

Mountain View VOICE



How-to for 'I do'

This year's guide provides tips for an eco-friendly wedding

TOGETHER | P.33

FEBRUARY 9, 2007 VOLUME 15, NO. 6

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KARNA KURATA

BOUQUET FOR MOM: Greg Amon, a Mountain View High senior with the varsity soccer team, follows tradition by giving his mom, Vicki Amon-Higa, a bouquet of flowers before the final home game of the season last Friday. Amon, who had to sit out the last month of games due to an injured knee, said he "had a lot of fun playing here and learned a lot." The match, against Los Altos High, ended in a 0-0 tie.

Parents brave chill for bilingual classes

POPULAR DUAL IMMERSION PROGRAM AT CASTRO DRAWS OVERNIGHT CROWD

By Alexa Tondreau

Castro Elementary School's dual immersion language program is turning out to be like a "Harry Potter" opener, with parents camping outside the Mountain View Whisman School District office all night last Wednesday in near-freezing weather to secure a spot for their children in the program.

The first parent arrived at around 10:30 p.m., and he prepared for the long night ahead with a cot, reading lamp and sleeping bag. Others followed throughout the night and into the early morning hours.

Denise Leary, whose daughter is a kindergartener in the dual immersion program, said she arrived around 2:30 a.m.

to stand in place for a friend. Leary reported that "by 6:30 a.m. there were 30 people in line, and by 7 a.m. there were 30 more."

This is the second year in a row that parents have waited all night to get first crack at spots in the dual immersion program.

The program spans kindergar-

"It used to be a struggle in terms of drawing people to the campus."

CHRISTY TONGE

ten to fifth grade and incorporates native English and native Spanish speaking students in the same classroom. Academic instruction is given primarily in Spanish in the younger grades, resulting in Spanish fluency for students, who graduate from the program with a strong bilingual proficiency.

The popularity of the program, which has been offered at Mountain View Whisman since 1996, has increased considerably in the past few years with the concerted effort of parents to raise interest in the program.

Christy Tonge, a dual immersion parent who has worked as a school ambassador, said the

► See **IMMERSION**, page 8

City may limit housing growth

MORATORIUM ON DEVELOPMENT COULD HALT BUILDERS FOR YEARS WHILE GENERAL PLAN IS UPDATED

By Daniel DeBolt

After years of rapid development in Mountain View, a newly formed City Council may halt housing development until a comprehensive update is made to the city's 15-year-old general plan.

Mayor Laura Macias, for one, wants a moratorium on nearly all housing developments until the revisions are made.

"We're driving full speed ahead and we're really not sure where we're going," Macias said. "It's really clear that since we do have such high density, the question needs to be asked, 'What's the capacity of a small city?'"

There are currently 3,598 housing units in the pipeline in Mountain View, including several hundred that have not made any formal application to the city but have made inquiries. To build them all would mean nearly a 10 percent jump in population, said council member Jac Siegel, who ran on a slow growth platform last year.

For a city with 75,000 people on 12 square miles, that's a lot, he said. Palo Alto, by comparison, has 58,598 people on 26 square miles.

If a moratorium were to pass, developments that already have fees submitted to the city would be allowed to continue. Others would be delayed — or possibly never make it through if a new general plan limits growth the way other cities' general plans do.

Morgan Hill, for instance, allows only the best 200 units through. Macias and Siegel called Morgan

Hill's ordinance a model, and Macias will propose it be a part of Mountain View's general plan.

Last year council members and other officials strongly rejected an "F" grade given to the city by the Bay Area Council for not meeting housing needs determined by the Association of Bay Area Governments, or ABAG. Those requirements said Mountain View should have built enough homes to match

► See **COUNCIL**, page 11

NASA-Ames readies for budget cuts

By Alexa Tondreau

Even though President Bush's budget proposal calls for a 3.1 percent increase in funds to NASA, officials at the agency, including NASA-Ames Director S. Pete Worden, say ambitious future projects mean it may not be enough to meet upcoming needs.

Even so, Worden said, activities at Moffett Field are currently moving ahead as planned, with 50 new civil servant positions slated for the coming year.

Bush's recently released Fiscal Year 2008 budget proposal allocates \$17.3 billion for NASA, a 3.1 percent increase over the previous year's request. But despite the increase, officials say, the agency's long lineup of projects

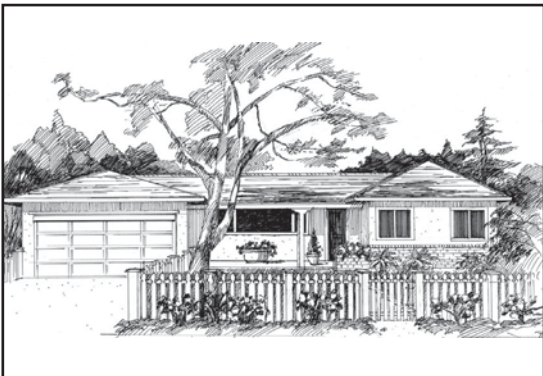
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Marcia Newton



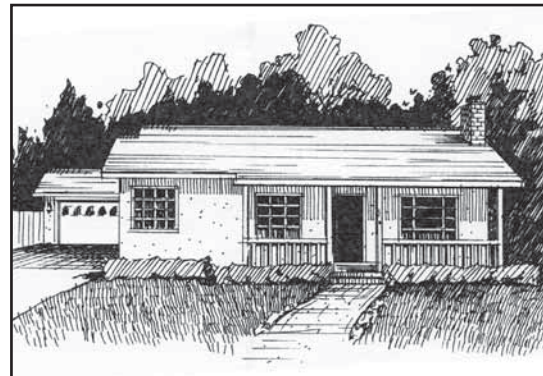
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Voices

A R O U N D T O W N

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

What are your plans for Valentine's Day?



"I was just thinking about that right now. I want to do more than a dinner and a movie this year. But I'll need a couple of days to figure out what I want to do."

Rob Phillips, San Jose



"I'm staying in a Victorian haunted house in Hayes Valley, San Francisco. I have a good friend coming from Thailand to join me."

Tina Liao, Mountain View



"Probably going for dinner in the evening. I'll get flowers and chocolates for my husband."

Anu Reet, Mountain View



"Me and my wife are going to Lake Tahoe. We may go skiing but really just want to take it easy and relax."

Brett Davis, Mountain View



"I'm working so I'll be bringing presents for my patients. I'll come home late and go to a restaurant with my husband."

Elnura Kuldaeva, Mountain View

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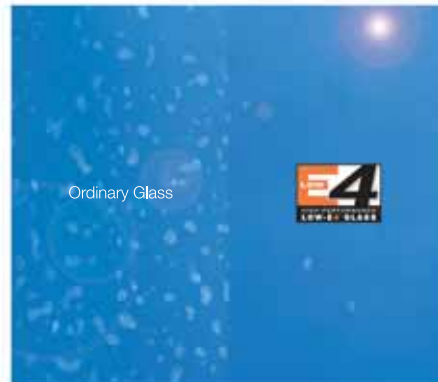
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Events & Lectures

"Women and Men are Different at Heart"
Tuesday, February 13, 7 – 8:30 p.m.
Meg Durbin, M.D., PAMF Family Medicine

Join us to learn about heart disease prevention in women, and how heart disease differs between women and men.
Hearst Center for Health Education, Level 3, Jamplis Building, Palo Alto Medical Foundation, 795 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. RSVP to (650) 853-4873.

Classes

"Good Nutrition and Feeding Practices for Toddlers," Wednesday, January 24, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
This class will address parental concerns regarding nutrition and feeding practices. It should be attended by parents or caretakers only.

"What You Need to Know About Warfarin," Wednesday, February 28, 2 – 4 p.m.
Learn what warfarin is, why you are taking it and how you can help yourself.

"Supermarket Wise," Thursday, March 8, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Learn techniques for making healthier food choices in a local supermarket with tour dietitian Karen Ross, M.S., R.D.

"Advance Health Care Directives," call for available dates and times.
PAMF's specially trained volunteers will provide advice and answer questions about the Advance Health Care Directive form. Free.

Community Health Resource Center

The Community Health Resource Center, staffed by registered nurse health educators, provides members of the community access to reliable health information in a variety of multimedia formats on specific diagnosis or procedure, health and wellness topics, and lists of community resources and support agencies. Hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Phone: (650) 614-3200. Services are provided at no cost.

Support Groups

Cancer (1st & 3rd Tuesdays) • Diabetes (1st Wednesday) • Multiple Sclerosis (2nd & 4th Mondays) • Sleep Apnea (1st Thursday) • Alcohol and Drug Education (Every Tuesday) • Healing Imagery for Cancer Patients (Feb. 14 & 28)

For information on class fees and to register, call the Education Division at (650) 853-2960.

Green by Design:

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"The presentation was very professional. Lots of great information!"
—Workshop Attendee

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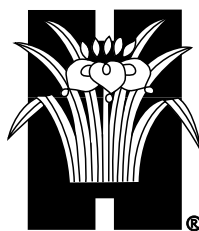
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■ QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"By 6:30 a.m. there were 30 people in line, and by 7 a.m. there were 30 more."

— DENISE LEARY,

CASTRO PARENT, ON LINING UP EARLY LAST WEDNESDAY TO GET A SPOT IN THE SCHOOL'S DUAL IMMERSION PROGRAM

■ CRIMEWATCH

POSSESSION OF A DEADLY WEAPON WITH INTENT TO ASSAULT, FARLEY ST. AND SAN RAMON AVE., 2/3

At 5:12 p.m. Saturday, a group of young boys with sticks was seen chasing another group on Farley Street and San Ramon Ave. Police located the group nearby. Three boys, 12 and 13 years old, tried to flee but the officers caught them. Police alerted the group that was being chased. The suspects were described as wearing bandanas and carrying a bat and metal tubing. They were cited and released to their parents.

SHOTS FIRED, 2100 BLOCK OF OLD MIDDLEFIELD WAY, 2/3

On Saturday at 1:59 p.m., police responded to reports of shots being fired at Francesca's Lounge. Police filed two differ-

ent reports. One account indicated that a suspect was seen shooting a shotgun in the air. Another report suggested that shots were fired from a moving vehicle. No one was injured. Police have no description of the suspect who fled the scene.

AUTO TAMPERING / PROWLING, 2200 BLOCK OF ROCK ST., 1/30

On Tuesday at 8:44 p.m., two suspects were seen tampering with a vehicle in an apartment parking lot. The suspects fled the scene in another vehicle before the police arrived. An investigating officer stopped a vehicle later that evening that resembled the eyewitness's description. Two suspects matching the description were found in the car and arrested. Police described the suspects as two males, 17 and 18.

■ POLICE LOG

AUTO BURGLARY

200 block Garden Terrace, 1/31
800 block Moraga Drive, 2/4
800 block Devoto St., 2/4

BATTERY

Seascape, 2/2
900 block W Dana St., 2/4
400 block Lotus Lane, 2/4

DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

500 block Mariposa Ave., 2/2

DISTURBANCE

100 block Fairchild Drive, 2/4

DOMESTIC DISTURBANCE

200 block Easy St., 2/3
200 block Latham St., 2/4

IDENTITY THEFT

100 block Oak Haven Place, 2/3

EMBEZZLEMENT

100 block La Avenida, 1/31
Sears Dept. Store, 2/3

PETTY THEFT

100 block Calderon Ave., 1/31
Marshall's, 2/2
Target, 2/2
500 block W Middlefield Rd., 2/3
500 block Showers Drive, 2/4
300 block Escuela Ave., 2/4

POSSESSION OF DRUGS

Independence Ave./Old Middlefield Way, 2/4

SHOOTING

2100 block Old Middlefield Way, 2/4

STOLEN VEHICLE

2100 block Junction Ave., 2/4

SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES/PERSON

Bonita Ave./Camille Ct., 2/2
Francesca's Lounge, 2/4

ROBBERY

Francesca's Lounge, 2/4

VANDALISM

1400 block Isabelle Ave., 1/31
500 block Castro St., 1/31
200 block California St., 2/4



Need for speed

By Don Frances

JOE SPARACO, the soap box derby guru who last week convinced City Council members to resurrect the sport this June with a new behind Landels Elementary, has more than one success to celebrate lately. Sparaco, owner of Clocktower Coffee Roasting Company on Middlefield Road, has opened a new coffeehouse here in Mountain View — and he somehow managed to time the opening with the council decision last Tuesday.

The new Clocktower Coffee, located at 425 N. Whisman, was “just opening for business that day,” Sparaco wrote to his friends, and he kept the place open late “for the purpose of holding a celebration honoring the work you have all done in getting the Derby to this point of readiness.”

SPORTS NOTES: MVLA CyberRays (Class 1 girls spring U15 team) are holding soccer tryouts this Saturday morning in Los Altos or by appointment, says Lynn Chronis. For more info contact Simon Weiss at sweiss818@hotmail.com or (650) 759-4303. ... Los Altos-Mountain View Pony Baseball will be hosting its Annual Golf Tournament on Monday, March 19, at the Palo Alto Hills Golf and Tennis Club. For more visit www.lamvpb.org and click on “Tee It Up for Baseball” or contact Mark

► See **EDITOR'S DESK**, page 8

Doing time for good

LOCAL LEADERS RAISE \$20,000 FOR MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY IN 'LOCK UP' EVENT

By Zunaira Durrani

“I was picked up in a police car, put behind bars, and then Sharkie bit my head off. I'm calling everybody under the sun,” said Stewart Reichardt, loan center manager at the downtown Washington Mutual on El Camino Real.

Reichardt had no business being behind bars. But instead of mortgage financing, his goal for the day was to secure \$1,950 to spring him from jail as part of the Muscular Dystrophy Association's “Lock Up” event at Armadillo Willy's last Wednesday, Jan. 31.

MDA brought 30 “jailbirds” — most of them local business leaders, but also leaders and educators such as Keith Moody, principal of Mountain View High School — to the Los Altos restaurant in order to “do time” in the name of raising \$20,000. Twenty other jailbirds asked friends to donate money on the MDA Web site (www.mdausa.org).

The voluntary jailbirds — beset by Sharkie, the San Jose Sharks mascot — needed a good sense of humor, cell phones and some generous friends to bail them out. The event commenced with former Council member Mike



NORBERT VON DER GROEBEN

Stewart Reichardt, a manager at Washington Mutual's downtown branch, pleads for donations so he can bolt the Muscular Dystrophy Association's “jail” during a fund raiser last Wednesday, Jan. 31.

Kasperzak announcing bail for the jailbirds as they donned a uniform, posed behind bars and got cracking on the phone.

For one of the jailbirds, Costco general manager Stephanie Gordon, who raised over \$3,000 behind bars, the gesture was personal. “Our GM, who attended this event two years ago, passed away recently,” she said. “Our company is active in the community and I wanted to carry on in his memory.”

Another jailbird, Lynda Newlon, owner of Los Altos clothing store Acacia C, had friends Doris Padilla and Kelly Davis of the Heritage Bank looking up names

and numbers in the Chamber of Commerce directory.

“These are my partners in crime,” she said. “I did this once before and it was difficult. But I've raised more money this time.”

Heather Riley, MDA's district director, said the funds will support 470 clients in Northern California. Uses include purchasing wheelchairs and communication devices, supporting a pediatric and an adult clinic at Stanford, taking dozens of “Jerry's Kids” to summer camp, and running support groups.

Besides Reichardt, Gordon and

► See **LOCK UP**, page 15

Just dial 2-1-1

NEW NUMBER LINKS SANTA CLARA COUNTY RESIDENTS TO ARRAY OF SERVICES

Bay City News

A new toll free three-digit phone number that will link Santa Clara County citizens to a variety of social services will be ready for calls beginning Friday.

The number, 2-1-1 Santa Clara County, provides a link to hundreds of community services, including food and shelter, counseling, drug and alcohol intervention, job training, child and adult daycare, and more, according to the United Way Silicon Valley.

Specially trained, multilingual call specialists will man the phone lines. People seeking to volunteer, provide resources or assist during a crisis can also use the new number to find out how.

The resource number is intended to streamline access to health and human services; serve as a critical resource during a disaster, such as an earthquake or flood; reduce non-emergency calls to 9-1-1; and provide help to the most vulnerable, hard-to-reach residents.

The new service number will launch Friday at 10:15 a.m. at the County Government Center's Isaac Newton Senter Auditorium, at 70 West Hedding St. in San Jose. Supervisor Liz Kniss will speak at the event. ▀

Stumping for electric trains

CALTRAIN DIRECTOR SEEKS REGULATORY RULING TO ALLOW LIGHTER, BETTER TRAINS ON PENINSULA TRACKS

By Daniel DeBolt

Caltrain's Bob Doty is a man on a mission. After working for BART in the 1970s, Doty, now Caltrain's director of rail transportation, took a job as a manager of China's expanding rail system. He was told that he was valued for his management skills only, because the U.S. is still a devel-

oping country when it comes to transportation.

Now Doty has a chance to help change that perception over the next two years as Caltrain prepares to replace its aging trains, and he's taken his pitch to City Hall downtown, where he gave a presentation last month.

The solution for increasing

► See **CALTRAIN**, page 19



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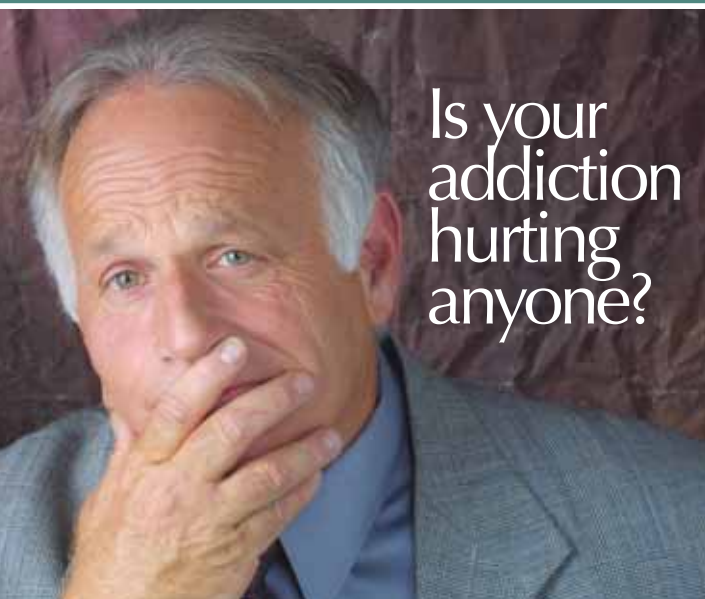
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■ SEEN AROUND TOWN

Burrowing owl stepping out



This sullen-looking burrowing owl was photographed by Mountain View resident Darius Przygoda in Mountain View on Jan. 20. Przygoda said the photo was taken at the entrance to its burrow, but he does not want to disclose the exact location.

“The burrowing owl population sharply declined over the last decade, and remaining birds should be left alone,” he wrote.

If you have a photo taken around town which you’d like published in the Voice, please send it (as a jpg attachment) to editor@mv-voice.com.

NASA

► Continued from page 1

— including missions to the moon and Mars — could mean there isn’t much left over for NASA-Ames.

Additionally, a House resolution in the works reduces overall funding for NASA by \$545 million from the previous year’s request.

S. Pete Worden, director of NASA-Ames, said in a press conference Monday that although NASA-Ames officials anticipate some cuts and project delays in the future, currently they still plan to hire at least 50 new civil servant positions. Worden said the budget’s overall effect on the NASA-Ames facility could prove to be minor.

Plans to work with Google and other high-tech companies on research projects will continue as planned, he said. Additionally, a project that studies 100,000 stars in four years in order to discover new planets, called the Kepler Mission, will go forward.

William D. Griffin, a NASA administrator, said at a press conference last week that budget cuts would “have serious effects on many people, projects and programs this year, and for the longer term.” He lauded Bush’s proposal, saying it showed “the President’s commitment to our nation’s leadership in space and aeronautics research, especially at a time when there are other, competing demands for our nation’s resources.”

NASA-Ames is considered the agency’s leader in information technologies. This past summer it hired Worden on as its new director. ▀

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

■ MOFFETTFIELD

CLEANUP COST MAKES TOP 10 LIST

A Government Accountability Office report released last week — which ranks former military bases by projected cost to finish environmental clean up — has ranked Moffett Field as the 10th most expensive at \$78.6 million.

Other onetime military sites in the Bay Area come in much higher. The former Navy base at Hunters Point in San Francisco comes in at \$127.7 million, the former Alameda Naval Air Station comes in at \$182 million, and Fort Ord Army base in Monterey comes in at \$342.3 million.

The No. 1 most expensive cleanup is at McClellan Air Force Base in Carlsbad. That cleanup is expected to cost \$695.9 million.

More recent reports show that Moffett Field has spent a total of \$108.7 million through 2005 for environmental cleanup of toxic contaminants in the ground and in buildings.

HANGAR ONE RUMOR CONFIRMED

A NASA official has confirmed rumors that large high-tech companies have been in informal discussions with NASA to restore Hangar One at Moffett Field in exchange for the ability to service aircraft inside it and to use the Moffett Field airstrip.

Marv Christensen, NASA deputy director, told a local newspaper that any plan would require a “synergistic” partnership with the companies, the names of which were not disclosed. Despite rumors to the contrary, Google reportedly said it has no need for an airstrip, and eBay founder Jeff Skoll also claims to have no involvement in the talks.

— Daniel DeBolt

Local legislator seeks study on chloramine

MOUNTAIN VIEW WOMAN TELLS OF WOES CAUSED BY TAP WATER DISINFECTANT

By Daniel DeBolt

State Assembly member Ira Ruskin, whose district covers several Peninsula cities, says he plans to introduce a bill this year to address the health effects of chloramine, the disinfectant introduced into the Peninsula's tap water in 2004.

"I'm concerned about the people who have relayed the difficulties they have had as a result of the water," Ruskin said. "My research shows there have not been sufficient studies of this. I think it would be prudent to study the effects and have more scientific evidence of what the effects are."

The exact form the bill will take has not yet been decided, Ruskin said. One option is to simply reintroduce a version Ruskin authored last year that stalled in the Appropriations Committee because of its price tag. That bill, AB2402, would have funded a study of the human health effects of chloramine.

According to Citizens Concerned about Chloramine, a local group which met with Ruskin on Jan. 26, more than 300 people have reported skin and respiratory problems which they believe are due to chloramine in the tap water.

Members of the group have long been pushing for a scientific study. The San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, which provides water to Peninsula cities including Mountain View, has not conducted or even heard of a study of the human health effects of the chemical, even though the agency made the decision to use it in 2004.

Ruskin said many agencies have chosen to use chloramine, which is composed of chlorine and ammonia, in response to new regulations from the EPA that call for better water disinfection. Previously, chlorine was used by the SFPUC.

Ruskin said any move to

ban chloramine outright was a long way off. "At this point I don't think that is a practical option," he said.

Mysterious health problems

A month after chloramine was introduced to the local tap water, an 82-year-old woman named Shirlee, who lives near the Monta Loma neighborhood, developed skin rashes on her legs that soon spread to the rest of her body.

For almost two years, she said, she sought help from doctors, all of whom told her she had a food allergy. It wasn't until she read an article about chloramine in the *Voice* last August, she said, that she decided to stop drinking, cooking and washing with the city's tap water.

"Within a week it was beginning to ease up," she said of the rashes. She said when she showed her doctors the *Voice* article, they didn't believe that it could be the problem — but that they were amazed when they saw the results.

Her skin is still scarred, but she hopes that will go away soon. Once

in a while she forgets and drinks some of the tap water, which brings the rashes back quickly, she said.

To cope with the problem she uses bottled water, and invested \$1,500 in a filtration system for cooking, dishes and bathing. But that only works when the water is cold.

Taking showers in cold water is "the pits," she added.

For 30 years, Shirlee said, tap water disinfected with chlorine was fine. "Chlorine doesn't bother me," she explained. "But the ammonia does you in. I hope they change the water back to the old way."

Shirlee allowed the Citizens Concerned about Chloramine to post before and after pictures of her legs on the group's Web site, www.chloramine.org. She believes there are others who suffer from chloraminated tap water problems unknowingly. ▀

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

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KARNA KURATA

KIDS AND CALVES: Theuerkauf Elementary School students lean in to pet a calf during a visit by the Dairy Council of California's Mobile Dairy Classroom on Monday. The Mobile Dairy Classroom gives students a glimpse at farm life and teaches the importance of agriculture and farming.

IMMERSION

► Continued from page 1

district was prepared this year for early-bird parents. Pastries and refreshments were provided, she said, as parents waited for the district doors to open at 8:30 a.m.

"When they finally let the first person through," Tonge said, "the whole crowd went up in applause."

She continued, "It was just amazing to see what has happened at Castro, which was probably the least favorable school a few years ago. It used to be a struggle in terms of drawing people to the campus."

While district officials could not provide exact enrollment numbers by press time, early reports indicate that all parents who applied were able to secure placement in the dual immersion kindergarten class.

Four kindergarten classes, with a maximum of 20 students per class, are slated for the 2007-08 school year.

Last year, the number of kindergarten classes went up from three to four because of increased enrollment, with each class composed of roughly half native English speakers and half native Spanish speakers.

Leary thinks the numbers might have increased this year because of what she perceived as a 15 to 20 percent increase of parents who showed up to information nights and other publicity events for the program.

Leary, Tonge and fellow parent Andrea Grey have joined as ambassadors to promote the program because they think it is one of the best that the district has to offer.

Tonge said, "When my daughter started we couldn't believe what a gem of a program it

was. We feel like we're getting a private school experience at a public school."

And though some parents may be skeptical about immersing young children in a learning environment where Spanish is the primary language, "with just a little bit of time, [the students] really do begin to understand," Leary said. "I can tell my daughter is getting the gist."

Leary was drawn to the program because of "obvious long-term opportunities in terms of employment and what we can do to make her more marketable," but said that just as much an incentive was the fact that the program provides a rich multicultural experience, where respect for other traditions and cultures is ingrained in children. ■

E-mail [Alexa Tondreau](mailto:Alexa.Tondreau@mv-voice.com) at atondreau@mv-voice.com

EDITOR'S DESK

► Continued from page 5

Atherton at (650) 960-0640 or mark.atherton@bea.com.

ARTS NOTES: El Camino Youth Symphony is holding its Sinfonietta Winter Spirit performance this Saturday, Feb. 10, at 7:30 pm. at Cumberley Theater, 4000 Middlefield Rd, Palo Alto. ... Next

week, the Nova Vista Symphony will present tubist Jeffrey Anderson in a concert at 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 17, at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts. Anderson, principal tubist with the San Francisco Symphony since 2002, will perform the Tuba Concerto by Ralph Vaughn Williams. Tickets (\$18-\$11, children free) available at the door. Doors open at 7:30 p.m. MVCPA is located at 500 Cas-

tro St., if you didn't know. ...

Finally, a hearty congratulations to Jeffrey Walker, new executive director of CSMA, this newspaper's favorite non-profit school of music and arts. Walker was officially welcomed last Thursday, Feb. 1 at the school's New Year Open House celebration, and I'm sure they feted him as only they can.

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

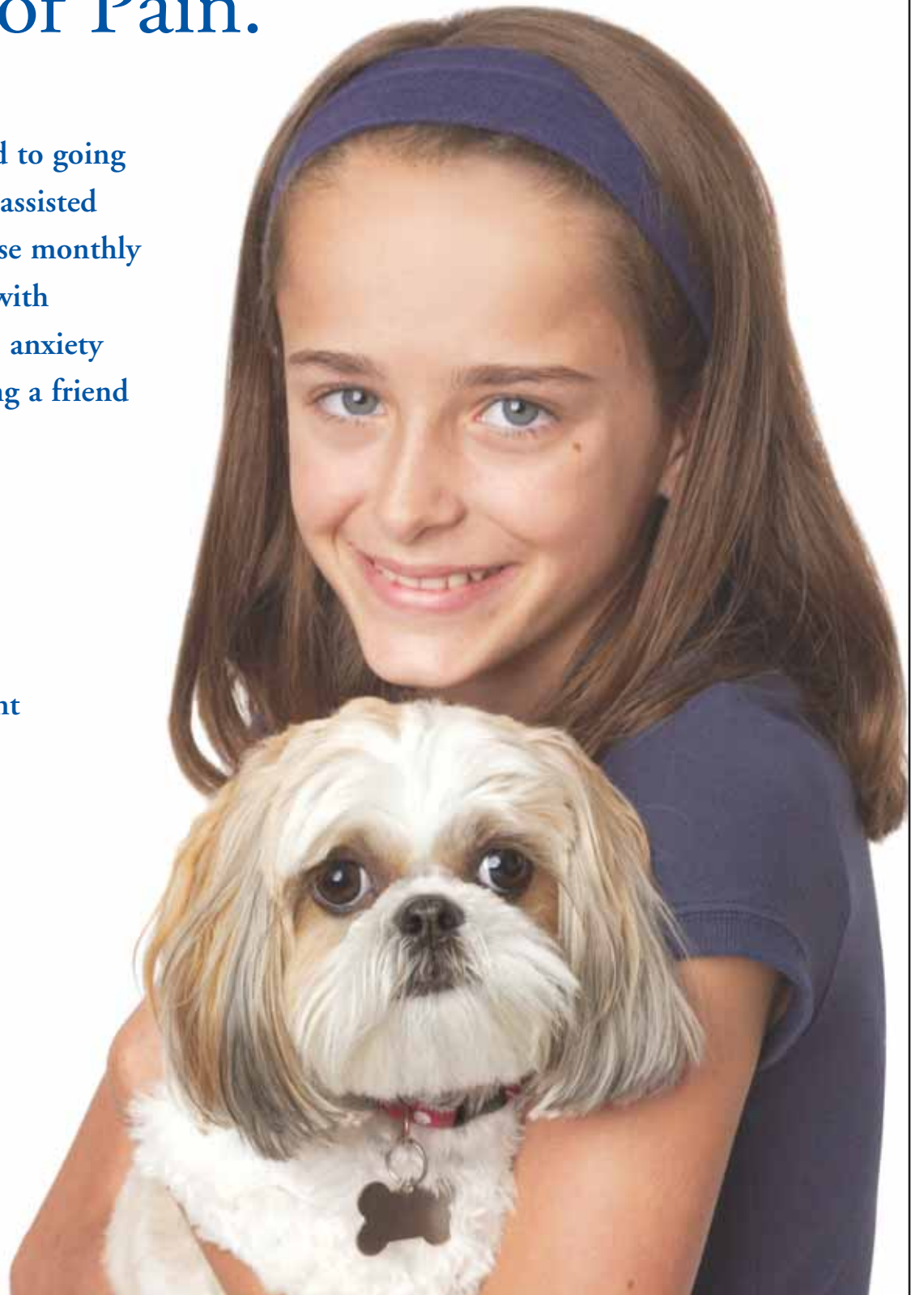


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COUNCIL

► Continued from page 1

its large number of jobs.

Siegel said the city's population is estimated to swell to 125,000 during the day as workers from other cities pour into companies like Google. But the grade was derided for not considering the "heavy lifting" Mountain View does to provide jobs for the neighboring bedroom communities, and for not considering the relatively high housing density that already exists here.

Also, the city had approved nearly all developments during the time period the Bay Area Council studied, rejecting only three housing projects in the last 15 years, Macias said.

"To put the pressure on one little city is nonsense," she said. Neighboring cities with lower housing density and fewer jobs were given high marks in the same report.

Council member Tom Means, an economics professor, agreed that ABAG's quotas were useless, but he was against any further restrictions on housing development. He said building more homes would help alleviate high housing costs by meeting demand. In some cities, he said, building more housing has actually led to lower prices, such as in El Dorado Hills in Sacramento.

Meanwhile, Steve Delva, president of Stand Pacific Homes' South Bay operation, said a limit on housing development may leave the city open to lawsuits. His firm has expressed interest in developing the Franzia family orchard on Whisman Road, the last functional orchard in the city.

"There are housing advocacy groups that are beginning to look at the legality of those things," Delva said.

He added that there was little reason why development couldn't happen as the general plan is revised, and that development moratoriums are usually only done "because they've had an infrastructure problem like their sewer plant was overloaded."

Council member Matt Pear agreed. "There has to be a major infrastructure issue," he said.

Council member Ronit Bryant said growth controls would make for an interesting discussion in Mountain View, but added that any changes to the general plan, which guides development and zoning for the city, should only be done after a lengthy process seeking public input.

In Morgan Hill, a voter-approved growth control ordinance limits development to 200 units a year, causing housing developments to compete against each other, each one earning points for how it includes traits such as affordable housing and

park space. But some Morgan Hill council members have sought to exempt downtown from the ordinance to encourage so-called smart growth in Morgan Hill.

Macias likened Morgan Hill's process to a "beauty pageant," while Mountain View's is an assembly line with every project getting the stamp of approval.

Elaine Costello, community development director, said cities generally take three years to revise a general plan, while Macias said it could happen in as little as a year. A city's general plan is usually revised every 20 years because of the expense, Costello said. Mountain View's was comprehensively revised in 1992. The housing element, revised in 2002, must be revised every five to seven years by law.

Macias said that if support is expressed by the council next week, a study session on the moratorium could be scheduled in a matter of weeks. Updating the general plan wouldn't start until mid-year, if the council decides to make it a priority.

Affordable housing would likely not be included in the moratorium, Macias said.

"We would never put the brakes on affordable housing," Macias said.

A recent study showed that homes in Mountain View sold faster than in any other Bay Area city, while companies like Google continue to expand and take root — bringing new residents with them. ■

City budget a winner

The city has received a "Distinguished Budget Preparation Award" from the Government and Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada.

Bob Locke, finance director, and the city's finance department were singled out for special recognition by the association.

According to the GFOA, the award is given to cities that "have pioneered efforts to improve the quality of budgeting and provide an excellent example for other governments throughout North America." More than 800 awards were given to American and Canadian cities this year.

Locke said the city had submitted its budget for several years before winning the award with a well organized budget that makes information accessible in supplements. It can be shown, for example, how much money the city has given to nonprofit organizations.

— Daniel DeBolt

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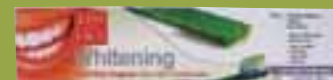
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500083Y-05 09/06



Above: A holy man smiles and waves as he walks by marigold sellers in Kathmandu. The marigolds are to be used as shrine offerings.
Below: The Swayambhunath Buddhist temple.

PHOTOS BY
 DIANA REYNOLDS ROOME

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Roads less traveled in Kathmandu

By *Diana Reynolds Roome*

Editor's Note: Diana Reynolds Roome, a Mountain View resident and longtime contributor to the Voice, has been traveling in India and Nepal, retracing steps she took there many years ago. In this installment, Roome describes the many ways things have changed in Nepal.

KATHMANDU, Nepal — Flying north over the Indian border into Nepal, I'm overwhelmed by the sudden sight of the vast Himalayan mountains shimmering against a deep blue sky. So formidable, they look ethereal too, with small clouds floating far below their dazzling white peaks.

The plane dips on approach to the Kathmandu Valley, giving me a new view of the forested and meticulously terraced hills I drove across in the late 1960s. From those hills I first saw Kathmandu, a medieval city of pagodas, temples, shrines and palaces — and fell in love in an instant. The day after that first landing, I rented a bike and rode around knocking on doors until I found a job as a teacher of English — in a school run by an ex-princess (yes, really).

Returning here almost four decades later has been a delight

and a shock. It's almost impossible to believe Kathmandu is the same city I once knew. I tried following routes I remembered, but it seems that everything has vanished without a trace — my school just outside Patan (the neighboring town), the shrine to Siva outside its gate, the field of wild bulls that I crossed daily, and (not surprisingly) the bus stop with the lady selling papayas and single cigarettes from her stall on the ground.

Even the road I used to take is no longer there. Since I lived here, the country's population

has leaped from 8 million to 26 million, so it's hardly surprising that new buildings, roads and traffic dominate the scene instead of fields, cows, temples and rickshaws. Pollution has obscured the view of snow-covered peaks that made me wobble in amazement as I biked between my school and town.

And instead of wandering among the Nepali townspeople and country folk selling their produce, now I can barely move for tourists and stallholders touting their wares. I shouldn't complain, because visitors, especially climbers, bring much-needed income to this country, which is one of the poorest in the world. When I paid 150 rupees (about \$2) for a Nepali embroidered tablecloth, the vendor touched the money to his lips and then his forehead in a gesture of thankfulness. The gratitude wasn't for me — but probably for Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of good fortune.

I walked a short way out of town to visit Swayambunath, an ancient Buddhist temple on a high hill. The huge, curving Buddha-eyes on the *stupa*, or shrine — including the third eye that looks like a question mark



but is in fact an *ek*, or number one, in Nepali — gaze out in all four directions over the valley. Prayer flags flutter everywhere, bringing a sense of peace and timelessness.

Nobody really knows when Swayambhunath was built (historians' best guess is around 460 A.D.), but Buddhists believe the temple appeared on a hill that rose up spontaneously after the lake that once filled the valley was drained. Geologists have their explanations for this, but the story here is that the Bodhisattva Manjushri drained the lake after raising his mighty sword and cleaving through the mountains where water now rushes through the Chobar Gorge. I once visited the gorge with the kids from my school, and still have a photo of myself sitting on a rock, incongruously playing a violin.

The main temple at Chobar, built in the 15th century, celebrates both the red-faced Hindu deity Macchendranath and the Buddha, whose image appears six times. Clearly, there's no problem with religious coexistence here.

Just for good measure, the temple also celebrates marriage, and to prove it, the outside is covered with hundreds of pots and pans nailed on to the exterior by newlyweds hoping to insure a harmonious married life. I'm not sure which deity bestows that — but what matters is that there's a god who can, as long as you do the right thing. And it seems that people do: Shrines and temples everywhere are abuzz, as people make offerings and light butter lamps. It's all in a day's work.

Speaking of harmony, a historic peace accord was signed on the night I traveled out of town to see the sunrise over the Himalayas. The sun never showed (the hillside village of Nagarkot where I stayed was enveloped in cloud), but Nepal's prime minister and the Maoist rebel leader apparently showed up to ratify a long-negotiated agreement that aims to usher in a multi-party parliamentary system. After 10 years of kidnappings and killings by Maoists rebels, and a grim period last year when a despotic king closed down parliament and then cut off communications to the outside world, Nepal — the world's only Hindu kingdom, though the Buddha was also born here — has managed to wrest back its democracy.

Sadly, this may barely register to the world outside. Even the Nepalis themselves are making no big fuss about it. They've seen too many agreements come and go. Meanwhile, they're smiling — but then, as I well remember, Nepalis have always smiled a lot. ▀

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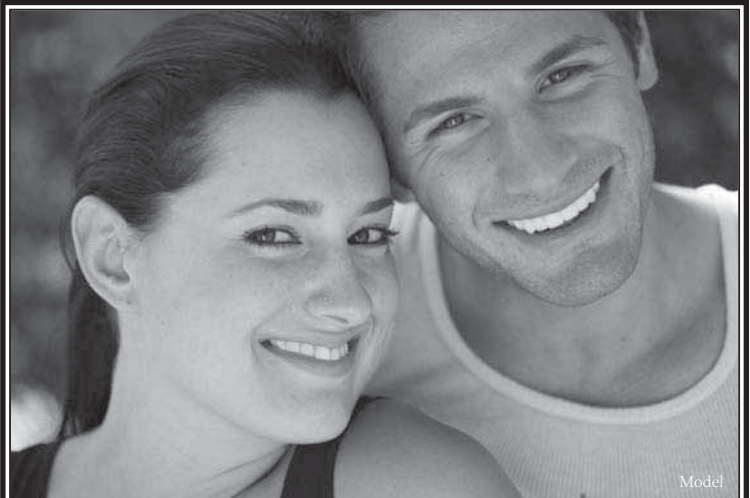
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Mountain View High School Principal Keith Moody participates in the 'Lock Up' event.

LOCK UP

► Continued from page 5

Newlon, among the many business leaders in attendance were Bryan Foertsch, Golden Bay Credit Union financial services representative; Warren McCord, owner of Dean's Automotive; Dave Isackson, founder of WideBand; Kathy Anaya, corporate sales manager of Gold's Gym; and Andre Boiteux from KFC.

Volunteers from the community also helped manage the event at Armadillo Willy's. Four Mountain View police officers lived up the go-directly-to-jail theme by assisting jailbirds to their mock cells. And Helen Robbins ushered guests from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"The mood has been very exciting here, especially when Sharkie bit my head," she said.

The event ran into a glitch early on when its original venue, La Rioja Latin Bistro on Castro Street, closed before the event was to take place, apparently without notice to event organizers.

Riley said hosting the event at Armadillo Willy's worked out well, and hoped the event will raise more money in the coming weeks. Future Lock Ups are planned in Sunnyvale, San Jose and Milpitas.

For more information on the Muscular Dystrophy Association or the Lock Up events, contact Heather Ripley at (408) 423 9345 or at hripley@mduasa.org. ■

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

VACANCY ON HOSPITAL BOARD

The El Camino Hospital District is seeking applicants to fill a position on its five-member Board of Directors. Dominick Curatola, a cardiologist on the hospital's staff and a board member since 1992, last month announced his resignation effective Feb. 14.

The deadline to apply for the position is Thursday, March 1 at 5 p.m. Applications will be reviewed at the regular meeting of the El Camino Hospital District Board on Wednesday, March 14. The board will then select no more than five applicants, who will be interviewed and considered for appointment at a special meeting of the district board on Tuesday, March 27.

Prospective board members must be registered voters in the El Camino Hospital District, which includes Mountain View, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills and portions of Sunnyvale, Cupertino and Palo Alto.

To apply, individuals must submit a resume and

statement giving reasons for seeking the appointment and otherwise comply with application requirements. Letters should be addressed to Edward W. Bough, MD, board chair, El Camino Hospital District, 2500 Grant, Road, ECH 126, Mountain View, CA 94040. For more information, contact Pam Marshbank at (650) 940-7300.

—Alexa Tondreau

VALENTINE'S DAY BREAKFAST TO DISCUSS 'UBUNTU'

The American Association of University Women has invited Helen Mathis to speak on its annual Friendship Breakfast on Feb. 14.

Members from the community are invited to join Mathis, who will discuss friendship in reference to the African ideology of *ubuntu*, which says that "People are people through other people." Mathis will share stories from her nine-year stay in Swaziland, South Africa.

The discussion will start at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday at the Village Court, located on the corner of San Antonio and El Camino. Visitors are invited to make advance reservations at \$16 per person. For more information, call (408) 616-8800.

—Zunaira Durrani

CHC PLAYS JOHNNY FLOWERSEED AT THE ANNEX

From 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. this Saturday, the group Community Helping Community will be restarting the old tradition of planting wildflower seeds in the Cuesta Park Annex, the open space next to Cuesta Park recently preserved by the City Council.

Council member Jac Siegel encourages families to bring their children and some native wildflower seeds. "We're hoping kids come," Siegel said. "Kids get to plant these flowers and watch them grow. I think it's good."

—Daniel DeBolt

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Hi-def surgery

EL CAMINO HOSPITAL FIRST IN COUNTY TO INSTALL SUCH A DETAILED VIDEO CONFERENCE SYSTEM

By Alexa Tondreau

El Camino Hospital announced it has become the first hospital in the county to install a high-definition video conferencing system, linking doctors to specialists at a treatment facility in Southern California.

Doctors, hospital staff and vice presidents from Sony, the maker of the teleconferencing technology, gathered in a meeting room last week to launch the first run-through with doctors gathered in a similar fashion at the Los Angeles-based City of Hope National Medical Center, a teaching hospital that specializes in cancer treatment.

Without a hitch, the high-definition visual communications system was up and running, and those gathered at El Camino were given a crystal-clear picture



COURTESY PHOTO

of doctors seated around a conference table in Los Angeles.

The teleconferencing relies on Sony's IPELA cameras, which have "multi-codec" capabilities, meaning they can support different kinds of compressed image files to increase flexibility and optimize bandwidth use.

This means doctors and staff can participate in a live, two-way conference with City of Hope, and can share images, from pathology slides to surgical

videos, with a level of detail and clarity not known until now.

"Precise imagery and color reproduction are important when viewing subject matter like blood, bone or organs," Mike Sekiguchi, general manager of the Sony IPELA group, said. "For example, the color red has always been particularly difficult to reproduce accurately with appropriate levels of gradation and shading. HD technology removes that challenge by effectively capturing the necessary image details."

"What we should be able to do is extraordinary for patients," Shyamali Singhal, director of El Camino Hospital's Cancer Center, told the audience.

Singhal, who completed her residency at City of Hope, said oncology doctors from both hospitals will be able to meet regularly and brainstorm difficult patient cases, discussing treatment options and the like.

At Thursday's meeting, doctors from both oncology boards viewed slides of tumors on a patient's liver, and after a round-table discussion determined that chemotherapy, as opposed to surgery, would best deter his cancer.

Similar teleconferences should take place at least once a month, Singhal said. The hospital plans to install the visual communications system in its pathology and catheterization labs, an operating room and the conference room.

The entire system costs approximately \$39,000, but the hospital acquired it for free because they were the first to embrace the technology, which was released this past summer.

Though the hospital didn't pay for the technology, Steven Blum, Sony's vice president of medical systems, said "they've made a tremendous investment of brainpower and expertise."

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► See **EL CAMINO**, next page

■ HEALTH BRIEFS

COUNTY OFFERS MAMMOGRAM SERVICES

A new program has been launched by Santa Clara County and the Community Health Partnership, giving underserved women in the area greater access to mammography services at 18 locations around the county.

Spearheaded by Supervisor Liz Kniss, the Community Mammography Access Project will have portable mammogram equipment available at clinics on a rotating basis.

The mammography services will be integrated at community health clinics around the county, which are better able to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate health care in familiar environments.

Statistics show that in underserved populations in the county, 30 percent of breast cancer diagnoses are detected as late-stage cancers.

For information on upcoming dates and locations for mammogram services at the county's network of health clinics, visit www.chpscc.org/whpCMAP.htm.

FOOTHILL PROVIDES AFFORDABLE DENTAL SERVICES

The Foothill College Dental Hygiene Clinic is offering low-cost oral health services to Foothill students and community members alike. All services are being performed by students of the clinic, under the supervision of licensed dentists and oral hygienists.

Services offered include dental cleaning, scaling and root planning, dental X-rays, sealants, oral cancer screenings and fluoride treatments, to name a few. Fees range from \$5 to \$30, depending on the procedures performed. The clinic can provide referrals to private dentists and local dental colleges.

Winter quarter clinic hours are Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Tuesdays from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The clinic is located in Room 5312 at Foothill College. To schedule an appointment, call (650) 949-7335.

— Alexa Tondreau

EL CAMINO

► Continued from previous page

Blum added that the hospital had approached Sony about installing the system.

He continued, "El Camino is fantastically ahead of the curve on this. They are innovators."

Singhal, who played a major role in bringing the technology to El Camino, was appointed the director of the hospital's new cancer center in November. The hospital has approved plans to build a \$2.62 million center that will group services for cancer patients in one centralized location. The center will open this spring in the Melchor Pavilion, next to the main hospital.

Singhal hopes to expand the hospital's use of the technology beyond conferences and educational seminars. She foresees a time when live surgical cases can be broadcast and diagnoses made in conjunction with medical institutions around the country.

But before that can happen, other hospitals have to get on the hi-def bandwagon.

"There's a great amount of interest and we are finding more unique applications," Blum said.

Sony envisions multiple other uses for the high-definition teleconferencing system in the medical field, among them tiny HD cameras affixed to endoscopy tubes in order to generate near-exact images of internal organs.

Other industries that can benefit from the transfer of high-quality images are auction houses, the apparel industry and other manufacturing industries, Sony executives said. ■

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

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Hidden Villa director resigns

BETH ROSS PLANS TO START A 'CLIMATE CHANGE INITIATIVE' ON THE PENINSULA

Bay City News

Beth Ross, executive director of Hidden Villa for the past two years, has resigned effective Jan. 31, board Chair Lee Price announced recently to supporters of the farm-based camp and environmental center in Los Altos Hills.

Ross was at the center of a firestorm of protest last year over cancellation of a multicultural summer camp that had been a part of Hidden Villa's core programs for decades. Price said she will leave to "launch a community-based climate change initiative on the Peninsula," and he praised her performance.

"Beth has made major contributions to Hidden Villa in her two years as executive director," Price said in a letter to Hidden Villa supporters. He said her contributions

included "successfully launching a dedicated annual camp scholarship campaign that raised over \$130,000 in 2006, creating the Healthy Food, Healthy Family Program ... and developing corporate sponsorships of summer community programs."

Price said last week that Chris Overington, longtime Hidden Villa staff member, will become interim executive director for much of 2007. Overington has been affiliated with Hidden Villa for more than 15 years. From 1994 to 2004, he served as director of its Environmental Education Program. Since 2004 he has been director of programs and community partnerships.

Layoffs of eight staff members last May and subsequent disclosure of a board decision to end the 12-week multicultural summer camp program for teens precipitated a crisis on the board and among longtime supporters. The board later rescinded the decision to cancel the summer camp, but left many unanswered questions about the review process of how the decision was made. ■

Soldier from Los Altos Hills dies in Iraq

CHURCH SERVICE FOR SGT. WILLIAM SIGUA, 21, HELD IN MOUNTAIN VIEW

Bay City News and Staff Reports

Army Sgt. William M. Sigua, 21, of Los Altos Hills, was reported killed in combat in Bayji, Iraq, and his life is being celebrated this Thursday and Friday in private and public ceremonies, one of them in Mountain View.

The U.S. Department of Defense reported last Friday that Sigua died the previous Wednesday in Bayji from wounds he suffered "when his unit came in contact with the enemy using small arms fire during combat operations."

Sigua served as an infantry squad leader with the 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division out of Fort Bragg, N.C.

Sigua joined the Army in July 2003 and

was first deployed in September 2004 "to bolster security for the Afghanistan elections," the department reported. Sigua was most recently deployed in August with his current unit.

"Sergeant Sigua was the type of leader you want your men to be," said Captain Timothy Peterman, commander, Company C. "He was intensely focused upon accomplishing his duty, but had a calm demeanor about him that put all at ease."

Sigua is survived by his father, mother and two brothers, who said in a written statement that they are proud of his commitment to serve his country.


Sigua's unit is holding a memorial service for him in Iraq. A private service for friends and family is being held Thursday at a church in Mountain View, and the family is also holding a memorial celebration and reception Friday which is open to the public, as well as to all friends and family. The Friday memorial begins at 3:30 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza Cabana, 4290 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. ■

Happy Chinese New Year!!!



The entire house should be cleaned before New Years Day. It's Tradition to paint window frames, red usually. The seventh day of the New Year is when farmers display their produce. The ninth day is to make offerings to the Jade Emperor. The 10th through the 12th day friends and relatives should be invited for dinner.

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CALTRAIN

► Continued from page 5

speed and reliability and lowering emissions, he said, is use of the lightweight electric trains common in other countries. But currently Caltrain and other agencies can't use them because they're too light — putting their use at odds with antiquated regulations encouraging the use of heavy trains, especially for freight.

To put them on Peninsula tracks, Doty said, would require new rules from the Federal Rail Authority, because the lightweight trains would share the tracks with heavier Union Pacific and Amtrak trains. And for a regulatory agency, he said, "The safest position is to not change."

But Doty is convinced that the lightweight electric trains, also known as electric multiple units, or EMUs, would be safer, because advanced computer controls, sensors and shorter braking distances would mean fewer accidents.

The trains would travel at the same 79 mph top speed as current trains, but a trip from San Jose to San Francisco would be one hour and six minutes instead of one hour and 16 minutes — all because the trains can accelerate to top speed and come to a stop much faster. The rides would be much more comfortable as well, he said.

Doty is betting that the increased quality in train service provided by electric trains would mean more riders, less commuting by car and fewer people exposed to car accidents. He said he would love to tell the railroad authority, "Your decision not to change is costing lives."

But he may not have to. He said the authority expressed support of the same sort of variance for the California High Speed Rail Authority in a Jan. 15 meeting. The CHSRA is planning to send lightweight electric trains hurling through central California at speeds well over 100 mph to connect Los Angeles to San Francisco in three hours.

"The word is out, they are totally in favor of it," Doty said about the railroad authority's views of allowing electric trains to share tracks with other trains.

Caltrain is setting meeting dates with the railroad group to discuss the option, and soon the agency could be the first of its kind in the country to use state-of-the-art EMUs.

"We need the public to help us," Doty said. "It is a political decision in the end. If we don't fight for it, we won't get it. If it works here, it can work everywhere else." ■

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



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**Mountain View Whisman School District
Parcel Tax Oversight Committee**

**Review of 2005 / 2006
Program Spending**

The Mountain View Whisman School District's Parcel Tax Oversight Committee has conducted a review of Parcel Tax spending for the 2005 / 2006 school year.

Key Findings

Overall, spending of Parcel Tax funds during 2005 / 2006 was consistent with Parcel Tax objectives.

- The District appropriately collected parcel tax funds and deposited them in segregated accounts, as required by Measure J.
- 100% of funds were spent on programs previously reviewed by the Committee.
- The actual cost of programs funded by the parcel tax was 4% under what was budgeted at the start of the school year.
- 94% of programs and 75% of actual spending was in categories defined by Measure J as appropriate uses of parcel tax funds.
- 25% of spending was allocated for keeping Slater School open for the 2005 / 2006 school year. While the Committee recommended that alternative funding sources be identified for this program, no such sources were available to the District.
- Administrative expenses were 0.4% of spending.

Oversight Committee Report

The Committee's complete report is available at the following locations:

- Online at: www.mvwsd.org
- District offices at 750-A San Pierre Way
- Mountain View Public Library

Copias del reporte del comité serán disponible en español en la oficina del Distrito, 750-A San Pierre Way

**Now Accepting Applications for
Oversight Committee Vacancies**

The Parcel Tax Oversight Committee is composed of representatives from the local community who monitor and provide advice on the expenditure of Measure J parcel tax proceeds, reporting annually to the Board of Trustees and the public regarding the use proposed and actual uses of such funds.

The Committee currently has three vacancies. Interested individuals are encouraged to apply. Applicants may represent the business community, homeowners in the District, parents or guardians of a student in the District, or the community at-large.

Applications Due February 28, 2007

Applications are available at www.mvwsd.org or by contacting the District at (650) 526-3548.



Parcel tax revenues are collected under Measure J, approved by Mountain View voters in 2004. Measure J established independent community oversight of parcel tax spending by creating the Parcel Tax Oversight Committee. Committee meetings are open to the public – your comments are welcome.

Viewpoint

- EDITORIAL
- YOUR LETTERS
- GUEST OPINIONS

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The Voice is published weekly by Embarcadero Publishing Co. and distributed by U.S. Mail to residences and businesses in Mountain View.

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■ EDITORIAL THE OPINION OF THE VOICE

Owners the missing link in prostitution busts

Voice readers may have noticed last week's Page 1 story describing how the Mountain View Police Department went "undercover" in a sting operation before charging three women with maintaining a house of prostitution on Pamela Drive, just off El Camino Real near Grant Road.

The police explained how they obtained a search warrant and sent an officer into the business posing as a massage customer. When "the officer was offered sexual acts in exchange for cash," other officers entered the building to conduct an investigation and then made the arrests, police said.

An interesting wrinkle in this incident is that the exact same Pamela Drive location was the focus of a very similar case seven months ago, when occupants of a massage salon were arrested and charged with virtually the same crimes. A new illegal massage business rose quickly again at a location that is obviously well-known to police.

Such diligent attention to prior arrests, and the department's consistent record of clearing out such illegal houses of prostitution (including one next door to the Voice office at Evelyn Avenue and Hope Street several years ago), are clearly the first line of defense to stop this criminal activity. But rarely do we see charges filed against the person or persons who actually own the businesses. Shouldn't officials go after them in addition to the women who work on the premises?

And what about the immigration status of the women involved? Many of those who have been arrested over the years are Asian. Is it possible that they are in debt to their boss or manager, who is forcing them into this illegal activity to pay off living expenses or even airfare from their home country?

We're sure that the police are doing everything they can to control this unseemly business. A check of Voice records shows an average of six massage salon arrests every year.

But when police can simply return to a location that was busted less than a year ago and replay arrests for the same crimes, someone must know who paid the rent and who signed the lease in the meantime. Given the popularity of massage salons in the city, detectives should be able to simply check out any new business licenses in the category and track down the owners.

Our police are doing a good job of keeping the crime of prostitution in check, but with a little more effort, it might be possible to lock up the owners and snuff it out altogether.

Rarely do we see charges filed against the person or persons who actually own the businesses.

■ LETTERS VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

COMPROMISE POSSIBLE FOR GRANT ROAD FARM

Editor:

Thank you for your editorial in last week's Voice ("Political will needed to save farm"). The plan put forth by the Mountain View Farmlands group can preserve the owners' rights to their profit on the sale of the land and the developer's rights to reap their profit on the houses built there, and give the community the benefit of preserving a working farm in an increasingly urban environment.

They have demonstrated that farming small plots is economically viable; that there is an organization devoted to finding farmers who want to find just such parcels to farm; and that there is a market, beyond farmers markets and fruit stands, for locally grown organic produce.

The City Council members have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to leave a legacy for Mountain View by encouraging such a compromise plan to go forward. They can demonstrate that they have a vision for the city that includes both providing housing and preserving our agricultural heritage.

**Martha Young
Swanson Way**

ABOUT THAT 'POLITICAL WILL' ...

Editor:

Poppycock! No amount of will, or political skill, is going to save the Grant Road farm. The die is cast.

The developers have the power, the money, and the ability to take over and build expensive homes on expensive land and the city, salivating over the expected tax money, will do nothing but encourage them, sub rosa of course. I can't blame the owners of the property, as they've been offered a deal they can't refuse. I watch developers take over mobile parks, motels, industrial parks, even an attempt to take over our Santa Clara Fairground to build a "music hall" ... for Philistines?

You're right: "When it's gone, it's gone."

**Bob Muse
El Camino Real**

GOOD TO SPREAD WORD ON SAVING FARM

Editor:

I just wanted to thank you for your editorial on preserving the Grant Road farm. I feel it's very

► See **LETTERS**, page 22



■ GUEST OPINION

County ruling is not the end of Hills redistricting efforts

By Bart Carey

I read with interest the *Voice's* recent coverage of the Los Altos Hills reorganization petition, specifically the defeat of the council petition by the county committee ("Hills redistricting bid soundly defeated," Feb. 2).

I was disappointed there were not more comments included from reorganization supporters beyond those from Jill Jensen which were incorrectly described as suggesting a "loss of momentum." Jill was correct that we have been frustrated in regard to our ability to control the process, but this has nothing to do with loss of momentum — it reflects frustration that the interests of Los Altos Hills are always secondary to those in Los Altos and Palo Alto due to our extreme minority status, and frustration regarding a process that then requires us to seek help from a committee elected by the districts themselves.

Please be aware of a few points:

■ This is not a "final blow" to reorganization. There is considerable momentum for a citizens' petition, and advocates of this petition see the council petition as only a first step. They also have strong reason to believe that they can address the concerns of the committee, including the number of students in a new district. A citizens' petition could also likely be appealed to the state board if turned down by the county committee.

■ An alternative proposal under consideration by some is a petition for a territory transfer of the "Los Altos School District portion" of Los Altos Hills into the Palo Alto School District.

■ Despite the above, Los Altos Hills remains committed to negotiating with the districts, maybe along the lines of the GO Plan which was mentioned in your article. We have reached out to the districts now for almost two months (since the first county meeting on Dec. 7) with very little direct response. It remains to be seen whether the districts will be willing to enter formal talks with Los Altos Hills to solve these problems, but we remain prepared and optimistic.

Please be prepared to cover the status of formal talks with the school districts. Please also be prepared to cover the status of the Los Altos district's plans to reopen Bullis School. The coming months will be especially important as they further discuss the finances of this project, the expected attendance, and the new attendance boundaries to be required for many Los Altos families.

There is a window of opportunity at the moment for a workable solution for our community so long as all parties remain committed to a formal process of problem-solving.

Bart Carey is a planning commissioner for Los Altos Hills.

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(Science & Health with Key to the Scriptures by Mary Baker Eddy)

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LETTERS

▶ Continued from page 20

important to save at least part of the current farm for future generations, and your efforts to spread awareness that there are people fighting to save the farm and that there are "win-win" alternatives available are much appreciated.

Douglas Fisher
Bruckner Circle

CLARIFICATION ON AN OLD MILITARY RECORD

Editor:

With reference to the article on Donald Luis ("Mountain View's charter member," Jan. 19, 2006): Luis mentions, "I was also part of the National Guard. They never discharged me; at least I never got a letter saying so. I guess I'm still one of them."

For your information and guidance, the first and only National Guard unit in Mountain View was Battery B, 637th Field Artillery Battalion, and their headquarters was located at 240 N. 2nd Street in San Jose. The unit was federally recognized on the 26th of April, 1949 at the Adobe House on Moffett Boulevard in Mountain View. The unit commander was Captain John S. Vai, and he was employed by Bank of America, on the corner of Dana and Castro Street, as vice president.

I happened to be the full-time Unit Administrative Assistant for the unit and was officially hired effective May 2, 1949. I can honestly say that Donald Luis was not a member at that time. If he belonged to the unit, he must have been 42 years old at the time, and that would make him too old to be in our unit. If he was in the National Guard during World War II, he must have belonged to the State Guard with their military headquarters, in Sacramento. There were a lot of "old-timers" who did belong to the State Guard.

I hope I have clarified some information as to Luis' military period. Around May of 1957, Mountain View's only unit was transferred to 251 W. Hedding Street, in San Jose.

Joseph E. Dela Fuente
Bonita Avenue

Editor's Note: The Voice contacted Don Luis, who explained that he "served in the National Reserve ... I trained and served with a Reserve [unit] from Sunnyvale, and not the one in Mountain View." He said his commander's name was "Mr. Sloane, who is no longer alive. I remember me and my friends handed over our guns after coming back from Japan. Both my friends received their letters but I didn't. I have a picture in uniform with my family."

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■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

■ MOVIE TIMES

■ BEST BETS FOR ENTERTAINMENT

■ RESTAURANT REVIEW

The Seoul of tofu

TOFU HOUSE'S HEALTHY FOOD BOASTS A WEALTH OF COLOR BEYOND THE WHITE CURD OF SOY MILK

By Sheila Himmel

Tofu is the cheese of Korea, not the chicken or the beef.

As served at Tofu House, the white curd of soy milk is creamy and rich, a palette for the other proteins. And it is closer to custard than the slimy brick in plastic containers that puts people off tofu forever.

The owner, Jim Huang, so far has stuck to El Camino Real for his Tofu Houses. He opened the first Tofu House eight-and-a-half years ago, in Santa Clara. He has since expanded that one and taken over somebody else's short-lived tofu restaurant in South Palo Alto. Now he is looking at sites in Burlingame, where El Camino is a possibility, and Fremont, where it isn't.

The cheerful former engineer isn't at the Palo



KARNA KURATA

Tofu House in Palo Alto serves Bibimbob with BBQ beef and vegetables in stoneware with an assortment of kimchi dishes.

► See TOFU HOUSE, page 24

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Your Everyday Farmer's Market



Tofu House serves a bowl of soft tofu soup with beef, shrimp, and clams.

TOFU HOUSE

► Continued from page 23

Alto site much anymore, as he was when it opened in one of the last A&W drive-ins a year-and-a-half ago. Sadly, none of the A&W character survived its transitional years as a Chinese restaurant.

First to the Tofu House table, where five or six little appetizers get your juices flowing. The hottest is a cigar-shaped roll of Napa cabbage in jalapeno, garlic and fish sauce. This is kimchi with levels of flavor beyond heat. Pickled cucumbers and bean sprouts are crunchy and tangy. The thin silky noodles called jap chae are sweet. Boiled potatoes in sesame oil have a nutty flavor. These dishes invite browsing, and any will be refilled if you ask.

You do have to ask: for more water, the bill, information about ingredients.

A raw egg also comes with the appetizer course. You will need it later.

Soft tofu soups are Tofu House's specialty and the bulk of its 21-item menu. Customers customize their soup's spiciness, from not spicy to hot, and

their ingredients. Judging from medium, I am in awe of anyone who orders hot.

With Original Soft Tofu No. 1, you choose beef, pork or chicken to boil with mushrooms and tofu in a chile-spiked broth. Crack your egg into the bubbling hot soup. It cooks immediately, and thickens with the melting tofu.

An accompanying bowl of sticky rice is flecked with red beans. That goes in, too. (Tip: Dip wooden chopsticks in tea before plunging into rice. It'll be easier to eat.)

Variations of soft tofu soup bring in seafood, dumplings, kimchi and fish eggs. Three versions are vegetarian.

Tofu House also has cold noodle dishes (\$9.24) and Korean barbecued beef, pork and chicken (\$11.55). At lunch on weekdays, the barbecue reduced rate is \$10.17. The barbecue will do in a pinch, and like everything else it comes with those darling kimchi dishes.

But bibimbob (\$11.54) is a thing of beauty, inside and out. A large stoneware bowl, for safety's sake set into a wooden platter, keeps the ingredients warm, even as you excavate down to the bottom. And excavate you must. Rice sticks to the

dining on the town

<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">afghan</p> <p>Afghan/Persian Kabobs 604 S. Mary Avenue (at El Camino Real) Sunnyvale 408/733-5262</p>	<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">chinese food</p> <p>Golden Wok 895 Villa St., Mtn. View. Distinctive Chinese Cuisine Dim Sum Daily 10-3 Open Daily 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Delivery/Take-Out (Daily) Now Online Order Available www.goldenwokusa.com By phone: 650/964-2222</p>	<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">mexican</p> <p>Fiesta Del Mar Too Rotisserie & Cantina 735 Villa St., Mtn. View 650/967-3525 Fresh Lime Margaritas, 200+ Tequilas, Open Late.</p>
<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">american</p> <p>Clarks Charcoal Broiler 615 W. El Camino Real, Mtn. View. 650/967-0851 Voted Best Hamburger 14 Yrs in a Row. Beautiful Outside Patio Dining.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">french</p> <p>Chef TJ 938 Villa Street, Mtn. View. 650/964-7466 "Outrageously good" New French-American fare "in a charming little Victorian house" - Zagat 2003.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">pizza</p> <p>Kapp's Pizza Bar & Grill 191 Castro Street Mtn. View, 650/961-1491 Happy Hours Mon-Fri 4pm-6pm and 11pm-2am.</p>
<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">chinese food</p> <p>Chef Chu's 1067 N. San Antonio Road, on the corner of El Camino, Los Altos. 650/948-2696 Zagat Review: "Gold Standard in Fresh Chinese Cuisine."</p>	<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">mexican</p> <p>Fiesta Del Mar- Seafood, Mexican Cuisine & Cantina 1005 N. Shoreline Blvd., Mtn. View. 650/965-9354 Open Daily, Lunch & Dinner. Voted Best Seafood for 7 years.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">tex-mex</p> <p>El Paso Cafe 1407 El Camino Real, Mtn. View. 650/961-8858 Fax: 650/961-3439 (Between Rengstorff and Shoreline) Happy Hour 2:30pm - 6:30pm.</p>
<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">chinese food</p> <p>Sports Page 1431 Plymouth Street (exit at Shoreline off 101) Mtn. View. 650/961-1992</p>	<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">mexican</p> <p>Le Petit Bistro 1405 W. El Camino Real, Mtn. View. 650/964-3321 Casual and cozy French restaurant. 15 tables.</p>	<p style="text-align: center; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">ice cream</p> <p>Gelato Classico 241 B Castro Street Mtn. View. 650/969-2900</p>

■ DINING NOTES

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KARNA KURATA

Tofu House is a popular spot for Korean soft tofu soups in Palo Alto.

bottom and becomes chewy, soft and crunchy, almost like a candy bar. Some pieces of calamari and shrimp get deliciously charred by snuggling next to the sides of the bowl.

But first, admire the colorful composition on top of the rice. Surrounding a fried egg are discrete sections of meat, vegetables and seafood. My companion looked around at Tofu House's stark white walls and said, "All the color is in the food."

For something light, tofu salad (\$3.46) involves crisp iceberg lettuce and a few sightings of mush-

rooms, carrots, corn, cucumbers and sesame seeds in a sprightly dressing. Resting on top are handsome cubes of dense tofu, with a nuttier taste than the soft stuff. Two reasonable diners

could split a salad and an entree, and not leave hungry.

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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: 12:05, 3:45, 7:05 & 10:05 p.m.

Century 20: 12:25, 3:45, 7 & 10:05 p.m.

BECAUSE I SAID SO (PG-13) ★★★1/2 Century 16: 11:35 a.m.;

2:15, 4:40, 7:20 & 9:45 p.m. Century 12: 11:50 a.m.; 1, 2:25, 3:35, 5, 6:20, 7:50, 9 & 10:20 p.m.

BORAT (R) ★★★1/2 Century 20: 7:55 & 10:15 p.m.

CASINO ROYALE (PG-13) ★★★1/2 Century 12: 12:30, 3:50, 7:15 & 10:25 p.m.

CATCH AND RELEASE (PG-13) Century 20: 11:55 a.m.; 2:30, 5:10, 7:50 & 10:25 p.m.

CHARLOTTE'S WEB (G) ★★★1/2 Century 12: 11:55 a.m.; 2:20 & 4:45 p.m.

CHILDREN OF MEN (R) ★★★1/2 Century 16: 11:10 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.

DREAMGIRLS (PG-13) ★★★ Century 16: 12:35, 4:10, 7:15 & 10:20 p.m. Century 20: 4:15 & 10:10 p.m.; Fri.-Mon. also at 1:10 & 7:15 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: Noon, 2:15, 4:30, 7 & 9:30 p.m.

ERAGON (PG) ★★★ Century 12: 12:05, 2:40, 5:10, 7:55 & 10:30 p.m.

FREEDOM WRITERS (PG-13) Century 16: 11:45 a.m.; 3:10, 6:40 & 9:35 p.m. Century 12: 12:40, 4:20, 7:25 & 10:15 p.m.

HANNIBAL RISING (R) Century 16: 12:30, 3:30, 7 & 10 p.m. Century 12: 12:20, 1:50, 3:10, 4:40, 6:15, 7:40, 9:20 & 10:35 p.m.

HAPPILY N'EVER AFTER (PG) Century 12: 12:10, 2:30 & 4:50 p.m.

HAPPY FEET (PG) Century 20: 11:30 a.m.; 2:15 & 4:50 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, 6:35 & 9:30 p.m. Century 20: 1:15, 4:25, 7:35 & 10:30 p.m.

LETTERS FROM IWO JIMA (R) ★★★1/2 Century 16: 11:25 a.m.; 2:40, 6:30 & 9:40 p.m. Century 20: 12:30, 3:35, 6:45 & 9:45 p.m.

THE MESSENGERS (PG-13) Century 16: Noon, 2:20, 5, 7:25 & 9:55 p.m. Century 20: 12:05, 1:05, 2:30, 3:30, 4:45, 5:45, 7:05, 8, 9:20 & 10:15 p.m.

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM (PG) Century 16: 11 a.m.; 1:45, 4:25, 7:10 & 9:50 p.m. Century 20: Noon, 2:35, 5:15, 7:45 & 10:20 p.m.

NORBIT (PG-13) Century 16: 11:05 a.m.; 12:10, 1:40, 2:45, 4:15, 5:20, 6:50, 7:55, 9:25 & 10:25 p.m. Century 20: 11:50 a.m.; 12:40, 1:30, 2:20, 3:10, 4, 4:50, 5:40, 6:30, 7:20, 8:10, 9, 9:50 & 10:35 p.m.

NOTES ON A SCANDAL (R) ★★★1/2 Century 20: Noon, 2:25, 4:40, 7:20 & 9:50 p.m. Aquarius: 2:30, 5, 7:30 & 9:45 p.m.; Sun. also at 12:15 p.m.

THE PAINTED VEIL (PG-13) ★★★ Century 20: 12:55, 3:55, 7:30 & 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, 7:35 & 10:10 p.m. Palo Alto Square: 1:30, 4:20, 7:20 & 10:10 p.m.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS (PG-13) ★★★ Century 16: 11 a.m.; 1:50, 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) ★★★ 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.

SERAPHIM FALLS (R) Century 12: 1:10, 4, 7:30 & 10:05 p.m.

SMOKIN' ACES (R) ★★ Century 16: 11:15 a.m.; 1:55, 4:35, 7:30 & 10:10 p.m. Century 20: 12:40, 3:05, 5:30, 8 & 10:30 p.m.

STOMP THE YARD (PG-13) Century 12: 12:50, 4:10, 7:45 & 10:25 p.m.

VENUS (R) ★★★1/2 Century 16: 11:30 a.m.; 2:25, 4:45, 7:45 & 10:05 p.m.

VOLVER (R) ★★★1/2 Century 20: 7:10 & 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)

CENTURY PARK 12: 557 E. Bayshore Blvd., Redwood City (365-9000)

CENTURY 20 DOWNTOWN: 825 Middlefield Road, Redwood City (369-3456)

CINEARTS AT PALO ALTO SQUARE: 3000 El Camino Real, Palo Alto (493-3456)

GUILD: 949 El Camino Real, Menlo Park (266-9260)

SPANGENBERG THEATRE: 780 Arastradero Road, Palo Alto (354-8263)

For show times, plot synopses and more information about any films playing at the

Aquarius, Guild and Park, visit www.LandmarkTheatres.com

- ★ 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

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

► See *MINI REVIEWS*, page 28



Lauren Graham, Diane Keaton and Piper Perabo in a scene from "Because I Said So."

Mandy Moore's meddling mom

DIANE KEATON WORKS HARD TO MAKE OLD STORY NEW IN 'BECAUSE I SAID SO'

By Tyler Hanley

Diane Keaton infuses this cliched romantic comedy with a healthy dose of youthful exuberance. The 61-year-old actress performs with the energy

of a teenager, which helps invigorate an otherwise lackluster tale.

Daphne (Keaton) is the proud single mother of three grown daughters, two of whom Daphne has watched walk down the aisle.

But her youngest, Milly (Mandy Moore), can't seem to snag the right beau. The meddling mother signs Milly up for an Internet dating service without Milly's knowledge.

Daphne meets would-be suitors

MOVIE REVIEW

at an upscale bar and soon realizes how shallow the dating pool really is, as unappealing single men arrive in droves. The exhausting introductions produce only two potential fellows for Milly: soulful guitarist Johnny (Gabriel Macht) and wealthy architect Jason (Tom Everett Scott).

Whereas Daphne is instantly encouraged by Jason's career and she quickly disregards Johnny as unfit for her daughter. And while Daphne surreptitiously fixes up Milly and Jason, Johnny devises plans of his own. Soon Milly is dating both men, unaware of her mother's veiled involvement, and when she must choose between what she wants and what's expected of her she finds that the options are in direct conflict.

The screenplay by Karen Leigh Hopkins and Jessie Nelson touches on sincere mother-daughter dynamics. One scene, in which Daphne suffers from laryngitis and bunks with Milly for support, features the film's finest moment. Daphne — having not

been sexually active for years — passes a note to her daughter asking what an orgasm feels like. Milly's reaction and the ensuing exchange bring a sense of realism and comfort to the otherwise strained relationship between the two.

Moore seems poised to gracefully assume the leading lady status that "party girl" actresses such as Lind-

say Lohan have badly fumbled. Relative newcomer Macht brims with big-screen charm.

Keaton's portrayal, though, is occasionally too frenzied. Her Daphne frequently collides

with modern technology (such as frustration with a GPS device or inability to shut off Internet pornography), leading to forced and humorless moments.

"Because" borrows dialogue and scenarios from films such as "Kindergarten Cop" and "Jerry Maguire," demonstrating a lack of originality. Ultimately, even a vivacious Keaton can't make a familiar film feel fresh — no matter how hard she tries. ▀

MOVIE NOTES

Stars: **1/2

Rating: PG-13 for sexual content including dialogue, some mature thematic material and partial nudity

Run Time: 1 hour, 42 minutes



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MINI REVIEWS

▶ Continued from page 26

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.

SMOKIN' ACES ★★

(Century 16, Century 20) 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 (Jeremy 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. Ex-cops, bounty hunters, a pair of kittenish hit women 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. The cast is a glittery who's-who of Hollywood, ranging from celluloid veterans Ray Liotta and Andy Garcia to newbie screen celeb Alicia Keys. But the zany energy ultimately gives way to slick but silly plot devices that drag the action over the finish line with a resounding thud. *Rated: R for excessive violence, nudity and language. 1 hour, 48 minutes.* — J.A.

VENUS ★★1/2

(Century 16) Peter O'Toole crafts a May-December "romance" with geriatric fervor and a large dollop of self-effacing humor. O'Toole is fading British soap star Maurice, weary of his staid existence and open to last-chapter adventure. He pals around with persnickety crony Ian (Leslie Phillips) — and then meets Ian's 19-year-old grandniece Jessie (Jodie Whittaker), a cheeky commoner whose presence is a much-needed breath of fresh air. A late-life crisis rears its ugly head as Maurice confronts the fact that he doesn't really know himself — and hopes to discover more *a la* the companionship of Jessie, who sullenly accepts his charity in the form of meals and shopping sprees but spurns his more lecherous advances. O'Toole's charisma has waned little since he heated up the silver screen as Lawrence of Arabia, though he appears far older than his 74 years, doubtless due to years of hard living and an unfortunate face-lift. As a last hurrah, "Venus" is a distinguished farewell. *Rated: R for nudity and language. 1 hour, 34 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 deadbeat 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.

DR. CULVER'S CASE STUDY OF THE WEEK



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MOVIE CRITICS

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

GoingsOn

MOUNTAIN VIEW VOICE

■ HIGHLIGHT

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

SPECIAL EVENTS

14TH ANNUAL WALLACE STEGNER LECTURE SERIES Nature Photographer Frans Lanting presented by Peninsula Open Space Trust. Sponsored by Ambassador Bill and Mrs. Jean Lane. Call for tickets. Feb. 15, 8-9:30 p.m. \$22. Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. Call 854-7696. www.openspacetrust.org

JAPANESE FLOWER ARRANGING "THE WAY OF TEA" Presented by The Community School of Music and Arts. Featuring masters of the Japanese art forms of flower arranging and tea ceremonies as they demonstrate these exquisite cultural traditions. Sponsored by Applied Materials. Feb. 11, 2-5:30 p.m. Free. Community School of Music and Arts, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. www.arts4all.org

JAPANESE IKEBANA AND TEA CEREMONY Feb. 11, 2 p.m. introduction to Urasenke Tradition of Chanoyu, Urasenke Foundation; 4 p.m. Wafu School of Ikebana, CA Chapter and Ohara Ikebana School of Northern CA Chapter. Masters of these art forms demonstrate cultural traditions. Free. Community School of Music and Arts at Finn Center, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. Call 917-6800. www.arts4all.org

ART GALLERIES

INGE INFANTE "FIELDS, NEW COLLAGES" Through Feb. 25. Gallery hours: Thu.-Sun., 1-5 p.m. Free. 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. Hours: Tue.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Gallery 9, 143 Main St., Los Altos. <http://www.gallery9losaltos.com>

"FIVE PAINTERS" Featured works by Nicole Buffett, Mitchell Confer, Catherine Dudley, Kenna Moser, Ryan Reynolds. 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

"WATER" An exhibit of watercolor paintings by Kay Culpepper. Through March 30; opening reception Feb. 28, 2-5 p.m. Tue.-Sun., 2-5 p.m. Free. Flea Street Cafe Gallery, 3607 Alameda de las Pulgas, Menlo Park. Call 854-1226. kayculpepper.com

ALLEGRO FINE ART Watercolors by Nina Uppaluru, VP of Fine Arts League of Cupertino, member of Santa Clara Valley Watercolor Society and Los Gatos Art Association. Through Feb. 28. Mon.-Fri., 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. Allegro Fine Art, 3130 Alpine Road, #370, Portola Valley. Call 851-4300. www.allegroframing.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. Portola Art Gallery, 75 Arbor Road, Menlo Park. www.portolaartgallery.com

DAVID REINTERPRETED An exhibit showing the recent interpretations of the legend by the sculptors of the Bay Area. Through Feb. 22.

Pacific Art League, 668 Ramona St., Palo Alto. Call 325-6679.

LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN Reflections on a trip to Norway highlighted in watercolor by artist Betty Dennis. On display through 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/

TERCERA GALLERY New jewelry by Dahlia Kanner, Brooke Battles, and Julia Turner. Large cast glass bowls by John Lewis. Through Feb. 28. Tue.-Sun., 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Free. Tercera Gallery, 534 Ramona St., Palo Alto. Call 322-5324. www.terceragallerypaloalto.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

CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

BUILD A CRYSTAL RADIO Students build their own crystal radio. Course teaches students the history of the development of radio, basic radio theory, modulation, how headphones work, and how to read schematics. For ages 10 and up. Saturdays, Feb. 10-March 3, 1-3 p.m. Members \$45/ non-members \$60. Museum of American Heritage, 351 Homer

Ave., Palo Alto. Call 321-1004. www.moah.org

GREEN REMODELING WORKSHOP Learn about green building in an informative workshop designed for homeowners. Feb. 17, 9 a.m.-noon \$20 pre-registered/\$25 at the door. Hidden Villa, 26870 Moody Road, Los Altos Hills. Call 230-2915. www.harrell-remodeling.com

INSIDE ISLAM: SUNNA AND SHI'A Learn about two Islamic groups and the history behind today's struggle in Iraq. Ismail Agayev, instructor. Feb. 14, 1-3 p.m. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

INTRODUCTION TO THE WOODLAND GARDEN Topics covered will include plant selection, layout and design. Plants in bloom will include hellebores, creeping forget-me-knots and many camellias. Feb. 17, 9:30-11:30 a.m. \$90 members/\$110 non-members. Filoli, 86 Canada Road, Woodside. www.filoli.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

OAXACAN ANTOJITOS Master authentic antojitos made with stone ground corn masa. Feb. 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m. \$34. Whole Foods Market, 4800 El Camino Real, Los Altos. Call 559-0300. www.wholefoodsmarket.com

CLUBS/MEETINGS

SPAUG PC COMPUTER USERS GROUP

Stoney and Jan Edwards will describe and illustrate nature and wildlife photography using both film and digital equipment, pointing out advantages and disadvantages of each camera type. Feb. 14, 7:15-9:30 p.m. First meeting free. Palo Alto Elk's Lodge, 4249 El Camino Real, Palo Alto. Call 494-6177. www.PA.SPAUG.org

COMMUNITY EVENTS

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>

TAX ASSESSOR LARRY STONE Sponsored by The Old Mountain View Neighborhood Association. Santa Clara County Tax Assessor Larry Stone to speak to residents of Mountain View and answer questions. Feb. 12, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Free. Mountain View City Hall, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. Call (408) 861-2037.

CONCERTS

BENEFIT CONCERT RECITAL Pianist Emiliya Serebrennikova will perform works by Bach, Schumann, Shostakovich, and Ravel. Guest artists include Era Lifschitz and Lana Gruen. Feb. 7, 7:30 p.m. Suggested donation adults \$15, seniors/students \$12, children \$8 at door. Palo Alto Arts Center, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto.

► Continued on next page



Len Tillem Esq.

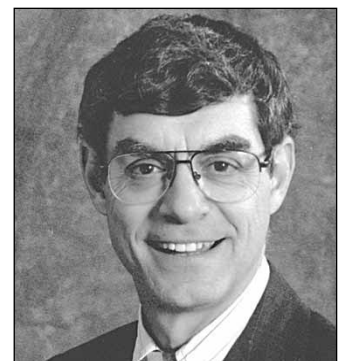
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BLACK LOVE FEATURING TEEDRA MOSES

An evening with R&B/Neo-Soul singer Teedra Moses. Featuring Spoken Word, R&B, Neo-Soul performances. Refreshments provided. Feb. 14, doors open at 8 p.m.; 9 p.m. performance. Free for Stanford students; \$5 with college ID; \$7 without. Arrillaga Alumni Center, 326 Galvez St., Stanford.

GRAHAM BARBER, ORGAN Wed., Feb. 14, 8 p.m.

Barber, Professor of Performance Studies at Leeds University in the U.K. perform works by Bach, Buxtehude, and Whitlock on both the Fisk-Nanney and Murray Harris organs. \$10/\$5/students free with ID. Memorial Church, 450 Serra Mall, Stanford. Call 725-1932. <http://music.stanford.edu>

HAYDN'S THE SEASONS Sun., Feb. 11, 4 p.m. The Congregational Oratorio Society Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Gregory Wait, will present The Seasons, by Franz Josef Haydn. Featuring soloists, a chorus, and a 35-piece orchestra. \$10 general, \$5 student/senior. First Congregational Church of Palo Alto, 1985 Louis Road, Palo Alto. Call 856-6662. www.fccpa.org

PALO ALTO CHAMBER ORCHESTRA TOUR

BENEFIT CONCERT Sun., Feb. 11, 3 p.m. Summer performance tour to Central Europe. Features a classical music performed by All Five PACO Orchestras. \$20 general/\$10 youth. Dinkelspiel Auditorium, 471 Lagunita Dr., Stanford. Call 856-3848. www.pacomusic.org

THE FORTNIGHTLY MUSIC CLUB CONCERT Sun., Feb. 11, 8 p.m. Include works by Brahms, Schubert, Ibert and Elgar. Performers

include M. Reiss, C. Calhoun, and D. Cogan, piano; J. Clark, bass; G. Kang, cello. Free. Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Road, Palo Alto. Call 522-8152. www.fortnightlymusicclub.org

WET INK Sat., Feb. 17, 2:30 p.m. New works for string ensembles by Stanford undergraduate composition students. Free. CCRMA Stage, 541 Lasuen Mall, Stanford. Call 725-1932. <http://music.stanford.edu>

YASUTAKA HEMMI, VIOLIN Fri., Feb. 9, 8 p.m. Violin virtuoso Yasutaka Hemmi performs works by Ferneyhough, Hosokawa, Ireland, Lachenmann, and Yuasa. Free. CCRMA Stage, 660 Lomita Ave., Stanford. Call 725-1932. <http://music.stanford.edu>

ZAKIR HUSSAIN AND FRIENDS Sat., Feb. 17, 8 p.m. The Pan Asian Music Festival opens with acclaimed percussionist Zakir Hussain and friends. \$15/\$5. Dinkelspiel Auditorium, 471 Lagunita Dr., 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.penin-sulavalunteers.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

FINDING FUNGI AT PURISIMA With docents Chris MacIntosh, Kay Partelow, and Paul Billig. Search along trails for fungi of all sizes, shapes, and colors. This is a non-technical, 7-mile walk at a moderate pace. Meet at the Whittemore Gulch entrance. Feb. 11, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. Purisima Creek Redwoods Open Space Preserve. www.openspace.org

HILLS AND HISTORY The Older mansion, Hunters Point, and Maisie's Peak will be destinations for a moderate, 5-mile hike led by docents Tommi and Stretcher Smith along various trails, including Cora Older, Coyote Ridge, Hayfield, and Seven Springs Trails. Feb. 18, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Fremont Older Open Space Preserve. www.openspace.org

NATURE THROUGH A LENS Amateur photographers and docents Frances Cleveland and Jack Zirker for a 2-mile photography hike along trails near Horseshoe Lake. Meet at Russian Ridge Preserve. Feb. 10, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve. www.openspace.org

TRACKS AND SCAT Docents Paul Vadopalas and Judy Boore leisurely 3 mile hike over portions of the Alder Spring and Ancient Oaks Trails. Discover how to look for signs of wildlife as you hike. Meet at the Caltrans vista point. Feb. 18, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve. www.openspace.org

EXHIBITS

"ACTOR! ACTOR" Jan. 28-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

"JUST PAINT" Paintings by 15 member artists in all media will be shown through 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

ART IN ACTION LIBRARY SHOW Art in Action opens a 6-month long art show series featuring artwork from local students grades

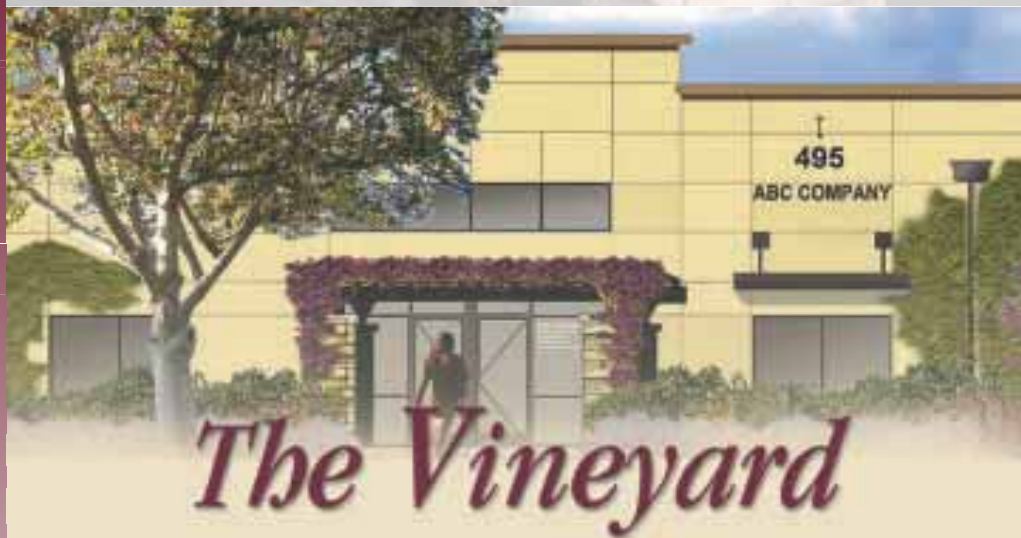


ANOTHER SUCCESS!

Jimmy Kang is congratulating his wife, Moria Kang, on her new home for her business WFG/Citinet Mortgage – Silicon Valley, which offers a wide range of financial services, including insurance, investments, and mortgages. The business is moving into the Vineyard, a private professional office park in Mountain View near 101 and Ellis St.

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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

CARMEN LOMAS GARZA: PAINTINGS & PRINTS Painting and prints by artist Carmen Lomas Garza. Gallery hours: Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m.-3 p.m.; closed Sundays. Free. Community School of Music and Arts, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View. www.arts4all.org

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

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>

SEASONS AT FILOLI Exhibition will highlight Filoli's special events through a collection of photographs by members of the Friends of Filoli and other local artists. Feb. 13-March 25, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Free with paid \$12 admission. Filoli, 86 Canada Road, Woodside. www.filoli.org

FAMILY AND KIDS

PARENTS NURSERY SCHOOL OPEN

HOUSE Parents Nursery School, a cooperative preschool is holding its annual open house Sun., Feb. 11, 1-3 p.m. To enroll, children must be three by Jan. 31, 2008. Parents Nursery School, 2328 Louis Road, Palo Alto. www.parents-nurseryschool.org

STORY TIME: VALENTINES FOR TEDDY BEARS

Sun., Feb. 11, 11:30 a.m. Kepler's invites Teddy Bears of all ages to a story time in honor of the love, joy and companionship they bring to our lives. Free. Kepler's Books, 1010 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Call 324-4321. www.keplers.com

VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY Hosted by The Parents' Club of Palo Alto and Menlo Park. A Valentine's Day party for children and their parents Sat., Feb. 10, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Children can participate in games, arts and crafts projects. Snacks and treats will be served. \$5 for non-member adults. Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto. www.pampclub.org

FILM

LITTLEHOUSE WEDNESDAY MOVIES Feb. 14: "The Glenn Miller Story"; Feb. 21: "The King of Masks"; Feb. 28: "La Boheme." 1-3 p.m. \$1 members/\$2 non-members. Little House, 800 Middle Ave., Menlo Park. Call 326-2025. www.peninsulavolunteers.org

ON STAGE

"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

MORE LISTINGS

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

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