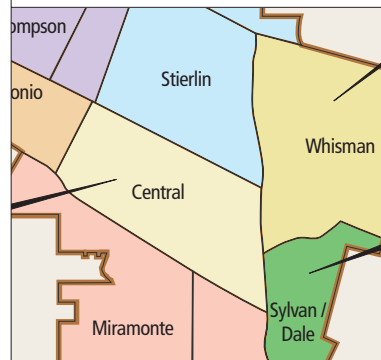


Mountain View VOICE



How you voted
We break down the votes for city council by neighborhood. | P.6

DECEMBER 22, 2006 VOLUME 14 NO. 52

INSIDE: HOME+GARDEN | PAGE 29

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Appeals court nixes Katz case

AFTER THREE-YEAR FIGHT, SUIT AGAINST MV WHISMAN PARCEL TAX TO BE DISMISSED

By Alexa Tondreau

Less than two weeks after his case against the Foothill-De Anza Community College District was thrown out, Saratoga attorney Aaron Katz faced similar bad tidings last Friday when a state appeals court ruled that he did not have standing to bring a case against the Mountain View Whisman School District.

The Sixth Court of Appeals ordered that the case be sent back to the trial court for dismissal, thereby ending Katz' lawsuit against the district's \$1.6 million Measure J parcel tax, approved by 69 percent of voters in March 2004.

The case was turned down by the court because Katz could not show that he suffered direct injury as a result of the enforcement of the law in question. Appellate court Judge J. Premo wrote the opinion, with judges P.J. Rushing and J. Elia concurring. They held that Katz' interest was indistinguishable from any person with an interest in a business entity in the Mountain View Whisman district.

Katz challenged the measure on the grounds that he wasn't allowed to vote on Measure J even though he would have to pay taxes as a Mountain View landowner. Measure J is a tax based on the total square footage of an individual parcel of

land, and Katz estimated that by owning 10 condos inside district boundaries he would pay \$750 annually.

The court's decision also hinged on a technicality, ruling that Katz failed to file his case in compliance with Corporation Code, and that he was not permitted to represent his real estate partners without an active law license. Though he has since reactivated his membership in the California State Bar, when the case was filed Katz was an inactive member.

Katz could not be reached for comment as of press time.

In comments made after release of the decision, district officials said MV Whisman has spent more than \$220,000 on the Katz lawsuit, and plans to pursue

the recovery of attorney's fees and other costs from Katz.

"At this point, we're working through the legal channels to do that," district board President

► See **KATZ**, page 8

MV Whisman plans to pursue the recovery of attorney's fees and other costs from Katz.



KARNA KURATA

BIG DIG IS DUG: Graham Middle School's new track and field is finally open, putting the lid on an eight million gallon reservoir beneath. Above, principal Alicia Henderson (in red) leads the entire school on its first walk around the track on Tuesday. See story, p. 10.

City appoints new fire chief

AFTER SIX-MONTH DELAY, INTERIM CHIEF MIKE YOUNG LANDS THE JOB

By Daniel DeBolt

The city didn't have to look far to find a new fire chief, officially handing the reigns of the department on Wednesday over to veteran firefighter Mike Young, who had been the interim chief since June.

Fire department spokesperson Lynn Brown said Young is a

great guy with plenty of local experience.

"Mike's a very stable guy, very organized," Brown said. "I think he's going to be a very good fire chief for the department and the city."



Mike Young

Young, 50, took on the role temporarily when former Chief Mark Revere left the post in June to become chief of the Novato Fire Department. Young was also the interim fire chief for eight months in 1992. He will oversee 69 firefighters and 16 other department staff.

"I find Mountain View to be a really fun and exciting place to

work," he said. Young described the city as fascinating, progressive and diverse while being "on the cutting edge for every city service we provide."

Young started his firefighting career in Santa Cruz in 1977 after getting the firefighting "bug" as a student at UC Santa Cruz. Moving to the fire department in Campbell, he was a captain and battalion chief. As the Campbell Fire Marshall he gained valuable experience working on fire

► See **FIRE CHIEF**, page 7



*For each new morning with its light
For rest and shelter of the night
For health and food, for love and friends
For everything thy goodness sends*

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

Seasons Greetings From Alain Pinel Realtors

Voices

AROUND TOWN

Asked in Downtown Mountain View. Pictures and interviews by Zunaira Durrani.

Joseph Barbera has died. Who was your favorite Hanna-Barbera character?



"Tom and Jerry. They were very funny. When I was young, they were usually played before a major movie. They were better than today's ads! They should do that now."

Janet Mohr, Mountain View



"Jetsons. When I was growing up, space was exotic and everything in the cartoon was so modern. I remember the wife [Jane] just had to press a couple of buttons to do the housework! There were anti-gravity cars and traffic jams in the air. ... It was a fun, futuristic series for a kid growing up."

Steve Scike, Woodside



"My favorite is Scooby Doo. He's my favorite dog. My cell phone answer tone is set to Scooby and Shaggy."

Lei Lani, Mountain View



"Tom and Jerry. I grew up watching them. I still watch them with my niece and nephew. I relate more to them than to any of the Disney characters."

Niraj Deshmukh, Charlotte, N.C.



"Papa Smurf. He's cool!"

Nhu Dong, San Jose

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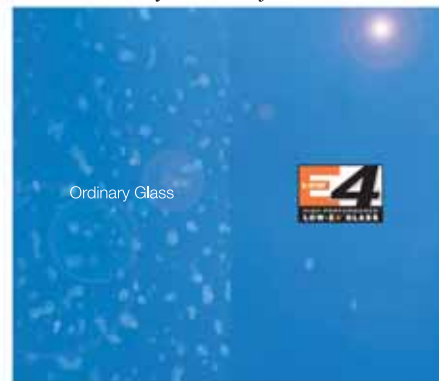
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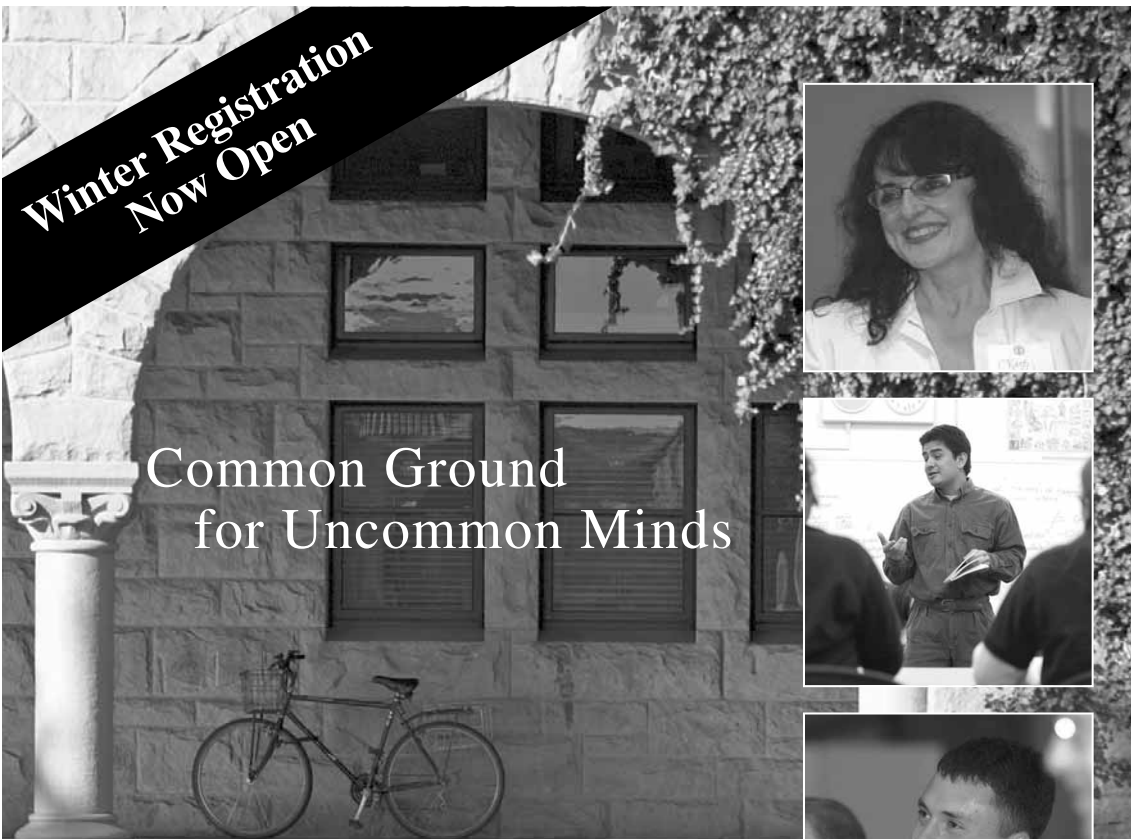
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■ CRIMEWATCH

ATTEMPTED ROBBERY, STEVENS CREEK NORTH OF CENTRAL EXPWY., 12/13

On Wednesday, at 6:38 p.m., a male biker riding along Stevens Creek trail was pushed by another biker approaching from behind. As the first biker crashed, three men in nearby bushes came out of a hiding place, surrounding him and demanding his wallet. The attempted robbery was disrupted when a passerby appeared on the trail. All four men ran away. Police are looking for suspects described as dark-haired Hispanic males in their teens, all of them 5'8" to 5'10" tall.

ARMED ROBBERY, SAN ANTONIO LIQUORS, 400 SAN ANTONIO RD., 12/15

At 9:41 p.m., three Hispanic males entered the liquor store, displaying a handgun and demanding cash from the store

clerk. They proceeded to tie up the clerk and take the cash. Customers discovered the clerk all tied up after the robbers had left the store. Police say the three suspects were wearing black hooded sweatshirts and could be in their late teens to early 20s. No arrests have been made.

ARMED ROBBERY, LAS MUSTACHES AQUARIA, 2483 OLD MIDDLEFIELD, 12/18

Three Hispanic armed men in dark clothes wearing masks entered the Las Mustaches Aquaria. They stole cash from the store employee and tied him up. As the robbers were leaving, they also approached a man in his car parked outside the store. They locked the passenger in the car trunk and took off with his stereo speakers and amplifiers. No arrests have been made.

■ POLICE LOG

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE
8300 block Jackson St., 12/15

AUTO BURGLARY
Century 16 Cinema, 12/16
1500 block N. Shoreline Bl., 12/17
500 block E. Middlefield Rd., 12/18

BATTERY
7600 block Luce Ct., 12/15
Century 16 Cinema, 12/15
Junction Ave./N. Rengstorff Ave.
700 block Continental Cir., 12/17
1700 Rock St., 12/18

COMMERCIAL BURGLARY
2600 block W El Camino Real, 12/14

DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE
1900 block Hackett Ave., 12/12
2000 block California St., 12/18

IDENTITY THEFT
Sears Dept. Store, 12/14

GRAND THEFT
Wal-Mart, 12/12
2500 block, Rengstorff Ave., 12/13
1600 block Plymouth St., 12/17
3500 block Amherst Ct., 12/18

PETTY THEFT
700 block Continental Cir., 12/16
500 block Showers Dr., 12/17
Sears Dept. Store, 12/18

ROBBERY
Ross Store, 12/15
2400 block Old Middlefield Way, 12/17

STOLEN VEHICLE
1900 block Latham St., 12/12
600 block Showers Dr., 12/14
2000 block Latham St., 12/15
Century 16 Cinema, 12/15
Train Station Downtown, 12/18

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES/PERSON
600 block Palo Alto Ave., 12/12
2100 Creeden Wy., 12/12
2500 block Solace Pl., 12/16
Rock Church, 12/16
1900 block Latham St., 12/17

VANDALISM
800 block W El Camino Real, 12/14
2000 block Horizon Ave., 12/16
500 block Castro St., 12/16
400 block Dell Ave., 12/18

■ CORRECTIONS

Last week the *Voice* reported that the condo development at 291 Evandale Ave. would produce \$216,000 in below market rate, or BMR, fees. The amount is actually \$2.16 million.

A story in last week's Health & Fitness section, "NovaSure proce-

dures gains in acceptance," incorrectly reported that Dr. Katherine Sutherland is affiliated with Camino Medical Group. In fact, Sutherland is affiliated with Women Physicians Ob-Gyn Medical Group (www.elcaminoobgyn.com).

The *Voice* regrets the errors.

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More kids than toys

By Don Frances

WHEN THE KIDS show up for a Christmas present and there's none to give, that's a problem. And when it's hundreds upon hundreds of kids showing up, that's a bigger problem.

Such is the dilemma facing the Mountain View Police Department, which this weekend holds its Cops That Care program at police headquarters downtown. All day Saturday, from 10 a.m. onward, low-income kids will arrive at the station in hopes of receiving a present — something humble, like a doll or small toy — courtesy of the department.

But as noted elsewhere in this paper (p. 13), the cops are short on presents this year. As Jim Bennett — the department's outgoing public information officer, chief diplomat and all-around nice guy — put it earlier this week: "Help!"

I'm embellishing that a little. But according to Bennett, donations this year have not even come close to the department's goals. In fact, they're behind last year's donations by as much as 50 percent, which is a big problem considering that organizers are expecting, as Bennett put it, "even *more* kids than last year's 1,700." That's a lot of kids.

I don't know why this year's charity is not up to snuff, but whatever the reason, there's very little time left to help. That's why everyone reading this is urged to head right over to the police department headquarters at 1000 Villa Street and drop off an unwrapped toy. The station is taking donated presents from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. up until Friday. Call Cops That Care

► See **EDITOR'S DESK**, page 11



Jonathan Castellanos and Emily Rosales look up at the board during an English class offered at the Day Worker Center in Mountain View on Monday.

KARNA KURATA

Eye of the storm

BESIDES EMPLOYMENT, WORKER CENTER OFFERS REFUGE FROM HARD LIFE LED BY IMMIGRANTS

By Daniel DeBolt

Inside the church on the corner of Escuela Avenue and California Street, a group of Latino immigrants are learning English in the recreation room, and waiting for possible employers to walk through the door.

One of them, Emily Rosales, is a Guatemalan immigrant who came to Mountain View three months ago after she lost her home in a hurricane. She said she and her husband had to leave their daughter behind to come to America and resolve their financial troubles. She also said she's received

so much help from the Day Worker Center that she doesn't know what she'd do without it.

Having just celebrated its 10th anniversary, the center seems to have found a niche in Mountain View, just like Rosales has. But changes may lie ahead.

The likelihood of Home Depot coming to Mountain View presents a challenge, because the chain store is often a magnet for day workers and could pull them away from the center. There is also talk of moving the center to a larger building along El Camino Real to make it more



► See **HOLIDAY FUND**, page 9

► See **MATH**, page 10

Mixed feelings over BMR fund use

TENANT GROUPS SAY DEVELOPERS, NOT CITY, SHOULD FOOT RELOCATION BILL

By Daniel DeBolt

When the city council decided to look into the use of below market rate (BMR) housing funds to relocate 250 displaced, low-income residents on Dec. 12, the residents of 291 Evandale Ave. clapped in appreciation, and some council members may have slept better that night knowing that help could be on the way for some of Mountain View's poorest families.

But originally, BMR funds,

which are collected from developers, were intended for the creation of new affordable housing in the city. That's why, in the days following the meeting, affordable housing advocates have responded to the idea with mixed feelings.

"Using BMR funds in this way in effect greases the skids under moving lower income residents out of their homes, and, in all likelihood, out of Mountain View," said Roy Hayter, a local affordable housing advocate, in an e-mail. "Such use amounts to a subsidy to the

very development that is causing residents to be displaced. If the development is a viable venture, it should be able to stand the cost of reasonable relocation expenses."

Human relations commissioner Alicia Crank also expressed concern over the proposed novel use of the funds.

"Though I am in favor of the council looking at tenant relocation funding options, I don't believe that BMR fees should be the primary source of those options," Crank said. "It should be

part of the developer's package." She added that if BMR fees end up being used, the city should stipulate that tenants relocate within Mountain View.

Crank said she believes the city's affordable housing problem is coming to a head, and the human relations commission has begun to look into the problem.

"There has been an increased outcry from the public about condo/townhouse conversions,

► See **BMR**, page 12

The final tally

ELECTION RESULTS SHOW CITY IN GENERAL AGREEMENT OVER ITS NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS

By Daniel DeBolt

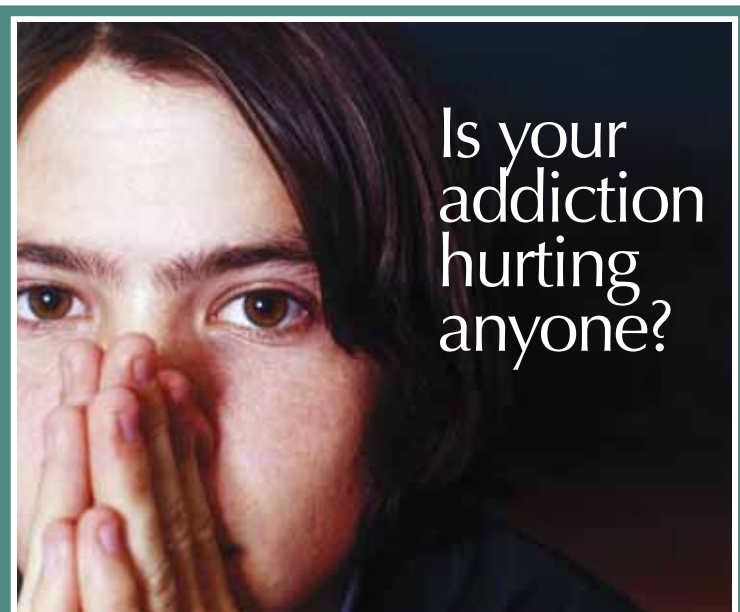
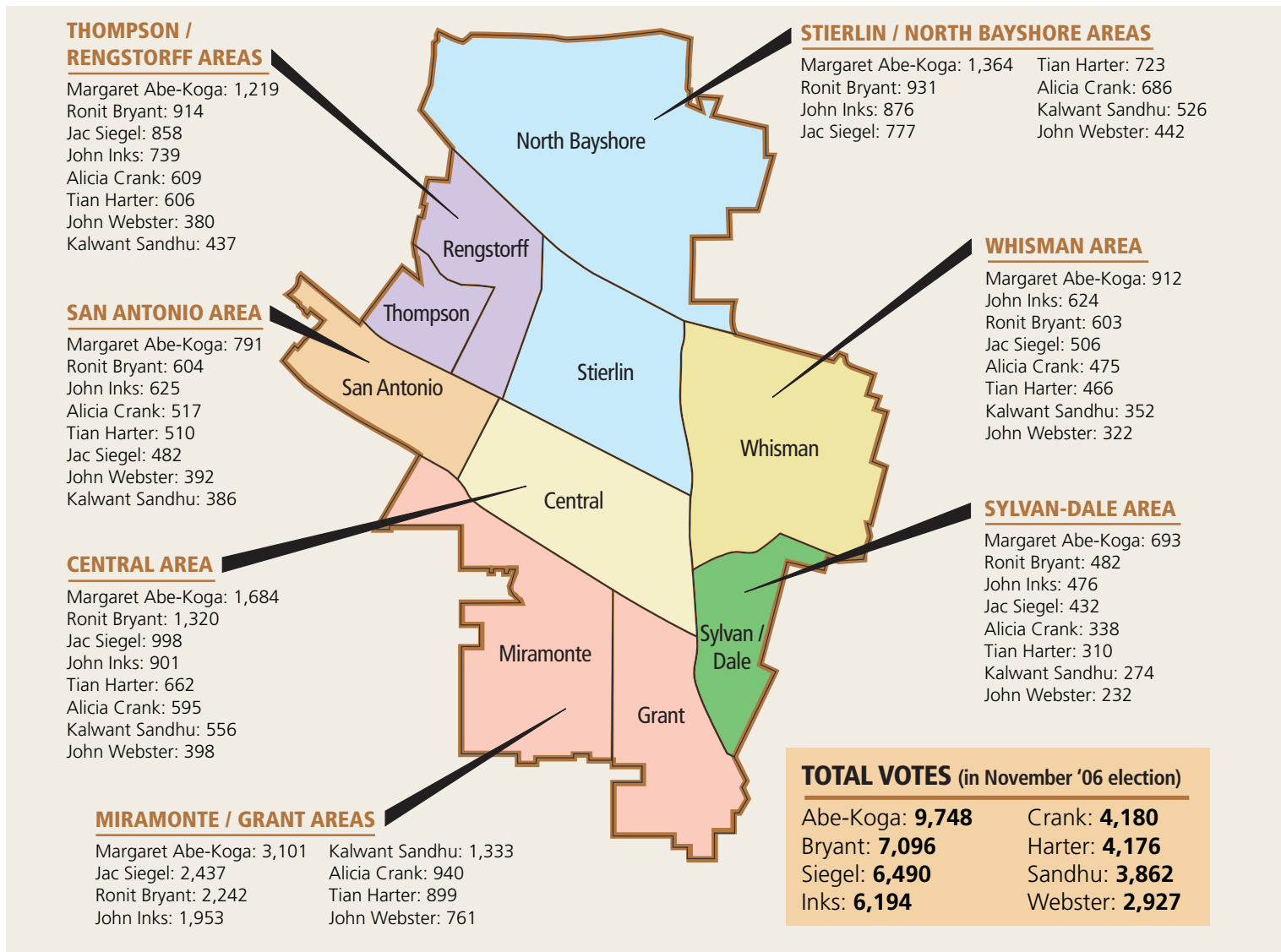
The County Registrar of Voters has released its official vote tally of Mountain View's 58 precincts, which the Voice tabulated to show trends within seven city regions.

While Jac Siegel, Margaret Abe-Koga and Ronit Bryant were the clear winners for city council, the results show that John Inks — a close fourth behind Siegel — beat Siegel in the San Antonio, Stierlin, North Bayshore, Whisman and Sylvan-Dale areas. In the Whisman area as well as in his own San Antonio neighborhood, Inks was more popular than both Bryant and Siegel, second only to Abe-Koga, who dominated throughout the city.

Inks lost the election south of El Camino Real, downtown and in the Monta Loma neighborhood, where Siegel was more popular with voters.

Other interesting results include the four-vote gap between Tian Harter and Alicia Crank, and Harter's popularity in his home neighborhood, Stierlin, as well as downtown. Also notable is Kalwant Sandhu's popularity south of El Camino Real.

There is a slight margin of error in the tabulation, partly because the Registrar of Voters paired one precinct south of El Camino with a precinct downtown. The pairing of precincts cut the city's 58 precincts to 36, and gave the southern neighborhood about 100 extra votes in the tabulation. ■



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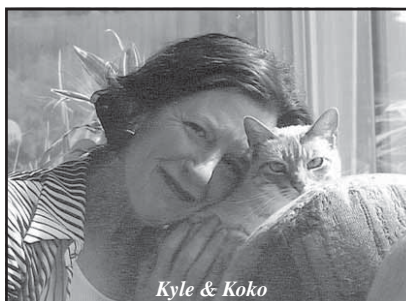
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NASA, Google form rocket-powered partnership

COMPANY HOPES TO ORGANIZE AGENCY'S VAST AMOUNTS OF DATA; MOFFETT PLAN STILL IN WORKS

By Daniel DeBolt

In the not-too-distant future people may be able to experience the virtual reality of Mars, the "crunch of Martian soil on their feet" and the planet's "wind on their face," according to NASA-Ames director S. Pete Worden.

Worden made the comment at a press conference Monday, where NASA and Google announced a formal partnership to make NASA's "terabytes and terabytes" of data available to the public. Worden, a science fiction fan, said he hoped for a technology similar to Star Trek's "holodeck" to bring people to faraway planets in a virtual reality.

Google already has plans less far-fetched, including real time weather forecasting and a ver-

sion of Google Earth that would take Internet users to the moon, Mars and future space stations for three dimensional tours.

Worden expressed frustration that NASA's vast databanks were often hard to access for scientists, and said Google would help restructure the information.

Analysts said the agreement is a milestone for NASA that will effect how it partners with the private sector in the future. Worden said there is nothing exclusive about its deal with Google, and that NASA is making similar deals with other unnamed companies.

NASA business director Chris C. Kemp said Google's mission was in line with the agency's needs.

"NASA has collected and processed more information about our planet and universe than any other entity in the history of humanity," Kemp said. "We have an obligation to reach out to the private sector [to get this information out]."

Meanwhile, Google's plans

to build a million-square-foot campus at the NASA-Ames facility at Moffett Field are still in the early planning stages, said Google engineering director Daniel Clancy. Google's voracious appetite for commercial real estate recently included the purchase of one million square feet of office space in two large buildings near its existing "Googleplex" in Mountain View.

NASA has not yet paid Google for taking on the task of making its data available. Megan Smith, Google's new business development director, said Google has paid NASA for some research work, but Google is getting NASA's data for free, as will any other interested party, Worden said.

But to understand how to navigate NASA's vast databanks right now can take "months" of training, Worden said. ▣

E-mail Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com

FIRE CHIEF

► Continued from page 1

prevention and suppression. For the last 18 years he has been a battalion chief for Mountain View.

In 2000 Young started the Overhead Support Team for the county, which provides specially trained command staff for major fire incidents county-wide. A month ago the team tackled a natural gas fire in San Jose that injured several firefighters and police officers. Over the summer a wildfire in the foothills near Milpitas required their support. He continues to work as team coordinator for the program, which is called in for action four to five times a year.

He also helped design and managed construction of the fire station on Shoreline Boulevard. Another accomplishment was turning what used to be a lengthy review process for fire permits into a "one stop" review process in 1994.

Young, who lives in San Jose, has also been a teacher at Cabrillo and Mission community colleges where he taught fire science and emergency response training. He went to Cabrillo College in Santa Cruz himself, earning an A.S. in fire science. At Saint Mary's College in Moraga he earned a B.A. in management.

In a press release, city manger Kevin Duggan said Young has great communication skills and

is committed to public safety education.

"The city of Mountain View and the Mountain View Fire Department are very fortunate to have someone of Chief Young's knowledge, experience and expertise willing and able to become fire chief," Duggan said. "Mike young has almost 30 years of fire service experience in all of its facets." ▣

E-mail Daniel DeBolt at ddbolt@mv-voice.com

OBITUARY

LUCY C. MALTZ

Lucy C. Maltz passed away in her Mountain View home on Monday, Dec. 4, after a brief battle with cancer. Her husband, Frederick Maltz, was by her side. She was 70 years old.

Maltz earned her bachelor's degree in education from San Jose State, then taught fourth grade for eight years before

retiring to follow her husband in his career.

Maltz is survived by her brother Anthony Ferrucci; her sister Ann Ryan; and many nieces and nephews.

A celebration of her life took place on Dec. 9 at Spangler Mortuary in Mountain View. Donations may be sent to the American Cancer Society or to KQED San Francisco.

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KATZ

► Continued from page 1

Fiona Walter said. District officials said the \$220,000 used in the fight was paid for by voters' tax dollars, as funds came out of taxes collected through Measure J.

Rebecca Wright, the district's financial officer, said in a statement that \$220,000 "could have provided our students with, for example, more than 8,500 hours of library time — almost two more hours per day per school over the last three years."

Measure J was put on the ballot in 2004 to raise money for art and music programs, school libraries, smaller class sizes, and to benefit teaching and clerical staff. Before the measure passed, Walter said, each school in the district was "down to one school secretary. No one could take lunch."

Early on, the district won a court ruling allowing it to collect and spend taxes from Measure J despite Katz' lawsuit. Measure J extends to 2009.

Other special districts in the area that have tried to raise funds through bond measures — the Foothill-De Anza, West Valley-Mission and El Camino Hospital districts — were less fortunate when Katz sued them, because his suits held up sale of their bonds, which in turn prevented the districts from going forward with planned projects. While the Foothill-De Anza case is headed for the court of appeals, West Valley-Mission settled with Katz for \$60,000.

El Camino also settled, paying Katz \$200,000 so it could proceed with construction of a new, seismically retrofitted hospital. Just last month the hospital was finally able to sell \$148 million in general obligation bonds approved by voters in November 2003. The sale was negotiated with CitiGroup Global Markets at an overall interest rate of 4.45 percent.

With the lawsuit settled, the MV Whisman district will continue to collect Measure J taxes until 2009, allocating all of the money for education programs.

"We appreciate the community's support," board president Walter said. "It's been a long run." ■

E-mail Alexa Tondreau at atondreau@mv-voice.com

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About the Holiday Fund



Abel Aquilar Hernandez works with a volunteer instructor during an English class offered at the Day Worker Center on Monday.

KARNA KURATA

Voice readers who want to increase the impact of their charitable donations this season can give to the Holiday Fund, which helps arrange dollar-for-dollar matching grants that can double the size of contributions to six local nonprofit agencies.

This year, the Wakerly Family Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation will match, to the extent possible, all contributions to the Voice Holiday Fund

on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Last year, Voice readers gave \$23,000, which after the matching grants created a total contribution of \$46,000, or \$7,600 for each of the six nonprofit agencies.

This year, all funds received will be held by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, and be dispersed to the six nonprofit agencies in February or early March. No fees are assessed by the foundation, so that 100 percent of every contribution will go to the nonprofit agencies.

HOLIDAY FUND

► Continued from page 5

visible and handle more workers.

“There’s just more energy than there was previously,” observed Paddy Sullivan about the English class in session. He’s the son of the center’s English teacher, Sue Sullivan, and visits regularly. He called it a very “tight community” at the center, with a high level of respect. “It’s like it’s run on heart,” he said.

Matt Tompkins, a student at UC Santa Barbara, works as an office assistant at the center. He travels back and forth to school once a week, and is doing research on the cost of immigration for people who have left Guatemala for the U.S. He said he’s talked to people who had to put up the deed for their land to make the trip, then were caught and had to return home, only to pay another smuggler to return them to the U.S.

Some have paid to make the trip with their life. Abel Aguilar Hernandez said he saw a man die during his difficult trek from Vera Cruz Mexico.

“I never want to return to that moment,” he said through a translator.

Hernandez also said he had to leave behind his children to make the trip. He said his sons and his wife were his “inspiration,” and he plans to return in a year to be with them again. Until then, Mountain View will be his home because it’s “tranquil” here, he said, even if it is harder to find work sometimes.

Finding work, of course, is what the Worker Center is all about — and why Hernandez was waiting there with the rest on a recent weekday. In Vera Cruz he was an artist, and he was able to sell some of his paintings for money, but he says he lives with too many people to have space for that now.

He said working through the center gets him better pay. Sometimes, he said, he’d work and then not get paid at all — but at the Day Worker Center, director Maria Marroquin makes sure the employers pay up, he said. ▀

E-mail Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com

Mountain View Voice Holiday Fund donations Nov. 20 through Dec. 18

Anonymous (23).....	\$7,505
Ben DeBolt.....	\$50
Barbara and Tom Lustig.....	\$300
Stephen and Ruth Anderson.....	\$250
Anthony and Wendy Chang.....	\$500
Rudolph and Jane Bahr.....	*
James and Marilyn Lane.....	\$250
Linda Cook.....	*
Ron Stephens.....	\$200
Silvia Newark.....	*
Ed Perry and Laurie Bonilla.....	\$400
Anne Johnston.....	*
Ed Taub.....	\$72
Bruce and Twana Karney.....	\$100
Mary and Christopher Dateo.....	\$250
Dan Shane.....	\$100
Carmel Mould.....	*
Xinh Huynh.....	*
Greg Fowler and Julie Lovins.....	*
Randa Mulford.....	*
John and Rada Ford.....	*
Karen DeMello.....	*
Linda and David Williams.....	*
Tom and Betty Zeidel.....	*
John and Jennifer Capelo.....	\$100
Trish Hernandez and Sean Arnold.....	\$100
Edith and David Davis.....	*
Brendan Timmer.....	\$600
Rune Dahl and Sharlene Gee.....	*
George Petersen.....	*
Lyle and Sally Sechrest.....	\$100
Robert and Virginia Downs.....	\$20
Mr. and Mrs. Wesley D. Smith.....	\$200
Paul and Sarah Donahue.....	\$200

Roy and Janet Hayter.....	\$1,000
Kevin and Robin Duggan.....	*
Dorothy Meier.....	*
Jim Cochran.....	\$600
Julie and Peter Reynolds.....	*
Carl Stoffel.....	\$100
St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church.....	\$2,309
Greg and Linda Kannall.....	*
Ed and Harriet Yu.....	\$250
Mary Artibee.....	*
George Wortiska.....	\$50
Job Lopez.....	\$200

In Memory/Honor:

Rudolph and Jane Bahr in memory of Kate Wakerly
 James and Marilyn Lane in memory of Mildred Moellinger
 Ed Taub in memory of Constance Gish
 Greg Fowler and Julie Lovins in honor of Anne Bakotich
 Linda and David Williams for the Community Services Agency (MV-LA)
 Brendan Timmer in memory of David J. Timmer
 Dorothy Meier in memory of her parents
 The Tirva Family in memory of Reni Blum, Mark Turos and Ruth Caron
 Mary Artibee in memory of Lennox Sweeney
 George Wortiska in honor of Emily Arcolino
 Job Lopez in memory of Kate Wakerly and immigrants who have lost their lives crossing the U.S.-Mexico border

Total..... \$19,521

How to Give

Your gift helps children and others in need



Contributions to the Holiday Fund will be matched dollar for dollar, to the extent possible, and will go directly to the nonprofit agencies that serve Mountain View residents. Last year, readers contributed \$23,000, which was matched dollar for dollar for a total of

\$46,000, or \$7,600 for each agency.

No administrative costs are deducted from the gifts, which are tax-deductible as permitted by law. All donations are shared equally by the six recipient agencies listed here.

This year, the following agencies will be supported by the Holiday Fund:

- **THE COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW AND LOS ALTOS.**
Assists homeless families and seniors with short term housing and medical care; the CSA shelter is a cooperative effort between 17 faith communities in Mountain View and Los Altos.
- **THE COMMUNITY HEALTH AWARENESS COUNCIL**
Serves Mountain View, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and seven school districts. Offers school-based programs to protect students from high-risk behaviors, such as drug and alcohol abuse.
- **MOUNTAIN VIEW ROTACARE CLINIC**
Provides uninsured community residents with medical care and medications and is frequently the last resort for this underserved clientele.
- **DAY WORKER CENTER OF MOUNTAIN VIEW**
Provides a secure place for workers and employers to negotiate wages. Serves 50 or more workers per day with job-matching, English lessons and guidance.
- **THE SUPPORT NETWORK FOR BATTERED WOMEN**
Operates a 24-hour bilingual hotline, a safe shelter for women and their children and offers counseling and other services for families facing this problem.
- **COMMUNITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND ARTS**
Provides hands-on arts and music projects in the elementary classrooms of the Mountain View-Whisman School District. Nearly 40 percent of the students are low-income and 28 percent have limited English proficiency.

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School's 'Big Dig' finally complete

NEW RESERVOIR HIDDEN UNDER PLAYING FIELD AT GRAHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL

By Daniel DeBolt

After a year and a half of construction, the city's eight million gallon water storage tank under the fields at Graham Middle School is complete. Truckloads of dirt were excavated, neighbors were annoyed, a tank was constructed, a state-of-the-art track and field was laid down and the city wrote checks totaling \$19.8 million.

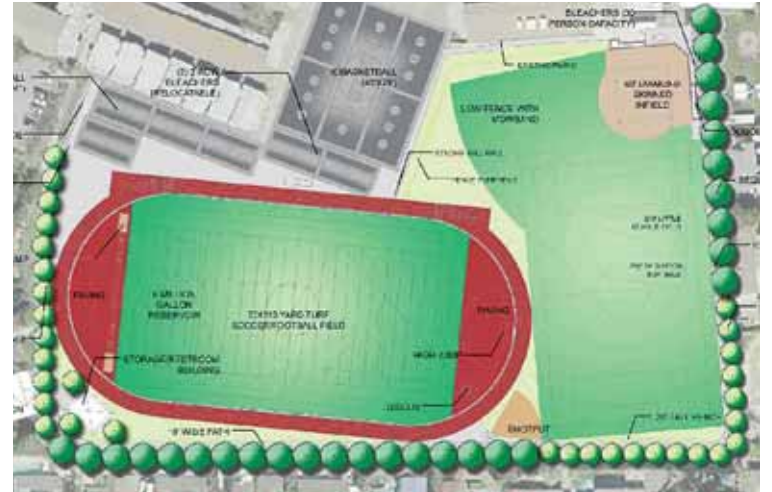
At a Dec. 16 ceremony, everyone involved was thanked, including past city councils which moved forward even though the project was almost unprecedented.

"A lot of councils might say 'this sounds risky,'" city manager Kevin Duggan said. He also thanked the councils for staying committed to the project when it was found that the cost was going to double.

As the project progressed, it was given nicknames. Graham Principal Judy Crates called the project "The Big Dig." The pile of dirt excavated for the reservoir was called "Mt. Graham" and the hole dug was called "Graham Canyon."

The reservoir may be used for emergency purposes. Many speculate the water will be in higher demand when repairs are done to the Hetch-Hetchy aqueduct, which supplies the Peninsula with water.

"Thirst itself has done more to drive history than anything else,"



COURTESY GRAPHIC

This artist's rendering shows Graham Middle School's new track and field, which sits on top of an eight million gallon reservoir.

said Maurice Ghysels, superintendent of the Mountain View Whisman school district. "What goes on [with our water supply] can make us peaceful or make us go to war."

The Graham band played the "Washington March" before the ceremony. The Mountain View Marauders cheerleading team, coming off a national cheerleading competition victory, performed on the new field with its bright green turf.

Duggan called the field "the best one for a middle school in the state of California, wouldn't you say?"

County Supervisor Liz Kniss,

who represents Mountain View, said she was "enormously impressed" with the project.

"It tells me this is a city that knows how to work together," she said.

For the dedication's finale, city and school officials unveiled a plaque for the project, embedded in a rock next to the new fields. The track and field was officially opened — and on Tuesday, Graham's entire student body and faculty walked a ceremonial first lap around the track to break it in. ▣

E-mail Daniel DeBolt at ddebolt@mv-voice.com

MATH

► Continued from page 5

were flunking at a rate of 54 percent. While not all students in the ninth grade take algebra, and in fact many go straight into geometry, the figure is alarming when compared to students coming from Blach Middle School in the Los Altos School District, who received failing grades in the same class at a rate of only 5 percent.

Looking at the two high schools separately, the performance of MV Whisman students at Mountain View High School is improving slightly in Algebra 1, but it is declining at Los Altos High School. Sarraf said, however, that based on the California Standards Test (CST), the overall scores are unacceptable.

Sarraf said she thought the issue boiled down to "a matter of language, poverty and race."

Scores from MV Whisman show that the populations who scored the lowest are Hispanic, English-language learners, and students with disabilities.

"Some students are doing

exceedingly well," Sarraf said, "and there are some who desperately need our collective attention and help."

Data from the elementary school district showed that in the last three years of CST testing, more students scored in the "advanced" category, but more also scored in the "far below basic" category — data which supports Sarraf's notion of a large divide among student achievement.

"Math is a real separator between the haves and the have-nots, and those who can make it in college and those who can't," MV Whisman Superintendent Maurice Ghysels said at the meeting.

One factor that may contribute to the low math achievement is that state standards have become much more rigorous in recent years. Starting in 1999, the math standards moved down one grade level, meaning that students in the fifth grade, for example, are now taking a math course previously offered in the sixth.

But Sarraf cautioned that "waiting until the state catches up to this would definitely be a big mistake."

Ideas for solutions were presented at the meeting. MV Whisman officials said fourth grade students are an important population to target with early math remediation. In fourth grade the curriculum becomes significantly more difficult, Lairon said, and the class size goes from 20 to 30 students, meaning one-on-one instruction is less likely. Stepping in during that critical year could set students on a better path, she reasoned.

The MV Whisman district will begin implementing its own standardized math testing this year, using a software program called EduSoft to help it analyze the results. "Interventions" such as increased time spent in math classes, possibly up from one hour to one and a half, and summer school options are being considered as well.

Officials from both districts agreed that the strongest tool they could use to enhance student success was open communication.

"I have a lot of confidence that if we put our heads together we can do even better," Lairon said. ▣

EDITOR'S DESK

► Continued from page 5

program founder Officer Ron Cooper at (650) 903-6712 for more information.

WHILE I'M IN finger-wagging mode, the holidays are always a time for warnings and imprecations (particularly in my e-mail in-box), so here's a couple to share:

First of all, says the Regional Water Quality Control Plant, don't go dumping all your fats, oil and grease down the drain, because that clogs the sewer lines and can "block sanitary sewer lines and result in overflows into homes, and onto streets. Street overflows can then drain untreated into creeks and the Bay and threaten wildlife. Cleanups

are expensive, unpleasant, and inconvenient to entire neighborhoods."

Here's a tip from me on what to do with the grease from your Christmas-morning bacon: while it's still warm, pour it into an empty soup can or other disposable container. Then after it cools and hardens, toss it.

Second of all, according our local Red Cross, now is the time when lots of people accidentally set their homes on fire. This is usually caused by obvious things, like putting a lit candle next the curtains, or a space heater close to a polyester blanket, or some such. So don't do that.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays. ■

Don Frances can be reached at dfrances@mv-voice.com.

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Dr. Robert Lehman, adolescent medicine specialist, explores the challenges that moms face in raising adolescent boys and offers ideas on how to strengthen the relationship between mothers and their sons as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

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BMR

► Continued from page 5

specifically in the area of renter/tenant relocation," she said in an

e-mail. "I have received numerous phone calls and e-mails from renters (displaced by the conversions and otherwise) feeling that the city does not care if they will be able to remain in Mountain

View, since they cannot afford to purchase the condos their apartments are being converted into."

The BMR fund is likely to be a priority topic when the new city council is seated and sets goals in

January. Council member-elect Margaret Abe-Koga said using the BMR fees for relocation is a practical solution — for now.

Incoming council member Ronit Bryant is not sure yet if she would support using BMR fees for relocation, saying that she would look into it more at a future council study session.

Incoming member Jac Siegel said he definitely supports using the funds for relocation, but also wants developers to pay for relocation as well.

"I have no problem whatsoever

to use BMR funds to help relocate [displaced tenants]," Siegel said. "These are the poorest and neediest in our community."

While helping tenants relocate is good, most agree it's not a permanent solution to the problem. With the city projected to have \$30 million to \$50 million in BMR fees coming in over the next decade, the council will feel increased pressure to spend the money. ▽

Next week, the Voice will examine the city's options for spending its growing BMR fund.



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MV police need gifts for tots

HOLIDAY PROGRAM SO FAR NOT MEETING ITS GOALS, OFFICERS SAY

By Zunaira Durrani

On Christmas Eve, thousands of children in Mountain View will be unwrapping toys through the Cops That Care community program. But in order to reach all the children, the police department will need more donated toys.

"Our donation of toys for this year's Cops That Care program is significantly behind last year's donations, by some estimates 50 percent less," explained Officer Jim Bennett. "The big concern is we are anticipating even more kids than last year's 1,700."

The program will be held this Saturday, so officers are asking for help right away. New unwrapped toys and gift certificate contributions can be brought to police department headquarters at 1000 Villa

"We are anticipating even more kids than last year's 1,700."

JIM BENNETT

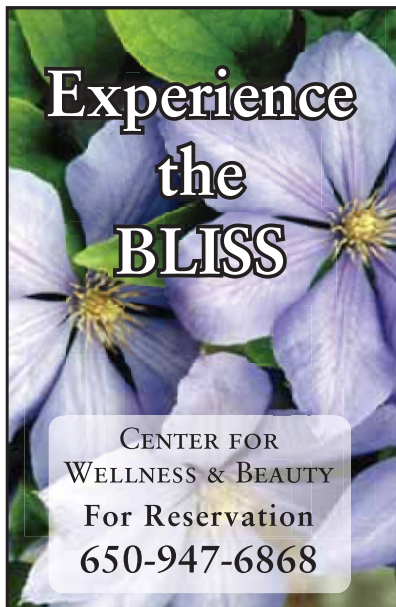
Street between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. up until Friday, Dec. 22.

Now in its fourth year, the Cops That Care gift collection program has brought joy to thousands of needy children in Mountain View. The gift giveaway will follow a ceremony at the department headquarters on Saturday, Dec. 23 at 10 a.m., and will continue until 8 p.m.

During that time, children in need are invited to bring their parents and pick out a gift of their choice.

The public's contribution of a doll, toy truck or other item to the Cops That Care program could make all the difference, Bennett said. For more information, contact program founder Officer Ron Cooper at (650) 903-6712. ▀

E-mail Zunaira Durrani at zdurrani@mv-voice.com



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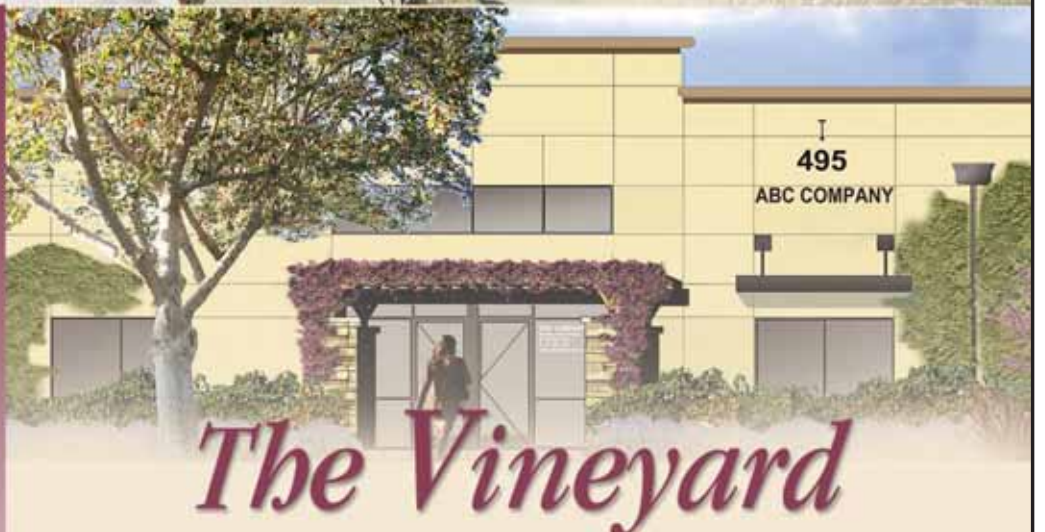
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NO-FAIL MOCHA NUT FUDGE

1 jar (7-1/2 ounce) marshmallow creme
1 cup sugar
2/3 cup evaporated milk
1/2 stick butter
3 tablespoons instant coffee powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 package (12 ounce) semisweet chocolate bits
1 cup chopped walnuts

Combine marshmallow creme, sugar, evaporated milk, butter, coffee powder and salt in medium-size saucepan. Bring to a full boil. Boil five minutes over medium heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat.

Add chocolate bits, stirring until chocolate is melted and smooth. Stir in 1/2 cup nuts. Pour into foil-lined 9-inch square baking pan. Top with remaining nuts.

Chill for at least two hours or until firm. Cut into squares. Cover tightly and store in refrigerator.

2 cups finely chopped pecans

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Roll dough into 1-inch balls and place on cookie sheets. Bake at 300 degrees for 15-20 minutes. Roll in powdered sugar while warm. Makes 4 dozen.

TOFFEE BARS

1 cup butter
1 cup brown sugar
1 egg yolk
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups sifted flour
1 cup semisweet chocolate bits
1 cup chopped walnuts

GIFT COFFEE CAKE

(The Harried Hostess Cookbook)

1 pkg. yellow cake mix
1/4 cup butter (cold)
1 cup brown sugar
3/4 cup chopped walnuts
3 eggs
1 1/2 cups sour cream

Topping

Process 2/3 cup of cake mix with the cold butter until crumbly. Mix in sugar and walnuts by hand. Set aside.

Cake

In another bowl, beat eggs. Stir in sour cream. Blend in remaining cake mix.

Pour half of the cake batter into 2 greased and floured loaf pans. Sprinkle with half the topping. Repeat. Bake at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes. Makes 2 coffee cakes. Freezes well.

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■ EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

Who pays to help displaced tenants?

The city council let its heart get in the way of sound judgment last week when it decided to look into using below market rate (BMR) housing fees to help defray relocation costs for tenants at 291 Evandale Ave.

We say this not because we think these mostly low-income residents don't deserve the help — they do — but because the funds should not be taken from BMR fees paid by the developer in lieu of building a few more affordable units into the complex. Instead, the BMR money should be added to the city's coffers and saved to help build more housing for low income residents.

The Evandale case is particularly poignant because rents there are said to be just about the lowest in Mountain View for family housing. When they are forced out in six months or so, tenants will not find comparably low-priced housing anywhere in the city.

The council voted to have city staff look into using a portion of the fees to help tenants relocate. But by setting the precedent of using BMR funds for these expenses, future developers may shirk their responsibility when they convert affordable units to condominiums costing \$500,000 or more — far beyond the prices most tenants can afford.

Admittedly, the council's good intention is to simply soften the blow by providing more cash to help tenants make the transition to what will almost certainly be pricier housing elsewhere. But by doing so, the city will set a precedent that is likely to give other developers the idea that they too can shirk their responsibility to help displaced tenants find a new rental home for about the same price.

Tenants' rights advocates appear to agree that the idea should be discarded. "If the development is a viable venture, it should be able to stand the cost of reasonable relocation expenses," said Roy Hayter, a local affordable housing advocate. "Using BMR funds in this way in effect greases the skids under moving lower income residents out of their homes, and, in all likelihood, out of Mountain View. Such use amounts to a subsidy to the very development that is causing residents to be displaced."

The Evandale developer (who currently owns the property) had already promised a full deposit refund, a \$500 moving allowance, a six-month notice and bilingual consultation on a new housing search. At last week's council meeting, the developer added a month's free rent to the deal.

If the council is serious about helping displaced tenants, members could make a relocation package a part of the approval process, and require developers to pay for it. For example, if the Evandale developer gave \$4,000 to each of the 64 households for relocation expenses — which, as anyone who has moved recently can tell you, is not unreasonable — that would cost the developer a total \$256,000.

By comparison, if the Evandale project sells its planned 144 units for \$500,000 each, the developers will gross \$72 million, a huge sum. Even after all building and other expenses have been deducted, it seems certain that a relocation package would be more than covered by the profits.

The city's BMR fees should not be used for a purpose the developers can easily afford.

■ LETTERS VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

NOT ALIGNED WITH KATZ IN RECENT LAWSUITS

Editor:

A letter by Allen Price appears in your Dec. 15 issue. You entitled the letter "Katz and Wesley don't speak for us." In the same issue is a lengthy editorial attack on Aaron Katz by managing editor Don Frances. Mr. Frances, or someone, had previously presented an editorial lumping me together with Mr. Katz and suggesting that we were out for money.

The truth is that I have never been involved in any of the lawsuits filed by Mr. Katz and have never joined him in arguing that the voting scheme for local tax measures (where voters vote and property owners pay) is unconstitutional.

I did agree with Mr. Katz, however, that the \$490.8 million bond measure on the June 2006 ballot in the Foothill-De Anza Community College District failed to include a "list of the specific school facilities projects to be funded" as required by the California Constitution for a measure which receives as little as 55 percent approval (of those voting). There is no appellate court decision which defines

that phrase in the law. Approval at 55 percent was just authorized by passage of an amendment to the state constitution in November 2000 (Proposition 39).

To illustrate my point, I gave the college district, under the slippery language of this bond measure, could later decide to use all of the money for one giant telescope or a nuclear reactor. The attorneys for the college district had no answer but still won the case — in the lowest court.

Whether Measure C was written in contravention of the California Constitution is ultimately a question of law properly considered by a higher court — not just by the first local judge who gets to hear the case.

Gary Wesley
Continental Circle

SOLUTION TO 'MUSICAL CHAIRS' IN LOCAL POLITICS

Editor:

"Musical chairs," a Dec. 15 Voice front-page headline, was an apt metaphor describing Santa Clara County's politi-

► See LETTERS page 18



■ GUEST OPINION

Local government gone wrong

SATAKE VOTE SHOWED CITY COUNCIL'S DISRESPECT FOR THE PEOPLE IT REPRESENTS

By Bill Krepick

At the Dec. 12 city council meeting, 155 of my neighbors petitioned the council requesting that it adopt city staff recommendations and approve an R1-7 zoning district — meaning 7,000-square-foot minimum lot size — for the proposed development on the Satake Nursery site at 1079 Marilyn Drive.

According to a Nov. 15 staff report, there are 204 homes in the “affected” neighborhood. More than three-quarters of these homes (my 155 neighbors) signed the petition and urged the council to adopt the staff recommendations. Of the 163 neighbors who were actually contacted, 95 percent signed the petition, and only 5 percent opposed R1-7 zoning.

Of the 204 affected homes, only nine are situated on lots of less than 7,000 square feet, while 173, or 85 percent, are on lots larger than 8,000 square feet. The developer requested R1 zoning — meaning 6,000-square-foot minimum lot size — and proposed to build 30 new two-story homes. The staff recommended the compromise “transition” zoning of R1-7 to avoid an obvious non-conforming situation between the existing neighborhood and the developer’s proposal.

So what did the council members do? They totally ignored the data and the citizen input and voted to support the developer’s request and zone the property

R1. Their rationale was that 60 percent of the neighborhood is zoned R1 and that should be the determining factor — not actual lot size, not neighborhood character, and not zoning conformity.

This logic is specious, but convenient to support their pro-developer stance. The existing neighborhood’s R1 zoning designation can be traced back to the 1950s, when the Satakes sold off part of their land for single family residences on 8,000-square-foot lots. The neighborhood’s R1

status is a relic of the past that in no way reflects the reality of the present.

The council chose to ignore hard data, the professional recommendation of the city planners, and the input

from a super-majority of neighbors. It is a sad commentary on local government when the politicians are so arrogant and disrespectful in their disregard for the facts and citizen input. One council member had the audacity to say that in order to remain consistent with his prior voting record he had to vote against the neighbor’s wishes because he had done so on several recent developments!

I would encourage the *Voice* to track individual council members’ votes on important issues and to keep a running tabulation on the *Voice*’s Web site. I would encourage citizens to pay attention to which individual council members have a voting record that favors developers and goes against neighborhood preservation — and to cast your vote in a

more informed manner during the next election.

Lastly, I hope that the three incoming council members will live up to their campaign promises to listen to residents and preserve neighborhoods.

Bill Krepick lives on Meadow Lane.

This logic is specious, but convenient to support their pro-developer stance.



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■ GUEST OPINION

Charity needs strategy

REGION'S INNOVATION COULD BE BETTER APPLIED DURING SEASON OF GIVING

By Emmett D. Carson

In my first five weeks as CEO of the newly created Silicon Valley Community Foundation, I have been overwhelmed by the vibrancy and innovation taking place throughout our community.

People with ideas and energy are constantly finding new ways to collaborate with each other to form new ventures with the promise of making our lives easier, more efficient and more fulfilling. There appears to be a widespread understanding that the region's economic success depends in large part on the for-

tunes of the tech industry.

Unfortunately, that same recognition of interconnectedness does not appear to have permeated the region's thinking about our charitable giving.

The energy, passion, innovation and desire to collaborate that characterize the region's approach to business development are not readily evident when one examines the charitable landscape. People in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties are generous; however that generosity is often specialized around a very narrow area of interest and localized to a par-

ticular community. When this occurs, the philanthropy takes place without a broader regional context that could enhance and strengthen a community's local work.

In other words, understanding regional trends and opportunities would better allow individuals to direct their charitable giving in ways that would strengthen their local communities. Collaborating with others throughout the region on common interests is far more likely to result in the same innovation and risk-taking that we see all around us in Silicon Valley. It would also help to interest all donors in all areas of the community as being worthy of their attention and support.

The issues of affordable housing and health care, inadequate public education, increasing traffic congestion and preserving open

space cannot be solved without understanding the regional context in which local solutions will be implemented. For example, in my first week, I was made aware of three new and completely separate multi-city initiatives involving public schools in which the proponents had no knowledge of the other efforts and no easy way to find out about their existence.

The hope and aspiration of the new Silicon Valley Community Foundation is to become a place where regional strategies can be developed and local solutions tested and, where successful, replicated. We aspire to be a place where like-minded donors can share ideas, find common cause and represent a new vanguard in bringing innovative solutions to the challenges facing our communities.

As you consider contributing

to the *Voice's* Holiday Fund and other worthwhile causes this holiday season, I ask that you take the time to consider how your gift will not only serve specific local needs but reinforce a larger strategy. If you'd like to learn more about how giving locally can also support the region as a whole, the community foundation as well as other organizations are certainly prepared to help.

Yes, this will take time and will require more than writing the check. It will, however, result in developing a new civic ethic in which our children and grandchildren will be the beneficiaries for decades to come.

Emmett D. Carson, Ph.D., is CEO and president of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. To learn more about the Foundation, visit www.siliconvalleycf.org.

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LETTERS

► Continued page 16

cal dilemma. In two years Sally Lieber's state Assembly seat will be yanked out from under her by term limits. So will Mike Kasperzak's Mountain View City Council seat be up for grabs. If Liz Kniss runs for reelection as county supervisor, there just won't be enough chairs to sit on, come the end of the next two years.

As a progressive political activist, I aver that Lieber is just too valuable as a legislator to be put out to term-limit pasture for two years. Seldom does such an effective legislator, whose agenda is real social and political justice, show up on the ballot.

However, there is a positive solution to the "musical chairs" dilemma if Lieber is to continue in her role as a rising star legislator. It is to encourage Kniss to throw her hat into the ring to run

for the state Assembly's 22nd District seat, as Kasperzak did. Putting political loyalties aside for the sake of solidifying progressive representation for now and for the future is what Kniss and her friends should seriously consider. Such a change of election match-ups would make the game for the chairs much easier when the music stops in November 2008.

To sum it up: Lieber as county supervisor would allow her to serve the county well while continuing on the path toward the state Senate. Meanwhile, Kniss and Kasperzak would have a good opportunity to vie for advancement to the state Assembly. And there's one other possible match-up: Kasperzak, Lieber and others compete for county supervisor while Kniss springs for the state Assembly.

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■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

Something to chant about

WITH A NEW CHEF, MANTRA PASSIONATELY FUSES CALIFORNIA AND INDIAN CUISINE

By Dale F. Bentson

Sachin Chopra is cooking up a storm at Mantra. Prior to his arrival six months ago, the clouds lingering over the restaurant were ominous. The food was uneven and filtered from the kitchen at a snail's pace. The wait staff seemed uninformed and tardy at their duties. Only the decor and bar were to recommend.

The restaurant is not quite yet top-flight but has taken major strides from what was to what is. Executive chef Chopra has righted the listing kitchen, infusing a combination of his Indian culinary roots and his passion for California cuisine.

Born and trained in India, Chopra worked in New York with the highly regarded Daniel Bouloud before settling in the Bay Area. He previously worked at Amber India in Mountain View. His notion of California-India fusion cuisine is inspired. A couple of dishes didn't quite hold up but, overall, the imaginative menu is appealing.


For starters, there was naan, the traditional Indian flat bread baked in the Tandoori clay oven. The onion goat cheese naan (\$4.50) was delicious and filling. The garlic naan (\$3.50) and the rosemary pesto (\$4) were airy and flavorful. The breads are

► See **MANTRA**, page 20



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NORBERT VON DER GROEBEN

The dining room at Mantra.

MANTRA

► Continued from page 19

served with two sauces, tamarind and mint.

I loved the Konkani mussels (\$9). The boomerang-shaped bowl was overflowing with briny black bivalves. The spicy tomato, mustard and coconut sauce was terrific, the kind I wanted to dip my naan in (and did).

Shrimp Vinhaleaux (\$12) was equally delectable. Three jumbo shrimp, marinated in cinnamon and chili, baked in the clay oven, were served on a compartmentalized ceramic dish. Each section contained a shrimp on a bed of minced pickled onion, fennel and pepper.

Cumin cauliflower soup (\$8) was thick and luscious. The server poured the golden soup from a teapot and filled the bowl surrounding a delicate tomato custard. The custard added interest and another taste dimension as it slowly dissolved in the hot soup.

The day boat scallops (\$12) didn't fare as well. The marinated scallops were served atop tomato saffron and gingered spaghetti squash noodles. The squash was overcooked and mushy, resulting in an unappetizing, goey texture, and the flavors never meshed.

Of the main plates, the pricey Dover sole (\$20) promised more than it delivered. Two sauteed filets had been rolled in a melange of red onion, mango, chilies and peppermint. The fish was served atop a bed of mustard,

► Continued on next page

dining town

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VOICE

► Continued from previous page

peanut, lemon rice. It sounded great but the ingredients were too finely chopped to leave much flavor of anything in the mouth.

Chicken Moilee (\$20), on the other hand, was chock-a-block with flavor. The rolled juicy chicken breast was sauced with tomato and chili coconut. Spiced plantain chips accompanied.

Subz Nadirgadh (\$16) was a wondrous combination of vegetables: potato, lotus root, carrots and tofu simmered in mouthwatering yogurt and roasted onion sauce. It was pleasantly spicy on the tongue yet didn't char the esophagus.

Tandoori mixed grill (\$23) was a mixed bag. The clay-baked rack of lamb was overcooked, losing its succulence. The rosemary chicken, though, was juicy and tender as were the jumbo shrimp and the sea bass. Dried cherries, date chutney, cilantro pesto and chickpea and potato salad garnished the plate.

Anari steak (\$24) was another just-off-the-mark plate. Flank steak had been marinated in pomegranate, and sliced and served over a fluffy concoction of Fuji apples, jicama and cilantro cream sauce. The flavors seemed to fight rather than complement each other.

Of the desserts, the ice cream trio (\$7) was the easy favorite. Three scoops of house-made ice cream sat atop a combination of chopped, macerated fruits. One scoop was kulfi, an Indian version of gelato, dense, rich and luscious.

The candied ginger creme brulee with fennel pollen (\$8) was

grainy and lacked the caramelized sugar top that makes creme brulee worth the calories. The lemon tart (\$8) was a soft served dollop amid fresh fruit. Custardy but not very lemony.

Mantra is the brainchild of Ashwania Dhawan and Krishan Miglani. They have put together an exciting, chic decor that bridges Indian timelessness and contemporary California originality. The spacious dining room and lounge are festooned in colors of dusty rose, saffron and cool greens. There are several colorful Indian paintings on the walls that somehow remind me of Technicolor versions of Picasso's "Guernica" but with a much happier theme.

The piped-in music — a medley of American classics and contemporary Indian music — can be terribly distracting, though. At times, it is just too loud. When the tempo is furious, it makes diners jittery, and they gulp

rather than enjoy the fare.

Besides having a full bar, Mantra can be proud of its wine list. The selection is broad-based and the wine menu has suggestions for pairings. The wait staff did not seem terribly knowledgeable about the wine list and I had to point with my finger as to what I wanted on two of my visits.

The list, however, is well constructed and offers many wines in the \$30-\$40 bracket with a few even cheaper. On the other end of the spectrum is the fabulous Domaine Dujac Echezeaux, 2001 (\$295).

Mantra is headed in the right direction with Sachin Chopra orchestrating the cooking. Service, the quality of the food, and pacing from the kitchen are vastly improved. Fusion is experimentation and, while some of the dishes didn't quite make it, I applaud the effort and appreciate the passion. ■

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■ DINING NOTES

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MOVIE REVIEWS

APOCALYPTO ★★★★★

(Century 16, Century 20) Mel Gibson combines his infamously twisted sensibilities and mammoth talents to create a bold and visionary telling of the downfall of the Mayan civilization. The film begins by establishing the Mayans as fun-loving, intimate folk with a deep sense of family and innate spiritual beliefs. Soon enough their idyll is shattered by a vicious attack at the hands of the Holcane warriors, ruthless predators who torch their village, rape their women and take the men captive. The Mayans gather strength from chaos thanks to the fervor of their beliefs. Leading the pack is charismatic tribesman Jaguar Paw (Rudy Youngblood), whose father is brutally murdered before his eyes and who manages to conceal his pregnant wife and young son before setting off on his tortuous death march. The violence is outrageously gory but never gratuitous, perfectly in keeping with the anguish of a disintegrating civilization and the survival of the fittest. Vivid, provocative and utterly breathtaking. *Rated: R for extreme violence, bloodshed and nudity. 2 hours, 16 minutes. In Mayan Yucatec with English subtitles.* — J.A.

BLOOD DIAMOND ★★★★★

(Century 16, Century 20) As ex-mercenary Danny Archer, Leonardo DiCaprio captures the essence of a conflicted smuggler from Zimbabwe (nee Rhodesia) making a living running stolen diamonds from Sierra Leone to Liberia. Archer chances upon the mention of a rare pink diamond that has been hidden in the mountains (during Sierra Leone's turbulent 1999 civil war) and determines to locate it and get the hell out of Dodge. It sets him on an unlikely collision course with Mende tribesman Solomon Vandy (Djimon Hounsou), a proud husband and father who has been torn from his family to slave in the diamond fields. Vandy unexpectedly discovers the rare pink and hides it, hoping to later retrieve it and re-connect with his family. Enter the third member of the studied triangle: foxy American journalist-cum-action junkie Maddy Bowen (Jennifer Connelly), who doggedly pesters Archer for a story about the truth behind conflict diamonds, thus exposing the corruption of European diamond industry leaders who choose the bottom line over humanity. There's a lot to like about director Edward Zwick's hard-line investigation on principle and profit: attacks of conscience, relentless action and a teary finale. But the film's message — stem the flow of conflict diamonds — is too preachy, brazenly dragging its significance over the finish line with the utmost melodrama. *Rated: R for extreme violence and language. 2 hours, 20 minutes.* — J.A.

CHARLOTTE'S WEB ★★1/2

(Century 16, Century 12) E.B. White's beloved children's book about a radiant pig and his unlikely friendship with a soulful spider gets the big-budget treatment. Opening narration care of Sam Shepherd reminds us that not much happens in Maine's Somerset County. But all that changes with the birth of Wilbur (voice of Dominic Scott Kay), a runt-of-the-litter pig on the fast track to an axe's edge. Wilbur's life is spared by an affectionate young girl (Dakota Fanning as Fern) who leaves Wilbur to live on her uncle's farm across the way where camaraderie comes in the form of a motherly arachnid named Charlotte (voice of Julia Roberts). Things begin to unravel with the appearance of Templeton (voice of Steve Buscemi), an omery and self-serving rat who informs Wilbur that he'll likely end up on a breakfast plate before winter. But Charlotte refuses to give up on her pal and devises a "miracle" solution that may save his life. By weaving pro-Wilbur messages such as "some pig" and "humble" into her web, Char-

MOVIE TIMES

A CHRISTMAS CAROL (1951) Stanford Theatre: Fri. & Sat. at 5:50 & 9:25 p.m.

APOCALYPTO (R) ★★★★★ Century 16: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 12:50, 4, 7:15 & 10:20 p.m.; Sun. at 12:50, 4 & 7:15 p.m.; Mon. at 4, 7:15 & 10:20 p.m. Century 20: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 11:35 a.m.; 12:40, 2:35, 3:45, 5:40, 7, 8:50 & 10:10 p.m.; Sun. at 11:35 a.m.; 12:40, 2:35, 3:45, 5:40 & 7 p.m.; Mon. at 3:45, 5:40, 7, 8:50 & 10:10 p.m.

BABEL (R) ★★★★★1/2 Century 12: Fri., Sat., Mon. & Tue. at 10:35 p.m. Aquarius: 1:30, 4:40 & 8 p.m.

BLACK CHRISTMAS (R) (NOT REVIEWED) Century 12: Mon. at 3:20, 5:45, 8 & 10:20 p.m.; Tue. at 1:05, 3:20, 5:45, 8 & 10:20 p.m.

BLOOD DIAMOND (R) ★★★★★ Century 16: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 12:15, 3:35, 7:20 & 10:30 p.m.; Sun. at 12:15, 3:35 & 7:20 p.m.; Mon. at 3:35, 7:20 & 10:30 p.m. Century 20: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 12:25, 3:25, 6:45 & 9:55 p.m.; Sun. at 12:25, 3:25 & 6:45 p.m.; Mon. at 3:25, 6:45 & 9:55 p.m.

BOBBY (R) ★★ Century 20: Fri. & Sat. at 11:45 a.m.; 2:20, 4:55, 7:30 & 10:15 p.m.; Sun. at 11:45 a.m.; 2:20, 4:55 & 7:30 p.m.

BORAT (R) ★★★★★1/2 Century 16: 7:20 p.m.; Fri., Sat., Mon. & Tue. also at 9:35 p.m. Century 20: Fri. & Sat. at 11:50 a.m.; 1:50, 4, 6:15, 8:20 & 10:20 p.m.; Sun. at 11:50 a.m.; 1:50, 4, 6:15 & 8:20 p.m.; Mon. & Tue. at 8:20 & 10:20 p.m.

CASINO ROYALE (PG-13) ★★★★★1/2 Century 16: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 12:30, 3:45, 7:05 & 10:15 p.m.; Sun. at 12:30, 3:45 & 7:05 p.m.; Mon. at 3:45, 7:05 & 10:15 p.m. Century 12: 3:45 & 7:50 p.m.; Fri.-Sun. & Tue. also at 11:40 a.m.

CHARLOTTE'S WEB (G) ★★1/2 Century 16: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 11 a.m.; 1:30, 4:10, 7 & 9:30 p.m.; Sun. at 11 a.m.; 1:30, 4:10 & 7 p.m.; Mon. at 4:10, 7 & 9:30 p.m. Century 12: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 11:55 a.m.; 1, 2:30, 4, 5:20, 7, 8:10 & 9:40 p.m.; Sun. at 11:55 a.m.; 1, 2:30, 4, 5:20, 7 & 8:10 p.m.; Mon. at 4, 5:20, 7, 8:10 & 9:40 p.m.

CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER (R) Palo Alto Square: 2:15, 4:45, 7:30 & 10:10 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. also at 11:30 a.m.

DECK THE HALLS (PG) Century 20: Fri.-Sun. & Tue. at 12:45 p.m.

DREAMGIRLS (PG-13) Century 16: Mon. at 2:35, 4:15, 5:45, 7:30, 9:10 & 10:30 p.m.; Tue. at 11:25 a.m.; 1, 2:35, 4:15, 5:45, 7:30, 9:10 & 10:30 p.m. Century 20: Mon. at 3:10, 4:10, 5:10, 6:15, 7:10, 8:10, 9:10 & 10:10 p.m.; Tue. at 12:10, 1:10, 2:15, 3:10, 4:10, 5:10, 6:15, 7:10, 8:10, 9:10 & 10:10 p.m.

ERAGON (PG) ★★★★★ Century 16: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 11:20 a.m.; 2, 4:45, 7:25 & 10 p.m.; Sun. at 11:20 a.m.; 2, 4:45 & 7:25 p.m.; Mon. at 2, 4:45, 7:25 & 10 p.m. Century 12: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 11:30 a.m.; 2, 3:10, 4:45, 6, 7:40, 9 & 10:10 p.m.; Sun. at 11:30 a.m.; 2, 3:10, 4:45, 6, 7:40 & 8:55 p.m.; Mon. at 3:10, 4:45, 6, 7:40, 9 & 10:10 p.m.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD (R) ★★ Century 16: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at noon, 3:30, 7 & 10:25 p.m.; Sun. at noon, 3:30 & 7 p.m.; Mon. at 3:30, 7 & 10:25 p.m. Century 20: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 11:50 a.m.; 1:35, 3:20, 5, 6:45, 8:30 & 10:05 p.m.; Sun. at 11:50 a.m.; 1:35, 3:20, 5 & 6:45 p.m.; Mon. at 3:20, 5, 6:45, 8:30 & 10:05 p.m.

HAPPY FEET (PG) Century 16: 2 & 4:40 p.m.; Fri.-Sun. & Tue. also at 11:15 a.m. Century 20: Fri. & Sat. at 11:25 a.m.; 12:35, 2, 3:05, 4:30, 5:35, 7:05, 8:10, 9:40 & 10:30 p.m.; Sun. at 11:25 a.m.; 12:35, 2, 3:05, 4:30, 5:35, 7:05 & 8:10 p.m.; Mon. at 3:05, 4:30, 5:35, 7:05 & 9:40 p.m.; Tue. at 11:25 a.m.; 12:35, 2, 3:05, 4:30, 5:35, 7:05 & 9:40 p.m.

THE HOLIDAY (PG-13) ★★★★★ Century 16: Fri. & Sat. at 11:25 a.m.; 12:25, 2:35, 3:40, 5:45, 6:50, 9:10 & 9:55 p.m.; Sun. at 11:25 a.m.; 12:25, 2:35, 3:40, 5:45 & 6:50 p.m.; Mon. at 3:40, 6:50 & 9:55 p.m.; Tue. at 12:25, 3:40, 6:50 & 9:55 p.m. Century 12: Fri. & Sat. at 12:05, 1:10, 3:10, 4:30, 6:20, 7:30, 9:30 & 10:30 p.m.; Sun. at 12:05, 1:10, 3:10, 4:30, 6:20 & 7:30 p.m.; Mon. at 4:30, 7:30 & 10:30 p.m.; Tue. at 1:10, 4:30, 7:30 & 10:30 p.m.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (1946) Stanford Theatre: Sun. at 9 p.m.

LITTLE CHILDREN (R) ★★★★★ Century 20: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 12:55, 3:55, 7 & 10 p.m.; Sun. at 12:55, 3:55 & 7 p.m.; Mon. at 3:55, 7 & 10 p.m. Aquarius: 1, 3:40 & 6:30 p.m.; Fri., Sat., Mon. & Tue. also at 9:20 p.m.

THE NATIVITY STORY (PG) ★★ Century 20: Fri.-Sun. & Tue. at 11:30 a.m.; 1:55, 4:25 & 6:55 p.m.; Mon. at 4:25 & 6:55 p.m.

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM (PG) Century 16: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 11 a.m.; 12:20, 1:50, 3:10, 4:35, 6, 7:35, 8:45 & 10:10 p.m.; Sun. at 11 a.m.; 12:20, 1:50, 3:10, 4:35, 6 & 7:35 p.m.; Mon. at 1:50, 3:10, 4:35, 6, 7:35, 8:45 & 10:10 p.m. Century 20: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 11:20 a.m.; noon, 1, 2, 2:40, 3:15, 4, 4:40, 5:20, 6, 6:40, 7:20, 8, 8:40, 9:20, 10 & 10:35 p.m.; Sun. at 11:20 a.m.; noon, 1, 2, 2:40, 3:15, 4, 4:40, 5:20, 6, 6:40, 7:20 & 8 p.m.; Mon. at 3:15, 4, 4:40, 5:20, 6, 6:40, 7:20, 8, 8:40, 9:20, 10 & 10:35 p.m.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS (PG-13) ★★★★★ Century 16: Fri. & Sat. at 11:10 a.m.; 12:10, 1:10, 1:55, 2:55, 4:05, 4:55, 5:55, 6:55, 7:55, 8:55, 9:55 & 10:35 p.m.; Sun. at 11:10 a.m.; 12:10, 1:10, 1:55, 2:55, 4:05, 4:55, 5:55, 6:55 & 7:55 p.m.; Mon. at 1:55, 3:50, 4:55, 6:45, 7:55, 9:40 & 10:35 p.m.; Tue. at 11:10 a.m.; 12:10, 1:55, 3:50, 4:55, 6:45, 7:55, 9:40 & 10:35 p.m. Century 20: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 11:30 a.m.; 12:10, 12:50, 1:30, 2:15, 2:55, 3:35, 4:15, 5, 5:40, 6:20, 7:10, 7:45, 8:25, 9:05, 9:50 & 10:30 p.m.; Sun. at 11:30 a.m.; 12:10, 12:50, 1:30, 2:15, 2:55, 3:35, 4:15, 5, 5:40, 6:20, 7:10, 7:45 & 8:25 p.m.; Mon. at 3:35, 4:15, 5, 5:40, 6:20, 7:10, 7:45, 8:25, 9:05, 9:50 & 10:30 p.m.

THE QUEEN ★★★★★ Century 20: Fri. & Sat. at 12:15, 2:30, 4:50, 7:15 & 9:35 p.m.; Sun. at 12:15, 2:30, 4:50 & 7:15 p.m. Palo Alto Square: 2, 4:30, 7 & 9:30 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. also at 11:30 a.m.

ROCKY BALBOA (PG) ★★★★★1/2 Century 16: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 11:35 a.m.; 2:15, 5, 7:45 & 10:25 p.m.; Sun. at 11:35 a.m.; 2:15, 5 & 7:45 p.m.; Mon. at 2:15, 5, 7:45 & 10:25 p.m. Century 12: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at noon, 12:50, 1:40, 2:40, 3:30, 4:10, 5:10, 6:30, 7:10, 7:50, 9:10, 9:50 & 10:25 p.m.; Sun. at noon, 12:50, 1:40, 2:40, 3:30, 4:10, 5:10, 6:30, 7:10 & 7:50 p.m.; Mon. at 3:30, 4:10, 5:10, 6:30, 7:10, 7:50, 9:10, 9:50 & 10:25 p.m.

THE SHOP AROUND THE CORNER (1940) Stanford Theatre: Fri. & Sat. at 7:30 p.m.

STRANGER THAN FICTION (PG-13) ★★ Century 20: Fri., Sat., Mon. & Tue. at 9:25 p.m.

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS (PG) Century 12: Fri.-Sun. & Tue. at 12:20 p.m.

VOLVER (R) ★★1/2 Guild: 1, 4 & 7 p.m.; Fri., Sat., Mon. & Tue. also at 9:50 p.m.

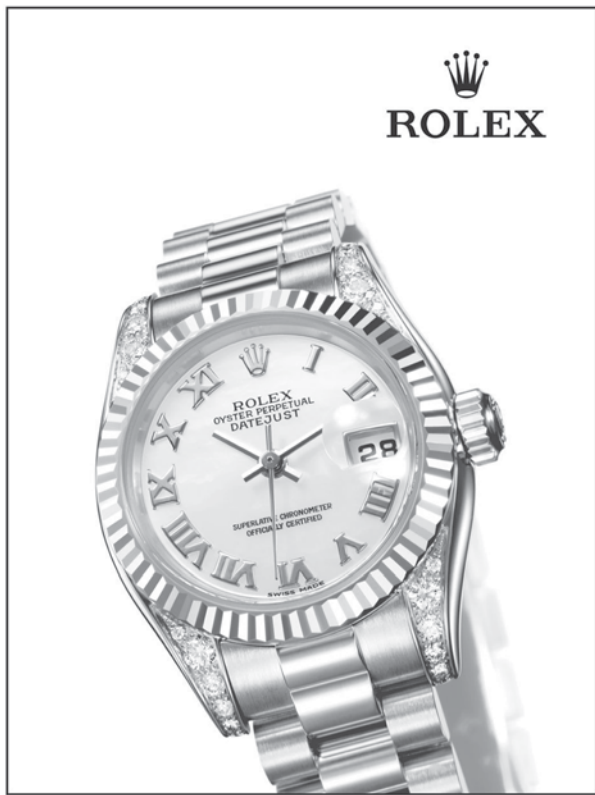
WE ARE MARSHALL (PG) ★★1/2 Century 16: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 12:45, 3:55, 7:10 & 10:05 p.m.; Sun. at 12:45, 3:55 & 7:10 p.m.; Mon. at 3:55, 7:10 & 10:05 p.m. Century 12: Fri., Sat. & Tue. at 11:50 a.m.; 1:20, 2:50, 4:20, 5:50, 7:20, 8:50 & 10:15 p.m.; Sun. at 11:50 a.m.; 1:20, 2:50, 4:20, 5:50, 7:20 & 8:50 p.m.; Mon. at 4:20, 5:50, 7:20, 8:50 & 10:15 p.m.

Note: Screenings are for Friday through Tuesday only.

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500083Y-05 09/06

lotte hopes the local townspeople will see Wilbur's worth and spare him. Despite some juvenile humor and a red-carpet vocal cast, this "Web" is spun with emotional resonance that sticks. *Rated: G. 1 hour, 53 minutes.* — T.H.

ERAGON ★★★

(Century 16, Century 12) Adorable as a newly hatched baby and elegant when grown, the dragon Saphira (voiced by Rachel Weisz) moves with a fluidity not seen in previous computer-generated renderings of these mythical creatures. Based on Christopher Paolini's best-selling novel of the same title, the coming-of-age tale focuses on 17-year-old farm boy Eragon (Edward Speleers) who discovers a mysterious sapphire stone in the forest. His war-torn homeland of Alagaesia suffers under the rule of King Galbatorix (John Malkovich), a one-time Dragon Rider who betrayed his righteous colleagues to take all the power for himself. When a winged creature surprisingly hatches from the blue "stone," Eragon discovers his destiny as the last of the Dragon Riders. He and Saphira offer the only hope of restoring peace and justice to the land. A fine cast brings the formulaic characters to life, including Jeremy Irons as Eragon's mentor, Sienna Guillory as a rebel princess, and Robert Carlyle as a malevolent sorcerer. Often warm and ultimately uplifting, the fantasy delivers entertaining fare for the entire family. *Rated: PG for fantasy violence, intense battle sequences and some frightening images. 1 hour, 39 minutes.* — S.T.

THE HOLIDAY ★★★

(Century 16, Century 12) Two very different women on either side of the Atlantic share the urge for a change of scenery. Iris (Kate Winslet) is a British reporter eager to shed the agony of a three-year love

affair that's left her an emotional wreck. Amanda (Cameron Diaz) is an uptight L.A. exec who wonders why she can't shed a tear over her broken relationship. Serendipitously the two meet on a home-exchange Web site. Iris's quaint country home seems the perfect getaway for Amanda, and Amanda's lush Hollywood mansion looks to be the ideal distraction for Iris. The women elect to swap places for two weeks, neither realizing how much can change in a short period of time. Amanda is instantly uncomfortable in the secluded English countryside and is quick to pack her bags — until she meets Iris's handsome older brother (Jude Law as Graham). Meanwhile, Iris befriends a retired L.A. writer (Eli Wallach) and surprisingly bonds with a quirky composer (Jack Black), all the while determined to break ties with her sleazy ex-beau. "The Holiday" is reminiscent of a winter

pastry — sugar-coated and sweet, but too much can make you sick. *Rated: PG-13 for sexual content and some strong language. 2 hours, 16 minutes.* — T.H.

THE NATIVITY STORY ★★

(Century 20) The timeless tale of Jesus, Mary and Joseph comes to cinematic life thanks to sweeping cinematography, exquisite costuming and a fantastic score. Unfortunately, the film is also about as exciting as an afternoon nap. The story is familiar even to atheists. The Virgin Mary (Keisha Castle-Hughes) is betrothed to Joseph (Oscar Isaac), a humble and honorable carpenter. Uneasy about her arranged marriage, Mary finds solitude in a nearby grove where she is visited by an angel (Alexander Siddig as Gabriel)

who informs her that she will bear the child of God and name him Jesus. Life is tough for the young peasant girl. Forced to wed a man she doesn't love, impregnated by a deity and all but ostracized by the suspicious townsfolk. But Joseph's love for Mary runs deep, and a dreamtime visit by Gabriel encour-

ages Joseph to support his wife wholeheartedly. Together Mary and Joseph set out for Bethlehem — Joseph's native land — by order of the vicious King Herod (Ciaran Hinds), who is desperately trying to quash a prophecy that would threaten his power.

► *Continued on page 24*

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MOVIE REVIEW



Beyoncé Knowles, Sharon Leal, Anika Noni Rose star in "Dreamgirls."

Bubbling 'Dreamgirls'

By Jeanne Aufmuth

"Dreamgirls" is the ideal holiday tonic — light, fizzy and bubbling with musical pizzazz.

The story relies on the classic arc of stardom, featuring a fetching trio of Motor City ingénues — The Dreamettes — who warble like songbirds in an effort to break into the biz.

The girls — Deena, Effie and Lorrell (Beyoncé, Jennifer Hudson and Anika Noni Rose) — are "discovered" by ruthless small-time promoter Curtis Taylor Jr. (Jamie Foxx) and pressed into service as back-up singers for soul legend James "Thunder" Early (Eddie Murphy).

Ultimately the group is spun off on its own, achieving crossover pop success and all its trappings — jealousy, love triangles, betrayal and the painful pitfalls of superstardom.

Nothing amazing here, but the ride is a blast due to some crack performances and the fantastic musical stylings of Beyoncé, Murphy (who knew?) and breakout newcomer Hudson as the proud but self-destructive middle child.

Beyoncé leads the charge, letting her inner Sasha go a la Diana Ross. She looks great and sounds better, and is genuinely convincing as Foxx's placid love interest cum meal ticket. Murphy is a revelation — hotter than hot as a Little Richard-esque crooner with a dark edge and

nasty drug habit to match. His solo numbers are pure pop gold.

Best of show goes to feisty American Idol finalist Hudson, who smacks it down theatrically and nails the Broadway classic's showstopper "And I am Telling You (I'm Not Going)" with goose-bump gusto. It's a bravura performance that's worthy of the buzz and awards hype.

As crowd-pleasing as this stage-to-screen adaptation is — the tunes, the Motown-era duds, the funky vibe — it's far from perfect, kicking off with a stale opening act that feels perilously conventional.

But ultimately this splashy songfest hits its mark, a riot of color and sound that can't help but divert and delight. ■

MOVIE NOTES

Stars: ***

Rating: PG-13, for language and adult situations

Run Time: 2 hours, 11 minutes

Continued from page 23

People curious about the original Christmas story or eager for a dramatic re-telling of the birth of Jesus will appreciate this visually impressive feature. But don't buy a ticket if you're prone to dozing. *Rated: PG for some violent content. 1 hour, 41 minutes.* — T.H.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS ★★★

(Century 16, Century 20) "You got a dream, you gotta protect it. If you want something, go get it. Period." Words of wisdom passed from struggling medical supply salesman Chris Gardner (Will Smith) to his 5-year-old son Christopher (real-life son Jaden Christopher Syre Smith). The sentiment bears heavy meaning considering the hardships Gardner faces. He's a suddenly single parent trying to break off a piece of the American dream by enrolling in a risky unpaid internship program with high-profile stockbroker Dean Witter. San Francisco circa 1981 is a city ripe with potential if you know how to work it. And Gardner works like a madman to protect his boy and pull himself out of a perpetual hole. When it gets as hard-luck as it can — a dissatisfied wife (Thandie Newton) who abandons father and son, faulty bone-density scanners that won't sell, no rent for the apartment and the IRS nipping at his heels — Gardner somehow reaches into untapped reserves of tenacity and courage. A real-life story that feels real — uncommonly refreshing. *Rated: PG-13 for language. 1 hour, 57 minutes.* — J.A.

MOVIE CRITICS

S.T.-Susan Tavernetti,
J.A.-Jeanne Aufmuth, J.S.-Jim Shelby,
T.H.-Tyler Hanley

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Goings On

MOUNTAIN VIEW VOICE

■ HIGHLIGHT

ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCING

Traditional and modern set dances to live music. Beginners welcome; no partner required. \$9. First, third and fifth Wednesdays, through June, 8-10 p.m. Flex-It Studios, 425 W. Evelyn Ave., Mountain View. Call 493-6012. www.bacds.org/series/english/mountain_view/

SPECIAL EVENTS

HOLIDAY DINNER Dec. 25, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. \$13 members/\$18 guests. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

ART GALLERIES

"BEACHES" PASTELS BY WAIF MULLINS Features new works on paper of his travels to exotic islands in the South Pacific, Caribbean and Mexico. Through Dec. 31. Portola Art Gallery, 75 Arbor Road, Menlo Park. www.portolaartgallery.com

"FLOWERS, FRUIT AND FUNGI, TREES AND TRAVEL" Photographs by Dawn Ishimaru Frazier on display through Jan. 13. Free. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

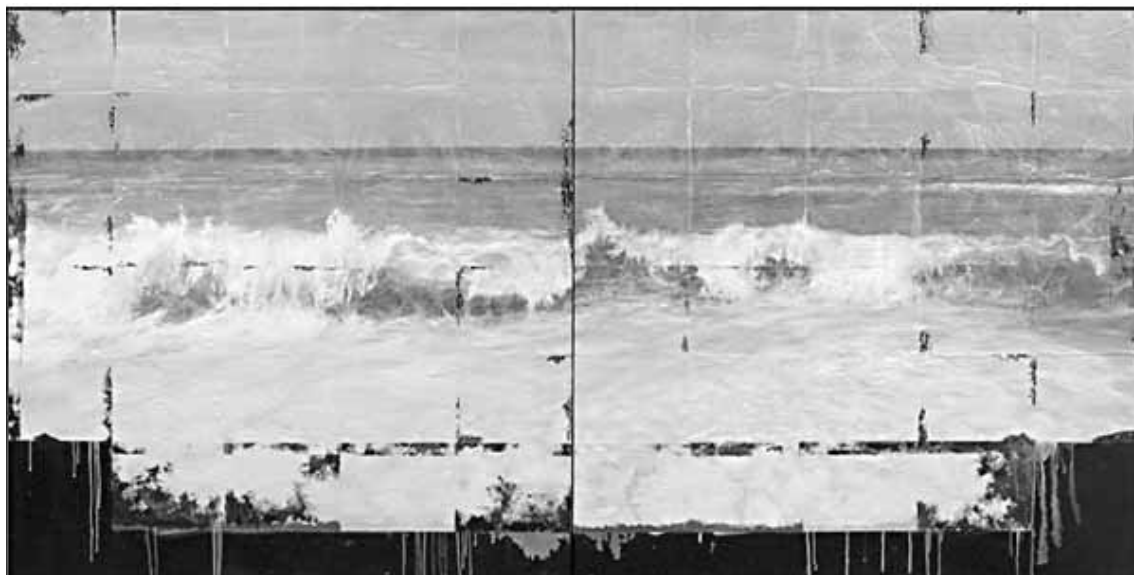
"MERRY ART AT MAIN" Holiday show features contemporary art and fine crafts by 23 artists. Through Dec. 23. Holiday hours: Mon.-Fri., 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 10 a.m.-3 p.m. The Main Gallery, 1018 Main St., Redwood City. www.themaingallery.org

"SERIGRAPHS AND DRAWINGS" Presented by artist Susan Trubow. Landscapes of the Mendocino coast. Thu.-Sun., through Dec. 31. Free. 1870 Art Center Gallery, 1870 Ralston Ave., Belmont. Call 261-1086. www.1870artcenter.org

"WINTER SALON" 30 artists present contemporary art and fine crafts for Holiday shopping. Wall art, jewelry, sculpture and ceramics created by local artists. Through Dec. 24. Hours: Mon.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Gallery 9, 143 Main St., Los Altos. www.gallery9losaltos.com

ALLEGRO FINE ART Jil Coolidge, watercolor artist and teacher displays work through Dec. 31. Hours: Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Allegro Gallery, 3130 Alpine Road, Portola Valley. Call 851-4300. www.allegroframing.com

ART 21 Bruni, known for painting jazz and folk singers, including Bay Area natives Dave Brubeck, John Lee Hooker and Jerry Garcia. On display through Dec. 31. Hours: Wed.-Sat., 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Art21 Gallery, 3145 Alma St., Palo



MICHAEL CORKREY, WAVE SERIES 2, 48 X 96 IN., MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH ART: *Nine British artists in an ongoing exhibition through Dec. 31. Hours: Tue.-Sat., 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sun., noon-5 p.m. and by appointment. Free. Chelsea Art Gallery, 440 Kipling St., Palo Alto. Call 324-4450. www.chelseaartgallery.com*

Alto. Call 566-1381. www.art21.us

ART21 Artist Kate Curry shows her latest work of sky scenes on display through Jan. 30. Art21 Gallery, 539 Alma St., Palo Alto. Call 566-1381. www.art21.us/539_Alma/curry_panel.htm

ARTSYNERGY GROUP SHOW Nine members display through Dec 22. Pacific Art League, 668 Ramona St., Palo Alto.

PAINTED PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIGITTE CARNOCHAN Through Dec. 31, 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Bella Figura: Painted Photographs by Brigitte Carnochan. Hand-painted gelatin silver prints of still-life's and nudes. Modernbook Gallery, 494 University Ave., Palo Alto. www.modernbook.com/carnochan.htm

SPIRIT DANCERS AND TREE DWELLERS Ceramic Sculptures by Jean Prophet and watercolors by Floy Zittin. Through Dec. 30, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. Viewpoints Gallery, 315 State St.,

Los Altos. www.viewpointsgallery.com

STEPHEN ACHIMORE: COLOR FIELD PAINTINGS Features abstract paintings of New York-based artist. Tue.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m. through Jan. 27. Free. Stellar Gallery, 539 Bryant St., Palo Alto.

TERCERA GALLERY New mixed media paintings on wood panel by Carol Dalton; Sterling silver and mixed media jewelry by Kristin Lora; cast glass sushi trays by artist John Lewis. Tue.-Sat., Dec. 26-Feb. 1, 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Free. Tercera Gallery Palo Alto, 534 Ramona St., Palo Alto. Call 322-5324. www.terceragallerypaloalto.com

INGS For advanced players of all instruments. Rehearsals Tuesdays, through Dec. 31, 7-10 p.m. Call for appointment. Gunn High School, 780 Arastradero Road Room M1, Palo Alto. Call 856-8432. www.peninsulapops.org

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

FELDENKRAIS Mind-body exercises for movement improvement. Fridays, 11 a.m.-noon. On-going class. All ages welcome. \$12/\$10 per class. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 327-9419. www.umovebetter.com

PYT DRAMA CAMP Peninsula Youth Theatre will offer a winter vacation drama camp for children ages 8-14. Tuesdays through Fridays, Dec. 26-Jan. 5, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. \$250. Peninsula Youth Theatre, 2500 Old Middlefield Way, Mountain View. www.pyt.net

AUDITIONS

PENINSULA POPS ORCHESTRA OPEN-

COMMUNITY EVENTS

"BETHLEHEM A.D." The annual live nativity Dec. 21-23, 6-9:30 p.m. Attractions include two baby camels, a miniature horse and more. Visitors walk through the living re-creation of Bethlehem on the first two nights and a drive through option begins on the third night. Free. Peninsula Christian Center, 1305 Middlefield Road, Redwood City. Call 366-8212. www.bethlehemad.com

CONCERTS

STANFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA Jindong Cai, director. Dec. 23, 8 p.m. The orchestra features pianist Aaron Kofman, winner of the Concerto Competition, in Ravel's Piano Concerto for the Left Hand, and the Stravinsky classic Rite of Spring. \$10/\$5. Dinkelspiel Auditorium, 471 Lagunita Dr., Stanford. Call 723-2720. <http://music.stanford.edu>

DANCE

BALLROOM DANCING Learn and practice new steps to live music. Thursdays, through Dec. 28, 7-10 p.m. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

ENVIRONMENT

ECOSYSTEM TRANSITIONS With docents David Milburn and Judy Boore. A moderate to strenuously-paced hike with an elevation change close to 2,000 feet over 7 miles. Older children with hiking experience welcome. Bring lunch and be prepared to climb and descend. Rain cancels. Meet at the Higgins-Purisima entrance. Jan. 1, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. www.openspace.org

TAFONI TREK 4.8-mile hike along the El Corte de Madera Creek, Fir, and Tafoni Trails to view outside evergreens and learn about Tafoni sandstone formations with docents Sarah Schoen and Pamela Reliford. Dec. 23, 9 a.m.-

► Continued on page 27

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Voice staff members, from left, front row: Diane Martin, Judie Rachel Block, Don Frances and Britt Callaway; back row, Tom Gibboney, Pooja Bhardwaj, Alexa Tondreau, Daniel DeBolt and Raul Perez.

*Wishing you a joyful
2007*

MountainView
VOICE

► Continued from page 25

12:30 p.m. Free. El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve. www.openspace.org

EXHIBITS

"BOUNTIFUL BOWLS, PLATTERS OF PLENTY" A collection of distinctive serving pieces. Tue.-Sun., 9 a.m.-9 p.m. through Dec. 24. Free. Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto. Call 329-3168. www.paacf.org

"CLASSIC AND TIMELESS TOYS" Palo Alto Sport Shop and Toy world and the Museum of American Heritage present "Classic and Timeless Toys," an exhibit featuring over 75 classic toys of the 20th century. Learn the history of toys and the story behind their inventions. Fridays-Sundays, through Jan. 28, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto. Call 321-1004. www.moah.org

"MYSTERY OF VENICE" An atmospheric view of La Serenissima during Carnavale. Photography by D. Cichon showing through Jan. 13. Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Keeble & Shuchat Photography, 290 California Ave., Palo Alto. Call 327-8996. www.kspphoto.com

ART EXHIBITION "Reflections" contemporary figurative paintings by local artist, Laura Varich. Paintings are rendered using the "alla prima" technique. Through Feb. 2. Mike's Cafe, 150 Middlefield Road, Menlo Park. Call 321-3520.

ART FOR LIFE PRESENTS "SHADOWS AND FOG" Art for Life, a quarterly exhibition celebrating the gift of life blood donors provide others in our community. Through Jan. 2. "Shadows and Fog," done by a community of San Francisco Bay Area artists. Stanford Blood Center, 3373 Hillview Ave., Palo Alto. Call 723-8270. <http://bloodcenter.stanford.edu>

ART IN ACTION LIBRARY SHOW Art in Action opens a 6-month long art show series featuring artwork from local students grades K-8. Through May 5. For a list of participating schools see website. Free. Art in Action, 3925 Bohannon Dr., Menlo Park. Call 566-8339. www.artinaction.org

MULTIMEDIA STUDENT ART SHOW Original works of digital paintings, imaging and photography will on display through Jan. 20 by students. Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Free. Canada College Main Theater Foyer, 4200 Farm Hill Blvd., Redwood City. Call 306-3330. www.canadacollege.net/multimedia/

PAINTINGS AND COLLAGE Oil Paintings by Bohdanna Kesala; watercolors by Amy Da-Peng King, and collage by Mellissa Shields. Through Feb 8. Free. Stanford Art Spaces, 420 Via Palou, Stanford. Call 725-3622. <http://cis.stanford.edu/~marigros>

REPETITIOUS ANTICS Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. through March 23. Photographs and collages by Jessica Walker and Cyane Tornatzky, blending gender issues and technology to blur the edges of the natural and the artificial. Free. Serra House, 589 Capistrano Way, Stanford. Call 723-1994. <http://gender.stanford.edu>

THE MONDAVI FAMILY GALLERY REINSTALLED New installation presents the Center's 19th-century European and American collection. Through Dec. 31. Hours: Wed.-Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thu., 11 a.m.-8 p.m.; closed Mondays and Tuesdays. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Dr., Stanford. Call 723-4177.

VISIONS OF DHARMA: THAI CONTEMPORARY ART Exhibition highlights the work of two of Thailand's artists. Works are contemporary and explore a wide range of subjects and styles. Hours: Wed.-Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Thu., 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Through March 4. Free. Cantor Arts Center, 328 Lomita Dr., Stanford. Call 723-3469. <http://museum.stanford.edu>

FAMILY AND KIDS

CHILDREN'S AUTHOR READS Sheralee Hill Iglehart, children's author, teacher, tutor, will read her latest book, "A Very, Very Special Birthday," Dec. 23, 10 a.m.-noon Free. Starbucks, 361 S. California Ave., Palo Alto. Call 324-2021. B, Cgateayvert

COOKIES AND COLORING With the Kepler's staff Sundays, Dec. 24-31, 11:30 a.m. Free. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Call 324-4321. www.keplers.com

HEALTH

WALKING GROUP Meets Thursdays, 9 a.m. December meet at Little House. Explore local streets. Walk about 3-4 miles. Call Hal Makin 948-2310 for weekly location. Free. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

ON STAGE

"KEEP THE YULETIDE GAY" Presented by Theatre Q. Christmas comedy by Dale Albright. Through Dec. 30. Thu.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m. \$10 previews/\$25 opening night/\$20 regular/\$15 seniors. Dragon Theatre, 535 Alma St., Palo Alto. www.theatreq.org

"THE LEARNED LADIES OF PARK AVENUE" Presented by TheatreWorks. Set in the Jazz Age of Cole Porter's New York. Through Dec. 23. \$20-\$60. Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.; Wed.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 and 7 p.m. Lucie Stern

Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto. Call 463-1960. www.theatreworks.org

RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE Sun., Dec. 24, 6 p.m. Sing and hear the Christ-

mas story in celebration of Jesus' birth. Free. First Baptist Church, 1100 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 323-8544. www.firstbaptist.com

CHRISTMAS EVE MIDNIGHT SERVICE Celebrated in with pageantry and music, and candlelight in a darkened temple. Dec. 24, 10 p.m.-midnight Free. Ananda, 2171 El Camino Real, Palo

Alto. Call 323-3363. www.anandapaloalto.org

MORE LISTINGS

For a complete listing of local events, see our website at www.PaloAltoOnline.com.



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Turn East on University off El Monte Ave. between I-280 and Foothill Expwy

Sunday Schedule: 3 Worship Times!
8:00 am Breakfast@Union #1 Worship
9:30am Breakfast@Union #2 Worship
9:45 am Church School Nursery
11:00 am Worship in the Sanctuary,
Club Sunday for Children, Nursery

To include your Church in *Inspirations*
Please call Blanca Yoc at 650-326-8210 ext. 221
or e-mail byoc@pawekly.com

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Rambus Scholarship 2007



\$10,000 Scholarship Opportunity

Rambus Inc. is offering up to two \$10,000 college scholarships to graduating high school seniors from Mountain View and Los Altos area high schools. The scholarship considers academic and extracurricular achievements, leadership, and communication skills, but is particularly targeted towards students who demonstrate strong interest in science and technology.

Applications are available now; the application deadline is March 2, 2007. Interested students should contact their school's scholarship coordinator for more details, or visit:

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