Milk Pail Market to close after 45 years

FAMILY-RUN GROCERY STORE TAKES BUYOUT AMID SHOPPING CENTER DEVELOPMENT

By Mark Noack

A fter 45 years in Mounta in View, the popular Milk Pail Market will be closing its doors permanently. Renowned for its selection of cheeses, frozen croissants and crowded aisles, the San Antonio grocer persevered amid intense competition with a loyal customer base, but owner Steve Rasmussen, 68, said the hardships of running a small business were becoming too great.

In a Tuesday interview, Rasmussen said he had accepted a buyout for his store property at the corner of San Antonio Road and California Street and would be closing in the next few months, likely in July. He did not disclose the buyer or the purchase price.

“The wave of development in Silicon Valley has brought many changes. It was inevitable that one day we, too, would be part of that change,” Rasmussen wrote in a Facebook post. “Although the closure of the Milk Pail will be bittersweet, we leave with fond memories and immense gratitude for the community that built us.”

Explaining his decision, Rasmussen said it was becoming more challenging to maintain a business that is open year-round, especially amid tighter parking restrictions for nearly three years even as neighboring cities prepared a citywide ban on oversize vehicles.

While a variety of measures were included to cushion the blow, the move was denounced by homeless advocates as a sign that Mountain View is criminalizing poverty. Members of the Mountain View Vehicle Residents group described the parking ban as a punishment for the city’s working poor who can’t afford housing.

“A citywide ban on oversize vehicles would destroy the last safe affordable housing option available to many of my neighbors,” said Blaine Dzwonczyk, a teacher who co-founded the Vehicle Residents advocacy group. “A handful of temporary safe parking spaces for a fraction of the current vehicle residents is not a comprehensive solution.”

In recent years, the vehicle encampments scattered around the city have become the most visible sign of the hardships afflicting the city’s poorest residents. The vehicle dwellers have been a divisive issue as city officials avoided creating new parking restrictions for nearly three years even as neighboring cities...
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GO GO TO ‘JOSEPH’

“Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat,” when done well, is a ridiculously colorful, humorous and melodic spectacular that retells the biblical story of Joseph as a gleeful pop-rock opera. Broadway By the Bay’s current production fits the bill to perfection.

The Andrew Lloyd Webber/Tim Rice musical covers how, in ancient Canaan, shepherd/patriarch Jacob (Chris Fernandez) favors golden boy Joseph (Matt Ono) above all his other 11 sons. They’re annoyed when dad presents him with a fancy coat of many colors but they’re furious when Joseph blithely recounts his dreams, which seem toclairvoyantly reinforce his familial superiority. “The dreamer has a comeback to the church but is still being branded by her secular forays. That year, she spotted Marie Knight performing on a bill with Jackson and invited the younger performer to join her tour.

Tharpe (Michelle E. Jordan) is big and brassy, a veteran of the A&R circuit, the likes of Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, and Ray Charles.

In 1946, Tharpe is beginning to eclipse other gospel luminaries such as Mahalia Jackson. She is trying to make an encore at the church but is still being branded by her secular forays. That year, she spotted Marie Knight performing on a bill with Jackson and invited the younger performer to join her tour.

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Drivers Hurt in Fiery Collision

Six emergency-response units were called out to rescue a driver whose car rolled over on Central Expressway in Mountain View and caught fire shortly before 5:30 p.m. Saturday, March 16.

The vehicle came to rest in the fast lane of Central heading southeast, between North Whisman Road and Ferguson Drive. Emergency crews had to extricate the driver, who suffered minor injuries and, according to Mountain View Police spokesperson Katie Nelson, was taken to a hospital. There were no passengers in the car.

The vehicle collided with an evergreen tree in the median strip during the incident, and police had to shut down lanes of Central as crews cleared the fallen tree and the car. Traffic was diverted for a few hours, police stated on Twitter.

The cause of the crash is still under investigation, Nelson said in an email.

—Jocelyn Dong

Car Burglary Suspect Arrested

A 47-year-old Palo Alto man was arrested Monday after he was allegedly seen checking door handles on vehicles in the San Antonio shopping center area. The suspect also opened the door of a parked RV, and tried to take a wallet from the employee-only section of a store in the shopping center, according to witnesses.

An officer reported seeing the suspect checking door handles and tampering with gas caps on vehicles in the parking lot at the 600 block of Showers Drive around 9:45 p.m. on Monday, March 18, according to police spokesperson Katie Nelson. While the officer stopped the man to ask questions, multiple reports came streaming in alleging that a man, matching the suspect’s description, had been tampering with vehicles in the area and illicitly entered a business.

One witness told police that the suspect has tampered with...
LAHS students walk out to protest inaction on climate change

By Kevin Forestieri

Close to 100 Los Altos High School students took to the streets Friday, March 15, to protest the Trump administration and federal legislators for inaction on climate change, describing it as an existential threat to the planet that will deeply affect younger generations.

Marching down San Antonio Road to the corner of El Camino Real, students chanted Camino Real, students chanted "We are at one of the most critical moments in time to fight for the future of the planet." They continued, "We are at one of the most critical moments in time to fight for the future of the planet."

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A cure-all for housing — but cities hate it

By Mark Noack

California lawmakers are taking aggressive action to address the state's crippling housing shortage in 2019. But despite political momentum and popular support, the state's campaign to fix the broken housing market is facing a growing backlash from cities on the Peninsula.

As of last month's deadline, more than 200 bills pertaining to housing have been filed in the state Legislature, and the sheer scope and severity of proposals is leaving local officials bewildered and nervous. Many critics say a power grab is in the works, alleging that a new state bureaucracy will rescind local control, replacing it with a top-down plan for where and how housing should be built.

While Peninsula cities have a long history of constraining housing growth, local officials say that they are beginning to act more responsibly. Like other elected officials interviewed for this story, former Palo Alto Councilman Greg Scharff said city-led status quo is insufficient.

"I think most elected council members recognize there's a housing crisis," he said. "It's been really easy to say no, and that's why we're in such a crisis today."

The centerpiece of this conflict is the so-called Casa Compact, a 10-point set of actions designed to spur substantial housing growth while preventing gentrification or mass displacement. The Casa package was drafted by a special committee at the Metropolitan Transportation Commission over the course of about two years, but it has recently become a lightning rod of controversy. This year, most of the bills are aimed at addressing the housing crisis, often by making decisions that seem sensible locally but end up shifting the burden elsewhere. At current rates, it will be centuries before more than one-third of Bay Area cities are expected to reach their affordable housing goals.

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New tech at El Camino helps patients breathe easy

By Kevin Forestieri

For millions of Americans, lung disease is an ever-present source of discomfort and pain, making it hard to breathe during everyday activities. And while there is no way to repair destroyed lung tissue, new technology debuting at El Camino Hospital is giving patients some much-needed relief.

Last week, the hospital announced it was the first in California to perform a new treatment where specialized valves, surgically inserted into the lungs, divert air flow away from irreparably damaged parts of the lungs. The alternative, up until now, has been to surgically remove these problematic parts of the lungs, but it came with high morbidity and a host of complications that only got worse with age.

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The problem with emphysema is that destroyed lung tissue is
In recent years, the Milk Pail seemed to be Mountain View’s version of the David and Goliath story. Beginning in 2013, Rasmussen was the lone holdout on that side of the San Antonio shopping center, refusing to sell his small grocery store. The plucky grocer’s battle with and rebuilt everything around it.

The Milk Pail emerged from the intense nearby construction impeded access to his store and still suffered. Rasmussen said he remains open to the idea of continuing the Milk Pail by handing off the business to younger hands. So far, no one has stepped forward, he said, certainly no one with the resources to reopen the store in a new location.

Rasmussen said he remains confident that the Milk Pail will outlast the current construction. He’s seen it before: "I’d be open to collaborating if that was a real possibility, but it’s not going to happen on the premises we’re on now," he said.

The Milk Pail site will likely be replaced by an office building. Last year, Mountain View officials approved an initial proposal for an eight-story, 250,000 square-foot office building at the corner site in order to secure needed funding to build a new elementary school.

Erika Rasmussen, whose father Steve owns the Milk Pail Market, rings up a customer on March 19. Staffers were told of the store’s impending closure a couple of weeks ago.

Crowding its sides. For a period last year, the Milk Pail employees attempted to co-opt the sudden influx of tech offices by changing up their inventory, offering ready-to-eat sandwiches and salads. It was an idea that didn’t pan out, in part because Facebook employees receive free meals from their employer. City officials had pressured the tech company to patronize local businesses, but a debit-card payment system used by the company only included nearby restaurants, not grocery stores. Rasmussen said the growing presence of well-heeled tech workers has been a difficult force to reckon with as his business struggled. Relocating would have been a possibility years ago, but today the cost of commercial real estate made it prohibitive. A grocery store would never have the capital to compete, he said.

“When you have millennials earning $240,000 a year, and your employees are earning a little more than one-tenth of that, it’s extraordinarily hard to co-exist,” Rasmussen said. “The disparity in Mountain View these days is unbelievable.”

Staffing has also remained a persistent challenge for the Milk Pail. Like many employers, Rasmussen said he has had difficulties finding regular service workers amid the high cost of living in Mountain View. For years, Rasmussen’s brother-in-law James Liu worked as store manager, but he died unexpectedly in 2014. In recent years, Rasmussen’s 20-year-old daughter, Kai, has stepped in to take over management duties at the store.

About two weeks ago, Rasmussen said he notified the Milk Pail’s 38 employees of his plans to close the store. The said reaction was mixed: some were shocked while others said they had sensed the writing was on the wall.

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not only useless for breathing, it can take a toll on the working parts of the lungs as well, said Dr. Ganesh Krishna, medical director of El Camino’s interventional pulmonology program. When someone suffering from the lung disease breathes in, air goes into the non-functioning tissue but doesn’t necessarily come out, trapping air and causing what’s called “hyperinflation.”

As these pockets of air expand, the lungs get squashed and the diaphragm — which sits below the lungs — gets flattened out, working in tandem to make breathing a painful struggle.

“Not only are areas of the lungs destroyed and making breathing more difficult, but the diseased portions of the lungs will compress the normal portions of the lungs and make it even more of a problem for breathing in these patients,” Krishna said.

The newest technique for fixing the problem is to insert tiny valves made of nickel-titanium, covered in a thin membrane of silicone, that prevent air from entering problematic parts of the lungs. Krishna said he was picked for the trial and the valves themselves, developed by the med-tech companies Olympus and Redwood City-based Pulmonx, have been in development for at least 15 years, Krishna said, but getting it to work in patients has been a timely challenge. Physicians and researchers have found, for example, that lungs are pretty good at getting around valves and re-filling destroyed lung tissue in what’s called collateral ventilation. Now doctors can test air flows ahead of time and avoid inserting ineffective valves.

There’s also the potential for complications that tend to crop up within the first three days of the procedure as faulty lung tissue deflates. Occasionally the valve causes damaged lung tissue to collapse too quickly, Krishna said, while not allowing normal tissue enough time to take its place. Other times trapped gas in a different damaged part of the lungs simply takes up the newly available real estate, effectively moving the problem rather than relieving it.

The solution, Krishna said, is to keep people in the hospital for three days, because there’s a level of unpredictability with each patient that can’t be accounted for ahead of time.

“We’re dealing with a biological organism and people are very different. We cannot have a cookie-cutter approach to a live human being,” he said. “They respond to these things differently.”

Barring any complications, Krishna said the results have been great. Patients have a significant increase in lung function — exceeding 15 percent — and valve recipients are able to get farther on a standardized six-minute walk following the procedure compared with those who don’t have valves. A subjective questionnaire aimed at measuring quality of life also shows patients are largely happier following the procedure, Krishna said.

“I had one patient who did the trial and he’s at the gym constantly,” Krishna said. “He’s been working out constantly as someone who wasn’t able to do daily activities. He’s working out half an hour to 45 minutes, three or four times a week.”

Although it’s a little touch-and-go after the procedure, past strategies for dealing with hyperinflation — surgically removing parts of the lungs — had common and more severe complications including death, arrhythmias, difficulty breathing and persistent “air leaks” out of the lungs. One study from 2006 found that of the 511 “non-high-risk” patients who underwent the operation, well over half — 58.7 percent — experienced at least one complication after surgery. Twenty-eight of those patients died within 90 days of the operation.

El Camino Hospital’s pulmonary rehabilitation center has become a regional draw of sorts, as the only nationally accredited program in the area that caters to all kinds of lung conditions and offers a multidisciplinary system of care. Last year, the hospital began using a new robot-guided procedure that can locate cancer and conduct biopsies in the smallest branches of lung tissue, which can be controlled and viewed by a physician using something remarkably similar to a video-game controller. The technique is used to find and test suspected cancerous tissue.

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Resentment has grown among homeowners and housed residents, who claim the vehicle dwellers are responsible for increased crime and garbage. Large RVs and trailers have attracted particular ire because they block drivers’ views and have generated complaints of safety hazards from bicyclists. These simmering frustrations came to a head at last year’s election, when two City Council incumbents were ousted. The rest of the council appears to have seen the election as a mandate from voters to address the issue.

Senior council members who supported the restrictions made every attempt to explain they were not being cruel. Councilwoman Margaret Abe-Koga highlighted the $1 million annually spent on homeless programs, including a mobile shower trailer, port-a-potties and outreach workers. She and her colleagues said Mountain View has received minimal credit for its tolerant approach, and instead had unknowingly stepped into the role of caretaker for all of the North County’s homeless population.

“That’s the normous scale of this, it’s frankly impossible for Mountain View to solve alone,” Abe-Koga said. “It’s not just Mountain View’s problem to solve alone; it has to take a regional effort.”

Mountain View Police Department community outreach officer Wahed Magee told city officials he had been handing out informational pamphlets on the streets of Sunnyvale, Palo Alto, Milpitas and Los Altos telling vehicle dwellers to relocate to Mountain View. In one instance, Sunnyvale police officers had handed a vehicle dweller a packet of information detailing Mountain View’s social-service programs, telling them they would be “welcome” there, Magee said.

Reached for comment Wednesday, Sunnyvale Police Capt. Jim Choi said his city’s officers do hand out informational pamphlets on regional services to homeless individuals they come across. But he denied any deliberative effort to push people living on the street into Mountain View.

“That’s not our policy or our practice,” Choi said. “We provide resources and if people think they can have it better elsewhere, that’s up to the individual.”

At the meeting, council members pointed to a range of other stakeholders, saying they bore responsibility for the city’s growing homeless population. Councilman John McAlister tersely grilled housing advocates from SV@Home, pressing them to explain why they and their donors weren’t directly funding housing programs. Santa Clara County, neighboring cities, tech companies and local churches were also called out for not doing enough.

Mountain View city staffs reported they had spent more than 2,500 hours working on issues related to homeless residents over the last fiscal year. Yet Assistant to the City Manager Kimberly Thomas acknowledged the city had “barely moved the needle” on reducing local homelessness. In fact, there were actually about 416 individuals living on the streets as of a 2017 homeless count, and that number had been roughly doubling every two years prior, she reported.

In public comment, an organized group of dozens of unhoused residents tried to describe their living situations, urging the council not to punish people who can’t afford regular housing. Francisco Caruso said he had worked at the local Whole Foods for nearly 20 years, but his living situation had slowly deteriorated due to rising rents. He had once lived in his car in a motel apartment on his wages, then he had to downsize to renting a room, and then to a motor home.

Several Foothill Community College students described living out of vehicles as their only housing option while pursuing an education.

“That’s no secret that rent here is very expensive and finding a livable wage is difficult,” said Matt Bodo, a student who said he had lived out of his car for two years. “I really don’t think restrictions are a step in the right direction.

“We should be pushing for more programs for homelessness and poor people.”

But the council’s ultimate action combined a bit of both. The Tuesday night council meeting was the first major political test for three new council members who were pressed on the issue repeatedly during their campaign. Two of those freshmen, Lucas Ramirez and Ellen Kamei, agreed to support the vehicle ban in exchange for minor amendments meant to soften the blow.

Ramirez warned the city could be making a much worse problem if a ban on living in vehicles ends up pushing the homeless population to sleeping in city parks or road embankments. Despite that concern, Ramirez and Kamei needed the City Council to support the large vehicle ban on the condition that one parking lot at Shoreline Amphitheatre be used during the winter months to provide extra space for 20 vehicles.

Kamei insisted the city should wait at least 18 months before enacting the ban in order to give ample time for families to relocate and also asked that the city investigate an unregulated market of people renting out RVs and trailers for others to live in.

On the opposite side, newly elected Councilwoman Alison Hicks said she couldn’t support a citywide ban on RV parking, saying she preferred targeting sensitive locations, such as dangerous traffic spots.

As part of the decision, the council asked staff to investigate ways to streamline permits for safe parking sites and updates to the city’s rental assistance program.

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Citing problems, district seeks to revamp Dual Immersion

SUPERINTENDENT SAYS MISTRAL IS LEAVING BEHIND KIDS STILL LEARNING ENGLISH

By Kevin Forestieri

Despite Mistral Elementary’s promise of dual literacy, some of its most vulnerable students are struggling to learn English and meet state academic standards, and school district leaders say that needs to change.

Superintendent Ayinde Rudolph announced at a school board meeting this month that starting this fall, the Mountain View Whisman School District will start an overhaul of the Dual Immersion program. It will change including the basic format of how kids learn Spanish and English, ditching its math curriculum and working to extend the dual-language program beyond fifth grade and into middle school.

The bilingual program draws children from all over the district, but Rudolph said the program has been inadequate for more than a decade. Kids who speak English going into the program are doing great in school and outstanding their peers, while children from Spanish-speaking families who don’t speak English as a first language are struggling to keep up, according to the district’s analysis.

A growing body of evidence has found that dual immersion, when implemented right, helps kids from both groups excel on standardized tests, but that hasn’t been the case in Mountain View, Rudolph said. He pointed to a study last year that concluded kids going into the program not speaking English are not seeing any of the purported benefits of bilingual education or high school. This has been the case for the Dual Immersion program going back to 2008, according to the study.

“The English-only students are learning Spanish off of the backs of the English language learners,” Rudolph said. “That was what was found. It was not published, but that was explicitly stated.”

The study itself is nuanced and has plenty of caveats about statistical significance, essentially saying English learners who attend the district’s Dual Immersion program don’t do that much better or worse than kids from other schools. But given the potential, well-documented benefits of bilingual and language programs as a tool to close the achievement gap, Rudolph told board members that Mistral is falling short of expectations.

In order to root out problems and come up with a plan of action, the district put together an all-staff committee that included Mistral teachers last fall. The group zeroed in on one central point: Native Spanish speakers aren’t learning English at a fast enough rate, and it’s putting them at a disadvantage. Unlike other language programs that teach English and Spanish in equal amounts each year, Mistral uses what’s called a “90/10” model that teaches kids English for the first year, adding more English instruction in each subsequent grade, ending elementary school with 50/50 instruction. That means students seeking to learn English wait years before getting direct instruction in English reading and writing.

“The problem at Mistral currently is that in the earlier grades we are not teaching (English) writing and reading until third grade,” said Mistral principal Tabitha Miller.

It doesn’t come as a surprise, the committee found. Yet, much of Mistral’s English learner students “reclassify” as fluent lags behind other schools in the district. Only six of the 152 students in kindergarten students mostly in Spanish, adding more English instruction in each subsequent grade, ending elementary school with 50/50 instruction. That means students seeking to learn English wait years before getting direct instruction in English reading and writing.

“The problem at Mistral currently is that in the earlier grades we are not teaching (English) writing and reading until third grade,” said Mistral principal Tabitha Miller.

It doesn’t come as a surprise, that’s why the committee recommended rapid change, converting the program to a so-called “50/50” model equally split between English and Spanish instruction from kindergarten on for the 2019-20 school year. Other changes include switching the math curriculum from GoMath to Eureka Math, which is used in every other district school, and regular testing in English and Spanish to ensure students are on track in both languages.

Brenda Jarillo-Rabling, a fifth-grade teacher at Mistral, said the proposed changes would put Dual Immersion on the right track, and that there is strong evidence that an even-handed approach to teaching Spanish and English would support every student at the school.

While the district’s own study found plenty of evidence that the 90/10 model can also be effective, and state data that both work if done right — Jarillo-Rabling said the status quo isn’t working for Spanish-speaking families.

“The 90/10 model is not necessarily translating into success for all kids,” Rudolph said. “That’s why we feel that we need more English learners, and not dual immersion.”

The committee’s recommendations come at the end of an evolving discussion over how to extend the Dual Immersion program to eighth grade, rather than have bilingual education end after fifth grade at Mistral. This could include adding sixth, seventh and eighth grades at Mistral or having dual-language courses at Crittenden or Graham middle schools, but district officials have yet to seriously consider the options.

Although the idea of middle school Dual Immersion came up in 2017, Rudolph said he has been considering the logistics of any expansion until there are clear signs Mistral’s academic program works well. Given the low reclassification rates at Mistral, board member Tamara Wilson said it’s time to trust the teachers at the school and move forward with the recommendations.

“We need more English immersion to bring equity to the dual part of dual immersion,” Wilson said.

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K-9 FINDS FLEETING MAN

A San Jose man pulled over by police Sunday was arrested after he allegedly tried to flee the traffic stop by pulling over on Highway 85, ditching the car and running down an embankment before being located by a police K-9.

The 45-year-old man was pulled over around 11 a.m. on March 17 after he was seen running a stop sign near the intersection of Bay View and Highway 85, according to police spokeswoman Katie Nelson. Instead of pulling over, the suspect sped up and entered Highway 85. Once on the highway, he ran out of the car and down an embankment, Nelson said.

A Mountain View police K-9 unit helped search for the man, who was found hiding in the embankment, Nelson said.

The driver was arrested on suspicion of willfully fleeing a police vehicle, which can be either a misdemeanor or a felony, as well as resisting arrest and possession of a methamphetamine pipe.

— Kevin Forestieri
the committee’s final recommendations have been plucked and drafted into a set of new bills moving through the state Legislature.

Depending on whom you ask, the Casa agenda is either overbearing or overdue. In general, the package would adopt a mild form of rent control across the Bay Area, establish a new $1.5 billion regional housing agency, provide some badly needed accountability for cities that routinely flout their housing requirements. For example, the city of Menlo Park infamously refused for nearly 20 years to provide zoning for any low-income housing until a lawsuit forced the issue. Similarly about one out of six cities in California this year declined to reveal potentially embarrassing data on their housing stock, even though disclosure is supposed to be mandatory. The Casa Compact is just one new effort by the state’s leadership to signal that this kind of defiance will soon carry a penalty. As of last week, this property-tax idea was scuttled after the state Legislature’s legal counsel determined it could violate the local-funding protections in the state constitution.

In some ways, this battle has been slowly building for years. At least 30 years ago, experts were warning that a main culprit behind the state’s imbalanced housing market was “local control,” the independent power of each city to dictate its growth.

For that reason, housing advocates say this resistance is not surprising, given that certain cities have been among the most flagrant bad actors behind the imbalanced housing market. In this situation, local autonomy should no longer be considered sacrosanct, said Jeremy Hoffman, a Mountain View resident and member of the pro-housing YIMBY Action group.

“So the cities with the worst records on housing are currently led by officials who deny reality, claiming that their city already builds sufficient housing. It’s like climate change denial," he said. “All the Casa Compact asks is that we all hold ourselves and each other to the same standards, and we all chip in a little bit.”

Matichak was among a delegation of officials from 23 Peninsula cities who met last week at the offices of state Sen. Jerry Hill to underscore their concerns with the new housing legislation. Across the board, none of the city representatives voiced support for Casa in its current form, she said. In the interim following the meeting, Hill sent mixed messages. He applauded the effort behind Casa and the legislation it produced, but he said he couldn’t support it in its current format.

“The elements are admirable and I would support them as necessary for the success of any housing solution, but it’s the nuances,” he said. “There’s no question about the need for this legislation, but we need to get there in a way that works for the largest constituency.”

In particular, Hill focused his criticisms on the transit-oriented development bill, SB 50, which has become the most controversial piece of the housing compact. Echoing Matichak’s concerns, Hill said the legislation needed to provide more flexibility for cities to decide where to locate dense housing.

Yet even as he poked holes, Hill also said the package wasn’t as draconian as its critics were making it out to be. The problem was branding, he said — the Casa Compact had inadvertently become a rallying cry for slow-growth factions, and they were being joined by local elected officials who felt excluded from its creation.

Fishman of the Nonprofit Housing Association acknowledged that Casa proponents had their work cut out for them.

“A majority of the Bay Area wants a solution to this, but there’s still a minority of NIMBY groups out there fomenting fears and misinformation,” she said. “People may not agree with every single element, but they agree that we need this package.”

Email Mark Noack at mnoack@mv-voice.com

For more on the Casa Compact legislation, see the Voice’s companion story, “What is the Casa Compact?” online at mv-voice.com.

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Teens host free educational hackathon

By Angie Wang

A team of students at Los Altos High School will bring together approximately 350 high school students across the Bay Area for a free-of-charge 24-hour hackathon that aims to empower students to apply computer science to real-world problems.

The fourth annual Los Altos Hacks will take place at the Juniper Aspiration Dome in Sunnyvale on March 23 and 24. “Generally colleges and companies host hackathons, and they focus more on the competition aspect of coding,” said Jamsheed Mistri, the lead and sponsorship director of Los Altos Hacks. “But our high school hackathon is more focused on the learning aspect. We’re trying to get students interested in pursuing STEM careers.”

Mistri said that while the Advanced Placement Computer Science course provides a strong foundation in basic principles, it is not representative of how computer science is implemented in the tech industry. Los Altos Hacks gives students the opportunity to create projects about issues they care about, alongside mentors who work in the tech industry. Silicon Valley executives will judge their projects.

In order to promote diversity, the team will provide travel reimbursement to fly 15 to 30 students to the hackathon. “We want to promote technological careers and represent minority groups because generally in tech jobs, you have this cookie cutter stereotype, and we’re looking to break those stereotypes,” said Katherine Nasif, outreach director of Los Altos Hacks.

Mistri said that they aim to have a balanced gender ratio this year, so women will be given preference when awarding travel reimbursements.

After an opening ceremony, hacking begins at noon on March 23. Students are encouraged to work in teams, and workshops will be held throughout the event. “For example, we have a build-your-own-website workshop, where people can build their first website if they’ve never coded before,” Mistri said. “For more advanced people, we have VMWare that is hosting a workshop about machine learning.”

Throughout the evening, there will be other non-coding related activities like cup stacking and capture-the-flag. All meals are provided. The event concludes with judging and a closing ceremony at noon on Sunday.

Projects made through Los Altos Hacks will also have the potential to be further developed after the hackathon, as companies like Facebook, Juniper, VMWare and Pixar are sponsoring the event. “We have some sponsors that actually want to take some of the prizes and invest in them,” Mistri said. “If they like it, they can reach out.”

The event is open to all high school students, regardless of coding experience. “I feel like the hackathon environment is really a great place for this whole concept of idea hacking and literally taking a problem — we face in everyday life, and really looking at what causes that problem and how can we fix it,” Nasif said. “This whole culture of getting thinkers and makers together to really work on problems and figure out solutions is something that they will be able to use in the future.”

More information about Los Altos Hacks is online at losaltoshacks.com or by emailing info@losaltoshacks.com.

Los Altos High School students march across El Camino Real on March 15 as they participate in a climate change demonstration, part of an international youth movement.

“The proposed changes of the bill are the types of changes we need if we want to continue on as a civilization,” students said in the statement. “We have just 12 years to cut our emissions down to zero, we simply do not have enough time for any bill less radical than the Green New Deal.”

Lai said he was particularly concerned — and galvanized to protest — that the Trump administration appeared to be rolling back climate change initiatives and denying that it exists. Trump had previously tweeted that global warming is a “Chinese hoax,” but has since walked back those comments and stated that climate change, while it may exist, is not a man-made phenomenon. He also implied strong action on climate change wouldn’t be worth the economic drawbacks and potential jobs lost.

“It’s worse than inaction,” Lai said. “It’s a step back.”

Los Altos High students walked out in solidarity with an international protest among children and teens demonstrating in nearly 100 countries across the globe, all under the companies like a movement called “Fridays For Future.” Many of the local protests were inspired, at least in part, by 16-year-old Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, who began protesting climate change in August last year and is largely credited for being the catalyst of the March 15 protests.
of its affiliates — including El Camino Hospital — requiring hospital officials to seek approval from district voters each time they want to buy or lease property outside of the district’s boundaries, which encompasses Mountain View, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and parts of Sunnyvale.

In a statement Tuesday, SEIU-UHW leaders say the measure would hold hospital leaders accountable and give district voters a direct say in El Camino’s strategy of expanding into other parts of Santa Clara County, which has been a priority for hospital leaders. The hospital operates a second campus in Los Gatos, and recently sought to purchase and lease clinics from San Jose to Gilroy. El Camino Hospital is planning to buy the clinics from Verity Medical Foundation located in San Jose, Morgan Hill and Gilroy. El Camino Hospital — which has been a priority for union employees at five clinics that they will be retained. Those employees have instead been encouraged to re-apply for their jobs.

Silicon Valley Medical Development (SVMD), a wholly owned subsidiary of El Camino Hospital, proposed a $1.27 million sale agreement for the purchase of clinics located at: 625 Lincoln Ave., 2585 Samaritan Dr. and 227 North Jackson Ave., all in San Jose; 18550 DePaul Dr. in Morgan Hill; and 9360 No Name Uno, #125 in Gilroy. Although the agreement excludes the transfer of existing clinic employees, SVMD officials say they are giving them “priority” over other candidates. The initiative could be seen as a bargaining chip in the dispute. Andrew Barragan, a hospital employee and proponent of the measure, told the Voice that the employees at the five clinics want answers about the future of their jobs for weeks, but have received virtually no new information and no guarantees of retention by SVMD. And while the current employees may have a leg up in re-applying for their jobs, she said the medical records staff had their candidacy interviews canceled that day.

“We need assurances that our continued dedication to our patients and our clinics will not be overlooked,” she said.

Hospital spokeswoman Kelsey Martinez said the ballot measure could make it difficult for El Camino to negotiate real estate transactions, which are competitive, time sensitive and confidential, and that district tax dollars would have to finance special elections. She said the hospital is not going to speculate on whether the ballot initiative is a bargaining tactic.

El Camino Hospital’s expansion outside of the health care district’s boundaries has been a hot-button issue for years. Although the nonprofit corporation that runs the hospital is separate from the El Camino Healthcare District, it nonetheless reaps benefits through its association with the special tax district. The two are also inextricably tied together because the district still owns the land under the hospital’s Mountain View campus and leases it to the hospital.

Some residents disputed the purchase of a community hospital in Los Gatos in 2009, seen as the largest expansion outside of the district’s boundaries to date. Since then, the hospital purchased just shy of 16 acres in South San Jose, and later sought to open a clinic on Winchester Boulevard.

The SEIU statement suggests that residents may be steadily losing a say over the hospital’s actions. Although the five El Camino Healthcare District board members directly elected by district residents used to make up a majority of the hospital’s board of directors, that was changed in 2017 when the board expanded to 10 voting members, with the hospital CEO serving as an 11th, non-voting member.

“The district is becoming less and less accountable to voters as the board of directors grows to include more unelected members,” Sunnyvale resident Veronica Vides said in the announcement. “El Camino is a community resource and we need to ensure that the community maintains control over it.”

Although the statement released by union officials suggested that the ballot measure would hold the district accountable for the “millions of taxpayer dollars entrusted to them” each year, the deal proposed between SVMD and Verity does not use money received by the district through property taxes.

Staff at the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters confirmed receiving the petition, but could not speak to the number of verified signatures needed to ensure it appears on the November 2020 ballot.
For more information about these camps visit paloaltoonline.com/camp_connection. To advertise in this weekly directory, call (650) 326-8210.

ACADEMICS

Harker Summer Programs San Jose
The Harker School’s summer programs for children K–grade 12 offer the perfect balance of learning and fun! Programs are led by dedicated faculty and staff who are experts at combining summer fun and learning. Strong academics and inspiring enrichment programs are offered in full day, partial and morning only sessions.

www.harker.org/summer (408) 553-5737

i2 Camp at Castilleja School Palo Alto
i2 Camp offers week-long immersion programs that engage middle school girls in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The fun and intimate hands-on activities of the courses strive to excite and inspire participants about STEM, creating enthusiasm that will hopefully spill over to their schoolwork and school choices in future years.

www.castilleja.org/i2camp (650) 470-7833

iD Tech Stanford/Bay Area
The world’s #1 summer STEM program held at Stanford, Palo Alto High School, and 150+ locations nationwide. With innovative courses in coding, game development, robotics, and design, our programs instill in-demand skills that embolden students to shape the future. iD Tech Camps (weeklong, 7-17), Alexa Café (weeklong, all-girls, 10-15), iD Tech Academies (2-week, 13-18).

idtech.com/locations/california-summer-camps/ (844) 788-1858

STANFORD EXPLORE: A Lecture Series on Biomedical Research Stanford
STANFORD EXPLORE biomedical science at Stanford. Stanford EXPLORE offers high school students the unique opportunity to learn from Stanford professors and graduate students about diverse topics in biomedical science, including bioengineering, neurobiology, immunology and many others.

explore.stanford.edu explore-series@stanford.edu

Summer at Sand Hill School Palo Alto
June 26 to July 23. If you’re looking for a great summer learning plus fun option for your child and you want them to be ready for fall, please join us at Sand Hill. The morning Literacy Program (8:30 to noon) provides structured, systematic instruction for students with learning challenges entering grades 1-8 in the fall. The afternoon Enrichment Camp ( Noon to 4) focuses on performing arts, social skills and fun. Choose morning, afternoon or full day.

www.sandhillschool.org/summer (650) 688-3605

Write Now! Palo Alto Summer Writing Camps Pleasanton
Improve your student’s writing skills this summer at Emerson School of Palo Alto and Hacienda School of Pleasanton. Courses this year are Expository Writing, Creative Writing and Presentation Skills. Visit our website for more information.

www.headsup.org Emerson: (650) 424-1267 Hacienda: (925) 485-5700

ARTS, CULTURE, OTHER CAMPS

Art and Soul Camp Palo Alto
Art, cooking, tinkering, yoga and mindfulness. We celebrate multiple perspectives and recognize the many ways for our children to interpret their world. Summer Unplugged! is appropriate for ages 6-11 years. Located at Walter Hays School.

www.artandsoulpa.com (650) 269-0423

Castilleja Summer Camp for Girls Palo Alto
Camp offers girls entering gr. 2-6 a range of age-appropriate activities including athletics, art, science, computers, writing, crafts, cooking, drama and music classes each day along with weekly field trips. Leadership program available for girls entering gr. 7-9.

www.castilleja.org/summercamp (650) 470-7833

City of Mountain View Recreation Mountain View
Come have a blast with us this summer! We have something for everyone – Recreation Camps, Specialty Camps, Sports Camps, Swim Lessons, and more! Programs begin June 4 – register early!

www.mountainview.gov/register (650) 902-6331

City of Palo Alto Summer Camps Palo Alto
A wide array of camps, from theater and tennis to ceramics and coding. Kids in kindergarten through high school can participate in camps during week-long sessions from June 3 to Aug 9.

www.cityofpaloalto.org/summercamps (650) 463-4949

Community School of Music Mountain View
Community School of Mountain View Music and Arts (CSMA) Mountain View 50+ creative camps for Gr.K-12! Drawing, Painting, Ceramics, Sculpture, Musical Theater, Summer Music Workshops, more! One and two-week sessions; full and half-day enrollment. Extended care from 8:30am-5:30pm. Financial aid offered.

www.arts4all.org (650) 917-6800 ext. 0

Oshman Family JCC Palo Alto
Camps at the OFJCC introduce your child to new experiences while creating friendships in a fun and safe environment. We work to build confidence, stretch imaginations and teach new skills.

www.paloalotjcc.org/Camps (650) 223-8622

Palo Alto Community Child Care (PACCC) Palo Alto
PACCC summer camp offers campers, grades 1st to 6th, a wide variety of engaging opportunities. We are excited to announce all of your returning favorites: Leaders in Training (L.I.T.), PACCC Special Interest Units (S.I.U.), F.A.M.E. (Fine Arts, Music and Entertainment), J.V. Sports and Operation: Chef! Periodic field trips, special visitors and many engaging camp activities, songs and skits round out the variety of offerings at PACCC Summer Camps. Open to campers from all communities. Register online.

www.paccc.org (650) 493-2361

Stanford Jazz Workshop Stanford
World-renowned jazz camps at Stanford. Week-long jazz immersion programs for middle school musicians (July 8-12), high school (July 14-19 and July 21-26), and adults (July 28- Aug. 2). All instruments and vocals. No jazz experience necessary!

www.stanfordjazz.org (650) 736-0324

TheatreWorks Palo Alto Silicon Valley
Menlo Park
April 1 - 5, June 3 - August 2. Kids have fun, create a character, and learn lifelong performance skills at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley’s Theatre Camps. TheatreWorks offers camps during spring break (offered in Palo and Menlo Park, April 1 - 5) and summer camps (six sessions offered in Palo Alto, Menlo Park, and Los Altos between June 3 - August 2) for children and youth in grades K-6. Professional teaching artists lead students in activities including acting, dance, play writing and stagecraft skills. Sibling discounts and extended care available.

www.theatreworks.org/education (650) 463-7146

ATHLETICS

Dance Connection Palo Alto Palo Alto
Share the joy of dance with us! Our studio is an extended family where we value the positive energy and atmosphere that we continuously strive to provide. Summer Dance Camps include all styles of dance for ages 4 and up and teens. At Dance Connection, we value the positive energy and atmosphere that we continuously strive to provide. Summer Dance Camps include all styles of dance for ages 4 and up and Teens. At Dance Connection, we value the positive energy and atmosphere that we continuously strive to provide. Summer Dance Camps include all styles of dance for ages 4 and up.

www.danceconnectionpaloalto.com danccesconnection-evnet-calendar/summer-dance-camps (650) 823-5167

Kim Grant Tennis Summer Camps Palo Alto
Fun and specialized Junior Camps for Mini (3-5), Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, High Performance and Elite tennis levels. Weekly programs designed by Kim Grant to improve player’s technique, fitness, agility, mental toughness and all around game. Weekly camps in Palo Alto and Sleep-Away Camps in Monterey Bay. SO MUCH FUN!

www.KimGrantTennis.com Text: (650) 690-0678 Call: (650) 752-8061

Nike Tennis Camps Palo Alto
Junior overnight and day tennis camps for boys and girls, ages 9-18 offered throughout June, July and August. Adult weekend clinicals and six-week Summer Leagues give you the opportunity to practice your tennis against some of the best ever. Join us at Nike Camps for a unique tennis experience.

www.nikecamps.com Palo Alto (650) 645-3226

Run for Fun Camps Palo Alto
Run for Fun’s mission is to provide creative and engaging play for all youth by getting kids active in an inclusive community centered around outdoor fun! We pride ourselves on hiring an enthusiastic, highly trained staff who love what they do. Summer 2019 features four weeks of Adventure Day Camp and two weeks of Overnight Camp High Five. Adventure Day Camp is a new discovery every day filled with sports, crafts and nature, including explorations to Camp Jones Gulch, Capitola Beach, Foothills Park, Shoreline Lake and Great America. Camp High Five is six days and five nights of traditional overnight camp mixed with challenge-by-choice activities, campfires, friendships and lots of laughter.

www.runforfun camps.com/summer-camps-and-school-holiday-camps/camp-overview

Stanford Athletics & Youth Stanford
At Sunken Diamond on the campus of Stanford University. A variety of camps are offered to benefit a wide range of age groups and skill sets. Campers will gain instruction in several baseball skills, fundamentals, team concepts, and game play.

www.stanfordbaseballcamp.com (650) 725-2054

Stanford Water Polo Camps Stanford
New to water polo or have experience, we have a camp for you. Half day or full day options for boys and girls ages 7 and up. All camps provide fundamental skills, scrimmages and games.

www.stanfordwaterpolocamps.com (650) 725-9016

Wheel Kids Palo Alto
Addison Elementary, Palo Alto
Adventuring Riding Camp for rising 1st - 8th gr, Two Wheelers Club for rising K - 3rd gr. Week-long day camp programs on campus for kids (grades K - 10) from June 3 – August 9. Space is limited so register online now.

www.wheelkids.c om (650) 223-8622

Kim Grant Tennis Summer Camps Palo Alto
Fun and specialized Junior Camps for Mini (3-5), Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced, High Performance and Elite tennis levels. Weekly programs designed by Kim Grant to improve player’s technique, fitness, agility, mental toughness and all around game. Weekly camps in Palo Alto and Sleep-Away Camps in Monterey Bay. SO MUCH FUN!

www.KimGrantTennis.com Text: (650) 690-0678 Call: (650) 752-8061
The good news about "Sojourn," which just had its world premiere at The Pear Theatre in Mountain View, is that it has a really good, five-person cast.

The bad news is that the play itself, by local writer and Pear regular Evan Kokkila-Schumacher, is a mess. It has a very dramatic and rewarding first act, then collapses in the second act like a child's tower built with mismatched Erector set pieces, Tinker Toys, LEGO bricks and Lincoln Logs.

But, back to the cast. The two principals, Laura Domingo as Deanna and Drew Benjamin Jones as Nick, play two astronauts who’ve been sent on a mission from which there can be no return.

When the show starts, they are five and a half years into their trip and are nearly to Saturn, which is getting larger and larger in the screen that shows them — and us — where they are in space. When Saturn is huge on their screen, they launch three robotic “seekers” that are to explore some of Saturn’s moons. Two of the three work.

And then it’s on, past Saturn at a ridiculous (though realistic) speed, deeper into limitless space, their only mission now to survive — and to eventually start the incubators that will bring to life the thousand human embryos carried in their $300 billion spaceship.

Domingo and Jones are excellent. Both are powerful and clearly committed to their roles. Like any other domestic couple not entirely happy with each other, they argue. They also try to help each other, with little success, in dealing with the sadness caused by knowing they will never meet another human — other than the embryos.

Why not just open the airlock and end it all?

Well, they are both dedicated to the mission.

“At some point, Nick,” says Deanna, “you have to make peace with the choices you have made.”

Also on hand — on Earth, at a NASA facility — are Melissa Jones as NASA communicator Marta, Richard Holman as mission commander Garett and Cynthia Lagodziński as a NASA administrator, Kaitlyn.

They’re all very good, and intense, although it’s easier to like Jones and Holman, because they seem to really care about the astronauts. Lagodziński has the nasty duty of having to play a ladder-climbing, manipulative creep who only cares about her career. It’s all we can do to not hiss and jeer when she’s on stage. But it’s just a role!

There is a dramatic reveal at the end of Act I, which I don’t want to give away here, but that makes for a strong, if rather confusing moment.

Act II gets lost in a morass of subplots and character studies. Garett is carrying the guilt of a previous NASA mission he’d overseen, in which six astronauts died. Marta, meanwhile, is trying to help him, and help the people in the spaceship. Kaitlyn is doing her best to keep her career on the right path, even if it means ruining a lot of lives.

What is happening with Nick and Deanna is the best part of Act II, so we tend to be grateful when they dominate the set, rather than the soap opera back at NASA.

“You don’t choose the ghosts that haunt you,” Deanna says, “but you don’t have to do everything they tell you to do.”

Director Caroline Clark always does very good work, and she certainly gets fine performances from her cast. It’s really a pleasure to watch these committed performers work, especially Jones and Domingo.

Ting-Na Wang’s set is simple but fun to look at, in a way that sort of brings the original, cheapo “Star Trek” TV sets to mind. It has a couple of smallish control panels, and a little vertical garden that presumably represents space-based agriculture. And not much else. No dials, switches, or gear drawers.

Just lots of blank wall space and a door or two. Not remotely realistic, even for something that’s supposed to be happening in 2062. Even in that distant time, NASA will want to use every possible square inch of space for something.

Lighting designer Ben Hemmen gives us pretty underlit decks, although they do a lot of flickering. Sound designer Charlie Hoyt gives us deep, rumbling background noise that helps create a sense of danger. And other space-shippy noises.

“John Beamer’s video designs are practically a character in the play, switching between a lovely fusing moment.

What is happening with Nick and Deanna in “Sojourn,” which is about two astronauts sent on a mission to Saturn.
Dumpling is not a place for a first date. Perhaps not even a fifth date, unless you are trying to impress someone with your frugality and good taste. It’s a place to go when you are in the comfortably sloppy stage of a relationship.

A tiny hole-in-the-wall restaurant three doors down from El Camino Real on Broadway Street in Redwood City, i Dumpling serves genuine, homemade northern Chinese dumplings and a small selection of other dishes. You can’t beat the price, and the food is both interesting and good, but the ambiance is not worth mentioning. i Dumpling is small — a long, narrow restaurant without any serious effort put into decor. Having said that, I enjoyed the illustrations of dumpling making on one wall and the shadow boxes of tea cups on the opposite wall.

The lack of an inviting interior might be why they do a good trade in take-out business. The first time I went, it was a Sunday at noon during the Lunar New Year. The place was packed — every one of their 30 seats was taken and a line ranged along the sidewalk outside. This is a restaurant that knows how to hustle when they need to. My order was ready in 13 minutes (I timed it). For about $40 we got enough food for four hungry people and had more to spare. My next visit was on a weekday night. The restaurant wasn’t full, but it was well-patronized. Young families came to eat in, a group of techies shared a meal before heading back for a late night at work and several people stopped in to pick up food. We lounged, picking at our food for well over two hours. Reading between the lines, you might say that the service was
The interior of i Dumpling is sparsely decorated.

The mapo tofu has large cubes of tofu sitting in a spicy red sauce topped with green onions.

lackadaisical. Or you might say that it was respectful, honoring our desire to chat. When we did need something, we only needed to raise our hand or catch the eye of the one person serving and tending the register.

i Dumpling has a compact menu that features foods that aren’t often seen on the English-language menu, including marinated pigs ears and sauerkraut pork soup noodles. They also offer Taiwanese-style bento, including one with chicken nuggets and another with stewed pork rice.

Bottom line: The dumplings are great and the other offerings are good to above average. Let’s start with the dumplings, since the restaurant is called i Dumpling. Almost all of their handmade dumplings are served steamed. Generous servings of 12 dumplings per order range from $6.45 to $7.95. The dumpling wrappers were thick and chewy, authentically handmade as advertised.

They are locally famed for their pork dumplings with napa cabbage ($6.95). Two sets of fellow diners recommended these and they were good. Not amazing, but solid. The chicken dumplings with corn ($6.95) were a trifle unusual and amazingly good, with a subtle back-of-throat burn. The lamb dumplings ($7.95) were savory and a sneaker favorite at lunch. We also loved the pork dumplings with cilantro ($7.45), the herb’s flavor coming through clean and clear.

The menu features two dishes that sound similar, but are very different — green onion cake ($3.95) and green chives pancake ($7.45). We tried the former at the suggestion of the waiter. I wouldn’t recommend it. It didn’t feature the typical flaky layers and it tasted a little like the oil in which it had been fried had been used a few times too often.

i Dumpling’s entrees, on the other hand, were a pleasure to consume. The kung pao chicken was spicier than expected, but deeply, fundamentally satisfying. The mapo tofu, soft cubes of tofu bathed in a spicy red sauce with a scattering of green onions, was delightful. I recommend you order some rice (the vegetarian fried rice is a solid choice) to go with both these dishes.

On any hot day, you should stop by for one of i Dumpling’s cold dishes. The cold wide bean noodles are a melange of cold, half-inch mung bean noodles

The mapo tofu has large cubes of tofu sitting in a spicy red sauce topped with green onions.
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SILICON VALLEY MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT
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37716 Glenmoor Drive
LIEN WILLIAMSON
registrant(s) is(are):
Nail Bar, located at 1910 W. El Camino Real C1,
business as:
The following person (persons) is (are) doing
File No.: FBN651915
February 19, 2019.
NAIL BAR
 FiCATIVITR BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT
File No. FBN651915
The following person(s) is (are) doing business as:
Nail Bar, located at 1910 W. El Camino Real C1,
Mountain View, CA 94040
FILED IN SAN LARA CLAY COUNTY ON
10/26/2018
UNDER FILE NO. FBN651915
REGISTRANT'S NAME:
MILTON SARAVA
1050 Creek Dr, #13
Mountain View, CA 94040
THIS BUSINESS WAS CONDUCTED BY: An
Individual.
This statement was filed with the County Clerk
of Santa Clara County on February 19, 2019.
MVV Mar. 1, 8, 15, 22, 2019.
NAIL BAR
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REGISTRANT'S NAME:
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Lupita Nyong’o stars in Jordan Peele’s new thriller “Us.”

Just the two of ‘Us’
JORDAN PEELE DELIVERS DOPPELGÄNGER HORROR

★★★★½ (Century 16 & 20, Icon)

What will surely be the single-most commonly cited moment of “Us” is when a dambounded American dad asks psychopathic home invaders, “What are you people?,” and they answer: “We’re Americans.”

It’s a punchline and a promise of scary, but satirical, social commentary in Jordan Peele’s follow-up to his smash success “Get Out.”

While Peele has tried to frame “Us” as more of a straight-ahead horror movie not built to sustain that kind of thematic weight, audiences have come to expect his pop-horror films to spark reflection on our existence and our society.

In a dynamic performance and feral homicidal mania, and all their wants is American life itself. Their deep-red jumpsuits and sandals say doomsday cult, but their shears say murderous home invaders.

“Us” largely plays as a more stylish, sci-fi take on “The Purge” franchise, which inhabits similar thematic ground. Both movies play upon Americans’ guilt for their largely latched-into plenty and the anxiety that they’re a class revolting away from having it all violently taken. Capitalism means a dog-eat-dog world: For us to thrive, others must suffer, and but for the sheer randomness of the universe, it could be “us” on the other side of the looking glass.

It’s precisely because Peele is taking on ideas this heavy that “Us” manages to be almost equal parts provocative and somehow a bit of a letdown. When “Us” finally gets literal about what’s going on, the rushed exposition beg more questions than answers.

Peele’s messy stew of allusive ingredients and jokey allusions (shamans and wizards, white rabbits, Beach Boys vs. N.W.A.) can be overwhelming, but it gives us a helluva lot more to chew on than a “Halloween” reboots.

Peele will find the film’s psychokiller insanity a bit overworked, but Nyong’s impressive dual performance goes a long way to making the scares work from both sides of the equation: scream queen and relentless monster.

When “Us” reckons with who created that monster, it adds another twist (of the shears) to Peele’s latest scary-funny-provocative trip into an American twilight zone. Rated R for violence/terror, and language. One hour, 56 minutes. — Peter Canavese

MOVIE REVIEWS

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THEATER
Jewish Women's Theatre: "It's a Life" Los Angeles-based Jewish Women's Theatre (JWT) presents "It's a Life," which celebrates life while exploring various events surrounding death. March 25, 7:30 p.m. $25-$35; discounts for members and J-Pass holders. Dolman Family JCC, Conference Room F401 (4th floor above the theatre), 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. dolmanjcc.org/jewishtheatre

'Sojourner' Pear Theatre presents "Sojourner," a futurist play written by Edwin Kokkieta Schumacher and directed by Caroline Clark. Through April 7; times vary. $32; discounts for seniors, students. The Pear Theatre, 1110 La Avenida St., Mountain View. thepear.org

TheatreWorks Silicon Valley Presents "Marie and Rossetta" In its West Coast premiere, the musical play "Marie and Rossetta" shares the saga of musical legend Sister Rosetta Tharpe, who inspired Elvis, Ray Charles, and others on her way to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Through March 31; times vary. $40-$100; discounts available. Lucie Stern Theatre, 1305 Midolfield Road, Palo Alto. theatreworks.org

"The Aliens" The Aliens" by Annie Baker is the story of two men who pass their time behind a coffee shop in Vermont discussing poetry, music and wind farms, and a lonely teenager who works there. March 29-31, 7:30-9:30 p.m. All Saints Episcopal Church, 555 Waverly St., Palo Alto.

MUSIC
Bay Area Flute Day The first ever Bay Area Flute Day will feature workshops, master classes, demonstrations and exhibits. March 24, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Community School of Music and Arts, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. arts4all.org/events/bay-area-flute-day-2019

Community Singing: "A Magic Singing of simple songs that describe the connection between people and the Earth, instructors use the call-and-response teaching method. Ability to read sheet music is not required. March 23, 9:15-10:15 a.m. Free. Hidden Villa, 26780 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. hiddenvilla.org

FESTIVALS & FAIRS
Multicultural Festival The city of Mountain View's Multicultural Festival will feature a variety of entertainment, educational activities and exhibits. March 30, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Civic Center Plaza, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. search.facebook.com/events for more info.

TALKS & LECTURES


Building Your Child's Self-Confidence and Personal Power Castle Kids, certified parent educator and author, will discuss children’s social and emotional development. For parents of children ages 5-12. Adults only. March 27, 7-8:30 p.m. Mountain View Library, 985 Franklin St., Mountain View. mountainview.libcal.com

CHAC's 2nd Annual Changing Lives Together Breakfast Community Health Awareness Council presents the 2nd annual Changing Lives Together Breakfast hosted by LinkedIn. Keynote speaker Ronnie Lott will discuss "Overcoming Obits: Challenges of our Time." March 27, 7:30-8:30 a.m. LinkedIn, 700 East Midfield Road (LinkedIn Building 4), Mountain View. changinglivesbreakfast.eventbrite.com

Cubberville Park Palo Alto Public Art and artist Lencia Walsh present Cubberville Stock, a community dinner where diners share a home-cooked meal while listening to proposals about how to temporarily animate Cubberville. Diners vote for their favorite idea and the winner is awarded funding to support their project. March 26, 6-8:30 p.m. Cubberville Community Center, 4000 Midfield Road, Palo Alto. Search eventbrite.com for more info.

Brown Bears in Alaska Wildlife photographer Joan Sparks will share images of the brown bears inhabiting Cook Inlet in Alaska and discuss volcanoes in the "Ring of Fire" and brown bear behavior, among other topics. March 26, 7-8 p.m. Mountain View Library, 985 Franklin St., Mountain View. mountainview.libcal.com

OUTDOOR RECREATION
Hidden Villa's Forest Playgroup For kids ages 3-5. Hidden Villa’s Forest Playgroup explores nature and brown bear behavior, among other topics. March 26, 7-8 p.m. Mountain View Library, 985 Franklin St., Mountain View. mountainview.libcal.com

Home & Garden
"Dry Gardens: High Style for Low Water Gardens." March 27, 6-8 p.m. Garden, 1431 Waverley St., Palo Alto. Search eventbrite.com for more info.

BAWSCA's "Inlet in Alaska and discuss volcanoes in the "Ring of Fire" and brown bear behavior, among other topics. March 26, 7-8 p.m. Mountain View Library, 985 Franklin St., Mountain View. mountainview.libcal.com

MUSEUMS & EXHIBITS
Closing Reception: "Rock, Feather, Plume" Exhibition "The Rock, Feather, Plume" exhibition features Inverine Miner’s photographs of rare stones taken with a special lens and lights. March 22, 5-7 p.m. Community School of Music and Arts, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. arts4all.org

FILM
"Umumhum": Film Screening and Panel Discussion in partnership with the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, Hidden Villa will host a special screening of the film "Umumhum," about the creation of Amah Mutsun. March 27, 6-8 p.m. Hidden Villa, 26780 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. hiddenvilla.org

FOOD & DRINK
Brunch on the Farm Kids ages 6-12 learn to make an organic breakfast by gathering ingredients from the farm, collecting eggs from hens and harvesting vegetables from the garden. March 24, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. $25. Hidden Villa, 26780 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. hiddenvilla.org

LESSONS & CLASSES
"Earn It! Keep It! Save It!" Free Tax Preparation Help Free tax-preparation help is provided by IRS-certified volunteers and is available to households with a 2018 income of $55,000 or less. No appointments necessary. Saturdays through April 13. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Mountain View Library, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View. mountainview.libcal.com

Water-Wise Landscape Classes BAWSCA's Landscape Education Classes are designed to introduce homeowners, commercial property managers, landscape service providers and others to the concepts of water-efficient and sustainable landscaping. Next class focuses on pruning techniques for native plants & trees. March 28, 8-9:30 p.m. Mountain View Public Library, 585 Franklin St., Mountain View. bayareaconservation.org/landscape

OUTDOOR RECREATION
Hidden Villa's Forest Playgroup Hidden Villa’s Forest Playgroup consists of a walk from the farm to the creek trail with an experienced guide who will facilitate intentional experiences with the outdoor world. For kids ages 3-5 with parent or guardian. March 30, 10-11 a.m. Hidden Villa, 26780 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. hiddenvilla.org

Volunteer at Arastradero Preserve Volunteers participate in hands-on activities, including weeding, planting and creating habitat structures to improve conditions for the area’s wildlife. Every second and fourth Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon. Pearson-Arastradero Preserve, 1530 Arastradero Road, Palo Alto. Search eventbrite.com for more info.

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