

Mountain View VOICE



Neat-o Neto
New café downtown
a delicious option
for vegetarians
WEEKEND | P.20

FEBRUARY 2, 2007 VOLUME 15, NO. 5

INSIDE: IN BUSINESS | PAGE 29

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VERONICA WEBER

First grader Keena Harris examines gak at Landels' Superbowl Science Day.

DNA, gak and lava lamps

LANDELS' HANDS-ON SCIENCE COURSE FINDS ORIGINAL WAYS TO CLUE KIDS IN

By Alexa Tondreau

Students at Landels Elementary got to skip their normal classes last Friday and play scientist for awhile.

As part of Landels annual "Superbowl Science Day," kids were treated to science demonstrations and activities from faculty, parents and community

volunteers, including representatives from NASA-Ames and the U.S. Geological Survey.

Students got to choose three activities that piqued their interest, and they moved in groups throughout the morning from one science activity to another.

The point of the science day,

► See **LANDELS**, page 14

Cuesta squirrels in crosshairs

TRAPPING WILL FOCUS ON FIVE SPECIFIC SQUIRRELS BELIEVED TO BE THE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM

By Daniel DeBolt

After months of delay, the city has announced that exterminators will soon begin trapping a group of about five aggressive squirrels at Cuesta Park — the ones believed to be responsible for numerous attacks on people since May 2006.

"We are in the initial phases of doing the trapping," said Dave Muela, community services director. "Trapping is an alternative the city has indicated very clearly for some time."

The city announced its intentions in October of last year to trap the squirrels after several children were bitten or scratched while holding food. The story quickly received nationwide attention and the trapping was delayed as the city consulted several agencies and experts to find the best method to deal with the problem, according to Kevin Duggan, city manager.



"The delay in implementation was only to assure that we identified the most humane method available to us," Duggan wrote in an e-mail. As for trapping and killing the squirrels, he said, "With children continuing to get bitten and scratched, we don't really have a choice. We will do so on a careful and limited basis examining the impact

► See **SQUIRRELS**, page 12

City struggles with plan to save part of the farm

By Daniel DeBolt

When the fruit stand at Mountain View's last farm was being dismantled last week, each wall was taken down carefully and methodically, and without much ado.

Similarly, the end of the Grant Road farm itself was not going to be a momentous event. Most people familiar with its history knew the day was coming and had already grieved its loss.

"I would say it was inevitable," said City Council member Tom Means about the closure of the farm. "I'm a little disappointed, but I don't see how this is different from what's going on in the rest of the Valley. Land is more valuable for housing."

Although some council members talked about the reality of housing needs — the farm is being shut down to make way for a housing tract — several were also open the idea of preserving part of it.

Council member Jac Siegel, who lives nearby, knows the farm well. He said he even plans to restore the Cushman three-wheeler used around the farm. But he ran for office last year saying he would not support spending park money

south of El Camino Real. The farm's 15 acres are valued at \$52 million, according to the Mountain View Farmlands Group, and it may take a large chunk of city money to save a piece of the farm.

But the Farmlands Group says the developer, SummerHill Homes, could preserve some of the farm and still make the same profit. The group had a meeting

last Thursday, Jan. 25 with SummerHill, at which the group presented its plan for 50 large homes on 10 acres of the site compared to the developer's proposal of 55 homes on all 15 acres.

Katja Kamengar, who represented SummerHill in the meeting, said she agreed to the meet-

► See **FARM**, page 8

Cops raid salon — again

ALLEGED PROSTITUTION RINGS REPEATEDLY BUSTED AT SAME PAMELA DRIVE LOCATION

By Zunaira Durrani

The owners of an acupuncture business on Pamela Drive may have thought their arrest on prostitution charges last August was a fluke that Mountain View police would soon forget about.

But on Jan. 12, officers once again raided UPI Acupuncture Herbal Center at the same location and arrested three women. Officer Jim Bennett said police discovered that prostitution

was being conducted at the business.

"Our investigators obtained a search warrant and conducted an undercover operation where we sent in an officer posing as a massage customer," Bennett said. "The officer was offered sexual acts in exchange for cash, at which time other officers entered the building and conducted their investigation, ultimately

► See **PROSTITUTION**, page 8

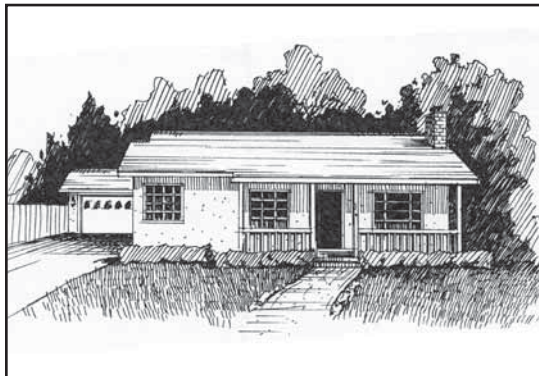


Karen Young



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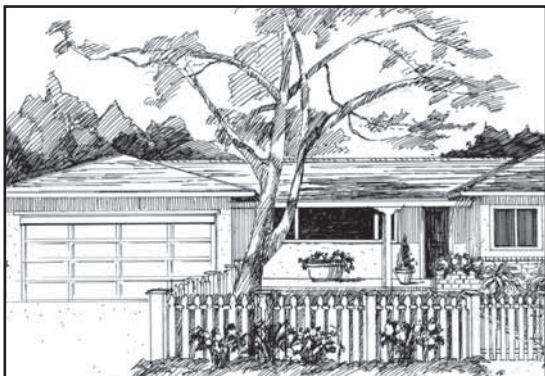
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Voices

A R O U N D T O W N

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

Is Simon Cowell too harsh on "American Idol" candidates?



"Not at all. He's right on. Some of the people that show up for that are delusional. I think he's sexy."

Tanya Fowlkes, Los Altos



"He says what people are actually thinking. Without him, the ratings of the show would not be what they are. He's the reason people watch it."

Yumi Hiroshima, Saratoga



"I don't think he's too harsh because they know what they're signing up for. The first year maybe it seemed harsh because people didn't know about him, but not now."

Michelle Bissonnette, Los Altos



"I think Simon is wonderful. Hey, it's life! He's one of my favorite people on the show. His comments are right on."

Tom Hinke, San Jose



"He could sound very hard. He's very critical and he uses strong words but he says the truth. He doesn't exaggerate his criticism. People expect it. It's just hilarious."

Laura Pagano, Rome, Italy

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OnRecord

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“My thing is, keep moving, don’t get in the rocking chair and watch TV all day.”

— THELMA DIMARIA,

86-YEAR-OLD RED CROSS RELIEF WORKER, ON THE SECRET TO STAYING YOUNG

CRIMEWATCH

AUTO THEFT, MIDDLEFIELD AND MOFFETT BLVD., 1/23

At 7:27 a.m., Palo Alto police pursued a car into Mountain View where the chase ended when the car crashed into two other vehicles before stopping on Middlefield and Moffett Boulevard. Mountain View police conducted a search of the area and found the driver, who had fled on foot. The suspect, a 27-year-old Hispanic male, had an outstanding warrant and was booked for auto theft, possession of narcotics, hit and run, and failure to yield.

AUTO THEFT, 100 BLOCK N. WHISMAN, 1/25

On Thursday’s routine patrol, a police officer saw a man sitting in a vehicle parked at the Whisman Apartment Complex. Police records showed that the vehicle was stolen from Milpitas. As the officer approached the car, the suspect got out in an attempt to flee. After chasing the suspect on foot, the officer took him into custody and booked him on auto theft charges. The man is described as a 43-year-old from Milpitas.

POLICE LOG

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

1300 block Park Dr., 1/27

AUTO BURGLARY

400 block Showers Dr., 1/24
2200 block Rock St., 1/24
100 block Dale Ave., 1/24
1200 block Dale Ave., 1/27
400 block E Middlefield Rd., 1/29

BATTERY

1700 block Rock St., 1/25
2400 block Leghorn St., 1/25
Global Beads, 1/26

DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE

800 block N Rengstorff Ave., 1/24

GRAND THEFT

700 block Mariposa St., 1/24
Wal-Mart, 1/24
500 block Del Medio Ave., 1/26
200 block Adele Ave., 1/26
900 block Rich Ave., 1/26
350 block Showers Dr., 1/28

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES/PERSON

200 block N Rengstorff Ave., 1/25
200 block Old Middlefield Way, 1/26
200 block San Antonio Rd., 1/28

RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY

700 block Continental Circle, 1/25

PETTY THEFT

2100 block Woodleaf Way, 1/24
2600 block W El Camino Real, 1/24
Wal-Mart, 1/24
1700 block Rock St., 1/24
Sears Dept. Store, 1/24
2400 block Whitney Dr., 1/25
100 block Rich Ave., 1/25
200 block W Middlefield Rd., 1/25
100 block N Rengstorff Ave, 1/26
Target, 1/26
Sears Dept. Store, 1/27
00 block Crestview Dr., 1/27
2500 block W El Camino Real, 1/28
200 block Chiquita Ave., 1/29
500 block Showers Dr., 1/29
Sears Dept. Store, 1/29

POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA

3500 block Truman Ave., 1/25
Leghorn St. / N Rengstorff Ave., 1/26

STOLEN VEHICLE

2400 block Whitney Dr., 1/24
300 block Moffett Blvd., 1/26

VANDALISM

1700 block Rock St., 1/24
Main Library, 1/27
700 block Borello Way, 1/28
100 block Ednamary Way, 1/29

CORRECTION

A dining review of Los Portales Mexican Restaurant which ran in last week’s *Voice* contained several mistakes in the “Dining Notes” section. Los Portales,

which is located at 430 Moffett Blvd., does accept reservations, does sell takeout, does hold banquets, and does cater. The *Voice* regrets the errors.

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Kicking the habit

By Don Frances

WHEN THE LEAGUE of Women Voters joins forces with the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, something is afoot.

Such is the case next Saturday, Feb. 10, when the two groups host a public forum at Mountain View High titled “Kicking the Oil Habit.”

The forum’s goal is exactly as its title suggests. But to speak intelligently on such matters, you need a panel of energy experts. Luckily, between the League and the SVLG, the clout exists to bring in such experts. They are:

Jeff Byron, a commissioner on the California Energy Commission and chair of its transportation committee; Dan Sperling, director of the Institute of Transportation Studies at UC Davis and co-editor of *The Hydrogen Energy Transition*; and Stefan Unnasch, senior manager at Tiax, a contractor to the Energy Commission which provides analysis of petroleum alternatives.

Not to mention a possible appearance by U.S. Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, who has been invited to talk about related efforts at the federal level.

The forum is Saturday, Feb. 10 from 9:30 a.m. to noon at the Mountain View High School Theater on the corner of Bryant Street and Truman Avenue. Call Jane Turnbull at (650) 559-1766 for more info.

THE COUNCIL got into its own discussion on energy efficiency during Tuesday’s meeting, during which Nick Galiotto warned of falling into “analysis paralysis.” Has he coined a new phrase here? If so I’d like to give credit — and in return ask permission to use it whenever the meetings bog down. ▀

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



KARNA KURATA

HOOP TALK: Eric Jenkins (left) and Thomas Gerard of Mountain View High listen to coach Bob Heckmann’s half time speech as they trail 28-23 against Monte Vista High last Friday, Jan 26. Although Jenkins was hopeful, the Spartans fared poorly in the second half, losing the game 60-38.

Bulk rate solar

LOCAL LEADS EFFORT TO HATCH A DEAL WITH SOLAR SUPPLY COMPANY

By Don Frances

Recently, dozens of property owners in Portola Valley decided to pool their numbers in an attempt to obtain solar power arrays at bulk rate. As a result, about 68 homes participated in the deal and were outfitted with power- and money-saving solar arrays — at a 30 percent discount.

Inspired by this success, local resident Bruce Karney is announcing he’d like to duplicate the idea

in Mountain View, with the same solar company, and he says now is the time to strike.

Karney, a “knowledge management consultant” by trade, says the first step is to recruit as many property owners as possible to meet with the company, SolarCity, and “learn about what happened in Portola Valley.” To that end, he’s booked a spot at the Mountain View Senior Center for next Saturday, Feb. 10.

“SolarCity has some numbers

in mind about the size of the discount they’d like to offer to the people of Mountain View,” he said. According to Nicole Ratner, marketing director for SolarCity, the company is considering a similar discount for Mountain View participants — between 20 and 30 percent, depending on market rates.

In Portola Valley (and parts of neighboring Ladera), the 30 per-

► See **SOLAR**, page 6

Local dynamo defies disasters

AT 86, THELMA DIMARIA IS STILL A STAR FOR RED CROSS

By Alexa Tondreau

When talking to Mountain View resident Thelma DiMaria, numbers come up a lot. Here are a few relevant ones: 24, 25, 57, 2 and 86.

That works out to 24 years spent with the Red Cross, 25 deployments to disaster sites around the country, 57 years

residing in Mountain View, two yoga sessions a week at the Mountain View Senior Center, and 86 years of age.

“My thing is, keep moving, don’t get in the rocking chair and watch TV all day,” DiMaria said from her home on Hollingsworth Drive, where she’s lived since 1950. “Keeping active and being out with people is part of the secret of old age.”

Many have benefited from DiMaria’s philosophy. Earlier this month, she returned from her most recent disaster deployment in Washington state, where she assisted 84 people from the community of Monroe, helping them recover from a series of floods that struck the area.

DiMaria has made her com-

► See **DIMARIA**, page 16



Thelma DiMaria

■ CITY COUNCIL

Team-builder, eye-opener

COUNCIL MEMBERS TAKE WORKSHOP ON DEALING WITH DEVELOPERS, BROWN ACT, THE PRESS

By Daniel DeBolt

A City Council team-building workshop last week provided rare insight into the challenges faced by council members: whether to meet with developers, how to deal with the press, and making sure they meet the requirements of the Brown Act, which restricts certain communication outside of public meetings.

The meeting was held in the new Senior Center and facilitated by Dr. Marilyn Manning, a consultant with a background in sociology who has given similar workshops in 30 cities. The city manager, city clerk and city attorney also attended.

The “seasoned” members gave advice and hints about protocol to new members Margaret Abe-Koga, Jac Siegel and Ronit Bryant.

“It’s easy to violate the Brown Act to get things done, but we don’t do that here,” said member Tom

► See **COUNCIL**, page 9

dreams
**What ~~assets~~
do you have?**

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■ SEEN AROUND TOWN

Blue heron hunting



Dr. Thomas Baer, a Stanford researcher who lives on Drucilla Drive, sent in this photo of a blue heron which, he said, "has taken up residence at Cuesta Park Annex."

"I think the picture captures some of the beauty of the open space and of this remarkable bird,

both certainly worth preserving," Baer wrote.

If you have any photos taken around Mountain View, particularly which show off its natural or cultural beauty, please send them to editor@mv-voice.com, and we'll run them in this space.

SOLAR

► Continued from page 5

cent discount came after residents met the "threshold" amount of electricity, 175 kilowatt-hours, which SolarCity's arrays would generate. Since the average home uses about 4 kilowatt-hours, that meant roughly 44 homes were needed for SolarCity to move forward.

In the end, with the help of some local schools and other government sites, they nearly doubled that goal, Karney said. The final deal was agreed to in late December.

Now is the time for such a deal in Mountain View, according to Karney, because a tax credit

for solar upgrades expires in 2007, rebates from the California Energy Commission are still worthwhile, and because "hot August days" are far enough off.

As for the threshold, Mountain View's is also set at 175 kilowatt-hours, Ratner said. Considering Mountain View's size — and the fact that this time the Foster City-based company is also courting small business owners — Ratner is hopeful the threshold will be met.

"I'd love to see it [happen]," she said. "To put Mountain View on the map."

"We started this company to bring solar to the masses," she added.

The next step, Karney said, is for interested residents to attend the meeting at the Senior Center and

hear what SolarCity has to offer. At that point "the process largely shifts over to SolarCity, because they need to go out and do individual assessments," he said.

Karney imagines the next few months as a time for getting property owners on board with the idea. Sign-ups would end in April, with solar installations beginning at that time and ideally being completed sometime in July.

"Thirty percent off is enough to get most people excited no matter what it is," he said.

The meeting is in Mountain View Senior Center's Social Hall, on Saturday, Feb. 10 from 3 to 5 p.m. Karney will be there, along with SolarCity representatives and possibly some participating homeowners from Portola Valley. ■

Arraignment in NASA golf course beating

ELDERLY MAN ALLEGEDLY
ATTACKED BY SUNNYVALE
BROTHERS FOR ASKING
TO PLAY THROUGH

By Daniel DeBolt

Two Sunnyvale brothers were indicted last week for allegedly beating a 61-year-old man on the golf course at Moffett Field in September after the man asked if he could play through.

According to an affidavit filed by NASA special agent Dirk Meier, Ryan and Charles Alexander were not very good at golf, causing their alleged victim, Edwin League, to wait at every hole while they played the links on Sept. 18. Things turned confrontational near the 13th hole when, according to the affidavit, Ryan Alexander called

League "gramps." League reportedly responded by saying, "Son, we are just trying to play through."

According to League, that's when the two brothers attacked him. He was later found to have a broken nose, large amounts of blood on his head and neck, several bruises and a swollen cheek and eyes.

The brothers and a friend were stopped while driving down Macon Road, and Ryan Alexander allegedly confessed on the spot. According to the affidavit, he had blood and cuts on his hands.

The two brothers are charged with a felony assault resulting in serious bodily injury. The maximum sentence is 10 years with a \$250,000 fine. The hearings, which began Jan. 24, are being held in U.S. district court in San Jose because the course is on NASA's federal property. ▀

NEWS BRIEFS

DRIVER CRASHES MULTIPLE TIMES, INJURES TWO DOWNTOWN

An 84-year-old Mountain View driver crashed into a tree and four vehicles on Friday afternoon between Villa and Castro Street, causing minor injuries to two people, police and witnesses reported.

The suspect, who witnesses said appeared to be confused and disoriented, drove his 2003 gray Ford Thunderbird into several objects — and at least one pedestrian — downtown at around 2:45 p.m. One witness told the *Voice* the suspect then tried to leave, but was restrained by passersby.

Joanne Pasternack of the Mountain View Police Department said police are still trying to determine the cause of the

victim's apparent confusion.

Lynn Brown of the Mountain View Fire Department said Villa Street was closed as the injured were transported to El Camino Hospital.

COPS NAB ONE IN ALCOHOL STING

Mountain View and Los Altos police carried out an Alcohol Decoy Program last weekend, hitting both cities on Saturday night.

With police waiting outside, a teenaged "decoy" approached 13 liquor stores to see if the stores' clerks would check the minor's ID. Twelve stores complied, however police cited one employee at the 7-11 on California Street when he failed to check the teen's ID.

— Zunaira Durrani

OBITUARY

NATHAN 'ED' PRUITT

Nathan Edward Pruitt, a longtime, well-loved Mountain View resident, passed away on Jan. 23. He was 78 years old.

Born to farmers in Danville, Ark., Pruitt was the youngest of 10 children. He joined the U.S. Army and eventually became a military policeman, serving in Okinawa until returning to Arkansas to finish high school.

Pruitt met his wife, Freda Earline Hood, during high school and moved with her to California in 1950. He held a variety of jobs, including as a reserve Deputy Sheriff.

In the mid-1950s, Pruitt opened Ed's Texaco on the

corner of Rengstorff and Alma, which he later sold. He worked for 30 years at CAP Concrete, after which he became a groundskeeper at Stanford University until retiring in 1993.

An avid baseball and football fan, Pruitt coached his kids' Little League baseball and softball teams, and also bowled regularly with his wife at nearby bowling alleys. He served as a deacon of Memorial Baptist Church, and volunteered at Second Harvest Food Bank for 10 years.

Pruitt is survived by his wife; children Gary, Laura, Freda and Julie; sister Lottie; and brother Raymond. He was preceded in death by his son Michael and eight brothers and sisters.

WHEN IT COMES TO PHARMACIES WE GO BOTH WAYS



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FARM

► Continued from page 1

ing because she believes in open dialogue. But when asked if the Farmlands Group's plan seemed workable, Kamangar quietly said, "No, it does not. A lot more analysis on their behalf would need to be put into it. These are complex transactions."

Still, council members seemed willing to listen to the preservationists. Mayor Laura Macias said the time was right to pursue plans for a farm, especially since there's an apparent groundswell of support in the Bay Area for the idea of having farms closer to the communities that use their produce.

Council member Ronit Bryant said the idea of a farm in an urban setting has been shown to work in other places, such as in Goleta, located in Southern California.

"If we can make it happen I think it would be a wonderful idea," Bryant said.

In a city that is already fairly "built out," Macias asked, "Do we need another development? I'm not so convinced." She added that the council needs to look at the issue fairly and put "everything on the table."

Council member Matt Pear had another view.

"The only solution is for them" — farm preservationists — "to buy it outright," he said. "It's a very simple issue."

The Farmlands Group has pulled together several endorsements for its plan, including from the County Office of Edu-



Antonio Mendoza (left) moves out of the way as the fruit stand on Grant Road is torn down on Thursday.

VERONICA WEBER

cation, the Sierra Club and Yahoo, plus Bon Appetit and Cafe 150, which provide food for Cisco and Google, respectively. Cafe 150 only serves food made from produce grown within a 150-mile range.

Members of the Farmlands Group say they've scheduled another meeting with Summer-Hill homes, where they'll provide an economic analysis of the plan, done by Bay Area Economics. BAE is a consultant that has provided analyses for numerous developments, including the transition of the Presidio military base in San Francisco to a park.

So far, the only city action has been to pre-zone the land for R1-8 residential housing — a



John Raumann (left) and Michael Mauel (right) tear off the chicken wire from the demolished fruit stand.

VERONICA WEBER

zoning SummerHill supports. A gatekeeper request has also been approved, which means the city is willing to consider the project. SummerHill plans to submit an

application for the project this month, but a date has not been set for a public meeting to officially re-zone and annex the last farm property in the city. ▣

Farm's choo choo train moves to south San Jose

By Daniel DeBolt

Last week, when news broke that the days were numbered for the city's last farm, the Schmitz family started selling its tractors and hens and tore down the familiar fruit stand. But for most of the kids who came to visit, it was all about the train that circled the pumpkin patch in October and the Christmas tree lot in December.

On a Sunday morning two weeks ago, the quarter-scale train was loaded onto a truck headed for another family farm in south San Jose.

A crowd gathered around the truck. One person, described as a "train buff," eyed a spare piece of track. "You going to use that?" he asked. Like several other souvenir seekers, he walked away with a cherished artifact that day.

Knowing the farm's future was indefinite, farmer Dave Schmitz had been looking for a home for the train for years. The Spina family farm, located in south San Jose and a supplier of pumpkins to the local farm, was an obvious choice. The train will now be used during the Spina farm's annual pumpkin promotion on Bailey

Avenue and Santa Teresa Road. Those who grew attached to the train in Mountain View will still be able to ride it next October when Schmitz helps the Spina family set it up for the first time.

"Dave's been talking to me about that train for years," said John Spina, the father of a 3-year-old boy. "I like the fact that it's home made. My kid is absolutely bonkers over it."

Schmitz recalled that, after working the Grant Road farm for a few years, he and his childhood buddy Mike McCarthy had a conversation that went something like this:

Schmitz: "Wouldn't it be cool to have a train?"

McCarthy: "Yeah, let's build one."

So the two built a train modeled after a German toy train commonly seen set up around Christmas trees. But this one is large enough to ride in, and runs on a small lawn mower engine. Schmitz' father built the caboose, which McCarthy said is a favorite. The tracks were salvaged from orchards that used carts to move produce before they closed in the early 1990s.

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

■ COUNCIL BRIEFS

SOAP BOX DERBY APPROVED

The city's first soap box derby was approved Tuesday, which means Dana Street will be closed off the weekend of June 9 while the overpass in front of Landels Elementary School is transformed into a race track for gravity-powered cars.

A resident living close to the site, Aaron Grossman, spoke in favor of the race, saying that his initial concerns about its impact on the neighborhood had been well addressed by the city and organizer Joe Sparaco.

For more information on the coming race, visit www.svsbd.com.

COUNCIL MOVES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL STRATEGY

The city council expressed unanimous support in a study session Tuesday for drafting a comprehensive plan for the city's efforts to reduce waste and curtail greenhouse emissions and other pollution.

The city has done numerous projects over the years that could be considered environmentally friendly, such as the methane gas regeneration plant at Shoreline and solar panels on the parking structure on Bryant Street. But it's a piecemeal approach, they said, and council member Ronit Bryant said a comprehensive plan would provide focus.

Areas of concern include transportation, green building, recycling, urban forests, land use, alternative energy, and a new state law requiring cities to return to 1990 carbon dioxide emission levels by 2020.

"The devil is in the details," said council member Matt Pear, expressing caution about subscribing to a model such as the Sierra Club's Cool Cities program.

— Daniel DeBolt

PROSTITUTION

► Continued from page 1

making the arrests."

Police arrested 56-year-old Julie Conroe of San Jose, 38-year-old Min Chang of Saratoga and 49-year-old Xue Mei Gao of Daly City. All were charged with maintaining a house of prostitution and operating a massage

parlor without a license. Bennett says investigators are still determining who the actual property leasee and owner are.

It was the second such raid at the Pamela Drive salon in seven months. Last August, police raided the same salon and charged occupants with prostitution and illegal massages.

To keep a check on prostitution, the department's suppres-

sion and support unit routinely investigates such practices in the area. Police are unable to say exactly how many prostitution parlors operate in Mountain View to date, but eight illegal massage practices were investigated in 2006. A review of past *Voice* reports shows that as many as six cases are reported in Mountain View per year.

According to police officials,

the city issues a one-year massage permit after an owner submits a fee, clears fingerprinting and background checks, and submits a certificate showing 200-plus hours of training. A telltale sign that massage parlors are conducting prostitution, they say, is when the owners operate without a massage permit — as was the case for illegal parlors on Pamela Drive and elsewhere.

Bennett said the suspects arrested on the premises of illegal massage parlors are nearly always women from Asian countries who, he said, have been in the country for a short period of time.

"In some cases prostitutes work independently and collect and keep all of their earnings," he said. "However, in some cases, they are associated with a larger organization." ▣

COUNCIL

► Continued from page 5

Means, who was elected in 2004. Means' comments were in response to a question from newly elected member Ronit Bryant, who wanted to know the proper way to develop an idea before putting it on a meeting agenda.

According to the Brown Act — designed to prevent government bodies from building a consensus prior to public meetings — council members must not meet in groups of more than three at a time. Even when a council member calls two others on the phone, members must be sure that no one calls anyone else about it — or risk violating the law.

As an alternative, city manager Kevin Duggan encouraged them to go to city staff with ideas. "That's what we are here for," he said.

Duggan and Mayor Laura Macias also urged members to avoid settling on decisions until the council discusses a project or issue publicly.

"It's our civic duty to keep an open mind," Macias said.

Duggan said if council members reached a conclusion before a meeting, public comment becomes a meaningless affair.

"Why should people show up and talk to you?" he asked.

Manning, the workshop leader, asked council members to identify behaviors that can distract from productivity. Several common annoyances were cited, such as beginning comments with "When I was on the planning commission..."

"Everyone knows you were on that commission," Means said.

Recently termed-out council member Mike Kasperzak was present, drawing on his eight years' experience on the council. He advised members to be clear about what was personally meaningful about a project before voting, so that compromise could be reached with efficiency. He encouraged differing members to ask, "What would it take to change your vote on that?" — something a new council member might be hesitant to do.

Talking with developers

Several veteran members said that, in the interest of saving time, it was important to talk to developers before a council meeting.

Siegel had expressed concerns about that, stating that his policy was that he would meet with developers but would not give feedback. That way, he said, he wouldn't "buy in" to a project before the vote.

"I know how the game is played," he said.

Kasperzak, who ran on a pro-housing platform years ago, said

he regularly met with developers and gave feedback on projects.

"I wanted to get the best project," he said.

Means seemed to agree with Siegel, and pointed to examples where the council took way too long deciding the details of a small housing development in a meeting, when those points could have been settled if the developers had sought input from individual council members.

Council member Nick Galiotto said that when he's met with developers, they often start by talking about their meetings with other council members — a conversation he stops right away. He is not allowed to know what other council members are interested in.

"Get that off the table quick," he said.

He also makes sure to not give any impression that he might favor a project. "You could be voting against it," he said.

Talking to the press

Though the workshop took place in a mostly empty room, some council members may have been uncomfortable having a reporter from the *Voice* looking over their shoulder — until they started talking about how to deal with the press. Jokes flew about the local papers and how much they respect the *Voice* for its accuracy.

"None of us owns a newspaper," Means said to members who might be frustrated with the press. "What the reporter thinks is important may not be what you think is important."

He said he's happy with how he's been quoted and portrayed, but others may not be, and others are just plain shy of the media.

"Don't be afraid of the press," Kasperzak said.

As the new council, with its new mayor and three new members, learns to work together, Manning said it faces four different phases, which she labeled "forming, storming, norming and performing."

Forming is the orientation, storming is the inevitable power struggle between members, norming provides workable structures, and performing is the stage of collaboration.

Manning said the council always has to start from the beginning following an election. After the "honeymoon" of the forming phase, "people start jockeying for power," she said, adding that many may already be familiar with one aspect of the storming process, "grandstanding."

Macias said she hopes the workshop will prevent problems by establishing rules and protocol early in the life of the new council. ■

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

All hail the Marauders

By Alexa Tondreau

For the first time in 40 years, the Mountain View Marauders, a local Pee Wee cheerleading squad, has brought home the first place National Title, bringing honor to the city and praise from the City Council.


At their regular meeting Tuesday, council members lauded the

Marauders for their dramatic win last week, when the squad took top prize at the 50th annual Pop Warner National Cheer and Dance Championship.

The Marauders are 16 girls between 9 and 12 years old, along with their team of coaches: Danielle Hypolite, Adrienne Hypolite, Collette Hypolite and Leah Sanabria. The Marauders beat out 15 other top-ranked Pee Wee

squads from across the U.S.

The Nationals champs are: Maria Barcenas, Aishlinn Carr, Chelsea Colbert, Kimberly Cortez, Fiona Cullen, Alexandra Fehoko, Angelica Flores, Jordan Garvey, Sydney Magana, Denyce Martinez, Esperanza Medina, Rayanne Palmer, Yesenia Perez, Samantha Sekator, Alexandria Vargas and Julia White. ■



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- Thursdays, February 1 – 22
- * **INFANT CARE**
Often touted as our "most fun" class, learn the specifics of newborn care including bathing, temperature-taking, changing diapers, and feeding and soothing techniques. Infant doll models are used to allow for hands-on practice.
- Saturday, February 3
- * **CESAREAN BIRTH CLASS**
This two-hour class is taught by a labor and delivery nurse childbirth educator who helps prepare families for cesarean delivery. Information about vaginal birth after cesarean (VBAC) will also be provided to go over questions and expectations.
- Wednesday, February 7
- * **INFANT AND CHILD CPR**
Conducted by a certified instructor, this interactive class is geared for parents, grandparents and other caregivers of newborns to school-aged children. The course includes presentation, video, text, practice on infant models and a certificate of completion.
- Sunday, February 11

Call (650) 723-4600 or visit www.lpch.org to register or obtain more information on the times, locations and fees for these and other courses.



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Freestyle gets dose of Big Brother

By Alexa Tondreau

State Sen. Joe Simitian came to Freestyle Academy last week in order to discuss privacy issues with the students, including Simitian's proposed privacy legislation concerning RFID or "smart chip" technology.

Simitian's bill, which was vetoed by the governor this summer but will be reintroduced soon, would heavily regulate the use of RFIDs (Radio Frequency Identification), which are embedded in documents for tracking and identification purposes.

Believing that tech-savvy students will confront privacy issues sooner than most, Simitian told the audience of 30 or so students, "If there is a group that cares about privacy, this is the group."

Though at first the Freestyle students, who are high school juniors and seniors from Mountain View and Los Altos, lounged heavy-eyed on the floor and in their seats as Simitian stood before them, they noticeably perked up when he peppered his talk with references that hit home.

Simitian (D-Palo Alto) touched on the way that people can be tracked and even exploited on MySpace, and he spoke about home-made videos on YouTube that often show people without their consent.

"I encourage you to think about all the different ways you have surrendered and even compromised your privacy," he said.

RFID chips make it easy to track the movements of those in possession of them. Currently they are being used in the Bay Area to track cars using the FastTrac lane on toll bridges.

Simitian envisioned a day when the chips would be applied subdermally.

"Certain companies are considering it," he said, warning that "the more the technology proliferates, the harder it will be to un-ring that bell."

As it happens, current required reading at Freestyle includes "1984" by George Orwell, and instructors were happy to hear Simitian tie the novel's themes to current events.

But as the students found out, not all privacy issues are considered equal. Students who brought up the fact that parents are able to track kids' whereabouts using GPS devices and cell phones discovered that Simitian's legislation won't address those concerns.

"The thing is, at 17 your parents can trump some of your privacy rights," Simitian told the disappointed crowd. ▀

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	Stress Reduction for the New Year 7:00-8:00 p.m. FREE			Simple, Healthy Lunches in Minutes 6:30-8:30 p.m. \$15		
			Oaxacan Antojitos 6:30-8:30 p.m. \$34			
	Healthy, Hearty Delicious Soups 6:30-8:30 p.m. \$18	A Gluten-Free Taste of Tuscany 6:30-8:00 p.m. \$10				

Truffles, Truffles, Truffles and More Truffles...

Friday, February 2, 6:30-8:30pm \$34
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Stress Reduction for the New Year

Monday, February 5, 7:00-8:00pm FREE
Learn a simple practice that you can do to relax, quiet your mind and body and feel better fast. Instructor Dana Ben-Yehuda, M.AmSAT, teaches you to undo everyday stresses using the Alexander Technique. Come learn ways to move that can help ease back pain. Be balanced and poised and reduce strain on your back. This is a hands-on educational method that has been in practice for over 100 years. It is recognized by health services in England, Switzerland, Australia, Germany and Israel. Here in the U.S., it is offered at chronic pain clinics, cancer centers, and physical therapy offices, as well as Universities and music and drama conservatories.

Simple Healthy Lunches in Minutes

Thursday, February 8, 6:30-8:30pm \$18
Wonder how to find time to make a healthy lunch in the morning and still be on time for work? Samia McCully, ND, will show you how to assemble quick, nutritious lunches. Includes simple ingredients like hummus, olives, tomatoes, crackers, and cheeses. Great for busy moms, working professionals and those of you who just want more ideas for healthy lunches. Also included is a store tour and sampling of lunches.

Oaxacan Antojitos

Wednesday, February 21, 6:30-8:30pm \$34
Diverse regional wonders. Ron Kent, expert on Oaxacan cuisine, helps you master authentic antojitos all made with fresh stone ground masa: Corn Tortillas a Mano, Memelas, Empanadas and other Oaxacan specialties. Some other items on the menu will be Molotes con Chorizo and Potatoes, Empanadas with Amarillo and Chicken, Mole Amarillo, Atole Blanco and Champurrado, the pre-Colombian drinks made of corn and chocolate. Black Beans and Spanish rice will be offered to round out the meal.

rontkent@yahoo.com www.oaxacanfoods.com

Healthy, Hearty, Delicious Soups!

Monday, February 26, 6:30-8:30pm \$18
With Samia McCully, ND. Make way for soups from scratch! Learn to make 3 scrumptious soups - included are Black Bean, Moroccan Spiced Vegetable Lentil and Italian Tomato. These can be used as a side or a meal. Included is a store tour and of course - soup sampling!

A Gluten-Free Taste of Tuscany!

Tuesday, February 27, 6:30-8:30pm \$34
Join Personal Chef, Daniela Magozzi, and Gluten-Free Baker, Kathryn Guy, as they prepare a delicious and gluten-free Taste of Tuscany! Enjoy traditional dishes with a gluten-free twist. Items on the menu include:

- Torta de Ceci: Authentic Tuscan Garbanzo Bean Pizza
- Salsa delle Melanzane con Verdure Crude: Eggplant Spread with Raw Veggies
- Risotto con Funghi Salvatiche: Wild Mushroom Risotto
- Filetto di Maiale Arrostito: Roast Pork Tenderloin
- Pane/Bread: Focaccia
- Patate al Forno con Rosmarino e Salvia: Rosemary and Sage Roasted Potatoes
- Piselli con Pancetta e Salsa di Pomodoro: Peas with Pancetta and Tomato Sauce
- Biscotti, Café, e Vinsanto

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SQUIRRELS

► Continued from page 1

as we go along.”

Initially, the city installed traps in Cuesta Park’s trees, as recommended by the state Department of Fish and Game, which would have crushed the squirrels instantly the way mouse traps do. Now the city has once again hired Clark Pest Control to trap the aggressive squirrels in live traps, after which they’ll be taken away to be euthanized with chloro-

form gas. The squirrels targeted will be the small group identified by experts to be the perpetrators of the attacks.

In all, officials say, there have been 12 attacks since May of last year. (The city originally reported 18 attacks during that period, but the number was later revised.) Officials have detailed efforts to curb the squirrel’s unusual behavior, including squirrel-proof trash cans, park ranger patrols and large warning signs in several

But none has stopped the attacks, which only occur near the children’s play area along Cuesta Drive. No such attacks have been reported anywhere else in the city — or, for that matter, anywhere else in any city.

Once the aggressive squirrels are removed, it is hoped the other, less strident measures will prevent the rest from developing the unique behavior, city officials said. ▣

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

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VERONICA WEBER

Landels Elementary School students test out the aerodynamics of the paper airplanes they created during the Superbowl Science Day.

LANDELS

► Continued from page 1

school coordinators said, was to leave the children with the lasting impression that science and discovery can be interactive and even fun.

"It's very hands-on," Landels teacher and Science Day coordinator Arlene Bautista said. "The premise is that each child walks away with something tangible in their hands to take home."

For students working with NASA-Ames educators, that meant their very own home-made recipe for small bottle rockets, using Alka-Seltzer and water. Students also received a lesson in craters, complete with NASA visuals from space, and then got to form their own by throwing a baseball into a mixture of hardened flour.

In another classroom, a lesson in DNA was in full swing. Students ground down strawberries and, with a teacher's help, used a chemical to extract a single strand of DNA from the fruit.

"There was some really high-level stuff going on," Bautista said. But she and co-coordinator Sharri Leonard made sure the activities covered a broad range of interests.

Quite a few students had the opportunity to make gak, a gooey substance made of water, glue and borax that acts like a very soft and sticky play dough.

Others made their own lava lamps, using a mixture of oil, alcohol and dye, and fixed a light bulb to the bottom for fluorescence. This particular activity was a huge hit.

"Everyone wanted a lava lamp," Bautista said.

Additional activities included

drawing topographical contour maps with the U.S. Geological Survey and learning about the science behind fingertip forensics.

Superbowl Science Day continues to be popular with students and volunteers alike. Bautista said the school relies heavily on parent volunteers, many of whom come back to help out every year. And students have shown their appreciation as well.

Planning for the day begins at the beginning of December, when teachers brainstorm for new and interesting ways to inspire the kids with practical lessons in science. Ultimately, Bautista said, Science Day is just another way to promote a love of learning among young children.

"The kids look forward to it," she said. "They remember the activities from years previous. They just don't forget." ▀

EDUCATION BRIEFS

FORUM HELPS SHIFT TO COLLEGE

Educators will gather this Tuesday to discuss issues related to student achievement and educational opportunities in a forum titled "From High School to College."

Slated for Tuesday, Feb. 6 at 6 p.m., the event will be held in the Los Altos Youth Center. Mountain View-Los Altos Superintendent Barry Groves will be on hand, as will Stanford education Professor Michael Kirst and Martha Kanter, chancellor of the Foot-

hill-De Anza Community College District.

Topics of discussion will include whether children are over- or under-prepared for college, career opportunities, and how to stay competitive in the global community. Visit communitydialogues.org for more information.

'COFFEE WITH THE PRINCIPAL' AT LANDELS

Landels Elementary school is asking parents interested in learning more about the school, its curriculum and educators to join an all-school assembly and meet with faculty afterwards.

The "coffee with the principal" meeting will be held immediately after the morning assembly on Monday, Feb. 12 at approximately 8:30 am. Principal Phyllis DeMattos will be on hand to meet, talk and answer question.

Participants are asked to sign

in at the school office before entering the campus. For additional information, contact Landels at (650) 526-3520.

STUDENT ART IN CITY HALL ROTUNDA

The PACT School, an alternative K-5 program in the Mountain View Whisman School District, will be putting on its annual display of student art in the Mountain View City Hall rotunda. The exhibition will run from Feb. 6 to Feb. 23, and is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day.

The student art show is a result of PACT's Arts Focus program, which provides each student with 45 hours of art education beyond the standard district offering. Arts Focus classes are mixed-age, and students rotate through sessions with various media, including clay, paper textiles, three-dimensional art, and painting and drawing.

— Alexa Tondreau

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VOICE

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Hills redistricting bid soundly defeated

COUNTY BOARD ENDS FEAR MVLA WOULD LOSE STUDENTS AND REVENUE TO NEW DISTRICT

By Alexa Tondreau

Proponents of Los Altos Hills redistricting were dealt a final blow last week, when the county school organization board voted unanimously to deny their proposal to create a new kindergarten through eighth grade district to serve Hills students.

All 11 members of the county's committee on school district organization voted against the proposal, effectively curtailing any further efforts to move forward with redistricting.

In response, many Hills residents appear to be trying to move past the battle that has engaged their community for three years — and some are putting their faith in a document called the "Go Forward" or GO Plan, drafted by community members from both sides of the debate.

The recently released plan calls for keeping existing school options for Hills students intact, but improving representation at the Los Altos and Palo Alto Unified school districts, possibly by putting a trustee system into place.

The GO Plan also suggests allowing multi-year interdistrict transfers, instead of asking students to apply once a year to change schools. Officials from the Los Altos School District said the issue will be discussed during

negotiations with school district leaders in February.

The county hearing was the second in as many months to hash out the next stage of redistricting in the Hills. December's initial hearing had nearly twice as many people, and the smaller crowd seemed to embody a premature sense of defeat. Of the 50 community members scheduled to speak at Thursday's hearing, only about half were present.

Hills resident Jill Jensen was one of them, and she voiced the plan's failing momentum, saying, "We have no sense of being able to control this. I hope you can help us."

The committee cited the potential illegality of the proposal as a major mark against the new district.

"If the attendance numbers aren't there, we can't do this, even if we wanted to," committee member Steve Glickman said.

State law requires a minimum of 900 students to establish a new school district, a number which Los Altos Hills "barely makes," Glickman said. He added that the proposal assumes that all students attending private school in the Hills would return to the new district, an assumption he and others on the committee highly doubted.

Barry Groves, superintendent of the Mountain View-Los Altos High School District, said he is satisfied that the county made the right decision. He estimated that if the county had allowed the redistricting plan to move forward, the district could have experienced

losses of about 200 students and \$4.2 million in funds.

"We've been providing education to Los Altos Hills students since 1902," Groves said the day after the county hearing. "We've been doing a good job."

Of the county's reasoning to deny the motion, Groves said he found the most compelling argument to be of the "if it isn't broke, don't fix it" variety.

"For me, it was that these [Hills] students are getting a quality education and will continue to do so," he said.

The committee also gave as a factor in their decision the fact that not all Hills residents were in support of redistricting. Only about half of the residents of the Hills supported the plan.

Though the county did not come through with approval, the committee vowed to help Hills residents in other ways. The Los Altos School District's proposal to reopen Bullis, the Hills' lone neighborhood school, is important, Glickman said, and the county should "keep an eye on whatever agreement was made."

"We can continue to be cognizant of the progress of the [Los Altos] district to continue to keep the school open," he said.

The closing of Bullis-Purissima in 2003 caused the Hills city council to seek redistricting, even after the Los Altos School District promised to open a new school on the site in 2008 and channel \$10 million in funds toward a reconstruction effort. ▀

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LocalNews

DIMARIA

► Continued from page 5

mitment with the Red Cross a central part of her life. She specializes in two types of volunteer work: accounting and family services. As a family services consultant, DiMaria interviews victims of disasters — most commonly floods and hurricanes, she said — to help identify their needs.

Since joining up with Santa Clara Valley Red Cross in 1983, DiMaria's volunteer work has taken her to 11 U.S. states as well as the American Samoa Islands and Guam. Red Cross volunteers must commit to up to 28 days at a deployment site, but DiMaria put in 30 days in Washington and stayed there through Christmas and New Year's.

"There's an awful lot to be

done," she said, but added, "I'm getting more than I'm giving."

DiMaria became involved with Red Cross on the urging of her daughter, who thought she needed something to do after she retired from her job at a Sunnyvale manufacturer. DiMaria quickly became

"I'm getting more than I'm giving."

THELMA DIMARIA

an integral part of the Santa Clara Valley chapter, using her accounting skills to help in the office and taking advantage of free time to volunteer for disaster deployment.

The first major disaster she worked on required very little

travel. The Bay Area's 1989 earthquake was a training ground for DiMaria, and prepared her for later disasters of even greater proportions — including 9/11. DiMaria was part of a Red Cross team that arrived in New York City just a week after the Twin Towers fell. She worked on accounting for the Red Cross while in New York, and the experience left a strong impression on her.

"That was the most traumatic one for me," DiMaria said. "We got there on the 19th, which was the first day planes were allowed to land."

She described how the Red Cross was stationed at an enormous warehouse on a local pier as part of a coordinated relief effort for victims and their families.

"Everyone was there. The IRS, insurance companies, the police department, everyone you can think of had a space there in that building."

Though her work has taken her across the country many times, DiMaria is a permanent fixture at the Red Cross branch in Santa Clara Valley — located in San Jose — where at least once a week she spends an afternoon as coordinator of the disaster volunteer corps.

Some 1,500 local volunteers have had their training and deployment coordinated by DiMaria, including 463 who went to New Orleans in the weeks after Hurricane Katrina. She also coordinates volunteers who show up at local fires. The Red Cross always sends out at least two people to these sites, she said, to assist families in temporarily relocating to motels.

Elizabeth Dietz, director of disaster services for Santa Clara Valley's Red Cross, said DiMaria is an indispensable part of their operation.

"In the face of disaster, you need someone level-headed who has experience," Dietz said. "She brings her maturity. She's been out in the world and around the block a few times, and it's very helpful. She understands human nature and she's a fantastic communicator. We really care about her."

DiMaria shows no sign of slowing down. Along with her volunteer work and her twice-a-week yoga class, DiMaria is on a bowling team, plays in a bridge club, and hikes regularly. And of course she plans to continue on at the Red Cross.

"Every so often I get aggravated with something and threaten to go to the pound and walk dogs," she joked. "But I think I'll keep going for awhile." ▣



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- YOUR LETTERS
- GUEST OPINIONS

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■ EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

Political will needed to save farm

OWNERS, CITY WILL DECIDE FUTURE OF 15 ACRES ON GRANT ROAD

As the clock inexorably ticks towards a final deal on developing the 15.6-acre Grant Road farm into 55 homes, a determined band of Mountain View citizens is advancing a unique plan to preserve at least a part of the historic property.

At this point, no one knows if the sisters who inherited the land or the developer are even remotely interested in listening to a plan that would preserve five acres as a working farm, while still producing (the preservationists say) about the same return to them on the rest of the property.

Last week the owners said they would not renew the year-to-year lease of the property to David Schmitz, who promptly put his farm machinery up for sale and pushed down the wooden fruit stand where thousands of local families bought their produce every year.

Our guess is that if anything resembling preservation occurs, it must come from the City Council. If the council is going to convince the owners and developers to even think about a farm, it is going to have to make it worthwhile, or at least ease current subdivision law to make it possible.

The first step in the process will be to officially bring the farm property, which is now county land, into Mountain View. The city already has zoned the parcel for residential use. Last year, the council passed a gatekeeper ordinance, which simply means the farm will be accepted as city property when the issue comes up, probably later this year.

When that time comes, the council is sure to hear from the Mountain View Farmlands Group, made up of neighbors and other supporters who want to keep a working farm on the site. They have drawn up a convincing plan that appears to produce

nearly the same number of lots on 11.2 acres as developer SummerHill Homes had designed on the entire 15.6 acres — leaving a few acres left over for a new, smaller farm.

This was done in various ways, such as drawing narrower streets and doing away with one street altogether. The Farmlands Group says its plan leaves 398,000 square feet of developable space, compared to 440,000 square feet by SummerHill's plan.

Whether the scheme advanced by the group (see it at www.mvfarmland.org), has a remote chance of gaining traction from the City Council is not clear. It couldn't hurt that newly elected council member Jac Siegel was visiting the farm last week during a fire sale of equipment put on by Dave Schmitz and his father.

"It's the end of an era," Mr. Siegel said, adding that "it's a heritage loss. It will be interesting to see what happens to the property."

Those words could be interpreted many ways, but if nothing else, we urge Siegel and his council colleagues to take a serious look at preserving a piece of the Grant Road farm. There should be a robust public debate about any reasonable plan that would maintain a small farm and also bring in a fair return for the owners.

Over the years, thousands of children and families carved pumpkins or enjoyed vegetables purchased at the farm's produce stand. It is no surprise that neighboring families and others have put forward such a huge effort to save at least part of the property.

The council will have to decide whether to make a concerted effort to save this institution, or allow the dream to fade into another subdivision of homes on Grant Road. In this case it may be appropriate to consider the old saw: "When it's gone it's gone."

■ LETTERS

VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

U.S. NEEDS TO DISCUSS VIOLENCE, NOT SPANKING

Editor:

It appears that all the sanctimonious furor over Sally Lieber's legislative try to discourage parents from paddling children 3 years old and under has gone nationwide — and worldwide.

Even if her Assembly bill goes nowhere, Sally can be thanked for opening the dialogue on the dangers of swatting little ones and on limits of parental freedoms. We live in the U.S., one of the world's most violent societies, and need all the discussion about curbing violence we can get.

Look at what has been going on — a prevalence of bloody entertainment; soaring homicide rates; hate crimes; road rage; maintaining poverty; drive-by shootings; 9/11; "shock and awe" in Iraq; glorification of militarism; Abu

Ghraib; Guantanamo Bay; the new "surge"; and on and on.

The question is, should the discussion of "parental freedom" or "addressing ways of preventing violent parental behavior" be at the top of the list?

Keep stirring the muddy waters, Sally.

Fred Duperrault
W. Middlefield Road

ANTI-SPANKING BILL IS GOVERNMENT OVERREACH

Editor:

Just what constitutes "spanking"?

Your editorial last week ("Furor over Lieber's spanking bill") uses "smacking" and "hitting" synonymously with spanking. However, Webster's defines "spanking" as "to slap

► See **LETTERS**, next page



LETTERS

► Continued from previous page

on the buttocks with an object or the open hand.”

Outside of the Bay Area, most Americans seem appalled by Ms. Lieber’s bill to outlaw spanking; it is seen as another ultra-liberal attempt to inject governmental control in our daily lives.

I am inclined to agree.

Hank Woodward
Porterfield Court

NOT SORRY TO SEE CURATOLA LEAVE HOSPITAL BOARD

Editor:

What do you call the resignation of El Camino Hospital District board member Dominick Curatola? I call it a good start to a more open and honest board.

It was Curatola who announced to the press that previous CEO Lee Domanico was hired for a salary of about \$350,000, when in reality his compensation was nearly \$1 million. Curatola also defended Domanico’s acceptance of stock options from hospital vendor Sensitron after a contract was signed, a clear conflict of interest and questionably legal.

Here’s to a new board member with more integrity and honesty.
John Niemic
Latham Street

IN MEMORY OF NASA ASTRONAUTS

Editor:

Throughout its history, NASA (and one of its ancestors, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics) has been hit by the deaths of test pilots and astronauts who were doing their jobs to the best of their ability.

The five-day period from Jan. 27 to Feb. 1 is especially heart-breaking because three major accidents killed 17 astronauts: Jan. 27, 1967, three Apollo 1 astronauts were killed in a ground test accident; Jan. 28, 1986, seven Challenger astronauts were killed when the space shuttle exploded during its launch sequence; and Feb. 1, 2003, seven Columbia astronauts were killed when the space shuttle exploded on reentry, due to major damage unknowingly incurred during launch. Over the years, too many others have also been killed during test flights and ground tests.

NASA takes this time of year to remember its fallen heroes. As an employee and contractor for over 49 years, it is with deep sorrow that I join them.

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■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

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■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

A touch of Middle Eastern class

NETO Caffe & Bakery is the promised land for pastry lovers, coffee drinkers and vegetarians

By Sheila Himmel

Neto has accomplished in four months what Starbucks is only now starting to talk about: Serve good food. Lucky Mountain View has this welcoming European-style cafe with excellent coffee and pastries but also full meals, all day and late into the night.

Neto (pronounced NEH-toh) is a Hebrew word that means, basically, "no B.S." What you see is what you get. "Talk to me neto" means "Be

straight with me," says owner Uri Raz. Neto, as a restaurant, means all fresh ingredients, no additives, everything baked in-house.

Picture windows open the small cafe to a tree-shaded patio and the darling Mountain View train station. Train noises foster the European feel.

Neto throws a warm embrace around students nursing coffee, co-workers at lunch, families, couples and vegetarians. Except for a little chicken, tuna salad and smoked salmon, the whole enticing menu is vegetarian.

Chicken schnitzel (\$12.95) is a cross between country-fried and citified chicken Kiev. Thin, buttery breading coats thin, moist fillets of chicken breast. It comes with pota-

toes and a welcome counterweight of green salad, sprightly dressed.

Chicken also appears in sandwiches, on pizza and in gigantic salads. There's a tuna salad sandwich and one with lox.

Otherwise, vegetarians, Neto is your promised land.

The house specialty is falafel, deep-fried patties of mashed chickpeas and spices, green under a browned crust. In the pita version (\$5.85) the falafel patties are flattened, and much easier to eat than the golf ball types that refuse to stay put in pocket bread.

What you see is prices are a little steep. What you get are generous portions, nicely accessorized, high-quality ingredients and preparation, and cheerful, comfortable decor.

Plain hummus (\$7.95) could be

Neto's fresh fruit tart makes a great accompaniment to a cappuccino.

VERONICA WEBER

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VERONICA WEBER

shared by three people. It comes with a dish of chopped green chile sauce, a dish with olives and pickles, and a basket of pita. It is fine, not outstanding, hummus.

Hummus also comes in flavors, including a topping of sauteed mushrooms and onions.

Have a pita topped with zatar (\$2), a dark green aromatic blend of spices, but make sure it takes a warm-up lap in the brick oven.

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house salad and bread.

Chunky vegetable soup (\$5.75), floating fresh garbanzo beans and accompanied by bread, is a meal in itself.

Pasta, couscous and Middle Eastern turnovers called samboosak round out the savory side of the menu. Mediterranean bagels sacrifice chewiness on the altar of healthy lightness, but the baker also bakes baguettes, multi-grain and ciabatta breads.

The baker, Eitan Ben Saadon, is also the chef. He studied bread in Germany, chocolate in Belgium, patisserie and desserts in

► See **NETO CAFFE**, page 22

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NETO CAFFE

► *Continued from page 21*

France, coffee in Italy, low-fat and healthy food preparation in New York. It all comes together in Mountain View.

Beer goes best with the Middle Eastern-Mediterranean menu. Neto has good choices, including Heineken, Sierra Nevada and Gordon Biersch. The wine list is a work in progress, and dessert wines are coming soon. Beauzeaux Red (\$7 a glass),



VERONICA WEBER

Besides an assortment of decadent sweets and pastries, Neto also offers many savory vegetarian plates, like this falafel platter.

despite the goofy name, is a food-friendly blend of eight grapes.

The must-have drink, though, is coffee. Neto imports its blend

of beans (eight, again) from Italy. The cappuccino is perfect, no bitterness, a little nutty, with a durable foam of milk and a bite-sized shortbread cookie. All the usual espresso drinks are here, plus Turkish coffee with cardamom, hot chocolate and infused teas.

My tour of the pastry case left a lot to be desired. But for now, you should know the chocolate babka (\$4.50) and chocolate mousse (\$6.25) are standard-setters. I also liked the brownie (\$2.95), with a chocolate divinity-type top and dense body, but my companions thought it tasted "not right out of the oven." The strawberry tart (\$5.50) pleased everybody.

One warning: Neto seats only 40 people inside, and fills up at peak times. When the weather warms up and you can sit on the patio, then we're really talking European. ▣

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MOVIE TIMES

- ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES (PG)** Century 20: 11:45 a.m.; 2 & 4:35 p.m.
- BABEL (R)** ★★1/2 Century 16: 12:30, 3:45, 7 & 10:05 p.m. Century 20: 12:25, 4, 7:05 & 10:10 p.m.
- BECAUSE I SAID SO (PG-13)** ★★1/2 Century 16: 11:50 a.m.; 2:15, 4:45, 7:20 & 9:45 p.m. Century 12: 11:50 a.m.; 1, 2:25, 3:35, 5, 6:15, 7:40, 9 & 10:20 p.m.
- BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE (PG-13)**
Century 12: 12:30, 3, 5:25, 7:50 & 10:15 p.m.
- BORAT (R)** ★★1/2 Century 20: 7:55 & 10:15 p.m.
- CASINO ROYALE (PG-13)** ★★1/2 Century 12: 12:20, 3:50, 7:15 & 10:25 p.m.
- CATCH AND RELEASE (PG-13)** Century 16: 11:05 a.m.; 1:40, 4:20, 7:05 & 9:40 p.m. Century 20: 11:55 a.m.; 1, 2:30, 3:45, 5:10, 6:30, 7:50, 9:15 & 10:25 p.m.
- CHARLOTTE'S WEB (G)** ★★1/2 Century 12: 11:45 a.m.; 2:20 & 4:40 p.m.
- CHILDREN OF MEN (R)** ★★1/2 Century 16: 11:15 a.m.; 2, 4:50, 7:40 & 10:30 p.m. Century 20: 12:35, 3:05, 5:35, 8:05 & 10:35 p.m.
- THE DEPARTED (R)** ★★1/2 Century 16: 11:30 a.m.; 2:45, 6:50 & 10:10 p.m. Century 20: 12:20, 3:40, 7:05 & 10:20 p.m.
- DREAMGIRLS (PG-13)** ★★★ Century 16: 1, 4:10, 7:25 & 10:25 p.m. Century 20: 1:10, 4:15, 7:15 & 10:10 p.m.
- EPIC MOVIE (PG-13)** Century 16: 11:20 a.m.; 1:30, 3:40, 5:50, 8 & 10:15 p.m. Century 12: 11:55 a.m.; 1:10, 2:15, 3:30, 4:30, 5:50, 7, 8:20, 9:30 & 10:35 p.m.
- ERAGON (PG)** ★★★ Century 12: Noon, 2:35 & 5:05 p.m.
- FREEDOM WRITERS (PG-13)** Century 16: 12:10, 3:10, 6:55 & 9:50 p.m. Century 12: 12:40, 4:20, 7:30 & 10:30 p.m.
- THE GOOD SHEPHERD (R)** ★★ Century 20: 12:30 & 6:55 p.m.
- HAPPILY N'EVER AFTER (PG)** Century 12: 12:05, 2:30 & 5:10 p.m.
- HAPPY FEET (PG)** Century 20: 11:30 a.m.; 2:15 & 4:50 p.m.
- THE HITCHER (R)** Century 12: 12:10, 2:50, 5:20, 8 & 10:05 p.m.
- THE HOLIDAY (PG-13)** ★★★ Century 12: 7:10 & 10:10 p.m.
- THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND (R)** ★★1/2 Century 16: 12:20, 3:20, 6:45 & 9:40 p.m. Century 20: 1:15, 4:30, 7:40 & 10:30 p.m.
- LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA (R)** ★★1/2 Century 16: 11:25 a.m.; 2:40, 6:40 & 9:55 p.m. Century 20: 12:50, 3:55, 7 & 10:05 p.m.
- THE MESSENGERS (PG-13)** Century 16: Noon, 2:30, 5, 7:35 & 10 p.m. Century 20: 12:05, 1:05, 2:30, 3:30, 4:45, 5:45, 7:10, 8, 9:20 & 10:15 p.m.
- NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM (PG)** Century 16: 11 a.m.; 1:45, 4:25, 7:15 & 9:50 p.m. Century 20: 12:15, 2:55, 5:25, 8:05 & 10:35 p.m.
- NOTES ON A SCANDAL (R)** ★★1/2
Century 20: Noon, 2:25, 4:50, 7:20 & 9:50 p.m.
Aquarius: 2:30, 5, 7:30 & 9:50 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. also at 12:15 p.m.
- THE PAINTED VEIL (PG-13)** ★★★ Century 20: Fri.-Mon. at 12:55, 4, 7:25 & 10:25 p.m.; Tue. at 4 & 10:25 p.m. Aquarius: 1, 3:45, 6:45 & 9:30 p.m.
- PAN'S LABYRINTH (R)** ★★1/2 Century 20: 11:35 a.m.; 2:20, 4:55, 7:30 & 10:05 p.m. Palo Alto Square: 1:30, 4:20, 7:20 & 10:10 p.m.
- THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS (PG-13)** ★★★
Century 16: 11:10 a.m.; 1:55, 4:55, 7:50 & 10:35 p.m.
Century 20: 11:30 a.m.; 2:15, 5, 7:40 & 10:20 p.m.
- THE QUEEN (NOT RATED)** ★★1/2 Century 20: 12:10, 2:40, 5:05, 7:25 & 9:45 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 12: 7:20 & 9:50 p.m.
- THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW (1975) (R)**
Guild: Sat. at midnight.
- SMOKIN' ACES (R)** ★★ Century 16: 12:15, 2:50, 5:25, 8 & 10:30 p.m. Century 20: 11:35 a.m.; 12:30, 1:55, 3:05, 4:25, 5:30, 6:55, 8, 9:25 & 10:30 p.m.
- STOMP THE YARD (PG-13)** Century 16: 11 a.m.; 1:35, 4:30, 7:30 & 10:05 p.m. Century 12: 12:50, 4:45, 7:25, 9:20 & 10 p.m.
- VENUS (R)** Century 16: 12:30, 3, 5:20, 7:45 & 10:20 p.m.
- VOLVER (R)** ★★1/2 Century 20: 7:15 & 10 p.m. Guild: 1:20, 4, 6:45 & 9:25 p.m.

Note: Screenings are for Friday through Tuesday only.

- AQUARIUS: 430 Emerson St., Palo Alto (266-9260)
CENTURY CINEMA 16: 1500 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View (960-0970)
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- ★ Skip it
- ★★ Some redeeming qualities
- ★★★ A good bet
- ★★★★ Outstanding

For show times, plot synopses, trailers and more movie info, visit www.mv-voice.com and click on movies.



MOVIE REVIEWS

BABEL ★★1/2
(Century 16, Century 20) On a remote Moroccan mountain, a young goat herder mindlessly fires his father's newly acquired rifle at a tour bus. The bullet hits an American passenger (Cate Blanchett), whose distraught husband (Brad Pitt) exhibits the same mix of fear and entitlement as his fellow Western travelers. In San Diego, the couple's Mexican nanny (Adriana Barraza) gets word that they won't return in time for her to attend her son's wedding across the border. Having cared for their two children since birth, she decides to take them with her. Her gun-toting, easily startled nephew (Gael Garcia Bernal) makes the return trip complicated. Meanwhile, a deaf Japanese teen (Rinko Kikuchi), desperate for love, wanders through Tokyo. Her widowed father (Koji Yakusho) was the former owner of the gun that started the disaster-chain of events. Director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu criticizes the way of the gun and the clash of cultures in a world where bad things happen to good people. *Rated: R for violence, some graphic nudity, sexual content, language and some drug use. In English and French, Spanish, Japanese, Berber, Arabic and Japanese sign language with English subtitles. 2 hours, 22 minutes.* — S.T.



CHARLOTTE'S WEB ★★1/2
(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 a 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 ornery 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, Charlotte 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.

► See **MINI REVIEWS**, page 24

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■ MOVIE REVIEW

Blowing smoke

'SMOKIN' ACES' A TIRED RETREAD FROM A WORN-OUT GENRE

By Jeanne Aufmuth

Jeremy Piven was riding high as the quintessential bad boy of "Entourage," but can't quite salvage this star-packed, blood-soaked copycat of a thriller.

Director Joe Carnahan borrows liberally from a wrung-out genre to craft a nefarious tale of corruption and greed in Nevada's high-rolling desert sun. At its core is Vegas showboat Buddy "Aces" Israel (Piven), who has taken his

illusionist act on the road and wormed his way into some shady mob connections that have any number of federal agencies secretly investigating his activities.

The inquiries sputter when a hit is put out on Buddy, with a \$1 million price tag on his head. Which brings every Tom, Dick and Harry to Nevada for a piece of the action, along with itchy feds who want to snag their key mob witness before he bites the dust.

Ex-cops, bounty hunters,

a pair of kittenish hitwomen and European assassins are all gunning for Buddy, who is holed up in the slick penthouse suite of a swanky Lake Tahoe hotel in a post-coital cloud of cocaine and regret.

Carnahan treads familiar ground here; his "Narc" was a tetchy high-octane thriller and one of my favorite films of 2003. But "Aces" is of the rip-off of this morally neglectful genre, an homage to bigger and better films — "Ocean's Eleven," "True Romance," "Pulp Fiction," etc. etc. — that never quite tracks its own groove.

That said, "Aces" gives good attitude, packed with personality and a slapdash rock 'n' roll mayhem. The cast is a glittery who's-who of Holly-



Jeremy Piven (as Buddy 'Aces' Israel) in a scene from "Smoking Aces."

wood, ranging from celluloid veterans Ray Liotta and Andy Garcia to such newbie screen celebs as soulful crooner Alicia Keys. Cameos take the cake: Jason Bateman as a strung-out foil, Ben Affleck as a sly ex-cop who wants in on the dough.

Piven plays it with Sinatra-like sleaze, perfectly convincing as a showy player who takes excess to the max. But the carnage is unfortunately gratuitous, ruthlessly over-the-top even for this

guts-and-glory junkie.

The zany energy ultimately gives way to slick but silly plot devices that drag the action over the finish line with a resounding thud. ■

■ MOVIE NOTES

Stars: **

Rating: R for excessive violence, nudity and language

Run Time: 1 hour, 48 minutes

Send Us A Postcard



Photo taken in Disneyland during Graham Middle School's 2006 Performing Arts Tour.

(Left to right) Back row: Zosha Stefanek, Conner Worland, Amy Hammer, Joanne Maltbaek, Kari Hyland, and Anette Skoda. Front row: Matt Costales, Sabrina Wong, and David Quistad.

Take a photo with the Mountain View Voice on your next trip and email to jblock@mv-voice.com or mail to Postcards, P.O. Box 405, Mountain View, CA 94042.

MINI REVIEWS

► Continued from page 23

CHILDREN OF MEN ★★★ 1/2

(Century 16, Century 20) In the futuristic world of "Men," human beings have seemingly lost the ability to reproduce, many of the planet's finest cities have been decimated and government soldiers rule with an iron fist. The film opens with downtrodden citizens suffering the news that the world's youngest person, an 18-year-old young man dubbed Baby Diego, has died. Theo Faron (Clive Owen) seems relatively unfazed — it's obvious Theo had given up hope for the future of mankind a long time ago. Now Theo sleepwalks through a dreary job and occasionally visits his pot-smoking friend Jasper (Michael Caine). Theo's humdrum existence takes a sharp turn when his former lover Julian (Julianne Moore) returns to his life asking for help. Julian leads a rag-tag group of rebels with a secret — one of their number is a young pregnant woman (Claire-Hope Ashitey as Kee). It will be the first child born in 18 years, and Julian's crew needs Theo to escort Kee to the coast and into the hands of the clandestine "Human Project." The graphic violence and permeating air of hopelessness in "Men" make for a less-than-uplifting experience. But this fascinating portrait of the future is one of the best-directed films of the year. *Rated: R for strong violence, language, some drug use and brief nudity. 1 hour, 49 minutes.* — T.H.

DREAMGIRLS ★★★

(Century 16, Century 20) "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

ingenues, The Dreamettes, who warble like songbirds in an effort to break into the biz. The girls — Deena, Effie and Lorrell (Beyonce Knowles, 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 cross-over pop success and all its trappings: jealousy, love triangles, betrayal and the painful pitfalls of superstardom. Nothing newsworthy here, but the ride is a blast due to some crack performances and the fantastic musical stylings of Beyonce, Murphy and breakout newcomer Hudson as the proud but self-destructive middle child. *Rated: PG-13 for language and adult situations. 2 hours, 11 minutes.* — J.A.

LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA

★★★ 1/2

(Century 16) The second of Clint Eastwood's World War II sagas is clearly superior to his flat companion piece, "Flags of Our Fathers." Unspooling from the perspective of the Japanese, the battle scenes against U.S. troops for control of the volcanic island are searing. The present-day discovery of a cache of letters triggers the flashback to 1944. Iris Yamashita's first script, developed from a story co-authored with "Crash" scribe Paul Haggis, quickly establishes Iwo Jima as part of Japan's sacred homeland and a key strategic position in the Pacific Theater. Embodying the honor and warrior code of the Imperial forces, General Kuribayashi (Ken Watanabe of "The Last Samurai") plans a do-or-die defense. He

► Continued on next page

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► *Continued from previous page*
and his troops write letters to loved ones, which serve as first-person accounts of the preparations and doomed attempt to stem the American attack in February of 1945. Eastwood triumphs in making you understand and identify with the Japanese entrenched in a no-win situation, instead of caring more about those raising the flags of our fathers. *Rated: R for graphic war violence. In Japanese with English subtitles. 2 hours, 20 minutes.* — S.T.



MISS POTTER ★★★1/2

(Century 16, Century 20) With her bee-stung lips and rosy cheeks, Renée Zellweger twinkles and charms as children's book author-illustrator Beatrix Potter. Miss Potter's narration opens the film, welcoming the viewer into the imagination that fuels her creativity and fills her lonely life with make-believe friends both furry and feathered. "There's something delicious about writing the first words," says the author, wondering where the story may take her. And you may wonder

the same when the 30-something spinster dabs paint on a lovely watercolor of a resting brown bunny — and his eyes spring open in an animated sequence that takes you totally by surprise. Such moments of whimsy enliven the simple narrative of Miss Potter peddling her wares to a publisher, finding success, and falling in love with the endearing Norman Warne (Ewan McGregor), who believes in her work. Flashbacks wonderfully convey how Beatrix came under the spell of the English Lake District during the summers of her childhood. Pretty as a Beatrix Potter picture, director Chris Noonan's charmer will surely put a smile on your face. *Rated: PG for brief mild language. 1 hour, 32 minutes.* — S.T.

NOTES ON A SCANDAL ★★★1/2

(Aquarius, Century 20) At the crux of this twisted melodrama is Judi Dench, a spinster schoolteacher named Barbara Covett with a penchant for obsessing on the weak. In this case new St. George's School hire Sheba Hart (Cate Blanchett), an anxious bohemian art teacher dubbed "the wispy novice." Barb keeps her stalker sensibilities under wraps while biding her time in becoming indispensable to Sheba, who needs all the help she can get in maintaining discipline with her charges. Soon the pair is doing regular lunches and Barb is worming her way into Chez Hart with abandon. The world comes crashing down when Barb discovers Sheba is having an affair with 15-year-old St. George student Steven Connolly (Andrew

Simpson). Barb feels betrayed, her magnificent complicity with Sheba violated by a pubescent paramour. Dench gives an Oscar-worthy performance as a devious SWF who dreads ending her days alone and unspools her conspiracies with vengeance. An overwrought score matches the flamboyantly scandalous mood, rendering the whole a wanton treat. *Rated: R for language, sexuality and adult themes. 1 hour, 32 minutes.* — J.A.

THE PAINTED VEIL ★★★

(Aquarius, Century 20) The classic W. Somerset Maugham novel gets the pretty treatment in this escalating drama of an embittered English couple navigating the perils of China circa 1925. Dr. Walter Fane (Edward Norton) is a staid bacteriologist managing a government lab in Shanghai when he falls for a beautiful but restless socialite named Kitty (Naomi Watts). Petulant, spoiled and hard to please, Kitty nonetheless accepts Walter's proposal of marriage out of desperation to escape her stifling family. Soon enough the jaded newlywed is shacking up with another man (Liev Schreiber), at which point a bitter cuckolded Walter bullies his wife into accompanying him to a small village on a tributary of the Yangtze where he has volunteered to aid the cholera epidemic. Forced by extreme circumstances to deal with the matters at hand, the estranged couple launches on a journey of self-discovery that ultimately ends in tragedy. "Veil" isn't thrilling filmmaking but rather sturdy adult fare that works lush period

locations and the subtle gifts of its talented actors to its advantage. *Rated: PG-13 for language and mature subject matter. 2 hours, 16 minutes.* — J.A.

PAN'S LABYRINTH ★★★1/2

(CineArts, Century 20) Guillermo del Toro crafts a captivating yet deadly gothic fairy tale rich with the sorrow of the postwar repression of Francisco Franco's Spain. Fantasy meets a brutal reality when young Ofelia (Ivana Baquero) arrives with her pregnant mother (Ariadna Gil as Carmen) at a rural military outpost commanded by her forbidding stepfather, Capitan Vidal (Sergi Lopez). Upon arrival Ofelia is of two minds: frightened and powerless in the face of her stepfather's icy demeanor yet enchanted by tiny dragonfly fairies that only she can see. This is a sinister place, crawling with soldiers on the lookout for resistance fighters hiding in nearby hills. Only sympathetic housekeeper Mercedes (Maribel Verdu) appears to sense Ofelia's anxiety, escorting her to a garden labyrinth where she can be on her own. As Carmen takes to her bed and turns her focus to her unborn son, Ofelia immerses herself in a world of whimsy presided over by a fearsome faun (Doug Jones) and his freakish henchmen. Monsters of the mind come to terms with real-life horrors, creating a brilliant juxtaposition of truth and imagination. *Rated: Unrated but should be R for very intense violence and mature themes. In Spanish with English subtitles. 1 hour, 52 minutes.* — J.A.

VOLVER ★★★1/2

(Guild, Century 20) Penelope Cruz gives a remarkably mature performance in a disjointed account of family ties. Cruz is the sultry Raimunda, a Madrid wife and mother who struggles with a teenage daughter, hard workdays and a rocky marriage. A family crisis results in her dead-beat hubby's untimely death. Raimunda's snap solution is to dispose of the body and keep his disappearance on the Q.T. As if that's not enough of a burden, Raimunda is also coping with her plainer, jealous younger sister (Lola Duenas), who claims their deceased mother (Carmen Maura) is making appearances at her apartment. A ghost or a hallucination? The family dysfunction makes for a complex foundation enhanced by director Pedro Almodovar's vivid visuals (red is the recurrent color of choice) and abstract sense of style coupled with a Hitchcock-mystery vibe. But "Volver" leans heavily towards the capricious, encompassing superfluous apparitions and a thread of genetic insanity. The result is a melodramatic telenovela that feels more like frippery than spiritual fantasy. *Rated: R for nudity, language and bloodshed. In Spanish with English subtitles. Two hours.* — J.A.

■ **MOVIECRITICS**

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



Len Tillem Esq.

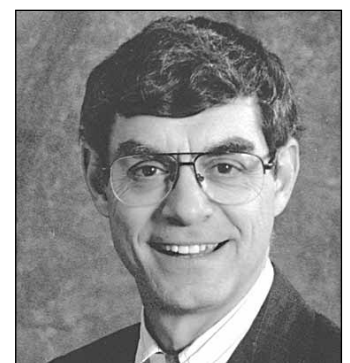
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CASCADA DE FLORES

Presented by The Community School of Music and Arts. Musical traditions of Cuba and Mexico. Sponsored by Applied Materials; presenting partner: Mellon Financial. Feb. 8, 7-8 p.m. Free. Community School of Music and Arts, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. www.arts4all.org

SPECIAL EVENTS

"TIBETAN FOR TRAVELERS" A course in "Tibetan for Travelers." Instructor Tsetan Chonjore. Contact Pasang Sherpa at psherpa@stanford.edu for more information. Feb. 10, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. \$75; lunch included. Stanford University, Stanford. Call 736-1301. <http://arc.stanford.edu>

INSTITUTE FOR DIVERSITY WITH JERRY QUICKLEY A lecture featuring hip-hop artist and political activist Jerry Quickley. He discusses issues of arts and civic dialogue. Feb. 8, noon Free. Pigott Theater, 551 Serra Mall, Stanford. Call 724-3657. <http://livelyarts.stanford.edu>

NEW YEAR GUANXI MIXER A networking event featuring keynote by Kevin Fong, Managing Director of Mayfield Fund, and a performance by San Jose Taiko. Mon., Feb. 5, 6:30-9:30 p.m. \$15-\$20; add \$10 for walk-ins. See website for pre-registration. Computer History Museum, 1401 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mountain View. www.cspa.com/2007nymixer/

ART GALLERIES

INGE INFANTE "FIELDS, NEW COLLAGES" Through Feb. 25. Gallery hours: Thu.-Sun., 1-5 p.m. 1870 Art Center, 1870 Ralston Ave., Belmont. Call 261-1086. www.1870artcenter.org

NEW IMAGES BY NANCY WULFF Watercolors by Bay Area artist, Nancy Wulff, include images from the waterways and woods of the Sierra Nevada to the world of Tango and partner dancing. Showing through Feb. 24; meet the artist Sun., Feb. 4, 4-6 p.m. Hours: Tue.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Gallery 9, 143 Main St., Los Altos. www.gallery9losaltos.com

"FIVE PAINTERS" Featured works by Nicole Buffett, Mitchell Confer, Catherine Dudley, Kenna Moser, Ryan Reynolds. Opening reception: Fri., Feb. 2, 6-9 p.m. Exhibition on display through Feb. 28. Hours: Tue.-Sat., 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Free. Stellar Somerset Gallery, 539 Bryant St., Palo Alto. www.stellarsomersetgallery.com

"JUNE IN JANUARY" By Lillian Balliet. Through Feb. 3, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. Viewpoints Gallery, 315 State St., Los Altos. www.viewpointsgallery.com

"SMALL WORKS" By member artists in all media. Through Feb. 3. Gallery House, 320 California Ave., Palo Alto. www.galleryhouse2.com

"SOLACE" PAINTINGS BY JEAN-MARC HUSS Photo-realistic oil paintings of Thailand-based French artist Jean-Marc Huss on display Tue.-Sat., through Feb. 10. Spur Projects, 888 Portola Road, Portola Valley. Call 529-2040. www.spurprojects.com

BRITISH MEGALITHS: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE Photographs by Alan McGee made at Pentre Ifan in Pembrokeshire, Wales and Avebury Stone Circle in Wiltshire, England. On display through Feb. 28; artist reception Sat., Feb. 3, noon-4 p.m. Portola Art Gallery, 75 Arbor Road, Menlo Park. www.portolaartgallery.com

LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN Reflections on a trip to Norway highlighted in watercolor by artist Betty Dennis. On display Feb. 4-March 3. Mon.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Viewpoints Gallery, 315 State St., Los Altos. www.viewpointsgallery.com/

BENEFITS

ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN BLIND WINE TASTING FUNDRAISER Guess wines, learn about them and win prizes. Tickets available online and include the tasting and a selection of nibbles. \$55. Feb. 12, 7-9:30 p.m. Savvy Cellar Wines, 2048 Broadway St., Redwood City. Call 212-4423. www.advocatesfc.org

VALENTINE'S FUNDRAISER FOR THE RED CROSS Carina's Creations Jewelry trunk show benefiting the Palo Alto area chapter of the Red Cross. Feb. 2-3, 10:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Coupa Cosas, 536 Ramona St., Palo Alto. Call 327-8434. www.



TAMALADA (MAKING TAMALES), 1987, GOUACHE PAINTING, 20 X 27 INCHES

CARMEN LOMAS GARZA: PAINTINGS AND PRINTS: *Paintings and prints by Chicana narrative artist Carmen Lomas Garza, depicting special and everyday events in the lives of Mexican Americans. Presented by Heritage Bank of Commerce. Special exhibition partner: Castellano Family Foundation. Through March 28, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Free. Community School of Music and Arts at Finn Center, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. www.arts4all.org*

carinascreationsjewelry.com and www.paarc.org

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

"TRUFFLES, TRUFFLES AND MORE" Learn recipes for truffles. Feb. 2, 6:30-8:30 p.m. \$36. Whole Foods Market, 4800 El Camino Real, Los Altos. Call 559-0300. www.wholefoodsmarket.com

AUDITION WORKSHOP Feb. 3 or 4, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Dragon Productions workshop on audition fundamentals and an opportunity to work one-on-one on audition monologues. Taught by Dragon Executive Director Meredith Hagedorn. \$50 each day. Dragon Theatre, 535 Alma St., Palo Alto. Call 493-2006. www.dragonproductions.net/classes.htm

BEGINNING SCULPTURE Using clay modeling method for later transfer to wood or metal. Feb 2-March 30, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. \$45 members/\$50 non-members/\$5 materials. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

BUILD A CRYSTAL RADIO Students build their own crystal radio sets from scratch. Learn the history of radio, basic radio theory, modulation, how headphones work, and how to read schematics. Saturdays, Feb. 10, 17, 24 and March 3, 1-3:30 p.m. \$45 members/ \$60 non members. Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto. Call 321-1004. www.moah.org

CALLIGRAPHY AND CARD-MAKING WORKSHOP Learn letterforms and make decorated cards. Ages teen to adult. Feb. 4, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. \$85. Community School of Music and Arts at Finn Center, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. Call 917-6800. www.arts4all.org

CASH FOR COLLEGE WORKSHOP Workshop ideal for students who plan to attend a community college, CSU, UC or independent college. Financial Aid professionals will assist with completing application forms and answering your questions. Feb. 3, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Foothill College, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Call 949-6987. www.foothill.edu

COMPUTER CLASSES "PCs for Beginners":

Feb. 7-28, 9-10 a.m.; "Quicken for Beginners": Feb. 7-28, 10:30-11:30 a.m. \$20 members/\$25 non-members. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

LANDSCAPING UNDER NATIVE OAK TREES Master Gardener Abby Garner explains how and why only certain plant types may be used under our Oaks. Resource lists given. Feb. 10, 9-11 a.m. Free. Gamble Garden, 1431 Waverly St., Palo Alto. Call (408) 282-3105. www.gamblegarden.org

ONE-DAY ACTING CAMP FOR KIDS Feb. 4, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Presented by Dragon Productions. For children ages 7-13. Various teachers will be offering short workshops aimed to kids. \$100. Dragon Theatre, 535 Alma St., Palo Alto. Call 493-2006. www.dragonproductions.net/classes.htm

VALENTINE'S CHOCOLATE AND SUGAR TASTING Feb. 4, 3-4 p.m. Free. Elephant Pharm, 4470 El Camino Real, Los Altos. Call 472-6800. www.elephantpharm.com/calendar/losaltos

COMMUNITY EVENTS

AFRICA: SIGNS OF HOPE A series of Sundays focusing on Peace, Health, Education and Economic Development in Africa. Incorporating African music, food, guest speakers, discussion forums, and resource information into worship services/programs. Sun., Feb. 4, 5-7 p.m. Free. Los Altos United Methodist Church, 655 Magdalena Ave., Los Altos. Call 868-5462.

DISCOVERING SHERLOCK HOLMES Stanford University will release 12 weekly facsimiles of Sherlock Holmes stories, as first seen in The Strand Magazine. Mailings through April 13. \$20 for newsprint copies; free pdf access. Discovering Sherlock Holmes, 482 Galvez St., Stanford. Call 724-9588. <http://sherlockholmes.stanford.edu>

CONCERTS

1945: TWO RUSSIANS' VIEWS Featuring the Redwood Symphony, conductor Eric Kujawsky. Stravinsky: Symphony in Three

Movements Shostakovich: Symphony No. 9. Weill: Songs with Julia Hosack. Two Russian symphonies about that momentous year, one Soviet, one by an expatriate in Hollywood. Feb. 4: pre-concert lecture, 2 p.m.; concert, 3-5:30 p.m. \$20/\$15. Notre Dame de Namur University Theatre, 1540 Ralston Ave., Belmont. Call 366-6872. www.redwoodsymphony.org

FOUR SHILLINGS SHORT Blend of Irish, East Indian, folk and fusion. Feb. 2, 7-10 p.m. \$10 donation/kids free with paid adult. Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto, 505 E. Charleston, Palo Alto. Call 274-1100. www.fourshillingsshort.com

LIGHT AND SHADE Fri., Feb. 2, 8 p.m. Mezzo-soprano Amy Schneider, violinist Anthony Martin, and harpsichordist Elaine Thornburgh present works by Caccini, William Byrd, Jean-Marie LeClair, and Jean-Joseph de Mondonville, exploring a variety of Renaissance and Baroque music. \$10/\$5. Memorial Church Chapel, 450 Serra Mall, Stanford. Call 725-1932. <http://music.stanford.edu>

PALO ALTO PERFORMANCES High Five Women's, a cappella quartet performing classical, jazz, be-bop and pop. Feb. 3, 8 p.m. \$14/\$12 students/seniors. Art Center Auditorium, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto. Call 463-4940. www.cityofpaloalto.org/concerts

SAN FRANCISCO CHAMBER ORCHESTRA PRESENTS "SIX SEASONS" "Six Seasons" featuring "The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires" by Piazzolla and the "Winter" and "Spring" movements from Vivaldi's "Four Seasons." Feb. 3, 8-10 p.m. Free. St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 600 Colorado Ave., Palo Alto. www.sfchamberorchestra.org

STANFORD JAZZ COMBOS Wed., Feb. 7, 8 p.m. Members of the Jazz Combo program entertain you with standards, blues, and original compositions. Free. Free. Campbell Recital Hall, 541 Lasuen Mall, Stanford. Call 725-1932. <http://music.stanford.edu>

STEFAN OSTERSTO, GUITAR Thu., Feb. 8, 8 p.m. Works for guitars and electronics from Olofsson, Nelson, Dolden, Edgerton, Karlsson, and Karpen. Free. CCRMA Stage, 660 Lomita Ave.,

Stanford. Call 725-1932. <http://music.stanford.edu>

DANCE

BALLROOM DANCING Thursdays, through March 1, 7-9 p.m. \$7. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

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/

ENVIRONMENT

EARTHQUAKE HIKE Docents Harry Combleet and Keith Johnsgard teach about local geology and earthquakes. 2-3 mile stroll to discover remnants of the effects of the 1906 earthquake, discuss plate tectonics, and how to prepare for future earthquakes. Feb. 4, 2-4:30 p.m. Free. Los Trancos Open Space Preserve. www.openspace.org

ECOSYSTEM TRANSITIONS Docents David Milburn and Judy Boore lead 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. Feb. 4, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. www.openspace.org

HUDDART PARK DOCENT TRAINING Docent program leads young children on short hikes through redwood, woodland, and chaparral habitats. The volunteer commitment is 4-6 weekday mornings during spring and fall. Introductory hike to learn more Feb. 7, 9:30-11 a.m. Free. Huddart Park, 1110 Kings Mountain Road, Woodside. Call 529-0305.

WINTER WANDERLAND With docents Toni and Rich Gooch. Moderately strenuous, 10-mile loop through Windy Hill's woodlands. Meet at the lower parking lot. Feb. 3, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. Windy Hill Open Space Preserve. www.openspace.org

EXHIBITS

"ACTOR ACTOR" Through April 29. A broad celebration of the intersection of art and theater with an emphasis on Asian material. Subjects include masks, puppets, and stage set design. Hours: Tue.-Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., 1-5 p.m. and 7-10 p.m. Free. Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto. Call 329-2366. www.cityofpaloalto.org

"CORRESPONDENCE: MASAMI TERAOKA UKIYO-E" Through April 29. Explores the contemporary work by Japanese American artist Masami Teraoka in juxtaposition with Ukiyo-e woodblock prints by Japanese masters. Hours: Tue.-Sat., 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sun., 1-5 p.m. and 7-10 p.m. Free. Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto. Call 329-2366. www.cityofpaloalto.org

"JUST PAINT" Paintings by 15 member artists in all media will be shown Feb. 6-March 3. On exhibit will be watercolors, oils on panel and canvas, batik and mixed media. Landscapes, figurative, still life and abstracts. Reception Sat., Feb. 10, 5-7 p.m. Gallery House, 320 California Ave., Palo Alto. Call 574-4654. www.galleryhouse2.com

"MOMENTS IN SOLITUDE" Panoramic photographs in color, infra-red and black and white by Wee Ng. Through Feb. 26. Keeble & Shuchat Photography, 290 California Ave., Palo Alto. Call 327-8996. www.kspphoto.com

100 YEARS AT THE WILLIAMS HOUSE Exhibit celebrates the 100th birthday of the Williams House through revisiting the life and times of the family who built and occupied the home. Exhibit examines life from 1907 to the 1930s. Opens Feb. 9 through June 3. Fri.-Sun., 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Free.

Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer Ave., Palo Alto. Call 321-1004. www.moah.org

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 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

ART OPENING: IMMERSION OF COLOR Abstract acrylic paintings by Kathryn Rone. Through March 16. Colors move in wavelike patterns, displaying emotions and internal flow. Free. Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, 1069 E. Meadow Circle, Palo Alto. Call 493-4430 ext. 254. www.itp.edu

NIGHTBLOOMS: PRINTS BY MARK BROWN A series of digital art works which explore the space in which Nature and Technology collide, merge and multiply. Through Feb. 26. Free. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 903-6000. www.ci.mtnview.ca.us/mvcpa/visualarts.html

PAINTINGS AND COLLAGE Oil Paintings by Bohdanna Kesala; watercolors by Amy Da-Peng King, and collage by Melissa 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

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

FRIENDLY MONSTER STORY TIME Sun., Feb. 4, 11:30 a.m. "There's a Nightmare in My Closet." Free. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Call 324-4321. www.keplers.com

PACT SCHOOL INFO NIGHT Accepting K-5 students from all districts. Feb. 13, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Free. Mariano Castro School, 505 Escuela Ave., Mountain View. www.pactschool.net

POSITIVE PARENTING FORUM BY KRISTEN WILL-PRATT Ms. Will-Pratt, licensed psychotherapist, Masters of Divinity from Princeton and Co-Director of Pratt Center, Los Altos will lead a discussion on ways to help parents. Feb. 5, 7-9 p.m. Free; child care provided. Foothills Congregational Church, 461 Orange Ave., Los Altos. Call 948-8430. www.foothills-church.org

PRE-SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE The Community School of Music and Arts will have a free open

house for children ages 18 months-4 years and their parents/caregivers. Participate in music and an art mini-classes with different teachers. Feb. 3, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Free. Community School of Music and Arts at Finn Center, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. Call 917-6800 ext. 312. www.arts4all.org

FILM

MONDAY MOVIES Feb. 5: "The Devil Wears Prada"; Feb. 12: "Last Holiday"; Feb. 26: "Little Miss Sunshine." 1-7 p.m. \$1 members/\$2 non-members. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.pensulavolunteers.org

SPINNING WHEEL FILM FESTIVAL Celebrates the stories of Sikhs worldwide, and brings diverse interpretations of their culture, identity and history to the screen. Feb. 3, 9:15 a.m.-8:30 p.m. \$5-\$25. Cubberly Theaters, 485 Lasuen Mall, Stanford. Call 274-8106. http://www.bayareawheel.com/

ON STAGE

"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM"

Shakespeare's classic comedy set in Jazz Age Italy, where parties at a Lake Como villa segue to forest frolics and mischief. Directed by J. Forte and B. Olson. Feb. 8-9, 7 p.m.; Feb. 10, 2:30 p.m. \$4 students/\$8 adults. Jordan Middle School Cafe, 750 N. California Ave., Palo Alto. Call 213-0150. http://starr.pausd.org/~jforte/prods/curprod.html

"A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM" Four young lovers meet in a moonlit forest filled with mysterious magical creatures and a "moon shining" bunch of novice actors. Southern version of Shakespeare's romantic comedy. Through Feb. 24, 8 p.m. \$22-\$32. Bus Barn Theater, 97 Hillview Ave., Los Altos. Call 941-0551. www.busbarn.org

"AMBITION FACING WEST" Presented by TheatreWorks. Playwright Anthony Clarvoe adapts his own family history in the exploration of the immigrant experience. Tuesdays, 7:30 p.m.; Wed.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 and 7 p.m. Through Feb. 11; \$20-\$60. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. www.theatreworks.org

"HUMBLE BOY" BY CHARLOTTE JONES Comedy goes on a journey of garden variety through black holes, bee hives, and brilliance. Thu.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m. Through Feb. 4. Email tickets@dragonproductions.net. for tickets. Cash and check only at door. \$13-\$25. Dragon Productions, 535 Alma St., Palo Alto. Call 493-2006. www.dragonproductions.net

"PACK OF LIES" Palo Alto Players presents Hugh Whitmore's drama that forces an ordinary English family to confront the question, "Who can you trust, your friends and neighbors or your government?" Through Feb. 4, Wed.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2:30 p.m. \$18-\$28. Lucie Stern Theater, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Call 329-0891. www.paplayers.org

"SNOW WHITE & THE SEVEN DWARFS" Presented in celebration of PACT's 75th anniversary. Feb. 2, 4:30 and 7:30 p.m.; Feb. 3, 2:30 p.m. \$4 children/\$8 adults. Palo Alto Children's Theatre, 1305 Middlefield Road,

Palo Alto. Call 463-4970.

A DOLL'S HOUSE Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m. Feb. 2-4. Torvald and Nora's negotiated and powerfully sexual relationship begins to crumble as events unfold over Christmas, 1959. Directed by J. Forte. \$10-\$25. Pear Avenue Theatre, 1220 Pear Ave., Mountain View. Call 254-1148. www.theopera.org

MENLO SCHOOL PRESENTS "GREATER TUNA" "A satire on rural life in America, is a look at the eclectic characters that make up Tuna, the third smallest town in Texas. Feb. 2-4, 7:30-9:30 p.m. \$7 students/\$10 adults. Menlo School, 50 Valparaiso Ave., Atherton. Call 330-2001, x.2328. www.menloschool.org

WEST BAY OPERA FREE PREVIEW "THE QUEEN OF SPADES" An opportunity to get familiar with this Tchaikovsky opera in preparation for seeing the production. Singers from the cast present arias and ensembles with piano accompaniment, and the director and conductor talk about the piece. Feb. 8, 8-9 p.m. Free. Lucie Stern Theater, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. Call 424-9999. www.wbopera.org

SPORTS

"TITLE IX: ITS AFFECT ON WOMEN'S SPORTS, CURRENT CHALLENGES" Sponsored by AAUW, Bay Area Women's Sports Initiative and Stanford University. Sat., Feb. 10, 10:30 a.m.-noon. Free. Talk by Marlene Bjornsrud CEO of BAWSI, Stanford Football Stadium tour, meet women athletes; 1 p.m. Women's Basketball Stanford vs U of W. Arrilla Center for Sports and Recreation, 641 East Campus Dr., Stanford. Call 968-0443. www.aauw-paloalto.org

PALO ALTO RUN CLUB FEBRUARY TRAIL RUN Carpool meets at the Lucie Stern Community Center, 7:45 a.m. departure; meet at 8:15 a.m.; 8:30 a.m. start. A run about 11.8 miles, 1,200 feet and a short run about 7.0 miles, 900 feet. The complete announcement can be found on our website. \$5 park entrance fee. San Bruno Mountain State and County

Park, 460 Cherry Ave.; 3555 Guadalupe Canyon Parkway, Brisbane. Call 224-3532. www.paranclub.com/trail2007feb.htm

SOCCER TRYOUTS STANFORD FIRE Boys born after July 31, 1992 are invited to tryout for Class 3 competitive soccer team coached by Juan Mayora. Sat., Feb. 4, 1-3 p.m. and Feb. 10, noon-2 p.m. Cubberly Field. Call 325-8582.

San Carlos. Call 654-0200. www.hiller.org

GOLD, GODS, AND GLORY: THE GLOBAL DYNAMICS OF POWER COLLOQUIUM Free series of programs on global issues. Feb. 8: "What it is like to be a Muslim today?" by Ameena Jandali; Feb. 15: "The world waits while Darfur dies" by the San Francisco Bay Area Darfur Coalition; Feb. 22: "Bridge 2 Peace: The Children of Sri Lanka." 7-8 p.m. Free. Skyline College, 3300 College Dr., San Bruno. Call 738-4376. www.SkylineCollege.edu

TALKS/AUTHORS

A NEW MILLENNIUM OF FEMALE AVIATORS Julie Jervis will talk about the opportunities, challenges and triumphs awaiting women pursuing a career in aviation. Lecture included with museum admission: \$9 adults/\$6 seniors/youth/kids 4 and under free. Feb. 3, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Hiller Aviation Museum, 601 Skyway Road,

MORE LISTINGS

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

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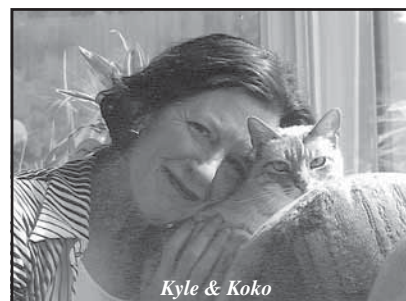
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