bootlegger who put a wooden plank over a pair of sawhorses under a tent on the beach and called it a bar. By 1928, the native of Malta had replaced the tent with a speakeasy at 27 Main St. The digital Sam, by Potrero Hill hospitality designer Anthony Laurino, is a balding man in a Hawaiian shirt and suspenders, a caricature with the traits of the real Vella, Flaherty says. He's occasionally accompanied by his dog, Fluffy.

"I have heard from people that his actual dog's name was Fluffy, so we are keeping with that," Flaherty says.

Tiburon resident Jon Fisher, chairman and CEO of ViciNFT, created the Sam's Genesis NFT and is now partnering with Servino Ristorante, which is in the process of reopening at its original location on Ark Row and would use an NFT to grant access to exclusive wines.

Fisher says owners of Sam's NFTs aren't just buying an image but access to what it offers.

"This acts as a smart ticket," he says. "Even an application on your phone doesn't have some of the technology that allows Sam's to use this in all these different ways."

He says the NFT is a good way to facilitate authentication for special events, but more importantly it has more perks than an average membership or loyalty card would.

According to Fisher, a traditional membership card is not "smart" — you can't program different capabilities into it, you

can't lend or resell it and you can't airdrop additional capabilities. For airdropping, Sam's will have the ability to remotely push perks to the digital wallets of its NFT owners, granting them additional privileges or giving them gift cards or access to merchandise.

The NFT holds is benefits in perpetuity for the owner, providing lifetime access to Sam's offerings, with no need to renew or purchase a new NFT annually. It's also transferable, so an owner can resell the membership in an NFT marketplace, and with exclusivity — only a limited number will be minted — Fisher says prices could soar on the secondary market. Though the artist, Laurino, was paid on a contract basis, the NFT's smart contract does include a royalty for Sam's, which will get 10 percent of every future resale.

"It is a one-of-a-kind artifact, but with all of the smart capabilities," Fisher says. "It's very smart, it's very secure, it's unique and it's very transparent," Fisher says.

He says if you look at NFTs that way, you're able to see the value in them. Future uses could include home deeds to simplify and speed transactions, with ownership proof and changes built into the NFT, or other records requiring authentication, such as birth or marriage certificates, medical records or academic credentials.

But with the recent NFT market crash, there is a question as to how bright the future is. The NFT marketplace — which has included drawings of kittens and apes and clips from NBA games — turned speculative and exploded in 2021. Artist Mike Winkelmann, known as Beeple, sold the NFT for his digital-only "Everydays: the First 5000 days" through Christie's auction house for a record \$69.3 million that March. By January, global sales ultimately reached \$12.6 billion before dropping 92 percent to about \$1 billion in June, a 12-month low. The number of sales dropped the same percentage, from a daily average of 225,000 last

learn more

To learn more or to purchase Sam's Anchor Cafe's Sam's Genesis NFT, visit samscafe.store.

September to about 19,000 in May.

The fall coincided with a crash in the cryptocurrency market, which lost about two-thirds of its value, or about \$2 trillion.

"I've been doing this for 25 years. The dot-com crash, the Great Recession — I've never seen a crash this large and this forceful," Fisher says. "That's what happens sometimes in the early days of doing this stuff."

Despite the crash, he says he's optimistic and noted similarities to the dot-com bubble, caused by excessive speculation of internet-related companies in the late 1990s. Low interest rates had helped facilitate an increase in startups with the Nasdaq index rising 400 percent between 1995 and 2000, only to fall 78 percent from its peak.

"People were writing articles when that crashed saying it's debatable how you're going to make money on the internet," he says, noting giants like Amazon, Google and eBay were able to find success as things stabilized. "The NFT is better access control, and as Sam's processes become more valuable, people see the concerts, people see the off-menu items, then so do those NFTs become more valuable."

For Sam's and other small businesses like Servino, it can also represent an economic defense against what they've been through with the recent COVID-related economic recession.

"I watched how difficult it was for all of these guys to go through the pandemic, so it's really cool that they can have a windfall for this," Fisher says.

Servino plans to offer a \$2,500 NFT for access to its cellar of exclusive wines, reservations for wine tastings, product launches and product-producer events.

"I've been observing the technology and how it can help small businesses expand

their community and create opportunities that never existed before. We've always really wanted to have a wine club and membership and the NFT opportunity seemed to be the best way to marry the two," says Natale Servino, who runs the family-owned restaurant with brother Vittorio.

Servino says they felt like their value proposition really lies in providing a community of food and wine lovers access to rare and allocated wine and food products.

"We felt that this platform is really a wonderful way to bring these like-minded people together and create this community," he says.

The Servino wine collection is 40 years in the making, a collaboration with vendors and Italian purveyors. The collection is predominantly made up of Italian varietals that are produced in limited quantities. The collection includes Barolo, Brunello and Sangiovese from Tuscany, as well as varietals from Veneto, Sicily and beyond.

While California's Wine Country is home to countless award-winning wines, there's a uniqueness to Old World wines, those grown in Spain, Italy, France and Germany, Servino says. Typically, the vineyard sites are older and more historic, and winemakers work with older vines, plus the wine is made using a more traditional method that's absent sophisticated technologies, Servino says.

For Flaherty at Sam's, he says he was drawn toward launching an NFT because it provides a unique and innovative way to market to potentially new customers. And he says he wants to make sure he's doing everything he can to help ensure Sam's is around for another 100 years.

"I think it is important to push the envelope on tech like this, and I think it is important to do what we can to keep Sam's going."

Reach Belvedere and public-safety reporter Katherine Martine at 415-944-4627.

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